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## THE TWO ERNESTOS

THE ACTUAL FIRST NAME of Che Guevara, the legendary international political figure still most familiarly associated with mid-twentieth-century Cuba, was Ernesto. (According to one theory, in the street vernacular of his native Argentina, “Che” is a common nickname, translating as “pal” or “buddy”; according to another, it is a common conversational interjection, something like “hey” or “yeah.”) The first name of Ernest Hemingway, the legendary international literary figure still most commonly associated with mid-twentieth-century Cuba, likewise translates into Spanish as Ernesto. (Though by the time he took up residence in Cuba, a biographical detail not without importance, “Papa” seems to have become the preferred term of address.) These two pieces of information would be merely interesting as facts of linguistic curiosity were it not for the highly visible ways, at once startling and mystifying to the contemporary visitor, in which Ernesto “Che” Guevara and Ernest “Papa” Hemingway continue to inhabit twenty-first-century Havana. In an age when celebrity has famously become a matter of hours or minutes, fifty years later there they remain, as if preserved in amber, strangely twinned icons of popular-culture myth.

To be sure, despite coming from vastly different political eras and cultural backgrounds, the two share a number of distinctly visible traits. Both were renowned expatriates, heroic citizens of the world: the first an Argentine military and political adventurer enshrined as a revolutionary hero-saint; the second an American literary and journalistic adventurer renowned as a creator of larger-than-life artistic legend. Making their lives and careers in places they sought out as the epicenters of the major cultural and historical events of their times, both were exemplars of the twentieth-century warrior intellectual, the man of action united with the man of thought; and both sought to invest their images as cultural cosmopolites with a hard edge of violent machismo. To this end, both became obsessively attracted to involvement in the great military and political struggles of the

century. Guevara, having played small roles in a failed revolution in Guatemala against a US-supported military dictatorship, wound up in Mexico, the site of his fated meeting and eventual alliance with Fidel Castro in the wake of the latter's imprisonment following the 26 July 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks. He then found his larger revolutionary destiny in Cuba, home of the nation and people with whom he would be most permanently associated, in the 1956–59 war of revolutionary liberation. Hemingway, after overseas World War I service with the Red Cross as an ambulance driver on the Italian front, where he was severely wounded, likewise pursued an adventurous migratory early existence as a newspaper and magazine correspondent, chronicling twentieth-century conflicts ranging from the Spanish Civil War to World War II in China and Europe. Meanwhile, having cemented his career as a major literary and cultural celebrity, after frequent periods of extended stay during the 1930s, he also established a more or less permanent home in Cuba from 1940 onward until his death two decades later.

Accordingly, during their lifetimes, both in Cuba and in the larger world, the two may be seen to have developed a number of parallels as figures of popular-culture mythology. Both possessed a certain fatalistic glamor in their quest after dangerous geopolitical trials of personal bravery. Following his experiences in Guatemala, Mexico, and Cuba, Guevara continued to serve as an apostle of revolution, first in the Congo and then in Bolivia, where he finally met his death. Hemingway followed journalistic assignments in the Spanish Civil War and Sino-Japanese War into World War II missions with the RAF bomber force, the Normandy invasion, and the infantry campaigns of western Europe including the liberation of Paris and the battles of the Huertgen Forest and the Ardennes. Both developed carefully cultivated legends of military prowess, partaking of the extra cachet of the irregular warrior, the figure of special knowledge and expertise standing outside conventional military doctrine and regimentation. Rightly or not, as Castro's closest lieutenant, Guevara was always regarded as the brains of the 1956–59 guerrilla action that succeeded in finally toppling the Batista regime, the imaginative genius without whom victory would not have been possible. Fully undeniable was a reputation for nearly insane bravery, an uncanny ability to lead, to inspire, and to face death in combat with personal example. Hemingway, as is well known, was likewise always quick to publicize his instinctual gift for what he called "the true gen"—the special knowledge of warfare frequently not vouchsafed to the plodding, tradition-bound, professional military functionary. As to personal bravery,

Hemingway fostered a genuine—if increasingly embellished—cult of hard-won perilous encounter as a true citizen of the wars of the twentieth century, including volunteer service as a freelance intelligence operative in Cuba and much-publicized stint as a World War II sub-chaser in Caribbean waters.

