Elements of Humor in Ernest Hemingway.

Thomas Neal Hagood

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/1490

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
This dissertation has been microfilmed exactly as received 69-4473

HAGOOD, Thomas Neal, 1930-
ELEMENTS OF HUMOR IN ERNEST HEMINGWAY.

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Ph.D., 1968
Language and Literature, modern

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan
ELEMENTS OF HUMOR IN
ERNEST HEMINGWAY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in
The Department of English

by
Thomas Neal Hagood
B.A., Jacksonville State University, 1954
M.A., Birmingham-Southern College, 1960
August, 1968
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer my sincerest gratitude to Professor Lewis P. Simpson and Professor Darwin Shrell of the Department of English of Louisiana State University whose patient and painstaking supervision has made this dissertation possible. I wish to acknowledge debts also to Fred Collins of the Department of English of Memphis State University for sparking my investigation of this topic. My sincere thanks go also to those whose timely encouragements have facilitated my efforts: Dr. H. B. Evans, chairman emeritus of the Department of English of Memphis State University; Dr. John Norris, Chairman of the Department of English at McNeese State College; and Dr. Milton Rickels of the University of Southwestern Louisiana. Last I wish to thank most those who have given most in this effort, my wife Annette and sons Craig, Bruce, and Hugh, who all understand how much they have given and why they have done so.
CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Critical Opinion of Hemingway's Humor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Purpose and Procedure</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Nomenclature</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE HUMOR OF YOUTHFUL CYNICISM</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Hemingway's Family and Early Life</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Juvenilia</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Journalism</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Three Stories and Ten Poems</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. in our time</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. In Our Time</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. HUMOR IN THE TORRENTS OF SPRING AND THE SUN ALSO RISES</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Torrents of Spring</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Hemingway as Tragicomedian: The Sun Also Rises</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. RESURGENCE OF PESSIMISM: MEN WITHOUT WOMEN AND A FAREWELL TO ARMS</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Men Without Women</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. A Farewell to Arms</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE HUMOR OF THE MACABRE AND OF GLOATING</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Death in the Afternoon</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Winner Take Nothing</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Esquire Letters</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Green Hills of Africa</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. HUMOR AND SOCIAL REINVOLVEMENT</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. To Have and Have Not</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. For Whom the Bell Tolls</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE FINAL PHASE: LITERARY MORBIDITY</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Across the River and into the Trees</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Old Man and the Sea</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Two Late Stories</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

This study is an examination of the elements of humor in Ernest Hemingway's works. It recognizes that Hemingway was not primarily a humorist, but seeks to prove that grim, ironic humor was important to him in many ways: sometimes as a safety valve for frustration or despair; often in helping to create a realistic picture of life, which Hemingway knew was never entirely without humor; sometimes as a way of achieving tragic effects; and, at other times, as a satirical weapon.

This study examines the elements of Hemingway's humor in the juvenilia written at Oak Park High School, in his journalism and poetry, and in one play, as well as his fiction and other work. It also examines the sources and development of his humorous techniques, the relation of humor to his tragic view of life, and the relationship of his life to his use of humor. Hemingway showed a special fondness for writers with a disposition to humor, studied their works, and, at first, modeled his work upon theirs. Poe, O. Henry, Kipling, Ring Lardner, and Mark Twain were notable influences on him. When he was in Toronto, Hemingway was influenced by journalistic practices that encouraged humor and satire. Sherwood Anderson, dadaism, sur-
realism, Hieronymus Bosch's grotesqueries, and Pieter Brughel's earthy humor also influenced him.

Chapter I of this study discusses the cynical work of Hemingway's youth, which culminated in *Three Stories and Ten Poems, in our time,* and *In Our Time.* These works feature the Nick Adams-Hemingway character as he is introduced to various moral dilemmas, wounds, and death. There are strong elements of macabre and gloating humor and satire in these works. Chapter II focuses on *The Torrents of Spring* and *The Sun Also Rises.* In the former, Hemingway parodied Sherwood Anderson, his former mentor, and forced Liveright to break its contract with him, thus enabling him to sell *The Sun Also Rises* to Scribner's. The second novel justified Hemingway's assertion of independence. Its tone is tragicomic, its humorous elements giving greater depth to the tragedy. The vein of humor is stronger in this work than in any other. Chapter III examines the resurgence of pessimism in *Men Without Women* and *A Farewell to Arms.* The general tenor of *Men Without Women* is abnegation. The pessimistic tenor continues in *A Farewell to Arms,* Hemingway's first full-length study of doom. Chapter IV studies the developing depression of spirits in *Death in the Afternoon* and *Winner Take Nothing* and the lighter tone of *Green Hills of Africa.* Death-embracing macabre humor predominates in the first two works, but changes to gloating humor in the last. Chapter V discusses Hemingway's rejoining society in
To Have and Have Not, The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories, and For Whom the Bell Tolls. In this period he shows a strengthened satirical impulse, but his targets change from American complacency to bureaucracy and Fascism. Chapter VI examines Hemingway's most unsuccessful work, Across the River and into the Trees, which fails primarily because the author cannot control his rabid satire, and The Old Man and the Sea, written in a chastened mood, embracing the Crucifixion theme, and demonstrating the least humor of any of Hemingway's works.

The recognition of the elements of humor in Hemingway demonstrates that he has more scope than he is given credit for. He has both a greater emotional range and a greater technical range than is generally acknowledged.
INTRODUCTION

A. CRITICAL OPINION OF HEMINGWAY'S HUMOR

The first essay on the work of Ernest Hemingway appeared in April, 1924, when *in our time* was reviewed in the *transatlantic review* in an article signed "M. R." A second article on Hemingway was published six months later when Edmund Wilson reviewed *Three Stories and Ten Poems* and *in our time* for the October, 1924, issue of the *Dial*. This marked the first appearance in an American publication of a critical study of Hemingway. Since his first notices nearly fifty years ago, critical studies of Hemingway have been published not only in England and America but in France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Russia, Norway, Sweden, Japan, and...

---

1 *in our time* (Paris: Three Mountains Press, 1924), is a thirty-two page book of "miniatures" (to use Carlos Baker's nomenclature), and is quite different from *In Our Time* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1925), which is a collection of fifteen short stories. The "miniatures" of *in our time*, except for two which have been extended to full length stories, are used as interchapters for *In Our Time*.

elsewhere. The volume of studies has become massive and keeps growing.

In general, one gets the impression from reading the extensive critical commentary on Hemingway that he has no sense of humor. Nevertheless, we find hints here and there indicating that various early critics saw a sense of humor in Hemingway. In a review published in February, 1926, Lewis Kronenberger found "culture . . . humor . . . sophistication . . . objectivity" in In Our Time. 4 When Torrents of Spring appeared in the same year, Ernest Boyd, prejudiced against In Our Time because Hemingway was an expatriate, saw in the author "a genuine humorist and a critic so shrewd" as to "possibly cure the disease he so well diagnoses." 5 A half dozen years later, in 1932, Joseph Warren Beach, not noticeably enthusiastic about Hemingway, commented on understatement, satire, and a certain irrational quality in his early work. He thought Hemingway belonged to a "cult of the simple," one that preferred to "err on the side of under-

---


4 Saturday Review of Literature, II (February 13, 1926), 555.

5 Independent, CXVI (June 12, 1926), 694. Quoted from Carlos Baker, Hemingway, the Writer as Artist, (Princeton: The University Press, 1963), pp. 33 and 42.
statement rather than overstatement." He apparently felt, in fact, that Hemingway carried understatement to an ultimate development: "There is, however, one way of signalizing an experience which is more important than others, and that is by saying nothing about it. . . . And this is, in general, the secret of his effect." Beach also saw in Hemingway a reticence at being "taken in" by ideal values, an attitude which, Beach felt, was especially strong in the United States, but which was a part of the "debunking" fever so strong in all postwar European art. He saw a nihilism and a "corrosive criticism of old ideals" vigorously at work. Of In Our Time he concluded: "As for the composition of the thing, it is perhaps most sensible to consider it an amusing stunt, or maybe simply a hoax." These remarks by Beach are important, for they suggest the influence of dadaism and surrealism on Hemingway. Both contribute significantly to his humor.

The most vituperative criticism of Hemingway began to appear in the second decade of his literary career. A classic attack by Wyndham Lewis, called "The Dumb Ox, a Study of Ernest Hemingway," appeared in 1934 in a work Lewis entitled

---

7 Ibid., p. 536. 8 Ibid., pp. 532-33.
9 Ibid., pp. 548-49. 10 Ibid., p. 477.
Men Without Art, a twist on the title of Hemingway's book Men Without Women. Lewis classified Hemingway as a "sati-rist" and a writer of comic "folk-prose." He asserted that the folk-prose is comic by accident and not by art. In the same year Max Eastman, in an essay called "Bull in the Afternoon," discussed Hemingway's Death in the Afternoon. He declared "there is an unconscionable quantity of bull . . . poured and plastered all over what he writes about bullfights. By bull I mean juvenile romantic gushing and sentimentalizing of simple fact." He was more critical of some of Hemingway's remarks about the bull's bravery. "This is not juvenile romanticism," he said, "it is child's fairy-story writing." But Eastman did admit, "There are gorgeous pages in Ernest Hemingway's book about bullfights—big humor and reckless straight talk of what things are, genuinely heavy ferocity against prattle of what things are not." The stature of Eastman as a critic of humor makes this a significant, if brief, recognition of the humorous


12 Ibid., p. 30.


14 Ibid., pp. 54-55. 15 Ibid., p. 54.
content of *Death in the Afternoon*.16

During the third decade of Hemingway's career, other important critics made brief comments about the humor in his work. Edmund Wilson thought the kidding in *Death in the Afternoon* is handled with more skill than it is in *Torrents of Spring*.17 Alfred Kazin identified a comic trace in Hemingway's career.18 Harry Levin recalled with interest that Hemingway's maiden effort, published in *The Double Dealer* in 1922, had been a parody of the King James Bible. He added that "the ring-tailed roarers of the frontier, such as Davy Crockett, were Colonel Cantwell's brothers under the skin; but, as contrasted with the latter's tragic conception of himself, they were mock-heroic and seriocomic figures who recommend themselves to the reader's condescension." Hemingway's verbal skepticism, or moral nihilism, according to Levin, demands that "anything serious had better be said with a smile, stranger."19

---

16 Eastman is author of two classic studies of humor: *The Sense of Humor* (1921) and *Enjoyment of Laughter* (1936).


As might be expected, the critics who have most to say about the humorous and ironic in Hemingway are those recent ones who have done full-length studies of him. The most useful are Philip Young, Carlos Baker, and Charles A. Fenton. Young repeatedly finds irony and understatement as basic devices in Hemingway and sees sprinklings of humor throughout his stories. Baker feels that "Hemingway's skills as a comic writer are probably not enough appreciated" and that his satirical motif is always near the surface. Fenton, interested only in the early years of the author's development, deals more fully with comic ingredients than any other writer. The reason is that a major portion of his study is devoted to Hemingway's work for the Toronto Star and Star Weekly; both of these publications as a matter of editorial policy aimed to amuse their readers. Another critic of major importance, so far as this study is concerned, is E. M. Halliday. He has not written a book-length study of Hemingway, but he has contributed one essay of special relevance to the study of

---


22Ibid., pp. 190-91.

Hemingway's humor. Taking his departure from Baker's work, Halliday admits the importance of symbolism in Hemingway, but argues that irony is perhaps more basic in Hemingway than symbolism.24

More than forty years have elapsed since Kronenberger and Boyd identified Hemingway's humorous inclinations. It would seem that suggestions over the years from a variety of critics about the humorous qualities of Hemingway should have provoked more consideration of his relation to humor than they have.

B. PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of my study is to give careful consideration to the humor in Hemingway's works. Aspects of the author's life will be included when they are helpful to an understanding of Hemingway's life and his art as an integrated whole. Because Hemingway produced a considerable body of journalism for the Kansas City Star and The Toronto Daily Star and Star Weekly before he became famous with The Sun Also Rises, his professional newspaper work, as well as his juvenilia written at Oak Park High School, receive attention in the opening chapter. The first chapter gives

attention also to the belles-lettres publications—*Three Stories and Ten Poems* (1923) and the two different works entitled *In Our Time* which led up to the full-length narratives that announce Hemingway's artistic maturity and independence. The second chapter will examine the two narratives of 1926, *Torrents of Spring*, a parody, and *The Sun Also Rises*, a tragicomedy.

After the bright climax of 1926, Hemingway's middle years began under the cloud of his divorce from Hadley Richardson Hemingway in March, 1927, and his father's suicide in December, 1928. Chapter III examines the works that reflect these two reversals, *Men Without Women* (1927) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). The next chapter examines three works of Hemingway's middle years that indicate a hardening pessimism: *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), *Winner Take Nothing* (1933), and *Green Hills of Africa* (1935).

Between the publication of *Green Hills of Africa* and the outbreak of World War II, Hemingway fought back to a position which, if it was not more optimistic, was at least less desolate than it formerly had been. The works which document that progress—*To Have and Have Not* (1937), *The Fifth Column* and the *First Forty-Nine Stories* (1938), and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940)—are examined in Chapter V.

After 1940 Hemingway had a ten-year lapse in his writing career. During this fallow period he was divorced from Pauline Pfeiffer Hemingway (a month after the publica-
tion of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and from Martha Gellhorn Hemingway (in 1945). He also went to several combat areas of World War II. After the 1940's, there was, as Chapter VI illustrates, a decline in Hemingway's literary powers, and he lost the detachment that is necessary for some kinds of humor. *Across the River and into the Trees* (1950) is difficult to evaluate since it is humorous partly because of what it attempts but fails to do. *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) is Hemingway's most humorless book, and the posthumous *A Moveable Feast* (1964) is his most vitriolic. It is possible that there are other works in his papers that will be printed at some later date. But it is unlikely that they will change very much the overall estimation of his work, or contribute much to a clearer understanding of his use of humor.

C. NOMENCLATURE

Some of the humor that one finds in Hemingway can easily be classified in the well-established categories of humor: satire, parody, and tragicomedy. But often Hemingway's humorous perspective is so grim as to be difficult to define. Even such a common term as satire demands careful definition when one applies it to the distinctive brand of ridicule he finds in Hemingway.

The following discussion of terms will be helpful:

1. Satire. Ordinarily satire is a blend of wit and
ironic humor in the hypercritical presentation of persona or things, including such abstract entities as philosophical systems, manners, and morals. Satire, as used in this study, means a kind of humor that often lies close to invective but is always laced with irony, thus presenting its object in a ridiculous as well as an immoral or unesthetic light. I do not assume, furthermore, that satirical purpose is ultimately reform; one may hold up to ridicule and scorn powers that he fears and yet that he knows are not subject to reform. From my point of view the only necessary ingredient in satire is comic or ironic incongruity. The purpose in such satire is, instead of reform, simply vindication of what is not immoral or unethical. The laughter—and even such circumstances of comic incongruity do provoke laughter—is the laughter of despair. This kind of satire stands close to tragicomedy, but tragicomedy has a detachment and acceptance that it lacks. This kind of satire has as its object the power or powers that control human destiny. It must be distinguished from l'humour noir.

2. Black humor (l'humour noir). We may or may not assume that Hemingway was familiar with this surrealistic concept of humor, l'humour noir, but he was close to the sources of surrealistic thought when l'humour noir was prominent, and his publication of a leaflet and article on
Joan Miro, the leader of one of the two main branches of surrealistic art, is indicative of his interest in it. L'humour noir, "black bile," uses laughter as a purge to sweep away conventional feelings. It is bitter, destructive, and shocking. It is also highly antiromantic. In it "distortions are extremely funny, and the lip that curls in a frightful grimace as a result of acute pain, not necessarily physical, a pain which causes the bile to turn black, is extremely funny." Its destructive nature is perhaps best seen in the following analysis of dadaism, one of the sources from which it sprang. According to Willy Verkauf, "Dada was a battle cry ... against a social order that could create what was happening in 1916, against any product of that order, esthetic product too." It was a "shock treatment" for its intellectual protagonists at that particular moment . . . the reaction to the blinkers that society had imposed, and it proclaimed "absolute" nonsense as a weapon against any sense imputed to the war. Dada negated all the values until then considered sacred and inviolable,


ridiculed fatherland, religion, morality, and honour, and unmasked the values that had been made idols of. ... The lampooning of the hypocritical politics and morals of the rulers—these had a cathartic effect. ... 

It is

a clownery out of the void in which all the sublime questions have been entangled; it is a gladiator's gesture. ... The dadaist loves the absurd. He knows that life will outlast adversity, and that his time like none before it aims at the destruction of all that is generous. He therefore welcomes every kind of disguise, every game of hide-and-seek which has the power to dupe."29

As one reads, "He knows that life will outlast adversity." He cannot keep from hearing echoes of the passage from Ecclesiastes that Hemingway uses as a preface to The Sun Also Rises: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever. ... The sun also ariseth," so close are the sentiments of Hemingway, at this point, to those of dadaism. Illustrations of what the surrealist considered l'humour noir are available in Andre Breton's Anthologie de l'Humour Noir (1950). This includes two rather distinct types of surrealist humor: the pointedly pessimistic, as in A Modest Proposal; and another type of wild, topsy-turvy, nonsensical humor, the kind found in Alice in Wonderland, Poe's "Angel of the Odd," "Meditations upon a Broomstick," and "Playboy of the Western World."30

3. Tragicomedy. The tragicomic view is especially prevalent in realism, because an accurate picture of life does not allow the separation of the tragic and the comic into distinct compartments. Karl S. Guthke says:

... it should have become clear from our discussions so far that the ingredient of the comic by no means alleviates the pain of tragic awareness; on the contrary, it makes it more acute. The presence of the comic element, therefore, need not always be interpreted as a symptom of escape or recourse to the healing power of detachment. Rather than that, it may be the result of a most serious urge to face unflinchingly every bitter nuance of what is felt to be the tragedy of existence. As such the tragicomic vision as we have so far developed it is a phenomenon not of escape, but of courage, though some will always insist on their right to call it decadence.  

Influenced by August Wilhelm Schelegel's Vienna lectures of 1808, Guthke suggests the validity of tragicomedy as an "intimate expression of the mentality of the moderns because this mentality was no longer characterized by harmony and confidence in the healing powers of life, but by contrast and unrest, tensions, and disharmonies of all kind."  

Mr. Guthke, writing with great respect for Victor Hugo, says that Hugo feels compelled to give cultural-historical reasons for this mixture of comedy and tragedy, which he considers characteristic of modern literature. Like Schelling he attributes it to the advent of Christi-

---


32 Ibid., p. 103.
anity and its image of man. Yet his speculation is entirely different from Schelling's and . . . a good deal more convincing since it does not quite lose sight of the pertinent and demonstrable facts: "On the day when Christianity said to man: 'Thou art twofold,'" namely body and soul, "the drama was created." In fact he points out again and again: the grotesque, the comic corresponds to "the human beast," the sublime, the tragic to the "soul." He continues: since man is always both at the same time, beast and soul, it would be an unrealistic abstraction to write comedy and tragedy separately. 33

Guthke says the tragicomedian knows that he cannot answer questions or save the world; he alludes to Gertrude Stein's preachment that questions are often more important than answers, and states:

Asking questions is in essence what the tragicomedian attempts to do in our time. He is--knowingly or unknowingly--far from asserting that "meaninglessness" is the last word. He does know, however, that he cannot "save the world." That is his wisdom and his despair--which drives him on to literary creation. "And thus we should not try to save the world," Durrenmatt, who considers tragicomedies the only dramatic form suited to our time, remarks in one of his stories, "but to bear it. That is the one real adventure which remains possible for us in this late time." 34

Guthke goes on to characterize modern tragicomedies further by listing its seven typical characteristics. The last three may have special relevance to our study of Hemingway. One is "irony in the course of events." "In this type of play the course of events is contrived in such a way that it is

33 Ibid., p. 106.

invariably ironic, yet the *dramatis personae* trapped by this ironic course of events rise to the stature of tragic heroes under its impact."35 A more subtle type "exploits a conflict within a person, such as the discrepancy between intention and fulfillment, wish and being, a person's ideal concept of himself and his reality, artist and human being, body and mind, being and mask, and so on."36 The last characteristic is the exaggeration of one trait of a character, as in the old comedy of humors and comedy of manners, but with care to make the exaggerated trait a virtue, not a vice, and care to develop the character into a fully developed figure.37

4. Parody. Parody is a form that has traditionally required little explanation, but its importance is often underestimated since it is a legitimate and serious form of criticism. Joe Lee Davis calls it "that type of satirical burlesque writing whose purpose is to heighten, through comic parallelism, our awareness of the peculiarities, the excesses and defects, in a specific literary work or in a literary type or mode or vogue or style represented by a specific work."38 Additional illumination comes from

William Van O'Connor, who says it is "a form of irony, of simulation, saying one thing and partly intending another. It deserves a place in the categories of irony arranged by I. A. Richards, Cleanth Brooks, and others. It is serious-comic, and praises while it condemns. As with other devices or forms of irony, when employed intelligently and affirmatively, parody makes more lucid the reader's sense of a style or a subject. It can be a valuable form of criticism." 39

5. Plainspokenness. Since the use of euphemism is motivated by the desire to avoid discomfort, it follows that the reveling in pain that characterizes the grimmer kind of humor demands the avoidance of euphemism. The austere expression of Scotland, as seen by Stephen Leacock, affords prime examples of plainspokenness. He explains that life for the Scotch often is so hard that little energy can be spared for circumlocutions and that these hardy people become inured to hard work and pain. They disdain euphemism. To them "a spade is a spade, and a grave is a grave, and death is death." 40 Hanging judges and courts of law abound in this humor. Leacock gives the following example: "The famous, or infamous, Lord Brasfield, in sentencing a pris-

oner to death, said 'You're a very clever chiel, man, but ye wad be none the war of a hanging.'" Another example from Leacock tells of Lord Kaines as he "presided over the trial of one Matthew Hay—for murder, at Ayr—with whom he had formerly played chess. When the jury returned the verdict of 'guilty,' Kaines said, 'That's checkmate for you, Matthew.'"41

6. Understatement. Incongruity of exaggeration produces humor characteristically American; incongruity of understatement produces humor characteristically Anglo-Saxon. A famous example occurs in Beowulf after Grendel's repeated visit to Heorot Hall when the cowardliness of Hrothgar's thanes is expressed in litotes: "Then was the man easy to find who sought elsewhere more remote a resting place for himself."42

7. Battle humor (Kampfhumor). Another kind of humor important in Anglo-Saxon literature is Kampfhumor, "battle humor," or Schadenfreude, "malicious humor" or "gloating." Though the German terms are often used when designating this humor, it is not necessarily or even primarily a German tradition. In fact, there are theorists who feel that this is the archetype of all humor. Leacock, for example, writes, "Our laughter originated then, it would

---

41 Ibid., p. 218.
seem, long before our speech as a sort of natural physical expression, or outburst, of one's feeling suddenly good, suddenly victorious. It was a primitive shout of triumph. The savage who cracked his enemy over the head with a tomahawk and shouted 'Ha! Ha!' was the first humorist. In the field of theory Schadenfreude is also a favorite kind of humor for those who carry the "superiority theory" of laughter to the extreme of using it to explain the humor in puns and misspellings as the gloating at smashing out of shape the conventions of semantics and orthography, respectively. One easily sees examples of gloating in Hemingway. Chapter III of *In Our Time*, "We were in a garden at Mons," is a perfect example of gloating. This kind of humor is not simply the exuberance of play. It occurs not when we merely score, but when we score off an opponent. It is the harshest form of laughter at the calamity of others.

8. Gallows humor (Galgenhumor). Another type of humor often designated by a German term, though it is not exclusively a German product, is Galgenhumor or "gallows humor." Instead of gloating over the defeat of others, the perpetrator of gallows humor triumphs emotionally by the use of wit over his own impending death. Freud illustrates this


by an example of a rogue being led to his execution on Monday, who remarks "Yes, this week is beginning well." He explains, "Our enjoyment comes from an economy in expenditure of sympathy. Our sympathy should be quite intense and painful but for the realization that the victim has risen above despair, and we laugh for the lightening of our debt." Classic examples also occur in the records of the last days of Sir Thomas More and Sir Walter Raleigh. Some critics feel that gallows humor is especially fitting in the twentieth century. For example, Guthke says that Jack Richardson's "Preface" to Gallows Humor (1961) states that if laughter is to exist it must exist in a grim setting—with the gallows rising threateningly above the joker. That Hemingway was familiar with this kind of humor and frequently indulged in it is apparent in Leicester Hemingway's record of a letter written by Ernest Hemingway to Marlene Dietrich after the African trip during which he was involved in two plane crashes and had obituaries published prematurely. He asked her to come to Cuba, promising "not to make bad gallows jokes or let her read his obituaries."


46 Guthke, Modern Tragicomedy, p. 122.

9. The grotesque. The grotesque is marked by twisting something out of shape into something unexpected, markedly different from the natural, or ludicrously awkward. Often the grotesque has tragic or sinister overtones. Its effects, however, may be pleasantly humorous or horrible. Poe's Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque affords several examples of the type.

10. The macabre. The origin of the concept of the macabre, la danse de macabre, is debatable, but it may go back to dancing skeletons on late Roman sarcophagi and murals at Cumae or Pompeii. It became prominent during the Black Death in the fourteenth century and during the Hundred Years War. During these calamities the church seized upon the ever present and universal power of Death to persuade the populace to its concern for the soul and life hereafter. Elements of the macabre are present in the Morality plays. Hans Holbein the Younger changed the stress from mankind's encounter with death, as in the Moralities, to the individual's encounter. Instead of refusing to recognize death, as in Galgenhumor, the macabre embraces it as if in a despairing way or to express contempt for it through familiarity, to rise equal in strength to the enemy at his own game. In literature and art the macabre is recognized by the morbid preoccupation with the physical aspects of death; a ghost, a
corpse, or a skull is usually present. In English literature the macabre is notable in the works of John Webster, Cyril Tourneur, Robert Lewis Stevenson, and, in American literature, in the works of Edgar Allan Poe.

Besides the influence of the European tradition of grim humor on Hemingway, one must also consider the influence of the American tradition on him. A definable tradition of American humor was about a century old when Hemingway started to write. Walter Blair, in his classic study, Native American Humor (1800-1900), gives 1830 for the beginning of the American tradition. Before 1830, Blair admits, there were writers who appear humorous to the modern reader, but their humor was unintentional. For example, we find humor, writes Blair, in Captain John Smith, but "two centuries were to pass before a perception of the outlandish and grotesque qualities of American wilderness adventures made possible the display of their fantastic comedy in a whole series of sketches consciously, not unconsciously, humorous." Blair cites, as another example, Francis Higginson's description of the glorious healthfulness of the American climate in New England's Plantation (1630). This represents whistling to keep up the spirit. Higginson died

---


50 Ibid., p. 7.
in this healthy climate. The humor of Smith and Higginson was basically, but unintentionally, humor of exaggeration.

When the native American tradition of intentional humor really began, many devices in addition to exaggeration were added. Blair quotes from The Stranger in America (1807) by Charles William Janson a passage which describes Southerners as being "eleveners" or "slingers," those who start their daily drinking at 11:00 A.M. or those who need a "sling" when they first get up. The passage notes further the barbaric methods of fighting used by the Southerners who employ "gouging, chewing off ears, and butting." According to Blair the frivolous attitude of the American writer toward experience necessary for humor occurred before the beginning of the nineteenth century. Witness Sarah Kemble Knight's Private Journal of a Journey from Boston to New York (1704 and 1705) and William Byrd's History of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina (1729). But these were not published in English until 1825 and 1841, respectively, which places them in the third decade of the nineteenth century, when the tradition took recognizable form. Appearing in 1835, The Crockett Almanacks

51 Ibid., pp. 4-6. 52 Ibid., p. 29. 53 Ibid., pp. 4 and 8.
heralded the trait of rugged individualism in the humorous conception of the American frontiersman. Franklin J. Meine says, "Crockett's only answer was an emphatic 'Go ahead!' . . . This high degree of individualism fostered cunning and courage, and it also encouraged eccentricities of character--an important pattern in the humorous tales in the Almanacks." Walter Blair writes that Longstreet's Georgia Scenes, published about the same time (1832-1835 in newspaper, 1835 in book form), indicate that the new humorists were more concerned with the lower social levels than the higher ones and were particularly fond of masculine entertainment, "such as hunting, fishing, gambling, drinking, and fighting and the trades of the doctor, the editor, the lawyer, the politician, the actor, the boatman, and the soldier." Hennig Cohen and William B. Dillingham point out in Humor of the Old Southwest that the writers of Southwestern humor were doing more than trying to be amusing; they were also trying to draw a realistic picture of their time. Cohen and Dillingham state, also, that A. B. Longstreet, Johnson Jones Hooper, Henry Clay Lewis (Madison Tensas), G. W. Harris, and others are preoccupied with

55Native American Humor, p. 75.
death and graveyard humor. Some of the Southwestern humor, Cohen and Dillingham think, is not funny. But they believe laughter was not always intended. They say that reading such works as "The Big Bear of Arkansas" (1841) and Crockett's tall tales "one smiles and at the same time feels something akin to nostalgia. This mixed effect derives from another tension, the head-on meeting of the humorous and the serious."  

Tension is, in fact, a basis of all Southwestern humor, according to Cohen and Dillingham. They point out that in the practical joke, the country boy in town, the fight, and other common motifs there would be no harm or ridicule if all parties knew what the reader knows. "But the world of Southwestern humor," they continue, "is populated with those who do not know all they need to know, and the tension between knowledge and ignorance acts as the essential stimulant to laughter. This tension often functions in language and character as well as in situation. For example, one feels the difference between the illiterate language Sut Lovingood speaks and the wisdom embodied in his words, or the difference between the lowly characters of the sketch and the sane, reasonable gentleman who is the narrator."  

---

57 Ibid., p. xx.  
58 Ibid., pp. xix-xx.  
59 Ibid., p. xix.
Pascal Covici, in his study Mark Twain's Humor, comments further on the matter of tension between two worlds. He feels that Southwestern humor limited itself to surface detail alone. The humor, he says, was cruel and painful to the victim and if the reader identifies with the victim the humor is spoiled. He thinks that we laugh at Sut skinned by a new kind of starch in his shirt, because Sut is a "nat'ral born durn'd fool," but we don't laugh at Negro Jim bitten by the snake or at Huck climbing a tree to hide from the Shepherdsons. The humorists before Twain worked in the area between reality and pretense, says Covici, but Twain's world differs in that the basic discrepancy there is between reality and appearance.

Undoubtedly between the time of Sarah Kemble Knight and of Mark Twain a refinement of techniques and perception developed in American humor; Mark Twain transcended the boundaries of Southwestern humor. Cohen and Dillingham recognize four conditions, however, that were common in the production of all Southwestern humor. They are (1) self-consciousness or regional awareness, (2) political undertones of doubt about the folks' ability to govern themselves, (3) the fact that the Southern frontier was a man's

---

60 Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1962, pp. 6-7.

world, and (4) an awareness in the writers that something old in the oral tradition might be new in writing.\(^{62}\)

An examination of how Hemingway's writings fit into the tradition of American humor reveals a situation that is complex and not always direct. Chapter I of this study will be concerned first with some of the ways in which Hemingway's family was influenced by the pioneer tradition, for this is relevant to his sense of humor. Attention will also be given to Hemingway's work on the staff of the Oak Park High School literary magazine, *The Tabula*, and school newspaper, *The Trapeze*. Hemingway's journalistic work for the Kansas City *Star* will be dealt with summarily; representative passages of the one hundred forty-two articles that were published in *The Toronto Daily Star* and *The Toronto Star Weekly* will be examined. Finally, in Chapter I, consideration will be given to the three volumes—*Three Stories* and *Ten Poems, in our time*, and *In Our Time*—that led up to the publication of the first full-length narrative. Our initial concern is with the ancestors of Ernest Miller Hemingway—the Hancocks, the Halls, and the Hemingways.

\(^{62}\) *Humor of the Old Southwest*, pp. xxiii-xxiv.
CHAPTER I

THE HUMOR OF YOUTHFUL CYNICISM

A. HEMINGWAY'S FAMILY AND EARLY LIFE

Hemingway's family very possibly was the most important formative influence on his work. Philip Young, who has long championed the wound Hemingway received in World War I as the central germinal force in his stories, modifies his position somewhat in his recent revision of his notable study of Hemingway. In answering his own question about what he would change in his study of Hemingway if he were rewriting it instead of simply revising it, he says:

For one thing he [speaking of himself] would deal at much more length with the writer's [Hemingway's] parents, who turn out to have been much more interesting and formidable people than their famous son made them out to be, in fiction or elsewhere. Their Victorianism was so preposterous—so, too, their lack of understanding—that as a context for his general rebellion the family now looks bigger than the war.\(^1\)

The best source of information on Ernest Hemingway's parents and grandparents is two biographical volumes, one by his oldest sister, Marcelline Hemingway Sanford, and one by his brother, Leicester. Although Mrs. Sanford and

\(^1\)Ernest Hemingway, A Reconsideration, pp. 273-74.
Leicester Hemingway are not practiced literary critics, they are trustworthy sources for most of what they touch upon. Because of their studies we are able to understand more fully a remark by Gertrude Stein about Hemingway in Paris early in the 1920's. "He is," said Miss Stein, "just like the flatboat men on the Mississippi river as described by Mark Twain." Morley Callaghan, who also knew Hemingway during his residence in Toronto and Paris, must have seen the same kind of boisterous, rowdy, flatboat-man quality. He wrote, just after Hemingway's suicide in 1961, that he could not believe his old acquaintance was dead. "We [he and his wife] assumed," he said, "that he would always be secure in some place in some other country strutting around, or making a fool of himself, or writing something beautiful." The life of the Hemingway family suggests the quality of frontier life in America. Let us look at some aspects of his family of significance to his humor.

---

Showing the disparity between ideals and practices is one of the outstanding motives of native American humor. The American humorist has been keenly aware that social and


moral values often taken thoughtlessly as universal truths, are not, in fact, universal truths, and he has viewed those values with enough detachment to hold them up to ridicule.

Ernest Hemingway was in an ideal position to see the disparity between standards and actualities that existed in American middle-class society in the early twentieth century, for he saw it dramatized convincingly in his own family in the first and second decades of the twentieth century. His grandfather Anson Tyler Hemingway represented the sternest precepts of the genteel tradition. A close friend of evangelist Dwight L. Moody, he was at one time general secretary for the YMCA. Mrs. Sanford recalls him as a formal, stern religious disciplinarian. She remembers that he was a fastidious dresser with manicured fingernails and a certain dainty way of holding his fork or knife.

Anson Hemingway, she says, was proud of his descent from Jacob Hemingway, a revolutionary war soldier, and he was proud too of that legend that a Hemingway was the first student at Yale.\(^4\) Leicester Hemingway recalls a detail of a different nature, which time would mark with sinister potentialities. It was Anson Hemingway who gave Ernest his first gun, a twenty-gauge, single barreled shotgun, for his tenth birthday.\(^5\) Guns play an important part in Heming-

---


\(^5\) My Brother, Ernest Hemingway, p. 33. See also pp. 28-29, where the age is set at twelve.
way's stories and in his life and death. So does the YMCA, or the YMCA attitude, for the complacent, naive, repressive morality of the YMCA kind was a source of his discontent and rebellion.

