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The World of Ernest Hemingway

A Critical Study

By Green D. Wyrick

The Emporia State Research Studies

KANSAS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
EMPORIA, KANSAS

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By Green D. ^{classmate} Wyrick

The world is a perpetual caricature of itself; at every moment it is a mockery and the contradiction of what it is pretending to be.

George Santayana

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The World of Ernest Hemingway

A Critical Study

By Green D. Wyrick*

"*Qué Va,*" the boy in *The Old Man and the Sea* says devotedly to Santiago. "There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you."

Literary critics, it appears, are at last willing to allow Hemingway a place in current letters comparable to the boy's opinion of Santiago: There are many good writers and some great ones, but there is only Ernest Hemingway. The universal acclaim of Hemingway's novelette *The Old Man and the Sea*, the award of a Pulitzer prize, two full length studies of the author and his work, (Philip Young's *Ernest Hemingway*, Rinehart and Co.; Professor Carlos Baker's *Hemingway, The Writer As Artist*, Princeton University Press) seem to establish a respectability for Hemingway that was for a quarter of a century in the making. One can like or dislike him now with a certain ease that wasn't present yesterday; for Hemingway's critical reception has ranged from the *enfant terrible*--a sort of Neo-Cro-Magnon, bellowing profanely, seducing the fair muse, and all in all upsetting the tea cups of cloistered literary decorum--to an idolatry that would have him the greatest writer of English since Shakespeare.

Almost from the beginning Hemingway was news, even though his news value has little to do with his power as a writer of English prose. He became a legend before he was thirty-five; he was tagged an American Byron, accused of growing false hair on his chest, characterized as a brawny arm and hand holding with utmost delicacy a single rose. He was the young man for whom Gertrude Stein had a weakness, the embarrassing product, in Stein's opinion, of the literary genius of herself and Sherwood Anderson. He was the badly wounded soldier, the boxer, an authority on bull fighting, the smiling fisherman; more recently George Patton's playmate, and the subject of patronizing *New Yorker* profiles. All this he has accomplished almost by accident for when Hemingway publishes, or fishes, fights or marries, our world is somehow excited. Harvey Breit points out that this fact creates certain misunderstandings:

Mr. Hemingway seems to be in the news more than he actually is only because each time he makes his move it starts talk. This is not his fault, and the people who think of Hemingway as a chap who likes moving into the spotlight are not less than dead wrong. As a matter of record, it would be difficult to find a writer who lives more privately, minding his own business and cultivating his own garden (in the best Voltairean sense of the phrase).¹

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1. Harvey Breit. "Talk With Ernest Hemingway," *The New York Times Book Review*, September 7, 1952, p. 20.

Perhaps the point has now been established: Hemingway's personal reputation has been colored by the hunger of our own press; yet his life has always been his own and from it experiences gathered that later became the fabric of stories and novels. Unfortunately, Hemingway's literary efforts have been received with the same misunderstanding and the same sensational, warped approach.

From time to time the world of criticism has been ripped and bruised, almost undone, by the publication of a new book by Hemingway. His *Across the River and Into the Trees*, published in late 1950, was almost universally and, by some critics, gleefully damned. Hemingway was through; he was no longer worthy to be taken seriously as an author of important fiction. On the other hand, his recent *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) was hailed by the critics as a masterwork, and critical opinion now believes that Hemingway's fish, like Melville's *Moby Dick*, was one of the truly big ones. The same elevator ride from heights to depths is the rule rather than the exception. It might be interesting to note two comments of critics toward earlier works of Hemingway. Mr. Robert Herrick wrote, in 1929, a comparison of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*:

Boston, with a beautiful lack of discrimination, has condemned both books. This censorship has harmed Remarque's book, but it would not be too strong to call Hemingway's mere garbage. No great loss to anybody would result if *A Farewell to Arms* had been completely suppressed.²

And Delmore Schwartz wrote in 1938:

To Have and Have Not is a stupid and foolish book, a disgrace to a good writer, a book which should never have been printed. It contains some good short stories, but elsewhere and for the most part, it is appalling as a literary product.³

So report the critics, and they may be right. Yet when an acknowledged master brings out a new work, it must be subjected to rigorous criticism by standards appropriate to his greatness. It can fall short of those standards; it can be called a failure, a pot-boiler, a re-hash of a story line done better. But even these criticisms should be made on bended knee, for an artist's work must be given an honorable and careful evaluation. And one feels now that Hemingway's will be. But the critic's task is not an easy one. Hemingway is so much a part of his fiction that it is most difficult to divorce the man from his work, the legend from what is written. Both Mr. Young and Mr. Baker write expertly and with insight on the power of parallel experiences in the life of Hemingway and the lives of his fictional creations. Yet, a work of art must stand or fall by its own power; it cannot be supported by the excitement, dignity, courage, or rebellion of its author.

Knowledge is the tool of art, and what is "modern" or contemporary is the author's use of knowledge and experiences unknown to the generation

2. Robert Herrick, "What Is Dirt?" *Bookman*, 120:259, November, 1929.

3. Delmore Schwartz, "Ernest Hemingway's Literary Situation," *Southern Review*, 3:777, April, 1938.

before him. Machines and forms of science change, as do the devices of everyday living, but not the affairs of the human heart. Modernity, then, is a specific impression, and few could see beneath Hemingway's athletic precision of style, and his reportage of the latest fads. Gertrude Stein wrote in 1933 that Hemingway was like the painter Derain, "he looks like a modern but he smells of the museums,"⁴ and implies here (although her statement was probably meant to ridicule) that Hemingway has caught something more than a passing ride on the hit parade. It is the purpose of this study to investigate Hemingway's work in the light of his fictional world; to attempt to understand Hemingway's fiction as it embraces the concepts of anthropological geography, of sociology, of morality, and of philosophy in our time; to understand that all great writers have always turned their special insight toward their world, and to so evaluate Hemingway as a major writer.

I

We will begin with an examination of the physical world as it appears in Hemingway's fiction. This imaginative, physical world of an author is, perhaps, the heredity and environment of his fictional creations; the birthplace of a story being a major part of an author's verisimilitude. A sense of geography, a sense of place is certainly present in Hemingway's stories and becomes an important dimension throughout his work.

From the beginning, critics found no agreement in their view of this world. Writing in 1927, Lee W. Dodd was uncomfortable.

I feel cribbed, cramped, confined: I lack air, as I do in the cruel world of Guy de Maupassant, just as I do in the placid stuffy little world of Jane Austen.⁵

David Garnett found, in 1934, no respect for or depth in Hemingway's fictional world:

His noisy entrance, his willful clumsiness, turn out to have been the celebration of a curious ritual of male self-respect comparable to that practised by male dogs when they meet each other at lamp posts.⁶

So said some, but there was another point of view. As early as 1927, Edmund Wilson wrote:

When Hemingway gave use to that title (*In Our Time*) he meant to tell us that life was barbarous, even in our civilized age. I do not agree, as has sometimes been said, that the behavior of the people in *The Sun Also Rises* is typical only of a small and special class of American and English ex-patriates. I believe that it is more or less typical of certain phases of the whole western world today; and the title *In Our Time* would have applied to it with as much appropriateness as to its predecessor.⁷

4. Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1933) p. 266.

5. Lee W. Dodd, "On Men Without Women," *Saturday Review of Literature*, 6:323, November 19, 1927.

6. David Garnett, "Current Literature," *New Statesman and Nation*, 7:192, February 10, 1934.

7. Edmund Wilson, "The Sportsman's Tragedy," *The New Republic*, 53:102-103, December 14, 1927.

These are some of the early comments. Their range of opinion is diverse and usually personal. They are, in the main, reflections of taste. David Daiches took a longer view in 1941:

This early work of Hemingway is not sensationalism. He is not out to shock his readers into attention by sheer horror or dreadfulness of the events he describes. There is always a quietness in the telling, an attempt to avoid by precision any suggestion of fuss or ostentation.⁸

These, then, are the observations on Hemingway's fictional world; but we have no real information as to the *Why* of these opinions. Mr. Daiches, in his excellent article, refers to this physical world as Hemingway's "personal tradition," and uses it as a background for his discussion of Hemingway's social and philosophic thought. But, we must ask ourselves, what is this "personal tradition," and how does it emerge from these conflicting statements?

From Mr. Hemingway's first forty-nine short stories, his play (*The Fifth Column*), his seven novels (*The Sun Also Rises*, *The Torrents of Spring*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *To Have and Have Not*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Across the River and Into the Trees*, and *The Old Man and the Sea*), his history of the bull fight (*Death in the Afternoon*), and his report of an African big game hunt (*The Green Hills of Africa*), the following list has been compiled to show the actual geographic locale of his work.

Nine of the short stories have their actual locale in Spain. (This includes three stories published in *Esquire* magazine, the "Chicote" stories that are laid in a Madrid bar of the same name.) Three novels, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Death in the Afternoon* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, are also laid in Spain, as is the play, *The Fifth Column*. Eight stories are located in the Michigan woods near rivers and lakes. *The Torrents of Spring* is also of this region. Ten stories are from Italy, as are the novels, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *Across the River and Into the Trees*. Two stories, and one book, *The Green Hills of Africa*, are located in the African hunting grounds. Three stories are laid in Switzerland, and three in France. Fourteen stories are set throughout the United States. (Six of these have no specific locale; one is in a small Oklahoma town, one in Key West, Florida, which is also the partial location of the novel, *To Have and Have Not*. Two stories find homes in Montana, two in Kansas City, Missouri, one in New York City and one story comes from Wyoming.) One story is located in Greece, and the one-act play, *Today Is Friday*, deals with Palestine at the time of the crucifixion of Christ. The Gulf of Mexico and Havana, Cuba, stage *The Old Man and the Sea*, as they do in part the novel *To Have and Have Not*.