Similarly, as icons of a certain sort of twentieth-century masculinity, both were invested with a distinct sexual charisma. For Guevara, the operative phrasing was media idol, with the proximate image enshrined forever in the famous Alexander Korda portrait, *el Guerrillero Heroico*, possibly the most famous celebrity photograph of the twentieth century. To cite a standard profile, Che was sexy, with rumours of hundreds of female conquests to his credit, though Fidel often got more credit for being the lover boy. Had Guevara looked like Churchill, Roosevelt or Stalin, the story goes, there would still be unsold T-shirts all over the world. Hemingway, with his many marriages and swaggering exhibitions of maleness, occupied a kind of movie-star status not unlike that of his friends Gary Cooper or Humphrey Bogart. Ingrid Bergman, Marlene Dietrich, Lauren Bacall, Ava Gardner all called him “Papa,” though his own interests were surely more than paternal.

“Grace under pressure”: in all these respects, to use Hemingway’s signature phrasing, both Guevara and Hemingway seemed personifications of twentieth-century existential heroes, high priests of male adventure and romance, with their own ritual codes and conceptions of identity validated by the presence of death. It is necessary only to endure, said Hemingway in a favorite quote: “*il faut d’abord durer.*” And then there is a time to die: “We owe God a death.” For Guevara, as for his fellow Cuban *guerrilleros*, the code was even simpler. Life was truly “*patria o muerte*”—with the homeland in his case being in the largest sense always the cause of Revolution.

Both, to their admirers at least, found ways of leaving the world in keeping with such personal codes. Indeed, their deaths remain, one might propose, two of the twentieth century’s most legendary exit-takings. In 1967, after capture in guerrilla combat, Guevara faced his death resolutely, allegedly taunting his murderer to get it over with. Hemingway was his own executioner, tripping both triggers of a favourite double-barreled shotgun. In death, both became icons of their own myths of heroic masculinity. Guevara, in surviving photos, remains unmarked, with peaceful features, the revolutionary martyr; with the removal of hands for identification, their permanent separation from the body, mutilation became elevated to the status of religious mystery. Prefigured in similarly ritual terms through the dramas enacted by characters such as Harry Morgan in *To Have and Have*

*Not*, Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Colonel Robert Cantwell in *Across the River and Into the Trees*, and the old fisherman Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea*, the final death-passion of Ernest Hemingway could have had only one outcome. The suicide itself may have been a terrible mess, blowing out the back of the head. Hemingway was certainly making sure it got done. As Che made one last defiant obeisance to the revolution, Hemingway, at least the legend says, determinedly faced one last reunion with the spectre he called just another whore.

At the same time, given the radically opposed cultures of pre- and post-Revolutionary Cuba, the circumstances and conditions underlying these strangely twinned associations of place with legendary historical personality could hardly seem more different. Guevara, after all, was a figure of distinctly post-Revolutionary Cuba, a true Hero of Socialist Liberation, and the friend, comrade, and loyal right hand of the *Comandante*. Accordingly, beyond his own *machismo* glamor, he was also the hard, uncompromising, doctrinal Marxist-Leninist, the ideological conscience of the Revolution and its cold-blooded executioner—selfless, austere, fated to revolutionary martyrdom and heroic self-sacrifice. Hemingway, in contrast, seems now as then the pre-Revolutionary arch-representative of decadent (read capitalist) ego-driven celebrity modernism, with all its rewards of wealth and fame: the legendary drinker, big-game hunter, sport fisherman, war-lover, womanizer, finally undone by his own bogus cult of heroic personality, a death by suicide with paranoid illusions about the Internal Revenue Service.

Yet there they are, still, for anyone who arrives today in Havana, the two of them—*los dos Ernestos*, one is tempted to say—comparably celebrated and strangely ubiquitous, with their stories continuing to be told and their images equally and concurrently promoted. And so the ways in which they are remembered and represented reveal their own bizarre confluences of vectors, political and commercial, at times saying less about the two heroic personalities than about the political and commercial complexities of today's Cuba. Paired cultural celebrities from two halves of a tempestuous, violent century, both have been essentially colonized by post-revolutionary Cuba, and reconstituted in the Cuban image as advertisements of the twenty-first century nation. "Ironically, Che's life has been emptied of the meaning he would have wanted it to have," asserts Cuban author Jorge Castañeda. "Whatever the left might think," Guevara is now far less "an ideological and political figure" and more "a symbol of a time when people died heroically for what they believed in. People don't do that any more." Something of this

