
Letting Literature Prepare Students for Study Abroad: A Case Study with Hemingway's Cuba

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1. Introduction

Without attempting to detail the confusing history of United States/Cuba travel policy, let us start with the Clinton administration in 1999, when academic travel to Cuba became a reality, temporarily, until the Bush administration severely restricted such travel along with family visits in June 2004. The Obama administration revisited those Clinton era Cuban travel standards, but with the addition of allowing for short term study abroad trips to Cuba. Previously, such trips to Cuba had to be a semester, and this change fit well with Lynn University's newly developed January Term, or J Term, also known as a Winterim elsewhere, a two and a half week term after the holidays but before the start of spring semester. In January 2011, the idea of "Hemingway's Cuba," a Lynn J term academic program abroad, was born with sights on January 2012. We ultimately incorporated cultural sensitivity theory that was primarily delivered through Ernest Hemingway's literature itself, effectively educating students about Hemingway's style and themes while simultaneously preparing them for cultural difference.

As fortune would have it, much of Hemingway's style and themes matches well with core Cuban values after the triumph of the Communist revolution. Thematically, two important levels of Hemingway's writings involve Marxism and existentialism. Stylistically, Hemingway's modernist tendencies, particularly his affinity for minimalism and

stream of consciousness, link strongly with the Cuban way of life since Fidel Castro led the revolution against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in January 1959. By covering these characteristics in Hemingway's literature, we also educate the student in these key Cuban concepts, effectively decreasing the potential for an ethnocentric experience and increasing the odds of a more ethnorelative one.

2. The Theory

Faculty Directors of Academic Programs Abroad (APA) would prefer to limit the potential for conflict caused by cultural insensitivity. Since, as Jaime Wurzel points out in his important 1988 anthology, "conflicts arise from not sharing cultural knowledge," (2) students need to somehow be exposed to the host culture of their APA before going abroad, which is difficult when embargos and other political posturing have been as prevalent as they have been with Cuba. Fortunately, three of Hemingway's novels can take us there: *To Have and Have Not*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and *Islands in the Stream*. The economic themes in *To Have and Have Not* clearly synthesize with Communist Cuban economic policy. Santiago's grace under pressure also echoes contemporary Cuban values and exemplifies the Code Hero. Thomas Hudson further enriches a Code Hero whose existential and modernist characteristics reflect the current Cuban character, and theoretically the student who reads these Hemingway works will be close to having a prior intercultural Cuban experience. In his equally important anthology from 1993, R. Michael Paige notes that experience almost always helps (9). Given that travel to Cuba has been so restricted, we decided to, at first, travel there through Hemingway.

Our goal was to put our students into a position of acceptance, the first of Milton J. Bennett's ethnorelative

stages, which he marks with respect for behavioral difference and respect for value difference (48-50). Reading and discussing Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* before travelling to Cuba made our students more accepting of, for example, the seeming disinterest in materialism, consumerism, and advertising evident in Marxist Cuba. Try to buy a camera there. Reading *The Old Man and the Sea* their first night there, the students could now be more accepting of the Cuban work ethic so grounded in existentialism and the Code Hero. Focusing on the "Cuba" section of *Islands in the Stream* advances their understanding of the Code Hero. In another significant anthology, this one edited by Kenneth Cushner in 1998, the editor himself warns those who have "a strong preference for interactions with similar others" (5) will run into conflicts in an APA. Using literature in conjunction with intercultural sensitivity theory affords the opportunity to address any such preferences and advance intercultural competence, an effort Jeff Morgan demonstrates the possibilities of in his lead article for Vol. XXI of *Frontiers*. Our mission simply became teaching these Hemingway novels with a focus on the themes and stylistic tendencies to help develop intercultural competence of Cuba.

Agreeing on what those themes and styles would be was easy: Marxism, existentialism, modernism, and the Code Hero. We just needed to make sure we were right about those being important aspects of Cuban culture. Assuming most of us are comfortable assigning Marxist as an adjective descriptive of post-revolution Cuba, even though Raul Castro has recently initiated significant capitalist change, let us first, then, consider the existential character of this island. Jean-Paul Sartre noticed it right away. He visited the island at the dawn of the revolution and witnessed Cuba creating its own reality. Impressed by the work ethic of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, their willingness to work hard against odds, their disdain for absolute truth and consequent

embracing of flux and change, their drive to live in the moment, their disdain for abstraction, Sartre ultimately wrote a book, *Sartre on Cuba* (1961), about the characteristics of these charismatic leaders of what would ultimately become a Marxist revolution in Cuba. Sartre's book portrays two heroes trying to live by example amidst the chaos and absurdities of a revolution. The French existentialist closes his book, observing the work Cuba "does day after day under foreign pressure takes on, in its eyes, an original and profound meaning" (160). Early on in the revolution, Castro himself showed certain affinities to existential thinking. Sartre quotes Castro, "I say that if someone doesn't do all he can all the time – and more – it's exactly as if he did nothing at all" (123). Rather extreme at the end, but notice the affinity to Sartre, who writes in "The Humanism in Existentialism," an essay that goes by several other titles, "A man is involved in life, leaves his impress on it, and outside of that there is nothing" (48). And, how involved should man be? Furthering the connection, Sartre adds in the same definitive essay that man is not only "responsible for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men" (36). So, one of the principles of existentialism emphasizes this need to act, to work hard, and to be an example. Such characteristics link the character of Castro and Sartre in an existential bond.