So we find that of a total of fifty-two stories, nine longer works, and one play, twenty-five are laid in the United States, thirteen in Spain, twelve in Italy, three in Africa, three in Switzerland, three in France, one in Greece, one in Palestine, and one on the great Gulf stream. (*To Have and Have Not* is counted as a long story.)

A hotel room appears as the pinpoint locale of five stories and is used

8. David Daiches, "Ernest Hemingway," *College English*, 2:727, May, 1941.

in five of the longer pieces of work. Eight stories find their actual setting in a bar or restaurant, and seven of the nine novels have scenes laid in a similar restaurant or bar. A hospital provides the background for five stories and is used in two novels.

A battlefield furnishes the background for eighteen of the sixty-two pieces of work. (This does not include the sixteen "Chapters" in *In Our Time*, seven of which are scenes of war.) The bull ring is the actual locale of only one story, and one "novel" (*Death in the Afternoon*) although it figures prominently in *The Sun Also Rises*. (There are six pictures of bullfighting in the "Chapters" of *In Our Time*). Nineteen of the sixty-two find their locale in the woods and tall timbers. Twenty-three stories (seventeen stories, five novels, *The Green Hills of Africa*), and the play *The Fifth Column* deal with some kind of sexual intercourse with or without benefit of clergy, and violent death is treated in twenty-four of the works considered.

These figures add to several conclusions. Without exception, they depart from the normal, work-a-day existence, but are recognized as part of our life. Violence of action appears in, or becomes the motivation of, fifty-four of the sixty-two pieces. The eight pieces that deal with more quiet themes are among the very short or very early stories. Hemingway's world, then, is a world in eruption. It is a world where foreboding death dominates, and yet it is a world of great beauty. It is the quiet, clean world of "Big Two-Hearted River," and the ugly, monstrous world of "A Way You Never Were." It is a world that includes many peoples, and many civilizations. Hemingway writes:

Madrid was always a good place for working. So was Paris, and so were Key West, Florida, in the cool months; the ranch, near Cooke City, Montana; Kansas City; Chicago; Toronto, and Havana, Cuba.

Some other places were not so good but maybe we were not so good when we were in them.⁹

So while it may be a physical world narrowed to conform to a limited picture of man's behavior, it is not limited in a geographical sense; one section of Hemingway's physical world is as fertile and ripe as another. Malcolm Cowley presents one view very nicely:

These are curious stories that he has chosen from his wider experience, and these countries are presented in a strangely mortuary light. In no other writer of our time can you find such a profusion of corpses: dead women in the rain; dead soldiers bloated in their uniforms and surrounded by torn papers; sunken liners full of bodies that float past the closed portholes. Mules with their forelegs broken drowning in shallow water off the quay at Smyrna; gored horses in the bull ring; wounded hyenas first snapping at their own entrails and then eating them with relish. And morally wounded people who also devour themselves: punch-drunk boxers, soldiers with battle fatigue, lesbians, nymphomaniacs, bull fighters who have lost their nerve; pictured without blur but

9. Ernest Hemingway, *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1938) Preface, p. vii.

having the nature of obsessions or hypnagogic visions between sleep and waking.¹⁰

There is another side to this world, and it is presented in the clear light of day. There is the water that comes down over the black stones, clear and cool; there is the trout hitting strongly on the fish line, setting your heart beating against your fishing jacket. There are the ham and eggs basting in fat over the open fire, and pastries delicate and flaky, and fish of an incredible richness; the pitcher of beer with drops of its coolness on the glass; there are beautiful women that stride happily in the sun, and the earth-moving power of love; there is the beauty of performing bravely and without fear when those that watch you do not understand your action. There is the quick allegiance between father and son, the white clouds above the Gulf stream, the blue gray hill behind the coast, the purple water in the morning sun, and the understanding even in the face of death that life is good and people are wholesome and deserve the right to live.

In speaking of Hemingway's "sense of place," Carlos Baker believes that place, in the sense of geography is combined with a sense of fact and scene:

The sense of place and sense of fact are indispensable to Hemingway's art. But the true craft, by which diversities are unified and compelled into graphic collaboration, comes about through the operation of a sense of scene.¹¹

Professor Baker goes on to suggest that Hemingway uses his locale and background symbolically, employing what Baker prefers to call "the discipline of double perception." This device is precisely what T. S. Eliot called "objective correlative"—a set of objects, a situation and a chain of events that would produce a particular emotional effect—and used much the same way in a physical, geographical sense. Hemingway's carefully selected locales function as a proper environment for his fictional creations.

This dualistic physical world, then, gives birth to two-dimensional characters; the violence and beauty so carefully pictured are dramatized by the personality and actions of the people who inhabit it. Hemingway's first and most personal hero is introduced to the reader while watching an emergency Caesarean birth. Through a series of stories, Nick Adams falls in love, breaks his love affair, goes hunting with his father, drinks too much for the first time, watches a punch-drunk fighter, goes to war and, while severely wounded, makes a separate peace; and upon returning home finds a comforting world beside a trout stream where one is too busy to think on past events. Nick Adams is never described for the reader, and for the most part serves only as a foil for the world around him. Nick Adams' world is a model for all later Hemingway heroes. The physical world becomes a die, and the behaviorist pattern of human projectiles from it follows the path blazed by Nick. Malcolm Cowley insists that Frederick Henry (of *A Farewell to Arms*) should precede the char-

10. Malcolm Cowley, Editor. *The Portable Hemingway*. (New York: The Viking Press, 1944) p. viii.

11. Carlos Baker, *Hemingway, The Writer as Artist*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952) p. 54.

acter of Jake Barnes (of the earlier novel *The Sun Also Rises*) in a physical as well as mental development of the Hemingway hero.¹² The point is well taken. Lt. Henry and Nick Adams both tell a Rinaldi that they have made a separate peace. The shell-shocked Nick of "A Way You Never Were" is not unlike the Frederick Henry who escapes the firing squad of his own retreating army. The world of Henry belongs to the world of Nick Adams; indeed, the very outline of *A Farewell to Arms* appears in *In Our Time* as "A Very Short Story."

Again, physically, Jake Barnes might have walked out into the rain at the end of *A Farewell to Arms* and entered the Paris of *The Sun Also Rises*. Jake might also be the Nick Adams of "Big Two-Hearted River" and "A Way You Never Were." All three men carry a physical as well as a moral wound. Cowley, writing of *A Farewell to Arms* says:

Frederick Henry has just returned to the front after recovering from serious wounds and falling in love with his English nurse. He is ordered to load his three bed ambulances with hospital equipment and make his way southward into the Po Valley. The next fifty pages not only give the best description of a routed army in American literature, and one of the best in any literature, they also prepare us, on another plane, for the crisis that will shape the later career of Hemingway's heroes, who are really one. The frustrated love of Jake and Brett (in *The Sun Also Rises*), the conversion of Henry Morgan, the happy love and death of Robert Jordan, all these are sequels to what happened at the crossing of the Fagliamento.¹³

It is true that Jake Barnes moves in a world wrecked by the war that Nick Adams and Frederick Henry fought, and that he carries the scars that were the gift of war to these men. He is a "damn poor Catholic" and finds himself wandering through, and being hurt by, a world over which he has no control. His pleasures, like Nick's, are an escape into a clean and unspoiled world where the weight of society is lifted from his shoulders. Colonel Richard Cantwell, (*Across the River and Into the Trees*) also knew this war, and like the above, carried away his physical wound. Unlike Adams, Barnes, and Henry, Cantwell never faces the emptiness of post-war life for his life is governed by his occupation. He stays in the army, and while aware of the waste of World War I, and of the depression years, is protected from the world in his smooth, peace-time uniform.

Henry Morgan, the depression victim, also has his physical wound—the loss of one arm—in keeping with the early heroes. He first appeared in *Esquire* magazine some eighteen months before the publication of *To Have and To Have Not*.¹⁴ Here still is the man who is a part of and developing from his environment. There is a change in the thinking of the hero here, but he must, like Jake Barnes, Henry and Adams, live in both the foulness and the beauty around him. Unlike the earlier protagonists and like Colonel Richard Cantwell, Henry Morgan lacks the impressionable and familiar tenderness of mind that youth has given them. Morgan

12. Malcolm Cowley, "The Four Novels," *The New Republic*, 101:755, December 4, 1944.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 755.

14. Ernest Hemingway, "The Tradesman's Return," *Esquire*, 4:27, February, 1936.

is forty-three years old, an East coast rum-runner, and has few surprises in life left for him.

Robert Jordan lives, as did his predecessors, in a world torn with violence, but the five-mile stretch of pine-topped mountain holds a quality of civilization that is missing in the France of Jake Barnes, the war-torn Italy of Frederick Henry and Richard Cantwell, the Wasteland of Nick Adams. Robert Jordan is not blindly pushed into action, but selects his role in the Spanish Civil War through reasoning that one's principles of freedom are worth the winning whether the issue be foreign or domestic. This freedom of will is echoed in the portrait of Santiago. He, like Jordan, has the authority to be himself, to extend himself to the utmost for what he believes to be important. The world, in this instance, is used by the protagonist. The environment, the conqueror, is conquered. Both Santiago and Jordan are beaten by the rigor of their selected roles; the world has its victory, but the men, nevertheless, triumph.