might now be said of Hemingway also in his symbolic relation to the intense, vibrant, colourful island culture of the pre-Cold War Cuba, the old allure and excitement of the international celebrity days when people knew how to live, eat, drink, gamble, and dance, make love and die. And so the personalities of both come to be enlisted as images of memory in service of new stirrings of Cuban cultural pride, the irrepressible energy of industry, enterprise, resilience, ingenuity, creativity. Guevara recalls the era of Revolution without the failed experiments of socialism, the Russians, the Missile Crisis, the “special period” of post-Soviet poverty and deprivation; Hemingway recalls the era of the Pearl of the Antilles, the excitement of the dollar decades of the century without the big corporations, the dictators, the Mob. Now, as then, in the environs of gleamingly restored twenty-first-century Havana, the images of Ernesto Che Guevara and Ernest “Papa” Hemingway seem easily harnessed as twinned adoptive heroes in a culture where the spirit of *Patria o Muerte* seems newly compatible with that of *Patria y Dinero*.

Regarding Guevara first, as anyone can report who spends time in the streets of Havana—stores, restaurants, public buildings, souvenir stands, offices and party headquarters—images of Che continue to show up everywhere, vastly exceeding those, for instance, of those of *El Comandante*, Fidel Castro. In fact, one rarely sees a likeness of Castro—for a number of reasons later discussed—either alone or accompanied, save in some historical collection such as that at the *Museo de la Revolucion* or at the national photo archive, *La Fototeca*. Even then, it’s usually a picture from the fifties or early sixties, the great years of Revolutionary struggle idealism and triumph. Moreover, Che is usually with him; alternatively, as with the occasional building decoration, one may also see *El Lider* as part of a fairly familiar mural design of three faces in silhouette, still featuring the original triad of youthful heroes of the revolution, Fidel, Che, and the late Camilo Cienfuegos.

But it is mostly Che one sees, beloved Che, the ever-youthful, undying spirit of *Revolucion*. Indeed the *Cuba Libre* of the vanished glory days now mainly seems to live on, in the autumn of the *Comandante*, through the ubiquitously displayed images of the charismatic sidekick, the eminence grise, the alter ego, even sometimes the necessary evil twin, but still Che forever alive and forever young. The details, themselves many of them less than glorious, have ceased to matter: the joining with Castro’s ragtag band in Mexico, after the 26 July 1953 Moncada Barracks disaster, Castro’s imprisonment, and his release during a surprise amnesty; the survival, after the *Granma* invasion, along with a handful of others, including Fidel and Raul,

of a defeat nearly as disastrous as Moncada; the long guerrilla struggle in the mountains of Oriente, where besides serving as Castro's closest comrade and revolutionary advisor, Che had also already become, along with Raul, the ruthless executioner, facilitator of drumhead court-martials, summary shootings of traitors, defectors, cowards, informants; then, finally, with the *Revolucion* consummated, second in power only to *el Lider* himself, Che, the commander of *La Cabana*, presiding energetically and remorselessly over the mass trials and firing squads, the elimination of *Batistianos* along with turncoats, counter-revolutionaries, and other enemies of the state; finally the emergent ideological genius in the Marxist-Leninist tradition, the Red Richelieu, at home Castro's chief commissar, abroad his geopolitical guide, mentor, monitor. With Fidel as the idealistic socialist liberator of the Cuban people, masking his own hardline ideological commitment with his political coyness and international hijinks—spirited trips to New York, the UN, secret Washington meetings with Nixon, John Foster Dulles, etc.,—Che embraced the role of ideological heavy and rigorous enforcer of party discipline.