Ernest Hemingway's other grandfather, Ernest Hall, had more to do than Anson Hemingway with the novelist's resentment of conservative social standards, however, for his relationship with him was closer. According to Mrs. Sanford, the novelist's parents lived with Grandfather Hall until Ernest was in his sixth year, and when they moved, it was directly across the street. Grace Hemingway was very close to her father and taught her children to call him "Abba," a term from the Bible meaning "father." Dr. Hemingway was head of the household, according to his daughter, only when "Abba" was absent. Mrs. Sanford recalls "Abba" holding almost daily family prayers. "God was a person he knew intimately," she says, and remembers the servants forced to gather with the family with bowed heads while "Abba" held forth in prayer in the middle of the room, his shiny pink and white head held up facing God. Ernest early showed signs of weariness: he caught the sounds and rhythms of grace that he always had to say before meals, but he ignored the words, so that the result was, says Mrs. Sanford, "Mrump mi raw, m'ree ma m'raw,

---

6 At the Hemingways, p. 3.  7 Ibid., p. 4.
m'raw, m'raw amen.8 And just as Grandfather Hemingway had faith in God, but remembered the efficacy of skill with a shotgun, so Grandfather Hall supplemented from more solid resources the boon he begged daily from God. Marcelline recalls that he went downtown every day to see about his investments. And he, too, was a fastidious dresser. He came to breakfast late, about 9:00 o'clock, in a neatly belted dressing gown, stiff collar, and black tie. He always wore dark clothes and walked with his toes turned out: "Only red Indians walk with their toes pointed straight ahead," he explained.9 "Abba" had known danger, however, for he was proud of his four years' service in the Union Army and the Confederate bullet he carried in his body until his death.10 But his danger did not turn him to harshness. He often carried lumps of sugar in his pocket or apples in a bag to feed any horse he might come upon. Mrs. Sanford tells that he once paid an exorbitant price for a junkman's nag because the owner was beating the poor beast and "Abba" wanted to board him at a livery stable for the remainder of his life.11 Grace Hemingway thought the kindness to horses was caused by remorse for two he had drowned because he hated to water them when he was seventeen.12

8Ibid., pp. 14-15. 9Ibid., pp. 5-6.
12Ibid., p. 7.
The discordant elements of God and guns in Grandfather Hemingway and God and gold in "Abba" were not found in Tyley Hancock, the brother of Grandmother Hall. He was a traveling salesman in the tradition of the Yankee peddler Constance Rourke describes so vividly in the chapter called "Corn Cobs Twist in Your Hair" in *American Humor*. According to Mrs. Sanford, he traveled in the Middle West for Miller Hall and Sons.\(^{13}\) Leicester Hemingway maintains he was a gun salesman, a wonderful shot and lover of good whiskey.\(^{14}\) Both Mrs. Sanford and Leicester Hemingway agree that he was a wonderful teller of tales, Mrs. Sanford recalling that he told of being left on a wharf in New Zealand while his father pretended to sail away to teach him a lesson. She also recalls stories of lumber camps up north and of killing birds by the thousands when he was young.\(^{15}\) Leicester Hemingway says that he had sailed around the world three times by the age of seven.\(^{16}\) Tyley Hancock, as he is described by Mrs. Sanford and Leicester Hemingway, comes closer to being a comedian than anyone in the Hall or Hemingway family, and he appears to be closer to the kind of man Ernest Hemingway admired in his


\(^{14}\) *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway*, p. 33.

\(^{15}\) *At the Hemingways*, pp. 9-11.

\(^{16}\) *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway*, p. 33.
literature.

The comic incongruities of his grandparents and the comic outlook of his uncle were all apparently lacking in the face that the novelist's hometown, Oak Park, presented to the public. Charles A. Fenton, who describes Oak Park in detail, writes that the suburb of Chicago was respectable, prosperous, Protestant, middle class, and proud of all these qualities. One finds in Fenton's description, however, that Oak Park contained flaws, as well as virtues. It was, writes Fenton, "heir to the provincialisms of village life. . . . It was an atmosphere calculated both to irritate and attract a boy who was proud, competitive, and intelligent, particularly if his intelligence were of a satiric and inquiring kind." A measure of the depth, or rather the shallowness, of Oak Park is taken in two statements of Oak Park residents: one of Hemingway's teachers says, "The wonder to me, . . . and a lot of other Oak Parkers, is how a boy brought up in Christian and Puritan nurture should know and write so well of the devil and underworld." A native of Oak Park said, in 1952, "It is a puzzle and, too, an amazement to Oak Park that Ernest should have written the kind of books he did."

In Hemingway's immediate family Dr. Clarence Edmonds

---

Hemingway, his father, was a sterling example of Oak Park citizenry. He was a respected member of the esteemed profession of medicine; he had even designed a new spinal forceps and anticipated in his own practice the importance of vitamins.\(^{19}\) His wife, Grace Hall Hemingway, was a pampered child, accustomed to such advantages as European travel\(^{20}\) and a musical education with a well known opera coach in New York, where she was offered a contract by the Metropolitan opera.\(^{21}\) She showed a single-minded devotion to her concept of herself as a musical prodigy (her coach told her that hers was a voice that was encountered perhaps once in a generation).\(^{22}\)

One may infer from descriptions of the family that close harmony did not exist in the Hemingway home. There were, according to Mrs. Sanford's description, elements in Clarence Hemingway—a frontier flavoring—that were in discord with the ultra respectability, which the family appeared to worship. The doctor delivered his oldest child, Marcelline, unassisted, in the best pioneer fashion.\(^{23}\) He was fond of frontier skills and artifacts. He chopped his own wood, canned fruit, molded bullets, made candles; and he taught his children how to perform these skills.\(^{24}\)

\(^19\) At the Hemingways, pp. 29, 34-35.
\(^20\) Ibid., p. 49. \(^21\) Ibid., p. 57. \(^22\) Ibid., p. 57.
\(^23\) Ibid., p. 17. \(^24\) Ibid., p. 27.
his office were collections of many nonmedical items, including Indian arrowheads, beaded moccasins, a bowie knife, decorated deerskin, and Indian baskets. Dr. Hemingway frequently taught nature lore to boy's clubs. One summer, at Walloon Lake, he used three barrels of clay pigeons in teaching the children how to shoot. He taught them to use a twenty-two as soon as they graduated from air rifles.

But frontier culture meant more to Clarence Hemingway than just the manual crafts. He was fond of telling the children about his adventures in the woods. One of his favorite tales, which Mrs. Sanford repeats in good faith, seems very close to some of the fantastic hunting adventures of Davy Crockett. According to the story, young Clarence Hemingway was serving as cook on a three-man geological expedition to the Smokey Mountains during his summer vacation from college. Once, when he was alone, he heard a slight rustle, "looked up to see a giant mountain lion" in a tree, edged softly to his rifle, grabbed it and killed the lion just as it sprang. According to Mrs. Sanford, the story was always finished by the doctor's saying, "Pretty good, eh?"

Other anecdotes by Mrs. Sanford make it clear that

---

25 Ibid., p. 28.  
26 Ibid., p. 30.  
27 Ibid., p. 79.  
28 Ibid., p. 24.
Clarence Hemingway did deviate from strict honesty. One of the stories concerns a fishing trip to Horton Bay, Michigan. It was illegal to take brook trout out of Michigan, but Clarence Hemingway gutted the fish, packed them in ferns in his bedroom slippers, wrapped the slippers in newspaper, and brought them to Chicago. When his wife showed concern about the legality of the operation, his reply was, "Sh-sh-sh... Don't say a word." Mrs. Sanford states frankly that her father took occasional grouse, woodcock, and trout out of season. Once she recalls eating fried "chicken" for breakfast and her father burning the feathers before they left the table. His explanation was, "Never can tell who might be nosing around with a badge on. . . . I pay taxes for this land all year round. Too bad a man can't fire a shot at a moving object on his own property once a year without permission. . . . How did I know it was going to be a grouse?"

The influence on Ernest Hemingway of his father's breaking the game laws is apparent in an incident of the summer of 1913. Fishing at the far end of the West Arm of Walloon Lake, near the game warden's house, Ernest Hemingway shot a rare blue heron because, as Mrs. Sanford says, he wanted it for the school museum. Warned by the warden's son that he would be arrested, he ran away across the lake

---

29 Ibid., p. 42. 30 Ibid., p. 82.
to his Uncle Jim. There he was persuaded that the best way out of the difficulty was to see Judge Stroud and pay his fine, which he did. After the episode, Dr. Hemingway commented, "It's cheaper to obey the game laws." Ernest answered, "But you don't always keep the game laws." His father grinned and said, "But I don't get caught."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 100-102. See also \textit{My Brother, Ernest Hemingway}, pp. 35-37.}

Clarence Hemingway's answer is, of course, a good basic example of the ironic attitude toward legal values in middle class society, an attitude related in American society to the frontier world and set forth in frontier humor.

It may be that Clarence Hemingway's ironic carelessness about strict honesty in what he considered matters of small importance bears on Ernest Hemingway's disregard for truth in the details of his own life. It is, for example, almost impossible now to tell whether he ever ran away from home or not, whether or not he took boxing lessons, whether or not he knocked out the French middle-weight boxing champion, whether or not Gertrude Stein or Sherwood Anderson are to be trusted in their statements about Hemingway. Concerning the matter of Hemingway's boxing lessons in Chicago, Leicester Hemingway reports that his brother's desire to box sprang out of a shooting incident. Ernest, he says, killed about twenty pigeons with the gun he had just
received from his grandfather. When he was taking a dozen of the birds to a neighbor, he was accosted by a party of country boys who denied Ernest's claim that he killed all twenty with one box of shells, and in the argument that followed the smallest boy flattened young Hemingway. After this Hemingway saw an advertisement by a Chicago gym and got his father's permission to take boxing lessons. On the first day of training Young A'Hearn broke his nose. Later his eye was permanently injured by the lacing of a glove during one of the many boxing bouts held in his mother's music room. Mrs. Sanford, however, says that Hemingway never took lessons. Her recollections are that he saw his first professional boxing around 1916 and wanted to take lessons but did not, although he did watch boxers training and boxed some at home. According to her, his worst injuries were nose bleeds. She says, "The legend that Ernie broke his nose or hurt his eye badly is not true. I saw him every day as we went to school together." Mrs. Sanford says that Hemingway explained his joining the ambulance corps in World War I by saying, "There hasn't been a real war to go to since Grandfather Hemingway's shooting at the Battle of Bull Run." She continues, "That Grandfather Hemingway served at Vicksburg and didn't happen to have

---

32 My Brother, Ernest Hemingway, pp. 28-30.
33 At the Hemingways, p. 137.
been in the Battle of Bull Run did not affect Ernie's point at all."34

Carelessness with facts is not insignificant. Ernest Hemingway may have felt his father's actions with the game laws gave the son leave to stray from strict truth in autobiographical detail. The precedent that his father set for him made it easier for the boy to escape into fantasy when he found it too hard to live up to the expectations of Grandfather Hemingway, the associate of Dwight Moody; to the expectations of Grandfather Hall, who held almost daily prayer meetings that servants, son-in-laws, and grandsons had to attend; to the expectations of Dr. Hemingway, who could kill a panther with a single shot just as he was springing. Perhaps the boy saw that there was only one way he could compete with such figures who seemed to loom larger than life. And if that way should make the denizens of ultra respectable Oak Park unhappy, why should the boy care too much? We have seen Fenton's assurance—if such assurance is needed—that Oak Park's "was an atmosphere calculated . . . to irritate . . . a boy who was proud, competitive, and intelligent." When he responded by supplying a fictional life for himself, the life he portrayed was strikingly similar, as Gertrude Stein realized, to the life of Mississippi boatmen or frontier hunters. The simi-

34 Ibid., p. 157.
larity of the life of Hemingway and the Hemingway hero to
the frontiersman's life is obvious when one notices how
close the following description of the flatboatmen by
Constance Rourke is to the description of the Hemingway
hero: "Strength was his obsession--size, scale, power: he
seemed obliged to shout their symbols as if after all he
were not wholly secure in their possession. . . . He
shouted in ritual, as though the emotions by which he was
moved were bending him to some primitive celebration." 35

B. JUVENILIA

We first see Ernest Hemingway's sense of humor de­
veloping during his years at Oak Park High School. Mrs.
Sanford tells us that he called himself "Stein," short for
Hemingstein, which he sometimes used as a nom de plume in
the weekly school paper. The name originated in Heming­
way's drawing a sign of a pawnshop, three circles, in yel­
low chalk on his locker. He, Ray Olsen, and Lloyd Golder
called themselves, respectively, Cohn, Goldberg, and
Hemingstein and announced, "We deal in funds. We don't
lend. You lend to us. We promise to use any money anybody
wants to contribute and we promise never to return it." 36

35 Constance Rourke, American Humor (Garden City, New

36 At the Hemingways, p. 128.
At Oak Park High School, Hemingway had a course, English V, in short-story writing, taught by Miss Fanny Biggs. In it he practiced various styles—those of Poe, Ring Lardner, and O. Henry. He used Walloon Lake and Northern Michigan for background, drawing upon tales he had heard from Indian bark peelers and old timers about rough days in Boyne City saloons and in the north woods with lumberjacks. There were, according to Leicester Hemingway, only two Indian stories. Fenton identifies the earlier one as "Judgment of Manitou," published in the February, 1916, issue of Tabula [the monthly literary magazine]. It is, writes Fenton, a rather complicated story of nature and violence, in which a vindictive trapper murders his young associate. The savagery is tempered by irony.

Fenton also identifies the second story, a tale of violence and revenge told by an Ojibway Indian. It is titled "Sepi Jingan" and is in the November issue of the Tabula. Mrs. Sanford writes of "Sepi Jingin" [sic], "That narrative, with its abrupt short sentences, its stylized repetition and natural, vivid dialogue is a forerunner of his later published books."

---

37 Ibid., p. 138.
38 My Brother, Ernest Hemingway, p. 40.
39 The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, p. 23.
40 Ibid., p. 25.
41 At the Hemingways, p. 139.
ford's comment, one can see the connection of these stories to later ones like "Indian Camp," "Ten Indians," and "Fathers and Sons," as well as to such a portrait of Hemingway as the one Lillian Ross published in The New Yorker.

Besides the Indian stories he writes in his boyhood days, Hemingway also wrote sports articles for the Trapeze, the Oak Park High School weekly newspaper. According to Mrs. Sanford, his articles, humorous ones in the manner of Ring Lardner, were printed after factual articles about the events.42 Fenton says Hemingway attempted four awkward experiments in Lardner's style during the winter of his senior year, but that during the spring Hemingway's technique became more facile because he learned that Superintendent M. R. McDaniel objected to Lardner and called him a lost soul. This inspired Hemingway's productivity, and he turned out most of his imitations of Lardner in the last few weeks of his senior term.43 An example of his Lardnerian style is an article under the headline, "Ring Lardner Junior Writes About Swimming Meet, Oak Park Rivals Riverside." The article opens in Lardner's epistolary form: "Dear Pashley [the week's editor]: Well Pash since you have went and ast me to write a story about the swimming

42 Ibid., p. 140.

43 The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 29-30.
meet I will do it because if I didn’t you might fire me off the paper . . . ." Part of the humor is effected by understatement and dead pan presentation: "If we would have got twenty more points we would have beat them and If [sic] I had have gone fifteen feet more I would have won the plunge and If [sic] Hughes would have carried four more states he would have been elected." Hemingway has also learned from Lardner the technique of misquoting and false allusion: "But then as the Bible says there ain’t no good in crying over split skirts or something I forgot what." 

In Fenton’s opinion, Hemingway's adaptation of Lardner was an "invaluable opening exercise in some of the technicalities of idiomatic prose, as well as a profitable experiment in various levels of humor, burlesque, and satire." 

One story by Hemingway in the April, 1916, issue of the Tabula is described by Fenton. It is neither an Indian story nor one done in the manner of Lardner. It is a boxing story entitled "A Matter of Colour." It is filled with irony. In it an old fight manager named Bob Armstrong tells about a crooked fight. Fenton says that Hemingway wrote the story while he was taking boxing lessons in a Chicago gym. Whether he was taking lessons, as Fenton

45. The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, p. 31.  
46. Ibid., p. 24.
believes, or simply watching boxers train, as Mrs. Sanford asserts, is not important. The importance of the story is that it uses a theme that Hemingway would use in his mature years in such stories as "Fifty Grand."

One event that illustrates the way Hemingway apocrypha originated and grew occurred while he was editor of the *Trapeze* and in desperate need of material to fill the next edition. He dreamed up a rifle club, which had no existence in reality, listed himself and half a dozen friends as members, and reported the club's successes with startlingly high scores. When a picture was required for the *Tabula* at the end of the year, Hemingway got the "club" together and posed them, each one holding what was obviously a shotgun, not a rifle. 47 Leicester Hemingway says that his brother was successful at making basically dull material seem fresh and says that he did so by treating high-school society as a comedy of manners. Marcelline Hemingway, he says, seemed to Ernest to be "the embodiment of the sanctimonious social belle" and he "particularly enjoyed aiming barbs at her." 48 Fenton calls the rifle club episode a "burlesque of extracurricular frenzy" and thinks it represented a "healthy self-irony." He also quotes a classmate of Ernest who said, "I remember . . . that often

his themes were humorous. And this is something I have talked about since—he was gay in those days, always laughing, carefree. His literary ability was recognized, but one might have predicted that he would be a writer of humor.\(^{49}\)

Besides prose pieces, Hemingway wrote several poems during his senior year at Oak Park. Fenton reports that one was a burlesque of James Whitcomb Riley and another was about a Great Lakes stoker who is morally superior to his effete passengers. Fenton also reproduces the first stanza, eight lines, of a forty-eight line ballad that was a writing requirement in Hemingway's senior English course. The title is "How Ballad Writing Affects Our Seniors." The first stanza follows:

Oh, I've never writ a ballad
And I'd rather eat shrimp salad,
(Tho' the Lord knows I hate the Pink and Scrunchy little beasts),
But Miss Dixion says I gotto—
(And I pretty near forgotto)
But I'm sitting at my table
And my feet are pointing east.\(^{50}\)

This juvenile ballad shows the influence of Kipling, who was a writer whose subject matter and style appealed to the young Hemingway.

All of the writers Hemingway showed a liking for in

\(^{49}\) The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, p. 21.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., p. 26.
high school have significant elements of humor in their work. Poe is a master of the macabre; O. Henry's most distinctive trait is an ironic turn at the end of his stories; and Riley and Kipling both show the whimsical quality that Brom Weber emphasizes in his *Anthology of American Humor*. Hemingway's experiences on the staff of the *Trapeze* prepared him for his brief but necessary newspaper career. When he went to the Kansas City *Star*, his professional career in letters began.

C. JOURNALISM

In going to Kansas City after his graduation, Hemingway indicated how strong his desire for independence from his family was. The family wanted him to go to Oberlin, or to any other college, but the boy wanted his freedom and he wanted experience in writing. The Kansas City *Star* was already a recognized training ground for Midwestern writers, and Dr. Hemingway's brother, Tyler Hemingway, was a successful, socially prominent businessman and an Oberlin classmate of Henry J. Haskell, chief editorial writer for the *Star*.51

It is impossible to tell now which of the *Star*'s stories were done by Hemingway, because by-lines were rare,

51 *The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway*, pp. 33-34 and *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway*, p. 44.
especially for cub reporters. Mrs. Sanford tells us that he liked his job, which, he said, was covering "fires, fights, and funerals, and anything else not important enough for the other more experienced reporters." The assistant city editor at the time, C. G. (Pete) Wellington, said that Hemingway liked action so well that he habitually rode away from the General Hospital with the first ambulance to go to a cutting scrape without telling city desk to cover his assigned post. Landon Laird, a member of the Star staff, recalled later that the young reporter liked to go up to the number four police station to ride squad cars with Officer Bauswell, who had the reputation of being a "character," and other officers. The only story of the Kansas City period that Fenton attributes to Hemingway is one that is "very sad, about a whore," to use Hemingway's own words as he described the story years later.

It appears that the most striking thing that Hemingway got from the Star was his association with two people who did much to help him to artistic maturity. Pete Wellington was in charge of inculcating into new reporters the famous Star style sheet. It was a single galley-size page, with one hundred ten rules that governed the Star's prose.

52. At the Hemingways, p. 156.
54. Ibid., p. 38.
55. Ibid., p. 46.
In the seven months that Hemingway was on the staff, Fenton tells us, Pete Wellington and his code of writing became so important to the young reporter that he often acknowledged the obligation afterwards.  

The other man who affected Hemingway very much, according to Fenton, was Lionel Calhoun Moise. In his lifetime Moise was a newspaper legend, the last of the "boom-ers." He could not stay on one paper long, but moved from place to place. He was exciting to know and exciting to read. His barroom brawls, cop-slugging, woman-chasing, and drinking were notorious. Fenton says that in 1952 Hemingway recalled him as "a very picturesque, dynamic, big-hearted, hard drinking and hard-fighting man." But, according to Fenton, he was serious about writing and contributed two things to Hemingway's development—a set of attitudes toward experience and a discipline in writing.

Mrs. Sanford says that her brother had a rare talent for making friends in all walks of life and that he frequently borrowed other people's experiences and treated them as if they were his own. She feels that some of the Nick Adams stories were borrowed experiences from a Kansas City reporter. It is very likely that the reporter that Mrs. Sanford writes about was Lionel Moise. We may infer

56 Ibid., pp. 34-36.  
57 Ibid., pp. 41-42.  
58 At the Hemingways, p. 156.
that his influence on the later humor in Hemingway's work was important. Of more than incidental significance is the fact that Fenton describes him as if he were a character straight out of a Crockett Almanack. The "boomer" was cut to the style of the frontiersman in American humor.

The need for adventure that caused Hemingway to adopt others' experiences as his own also caused him to seek personal involvement when it was available. He joined the ambulance corps in order to get into the war and, according to Mrs. Sanford, sailed from New York May 28, 1918. According to Fenton, Hemingway's section of the ambulance drivers had about fifty men, of which two were journalists. The section, he says, published its own paper, with the macabre Italian name Ciao ("good-bye"), and Hemingway wrote one article for it in the style of Ring Lardner. It was entitled "Al Receives Another Letter" and, Fenton writes, "exploited the familiar malapropisms, grammatical distortions, and personal vanities of Lardner's buffoons." 59

At the front, Mrs. Sanford says, he volunteered for the Red Cross Rolling Canteen service, a job that called for him to ride a bicycle to the trenches to distribute mail, chocolate, and tobacco. It was at about midnight of his seventh day on this job, July 8, 1918, that he was wounded by a mortar round. Marcelline says that Ted Brum-
back wrote Hemingway's first letter after the wounding because one or two splinters were lodged in Hemingway's fingers. To Brumback's letter Hemingway added a postscript: "Dear Folks:/ I am all O. K. and include much love to ye parents. I'm not near so much of a hell roarer as Brummy makes out. Lots of love./ Ernie/ Sh--Don't worry, Pop!" Hemingway's statement that he is not such a "hell roarer" is a brief, humorous indication of his passing into what he called later the second stage of soldiering. The first stage, according to his theory, is marked by carefree confidence that one will never die. Then, when one is hit, he is frightened, but continues to function, if he is a good soldier. The third stage is reached by becoming hard boiled; the fourth comes after the second crack when one begins to lay up blessings in heaven.

While Hemingway was working out his philosophy of combat experience in the hospital in Milan, he met a young British officer by whom he was deeply impressed. The officer, according to Fenton, taught Hemingway his formula for courage. He used as a talisman these lines from Shakespeare's Henry IV: "By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death . . . and let it go which way

---

60 At the Hemingways, p. 163.

it will, he that dies this year is quit for the next."  The conceit of dying as merely paying a debt approaches the attitude of gallows humor. It is probably this officer who inspired several of Hemingway's minor sketches of light-hearted, courageous, garrulous British officers.

In Hemingway's letters written from the hospital, we see several witticisms that either receive literary treatment later or are referred to again. Mrs. Sanford quotes a letter that Hemingway wrote after he had read in the hometown newspaper, Oak Leaves, the write-up about his being wounded: "It's the next best thing to getting killed and reading your own obituary," he writes. Later in his life, after two plane crashes in Africa, when he was reported dead, Hemingway took relish in reading his obituaries. In the letter to Mrs. Sanford he describes a ludicrous linguistic problem he encountered in attempting to translate American idiom: "'Oh,' says I, in Italian, 'my captain, it is of nothing. In America they all do it. It is thought well not to allow the enemy to perceive that they have captured our goats.' The goat speech required some masterful linguistic ability, but I got it across and then went to sleep for a couple of minutes." In A Farewell to Arms the joke is changed somewhat, and the animals

---

62 The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, p. 61.  
63 At the Hemingways, p. 166.  
64 Ibid., p. 168.
changed from goats to turkeys. There is the likelihood, of course, that the action Hemingway described never actually occurred, at least as he described it. There was not enough time for Hemingway to learn Italian. Mrs. Sanford tells us that the S. S. Chicago, on which Hemingway sailed, left New York May 28, 1918, and that he reached Paris early in June and was in Milan two days later. It appears that the earliest Hemingway could have been immersed in the Italian language is June 9, one month before his wound. It is doubtful that he could have learned much Italian in one month in wartime at work with a detachment of fifty Americans. It is more likely that this is an imagined or borrowed episode; he was whistling to keep up the spirits. His account is significant, however; it suggests that Hemingway's philosophy of humor justified passing off figments of his imagination for actual occurrences.

There are several instances of Hemingway's exaggerating accounts of his wartime experiences. Leicester Hemingway tells us that his brother was interviewed by Roselle Dean previous to February 1, 1919, for the Oak Parker and that the account says he was wounded three times, twice by

65 Ibid., p. 159.

66 My Brother, Ernest Hemingway, p. 46.
machine-gun fire. The account reads: "In all, Lieutenant Hemingway received thirty-two forty-five-caliber bullets in his limbs and hands, all of which have been removed except one in the left limb which the young warrior is inclined to foster as a souvenir. . . . Lieutenant Hemingway submitted to having twenty-eight bullets extracted without taking an anaesthetic. His only voluntary comment on the war is that it was great sport and he is ready to go on the job if it ever happens again."67 As a matter of historical fact, the Central Powers used no forty-five caliber weapons.

Mrs. Sanford tells us that in March, 1919, Hemingway spoke of his war experiences before an assembly at Oak Park High School. The Trapeze, she says, quoted his comments about the Arditi as follows:

These men . . . had been confined in the Italian penal institutions, having committed some mistake—such as—well—murder or arson, and were released on the condition that they would serve in this division which was used by the government for shock troops.

Armed only with revolvers, hand grenades, and two-bladed swords, they attacked, frequently stripped to the waist. Their customary loss in an engagement was about two-thirds.68

The same article says, "Lieutenant Hemingway saw a wounded captain being brought back to a field hospital in an ambulance. He had been shot in the chest but had plugged the

67 Ibid., p. 53.
68 At the Hemingways, pp. 179-181.
holes with cigarettes and had gone on fighting. On the way to the hospital he amused himself by throwing hand grenades into the ditch just to see them go off."  

Leicester Hemingway describes his early bewilderment at another of his brother's exaggerations of wartime experiences. Ernest, in explaining to him a war souvenir he had brought back, an Austrian Mannlicher carbine, would say, "That's a sniper's rifle. . . . I killed the sniper who was using it to pick off our troops from up in a tree." Leicester Hemingway says that even as a young child he was perplexed as to why his brother told him such tales only when there were others to hear. He says it was years before he knew Ernest served only in an ambulance unit.  

In telling the tall tales about his experiences in World War I, Hemingway was operating in the oral tradition of the backwoods humorist. We understand better how he slipped into this tradition when we recall his father's frequently repeated anecdote of killing the panther. This talent for exaggeration was to be encouraged in 1921 by Hemingway's association with Sherwood Anderson while Hemingway was living at the Y. K. Smiths. Anderson was a notorious exaggerator. Morley Callaghan tells of his consternation when Maxwell Perkins, acting on what Anderson

---

69 Ibid., p. 182.  
70 My Brother, Ernest Hemingway, p. 57.
had told him, congratulated him on a defense of Hemingway's Catholicism that he was supposed to have made to Anderson the night before. Callaghan writes: "A look of indignant consternation must have come on my face. . . . Taking my arm, Perkins said urgently, 'Now just a minute. Before you go any further, please let me explain something to you. Don't let this spoil Sherwood for you. It's happened with others. You must understand Sherwood wasn't really lying. . . .' Surely I would understand that Anderson, a storyteller, couldn't help going on with the story. From past experience with Anderson, Perkins knew what had happened."71

Besides the technique of exaggeration, Hemingway was also developing at this time a satiric facility, at least in oral form. Fenton tells us that he frequently mocked conventional commercial and ethical values. He quotes Donald M. Wright, one of Hemingway's associates at the Y. K. Smiths: "We had much fun after hours . . . telling yarns about the scheming of the low grade morons who were our bosses in agencies and magazines." Wright recalls one of Hemingway's burlesque advertising plans that involved bottling blood at the stockyards and selling it "in gooey kidd-ee copy as 'Bull Gore for Bigger Babies.'"72

71 That Summer in Paris, p. 119.
72 The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 91-92.
It was on *The Toronto Daily Star* and *Star Weekly* between February 14, 1920, and September 13, 1924, that Hemingway got his real experience in journalism. Fenton points out that it was just as Hemingway arrived in Toronto that J. Herbert Cranston, *Star Weekly* editor from 1911 to 1932, changed the paper's editorial policy. Fenton quotes Cranston as saying, "We now sought . . . to give a larger number of entertainment features, and possibly fewer information articles. By that I mean humorous articles, Leacock, Lardner, and many others, some of them American syndicate, and encouraging humor wherever we could find it in Canada."⁷³ Cranston's concessions were made, he said, to cater to a semi-literate audience who liked to read about ordinary individuals like themselves, and Cranston always looked for a startling anecdote to open articles.⁷⁴ Hemingway fitted Cranston's policies well, and he recalled in later years, "Hemingway . . . could write in good, plain Anglo-Saxon, and had a certain much prized gift of humor."⁷⁵ Cranston was also impressed by what may be called the "ring-tailed-roarer" quality in Hemingway's personality. He described Hemingway--no doubt on the basis of Hemingway's own description of himself--as a "vagabond" whose boyhood was spent "riding the rods and sleeping in

---

tramp jungles... There was nothing," he said, "Hemingway would not do just for the sheer excitement of it,... and he had eaten—or said he had—all kinds of things, slugs, earthworms, lizards, all the delicacies that the savage tribes of the world fancy, just to get their taste." 76

In Hemingway's early Toronto work his satirical bent is much in evidence. Seven of Hemingway's early journalistic endeavors for the Star Weekly serve to illustrate the quality of his journalistic satire. In "Sporting Mayor", 77 Hemingway describes Toronto's Mayor Church at a boxing match standing between rounds to wave to friends, shaking hands several times with the same person, occasionally booing when the crowd is cheering, shifting easily to cheering when he realizes the error, and then absent mindedly saying "Meeting dismissed" when the fights are over. Mayor Church, according to Hemingway, loved all sports that attracted voters. In picking Church to ridicule, Hemingway reveals his own disdain for artificiality and contempt

76 Ibid., pp. 79-80.

77 The Wild Years, ed. Gene Z. Hanrahan (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), pp. 29-31. The collection of Hanrahan and By-Line: Ernest Hemingway, ed. William White (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967) are the only collections of Hemingway's journalism. When citing articles from these sources, I shall use the abbreviated titles that Hanrahan and White use, instead of the longer newspaper headlines, which, in any case, were not Hemingway's.
for insincere or corrupt politicians.

In most of the articles there is a catering to the Canadian point of view, a slant that Hemingway said later was very important. The slant is mild in "How To Be Popular in Peace Though a Slacker in War," for only part of the attack is directed against the United States, whose munitions factories were a source of enrichment for Canadian slackers. The anti-United States invective is more severe when Prohibition and gangsterism are the subjects. In "Smuggling Canadian Whiskey into the U. S." Hemingway presents a touching sketch of a teen-ager he saw nauseated on smuggled whiskey. The article relies on sympathy for its effect. In a second article, "Chicago Never Wetter Than It Is Today," the pathetic picture of the boy is set in relief against American complacency. In the second article Hemingway ridicules the imbecility of trying to control the liquor traffic in Chicago with eight agents, four doing office work and four guarding the warehouse. Two more articles on gangsterism examine another aspect of Prohibition. "Chicago Gang War" is concerned with the shotgun slaying of Anthony d'Andrea, for twenty-five years alderman of Chicago's nineteenth ward. Strong irony braces this article as it had "Chicago Never Wetter," for, before

---

78 Ibid., pp. 20-22. 79 Ibid., pp. 68-70.
coming to Chicago, d'Andrea was, Hemingway says, a student priest in Sicily. In "Plain and Fancy Killings, $400 Up" the handling of the article approaches the mock heroic. The retired killer that Hemingway says he interviewed preferred to talk about finance, bonds, and investments. His knowledge of the business of murder seems encyclopedic, and he wished the boys luck who had not been able to retire. Hemingway explains that $400 for a simple murder may seem high, since $100 used to be the price in New York. But, he explains, a killer is a specialist, and specialists' wages have advanced. These four articles about Prohibition fit easily into the tradition of Southwestern humor, as it is described by Cohen and Dillingham. Drinking, cruelty, fighting, the adventures of rogues are all touched upon, and in all four articles the detached, superior narrator implies that these southern folk, in this case all Americans, are not really capable of ruling themselves.

Of a milder nature is the interest shown in the humor of manners in the article "On Weddynge Gyftes." Hemingway is usually better at presenting foibles that belong to all humanity than he is at presenting those restricted to certain nationalities. "On Weddynge Gyftes" is an attack on those who give impractical wedding gifts. In this work Hemingway does not rely on prose alone, but adds

\[\text{\textsuperscript{82}}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 41-43.}\]
a passage of poetry. The gain in compression is apparent.

The influence of Cummings is also apparent:

Three travelling clocks
Tick
On the mantelpiece
Comma
But the young man is starving.

The five-line poem is the first publication of a poem by Hemingway after he became a professional journalist.

In attempting to summarize the early Toronto period in Hemingway's development, Fenton quotes Gregory Clark, feature editor for the Star Weekly. Clark thought that Hemingway was going through a chaotic interlude of adjustment. "He was," said Clark, "lost . . . in the lonely confusion of trying to understand his past." Clark remembers that Hemingway was continually shadow-boxing during conversations or while others were talking. He thought this showed a basic lack of confidence.83

The tone of the "middle Toronto period," which lasted nearly a year, from December of 1921 to October of 1922, seems to indicate Hemingway's contempt, sometimes approaching hate, for the objects of his ridicule. The first of the five articles that we may take as representative of this period is "Profiteers, Sheep and Wolves."84 Hemingway describes the interiors of the Swiss hotels filled with

83. The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, p. 74.
84. The Wild Years, pp. 164-65.
professional bridge-playing young men, ruddy English who stay on the ski slopes all day, rich lonely widows, and profiteers who are victimized by young, athletic French aristocrats. The article is dominated by Hemingway's simile describing the aristocrats: "When the young men with the old names come into a room full of profiteers, sitting with their pre-money wives and post-money daughters, it is like seeing a slim wolf walk into a pen of fat sheep."\(^{85}\)

An article with a lighter touch is "Parisian Hats."\(^{86}\) The tone is that of comedy of manners. Hemingway ridicules the current craze in Paris for mushroom hats girded by about fifteen stuffed English sparrows. Monkey-fur hats caught on slowly, and monkey fur is getting rare, he says; at least there won't be that trouble with sparrows. The commonness of sparrows and the association of foolishness with the word monkey are used skillfully in the satire. Hemingway is again operating in a native American tradition. A similar episode is "How Sally Hooter Got Snake-Bit,"\(^{87}\) by William C. Hall, a Louisiana humorist of the early nineteenth century. Instead of sparrows for a hat, Sally uses sausages for a bustle after her father Mike Hooter refuses to let her buy a bustle from a Yankee peddler.

An important article in Hemingway's development is

\(^{85}\)Ibid. \(^{86}\)Ibid., p. 85. \(^{87}\)Humor of the Old Southwest, pp. 316–21.
"The Swiss Luge."

