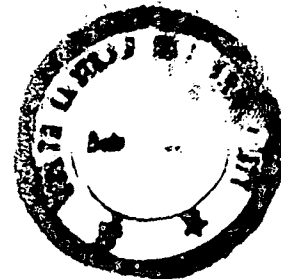


ERNEST HEMINGWAY
THE WAR EXPERIENCE

GEETAM SARMA
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY



To



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C E R T I F I C A T E

I certify that the dissertation entitled "ERNEST HEMINGWAY : THE WAR EXPERIENCE" submitted by Geetam Sarma in part fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Master of Philosophy of the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong embodies the record of original investigation carried out by her under my supervision.

She has been duly registered and the dissertation presented is worthy of being considered for the award of the Master of Philosophy degree. This work has not been submitted for any degree of any other University.

Place : Shillong

Date : 3 December
1986


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CHAPTER - IERNEST HEMINGWAY'S APPRENTICESHIP

Hemingway's arrival in the mid 1920s created a new epoch in American fiction. During his lifetime, Ernest Hemingway was very probably America's most famous writer. His style, his heroes, his manner and attitudes have been recognized wherever books are widely read. That lucid prose with its seething emotional force held in check by an iron will has had countless imitators since his time. The romantic glamour with which he coloured the life, loves and locales of his heroes have become legion and they still retain their power from the time he moved with such rapidity, between the wars, from apprenticeship to mastery¹.

As a man and as an artist, Hemingway began his apprenticeship in the years between 1916 and 1924 during which he acquired much of the material which he was to use in his early fiction, as well as the basic attitudes which were to shape his vision. It was in the field of journalism that Hemingway first worked out his literary apprenticeship. Between 1916 and 1923 he worked as a newspaper reporter and although there were frequent intervals, this was a time of growth and success. Besides journalism, the traumatic experience of war, travel, sport, his early youth in the Michigan

1. Baker, Carlos - Saturday Review, July 29, 1961.

woods as well as his various literary associations all combined to give him the essential background material and medium for much of his work. Hemingway's apprenticeship, however, never really ended, he always stressed upon himself the need for growth and discipline, and it is this which has contributed to his durability.

Ernest Hemingway was born and brought up in the provincial Illinois suburb of Oak Park which not only influenced him but also made him more sensitive to certain aspects of suburban life. He was always acutely aware of Oak Park, although he never actually wrote about its milieu; infact many Oak Parkers wondered how he could write of a world so steeped in violence and vice raised as he was within the strict confines of suburban respectability. But a young boy with an intelligent, enquiring and satiric mind as Hemingway's was bound to be affected by the narrow Puritanical world of the tightly knit society of Oak Park where a son of the illustrious Hemingways and Halls was scrutinized with interest and curiosity by the neighbours. Hemingway's father was a physician who tried to urge his son on to a healthy outdoor life of shooting and camping but his artistic musician mother almost smothered him with her overpowering love for culture and the resulting conflict naturally created tension in the already precocious young

boy. He found a natural outlet for his restless energy and his inborn creative traits in the active liberal arts department of Oak Park High School where he realised his talent for writing stimulated by the imaginative curriculum and by the particular interest of his English teachers Margaret Dixon and Fannie Biggs. He was editor of the school magazine Trapeze and contributed regularly to the literary magazine the Tabula where he tried his hand at fiction and verse. The chief significance of Hemingway's school writing was to emphasise the crucial apprenticeship which lay ahead of him in journalism, in war and his European associations of the 1920s. His high school writing displayed his fresh narrative style, his sharp interest in all new experience as well as his gift for lucid self expression. An important aspect of his school writing was his already growing bent towards violence (as in Sepi Jingan and The Judgement of Manitou) which later dominated his work so much. But perhaps nothing was of greater significance than Hemingway's response to a Chicago Tribune columnist called Ring Lardner who was the contemporary writer most widely read in Chicago. Hemingway paid suitable tribute to him in the Trapeze by adapting the Lardnerian idiom to the High School framework. But like all great imitators, Hemingway did not end with imitation alone, he made Lardner's technique

his own by injecting it with his own brand of high school humour coupled with the Lardnerian posture of self derision. Hemingway learnt a great deal from Lardner's use of burlesque humour and satire and the clever use of idiomatic prose which showed not only his familiarity but also his grasp of Lardner's technique. Like all influences this too was outgrown but Lardner gave Hemingway a sense of direction which later helped him in his writing career. The Trapeze experience on the whole was invaluable in giving him the necessary foothold to move on to a journalistic career soon after graduation in the summer of 1917.

Emerging from the relatively sheltered world of Oak Park, Illinois, Kansas City and the tough world of daily newspaper reporting was an intense experience for the young Hemingway. He had very much wanted to enlist for the war, but to no avail. He was considered too young. Finally, he was sent off to Kansas City where he went through a very crucial period in his career starting off as a newspaper reporter in the Kansas City Star which at that time was one of the best newspapers in the U.S. . It was the Star which really taught Hemingway the very basics of good writing which he was to remember throughout his career. The atmosphere of the Star copy room was new and exciting

and the reporters were all young people surging with enthusiasm. The Star editors did not believe in the general practice of recruiting experienced journalists - they gave their reporters the experience they needed. The Star prided itself on its high standard of reporting conveyed through its good, clear, simple language. The slightly heavy High School literary style that Hemingway had brought along with him, inspite of his excellent teachers was chiselled into what we know today as the surface characteristics of Hemingway's very distinctive style. The Star had a long style sheet which the new recruits were expected to study meticulously, and among these were the first principles of good writing: "Use short sentences, short first paragraphs, vigorous language and be positive not negative."² Emphasis was laid on originality, accuracy, authenticity and immediacy. The use of hackneyed slang and extravagant language was strongly discouraged. Language had to be sharp and clear like the polished pebbles in a brook. Hemingway's indebtedness to the Star is too apparent.

Hemingway's penchant for action and violence evident since his early high school writing became even more pronounced as a Star reporter. He managed to secure the General Hospital, the 15th Street Police Station and the Union Station

2. Fenton, A. Charles - The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway,
(New American Library 1961) Page 35.

beat and was out late nights reporting on small time crime, Chasing ambulances and meeting shady characters and celebrities coming in and going out of town. He had a full and exciting life hardly ever sitting at his desk, suddenly disappearing at the sound of a siren. He wanted to be always on the spot and refused to report or write on anything which he had not witnessed first hand. Starting out as an ambulance driver in the First World War, he wrote A Farewell to Arms having seen the world of Frederick Henry, his fictional hero at first hand. During the Spanish Civil War he was present in Madrid filming the documentary "The Spanish Earth". The film-making was not easy, the crew having to wade through difficult terrain, army tanks, Loyalist soldiers and lengthy red tape, but it gave him first hand knowledge which he used when he wrote For Whom the Bell Tolls. Even his non fiction work, Green Hills of Africa and Death in the Afternoon evoke a world which Hemingway knew and enjoyed. This urge for first hand experience learnt in the mammoth Star copy room stayed with him throughout his career and gave his work that distinctive flavour of immediacy and accuracy.