Indeed, it remains telling in this connection, but unsurprisingly remarked on, that the only Che Guevara residence site maintained by the government—equivalent to Hemingway's much-visited *Finca Vigia*, his pastoral retreat in the hills outside the city, though touted with rather less touristic cheery enthusiasm—lies within the sinister, overwhelmingly massive walls of *la Fortaleza de la Cabana*—to this day the largest military fortification in the western hemisphere. (His actual burial site, after the much-publicized return of his remains to the island in the 1990s, was chosen to be not the capital and seat of Communist government, but Santa Clara, the site of the culminating late 1958 “battle” where forces led by Guevara, at least according to revolutionary legend, opened the gateway to final victory in Havana.) A “cottage” reverently preserved on the *Cabana* site, within quick walking distance of the wall used for the mass firing-squads remains the place Che chose to make his dwelling in the months following final Revolutionary victory (officially appointed commander of the fortification by Castro), with his office and living quarters now devoted to a major collection of his personal memorabilia. In official brochures, the quarters are described as those from within which Guevara “consolidated the revolution”—essentially reviewing and in most cases confirming the death sentences of its enemies. Identified also on the tourist map of the fortress is the aforementioned wall—noted as once the execution site of nationalist martyrs—where appropriate Revolutionary justice was handed out.

On the personal, romantic, reflective side, while still in life Guevara himself was fostering something of an alternative textual legacy, in various works of self-mythologizing combining revolutionary history and political autobiography. These too remain ubiquitous at countless historical and commercial venues. His *Reminiscences on the Cuban Revolutionary War*, widely translated, remains a bible of guerrilla warfare; and now, bookended by the early *Motorcycle Diaries* and the final *Bolivian Diaries*, lies an ever enlarging body of political and personal testament, published and republished in a host of languages, preserving and memorializing the words of Che, the great martyred evangelist of revolutionary world liberation.

Now, in Havana, as elsewhere, it is most often the risen, defiant, ever inspirational Che one sees in the very image of revolutionary apotheosis. Made famous, ironically by sixties' US radical youth, and thereby becoming the symbol of socialist liberation movements worldwide, reproductions of the Korda photograph especially seem ubiquitous, on caps, T-shirts, prints, posters, scarves, banners, pencils, pens, postcards, paperback covers of every size and description, in shops, museums, galleries, photo exhibitions, and displays of Cuban art. Decidedly less publicized are the images of the later Bolivian death and martyrdom or ceremonious Cuban reburial. One has to read websites to find out about shrine of final entombment.

A number of fairly obvious explanations may be suggested for all this, most having to do with the ever-increasing divorce over the years of the youthful, heroic promise of the early years of Revolutionary victory from the dispiriting course of political and ideological history as it actually turned out for the makers of the Revolution and their inheritors. First of course is the fact that Che the Revolutionary hero had the good manners to die young, a martyr to world-historical liberation. In the Korda image and those of the other Revolutionary photo-chroniclers, even in the death photos, something seems just unkillable: a fierce, defiant beauty mixes with a serene, heroic beatitude. Meanwhile, there has now passed before the eyes of Cubans and the world a lifetime of photographs of Fidel, growing older with each failure of the promised revolution. The celebrated *Gallego* profile, the masculine energy that made the Soviets call him *el Caballo*, may still help Castro live on as the last of the great twentieth-century dictators. But within a few years of victory, even the fatigues, the beard, the black-framed glasses, had gotten old for *el Comandante*, as the familiar revolutionary costuming never would for Che. The former, in movies like Woody Allen's *Bananas* and on the drawing boards of editorial cartoonists around the world had become a caricature

of himself, trying out other designs. Soviet-style military getups would be followed by the occasional suit, eventually the odd *guayabera*. Even Che himself, one thinks, could hardly have imagined Fidel now this old, mostly hidden away and years in his dying, or Raul, still holding on.

Although crucially influential as an advocate and agent of the Revolution's Russian misalliance, the creation of Cuba as western hemisphere satellite of the Cold War Soviet Union, neither did Che of course live long enough to have to take the rap for the long, torturous unraveling of that disaster: the American embargo, a long string of disastrous experiments in managed economy, the dire times of shortage and want of the "special period" following the fall of bankrupt Soviet Communism. It is a handful of old men who have outlived the revolution who now fully bear blame for the prolonged agonies of the great casualty of the Revolution, the Cuban economy—a colossal material and human failure, completely ruining, for no one will know how many years, the richest country in the Caribbean, not to mention plunging generations of Cubans, comprising who knows how many individual lives and aspirations, into a long malaise of poverty and nearly universal deprivation.

