4-1-1952

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Robert Alexander Chermside Jr.

# ERNEST HEMINGWAY, A WRITER OF EPISODES

BY

ROBERT ALEXANDER CHERMSIDE JR.

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

IN CANDIDACY

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH



JUNE, 1952

# ERNEST HEMINGWAY, A WRITER OF EPISODES

## I

In this thesis my purpose is to analyze and review some of Hemingway's episodes and short scenes, which I believe to be his most valuable work, in order that their value may become evident. I then intend to show that the author's novels are in most cases dependent on these episodes for their literary success. In accomplishing this, it would be useless to consider everything Hemingway has written. I shall deal only with his fiction and shall confine myself to selections which most amply illustrate my point.

## II

Ernest Hemingway was born July 21, 1898, in Oak Park, Illinois, near Chicago.[1] He is one of the family of four children of Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, M.D., and Grace Hall Hemingway. Reared in this timber region inhabited by Ojibway Indians, Hemingway found this early experience invaluable when he wrote In Our Time. His father often took him along on country medical visits, which were later recorded in such stories as "Indian Camp." The author also wrote a good deal about the Indians themselves and outdoor life.

He studied in the Oak Park Public School and was urged by his father to complete his education by taking up medicine. Apparently this idea did not appeal to him, nor his mother's idea that he study music, and he ran away from home at the age of fifteen. He returned shortly, however, and completed his high-school education.

After high-school, he got a job with the Kansas City Star but left subsequently for Italy as a volunteer ambulance driver. From this he transferred to the Italian infantry, and it was this experience that provided most of the background for A Farewell to Arms. He was severely wounded in this campaign, however, and was sent home to recover. While at home he married his boyhood sweetheart, Hadley Richardson. They had one son and were finally divorced in 1926.

In 1921 he settled in Paris, where he met Ezra

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1. Kunitz and Haycraft, Twentieth Century Authors, p. 635. All biographical information is taken from this source unless otherwise indicated.

Pound and Gertrude Stein. He was coached in his writing by his two friends, and, according to Malcolm Cowley, "... what they gave him (or, rather, what they confirmed in him) was an ideal of complete objectivity."[2]

When he had saved a little money, he gave up his job and devoted himself exclusively to his stories, which were successful. He returned in 1927 to the United States and married Pauline Pfeiffer. He divorced her in 1940 and married Martha Gellhorn.

In 1930 he bought a home in Key West, Florida, which is his home today and the scene of To Have and Have Not. He wrote the commentary for the film The Spanish Earth in Spain. His experience in Spain made him an ardent bullfight fan and provided him with the background for Death in the Afternoon and For Whom the Bell Tolls. He is still living and has recently completed another novel, Across the River and into the Trees.

Hemingway's principal works are:

1923- Three Stories and Ten Poems
1924- In Our Time
1926- The Torrents of Spring
1926- The Sun Also Rises
1927- Men Without Women
1929- A Farewell to Arms
1929- Present Day American Stories
1932- Death In the Afternoon
1933- Winner Take Nothing
1935- Green Hills of Africa
1937- To Have and Have Not
1938- The Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories
1940- For Whom the Bell Tolls
1950- Across the River and into the Trees

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2. Malcolm Cowley, introduction to Viking Portable Library Hemingway, p. xiii.

III

> If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. 3

This is Hemingway's philosophy of prose summed up in his own words in Death in the Afternoon. It is an ideal system of prose writing in one respect, because it involves a conviction that stories and scenes can be recorded so vividly that the reader can virtually live the events rather than read them second-hand. Thus, if he reads "The Undefeated," he feels that he has seen a bullfight and not merely read about one. As difficult a task as it may seem, Hemingway accomplishes just that in his earlier works, particularly In Our Time, A Farewell to Arms, and The Sun Also Rises. Carl Van Doren experiences a typical reaction to the author's prose: "His stories seem to be nothing but facts, set one after another without comment. Every fact makes its point and takes another step in the narrative. There are no superfluous words, no visible rhetoric." 4 According to Hemingway's theory, he has simply to select those facts which are most stimulating emotionally to him, and the reader will react to them just as the author does.

When one reads a Hemingway novel or a short story

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3. Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon, p. 192.
4. Carl Van Doren, The American Novel, 1789-1939, p. 340.

or two for the first time, he feels that there is a bareness about them, as if something has been left out that is present in most prose. If he examines carefully, he discovers that aside from the dialogue there is almost nothing but straight narration and statement of physical fact. There is little analysis of the thoughts of his characters, little suggestion on the author's part of the person's motive, and, as far as I can see, no statement of the writer's own prejudices. He contents himself with straight description and dialogue. As Robert Littell says: "He instinctively mistrusts explicitness, analysis, imputation of motives, investigation of the souls of others, qualifying adjectives...." [5] This peculiarity of Hemingway must be recognized in order that his writing may be given fair evaluation.

Since he feels compelled to write in the way described, Hemingway has set himself a difficult task. His characters must be depicted through their own speech and actions without analytical aid from the author. They describe themselves, so to speak, and depend for their existence on their words and their deeds. (This is true of any novel or story, but to a greater extent of Hemingway's). Since characters are possibly the most important element of a story, action and dialogue become doubly important in Hemingway, because his characters are so dependent on them.

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5. Robert Littell, "Notes on Hemingway," The New Republic, LI (Aug. 10, 1927), 305.

What is true for the characters is equally true for the message or point of the story, if it has one. It must be put across through inference and suggestion, as in "The Killers." The writer of stories like these requires a large supply of a certain kind of talent, a talent which combines an extreme sensitivity to words and phrases and an awareness of the potential suggestiveness of actions and objects. Since dialogue plays an important role, the author must also have a good bit of dramatic ability. Oddly enough, Hemingway's play, The Fifth Column, is one of his least successful works.

The second striking characteristic of Hemingway's stories is his selection of characters. His novels and short stories are sprinkled with an odd assortment of alcoholics, worn-out bullfighters, punch-drunk boxers, nymphomaniacs, prostitutes, smugglers, and revolutionists. Even aside from the psychopathic kind, there are many men and women of less privileged classes in his tales; tramps, lumberjacks, Indian girls, and waitresses, for example. Perhaps his reason for his choice of people is much the same as that of Wordsworth, the idea that the simple emotions of the unsophisticated are a truer expression of the human personality. While this might contain a certain amount of truth, it does not explain away the fact that Hemingway's heroes are not usually so simple. They are generally sophisticates who have renounced sophistication and exiled

themselves from all classes of society. The large majority of minor characters are not of this kind, however. Edgar Johnson speaks of Hemingway's selection of characters: "If the adolescents and the pugs and the simple-minded and the illiterates didn't have the answers, neither did the aesthetes and the sophisticates in their dreary world of urban futility."[6]

With the exception of Harry Morgan of To Have and Have Not, the Hemingway hero is of another variety than the commoner minor characters that range through his entire works. Lt. Henry and Jake Barnes are the best examples. They are a "lost generation," as Gertrude Stein puts it. They are the defeated men, the men who have lost faith in organized society, having been disillusioned and frustrated previously, and they occasionally seek sanctuary somewhere (usually a trout stream) to lick their spiritual wounds.

In some ways the heroes of Hemingway's novels are alike. The author's first four novels seem to portray the spiritual development of one man. Jake Barnes of The Sun Also Rises is Hemingway's best example of the disillusioned, purposeless type mentioned before. Then Hemingway wrote about Lt. Henry in A Farewell to Arms to explain how his hero had lost faith and become spiritually desolate. In To Have and Have Not Harry Morgan is the logical result of Barnes' lack of ambition, but finds a certain amount of faith when he dies

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6. Edgar Johnson, "Farewell the Separate Peace," Sewanee Review, XLVIII (July, 1940), 292.

saying, "No man alone now."[7] Finally, Robert Jordan of For Whom the Bell Tolls is a spiritually rejuvenated Jake Barnes with a positive philosophy and a purpose. This indicates that Hemingway suffers from a shortage of heroes, but there is ample compensation in his abundance of minor characters and in his excellence in story-telling.

Hemingway is handicapped in his earlier works by his philosophical outlook or, more exactly, by that of his characters. Somewhere in their lives they have lost faith completely. Upon realizing that the code they inherited is hollow and truthless and that the standards set for them are false, they find themselves unable to formulate a new code or a new sense of values, and because of this, they are spiritually crippled. Robert Jordan is an exception to this and represents a distinct change in the author's philosophy. But many of the earlier characters are without goals and blindly grope around looking for spiritual opiates to render life bearable to them. Negative people such as these are difficult to depict, and it is for this reason that Hemingway resorts to an emphasis on alcohol, sex, dope, and violent action, which is really a stimulant of a sort. The drinking in Hemingway is almost fantastic, sex plays a large part, dope-fiends occur in two or three stories, and there is enough violence in the bullfights, on the battlefield, in barrooms, and in the boxing ring. Maxwell Geismar explains this idiosyncrasy

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7. Hemingway, To Have and Have Not, p. 225.

of the writer in a few words intended to discredit him.

> Thus Hemingway's stress on virile action is merely the masculine counterpart of the emphasis on opiates, until all forms of life are seen as drugs to soothe us, rather than any sort of stimulant to intelligent behavior. 8

Although at least three of Hemingway's novels are generally accepted by most critics as praiseworthy, his real genius lies in his ability to depict short, vivid episodes. Most of these occur as short stories, but there are a few in his novels. Upon recalling Hemingway's novels, one finds that some of the short scenes such as the bullfights in The Sun Also Rises are more memorable than the novel as a whole. The barroom episodes, the flight from Italy to Switzerland across the lake in A Farewell to Arms, many of the fishing scenes (especially Nick Adams'), and numerous others are examples of the author's talent. Some of these scenes are dramatic and others purely descriptive. Hemingway is equally proficient in both. He has an extraordinary ability to bring to the reader's consciousness obvious details that seem to go unnoticed otherwise. And, to add to this, he can take the most ordinary words and phrases and by transposition and repetition give them new connotations and tones.

Two literary devices are used most commonly by Hemingway: irony and symbolism. Not much can be said about

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8. Maxwell Geismar, "No Man Alone Now," Virginia Quarterly Review, XVII (Autumn, 1941), 528.

the use of these generally, but it might be pointed out that his use of the former is subtle enough to retain its effectiveness, and he eventually perfected the use of the latter. "The Killers" is a good example of the first and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" of the second.

IV

"Indian Camp" is the first story of In Our Time. Aside from its value as a short story, it illustrates a technique of Hemingway's used to good effect in many of his tales, especially the ones about Nick Adams. Nick, who is very young in the beginning of In Our Time, grows up and learns about life and how to accept it. Many of the stories of In Our Time concern the process of the introduction of life to the inexperienced hero, Nick. In most cases Hemingway achieves his effect by depicting the contrast between the youthful sensitiveness and naivete of the boy and the stoical acceptance of shocking circumstances by the more hardened and mature characters. Brooks and Warren discuss this method in great detail and summarize their findings in the following statement.

> Hemingway, as a matter of fact, is accustomed to treat his basic situation at one or the other of two levels. There is the story of a person who is already initiated, who already has adopted his appropriate code, or discipline, in the world which otherwise he cannot cope with. There is also the story of the process of the initiation, the discovery of evil and disorder, and the first step toward the mastery of the discipline. This is Nick's story. 9

The quotation alludes to "The Killers," but it applies to "Indian Camp" as well. In other words, Hemingway believes that every mature person has formulated or adopted a protective philosophy, a code, the purpose of which is to shield that person's sensitivities from inevitable terrifying situations and events. A mature person, therefore, is one who has fully perfected his protective philosophy

9. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, Understanding Fiction, p. 322.

and can adequately cope with any circumstance, retaining his mental composure by means of some variety of stoicism. Nick, who is still in the growing stage, has not yet had t time to develop a system of that sort. Confronted with shocking circumstances, he is inexperienced enough to bear the full emotional impact, and it is this impact that Hemingway gets across to the reader, chiefly by the use of contrast of individual reactions.

