

# Hemingway: From Nightmare to the Cross

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“The dignity of movement of an iceberg,” Hemingway remarked in one of his books, “is due to only one-eighth of it being above water.”<sup>①</sup> Dignity is all that is left to man whom he thought is placed in *Nada*, and especially to a writer who sets the task for himself to seek the remnant of humanity to stand on. For Hemingway, the writer, dignity is not to show but to point at truth; not to explain but to suggest essence; to hide and guard carefully rather than to expose cherished feelings in the glaring sun for fear of their being scorched. It may be that the ultimate human condition of limited reality and vast possibility corresponds to this form of expression, for Hemingway sought to grasp the real thing and to present it to the reader as vividly as possible. Carlos Baker put a note to the quoted sentence as follows: “The visible areas glint with the hard factual lights of the naturalist. The supporting structure, submerged and mostly invisible except to the patient explorer, is built with a different kind of precision—that of the poet-symbolist.”<sup>②</sup>

A view which labels Hemingway as a symbolist has increased greatly since Malcolm Cowley suggested that under the clear, concise picture Hemingway put the restless haunting spirit. What the nature of this symbolism is and how Hemingway employed it are points of dispute and will be touched on, as needed, in this paper. However I think it advisable in any discussion of Hemingway's symbolism to remember the warning of E. M. Halliday: “Hemingway used certain techniques of symbolism. But I think he does so in a very limited and closely controlled way, and that failure to recognize the controls leads—already has led—to distortions of his meaning and misappreciations of his narrative art.”<sup>③</sup> Halliday set Hemingway apart from the symbolists who preceded him. In the traditional symbolist represented by Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville, the entire story operates distinctly on two plains: one, on the realistic, and the other, on the philosophical. Hemingway has

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① Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon* (New York Scribner, 1932) p. 192

② Carlos Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist* (Princeton, 1965) p. 117

③ E. M. Halliday, “Hemingway's Amiguity, Symbolism and Irony.” from *American Literature* XXVIII (1956) p. 4

never written an allegory, in which the story on the primary level is dominated by the story on the secondary level, and if the allegorical meaning is to be kept clear, its naturalistic counterpart must pay for it by surrendering realistic probability in one way or another.

Hemingway largely used two devices in his effort for symbolic expression. One is that which is introduced by T. S. Eliot as objective correlative and which Halliday called the technique of objective epitome—both referring to exactly the same function that produces concrete objects to convey the subjective conditions of characters. It is the action of a story which is expected to produce certain emotion. One of the typical examples for this method is provided in a crisis in *The Sun Also Rises*, when Jake Barnes helps the love affair between Brett and Pedro Romero—a despicable act of which he is supposed to be deeply ashamed. In this case his turbulent feeling is not dwelt on; nevertheless it is poignantly suggested by the seemingly impersonal and detached remarks:

When I came back and looked in the cafe twenty minutes later, Brett and Pedro Romero were gone. The coffee-glasses and our three empty cognac-glasses were on the table. A waiter came with a cloth and picked up the glasses and mopped off the table.<sup>④</sup>

Another example comes from *Farewell to Arms* in which exhausted with care for abnormally laboring Catherine, Frederic Henry goes out for breakfast:

Outside along the street were the refuse cans from the houses waiting for the collector. A dog was nosing at one of the cans. "What do you want?" I asked and looked in the can to see if there was any thing I could pull out for him; there was nothing on top but coffee-grounds, dust and some dead flowers. "There isn't anything, dog," I said.<sup>⑤</sup>

The second way of symbolic expression is the creation of key characters which tend to act as a type and to serve as a pointer to a philosophical theme. Through this symbolic eye-glass Jake Barnes's war wound impotence becomes a kind of metaphor for the whole atmosphere of sterility and frustration which is the major theme of *The Sun Also Rises*. Catherine Barkley, whose naive simplicity and warmth captivates Frederic Henry, can be considered as the symbolic figure of the ideal for a normal civilian home life to which he deserts. It is also permissible to regard Santiago, the old Cuban fisherman in *The Old Man and the Sea*, as representing in more than one sense the whole human race in his na-

<sup>④</sup> Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (Scribners, 1956, New York) p. 187

<sup>⑤</sup> Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (Scribners, 1956, New York) p. 336

tural struggle for survival.