Pete Wellington, the assistant city editor of The Star at that time was the one person who influenced Hemingway the most during this period. From Wellington, he learnt the craft of writing about simple things simply. A crisp lucid

prose easily understandable without tangling up the words or the mind of the reader was encouraged. " Those were the best rules I learnt for the business of writing", Hemingway told a newspaper in 1940, "I've never forgotten them. No man with any talent who feels and writes truly about the thing he is trying to say, can fail to write well if he abides by them".³ Charles Edgar, Hemingway's friend and confidante of those years recalls that Hemingway considered his journalistic work as a means to an end - the writing interested him mainly and he would often make the dramatic promise not uncommon in a newspaper staff room that he would write the "great American novel". From his seven month stint at Kansas City, Hemingway took with him not only the lessons he had learnt about writing, but also a trained reporter's eye which would enable him to profit considerably from his Italian experiences. He took with him too a reservoir of material from which he could draw when he began his serious writing. He was better prepared for a part of his apprenticeship which would in a way be equally important to him.

" I was an awful dope when I went to the last war", said Hemingway in 1942, " I can remember just thinking

3. Quoted in The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway - Fenton

Charles - Hemingway, Ernest, " Monologue to the Maestro", Esquire III (November 1935).

that we were the home team and the Austrians were the visiting team."⁴

It seemed like the greatest game in the world when Hemingway and his friend Ted Brumback drew their last pay check from the Kansas City Star and started on their long journey to the Italian front.

Looking back to that First War one is tempted to postulate a death wish in an entire culture, perhaps caused by the peace and comfort in the years before 1914, a debt which had to be met by offering the most cherished of their young men as human sacrifice. Those blood sacrifices of the great war were, however, unique in the sense that the young soldiers were often willing victims. For Americans in 1917, the war was something you "went to", as Archibald Mac-Leish has pointed. It was not a condition, but a place.⁵ Something Cowley has called the "spectatorial attitude" was especially prevalent among soldiers who were also young American writers, and this for reasons that are not impossible to explain. In 1917, there happened to be a larger than usual number of apprentice writers. They had more imagination than most of their contemporaries. They wanted to see everything so that they could write about everything. One

4. Baker, Carlos - Ernest Hemingway - A Life Story (Charles Scribner and Sons, 1970) Page 54.

5. Cowley, Malcolm - A Second Flowering, (Andre Deutsch, 1973) Page-8.

service under foreign command that attracted a considerable number of writers was Ambulance driving in the French or the Italian front. It offered an expeditious means of getting to the front and it also offered a panorama of the battle field only a little less extensive than that enjoyed by airmen. The ambulance drivers were gentlemen volunteers detached in spirit from the armies, and to the end they remained observers, if helpful ones, and this spectatorial attitude is revealed in much of their writings.

" I thought..... what a great advantage an experience of war was to a writer. It was one of the major subjects and certainly one of the hardest to write truly of and those writers who had not seen it were always jealous and tried to make it seem unimportant, or abnormal or a disease as a subject, while really, it was just something quite irreplaceable that they had missed."⁶

Hemingway had always valued enormously his experience of war. Even at eighteen he sensed instinctively its potential utility as material and as an area for self discipline as observer and student. His behaviour during that period was neither abnormal nor ghoulish. It was the same instinct which impelled a writer of another generation in another war to say:

6. Hemingway, Ernest - Green Hills of Africa (Granada Publishing, 1978) Page 70.

" All the time I was overseas, " Norman Mailer said shortly after the publication of The Naked and the Dead in 1948, " I had conflicting ideas, wanting the way everybody else did to get the softest job, to get by with the least pain and also wanting to get into combat and see it".⁷

Hemingway regarded the opportunity in an even more intense way because of his temperament making involvement even more natural for him in Italy than for Mailer in Luzon in 1944.

Hemingway threw himself into the front line life with his old intensity and out of those few days, he would create not only A Farewell to Arms, but also several fine short stories. Al Receives Another Letter was, however, the extent of Hemingway's work during the war published in a Red Cross Bulletin called Ciao. There was an illusion of effortless flow and a consistency of treatment that made it superior to Hemingway's Oak Park columns. The story was organized with a coherence that stemmed directly from the severe city

7. Quoted in Fenton, Charles - The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway (New American Library, 1961)

room and discipline of the Kansas City Star. His tenure at the front was, however, short-lived. On the night of July 8, near the tiny Italian village of Fossalta, Hemingway was struck by exploding fragments of a trench mortar while handing out chocolates to Italian soldiers. However, in reality he showed considerable heroism, but this came after he was wounded. He picked up on his back a soldier more severely wounded than himself which earned him the Silver Cross. This scene was forcefully recollected in A Farewell to Arms. After he regained consciousness he was carried by stretcher and the bearers as again in A Farewell to Arms, dropped him several times. He was admitted into the Red Cross Hospital in Milan where he was nursed back to health by a nurse called Agnes Von Kurowsky who later was characterised as Catherine Barkely.

His front line experience was brief but the wound qualified him as a combat man and deepened his absorption in war as a temporary arena for the study of men and for the expression of his creative energy. The brevity of his service, he later concluded, was an advantage to him as a writer. " Any experience of

war, " he said in 1952," is invaluable to a writer. But it is destructive if he has too much."⁸ He came back from the front with a burning desire to write and this was directly connected with the war. He seemed to have a tremendous need to express the things he had felt and seen. The effect of Hemingway's wounding naturally had deep psychological implications on his creative faculties. The wound gave him a sensitivity to the trauma of war which was channelled into his creative writing. The war became the back drop for the study of " grace under pressure". His judgements about men at war, because of the nature of his close experience with it would always be sharp and deeply felt for he had gone through the "baptism of fire."

In the summer of 1918, Hemingway was satisfied with war. He was able to learn quickly in Thrace and Macedonia where he covered the Greco-Turkish War as a war correspondent because he was "blooded at Fossalta".⁹ It is on this basis that World War I must be included in his literary apprenticeship.

Hemingway's tenure as a war correspondent in the Greco-Turk War was particularly significant in

8. Ibid, Page 61.

9. Ibid, Page 62.

his apprenticeship, because it was here that he learnt the art of "cabalese." Even in the seventy world cables he had to send back to the Kansas City Star he aimed for Impressionism creating it both by a string of positive adjectives- "Constantinople is noisy, hot, hilly, dirty and beautiful" and by a sense of tension as in "packed with uniforms and rumours."¹⁰ Most writers were content to describe an emotion as it was felt by themselves or their heroes, in the hope that the reader would be moved by it, but this was a method which made him a mere auditor of someone else's fear or rage or longing. Hemingway wanted his readers to feel the emotion directly as if he were taking part in it. The best way, he decided, was to set down exactly in the proper sequence, the sights, sounds, touches, tastes and smells that had evoked an emotion he remembered feeling.

" In writing for a newspaper you told what happened and with one trick and another you committed the emotion aided by the element of timeliness which gives a certain emotion to any account of something that has happened on that day; but the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion and which would be as valid in a year, or in ten years or with luck if you stated it purely enough, always, was beyond me, and I was working very hard to try to get it."¹¹

¹⁰. Ibid, Page 138.