Nick's initiation in "Indian Camp" is rather a painful one. He finds himself for the first time in immediate contact with pain and death. Naturally, an occasion of this sort is of great importance to an impressionable child. He is introduced to childbirth by his father, a doctor, who allows the boy to accompany him to an Indian camp where a squaw is in labor. Of course, Nick is the uninitiated, whereas the other characters of the story are experienced people accustomed to situations of this sort. As the tale goes, Nick's father finds it necessary to operate and, being without equipment, he operates with a jack-knife using no anaesthetic and sews up the incision with cat-gut fishing leaders. The mother and child survive, but the husband, who is lying in his bunk with a wounded foot, is unable to bear his wife's screams and cuts his own throat with a razor.

If one considers the initiated characters individually, there is first Nick's father, who is unperturbed by the screams

of the squaw. He understand his code when he speaks to Nick: "... her screams are not important. I don't hear them because they are not important."[10] This philosophy is quite prevalent among physicians. The importance of all normal reactions of the patient is minimized, all attention being directed toward symptoms of more vital consequences. Naturally, the doctor is not disturbed by the operation itself, although Nick turns his face away. After the job is over, the doctor is still so unimpressed by the horror of the thing that he boasts gaily of the success of the strange operation.

Uncle George, who also came along to help, is even more insensitive than the doctor. Affecting the attitude that Indians are scarcely human anyway, he curses at the squaw, who bites him while he is holding her; and the Indian helping him is equally indifferent, laughing at Uncle George's outburst.

The squaw and husband are beyond the aid of self-discipline, but many of the other Indians have long ago learned how to cope with such problems. They simply leave the camp where they will be out of earshot of the woman's screams.

Meanwhile, Nick has learned his first lesson. He has begun to develop his protective philosophy regarding pain and death. Afraid and unwilling to associate the incident

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10. Hemingway, "Indian Camp," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 190.

with his own life, he detaches himself from it, and as he returns home in the boat. he feels that he will never die.

"The Killers" is discussed next, because it fits into the same pattern as the previous story. It is probably the best illustration of Hemingway's early theory that if the proper actions and objects are recorded in a story the reader will react to them just as the author did in actual experience. Of course, this theory is inapplicable unless the writer is personally familiar with the details of his story. The circumstances of his contact with these details, which most likely came to him in no special order and over a long period of years, are unimportant to the reader. If the facts are true and recorded in the best way, the reader will have an instinctive feeling of their truth and will seem to have lived the story rather than to have read it.

There is no investigation of motives nor analysis of reactions in "The Killers." There is only dialogue and cold facts following one another in a most deadly manner. Although Hemingway is successful with this technique, he abandons it later in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" for a more conventional one. He succeeds again, showing adeptness in both methods.

"The Killers" is characteristic not only of the author's style but also of his choice of people. There are the gangsters, the boxer, and Nick Adams- all familiar characters in Hemingway's stories. The gangsters are, as

usual, unimaginably inhuman and vicious. Nick is still the simple, hardy boy from the northern woods.

Considering the story first, one finds that the theme is rather elusive, not because of complexity of ideas, but its obviousness is obscured by subtle suggestion and implication. Actually Hemingway is repeating what he said in "Indian Camp." Nick is being introduced to the more shocking aspects of life. In more precise terms, "... the story is about the discovery of evil."[11] Just as in "Indian Camp" there are the initiated and the uninitiated. Everyone has a code or protective philosophy except Nick, who is completely thrown off balance by the incident. The gangsters live by a code of honor that requires that they kill Ole Andreson "for a friend";[12] Andreson accepts this code as right and awaits his death stoically; George knows that "You better not think about it";[13] and the cook refuses to become involved in the situation at all.

The story consists of three scenes, the theme being brought out in the last. The killers invade the lunchroom in the first, disclose their plot, and leave. In the second, Nick warns Andreson, who is excellently characterized in a few words of conversation with Nick. And in the last, the theme of "discovery of evil" is brought out. Hemingway does a magnificent job of maintaining suspense until this last scene.

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11. Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 317.
12. Hemingway, "The Killers," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 381.
13. Ibid., p. 381.

The conversation between the killers and George and Nick at the beginning subtly contains such brutal implications that the expectancy of violence is hair-raising. Even the first few lines, which, when taken literally and without the aid of the imagination, are innocent enough, have a certain sinister ring.

> The door of Henry's lunchroom opened and two men came in. They sat down at the counter.
> "What's yours?" George asked them.
> "I don't know," one of the men said. "What do you want to eat, Al?"
> "I don't know," said Al. "I don't know what I want to eat." 14

The effectiveness of these lines is in Al's repetition. It is artificial and somehow insolent. It is so unnatural that it implies that the reason for their presence is not an ordinary one. Al and Max then begin to bully George verbally, the latter not daring to retaliate. When the killers have eaten, they make arrangements for the murder of Ole Andreson, their casual manner effecting a horrible contrast to the true grimness of the situation. Speaking of Al, Hemingway says: "He was like a photographer arranging for a group picture." 15

When the killers leave, Nick goes to warn Ole Andreson at his boarding house. Andreson is not surprised that he is being sought after by killers. Neither does he appear afraid. Like many of Hemingway's characters he simply accepts his fate as inevitable. This particular type of Hemingway character is described roughly in a statement by

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14. Ibid., p. 881.
15. Ibid., p. 881.

Brooks and Warren,

> They are not defeated except upon their own terms; some of them have even courted defeat; certainly they have maintained, even in the practical defeat, an ideal of themselves, formulated or unformulated, by which they have lived. 16

Another comment is made on the Hemingway hero by Wyndham Lewis in Men Without Art: "He is in the multitudinous ranks of those to whom things happen- terrible things, of course, and of course, stoically borne."[17] Anderson has broken the rules of his own code and must pay for it.

Mrs. Bell has been compared to the porter at Hell's Gate in Macbeth. "She is the world of normality, which is shocking now from the very fact that it continues to flow on in its usual course."[18] This comparison is to some extent valid. Mrs. Bell, like the porter, is merely a device used to bring about an ironical situation.

The third part of the story emphasizes the discovery-of-evil theme mentioned previously. Nick Adams' character is brought in contrast to that of George. Nick is obviously genuinely shocked by the incident. He is unable to adjust himself to these new and appalling conditions, and his first reaction is to get out of town, as far away from the whole affair as possible. He is being initiated just as he was in "Indian Camp." But George has the saving answer: "Well, you

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16. Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 320.
17. Wyndham Lewis, "Ernest Hemingway, the 'Dumb Ox'," Men Without Art, p. 18.
18. Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 319.

better not think about it."[19]

Brooks and Warren comment on the dialogue of "The Killers": "The dialogue itself has the sleazy quality of mechanized gag and wisecrack, a kind of inflexible and stereotyped banter that is always a priori to the situation and overrides the situation."[20] The killers looked and talked like a "vaudeville team," as Hemingway expressed it.[21] This intentional artificial quality of the killers, together with the grim suggestion of their terrible purpose, constitutes a subtle form of irony. "Hemingway created a scene of extraordinarily sinister, accurate excitement- 'The Killers' with its queer, vague, menacing relevance to what is about to happen."[22] The same writer says again: "The small pieces of dialogue in 'The Killers' are more highly charged than in his other stories."[23]

Brooks and Warren argue that the theme of "The Killers" is, in a sense, much the same as the Hamlet theme. The only similarity I can see is in the situations. Both Hamlet and Nick are thrown in contact with evil, and they are both faced with the problem of how to react, how to accept appalling and dreadful facts. But this is as far as the rather weak comparison goes. Further likening would probably prove ridiculous.

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19. Hemingway, "The Killers," op. cit., p. 387.
20. Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 518.
21. Hemingway, "The Killers," op. cit., p. 383.
22. Robert Littell, "Notes on Hemingway," The New Republic, LI (Aug, 10, 1927), 305.
23. Ibid., p. 305.

There are three essentially Hemingway elements in "The Killers." The first involves the characters of the people of the story. They are beaten men who have either selected or originated some code by which to live, that they may become adjusted to life and not be continually horror-stricken as was Nick. There is the gangster code, which is accepted by Ole Andreson, and there is the philosophy of George and the cook, who have learned not to think about such incidents.

Nick Adams is the second element. He is the innocent one who makes the discovery and is being initiated.

The third element is the dialogue, which is probably the writer's most distinctive characteristic. The sentences of the speakers are nearly always short, containing nothing nonessential. The thoughts expressed are always concrete, unmixed with abstractions. But even with this, the dialogue has a convincing and highly realistic quality due in a large part to the author's almost complete objectivity. It might also be added that repetition of words and phrases is a very common device of Hemingway. There are many examples of this, other than the one cited, in the same story as well as in other stories.

> In no other writer of our time can you find such a profusion of corpses: dead women in the rain; soldiers bloated in their uniforms and surrounded by torn papers; sunken liners full of bodies that float past the closed portholes. In no other writer can you find so many suffering animals: mules with their forelegs broken drowning in the 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, veterans--, lesbians, nymphomaniacs, bullfighters who have lost their nerve, men who lie awake all night while their brains get to racing like a "flywheel with the weight gone." 24

Cowley appropriately calls scenes like the ones quoted "nightmares at noonday."[25] This type of story is the most common of all found in Hemingway. Generally speaking, it consists of two violently contrasting situations. There is the background or setting of the story, which is pleasant and satisfying, and there is the story itself, which is nightmarish and shocking in the extreme but at the same time credible.

"An Alpine Idyll" fits into the category mentioned. The story is about two men who have been skiing in the Alps and are just returning to the inn where they stay. En route to the inn, they pass a sexton and Swiss peasant covering a fresh grave. They pass on to the inn, where they sit at one of the tables and drink beer. Presently the sexton and peasant arrive, sit at another table with the innkeeper, and

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24. Malcolm Cowley, introduction to Viking Portable Library Hemingway, p. viii.

25. Ibid.

carry on an extended conversation, which ends only when the peasant leaves. The innkeeper then begins to tell the two skiers a gruesomely shocking tale about the peasant.

The peasant's wife had died at their remote home during an unusually hard snowstorm. The snow had prevented him from bringing her to town to be buried; so he put her in the cold woodshed where she would keep until he could bring her in. She became frozen stiff, and, having been leaned against the wall in a standing posture with her mouth open, she conveniently served as a lantern stand for her husband, who hung his lantern from her mouth every time he chopped wood at night. Upon being questioned later by the priest, he confessed what he had done. He had done this every time he worked in the shed at night. When asked if he loved her, he replied that he most certainly did. The innkeeper and the priest were both disgusted by the peasant's story, but the sexton thought it rather funny.

The force of the story is supplied by the last several lines: "'Say,' said John. 'How about eating?' 'All right,' I said."[26] This is the same type of irony employed in "The Killers" in the scene at Ole Andreson's boarding house. Devices of this sort are usually too artificial to be successful, but in this case there is nothing unnatural about John's nonchalant reference to eating. After the innkeeper has declared that

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26. Hemingway, "An Alpine Idyll," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 447.

peasants are beasts, further comment would be superfluous; so John returns to the original topic of conversation. His remark seems quite normal and unaffected.

"An Alpine Idyll" is one of the type of stories described previously in this chapter. It has the "noonday" background, the pleasing and picturesque atmosphere of a Swiss inn in the Alps. Conflicting with this is the horrifying tale told by the innkeeper: certainly a nightmare. To add to this, there is the unemotional acceptance of the story by the two skiers, an undisturbed reaction typical of many of Hemingway's characters.

"Today is Friday" is very similar to the last story. Both occur in drinking establishments of rather jovial atmosphere, and both present a contrast between the setting and the topic of conversation. "Today is Friday" takes place in a barroom in Palestine on Friday night, the day of Christ's crucifixion. The crucifixion is discussed by three Roman soldiers and a Jewish bartender. The story--or short play, really--relies for its effect on the contrast between the tough, callous atmosphere of the barroom and the sacred nature of the crucifixion story. The question arises: Would the story be as moving for a reader unfamiliar with Christ's life and holiness as for one who has been accustomed to treat the story reverently? Most likely it would not. To some extent Hemingway takes advantage of the Christian reader's reluctance even to consider the matter in an irreligious way. The second

soldier's comments are disrespectful and border on blasphemy and are, therefore, shocking to the inhibited reader. The story is weak in this respect, because the use of blasphemy to arouse the emotions of the reader is hardly a fair literary device.