The character of Che Guevara, whose visage, works, and words are almost ubiquitous in Cuba, also emphasizes this principle of work. In his essay "Socialism and Man in Cuba," addressing the time right after the revolution, Guevara adds, "This was the first heroic period, and in which combatants competed for the heaviest responsibilities, for the greatest dangers, with no other satisfaction than fulfilling a duty" (150). But, one needs look no further than the famous architectural relief on the side of Cuba's Ministry of Interior building facing onto The Revolutionary Plaza in Havana. Under the relief of Guevara it reads "*Hasta la Victoria*

Siempre,” or “Until the Victory Always.” The notion of work is there. The notion of repetitive action with no end in sight is there. These key existential characteristics and more can be seen in Cuba and in the themes that present themselves in the literature of Hemingway.

Also in Hemingway’s literature is a style, described as modernist by most. Within the umbrella of modernism and within the stylistic tendencies of Hemingway’s writing is minimalism, which suggests less abstraction, less description, more of an impetus on the reader to become actively involved in the work of reading, and, at its base, simple sentence structures and simple vocabulary. This minimalist stylistic tendency in Hemingway fits right into what Guevara writes, again from “Socialism and Man in Cuba.” Describing how work is initiated and performed, Guevara writes that Cubans are able to take the directive from on high but ultimately “make it their own” (151). This resounds with the existential concept of man creating his own reality, a sentiment which Castro states early on in his spoken autobiography with Ignacio Ramonet. “I made myself into a revolutionary,” (23). In fact, in the early days of the revolution, when Manuel Urrutia was president, the bearded rebels from the Sierra Maestra seemed to recognize the drawbacks of abstraction and the power in clear, direct work aimed at improving the lot of humanity. Sartre’s early observations of the revolution are again instructive when he points to Urrutia’s inflexible principles, particularly when it came to brothels and casinos, and Castro’s willingness to embrace flux and change. And, as for the notion of simplicity, Hemingway’s style clearly reflects Cuban existentialism and its disdain for abstraction and embracing of the basic perspective of existence and work. As Sartre writes in “The Humanism of Existentialism,” “I’ve got to limit myself to what I see” (47). He could just as well replace the first person pronoun with “The Cuban.” With Hemingway,

what we see is what we get, and Cubans tend to likewise avoid abstraction.

Furthermore, Hemingway's modernist use of multiple points of view reveals the idea that the truth is unstable, which also fits into the existential idea of no fixed absolutes. With no fixed absolutes, the existentialist, or the Cuban, is able to create his own reality, without the influence of outside forces. Since "The Special Period," which is what the Cubans call their time after the departure of the Soviet influence, Cuba has been without a "sugar daddy." Whatever reality they are creating, it is their own. In fact, now more than ever, the existential character of the revolution can be linked to this concept of living in the moment, for Cuba has so many pressing needs, she finds herself like Dr. Rieux in Camus' *The Plague*, constantly facing a critical situation, and there is almost always another critical situation so that what evolves is a series of moments. These experiences create a reservoir of memories, enabling the Cuban to almost intuitively respond to certain given situations if the situation is within his experience. As Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy write in the *Monthly Review* back in 1960, "A revolution is a process, not an event" unfolding "through many stages and phases. It never stands still. What is true of it today may be untrue tomorrow and vice versa" (77). This is like a living stream of consciousness, like the living reality of life in Cuba. This also reflects on Hemingway's social conscience in *To Have and Have Not*, the first text we studied prior to our departure.

3. Themes & Style

Hemingway received criticism in the 1930s, during his Key West years, for not having enough of a social conscience in his literature. These arguments turned to the rather bourgeois character of such works as *Death in the Afternoon* and *Green Hills of Africa*, travelling to bullfights and going on

safaris a bit out of the realm of the typical worker's experience. However, Hemingway's literature does have a social conscience, and his essay on the 1936 Labor Day Hurricane that struck Islamorada is a good example of it. More than 200 World War I veterans died, or as Hemingway puts it were left to die. They had been building a bridge so that the New Deal could come to Key West and transform this town that has, economically, lost so much: cigars to Tampa, sponges to Tarpon Springs, and its status as the major gulf port to New Orleans. This backdrop is significant because in "Who Murdered the Vets?" Hemingway lambasts the government for its neglect of the veterans; moreover, Key West is the setting for *To Have and Have Not*, and the New Deal is not welcome by the Conchs in the novel, which comes out a year after the hurricane. Hemingway lets a vet speak in the novel, "They've got to get rid of us. You can see that, can't you?" (206). It appears that it is not in the government's best interest to keep this particular segment of the population alive since they pose a threat to the potential capitalistic gain available for those in power.