In order to convey his themes most effectively to the reader Hemingway handles these powerful vehicles to their full use, though as mentioned already they are carefully controlled and arranged in the best order possible. Thus Hemingway's major themes are given the corresponding symbolical forms as vivid as motive in symphony, and as effective as well. The theme of disorder and chaos begets the form of nightmare as the monster horror is born between Satan and the fallen angel at the Gate of Hell in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The mark left by nightmare is understandably the wound both physical and spiritual, and as the scar is deepened the corpses come into view on the plain, in the street, at the bay. Appropriately these physical losses are linked with their spiritual counterpart, and when we walk among these cadaverous scenes the sense of moral anarchy and spiritual famine is inevitably forced upon our consciousness. The next phase of theme, the defeatism of all human effort in the context of universal scheme, is best expressed when Hemingway recollects the miserable scene he witnessed on the Italian front, and in which retreating troops and refugees, the wounded and the corpses among them, cross over a bridge under which a muddy river runs nearly overflowing in the rain. The bridge, in this instance, powerfully implies the unconquerable barrier in the fate of human struggle for harmony and peace. In this sense the wall is also strongly suggestive of this human predicament as testified in the following sentences from Chapter VI of *In Our Time*:

Nick sat against the wall of the church where they had dragged him to be clear of machine gun fire in the street. Both legs stuck out awkwardly. He had been hit in the spine. His face was very hot. Rinaldi, big backed, his equipment sprawling, lay face down-ward against the wall. Nick looked straight ahead brilliantly. The pink wall of the house opposite had fallen out from the roof, and an iron bedstead hung twisted toward the street.<sup>6</sup>

Through this evocation of objective epitome the theme of doomsday is firmly fixed in the mind of the reader. Thus human condition is provokingly expressed in these concrete images with sharp contour.

The individual posture which consists of—to freshen the memory—escape from chaos, separate peace, and religious salvation, is likewise cultivated into full bloom by means of several major objective revelations. Examining the apparently pointless sketch of a fishing trip in 'The Big Two-Heated River'

<sup>6</sup> Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (Scribners, 1953, New York) p. 81

as a part of the organic whole which is Hemingway's world, Malcolm Cowley found the simple expedition a kind of secret, individualistic ritual to ostracize nightmare.<sup>⑦</sup>

Further careful reading of Hemingway's works leads us to conclude that not only fishing but other intensive physical activities such as hunting, boxing, and bull-fighting along with such diverse actions as drinking, writing, making love, and fighting in war are serving in similar ritualistic function. Between this rest in refuge and the active pursuit of individual peace lies just a flight of step and the latter is the necessary extension of the former. If we take the actions not as a protective shield but as an aggressive spear, and if we shift our attention from actions to the characters who are engaged in them, we have the typical figure of a violent man who is represented by the fine matadorship of Pedro Romero in *The Sun Also Rises*. It need not be said that violence is not sought for its own sake but for securing the intensity of emotion, as well as concentration of energy. This whole-hearted, single-minded devotion to his own personal code enables Hemingway's characters to seem, in spite of their apparent irreligious behaviors, exceptionally pious, and we cannot grudge to give them, if we are put in the position to give, a religious salvation. Indeed most of Hemingway's major characters, above all Santiago of *The Old Man and the Sea*, are something of a Christ figure, and we can safely put them in the order of the crucified.

It is of course possible to pick and name other themes and their more varied symbolic expressions. But I think the themes already introduced show well the major issues and patterns of Hemingway's art. In the subsequent pages, I will strive to examine them more closely in order to appreciate as fully as possible the profundity and dexterity of symbolic expression of themes in the works of Ernest Hemingway, and to demonstrate how Hemingway achieved his separate peace.

With a touch of poetical insight upon his second visit to Hemingway's works, Malcolm Cowley described the world of Hemingway as a haunted place. Whereas he had been engrossed by the well-lighted places and colorful scenes before, now he was surprised at finding so dense a shadow lurking behind. Presently he came to the conclusion that the light and the color were nothing but a carefully molded facade which was supposed to reflect and lead to the all important shadow.