The characterizations are very good considering the brevity of the scene. The first soldier openly admires Christ. He often repeats: "He was pretty good in there today."[27] It is later disclosed that it was he who stuck the spear into Christ's side.

The second soldier is the most unconcerned of the three. He attributes the remorse of the first and the physical ailments of the third to their prolonged residence among Jews and other non-Romans.

The Jewish barman is eager to display disinterest in the crucifixion: "'I'll tell you, gentlemen. I wasn't out there. It's a thing I haven't taken any interest in.'" And again: "'No, I didn't take any interest in it, Lootenant.'"[28] Obviously afraid that taking sides will ruin his business, he remains unbiased and over-polite to the soldiers.

The last line is another example of Hemingway's casual matter-of-factness following rather shocking circumstances. The second soldier comments on the third's illness: "'You been out here too long. That's all.'"[29]

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22. Hemingway, "Today is Friday," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 456.
28. Ibid., p. 455.
29. Ibid., p. 457.

Other stories of the same kind as the ones discussed could be cited as examples, but it is sufficient to analyze only the two mentioned as typical representatives of a large class of episodes which occur not only in the author's short stories, but also in his novels.

VI

Before discussing the stories that illustrate the writer's philosophical outlook, the title of the book Winner Take Nothing, from which the two stories discussed are taken, deserves comment. It is taken from a quotation included at the beginning of the book.

> Unlike all other forms of lutte or combat the conditions are that the winner shall take nothing; neither his ease, nor his pleasure, nor any notions of glory; nor, if he win far enough, shall there be any reward within himself.

This quotation expresses in condensed form the total of Hemingway's philosophical findings expressed in his writing up to that point. Generally speaking, all the writer's heroes before Robert Jordan of For Whom the Bell Tolls have suffered from a spiritual malady resulting from their conviction that, as far as major considerations are concerned, life is purposeless and without reward. In their efforts to alleviate the discomforts of this philosophy, they sometimes resort to physical excesses and reckless living to bring about forgetfulness. But many of them, even in deepest despair concerning their plight, preserve an ideal of themselves--something to be lived by and to give some order to an otherwise chaotic existence. Often they attribute to themselves particular characteristics which they admire, but when they are alone at night and have left their artificial system of living, they lie awake with their brains racing like a "flywheel with the weight gone."[30]

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30. Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 361.

Such a man is the old drunkard of "A Clean, Well-lighted Place." He has come to a restaurant to spend the night and sits there drinking. The two waiters discuss him, and it is disclosed that he recently attempted suicide. The younger of the two waiters has no sympathy for the customer, but the older one has and tries to explain. The younger man is inattentive, however, and leaves the older one in the restaurant musing over the matter. Wondering why he is afraid to go home at night, he thinks:

> What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it was all nada*... 31

The philosophy here is clear. The realization of life's purposelessness has suddenly become clear to him, and the importance of man is reduced to zero.

The tale is also a good example of Hemingway's use of symbolism. To the old man a clean, well-lighted restaurant symbolizes all the necessary appearances that must be kept up as requisites for an empty life. Above all, he cherishes dignity: "... a very old man, walking unsteadily but with dignity."[32] A clean restaurant with good lights did have dignity and bolstered the old man's pride.

The story ends with the waiter's ironic observation

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* Translated, the word nada means "nothing."

31. Hemingway, "A Clean, Well-lighted Place," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 480-481.

32. Ibid., p. 479.

on his own sleeplessness: "... it is probably only insomnia. Many must have it."[33]

"The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," in its philosophy, is closely akin to "A Clean Well-lighted Place." As in the latter, the philosophical implications are brought out by an observer who has no real part in the important action. It is a considerably better story than "A Clean, Well-lighted Place," however, because a critical situation exists. A gambler has been wounded by a would-be assassin, and because he feels a certain amount of honor and pride in his profession, he refuses to tell the police who shot him.

The setting of the story is very characteristic of Hemingway. It takes place in a hospital, where the most fundamental stages of human life are ever present--death, pain, and birth. As the hero, Mr. Frazer, says: "Everything is much simpler in the hospital, including the jokes."[34]

A wounded gambler is brought to the hospital, where he is questioned by the police. The gambler speaks only Spanish, and Mr. Frazer, another patient, translates his remarks to the police. The gambler refuses to disclose the identity of his attacker even after Mr. Frazer advises him: "One can, with honor, denounce one's assailant."[35] Unsuccessful, the police leave, and the gambler is taken over by the doctors. Mr. Frazer takes an interest in the case, making it a point

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33. Ibid., p. 481.
34. Hemingway, "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 571.
35. Ibid., p. 568.

well."[36] The same philosophy is inferred here that was set forth in "A Clean Well-lighted Place," but in more effective words. These two stories express the philosophical tone of all the writer's prose up until *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 584-5.

VII

In this chapter the stories cited will be those which stress character rather than incident. Character is very often the most important element of a story, and, therefore, it is no coincidence that these last few stories are some of Hemingway's best. I do not mean to imply that character is intentionally neglected in the author's other tales. But it was sometimes overshadowed by the nightmarish qualities of the incidents.

Befor the discussion of "The Undefeated" a few words should be said about bullfights and Death in the Afternoon. Death in the Afternoon is an elaborate introduction to the art of bullfighting and contains much of the author's philosophy. A reading of this book eliminates much of the misunderstanding of Hemingway and serves as a good background for the reading of his fiction.

Hemingway first became interested in bullfighting when he was learning to write. The war had provided him with his first subject matter, and afterwards he went about seeking other subjects. Although the sport was not familiar to him, he knew enough of it through hearsay to suspect that it was what he wanted to write about. He says in explanation of his choice of this subject:

> The only place where you could see life and death, i.e., violent death now that the war was over, was in the bull ring and I wanted very much to go to Spain where I could study it. I was trying to learn to write, commencing with the simplest things, and one of the simplest things of all and the most

fundamental is violent death. 37

He later says that death in the bull ring is not half so simple as he had anticipated and actually not the subject for a writer without much experience. Nevertheless, he succeeded admirably in depicting bullfights in all their phases; so the subject could not have been too unsuitable.

Hemingway believes bullfighting to be one of the noblest and most original arts, because it is the only art that involves the possibility of violent death of the artist. Of course, the matador is the artist. True to his Spanish blood, he should show pride and arrogance in the presence of an enraged bull, contempt for danger, and indifference to the bull's near successes. Cowardice is to be avoided at all costs.

The essence of the bullfight is the tragedy of the bull. The deaths of men and horses are incidental to this. A good bull is possessed of noble and admirable qualities such as pride, courage, and daring, and his death should not be regarded as simply the death of an animal. It is a tragedy in the true sense, the death of a noble spirit. The spectator should react in much the same way as he would to a showing of Macbeth or Hamlet. Hemingway describes his own reaction in the following few lines.

... the bullfight is very moral to me because

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37. Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon, p. 2.

> I feel very fine while it is going on and have a feeling of life and death and mortality and immortality, and after it is over I feel very sad but very fine. 38

Hemingway defends bullfights against horrified tourists and others who object to them on moral grounds. In particular, he defends the killing of horses and the applause of the audience when they are killed. The audience does not applaud the death of the horse, but the bravery of the bull. And as for the horses themselves, their death is not particularly stirring, because the interest is centered exclusively on the bull. The writer offers the following explanation for the spectators' disinterest in the death of horses.

> The question of why the death of the horse in the bull ring is not moving, not moving to some people, that is, is complicated; but the fundamental reason may be that the death of the horse tends to be comic while that of the bull is tragic, ... I have seen these, call them disemboweling, that is the worst word, when, due to their timing, they were very funny. 39

One of the most important phases of the bullfight is the last, in which the bull is killed. There are some matadors who do not like to kill at all and others who are so terrified of the horns at close range that they sometimes decide at the last minute to let another fighter do the job. A really good matador must enjoy killing for its own sake, as one who would enjoy an art.

A great killer must love to kill; unless he

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38. Ibid., p. 4.
39. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

> feels it is the best thing he can do, unless he is conscious of its dignity and feels that it is its own reward, he will be incapable of the abnegation that is necessary in real killing. ... 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. 40

"The Undefeated" is one of Hemingway's best and most important short stories. It earns this distinction through its sympathetic and understanding treatment of the hero, Manuel. For once, the more bestial aspects of bullfighting are of secondary importance, and the matador, the man who spills his own blood as well as the bull's for the entertainment of bullfight aficionados* is given primary consideration. It is strangely paradoxical that a true lover of bullfights like Hemingway, who has seen bullfights in their most gruesome and shocking phases, who has seen the horses disembowelled and the fighters gored, can at the same moment understand with sympathy the matador, the bull, and the audience. This understanding of the three elements gives "The Undefeated" a fatalistic quality. Manuel moves blindly on toward his failure, one inevitable mistake following another.

It is impossible to say how much of "The Undefeated" is based on actual fact. Judging from the accounts given in Death in the Afternoon, Hemingway borrows his details from a number of different fights, selecting the ones he finds most

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40. Ibid., p. 232.

* Aficionados are enthusiastic bullfight fans.

useful and mixing them together for his fictional product. His matadors also have some claim to authenticity. Manuel is most probably named for the celebrated matador, Manuel Garcia Maera, who was killed in the ring fairly recently. Zurito, who is Manuel's picador in "The Undefeated," is also named in honor of a distinguished bullfighter. The incidents described in the bullfight part of the story are nearly all recorded in Death in the Afternoon.

Manuel is a veteran bullfighter whose trade has become so much a part of him that he cannot leave it although he consciously realizes that he is too old and has lost his nerve. When asked by his friend Zurito why he does not give up bullfighting, he replies simply that he does not know but that he is compelled to stick with it. He attributes his unpopularity to the fickleness of the fans and bad luck in the ring. He believes that if he were given an even chance and a good picador he could regain his confidence and his reputation as a first-rate matador. Part of this is true. Audiences are always interested in new matadors and tend to disregard the veterans. It is more difficult to attain success in the bull ring the second time than it is the first. This is the only real excuse that Manuel can offer for his refusal to surrender.

With much difficulty he secures a job to fight at night for a very small sum of money. He also succeeds in hiring one of the best picadors in the country, Zurito. His chances for success are about as favorable as can be expected

under the circumstances, but when he gets in the ring with the bull, he can only perform routine maneuvers and fails in the killing of the animal. Hemingway uses a rather clever device to emphasize the pathetic nature of Manuel's attempts at bullfighting. He quotes the remarks of a critic who writes up the fights for a newspaper. The critic is altogether disinterested and reluctant to give Manuel credit for his efforts. Manuel is in the ring putting forth the best that old age and nervousness can muster, risking his life with every charge, while the critic sits complacently in the stands reflecting that bullfighters are nothing but bums anyway.

When Manuel has failed four times to kill the bull, the crowd begins to throw cushions, leather wine bottles, and vegetables at him. Enraged with the spectators and the bull, Manuel finds his courage and kills the animal. He has been gored once, and his associates carry him off to the infirmary. Even in disgrace, Manuel clings tenaciously to his faith in himself. "'I was going good,' Manuel said. 'I didn't have any luck. That was all.'"[41] Zurito agrees.

"The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" is also a good story and tells something of Nick Adams' parents. It is composed of two scenes, the second of which is more important. In the first the doctor and three hired Indians (Dick Boulton, Eddie, and Billy Tabeshaw) are salvaging neglected timber from

41. Hemingway, "The Undefeated," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 365.

the river. The timber is really the property of some logging company, but the doctor always assumes that it will never be recovered and uses it for firewood. But this time Boulton decides to make trouble. Insinuating that the doctor is stealing the timber, Boulton forces him to lose his temper, and a fight almost ensues. But the doctor realizes that he is outmanned, turns on his heel, and goes back to the cottage, having lost face completely. Boulton's sarcastic and insinuating remarks, embarrassing the doctor to the verge of violence, brought on a tense and typically Hemingway scene.