It describes a Swiss sled, called a luge, a kind of sled used by almost everyone in Switzerland. "You go down a long steep stretch of road flanked by a six hundred foot drop-off on the left and bordered by a line of trees on the right," writes Hemingway. "Additional hazards are provided for the lugeurs by hay sleds and wood sleds," he explains. The traffic is sometimes heavy and the hay and wood sleds refuse to yield the right of way as they are supposed to do. With marked understatement Hemingway explains that one then has to choose between hitting the wood sled "or shooting off the road. It is considered a very bad omen to hit a wood sled." In this article one finds one of the first admirable Britishers Hemingway often uses as minor characters. He describes the ex-military governor of Khartoum on a luge "his feet stuck straight out at the sides, his hands in back of him, charging a smother of ice dust down the steep, high-walled road with his muffler straight out behind him in the wind and a cherubic smile on his face while all the street urchins of Montreux spread against the walls and cheer him wildly as he passes." As one reads the description of the governor in the street of Montreux, he is struck by the similarity of this description to those of the running of the bulls in The Sun Also

---

88 By-Line: Ernest Hemingway, pp. 20-22.

89 Ibid., p. 21.

90 Ibid., p. 22.
Rises and Death in the Afternoon. The dangers involved in using the luge are understated. The general outline of the scene, the humor, and the hearty Britisher reappear often in other Hemingway works.

Hemingway is often concerned with pseudo intellectuals and artists. Another work that shows that he was assimilating early the material that was to go into The Sun Also Rises is "American Bohemians in Paris." In this article Hemingway not only illustrates, in a concrete form, the follies of patrons of the Rotonde, but he also suggests how large were the numbers of those who were seduced by the madness of Montparnasse. This is done by presenting not one but two portraits of American Bohemians. The second portrait is of a big woman who laughs at everything and is accompanied by three young men. She pays the bill and walks unsteadily out the door with the men. Hemingway emphasizes the extent of her degradation when he writes: "Three years ago she came to Paris with her husband from a little town in Connecticut, where they had lived and he had painted with increasing success for ten years. Last year he went back to America alone."91

During the middle Toronto period Hemingway covered the Genoa Economic Conference, from which he gleaned five by-line articles published in the Daily Star between

91Ibid., p. 24.
April 10 and April 24, 1922. The articles are not important in the development of Hemingway's humor, but in June, Hemingway published in the New Orleans Double Dealer, the first of his poems to be published independently of his journalism. It is composed of one quatrain entitled "Ultimately."

He tried to spit out the truth;
Dry mouthed at first,
He drooled and slobbered in the end;
Truth dribbling his chin.

None of the critics has bothered to take note of "Ultimately," but, because Hemingway had recently covered the Genoa Conference, which had important political overtones, it seems safe to assume that the "He" of the poem may have been inspired by a political figure. The poem is satirical and intense. The politician is presented as one who cannot speak truth even when finally he wants to.

An article of this period that indicates increasing bitterness toward human behavior is "A Foreigner in Germany." It describes cruelty of Germans to their wives and to women generally. In the article Hemingway describes one husband on a train who hands his wife the paper, goes to the dining car to eat, and brings her back "parts of rolls stuffed with bits of cheese." Another drops a ruck-

---

92 Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 175.
93 The Wild Years, pp. 103-105.
sack on his wife and tells her she isn't hurt when tears form in her eyes. A third man sits down in an old woman's seat when she stands up and remains sitting when she, not noticing that someone has taken the seat, sits back down in his lap. The man continues to sit after the old woman jumps up frightened. Hemingway says that he considered attacking the man with a tennis racket, applying it to the best part of a man to attack, but feared a mob. This is the first expression of an impulse to violence that I have found in the journalism.

Hemingway's bitterness increased in the "third Toronto period," which began with his being sent to Asia Minor at the end of September, 1922, to cover the war between Greece and Turkey. The third period ended when he abandoned journalism for serious fiction. Almost immediately after Hemingway got back from Asia Minor his poetry, sketches, and short stories began to appear. In this period his journalism, of which we will examine only eight articles, contains themes with satiric overtones that encompass far more than mayors or other political figures or Left Bank Bohemians or the many thousands of politically deluded citizens of Germany and France that seem to be the main concern of the articles. In some of the sketches it is the Fate of Man that is made ridiculous, and l'humour noir gives in ironic laughter the only resolution of his situation that modern man is capable of. Consider the
humor that pervades "A Silent, Ghastly Procession." Hemingway describes two hundred and fifty thousand Christian refugees herded along by Greek cavalry and states that the whole world will hear their cry. A woman in labor under a blanket makes the only noise there is in the procession, and her small daughter looks on and starts to cry. Another striking vignette symbolizes the plight of all life caught in the debacle: "An old man marches bent under a young pig, a scythe and a gun, with a chicken tied to his scythe." The old man and the scythe suggest both the grim reaper and mankind personified, whose fate is painful struggle and death. Mankind is ironically both the victim, as the old man is in reality, and the executioner, as he is suggestive of the grim reaper. Man as executioner is also suggested by the picture of the Greek cavalry riding "herd" on the refugees. Gross, thoughtless animality is the object of the satire. It is human beings that the "Greek cavalry herd . . . along like cowpunchers driving steers." The old man bends under the weight of the pig and serves the animal because he hopes that later the animal will serve him. The scene looks like one from Bosch, one of Hemingway's favorite painters. It tells us that Hemingway uses the technique of the painter and symbolist in controlling satire. We find again that Hemingway has analogies in

94 By-Line: Ernest Hemingway, p. 51. 95 Ibid.
Southwestern humor. The retreat of terrified citizens of Alabama caused by their hysterical fear of Creek Indians in Johnson Jones Hooper's *Some Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs* (1846)⁹⁶ is, in some ways, similar. Hooper says,

> The yeomanry of the country ... packed up their carts and wagons, and "incontinently" departed for more peaceful regions! We think we see them now, "strung along the road," a day or two after the intelligence of the massacres below had reached the "settlement" of Captain Suggs! There goes old man Simmons, with his wife and three daughters, together with two feather beds, a few chairs, and a small assortment of pots and ovens, in a cart drawn by a bob-tail, gray pony. On the top-most bed, and forming the apex of this pile of animate and inanimate "luggage," sits the old tom-cat. . . .

The tone is, of course, different, for Hemingway attacks the mad and senseless naturalistic universe that allows such pain to exist, whereas Hooper is ridiculing the stragglers.

In satirical sketches in this third period Hemingway seems to prefer—especially later in the period—dramatic presentation. In "The Turk General and the Italian Dictator,"⁹⁸ Mussolini does not speak for himself, but is described by the author. Hemingway says he "tip-toed over behind him to see what the book was he was reading with such avid interest" and found it was a French-English dictionary held upside down. In a later article, "The German Hater,

---

⁹⁶ Excerpts are reprinted in Walter Blair's *Native American Humor*, pp. 308-25.

⁹⁷ *Native American Humor*, pp. 308-309.

⁹⁸ *The Wild Years*, pp. 212-16.
Hemingway uses dramatic presentation in a more skillfully done article. The change may indicate Hemingway straining at the restraints of journalism, restraints that he will soon throw off.

Hemingway does add one notable rhetorical element to the article on Mussolini. Ismet Pasha, the Turkish general, is used as a foil to the bluff Italian. Hemingway pictures the pasha as an unobtrusive man who allows reporters to slam an elevator door in his face without recognizing him. Yet he is genuine enough to enjoy a jazz band and make jokes with the waitress in a French dancing palace.

Hemingway is not always successful in taking a foible or vice that he identifies with a nationality and distilling it into characters for a dramatic and satiric presentation. He seems to be less successful in presenting German hatred. In "The German Hater," for example, the author describes his journey through Germany with a Belgian lady. Their conversation in French finally becomes more than one German traveler can bear. He bursts out in German invective. The Belgian lady hushes him with ridicule: "'The Herr is not a Frenchman,' she shouted at the hater in German, 'I am not French. We talk Franch because it is the language of civilized people. Why don't you learn to talk French? You can't even talk German. All you can talk is

profanity. Shut up." The article on German bitterness is more effective than, for example, "The Myth of French Politeness," which was published in the middle period. The inferences are that Hemingway is refining his technique and that his cynicism is increasing so that he portrays the vigorous and violent better than the merely impolite.

"Christmas on the Roof of the World" is a three-part article, of which the third part, "Christmas in Paris," is most interesting to us. A young man and his girl are spending their first Christmas in a foreign land. It is their third day in Paris, and both are homesick. He wonders if they will ever get home; she wonders if they will ever be artists. The situation is ironic, and Hemingway's understatement of the tension between the pair is notable. The autobiographical basis is obvious. Ernest and Hadley, married three months, sailed for Europe December 8, 1921. This would put them in Paris three days before Christmas. The crying of the girl in the article suggests that all is not well within the young Hemingway family. In a little over five years they will be divorced, and Hemingway will have endured a failure in human relationship that must have had a basic influence on the cynicism in Men Without Women.

An interesting and significant development of October, 1923, is the appearance of Hemingway's first bull-

---

The place of the bullfight in Hemingway's concept of comedy and tragedy is complex and will be discussed in Chapters II and IV. There is, however, one of Hemingway's most deftly drawn characters in the article. Hemingway calls him the "Gin Bottle King" because, he says, the American teetotaler had a fight early in the morning armed only with an empty Gordan's gin bottle. In "Pamplona in July," Hemingway portrays another masterfully drawn comic character and comic episode. He writes: "We had wired and written for rooms two weeks ahead. Nothing had been saved.

... There was a big row with the landlady, who stood in front of her desk with her hands on her hips... She could show us a better room for ten dollars apiece. We said it would be preferable to sleep in the streets with the pigs. The landlady agreed that might be possible. We said we preferred it to such a hotel." Both of the bullfight articles, coming near the end of Hemingway's career with the Toronto papers, indicate a level of artistic maturity approaching that of The Sun Also Rises.

In "Weird Wild Adventures of Amateur Impostors," published during the frustrating four-month sojourn in

---

101 The Wild Years, pp. 221-29.
103 The Wild Years, pp. 31-37.
Toronto between September, 1923, and February, 1924, Hemingway shows he is interested in certain eccentric types who pose for a brief period as champion boxers, famous pitchers, great mountain climbers, or other celebrities. These are people who impose their fictions about themselves upon the credulity of others, but do not injure anyone in the process. "This kink," Hemingway explains, "may be the same that in another man would make a Joseph Conrad or a great painter." These imposters are humorous because they are eccentric and, in their assumed identities, bring delight to others and peace to themselves. Hemingway explains, "For there is some strange force inside of them that forces them to be impostors. They might die of a broken heart if they could not live their lives of the imagination." In this article the author does not give dramatic presentations of his characters. His discussion of the impostor as a type may suggest that he feels that he himself is leading a double life, a part-time journalist and part-time author. One may also infer that he envies the person with courage to live the life of his imagination. Hemingway was undergoing what Fenton calls "the celebrated Hindmarsh treatment," under which he could not avoid frustration. Hemingway was so angry, says Fenton, that Hindmarsh almost became the protagonist of a satiric novel.

---

104 Ibid., p. 32. 105 Ibid., p. 37.
entitled The Son-in-Law. Fenton says that the novel was not written because Hemingway felt that writing about someone he detested would distort his perspective,\textsuperscript{106} which is, one will notice, an interesting comment from someone capable of the bitter satirical portraits of Hemingway's later years. The article is in the tradition of adventures of a rogue, an example of which is the elaborate impostures of Billy Fishback in Kittrel J. Warren's "The Courtship of Billy Fishback, Army Straggler" (1865).\textsuperscript{107}

D. THREE STORIES AND TEN POEMS

According to Fenton, Hemingway regarded himself as, in part, a humorist for some months after he left journalism.\textsuperscript{108} One finds evidence of his humorous inclinations in six of his poems that were to go into Three Stories and Ten Poems that were published in January, 1923,\textsuperscript{109} some time before he quit the Toronto papers. They show a variety of humorous attitudes. "Oily Weather" develops a bawdy theme in nine lines. The feminine sea desires the masculine ship through the first eight lines, only to be

\textsuperscript{106}The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 190-92.

\textsuperscript{107}Humor of the Old Southwest, pp. 360-75.

\textsuperscript{108}The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, p. 203.

\textsuperscript{109}They were published under the title "Wanderings" in Poetry, XXI (January, 1923), 193-95.
scorned by the ship in line nine. The cold, disdainful attitude of the masculine lover that is characteristic of Hemingway heroes emerges in this poem. The personification is striking, but the poem does not have the depth of "Chapter Heading," which was published with it. In the six-line poem Hemingway writes:

For we have thought the longer thoughts
And gone the shorter way.
And we have danced to devils' tunes,
    Shivering home to pray;
To serve one master in the night,
    Another in the day.

The poem is ironic and satirical. The situational irony expressed in the poem is the theme of "While the bombardment was knocking . . ." in In Our Time, a sketch in which the young soldier promises God anything during a bombardment, but forgets all his promises with a prostitute the next day. The sketch does become a "chapter heading" in In Our Time, which suggests in Hemingway an uncanny methodicalness and tenacity.

Two other poems suggest a despairing cynicism. "Roosevelt" scoffs at the confidence working men have in Theodore Roosevelt. His death has enhanced his legend because all the legends that he [Roosevelt] started in life Live on and prosper,
    Unhampered now by his existence.

The pessimism and macabre quality of "Champs D'Honneur" is palpable. The eight-line poem ends:
Soldiers pitch and cough and twitch—
   All the world roars red and black;
Soldiers smother in a ditch,
   Choking through the whole attack.

The cruelty of warfare is Hemingway’s most persistent theme. But nowhere else in his works does it receive such compressed, intense treatment as in the poems and stories first published in 1923.

Two stories that may be used to illustrate the influence of the frontier tradition on Hemingway appear in Three Stories and Ten Poems. One of them, "Out of Season," shows a young man and his wife, tourists, being taken fishing by an old man named Peduzzi, a native of the town. It is the wrong season for fishing and the couple are reluctant, but Peduzzi is successful time after time in getting money for various items. They catch no fish, and the young man says he probably will not go any more but gives Peduzzi more money anyway. Peduzzi seems so successful with the tourists, without producing any fish, that the story appears to be patterned on the typical frontier story of the dude or outsider being imposed upon by the native, as may be found, for example, in Field's "Kicking a Yankee," Harris' "Sut Lovingood's Big Music Box Story," and Baldwin's "Sharp Financing." Hemingway felt, however, that there was an added dimension. In A Moveable Feast he explains how he left out the real end, which was that afterwards the old
man hanged himself. If Hemingway's "iceburg theory," as he calls his notion of the necessity of concealing important facts of a true story, is valid, then we might say in addition to the other qualities of folk humor there is a kind of subliminal macabre tone in "Out of Season."

The other story is "My Old Man." Critics have found a marked resemblance in the story to the work of Sherwood Anderson, especially to "I Want to Know Why." One can find some similarities in such frontier humor as Longstreet's "The Turf" or Harris' "Bill Ainsworth's Quarter Race." As Blair says, horse racing and cock fighting were prime entertainment in the Southern states. The portrait of Joe's father is generally satirical, but the emphasis of the story is on Joe's awakening to the realities of his father's degradation and of the harshness in life. The story is, furthermore, a good example of the use of comic "folk prose" that Wyndham Lewis finds later in Death in the Afternoon.

The influence of Huckleberry Finn on Hemingway is treated at length by Philip Young. Young's attention, however is focused on the pessimism and grimness in Mark Twain, rather than on his humor. He points out, for example, that Mark Twain's childhood was filled with scenes of violence which left him with emotional scars so vivid that the boy

could not sleep at night without having horrifying dreams. These scars, says Young, are analogous to the wounds suffered by a Hemingway character. Young shows that there are no fewer than thirteen corpses in *Huckleberry Finn* and that, for Twain, Huck's escape down the Mississippi River was the manifestation of a wish to be reborn, or to return to the womb, or to die, there being, he says, little difference in the three because each wish is a form of escape, a basic theme in both Twain and Hemingway.\(^{111}\) We may surmise on the basis of what Young says that Hemingway's comic "folk prose"—the understatement, plainspokenness, the exaggeration and the irony—tends to conceal instead of reveal the basic horror in the life story of the Nick Adams-Hemingway character.

E. *in our time*

In January, 1924, William Bird's Three Mountains Press turned out one hundred and seventy copies of *in our time*. There are eighteen sketches in its thirty-two pages, which are among the grimmest thirty-two pages to be found in Hemingway. Ten sketches are concerned with war, rebellion, or personal wartime experiences; six are based on bullfights and two on the death of criminals. The first six of the sketches were published previously in the *Little*  

\(^{111}\) *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration*, pp. 220-29.
Review in the spring of 1923. Many of the sketches con­tinue the bitter ironic lashing at Fate that Hemingway started in "Amateur Starvers" and the Asia Minor articles in the Star and Star Weekly. In the first sketch, "Every­body was drunk," there is obviously something wrong, some­body is responsible, but nobody knows who, and it is funny. The reason everybody is drunk is that all are going to a war they do not want to go to and they fear for their life. The Lieutenant keeps riding his horse into the fields to tell it (he calls it "mon vieux") that he is drunk. The adjutant is afraid the kitchen fires will be seen although they are fifty kilometers from the front, but he is unable to compel the corporal to extinguish them. The sketch gains its power from understatement. There must be more to it than the mere dozen lines indicate. Two of the most suggestive lines point beyond the story. The first sen­tence of the story is "Everybody was drunk." The next-to­last sentence is "It was funny going along that road." The sentences are suggestive because of the implications of everybody and that road. The nonsensical sketch does make sense because everybody not only means everybody in the battery but also suggests that everybody in the world is drunk or mad and is on the road to ruin through the mad,

inhuman actions of World War I. Going along that road can be funny only if one is drunk or if he sees it in the despairing spirit of l'humour noir. It is precisely the atrocities and excesses of World War I that give major impetus to l'humour noir, and this humor of despair is fundamental to the ironic title in our time.  

One of the finest short works by Hemingway is the second sketch in in our time, "The first matador got the horn." The sketch contains only six sentences, yet there is a developing plot in three distinct parts: the first sentence about the first matador, the second sentence about the second matador, and the last four sentences about the third matador. The second sentence is long, so that the second and third parts are only slightly longer than the preceding parts and the arrangement gives added emphasis to the end. The first matador gets the horn through his hand and is hooted out. The second is gored in the stomach, fights off "like crazy drunk" those who would aid him, but faints and is carried out. The third matador, therefore, has to kill five bulls and is so tired that "he could hardly lift his arm" and has to try five times before he can kill the last bull. The crowd "was quiet because . . . it looked like him or the bull." The final sentence says,  

113 Young discusses the irony in the title in Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 30.
"He sat down in the sand and puked and they held a cape over him while the crowd hollered and threw things down into the bull ring." The tendency in surrealist comedy to laugh at the entire nonsensical world is most apparent in the scene. The crowd is malevolent. Although each fighter has given more than is usually demanded, it remains unappeased. The emphatic last line shows a quite irrational inversion of the expected. It is the matador, not the bull, that has the cape flourished before him. The final emphasizing of the inverted, nonsensical, nightmarish quality of the last tableau occurs when Hemingway uses the words hollered and things. Hemingway's command of diction is too precise to allow these vague words unless he intends vagueness. Hemingway crowds generally cheer or hoot and Hemingway, in *Death in the Afternoon*, explains that bottles, for example, are thrown into the bull ring to show disapproval, and cigars, sometimes, to show approval. The meaning of the fighter with the cape above him and the meaning of the intentional vagueness in the crowd's hollering and throwing things is precisely that meaning in the world at large is elusive and vaguely discerned. It is the nonsensical world that is pilloried in bitter satire in "The first matador got the horn."

The ninth sketch in *in our time*, "At two o'clock in

---

114 The Short Stories, p. 159.
the morning," shows two policemen after one has shot two burglars off their wagon. The confusion, fear, and dialect of the policemen all contribute to the comedy. They look like small boys who are afraid they have initiated something that may get out of control. The policeman who did the killing says, "They're wops, ain't they? Who the hell is going to make any trouble? . . . I can tell wops a mile off." The beastly inhumanity of the act is plain from even a superficial reading, but the subhuman quality of Boyle, the killer, is emphasized by his error in designating the burglars as wops (Italians) when in the first sentence of the story they are plainly stated to be Hungarians. Boyle, of course, does not know he is wrong in the identification, but he must certainly know that he can not identify nationality "a mile off." The ridicule strikes at the cruelty in man, of course, because the act is murder. But human irrationality is also pilloried when Boyle rationalizes what he has done.

The satire of the two previous sketches is subtle because Hemingway has learned to report or record the thing as it was. He is no longer, in his best work, drawing conclusions or presenting his own judgments to his readers. Hemingway critic Earl Rovit says that certain stories "have significant affinities with the structural devices of

115 Ibid., p. 155.
Lardner's fiction, which aim to evoke an overwhelming dis-
gust with what they are innocuously presenting under a mask
of naive or ignorant acceptance."\textsuperscript{116} This device is effec-
tive because it circumvents the reader's defense against
taking other persons' opinions instead of seeing for him-
self. The reader feels that he has seen for himself, yet
he draws the conclusions that Hemingway wants him to draw
because Hemingway is in sure control of the details from
which he draws them.

Naive acceptance of evil and brutality as something
desirable or, if not desirable, at least normal and not
suitable cause for remonstrance has a grotesque, comic
quality about it. The stories of \textit{in our time} are laced
with grotesque humor. They do what Constance Rourke says
those of the frontiersman do: "Many of the tales and much
of the talk verged toward the median between terror and
laughter which is the grotesque."\textsuperscript{117} In a later passage
Miss Rourke asserts, "Backwoods drawing was broad, with a
distinct bias toward the grotesque, or the macabre."\textsuperscript{118}
Mark Twain provides two examples of the markedly grotesque.

\textsuperscript{116}Earl Rovit, \textit{Ernest Hemingway} (New York: Twayne
\textsuperscript{117}American Humor, p. 49. \textsuperscript{118}Ibid., p. 68.
In "Rambling Notes of the Idle Excursion" two soldiers lie dying in a ward. There is a shortage of coffins. A coffin is brought in and put under the bed of one, whereupon the soldier, feeling that he has won a distinction, rises painfully on his elbow and winks at the second soldier, the loser. A friend of the loser comes in and wheels the coffin under number two's bed and then helps him to rise on his elbow. After three painful attempts to raise his hand, the second soldier finally succeeds in thumbing his nose at number one before he drops back dead. In another anecdote of Twain, called "The Wounded Soldier," one soldier, whose leg has been shot off, asks a comrade to carry him to the rear. On the way the wounded soldier's head is shot off without the carrier knowing it. When an officer stops him, the carrier explains that his friend's leg is gone. "His leg . . . you mean his head, you booby," says the officer. The carrier is disconcerted, but finally says, "But he TOLD me IT WAS HIS LEG!!!!!!"

The deepening cynicism in Hemingway between the publication of in our time in January, 1924, and In Our Time
in October, 1925, is illustrated by three poems that were published in *Querschnitt* during this period. The vulgarity of the poems is striking. They could easily have served as shockers for those who were too blase, in a different way, to be startled into awareness by the macabre stories of *our time*. With the poems and stories Hemingway does about as much as can be done with short-short literary forms that are designed to startle. In "Earnest Liberal's Lament"\(^{121}\) he writes:

```
I know monks masturbate at night
That pet cats screw
That some girls bite
And yet
What can I do
To set things right?
```

"The Soul of Spain with McAlmon and Bird the Publishers"\(^{122}\) is even more cynical. Everything is defiled: "home is where the fart is," and Democracy, relativity, dictators, Menken, Waldo Frank, Broom, dada, and Dempsey are "the shit." Ezra is not, writes Hemingway, but the monument to Ezra that Hemingway calls for is called a "mess" that must be cleaned up. The poem seems to indicate acerbity so intense as to destroy the poet's control. The poet seems particularly fond of the word *shit*, repeating it nine times. There is a childish quality about the repetition. Heming-

---

\(^{121}\) *Querschnitt*, IV (Autumn, 1924), 231.

\(^{122}\) *Querschnitt*, IV (Autumn, 1924), 229–30 and V (February, 1925), 278.
way achieves more emphasis with this four-letter word in "The Age Demanded," where he uses it only once in an eight-line poem. The childish attitude is eliminated. The poet gains emphasis by withholding the key word until the last line.

The age demanded that we sing and cut away our tongue. 
The age demanded that we flow and hammered in the bung. 
The age demanded that we dance and jammed us into iron pants. 
And in the end the age was handed the sort of shit that it demanded.

F. IN OUR TIME

There are fifteen short stories in In Our Time not counting the sketches from the first version, which served as inter-chapters. "Out of Season" and "My Old Man," had already appeared in Three Stories and Ten Poems, and two stories, "The Revolutionist" and "A Very Short Story," were expanded versions of sketches from in our time. The four stories discussed in this section are ones with the largest proportions of humor.

A story that has received considerable attention is "Indian Camp." It is, as Young explains, the first story in the author's first book devoted exclusively to stories,

123Querschnitt, V (February, 1925), 111.

124If the two parts of Big Two-Hearted River are considered one story, there are only fourteen stories.
and it shows Nick Adams probably at his earliest age.\textsuperscript{125} Irony is strong in the climax of the story, from the time Nick's father says, "Ought to have a look at the proud father. They're usually the worst sufferers" until "Nick trailed his hand in the water . . ." and "felt quite sure that he would never die." On the surface the most striking details are the macabre description of the Indian father's throat "cut from ear to ear" and the blood in "a pool where his body sagged the bunk." But Young, in identifying the symbolic significance of night journeys by water, has provided us with the key to the story. Thus there is in Nick's simple act of trailing his hand in the water the strong suggestion of death. The macabre details earlier in the story tend to mask the irony of Nick's confidence in life as, symbolically, he trails his hand in death.

An element in "Indian Camp" that has analogies in Southwestern humor is Nick's father's pride in his improvisations. He performs a Caesarian with a jack-knife and sews the incision up with tapered gut leaders. In "The Indefatigable Bear-Hunter,"\textsuperscript{126} by Henry Clay Lewis (Madison Tensas), the "swamp doctor" has to perform a leg amputation with surgical instruments consisting of only "a couple of bowie-knives, one ingeniously hacked and filed into a saw--

\textsuperscript{125}Young does not consider the sketches of in our time to be stories, but calls them "sketches." See \textit{Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration}, pp. 180 and 261.

\textsuperscript{126}\textit{Humor of the Old Southwest}, pp. 346-54.
a tourniquet made of a belt and a piece of stick—a gun screw converted for the time into a tenaculum—and some buckskin slips for ligatures. In another story of backwoods humor, "Rance Bore-'em," by Francis James Robinson, the protagonist relieves a Texas ranger of "caries of the bone" by whittling a new humerus and tibia from "young green white oak" with an "Arkansas tooth-pick." He cuts the old bones out without cutting any large blood vessels, and on the third day the patient pronounces himself as good as new.

There are three stories in *In Our Time* that make satirical thrusts at the family. In "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" the doctor allows himself to be abused by half-breed Dick Boulton, whom he has hired to cut up logs left on the beach by the lumbermen. But Dick Boulton is a laborer and a big man who likes to fight. He is not the man who can take the doctor's threat to knock his eye teeth down his throat. Later the doctor tells his wife that Boulton had picked the quarrel to keep from paying his debts, and his wife is concerned when she hears the doctor pumping shells into and out of his gun. Nevertheless, she does not leave her darkened room where she rests with her Bible and copy of *Science and Health*. She merely asks that Nick be sent to her, so, presumably, she may learn what has

---

happened. Nick, however, chooses to go with his father. All the adults in the story behave shamefully. Young suggests two targets of abuse, the mother's naïveté in refusing to believe that such evil men as Boulton exist and the doctor's cowardliness.\textsuperscript{129} He seems to forget, however, that Boulton is a naturally coarse fellow who has been interrupted twice and threatened by physical violence as he tries to reason with the doctor, and it is then the doctor, his antagonist, who reports that he was trying to pick a quarrel. As the story is written, Boulton is not an evil man. He is a big man who lives by physical labor and who loves to fight. To refuse to fight him is, therefore, no reflection on the doctor, who naturally is not physically equal to Boulton and who knows himself to be wrong anyway. The contemptible character is the doctor's wife who, knowing that her husband has been in a quarrel and is loading his shotgun, does not move from her darkened room to restrain him. That she is aware of the seriousness of the situation is suggested by her sending for Nick and by her catching her breath when the door slams like the firing of a gun. Nick serves as her foil when, instead of leaving his father, as his mother had said, he says, "I want to go with you" and distracts his father from his anger by adding "I know where there's black squirrels, Daddy."\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{129}Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{130}The Short Stories, p. 103.
The shallow love and willful innocence of Nick's mother reflects her essential selfishness that is pilloried in this story.

A similar theme appears in "Soldier's Home." In that story Krebs is tired of the lies that veterans tell about the war. He is tired of lies that boys must tell American girls in order to have them. It is a ridiculously long time after the other veterans returned before Krebs gets home, but a month after he is back, his parents worry because he is not becoming the credit to the community that the other veterans are. Krebs' mother makes him lie to her by saying he loves her just after she has humiliated him; then she tries to make him pray. In this story it is the mother's shallowness and inflexibility that is satirized. There is no humanizing love in her for her child when he stands opposed to her convictions.

"Mr. and Mrs. Elliott" is a satirical thrust at passionless marriages and people. There are hints at fetishism and masturbation in the honeymoon scene: "As he walked he saw all the pairs of shoes, small shoes and big shoes, outside the doors of the hotel rooms. This set his heart pounding and he hurried back to his own room but Cornelia was asleep. He did not like to waken her and soon everything was quite all right and he slept peacefully."

Elliott is presented at the first of the story as an ideally pure young man observing all the standards of Vic-
torian morality and refinement that were given lip service, at least, in middle-class America at the turn of the century. Thus American social standards are indicted. There is a tremendous amount of understated bitterness in the story. Fenton enlightens us about the bitterness when he tells us that one of the things that irked Hemingway about Toronto was its aura of refinement. It was, he says, "a caricature of puritanism, notorious for its blue laws and its Sabbath solemnity." Fenton also reports Hemingway's once being sent to cover a convention of Toronto clergymen. According to Fenton he "slouched down in his chair, feet up on the bench in front of him, grumbling and cursing. 'Goddamn' he told [Mary Lowery] loudly, 'I hate refinement.'"

The three previous stories satirizing domestic respectability in *In Our Time* are reminiscent of Longstreet's "'The Charming Creature' as a Wife." Eveline, the heroine of the story, is drawn as an idealized picture of innocence and vanity. But she is a failure in the real world of marriage. Van Wyck Brooks hypothesizes that Mark Twain felt the same schism between clear-sighted individ-

131 *The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway*, p. 195.
132 Ibid., p. 195.
uality and social conformity:

So here was Mark Twain face to face with a dilemma. His unconscious desire was to be an artist, but this implied an assertion of individuality that was a sin in the eyes of his mother and a shame in the eyes of society. On the other hand, society and his mother wanted him to be a business man, and for this he could not summon up the necessary powers in himself. The eternal dilemma of every American writer! It was a dilemma which Mark Twain solved by becoming a humorist.

If Van Wyck Brooks's hypothesis is correct, or even if it is only possible, it is reasonable to examine Hemingway's life for similar repressive forces. One may find a similar force which operates through the doctor's wife, Kreb's mother, and Cornelia Elliott. Behind it all, in Hemingway's work, the ghost of Grace Hall Hemingway appears to lurk.

The story of Hemingway's literary apprenticeship begins in an environment of conformity, restraint, pain and terror. But the early years also show that Hemingway was hard at work trying to resist or escape from his environment. For example, when his high school principal was displeased with his Lardnerian articles, Hemingway increased his productivity. After high school he deliberately chose to disappoint his parents' wishes by going to Kansas City.

and gaining independence rather than going to Oberlin and continuing his dependent role. The ambulance corps offered another escape and adventure. Toronto afforded freedom from his family again. And Paris and literary authorship were the most liberating experiences of all. Hemingway did not achieve his independence without paying a stiff price, however. It cost him severely to recognize the enemies of his growing spirit for what they were, middle-class bigotry and unreasonably repressive parents. The price he paid in Italy was almost the ultimate one. And the price of literary and intellectual independence cost hard hours and months of slaving away in an atmosphere of misunderstanding, anger, and scorn. It is not surprising that Hemingway pictures the world as stupid, hating, murderous. Also it should be understandable that Hemingway might show signs of fatigue from the long and arduous effort and that he might carry battle scars, physical and psychic. Furthermore one expects that long and diligent effort by the young and intelligent will show progress. It did for Hemingway. In the year and one half that followed the publication of In Our Time, he gained a measure of relief from despondency. One may even say that he was a spectacular success. But the cries of anguish that manifested themselves in the macabre humor and cynical satire of Hemingway's best poems and stories between January, 1923, when "Wanderings" were published, and the publication of In Our Time in October,
1925, were mature and well considered and originated in an attitude that was hardened and could never show much change. The humor of youthful bitterness matured, but it never lost its overtones of bitterness.
CHAPTER II

HUMOR IN THE TORRENTS OF SPRING AND THE SUN ALSO RISES

A. THE TORRENTS OF SPRING

The poems and stories that were collected in Hemingway's first three volumes were written during a particularly anxious period for the author. They were perhaps cries of bitterness that served mainly as relief valves for the author's sensitive, overburdened nerves. They may be taken together as an "earnest liberal's lament," but, like Hemingway's poem, they seem to end with "And yet/ What can I do/ To set things right." The Torrents of Spring was written to more purpose. It served as his declaration of literary independence.

Although all of the author's motives for writing The Torrents of Spring cannot be known, we can identify some important ones. The explanation that is repeated most often is that Hemingway wrote it in order to make Boni and Liveright break his contract so that he could take his writing to Maxwell Perkins at Scribner's.\(^1\) This seems to be the most likely explanation. There is no doubt that The Tor-

\(^1\) Hemingway, the Writer as Artist, p. 38.
rents of Spring did result in a broken contract with his publisher and a weakened relationship between Hemingway and Anderson.

Several other possible reasons why Hemingway wrote The Torrents of Spring have been advanced, however, by John T. Flanagan. He disputes Gertrude Stein's assertion that Hemingway was jealous of Anderson because he felt the field of sports was his and Anderson was trying to invade it. Instead, Flanagan says, Hemingway was irritated by the indolence both of Anderson himself and the characters in Anderson's works. Flanagan feels that the almost total lack of humor in Anderson was, perhaps, also a factor. Undoubtedly there is some truth in all of these theories, including Stein's. But there were other reasons for his writing The Torrents of Spring.

Something else that must have had a part in producing the parody is Anderson's insulting the memory of Mark Twain. Hemingway had the highest regard for Mark Twain and once said that "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn." Anderson was also indebted to Mark Twain, and Hemingway


4Brom Weber, Sherwood Anderson, University of Minne-
knew it. But Anderson has Bruce Dudley, in Dark Laughter, musing, "There was Mark Twain, who wrote a book called 'Innocents Abroad,' that Aline's father had loved. When she was a child he was always reading it and laughing with delight over it, and it had really been nothing but a kind of small boy's rather nasty disdain for things he couldn't understand. Pap for vulgar minds."\(^5\)

There is another sentiment in Dark Laughter that could have been taken as a personal affront by Hemingway and one which could be dangerous to the book he had just finished but not yet published. Dark Laughter was published in September of 1925, and it was in September that Hemingway finished writing The Sun Also Rises, having worked on it since July.\(^6\) In Anderson's novel, Tom Wills explains to Bruce:

"There's a note I'd like to strike. It's about impotence. Have you noticed, going along the streets, that all the people you see are tired out, impotent?" he asked. "What is a newspaper—the most impotent thing in the world . . . and if this war isn't a sign of universal impotence, sweeping over the world like a disease, then I don't know much. A fellow I know, Hargrave of the Eagle, was out

---

sota Pamphlets on American Writers, No. 43 (Minneapolis, 1964), pp. 24-25. Weber says, "It was as a truly great prose poet that Anderson took up the dormant literary tradition of mock oral narration, briefly revivified by Mark Twain, and transformed it afresh into a vibrant literary medium."