Thus Hemingway was placed in the same gallery of such nocturnal writers as Poe and Hawthorne and Melville, "the men who dealt in images that were symbols of an inner

<sup>⑦</sup> Cleanth Brooks, "Man on His Moral Uppers" from *The Hidden God* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1963)



world.”<sup>8</sup> Subsequently Hemingway’s inner world was traced under a strange mortuary light through corpses, suffering animals, morally wounded people, and was labled incisively as “nightmares at noonday”. It is a disordered and unhinged world where every human enterprise, along with natural phenomena, put on a grim and spectral aspect. The representative emotion which reacts directly to this world is horror, most profound because it is abstract and elemental, and has a touch of unreality and yet is manacingly close. In Hemingway’s works this nightmare aspect of his world and the resulting feeling of horror are perhaps most prevalent and should have priority in our consideration of his thematic expressions. When we have a close look at his works, we are amazed at finding so many symbolic images which point to this theme. We are only to wait till the sun sets and then we can see that the air is full of the wisps. It will suffice for our present purpose to pick up a few conspicuous and emotionally charged samples to investigate how concretely and realistically Hemingway projected his subjective world.

The first nightmare Nick Adam, Hemingway’s first hero, is slated to have is most appropriately a child-birth. In the first story of his first published book, titled *Indian Camp*, Nick goes with his father who professes medicine to an Indian village where his father has to deliver an Indian woman of a baby by a Caesarean operation, with a jack knife, and without an anesthetic. Her invalid husband is lying in a bunk above her, and after the operation the doctor

. . . pulled back the blanket from the Indian’s head. His hand came away wet. He mounted on the edge of the lower bunk with the lamp in one hand and looked in. The Indian lay with his face toward the wall. His throat had been cut from ear to ear. The blood had flowed down into a pool where his body sagged the bunk. His head rested on his left arm. The open razor lay, edge up, in the blankets.

“Take Nick out of the shanty, George,” the doctor said. There was no need of that. Nick, standing in the door of the kitchen, had a good view of the upper bunk when his father, the lamp in one hand, tipped the Indian’s head back.<sup>9</sup>

Here the violence of birth and death, pain and human agony assume the grisly visages and enact their horrible part before Nick making the vivid impression of nightmare on him. Characteristically the story is void of direct comments, which increases the force of symbolic

<sup>8</sup> Malcolm Cowley, *Portable Hemingway* (New York, 1945)

<sup>9</sup> Ernest Hemingway, ‘Indian Camp’ from *In Our Time*, p. 20

meaning to make us see for ourselves that in the objective account of the event, Hemingway's haunted inner world is duly reflected.

In the much celebrated story of 'The Killers' Nick encountered a different kind of nightmare at noonday. Two gangsters enter the lunchroom where Nick serves and after gagging and tying up Nick and the cook, set out to assassinate Ole Anderson. When the gangster leaves knowing that the man is not coming, Nick goes to Ole Anderson to inform him about the incident, and is surprised to find that the boxer knows about it and painfully prepares to be killed. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Pen Warren in their careful analysis of the story pointed out a few concrete details which sharply demonstrate the horror of this new experience of Nick. Nick has never been gagged before and he did not think that gagging could really exist in his actual life. The coarse fibre of the towel injects the violence of a fantasmagoric world into his every membrane. This could be possible only in the movies, but the gangster gives just such advice that clever boys should see lots of movies. And in reality the most common movie stuff is developing before Nick's eyes. Walking down the street under the arc light, the gangsters pose as the vaudeville team to reassure authenticity to the lesson they gave. The lesson is that a nightmare whose existence we could only imagine is reality, and in the following passages Nick, in spite of himself, is forced to accept the lesson.

The two of them went out of the door. George watched them, through the window, pass under the arc-light, and cross the street. In their tight overcoats and derby hats they looked like a vaudeville team. George went back through the swinging-door into the kitchen and untied Nick and the cook.

"I didn't want any more of that," said Sam, the cook.

"I don't want any more of that." Nick stood up.

He had never had a towel in his mouth before.

"Say", he said. "What the hell?" He was trying to swagger it off.

"They were going to kill Ole Anderson," George said.