¹¹. Hemingway, Ernest - Death in the Afternoon (Triad/
Doubleday, 1927) Page 8.

"Purely enough", for Hemingway, meant without tricks of any sort and without conventionally emotive language and with a bare minimum of adjectives and adverbs. It also meant that the permanent work had to be written like Cabalese, with everything omitted that the reader could take for granted and with each detail so carefully chosen that it did the work of six or seven. One of Hemingway's early studies was the art of omission.

Hemingway's reaction to the tragic spectacle of military defeat was both sensitive and imaginative. He was an accurate and informative reporter of this basic element of war- the withdrawal of a large army through enemy country. Years later he would use his Near East experience and work it into The Snows of Kilimanjaro as a fragment of memory. Hemingway learnt other things about a retreat, things he did not mail back but saved for the long Caporetto passage in A Farewell to Arms.

The scene of refugee misery was the permanent scar of Hemingway's Near East experience and it was here that he "really learnt about war",¹² as he once remarked to Cowley. Quick to anger and indignation at

12. Mc Caffery, John K.M., ed. Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Work (Cleveland: World, 1950) (Essay by Malcolm Cowley)



human suffering he had reacted strongly to the appalling tragedy of World War I, and here in the road to Adrianople he was witness to a spectacle of human suffering that he had never imagined before. This suffering deepened his desire to express himself as a writer. The shocking cruelty to animals had a powerful effect on him. He used his remembered images, not only in the brief photographic inter-chapters of In Our Time but also in The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Death in the Afternoon.

His Near East experience, gave Hemingway a depth to his understanding of war. His political and geographical boundaries were extended and it made him more sensitive to human tragedy. The civilian suffering he saw sharpened his sensibilities and gave him a worldliness which characterised much of his early work. Paris itself with its gay crowds was a shocking contrast to Adrianople. As with Harry ⁱⁿ The Snows of Kilimanjaro there was something in Paris which only aggravated his memories. "So when he got back to Paris that time he could not talk about it or stand to have it mentioned".¹³ The strongest impression he took with him from the Near East was one of indifference towards suffering.

13. Hemingway, Ernest - The Snows of Kilimanjaro (Triad/Panther 1977) Page 20.

Hemingway's debt to journalism was a large one and he always acknowledged it. Unlike many ex-newspapermen he neither sentimentalised it nor exaggerated its threat to creative writing. But in the year 1924, he decided to part ways with newspaper reporting. In newspaper reporting, he maintained later, one has to forget everyday what has happened the day before. He always felt a parallel between journalism and war, each being valuable to a writer upto the point when it begins to destroy the memory. A writer must leave it before that point but the scars will always be there.

It required a considerable intensity and courage to abandon a vocation in which one was considered a professional, and in 1924, Ernest Hemingway was just one among the many aspiring creative writers. But the demands of newspaper reporting were bogging him down and using up all his time and energy. "It is impossible for me to do any writing of my own", he wrote to Sylvia Beach in Paris.¹⁴ And it was Paris, the homing ground of all European artists that beckoned, and urged him to realise his ambition of writing "the great American novel".

14. Baker, Carlos - Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story (Charles Scribner and Sons, 1970) Page 155.

CHAPTER IIA FAREWELL TO ARMS : : : A STUDY IN ISOLATION

In America the Great War provided a curious combination of circumstances in that a particularly voluble group of young men went to Europe and were allowed to observe the war from what Malcolm Cowley has called a "spectatorial point of view".¹ If these men were horrified by what they saw they were also frustrated by its inconclusiveness. What is more important, a greater proportion lived to tell about their experiences than was the case with the soldiers of the European armies. As a result the literature of protest was prodigious in America. The works of these novelists represented the war as it really was ; the experience of the war lent them a realistic and horrifying style. The most enduring novels are those of Cummings, Dosz Passos, Faulkner and Hemingway, the men of whom it was said :

"If the war taught them bitterness, it was a bitterness tinged with longing and detached regret, a romantic distillation of other men's despair"²

1. Cowley, Malcolm - A Second Flowering (Andre Deutsch, 1973) Page 9

2. Aldridge, John W. - After The Lost Generation (Princeton, 1960) Page 10.

None of them served in a fighting army and the real significance of their work lies elsewhere, Vernon Parrington observed :

"With the cynicism that came with post-war days, democratic liberalism was thrown aside like an empty whisky flask; Clever young men (said) that the first want of every man is his dinner and the second his girl."³

The shock effect of the war on American idealism and optimism was even reflected in contemporary typography in the consciousness of the insignificance of human action; the letter ' i ' often becomes lower case as the point of view of the narrator was lost in the general reductive terror.

In these circumstances the war provided a powerful metaphor not only to express the reaction

3. Parrington, Vernon - The Beginning of Critical Realism in America III - Page 412

against post war conditions but also to embody the spirit/^{of} 'the lost generation'.⁴ The retreat from Caporetto and the subsequent events of A Farewell to Arms thus become symbolic of the outlook of the twenties : the collapse of the Italian forces resembles the collapse of the moral certitude with which America entered the war ; the chaos of the retreat itself parallels America's frenetic search for new values in the twenties; and Lieutenant Henry's desertion and subsequent tragic loss of wife and child symbolise a sense of isolation expressed by many writers of this generation. But ultimately it was the aspect of the war as a mindless destroyer of human dignity that proved to be most debilitating, particularly to a generation that had gone to the war as they would to a picnic. The only lesson of the war is contained in the much quoted passage from A Farewell to Arms: " That was what you did. You died."⁵

A Farewell to Arms published in 1929 stemmed directly from Hemingway's experiences as a

4. A remark attributed to Miss Gertrude Stein

5. Hemingway, Ernest - A Farewell to Arms (Granada, 1977) Page 232.

Lieutenant in Italy in World War I. Hemingway's response to World War I was the impulse behind perhaps his best fictional work. In his Introduction to Men At War, he said that this was the occasion for the loss of his illusion of immortality and his learning to hate the corrupt politicians whose corrupt policies led to the denouement in the great slaughters of Somme, Verdun and the Vittorio Veneto. It was a war of disillusionment with a personal climax for him in the summer of 1917 - the time of his wounding - but with a general emotional climax for him in the summer of 1918 - the time of the Caporetto disaster in Italy.⁶

Hemingway realised that the key to the war in Italy was the disaster at Caporetto. It defined the battle lines of 1918 and it coloured the entire Italian war effort. To write about the war in Italy, Hemingway realised he could not avoid Caporetto. He realised that the implications of Caporetto went beyond the battlefield and beyond even the national honour about which the Italians had become so hysterical. Ultimately Caporetto stood for the entire

6. Hemingway, Ernest (ed) - Men At War (Fontana, 1966) Page 7

war experience, and that experience was defeat. Nations may have won or lost at the military level, but the individual soldiers in the trenches experienced a kind of defeat that had little to do with occupied territories or victorious battles. It was an experience of defeat epitomised in struggles all over the world. On every front soldiers were experiencing what they would come to understand - that the war was a defeat, no matter who won.