The second and more important scene follows as a direct result of the first. The doctor talks of the incident to his Christian Scientist wife. Apparently she is a hypochondriac and having been indulged and pampered most of her life, spends considerable time in bed, reading Christian Science magazines and brooding over her illness. The doctor and his wife are skillfully characterized by their contrasting interpretations of the Boulton incident. He realistically sums up the situation by explaining that Boulton owed him money and wanted a row so that he would not have to work the debt off. She betrays her inexperience and idealistic approach to real problems of which she is ignorant when she tells the doctor that she cannot believe that Boulton would do a thing like that. Suddenly, after only a few words between husband and wife, their lack of mutual understanding becomes perfectly clear. The doctor has become accustomed to this from long

experience, however, and does not trouble to debate the question.

After leaving his wife the doctor encounters Nick outside of the house and informs him that Mrs. Adams wishes to see him. Nick ignores his mother's summons and tells the doctor he would rather go hunting with him. The doctor assents.

In one way "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" resembles "Indian Camp." In both cases there is the conflict between two dissimilar reactions to the same incident. In the first story this conflict is used to illustrate Nick's introduction to life, and in the second it is used to characterize two people through contrast.

In "Soldier's Home" Hemingway uses the same technique, only this time the misunderstanding between mother and son is even more drastic. Krebs is an excellent example of a certain type of Hemingway character whose most pronounced trait is the desire to avoid problems rather than to solve them. This tendency is analogous to the craving for alcohol and violence of many other of the writer's characters.

Krebs has recently completed several years of active military service in World War I. He has become adjusted to the army and in many ways likes it. Accustomed to the rugged simplicity of military life, he finds the return to civilian status distasteful and, above all, loaded with complications and responsibilities. He is tired of the intricacies of life and has lost his desire to take up where he had left off. He does not want to become involved in anything complicated, anything

that requires diplomacy, maneuvering, or lies. Especially, he wants his life to run smoothly and simply with little conscious effort on his part. Finding work or a girl is too complicated, and he would rather do without either. In addition to this, he is disgusted with the lies that he has told about the war and in some ways wishes he had not left Germany, where living was comparatively simple. He therefore loafs around the home, a frustrated and ambitionless man in a world of normalcy.

Krebs' family, who have not been shaken from their normal routine, cannot understand him. This misunderstanding is brought out through Krebs' mother. She is a typical Christian mother, deeply religious, and devoted to her son's welfare. Her character, however, is set in such violent contrast to her son's attitude and to the flat, materialistic tone of the story that she appears ludicrous, and the relationship between mother and son becomes embarrassing for this reason.

Most of the story deals with Krebs: his reaction to the war, his general feeling of listlessness, and his desire to avoid problems and responsibilities. The climax comes with his mother's entreaty that he try soon for a job. Krebs listens to her without enthusiasm until she has finished, and when she asks him rather sentimentally if he loves her, he replies, no. There is a painful interval of silence, but finally Krebs brings about a reconciliation with his tearful mother by retracting his answer. He leaves her then, regretting

that he had been forced to lie again, and reflecting that there will probably be one more scene like this before he finds a job.

Malcolm Cowley makes the following statement about "The Snows of Kilimanjaro."

> Technically "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" is Hemingway's most accomplished piece of writing. That isn't the same as calling it his best piece of writing, but it is very good indeed: firm, [42] subtle, and having the eloquence of deep feeling.

This is a very accurate general evaluation of the story, but even with its technical perfection, it is doubtful whether it will survive as long as "The Undefeated." The latter contains more human interest, an element indispensable to the lasting popularity of prose.

The technical improvement over the writer's other prose is immediately evident. The younger and cruder style of "The Killers" has been polished and smoothed so that "The Snows" can never be criticized on grounds of jerky dialogue or abrupt phrases. The somewhat exaggeratedly short dialogue has been toned down to a more natural and more easily read variety. It has been generally observed that Hemingway can, and sometimes does, exhibit a form of prose that contains distinct lyrical qualities. The best examples of this lyrical quality are to be found in "The Snows," and if these examples are unconvincing, then it would be difficult to find others

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42. Malcolm Cowley, op. cit., p. 599.

more satisfactory. Unversed in the elements of lyrical prose, I can only explain this effect in Hemingway's writing by pointing out that some of the italicized passages of the story have a smooth-running quality that is not found in most prose. Perhaps this style is due to the influence of Gertrude Stein. One striking characteristic of this prose is the repeated recurrence of the word "and." My own conclusion is that to develop this new style Hemingway has merely mixed his old style with a few conjunctions (a slightly excessive number, perhaps) to produce a more fluent prose. But even if this is true, it is not a system to be underrated, for the writer must be judiciously careful lest he overdo a good thing, so to speak, and render his writing offensively monotonous by too frequent repetition of these conjunctions. The following is an example of the lyrical style exhibited in "The Snows."

> Now in his mind he saw a railway station at Karagatch and he was standing with his pack and that was the headlight of the Simplon-Orient cutting the dark now and he was leaving Thrace then after the retreat. That was one of the things he had saved to write, with, in the morning at breakfast, looking out the window and seeing snow on the mountains in Bulgaria and Hansen's Secretary asking the old man if it were snow and the old man looking at it and saying, No, that's not snow. It's too early for snow. 43

Aside from the style itself, there is another change in the author's writing.

There is the contrast with his earlier work which

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43. Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 153-4.

> consisted of "what truly happened"-- that is, what the hero saw, what he heard or said, and what he did as a result; you had to guess at his emotions. Here the story turns inward....44

Most of the story consists of the hero's, Harry's, conscious and unconscious reflections on his wasted life. It is the portrait of a man dying as told from the man's own point of view. Incapacitated by a trivial thorn scratch which has become gangrenous, he lies stretched under a mimosa tree, abusively taunting a woman, Helen, and watching with morbid fascination the vultures which have followed them.

"Death has always been Hemingway's principal theme, but this is the first story (except for the very brief Chapter XIV of In Our Time) in which it is described from within the hero's mind."[45] This is a restatement that the author has discarded his antipathy for analyzing minds and motives. Freed from this, he writes even more effectively. Never before has Hemingway caught the smell of death or the character of a dying man so clearly in a few pages. Death as the subject of a story lent itself well to the writer, who has written about it many times before and has apparently been in close contact with it himself. Not only that, but death holds an irresistable fascination for Hemingway: death on the battle-field, death in the bull ring, death in childbirth, death of animals, all continually recurring in his stories and novels.

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44. Malcolm Cowley, op. cit., p. 599.
45. Ibid., p. 600.

In "The Snows" it is the constant and skilled use of symbolism that charges the atmosphere with the heavy, oppressive feel of death. The snows, the hyena, the vultures, the smell of Harry's gangrenous leg, and finally, the trip in an imaginary airplane are constant reminders of death's presence. But all of these symbols seem natural and are woven into the story so skillfully that there is no obvious artificiality about them. Nor are these symbols so carefully worked out that the reader is continually aware of the existence of an author plotting and contriving to construct perfectly accurate symbols.

There is an italicized paragraph at the beginning of the story which explains the snow symbolism and sets the mood.

> Kilimanjaro is a snow-covered mountain 19,710 feet high, and is said to be the highest mountain in Africa. Its western summit is called the Masai "Ngaje Ngai," the House of God. Close to the western summit there is the dried and frozen carcass of a leopard. No one has explained what the leopard was seeking at that altitude. 46

Aside from the association of the snows with death, there is a bit of irony in the paragraph: the conflict between the apparent symbolical trip of the leopard to attain the House of God and the reality of a dumb beast that strayed from its clime and froze to death on top of a mountain. A more practical value of the passage is that it sets the approximate scene of the tale.

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46. Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 150.

The story begins with a conversation between Harry and Helen about his infected leg. Death shows itself immediately in another form besides the odor of the infected leg. "... out past the shade onto the glare of the plain there were three of the big birds squatted obscenely, while in the sky a dozen more sailed, making quick-moving shadows as they passed."[47] Harry remarks bitterly on this and then begins to brace himself psychologically by abusing and blaming his woman. He feels that if he can learn to hate everything that he is leaving behind, he can die without regrets, become resigned to something he has always feared. Dying has already lost most of its terrors for him. It is surprising to him how death is made easy by being tired enough. He begins to speculate on his condition, and there are echoes of Lt. Henry's feelings about the death of Catherine in A Farewell to Arms. Harry thinks: "So this is the way it ended in a bickering over a drink."[48]

We learn from the man's musings that he is a writer who has intended to write a great deal but has put it off until it is too late. He dreams about the things he had intended to write about and did not. These passages of Harry's dreaming are written in a smooth-flowing, stream-of-consciousness style. They are experiences and parts of experiences that Harry had planned to write about, and we may gather from

47. Ibid., p. 150.
48. Ibid., p. 158.

them that the man actually had something to write about and was not simply dreaming of a talent that had not existed. When he has finished dreaming, he thinks again about his failure as a writer. He had believed that writing was his one talent and wonders now why he had not made his living that way. Sometimes he suspected that he and no talent at all and that, knowing this subconsciously, he had procrastinated deliberately. But that was not what caused him bitterness. "He had destroyed his talent himself. ... It was a talent all right but instead of using it, he had traded on it. It was never what he had done, but always what he could do."[49] He had used it to get married, and now that he looked back on his marriages, it seemed a strange coincidence that all his wives had been very rich. But even when he lived among these rich people, these people that he thought he hated, he told himself that he was not really one of them; that he was simply living with them temporarily and would eventually write about all of it. He had not written though, and the longer he lived that way, the less he felt inclined to write.

After thinking of all this, he gives up abusing the woman and dreams about more of the things he had wanted to write about. Later Harry feels the first touch of death when the hyena stalks around the camp. "It came with a rush; not as a rush of water nor of wind; but of a sudden evil-smelling emptiness and the odd thing was that the hyena

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49. Ibid., p. 156.

slipped lightly along the edge of it."[50] The hyena is suggested when death comes again later. It "rested its head on the foot of the cot and he could smell its breath."[51] Then it became a shapeless, invisible thing that sat on his chest so that he could hardly breathe. Harry did not regain consciousness after this, but dreamed it was the next day and he was being taken away by plane. After flying through storms, the plane eventually broke into the clear, and Harry saw where he had been taken. "... and there, ahead, all he could see, as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro. And then he knew that there was where he was going."[52] It is night now, and Helen is awakened by the cry of the hyena. She calls to Harry and finds him dead.

Like the previous story, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" was born of Hemingway's African experience. The descriptive details of the landscape, the lion hunt, and the buffalo hunt give the impression of absolute accuracy. This quality of accuracy is also present in "The Snows." In addition to this likeness, there is also a similarity between the two protagonists, Harry and Macomber. As Malcolm Cowley says, they are men caught in impossible situations who escape only by death.[53] Macomber finds himself to be a coward. He

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50. Ibid., p. 162.
51. Ibid., p. 172.
52. Ibid., p. 174.
53. Malcolm Cowley, op. cit., p. 558.

later regains his courage only to be killed by his wife, who could not tolerate a husband who would refuse to be dominated by her.

The prose style is much like that of "The Snows." It is more conventional than that of his early stories. Another technical difference is the order of the relation of facts. For the first time, Hemingway plunges the reader *in medias res*. The reason for the use of this method is doubtful. It does provide the first scene with an atmosphere of uncertainty and mystery, but on the other hand, it violates Hemingway's early theory that stories should be told exactly as they happened, the order of events being as accurate as their description. That is more evidence of the writer's change toward orthodoxy.

Francis Macomber and his wife Margot are on a hunting expedition in Africa with their guide, Robert Wilson. While hunting down a wounded lion in the brush, Macomber suddenly loses his nerve and runs away. Wilson finishes the lion, but the incident is by no means closed. Margot, who finds a savage delight in bullying her husband, taunts him about his cowardice and turns her attention to Wilson. She has been unfaithful to her husband before, and Macomber is without the strength to control her. The day after the lion hunt Macomber distinguishes himself shooting buffalo. He feels that he has just begun to live, and even as he is redeeming himself for his cowardice of the day before, Margot shoots him. She apparently cannot

abide her husband's escape from her contempt and mastery of him.