\(^6\)Hemingway, The Writer As Artist, p. 75.
there to that place called California. . . . He says the whole Pacific Coast is a lot like that—in that tone I mean—impotence crying out to God that it is beautiful, that it is big, that it is effective. Look at Chicago, too, 'I will,' that's our motto as a city. . . . And, anyway, I'm not bragging. When it comes to impotence if you can beat me you're a darby. . . . And I ought to be writing my novel, or a play, if I'm ever going to do it. If I write one about the only thing I know anything about, do you think anyone in the world would read it? Only thing I could possibly write about would be just about this stuff I'm always giving you—about impotence, what a lot of it there is. Do you think anyone wants that kind of stuff."

Tom Wills' words are prophetic and satirical. They ridicule the theme of impotence, precisely "that kind of stuff" Hemingway was hoping someone would want to read, and they sound as if they offer advice to a young writer. Hemingway did not want advice and certainly not ridicule. He made an effective counterattack with The Torrents of Spring and cleared the field for The Sun Also Rises.

Whatever other reasons there may have been, certainly Hemingway's esthetic principles were also involved. In A Moveable Feast the author disparages all of Anderson's "strangely poor" novels and says, "he wrote a novel finally called Dark Laughter, so terribly bad, silly and affected that I could not keep from criticizing it in a parody."\(^7\)

Some critics feel that in addition to Anderson, Hemingway was parodying other writers whose literary philo-

\(^7\) Dark Laughter, pp. 42-44.

\(^8\) A Moveable Feast, p. 28.
sophy was different from his own. The early and mid-twen-
ties produced many who opposed Hemingway, for writers' 
styles were diverging toward two extremes. Some were de-
veloping an introverted, cerebral, chain-of-consciousness 
technique; and some, like Hemingway, preferred to work to-
ward straightforward, simpler styles. The more complex 
styles often abandoned spatial and temporal arrangements 
and allowed their characters to become illustrations of 
psychological, esthetic, or other principles instead of 
real persons.  

Carlos Baker thinks that Joyce's Dubliners is paro-
died in the last half of Chapter II of The Torrents of 
Spring and that the impressionistic geographical catalogu-
ing of Dos Passos is also parodied. D. H. Lawrence also, 
according to Baker, is sneeringly suggested by the bird 
that Scripps keeps in his shirt, the Indian squaw, the con-
versation of Scripps with Mandy and Diana, and Red Dog with 
the British accent at the stable club.  

Baker, however, 
clearly does not believe that these three writers are pri-
mary satirical targets. It seems to me that the parody 
might appear to be directed at Joyce simply because Ander-
son sometimes makes a conscious effort to use Joyce's style.

---

9Joe Lee Davis, "Criticism and Parody," Thought, 
XXVI (1951), 200.

10Hemingway, The Writer As Artist, p. 41.
But the parody is of Anderson, not Joyce. Furthermore, there is in *The Torrents of Spring* parodying of vague sexual symbolism as found in *Dark Laughter*. Lawrence uses a great deal of sexual symbolism, but so does Anderson. Again the parody is directed at Anderson, not at Lawrence.

Baker feels that Gertrude Stein is also a target of *The Torrents of Spring*. Her special form of echolalia is parodied in the following passage:

> Going somewhere now. En route. Huysmans wrote that. It would be interesting to read French. He must try it sometime. There was a street in Paris named after Huysmans. Right around the corner from where Gertrude Stein lived. Ah, there was a woman! Where were her experiments in words leading her? What was at the bottom of it? All that in Paris now. Paris in the morning. Paris in the evening. Paris at night. Paris in the morning again. Paris at noon perhaps. Why not? Yogi Johnson striding on. His mind never still.

Philip Young agrees that Gertrude Stein is attacked in Part III of *The Torrents of Spring*. But he thinks that this assault is only a prelude to the main attack.\(^\text{12}\)

There are two more identifiable minor targets. Carlos Baker says that the dedication to H. L. Mencken and S. Stanwood Menken must have been designed to infuriate H. L., whose love of foreign terms is parodied in Scripps' "No politzei for mine. [sic] They give me the katzen-

\(^{11}\)Hemingway, *The Writer As Artist*, p. 40.

\(^{12}\)Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 82.
jammers. . . . No more weltpolitik."  

I believe that another object of satire is Lawrence Stallings, who reviewed *Dark Laughter* in the *New York World*. 

Stallings wrote, "I should say that DARK LAUGHTER is the finest contemporary estimate of American life, written with the greatest sincerity and restrained passion, done with a yawpy, stentorian barbarism unheard in these states since Old Walt Whitman passed on. ANDERSON HAS WROUGHT A MASTERPIECE." [The capitals are in the original.] At the end of Chapter XII, in his third author's note, Hemingway mimics Stallings's words too closely for it to be accidental. He writes, "Mr. Dos Passos, I believe, shared a bottle of Chambertin with me over the marmelade de pommes (Eng., apple sauce). We drank two vieux marce, and after deciding not to go to the Café du Dôme and talk about Art we both went to our respective homes and I wrote the following chapter. . . . It was when I read this chapter to him that Mr. Dos Passos exclaimed, 'Hemingway you have wrought a

---

13 Hemingway, *The Writer As Artist*, p. 41.

14 Anderson, *Dark Laughter*, on the jacket. The passage is enclosed in quotation marks and is cited "—Lawrence Stallings, N. Y. World." I have written both Liveright and the New York Public Library—Central Branch, as suggested by Liveright, but neither can, or will, supply the date of the review. The review is not in the *Book Review Digest*, although there were a dozen other reviews cited between September, 1925, and January, 1926, inclusively.
masterpiece." 15

The prime target of Hemingway's ridicule, in *The Torrents of Spring*, in any case, is Sherwood Anderson. By 1925 Anderson was receiving critical fire from many quarters. William Faulkner, for example, parodies Anderson in the preface of William Spratling's *Sherwood Anderson and Other Creoles*. 16 In a review of *Dark Laughter* for *Atlantic Bookshelf*, Archibald MacLeish makes a note of "the inadequacy of his method and the feebleness of his style." 17 A review in the *Boston Transcript* signed "K. S." says that Anderson "is unable to give any contribution to modern literature that is worth while." 18 Waldo Frank in the *Dial* states, "The stuff of this novel is not more than that of many of his ten-page stories." 19

Although everyone agrees that *Dark Laughter* is the prime target of Hemingway's ridicule, there were satirical darts directed at other of Anderson's "strangely poor novels," as Hemingway called them. Baker says that the

18 October 10, 1925, p. 4.
19 LXXIX (December, 1925), 510.
parody encompasses Many Marriages, Marching Men, Horses and Men, and even Winesburg, Ohio. John T. Flanagan feels that details of Windy McPherson's Son and Poor White are included in the ridicule. Hemingway probably had stored up a considerable amount of irritation at the style of all of Anderson's work, and Dark Laughter acted as the trigger.

That style is described by Brom Weber, who says that Anderson "employs an art of suggestion to articulate his search for pattern and meaning in human existence. His experiences are fragmentary, incoherent, inexplicable. The chronological sequence of time may be interrupted and reversed by memories, inadvertent thoughts, gusts of emotion, and frustrated attempts at comprehension. Objects and people are haphazardly perceived, grotesquely distorted. Absurdly helpless, the narrator may succumb to impotence, give vent to explosive stirring in his subconscious, flee the envelope of his body in mystical anguish or ecstasy, obsessedly focus upon trivialities such as a bent finger, find momentary relief in the health and grace of animals." 

Besides these characteristics named by Weber, there were other stylistic traits Hemingway could mock. Lionel Trilling in The Liberal Imagination, which is not concerned with Hemingway's parody, identifies other important fea-

tures of Anderson: purposely stilted style, designed to stress the unusual in a scene, old slang, elegant archaism, and over-stressed simplicity. Davis identifies the objects of Hemingway's ridicule as the "over-simplified stream-of-consciousness style, the cutback as a structural device, neurotic characters, phony intellectualism and symbolism, irrationalist values." Rex Burbank thinks that the irrelevance of themes to action, rhetorical questions about absurdly insignificant subjects, fragments used to illustrate the natural lack of congruity in the mind, and a disjunctive structure used to show a groping mind are satirized. Carlos Baker identifies the sentimental simplicity of Anderson's climactic scenes, the interrogatory monologues, and the confused use of id and ego as objects of Hemingway's satirical attack. According to Philip Young, it is Anderson's sentimental primitivism and his habit of having characters stop to wonder at banal mysteries of life that provoked Hemingway. There is no need

---


25 Hemingway, The Writer As Artist, pp. 40 and 47.

26 Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, pp. 81-82.
to prolong the list. All that is needed for parody is a distinctive style, and Anderson had that.

Although parody depends for its effects on a mocking imitation of the style being ridiculed, occasionally Hemingway changes his target to Anderson himself, and the attack becomes ad hominem as personal qualities of Anderson appear. For example, without giving a reason Scripps leaves his home and wife to go to Chicago to get a job. Anderson deserted his wife in a similar fashion. Scripps' mother is Italian, and his father had been a Civil War soldier, as Anderson's are in his fictional autobiographical accounts. When Scripps says that he published two stories in the Dial and Mencken is trying to get him, Hemingway may be alluding to the publication of "A Meeting South" and Many Marriages serialized in the Dial. And Mencken did get "Death in the Woods" in 1926. Scripps leaves one wife and takes two others in the course of the narrative. Anderson divorced Cornelia Lane in 1914 and Tennessee Mitchell in 1923. He married Elizabeth Prall in April, 1924, before writing and publishing Dark Laughter between July, 1924 and September, 1925. These personal events are suggested when Hemingway has the old craftsmen at the pump factory sympathize with Scripps and offer advice when Scripps says his

27 The Torrents of Spring, p. 29.
28 Ibid., p. 30. 29 Ibid., p. 34.
wife has left him: "'Well, you won't have any difficulty finding another one,' Mr. Shaw said. 'You're a likely-looking young fellow. But take my advice and take your time. A poor wife ain't much better than no wife at all. . . . You take my advice young feller, and go slow. Get yourself a good one this time.'"30 Anderson is personally attacked when Scripps says to Diana, who is telling a story, "Go on. . . . If you had ever been as hard up for plots as I have been!"31 Both his belief in the superiority of fiction over fact and his compulsion to fictionalize fact, working it over and over into almost unrecognizable form, are pilloried when Diana cautions Mandy, "You don't always tell it the same way, dear."32

30 Ibid., p. 45.

31 See Weber's Sherwood Anderson, p. 44, in which Scott Fitzgerald is quoted: "To this day reviewers solemnly speak of him [Anderson] as an inarticulate, fumbling man, bursting with ideas—when, on the contrary, he is the possessor of a brilliant and almost inimitable prose style, and scarcely any ideas at all."

32 The Torrents of Spring, p. 51. Brom Weber (Sherwood Anderson, p. 7) writes "In private life, letters, and autobiographical publications, Anderson tenaciously mixed art and life until he became a fictional character for himself and his times. Many supposedly objective details in A Story Teller's Story (1924), Tar (1926), and the posthumous Memoirs (1942) were products of 'fancy,' a term he used interchangeably with 'imagination.' He preferred these imaginative constructions to 'facts' which he believed concealed 'the essence of things.' The angry corrections of relatives and friends did not alter his belief that a man's vision of himself and his world contained more meaningful truth than did a birth certificate or an identification card." For a personal account of this oddity in
Hemingway's ridicule is sometimes intricate. For example, note the vulgar innuendo when Scripps orders beans for supper and the waitress calls into the wicket "A pig and the noisy ones." The apparently pointless vulgarity suggested by "the noisy ones" has a purpose which appears later: "'They're mighty fine beans, too,' Scripps agreed. Under the influence of the beans his head was clearing." The assertion that Scripps' head clears when he vents gas from his stomach is an indirect ad hominem attack on Anderson. It suggests Anderson's literary ventings have a fecal nature.

Hemingway names Anderson in only one section of the book, when he alludes to Fred in a book by Anderson. He ridicules the fact that Fred has been two years at the front in the infantry and could still muse, "You don't kill men in war much. They just die." "The hell you don't, Yogi thought. . . . They just die. Indeed they do. . . . That was the way the soldiers thought, Anderson said. The hell it was." To emphasize the banality of the Andersonian hero, Hemingway has Scripps make a pompous address about war to the two Indian characters. When Scripps finishes, one of the Indians says, "I thought maybe white

Anderson's personality, see Callaghan's That Summer in Paris, pp. 119-20.

33 Ibid., p. 37. 34 Dark Laughter, pp. 198-99.
35 The Torrents of Spring, pp. 60-61.
chief was in the war from the way he talked. . . . Him [his Indian companion] . . . he got V. C. Me I got D. S. O. and M. C. with bar. I was major in the Fourth C. M. R.'s."

There are many specific images, phrases, and postures ridiculed. One device that Hemingway responds to in Anderson is the ridiculous, mixed metaphors and vulgar double entendre. For example, in Dark Laughter when Aline first notices that she is attracted by Bruce, she decides of women, "We are pretty practical and hard-headed, at bottom." Fred thinks about what his advertising agent told him: "A writer is always a little nutty at bottom." And after Aline is seduced, she wonders, "Is every woman at bottom . . . a wanton?" Hemingway's use of double entendre is clearly a parody. In The Torrents of Spring Yogi Johnson is shown at the window where "his breath made little fairy tracings on the cold window pane. Yogi thought of Paris. Perhaps it was the little fairy tracings that reminded him of the gay city where he had once spent two weeks." Bawdy double entendre occurs again when Scripps O'Neil goes home: "Scripps went on up to his house. It was not a big house, but it wasn't size that mattered to Scripps's old woman." 

36Ibid., pp. 61-63. 37Dark Laughter, p. 135. 38Ibid., p. 275. 39Ibid., p. 262. 40The Torrents of Spring, p. 25. 41Ibid., p. 27.
Hemingway parodies Anderson's garbled literary allusions and quotations and endless rhetorical questions by having Yogi ask, "Could it be that what this writing fellow Hutchinson had said, 'If winter comes can spring be far behind?' would be true again this year?" The same kind of parody occurs in two other places. Scripps wonders: "What was it that poet chap his friend Harry Parker met once in Detroit had written? Harry used to recite it: 'Through pleasures and palaces though I may roam. When you something something something there's no place like home.' Anderson's failure to remember quotations correctly is also satirized by the failing memories of the two waitresses. Diana can only say, "'General So-and-so'--I cannot remember his name," and Mandy speaks of "Professor Whatsisname. . . I wish I could remember his name." The parodying of Anderson's rhetorical questions becomes even more inane and the satire more severe when Scripps, a Harvard graduate and writer, so he says, comes to a depot with a big sign PETOSKY on it. "Scripps read the sign again. Could this be Petosky? A man was inside the station, tapping something back of a wicketed window. . . . Could he be a telegrapher? Something told Scripps

---

42 Ibid., p. 25. 43 Ibid., p. 28.
After reading "BROWN'S BEANERY THE BEST BY TEST," Scripps wonders, "Was this, after all, Brown's Beanery?" The questions reach the height of absurdity in Chapter VI. Scripps goes to the pump factory to get a job. "Could this really be a pump factory? True a stream of pumps were being carried out and set up in the snow. . . . But were they really pumps? It might all be a trick. . . . "I say!' . . . 'Are they pumps?" Scripps asks a worker. "He walked up to the door. There was a sign on it: KEEP OUT. THIS MEANS YOU. Can that mean me? Scripps wondered?"

Hemingway satirizes Anderson's wordiness: "Coming toward him down the street came two Indians." Another example occurs in the beanery: "Scripps noticed that it was the Detroit News. There was a fine paper.

"'That's a fine paper you're reading,' Scripps said to the drummer.

"'It's a good paper, the News,' the drummer said." One form of redundancy that Anderson uses frequently is the repetition of the noun or pronoun subject at the end of the sentence. Hemingway parodies the pattern as he describes Scripps' beginning to notice Mandy: "He eyed the

---

46 Ibid., p. 32. 47 Ibid., pp. 35-36. 48 Ibid., p. 42. 49 Ibid., p. 34. 50 Ibid., p. 49.
waitress Mandy. She had a gift for the picturesque in speech, that girl.  

Anderson's impressionistic style and his frequent use of sentence fragments are ridiculed. An allusion to Marching Men is made when Yogi Johnson meets his two Indian comrades: "Yogi Johnson walking down the silent street with his arm around the little Indian's shoulder. The big Indian walking along beside them. . . . The three of them walking, walking, walking. Where were they going? . . . Marching men, Yogi thought. Marching on and on and where were they getting? Nowhere. Yogi knew it only too well. Nowhere. No damn where at all."  

Dark Laughter is strongly suggested by other fragments. One sentence says, "After all, the white race might not always be supreme. This Moslem revolt. Unrest in the East. Trouble in the West. Things looked black in the South."  

Anderson's chain-of-consciousness technique often deteriorates into meaninglessness, and his observance of grammatical conventions is anything but rigid. Hemingway parodies these two failings in a passage where a mere fault in grammatical gender is intensified into a suggestion of sexual abnormality in the protagonist, a condition which is also found in Dark Laughter. Musing about his new love,

---

51 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
52 Ibid., pp. 73-74.
53 Ibid., p. 74.
Scripps says, "You are my woman now, Mandy. . . . My woman. My woman. You are my woman. She is my woman. It is my woman. Somewhere, somehow, there must be something else. Something else." 54

Hemingway strikes at the many digressions in Anderson's work. He describes Scripps' leaving home and walking down the G. R. & I. railroad: "He cut away from the tracks and passed the Mancelona High School. It was a yellow brick building. There was nothing rococo about it, like the building he had seen in Paris. No, he had never been in Paris. That was not he. That was his friend Yogi Johnson." 55 There are other violations of unity. The waitress Diana's story of the Paris Exposition is one of the more lengthy ones. There are also seven author's notes that interrupt the narrative. The pointless Indian war whoops that punctuate the story are digressions designed to ridicule Anderson's symbolic Negro laughter.

When the two Indians take Yogi to a club above a stable, the scene parodies the flashy patriotism that Fred illustrates when he marches in the parade as a private, ironically proud of his humility. In the stable-club a framed, autographed portrait of Longfellow hangs draped in an American flag. On the walls are other autographed portraits of Chief Bender, Francis Parkman, D. H. Lawrence, 

Chief Meyers, Jim Thorpe, General Custer, Glen Warner, and others. 56

Scripps' picking up the frozen bird and carrying it with him, especially in his encounters with Diana and Mandy, suggests Anderson's vague symbolism. The bird has sexual significance, but if it is taken as a phallic symbol, as it appears it should be at first, the results are preposterous. It appears as Scripps is leaving his wife. As he proceeds on his journey, he promises to build it a "beautiful gilded cage." Scripps tells the operator in Petosky, "My wife left me." The operator responds, "I don't wonder if you go around with a damn bird sticking out of your shirt." 57 When he meets the elderly waitress he is to "marry," she inquires about the age of his bird and gives it a little catsup.

After the sexual associations for the bird become apparent, the severest satirical use of the symbol occurs when Scripps cannot name the bird:

"'What do you call your bird?' the drummer asked.

"'I haven't named him yet. What would you call him?'

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

"'He ain't a parrot, is he?' asked the drummer. 'If he was a parrot you could call him Polly.'

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

"Scripps wondered. Perhaps the bird was a par-

56 Ibid., pp. 66-69. 57 Ibid., p. 33.
rot. A parrot strayed from some comfortable home with some old maid. The untilled soil of some New England spinster.

"Better wait till you see how he turns out," the drummer advised. "You got plenty of time to name him... Wait till you see if he lays eggs," the drummer suggested."

In *Dark Laughter* Bruce wonders if he is homosexual or not. The uncertainty of Scripps about the sex of his "bird" suggests that he has inadequacies. The doubt about the bird's sex repeats the doubt voiced by the telegrapher about Scripps when Scripps spoke his first words to the telegrapher:

"Are you a telegrapher?"

"Yes, sir... I'm a telegrapher."

"How wonderful... Is it hard to be a telegrapher?"

"Say, ... are you a fairy?"  

Thus the attack on the protagonist's masculinity occurs frequently and is, by extension, a thrust at the masculinity of Anderson's hero, Bruce Dudley, who, despite the doubt he has about himself, feels the primitive urges in the dark laughter he hears and gives up everything for love. Dudley is conspicuously successful as a lover as he demonstrates by taking Fred's wife. Hemingway cannot tolerate Dudley's sexual success; he levels his bitterest and most prolonged attack at it.

---

Yogi Johnson fears that women may be a thing of the past for him, but consoles himself that he still has his love of horses, a trait of many of Anderson's characters. When he sees "a team of beautiful horses" later and attempts to touch one, the horse backs its ears and bares its teeth. "Perhaps they were lovers," Yogi thinks to himself. The Andersonian hero is doubly ridiculed; he is a failure with horses as well as with women.

Sexual uncertainty and failure result in the perversion of love by other characters. The quadruple-amputee Indian that Yogi meets has a passion for pool. He does not care when Yogi pursues his naked squaw, but when he is kicked out of the stable-club and loses an artificial arm, he cries because, as he says, "me no play pool no more." Yogi's memory of the beautiful thing that happened to him in Paris involves commercial voyeurism, although Yogi is initially only the unwitting victim. The tall Indian alludes to prostitution when he is sure that the real chinook has begun and grunts, "Want to get in town before rush." Scripps' attraction for the elderly waitress is little short of a perversion. This parodies John Webster's feelings for his elderly maid, Katherine, in Many Marriages. That novel is the object of several thrusts. Scripps look-

60 Ibid., p. 59. 61 Ibid., p. 71.
62 Ibid., p. 85.
ing into the pullman cars as they pass him and wondering about the lives of the sleepers is also like John Webster's actions before the houses on his street, and Scripps' moment of communion with the telegrapher is like Webster's moment of insight into the minds of other characters in *Many Marriages*.

The satire in *The Torrents of Spring* is very severe. After the work was published, Hemingway's attitude was that he had performed an unpleasant but necessary duty. From Madrid in 1926 Hemingway wrote what Anderson called "the most self-conscious and probably the most completely patronizing letter ever written." In it Hemingway states that Anderson's work has no value at all and explains that *The Torrents of Spring* was a joke that was written very rapidly. Anderson called the letter "a kind of funeral oration delivered over my grave."

A second letter followed in which Hemingway expressed concern over wounded feelings. The letter states, "I feel badly about having ever written to you in an ex cathedra . . . manner but I think that is just that the young have to be very sure always, because the show is really very tough and it is winning all the time and unless you know everything when you're twenty-five you don't stand a chance of knowing anything at all when

---

it's had time to shake down and you're thirty-five. And we've all got to know something. Maybe." Hemingway's assertion that he was then "very sure" marks the independence from Anderson that the publication of The Torrents of Spring gave him.

B. HEMINGWAY AS TRAGICOMEDIAN: THE SUN ALSO RISES

In the discussion of Hemingway's esthetics which leads to the analysis of The Sun Also Rises, Carlos Baker quotes Hemingway as saying "A writer's job is to tell the truth." It has, from first to last, says Baker, been Hemingway's purpose to get a total experience down on paper, to tell accurately, as Hemingway often phrased it, "the way it was." Since the publication of The Sun Also Rises in October of 1926 there has been a considerable amount of controversy about its meaning and value, although today most critics consider this first novel as either the best or among the best that Hemingway wrote. It is perhaps his best and perhaps also his most successful attempt to portray the world truly. The portrayal is so accurate that the phrase "lost generation," which Hemingway says he got

64 Ibid., p. 517.
66 Men at War, p. 15.
from Gertrude Stein, has served historians well as a tag not for the book, but for the era.

Our examination of Hemingway's tragicomic concept of life will proceed in four steps. The first concern is with the critics Young, Spilka, Rovit and Baker, who, it seems to me, are the ones that have the most to say about the aesthetic problems of The Sun Also Rises. The second part of the examination is concerned with the bullfight as epiphany. Hemingway does not depart from the frontiersman's distrust of established opinion; basically, it seems, he is trying to reconstruct the lessons of orthodox Christianity in more primitive terms. The bullfight takes the place of Christian ritual, or, at least, assumes primacy over it. The third part of my discussion of The Sun Also Rises deals with Christian symbols in the novel. Finally, we are concerned with the conflicting views of native aficionados, who are in touch with realities, and tourist non-aficionados, whose assumption and complacency will not allow them to see reality. Hemingway draws the tourists satirically, much as the American frontier humorists drew satirical sketches of Easterners, Yankees, and dudes.

There has been much disagreement about both the moral qualities of the characters in the story and of the book in general. The term "lost generation," which was widely publicized by the novel, has taken on some of the characteristics of the proper noun, despite the author's
denial that such a generation really existed, or, at least, existed in his experience. Hemingway's opinion has been largely ignored while critics have tried to determine who among the personae are lost and who are not. Henry Seidel Canby's Introduction to the Modern Library edition of the novel declares that Jake is the only character worth saving. Most critics, however, see heroic qualities in Pedro Romero. And most find Robert Cohn the worst of all.

Philip Young, who has had more to say about the Hemingway hero than anyone else, calls Jake Barnes a Nick Adams character. Hemingway and Nick Adams are, to Young, essentially the same person. At the end of the novel, he says, Jake "is returned to Brett as before, and we discover that we have come full circle, like all the rivers, the winds, and the sun, to the place where we began."67 But, Young continues, "Not quite all the people are 'lost'—surely Romero is not—and the beauty of the eternal earth is now and then richly evoked. But most of the characters do seem a great deal of the time if not lost then terribly unsure of their bearings."68 The earth, according to Young, does not have a very important place in The Sun Also Rises. Its "abiding forever as hero" is not an important leavening agent to him, and he sees the end of the novel to be very

67 Ernest Hemingway, A Reconsideration, p. 86.
68 Ibid., p. 87.
pessimistic. Young's opinion about Romero is rather similar to that of Mark Spilka, except that Spilka elevates Romero to the position of "the real hero of the parable, the final moral touchstone, the man whose code gives meaning to a world where love and religion are defunct." 69

Earl Rovit finds the novel much more optimistic. It is to him an "epistemological" novel, with "one tutor, Count Mippipopolous, and one anti-tutor, Robert Cohn." 70 The ending is comparatively happy for Jake because, according to Rovit, the act of the traffic officer in stopping the taxi containing Jake and Brett is symbolic of Jake's new control over himself. Rovit feels that the title of the novel, in addition to reflecting Ecclesiastes, reflects also "Emerson's considered faith that 'The sun shines today also.'" 71

A position somewhere between the extreme pessimism of Young and the subdued optimism of Rovit is held by Carlos Baker, who sees a basic opposition between the "healthy" Jake Barnes, Bill Gorton, and Pedro Romero and the "sick abnormal 'vanity' of the Ashley-Campbell-Cohn

69 "The Death of Love in The Sun Also Rises," Hemingway and His Critics, p. 92.
71 Ibid., p. 162.
triangle." Baker gives more emphasis than other critics to the importance of the country—the grain fields, pastur­
lands, trees, mountains, and streams. He has paid more at­
tention than the other critics to Hemingway's statement that his novel was not "a hollow or bitter satire, but a damn tragedy with the earth abiding forever as the hero." As a consequence of the earth's importance and its per­
manence as a "character," Baker finds the tone is lighter than in Hemingway's other novels; he uses the term "tragi­
comedy" three times in describing The Sun Also Rises.

No critic, however, has noted in print the paradoxical implications in Hemingway's assertion that he has written a "tragedy with the earth abiding forever as the hero." Baker suggests a resolution of the problem of a tragedy with the hero abiding forever by classifying the work as tragicomedy, but he does not defend his suggestion. It is rea­
sonable to suppose that the paradoxical intention of the author may have accounted for the uncertainty of the critics about the meaning of the work. In concerning themselves with the different halves of the paradox, the critics have often chosen sides and arranged the characters into two groups, the saved and the damned, not giving enough atten­
tion to the assumption of tragicomedy that ambiguity is

---

72 Hemingway, The Writer As Artist, pp. 82-83.
73 Ibid., p. 81. 74 Ibid., pp. 37, 96, and 152.
basic to life and that characters are, therefore, not often all good or all bad. The classifying process of such critical actions tends to warp the characters somewhat to make them fit into a critical scheme.

The dramatic quality of *The Sun Also Rises* is founded in the tension between the powers of vanity and meaninglessness and the vital powers that cluster around the symbol of the earth as hero. In the first half of the book the earth, or earth symbol, does not appear. The action is dominated by absurdities: before the action of the story opens, Cohn had wanted to leave his wife but would not allow himself to do so, whereupon she left him; Brett, a near-nymphomaniac comes to the *bal musette* escorted by homosexuals; Jake Barnes, who is impotent, picks up a *poule* and later deserts her to take a titillating ride in a taxi with Brett. In Chapter IX, midpoint in the nineteen chapters of the novel, the scene shifts from Paris, and from then on all the action occurs in Spain or southern France. The intensity increases, for the action is overshadowed by the aegis of the earth, the ambivalent source of retribution or hope. The change is immediately noticeable. When Jake and Bill depart from the Gare d'Orsay, Jake says, "It was a lovely day, not too hot, and the country was beautiful from the start."75

75 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926, p. 84.
The last half of the novel revolves around the bull-fight. Tragic implications are added to what has been mainly comedy. Hemingway's concept of tragedy and comedy with relation to bullfighting may be studied in *Death in the Afternoon*, published six years after *The Sun Also Rises*. "The bullfight," says Hemingway, "is very moral to me because I feel very nice 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." The Passage can be taken as a good description of the proper purgation of the emotions effected by pity and fear that Aristotle gives as a characteristic of tragedy. Obviously the force of the tragedy depends on the value given the bull, for if the animal is considered as merely a beast then Hemingway's concept of its death as tragedy is inexplicable. The bull is, however, a rather clear symbol of the earth. He is as much a part of the Spanish landscape as the mountains, fields of grain, trout streams and cold, crisp air that are the sanative influences of the novel. In *Death in the Afternoon* Hemingway says, "The fighting bull is to the domestic bull as the wolf is to the dog. . . . Bulls for the ring are wild animals. They are bred from strain [sic] that comes down in direct descent from the wild bulls that ranged over the Peninsula and they are

76 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932, p. 4.
bred on ranches with thousands of acres of range where they live as free ranging animals. The contacts with men of the bulls that are to appear in the ring are held to an absolute minimum. "Otherwise they become too sophisticated for the matador to handle in the ring. Thus, in the bull, there is a part of the abiding earth that can be destroyed. The bull belongs with the Spanish landscape and the natural scenery of Spain. In the truest sense he is produced by the land and not by man.

The bullfight is the epitome of the whole action of The Sun Also Rises, as will become apparent later. Its relationship to tragicomedy is stated by Hemingway, who says in Death in the Afternoon, "I believe that the tragedy of the bullfight is so well ordered and so strongly disciplined by ritual that a person feeling the whole tragedy cannot separate the minor comic-tragedy of the horse so as to feel it emotionally." Hemingway says that Death in the Afternoon proposes to present the bullfight integrally. . . . The comic that happens to these horses is not their death then; death is not comic, and gives a temporary dignity to the most comic characters, although this dignity passes once death has occurred; but the strange and burlesque visceral accidents which occur. There is certainly nothing comic by our standards in seeing an animal emptied of its visceral content, but if this animal instead of

77 Death in the Afternoon, p. 105.
78 Ibid., p. 8.
doing something tragic, that is, dignified, gallops in a stiff old-maidish fashion around the ring trailing the opposite of clouds of glory it is as comic when what it is trailing is real as when the Fratellinis give a burlesque of it in which the viscera are represented by rolls of bandages, sausages and other things.

Thus Hemingway himself finds in the bullfight both tragedy and tragicomedy.

Earl Rovit shows the likeness between the bullfight and the structure of The Sun Also Rises. The first part of the three-book division, according to Rovit, corresponds to the mounted picador's tiring the bull. In this part Jake is "pic-ed" by his desires. In Book Two the action at Pamplona is parallel to that of the bandilleras, which, according to Rovit, "goads him beyond endurance into jealousy and self betrayal." In Book Three the death of the bull is reflected by Jake's suppressing that part of his desires that he cannot fulfill. Rovit is enlightening, but does not concern himself with the ramifications of tragicomedy, although his comparing the book to the bullfight would seem to make it necessary for him to do so.

The "comic tragedy," as Hemingway asserts in Death in the Afternoon, is found in the first part of the three-part bullfight. If the structure of the novel reflects that of the bullfight accurately, the comic content should be found mainly in Book One. The basis of the comic part

79 Ibid., p. 7. 80 Ernest Hemingway, p. 158.
in the fight, according to Hemingway, is the silly pretense of the wounded horse, which, after he is gored, spills his viscera and is only a "parody" of a horse. The motif of pretentiousness is sounded early in the book when Brett first appears at the bal musette with the homosexuals. The homosexuals immediately spot the poule Jake has brought with him: "One of them saw Georgette and said: 'I do declare. There is an actual harlot. I'm going to dance with her, Lett. You watch me.' The tall one called Lett said: 'Don't you be rash.'"81 The homosexuals are parodies of real men in the same way as the picador's horse is a parody of a real horse.

To give another example, the pretentiousness of those who are essentially "lost" but still pretend to be whole is well reflected in the story of Mike's medals. Mike is asked three times to tell the story, but will not because, he says, "It reflects discredit on me." Finally he is persuaded and tells of his borrowing from a tailor medals that he never earned the right to wear. He wears them to a social gathering where they are later cut "off their backings" and given "all around."82 Mike is, of course, like the picador's horse, a parody of the real, and in the position of his medals and manner of their removal by being cut off their backing there is a strong sug-

81 The Sun Also Rises, p. 20. 82 Ibid., pp. 135-36.
gestion of the "visceral accident" in the bull ring.

The pretense and visceral displacement is even more positively suggested by Jake. He leaves the bal musette with Brett, takes a taxi, and performs all the actions of a lover with her that he can. But it is merely a pretense. Brett says, after a time, that she does not "want to go through that hell again," but she does not stop. Jake explains, "What happened to me is supposed to be funny," and Brett, speaking of a similar injury in someone else, says, "It seemed like a hell of a joke." Of course, "what happened" is in the most literal sense a "visceral accident," yet Jake figuratively "gallops in a stiff old-maidish fashion around the ring trailing the opposite of clouds of glory."83

The similarity of Jake's involvement to the "comic-tragedy" of the picador's horse is even more noticeable when he describes what happened to him in the Ospedale Maggiore in Milano: "That was where the liaison colonel came to visit me. That was funny. . . . I was all bandaged up. But they told him about it. Then he made a wonderful speech. . . . He never laughed. He was putting himself in my place, I guess. 'Che mala fortuna!'85 For the signifi-

83 Ibid., pp. 25-27.
84 Death in the Afternoon, p. 7.
85 The Sun Also Rises, p. 31.
cance of Jake's calling the incident funny, yet the colonel's putting himself in Jake's place, not laughing, and exclaiming "Che mala fortuna," one must return to Hemingway's explanation of the bullfight as comic-tragedy in *Death in the Afternoon*. He explains the mistake of non-africanados: "If they sincerely identify themselves with animals they will suffer terribly, more so perhaps than the horse."86

Jake's pretentiousness is shown explicitly in a conversation he has with Count Mippipopolous. The Count, speaking of his wounds, is trying to explain his values to Brett and Jake: "You see, Mr. Barnes," he says, "it is because I have lived very much that now I can enjoy everything so well. Don't you find it like that?" Jake answers, "Yes. Absolutely." He cannot admit to the count that his "visceral accident" has left him only a shadow of what he was. But he knows, and his answer is laced with irony.