The economic situation in 1930's Key West, whether real or imagined, is potent. As Albert, a fated mate in the novel explains, "They are only going to give us three days a week on relief now. I just heard about it this morning. I got to do something."(144). For Albert that means ultimately dying during a desperate attempt to make some money because the government, in the novel and in the essay, seems to be interested only in making money for itself and a select few. In both works, Hemingway's critique of savage capitalism helps explain, in part, why he is still so venerated in Cuba. These works do have a social conscience, and while they do not embrace big government, they definitely criticize capitalism.

Since Cubans are indoctrinated in school about savage capitalism and are encouraged to develop their social

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consciences to the fullest, we chose to start our students with *To Have and Have Not*. We instructed them to read the book before the first day of class on the ground. In addition to more traditional preparation to educate students so that they are better prepared to relate with the host culture, we spent a two hour class going over the novel, focusing on those aforementioned themes and stylistic tendencies. It was easy. The novel lends itself to just such an analysis. The title itself points to a bourgeois (the haves) and proletariat (the have nots) conflict, and in this novel the haves are weak, seemingly unworthy of their position. One woman wants to buy Harry Morgan, the main character of the novel, like a pet. On an autobiographical level, and few are as autobiographical as Hemingway, this can be seen as a cut against his in-laws, the Pfeiffers, some particular artists, the government, and certainly certain tourists, but, viewed metaphorically, Cubans, and our students, can read this as a metaphor for Cuba's own struggle to create their own reality without Spain, the United States, or the Soviet Union. The Cubans would be the have nots while the various imperialists would be the haves.

Despite creating a kind of oppressor/oppressed situation, big government, though, is not the answer in the novel, for Hemingway specifically targets Roosevelt's New Deal as making matters worse. In 1934, Julius Stone was sent down as part of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration's effort to economically transform and, in their eyes, save Key West. Stone created the Key West Administration and with an eye toward tourism dollars as the saving grace of the island, considered forcing Conchs to wear Bermuda shorts so that everyone would look in character, much like Disneyworld. The Conchs in the novel, like the population they are based on, and like Cubans by metaphoric extension, live under a curfew and dislike the federal government's liberty infringing efforts. The protagonist of the novel, Harry Morgan, especially follows this kind of code. Morgan, by the

way, only has a left arm; additionally, his wife refers to him as a loggerhead, a threatened species. The figurative possibilities abound with such wording although the character seems to defy definitive labeling. At best, Morgan is a kind of Libertarian. He can't get ahead and blames outside forces. He wants more independence. He worries about money, urging his daughters to go swimming because it's free fun as opposed to going to the movies. He worries about feeding his family. Despite unease in labeling Morgan's politics, there is no denying the anti-capitalist layer to the novel. This helps prepare our students for anti-capitalist tendencies in Cuba, and when discussed in a context of Cuban history, we feel this approach definitely worked well for us.

A close reading of the novel provides numerous illustrations of our theme as almost every chapter of the novel addresses the notion of savage capitalism and its negative effects on characters, especially Conchs who just want to be left alone to create their own reality, further cementing the novel as a helpful tool in preparing our students for existentialism in this study abroad experience. Though he really only wants to make "honest money" (121), Morgan is tempted right away to take a risk and smuggle Chinese for good money, but this goes against his principles, and there's a risk he could lose his boat. How risky such entrepreneurship might be becomes clearer a few pages later when the principals involved in the smuggling have a shootout. Still, making a buck is seemingly just as difficult with his honest work chartering his boat for fishing. The rich man, Johnson, ends up stiffing Morgan for the large fee he owed our captain, who then finds himself broke and close to despair. This would be similar to the lesson of imperialism in Cuba, in which a few made big money while the many had to resort to almost any means to make ends meet, and Morgan finds himself breaking his code and resorting to smuggling Chinese. He is corrupted. He feels the system has

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left him no choice, something he repeatedly laments later in the novel. Soon, he is receiving threats for the business he has chosen. A little later, he kills. This is what savage capitalism can lead to.