Unfortunately, "The Short Happy Life" is found distasteful by most people for two reasons. First, its characters are objectionable. They are of the rich, fast, sporting set, which Hemingway has delighted in satirizing periodically throughout his works. Their superficiality, depravity, and pettiness are rendered even more contemptible in Hemingway than in life. This is hardly conducive to sympathetic understanding of the characters by the reader. The second objectionable trait is Hemingway's primordial sense of values. He continually glorifies such characteristics as physical courage, toughness, and manly independence. These qualities are admirable in moderation, but in "The Short Happy Life" they are held forth as the supreme virtues of man. Macomber's life only begins when he has acquired these traits and has mastered his fear. This is not Hemingway's only tale in which hyper-masculinity is exalted, but here the glorification is more pronounced and obvious.

Neither of these criticisms is valid from a literary point of view. But, nevertheless, they detract from the popularity of the story.

"Big Two-Hearted River: Part I" and "Big Two-Hearted River: Part II" are really one story and will be considered as such. The best of the stories about Nick Adams, "Big Two-Hearted River" is Hemingway's only story which is completely

disconnected from the world of reality. The degenerate international set, violent death in the bull ring and battlefield, and all of the author's perennial nightmares are relegated to the background and to Nick's tortured memories, which he has successfully stifled for the time being. The hero has returned to the scene of his childhood, to the cold trout stream and big timber country of his early years.

The story is simple, and Nick's actions are elemental to the extent of seeming primitive. Leaving behind him all the complications of civilization, he gets off a train with the intention of fishing a few days in a trout stream. He makes his camp and spends the night by the stream. He fishes the next day and is happy in the realization that there will be more days like this one.

Hemingway particularly emphasizes sensory details in "Big Two-Hearted River." Nick cherishes all that he sees and feels and tastes. He enjoys these sensations at his leisure. Eating, sleeping, and fishing seem to have a special significance for Nick, and he is careful lest he should fail to derive the maximum of pleasure from each of them. Offhand, "Big Two-Hearted River" seems to be only a vivid account of a fishing trip. There appears to be no meaning to the story. However, it has a great deal of meaning for the reader who is familiar with the Hemingway world of nightmares, from which Nick is escaping. Malcolm Cowley explains this second level of meaning.

The river described in it remains completely

> real for us; but also... it has the quality of a waking dream. Although the events in the foreground are described with superb accuracy and for their own sake, we now perceive what we probably missed at a first reading: that there are shadows in the background and that part of the story takes place in an inner world. We notice that Nick Adams regards his fishing trip as an escape, either from nightmares or from realities that have become a nightmare. 54

The "shadows in the background" are suggested to the reader through Nick's obsessed preoccupation with simple, fundamental actions. He is a lost soul who has come to doubt the reality of most human values and clings fast to the few elemental phases of life which he knows to be true and real. Only when he has reverted to this primitive mode of life is he on congenial terms with his environment. The over-emphasis of primitivism suggests its own antithesis, the "civilized," sophisticated world of artificiality. These suggestions are the shadows to which Cowley alludes.

Of course, the fishing trip is an escape for Nick. It is an escape to the ideal world of his youth, the only world which he has understood and loved. Here he can undergo a kind of spiritual recuperation before returning to the chaos of organized human existence.

As in the preceding story, masculine independence and self-sufficiency are again stressed, but not to excess this time. They blend harmoniously with the primitive

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54. Malcolm Cowley, op. cit., p. x.

background.

"Big Two-Hearted River" is the most accurate and vivid of Hemingway's fishing episodes. All others, no matter how good, seem to be imitations of it.

"The Sea Change" is one of the best of Hemingway's very short stories. It is a brief barroom conversation between a man, a woman, and a bartender, but primarily it is a study in the degeneration of a man placed in unfavorable circumstances. The title itself is an ironic reference to the change which takes place in the man.

The story begins with a rather mysterious dispute between a man and woman, seated in a bar. It is subtly revealed that the woman has announced her intended desertion of the man for a woman. Her absence from him is to be short-lived, however, and she is trying to effect a reconciliation by persuading him to accept the desertion in a rational, worldly way, so that upon her return to him they may continue friendly relations as if nothing had happened. The man finds it difficult to regard the situation so objectively and tells the woman not to return if she leaves. However, when he realizes that she is intent on going despite his persuasions to the contrary, he suddenly feels a change taking place within himself and hears his own voice, which sounds strange to him now, telling her that she may go. She leaves the room, and the man, amazed at his change of heart, walks over to the bar and muses about

the power and effects of vice. The last few ironic lines are worth quoting. (The man is speaking to the bartender).

> The young man saw himself in the mirror behind the bar. "I said I was a different man, James," he said. Looking into the mirror he saw that this was quite true.
> "You look very well, sir," James said. "You must have had a very good summer." 55

"A Pursuit Race" is the most blunt illustration of Hemingway's emphasis on opiates. The leading character, William Campbell, is an advance agent for a burlesque show. He also rides in pursuit races sponsored by the show. He has abandoned his work, however, in favor of whiskey and dope. When the show reaches Kansas City, the manager finds Campbell in bed with a bottle of whiskey. There are hypodermic needle marks on his arm. He is just inebriated enough to make ludicrous comments, which are, however, not without meaning. In a few words of drunken advice to his manager, Campbell betrays his bitterness and the causes of it. He tells the manager to keep away from women, horses, and eagles, eagles apparently symbolizing patriotism. Turner, the manager, leaves but returns later and finds Campbell asleep. "... as Mr. Turner was a man who knew what things in life were very valuable he did not wake him." 56

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55. Hemingway, "The Sea Change," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 499.
56. Hemingway, "A Pursuit Race," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 455.

## VIII

The stories considered in this chapter will not be analyzed at length as the others were. This is not because they are not good stories. It is because Hemingway is a very limited writer, and the same ideas appear again and again in his work, thus rendering exhaustive analysis of his tales repetitious and fruitless. Many of the stories mentioned here will fit into the categories previously discussed.

"The End of Something," "The Battler," "Ten Indians," and "Fathers and Sons" are all about Nick Adams and belong to the group first discussed. "The End of Something" concerns the breach of relations between Nick and his girl, Marjorie. She has been initiated to his own form of primitive living in the northern woods, and because she has learned enough so that he can no longer feel superior to her, he ceases to love her. The scene in which he discloses his feelings to her is simple and convincing. Hemingway displays marvellous economy in his use of words.

"The Battler" is possibly autobiographical to some extent. It tells of Nick's experiences when he has run away from home (just as Hemingway did at fifteen). Nick's worldly experience is again broadened when he meets a punch-drunk boxer, who has left the ring and has been reduced to the status of a tramp. The story includes one powerful scene in which the fighter has one of his spells of insanity and threatens

the innocent Nick. The tale is one of Hemingway's best portraits of a prize-fighter.

"Ten Indians" contains less brutality than most of the author's stories. It is an unpretentious story, in which Nick learns about the infidelity of girls. When he first learns that his girl has been unfaithful to him, he is in despair, but, being young, he forgets very quickly that his heart is broken.

"Fathers and Sons" concerns Nick when he is grown and has a son of his own. The cycle of initiation is complete with Nick and has begun over again with his boy. The story should be added as a supplement to In Our Time.

There are several good stories about war. One of the best is "Old Man at the Bridge." It is a simple, human incident of the Spanish Civil War and might easily have actually occurred. It shows the utter misfortune of people of simple wants and no political beliefs, who are the real sufferers in time of war. The story was cabled to the United States when Hemingway was in Spain.

"Che Ti Dice La Patria?" is a bitter description of post-war conditions in Italy. It is really no more than a description, however, and can hardly be criticized as a short story.

"A Natural History of the Dead" is a brutal account of medical service on the battlefront. It was told in Death in the Afternoon to break the monotony of bullfighting and

has all the more raw qualities of naturalistic fiction.

"God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" is one of the most extreme examples of Hemingway's "nightmares at noonday." The incident related is so exceptional and shocking, however, that it overshadows Hemingway's art.

"On the Quay at Smyrna" is the introduction to In Our Time. It is another one of those Hemingway incidents which are apparently taken from life. It is in this story that the mules with their forelegs broken, drowning in the shallow water are found. (They are mentioned in a statement of Malcolm Cowley's in Chapter V). "On the Quay at Smyrna" is obviously not intended to be a true short story. It is one of Hemingway's many bitterly related episodes.

"Homage to Switzerland" holds the distinction of being Hemingway's only humorous short story. It is composed of three incidents, which occur in a railway-station restaurant in Switzerland. The last is the most amusing and has nothing in common with the author's other tales.

Like "The Sea Change," "A Simple Inquiry" and "The Mother of a Queen" both concern vice. "A Simple Inquiry" is the better of the two, but neither has much claim to greatness.

Many critics rank "My Old Man" as one of Hemingway's best short stories. It is his only story about horse racing, jockeys, and horse owners, and it differs from most of his tales in that it is told from the viewpoint of one of the

characters. A young boy tells the story. He is the son of a dishonest jockey, who tours Europe, riding for any horse owner who will hire him and deliberately losing the race in some instances. The father is killed at the end of the story, and the boy's loyalty to his dishonest father is rather pitiful and hopeless. In the manner in which the story is told and in the boy's love of horses and racing, "My Old Man" strongly resembles a story by Sherwood Anderson called "I Want to Know Why."

"Fifty Grand" is also widely acclaimed as one of the writer's best. Hemingway participated in amateur boxing at one time in his life and undoubtedly drew from this experience when he wrote "Fifty Grand." Like the preceding story, it deals with the fixing of sporting events. The leading character is a boxer in poor physical condition, who bets on his adversary and intentionally loses the fight. The story pictures vividly the hardships that must be undergone by a fighter who must successfully lose a fight for the sake of fifty thousand dollars.

Nothing has been said so far about the italicized inter-chapters of <u>In Our Time</u>. These were published separately at first under the title, <u>in our time</u>. It is difficult to decide to what literary form these passages belong. They are too short to be short stories, nor are they long enough to be called episodes. They are quick, vivid flashes of scenes in which much more is implied than stated.

## IX

Hemingway's first novel, The Torrents of Spring, is generally regarded as the poorest of his works. It is a satire and entirely unlike all his other novels. To use it to illustrate the weaknesses of the author's novels would be unfair, as it has never been held forth as an example of his talents. Nevertheless, it would be too harsh to say that The Torrents of Spring is beneath all criticism. There are some passages in it which are at least creditable enough to indicate that its author was a man of some literary ability. But since the novel's inferiority is apparent without exhaustive analysis and criticism, it will not be dealt with in this thesis.

In 1926 Hemingway published his second novel, The Sun Also Rises. There is more bitterness and disillusionment in The Sun than in any of his other books. There is also evident the writer's early conviction that life is empty and purposeless. The well chosen title is taken from the Bible: "The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose."[57] Another line written in the same spirit reads: "Vanity of vanities saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity."[58] The purpose of Chapter One of Ecclesiastes is to prove by "the transitoriness of all things" that "all is vanity." Ecclesiastes later

57. Holy Bible (Scofield Reference Edition), Eccles. 1: 5.
58. Ibid., Eccles. 1: 2.

emphasizes the importance of man's faith in God, but this is the element which is lacking in The Sun Also Rises.

The Sun Also Rises should have been written after A Farewell to Arms, for, in a sense, it is a sequel to it. Jake Barnes could easily be Lt. Henry in the post-war period, and Brett might be the ghost of Catherine. The Sun has a dream-like quality that is lacking in the writer's other novels. This is due to the singularity of the characters and the situation. Jake Barnes has been wounded in the war and, as a result, is sexually impotent. But he still loves Lady Brett Ashley, who is something of a nymphomaniac, and, to add to this frustrating situation, the story takes place during the bullfight season in Spain, which is anything but normal conditions. To strengthen his convictions regarding the vanity of earthly pleasures, Hemingway has endowed all his characters with a maximum of earthly comforts and advantages (with the exception of physical normality). Leisure and money are abundant, no one suffering from poverty in this novel. But the circumstances and the characters are so exceptional that it takes on the aspects of a phantasy.