Analyzing the structure of the novel in the light of the ritualistic form of the bullfight sheds a great deal of illumination on the tragicomic form as Hemingway describes it in *Death in the Afternoon*. But the religious motif in the story also brightens some corners otherwise left dark. When Hemingway calls his work a tragedy with the earth abiding forever as hero, he sounds overtones of the Cruci-

86 *Death in the Afternoon*, p. 9.
fixion motif. For in a tragedy the hero does not abide forever, or, to state it conversely, if the hero abides forever, the product cannot be called tragic. The paradox may be reconciled by a hero that is destroyed, to meet the requirements of tragedy, and then resurrected, to conform to Hemingway's idea of a tragedy with the hero abiding forever. Such a requirement finds a prototype, obviously, in the Christian Crucifixion theme. Of course it is not the earth itself that can be destroyed, but a symbol of the earth. Hemingway's symbol is the bull. His destruction is the destruction of natural nobility and is therefore tragic. He is the key to the paradox of a tragedy with an eternal hero.

The name of Pedro (Pedro is Spanish for "Peter" or "rock") Romero has symbolic significance in the Christian motif. Like his namesake, Romero is the high priest who reproduces the ritual again and again for the enlightenment of his followers. His regular reconstruction of the basic elements of the Crucifixion has a sanative effect on those who are believers or, in the idiom of the novel, aficionados. Jake's feelings after watching Romero perform are something like his feelings after attending religious services, as he does several times during the San Fermin fiesta. Romero's role is mainly in the tragic part of the tragicomedy. Hemingway found, like the writers of the early English mystery plays, that revered persons and comedy do not mix easily.
Most of the comic parts of the novel are produced by the lost and non-aficionados. Or, to find analogies in the American tradition, Romero's role is like the frontiersman's. He exists amid primitive unforgiving surroundings. The non-aficionados, like complacent more highly civilized Easterners, are objects of ridicule on the frontier.

The difference between the feelings of the aficionado and one who is not an aficionado is demonstrated by the waiter who serves Jake breakfast after the running of the bulls. Jake explains to him that one man was gored by a bull. The waiter is bitterly ironic: "Badly cogido... All for sport. All for pleasure... A big horn wound. All for fun... Fun you understand." "You're not an aficionado?" Jake asks him. "Me? What are bulls? Animals. Brute animals," he replies. The waiter has spent his life near the primitive sport. He views animals in a way similar to the way Sut does in "Sut Lovingood's Love Feast of the Varmints." All religious significance is lost on the "unconverted" waiter. To him the affair is completely senseless, for he is not, as Brett phrases it earlier, "one of us" as the Count is. The wounds he has received from life have not made him search for values, as Brett, Jake, and the Count. His words are merely humorous.

When the story is read with the Crucifixion motif in

87 The Sun Also Rises, p. 197.
mind, meaning is given to another incident that is often ignored in critical discussions. Earl Rovit points out that Bill Gorton is deficient in human sympathies. His reaction to Jake's statement that someone was killed by the bull, the only "event of absolute human importance in the entire novel," is merely "was there?" But the failure of Bill and Mike to belong to those who understand the code is most dramatically presented in a scene that suggests the morally unsatisfactory position of the two. After Jake has told Montoya not to give the American ambassador's note to Romero, he goes to find Mike and Bill eating dinner. Bill is having Mike's boots shined for the twelfth time. According to a symbolic reading, the earth, the hero of the story, is being sacrificed in the form of its product, the Spanish bull; and those who have come to the fiesta excited and happy at the prospect of seeing the execution occur, as Bill and Mike, have stirred the Spanish earth into mud that Bill is going to preposterous lengths to have removed from his friend's boots. The passage suggests the washing of the victim's blood off the hands of the guilty. It is reminiscent of Pilate's washing his hands before the Crucifixion and Lady Macbeth's actions after her murder of Duncan.

Bill's moral position rather deteriorates in the
course of the narrative. He is caught in the tension between spectator-tourist on one hand and aficionado-native on the other. In Vienna, he tells us, he saved a Negro from a hostile crowd of spectators. In that early episode he is an aficionado of the sport of boxing and speaks with authority. Just after his experience in Vienna he returns to Paris and is soon involved in his hilarious monologue about stuffed animals. He proposes to send Mike and Brett "a couple of stuffed race-horses." The burlesque role and anti-heroic role of the "stuffed" horse in the bullfight has already been discussed. "Always been a great lover of stuffed animals," Bill says. This humorous speech identifies him with the anti-heroes. It is consistent with his unconcern with death during the running of the bulls and his compulsion to clean the mud of Spain, the symbol of their guilt, from Mike's shoes.

The tourist-aficionado antithesis appears in The Sun Also Rises when Jake meets an American family of tourists on the way to Biarritz while he is on the train from Paris to Bayonne. "You both going to Biarritz?" asks the man.

---

89 The Sun Also Rises, p. 76.

90 Death in the Afternoon, p. 92. Hemingway explains to the Old Lady that the picador's horse sometimes has sawdust placed in it "by a kindly veterinarian to fill the void created by the loss of other organs."

91 The Sun Also Rises, p. 73.
"No. We're going fishing in Spain," Jake answers. "Well, I never cared for it, myself. There's plenty that do out where I come from though. We got some of the best fishing in the state of Montana,"\(^ {92}\) the man replies. Hemingway's fondness for the state of Montana is well known; he compared the Spanish countryside to that of Montana, a state which, in fact, bears a Spanish name. Ironically the American tourist has left the sanative influence of his own country to become a tourist in Spain, not a fisherman like Jake. He is clearly no aficionado. Instead he and his family are comic.

The position of Brett in the moral scheme is somewhat ambiguous. She recognizes the Count as "one of us," and she recognizes the worthwhile traits in Jake and Pedro Romero. Jake, however, identifies her as a drunk who twice married someone she did not love. After a brief affair with Cohn, she is living with Mike, whom she plans to marry. Carlos Baker remarks that Brett is a "witch"; her "witchhood is signified by her not understanding the language of the Church and not being allowed to enter the chapel. Instead, he explains, the pagan dancers dance around her as their image. Hemingway suggests that she does not know the spirit of bullfight aficionados: "The bull who killed Vicente Girones was named Bocenegra . . . and was killed by

\(^ {92}\)Ibid., p. 86.
Pedro Romero. . . . His ear was cut by popular acclamation and given to Pedro Romero, who, in turn, gave it to Brett, who wrapped it in a handkerchief belonging to myself, and left both ear and handkerchief, along with a number of Muratti cigarette-stubs, shoved far back in the drawer of the bed-table that stood beside her bed in the hotel Montoya, in Pamplona. "93 The gift of the ear, part of the body of the bull, suggests the Eucharist, but Brett does not belong in the communion of aficionados. Hemingway's description of the incongruent mixture of items in Brett's bed table is humorous; in a similar way Pope's description of Belinda's dressing table, with its ironic juxtaposition of "Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billets-doux," in "The Rape of the Lock" is humorous.

One of the most disputed parts of the novel is its ambiguous ending. Nearly everyone agrees that Romero is not among the lost. He comes rather close to being one of them, however, for he is seduced by Brett, who is once called Circe, the goddess who "turns men into swine." And he is the destroyer of the bull, the symbol of the earth. But his actions are attempts to save Brett. Pedro's saving Brett would be, on the surface, to "make her more womanly," as Brett says he wants to do. But the deeper, religious effect would be to remove her from her place among the lost

---

93 Ibid., p. 199.
generation.

However, Pedro is sent away, and Brett turns to Jake for aid. Jake's willingness to embroil himself again, or rather to remain embroiled, in the morass of despair and futility indicates that he is himself one of the lost. Rovit's interpretation of the symbol of the mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic is too optimistic. The officer's stopping the taxi with Jake and Brett indicates, says Rovit, Jake's newly established control over himself. But it is not Jake who stops the taxi. It is the decision of the officer and the action of the driver. The ride begins when Jake says, "Want to go for a ride? . . . Want to ride through the town?" Brett replies, "Right. . . . I haven't seen Madrid. I should see Madrid." Consequently, Brett and Jake become tourists. Since the officer stops them only momentarily, when he lowers his baton, as he will in a matter of seconds, the pair will continue on their way as tourists, loving each other as before. The only difference, the thing indicated by the officer, is that now Jake knows he is damned. The subtle suggestion in Hemingway's indicating that the officer is in khaki should not be wasted: etymologically khaki is from the Persian khāk, meaning "dust or earth." Thus Jake is reminded briefly of what he is doing. And, because he has thought much about

---

Ibid., p. 246.
it before, a brief reminder is enough. Like Oedipus, who
knows he is a victim of fate, he cannot change his role now,
just as he could not refuse to go to Madrid when Brett's
telegram came.

Jake's enlightened acceptance of his damnation is
ironic indeed. He is pitied because he can look forward to
nothing better than the hell he has just survived. But the
pity he evokes is limited because his choice is made after
he has become thoroughly enlightened about himself and
Brett. The ambiguous issue of the novel is, therefore,
neither comic nor tragic. It is tragicomic in its ambi-
valence.
CHAPTER III

RESURGENCE OF PESSIMISM:

MEN WITHOUT WOMEN AND A FAREWELL TO ARMS

If the bitterness in Hemingway's early works was alleviated in The Torrents of Spring and in The Sun Also Rises, both published in 1926, the possibility that Hemingway might become a humorist was deeply affected by two notable reversals of the fortunes of his own life. One was his separation from Hadley Richardson in September, 1926, and his subsequent divorce from her on March 11, 1927. The other reversal was Clarence Hemingway's suicide on December 6, 1928. This chapter will examine the resurgence of pessimism in Men Without Women, published on October 14, 1927, and A Farewell to Arms, published on September 27, 1929, and trace its relationship to Hemingway's personal life.

A. MEN WITHOUT WOMEN

One of the most informative stories in Men Without Women is "Banal Story," first published in the Little Review of spring and summer 1926. The same kind of inane rhetorical questions and allusions that Hemingway uses in
his parody of Anderson are used for satirical purposes in "Banal Story." Note the satirical reference to George Bernard Shaw, employed to epitomize all writers: "Are you a girl of eighteen? Take the case of Joan of Arc. Take the case of Bernard Shaw. Take the case of Betsy Ross." The tension of the story is developed between the life of writing and the life of action. The writer is obviously dissatisfied with his life and champs at the bits when he compares writing to bullfighting. The protagonist of the story appears to be enjoying life by doing nothing. "And meanwhile, stretched flat on the bed in a darkened room in his house in Triana, Manuel Garcia Maera lay with a tube in each lung, drowning with the pneumonia. All the papers in Andalucia devoted special supplements to his death." Obviously the writer prefers Maera's life to his own. But there is a morbidity in the story because the protagonist seems, at first, to prefer even Maera's death to his own life. The story ends, "After the funeral every one sat in the cafés out of the rain, and many colored pictures of Maera were sold to men who rolled them up and put them away in their pockets." In the end the tension between writing and a life of action is resolved, because Maera, the man of

---

1 Taken from The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 361.
2 Ibid., p. 361. 3 Ibid., p. 362.
action is dead and exists no more except as he is preserved by the artist. Although he may have been more important, or more of a man when he lived than the writer, he lives now only in his pictures, and his pictures mean enough to real men who sit drinking in the cafes that they buy them and keep them. Those pictures are the writer's raison d'être, for he is a maker of pictures.

"Banal Story" was probably written after The Torrents of Spring, which, Baker tells us, was written after The Sun Also Rises. Consequently it serves both as an index to Hemingway's themes (mentioning Paris, boxing, writing, Canada, art, codes of conduct, bullfighting, Andalucia) and a coda of his published works. Our principal interest in it now is for what it tells us about the author's humor. The protagonist of the story reads in The Forum:

You will enjoy these warm, homespun American tales, bits of real life on the open ranch, in crowded tenement or comfortable home, and all with the healthy undercurrent of humor.

I must read them, he thought. The protagonist's comment suggests that the author thinks that humor contains some special benefit for those near despair as he is. The attitude expressed in the story,

---


5The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 360.
though introspective and anxious, is not as dark as that of some of the stories collected in *Men Without Women* which were written later, probably because Hadley did not leave Hemingway until the fall following the story's publication.

The primary theme of the stories in *Men Without Women* is love, either normal or abnormal. Eleven of the stories touch directly or indirectly upon some form of love. Three which centered on the theme of marriage, all published before they were collected in the book, are "In Another Country," "A Canary for One," and "An Alpine Idyll." The fact that Hadley Richardson secured her divorce from Hemingway before any of these were published is enlightening, for all are pessimistic about the prospects of domestic happiness. The most despairing of the three stories is "In Another Country." In it a courageous major has lost his beloved wife by death and vows bitterly that no man should take a wife, or anything else that he can lose.

Again as in "Banal Story," the narrator's chief concern is that he is not the man, or "hawk," that, in this case, the major is. Hemingway at this time was suffering the loss of a wife, as the major was, and was quite likely suffering from the same feelings of anxiety as the protagonist.  

---

A much more ironic, and probably more personal story, is "A Canary for One," for it describes an American husband (the narrator) and his wife coming back to Paris to set up separate residences. An older American lady on the same train is bringing a canary to her daughter in compensation for a foreigner the daughter has not been allowed to marry. The story is so bitterly satirical that it is almost gloating over the American matron's imbecility. She is insconsiderate of her traveling companions, insensitive generally, somewhat deaf, full of faulty judgements about the American couple, and very bigoted in her conviction of the superiority of Americans.

"An Alpine Idyll" is the very ironic title of a study in the grotesque. The "idyll" is a story of a Swiss peasant who hung his lantern from the mouth of his wife's frozen corpse so that he might have light to see to cut wood. The result is that the wife's mouth is frozen open in the position in which the lantern forced it. Ironically the narrator hears the story just as he is preparing to eat. The peasant says that he loved his wife, but, as the inn-keeper says, "These peasants are beasts." The grotesque details of the burying are reminiscent of George Washington Harris' "Mrs. Yardley's Quilting," in which Sut says he has

---


7 The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 349.
been "Helpin tu salt ole Missis Yardley down. . . . Fixin her fur rotten cumfurtably, kiverin her up wif sile, tu keep the buzzards from cheatin the wurms." In Another Country," "A Canary for One," and "An Alpine Idyll" are all concerned with legally and religiously sanctioned love. In them the complacent illusions that govern the depiction of marriage in genteel literature, thus the hollowness of the cherished institution, stand revealed; and a deep kind of despair is suggested, for what could be more bitter than the knowledge that the only accepted way of love does not work?

Along with the examination of sanctioned love, Hem­
ingway explores illicit and abnormal love in four stories of Men Without Women. In "Hills Like White Elephants" an American is seeing his girl friend off on the train to get an abortion. "Che Ti Dice La Patria?" shows Italy with Fascists running it. Houses of prostitution have been le­gally forbidden, so they flourish as "restaurants." Homo­sexuality is the theme of "A Simple Inquiry," in which an Italian major propositions his orderly but has his hopes frustrated. William Campbell, in "A Pursuit Race," goes on a narcotic binge and discovers that he has fetishistic in­clinations toward his sheet. These four stories seem to be a rather systematic exploration of socially unacceptable

---

8Humor of the Old Southwest, p. 180.
modes of love, and tend in *Men Without Women* to deepen the despair at the failure of sanctioned love depicted in "An Alpine Idyll," "A Canary for One," and "In Another Country." A comment by Nelson Algren about "A Pursuit Race" is applicable to all the previously discussed stories of *Men Without Women*. Algren says, "It was not a story about an untouchable, but about an unreachable. Taken in the context of Hemingway's work, the affliction for which no one had a cure was spiritual isolation."\(^9\)

In view of the pessimistic view of marriage expressed in the stories in *Men Without Women*, the praise of marriage in the last story, "Now I Lay Me," is especially ironic. The protagonist, an American "Tenente," is wounded and in an Italian hospital. He suffers from insomnia and is advised by his Italian-American ward mate to get married. "I can't talk the language well enough,"\(^10\) is the lieutenant's reply. The answer reminds one of Brett in Pamplona when Jake discourages her from going to church because she can't talk the language; Baker's opinion is that Jake means especially the language of Christian love. In "Now I Lay Me," we may assume that it is really the language of married love that the young lieutenant is afraid he will perform.

---


\(^10\)The *Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, p. 370.
inadequately in, for, as his practical-minded ward mate says, "You don't have to talk to them. Marry them." The last sentence in the story, and therefore in the book, is, "He was going to America and he was very certain about marriage and knew it would fix up everything." Considering both Hemingway's personal experience and the other stories of the collection, we see that Hemingway is using climax to emphasize his ironic view of marriage, which is a basic attitude of *Men Without Women*.

Enlightenment for *Men Without Women* comes from other publications by Hemingway during the time the stories were being written. The depth of Hemingway's despair in the midst of his problems which occur shortly after his second divorce seems to drive him to thoughts of suicide. "Neothomist Poem," published in *Exile* in the spring issue before the poet's marriage to Pauline Pfeiffer in the summer illustrates his despair. The poem has only two lines:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want him for long.

---

11Ibid., p. 370.  
12Ibid., p. 371.

13I hope I do not belabor the point that divorces were defeats for Hemingway. The reasonableness of assuming that they were is supported by the testimony of Malcolm Cowley, who knew him during the Paris years; his brother Leicester Hemingway; and A. E. Hotchner. See footnote six of this Chapter.

14Quoted from Young, *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration*, p. 176.
There seem to be at least three implications in the poem. First, because of the breaking of the line after not, one may infer that the poet sees his "Lord" as a repressive God of negative commandments. Thus the second line seems to be the poet's rejection of his Lord, perhaps because he is so negative. However, the poet does not say that he does not need his God at the present; it is quite the opposite. He says that he does have Him as his shepherd, but that at some time, not far in the future, he will no longer need him. Does the poet expect death and believe he will not be acceptable to God afterwards—as he might feel if he were contemplating suicide? The poem has an ironic twist because the word want may be read as "lack." To support this implication, we know that Hemingway adopted the Catholic faith when he married Pauline a few weeks after the publication of the poem. The tragicomic view of life that Hemingway had could, of course, reconcile the irony of both meanings. It is a point of view that may be strongly related to Hemingway's humor. Ironically the poet must live with the God he scorns.

B. A FAREWELL TO ARMS

There is little doubt that A Farewell to Arms is, to use Baker's phrase, a study in doom.¹⁵ It includes a dan-

¹⁵Hemingway, The Writer as Artist, p. 94.
gerous wounding of the hero, his retreat (if not a cowardly act, certainly not a courageous one), his becoming a fugitive from a country he has some affection for, and loss of his lover Catherine. Henry's philosophical musings indicate the sense of doom which pervades the novel. He says:

If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterwards many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure that it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry.  

A Farewell to Arms was written in reaction to the same events that seem to have inspired Men Without Women, especially Hemingway's rejection by Agnes H. von Kurowski, and his divorce from Hadley Richardson Hemingway. Young says the novel grew out of two stories in In Our Time, "the human arms" from "A Very Short Story" and the arms of war from Chapter VI, "Nick sat against the wall. . . ." The despair in "A Very Short Story," says Young, may be traced back to Agnes H. von Kurowski, Hemingway's nurse during his hospitalization in World War I, whom Hemingway intended to marry until she disappointed him by choosing an Italian officer instead of him. Young points out the irony in the title, A Farewell to Arms, which is taken from George Peele's poem, "A Farewell to Arms." The poet laments that

he is growing too old to fight and must turn to religion instead.\(^{17}\) There is no doubt that during the period of the novel's composition Hemingway did a great deal of thinking about the related subjects of Agnes Kurowski, Hadley Richardson, and the wounds he received in World War I. Also, we must remember, Hemingway was actively revising the book for nearly six months after his father's suicide. \textit{A Farewell to Arms} was surely partly an attempt to exorcise these bitter memories. Exorcism by writing is the theme in "Fathers and Sons." Note the description of Nick Adams's thoughts about writing: "Now knowing how it had all been, even remembering the earliest times before things had gone badly was not good remembering. If he wrote it he could get rid of it. He had gotten rid of many things by writing them."\(^{18}\)

A rationale of humor is set forth, partially at least, in \textit{A Farewell to Arms} in two interviews Lieutenant Henry has in the field hospital before he leaves for Milan. The first is with Rinaldi, who tells him, "I wish you were back. No one to come in at night from adventures. No one to make fun of. No one to lend me money. No blood brother and roommate."\(^{19}\) The second is with the priest. Henry

\(^{17}\textit{Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 88.}\)

\(^{18}\textit{The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 491.}\)

\(^{19}\textit{A Farewell to Arms, p. 65.}\)
asks him how things are at the mess, "He smiled. 'I am still a great joke,' he sounded tired too. 'Thank God they are all well.'" Later the priest talks of living in the mountainous Abruzzi: there he will be respected, for, as he says, "there in my country it is understood that a man may love God. It is not a dirty joke." Obviously the attitudes that Rinaldi and the priest take toward the joke are quite different. Rinaldi, the amoral man of science, a physician, is a great joker, who, when Henry is no longer near to be the butt of his good-humored ridicule, misses him as if he were a "blood brother." The priest, however, does not indulge in the humorous play. He is tired and longs for a place where he is respected and the love of God is not a dirty joke. Despite his profession, he does not seem to feel blood brotherhood as Rinaldi does. It is ironic (note the relationship to "Neothomist Poem") that humor is a better cement of brotherly love than religion is. Rinaldi, because of his jokes, is closer to his fellow man than the dignified priest, who longs to escape from the jokes to his rural Abruzzi, where flute playing is forbidden at night because it might disturb the young ladies. In these conversations the joke is associated with freedom from repressive laws and with extroverted activities. The anti-joke is associated with religion, tiredness, and re-

20 Ibid., pp. 69 and 71.
pression. A man can reveal more intimate thoughts while he jokes with his "blood brother" than he can while talking to the man of God, who seems worn out by the proliferation of the ironies of life during war.

Humor in *A Farewell to Arms* helps in overcoming a major esthetic problem of the novel, that of combining the themes of war and love in a believable way. Hemingway begins in the first chapter, through the comparatively subtle means of a simile, imagery and humor, to prepare for the juxtaposition of these two themes later. In describing the soldiers marching past the house in the village, he says:

There were mists over the river and clouds on the mountains and the trucks splashed mud on the road and the troops were muddy and wet in their capes; their rifles were wet and under their capes the two leather cartridge boxes on the front of the belts . . . bulged forward under the capes so that men, passing on the road, marched as though they were six months gone with child.

The symbolic importance of the rain has been commented on frequently, but the irony of the soldiers looking as though they are six months gone with child, which has been ignored, is of more thematic significance. Combat, love, and pregnancy, such disparate subjects, are brought into relationship first humorously preparing the approach of their serious juxtaposition.

It seems that at the time of writing *A Farewell to Arms* to

---

Arms, Hemingway was still turning over in his mind some of the same themes that absorbed him in *Men Without Women*, the themes of variant forms of sexual accommodation. In Book I of the five books of *A Farewell to Arms*, several variant forms are the subject of laughter. Henry is not inclined toward sexual perversion, but he does frequent the prostitutes' quarters and is philandering when he meets Catherine. By the end of Book I his love of Catherine has deepened and absorbs all his libidinous energies. The artistic problem of Hemingway is how to show the importance of normal love without writing a disquisition instead of a novel. A serious examination of five kinds of love would reduce the aesthetic quality in a way that a humorous survey does not.

In Chapter II Henry sits with a captain friend looking out the window of a bawdy house when the priest comes by: "My friend saw the priest from our mess going by in the street, walking carefully in the slush, and pounded on the window to attract his attention. The priest looked up. . . . My friend motioned for him to come in. The priest shook his head and went on."22 That night at mess the captain baits the priest. He says, "Priest to-day with girls." When the priest smiles and shakes his head, the captain continues, "Not true? . . . Priest not with girls. . . . Priest never with girls. . . . Priest every night five against one."23

---

The joke makes everyone at the table laugh. The joking continues until the priest says to Henry, regarding Henry's approaching leave, "I would like you to go to Abruzzi... There is good hunting. You would like the people and though it is cold it is clear and dry. You could stay with my family. My father is a famous hunter." The captain interrupts with, "Come on... We go whorehouse before it shuts." 24

In these scenes with the priest, we see that the priest is, as we would expect, an enemy of prostitution. Symbolically he is grouped with the mountains. Baker has shown the mountains to be associated with home, peace, quiet, love. 25 In the mind of Henry's messmates, the priest is also associated with masturbation. The association is not an isolated one for Hemingway; in the poem, "The Earnest Liberal's Lament," the first line is, "I know monks masturbate at night." 26 When Henry leaves the priest to go with the captain to the whorehouse, celibacy and masturbation are refused as sexual alternatives. He embraces the same arms as his military comrades.

But as the action progresses, Henry rejects military arms. The most succinct illustration of his disillusion-

24 Ibid., p. 9.
26 Querschnitt, 4 (Autumn, 1924), 231.
ment occurs in the humorous passage with Ettore Moretti, a much-decorated Italian from San Francisco in the Italian army. The portrait of Ettore has remarkable likenesses to the Miles Gloriosus figures of Roman and Renaissance English drama. He talks of his wounds, his killings, his medals, his ability to command, and his assurance that he will be a colonel before the war is over. He even takes a grotesque pride in the fact that stinking bones work out of his wounded foot. He is slightly dull witted. He solemnly explains silly superstitions as if they were complex and respected customs:

"'I'll be a colonel before the war's over,' Ettore said.

"'If they don't kill you.'

"'They won't kill me.' He touched the stars at his collar with his thumb and forefinger. 'See me do that? We always touch our stars if anybody mentions getting killed.'"27

Catherine cannot stand him because he bores her, and Henry admits he is a bore. Ettore is a comic fool and a braggart soldier, but he is not a true Miles Gloriosus, for he is a legitimate hero who has earned his medals and three wound stripes. Also he is, as he states, "no boozer and whorehound." Otherwise he is true to the Renaissance concept of the braggart soldier. Ettore is a foil to Henry because he returns eagerly to the war, unlike Henry who soon makes his

27 _A Farewell to Arms_, p. 123.
private peace. But in the foolish picture of military competence that Ettore presents, Hemingway is preparing the rationale for Henry's defection later.

The withdrawal of Henry from personal involvement in the war that Ettore's portrait prepares for gets under way in the retreat from Caporetto. Again Hemingway uses humor to suggest first what will later become serious. The beginning of the retreat is marked by Henry's irony: "We'll have a good trip," he says. "We'll have a hell of a trip," Bonello answers. Henry's answer is, "That's what I mean." The humorous exchanges between Bonello and Henry during the retreat are significantly concerned with dislocation in love or in war. It is here that Henry's farewell to both kinds of arms begins, but we see the alienation begin in minor comic characters:

"To-morrow we'll sleep in the king's bed," Bonello said. He was feeling very good.

"To-morrow maybe we'll sleep in—," Piani said.

"I'll sleep with the queen," Bonello said. He looked to see how I took the joke.

"You'll sleep with—," Piani said sleepily.

"That's treason, Tenente," Bonello said. "Isn't that treason?"

The crime would not be treason, as Bonello thinks, unless the king be taken as a metonym for the state. The real

---

28 Ibid., p. 188. 29 Ibid., p. 192.
disruption, however, would be in the area of love, a theme of only secondary importance during the Caporetto retreat.

Military usurpation is suggested when Bonello asks to be allowed to kill the sergeant that Henry has shot: "'Let me finish him,' he said." When Bonello finishes, he gloats: "'The son of a bitch,' he said. He looked toward the sergeant. 'You see me shoot him, Tenente?'" The importance of the incident is emphasized when Hemingway returns to the topic only three pages later:

"You certainly shot that sergeant, Tenente," Piani said. We were walking fast.

"I killed him," Bonello said. "I never killed anybody in this war, and all my life I've wanted to kill a sergeant."

"You killed him on the sit all right," Piani said. "He wasn't flying very fast when you killed him."

"Never mind. That's one thing I can always remember. I killed that--of a sergeant."

"What will you say in confession?" Aymo asked.

"I'll say, 'Bless me, father, I killed a sergeant." They all laughed.

Bonello's "confession" would be an insult to a priest and, indirectly, to the church, just as his proposal to sleep with the queen is an assault upon the state; "treason" is Bonello's word. With the end of this humorous episode Hemingway succeeds in making the point that neither cate-

---

30 Ibid., p. 204. 31 Ibid., p. 192.
gory of the love-war theme is perfectly comfortable for his hero.

Humorous passages that appear isolated at first are used as unifying elements of the story, binding together even the random comments of the beginning and end. For example, a satirical thrust is made at King Vittorio Emanuele who rode among the troops in one of the cars that "splashed more mud than the camions even and if one of the officers in the back was very small and sitting between two generals, he himself so small that you could not see his face but only the top of his cap and his narrow back, and if the car went very fast it was probably the king."\(^{32}\) Later Henry comments on his "little long necked body and gray beard like a goat's chin tuft; all these with the sudden interiors of houses that had lost a wall through shelling. . . ."\(^{33}\) The diminutive king with his goatee is especially incongruent among the soldiers, but he is often seen there, the figurehead of the state, and, with his beard, the classic father image. The role of fatherhood repeatedly causes rebelliousness in Hemingway. Gertrude Stein describes his reaction to Hadley's first pregnancy in Paris:

He and his wife went away on a trip and shortly after Hemingway turned up alone. He came to the house about ten o'clock in the morning and he

\(^{32}\)Ibid., p. 4.  \(^{33}\)Ibid., p. 6.
stayed, he stayed for lunch, he stayed all afternoon, he stayed for dinner and he stayed until about ten o'clock at night and then all of a sudden he announced that his wife was enceinte and then with great bitterness, and I, I am too young to be a father. We consoled him as best we could and sent him back on his way.34

This disappointment at his approaching fatherhood gave Hemingway part of the background for "Cross-Country Snow."

Patricide is a theme in "Fathers and Sons."

Significantly, it is when Henry is no longer fighting for the king that the beard appears again; this time the beard is on Henry. Catherine, whom Baker calls a symbol of home, comes to Henry's room and lets him let her hair down until it covers both of them. Henry says,"... it was the feeling of inside a tent. ..." Henry tells her that her face is "Smooth as piano keys," and she returns with the witticism about his chin, "Smooth as emery paper and very hard on piano keys." When Henry wants to know if his chin is rough, she says, "No, darling. I was just making fun of you."35 The statement is ambiguous. We do not know whether Catherine "makes fun of" Henry because he does not have a beard or because he is not accepting the father role. Henry's domestic uncertainty is consistent with the position he is in. He is in a military hospital; and yet


35 A Farewell to Arms, p. 114.
physically he is divided between military duty, which makes him entirely dependent on the will of others, and the obligation to a home, where he may head his own household.

Once Catherine and Henry have escaped to Switzerland and Catherine's pregnancy becomes apparent, the humorous motif of the beard appears again. Catherine asks Henry to grow a beard because, she says, "I'd like to see you with a beard." "All right," Henry replies. "I'll grow one. I'll start now this minute. It's a good idea. It will give me something to do." It is only after Henry has assumed full responsibility for Catherine and after she is visibly pregnant that he is ready for the beard, the symbol of his domesticity and the "putting on" of Catherine's arms.

But in skillful counterpoint to Henry's increasing domesticity suggested by the beard is the creature symbolism in the narrative, given a humorous context. The use of the goat, dog, turkey and ants reflects accurately Henry's progressive alienation from Catherine and from joy in life. The goat symbol, as we already have seen, occurs in the description of the bearded king, who stands for both political order and domesticity. By contrast, Henry is compared to the dog. Rinaldi tells him that he has "that pleasant air of a dog in heat," after he returns from a visit to see Catherine early in the story and then tells him,

36 Ibid., p. 298.
"Good-night, little puppy." The attitudes of both promiscuity and inexperience are suggested by dog and puppy, and, at this point, both are correct, for Henry has not formed any deep attachments yet for Catherine.

When Hemingway himself was wounded, as we saw in Chapter I, he joked with his doctors about not letting the enemy "capture our goats." When Henry is in the hospital, Rinaldi and the major come to see him. The United States had declared war on Germany, but not Austria. Henry describes his visitors:

The Italians were sure America would declare war on Austria too and they were very excited about any Americans coming down, even the Red Cross. They asked me if I thought President Wilson would declare war on Austria and I said it was only a matter of days. I did not know what we had against Austria but it seemed logical that they should declare war on her if they did on Germany. They asked me if we would declare war on Turkey. I said that was doubtful. Turkey, I said, was our national bird but the joke translated so badly... that I said yes, we would probably declare war on Turkey. This joke does not add to the thematic purpose, but it appears to prove that the author had carried the goat-turkey translation joke for ten years and thought that it was too good to waste. In the narrative it seems useful only as comic relief between the incidents of Henry's wounding and the retreat from Caporetto.

Near the end of the novel, while Catherine is in

37 Ibid., p. 27. 38 Ibid., p. 75.
protracted labor in the hospital, Henry leaves the hospital to get breakfast. On the way back he sees a dog:

"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 anything 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. 39

Once Rinaldi has said Henry is like a dog in heat; now Henry will soon discover that, like the dog at the can, there is nothing for him. He must say farewell to the arms of Catherine just as he has said farewell to Italy. Consequently he ends up in a no man's land between the primitive combat of war and domestic bliss with Catherine.

It may be said that this is the greatest defeat that a major Hemingway hero endures, for Henry does not go down fighting. Instead he is, in a manner of speaking, caught by fate and punished while he is in the process of running from a fight. And he is doubly defeated on the fields of love and of battle. It may be that it is through no fault of his own that Henry loses Catherine, but through the impersonal whim of nature, the universe, or God. Nevertheless the pain is not decreased for Henry. It may even be more painful; Thomas Hardy believed pain to be greater when not even a vengeful god had desired it. Hemingway uses his

39 Ibid., p. 315.
last animal imagery in *A Farewell to Arms* in the very ironic description of Henry's remembrance of a time when he saw ants on a log burning in a campfire. He had tossed water from a cup onto the log so that the cup would be empty for whiskey. "I think the cup of water on the burning log only steamed the ants," he said. Henry's actions have not caused Catherine's death; it may be attributed to God's whimsy.

In the three years from Hadley's divorce in 1927, through Clarence Hemingway's suicide in 1928, and Ernest Hemingway's automobile accident in Montana in 1930, Hemingway returned more or less to the pessimism he had transcended during 1926. For nearly ten years he lived in a kind of emotional stalemate through *Death in the Afternoon*, *Winner Take Nothing*, and *Green Hills of Africa*.

CHAPTER IV

THE HUMOR OF THE MACABRE AND OF GLOATING

The major inspiration of Hemingway's next three works—Death in the Afternoon (1932), Winner Take Nothing (1933), and Green Hills of Africa (1935)—derives from his obsession with death. He does not escape from this obsession until the social themes of To Have and Have Not appear in 1937. In this period the humor of the macabre and gloating predominate. The first work of the period, Death in the Afternoon, is mainly a study in the macabre. Death is treated as a familiar and almost desirable companion. In the third work, Green Hills of Africa, although death is still the center of attention, the point of view is that of the humor of gloating. Our main concern will be Death in the Afternoon and Green Hills of Africa, but some attention will be given to the humor of the macabre and of gloating in Winner Take Nothing and in the articles Hemingway wrote for Esquire.
A. DEATH IN THE AFTERNOON

Hemingway's most ambitious undertaking in the humor of gloating and the macabre is Death in the Afternoon. At the beginning of the book he states "The only place where you could see life and death, i.e. violent death now that the wars were 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." Hemingway says that he wants to state "the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which make the emotion" so that it would be valid always.¹

Early in the book (pp. 19-20), Hemingway is explicit about suicide as the particular kind of "real thing" he is concerned with. He describes the indignation of Madrid aficionados at matador Hernandoarena who has foolishly allowed himself to be gored when he should not have been in the ring. His ignorance and lack of good physical condition made his efforts suicidal, Hemingway says:

For myself, not being a bullfighter, and being much interested in suicides, the problem was one of depiction and waking in the night I tried to remember what it was that seemed just out of my remembering and that was the thing that I had really seen and, finally, remembering all around it, I got it. When he stood up, his face white and dirty and the silk of his breeches opened from waist to knee, it was

¹Death in the Afternoon, p. 2.
the dirtiness of his slit underwear and the clean, clean, unbearably clean whiteness of the thigh bone that I had seen, and it was that which was important.