"They were going to shoot him when he came in to eat."<sup>10</sup>

It is as if Nick is dreaming at night about the horror movie he saw in the evening. Yet it is day and look, gunmen actually walk out of the picture frame hung over the lunch counter. This living image of gangsters sneering at the terrified Nick dramatically symbolized the kind of nightmare which haunted Hemingway.

As it is noted already, Hemingway's nightmares are cast under a strangely mortuary

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Hemingway, 'Killers' from *Men Without Women* (Penguin Books, 1955) p. 65

light. In all the cases raised in the previous pages, death intrudes one way or another and plays a vital part in it. Death is an immanent presence touching every corner of Hemingway's works; it arrests our attention so consistently that we are obliged to treat it as a major theme of Hemingway's works. It is needless to say that throughout his career as a writer Hemingway was obsessed with death and it is not at all surprising that some critics call the author's entire works a study in death. But we are not concerned with the actual death in itself (although it would be both instructive and interesting to examine its vivid and diverse accounts), but with death as the symbolic expression of Hemingway's themes. It takes various specific and concrete forms as the story dictates, but they all point at the single line of scar in Hemingway's inner world, namely the loss of values. When he was sufficiently acquainted with the nightmare in which violence seems to be the only cause, and chaos, the only result, he realized that established order of things and ideas no longer exists, and that in reality no order in whatever form could be possible. It is the natural aftermath of World War I, which became the enormous backdrop of Hemingway's artistic world, generating the black fume of lengthy nightmare. The giant monster which devoured hundreds of thousands of soldiers symbolically killed all human faith, ideals, desire, all the artifacts of human intellect, and even common feeling. For the lost generation who survived the great destruction, the world is the vast cemetery for the death of everything and is ruled by the impersonal despot called Nada. These persons are the most genuine nihilists, for they became so through experience and not through idea. This nihilistic idea is expressed in Hemingway's work chiefly through the wounding and the death of the main characters and the abundance of corpses. The helplessness of the wounded, the purposelessness of the dead, and the undignified exposure of the corpses together brew the strong sense of nothingness which becomes the dominant theme in his third collection of short stories, *Winner Takes Nothing*.

To illustrate this point it would be convenient to introduce an article by Mark Spike titled 'The Death of Love in *The Sun Also Rises*.' Introducing the death of love in World War I as one of the persistent themes of the twenties, he contends that in *The Sun Also Rises* the protagonists are deliberately shaped in allegorical figures: Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley are two lovers desexed by the war; Robert Cohn is the false knight who challenges their despair; while Romero, the stalwart bullfighter, personifies the good life which will survive their failure. Here the critic finds that through the fall of chivalric code Hemingway put his theme in a concrete, fictional form. In developing his points he takes up the major characters of the novel to explain what kind of specific form they take and in what way they contribute to the entire picture. Naturally Jake Barnes, the narrator, comes first, and his case is somewhat representative of most of the characters and the whole atmos-

phere. Barnes' sexual wound, the result of an unpreventable accident in the war, points to another realism where accidents can always happen and where Barnes is equally powerless to prevent them. He is incapable of protecting and upholding the established values, nineteenth century morality, and pure and ardent feelings that have been regarded as an infallible guide. In the world of chivalry Barnes is at a loss to find his place, having no purpose for which to employ his manly courage. As the story goes on it becomes increasingly apparent that his world is an unfathomable abyss on which his life floats to no purpose. His love for Brett Ashley is an impossible proposition and unsolvable dilemma, for he is debarred from physical love, whereas Brett is capable of nothing but physical love. The sense of frustration which originates from the wound and the blank feeling of the aftermath is well dramatized in the scene where Jake could do nothing but prostrate and groan while Brett pets him.