Some of the dreamy quality of The Sun is due to its association with historical myths and the pre-Christian outlook. Hemingway has a kind of Dionysian streak in his writings, and probably in his personality as well. The glorification of wine drinking and physical pleasures, together with the

pageant atmosphere of the bullfight season, all contribute to this pagan effect. The bull itself is a pagan symbol. In ancient Greece and Crete it was believed that Dionysius had once assumed the form of a bull just previous to his murder by some of the other Gods. This belief, together with the Europa legend and the belief that the wife of Minos, king of Crete, had been seduced by a bull and had borne a monster, the Minotaur, produced in the ancients a worshipful attitude toward the animal. At various seasons they would sacrifice to the bull and hold wild orgies in honor of Dionysius. The orgies of The Sun Also Rises, though milder than the old ones, are much the same in spirit.

The Sun Also Rises is the best novel to illustrate my contention that Hemingway's real ability lies in the depiction of short scenes and episodes rather than in novel writing. His weakness is in his plots. A good narrative should be a logically connected series of events. That is, each event should be connected with the preceding one, in that it follows as a direct result. The action should also be related to the character of the man who performs the action. In other words, the man performs a specific action in accordance with certain specific traits of his personality. There is usually some conflict (either between two characters, or between a character and a situation) which leads up to, or brings about, the action. The Sun Also Rises does not lack conflict. Wounded so that he cannot partake of one normal phase of life, Jake Barnes is

out of place in the sexually promiscuous world in which he lives. Lady Brett Ashley is also at conflict with circumstances. She is in love with Barnes but realizes the impossibility of an alliance between them. Since the predicament of the two leading characters is hopeless and without solution, there is no particular course of action to be pursued by either. Consequently, the action of The Sun Also Rises is not, for the most part, governed by the personalities of the principal characters. As a result, the occurrences of the plot either seem to have no motivation at all, or they are brought about by mere caprice on the part of one or more of the characters. It might be argued that this contributes to the atmosphere of purposelessness intended by the author. Unfortunately, it also makes the novel seem purposeless. There is neither unity of time, nor unity of place, nor unity of action. There is only a kind of unity of mood, and when some time has elapsed after a reading of the novel, the reader is likely to remember only a hodgepodge of disconnected scenes and episodes in trying to recall the plot. Thus, The Sun Also Rises has well-drawn characters and conflict, but no main thread of action. It is a compilation of scenes and episodes. Before attempting to illustrate and prove this contention, I shall say a few words about the characters and background of The Sun.

> In the summer of 1924, Hemingway went to Pamplona for the fiesta of San Fermin and the six bullfights held during the week of the fair. It was the trip described in The Sun Also Rises, but with many changes to make it truer than life. 59

59. Malcolm Cowley, op. cit., p. 5.

The writer goes on to say that many of the characters of that novel were taken from life but should not be confused with the real people, because Hemingway has "selected and combined and changed their adventures." There has been a great deal of useless speculation concerning the identity of the characters. Many of them are probably part real, and many of the scenes were evidently taken from life, but something definite is known about the matador, Pedro Romero. He is named after a famous one who was supposed to have lived to be ninety-five. "The character, however, seems to be based on that of Niño de la Palma in his first season as a matador, with a few touches borrowed from Manuel Garcia, known in the bull ring as Maera."[60] This gives us reason to suppose that many of the bullfight scenes are based on actual fights.

The Sun Also Rises begins in Paris, where most of the leading characters are introduced. There are a few miscellaneous scenes intended to familiarize the reader with the background and circumstances of the story. These scenes are chiefly in clubs, barrooms, and in Barnes' apartment. It is made known that Barnes has suffered a severe wound resulting in impotency, that he is, and has been for some time, in love with Lady Brett Ashley, and that he is a correspondent in Paris. Brett was his nurse in the hospital where he recovered from his wound, the same situation as in A Farewell

60. Ibid., p. 4.

to Arms. Brett loves Jake in return, but she realizes the impossibility of a marriage between them and continues her life as the mistress of various wealthy men. Hemingway uses some of these first few scenes as satire on the lives of the depraved international sophisticates, who imagine themselves to be novelists, poets, or anything intellectual that suits their fancy. None of these scenes is exceptionally good, and there is no main thread of action to unite them. The story seems to begin to move, however, when Brett suggests that they all go to the bullfights in Spain. The party will consist of Jake, Brett, Brett's fiance Mike, Robert Cohn, and a friend of Jake's named Bill Gorton. Robert Cohn is one of the most important minor characters in the novel. He is an American Jew expatriate and friend of Jake. He has taken up writing as a means of subsistence and has made a moderate financial success of it. His friendship with Jake seems permanent until Jake learns that Cohn has spent some time with Brett. As a result, Jake is violently jealous but controls himself admirably. Jake, Cohn, and Bill Gorton travel to Spain together, intending to meet Brett and Mike there. On the way they stop at Burguete to enjoy a day's fishing. This episode is probably the best in the novel and will be reviewed at length.

Jake Barnes and Bill Gorton have been intimate friends for some time. The likeness of this friendship to the one of Lt, Henry and Rinaldi of A Farewell to Arms is remarkable. Even so, the Burguete episode far surpasses any other

in the portrayal of a deep personal attachment of two men. Bill is one of Hemingway's bitter, morally wounded people, but he is not quite so morose as Jake and adds a light touch to Jake's otherwise sombre existence. Nothing of great consequence occurs in Burguete. However, the incident is more effective for its simplicity. The two men travel to Burguete by open bus, pass the night at an inn there, and fish the next day. They actually spend five days there, but only one is described.

The bus ride to Burguete, alone, is a cleverly described incident. When the two men wave goodbye to Robert Cohn at the station, the reader instinctively feels the renunciation of nightmarish reality and the departure into a simpler and rather healing existence. Cohn's farewell symbolizes this breaking away from problems and complications, for, in one way, he represents all of Jake's friends and connections in Paris, and, in another way, he stands for one of Jake's chief emotional disturbances, his jealousy concerning Brett. Bill is not associated with the Paris group. He is a stranger to all except Jake and recalls the better days of the past, before life had become embroiled in evil circumstances and tragic, frustrating consequences. Therefore, his presence defines more clearly the new life, actually an older and better one. Another factor that strengthens the feeling of desertion is the nature of the trip itself; i. e., from the city to a quiet, country town in the mountains. One usually associates

trips of this kind with the escape of urbanites to more peaceful surroundings.

The day of departure is baking hot, and the two men have to sit on the crowded top of an open bus, sharing a wooden bench with a Basque. The passengers cool themselves by drinking cold wine from leather bottles. Like most Hemingway roads, the one they travel is also dusty, and the author uses one of his favorite phrases to describe it: "... we went out along the road with the dust powdering the trees...."[61] This description is repeated on the first page of A Farewell to Arms with a minor rearrangement of words. The author brings out a great deal of local color and Basque scenery: "... patches of grain on the bare hillsides...," "The country was quite barren and the hills were rocky and hard-baked clay furrowed by the rain," and "These were not like the brown, heat-baked mountains we had left behind."[62] Thus, the country is described as it changes until the bus arrives at Burguete.

The mountains nights are intensely cold in that region, and the weather abruptly changes from tropical to arctic. It is cold that night in the inn when Bill and Jake sit in the dining room and drink hot rum. The scene is reminiscent of "An Alpine Idyll" and "Cross Country Snow," both in Switzerland. Nothing of particular importance is said in it, but

61. Ibid., p. 100.
62. Ibid., pp. 102-5.

there is a pleasant, rustic atmosphere, which is a direct contrast to the barrooms of Paris. This goes furhher to differentiate the new life from the old.

In the morning they leave the inn for the trout stream. Artistically, this is the best described adventure of the trip. When they arrive at the stream, they separate, Jake fishing above the dam, and Bill wandering down the stream to fly-cast. The stream is icy cold and clear like the one in "Big Two-Hearted River." At noon they eat their lunch and drink cold wine. The conversation provides us with a good deal more of Bill's ironic sense of humor and a deeper sense of the two men's friendship. Jake confides to Bill his love for Brett, and the latter, understanding his friend's plight, expresses his regrets and sympathies. Later, Jake hints that he has broken away from the Catholic Church, indicating his loss of faith and his disillusionment. This divorce from established principles by the hero is very characteristic of Hemingway.

After their fishing expedition, Jake and Bill go to Pamplona for the fiesta. They meet Brett and Mike, and spend the day inspecting bulls for the fights. Relations between the various members of the party are rather strained. Jake suppresses his jealousy of Cohn, while Cohn tries to hide his dislike of Brett's fiancé, Mike. Mike is openly resentful of Cohn, and his dislike takes a particularly ugly turn when he is drunk. Brett, who is the cause of all the friction,

makes a few vain attempts to keep the quarreling at a minimum. Despite all this discontentment, none of them embarks on any positive course of action. They all depend on the fiesta to lift them from their present state of unhappiness.

The beginning of the fiesta in Pamplona is one of the most colorful scenes in The Sun. As Hemingway says: "At noon of Sunday, the sixth of July, the fiesta exploded."[63] Suddenly the quiet streets of the town became filled with colorful, costumed people, marching through the streets and dancing to the music of pipes and drums. The fiesta has all the atmosphere and abandon of pagan celebrations. Jake Barnes, Brett, and their friends join in the rejoicing wholeheartedly and find themselves in various wine shops drinking toasts with the other celebrators. Mixed in with the drunken orgies and the carefree dancing, they see at least one religious procession, but all seriousness is lost in the heedless gaiety of the peasants, singers, drunkards, and bullfight fans. The scene is rather short, as the narrator, Jake Barnes, is gradually overwhelmed by wine and absinthe and retires to bed. Later, the description continues through the whole seven days of the fiesta. Since the fiesta lasts about half the novel, the atmosphere remains weird throughout. As Bill Gorton says later: "You wouldn't believe it. It's like a wonderful nightmare."[64]

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63. Ibid., p. 147.
64. Ibid., p. 219.

The bullfights are the center of attraction for the remainder of the fiesta. It is at one of these that Brett becomes acquainted with her next lover, the matador Pedro Romero. She is quite without self-control in matters of love and confides as much to Jake. For the first and only time in the novel a crisis is reached and a character acts from some motive other than whim. Cohn is overwhelmed by jealousy of Romero, and in a fit of uncontrolled anger attacks both Jake and Romero, physically beating them. This action is in no way influenced by the hero, however. He remains a passive onlooker. Wyndham Lewis must have had Jake in mind when he said: "Hemingway's books... scarcely contain a figure who is not in some way futile, clown-like, passive, and above all purposeless."[65]

After his attack on Romero, Cohn leaves in despair for Paris. When the bullfights are over, Brett and Romero elope, leaving Jake to say farewells to Mike and Bill, who no longer care to remain in Spain. Jake is left quite alone then and goes to San Sebastian for the remainder of his vacation. There he receives telegrams from Brett from Madrid, imploring him to come to her, for she is in trouble. He goes to Madrid and finds that she had anticipated difficulties in disposing of Romero but had succeeded. The novel ends rather abruptly in the same mood of hopelessness that pervaded it.

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65. Wyndham Lewis, "Ernest Hemingway, the 'Dumb Ox'," op. cit., p. 21.

Summarizing, The Sun Also Rises has two weaknesses. First, there is the lack of purposeful central action on the part of the hero, Jake Barnes. The novel has no plot in the true sense. Second, the hero has no active influence on what little action there is. He remains passive throughout, the only crisis being brought about by Cohn, a minor character.