As to official reasons for Che's ubiquity as a symbol of revolution and Fidel Castro's invisibility—even before the geriatric travails of the past decade—Cubans themselves will explain that there is a proper ideological protocol. Indeed, they say, for a doctrinally sound Marxist-Leninist society such as their own, a true dictatorship of the proletariat, it is not only ideologically improper but in fact illegal to promote images of *el Líder*. For that would be to foster, as did Mao Tse Tung, or Stalin before him, a cult of personality. Che, on the other hand, along the sainted Camilo Cienfuegos, is safely and faithfully in that great good place of all ideological correctness, the grave.

The simplest explanation possible, however, for such enduring appeal is one apparent to nearly any media-savvy teenager. To put it directly, for certain historical or cultural figures, in certain circumstances, particularly in a world of instant visual and verbal information, image takes on a life of its own. (Who remembers outside of Cuba, after all, the 1960 explosion of the French ship *La Coubre* in Havana Harbor, still commemorated with an official dockside memorial as a revolutionary version of the *USS Maine* disaster, that occasioned the "Che" of the Korda photo?) Like a Nike swoosh or a Mercedes star, Che is at once a historical product and a brand, in the fullest sense a popular culture logo: a name; a face; a photograph; an icon of revolutionary heroism. If anything, in Guevara's case, the persona remains



continually enriched and enlarged by additions to the legend, not least including a recent revival of interest in the US and elsewhere through books and movies. With the rediscovery of the youthful *Motorcycle Diaries*, Che now becomes something like an Argentine Jack Kerouac. The cover picture on the popular paperback, as well as the 2004 movie poster, both spotlight a boyish, pre-revolutionary, almost prep-school Che, square jawed, well-barbered, unbearably handsome. Meanwhile, at the more recent end of the legendary history of an image now lies the Benicio del Toro movie characterization, showcased in a 2008 two-part, four-hour bio-epic by director Steven Soderburgh.

Books and movies, coupled with a long history of lifetime and posthumous media representations in their relation to celebrity legend, certainly may be said at least to begin to explain Cubans' corresponding embrace of the Ernest Hemingway legacy in twenty-first-century Havana. The drinking, the meals, the celebrity guests, the movie stars and Cuban cronies, the favorite watering spots, the sport fishing expeditions—all these became recurrent subjects of feature newspaper and magazine journalism. For its January 1949 issue, *Life* magazine sent the renowned critic Malcolm Cowley to chronicle literary and personal life at the *Fincia Vigia*. In September 1952, along with a cover portrait of the author and a portfolio of specially commissioned photographs by Alfred Eisenstadt, it would publish *The Old Man and the Sea* in its entirety.

Out of such records of the times, the significance of the Hemingway image in both pre- and post-Revolutionary twentieth-century Cuban popular culture likewise remains curiously invested in a single famous photograph, taken in this case by Oswaldo Salas—along with his son Roberto, among the other legendary photographers of the Revolution. It is not nearly as known to the world as the Korda image of Che; in Cuba however, one sees it frequently, and with comparable effect. The only known photograph in existence of Ernest Hemingway with Fidel Castro, it commemorates their friendly meeting at a notorious fishing tournament, sponsored by the former, and won by the latter. The “competition” itself is the source of a much retold story in Cuba that speaks volumes about both the boyish *Comandante* and the aging Hemingway, depending on your sense of humour. In one version, the tournament (if a pun may be excused) was rigged and a modestly prizewinning sailfish secretly attached to Castro's line. The other is that the fishing was utterly terrible anyhow and the meager specimen actually caught by Castro did indeed weigh in as the winner.

As important are the ways in which the photo and tournament anecdote comprise equally a story about Hemingway's relation to Cuba and Cubans. Though he is described then and now to have loved the island, thinking himself even an honorary citizen, the consensus remains that he did not particularly care about its everyday inhabitants, save those who enhanced his celebrity or provided him with "character." Here the popular and journalistic record rings true. Virtually all photos of Hemingway during the era, when he is shown associating with Cubans at all, reveal his relations with a handful of privileged hangers-on, most of them socially well placed and extremely wealthy as a result of family holdings or commercial fortunes, or his everyday pleasures with ostensibly beloved menials.