Hemingway's musings on the exposed whiteness of the thigh bone seem to satisfy a hunger for the knowledge of suicidal death. The whole use of macabre images in *Death in the Afternoon*, in fact, appears to satisfy his craving to embrace death itself. We do see a calming down of the imagery toward the end of the book; tension decreases and death is viewed with more detachment, almost with complacency.

In the first quarter of the book Hemingway shows us how his despair is related to his view of the world. Not only does he feel that he has failed personally, but the age has failed. And it has not merely failed, it has reached its lowest point. He says, "It is the decadence of the modern bull that has made modern bullfighting possible. It is a decadent art in every way and like most decadent things it reaches its fullest flower at its rottenest point, which is the present." For the rot of the present age there is no remedy—or, rather, the remedy is death.

Ah, Madame, you will find no man who is a man who will not bear some marks of past misfortune. Either he has been hit here, or broken this, or contracted that, but a man throws off many things and I know a champion at golf who never putted so well as with the gonorrhea.

...Old lady: Have you no remedy then?

Madame, there is no remedy for anything in life.
Death is a sovereign remedy for all misfortunes. . . .

The mention of the power of the world to break a man reminds us of *A Farewell to Arms*, in which we find another famous statement about the world breaking the courageous and their being strong again at the broken places; the reference to gonorrhea recalls "*A Very Short Story,*" in which we find the hero contracting gonorrhea after his fiancee and former nurse jilts him for an Italian major. Are "the marks of past misfortune" for which "death is a sovereign remedy" still those that Hemingway was trying to exorcise in "*A Very Short Story*" and *A Farewell to Arms*, namely, his failure with Agnes von Kurowski and Hadley Richardson and his near death in the war?

*Death in the Afternoon* frequently pictures in detail the death of the bull. Since readers identify with the matador and not the bull, a gloating tone pervades these depictions. But since the bull occasionally kills the matador, the humor does not consistently reflect the victorious elation of the bullfighter. Hemingway's statement at the opening that death is the subject of his study suggests questions: a study for what purpose? for whose improvement? improvement by what means? Is it that we all must face death and, therefore, should know it better in order to be better prepared for it? The macabre tone, which is

\footnote{Ibid., p. 104.}
antithetical to gloating, is so strong that Philip Young says that the book "finds him [Hemingway] in the depth of his pessimism, which is here, however, a depth lighted by a certain humor."\(^3\)

But Hemingway makes it clear that one must earn his right to laugh at scars, and the only way to earn that right is to acquire the scars first. Thus, in a manner of speaking, there is a macabre apprenticeship served to death before one has the right, or perhaps even the depth, to gloat over others' pains. Hemingway feels that sheltered individuals do not laugh at real calamity. Those who escaped from being Sunday-school teachers to become "rounders," he says, have no future as rounders:

... it is a trial to watch ... them during their discovery of what Guy de Maupassant classed among the diseases of adolescence, and of what, incidentally, to justify his right so to speak, he died of. They say, "He jests at scars who never felt a wound." But he jests very well at scars who is covered with them ... although now our jesters will be most humcrrous about anything which happens to any one else, and the moment they are touched ... cry out, "But you don't understand. This is really serious!" and become great moralists or abandon the whole thing through something as banal as suicide. Probably venereal diseases must exist as bulls must have horns in order to keep all things in their proper relation.

The implication of what Hemingway says is that laughter is a substitute for suicide and a better way of adjusting to

\(^3\)Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 95.

\(^4\)Death in the Afternoon, p. 102.
life than moralism. He even assumes a faith that suggests that all is right with the world, or at least such inevitable dangers as venereal disease and bulls' horns are right. Of course Hemingway, or his hero, is one who has contracted gonorrhea or met the horns of the bull and has triumphed and thereby earned the right to jest.

The triumph that Hemingway speaks of thus is gloating that grows out of the macabre. He implies the aesthetics of gloating when he says that the great killer is a simple man, usually a relatively inarticulate one, who feels a spiritual enjoyment in killing:

Killing cleanly and in a way which gives you aesthetic pleasure and pride has always been one of the greatest enjoyments of the human race. . . . One of its [killing's] greatest pleasures, aside from the purely aesthetic ones, such as wing shooting, . . . is the feeling of rebellion against death which comes from its administering. . . . But when a man is still in rebellion against death he has pleasure in taking to himself one of the God-like attributes; that of giving it.

Thus we find that killing is a "rebellion against death."
The paradox is explicable only by recognizing that the point of view is that of the killer and that he himself fears imminent death. Aesthetically, gloating springs from the macabre as the artist is consciously rebelling against death by learning about it and learning to administer it.

In Death in the Afternoon the note of triumph that gloating humor demands is sounded in various ways. Heming—

---

5Ibid., pp. 232-33.
way emphasizes man's superiority over the beast by detailed insistence on the care the picador must use not to injure the bull.\textsuperscript{6} The author shows, however, that man's greatest gloat is not over the animal's fragility but over the defeat of a courageous bull. It is true that man lords it over the bull's inexperience--bulls of age and fighting experience are not chosen for the ring\textsuperscript{7}--beating him down until, at the end, the bull himself is aware of his defeat before death comes.\textsuperscript{8} But the author shows, nevertheless, that a noble fight or extraordinary difficulty heightens the exhilaration of the conqueror, as, for example, when Maera repeatedly bends his sword until he cries out, "He was made out of cement... F--king bull made out of cement."\textsuperscript{9} He indicates that some amateurs even fight experienced bulls in the capeas in order to show their contempt for death.\textsuperscript{10} Gallo boasts that his only exercise is to smoke Havana cigars, because "the bull takes plenty of exercise... I have now forty years, but every year the bulls are four and a half going on five."\textsuperscript{11} Hemingway heaps honor on Spain for taking "an intelligent interest in death," seeing "it being given, avoided, refused, and ac-

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., p. 155. \textsuperscript{7}Ibid., p. 21.
\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., p. 147. \textsuperscript{9}Ibid., p. 82.
\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., p. 23. \textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 157.
cepted in the afternoon for a nominal price,\textsuperscript{12} while the English kill only for sport and the French for the pot.\textsuperscript{13} "A great killer," he says, "must love to kill; . . . 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. The truly great killer must have a sense of humor and a sense of glory . . . he must take pleasure in it . . . he must have a spiritual enjoyment of the moment of killing."\textsuperscript{14}

The very apex of gloating and the macabre is achieved in the account of the brother and sister who follow for two years a bull that had killed their brother. When he is sent to the slaughter house

"The two gypsies were at the slaughter house and the young man asked permission, since the bull had killed his brother, to kill the bull. This was granted and he started in by digging out both the bull's eyes while the bull was in his cage, and spitting carefully into the sockets, then after killing him by severing the spinal marrow between the neck vertebrae with a dagger, he experienced some difficulty in this, he asks permission to cut off the bull's testicles, which being granted, he and his sister built a small fire at the edge of the dusty street outside the slaughterhouse and roasted the two glands on sticks and when they were done, ate them."\textsuperscript{15}

This kind of killing is not, however, the subject of \textit{Death in the Afternoon}. Hemingway explains that "all amateur or

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 266. \textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 265. \textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 232. \textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 25.
group killing is a very barbarous, messy, though exciting business and is a long way from the ritual of the formal bullfight.\textsuperscript{16} Thus Hemingway says that there is something besides barbarous, messy killing in the book—something is related to ritual.

Hemingway's description of the amateur killing by the gypsy brother and sister occurs near the beginning of the book. Near the end the author identifies a ritual that he often relates to the bullfight. It is the ritual of the Crucifixion. The difference between amateur killing and killing in the bullfights, or in Crucifixion, is explained by Melvin Backman who says, "The matador represents a great force held in check, releasing itself proudly in a controlled yet violent administering of death."\textsuperscript{17} Hemingway, in writing of Greco, Goya, and Velasquez, says, "Goya's crucifixion is a cynically romantic, wooden oleograph that could serve as a poster for the announcement of crucifixions in the manner of bullfight posters. A crucifixion of six carefully selected Christs will take place at five o'clock in the Monumental Golgotha of Madrid, government permission having been obtained. The following well-known, accredited and notable crucifiers will officiate,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{17}Melvin Blackman, "Hemingway: The Matador and the Crucified," \textit{Hemingway and His Critics}, p. 245.
\end{flushright}
each accompanied by his cuadrilla of nailers, hammerers, cross-raisers and spade-men, etc.\textsuperscript{18} During the course of the book then, "barbarous, messy" death has given way to control and to a cynical romanticism, as if the writer himself has, through association with death, gained confidence in his ability to control it. His point of view becomes increasingly that of the ritualized killer, the matador. And the more the author gloats, the more it seems that morbid macabre humor fades into the background.

The most dismal point in Death in the Afternoon occurs midway in the extremely macabre "A Natural History of the Dead," which appeared as a separate story in The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories in 1938. In it Hemingway describes various oppressive scenes. For the third time in his writings, we read of the Greeks at Smyrna breaking the legs of their baggage animals and drowning them in the shallow water. There are descriptions of the munitions factory explosion near Milan and of the dead left by the Austrian offensive of June, 1918. A more macabre passage can hardly be imagined than the one describing how different shades of color in human corpses are an indication of how many days they have been dead. The story is, as the author implies, an ironic antidote for the shallow optimism of Mungo Park.

\textsuperscript{18}Death in the Afternoon, p. 204.
The gloating in *Death in the Afternoon* is not necessarily confined to the theme of death. Hemingway seems to prove the maxim "misery loves company" when he takes pleasure not in death but in the failure of others. His gloating is directed particularly at three classes: unsuccessful lovers, tourists whose sexuality is questionable, and "erectile" writers. His ridicule of these groups affords further proof that the manifestations of despair in his humor bear on his broken engagement and broken marriage. He appears to be amused at the possibility of the readers' lack of amatory success in such a beautiful place as Ronda, Spain. He says:

That is where you should go if you ever go to Spain on a honeymoon or if you ever bolt with any one. The entire town and as far as you can see in any direction is romantic background and there is an hotel there that is so comfortable, so well run and where you eat so well and usually have a cool breeze at night that, with the romantic background and the modern comfort, if a honeymoon or an elopement is not a success in Ronda it would be well to start for Paris and both commence making your own friends.19

Hemingway uses a sexual simile to explain the inability of some tourists to appreciate the austere beauty of the Prado in Madrid, after being corrupted by bad pictures in Italian galleries:

It is as though, after having known of certain things only through reading pornographic literature, the tourist should be introduced to an

---

19 Ibid., pp. 42-43.
attractive woman quite unclothed with no draperies, no concealments and no conversation and only the plainest of beds. He would probably want a book to aid him or at least a few properties or suggestions. 20

Hemingway gloats also at the failure of tourists-writers who fail because of sexual frustrations. One satirical barb is aimed at the author of Virgin Spain. Hemingway says that the author has explained elsewhere that he uses a mystical method to get his inspiration to write; he lies naked at night and God sends him things to write.

Hemingway says:

The whole thing is what . . . I call erectile writing. It is well known, or not known, whichever you prefer, that due to a certain congestion or other, trees for example look different to a man in the portentuous state and a man who is not. All objects look different. . . . Now there has arisen in America a school of writers who . . . had, it would seem, by conserving these congestions, sought to make all objects mystic through the slight distortion of vision that turgidness presents. 21

Hemingway has already explained how gloating springs, for him, out of despair, how it is a rebellion against the death it administers. His satirical gloating over living artists, tourists, and lovers may have an analogous origin. That is, he gloats over those who fail in the same way that he fails, or fears he will fail. We know, too, that he feels that once he writes something he has gotten rid of it as an irritant. Thus Death in the Afternoon rids him of his poisonous feelings toward those like himself who are the

20 Ibid., p. 52. 21 Ibid., p. 53.
unfortunate in love, and rids him, for a period, of his awe of death.

The last chapter of *Death in the Afternoon* is lyrical. It is as if death has become a trusted companion in whose company the author can relax. Killings are sometimes funny, as in the case in the last chapter with "the boy who missed the bull entirely when he went in to kill and missed him again the second time."\(^{22}\) Even in the more macabre sketches there is a soothing quality. Describing an evening at Miro's, Hemingway writes, "In front of the barn a woman held a duck whose throat she had cut and stroked him gently while a little girl held up a cup to catch the blood for making gravy. The duck seemed very contented and when they put him down (the blood all in the cup) he waddled twice and found that he was dead. We ate him later ... with the wine of that year and the year before ... and other years that I lost track of while the long arms of the mechanical fly chaser that wound by clock work went round and round and we talked French. We all knew Spanish better."\(^{23}\)

The passage has a curiously suggestive tone, but the implications are not very easily discernible. Hemingway, however, often clarifies himself in later works and may have done so in this case. In *Green Hills of Africa* there

is a clue in the line "Any one [sic] who knows a foreign language in any country is damned liable to lie to you." Although one must not read something into the lines that is not intended, it seems safe to say that there is a tone of caution discernible. The book that begins as a rather precipitous embracing of the glories of death has mellowed, and the author's attitude has changed. The various vintages of wine and the "clock work" suggest the passage of time, and the passage about the death of the duck seems soothing compared to earlier passages about more violent deaths. Two pages later (on the last page in the book) we find Hemingway declaring "I know things change now and I do not care. It's all been changed for me. Let it all change. We'll all be gone before it's changed too much . . . it makes no difference if the fountains play or not. We will never ride back from Toledo in the dark. . . . The great thing is to last and get your work done. . . ." Philip Young has discussed the suggestion of death in all night journeys. If Hemingway turned to the writing of Death in the Afternoon in despair, his "embracing of death," which constitutes the meaning of macabre, may have spent most of its force in the writing, and his Smith-Corona in its capacity as psychiatrist, as he once designated it, may have

---

25 Death in the Afternoon, p. 278.
performed a life-saving service. Such a service would not be without precedent in American literature. For example, Ishmael, in *Moby Dick* chooses whaling as a "substitute for pistol and ball." And the journey of Huck Finn down the Mississippi may have had, if Young's suggestions are correct, important therapeutic effects on Mark Twain.

B. WINNER TAKE NOTHING

Of the fourteen stories published in *Winner Take Nothing*, there are six that are notable because they mark a change of interests and progression in Hemingway's development. The first story in the collection is "After the Storm," which had been published in *Cosmopolitan* in May, 1932, before publication of *Death in the Afternoon* in September. The story marks Hemingway's interest in a new setting for his fiction, the Gulf Stream. As we will see later, the Stream is used by Hemingway to suggest the primeval and eternal. The narrator-protagonist of the story wins a fight by cutting his opponent seriously, but then he has to flee. He takes to a skiff and discovers the submerged wreckage of a liner. Through a porthole he sees a dead woman, jewelry, and various other riches, but he is not prepared to open the liner. When he prepares himself and returns, he finds "the Greeks have blown her open and cleaned her out." He ends by saying, "First there was the birds, then me, then the Greeks, and even the birds got
more out of her than I did." Although he was the winner in the race to the liner, he took nothing, but the fact that the birds beat him and took little or nothing seems to reconcile the narrator that it is a universal principle that one may be a winner and yet have nothing to show for it. The ending is very much like that of *A Farewell to Arms*: the hero is frustrated in his desires to reach a dead woman and the "nothing" that he gets is reflected in the nothing that a dog gets in *A Farewell to Arms* and that the sea birds get in "After the Storm." But the narrator is more composed in "After the Storm." It is true, of course, that the woman in the short story is not one whom he loves, but it is also true and significant that the birds, winners who take nothing, are multitudinous and suggest that the author is reconciling himself to the fact that his fate is the ironic fate of all society. This reconciliation looks ahead to the social concern that Hemingway develops in the late 1930's.

"A Clean Well-lighted Place," the second story in *Winner Take Nothing*, is notable mainly as a milestone on Hemingway's movement away from the religious hope expressed by Jake in the church in Pamplona and the more desperate hope expressed by Henry's prayers in the hospital in

---

26 The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories, p. 476.
Lausanne. Both the Lord’s Prayer and the Hail Mary are parodies by the substitution of nada for all the important words of the prayers. Ironically, it is a clean, well-lighted cafe that brings security prayers cannot bring to both the old man and the sympathetic waiter. At least the cafe is a sanctuary, for most of the night, from the despair that produces suicidal impulses.

Four stories of Winner Take Nothing show an unusually close attention to medical information, misinformation, and communication. In doing so they, like "After the Storm," show an awakening to the social implications of man's plight. Erroneous information is the theme in "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" and "A Day's Wait." In "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" there are religious overtones. A boy of about sixteen, terrified by what he has been taught about the sin of lust, asks on Christmas Eve to be castrated, but neither the Jewish Doc Fisher nor the inept Doctor Wilcox perform the operation. On Christmas he is brought in, having performed an amputation with a razor. The boy, while begging for the operation, says of his physiological reactions, "It's a sin against purity. It's a sin against our Lord and Saviour."27 Now, because of misguidance, the boy has rid himself of the physical manifestations but not of the source of his lust. Ironically the

27 Ibid., p. 394.
work he has done on himself will do nothing to reduce his sinful desires. It will only assure either frustration or perversion or both. The Christian ideal of sexual purity is an object of satire. But, after this point has been made, the story continues when the Jewish Doc Fisher is challenged by Doctor Wilcox for saying "our saviour" and "the significance of the particular day is not important." Together the doctors stand for scientific medical knowledge, Judaism, and Christianity. Both try to dissuade the boy from his act, but both fail and neither can do anything after the act is completed. The bitterness of the story is directed at the inability of scientific knowledge to correct the grief caused by religious superstition. Thus two sides of man's nature that are often opposed to one another are combined and both held culpable in satire informed by l'humour noir of the darkest kind.

The theme of "A Day's Wait" is the terror evoked by misunderstood scientific information. Young Schatz thinks he will die because his temperature is one hundred and two (Fahrenheit) and he has heard that forty-four degrees (Celsius) is fatal. Unlike "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen," the theme is not the inability of science to cure. The ailment, which is fear, would not even have occurred if it had not been for scientific knowledge and the inability of modern men, who live in the scientific age, to communicate with each other. Science is not often an obvious theme in
Hemingway, for the tragic ironies that he exposes seem no more modern than those of Sophocles. But one can see that the forces of scientific knowledge that terrify Schatz are the same ones that terrify the old man in "A Clean, Well-lighted Place": The old man's belief in a personal god is destroyed and Schatz is assured that he will die.

In "One Reader Writes," there is a plea to science to "tell me what's right to do." The reader writes a celebrated doctor about her husband's syphilis. In asking what is "right to do" the reader exposes another weakness of science, its amoral character. The failure of science is emphasized in the last nine sentences of the story by the wife's exclamations, "My Christ," said once, and "I wish to Christ," repeated three times. But, as in the previous stories, neither Christ nor the doctor will solve the dilemma.

"The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio" provides a sort of coda for the "medical" stories. In writing about the story, Baker says, "Hemingway's skills as a comic writer are probably not enough appreciated. 'The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio,' for example, is a fine and subtle study, depending to a great degree on the humor of character, and setting up a memorable contrast among three levels of the apprehension of reality."²⁸ Baker thinks the humor

²⁸Hemingway, The Writer As Artist, pp. 140-41.
comes from a "collocation of the old and dignified with the new and crass." 29 Mr. Frazer, after he views several people, especially the dangerously wounded Cayetano, develops his own eclectic theory about knowledge. He thinks religion, music, economics, sexual intercourse, drink, and even the radio (his radio) may be the opium of the people. Even education may be, but not knowledge. He believes in knowledge. But he also believes that opium is a valuable anaesthetic when one has to be "operated" on. He has seen that the gambler Cayetano's "opium" is his gambler's code, that Sister Cecelia's desire to be a saint is her "opium," just as his own has been his radio that allows him to escape the here and now. Thus Hemingway indicates that one may fight despair with anything that deadens the pain; it is not necessary to believe in a cure. This story, the next to the last one in Winner Take Nothing, provides an ironic resolution for the volume. And in identifying the weaknesses of science, especially the communication of it, the author rises superior to another antagonist, and, to an extent, gloats.

C. ESQUIRE LETTERS

In the twenty-five letters that Hemingway wrote between 1933-1936 he maintains, on the surface at least, a

---

29 Ibid., p. 249.
more relaxed tone. The elements of humor that appear tend more to gloating than to more morbid forms of humor. It is true, however, that many of the activities described in the letters are set on the water instead of the land. If that fact is examined for symbolic significance, it appears that the morbid quality is not absent but concealed. The Gulf Stream is a favorite setting. Hemingway admires the Stream because he knows it was there before the appearance of man on earth and will be there, he thinks, after the last man is dead. It is an eternal verity against which the accomplishments of man can be measured. It is deep, cold, dark, unchanging, dangerous, isolating, and final. In short, it has the attributes of death.

For example, "Marlin off the Morro," the first Esquire letter, shows the author pleased with the fact that "from the middle of March to the 18th of July this year . . . eleven thousand small marlin and one hundred and fifty large marlin were brought into market." But a feeling the opposite of gloating is suggested by the second sentence of the letter: "If you sleep with your feet toward the east, this may be against the tenets of certain religions. . . ." One is surprised to find in the holiday environment of Havana that there are still thoughts of how

---

30 By-Line: Ernest Hemingway, p. 139.
31 Ibid., p. 137.
the dead sleep. Macabre overtones are present, although they are more muted than they were early in _Death in the Afternoon_.

In "A Paris Letter," Hemingway describes killing six grouse and sparing a moose he could have killed near Cooke City, Montana, the previous year. Gloating is hardly the dominant tone, however, for the author writes "This year, at the same time, we are in Paris and it is a big mistake. If you want a Paris letter full of spice and detail and funny cracks you will have to get someone else to write it. All I do is go out and get depressed and wish I were somewhere else. . . . This old friend shot himself. That old friend took an overdose of something. That old friend went back to New York and jumped out, or rather fell from, a high window." Later Hemingway explains that "People must be expected to kill themselves when they lose their money, I suppose, and drunkards get bad livers." The real source of his depression seems to be, however, a classic one: Paris is not aging, he complains, but is taking new and more youthful lovers. He feels a contrast strongly in himself, for he is changing, is growing older. Those that he cares for are not here; in fact many are no longer among the living. He voices a preference for the Gulf and, symbolically, for death. He will repeat his preference again

---

and again.

It is in a letter published a year after the one in Paris that we find how necessary killing, or the artistic sublimation of it, is to Hemingway. "Remembering Shooting-Flying" opens with "There is a heavy norther blowing; the Gulf is too rough to fish and there is no shooting now." Shooting clay pigeons, writes the author, is a poor substitute. "The trouble is there isn't any thud" nor is there "that thump when he lands." The author continues by explaining his reason for writing on such subjects: "But when you cannot shoot you can remember shooting and I would rather stay home, now, this afternoon and write about it than go out and sail clay saucers in the wind, trying to break them and wishing they were what they're not."\(^\text{34}\)

There are several significances in this letter. For one thing, it seems that there is in the author a compulsion to destroy, either in the Gulf or in the field, that cannot be sublimated by shooting lifeless clay pigeons. It is better to imagine shooting live birds, imagining the "thud" and "thump," than to shoot lifeless targets. One also remembers that it was only after the author lost his holdings in Cuba, where the joys of destroying fish on the Gulf Stream were so convenient, that he turned his destructive instincts on himself.

\(^\text{34}\)Ibid., p. 186.
D. GREEN HILLS OF AFRICA

It may have been Hemingway's desire to hear the thud and thump that took him away from the Gulf Stream to Africa for the experiences published in Green Hills of Africa at the end of October, 1935. Again, as in Death in the Afternoon, the tone is basically gloating humor, for it is the story of a successful hunt. It is perhaps relevant at this point to remember that although both Green Hills of Africa and Death in the Afternoon are not presented as fiction they were still shaped to a great extent by the author's imagination and aesthetic standards. For although Hemingway supposedly relates true experiences in the books, he can not possibly relate all of them, and insofar as he selects some incidents in a certain order, and reinforces them by various metaphors, indeed, because the story itself is to him worth telling, it may be treated very much like fiction in revealing the author's mind. In the case of Green Hills of Africa we have only Hemingway's word that the book presents the story the way it actually occurred, and it is, of course, a literary tradition of long standing to maintain that every shred of a story is fact, regardless of whether it is or not.

Early in the text Hemingway makes some explicit statements about humor. There is, for example, the shooting of hyenas:
It was funny for M'Cola to see a hyena shot at close range. There was that comic slap of the bullet and the hyena's agitated surprise to find death inside of him. It was funnier to see a hyena shot at a great distance . . . But the great joke of all . . . the pinnacle of hyenic humor, was the hyena, the classic hyena, that hit too far back while running, would circle madly, snapping and tearing at himself until he pulled his own intestines out, and then stood there, jerking them out and eating them with relish . . . The hyena was a dirty joke but bird shooting was a clean joke. My whiskey was a clean joke. There were many variations of that joke . . . The Mohammedans and all religions were a joke.

Hemingway explains elsewhere that in the case of birds the joke is on the bird if it is hit and on the shooter if it is missed. Apparently the hyena joke is dirty because the animal is, to an extent, his own destroyer and is aesthetically unpleasant to watch. A clean joke is one of sanative influence.

The book has nearly the same moral perspective of *The Sun Also Rises* in which the earth and frank unsophisticated people are noble influences. The greatest exhilaration the honest natives get in the book is that which comes from killing game well. It is the same feeling the *aficio-

---


36 The use of alcoholic beverages considered in a moral perspective is complex in Hemingway, receiving different evaluation in, for example, "The Three Day Blow" (1925), *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), and "Wine of Wyoming" (1930), to mention only a few. Perhaps it is not the use but the abuse of alcohol that is disparaged in *The Sun Also Rises*, and perhaps for some people the sedative effects of alcohol are substitutes for suicide.
nados get from Romero's skillful work. When "Mama" Hemingway kills a lion with a good shot, the natives behave ritualistically: "Mama!" M'Cola shouted. "Mama piga Simba.' The boys came dancing, crowding, and beating time and chanting something from down in their chests that started like a cough and sounded like 'Hey la Mama! Hay la Mama. . . . The rolling-eyed skinner picked P. O. M. [Poor Old Mama] up, the big cook and the boys held her . . . they danced and sang through the dark, around the fire and to our tent. . . . they sang the lion dance with that deep, lion asthmatic cough in it." The color of Mama's skin or her sex seems to mean nothing; she deserves honor in their primitive society because she has killed a lion skillfully.

The author receives a similar primitive honor himself in the climactic Chapter XII after he shoots the kudu bull: "The Roman had his arms around my neck and M'Cola was shouting in a strange high sing-song voice and Wander-obo-Masai kept slapping me on the shoulder and jumping up and down and then one after the other they all shook hands in a strange way that I had never known in which they took your thumb in their fist and held it and shook it and pulled it and held it again, while they looked you in the eye fiercely." Later Hemingway asks Pop what the cere-

37 Green Hills of Africa, p. 42.
38 Ibid., pp. 231-32.
mony means and is told, "It's on the order of blood brotherhood but a little less formal." These two passages illustrate beyond doubt that P.O.M. and the author behave well in the primitive environment of Africa and are honored by those who know good behavior when they see it; that is, they kill well.

The significance of P.O.M.'s and Hemingway's acceptance by these primitive people is apparent when one realizes that there are two antithetical forces at work in this book, as in The Sun Also Rises. There are those who do not have truly pure and primitive emotions, for example Charo, the Mohammedan gun bearer, who cannot drink water or even his own saliva, all Ramadan. Both M-Cola and the author feel superior to him. Another is "Garrick," the theatrical and almost useless guide whom Hemingway repeatedly professes to want to shoot. Kandisky, the Austrian who tries to dissuade Hemingway from shooting the harmless animals, is another. He is the manager of a sisal shamba (plantation) for an Indian, Indians being just about the only people who can make a profit in the country at the time. "I represent European organization," Kandisky says. "I have been away from my family for three months... You do it in a week as easily, but it is not so impressive." These three characters are not the frank, simple primitive people that

39 Ibid., p. 293. 40 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
Hemingway admires.

Opposed to the likes of Charo (whose name, incidentally, is significantly close to Charon, the ferryman of dead souls), Garrick, and Kandisky are the author, P. O. M. and Pop. Hemingway and P. O. M. are initiates after killing well and Pop, as the white hunter, is rather a Pedro Romero or high priest image, for his skill in the hunt is not to be exceeded by anyone. The country is repeatedly compared to Spain ("I could not believe we were not in Spain"\textsuperscript{41}) and praised ("This was a virgin country. . . . This was the finest country I had seen."\textsuperscript{42}) The Masai people are God's chosen: "They were the tallest, best-built, handsomest people I had ever seen."\textsuperscript{43} And the primitive act of killing worthy game well puts the author and his wife into their society.

Just as \textit{The Sun Also Rises} describes the destruction of the earth symbol in the bull and \textit{Death in the Afternoon} describes a primitive sport that is, according to the author, rapidly becoming decadent, so in \textit{Green Hills of Africa} one finds that even the country is not eternal. Hemingway writes, "A country, finally, erodes and the dust blows away, the people all die and none of them were of any importance permanently, except those who practised the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[41] Ibid., p. 146. \item[42] Ibid., p. 218. \item[43] Ibid., p. 219.
\end{footnotes}
Hemingway goes on to tell how the country's decay is accelerated and who is to blame:

A continent ages quickly once we come. The natives live in harmony with it. But the foreigner destroys, cuts down the trees, drains the water, so that the water supply is altered and in a short time the soil, once the sod is turned under, is cropped out and, next, it starts to blow away as it has blown away in every old country. . . . A country wears out quickly unless man puts back in it all his residue and that of all his beasts. When he quits using beasts and uses machines, the earth defeats him quickly. The machine can't reproduce, nor does it fertilize the soil, and it eats what he cannot raise.45

Hemingway's musings about the earth have thematic significance. Kandisky is an example of an exploiter who has worked his own land to the point of failure and now works for an Indian. The treachery of the machine is illustrated in Kandisky's first appearance, for he stands beside his disabled truck as the author's car drives up. "It has taken a dislike to me. All engines dislike me," he explains. "I am afraid to make it go further with the noise of death inside."46 Within the context of Hemingway's earth-versus-machine antithesis, we might add that it has not taken a dislike to Kandisky alone, but is innately opposed to all men. Philip Young explains that Mark Twain suggests death, rebirth, and the return to the womb by the use of the river symbol. Hemingway, he declares, substi-

46 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
tutes the railroad for the river in the Nick Adams stories. In *Green Hills of Africa* we may be sure a further substitution is made, for a broken down truck is the machine that stands by Kandisky, and both Kandisky and the machine are the killers of the continent of Africa.

How the machine is pitted against what Hemingway calls the "handsomest people I had ever seen" is graphically portrayed as the author rides into the Masai village in his truck. It is worth noting that the "virgin country" is presented in idyllic terms, as if the trip were indeed a return to childhood. The author comes here, in his car, alone, that is without his wife or "Pop." The people are like children. "We went through a little knot of brush," Hemingway writes, "and a small rabbit started out. . . . They caught the rabbit and the tallest runner came up with him to the car and handed him to me." When the rabbit is handed back, "the Masai stooped and put the rabbit on the ground and as he ran free they all laughed." But that which would carry one back to a childhood existence, as Hemingway's car does, would carry him back to a still more effortless existence in the womb—or the grave. And it is in terms of destroyer that the author's car is described: "Finally, when we were moving, they started to run beside the car smiling and laughing and showing how easily they could run and then, as the going was better, up the smooth valley of a stream, it became a contest and one after
another dropped out of the running . . . until there were only two still running with us, the finest runners of the lot. . . . They were still running well and still loose and long but the machine was a cruel pacemaker. So I told Kamau to speed it up and get it over with." Thus the machine beats them in the race, as the author says it will beat the continent, eventually.

One further humorous passage shows the corrupting force of the machine. As Hemingway's attendants are loading the car in preparation for leaving the country and the people that have impressed him so much, the author notices the theatrical Garrick. "Garrick was talking loudly and in a roostery way to the Roman's women. As near as I could make out he was offering them the empty petrol boxes in exchange for a piece of something." Thus the gasoline cans, a necessary part of the machine, are being used to corrupt the primitive morals of the Masai people. As the car passes through the Masai village on the return trip, Hemingway says "as Kamau, in response to popular demand, pressed the klaxon again and again, I watched the look of utter rapture and ecstasy on the women's faces and knew that with that klaxon he could have any woman in the tribe." Thus the machine is presented not only as the destroyer of

\[47\] Ibid., pp. 219-21. \[48\] Ibid., p. 277. \[49\] Ibid., pp. 286-87.
the fertility of the land by its plowing under of the vegetation and failure to create fertilizer to replace plant nutrients, but also a corrupter of morals and values. This theme is, in fact, one thing that keeps the book from being one continuous gloat after another over the bodies of lifeless animals. It is a tragic implication, and on it the true force of the book depends.

When one notices the earth-versus-machine tension in Green Hills of Africa, he finds that the primitive gloat­­ing over the slain animals is a parallel development to a more subtle exultation which may be termed an "artistic gloat." The death that Hemingway is most concerned with is not the death of game killed by hunters' rifles but the death of the continent, killed by a machine. The book becomes, in the context, the story of a hunt where the stalk­­er is rightfully called an artist, not a hunter, and his quarry is the country. "Every damned thing is your own fault if you're any good," the author writes about a bad shot he makes. The statement takes an additional meaning when compared to an earlier declaration in the book: "For we have been there in the books—and where we go, if we are any good, there you can go as we have been." The country is vanishing, but it can be saved by writing about it, if the writing is good enough. In the final episode of the

---

50 Ibid., p. 281. 51 Ibid., p. 109.
book, which occurs at Haifa by the Sea of Galilee after the safari, Hemingway gives a religious intensity to the task of writing. He says, "The hills made shadows on the water, which was flat calm and rather stagnant looking. There were many grebes, making spreading wakes in the water as they swam, and I was counting them and wondering why they never were mentioned in the Bible. I decided that those people were not naturalists." Hemingway has, of course, shown clearly his preference for naturalists and clear water. "Those people" do not serve the needs of the author's generation. It is rather clear, however, that Hemingway thinks that the experience he has just finished with primitive people in a yet unspoiled country does serve his needs. He suggests it in a final short dialogue: "'You know,' P. O. M. said, "I can't remember it. I think about him and think about him and I can't see him. . . . In a little while I won't be able to remember him at all.'" Hemingway replies, "I can see him. . . . I'll write you a piece some time and put him in." Green Hills of Africa is the book he promises. And because we can go there and see the land, as yet unspoiled, as he saw it, the author's final comment has an unmistakable gloating quality, as it had in the Esquire article, "Remembering Shooting Flying," for he has saved his experiences and the country from the

---

52 Ibid., p. 294. 53 Ibid., p. 295.
threat of change and decay by embalming them in a permanent art form.
Hemingway finished *Green Hills of Africa* on an optimistic note: there was something he could do to save the Africa from being spoiled by exploitation. This tendency to an optimistic affirmative outlook on mankind generally marks his next three works, which were published between 1937 and 1940. The outstanding message of these three volumes—*To Have and Have Not* (1937), *The Fifth Column* and the *First Forty-Nine Stories* (1938), and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940)—is that men must work or fight together if they are to have any hope for victory, or even for an endurable stalemate. There can be, in other words, no "private peace." Young says of *To Have and Have Not*, "The novel is a book with a 'message,' and that message is stated by the author in one sentence. It is a sentence which 'had taken him a long time to get out,' and which 'had taken him all of his life to learn.' It is a deathbed conversion; the words are Harry's last on earth: 'No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody f---ing chance.'"¹

The message of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is no less obvious. It is the epithet of the novel and comes from John Donne's "Meditation XVII" in *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*. "No man is an Island, intire of it selfe; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine. . . ."