As for Brett, in spite of her hilarious life, her inner world is as agonized and as blank as Jake's. 'She survived the colossal violence, the disruption of her personal life, and the exposure to mass promiscuity, to confront a moral and emotional vacuum among her postwar lovers. . . . And with a man's felt hat on her boyish bob, and with her familiar reference to men as fellow chaps she completes the distortion of sexual roles which seems to characterize the period.'<sup>①</sup>

Her world is psychological and externally it manifests in the form of nymphomaniacs. As a supposed object of knightly love she does her role by stripping herself of every womanly virtue for which they aspire, and when the ideal is in such a state the aspirants cannot help rotting. Accordingly Jake is not alone in his predicament. In some figurative manner the artists, writers, and derelicts with whom Jake associates have all been rendered impotent by the war. They are all incapable of love. Among them only Cohn is the remnant of a chivalric hero, the last defender of an outworn faith, and his function is to illustrate its present folly, to show us, through the absurdity of his behavior, that romantic love is dead, that one of the great guiding codes of the past no longer operates.

The ironic gap between expectation and fulfillment, pretense and fact, intention and action, the message sent and the message received, the way things are thought or ought to be and the way things are; this has been Hemingway's great theme from the beginning. After being horror-struck by nightmare and irrevocably wounded as the result, Hemingway's hero comes to realize the inevitable existence of this gap. As early as 'The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife' in *In Our Time*, Nick Adam is introduced to something of this disparity. Nick's father hires Dick Boulton to cut up the drifted logs that would be left to be

<sup>①</sup> *Twelve Original Essays on Great Novels*, ed. Charles Shopiro (Detroit, 1958, The Wayne State University Press)

water-logged and rot on the beach. They are not exactly the doctor's property, but it seems to be an accepted fact that the doctor could do that without any sense of dishonesty. Dick Boulton knows this, but he owes the doctor the fees for his wife's delivery. He wants to have the doctor quarrel with him, and then he may not have to pay him the debt. He deliberately charges the doctor of a theft and the doctor angrily leaves him and tells the event to his wife. But the doctor's wife could not believe this existence of atrocity. Between his father and his mother, expectation and reality, Nick senses a gap which cannot be closed. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, to extend and support the hero's explicit awareness of the inevitable contradictions of his position, Hemingway poses a series of situations pregnant with irony. Throughout all the Pillor's account the reader is never allowed to forget that it is the loyalists who are committing the atrocities described, and that the leaders of the massacre are the very people with whom Jordan is now allied. The implication is that the general human enterprise seems very likely to end in failure—the doom of darkness. (The irony of the denouement is that the central action, the blowing of the bridge which is responsible for the death of El Sordo, Anselmo, Fernando, and indeed, Robert Jordan, is rendered a strategic failure by the loose tongues of their comrade behind the lines.) This sense of doom is ever present in Hemingway's work, but it is especially strong in *Farewell to Arms*. The novel's opening paragraph helps to establish the dominant mood, which is one of doom.

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves.®

Carlos Baker, in his controversial chapter of his book, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, suggested another form of gap in Hemingway's artistic world, the gap between the mountain and the plain. Even though we admit the complaint of other critics who say that the relative position of the mountain and the plains is unjustifiably forced, the gap between the village in which Lieutenant Henry lives at the moment and the mountain seems

® Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, p. 1

unerasable. The river and the plain serve here as the very gap and temporarily signify the misery of the war, because of which the lovers' happiness is wrecked in the end. Another scene which shows this sense of doom comes at the end of *The Sun Also Rises* where Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley are riding from Madrid and are stopped by a policeman at a cross-road.

"Oh, Jake" Brett said, "We could have had such a demned good time together."

Ahead was a mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic.

He raised his baton. The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me.

"Yes, Isn't it pretty to think so?"<sup>⑬</sup>

With his khaki clothes and his preventive baton, he stands for the war and the society which makes it, and for the force which stops the lovers' car and which robs them of their normal sexual roles. In *The old Man and the Sea* this gap becomes a struggle between a man and a force which he knows must end in defeat.

It is already suggested that 'Big Two-Hearted River' which shows no apparent point on the surface becomes meaningful when we take it as an evocation of ritual to ostracize the nightmare which haunts Hemingway heroes. As an obvious clue to this critical proposition another plotless story, 'Now I Lay Me' is frequently cited. In the latter story a nameless soldier speculates about his past and present, lying on a couch. The terror of war is on his mind, and makes him afraid of even falling into sleep, for the bottomless abyss may engulf his soul. Then he thinks of his fishing trip made years ago, and finds that it has a peculiar soothing effect such as a religious ritual might give. He meditates:

I had different ways of occupying myself while I lay awake. I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length very carefully in my mind; fishing very carefully under all the logs, all turns of the bank, the deep holes and the clear shallow stretches, sometimes catching trout and sometimes losing them. I would stop fishing at noon to eat my lunch; sometimes on a high bank under a tree; sometimes on a log over the stream, and I always ate my lunch very slowly and watched the stream below me while I ate.<sup>⑭</sup>

To him even a speculative fishing in some imagined stream is a sedative strong enough to

<sup>⑬</sup> Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, p. 247

<sup>⑭</sup> Ernest Hemingway, *Men Without Women*, p. 151

make him think he is on a real fishing trip. The soldier continues:

Some nights too I made up streams, and some of them were very exciting, and it was like being awake and dreaming. Some of those streams I still remember and think that I have fished in them, and they are confused with streams I really know.<sup>15</sup>

Fishing is singularly adapted to the state of mind which, being wounded, craves for the healing balm. Besides the slowness of the procedure there are calmness and softness in the stream which also serve to wipe away the stain of undesirable memory of the past. Its location is in the country and without referring to one of the major themes in English literature which forms the antithesis between city as the lair of evil and country as the cradle of goodness, we may safely conclude that Hemingway's moral geography shows pretty much the same picture. This idea is strongly evoked in the clear contrast between the aimless, confused life in Paris and the simple, meaningful experience in the country stream of Burguete. Here Barnes and Gorton approach "the good place", and each item in the landscape is singled out and given its own importance. Like Nick Adams, these men have left the wasteland for the green plains of health. The fishing there is good, the talk free and easy, and even Barnes is able to sleep well after lunch, though he is usually an insomniac. Thus exhausted by the nightmare of the war and the agony of the wound which the city engendered in the pride of its civilization, he can find happiness only in the primitive posture of the wilderness recovering a ritualistic reverence toward nature and natural action. As with Nick Adams, it brings him health, pleasure, beauty and order, and helps to wipe out the damage of his troubled life in Paris.

Hemingway at his best depicts brilliantly the struggle of man to be a human being in a world which increasingly seeks to reduce him to a mechanism, a mere thing. Analyzing a man in the modern world Paul Tillich said:

He has become a part of the reality he has created, an object among objects, a thing among things, a cog within a universal machine to which he must adapt himself in order not to be smashed by it . . . Out of this predicament of man in the industrial society the experiences of emptiness and meaninglessness, of dehumanization and estrangement have resulted.<sup>16</sup>

Tillich goes on to say that our contemporary arts everywhere "show in their style both

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 152~153

<sup>16</sup> Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (The Macmillan Co., 1964)

the encounter with non-being, and the strength which can stand this encounter and shape it creatively." This intensive strength employed for mortal stakes inevitably causes violence. Only through desperate means the Hemingway heroes can break away from the doomed atmosphere and achieve their separate peace. Disillusioned with the existing law of society he has to form a code of his own which supports him by the sheer force of resistance against the former. Symbolic expression of the Hemingway hero in his search for his place in this world is, we may say, a violent man.

In "The Undefeated" we have a typical case of a violent man. The old bullfighter, Manuel Garcia, returns from a hospital where he recovered from the wound received from a bull, and in spite of his failing physical strength seeks doggedly for the opportunity of fighting in the arena. He knows he is losing his fighting style and strives to compensate the loss with his undefatigable strength of will pitted against the will of the bull. In this context the bull forces us to the assumption that he represents something in the order of chaos, nothingness, and defeatism. However the spectators, including the cynical newspaper correspondents, who know nothing but the outward form and conventional tricks, deride him. Amidst this hostile atmosphere, and against the formidable adversary, the aging bullfighter struggles to his utmost until he falls gored by the bull. It is the violent action of a man who desperately seeks to regain the title of man. It is well illustrated in the following passage in which the bullfighter's sharp concentration and the intensity of movement is pitched boldly against the apparent odds.