In fact, Morgan loses his arm in a smuggling job, one that goes awry with a shootout that leaves Morgan's shot black mate left to ask, "Ain't a man's life worth more than a load of liquor?" (69). As fate would have it, a federal man, probably linked to Stone, comes upon Morgan's shot up boat and thinks he has an opportunity to strut his authority; however, his captain, Willie, keeps him from coming down with all of his authority on Morgan, pulling away and saying, "If he wanted us he would have signaled us. If he don't want us it's none of our business. Down here everybody aims to mind their own business" (79). The Fed can only see Morgan as a lawbreaker, but Captain Willie, Morgan's friend, knows more of the truth, knows that the government plays a part in causing this bloodshed because the government is corrupt, aiming to hypocritically capitalize where it can. As Captain Willie questions as they pull away from Morgan's shot up boat, "Ain't you mixed up in the prices of things that we eat or something? Ain't that it? Making them more costly or something. Making the grits cost more and the grunts less?" (84). In addition to exposing Hemingway's social conscience, the passage is insightful when it comes to Cuba's history in which imperialist forces have forced Cuba's indigenous economy to become almost worthless while raising the cost of living.

The blending of Marxism and existentialism has become quite clear by this point in the novel, and we took advantage of the points in the novel where the synthesis occurs, pointing them out to students so that they better understand how both the themes work in the novel and how the characteristics associated with those themes help expose them to their upcoming Cuban experience. When Johnson,

for example, haggles with Morgan about how captains take the money even if the client doesn't catch any fish, almost always coming up with some reasonable excuse, Morgan affirms that is indeed the way it is and that there's not much one can do about it. Here, we have both a conflict within the capitalistic transaction and the awareness of human limitations, Morgan hammering home a sense of existential futility by adding, "Then when you get a day that's perfect you're ashore without a party" (14). In a chapter that Albert narrates, he has a conversation with Morgan that further evinces this bond between Marxism and existentialism in the novel. Neither man can explain the absurd situation in which they find themselves. They want to work but cannot find any, and Morgan turns the talk towards that savage capitalism with "What they're trying to do is starve you Conchs out of here so they can burn down the shacks and put up apartments and make this a tourist town" (96). In the next chapter, switching the narrative voice to Harry, yet another example resounds with the possibilities of educating students about two Cuban characteristics in one when Morgan laments that he has no choice, that the corrupt government has put him in this position, and that he must do what needs to be done.

The switching of these voices is equally significant for our attempts to create cultural competence through literature, and Hemingway's inventive use of voice here is indicative of his modernist style in literature. We often think of Faulkner and Joyce, but Hemingway, too, was at the vanguard of this style, and in *To Have and Have Not*, we were able to focus on this style and link it to yet another existential characteristic, one which Cubans would be quite accustomed to, multiple perspectives of the truth, rendering the truth ambiguous. Making our students more accustomed to traits such as this helped put them in an early position to accept cultural difference, having had the exposure abstractly through our analysis of the novel, which begins with first person

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narration from Morgan but doesn't stay there, moving to third person in Part Two, and different voices in Part Three. These are the chapters with Albert and Morgan speaking before moving back into third person. The multiple voices suggest multiple truths, breaking down the concept of fixed absolutes and further cementing the literature and Cuban existential character that thrives on creating its own reality.

In addition to these multiple voices, Hemingway employs other modernist technique. His emphasis on using the right word helps illustrate his disdain for abstraction and his interest in clear, concrete reality. After years of imperialism, Cuban culture also has a disdain for abstraction and an interest in clear, concrete reality. So, when we point out when Morgan corrects Mr. Sing, who has just used the word accommodate in reference to smuggling while Morgan queries with "You mean carry?" (32), we are putting our students into a better position to accept and adapt to the Cuban host culture. The above example evinces Hemingway's minimalist tendencies, which also can be seen when his third person narrator in Part Two sums up the pretty wretched, shot-up condition of Morgan and his mate after running into trouble on a liquor run with simply, "Things were bad" (71). They were much worse than that, but this tendency to understate works well on a similar level as seen before with the characteristics of abstraction and reality, and Hemingway utilizes this move with some frequency, notably when he refrains from revealing the full details of an upcoming trip to his wife, Marie, preferring to leave the matter with "I'm going on a bad trip" (127). Such a technique also plays into the existential notion of the reader creating his own reality from the narrative since the narrator is leaving matters rather up in the air.

Hemingway's modernism, though, is not limited to minimalistic evidence, for in addition to his multiple perspectives, he also likes to try to abandon perspective and

slip into a stream of consciousness with the third person revealing what a character is thinking, usually ending with a “he thought,” as at the end of such a stream of modernism at the beginning of chapter eight, or a “she was thinking” at the start of such a stream (114). Hemingway’s use of stream of consciousness clearly connects to the current Cuban value system. On an existential level, the stream of consciousness technique suggests the notion of living in the moment. The narrative comes unedited, without outside censorship, as a pure pouring forth of the instantaneous thoughts of the narrator. This links back to the Code Hero and living in the moment. In *To Have and Have Not*, this is clearly seen when the narrator reveals that Morgan has two moves to make near the start of chapter sixteen, two moves being rather minimal, but they are also a part of his code of behavior.