The message that it took Harry Morgan all his life to learn was a message of hope. To say that a man alone has no chance is to imply that social man may have a chance. The optimism expressed in this hope had taken Hemingway at least seven years, if not a lifetime, to acquire. It is undoubtedly related to the good years he spent in Key West with Pauline Pfeiffer Hemingway. Hemingway's own evaluation of his marriage to Pauline came after World War II and after his fourth marriage, when he told his brother Leicester, "You know, Baron, I've been married three and a half times, really. Of them all, Pauline was the best wife any man could have."\(^2\) Those years, moreover, were never plagued by the indigence that made the years in Paris with Hadley difficult. Although one finds Hemingway commenting occasionally that he could have used more money, he did well enough financially to buy Finca Vigia near Havana, have the *Pilar* built to order, to fish almost daily, and to choose the kind of writing he wanted to do. It may also have been important in Hemingway's reintegration into

---

\(^2\) *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway*, p. 271.
society that oppressive, complacent middle-class America of the early 1920's itself became en masse a sort of lost generation after 1929. Hemingway with his tendency to champion the underdog could embrace nearly all his countrymen warmly. It is also probable that criticism of his political apostasy may have helped to sting Hemingway into political awareness. Certainly he was sensitive to such jibes as Wyndham Lewis's statement in 1934: "It is difficult to image a writer whose mind is more entirely closed to politics than is Hemingway's."  

During the last part of this period Hemingway met Martha Gellhorn, who was "instantly fascinated" by him. This was in the summer of 1937. She followed him to Madrid, at his suggestion, where they both reported the Spanish Civil War, and lived in the hotel Florida. Later, with Herbert Matthews, they took a "sleeping-bag" trip through the northern mountains observing the very fluid front and the life of peasants. Leicester Hemingway quotes Matthews as saying, "Ernest and Martha were wonderful traveling companions." By fall, he says, "Pauline somehow knew or sensed from Ernest's letters that the old relationship no longer existed." There was some anguish to come out of

---

4 *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway*, p. 203.  
the tangled relationship, which ended in divorce, but most of it came after the high-spirited period we are now examining. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was published October, 1940; Ernest Hemingway and Pauline were divorced in November, and he married Martha two weeks later. Even though anguish resulted from the divorce, Hemingway found Martha Gellhorn's attention pleasing to his ego.

A. TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT

As we have seen, Young regards *To Have and Have Not* as a novel with a message; it says that a man isolated from society does not have a chance. The message was in the making for several years. The novel was not written as a novel originally; instead it grew from two short stories: "One Trip Across," published in *Cosmopolitan* in April, 1934, and "The Tradesman's Return," published in *Esquire* in February, 1936. A third story was added to the previous two to make the novel. All of the stories feature Harry Morgan, who, according to Young, is not the Hemingway hero, there not being one in the novel. Young says, "He [Morgan] has neither the background, the troubles, nor the personality. But all the same, we have seen the like of him before: he is the man who teaches the hero. He . . . appears . . . to illustrate something important that the hero must know, and

---

knows in his next appearance.  

Carlos Baker calls Morgan "a lineal descendant of the American frontiersman," because he has complete confidence in his own judgment and laws of his own making. Baker feels that Wyatt Earp, a sheriff in Kansas before going to Tombstone, is the prototype of Morgan, who was a policeman in Miami before he came to Key West. Furthermore, the kind of fraud that Johnson perpetrates against Morgan was commonplace in Tombstone, says Baker, and the smuggling of alien Chinese from Cuba is much like the cattle rustling carried on across the Mexican border—Cuba and Mexico both being Latin American countries. Even Morgan's being wounded while engaged in illegal activities against Spanish-speaking people has parallels in the annals of nineteenth century American frontier life. Morgan is the unifying character in the novel. He sets the tone for the narrative, and the tone is that of the frontier life of the nineteenth century.

As the title indicates, To Have and Have Not is a study in contrasts. In order to strengthen the characterization of the protagonist and to develop a plot in the novel, Hemingway provides Morgan with a foil in the satirical portrait of writer Richard Gordon. The narrative ele-

7 Ernest Hemingway, A Reconsideration, p. 100.
8 Hemingway, The Writer As Artist, pp. 210-11.
ment of the satire is expertly done, although verisimilitude sometimes suffers. The narrative of Gordon's adventures has the compression of satirical poetry. Near the end of the novel, Gordon, studying life for his next novel, passes Marie Morgan, Harry's wife, who has already been drawn in idealized terms. His attitude is scornful: "Look at that big ox, he thought. What do you suppose she does in bed? How does her husband feel about her when she gets that size? Who do you suppose he runs around with in this town? Wasn't she an appalling looking woman? Like a battleship." 9

Yet Gordon fails as a lover—the ultimate failure in Hemingway's perspective. One of the famous scenes in To Have and Have Not occurs when Helene Bradley's husband surprises Gordon making love to her:

The bearded man had closed the door softly. He was smiling.

"What's the matter, darling?" Helene Bradley had asked. . . .

"I must go."

"Don't you see you can't go?"

"That man—"

"That's only Tommy. . . . Don't mind him. Come on darling. Please do."

"I can't."

---

9 To Have and Have Not (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 176.
"You must... My God, don't you know anything?...

"I have to go," said Richard Gordon.

In the darkness he had felt the slap across his face. ... Then there was another slap. ...

"So that's the kind of man you are. ... I thought you were a man of the world. Get out of here."

It is as a lover that Gordon is in strongest contrast to Morgan. Gordon cannot be kind to his wife, and he cannot dominate the loose women in his life as, for example, Morgan does in one minute with an inviting wife of a tourist at Freddy's Bar when he says, "Shut up, you whore."

Gordon's failure is broadened to other areas than love at Freddy's Bar on pay-day night. Gordon speaks to a Communist:

"I've written three books... I'm writing one now about Gastonia."

"Good," said the tall man. "That's fine. What did you say your name was?"

"Richard Gordon."

"Oh," said the tall man..."

"Did you ever read the books?" Richard Gordon asked.

"Yes."

"Didn't you like them?"

"No," said the tall man.

\[\text{Ibid., pp. 189-90.} \quad \text{Ibid., p. 130.}\]
"Why?"

"I don't like to say."

"Go ahead."

"I thought they were shit," the tall man said and turned away.  

The insult that Gordon receives from the tall Communist, one of the Have-Nots, is all the more meaningful because it comes from one of the laborers—the waiters, hotel porters, stevedores, etc.—whom Hemingway idealizes in the novel. They are the ones who know life—who do not separate on the basis of false assumptions as do members of higher social levels. Just as Morgan is in the frontier tradition, so are the Have-Nots also. They are like primitive "backwoodsmen" who laugh, or in this case sneer, at Gordon's affectation.

The crowning moment of Hemingway's satirical sketch of Gordon occurs, however, after he has been knocked out twice by the bouncer at Freddy's. As he staggers along the road at night in a situation the exact, ironic opposite of the one in which Gordon scorned her, Marie passes him:


They passed the man, who had blood on his face, and who kept on unsteadily in the dark after the lights of the car had gone on up the street. It was Richard Gordon on his way home.  

12 Ibid., pp. 209-10.  
13 Ibid., p. 255.
The complacent Gordon has been defeated in love, insulted about his novels, and beaten at fisticuffs. To climax his disgrace, he is both pitied and scorned by a passionate woman who is herself past the age of great attractiveness. In the world of the Hemingway hero his degradation is complete.

There are many satirical portraits in To Have and Have Not, too many to treat each one in such a study as this. Calling attention to two more portraits will suffice to reveal the use of satire in Hemingway's story.

There are two opposing responses to the economic and social dilemma of the Have-Nots. One is the communist solution, represented by Roberto, the Cuban revolutionist and bank robber. The other has a fascist character and is represented by Mr. Johnson, the tourist who leaves without paying for three weeks fishing; Frederick Harrison, the important man from Washington; and the members of the yachting group. Johnson fishes for three weeks and leaves owing $825. Morgan is worried about the money but is afraid to say anything. Hemingway ridicules Johnson as an inept sportsman and dishonest business man. Johnson thinks that hooked fish are gone while they are still hooked or dead while they are jumping free. He disobedys instructions and, besides being struck in the belly by the butt of the rod, loses the rod, reel, and line. Johnson's naïveté, a constant characteristic of tourists in Hemingway's works, is
revealed with the most biting sarcasm when Morgan muses, "I was thinking to myself that this Johnson had fished fifteen days, finally he hooks into a fish a fisherman would give a year to tie into, he loses him, he loses my heavy tackle, he makes a fool of himself and he sits there perfectly content, drinking with a rummy." Finally Johnson leaves without paying, leaving Morgan with only forty cents. The purpose of the satirical portrait of Johnson is apparently to give Morgan a motive for his desperate feelings about his bloody treatment of Mr. Sing in the episode of the smuggling of the Chinese aliens. This is the section of the novel published as "One Trip Across" in 1934. The thematic contrast between the Haves and Have-Nots is formed in this short story.

In the second part of the novel, first published as the short story called "The Tradesman's Return," the fascist solution is satirized in the depiction of Frederick Harrison who, in attempting to coerce Captain Willie to pursue the wounded Morgan, tells him, affecting modesty, "All right. For your information, I'm one of the most important men in the United States today." Captain Willie's lack of awe is apparent when he calls to Morgan, "I got a guy here on board some kind of stool from Washington. More important than the President, he says." Captain Willie

---

14 Ibid., p. 22. 15 Ibid., p. 80.
will not cooperate with Harrison: "I'm taking this big alphabet man fishing until dark," he shouts and takes the impotently protesting bureaucrat away, explaining fish prices to him: "I thought you'd be interested in these things as a government man. Ain't you mixed up in the price of things that we eat or something? Ain't that it? Making them more costly or something? Making the grits cost more and the grunts less?" The contrast between the power Harrison thinks he wields and the power he actually has on Willie's boat provides the humor. This may have some relation to the tradition of American riverboat humor with its tales of boisterous passengers who learn that the captain, or in some cases a modest passenger, is not to be abused. In Joseph M. Field's "Kicking a Yankee," it is a passenger who kicks a boasting "dandy tourist"; in "A Rough and Tumble Fight on Board a Steamboat," the captain's pistols force order over the passengers' knives. Captain Willie is, of course, socially the same as Morgan, whom he calls "brother" and whom Baker, as we have seen, calls a frontiersman.

A social and economic solution the opposite of Johnson's and Harrison's is the one provided by Roberto, the

16 Ibid., pp. 83-84.
17 Humor of the Old Southwest, pp. 105-107.
18 The Crockett Almanacks, pp. 139-40.
Cuban revolutionary. In his portrayal the macabre is combined with satire, whereas the fascistic characters are satirized in a comedy-of-manners technique. The macabre treatment begins with Roberto when he shoots Albert as soon as he gets on the boat: "Hey, don't! Don't!" Albert said. 'Don't!' The burst was so close to his chest that the bullets whocked like three slaps. Albert slid down on his knees, his eyes wide, his mouth open. He looked like he was still trying to say, 'Don't!'" 19 After Harry talks to one of the more sympathetic revolutionists while they are crossing to Cuba, he pretends to see the good of their fight to help the working man in Cuba, but his thoughts reveal its incongruities:

F— his revolution. To help the working man he robs a bank and kills a fellow who works with him and then kills that poor damned Albert that never did any harm. That's a working man he kills. He never thinks of that. With a family. It's the Cubans run Cuba. They all double cross each other. They sell each other out. They get what they deserve. The hell with their revolutions. 20

Mr. Johnson, Frederick Harrison and Roberto have in common a contempt for law and justice. There are minor characters that fit into the same category. Mr. Sing, the smuggler of Chinese aliens, is one. Bee Lips, the lawyer, is another. Mr. Sing can function because the service he

19 To Have and Have Not, p. 153.
20 Ibid., p. 168.
sells cannot be obtained legally. Bee Lips, of course, would have no job if it were not for laws. But all of these are Haves because in the present system they appear to be doing quite well financially. It is one of the ironies of their life that some of their own kind must perish in the savage atmosphere that they spawn, and Mr. Sing and Bee Lips are destroyed by Hemingway in brutally realistic passages that hold fascist philosophy up to scorn.

The Have-Nots are essentially comic characters, for their plights are almost unavoidable; their efforts to escape all ineffectual. Since they can not be blamed for their failures, as the Haves can, the comedy of their lives is not satirical, although their moral and ethical standards are no better than that of the Haves. Eddy, the rummy, is such a character. His appearance in the novel is mainly to give comic relief and to evoke sympathy for the Have-Nots. He slouches along "looking taller and sloppier than ever. . . . with his joints all slung wrong . . . Eddy looked pretty bad. He never looked too good."21 "He was pretty close to the shakes and when he came near me he had a breath like a buzzard."22 When Morgan was forced to smuggle the Chinese aliens he planned to kill Mr. Sing and, therefore, planned to work alone. But Eddy had gone to

---

21 Ibid., p. 9. 22 Ibid., p. 46.
sleep on board, unknown to Morgan. When Morgan kills Mr. Sing, he assumes that he must kill Eddy too, who would talk if he were ever put under pressure. Morgan says, however, "I was sorry for him and for what I knew I'd have to do. Hell, I knew him when he was a good man." But he continues to carry him to help unload the twelve aliens locked in the hold. Part of the humor comes in the rum-bravery that Eddy displays in handling the Chinese, and part of his attractiveness comes from his comic, i.e. nontragic, character. He is always lucky at critical moments, and we are sympathetic toward him the way we are toward Falstaff. An example of his luck occurs when Morgan, already having decided how he will kill him, discovers that Eddy got his name on the crew list before he fell asleep in a rum-induced stupor. "God looks after rummies," I [Morgan] told him and I took the thirty-eight off and stowed it down below."

Other Have-Nots who are comic characters rather than satirical portraits are Wesley, the Negro wounded with Morgan when he loses his arm, a stock caricature of a frightened Negro; "the old man with the long grey hair over the back of his collar who sells the rubber goods specialties [and] comes in for a quarter of a pint"; and Hayzooz, who has been married a month, or two; he isn't sure which.

---

23 Ibid., p. 43. 24 Ibid., p. 62.
Hayzooz is indignant when someone suggests that his wife's new baby may not be his: "What you mean not my baby? What you mean? By God, I no let you talk like that! What you mean not my baby? You buy the cow you no get the calf? That's my baby. My God, yes. My baby. Belong to me. Yes sir!" The episode with Hayzooz occurs between the time when Morgan has agreed to take the Cuban revolutionaries to Cuba (he has heard the word kill in Spanish in their conversation) and the time when Albert is murdered. It is obviously comic contrast used to add suspense and to emphasize the brutality of the pointless murder, which badly needs some kind of foil in the brutal story to make the cruelty noticeable.

The most interesting humorous studies are the ones that do not fit with either the purely comic or purely satiric. They partake of both kinds of humor. These are the sketches of Morgan, whom we have already discussed, of Professor MacWalsey and, collectively, of the veterans. The sketches of Morgan, MacWalsey and the veterans are touched with both the sympathy of comic conception and the scorn of satirical portrayal. It is in them that most of the power of the novel lies.

The veterans who hang out at Freddy's Bar are all volunteers and are, therefore, called the "cream of the

---

25 Ibid., p. 120.
scum." Part of the humor is afforded by the red-haired veteran who is proud of all the wrong things. He is pome­meled by his friend, his head pounded on the sidewalk until blood oozes from his ear, but he almost attacks the sheriff for pulling his assailant off. "I can take it" is his often repeated boast. "It don't hurt... Sometimes it feels good," he says. His friend explains, "First it was an art... Then it became a pleasure."26 One of the veterans explains to Gordon:

"We'd run them [the radicals] out, but I tell you half the time most of the guys in camp can't remember."

"Can't remember what?" asked the red-headed one.

"Can't remember anything," said the other.27 Hemingway uses a particularly humorous passage to illustrate the veterans' faulty memory. The red-headed one is talking to Richard Gordon:

"Would you guess I got the finest little wife in the world?"

"Why not?"

"Well, I have... And that girl is nuts about me. She's like a slave... She's carried away with me. If I got a whim, it's her law."

"Only where is she?" asked the other Vet.

"That's it," said the red-headed one. "That's it pal. Where is she?"

26 Ibid., p. 203. 27 Ibid., pp. 210-11.
"He don't know where she is," the second Vet said.

"Not only that," said the red-headed one. "I don't know where I saw her last. . . . But listen, buddy, . . . wherever she is, that girl is faithful."

"That's God's truth," said the other Vet.  

These two passages illustrate Hemingway's dexterity in humorous writing, for in the complex interactions of numerous characters one humorous passage serves as an illustration for the other without the slightest disruption of continuity.

Hemingway portrays the depravity of the veterans as animal-like. The red-headed veteran is impressed by "old guys with long beards" in New York who allow sailors to urinate in their beards for a dollar. He is also impressed by Freddy's trick of knocking out his obstreperous customers with one surprise blow, using a big saltcellar wrapped in a towel.

The veterans present a distasteful picture of man's animality in its lowest state. Yet there is a significant sympathy in their portraiture. Hemingway had "reported with savage indignation for the communist New Masses" the scandal involved in the drowning of over two hundred veterans in a hurricane at the Matecumbe work-camps near Key

---

28 Ibid., p. 211.  
29 Ibid., p. 207.  
30 Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 99.
West on September 3, 1935. Hemingway obviously identified with the unfortunate veterans of World War I. Furthermore the veterans' sins are not premeditated; they are merely thoughtless, animal-like. They come off much better than the vicious Haves. Their boasting about their ability to take it fits into the long tradition of boasting backwoods fighters described by Constance Rourke in "The Gamecock of the Wilderness" and by Walter Blair in Half Horse Half Alligator.

The character who provides the moral key in To Have and Have Not is Professor MacWalsey. It is the Professor whom Richard Gordon's wife wants to marry, and the Professor tells Gordon that he wants to marry because he thinks he would be better at it now, his first wife having died in 1918. Gordon is knocked out twice by Freddy's bouncer when he tries to attack the Professor, yet the Professor tries to take him home in a taxi. When Gordon will not stay in the taxi, the driver says, "You can't get him in without fighting him. . . . Let him go. He's fine. Is he your brother?" "In a way," MacWalsey answers. As Gordon staggers down the road, MacWalsey is thinking:

It is a mortal sin . . . a grave and deadly sin and a great cruelty, and while technically one's religion may permit the ultimate results, I cannot

---

31 Hemingway, The Writer As Artist, p. 208.

pardon myself. On the other hand, a surgeon cannot desist while operating for fear of hurting the patient. But why must the operations in life be performed without anaesthetic? . . . I am ashamed and disgusted with myself and I hate what I have done. It all may turn out badly too. But I must not think about that. I will now return to the anaesthetic I have used for seventeen years and will not need much longer. Although it is probably a vice now for which I only invent excuses. Though at least it is a vice for which I am well suited. But I wish I could help that poor man whom I am wronging.

The Professor is sympathetically drawn. He has a foot in the worlds of both the Haves and Have-Nots. His humorous commentary on the life around him puts him into the place of the narrator in frontier humor. His musings about his sin could serve to end the novel, for the story is really over. Morgan has been shot and has been taken dying to the hospital. And, finally, it is only a very short distance from MacWalsey's statement that "in a way" he is Richard Gordon's brother to the theme of Hemingway's next novel, For Whom the Bell Tolls, which says that "no man is an island."

B. THE FIFTH COLUMN AND THE FIRST FORTY-NINE STORIES

One may find documentation of an aesthetic preparation for For Whom the Bell Tolls in the previously unpublished short works found in The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories and in some of Hemingway's journalism and propagandist work of 1937 and 1938. The cyclical na-

33 To Have and Have Not, pp. 221-22.
ture of Hemingway's development is apparent in a North American Newspaper Alliance dispatch date lined Barcelona, April 3, 1938. The article, entitled "The Flight of the Refugees," describes the road from Reus to Barcelona clogged with refugees, one a new baby born the day before, its mother now on a mule. The description is reminiscent of Hemingway's Asia Minor articles nearly twenty years before, and one passage recalls the ironic last sentence of "Indian Camp": "There was no panic at all, only a steady movement, and many of the people seemed cheerful. But perhaps it was the day. The day was so lovely that it seemed ridiculous that anyone should ever die." 34

One of the new stories, "Old Man at the Bridge," is apparently inspired by the same flight of refugees. The old man rests near the Ebro River and worries about a cat, two goats, and four pair of pigeons that he left behind him. He is despondent because he knows no one in the direction of Barcelona. The author's comment is that the independence of cats and the cloudiness that keeps fascist bombers grounded are all the good luck he will ever know. One is reminded again of Hemingway's 1922 Daily Star dispatch, "The Silent, Ghastly People," describing an old man carrying a pig, a scythe, a gun, and a chicken from Thrace. The despairing humor is ironic understatement. When one reads

34 By-Line: Ernest Hemingway, p. 282.
about the old man and the bridge in Spain, he thinks immediately of Anselmo in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and is struck by how Hemingway makes a timeless tableau out of the flux of streaming refugees.

Hemingway seems to be employing symbols again in the article. It is Easter Sunday; the old man "did not look like a shepherd nor herdsman," although he keeps repeating, "I was taking care of animals." He says, "There were three animals altogether"—two goats and a cat. Then he says there were four pairs of pigeons. He does not consider them animals. The old man at the bridge seems just the opposite of the old man burdened down with animality in "The Silent, Ghastly People," for, as he explains, he left the dove cage unlocked and the birds will fly, two for each animal, including the old man. The picture is not as optimistic as the one drawn by Hemingway as a young man, gruesome though that earlier one was. The flight of the birds seems to suggest death in the sense that they are associated with the spirit or spiritual qualities. The old man is near death, or near the bridge between life and death. The fate of two "goats" before an advancing army is pretty obvious. The fate of the cat is more significant, however. Nothing will happen to it, for a cat quickly adapts itself to jungle conditions, the naturalistic world of war. It represents a soulless beast, now that the birds have flown, repossessing the world: "mere anarchy is loosed upon the
world" as Yeats says, describing an analogous tableau in "The Second Coming." The tone is a macabre fatalism that sees its ultimate flowering in For Whom the Bell Tolls.

In another NANA dispatch, entitled "A New Kind of War," Hemingway identifies the feeling that he is concerned with in For Whom the Bell Tolls. He describes a scene when an artillery shell kills a man and wounds a woman in the abdomen. Afterwards people are joking, "and everyone has the feeling that characterizes war. It wasn't me, see? It wasn't me."\(^{35}\) The epithet from Donne that Hemingway chose for For Whom the Bell Tolls is a specific answer for this very natural but, so Hemingway seems to think, doubtful reaction. He feels that no man can escape his neighbor's wounding.

"The Snows of Kilimanjaro" documents Hemingway's return to what he considers his duty as a writer. He chides himself for abandoning the moral responsibility of a writer: "Now he would never write the things that he had saved to write until he knew enough to write them well. . . . Maybe you could never write them, and that was why you put them off and delayed the starting."\(^{36}\) It is, in fact, Hemingway's confession of a sin of omission that he begins to make up for in To Have and Have Not and his new

\(^{35}\) Ibid., p. 263.

\(^{36}\) The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 54.
stories of social concern and that he tries hardest and most successfully to counteract in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

In the play of 1938, *The Fifth Column*, Hemingway experiments with more themes that will go into *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The most dramatic episode is a raid through fascist lines to capture a political chief and a German officer. There is also the combining of the themes of war and love, as in *A Farewell to Arms*. The combination is easier in the play, for the protagonist Philip is an irregular skilled in guerilla warfare and has important political influence. The love affair is more casual also than the love of Henry and Catherine. One of the characters is a drunk electrician whose services are much needed in the Hotel Florida and who, in his role as fixer or repairer of whatever is out of joint, fits into the humor of surrealism, for it is an insane, topsy turvy world where the maintenance work is carried on by inebriated workmen. The surrealististic humor does not conflict with the theme of the play. Grotesque humor used for comic relief is provided when the manager of the Florida complains that his mother-in-law, who has only one tooth in her head, is eating everything he is able to provide for his family.

Notes toward a definition of comic are provided when the "politically mature" Max challenges Philip's association with Dorothy Bridges. Philip's response to Max's question about whether or not Dorothy is a serious concern of
his is, "I wouldn't say so. You could call her comic, rather. In some ways." Philip goes on to explain that he never spends "the Party's time" with her, only his own, because he has "never been much like a damned monk." But he does give her up in the end, calling her services "a commodity you shouldn't pay too high a price for." He then installs a prostitute in the place Dorothy vacates. The advantage of the prostitute, in the eyes of the party, is that she will remain comic, not serious. Thus proletarian standards demand that casualness be a part of the comic. That is understandable, for the proletariat are cut from the same cloth as the backwoodsmen of the Old Southwest. Their position in life is precarious, and they cannot afford hostages to fate.

C. FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

There is an extraordinary tension in For Whom the Bell Tolls that is felt by anyone trying to analyze the novel. It is a tension that is imperfectly resolved by the novel's ending. Baker calls For Whom the Bell Tolls an epic and suggests that the source of the tension is the

---


38 Ibid., p. 99.
precarious tightrope that the writer of a modern epic must walk: "There is also the danger that the struggle for the cosmic may backslide into the comic. The grand manner too easily inflates to the grandiose; good sense may be sacrificed to size; quantity may be mistaken for quality; and what was meant to be great will become simply gross."\(^{39}\) Baker goes on, however, to say that Hemingway successfully avoids all the pitfalls of modern epics. I do not think, however, that Baker resolves all the questions that he raises, as I will explain later.

Young, commenting on Hemingway's rendering of translated Spanish, says, "on the whole the dialogue is witty—or even, at times, hilarious—and would alone make the book a joy to read." Young goes on to say, "In _For Whom the Bell Tolls_ there is a subterranean struggle between his [Jordan's] wish to live and the old obsession with death."\(^{40}\) Young's identification of the macabre as the basis of _For Whom the Bell Tolls_ is not, of course, in harmony with Baker's belief that the novel has an epic basis. It is surely possible to find elements of both the epic and macabre in the work, and their union in something that, ironically, can encompass both.

Numerous details in _For Whom the Bell Tolls_ are very

---

\(^{39}\) *Hemingway, The Writer As Artist*, p. 247.

\(^{40}\) *Ernest Hemingway, A Reconsideration*, p. 107.
suggestive of the mock epic. The use of mock epic would not, of course, necessarily preclude the epic character, especially in such a master ironist as Hemingway. In an episode early in the narrative Jordan is talking to General Golz about the Spanish corruption of his name: "'How do you say Golz in Spanish, Comrade General?' 'Hotze,' said Golz grinning, making the sound deep in his throat as though hawking with a bad cold. 'Hotze,' he croaked. 'Comrade General Khotze [Italics are mine.] If I had known how they pronounced Golz in Spanish I would pick me out a better name before I come to war here.'" The Spanish corruption of Golz into something sounding much like "Quixote" is only one of several suggestions that For Whom the Bell Tolls has an ironic resemblance to the mock epic. The malady of Cervantes' character Don Quixote was that he lived in an ideal world that did not coincide with reality and that was not understandable to realists like Sancho Panza. Don Quixote's illusory world is created out of books he has read. Robert Jordan is, in his capacity of the bridge blower, an extension of General Golz. The General takes an extraordinary amount of time, considering his rank, to explain his orders fully and in person to Jordan. The primitive peasants that he moves among are not

41 For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 7.
easily convinced of Jordan's high calling (none of Quixote's friends believe in him). In For Whom the Bell Tolls Agustin says, "In this war are many foolish things. . . . In this war there is an idiocy without bounds." 'Clearly,' said Pilar. 'Otherwise we could not be here.'" Even Jordan is at first doubtful of the sensibleness of his orders. He muses, "But should a man carry out impossible orders knowing what they lead to?" Later, even though Jordan knows that his mission is futile because the fascists have already reinforced La Granja, which the destruction of the bridge was supposed to prevent, he continues his mission to destroy the bridge. Jordan is also aware that his ideals are wasted on the Spanish people. "They turned on you often," he thinks, "but they always turned on every one. They turned on themselves, too. If you had three together, two would unite against one, and then the two would start to betray each other." But Jordan, like Don Quixote, carries out the nonsensical orders because of something he has "read." Golz points out with a pencil what Jordan is to do.

The ironic suggestion of the mock epic achieved by using the ignorant peasantry as foils to Jordan's idealism, just as Sancho Panza is a foil of Don Quixote's vagaries.

Jordan knows that Pablo sees the meaning of the bridge at

42 Ibid., p. 94. 43 Ibid., p. 162.
44 Ibid., p. 135.
once and does not like it because it means that he must leave his good location or be hunted down. And later, when he is forced to go along with the project, Pablo provides horses for his associates by recruiting men who own horses from neighboring bands and then killing the men. Pablo is not the only guerilla lacking in the ideals that Jordan has. When Jordan wants to know who is going to help him, he gets the response, "'To me the bridge means nothing,' one of the brothers said. 'I am for the mujer of Pablo.' 'Equally,' said the other brother. 'Equally,' the gypsy said."  

Pablo's mujer, Pilar, shows that she is a realist, not an idealist, when she scolds Primitivo for wanting to go to Sordo's aid when such an emotional response would have been futile and suicidal: "'Que va,' Pilar said. 'Another romantic. Dost thou not believe thou wilt die quick enough here without useless voyages.'"  

The most important purely humorous character in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is the gypsy Rafael, who is totally devoid of ideals. He is a minor figure, but does play a more important role than Agustin and Fernando, who are the only other characters that are primarily humorous. Hemingway uses a clever technique in handling the portraiture of Rafael. In nine humorous passages involving the Gypsy, Rafael speaks for himself, in dramatic scenes, in the first

---

five. After these five scenes, when the character's physical and verbal peculiarities are established, in humorous episodes his words and actions are only reported. The technique achieves both variety and economy of expression.

Part of the humor is the Gypsy's picturesque speech. When he first meets Jordan, he describes Pablo as one who "killed more people than the cholera ... more people than the typhoid fever." A little later he says, "Pablo killed more than the bubonic plague." His speech is characterized by hyperbole and exaggeration. His excitement at heroic pretensions is in the mock epic tradition. His is a childish mind when he is excited at the "great" deeds, meaning atrocities, Pablo has done. The effect is also mockery when he is so impressed by the complexity of Jordan's watch that he says it "should be able to read and write." He declares that the flight of Fascist planes had been in numbers enough "to kill us back to our grandfathers and forward to all unborn grandsons including all cats, goats and bedbugs." His description of the rabbits he killed when he left his post is burlesque because of the elevated diction. He says, "You cannot imagine what a debauch they were engaged in.... I found them together and slew them both."

---

Gypsies often appear in Hemingway's works, and they are usually treated with a mixture of awe and contempt. Rafael is no exception, for though Jordan calls him worthless, unreliable, and lazy, he treats him with more respect than some of his actions indicate he is due. His lies and exaggerations are accepted as if they are part of a poetic temperament. And Hemingway ironically justifies respect for the Gypsy when he shows him behaving with valor at the blowing of the bridge. There is, therefore, irony in the assignment that Pilar gives him after he deserts his military duty to kill rabbits. She says to Jordan, "Thy gypsy (I give him to thee) I have sent to gather mushrooms to cook with the hares." But it is not likely Rafael, given the character he has, would have felt the irony.

The mock-heroic attitude is evoked in the character of Agustin when he is on sentry duty and challenges Anselmo and Jordan. Anselmo answers:

"Dost thou not know us?"

"Yes," the voice said. "But it is an order. Have you the password?"

"No. We come from below."

"I know," the man said in the dark. "You come from the bridge. I know all of that... You must know the second half of the password."

"What is the first half then?" Robert Jordan said.

---

50 Ibid., p. 300.
"I have forgotten it," the man said in the dark. . . .

Finally Anselmo says:

"Uncock they piece."

"It is uncocked," the man said in the dark. "I let it down with my thumb and forefinger."

"Thou will do that with a Mauser sometime which has no knurl on the bolt and it will fire."

"This is a Mauser," the man said. "But I have a grip of thumb and forefinger beyond description."

The simple-minded Agustin, unlike Beowulf, whom this episode recalls, uses his great strength only for foolish reasons. Agustin is the anti-hero and the foil of both fascist precision and the conscientious thoroughness of Robert Jordan.

Another anti-heroic character is Fernando. In La Granja he has heard rumors of a Republican offensive, of the blowing of the bridge, and of troops being sent to clear the guerrillas out of the mountains near the bridge. All of the rumors are fact, but Fernando says, "Neither should one become alarmed at rumors. . . . Since it was but rumors, I paid no attention to any of it. . . . If I could remember, I would not. . . . It is beneath a man's dignity to listen and give importance to rumors." The effect of Pablo, Rafael, Agustin, and Fernando in their mock-heroic presentation is to heighten irony in the novel, which does  

51Ibid., p. 44.
have notable epic qualities.

Hemingway's new concern with society—Spanish repre-
senting the world—is frustrated by society's indifference
to its own destruction. Even so, *To Have and Have Not*, the
new works in *The Fifth Column* and *The First Forty-Nine
Stories*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* shows a new social
concern by Hemingway that implies a hopefulness lacking in
his works of the early thirties. On the other hand, the
morbid, macabre humor is there. It is merely concealed by
the busyness of the social concern, although that busyness
is itself a symptom of more optimism in Hemingway. Note
the macabre element in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. It is
found mainly in the "wound" of Robert Jordan, Pablo's mass-
murder of the fascists, Sordo's death, and Jordan's death.

The morbid quality in a Nick Adams character--Jordan
is one--is usually motivated by macabre incidents he endured
in war. The incidents constitute his wound, which may be
physical or psychological or both. But in *For Whom the
Bell Tolls* Jordan is, as Young points out, the first Nick
Adams hero in Hemingway's work to be too young to have been
in World War I. The wound, says Young, is the lynching and
burning of a Negro in Ohio that Jordan witnessed when he
was seven. 52 We may notice also that there is the suicide
of Jordan's father to consider. These are the most

---

important two incidents that account for Jordan's stoicism and fatalism.

Probably the most important incident that mitigates against the heroic conception of Pablo and his band is their brutal mass murdering of the fascists at the beginning of the revolution. Pablo arranges the square as if a _capea_, an amateur bull fight, were to be performed. But all of the Christian ritual is missing or is inverted. The episode can be described as an ironic "revolt of the bulls," for it is the primitive, almost animal, Spanish people who kill their refined oppressors this time. Mayor, merchant, priest, and soldier are killed by the drunken inhuman mob. The second victim "had no command of his legs," a frequent characteristic of the bullfighter, never of the bull. The fourth victim is, in fact, a bullfighter, albeit an unsuccessful one. As he approaches his executioners, he is even taunted with the cry, "He's seen the big bull now." Dealers in horses, feed dealers, and land owners are executed. Afterwards some of the executioners fight with each other, as bulls do unless oxen are used to calm them. The rebels are reduced to such an animal state that the meeting scheduled for after the executions has to be rescheduled for the next day. The macabre details are too numerous to try

---

53 _For Whom the Bell Tolls_, p. 110.
54 _Ibid._, p. 115.
to describe.