Still, the Cubans remained large in their admiration for Hemingway, in life as in death, and some of the reasons remain fairly simple and obvious. In many of his works, characters find their purpose in life in sacrificing individuality to some larger struggle against social or political injustice. (He is said by some witnesses to have expressed sympathy for the Revolution; others suggest that his demise was hastened by his knowledge of the likely expropriation of his property.) Fidel Castro is said to have been an informed reader, allegedly claiming that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* helped serve him as a primer on revolutionary insurrection. Castro is also alleged to have admired the author's ongoing quest for an adventurous life. And the legendary life itself was no small matter for many Cubans. The fact was that the most celebrated American writer in the world, when he could have been a celebrity anywhere, chose Cuba; and by doing so he made Havana at once the exotic celebrity and cultural capital of both the Caribbean and to some degree of the western hemisphere at large. Along with Italy, France, Spain, Africa, the Florida Keys, Cuba became a place of residence made to order for the Hemingway persona, with its history of romance and excitement linked to a vibrant tradition of native writers, composers, painters, and in the glory days between the wars attracting musicians, entertainers, literary and artistic figures from America and Europe.

So Cubans also embraced the literary and popular-culture evidence of Hemingway's honoring of Cuba as the home of series of a host of avatars of Hemingway "code" heroes—not least including himself. Even before taking residence, Hemingway had created in the 1930s the convincingly proletarian Harry Morgan in *To Have and Have Not*, in large passages a deeply and honestly rendered book about Depression-era Key West and Machado-era Havana, the poverty, the violence, the danger, the desperation. (In homage

to the wartime Rick Blaine characterization in *Casablanca*, on the other hand, the backgrounding of the Bogart movie role as the hard-bitten skipper is transferred to Martinique.)

The height of Hemingway's connection with the island, of course, both personal and literary, would be marked by *The Old Man and the Sea*. In that last great fable seemed to be a complete transfer of heroic interest from an autobiographical self to a simple Cuban fisherman, his catching of the great fish, and his battle with the savage, devouring sharks, the sun, the sea, and the sky. An instant world classic, invariably associated with the author's winning of the Nobel Prize, and eventually appearing in the great Spencer Tracy movie version, it was eagerly embraced then as now in Cuba, with a kind of quasi-scriptural veneration. An enduring local embellishment of the Nobel legend is the belief that Hemingway won the prize, specifically, for the Cuban book. The idea is further promoted officially by post-Castro custodians of the archive, who cite a famous press conference at the Finca Vigia at which Hemingway declared himself as giving the award to the people of Cuba. Then and now, according to national will, Hemingway's Nobel Prize novella belongs to the island.

Less known, though having much to do with Cuba, is *Islands in the Stream*, a posthumously published World War II chronicle of sculptor Thomas Hudson, another Hemingway stand-in. This time the hero is found living initially on Bimini, where he creates art, drinks, fishes, bonds with his sons, makes love to his beautiful ex-wife, eventually takes his boat to sea, finds adventure, fights bravely and dies. Along the way, in this late, rather diffuse book, one gets again at least a vivid nostalgic rendering of Old Havana, including the wishful depiction of a legendary prostitute, Diamond Lil; styled on Hemingway's own wishful wartime activities, there are secret intelligence operations engineered by Hudson out of the US embassy and vivid action scenes of hunting down a shipwrecked Nazi submarine crew amidst the *bahias* and inlets of the northern Atlantic coast. In an even more mendacious late-seventies' movie, Thomas Hudson becomes a rescuer of Jews from Hitler's Europe; Cubans are fascist collaborators. When Hudson takes a fatal slug in the movie, it is not, as in the book, from a desperate fugitive Nazi submariner; it is from the deck machine gun of a collaborationist Cuban coast guardsman.

More generally for the writer Hemingway in the nearly two decades he spent off and on in residence at the *Finca Vigia* and in Havana, the Cuban world seems to have been deeply inspirational. Among texts produced while

living on the island, he began and wrote major portions of his most popular book, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, with Robert Jordan, an heroic American serving with Republicans in Spanish Civil war modeled on his own experiences as a journalist. He also dreamed himself back up, this time at his most vaingloriously macho and self-parodic, in an aging US colonel, Robert Cantwell, as the protagonist of the World War II novel *Across the River and into the Trees*. During the post-war years he also began work on a trilogy to be called “The Land,” “The Sea,” and “The Air,” which he intended to combine in one novel known as *The Sea Book*. (Less known, in 1946, at the height of his machismo celebrity posturing, he also began work on *The Garden of Eden*, a book about androgyny and sexual transference.) Increasingly, Cuba became and remained for two decades the place where he lived and wrote the Hemingway myth and found inspiration to further it, even as the Cubans helped make it come true in the way they idolized him as an adoptive son, brother, favoured elder. Toward the end, life at the *Finca* seemed to foster a mood of mellow nostalgia, enabling Hemingway to write much of *A Moveable Feast*, a posthumously published volume about his formative years as an expatriate writer in Paris.