The other two novels, which we cover while in Cuba, help continue this sensitivity training. *The Old Man and the Sea* especially reinforces the existential Cuban character and the Code Hero. Much has been written on this quality in Hemingway’s novel. We all know about Santiago’s seemingly futile quest, his winner take nothing mindset, his poor results from great effort, but, at this point, instead of rereading over those instances from the novel, let us turn to a narrative of our study abroad trip and how many of our experiences did not catch us too much by surprise because of our earlier work with *To Have and Have Not*. To be sure, that preparation along with the daily reinforcement of our readings while on the island further solidified our efforts toward letting literature prepare students for study abroad.

We introduced our students to Hemingway’s Code Hero in a Cuban context exemplified by the smuggler Morgan in *To Have and Have Not*, the artist/intelligence operative Thomas Hudson in *Islands in the Stream*, and the aging fisherman Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea*. The term itself is a creation of the critics.

The code by which Hemingway's heroes must live (Philip Young has termed them "code heroes") is contingent on the qualities of courage, self-control, and "grace under pressure." Irving Howe has described the typical Hemingway hero as a man "who is wounded but bears his wounds in silence, who is defeated but finds a remnant of dignity in an honest confrontation of defeat." Furthermore, the hero's great desire must be to "salvage from the collapse of social life a version of stoicism that can make suffering bearable; the hope that in direct physical sensation, the cold water of the creek in which one fishes or the purity of the wine made by Spanish peasants, there can be found an experience that can resist corruption." (poetryfoundation.org)

Hemingway once described courage as "grace under pressure." ⁱ In a letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald he writes about bullfights: "Was not referring to guts but to something else. Grace under pressure. Guts never made any money for anybody except violin string manufacturers." (qtd. in Baker 200). All three protagonists certainly qualify as Code Heroes. But, with respect to Hemingway's characterizations of Morgan and Hudson, Santiago stands out as his epitome of a Code Hero. Santiago is already a hero when we meet him, unlike Morgan and Hudson.

Our students agreed. We took our students to Cojimar Bay, the site just outside Havana that inspired the setting for *The Old Man and the Sea*. This visit brought the story to life for them, as evidenced by their animated comments when we went to the restaurant overlooking the bay for lunch, *Las Terrazas* (referred to as The Terrace in the story). Tourists mixed with locals, not unlike Hemingway's description in the

book. A statue of Hemingway overlooks this cove full of small fishing skiffs that resemble Santiago's.

Hemingway began work on "the Santiago story" as he called it in January 1951. It was based on a well-known Cuban folktale told to him by Carlos Guitierrez, his first mate on his boat, *The Pilar*. Hemingway writes to his editor, Maxwell Perkins in 1939:

And three very long ones I want to write now...One about the old commercial fisherman who fought the swordfish all alone in his skiff for 4 days and four nights and the sharks finally eating it after he had it alongside and could not get it into the boat. That's a wonderful story of the Cuban coast. I'm going out with old Carlos [Gutierrez] in his skiff so as to get it all right. Everything he does and everything he thinks in all that long fight with the boat out of sight of all the other boats all alone on the sea. It's a great story if I can get it right. One that would make the book. (qtd. in Baker 479).

Hemingway breathed new life into the story by using the first person voice. He takes us inside Santiago's head to reveal a man not so much in conflict with himself but rather in conflict with nature. He is a Code Hero at sea, going further out than the other fishermen, facing death and danger with dignity. He has a sense of peace and acceptance. He talks to himself and the fish and the birds. Like a true Code Hero, he is a man of action, not words. He refers to the great marlin as his brother. "Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who." (OMS 70). "What will you do now if they [the sharks] come in the night?...I'll fight them until I die." (OMS 86). "The wind is our friend, anyway, he thought. Then he

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added, sometimes. And the great sea with our friends and our enemies.” (OMS 88). Santiago will not go gently into that good night. And he endures.

Santiago's conflict with nature (the sea, the marlin, and the sharks), and not other men, separates him from the younger Code Heroes Harry Morgan and Thomas Hudson. Morgan dies from wounds suffered in a shoot-out at sea, and Hudson dies shooting it out with Nazis on Cuba's coastline. Curiously, only Santiago faces death and endures. “But man is not made for defeat,” he [Santiago] said. “A man can be destroyed but not defeated” (OMS 78). Charles Scribner Jr. comments in his introduction, “It is impossible to read this story without believing that in many respects it represents Hemingway's own ideals of manhood” (qtd. in OMS 9). What does this say about Hemingway's evolution of Code Heroes in these three texts?