It is this concept of defeat which carries the action of A Farewell to Arms. Frederick Henry's desertion epitomises the experience of the individual regardless of nationality. The usual responses to the trauma of war and the sudden armistice are those in which the individual either tries to make a "separate peace" or else is permanently alienated from society by the enormity of what he has experienced (what we call shell shock today). Frederick Henry and Nick Adams (In Our Time) both try to make a separate peace. It is an attempt at the preservation of selfhood in the midst of chaos.

Frederick Henry's desertion is the most rational choice he makes and it becomes a radical political statement indicating the national goals that had failed to sustain the individual. Henry's desertion is not that of an American deserting on a "joke front", it is rather the conclusion of a war generation who had ultimately understood what the experience had meant. In the circumstances it is the tough minded individual who manages to survive the effects of the war. Lieutenant Henry moves from an enjoyment of the war as an aesthetic and intellectual stimulus to a rejection of it as a soul shattering absurdity beyond the comprehension of the human mind. But in many cases the protagonists in the World War I novels begin and end their participation in war on a purely selfish plane. There is the example of Krebs in Soldiers Home,⁷ who went away to war on such a motivation, experienced a great deal of action, spent time in the army of occupation and was in no particular hurry to get back to civilian life. The cynical outlook necessary for

7. Hemingway, Ernest - In Our Time (Boni and Liveright, 1925).

survival in wartime made civilian life an absurdity reducing the violence of the battlefields to the level of the incomprehensible. Hemingway in his later works turned away from the limitless violence of the war towards the ritualised comprehensible violence of the bullring. In fact this task, the necessity to comprehend the nature of industrialised war and to show how the individual could act effectively in the face of it, was not accomplished until much later. In For Whom the Bell Tolls the value of an individual gesture was to be emphasised as opposed to the idea of "a separate peace", but in the novels about World War I, Hemingway and his colleagues saw the private peace as one acceptable solution in a situation larger than the human mind could grasp.

In the opening pages of the novel, Frederick Henry is the archetype of the all American young man - a nice guy. Like many others of his age and generation, he is insensitive to the suffering of others, slightly selfish and above all totally ridicules the possibility of his own death. "Well I knew I would not be killed. Not in this war. It did not have anything to do with me. It seemed no more dangerous to me than

war in the movies."⁸ In fact at the beginning Frederick Henry is very much like a soldier" in the movies". He is tough, young and attractive to women and wears his uniform with a touch of proud nonchalance. In the circumstances, he is particularly attractive to the local nurses, one of which he intends to ensnare. He has a vague, ill defined idealism common in the American youth of the twenties who had till then only heard about the war at second hand and not really experienced it. He is in other words, a perfectly normal young man - a normalcy which becomes the basis for satire directed both at the young protagonist and the reader. Henry at the beginning of the novel is egoistical and selfish, so also his perceptions are limited and detached. But his greatest fault, however, is his general lack of awareness, a deadly sin in Hemingway's ethics. In his characterisation of Frederick Henry it is interesting to note, that Hemingway actually depicts himself as he was in 1918. He maintains an ironic distance from the character, a distance which is not without a touch of regret and ~~all~~ ridicule.

8. Hemingway, Ernest - A Farewell to Arms (Granada, 1977)
Page 31.

Early in the novel, the scene of the war is set in a manner "reminiscent of a quaint Italian operetta".⁹ Priest baiting in the officer's mess is juxtaposed with the bawdy activities at the Villa Rosa, while the war progresses like a game - the Italian infantry moving up and down, capturing and surrendering the same territory and the Austrian artillery bombarding Henry's station not seriously "but only a little in a military way",¹⁰

Henry's perception of the outside world is abstract and dreamlike and parallels the emptiness within himself. His insensitivity is heightened in his feelings for Catherine, particularly in context to her recent bereavement. She has lost to the war the man she was to marry, as a result of which she is deeply wounded emotionally. But Henry's limited perception of her feelings leads him to think of her as nothing more than "a little crazy." He intends to use his charm to full advantage; to love her and to leave her.

9. Benson, Jackson J. - Hemingway ; The Writer's Art of of Self Defence. (University of Minnesota Press, 1969)
Page 84.

10. Hemingway, Ernest - A Farewell to Arms (Granada, 1977)
Page 8.

"I knew I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game like bridge in which you said things, instead of playing cards."¹¹

The two major aspects of life in the novel, love and war acquire the same degree of flatness in Henry's eyes:

"We kissed and she broke away suddenly. 'No, good night please darling' ... we walked to the door and I saw her go in and down the hall. I liked to watch her move It was a hot night and there was a good deal going on up in the mountains. I watched the flashes on San Gabriele."¹²

It is the Priest from Ambruzzi, however, who perceives Henry's latent capacity for commitment ".... to do things.... to sacrifice.... to serve."¹³ But at the time, he drowns himself in a world of sensations in "the smoke of cafes and nights when the room whirled knowing that this was all and all and all and not caring."¹⁴ It is again the priest who perceives

11. Ibid., Page 26-27

12. Ibid., Page 28

13. Ibid., Page 57

14. Ibid., Page 14

that even after being wounded Henry has not acquired a consciousness of the reality of the war - "still even wounded ... you do not see it. I can tell."¹⁵ Henry does not perceive the terrifying irrationality of the war, the nature of its irrational violence which leaves no room for the preservation of the individual and his dignity. Henry's even casual commitment to the war has denied him his ability to love as well as his ability to react as an individual. The war has nothing to do with the victor or the vanquished. Its mindless progression is based on destruction irrespective of everything and everyone and therein lies the absurdity. Yet Henry seeks a purpose behind the war, an order behind the chaos, till suddenly the incident at the bridge allows the truth to dawn on him.

War in the novel not only becomes a fact of life but acquires a metaphorical meaning as well. It becomes a symbol for "mass - man", the bureaucracy, the propaganda and above all the indifference. Individual dignity is destroyed at the altar of general submission, and it is this aspect which becomes even more terrifying than the violence unleashed.

15. Ibid., Page 55.

It is not that Henry is impervious to the irrationality of the war, but at the beginning the impact of it is negligible to his insensitive mind. He does wonder a great deal about what is going on and what will happen in the end and gradually the reader begins to perceive the growing horror of the individual at the mass madness of the war. "There is no finish to a war."¹⁶ But even then Henry seeks a meaning in war, a meaning yet beyond his grasp. His general stance of commitment, even though perfunctory, is radically different from the driver Passini.

"..... There is nothing worse than war (Passini said) Defeat is worse" (Henry replied)¹⁷

Passini of course has a deeper understanding of the war, an understanding which dawns on Henry only when he is met by the chaos at the bridge.

"My knee wasn't there. My hand went in and my knee was down on my shin!"¹⁸

But it is at the time of his wounding that

16. Ibid., Page 41

17. Ibid., Page 40

18. Ibid., Page 45

the first lesson of the war is learnt by Henry. There are, however, several absurdities linked with his wounding. Firstly, Henry and his comrades are not soldiers, they are ambulance drivers ready to carry the wounded to the hospital. Henry is wounded not while in combat, but in the mundane act of eating cheese. And the tragedy is, that it is Passini who so abhors war who is killed.