The pervading tone of the massacre is that of madness or meaninglessness. It is true that the procedure originally had a purpose, but that is soon lost sight of. Pilar tells two peasants, "I think that I have a belly-full." The answer is, "Us, too." The members of the crowd are shouting slogans. One peasant says of them, "They should shout, 'Long live drunkenness.' That's all they believe in." Someone answered, "Those neither understand nor believe in anything." One drunkard shouts "Long live me and long live Anarchy." Thus the scene pictures the toppling of reason. The personified Anarchy that is hailed is not only political anarchy, but the anarchy of Unreason prevailing over any kind of sensibleness.

Unreason is so obvious, and what one ordinarily calls the macabre is so profuse, that it may be necessary to find another term than _macabre_, or at least a qualification of it, in order to classify the phenomena. Incidents of the affectionate embracing of the death that _macabre_ denotes so glut the senses in this episode that an overall feeling of repulsion subdues the gentle acceptance of death. Yet there is a sense of mad laughter about the scene, a sense that the human-demons that perpetrate this have

---

55 _Ibid._, p. 119. 56 _Ibid._, p. 120. 57 _Ibid._, p. 122.
doomed themselves to living hells, even in a Godless, naturalistic universe and it is hilarious that they have punished themselves so greatly under the misapprehension that they are destroying others with impunity. The irony involved in Jordan's siding with these produces the strongest tension in the novel.

The macabre and gloating humor is remarkable in two more episodes that are similar in other ways also. These are the deaths of Jordan and Sordo. Both are wounded and caught in untenable situations and have to await death that they know is coming. Both are courageous and think of suicide, but decide to kill as many of the enemy as they can instead. Sordo's mind runs to gallows humor. In his pain he thinks of a Spanish joke: "You will have to take death as an aspirin." He borrows a pistol and fakes suicide so that he is able to lure the fascist captain into investigating and kill him. "This is ten times better than the aspirin," he thinks.

Jordan jokes also about his predicament. The joke is apparently necessary for both men to face death. Jordan faces his death lying on "the pine needle floor of the forest." The first sentence of the book and the last one show Jordan in the same position. Young finds in these two

\[\text{Ibid., p. 308.}\]  \[\text{Ibid., p. 314.}\]  \[\text{Ibid., pp. 1 and 471.}\]
sentences and in Jordan's seemingly fated actions throughout the book an attraction toward death that "brackets the novel." It is true that death is more dominant than in either To Have and Have Not or The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories. The humor that occurs is not able to soften the aspect of death as it has done in previous books, although the effect of humor is felt. When the caressing humor that is a part of the macabre weakens, the humor begins to take on more of the characteristics of l'humour noir, and perhaps the total effect of For Whom the Bell Tolls is more that of l'humour noir than of the macabre. Certainly the disintegration of humor in the Hemingway canon is rapid after the novel of the Spanish Civil War. There is, however, a ten-year span between For Whom the Bell Tolls and the next book, Across the River and into the Trees. That ten years includes two more divorces for Hemingway, the second World War, and the arrival of his fiftieth birthday.

61 Ernest Hemingway, A Reconsideration, p. 108.
CHAPTER VI

THE FINAL PHASE: LITERARY MORBIDITY

Early in November, 1940, a month after the publication of For Whom the Bell Tolls, Hemingway divorced Pauline Pfeiffer, whom he later called the best wife any man could have. His marriage to Martha Gellhorn, his third wife, took place two weeks later in Cheyenne, Wyoming.¹ That marriage endured a shorter period than any of his other three, lasting five years until December, 1945. In addition to his marital difficulties, there was also the tragedy of World War II. From 1942 to 1944 Hemingway used the 40-foot Pilar for anti-submarine patrol in a scheme that might well be called suicidal. Then he transferred to the European theater of operations where he witnessed the remainder of the war, of which the most remarkable episodes for him were the bloody actions on Fox Green beach and Easy Red beach on D-Day² and Huertgen Forest in November, 1945, where the 22nd Regiment of Colonel C. T. Lanham suffered,

²By-Line: Ernest Hemingway, p. 355.
in eighteen days, 2,600 casualties out of 3,200 men.\(^3\) Besides the difficulties of divorce and war Hemingway, more than most men, must have felt the passage of his youth and would have felt especially acutely the arrival of his fiftieth birthday on July 21, 1949, before the publication of Across the River and into the Trees on September 7, 1950, his first novel since For Whom the Bell Tolls.

A. ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES

There seems to be plenty of critical evidence that Across the River and into the Trees is Hemingway's poorest work. According to Philip Young, only Carlos Baker and John O'Hara have not considered it a failure. It is quite likely that the long-repressed rage that finds vent in the novel is, as Philip Young suggests, an important factor contributing to the failure.\(^4\) Certainly a very bitter satire is the basic form of the controlled humor in the novel. The spokesman for the satire is Colonel Cantwell, who is, perhaps, the most irascible major character in all of Hemingway. His irascibility detracts from the force of his satirical attacks on what he dislikes.

Colonel Cantwell's criticism is often directed at such broad targets as whole nationalities. For example, he


\(^4\) Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 8.
belittles American beauties, who mostly "come from soda counters, and . . . do not know their grandfather's last name." And he depreciates the British, "who," he says, "could not fight their way out of a wet tissue towel." His main attacks, however, are directed at the French, whom he accuses of venality and stupidity, of not having a military thinker since du Picq, and yet of having conceited opinions of their own military worth:

Mangin, Maginot and Gamelin. Take your choice, Gentlemen. Three schools of thought, One; I hit them on the nose. Two; I hide behind this thing which does not cover my left flank. Three; I hide my head in the sand like an ostrich, confident in the greatness of France as a military power and then take off.

The Colonel's denunciation of French General Leclerc has an autobiographical basis, for Hemingway had his own difficulties with the general while serving as a correspondent in World War II. The ridicule of Leclerc is made more forceful by its bulk. The repetition of satirical jibes has the effect of continued drops of water upon stone. Cantwell ridicules the plan of Allied Headquarters to reserve the first entering of Paris for Leclerc. Leclerc's success, he says, was in part due to the failure of the

---

5 Across the River and into the Trees, p. 247.
6 Ibid., p. 223. 7 Ibid., pp. 26-27.
Germans to defend the city seriously, yet it was not Leclerc but irregulars who first entered the city. The care which Hemingway gives to satirical details further strengthens the ridicule of Leclerc. The plan for Leclerc's "reserved" victory was shaped by SHAEF,\(^9\) whose members "wore a badge of shame in the form of a flaming something."\(^{10}\) Hemingway could have named the something accurately, but preferred, for his purpose, a vulgar suggestion. The ridicule is sharpened by the appearance of a concern for accuracy in crediting Leclerc with being very brave. At one time during the verbal lashing at Leclerc, the Colonel asks Renata, "Is this too technical and does it bore you?"\(^{11}\) Later in the novel the Colonel, speaking of Leclerc, says, "Very brave, very arrogant, and extremely ambitious. He is dead, as I said. . . . They say you should never speak ill of the dead. But I think it is the best time to speak truly of them."\(^{12}\)

Three American generals are also treated satirically. The Colonel's attack on Patton begins skillfully by first alluding to the "stupid eyes" of a lobster and then saying, "He looks a bit like Georgie Patton." Patton is not called

---

\(^9\)Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces.  
\(^{10}\)Across the River and into the Trees, p. 134.  
\(^{11}\)Ibid., p. 140.  
\(^{12}\)Ibid., pp. 217-18.
stupid, but the suggestion is forceful. Furthermore, each
time Patton's name is used it is preceded by the effeminate
"Georgie."\footnote{\textit{Tbid.}, pp. 115-16.} The satire is made more oblique and more ef­
ficive by attacking armor because "it makes men into bul­
lies which is the first step toward cowardice."\footnote{\textit{Tbid.}, p. 145.} The at­
tack on lobsters and armor partially conceals the real bit­
terness against Patton and, therefore, succeeds where more
direct ridicule might fail.

All American generals are attacked directly when
Cantwell says he does not care for football, especially "when
the very high brass speak in terms of American football so
they can understand, themselves, what they are talking of."\footnote{\textit{Tbid.}, p. 148.} But Walter Bedell Smith and Eisenhower are singled out,
with Patton, for special attention. The ridicule is buried
in the conversation between the Colonel and Renata and is
softened by this bulk of non-satirical material. The per­
sonal ridicule loses much of its sharpness because the
Colonel has so much bitterness about the war generally.
General Smith is presented as one who could not comprehend
the magnitude of the effort he was engaged in or even un­
derstand what had happened after the effort was over.
Eisenhower is not named, but is identified as a politician,
a Kansan, and a businessman. The Colonel says, "Nobody but

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Tbid.}, pp. 115-16.
\item \textit{Tbid.}, p. 145.
\item \textit{Tbid.}, p. 148.
\end{itemize}
Kansans ever had anything to do with it [Kansas brass]; except maybe us who fought." The satire reaches a climax when Renata says, referring to Smith and Eisenhower, "I'm glad we don't have to know him or the nylon-smooth man." Cantwell replies, "We won't have to know them this side of hell." The use of "nylon-smooth" by the peerless Renata is sexually colored and, with the use of "it" referring indirectly to Eisenhower and "Georgie" referring to Patton, shows that the sexual connotation is precise and not accidental. It is, however, precise with a light touch, and the apparent restraint makes the satire more effective because it suggests an attempt at honest evaluation. A heavier stroke would have risked becoming mere railing. The Colonel's assurance that contact may be avoided except in hell is doubly severe. It implies that the actions of the two generals are as unpleasing to God as to the Colonel. It also implies that merely having to know the men is a pain suitable only for hell.

*Across the River and into the Trees* is undoubtedly Hemingway's weakest work. It in no way deserves a major portion of the attention given to a critical survey of Hemingway's works. Nevertheless, because so many critics have seen the work as a near-parody of the author himself, as

---

16Ibid., p. 241. 17Ibid., p. 245.
Philip Young has,\(^{18}\) it is perhaps necessary to examine this issue. Nemi D'Agostino, attempting to explain the failure of the book, declares, "Hemingway wanted to transfigure his eternal hero, making him a pathetic and solemn figure, a creature of bitter passions and childish goodness, whose solitary experience has brought wisdom, nobility, and peace. But the character he actually portrays is that of an embittered and bad-tempered old man, querulous and self-conceited to the point of parody, full of boring and depressing boasts. . . . Tied still to his world of desperate young men, he [Hemingway] has only been able to fall back on his old type, in a mannered and senile version."\(^{19}\)

Philip Young discusses additional causes for the book's failure. He thinks that the long-restrained bitter rage that Hemingway allows to escape in the novel is responsible. He notes especially the irrelevant attacks on the American novelist. He feels the embarrassing conversation with Renata and with her portrait\(^ {20}\) detracts from the novel. Also damaging is an utterly uncritical attitude by the author toward his hero that allows "every opinion, taste

---

\(^{18}\)Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 8.


\(^{20}\)Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 117.
and whim" to be revealed. The code, he says, has become a joke, "El Ordine de Brusadelli," and movements that once meant something have become comic mannerisms. He gives the example of Cantwell "reaching accurately and well for the champagne bucket," and Renata, who "chewed well and solidly on her steak," and Cantwell's habit of sitting in the corner of the restaurant so that his flanks would be covered—"these make up a parody of the grace of execution and the need for defense which once made Hemingway distinctive. The writer was imitating himself, and the result is a more telling travesty than anyone else composed."22

It is not likely, however, that Across the River and Into the Trees can be called either intentional or unintentional parody. One reason is that the intentions of the author cannot be fully known. Another reason is that many of the passages that admit labeling as parody admit also interpreting simply as grotesque humor, a form of humor found in Hemingway's works from their first appearance. The critics who find elements of parody in the novel are usually cautious, labeling the elements "almost parody" or "near parody," not full-blown parody. There is, of course, a distinct difference. And there are, as we shall see, good reasons why near-parody and the grotesque appear in the work of this fifty-year-old author and pave the way for such a

21Ibid., p. 118. 22Ibid., pp. 118-119.
work of reconciliation as *The Old Man and the Sea* was.

It is natural that both the terms "near parody" and "grotesque" may be used in the discussion of the same work. The Hemingway hero, who is always associated with the author, became established between 1923 and 1940 as an active, athletic, virile young man who was usually a killer of men or animals or else was himself in danger of being killed by them. He was also linked to the submissive, worshipful female, and he was regularly the approximate age of Hemingway himself. Because the hero was a living being with the same hungers and habits as the author, who came close to making a fetishism of youth, he suffered critical ridicule when he refused to let his youth go and act like a man of fifty instead of one of nineteen. Some critical ambiguity results because a fifty-year-old Lothario is, in a sense, a parody of one who is nineteen years old. But for Hemingway, whose focus would have been on the hero and his life, not on his own style, the term used to describe the humorous quality of Cantwell must be *grotesque*, not parody. Most important to the theme of *Across the River and into the Trees* is a hero who has courage and desire to try to act the part of the youthful lover although he may be caught "too far out" and punished by ridicule for foolhardy actions. To state a relationship that is useful later in this study, it is also reasonable that, if the ridicule is severe enough or the hero is sensitive enough, he may alter
his view of himself, accepting his age and decay as a cross that must be borne, as, in fact, Santiago does in *The Old Man and the Sea*.

This close relationship of parody to the grotesque, which we have just examined, is of central importance to the humor of *Across the River and into the Trees*. One must remember that the grotesque has always been a part of Hemingway's humor, that the theme of extending oneself too far has been equally important, and that Hemingway was always quite sensitive to any criticism of his work. It is not likely that he would have parodied himself. Hemingway has shown previously that when a young man goes too far out he may be wounded, either physically in battle or emotionally by losing something dear to him. Military injuries and the death of lovers are significant injuries that one may suffer for exerting his manhood. Ridicule, to a sensitive person, is no less an injury, and Colonel Cantwell must suffer from it for precisely the same reasons as other Hemingway heroes suffer—asserting his manhood, going too far out.

Hemingway could not have failed to recognize that Cantwell's actions were grotesque. Some of his actions are simply too eccentric for him to have done them. But that is one of the risks that a Hemingway character of fifty must take. The people who are worthwhile in the novel do not mind. It is only the uninitiated who resent the
Colonel because he is "slug nutty" or "crazy," as Jackson the driver calls him. But Jackson is a typical Hemingway tourist. His amusement is to read comic books in Venice.

After the severe reviews of *Across the River and into the Trees*, Hemingway must have realized that the course he had taken in depicting Colonel Cantwell was the wrong one, for he alters his direction drastically in *The Old Man and the Sea*, which followed two years later. Santiago goes out too far, but he extends himself in ways quite different from the Colonel. He is not, in any sense, like the Colonel, a grotesque, but like every Hemingway hero he has suffered because of his manhood. After the numerous depictions of the tragic consequences of life, it is not surprising that Hemingway would choose for his last novel the Crucifixion theme.

**B. THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA**

A bare outline of the plot of *The Old Man and the Sea* would suggest its relation to gloating and to the macabre. But in a careful reading of the text, one finds a singularly humorless book. There is an overall irony in Santiago's snatching a moral victory from physical defeat. But the irony is in the total perspective, not in the details. There are, of course, some instances of humor. But

---

23 *Across the River and into the Trees*, pp. 27 and 58.
there are very few. For example, thinking of the big Marlin, Santiago says, "He is beautiful and noble and knows no fear of anything. 'I killed him in self-defense,' the old man said aloud. 'And I killed him well.'" But the exultation that is a necessary component of gloating is absent, because the old man is sorry that he has killed the fish. The killing of the sharks also lacks the note of triumph, for Santiago knows, even after killing several sharks, that he cannot be victorious. "He did not even watch the big shark sinking slowly in the water, showing first life-size, then small, then tiny. That always fascinated the old man. But he did not even watch it now." Just as The Old Man and the Sea lacks gloating humor because Santiago feels that he is doomed to fail and there is nothing to gloat about, so it lacks any strong manifestation of the macabre because at the end the old man is left still alive and well, although he is tired. The consensus of critics is that Hemingway "turned Christian" in The Old Man and the Sea. Although such an opinion, stated briefly, is a great oversimplification, there is much truth in it. The novel suggests a reconciliation, and the marginal area between realities and erroneous assumptions,

---

25 Ibid., pp. 111-12.
where humor operates, disappears. Santiago, like the frontiersman, goes far out, further than anyone else, but he carries no illusions with him, and, because he is alone, there are no illusions of others existent as comic foils. The sharks may easily be seen as evil; but in their wonderfully coordinated and powerful, but almost mindless, bodies they are not good symbols of either error or illusion.

Apparently Hemingway, like Santiago, decided, at least for a time, to accept the overriding natural forces of life. But the reconciliation was a brief one. The bitter humor that one finds in *Across the River and into the Trees* was not exhausted. It was vented again in two stories published in 1957.

C. TWO LATE STORIES

If one is doubtful of Hemingway's literary morbidity at the end of the 1950's, two stories published in *The Atlantic Monthly* of November, 1957, will remove all doubt. The complementary stories, "A Man of the World" and "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog" [sic] are not exceeded in grotesqueness by anything else Hemingway wrote. The first may be located in the tradition of Longstreet's "The Fight" and other frontier stories of this type. The protagonist of "A Man of the World" is Blindy, who had been called Blackie

---

26 Volume 200, pp. 64-68.
until he got into a barroom fight and had his eyes gouged out and bitten off. Blindy had his revenge on Willie, his antagonist, by biting part of his face off. In the story, which covers a period long after the fight, Blindy—he doesn't like to be called Blackie now—is gloating about recently getting even with Willie again when Willie picked him up on a cold night. He says he just felt Willie's face and told him he ought to bundle it up so the whole inside of it wouldn't catch cold. The story is told in a very high-pitched voice; Blindy got the high-pitched voice the same night he lost his eyeballs.

The companion story, "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog," concerns a blind man who is not getting along very well with his wife. The tone is very similar to "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." The hero is obviously suffering from anxiety reactions, depression, and probably alcoholism. It is likely that the hero has many characteristics in common with the author.

With the publication of "A Man of the World" and "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog" Hemingway completes another cycle. He has come from his hopeful rejoining of society in To Have and Have Not and For Whom the Bell Tolls back to a cynical outlook. Across the River and into the Trees is a bitter attack on the society, or elements of it, that he had apparently so hopefully rejoined in the novels of 1937 and 1940. The Old Man and the Sea is a pessimistic expla-
nation of the life of man in terms of the Crucifixion theme. And the two final stories, "A Man of the World" and "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog" are grotesque expressions of brutality and near despair.
CONCLUSION

This study has not attempted to find a one-to-one relationship between particular events in Hemingway's life and the humorous episodes in his work. But it does identify some distinct pressures operating at specific times that manifest themselves, though in quite metamorphosed form, in his literary output. His literary products were, among other things, both sublimations of his desires and cathartic ventings of frustration, anger, and bitterness. As he himself said, literature was a way he could make things endurable. Some of the irritants he compensated for in his stories are parental tyranny, arrogant snobbery, unworthiness in women, man's inhumanity to man, political tyranny, military atrocities, cowardliness, death (especially by suicide), ignorance of fundamental truths caused by narrow-mindedness, and, generally, a morally culpable universe.

Early in his life Hemingway found access to the tools that were necessary to handle a recalcitrant reality. In high school he engaged in creative writing, modeling himself on Poe, O. Henry, Kipling, and Ring Lardner. He was also very impressed by the work of Mark Twain. When he went into journalism in Kansas City, he received instruction in pungent writing and discovered, much to the enrich-
ment of his abilities as a humorist, a new type of character, the journalistic "boomer" of an era that was rapidly passing. In Chicago, after his experiences in World War I, he came under the influence of Sherwood Anderson, who is nearly in the tradition of the teller of tall tales. A short time later he was back in Europe in the intellectual swim where dadaism had just created a brief sensation and the hypotheses of surrealism, with meaningful implications for humor, were being formed. There was also the influence of the museums where Hemingway developed a special interest for the grotesquerie of Hieronymus Bosch and the earthy humor of Pieter Breughel.

Some of the assignments in Hemingway's journalistic career called especially for a humorous approach. The Toronto Daily Star and Star Weekly was especially partial to humor, especially satirical thrusts at the United States. And Hemingway's rites of literary initiation demanded parody of Sherwood Anderson, and perhaps others, in The Torrents of Spring.

Most fundamental, however, in Hemingway's outlook is a pervasive tendency to resolve the ironies of life by laughter and to combat a morbid temper with humor. A pervasive tint of grim humor is part of Hemingway's equipment as a writer of realism, especially early in the author's career when he saw life in terms of tragicomedy. Plotting Hemingway's literary course by its comic-tragic variations
and relating it to variations in his fortune must not be over emphasized. Variations in his fortunes must certainly never be advanced as the cause of his art. Yet one may, perhaps, find a pattern and progression in Hemingway's employment of humor if he does not try to fit the literary career too snugly to the life of the artist and is satisfied to find in a rather tragic life meaningful, or at least suggestive, clusters of tragic episodes interspersed with clusters of successes or optimistic stances. With these qualifications one may point out that Hemingway's earliest cynical outlook must have been tempered by three things. The first was repressive parents that he was obviously glad to get away from as early as he could and stay away from as consistently as possible. The other two shaping influences were two wounds received in World War I, one in the legs from an Austrian mortar and the other in the heart from an American nurse. The early stories and poems written shortly after this period reflect a cynicism that gradually moderated as more books and short works were produced.

The first of the two optimistic periods culminates with literary independence and notable literary success in The Torrents of Spring and The Sun Also Rises. The tone of these two works, which is obviously less cynical than that of the works immediately preceding and following them, bears, perhaps, a causal relationship to Hemingway's par-
tially escaping from his troubles and to his writing them out, a form of medication which we have his word he was capable of.

It is very suggestive that the next three more pessimistic full-length works did not follow immediately upon these successes but were separated from them by Hemingway's first divorce, his father's suicide, and (except for *A Farewell to Arms*) an automobile accident that nearly took his arm.

Hemingway's second marriage proved in time to be his most satisfactory one. He continued to write about pain and death, and his works became progressively less pessimistic. His native country, which he had scorned, partly because of its oppressive Prohibition laws, became more the oppressed than the oppressor after 1929, and tyranny, as Hemingway saw it, shifted to Europe, where fascism was a growing threat. While these changes were progressing, Hemingway came home, became more concerned with social issues, and wrote a more varied and vital humor into *To Have and Have Not* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Hemingway's lighter spirit did not continue in *Across the River and into the Trees* and *The Old Man and the Sea*, which followed the more optimistic works only after the calamities of World War II, two more divorces, and Hemingway's fiftieth birthday had occurred. The last two books contain, respectively, ventings of bitter satire and
tragic irony. They close Hemingway's literary career. Everyone agrees that Hemingway's view is basically a tragic one. But no one can deny that that tragic view makes use of a humor in which the pulsation between grim humor and less pessimistic humor corresponds suggestively to the fluctuations in the writer's outlook.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary


. "The Age Demanded," *Querschnitt,* V (February, 1925), 111.


. *For Whom the Bell Tolls.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.


"The Soul of Spain with MacAlmon and Bird the Publishers, Parts II-VI," Querschnitt, V (February, 1925), 278.

The Sun Also Rises. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.

To Have and Have Not. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.


Secondary


Gelfant, Blanche. "Language as a Moral Code in *A Farewell to Arms,"* *Modern Fiction Studies,* IX (summer, 1963), 173-76.


APPENDIX
APPENDIX

A Moveable Feast is of amazingly good quality, perhaps too good to have been written during 1958-1960, when, according to Philip Young, Hemingway was working on it.\(^1\) Hotchner says that most of the book was written earlier.\(^2\) Young thinks that the reason A Moveable Feast exhibits prose like that Hemingway had written forty years before may be that it came from some of his recently discovered notebooks of the Paris years.\(^3\) If that is the case, then the bitter vindictiveness of the satire expresses feelings that belong to the 1920's more than to the 1950's. But the memories, whether they were recorded in Hemingway's mind or on his notebooks, were being turned over in the author's mind in the late 1950's with the intention of publishing them.

Because it is impossible to date the composition of these satirical sketches they will be discussed in this

\(^1\)Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 268.

\(^2\)Papa Hemingway, p. 297. Hotchner gives us Hemingway's statement of 1961 that he had written the "best" of A Moveable Feast "before" and could not finish it, a factor which in Hotchner's view is important in Hemingway's suicide.

\(^3\)Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 279. These notebooks are not available to scholars.
During the years 1958-1960 and the ones leading up to them, many trials which seriously threatened his work confronted Hemingway. In the summer of 1953 he was in two plane crashes in Africa and sustained an injured spine, ruptured kidney, concussion, double vision, and several burns. Hotchner comments on Hemingway's fear that he might "sound like a morbid" and registers his shock at how the author had aged in five months, his hair and beard turning from brindle to white.\(^4\) While he was in Europe, he was told by an excellent European doctor that he had cirrhosis of the liver and (unless he changed his life) less than ten years to live.\(^5\) In July, 1960, he left Finca Vigia under threat of Castro's communist regime. By October, 1960, according to descriptions by A. E. Hotchner, he was suffering from delusions of persecution.\(^6\) By the beginning of 1961, according to Young, it was discovered at the Mayo Clinic that he was suffering from hepatitis, hypertension, diabetes, hemochromatosis, and deep depression;\(^7\) by spring he had received twenty-five electroshock treatments. Young says that in his last interviews with literary people, Hemingway

\(^4\)\textit{Papa Hemingway}, pp. 82-83.  
\(^5\)\textit{My Brother, Ernest Hemingway}, p. 272.  
\(^7\)\textit{Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration}, p. 269.
had shocked Leslie Fiedler by "his uncertainty that he had ever written anything good" and embarrassed Seymour Betsky, who said, "we wanted to get out of there. . . . The man we saw was something of a ghost."^8

A Moveable Feast is Hemingway's most satirical work; it is, in fact, a catalogue of satirical portraits. Gertrude Stein and Scott Fitzgerald receive most of the ridicule. But other people are satirized also. Hemingway is always blunt in his disapproval of what he calls "phonies." It is into the category of "phonies" that several of his portraits fit. In the chapter entitled "The Man Who Was Marked for Death" Hemingway draws a scornful picture of a minor Irish poet and editor, Ernest Walsh. There is direct abuse: Walsh, according to Hemingway, promises the same prize to two people, perhaps more. The prize is given annually by Walsh's magazine, and Walsh promises it to both Hemingway and Joyce in the same year. Most of the satire, however, is indirect. Walsh is pictured as an ineffectual person with very poor taste. Hemingway first shows him with two girls that are later suggested to be shills. They are very impressed by Walsh's poetry because, they say, he gets twelve hundred dollars apiece for his poems, which is more, they say, than Eddie Guest gets. Hemingway relates, for the record, that he himself gets

^8Ibid., 270.
twelve dollars a page from the same source. The incrimination in this passage is indirect, for Walsh makes no claims for himself. Walsh is further attacked by implication when Hemingway writes of the prize Walsh's magazine is supposed to give: "Let us hope and believe always that it was completely honorable in every way. Certainly nothing could ever be said or imputed against Walsh's co-editor." Another thrust directed at Walsh pictures him when he invites Hemingway to lunch at the best and most expensive restaurant in the Boulevard St. Michel quarter and orders expensive oysters. "I was wondering," writes Hemingway, "if he ate the flat oysters in the same way the whores in Kansas City . . . always wished to swallow semen as a sovereign remedy against the con."^10

One of the most devastating portraits in A Moveable Feast is that of Ford Maddox Ford. Ford is ridiculed for physical nastiness and affectation, but the focus of the satire is on Ford's ordering drinks in a Parisian cafe. The attention of the reader is drawn away from Hemingway's more deprecating direct judgment about Ford by the details given about the drinks. Ford orders a Chambéry Cassis first, but changes it to a fine a l'eau. When the drink is brought, Ford insists the waiter is in error, and Hemingway drinks it to prevent hard feelings. Ford asks for his

9 A Moveable Feast, p. 123. 10 Ibid., p. 124.
original order. Then he asks Hemingway why he is drinking brandy, a drink Ford considers fatal for young writers. But after Hemingway pretends to be interested in the social distinctions between cad, bounder, gentleman, and parson, Ford says, "I'm glad you're interested. . . . I'll have a brandy and water with you before I go." During the time the drinks are being brought, Hemingway narrates the barrage of uncomplimentary impressions of Ford that go through his mind. Because Ford sits before him, but can not keep his attention, although he tries, Hemingway's thoughts have the effect of being secondary to the conversation, as if Hemingway does not care whether his ridicule of Ford is taken seriously or not. The satire is more effective because of the diversionary tactic.

The satire against Gertrude Stein is quite different. Most of the criticism is directed at her vanity, her attitudes towards sex, or her opinions. And little of it is presented dramatically. Hemingway reports that she told him that she wanted to be and would be published in the Atlantic, but that he was not good enough for that or The Saturday Evening Post. She also tries to enlighten him about homosexuality. She explains, "The main thing is that the act the male homosexuals commit is ugly and repugnant and afterwards they are disgusted with themselves. . . . In

\[11\] Ibid., p. 87.
women it is the opposite. They do nothing that they are
disgusted by and nothing that is repulsive and afterwards
they are happy and they can lead happy lives together."\(^{12}\)
Hemingway never states that Gertrude Stein is a lesbian,
but the circumstantial evidence he presents is very
persuasive.

Speaking of Gertrude Stein's abilities as a writer
and an intellectual, Hemingway says that he "got--forced,
perhaps would be the word--Ford Maddox Ford to publish" her
in *The Transatlantic Review*.\(^{13}\) He relates that, when he knew
her, she did not like to read French although she liked to
speak it. If one brought Joyce's works up twice, he was
not invited back, and. according to Hemingway, she did not
think Anderson's stories made good conversation.\(^{14}\) The im-
plication that comes out of Hemingway's comments on her
reading is that she was incapable of enjoying serious read-
ing or material written in French.

Hemingway reports an argument with Gertrude Stein
about the lost generation. A garage owner had used the
phrase "lost generation" to abuse one of his mechanics.
Stein says:

"All of you young people who served in the war.
You are a lost generation. . . . You drink your-
selves to death. . . ."

"Was the young mechanic drunk?" I asked.

\(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 20. \(^{13}\)Ibid., pp. 17-18.
\(^{14}\)Ibid., pp. 27-28.
"Of course not."

"Have you ever seen me drunk?"

"No. But your friends are drunk."

"The boy's patron was probably drunk by eleven o'clock in the morning," I said. "That's why he makes such lovely phrases."

"Don't argue with me, Hemingway," Miss Stein said. "It does no good at all. You're all a lost generation, exactly as the garage keeper said."

The argument, as reported, shows not only that Gertrude Stein had an illogical mind, but it also shows that she had a closed one, one where argument "does no good at all." Her taking the opinion of the garage keeper as a meaningful comment on literary and social history is ridiculous. In choosing as his satirical subject the naming of the lost generation, Hemingway selects one that is important in the history of the twenties. It was Hemingway that made Stein's borrowed phrase famous, perhaps her most famous statement. Hence the satirical explanation of its origin is a thrust at the heart of Stein's literary reputation.

The satire on Fitzgerald is startlingly severe. Fitzgerald is presented as an extremely immature person. His awkwardness is described at greater length and in more detail than is used in any other of Hemingway's satirical portraits. The most punishing ridicule describes a trip to

---

15 Ibid., p. 29.
Lyon to get Fitzgerald's car that has been abandoned there. He and Hemingway are supposed to go together, but Fitzgerald misses the train. "I had never heard, then," writes Hemingway, "of a grown man missing a train; but on this trip I was to learn many new things." The car had been left because it was raining and the car's top had been cut away on Zelda's orders because it was damaged. She would not allow it to be replaced. Scott had persisted in running the car without oil and water until the paint is burnt off the motor. On the return trip from Lyon, Hemingway and Fitzgerald stop about ten times because of the rain.

On the same trip, in the hotel at Chalon-sur-Saone, Fitzgerald is convinced that he is dying of lung congestion and has Hemingway send for a thermometer. The only thermometer available is a bath thermometer, but Hemingway is able to trick Fitzgerald into accepting it and believing that he is well, which he is. He writes, "You could not be angry with Scott any more than you could be angry with someone who was crazy." He says he is aware of his error in allowing Fitzgerald to drink and explains, "it had never occurred to me that sharing a few bottles of fairly light, dry, white Mâcon could cause chemical changes in Scott that would turn him into a fool." The satire tends to understatement elsewhere, except for occasionally powerful

\[16\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 155. \ \ 17\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 164.\]
thrusts when Fitzgerald is called crazy or a fool. Sexual ridicule is almost always involved in Hemingway's lengthy satirical portraits. The climax of the ridicule of Fitzgerald is reached in the description of his depression after Zelda has told him that he could make no woman happy because of his measurements. After Hemingway's assurance that everything is as it should be, the measurements having been checked in the bathroom, Fitzgerald is advised to study carefully the paintings and statues at the Louvre for further assurance. The ridicule strikes, of course, not at Fitzgerald's manhood, but at his naïveté. But the sexual element here and elsewhere has the consistency of a formula in Hemingway: all inferiority or deficiency is ultimately depicted in sexual terms.

The satire of *A Moveable Feast* is so bitter that Young is moved to say, "Underneath his [Hemingway's] well-known openness and generosity there was a mean, wary streak. He couldn't have been all that good nor they, perhaps, all that vulnerable."¹⁸ In explaining the vindictiveness, Young says:

> ... one remembers the terrible need for reassurance that caught Hemingway up during the months of acute depression in his last two years, when he felt that after all he had been knocked out and nothing he had ever written was worth a damn. As George Plimpton guessed in an early review, one function of this book was probably therapeutic.

¹⁸ *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration*, p. 281.
It was as if by "touching down" at these places and times, and even specific bottles and meals, the author could bring back the serenity and order that were failing him so badly. We know he had done this sort of thing before, as in "Big Two-Hearted River." And now he must touch down once more, with the same fanatical precision."

Young is, of course, assuming that significant work was done on *A Moveable Feast* between 1958 and 1960. He assumes a cyclical pattern in Hemingway when he discusses his death, "Indian Camp," and *A Moveable Feast*:

Thus Hemingway's life ended where his fiction had begun—had begun with a "forecast" so unintentional and obscure that only hindsight has chillingly felt it as an omen. So Hemingway's career came full circle, from early wounds around to a final one. With the sketches of *A Moveable Feast*, a record of the brilliant apprenticeship days in Paris, even the writing to date ends where it began.

---

19 Ibid., pp. 289-290. 20 Ibid., p. 263.
VITA

Thomas Neal Hagood was born March 14, 1930, in Birmingham, Alabama. He was graduated from Kimberly, Alabama, in 1942 and from Mortimer Jordan High School, Morris, Alabama, in 1948. From 1948 to 1950 he served in the United States Navy. He received the B.A. degree in English and history from Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, Alabama, in 1954 and the M.A. degree from Birmingham-Southern College, Birmingham, Alabama, in 1960. His master's thesis was entitled PLACE-NAME PATTERNS IN JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA. He began work toward the doctorate at Louisiana State University in the fall of 1959. Fourteen years of teaching experience includes terms taught at Jacksonville State University, Louisiana State University (as a graduate teaching assistant), New Mexico Military Institute, and Memphis State University. He is presently assistant professor of English at McNeese State College. He married Elizabeth Annette Stone in 1961, and they have three sons--Craig Edgar, Bruce Thomas, and Hugh James.
Candidate: Thomas Neal Hagood

Major Field: English

Title of Thesis: Elements of Humor in Ernest Hemingway

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: May 17, 1968