X

> A Farewell to Arms is a book important in the annals of the art of writing because it proves that Hemingway, the writer of short, perfect episodes, can keep up the pace through a volume. 66

This statement expresses my own sympathies as well as those of the writer of it. I can find no criticism of A Farewell to Arms on grounds of disunity, as was the case in the previous novel. Unlike The Sun Also Rises, there is positive action in A Farewell to Arms, and it is motivated by the characters of the people involved. Conflict arises when Lt. Henry encounters unendurable circumstances, war and its accompanying disillusionments. To add to this, his love affair with Catherine Barkley and their life together are impeded by war. Because he has lost faith in a cause and has, therefore, no reason to remain with the army, he deserts and flees to Switzerland with Catherine. The rest is tragedy. Even so simple a plot as this renders A Farewell to Arms a story rather than a disconnected series of episodes. One of the chief assets of a logically connected plot is the resulting sense of time with the regard to the relation of one scene to another. This sense of time was largely absent in The Sun Also Rises, and the result was somewhat chaotic.

Another distinction between The Sun Also Rises

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66. Ford Madox Ford, Introduction to A Farewell to Arms, p. xix.

and A Farewell to Arms involves the characters of the two heroes. Jake Barnes is essentially passive. Although he lives in adverse conditions and seems to have all the necessary stimuli to definite action of some sort, he in no way attempts to turn the future course of events to his own advantage, or even away from his disadvantage. As a result, the hero is divorced from the story. This is not the case in A Farewell to Arms. Frederick Henry decides his own fate, or, at least, to some extent he decides it. As a consequence of this, he is of great importance to the story itself, being inseparably attached to the plot.

A Farewell to Arms is the tragic story of a generation disillusioned by war. It tells of how one man of this generation, Lt. Henry, loses faith in what had been considered the fundamental principles of his civilization. Because his loss of faith is complete, he abandons all efforts to "save the world" and deserts, with the idea of discarding social instincts and isolating himself. This proves impossible, and the result is calamity. It is implied that Henry is a man once possessed of noble and altruistic purposes. This being the case, his disillusionment is even more severe. But Henry is not alone in his bitterness. Like Jake Barnes, he also shares his disappointment with a friend. This friend is Rinaldi, through whom the spiritual malady manifests itself differently. Rinaldi is sardonically cheerful like Bill Gorton. He assumes the air of one who is resigned to the

peculiarities of mankind and accepts them simply because there is no practical alternative. He is the jovial cynic, who offers a relief from Lt. Henry's sobriety. Catherine is the third principal character. Feeling that her life has been swept away with the death of her lover in the battle of the Somme, she values Henry as a savior and possible hope of future happiness. This hope is rewarded only with death, however. Hemingway's acute awareness of the final fate of man makes this inevitable. As Maxwell Geismar says: "It is indeed the day of death which preoccupies him steadily."[67]

In A Farewell to Arms Hemingway adheres to his original system of recording only facts and words with no comments. But in this case the technique has an additional significance. It can best be explained by a statement of the narrator, Lt. Henry.

> I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago, if nothing were done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything.

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67. Maxwell Geismar, "No Man Alone Now," op. cit., p. 518.

> Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates. 68

Aside from its value as an example of Hemingway's skill, A Farewell to Arms is important for another reason. It is important because it concerns a vital phase of civilization, war and its effect on those who fight it. This is another reason for its superiority to The Sun Also Rises.

Having discussed and criticized the novel generally, I shall now cite examples of its better scenes. The Caporetto retreat is usually held to be one of the most perfect episodes, but it will not be discussed here, as it is much longer than those investigated heretofore and, therefore, is not in the same class.

The first few pages of dialogue of A Farewell to Arms introduce the reader abruptly to the tough, battlefront background. The scene occurs in an army mess hall and concerns the baiting of a young priest by an older, more hardened captain. The captain is a bully and seems to regard church representatives as the best objects of ridicule. He comments skeptically on the priest's morals with regard to the local women. He also insults the Catholic Church, implying that it helped to foment the war. The other men laugh heartily at the captain's humor and at the embarrassed priest. After

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68. Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 196.

a few final bawdy remarks the captain desists, and his audience disperses. Obviously intended to suggest the incompatibility of Christianity and war, the scene has much the same effect as "Today is Friday." Most of its strength stems from callous treatment of a delicate subject. However, there is also some of the same effect as found in "The Killers." The captain's insulting implications are reminiscent of the gangsters' treatment of George. The scene is a good introduction and affords the reader a general idea of the novel's mood.

Henry meets Catherine, a nurse, through his friend Rinaldi. They fall in love immediately, and Henry is wounded shortly afterwards. He is visited by the priest and Rinaldi and later by Catherine, who becomes his nurse. After several months of convalescence, Lt. Henry returns to the front. The Caporetto retreat occurs then, and it is during this that Henry deserts. After his desertion he stops in Milan in the early morning and goes into a small wine shop. The proprietor, a shrewd man, familiar with deserting officers and men, sees where the stars have been ripped from Henry's sleeve and guesses the truth immediately, but he does not reveal his knowledge to the other. A tense conversation follows, both men carefully choosing their words and concealing their nervousness from each other. Their statements are clipped and direct. The dialogue is what is generally considered typically Hemingway. The proprietor is evidently afraid of startling Henry into violence by becoming too confidential.

He starts cautiously by suggesting that perhaps Henry is in some sort of trouble, and, even after receiving a negative answer, he concludes by assuring him complete safety there. Henry does not impart his secret to the owner, even after comments are made about the star marks on his coat, but they understand each other without words and they part comrades. The proprietor's comprehension of Henry's predicament is brought out very cleverly and subtly by Hemingway without the use of verbal explanation.

"Hemingway's stories are most of them continued, in the sense that he has a habit of returning to the same themes...."[69] Again, as in The Sun Also Rises, the hero enjoys a moment's respite in a fishing trip. Fishing symbolizes an escape from humanity and a throwing aside of obligations that can be accomplished in no other way. Henry has been reunited with Catherine, and although he is still in serious danger of apprehension by the local military authorities, he befriends the hotel barman, and they row out over the lake, trolling. A few words are exchanged about the war. The barman says that he will not fight, even when his class is called. He will leave the country. Henry confesses that he had been a fool to join the army. After a few quiet words about fishing, they return to the hotel. The trip affords Henry time to relax and review his past actions more objectively.

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69. Malcolm Cowley, op. cit., p. ix.

He does not regret his desertion, however.

The escape of Henry and Catherine from the military authorities is the most exciting and dramatic episode of the novel. A friend of the hero, Emilio, comes in the night to warn them that they are to be arrested in the morning. Report of the lieutenants desertion had finally got back to headquarters, and the officials had arrived. Henry receives the news stoically, asking the advice of Emilio concerning a possible escape. Fortunately, Emilio is a better friend than Henry could ever have hoped for. He is much concerned about the safety of both of them, offering them his boat, a supply of food, and some wine. Henry awakens Catherine and informs her of their danger. At first she is incredulous, but after being convinced, she prepares to leave.

The dramatic and arousing element of the scene is accentuated by a violent storm. Aside from the obvious and routine emotional effects of thunder and lightning, the storm may have a subtler and more ominous meaning. Rain has been used to symbolize death. Catherine once said that she was afraid of rain because she saw herself dead in it. The storm serves as a reminder that death still follows them.

Travel is difficult in the rain, but with the help of Emilio, Henry and Catherine embark for Switzerland. Their trip across the lake in a rowboat is the most perfectly drawn phase of the escape. They arrive safely in Switzerland on the next day, their flight marking another turning point in the

novel. The war is now behind them, together with all mention of desertion, causes, battles, and heroes. Their new life begins, a short and not very happy one.

The last scene of the novel tells of Catherine's death. It begins when she is taken to the hospital, and lasts to the end of the book, broken only by Henry's occasional trips to the restaurant. It is a period of intense suffering for Catherine and for the hero, who senses her death as if by premonition. Hemingway displays his usual proficiency in depicting scenes of this sort. It resembles "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" in one respect; the smell of death is so evident throughout. Hope is never offered, and inevitable death haunts the mind of Lt. Henry.

Grimly realistic in detail, Catherine's death is as much a scene of horror as of tragedy. It recalls the screams of women in labor in "On the Quay at Smyrna" and the atmosphere of "evil-smelling emptiness" in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." Henry stays with Catherine most of the time, administering gas, which offers little relief. Much of Henry's reluctance to accept death is revealed through his thoughts.

> Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or they gave you syphilis like

> Rinaldi. But they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you. 70

There is another passage on the same theme. In it Henry's ideas are put across more clearly.

> Once in camp I put a log on top of the fire and it was full of ants. As it commenced to burn, the ants swarmed out and went first toward the centre where the fire was; then turned back and ran toward the end. When there were enough on the end they fell off into the fire. Some got out, their bodies burnt and flattened, and went off not knowing where they were going. But most of them went toward the fire and then back toward the end and swarmed on the cool end and finally fell off into the fire. I remember thinking at the time that it was the end of the world and a splendid chance to be a messiah and lift the log off the fire and throw it out where the ants could get off onto the ground. But I did not do anything but throw a tin cup of water on the log, so that I would have the cup empty to put whiskey in before I added water to it. I think the cup of water on the burning log only steamed the ants. 71

Both Catherine and the baby die. True to Catherine's terrible premonition, it is raining when Henry leaves the hospital.

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70. Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 350.
71. Ibid, p. 350.

## XI

*To Have and Have Not* differs in one important way from Hemingway's other novels. It is a novel of social implications, in which economic problems play an important role. As the title implies, it is the contrast between the poor and uneducated, who have little hope of improving their lot, and multi-millionaires, successful writers, and others endowed with those advantages which insure security. It is doubtful that the author intends to advocate any specific policy to alleviate the sufferings of destitute classes. His only concern seems to be to depict the plight of the latter, that pity may be evoked in the reader. The novel betrays a bitter contempt for the idle, dissolute sophisticates who infest Key West and a rather sentimental concern for the working classes.

Hemingway achieves his contrast between poverty and riches by portraying fairly accurately the condition of Harry Morgan, a fisherman and smuggler of Key West, and, much less accurately, portions of the lives of third-rate writers and playboys. The scope of the novel is very limited, all action taking place around Key West, and the characters representing rare and exceptional segments of society. Most of the book is concerned with the predicament of the hero, Morgan, but the author occasionally describes adventures in the lives of the writers and millionaires. Herein lies the cause for the

failure of the novel. There is no connection between the actions of the two classes; nor are the characters of these two groups related in any way. But this would be pardonable if both classes were involved in the same major plot. However, there is no major plot or central action to give the story unity. Therefore, it is scarcely a novel at all, but merely a compilation of representative scenes from the lives of the characters. These scenes and episodes are either very loosely connected or not connected at all. This is particularly true of the first two books of the novel.

Book I deals with the smuggling of twelve Chinese to the mainland from Cuba. Morgan is forced to this type of work through a loss incurred when an expensive customer left without paying his fishing bill. Morgan does not take the Chinese to the mainland as he had agreed, and he murders their agent, whom he considers dangerous. This adventure ends the first book of the novel.

Book II is short and uneventful. It concerns liquor smuggling and tells how Morgan loses his right arm. It, also, may be considered a complete story, independent of the remainder of the novel.

Book III deals with Morgan's last adventure, which ends with his death. It is only at the beginning of this book that To Have and Have Not begins to resemble a novel. Richard Gordon, Tommy Bradley, and their wives are introduced. They are moderately successful writers—spoiled, depraved, and

selfish. Hemingway delves briefly into their problems and succeeds in effecting some kind of contrast between hard-working, serious Harry Morgan and this frivolous group of tourists. But Richard Gordon and party are in no way connected with Morgan's last adventure. They participate in a story which is unimportant to the life of the hero.

Even with the novel's chaotic construction, Hemingway manages to characterize Harry Morgan. Like all the writer's heroes, Morgan is the tough, virile, hyper-masculine type. Without education or advantages, he is thrown into a hostile world, and having a certain amount of pride in his independence and virility, he forges ahead as best he can, trying to support his wife and three daughters regardless of the means he employs to this end. For the first time, the Hemingway hero is beset by serious, practical, economic problems. He has not toughened himself because he is spiritually defeated. He has done so because he knows that toughness is necessary in a world which would destroy him.