These ironic contrasts raise questions, what sort of game is war? What are the rules and who dictates them? The effect of the wounding on Henry and its psychological implications are, however, not explicitly stated in this novel. But for Hemingway himself this must have had very deep emotional implications, for this motif reappears in a much later novel Across the River and into the Trees. Here we have Colonel Cantrell, a much wounded older man than Henry but having gone through the same war and the same initial wounding.

"Finally he did get hit properly and for good. No one of his other wounds had ever done to him what the first big one did. I suppose it is just the loss of immortality, he thought. Well, in a way, that is quite a lot

to lose."¹⁹

Henry's subsequent sojourn at the hospital in Milan is the beginning of a doomed love story. As his relationship with Catherine deepens, his links with the war gradually grow more tenuous. Ultimately he reaches a point where he cannot bear to read news of the war - the only words he can read are the baseball scores. In ironic contrast to Henry and his growing despair is the super patriot Ettore so taken up with the war that he is swept away by the glamour of the wounds and the medals.

"He's got five medals and, oh boy, aren't they great for making the girls think you're fine. But wound stripes are better"²⁰

On his return to the front Henry is met with a shock. The situation has degenerated drastically. The Austrian offensive has depleted his comrades both physically and psychologically. The same men had grown older and wiser in a period of months. The mood is summed up

19. Hemingway, Ernest - Across the River and into the Trees (Scribners, 1950) Page 33.

20. Hemingway, Ernest - A Farewell to Arms (Granada, 1977) Page 89.

aptly by the major when he says that Henry was lucky to have got hit when he did. The priest who had once blushed at the teasings in the mess room, now has become impervious to everything. He still prays, but there is no conviction in his prayers. He has seen too much death to believe in hope. But it is in Henry's encounter with Rinaldi, the surgeon, that the reality of the war is brought to sharpest focus. Rinaldi does not think, he operates - like a machine. He has been driven by the demands made on him by his profession to a point beyond physical and emotional endurance. He is a man at the brink of hysteria.

Henry too has seen enough of the war. Words such as victory, courage, honour and glory all sound hollow to him. He reaches a point where the only solace he seeks is oblivion in sleep.²¹

But it is the event at the bridge which leads to a radical turning point in Henry's thinking. All this while he had been a mindless automaton in the meaningless process of war. But it is the battle police at the bridge who symbolise the ultimate irrationality of the war game.

21. Ibid., Page 130.

" They were all young men and they were saving their country."²² They shoot everyone they question and neither the shootings nor the questions have any significance for they were "saving their country." Henry is faced here with two alternatives. On the one hand is the false rhetoric of victory, honour and courage and on the other the reality of terror, cowardice and death. The incomprehensible reality of the defeated Italians shooting their own officers becomes a symbol for the loss of all reason. Henry is faced with death, a death which like everything else has no meaning and quite suddenly a rational alternative does present itself. From disillusioned acceptance he chooses a way out and swims across the river to freedom.

But the knowledge that Frederick Henry acquires does not make A Farewell to Arms an initiation story. Neither Henry nor Catherine is portrayed as an innocent in Europe at the beginning of the book. Neither expresses any ideals that have been besmirched by the war. The only object lesson is contained in the words -" That was what you did. You died."

22. Ibid., Page 162.

However, rather than being a study in war, love or initiation, A Farewell to Arms is more aptly a study in isolation. Although Frederick Henry is not the hero in the conventional sense, he emerges as the central character in the novel as it defines his progress from group participation to total isolation which in reality is the main action of the novel.

At the beginning of the novel in the fall of 1915, Henry is part of a contingent of ambulance drivers in the Italian Second Army - a key link in the defences of the Italian front, which is an extension of the Western front in France. Italy in turn is part of an alliance which places Henry at the end of a long chain of command. But at the end of the novel, Henry is bereft of country, family and friend - he is totally isolated.

It is with his wounding that Henry's movement into isolation first begins. His wounds separates him both physically and psychologically from his comrades. His convalescence at the hospital separates him physically from his friends at the front while his wound gives an

added dimension to his experience of war unknown to his friends who have not been wounded. In Book II, his growing relationship with Catherine gives the couple a separate identity removed from the mass identity of the war. As their relationship deepens all the props that sustain Western civilization fail to sustain them.

The family, the military and the State fail to support Frederick and Catherine in the face of the "nada" that surrounds them. Organised religion has no meaning and comfort for the couple; in the pouring rain in Milan, Catherine refuses to take shelter in the Church for she says the Church will not do lovers any good. Catherine tells Frederick that he has become her religion. At the brink of death, she refuses to seek solace in God and rejects Henry's suggestions of seeing a priest, just as earlier Henry never seeks the Ambruzzi country where religion has meaning. The priest in the officers' mess prays but his prayers lack his earlier conviction; he too has been disillusioned by the war.

Troop mutinies and references to a 'separate peace' coupled with the soldiers criticism and frustration give evidence to the bankruptcy of the military. The soldiers' uniform which had earlier provided comfort gradually becomes a hollow symbol for Henry. The family too has no

meaning for either Catherine or Henry - they are essentially without family, two individuals caught in the crossfire of war.

But initially, Henry does not realise the extent of his growing isolation till his return to the front in Book III. His wound not only isolates him from his comrades but his feelings for Catherine further isolates him from group participation for he can no longer visit the Villa Rosa where his soldier comrades are entertained by the women of the house. During the retreat from Caporetto he is sustained not by his official obligations but by his ~~love~~ and desire to join Catherine. It is Catherine who sustains him throughout the maddening progress of the retreat.

When the retreat begins Henry is part of the Second Army. Soon after he leaves Gorizia his ambulances are separated from the main body of the retreat. Bugged down in the mud, the ambulances have to be deserted and Henry and his co-drivers have to make the journey on foot towards the bridge head. When one driver is killed and the other deserts, Henry is left alone to face the battle police at the bridge. Thus during the retreat, one sees the movement into isolation

acted out in the narrative. Here in Book III, the key chapter of the novel Hemingway has epitomised the progress into isolation, which is the central theme of the novel.

In the last pages of the novel the movement into isolation is brought to its final culmination at Stresa. Here the lovers have abandoned the last of their friends and acquaintances. They have abandoned their duty to move on to safety. They are in Switzerland which, significantly, is a neutral country uninvolved with the war. Here in another country they are totally alienated from every one and everything familiar. And when Catherine dies in childbirth in Lausanne, doctors fail, just as earlier in the midst of war the priest failed to sustain the individual in the face of death. Bereft of wife and child, Frederick Henry is alone against the world. He has no hope, no belief, no person to turn to. He is the truly isolated man.