Let us look at the women. Lady Brett Ashley (*The Sun Also Rises*), Catherine Barkley (*A Farewell to Arms*), Maria (*For Whom the Bell Tolls*), and Renata (*Across the River and Into the Trees*) might well be sisters or the same person. From physical portraits, these heroines are almost interchangeable in the four novels. Short hair, a deep suntan, and styles of dress are the major differences. The lady of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" also fits this picture as indeed do all the lovely women of Hemingway's works.

A new female character appeared in *To Have and Have Not*. Marie Morgan, wife of Henry Morgan, is, through the eyes of Richard Gordon, a "big ox with bleached-blond hair; an appalling looking woman, like a battleship. Terrific."¹⁵ She is forty-five, the mother of two children. She has a great "talent and appreciation for the bed," and seems to be a female counterpart of the hard-minded masculinity that characterizes Henry Morgan. This woman appears again in the character of Pilar (*For Whom the Bell Tolls*).

Robert Jordan saw a woman of about fifty almost as big as Pablo, almost as wide as she was tall, in black peasant shirt and waist, and heavy wool socks on heavy legs, and a brown face like a model for a granite monument.¹⁶

Pilar says of herself:

I would have made a good man, but I am all woman and all ugly. Yet, many men have loved me and I have loved many men. It is curious.¹⁷

The four "lovely" heroines, Lady Brett Ashley, Catherine Berkley, Maria, and Renata find their actions directed by the existing conditions of their society or by the men with whom they fall in love. The promiscuous Lady Brett Ashley, of *The Sun Also Rises*, represents a symbol of the pleasure-seeking, morally lost woman of the post-war decade. She vaguely feels good when she decides "not to be a bitch," but we realize

15. Ernest Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not*. (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1943) p. 136.

16. Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940) p. 30.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

that this is only a transient victory, and like Jake Barnes who knows his Brett Ashely, find it pleasant to think that such a reform could last; but Brett is as corrupt as her post-war Paris. Catherine Barkley is caught in the sweep of war as surely as is Lt. Henry. Maria has seen her father and mother killed, has screamed helplessly while being brutally raped, and has been carried unconscious into a mountain retreat before Robert Jordan enters her life. Renata has seen her brothers killed and her country defeated before she meets Colonel Cantwell. Certainly, then, they are products and victims of their environment. Yet, paradoxically, they do not function, as do the men, as a projection of their violent world. Their chief purpose is to love and be loved; they become rather flat models of willing, unprotesting femininity. The man-women, Marie Morgan and Pilar, are drawn with much more roundness. They serve, much as do the male heroes, as victims of a world they did not make.

Because of the intensity of Hemingway's world, which ordinary life lacked, it became a symbol to a generation that searched desperately for symbols. His characters became models of cynical lostness, and his dialogue became a sort of working plan of speech in the decade following World War I. David Daiches writes:

It is not that his characters do not know where they are going, but that they do not go anywhere with the proper intensity and vitality. They seek to give a semblance of intensity to their living through drink, travel, or by watching the intense life of others. The fiesta and the bull fighter at Pamplona represent, to the English and American observers, a lost way of living (not a lost ideal but a lost technique). Occasionally one or two of the characters almost rediscover the lost technique (as in the fishing expedition in *The Sun Also Rises*), but hardly have they done so when they are dragged back into the life of the lost generation again. Reality lies either in the past or with a foreign civilization. The color and the vividness of their Spanish surroundings represent something to which they cannot attain.¹⁸

Hemingway's characters sought the color and vividness of a world with meaning, and the search was taken up by those who read his work. The Hemingway legend was founded upon his physical world. In *In Our Time*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Men Without Women*, and *A Farewell to Arms*, he created a world from his experiences, intense and violent, which, as Daiches explains, searched for a lost technique of living.

The public taste feasted on Hemingway's world. Frederick Lewis Allen provides a view of this public that goes a long way in explaining the cause of the Hemingway legend:

Bernarr McFadden's *True Story*, launched as late as 1919, had over 300,000 readers by 1923; 848,000 by 1924; over a million and a half by 1925; and almost two million in 1926—a record growth probably unparalleled in magazine publishing.¹⁹

True Story is made up of so-called 'true' experiences of unrequited love, unwed mothers, the experiences of a first kiss, and general sexual excitement.

18. Daiches, *op. cit.*, p. 729-730.

19. Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday*. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931) p. 101.

Movies promised: neckers, petters, white kisses, red kisses, pleasure-made daughters, sensation craving mothers, the truth—told naked. Sex, it appeared was the central and persuasive force which moved mankind; almost every human motive was attributable to it: if you were patriotic or liked the violin, you were in the grip of sex.²⁰

This public cried for a strong man, a hero to symbolize the "lost color and vividness of their lives." To the literary minded, Ernest Hemingway became one with his bull fighter, his big-game hunter, and his disillusioned hero. The smiling young man in the photographs, standing in a swim suit, holding a captured marlin, or kneeling beside the carcass of a dead lion, became the virile, hard-drinking, hell-raising symbol of purposeful living, and, happily, without responsibility. He was a lost young man, as their generation was lost, and this was everyman's separate peace. The nation ached for a hero, any sort of hero. Allen clearly makes this point:

On the day Lindbergh's flight was completed the *Washington Star* sold 16,000 extra copies, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 40,000 and the *New York Evening World* 114,000. Lindbergh had performed "the greatest feat of a solitary man in the records of the human race" . . .

Lindbergh was commissioned colonel, received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Congressional Medal of Honor, and so many foreign decorations that a list would be a weary task. Why? Five air planes and dirigibles had already flown the Atlantic. It was nothing but a daring stunt flight, by a man who did not claim to be anything but a stunt flyer. Why this idealization of Lindbergh?

Debunked religion and ridiculed sentimental notions, crime, graft in politics, newspaper diet of smut and murder, found the people needing something that was missing from their lives, and all at once Lindbergh provided it. Romance, chivalry, self-dedication—here they were, embodied in a modern Galahad for a generation which had foresworn Galahads.²¹

And so, paradoxically, the man who had been considered the "voice of the lost generation," provided many of the missing qualities of United States' life that Allen attributes to Lindbergh's idealization. Hemingway's "legendization" happened in much the same fashion. His tight violent world with its code that his fictional characters had to follow, his self-dedicated bull fighters moving toward almost certain death, the sentimental qualities of lost love and wasted life, must have provided the same qualities of Sir Galahad, for which the public so eagerly thirsted. Hemingway did nothing to discredit this attitude; in fact, he must have found it quite flattering. Yet, except for the almost accidental interruption of his literary efforts, he might never have been placed in this position. Hemingway cashed in on the accident, sold fishing and hunting sketches to *Esquire* magazine at one thousand dollars an entry. He had more pictures taken, and he laughed at himself and at his public through most of these pieces. There were twenty-four of these short pieces, most of them concerned with fishing, drinking, and hunting. However, several serious observations appear throughout this writing, which will be noted

20. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

later as an indication of his work that was to come. Several good stories were sold to *Esquire*, including (as already noted) Chapters six, seven and eight of *To Have and Have Not*, the "Capital of the World" (originally titled "The Horns of the Bull")²² and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro."²³

Hemingway has been much criticized for this phase of his career. This was, however, his economic reward for becoming a legend. But it must be shown that he was keeping good company, for *Esquire* was an author's goldmine. John Dos Passos, Erskine Caldwell, Ring Lardner, Theodore Dreiser, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Edgar Lee Masters, Ezra Pound, D. H. Lawrence, Conrad Aiken, Thomas Mann, E. E. Cummings, and Aldous Huxley also sold to *Esquire* in the years 1933 through 1936.

John Peale Bishop, writing in 1936, offers corroboration of this explanation of the birth and growth of the Hemingway legend:

His own generation admired him, but could also appraise how special his experience had been. It was a still younger generation, those who were school boys at the time of the war, who were infatuated with him. Hemingway not only supplied them with the adventures they missed; he offered them that attitude with which to meet the post-war decade. It was they who accepted the Hemingway legend and by their acceptance gave it reality it had not had.²⁴

In a brilliant chapter from his *Ernest Hemingway*, Philip Young separates Hemingway the author from Hemingway the legend. He points out that most of the important action in Hemingway's work was at least in part lived by the author; that many of his chief characters were based on people from real life.

The Heroic Hemingway and the Public Hemingway have somehow conspired to produce a Mythical or Legendary Hemingway. This is an imaginary person who departs from the actual person at some point that is very difficult to determine. He is partly the product of a branch of myth known as hero worship, which tries to make a man familiar to us by elaborating actual details of his life and career while at the same time exaggerating unusual or colorful traits in order to make the man seem very special, and a little more than human. This figure is also the product of Hemingway himself, who seems at times to be both creating and imitating his hero. When this romanticized and rather Byronic legend began to catch on, there were plenty of other people who were willing to contribute to it.²⁵

II

What sort of social judgment rules this world of Hemingway's fiction? None, cried the critics as America lay gripped in the depression. With the publication of *To Have and Have Not*, Hemingway was said to have been suddenly converted; shaken out of the lethargy of his "separate peace," to have thrown away his matador's cape, his fishing equipment, his big-game guns, and joined the cry for social betterment in his own country, and for the peoples throughout the world. He had, at last,

22. Ernest Hemingway, "The Horns of the Bull," *Esquire* 6:36, June, 1936.

23. Ernest Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," *Esquire* 6:37, August, 1936.

24. John Peale Bishop, "Homage to Hemingway," *The New Republic*, 89: 39-42, November 11, 1936.

25. Philip Young, *Ernest Hemingway*. (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1952) p. 119.

answered the call, and become one with Dos Passos, Steinbeck, and the rest of our new crop of "social" writers. Perhaps the jump from the *Green Hills of Africa* to *To Have and Have Not* was indeed an awakening to the fact that one cannot spend one's time neatly killing giant Kudu and still hope to be taken seriously as an artist. However, Hemingway had shown throughout his work a deep sense of his social heritage; his lamented lack of "social consciousness" was never just, for at times his social message was detrimental to the story he was attempting to tell.