For all this, in today’s Cuba—there is just no other way to say it—one is just stunned by what seems the bizarre ubiquitousness of Hemingway references, markers, images, memorials, historical and commercial commemorations. The state-sponsored, reverential promotion of the *Finca Vigia*, the writer’s country home in the hills twelve miles outside Havana, places it as a tourist site in a league with many of the city’s other most prestigious attractions. It is far more heavily publicized, for instance, than the restored Havana birthplace of Jose Marti. Books, magazines, furniture, and everything else remain in place, left as if he is going to walk back in at any moment. Inside visits are given to those culturally privileged, or otherwise well connected with government agencies in charge of preserving site. Indoors or out, notable is the evidence of how fully the great author so fully enjoyed displaying his trophies as the great hunter. A shocked Graham Greene got it just right: “Taxidermy everywhere, buffalo heads, antlers ... such carnage.”

The *Finca* remains the crown jewel of the Hemingway memorial trail. But it is surrounded by a constellation of related sites. At Cojimar, in a specially constructed beachside pavilion, a bust of Hemingway, placed on a pedestal and facing out to sea, commemorates the author of the *Old Man and the Sea*. The *Terraza* restaurant next door naturally specializes in Hemingway

drinks and dishes. Until a few years ago, the old fisherman Grigorio Fuentes himself could be visited and paid to hold forth on the author he accompanied as first mate of the *Pilar* and the novelistic protagonist he allegedly inspired. In old Havana, at the *Hotel Ambos Mundos*, on the harbour a block from the *Plaza de Armas*, one can pay a small fee in tourist currency to see the author's room, number 511. Downstairs, the bar is walled with pictures, as is the case with everywhere he stayed or ate and drank—the *Plaza*, the *Sevilla*, the *Nacional*. Among the legendary bars, the *Floridita* and *Bodequita* still compete for watering-hole nostalgists, swilling overpriced Daiquiris at the former, to this day home of the Papa Doble, or at the latter, production-line Mojitos. At the *Floridita*, amidst all the celebrity knickknacks, one may have one's picture taken with a bronze statue of the great man, permanently seated at his favourite corner on his favourite barstool. At the *Bodequita*, more vintage pictures accompany display of the definitive Hemingway endorsement, alleged to have been written in his own hand on the wall: “*Mi mojito en La Bodequita, Mi Daiquiri en el Floridita.*” For deep archaeologists of heroic Hemingway drinking, internet directions are easily available for tracking down the former site of the original Sloppy Joes.

So, to one's wonder, the reach of the celebrity Hemingway presence today extends from the familiar precincts of Habana Vieja, Habana Centro, Vedado, out beyond Miramar to Jaimanitas and Cubanacoa, still the old Beverly Hills of Havana, home of all the confiscated Yacht Clubs and pleasure palaces of the pre-revolutionary elites. In luxurious precincts where Batista could not enter because he was insufficiently “white,” and where Fidel and Raul Castro still maintain their homes, one now finds an area now converted into international resort properties, American-style townhouse and office developments. Closed to but all the most privileged everyday Cubans, one is proudly called the *Marina Hemingway*. It features two deluxe hotels. The first is actually called *El Viejo y el Mar*—The Old Man and the Sea. The second has an “African” bar named *Massai*; the restaurant is called “Ernies.”

It is amidst so surreal a setting, out beyond where the Revolution seems no longer much to obtain, that one finds something of an answer about the ongoing Guevara-Hemingway connection in today's Cuba as well. And that too has to do with new relationships being forged between history and commerce in both official and popular-culture Cuban memory. The great glistening restored clubs themselves, the new international hotels, the four-star restaurants serving food Cubans cannot buy or eat, turn out to have

everything to do with the restoration of *Habana Vieja* and the rehabilitation of *Habana Centro* and *Vedado*. As Che Guevara remains the shining, youthful face of the revolution, a Cuba without the later failures, the bizarre posturings and adventurings, the humiliations and the fiascos, the corresponding Hemingway image represents a renewed cultural connection with the glory days of pre-Revolutionary Cuba, purged of their own corruptions and failures. As phrased by Valerie Hemingway, the writer's secretary during the Cuba years and eventual daughter-in-law, on a brief 1999 return, "the Hemingway I encountered on my ten-day visit was both more benign and more Cuban than the one I knew, with an accent on his fondness for the island and his kindness to its people. There seemed almost a proprietary interest in him, as if, with the yawning rift between the United States and Cuba, the appropriation of the American author gave his adopted country both solace and a sense of one-upmanship."