It is significant that Hemingway had written A Farewell to Arms in retrospect, and in this context his theme of growing isolation becomes even more meaningful. He had viewed the period between the war and the writing of A Farewell to Arms

with the eyes of a practicing journalist. As Philip Young remarks :

" Something in the evolution of Frederick Henry from complicity in the war to bitterness and escape has made him seem, though always himself, a little larger than that too. Complicity, bitterness and escape - a whole country could read its experience When historians of various kinds epitomise the temper of the American twenties and a reason for it, the adventures of that Lieutenant come almost invariably to mind." 23

When he expressed his disillusionment with the ideals the war claimed to promote and jumped into the river and deserted, Henry's action epitomised the contemporary feeling of a whole nation. Edmund Wilson says at the end of Axel's Castle ;:

" When the prodigious concerted efforts of the war had ended only in impoverishment and exhaustion

23. Young, Philip - Ernest Hemingway : A reconsideration
(New York, Harcourt Brace, 1966) Page 90

for all the European peoples concerned, and in a general feeling of hopelessness about politics, about all attempts to organise men into social units - armies, parties, nations - in the service of some common ideal, for the accomplishment of some particular purpose, the Western mind became peculiarly hospitable to a literature indifferent to action and unconcerned with the group."²⁴

Many writers began to identify themselves with James Joyce's hero Stephen Dedalus in his A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man in his proud revolt from Church and family, in his resort to "silence, exile and cunning" and in his dream of "forging in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race." This last was a social purpose since Joyce himself was an Irish patriot as many of the American exiles were patriots; young men who had left their country in despair

24. Wilson, Edmund - Axel's Castle (Fontana, 1969) Page 226

but yet sought to redeem it. These exiles had a purpose in the sense that they wanted to expunge the language of what they often called "the big words". To comprehend the purpose behind this, one must realise that the horrifying reality of the war was often camouflaged behind grandiose words and sentiments in a verbal effort to mislead the people. Hemingway made famous this revolt through his classic statement against the big words in A Farewell to Arms :

"I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by bill posters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards

at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except bury it." 25

This revolt against big words and lofty sentiments took shape in a fresh new prose style of the post war generation, which distrusted any words which begged for an emotional response. Disgusted with the false sentiments of wartime, this generation was trying to write of simple things simply. This search for "clean words" became the most distinguishing facet of the new generation. What first took birth as a revolt against style later grew into the radical pacifism of the 1930s

The connection between Hemingway and his hero is always intimate, and in view of the despair of A Farewell to Arms, it is perhaps not surprising that his next two books - both non-fiction - find the hero, Hemingway himself, now without disguise, at the

end of his tether and in complete escape from the society he had renounced in A Farewell to Arms. The books are Death in the Afternoon (1932) and Green Hills of Africa (1935). The first is a book on bull-fighting, the second is a book on big game hunting. But both these books are really about death, a subject which by his own admission obsessed Hemingway for a long time. But more clearly than anything else, the books present a picture of a man who had since the "separate peace" found himself completely rootless. The feeling is strong that he will have to find new roots, or re-establish old ones if he were going to write anymore good novels. This sense of isolation in A Farewell to Arms, is however, brought to its logical conclusion in his next fictional work To Have and Have Not - "one man alone ain't got no bloody chance". But it is another war and another people that really brings him back to the world of other people and that happens in 1939 with the writing of For Whom the Bell Tolls.

CHAPTER IIIFOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS - AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH

With the publication of For Whom the Bell Tolls in 1939, it was evident that Hemingway had come a long way since the writing of A Farewell to Arms. He had changed his tone drastically. From the easy youthful posture of revolt, disillusionment and ultimate isolation of the earlier novel, he had to envisage a vision of man, where there was no room for a "separate peace"; what mattered now was the brotherhood of man working together for a common cause, greater than just the survival of the self.

This transitional process was not a painless one, for Hemingway passed to For Whom the Bell Tolls through the ante room of his worst novel To Have and Not. This novel is of minor significance but it is important in Hemingway's development as an artist. At the end of the novel, Harry Morgan, the protagonist of the novel realizes that his aggressive individualism has failed him, but the pattern of his tragic isolation and death has been set and his recognition for the need for human solidarity comes too late. With the words Harry Morgan speaks: "No matter now, a man alone ain't got no bloody chance",¹

1. Hemingway, Ernest - To Have and Have Not (Penguin, 1973)
Page 179.

Hemingway introduces a conflict that is to become increasingly acute in the mind of his next protagonist. Apparently, Hemingway had begun at this time to become aware of the tragic effects of the forces of rebellion, individualism and isolation that he had just extolled in the lives of the matadors (Death in the Afternoon). In any case one theory that has been advanced in the final words of Harry Morgan is the renunciation in the author's part of a rebellious, antisocial and belligerently individualistic attitude and the acceptance of a new social framework. Edgar Johnson in his Farewell to a Separate Peace² feels Hemingway means to show that Harry Morgan has been beaten because he "has tried to stand alone and fight alone" and that this provides the clue to victory for his heroes to come. "Hemingway has rejected a philosophy of atomic individualism" he says, "he has fought his way out of defeatism, ... For the good, the gentle and the brave", he now tells us, if they do not try to stand alone and make a separate peace, defeat is not inevitable.³

2. MacCaffery, J.K.M. (ed) - Ernest Hemingway : The Man and His Work (World, 1950) Page 50.

3. Ibid., Page 125.

It is within this pattern of Hemingway's renunciation, exile and return that his later and more popular novel For Whom the Bell Tolls must be appraised.

More than any other single event it seems to have been the civil war in Spain that returned Hemingway to the world of other people. The Spanish Civil War had a strong emotional impact on him. His emotional investment in the country, great because many of his friends from the bullfight days were on the wrong side ; most of the matadors supported the Francoist insurgents and the Soviets supporting the Republic were more acceptable politically and intellectually than emotionally.

The Spanish Civil War was the mirror image of the sort of war in which the United States usually involved itself in the twentieth century : individuals volunteered to serve while the country remained officially neutral. Since 1917 the tendency had been for the nation to get involved while individuals try to opt out. Allen Guttman has suggested that although the Spanish Civil War disturbed the part of the American public that was politically alert as no other event except the Great Depression itself, it also had a curiously satisfying quality.

It was a war in which the natural man in the tradition of Thoreau and Whitman clearly opposed the forces of a mechanised society.⁴ El Sordo defending his hilltop against the aeroplanes and Jordan blowing up the bridge to stop the tanks represents in a way, the desires of a society anxious about the increasing regimentation of their lives.

By the time of the Spanish Civil War, it had become clear to Hemingway that death was the true measure of human qualities and that while death is still very badly organised in war, it is in war, beyond human tampering. As he said in Death in the Afternoon, he had used bullfighting as an emotional equivalent of war during the twenties and early thirties. But at the end of the book had found that matadors could posture before the crowds in the presence of death in the arena, or because of the decadence in bullfight practices, one could never tell whether he was in the presence of death or only of a tampered with bull.

4. Guttman, Allen - The Wound in the Heart : America and the Spanish Civil War (New York, 1962) Page 192-195.

The corrupt bullfight managers might find their moral equivalent in the politicians but the politicians mismanagement did not intrude in the testing of man at the front. So he went to the battlefronts of his time and reported how men really are⁵.