The critics cried for a "socially significant" book in the early thirties, and Hemingway, tender skinned as always, answered rather wistfully in December, 1934:

Not one (of the critics) will wish you luck or hope that you will keep on writing unless you have political affiliations in which case they will rally around and speak of you and Homer, Balzac, Zola, and Link Steffens. The hardest thing in the world is to write straight honest prose.¹

His best friends and supporters took up the cry. Malcolm Cowley wrote in 1932:

In a sense, every book Hemingway has written seems to be a social elegy. He has given us his farewell to Michigan, to Montparnasse, his *Farewell To Arms*; his new book (*Death in the Afternoon*) is a sort of elegy to Spain and vanished youth. Hemingway's talent is great enough to justify us in making demands on it. Will he ever give us, I wonder, his farewell to farewells?²

And so came *To Have and Have Not*. Not until 1950 were the critics to have such disagreement over a single novel. Elliott Paul states a brief summary of opinion:

I think *To Have and Have Not* is by far the best of Hemingway's books, style, subject matter, dialogue, and all. That is not the point. Harry Hanson says, 'Hemingway has turned himself into a hack,' Herschel Brickell, 'sees no reason why intelligent readers of fiction should bother with the book.' Obscure young journeymen come up with remarks like these: 'Empty,' 'Real as a sewer,' 'confused with no answer to social questions.' A few modest men saw the worth in *To Have and Have Not*. Charles Poole, Malcolm Cowley, Granville Hicks and even *Time Magazine*, were appreciative.³

This was the greeting accorded Hemingway's "first" socially significant book. Throughout the years 1929-1937, Hemingway was considered by the critics to be endowed with style, gifted and brainless, the husky escapist basking in the glory of his "separate peace" with his world. Yet, surely, our look into his fictional world and his reaction to his time, proves that Hemingway's "separate peace" carried a meaning far removed from mere escape from his responsibility as an artist. Sinclair Lewis had said in his Nobel prize acceptance address:

Ernest Hemingway is a bitter youth educated by the most intense experi-

1. Ernest Hemingway, "Old Newsman Writes." *Esquire*, 2:26, December, 1934.

2. Malcolm Cowley, "Ernest Hemingway: A Farewell to Spain." *The New Republic*, 73:511, November 30, 1932.

3. Elliot Paul, "Hemingway and the Critics," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 17:3, November 6, 1937.

ence, disciplined by his own high standards, an authentic artist whose home is in the whole of life.⁴

And seven years later, 1937, John Peale Bishop wrote in rather awed tones:

It was given to Nathaniel Hawthorne to dramatize the human soul in American literature. In our time, Hemingway wrote the drama of its disappearance.⁵

Certainly, something is wrong here. *To Have and Have Not*, the long awaited social comment, was far from Hemingway's finest work; but more important, it was not the book the critics wanted Hemingway to write, as was later to be the case of *Across the River and Into the Trees*. Certain aspects of *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* revealed the character of society following World War I. We had been shown the contemptible lives of the amoral rich; we see clearly how the simplest values are perverted by modern war—given, always, Hemingway's own values. The literary world seemed to expect from Hemingway a super blending of *U. S. A.*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *Studs Lonigan*. Hemingway was no more able to produce this new naturalism than was his friend Scott Fitzgerald. His very style prohibited it. Hemingway at his best is a sort of symbolic realist, leaving the working of the scene to the mind of the reader. Much of his inability to handle the social theme directly stemmed from his own artistic values. Hemingway wrote in 1932 that, at that time, he was capable of writing only the most simple of emotions. Sudden death he considered to be the least complex of emotions, and after the war ended he had followed the bull fight to study death. "In newspaper writing," Hemingway wrote, "you use one trick or another to communicate the emotion." He goes on to say:

But the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion and which would be as valid in a year or ten years, or with luck and if you stated it purely enough, always, was beyond me and I was working very hard to get it.⁶

This "real thing" it seems, could not be found by Hemingway in the conventional "social conscious" novel so popular in the thirties. Hemingway felt that he had to know; had to present life "truly" before he could write. Harold Strauss makes the point clear:

There is no proletarian tradition in this country. There is only tradition of revolt against puritanism. The idea of a proletarian literature was imposed on this tradition from the outside. The novelists themselves employed the technique of photographic realism because they were a part of the main stream of twentieth century literature. The story of this literary technique starts with Hemingway. The photographic realist invariably has an emotional distrust of the common basic symbols and generalizations of the world to which he was born. Hemingway, ridden by this distrust, pointed the way. His mind, tutored

4. Sinclair Lewis, "Address to the Swedish Academy." *New York Times*, 79:13. December 13, 1930.

5. John Peale Bishop, "The Missing All," *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, 13:118, January, 1937.

6. Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*. (New York: Halcyon House, 1932) p. 4.

in post-war realities, rejected its heritage of ideals. As he prodded into the complexities of human behavior, he discovered an impasse, a contradiction between belief and fact which inhibited action—and action for him was writing.⁷

This "impasse which inhibited action" was brought about in part by Hemingway's strict adherence to his own artistic code. The search to find and write the "real thing" became for Hemingway (in Joseph Warren Beach's phrase) "empirical ethics."⁸ His development has been one of thesis followed by antithesis; the resolving synthesis fusing the values of its predecessors and being rejected in turn as Hemingway approached his idea of "that which makes the emotion." In *In Our Time* he views the Michigan woods as a spoiled land that was rapidly losing its beauty through the corruption of base humanity. Hemingway's six novels tell in effect, a loosely connected story of man against his society. The "separate peace" of Lt. Henry (*A Farewell to Arms*) was impossible. His defeat and the death of his beloved symbolizes the defeat of human relations in the post-war world. Henry is made to think:

If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them or break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially.⁹

This is the same Frederick Henry that finds himself

Embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain . . . I had seen nothing sacred and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stock yards of Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except bury it.¹⁰

And Henry concludes that society led to the death of all men:

They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you.¹¹

Jake Barnes (*The Sun Also Rises*) inherited this world and found in this society a moral and spiritual death. Malcolm Cowley interprets a farewell to arms as "a farewell to armies; this is to *armies* as representing all institutions of organized society."¹² Barnes, then, lives in a world with no organization, and his unhappy life, his hopeless love, prepares us for the conversion of Henry Morgan (*To Have and Have Not*) and for the rich and meaningful life of Robert Jordan (*For Whom the Bell Tolls*). It also sets the stage for what seems to me to be the weakness of *Across*

7. Harold Strauss, "Realism in the Proletarian Novel," *The Yale Review*, 2:371, December, 1938.

8. Joseph Warren Beach, *American Fiction 1920-1940*. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1942), p. 69.

9. Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 267.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 350.

12. Malcolm Cowley, "The Four Novels," *The New Republic*, 101:754, December 4, 1944.

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13. Ern
14. *Ibid*
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16. Joh
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the River and Into the Trees and for the classic humanism of *The Old Man and the Sea*.

In the group of short stories written in the period between *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) and *The Green Hills of Africa* (1935) Hemingway makes a consistent effort to find peace with his society. In the story, "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," a waiter paraphrases the Lord's prayer as "Our Nada who art in Nada, thy kingdom nothing and thy will nothing," when all that was needed to make life full was "only light and a certain cleanness and order." In "The Light of the World," Christ is replaced in the minds of a group of men and women by a prize fighter who once lost to Jack Johnson, but who went to his defeat with the honor of "I fought a good fight." "In a Way You'll Never Be," Nick Adams wears the first American Army uniform seen on the Italian front. His orders are to tour the lines giving away chocolate and cigarettes. "These," Nick says, "I should distribute with a kind word and a pat on the back. But there weren't any cigarettes and no chocolate."¹³ In "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," Hemingway concludes that "Liberty in America is the name of a McFadden publication," and the "opium of the people" included religion, sexual intercourse, drink, patriotism, and ambition. "But the real opium of the people. What was it? He knew very well. Bread was the opium of the people."¹⁴

The term "nihilism" was applied to this period of work. The term is most misleading. The general tone of the stories is one of deep bitterness, but all that is missing "is light and a certain cleanness and order." Man's eternal struggle for bread, his desire to live, has been the opium as well as the survival of the race. Hemingway concludes, as Hamlet before him, that society "shows no cause without why the man dies."

This position, socially, is not far from the praised "conversion" of thought as presented in *To Have and Have Not*. The negativism of *Winner Take Nothing*, is echoed in the dying words of Henry Morgan, the one-armed protagonist. Morgan, after making several attempts to speak, says at last:

'I mean how things are. The way that they have been going. A man—one man ain't got. No man alone now.' He stopped. 'No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody f----g chance.'¹⁵

The thesis of "no man alone" sweeps into the language of John Donne that Hemingway used as the epigraph of his next novel.