A Code Hero must have a wound, physical or psychic or both, like Jake Barnes' famous war wound that left him impotent. He must live with pain in dignity. Our three Code Heroes in Hemingway's Cuba meet the test. Harry Morgan loses an arm and then his life trying to provide for his family. Thomas Hudson has lost his wife, is separated from his sons, and loses his son by a movie star lover to the war; then Hudson risks and loses his life hunting for Nazi submarines on Cuba's coastline. Hudson's money does not save him from pain. Santiago has lost his luck fishing for eighty four days when we meet him, and after a lifetime of fishing lives alone in poverty. Only the boy, Manolin, cares for him. His record without catching a fish is eighty seven days, and we approach it with him in this story. Hemingway introduces Santiago as:

...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. But none of these scars were fresh. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert. Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated. (OMS 13)

Santiago loses the catch of a lifetime that would have ended his string of unlucky days at sea without catching a fish fit for wholesale. Scribner comments: "It is a curious fact of literary history that a story which describes the loss of a gigantic prize provided the author with the greatest prize of his career" (OMS 9). Scribner agrees with our students regarding Santiago as the supreme Code Hero by pointing out that when Hemingway received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954, the recently published *The Old Man and the Sea* was specifically cited (OMS 9).

Santiago best exhibits the humility that is essential to a Hemingway Code Hero. Hemingway writes: "He was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride" (OMS 15). As a baseball fan Santiago reveres "the great DiMaggio" and wonders how he can play so well with pain from his bone spurs and wonders what bone spurs are and if they hurt as much as the pain Santiago suffers from his bleeding hands cut by fishing line. Santiago reveres the birds and the fish at sea as his equals, even if they are his prey. Santiago does not regard himself as better than the marlin. He admits he has tricked the marlin into death. He certainly does not regard himself as better than the other fishermen, some of whom shun him for his lack of luck. He possesses humility. He suffers with dignity and grace under pressure. Likewise,

many of the Cubans we encountered shared this quality. Their lives pale in comparison to the USA on a material level, but they shine in comparison regarding grace under pressure.

Hemingway's Code Heroes typically display intense loyalty to a small group rather than loyalty to an abstract idea. For example, Morgan is loyal to only his family; he navigates around international and national law. Santiago is loyal only to himself and to Manolin, the boy he mentors who is loyal to him, and he repeatedly wishes Manolin had accompanied him on this fishing voyage. Likewise, Hudson is loyal to his sons and his lovers and his employees; however, he is also loyal to the abstract idea of patriotism, which leads to his death. He says at the end of the Cuba section, "Get it straight. Your boy you lose. Love you lose. Honor has been gone a long time. Duty you do. / Sure and what's your duty? What I said I'd do. And all the other things you said you'd do?" (IIS 326). Curiously, the Code Hero who survives in these three stories is the one who is the oldest and the most singular. Our experience in Cuba did not fully support this point of comparison. Family, of course, was central to Cuban citizens' loyalty. But, the Cubans were also loyal to the abstract idea of Castro's revolution, either because of fear or because of indoctrination or because of belief. Yet, curiously, when they discovered we were Americans, most reached out to us in friendship.

The Old Man and the Sea is also a story that reveals Hemingway's respect for life, even that of his prey, and most of all, his respect for endurance. Stoic endurance is a key trait of a Code Hero. "He rested on the un-stepped mast and sail and tried not to think but only to endure" (OMS 40). "I do not think I could endure that [the spur of a fighting cock in one heel] or the loss of the eye or both eyes and continue to fight as the fighting cocks do. Man is not much beside the

great birds and beasts ” (OMS 54). The Faulknerian word “endure” (Dilsey “endures” to end *The Sound and the Fury*) appears repeatedly in the story. Hemingway had a competitive relationship with Faulkner. Ironically, Faulkner received a screenwriting credit for Howard Hawks’ 1944 film adaptation of *To Have and Have Not*. Also, Faulkner received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950, a few years before Hemingway. Obviously both writers embraced the theme of endurance. And the Cuban people have endured. Their resilience impressed us. Also, we could not ignore the presence of other nations – China in particular – helping themselves and the Cubans. Breakfast in the dining room of the Hotel Nacional typically included a table of eight Chinese businessmen, as well as tables of British, Venezuelan, German, Iranian, Canadian, and other business people. Our butter was from Minnesota, imported by a Canadian company. Saudi Arabia maintained their embassy at the hotel. The USA was conspicuous in its absence. Cuba endures without our help.

Darkness, which evokes facing nothingness, is another facet of Hemingway’s Code Heroes. The *nada* that Hemingway’s insomniac old man prays to in “A Clean Well-Lighted Place” occurs at night. All three of our Cuban Code Heroes faced their nothingness in perhaps the loneliest of all places, the sea at night. Thomas Hudson articulated this to his movie star lover regarding the death of their son: “And we just go on? / That’s it. / With what? / With nothing” (IIS 322). Morgan smuggled at night; Hudson looked for Nazi submarines under the guise of night fishing; and Santiago fished and fought sharks alone at night. Yet, each Code Hero existentially creates his meaning by facing this fear and acting with courage. (How can courage exist without fear?) Only Santiago survives. Cuba, particularly since the exit of Soviet support, has faced this nothingness, and survived.