To put this most directly, in the Cuba of what might now be called the pre-post-Castro era, several generations removed from the decades of their particular historical and ideological associations, both Ernesto Che Guevara and Ernest Papa Hemingway have undergone twinned resurrections as major tourist attractions. Both are reconceived as heroic Citizens of the World who chose Cuba as their adoptive home, in their legendary lives and deaths, and images of both are now widely used to showcase Cuba as the place where their legends would most happily rest. To be sure, both appeal to distinct target audiences and capture identifiable market shares. For Guevara, the star quality is in the revolutionary political cachet, the appeal to cosmopolitan European social democrats, and North and Latin American left activists-nostalgists. Hemingway, still a major literary modernist in much of the world, satisfies the celebrity curiosity of the more conventional cultural traveler. Guevara beckons to the kind of person who would visit Lenin's tomb in the Kremlin or Trotsky's house in Mexico City; Hemingway attracts the kind of person who would visit Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia or the restored Globe Theater in London. The chief appeal of both, now coming up on nearly fifty years in the grave, remains their continuing capacity to project attractive celebrity images of cultural memory in a new world of instant information where a week is a geological epoch.

To consider the bizarre half-life of current cultural iconography is also to be reminded that, for all the great archaeologies of the past, stretching back through five centuries, Cuba as a nation is itself roughly just a hundred years old, and moreover divided into capitalist and communist eras almost

exactly in the middle. Accordingly, the simultaneous cherishing of popular images of both Guevara and Hemingway represents a subset of larger Cuban thinking about modern national identity, an attempt to re-create twentieth-century versions of a usable past in a kind of serial time warp. Che Guevara, from the victory days of Revolution, now stands in perverse relation to flotillas of wheezing seventies and eighties Ladas and Fiats, the grotesque deserted Soviet embassy building, the vast baking asphalt desert of the party square in Vedado, the Cold War junkyard of the *Granma* memorial in front of the *Museo de la Revolucion*. Hemingway likewise stands in similar nostalgic connection with all the forties and fifties Detroit automobile behemoths still proudly on the road, the old mob hotels still flaunting their notorious history of seedy glitz, the bars, the marinas, the big wagers on the cockfights, the shooting at the *Club de Casadores*, the floor show at the *Tropicana*.

Part of all that, yet somehow standing beyond it now are the two Ernestos, images of twentieth-century culture-heroes reinvented as icons of twenty-first-century national pride. Che, the eternally young, and Papa, the revered old one, remain emblems of romantic reprise of a hundred years of mostly bad history. The first somehow redeems, from the recent five decades, a chance at glory as a cynosure of revolutionary socialist world liberation, now largely failed and abandoned; the second restores the promise of an earlier glory, from the five decades before that, as the showplace of a culturally vibrant independent nationhood also sadly corrupted and betrayed. Yet now poised on the edge of a century deeply in need of new heroes, the nation also builds its newer historical image through the symbolic adoption of two strangely disparate, yet parallel outsiders who found in Cuba affirmation of their own sense of romantic destiny, and whom Cubans came to embrace on equal terms. Twentieth-century men of the world in the tradition of the conquistador, the freebooter, the revolutionary *guerrillero*, both embodied deeply-engrained, heroic cultural codes of maleness. More importantly, as warrior intellectuals in the image of Cespedes, Marti, Gomez, Maceo, Garcia, and, yes, Castro, both also displayed larger aspects of value and belief still deemed worthy and enduring by most Cubans as traits of the national character—selfless bravery, passionate devotion, dignified endurance. In a Janus-faced broken century, the two Ernestos, Che Guevara and Papa Hemingway—warriors with a poet's soul who both knew how to live and knew how to die—remain heroes the Cubans still recognize as their own.