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent . . . Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.¹⁶

Gone now, indeed, is the "separate peace," in the sense that to be separate is to be dead. The attitude now gives cause for dying. To stand

13. Ernest Hemingway, *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine*. p. 504.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 584.

15. Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not*. p. 225.

16. John Donne, *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1946), p. 332.

alone does not bring inevitable defeat. There is no real "conversion" in this point of view. Symbolically, Jake Barnes and Frederick Henry did not stand alone; a world stood with them—a society that offered them nothing, but could have had there been any sort of order and light. To be "lost" as the twenties were lost, is to be without purpose. This, above all else, was Hemingway's social criticism throughout the twenties and thirties, but was to change with *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The old man Anselmo says (in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*) to the cowardly Pablo:

Now we come for something of consummate importance and thus, with thy dwelling place to be undisturbed, puts thy fox hole before humanity.¹⁷

Out of the same violent world, out of corruption and cowardice, out of rape, treachery and blood, that is to say, out of the same personal tradition that has marked all his work, Hemingway had found in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* the dignity and order that gives an intensity and vitality that had been his search since he wrote of the woods of Michigan. All the evil of the twentieth century remains; the change seems now that there is hope for change. The strong good man could bring meaning into strength and goodness. The world became a world of people, all working toward a common end. Robert Jordan fought because:

You believe in Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. You believe in Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.¹⁸

And Robert Jordan adds:

I love liberty and dignity and the rights of all men to work and not be hungry.¹⁹

War time had stopped the search for a life with meaning. Hemingway found in the Spanish War a situation that threw new light on the past. There was a happy life and death for Robert Jordan.

But the reasons behind his fighting were the same desires and aims of Nick Adams, Jake Barnes, Frederick Henry, and Harry Morgan. These things could not be won in the world of the first four protagonists; there was an opportunity for the winning in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

In *Across the River and Into the Trees*, the personal tradition remains the same. But the importance of this hastily written book (A unique fact of Hemingway's work is the necessity of slow, careful re-writing. *To Have and Have Not* was thrown together from three short stories in a hurried trip, in 1936, from Spain.) is that Robert Jordan seems now not to have won. For the first time, a Hemingway protagonist is not a man with whom we sympathize. His life has been filled with gross mistakes, and while part of these are the fault of the "system" (U. S. Army), most are brought about by Col. Richard Cantwell. Cantwell's war of his youth and his reunion with those who fought with him (a sort of nostalgic St. Crispin's Day) seem to say, "We didn't win, but we don't care." The Venice of the novel is without energy; the G. I. driver, Ronald

17. Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, p. 11.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 348.

Jackson, is "one of those sad Americans, sad self-righteous, overfed and undertrained." America is governed "by what you find in the bottom of dead beer glasses that whores have dunked their cigarettes in."²⁰

The tone throughout the book echoes Nick Adams' words in "A Way You'll Never Be." An American is ordered to bring comfort and aid to Europe, but there "weren't any cigarettes and no chocolate." In the vast plan of a clean, well-lighted world, where liberty and individual dignity reign, Cantwell's America has failed in its effort to accomplish this end. The fight goes on. Cantwell, who has had the tools of war to work with, has failed and must "rest in the shade of the trees."

Cantwell, certainly, is a man alone. His world is almost as dark as the early novels, but there is one significant difference. Cantwell has in part, made his world, and shaped his life as he directed. The shift here is not one of character. There is no reason to believe that Robert Jordan could not have become Richard Cantwell. However, the society has changed. The brave new world of Jordan is neither, now, brave nor new. There is nothing to be done except to begin again. Cantwell, as a social reformer, (*i.e.* America at War) has been a failure.

The Old Man and the Sea reverts to an earlier Hemingway method of presenting his social message. Like the best of his earlier work, society is reflected by the stature of what a man may be. This story of courage, pride, humility and death is remarkably classical in the best spirit of Greek tragedy. Santiago, like Robert Jordan before him, is a part of, rather than at odds with, his world. "Fish," Santiago addresses his foe, "I will kill you before this day ends."²¹ And a bit later, when a bird rests on the taut fishing line, Santiago says: "Take a good rest, small bird. Then go in and take your chance like any man or bird or fish."²² Life's struggle is here dramatized, and Santiago represents the social being who realizes that no matter how humble, this struggle is personal; that the bell again tolls for the individual. Philip Young states:

This veneration for humanity, for what can be done and endured, and this grasp of man's kinship with the other creatures of the world, and with the world itself, is itself a victory of substantial proportions. It is the knowledge that a simple man is capable of such decency, dignity, and even heroism, and that his struggle can be seen in heroic terms, that largely distinguishes this book. For the knowledge that a man can be great, and his life great might be in itself an approach to greatness. To have had the skill, then, to convince others that this is a valid vision is Hemingway's artistic achievement.²³

Ironically enough, *The Old Man and the Sea* ends on a note that implies that Santiago's struggle as far as society is concerned was a futile one. A rather bored young man and woman walk past the skeleton of the great fish and conclude that it's a strange looking shark. The young couple are neither aided nor taught by Santiago's struggle. They must,

20. Ernest Hemingway, *Across the River and Into the Trees*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 227.

21. Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea*. (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 60.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

23. Young, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

one deducts, meet and conquer their own marlin.

Perhaps the individual unit of society is the relationship between man and woman. Usually this union is called "the home" and is considered the nucleus of any society. Through most of Hemingway's fiction the power of love, the sexual attraction between male and female represents one of life's higher values. Any deviation from the classic roles of men and women in the love game was witnessed with disgust by Hemingway's hero; especially appalling was the domineering, damning female. Edmund Wilson, writing in 1941, noted:

And now this instinct to get the woman down presents itself frankly as a fear that the woman will get the man down. In the African stories ("Snows of Kilimanjaro," "Francis Macomber") Hemingway has at last got what Thurber calls war between men and women right out in the open and in "Francis Macomber" has written a terrific fable of the impossible civilized woman who despises the civilized man for his failure in initiative and nerve and then jealously tries to break him down as soon as he begins to exhibit any.²⁴

Twenty-six of the sixty-two works considered have as their basic theme the problem of adjustment between men and women. The early stories of Nick Adams present an almost complete history of the problem as it affects the Hemingway hero.

The opening story of *In Our Time*, "Up in Michigan," deals with the rather brutal seduction of a young girl. Liz Coates, the daughter of a fisherman, is strongly attracted by Jim Gilmore, the blacksmith of the small town. Gilmore is equally attracted by her, and one night when the moon is right, their respective desires are consummated. Jim, having had a bit too much to drink, goes to sleep immediately, leaving Miss Coates hurt, crying, and disillusioned.

"Jim," she said, "Jim, Please, Jim."

Jim stirred and curled a little tighter. Liz took off her coat and leaned over and covered him with it. She tucked it around neatly and carefully. Then she walked across the dock and up on the steep sandy road to go to bed. A cold mist was coming up through the woods from the bay.²⁵

It seems that the only real villain of this rather brutal scene is the sociological factor of the brutality of sex. Jim Gilmore does not intend to be unkind; Liz is as responsible for her position as is Jim. Hemingway seems to say that the "cold mists from the bay" were as much a factor of cause as were the two people.

This point of view is expounded through the early life of Nick Adams. In "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" Nick goes hunting with his father instead of obeying the summons of his mother. In the story "The End of Something," Nick Adams breaks off a love affair with his girl, Marjorie. The ironic dichotomy of sex seems again to be responsible. The result of the death of young love is tested further in "The Three-Day Blow." Nick realizes that he will always care for Marjorie, but "the big thing was

24. Edmund Wilson, *The Wound and the Bow*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1941), p. 240.

25. Hemingway, *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine*, p. 184.

that Marjorie was gone, and that he would probably never see her again."²⁶

And so the problem continues. In *The Torrents of Spring*, Hemingway satirizes the idyllic love of Scripps O'Neil for his many women. The "Great Race" passes while a happy couple walk, naked, down a railroad track, merrily throwing their clothes to the side of the right-of-way.

In *The Sun Also Rises* the problem of the sexes comes to its fullest and most clear treatment. The cause of the unrest, the lostness of the characters in the book have their *immediate* stem in the person of Lady Brett Ashley. Edmund Wilson observes:

Brett Ashley is an exclusively destructive force: She might be a better woman if she were mated to Jake the American; but actually he is protected against her and is in a sense revenging his own sex through being unable to do anything for her sexually.²⁷

Jake Barnes, who has been emasculated by a war wound, is introduced at the beginning of the novel as a rather restless young man, burdened by the company of Philip Cohn, a writer with an inferiority complex. After a meeting with his friend, Bill, (popularly supposed to be modeled on Hemingway's friend, Dos Passos), they encounter Lady Brett Ashley, who at present appears to be engaged to Mike, a Scotchman of good social standing and a war veteran. A few uncomfortable days pass while Robert Cohn falls in love with Brett, and Brett renews her old love for Jake before Jake and Bill escape to Spain. Free of Lady Ashley, Jake and Bill manage to have a good time. "This is Country," Bill says, as they fish, drink, and sleep in the sun. They learn to laugh.