Why did our students resonate the most with Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea*? Perhaps because Santiago is a Code Hero who offers them hope and endurance? He does not die like Harry Morgan and Thomas Hudson. He maintains his dignity in the face of defeat. He can be “destroyed but not defeated.” (OMS 78). He endures to fish again. “And what beat you, he thought. ‘Nothing. I went out too far.’” (OMS 89).

4. In Cuba: Putting the Text to Practice

Total immersion results in recall far superior to classroom experience, as evidenced in learning foreign languages. Our students embedded memories to last a lifetime by visiting sites in Hemingway's Havana. Four key sites related to our readings: The San Francisco docks in Havana where the shootings open the action in *To Have and Have Not*; Hemingway's *Finca Vigia* outside Havana, the site of most of the action in the second section of *Islands in the Stream*, wherein the remainder occurs in The Floridita bar; and Cojimar, the bay near Havana that serves commercial fishermen and provides the setting on land for *The Old Man and the Sea*.

We boarded the bus from our base at The Hotel Nacional, the jewel of Havana's hotels that was controlled by Meyer Lansky and the mob prior to Castro's takeover. Our tour guide and handler, a middle-aged woman named Migdahlia, provided local commentary and good routing as we traveled a two-lane road along the fourteen miles from downtown Havana through less fortunate rural villages and hamlets. We gradually ascended into the hills. A small sign denoted Hemingway's *finca* when we made the turn onto a gravel road leading up a hill to his former estate. Fidel Castro has insisted on respect for this property, which is now the home of the Hemingway Museum.ⁱⁱ Hemingway is revered as a national hero. At the request of James Meredith, President

of the Hemingway Society, we and our handler Migdahlia delivered Tylenol and some other over the counter medications unavailable in Cuba to the woman who heads the Museum and suffers from migraines. We were not the only visitors that day. It reminded us of the buses pulling into Bob Marley's home in Kingston, Jamaica, or Elvis's Graceland on a slow day.

Visitors are not allowed inside the house. Ropes drape across doorways to reinforce this message. The open-air house is surrounded by a wrap-around porch that allows visitors to peek through the many open windows and doorways. What they see is a glimpse of a refined and relaxed household that appears to be waiting for its owners to return. The dining room table is set, as if another dinner party were scheduled for the evening. His bookcases are full, although the tropical air has deteriorated their quality. The musty smell of Hemingway's clothes, hats, and boots hangs in his closet. The numbers written on the wall of his bathroom track the fluctuation of his weight. An embalmed large lizard is mounted in glass on the wall, a trophy for his favorite cat, Big Goats – a character in *Islands in the Stream* - who had killed it after a drawn-out afternoon battle. The mounted heads of kudu and other trophies of Hemingway's hunting kills adorn the walls of other rooms. The three story tower that Mary Welsh built for him as a studio is accessible from this porch. Hemingway used this tower primarily as a home for his cats on the lower level, and he primarily used the writing studio on the third level as a lookout perch outfitted with a telescope. We were told he used this telescope to spy on the nude Ava Gardner swimming in his pool. The pool is now empty and needs repair. His boat, *The Pilar*, is restored and displayed in an area that used to be the tennis courts. The grounds are groomed and afford the quiet and privacy that Hemingway craved in between his famous gatherings.

Movie stars visited Hemingway at the *finca*. Gary Cooper had a guest house (now the offices of the Museum), and “Coop” had a permanent invitation that required no notice. Hemingway befriended Ava Gardner, Ingrid Bergman, and Marlene Dietrich. Only Gardner visited the *finca*, although Bergman and Dietrich were often invited. The identity of the mysterious movie star who unexpectedly visits Hudson at The Floridita in *Islands in the Stream* remains debatable.ⁱⁱⁱ For this reason, John Daily has argued that Dietrich is the basis for the character. Raul Villarreal, the noted artist and co-author with his father, Rene Villarreal, of *Hemingway's Cuban Son: Reflections on the Writer by his Longtime Majordomo*, told a story he heard from his father about how Hemingway hid Dietrich's letters behind the bookcases and would occasionally read them when Mary Welsh was not around. His father was a poor local boy who lived down the road and who played with Hemingway's sons and was then “adopted” and put to work by Hemingway. He became Hemingway's major domo at the *finca*. Mary Welsh was able to get the family out of Cuba and into Madrid, Spain in 1972 and then into the United States in 1974.

In a 2012 interview with Mike Foldes published in 2013, Raul Villarreal offers his thoughts on Cuban-American relations and how academic programs abroad like ours contribute to better relations.

Q) From your perspective, what will it take to bring the U.S. and Cuban experiments closer together?

A) *From my perspective I think that perhaps more cultural and academic exchanges will help to forge a strong bridge between the two countries. I also believe that the younger generation (those born in the 1980s) from both sides is eager for this cultural bridge and change.*

With technology the world has become a smaller place and communication is faster than ever before. We live in an immediate society and in order to be a part of that society a country and a system must evolve.