Now, facing the bull, he was conscious of many things at the same time. There were the horns, the one splintered, the other smoothly sharp, the need to profile himself toward the left horn, lance himself short and straight, lower the muleta so the bull would follow it, and going in over the horns, put the sword all the way into a little spot about as big as a five-peseta piece straight in back of the neck, between the sharp pitch of the bull's shoulders. He must do all this, and must then come out from between the horns. He was conscious he must do all this, but his only thought was in the words: 'Cortoy derecho!'.<sup>①</sup>

At the end, Manuel is defeated. This defeat is only apparent, however, for it becomes increasingly clear throughout the story that it is not victory or defeat that matters but the struggle itself. This struggle is the justification of a violent man in Hemingway's world. Our second illustration also deals with as grimy and rough-hewn character as the bloody

<sup>①</sup> Ernest Hemingway, *Men Without Women*, p. 37



bullfighter. Hemingway's story of the boxing ring, "Fifty Grand," will provide us with another example of the violent man. The hero of this story is also getting on in age and finds it hard to get in shape for the bout to defend his championship title. He is really panic-stricken about his prospects and lies in bed cowering as if waiting for the execution. It seems that his defeat is a preordained fact, and that everyone is expecting it as a natural thing. The unconquerable wall is set against the aging boxer, and it seems to leave him no choice but to accept abjectly this defeat. It is quite understandable that in order to break this unbreakable barrier the boxer has to employ an unusual measure, which is violent and in this particular incident, dishonest. We should not be misled to denouncing his action by the negative nature of violence and dishonesty. They serve only as a foil for the hero's will seeking a human choice. To be specific, he decides to fix the fight and to bet against himself. He is going to lose his title anyway, but betting against himself he will at least realize some profit out of the end of his boxing career. However, the opponent in his turn makes a secret contract with gamblers and arranges to beat himself by committing a foul. As a result, the boxer suddenly finds himself torn apart by the low blow during the fight. Again he is threatened by the outward management to accept the choice not of his own. With the support of his moral strength, he sustains the pain well enough to convince the referee that the foul was not intended or serious, and some moment later he manages to deal his own blow to the groin of his opponent securing his intended result.

The violent man's essential quality is undeniably courage, physical as well as moral. In Hemingway's novel, as in most artistic forms, physical strength is a necessary expression of spiritual force which is important. Perhaps in the word courage we tend to think in terms of spiritual quality, but as a writer who works through a symbolical way of expression, Hemingway often depicts a man who achieves manhood through an unusually violent action. He sees that the man who lacks courage, a mere slave to his fears, is not truly free and not truly human, that he has to break away from his habitual fear with violence and vigor, even risking the violence of death. This point is made over and over again in the stories.

Hemingway is the writer who, through most of his life, seems to have had no religious commitment. Hemingway was concerned with man as man, with man in his relation to things of this world almost exclusively. The other world or God do not often enter into the thoughts, plans, or motions of a Hemingway character. In *Farewell to Arms* Catherine Barkley insists that the church's sanction is not really necessary for her marriage to Frederic Henry. Jake Barnes tries to pray but feels sorry that he no longer could manage to pray in *The Sun Also Rises*. However even men and women who do not have God, Hemingway felt,

must try to make up for Him in some sense, quixotic as that gesture will seem and in ultimate terms at least, desperate as that gesture must be. It is almost as if Hemingway, driven back out of theism, dispossessed of his heritage, insists upon stubbornly defending whatever he has felt could still be held. This existentialistic attitude, like that of the Christian, is pitted against the dehumanization of man and devoted to almost desperate assertion of man's dignity as a being capable of moral choice.

As a central image for this religious theme Hemingway seemed to have taken the figure of Christ, especially at the moment of his crucifixion. In "Today is Friday" the first soldier's attitude toward Jesus whom he had crucified can be said the objective epitome of Hemingway's religious concern. The soldier is not a regular christian, that is, he is not interested in the religious doctrine. His only comment on the crucified Jesus is "he looked pretty good to me in there today." In the image of the crucifixion, it is the unique courage of the forsaken and crucified man-God that takes his attention. So important for Hemingway is courage that it seems to underlie all the other virtues, as perhaps indeed it does. The specifically Christian virtue is exercised only by the man who turns his cheek though he is not in the least afraid. In a hostile universe—or in what is at the least an indifferent and meaningless universe—the Hemingway hero clings to a lonely virtue—courage.