But upon return to Pamplona, and reunion with Brett, all laughter dies. Brett has been sleeping with Robert Cohn, who is now jealous of her every move. She is strongly attracted by the young bullfighter, Pedro Romero, and leaves the fiesta with him. Later she gains a moment of virtue by leaving young Romero. "You know," she says to Jake, "It makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch."²⁸ And, at the end of the book, when Brett nestles close to Jake with his arms around her, she says: "Jake, we could have had such a damned good time together." And Jake replies, "Isn't it pretty to think so?"²⁹

Here Hemingway concludes that Brett Ashley would not have been a "damned good time" for anyone. George Snell makes the point:

Symbolically, Brett Ashley stands not only for the principle of love but of total animal destruction; and the men who swam around her like garflies meet destruction at her hands; Jake's victory over her is in a sense accidental, but it is conclusive. Even if love had been possible, Hemingway indicates it would have failed.³⁰

Hemingway's strongest comment upon man-woman relationships is to be found in *To Have and Have Not*. Richard Gordon's wife says of love:

26. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

27. Wilson, *The Wound and the Bow*, p. 238.

28. Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 256.

29. *Ibid.*, 259.

30. George Snell, *The Shapers of American Fiction 1798-1947*. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1947), p. 163.

Slop. Love is just another dirty lie . . . Love is that dirty aborting horror that you took me to. Love is my insides all messed up. It's half catheters and half whirling douches. I know about love. Love always hangs up behind the bathroom door. It smells like Lysol. To hell with love.³¹

Gone now is the sympathy and pity that characterized Lady Brett Ashley. Hemingway's attitude toward Richard Gordon and the people of his society is positively malignant. Sex becomes a symbol of good and evil in *To Have and Have Not*. The wasteful and wasted lives of the "haves" are shown to be perverted, unhappy, and impotent. The "have nots" are sexually happy on a heroic scale.

Maxwell Geismar compares the unhappy ending of "A Very Short Story" with "the rich and warm love of Lieutenant Henry and Catherine Barkley on a foreign shore,"³² and concludes that Hemingway holds the rather firm belief that American women are not capable of love. The point is well taken. The brutality of the relationship in the story "Hills That Look Like White Elephants" occurs between Americans. The wishful longing for married happiness in "Cat in the Rain" again is illustrated by an American couple. The final irony of American family life is the theme of "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber;" again America seems unable to produce a society that would support sexual harmony. Colonel Cantwell denounces young American girls as "only able to count good" and cheapened by false aids to beauty. This cheating becomes their only characteristic. As previously stated, the love affair in *A Farewell to Arms* occurs in a foreign land; the happy love of Robert Jordan and Maria is possible in war-torn Spain. Swiss women are praised for their fidelity in the story, "Homage to Switzerland."

This attitude is, of course, the point of view of the author, and is certainly a telling social criticism. It is, however, unfortunate that such an attitude leads, at times, to a vaulting masculinity, a sort of chest-pounding that destroys depth and sensitivity in an author's fiction. Hemingway's women, in order to exist at all, are inclined to become caricatures rather than characters.

III

Probably the most obvious of consistent themes in Hemingway's work is his moral code. The ethical reaction of Hemingway's people toward his set standard of behavior can lead in only one direction: acceptance or rejection of the code. A rejection can lead only to dishonor; acceptance will not bring happiness, nor avoidance of death, but it does assure honor and respect.

In *Death in the Afternoon* Hemingway states:

So far, about morals, I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after and judged by these moral standards, which I do not defend, the bull fight is very moral to me because I feel very fine while it is going on and have a feeling of life and death and

31. Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not*, p. 186.

32. Maxwell Geismar, *Writers in Crisis*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1942), p. 72.

morality and immorality, and after it is over I feel very sad but very fine.¹

Here is presented Hemingway's most succinct statement of his moral standards. *Death in the Afternoon*, while posing as a history and introduction to bull fighting, is in many ways, a spiritual autobiography of Hemingway. The book represents a study of manners in the Iberian peninsula, and symbolically, a study of the manners of the world. Lincoln Kirsten says that the book "also defines in a way which has perhaps never before been attempted, at least in the English language, the ecstasy of valor."² The phrase, "ecstasy of valor," summarizes Hemingway's moral position. This code of valor comprises a sort of implicit belief in the purity of uncorrupted land and flesh, of fair play between man and nature, and of honesty in thought and directness of action. The young Nick Adams in the story, "Big Two-Hearted River," carefully wets his hand before lifting an under-sized trout from his hook:

He had wet his hand before he touched the trout, so he would not disturb the delicate mucus that covered him. If a trout was touched with a dry hand, a white fungus attacked the unprotected spot. Nick had again and again come on dead trout, furry with white fungus, drifted against a rock or floating belly up in some pool.³

One must always "kill cleanly" and with purpose. Death is always inevitable to all forms of life, but man should retain a dignity in his own death, and in bringing death to other forms of life. "Killing cleanly and in a way which gives you aesthetic pleasure and pride has always been one of the greatest enjoyments of a part of the human race," Hemingway states in *Death in the Afternoon*.⁴ This is true in the bull fight, and it remains true in all of Hemingway's works. The practice of the evacuating Greeks in the early story "On the Quay at Smyrna," of breaking the forelegs of their pack mules and leaving them to drown slowly in shallow water filled Hemingway with deep disgust. Writing in *Esquire* in 1934, Hemingway asserts that shooting a lion from the protection of a car is "not only illegal but a cowardly way to assassinate one of the finest of game animals."⁵ In *Across the River and Into the Trees*, Colonel Cantwell finds that he must save a duck that has only been wingtipped, and the respect of Santiago for his marlin has been illustrated.

A good man never kills for the wanton lust of killing. The working principle is a sort of sportsmanship in which all actions are met with honor and courage. The story, "The Undefeated," exemplifies this code. The protagonist of this story, an old bull fighter named Manuel Garcia, is injured while performing before a hostile and unappreciative audience. While on the operating table, Garcia comforts himself with the knowledge that he "was going good" at the time of his injury. The reader knows this also and realizes that while the world may mock one's actions, the

1. Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*. p. 1.
2. Lincoln Kirsten, "The Canon of Death." *Hound and Horn*, 6:336, January, 1933.
3. Ernest Hemingway, *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine*. p. 323.
4. Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*. p. 232.
5. Ernest Hemingway, "Shootism Versus Sport." *Esquire*, 2:19, June, 1934.
6. Ernest Hemingway, *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine*. p. 253.

courage necessary to adhere to a system of values is enough to keep one undefeated.

This is the position. Individual honesty, integrity to one's duty, is the reward of honor. To die honorably is the reward of valor. In the one-act play, "Today is Friday," three Roman soldiers participate in the crucifixion of Christ. They are profoundly moved by the courage of Christ on the cross. They agree "he looked good in there."

The code enters war. The pilot in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" who machine-guns helpless victims behind enemy lines is called "a bloody murderous bastard."⁶ Colonel Cantwell thinks:

What's a man's life worth anyway? Ten thousand dollars of his insurance is paid up in our Army. What the hell has that got to do with it? Oh yes, that was what I was thinking before those jerks showed; how much money I had saved my government . . . yes, he said, and how much you lost them at the Chateau that time at ten G's a head. . . . you do it, as ordered, with a big butcher bill and you're a hero.⁷

This slaughter of men haunts the Colonel and was his undoing in the army. Robert Jordan thinks how many he has killed and realizes that he must not think about it. He must keep it straight in his head:

Because if you are not absolutely straight in your head you have no right to do the things you do for all of them are crimes and no man has a right to take another man's life unless it is to prevent something worse happening to other people.⁸

So the moral code remains consistent; valor in the face of death and danger, valor in the realization that waste and wantonness lead only to personal and social destruction. Those who break this code can be assured of disrespect and dishonor. Robert Cohn, of *The Sun Also Rises*, is an excellent example of one who attempts to live outside the rules. Cohn cannot admit Lady Brett prefers the young bull fighter to himself. He meets the matador who has won the lady whom he loves, and being a good boxer, knocks him down again and again, only to have the matador get up from the floor each time, until Cohn is defeated by fortitude, the moral ascendancy of the matador, and can only begin to cry and wish to shake hands.

Lady Ashley, however, obeys the code and gives up the young Pedro Romero, realizing that he was not her way of life, and that she would only ruin the unspoiled youth of the bull fighter by staying with him. This is, as Brett says, "What we have instead of God."⁹

This moral code remains "What we have instead of God." Jake Barnes (*The Sun Also Rises*) attempts to pray in a Catholic cathedral, and realizes that he was ashamed of the attempt:

I was such a rotten Catholic, but realized there was nothing I could do about it, at least for a while, and maybe never, but that anyway it was a grand

7. Ernest Hemingway, *Across the River and Into the Trees*. p. 188.

8. Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. p. 196.

9. Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*. p. 257.

religion, and I only wished I felt religious and maybe I would next time.¹⁰

But there is no "next time" for Jake Barnes; only a code of behavior that is explained as a substitute for God. The Catholic priest of *A Farewell to Arms* asks Fredrick Henry if he loves God. "No," Henry answers, "but I am afraid of him at night sometimes."¹¹ And Henry cannot go home with the priest to Abbruzzi where "It is understood that a man may love God. It is not a dirty joke."¹² Lieutenant Henry is embarrassed by words that express sacrifice or glory. Henry likens the world to a burning log that is full of ants. The ants swarm out as the log commences to burn, and:

. . . went first toward the center where the fire was; then turned back and ran toward the end. When there was enough on the end they fell off into the fire. Some got out, their bodies burnt and flattened.¹³

Lieutenant Henry, then, is beyond Hemingway's ethical and moral code. He has attempted to make his separate peace, to run away from a cruel and destructive world. Unlike Pedro Romero he does not rise from the floor again and again. He has not the moral ascendancy to allow himself to do so. Unlike Lady Brett he has nothing instead of God; he can see only a flaming world in which he must drop to destruction. His attempt to escape his responsibilities, his seance with death (as the hero of the story "The Undefeated") leads to his horrible disenchantment and to the ultimate death of Catherine Barkley.