Our students tended to agree. To them, the Cuban missile crisis was an historical footnote. It was brought to life when we visited The University of Havana and saw the captured U.S. Army tank on the quadrangle and had our picture taken on the steps where Fidel started the student protests in the early fifties. Our students emailed and texted home. They shot photos. They danced at night in the nightclubs near the hotel and returned with exuberant stories about their warm reception. The local promoter for the nightclub visited us at the Hotel Nacional, almost like a young man visiting his girlfriend's father. The cabbies welcomed us and our dollars, but more importantly, the people on the street were glad to meet Americans. There were only a few hard stares from older men who sometimes followed us. Villareal's assessment was correct.

Upon our return to Havana from the *Finca Vigia*, we imagined Hudson being driven down this same road to the American Embassy on Obispo Street to report on his search for Nazi subs, and then going to The Floridita for drinks. Although there is no longer an American Embassy in Havana (only an American Mission not far from The Hotel Nacional), The Floridita is alive and well. A band played in the noontime crowded bar. A statue of Hemingway stands in his familiar spot at the end of the bar just inside the door. From this vantage point, he would spot you before you spotted him. We crowded into tables and surveyed the scene. We imagined the banter at the bar with the beloved aging prostitute, Honest 'Lil, and the politician, *Un Alcade Peor* (A Worse Mayor). We imagined the mysterious movie star making her entrance and then exiting with Hudson. Before we departed we enjoyed Hemingway's favorite call at this bar,

an icy blue Daiquiri, the doubles called *Papa Dobles* that were so cold they could give you a headache before the alcohol took effect. Thomas Hudson said, "If I drink it too fast it hurts across the front of my forehead." (IIS 277). As Hemingway writes, "*La Floridita para mi daiquiri et La Bogadita del Medio para mi mojito*," which appears framed behind the bar at The Bogadita del Medio. We bought some souvenir t-shirts and menus and headed for La Bogadita del Medio to continue our research. We headed up O'Reilly Street. Our handler, Migdahlia, informed us that O'Reilly was a priest who was also an astute businessman. We imagined Hudson walking this street after leaving the American Embassy.

5. Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration

In our pre-travel orientation meetings, one of our students wanted to know how far the outlet malls were from our hotel in downtown Havana. Upon our return, this was not an issue for her, at least in Havana. What happened to her? Acceptance, adaptation, and integration. Literature prepared her for Cuba, but Cuba prepared her for a new international attitude. As Raul Villarreal has postulated, our academic exchange delivered a deeper understanding of cultural diversity to our students and began to bridge the gap that exists between The United States and Cuba. Perhaps this gap will be bridged in their lifetime.

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ⁱ "The phrase "grace under pressure" first gained notoriety when Ernest Hemingway used it in a profile piece written by Dorothy Parker. Parker asked Hemingway: "Exactly what do you mean by 'guts'?" Hemingway replied: "I mean, grace under pressure." The profile is titled, "The Artist's Reward" and it appeared in the *New Yorker* on November 30, 1929. The first published use of the phrase, however, was in an April 20, 1926 letter Hemingway wrote F. Scott Fitzgerald. The letter is reprinted in *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters 1917-1961* edited by Carlos Baker, pages 199-201." (qtd. in *Timeless Hemingway*).

ⁱⁱ In 2002, Cuban and American officials reached an agreement that permits U.S. scholars access to Hemingway's papers that have remained in his Havana home since the author's death in 1961. The collection contains 3,000 photographs, 9,000 books, and 3,000 letters, and will be available on microfilm at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, Massachusetts. Efforts to gain access to the collection were led by Jenny Phillips, the granddaughter of Maxwell Perkins, Hemingway's long-time editor. (poetryfoundation.org)

ⁱⁱⁱ In an unpublished paper, "Hemingway's Mysterious Woman in *Islands in the Stream*" presented by John J. Daily to The American Literature Association in October, 2010, the argument is levied that Marlene Dietrich, not Ava Gardner or Ingrid Bergman, is the basis for this character. Only Ava Gardner visited Hemingway at the Finca Vigia according to Raul Villarreal, the son of Hemingway's longtime majordomo at the Finca. Bergman cancelled once in the early 1940s and Dietrich cancelled three times. However, he believed Dietrich was in Cuba and they may have met somewhere else. This may have appealed to Hemingway's imagination in the Cuba section of *Islands in the Stream*. Although the character's hair is not dark like Dietrich's, the topic of hair dye is addressed in the scene at The Floridita. Hemingway's description of them "kissing hard" also appears in his correspondence with Dietrich as a phrase they frequently used to end their letters. Also, Dietrich's USO appearances in uniform during WWII led Hemingway to write in his draft for *Life* magazine, "[she] is as lovely looking in the morning in a G.I. shirt, pants, and combat boots as she is at night or on the screen."