In For Whom the Bell Tolls there are no longer any literal bullfighters but Hemingway is as much occupied with the bullfighters' values as ever, and the conflict in his hero's mind between the forces of aggression and restraint, individualism and inter-dependance increases in severity. The author states that in this book he is putting in all that he learnt about the Spaniards' characters and values. And Robert Jordan emphasises that the Spanish Civil War was his education. "It is part of one's education", he said, "it will be quite an education when it's finished. You learn in this war if you listen. You most certainly did."⁶

5. Hemingway, Ernest - Death in the Afternoon (Triad/Panther, 1977) Page 243.

6. Hemingway, Ernest - For Whom the Bell Tolls (Triad/Panther, 1976) Page 269

"No Man is an Iland intire of itself..." These words from a devotion of John Donne, are a part of an epigraph to For Whom the Bell Tolls, a title which comes from the same source. In images derived from geography and from funeral customs of seventeenth century London, Donne had set down a little parable about the inter-dependency of all human beings. Hemingway saw that the passage pointed to the theme of tragic loss of human solidarity which he had been developing in the story of Robert Jordan. It concludes with the statement that "any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in Mankind and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

This time the novel is true to its controlling concept. It deals with three days in the life of the Hemingway hero, Robert Jordan, who is fighting as an American volunteer in the Spanish Civil War. He is sent to join a guerilla band in the mountains near Segovia to blow up a strategic bridge, thus facilitating a loyalist advance. He spends three days in the guerilla cave, while he awaits what he expects to be his own destruction and he falls in love with Maria, the daughter of a Republican Mayor who has been murdered - as she herself has been raped - by the Falangists.

Jordan believes the attack will fail, but the generals refuse to cancel it until it is too late. He successfully destroys the bridge, is wounded in the retreat and is left to die. But he has come to see the wisdom of such a sacrifice, and the book ends without bitterness.

The most striking thing about Robert Jordan, however, is the distance he has come from Frederick Henry of A Farewell to Arms. Robert Jordan is made to say to himself "He fought now in this war because it had started in a country that he loved and he believed in the Republic He was under Communist discipline for the duration of the war because in the conduct of the war, they were the only party whose programme and discipline he could accept."⁷ This is in fact a rejection not only of Marxism but of defeatism as well, and the conflict between personal love and political duty of A Farewell to Arms is now finally resolved. Communism is merely an instrument for the winning of the war. More important is the suggestion of some greater affirmative value.

7. Ibid., Page 149.

He opts to fight in this war because it had started in a country he loved and he believed in the Republic. This is clearly illustrative of the changes that took place in the ten year interval in Hemingway's thinking. Frederick Henry had declared in A Farewell to Arms in the much quoted words : "I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice". And then there is Jordan in For Whom the Bell Tolls saying "You believed in Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,..... If this war is lost all of those things are lost."⁸ The shift from the negative to the affirmative demands a shift in the resultant action. Thus, while Henry opts to desert, Jordan does his duty and pursues a mission knowing it is doomed from the start. He continues, despite the possibilities of his own death, despite the confusion in command not very far removed from the disorganised retreat at Caporetto which ultimately prompted Frederick Henry to desert. He continues despite a love affair in every way as strong as that between Henry and Catherine.

8. Ibid., Page 305.

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity do not comprise an empty slogan for Jordan, but words that represent reality. They are real to him because he has faith in their possibility. The only driving force behind the success or failure of Jordan's mission is that of faith. It is faith which battles against odds and emerges triumphant. This is the end of disillusionment. This is the end of the "lost generation"⁹.

But it is not an unquestioning faith, a product of the naivete of the hero. For Whom the Bell Tolls is a novel of faith and the struggle to maintain it. Throughout the novel we are made persistently aware that Jordan's faith has not been cheaply bought. Hemingway has the difficult problem of presenting the struggle as both authentic and immediate. He manages to make this struggle real to the reader through the technique of internal dialogue that Jordan carries on with his own conscience. The main thrust of the novel is not the heroism that Jordan displays, but how he manages to achieve what he does.

9. A remark attributed to Miss Gertrude Stein.

In one sense For Whom the Bell Tolls reads like a morality play with the forces of aggression and restraint battling for Jordan's soul. All the members of Pablo's band display the extremist tendencies inherent in the Spaniard's nature. With the bloodthirsty Pablo at one pole and the soft-hearted Anselmo at the other. Consequently Jordan is torn between two marring impulses - the impulse to love human beings and to allow himself to become involved with them as in his good companionship with Anselmo and his love for Maria and the impulse to engage in the rebellious individualism of the matador, such as is evinced by the fanatical Augustine and the irresponsible anarchist Pablo. Jordan exhibits a spiritual relationship with both of these extremes, by turns he is both gentle and cruel, tender and barren of feeling. He looks with regret upon the frequent reversion to bestiality in the people around him and reflects sadly on much that is irrationally aggressive within himself. And in particular, he observes that the Spaniards' wilful resistance of authority and domination is the chief disintegrating factor in the struggle for a better life. A part of Robert Jordan - perhaps the greater part it would seem veered towards Anselmo.

Anselmo represents a position towards which a part of Hemingway was drawn, as the priest in A Farewell to Arms had served as a similar attraction for Fredrick Henry.

Maxwell Geismar writes about the tragic paradox confronting Jordan. "As the story progresses..... the 'Yes' of Jordan is progressively threatened by the submerged 'nada' of his creator and the pervasive nada of his comrades."¹⁰ Jordan's emotional faith in the Spanish people is first shaken when he hears Pilar's account of the murder of the Fascists in the village square at the hands of Pablo's mob. Even though Pilar seems to detect the furious mixture of humanity and beastiality among the killers, she recounts the spectacle with a cold fascination, as if it had been a bullfight and in fact the barbaric spectacle perpetrated by Pablo's mob brings forth the same primitive passions - the same zest for killing - as is inspired by the primitive ceremony of killing epitomised in the bullring.

10. MacCaffery, J.N. - Ernest Hemingway : The Man and His Work (World, 1950) Page 70.

Jordan seems to recognise the tragic implications of the killings - that the primitive emotions unleashed by the war could not be assuaged by the seeking of justice. It is a moment for the explosion of the irrational element in man. Having made the first killing, Pablo's band grow impatient for the next victim, the next bull.

But it is striking how rarely Hemingway disparages the enemy. In Hemingway's ethics there are no villains in war, except those made possible by the war itself. For Hemingway the enemy too was a man functioning at his highest powers in the presence of death. Atrocity on one side is balanced by atrocity on the other, as Pablo's massacre of the Fascists, is balanced by Maria's rape by the Falangists and the very viscious aspects of Fascism are inherent in the Republican side as well.

One of the major moral conflicts in the novel is that between the duty to kill under the circumstances of war and the principle which values human life.

Robert Jordan and Anselmo, the sweet man of peace amidst war's horrors try to assuage the stirrings of their conscience. Repeatedly Anselmo searches his conscience about the right to kill. He believes killing to be a sin but it is a necessary evil in the cause of the war. And so even though he wishes "to win the war and shoot nobody", he does his duty for the cause of the Republic. Yet it is Anselmo who insists on Jordan being explicit in his orders to shoot the guard at the bridge. The conflict is resolved in his mind through the belief that the responsibility for an act lies in the one ordering it rather than on the one performing it.