Harry Morgan (*To Have and Have Not*) dies proudly and with purpose. Morgan has obeyed the code. He has killed when killing is necessary and for the benefit of his family. He has met adversity with valor, and while his life is taken by the society in which he lives, he remains a moral man by Hemingway's standards. The only directing God for Morgan was this ethical code.

The old man, Anselmo, (*For Whom the Bell Tolls*) tells Robert Jordan that "we do not have God here any more. Neither His Son nor the Holy Ghost."¹⁴ The Spaniards have rejected their religion, now that it is also claimed by the Fascists. Pilar is made to say:

Every one needs to talk to some one. Before we had religion and other nonsense. Now for everyone there should be someone to whom one can speak frankly, for all the valor that one could have one becomes very alone.¹⁵

But they are not alone, for they are bound by their common effort to win the war. They have seen too much of man's destruction to believe that a God of mercy would allow such action. They live by the ethics of Hemingway's redoubtable code; what is moral is "what you feel good after, and what is immoral is what you feel bad after." All members of the little guerilla band adhere to this code, except Pablo.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

11. Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*. p. 77.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

14. Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. p. 41.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

Pablo has lost his ability to feel good after; he regrets his action in the early part of the war, and wishes to steal away and live the rest of his life with his newly acquired herd of horses. He wishes to make a "separate peace" forsaking all others and his country. He attempts to run away, taking Robert Jordan's exploding equipment with him. Pablo returns (feeling bad after) but his cowardice leads to the death of Robert Jordan and brings moral damnation upon himself. Pablo did not have the courage to abide and fight for life; in breaking the code he suffered dishonor.

In the preface of *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine* Hemingway lists seven short stories as being his personal favorites. They are, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," "In Another Country," "Hills Like White Elephants," "A Way You'll Never Be," "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," "A Clean Well-lighted Place," and "The Light of the World."¹⁶ It is interesting to note that all of these stories embody, to a greater or lesser degree, Hemingway's moral standard and offer varying ethical reaction to this standard. "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" offers an example of what may happen when one's moral sense arrives too late. Macomber has been a weakling all his life, and proves himself a coward in his attempt to kill a wounded lion. He does not face danger bravely, and so loses the respect of his wife. When he gains the moral strength to do what he knows is right, his wife kills him. She realizes that she could never hope to hold a husband with the courage and valor to free himself. "In Another Country" illustrates the delicate decorum that must be retained among men who once knew valor, who once fought for what they believed was right, but are now unable to continue the fight because of physical disabilities. In "Hills That Look Like White Elephants," both the man and woman are doomed because of their inability to face the laws of nature. The man demands an abortion of a baby just conceived. The woman realizes that with or without the child, their love is gone. They hardly "feel good after." "A Way You'll Never Be" shows the horrible result when a society breaks the code in favor of wanton slaughter. "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" tells of the wasted life of a man who sold himself, making a "separate peace" through money. "A Clean Well-Lighted Place" underlines the need of positive direction of action; of a need for courage that can transcend nothingness.

"The Light of the World" might be considered a sort of summary of Hemingway's moral and ethical position. Stanley Ketchel, a man who once fought Jack Johnson for the heavy-weight championship, symbolizes a sort of God that all recognize. He has been fearless and aggressive in the face of danger, and he has been open and frank in his relationships with men and women. A cook, who has homosexual tendencies, does not recognize Ketchel as anything except a prizefighter. He is incapable of Hemingway's morality. One woman, a peroxide blonde, claims to have been the lover of Ketchel and thus elevates herself, in the opinion of the rest of the group, as being next to deity. The blonde is proved a liar by Alice, a huge woman, who, through her sincerity and directness, con-

16. Ernest Hemingway, *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine*. p. vii.

vinces all that she was Ketchel's true lover. She suddenly appears beautiful and desirable to the men who have listened to the argument.

Here, Hemingway seems to be saying, is the true light of the world, the salt of the earth. Honesty will out, and those of positive action will win respect. Adherence to the code may bring death, or gross ugliness, but a beauty once earned is forever retained. The latest pronouncement of the code, and probably the most powerful, is to be found in *The Old Man and the Sea*. Santiago must prove again that he is still a champion fisherman, and he must do it alone and without the boy. And he does prove it. The sharks may eat the fish, the world may destroy everything, but he has been "good in there," and that is all-important. The world may still break, crucify and destroy, but that is the way of the world. The fact that Santiago survives, is happy and ready to fish again, proves for the first time that Hemingway will allow this twentieth century to sustain such men. All previous adherents to the code, if their struggle could attain it, died for their efforts.

IV

The existence of language has half created man, and half developed with him. With the existence of language, man has built his civilizations, his sciences, his literatures; all obviously impossible without this vehicle for communicating ideas. As man grew, as his thoughts became more complex, distinguishable modes of expression undertook to define the elements, principles and causes of his identity with the world in which he lived. Literature and philosophy were among the first of man's study and developed together and simultaneously. George Santayana writes of the close relation between the poet and philosopher:

[Philosophy is] a steady contemplation of all things in their order and worth. Such contemplation is imaginative. No one can reach it who has not enlarged his mind and tamed his heart. A philosopher who attains it is, for the moment, a poet; and a poet who turns his practiced and passionate imagination on the order of all things, or on anything in light of the whole, is for that moment a philosopher.¹

The vision of philosophy at its most objective and enlightening, approaches the sublime. The order it reveals in the world is something beautiful, tragic, or sympathetic to the mind, and what every writer, on a small or on a large scale, is trying to catch. The search for wisdom and for elemental laws of behavior is the province of both philosopher and poet. Their approach toward the subject may differ, but their desire to understand and help others to understand, remains always constant.

Ernest Hemingway is no exception. Throughout his work there is an evident search toward a workable philosophy of life. Born in a materialistic and pragmatic world, his first reaction was one of violent rebellion. Hemingway tramped from the woods of Michigan to Caporetti; he studied the matador and the giant Kudu; he denounced his native land—all in a continuous search for values that would make life a reward-

1. George Santayana, *Three Philosophical Poets*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 11.

ing experience. Hemingway concluded that one can always come back, and with this conclusion affirmed a philosophy that had been developing throughout his life.

This philosophic quest was little noted by early literary critics. In a typical comment of this school, J. Donald Adams described Hemingway's attitude toward life as "basically adolescent," and concluded that "even his pessimism is the romantic passion of adolescence."² Hemingway became the stupid boy of nature; the writer who derived his observations through sensory perception, leaving his mind and reasoning powers completely unused. Commenting on this attitude Edgar Johnson wrote:

Hemingway, like D. H. Lawrence, has quarreled although not so fundamentally and all inclusively, with the root-assumptions of Bohemian-aesthetic intellectualism. And like Lawrence he has been derided as a sort of modern Heidelberg Man, incapable of understanding the things he despised.³

Hemingway's rebellion against the world as he viewed it is evidenced in his selection of locale and characters. His rejection of post-war disillusionment with existing society has been shown to be more complex and profound than mere cynicism. Hemingway found it necessary to devise a system of moral values when he found existing systems had no value or meaning for him. From a temperament charged with temptations, forebodings and fears, Hemingway sought to bring "a certain cleanness and order" into a world that otherwise was dark and empty. With a systematic rejection of thesis followed by rejecting antithesis, Hemingway reached a stage equivalent to the skepticism of Descartes, doubting everything except his own existence. He learned from every possible source, his own experiences as well as the experiences, teaching and writing of others. Alfred Kazin notes:

What is significant in Hemingway's literary education is not that he learned prose rhythm from Gertrude Stein, the uses of simplicity from Sherwood Anderson, the sense of discipline from Ezra Pound and the cosmopolitan literary ateliers of postwar Paris, but that they gave him the authority to be himself.⁴

The "authority to be himself" caused Hemingway to reject both Anderson and Stein. In *The Torrents of Spring* he parodies Anderson's sex mysticism, and burlesques Stein's infantile symbolism. He launched himself in search of "the real thing." As previously noted, he visited the bull fight hoping to learn the emotion of sudden death which he considered the most simple of human characteristics. Again Kazin illustrates:

[For Hemingway] writing was not a recreation, it was a way of life; it was born of desperation and enmity and took its insights from militant suffering. Yet it could exist only as it purified itself; it had meaning only as it served to tell the truth.⁵

Thus life at this stage of Hemingway's career still held before him

2. J. Donald Adams, "Ernest Hemingway," *English Journal*, 28:88, February, 1939.

3. Edgar Johnson, "Farewell the Separate Peace," *The Sewanee Review*, 48:290, July-September, 1940.

4. Alfred Kazin, *On Native Grounds*. (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942) p. 332.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 327.

a perfect barricade that hid "the real thing." The worried futility of *The Sun Also Rises*, the attempted escape into the "separate peace" of *A Farewell to Arms*, were both rejections of existing systems of values that led only to a philosophical barricade which hid "the real thing." In Chapter IV of *In Our Time* Hemingway had written:

It was a frightfully hot day. We'd jammed an absolutely perfect barricade across the bridge. It was simply priceless. A big wrought iron grating from the front of a house. Too heavy to lift and you could shoot through it and they would have to climb it. It was absolutely topping. They tried to get over it and we potted them from forty yards. They rushed it, and officers came out alone and worked on it. It was an absolutely perfect obstacle . . .⁶

And Maxwell Geismar states:

This absolutely perfect obstacle is to appear and reappear so often in Hemingway's work, sometimes changing its shape but never its meaning (sic.) until we are tempted to speculate whether life itself is for the writer Hemingway, simply a larger sort of absolutely perfect obstacle.⁷

Hemingway's philosophy had apparently approached a state of utter nihilism; however, the very intensity of this expression of the "perfect barricade" is shot through, is blasted with ideas that move toward a final judgment of man's position on earth. At the end of *The Green Hills of Africa*, Hemingway concludes:

Our people saw the country at its best and fought for it when it was worth fighting for. Now I would go somewhere else. We always went in the old days and there are still places to go.⁸

The perfect barricade was still there, but the "separate peace" was beginning to rest heavily on his shoulders. This same America became the home of Harry Morgan (*To Have and Have Not*), and Harry was to die with the knowledge that there are *not* still places to go. No man can be alone Morgan realizes; there is no place to run except toward the perfect obstacle. The many types of death described in *Death in the Afternoon* throw light on the unity in all humanity. Hemingway's philosophy was steadily progressing toward the idea of "no man is an island entire of itself." Hemingway seems to have explored the paradox of man's concept of individual freedom, *i.e.*, his finiteness and his return to the infinite. Wanting his freedom, man seeks always to escape from the insecurity of freedom, which denies an association with his society. Hemingway had rejected the materialistic world in which he was born; he seems to have doubted the validity of pragmatic philosophy. His fictional protagonist wandered lonely and alone in search of values that had hitherto escaped him. Hemingway established a lonely moral code which made life livable, but "the real thing" still escaped him. From this position, Hemingway transcends esthetics which are the same as his

6. Hemingway, *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine*. p. 211.

7. Geismar, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

8. Ernest Hemingway, *The Green Hills of Africa*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 25.

code of morality—a reduction of things to their simplest terms. In the original printing of “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” Hemingway has his protagonist remember that “Poor Scott Fitzgerald had started a story once that began, ‘the very rich are different from you and me,’ and . . . when he found out they weren’t it wrecked him.”⁹ This statement implies that a man brings only personal destruction upon himself if he believes that any society is “different from you and me.” “The real thing” then, seems to be to get one’s self outside one’s ego. George Snell states:

To shed the sickly soul of the sophisticate and be one with good, if fallible, humanity is the salvation of Robert Jordan. He tries to do it through identifying himself with his simple, honest, if fallible, companions, and Hemingway shows us his success; we do not need to be told. To liberate the ego is to liberate the world.¹⁰

This philosophy parallels that of Henri Bergson. There is no record that Hemingway has studied Bergson’s philosophy, but he was probably acquainted with Bergson’s thought through his early contact with Gertrude Stein. Be that as it may, Hemingway might well have absorbed a part of Bergson’s romantic pragmatism in his early conversations with Miss Stein. The idea to remove from life all of its veneer, to find the roots of the “reason behind the emotion” is clearly stated by Bergson. Bergson advised his pupils to “think like men of action and act like men of thought.” He goes on to say:

Let us then concentrate attention on that which we have that is at the same time the most removed from externality and the least penetrated with intellectuality. Let us seek in the depths of our experience the point where we feel ourselves most intimately within our own life. It is into pure duration that we then plunge back. A duration in which the past, always moving on, is swelling unceasingly with the present that is absolutely new. But at the same time, we feel the spring of our will strained to its utmost limit. We must by strong recoil of our personality on itself, gather up our past which is slipping away, in order to thrust it, compact and undivided, into a present which it will create by entering.¹¹

Here seems to be a working plan in the development of Hemingway’s philosophy. He cast off all forms of intellectuality, and, in a primitivistic mode, sought through his own personal tradition the answers to man’s place and duty in the world. Perhaps he gathered his past in a spring from the nihilism of “nada e nada” to the unity of individual and whole, which is the significant orientation of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Here Hemingway’s work answered a requirement; his vast reading public found an expression of a confused world that could help to alleviate some of their own confusion. And here, at this point, is the failure of *Across the River and Into the Trees* and the success of *The Old Man and the Sea*. Hemingway, in 1940, had developed a position of naturalistic humanism. He viewed the world as governed primarily by natural forces,

9. Ernest Hemingway, “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” *Esquire*, 3:200, August, 1936.

10. Snell, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

11. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*. (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1913), p. 200.

excluding the supernatural and spiritual; however, human interests predominate in action and thought. It was a world worth the saving. It was a world of strength and energy that held the hope of a new and better life. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* reflected the dream of World War II—humanity stood to gain with the defeat of Fascism. In *The Old Man and the Sea* the individual brought with him his own ability for purposeful action.

In *Across the River and Into the Trees*, this purpose is missing. The search for “the real thing” that marked the early stories has mellowed into a kind of indifference. There is no real violence here, no real impact. The philosophic point of view seems to be, outwardly, the same held in the above mentioned novels, but something has happened—this knowledge does not help the world. The critic for the London *Times* writes:

It is almost as if Mr. Hemingway were writing his swan song, for the mood is that of *The Tempest* or *Oedipus Coloneus*. But it is only “as if,” for all passion is not spent, however it may seem. Rather, for the first time passion is under control.¹²

There is indeed a mellowed tone in this tale. Passion is not spent, and may be controlled, but the important point is that it has no meaning. The world of Colonel Cantwell reflects the school of existentialism. Here is the middle way between traditional materialism and idealism, and the stress is on personal decision in the face of a universe without purpose and without reward of so much as personal pride in a job well done. Cantwell holds the ideas of Robert Jordan and Santiago, but unlike them he aids no one with his life or his death. Renata tells Cantwell that she did not have much of a chance to understand herself:

“And when you know what the hell have you got?” the colonel asked.

“I don’t know. Something better than this, I suppose.”

“Sure. We ought to try for that. I don’t believe in limited objectives. Sometimes you’re forced to, though.”

“What is your great sorrow?”

“Other people’s orders,” he said.¹³

Cantwell’s America is a place of gross incompetence in all forms of leadership. The American G. I. was a reader of comic books, a draft dodger, a phony and a coward. Cantwell tells himself that the old war against Fascism is not over. Franco will fall. “We will retake and they will all be hung upside down outside filling stations. You have been warned.”¹⁴ But with Cantwell’s death, the idea seems lost. Jackson, the driver, does not understand nor does he wish to understand Colonel Cantwell. Cantwell’s death means nothing to him, and we conclude, symbolically to America. Jackson’s reaction to Cantwell’s death note that asked for certain articles to be returned to Renata is to think: “They’ll return them all right, through channels.”¹⁵

12. “The New Hemingway Novel,” *The London Times*, October 6, 1950.

13. Ernest Hemingway, *Across the River and Into the Trees*. p. 210.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 308.

This position in itself is not weak; its weakness in the novel lies in the fact that it is not stated clearly enough or with enough conviction. Unlike the works of, for example, Jean Paul Sartre, Hemingway seems a bit surprised at himself. He seems for the first time uncertain. He is not the teacher here as he has been in his early work.

But this book, whose main theme seems to be to advance Hemingway's personal opinion of certain personalities, can not be judged as a change of values for Hemingway's hero.

For the "good life" for this hero is entirely earth bound. It is Epicurean in the sense that pleasure is its basic principle. Epicurus taught such a principle, but he thought of pain negatively. Hemingway would never embrace this vegetable concept. Professor Halliday writes:

The Hemingway hero actively seeks pleasure even at a great risk, because the essential thing is to broaden the area of control over life, through the exercise of discrimination.¹⁶

And personal discrimination is certainly an indication of values. Recently James W. Aldridge and Edward Wagenknecht have bewailed the loss of values in modern fiction. If the heart of the matter is man, we must not conclude that Hemingway has no system of values however inadequate they may appear to the reader. It is not untrue to say that the whole of Hemingway's work is a statement of a search for values. There is no reason why these values must be held by the reader.

Hemingway once wrote:

In prose there is a fourth and fifth dimension that can be gotten, if one is serious enough and has luck.¹⁷

I don't know what he means by fifth dimensional prose. Perhaps "facet" would have been a more fortunate term, for I believe we can find five sides to his prose. A consistent physical world, a social concept, a code of morality, and a workable philosophy could be said to be four facets. A fifth, we might advance, could be Hemingway's infectious prose style. A happier choice may be his sense of timing. No American writer has been able to filter through the consciousness of a central protagonist the violent nightmare of modern war as Hemingway has done; no American writer has pictured the butcheries, confusions, the incomprehensibilities of twentieth century war and peace as Hemingway has so powerfully painted them. He was the toast of his own literary generation, a sort of cherished legend in the forties, a critical target in the fifties—but never was he forgotten.

Hemingway possesses superbly the contemporaneous sense and moves actively in an active world. Like Marvel, Hemingway rolls his world into a ball and throws it back to us. Sometimes his aim is not good; sometimes we error in our catch. This dynamic present is, perhaps, a fifth dimension. If Hemingway's art, then, does not embrace all the uses of this world, it is certainly world enough.

16. E. M. Halliday, "Hemingway's Hero," *The University of Chicago Magazine*, 45:13, May, 1953.

17. Ernest Hemingway, *The Green Hills of Africa*. p. 27.

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