Another peculiarity of the book is the periodical changing of narrators. Morgan, a man named Albert, and Hemingway are the story-tellers. As far as I can see, nothing is gained by this.

Although To Have and Have Not is a weak novel, there still remain a few episodes, which, when judged separately, are worthy of criticism. Some of these have been mentioned by critics, and their judgment seems to be either violently

for or against them. Most critics who defend the novel are admirers of Hemingway and are prone to judge too leniently. I will review the major episodes in an effort to show that they are not unified as a novel, regardless of their possible intrinsic value.

Part I begins in a cafe. Morgan and several other men are discussing a business proposition in which Morgan shows little interest. He finally turns down a proposal to smuggle Chinese to the mainland. This scene is followed by a fishing expedition sponsored by the hero. Some valuable fishing tackle is lost through accident, and its value is never recovered, because the fisherman who lost it leaves town without paying his fishing debts. Because of this financial difficulty, Morgan deems it necessary to accept the smuggling proposal previously mentioned. Arrangements are made with a Chinese agent, and the Chinese are taken on board Morgan's boat. Morgan murders the agent to prevent future treachery, unloads the Chinese off the coast of Cuba, and returns home. This concludes the first part of the novel. Part I is an isolated episode, which has no bearing on Parts II and III.

Part II is of less importance than Part I. It is a very brief account of one of Morgan's liquor-smuggling adventures. It is not exceptionally well written and is of no consequence except that it tells us of the loss of Harry's arm.

Part III deals with the hero's last and longest

adventure. He becomes involved with a group of revolutionists, who seize his boat as a means of escape and force him to navigate. A fight ensues, and Harry kills the revolutionists but is mortally wounded himself. For the sake of contrast Hemingway brings rich tourists into the story, occasionally describing scenes in their lives. The technique is ineffective, however, because of the disunity of the story.

There are three scenes in Part III worth pointing out. In his article "Hemingway and the Critics," Elliot Paul refers to two of these in a desperate attempt to save the novel from complete condemnation. He first defends the conversation between Morgan and his wife in bed, which he says Hershell Brickell calls indecent and unintelligible. He quotes Clifton Fadiman as saying it is "a conversation as beautiful as it is unashamed... just three pages... unforgettable."[72] According to Paul, George Stephens also compliments this scene. In my opinion Hemingway carries his preference for earthiness and simple, rough people too far. The level of Morgan's conversation with his wife is only slightly above that of the animal and, as Brickell says, is unintelligible.

Elliot Paul also praises the barroom scene with the war veterans. This scene concerns Richard Gordon and constitutes a rather long chapter of the novel. It is the fantastic account of Gordon's conversation with two drunken, psychopathic veterans. The scene contributes nothing to the story except its own raw,

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72. Elliot Paul, "Hemingway and the Critics," Saturday Review of Literature, XVI (Nov. 6, 1937), 4. All of Elliot Paul's opinions are taken from page 4 of this article.

anâmalistic qualities.

In his edition of Hemingway's works, Malcolm Cowley includes the only episode of artistic value in To Have and Have Not. It is the chapter in which Morgan kills the revolutionists and is fatally wounded himself. The first part of the chapter is valuable as a well-related, tense, and exciting incident. Cowley maintains that with the exception of El Sordo's death in For Whom the Bell Tolls it is the best of Hemingway's battle scenes. The last part of the chapter tells Harry's thoughts as he lies wounded on the deck of his boat. In contrast to his external toughness, he shows a great deal of warmth and sympathetic feeling for his wife, Marie, whose future would be uncertain if he were to die. It is one of the few human incidents of the book and probably the novel's only redeeming feature.

With the exception of The Torrents of Spring, To Have and Have Not is Hemingway's poorest novel. It is disconnected. and its characters are, for the most part, badly portrayed. Most of its favorable criticism comes from those who see it in the light of the author's other works. Malcolm Cowley says the only optimistic thing possible about To Have and Have Not.

> Most of the critics said that it was Hemingway's weakest novel, but they also said that it showed a broadening of his sympathies and made them feel that he was beginning a new stage in his career. 75

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75. Malcolm Cowley, op. cit., p. 318.

## XII

*For Whom the Bell Tolls* is the longest and probably the most popular of Hemingway's novels. Although it is the longest, it covers a shorter span of time than any of the others, with the exception of *Across the River and into the Trees*. Its popularity is undoubtedly due to an unusually heavy emphasis on the love theme. Its title is borrowed from a quotation which Hemingway includes on the page preceding Chapter I of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

> No man is an *Island*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*; if a *Clod* bee washed away by the *Sea*, *Europe* is the lesse, as well as if a *Promontorie* were, as well as if a *Mannor* of thy *friends* or of *thine own* were; any mans *death* diminishes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankinde*; And therefore never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; It tolls for *thee*. 74

The quotation immediately suggests a striking change in Hemingway's philosophy. He has groped his way out of the purposeless world of *A Farewell to Arms* and *The Sun Also Rises* and found a positive, meaningful philosophy. It is reflected in the hero of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan.

The action of the novel covers about three days. It is a story dealing with guerilla warfare of the anti-Fascist factions in the Spanish Civil War. With the exception of

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74. These lines are taken from John Donne's "XVII Meditation," a part of his *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*.

Jordan, Hemingway's characters are simple and crude. They are Gypsy mountaineers and Spanish peasants, illiterate and superstitious. Robert Jordan has been sent among them by Communist sympathizers to destroy a bridge at a specified time. The blowing of bridges and railroad tracks is Jordan's specialty, but he needs assistance in this case and, consequently, allies himself with the mountaineers. His principal colleagues are Anselmo, Pablo, Pilar, and Maria. Anselmo serves as a guide to conduct Jordan to the mountain hideout. Pablo is a hardened and cynical reprobate, from whom everyone suspects treachery. Pilar is a middle-aged Gypsy woman of amazing frankness, loyalty, courage, and obscenity. Maria is not originally of these mountain people. She has been brought there after escaping from the Fascists.

Unlike Jake Barnes and Harry Morgan, Robert Jordan is committed to a definite line of action. He has been ordered to blow a bridge, and realizing that the performance of his duty is indispensable to the ultimate success of his cause, he relentlessly concentrates on his objective, spurning all temptations to desert. Almost the entire novel concerns the preparation for the accomplishment of Jordan's assignment. There are many scenes which serve to heighten the suspense or provide a better understanding of the backgrounds of the characters involved. However, the plot is simple. Jordan is guided to the mountain hideout of Pilar and Pablo. He

becomes a friend of everyone there except Pablo and enjoys a short, three-day love affair with Maria. The climax of the novel comes when he destroys the bridge, but he is seriously wounded in the execution of this job and is left to face almost certain death at the hands of the Fascists.

For Whom the Bell Tolls has two defects which prevent its being a good novel. First, Hemingway has a naive conception of human nature. He portrays his characters under the delusion that the philosophical convictions of men direct the majority of their important actions. If this were the case, the depiction of characters in novels would indeed be very simple. Unfortunately, this is not generally true, and, as a result, Hemingway exhibits a lack of depth in his interpretation of motives. This characteristic of the writer becomes most clear when his novels are considered altogether. To Have and Have Not is too poor to be taken into consideration, but the heroes of The Sun Also Rises and A Farewell to Arms are both guided in their actions by their disbelief in moral and social obligations. Thus, Jake Barnes' actions lack purpose, because he feels responsible only for himself and renounces any duty to society. For similar reasons, Lt. Henry deserts the army and flees to Switzerland. On the other hand, Robert Jordan accepts the idea that he is no isolated individual but is "involved in mankind." However, he has become imbued with this idea to such a degree that he is almost a fanatic

and resembles a philosophical conviction rather than a man. I do not contend that it is not possible for a man to display bravery, even when courageous deeds may entail his own undoing; but courage is a complex virtue and not born only of intellectual persuasions, as Hemingway seems to imply in For Whom the Bell Tolls.

The second weakness of the novel is its excessive length, which is due to the love story of Jordan and Maria. The only value of such a love story to the principal theme of the novel is to emphasize Jordan's loyal adherence to duty. Unlike Lt. Henry, Jordan resists what Hemingway apparently considers to be the greatest of all temptations, and declines to desert. Unfortunately, the love story is out of character with the hero's altruistic purpose. It is almost entirely physical, lacks depth of feeling, and the love scenes, which should evoke honest emotions in the reader, are over-sentimental and inane. As a result of these two defects, Hemingway is unsuccessful in convincingly portraying his hero, and much of the love story could be omitted without damage to the novel.

Although For Whom the Bell Tolls is not an artistic success, it contains some of Hemingway's best writing. Pilar's account of Pablo's execution of four of the guardia civil and the subsequent slaughter of twenty other Fascists is an example of this. It is a vivid, realistic study of

mob violence and the atrocities of war. Pablo has captured four prisoners after an attack on the guardia civil. Having compelled one of them to explain to him the mechanism of his pistol, he forced them to kneel and shot each of them in the back of the head. There were twenty other Fascist prisoners in the village, most of them of aristocratic stock. To dispose of them Pablo organized a mob of peasants, armed with sickles, pitchforks, and other implements, and formed them into a double line, through which the prisoners were to pass. After the Fascists were flailed in this manner, they were pushed over the cliff into the river. Pilar describes the behavior of each of several Fascists killed in this way. The account is one of the best of its kind in all of Hemingway's writing.

Another good episode is El Sordo's last stand on the hilltop. El Sordo is another of the Republican guerillas. He and some of his men are isolated and surrounded by a band of Fascist cavalry. El Sordo offers such valiant resistance that there is hope for a while, but enemy planes soon arrive and bomb his outpost. The fight is Hemingway's best war story.

There are other well written scenes in For Whom the Bell Tolls, but most of them are short and dependent on the rest of the novel for their meaning. Despite the novel's general weaknesses, it is still worth reading for its few good passages.

## XIII

A few words should be said in closing about the author's last novel. Despite the unfavorable judgment of critics, Across the River and Into the Trees possesses one virtue for those seeking a general evaluation of the writer. It clearly defines his limitations and destroys forever the hopes of those Hemingway enthusiasts who expected miraculous achievements of him. In this last novel he attempts a character study of much greater depth than in his previous ones. He tells the story of the last few days of a war-torn, embittered American colonel, Richard Cantwell. Cantwell is aware of his impending death but finds it hard to accept, as he is in love with a beautiful young Italian countess. At the moment when his life becomes meaningful, he finds that he must die. However, he accepts defeat as a soldier should enjoys his final days.

The novel confirms the suspicion that Hemingway's outlook is essentially primitive. He exalts the virtues of the bull ring, animal courage and the stoical acceptance of pain and death. Like Robert Wilson of "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," Cantwell is over-masculine and blustery. These qualities are usually present in Hemingway's characters, but they are more marked in the colonel. Cantwell's pleasures are also primitive. Sex, alcohol, and food occupy most of his attention. His affair with the countess is

extremely physical, calling to mind the love stories of Hemingway's earlier novels.

Hemingway's preoccupation with the physical side of life would be justifiable if more were implied by the story itself. However, in Across the River and into the Trees he attempts a deeper analysis of his hero, and we learn from its failure that what seems to have been implied in his other novels may have been imaginary. But if we read Hemingway with an awareness of his limitations, we find that much of what he has written is good; and although he has often failed, there still remain to his credit Winner Take Nothing, Men Without Women, and the perfect episodes of In Our Time.

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# VITA

Robert Alexander Chermside Jr. was born in Winchester, Kentucky, on February 2, 1927. He came to Virginia in 1929 when his father, who was temporarily engaged in railway construction work, returned with his family to his home in Orange. He has lived there ever since. He attended a private grammar school and, upon completing the sixth grade, entered Woodberry Forest, a private school for boys. He received his diploma in 1944 and subsequently went to the University of Virginia, where he took his Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1948. Since that time he has alternately attended the University of Richmond and taught in Virginia high schools. He completed his resident work for a Master of Arts degree in a winter and two summers, taught two years in a Brunswick County high school, and is now teaching in Fluvanna County High School.