The image of the crucified Christ as the religious symbol appears most strongly and most explicitly in *The Old Man and the Sea*. In this respect it will suffice to introduce the excellent article by Joseph Waldmeir titled "Confiteor Hominem: Ernest Hemingway's Religion of Man." He begins the arguments by giving the parallel points between Jesus and the Old Man. "The Old Man is a fisherman, and he is also a teacher, one who has taught the boy not only how to fish—that is, how to make a living—but how to behave as well, giving him the pride and humility necessary to a good life." Jesus told the disciples that he would make them the fishermen of men. "During the trials with the great fish and with the sharks his hands pain him terribly, his back is lashed by the line, he gets an eye-piercing headache, and his chest constricts and he spits blood."<sup>18</sup> Tried by Pilate, Jesus also was lashed by the Roman soldiers, and in his agony he sweats blood. As he sees the the second and the third sharks attacking, the Old Man calls aloud "Ay," and Hemingway comments: "There is no translation for this word and perhaps it is just such a noise as a man might make, involuntarily, feeling the nail go through his hand and onto the wood."<sup>19</sup> On landing, the old Man shoulders his mast and goes upward from the sea toward his hut; he is forced to rest several times on his journey up the hill; and when he reaches the

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Waldmeir, "Confiteor Hominem: Ernest Hemingway's Religion of Man" from *PMASAL* XLII (1956) pp. 277~281.

<sup>19</sup> Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York) p. 99.

hut he lies on the bed "with his arms out straight and the palms of his hands up." This is the obvious reference to Jesus on the way to Golgota and the crucifixion itself.

Waldmeir sees the constant shifts from man to fish which was a symbol for early Christianity, and back to man throughout the story not as an example of the sacrificer—sacrificed phenomenon but that of the doctrine of the Trinity. He goes a step further to suggest that "the phenomenon itself closely parallels the Roman Catholic sacrifice of the Mass, wherein a fusion of the priest-man with Christ takes place at the moment of transubstantiation."<sup>20</sup> So the Old Man along with the fish with which he grapple, through the image of the crucified, exercises the ritual of a religious sacrifice.

There is a sense of awe in the works of Hemingway. It comes from the fact that he is essentially a philosophical writer who tried to find the essential facts and the deep meaning of human life. What he has found is largely negative; religious faith never takes a firm root in his mind, which circles around pessimism and nihilism without quite giving up the fight against them. To mold a meaning in the apparently meaningless universe, Hemingway turned to himself and through the ethical conduct built with individual human courage, he hoped to achieve a salvation. The underlying significance which we get in Hemingway's works may be rendered partly by this moral code under human predicament. When we get the proper perspective for the author's unique artistic world, it becomes quite obvious that he never lost sight of this basic posture, which he adopted from the beginning. This central theme, like a great artery, runs through Hemingway's entire works, and becomes the lifeline which gives pulse to every detail. Again like the human blood system, it runs in two ways, one negative, and the other positive, and it is the conflict between these two counter movements that gives Hemingway's works the dramatic intensity and profound significance. For convenience, we may call the negative proposition the condition of man and the positive one the individual posture, and then we find several characteristics gather around each pole.

The first thing we notice for the condition of man as Hemingway saw it is that man is living in an essentially disordered world. Secondly we are led to understand that after being initiated to this world of violence, the Hemingway hero emerges with no recognizable sense of value. With the disjointed world around and without any support of value, the fundamental condition of man is defeatism, which is inevitably the frame of whatever picture life takes. Under this dismal condition Hemingway forges a few painstaking formulas for the only possible posture of individual man who cannot abandon himself to that condition and who cannot help trying to salvage something. The first reaction to the horrifying

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Waldmeir, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

disorder is understandably the escape from it. However, as the manace is of an obsessive character, there is no easy retreat from it, and the process is as fierce as the actual battle itself, although it is usually executed quietly and deliberately. To ostracize the chaos, the hero coins rather rigid formality which he takes for shelter. There, estrabged from the world and society, he makes his separate peace, and works out the individual principle of conduct by which he hoped to protect the newly gained peace. Finally, given an utmost devotion, this principled conduct reaches up to the religious intensity and puts on a mysterious implication. The Hemingway hero achieves something like a religious salvation through his individual creed of conduct.