Jordan too is deeply anguished about killing. He never kills with pleasure but always with pain. He mourns for the enemy as well as for the friend. Killing can only be justified if it is a necessity and carried out for the greater good. If one believes in killing the whole thing is wrong. A voice within Jordan urges him on a straight path of honesty and insists that only if these transgressions are faced can Jordan survive with a clear faith.

In being honest to himself Jordan recognises the necessity to kill that was on Augustine like "a mare on heat" and remarks that there is no stronger thing in life. Thinking this over Jordan calls it the Spanish¹¹ "extra sacrament" that has welled forth in wars and Inquisitions and he admits that he too and "all those who are soldiers by choice have felt it at some time or the other whether they lie about it or not".¹¹ To this end Malcolm Cowley has observed "Hemingway himself seems to have a feeling for half forgotten sacraments" such as the Spaniards' instinct for killing. "His cast of mind is pre-Christian and pre-logical", says Cowley.¹² This primitive emotion is precisely what Jake Barnes enjoyed in connection with death giving in The Sun Also Rises and Hemingway explained more clearly in Death in the Afternoon - the pagan elation of one still in rebellion against death.

11. Hemingway, Ernest - For Whom the Bell Tolls (Triad/Panther, 1976) Page 254-255.

12. Cowley, Malcolm- Nightmare and Ritual - A Collection of Critical Essays in Portable Hemingway (New York, 1944) Page 49.

But the most exacting experience for Robert Jordan is not in the killing but in the preparing to be killed. His heroic posture of courage and dignity seems to have a deep-rooted history. Somewhere in the back of Jordan's mind is the guilt of his father's suicide which forces him to adopt a certain stance; to blot out the stain of his father's cowardice as if he had never been, and to replace him with his grandfather, the soldier in the family.

Cruelty and violence and the compulsion to kill assume, however, a larger dimension in the fight for universal justice. "Neither you nor this old man is anything, you are instruments to do your duty..... there is a bridge and that bridge can be the point on which the future of the human race may turn."¹³

very From the every beginning it becomes clear that the general course of the war is dependent on smaller events and the great battle of Segovio is dependent on internal battles fought in the minds of the participants.

13. Hemingway, Ernest - For Whom The Bell Tolls (Triad/Panther, 1976) Page 45.

Concentric circles are formed around the large offensive at the top, the success of which depends upon the proper functioning of the smaller units, resting ultimately on that particular guerilla band led by Robert Jordan whose job it is to blow up the bridge. And ultimately it is upon Jordan's clear thinking and soundness of spirit that the success of his operation is based. The importance of the individual is heightened and becomes further significant in the context of Donne's epigraph - "No man is an Island intire of itself,.....". Reality is not a whole, as perceived by the narrator, but formed by a number of individual parts, an investigation of human interdependence which Hemingway sought in the novel.

This theme is particularly relevant to the narrative technique that Hemingway employs in this perhaps his greatest novel. No doubt it would be too easy to say that the theme of "No Man is an Island" could not have been aptly illustrated by first person narrative. Nevertheless, if the appropriateness of the first person narrative in novels such as The Sun Also Rises and A Farewell to Arms is applauded, one cannot but subscribe

to the idea that such a technique would have been a handicap in For Whom the Bell Tolls. The effect of alienation and isolation which it is possible to convey so admirably with that technique is not what is wanted to express the essential brotherhood of man. On the contrary, the third person narrative technique which Hemingway uses for this particular novel is very apt for the theme of human inter-dependence. In this novel the narrator is free to move from one character to another to give us a view of their thoughts. Thus, in being equally accessible to the omniscient narrator - all existing on one plane and apart from him, they may be regarded technically and thematically as each "a piece of the continent, a part of the Maine".

War seems to be a strange setting for the demonstration of such ethics. But Hemingway felt that men are at their finest, the closer they are to battle and in the testing of their resources against death, Hemingway showed his leaning towards primitivism. In this case death's agent was other men rather than nature. The war in Spain illustrated another part of Hemingway's assumption that it was in war that men lived most fully.

To live next to death, they had to learn to live nimbly, to accept the discipline of a situation and adapt themselves mentally, physically and emotionally to a new situation. "Learning to suspend one's imagination and living completely in the very second of the present minute with no before or after is the greatest gift a soldier can have".¹⁴ El Sordo defending his hilltop hideout against the fascist army is a prime illustration of this. Caught up in the pressures of violence and death men can still function with faith, principle and honour, inspite of the internal emotional weaknesses, the temptations and self-deceptions.

Jordan's heroic stature is heightened through his ability to transcend these many different conflicts that tug at his emotions. Given the best of chances, Jordan's mission to blow up the bridge is doomed to failure. Yet we are made conscious of Jordan's faith as the deciding factor between success and failure.

14. Hemingway, Ernest - Men At War (Fontana, 1966)

In the beginning Jordan had felt as though he was taking part in a Crusade, but gradually he sees through the veneer of idealism to the hypocrisy of the Republican party. He perceives the strengths and weaknesses of both the Fascists and the Loyalists. Not wanting to go through life wearing rose tinted spectacles Jordan is a man who likes to know how things are and not how they are supposed to be. The Fascists were fighting for a cause just as were the Republicans - the only difference was in the cause. Like the true bullfighter performing to the hilt he promises to give absolute loyalty during the period of the war, but no one owned his mind nor his powers of seeing and hearing.

From the very beginning he refuses to trust Pablo, while he readily trusts Anselmo, Pilar and certain others. Three days is too short a time for any of the band to give proof of their trust, it is just that he is mentally strong enough to take the risk, a stability that can only arise from an inherent strong faith in humanity.

The overall picture of the Spanish Civil War that Hemingway presents is not a very inspiring one. Every level is infested with moral cripples. And at the very highest rung of the ladder there are people like General Lister, not unlike the Carabinieri at the bridge in A Farewell to Arms. There is intrigue and hypocrisy at every level - in other words the landscape is very similar to the Italian front in A Farewell to Arms. The only difference is that while Hemingway's earlier protagonists dread commitment, Jordan in spite of the conditions finds the cause worthwhile. Jordan does not alienate himself because he finds the conditions imperfect, but its very imperfections strengthens his will to contribute what little he can. It is Jordan's faith grounded in his own set of principles that sets him apart from people like Frederick Henry, who seems a callow youth in comparison. Frederick Henry and Jordan are both assailed by doubts and moments of abject cynicism but what separates the grain from the chaff is that while Jordan's faith is strong enough to withstand his doubts, Henry's lead to ultimate disillusionment and despair.

Jordan is like the good bullfighter of A Sun Also Rises --- a true professional and a true hero. His bridge is at the centre of the history of holding actions; and although his mission is small in scale it is so conceived and projected as to suggest an epic struggle. "Jordan remains an essential non-conformist, a free man not taken in, though doing his part in the perennial attempts which free men must make if the concept of freedom is to last."¹⁵

The mood of For Whom the Bell Tolls is that the war is accepted as an immediate necessity, but one which may be possibly avoided in the future, not by imposing the will of the victor upon the vanquished but by appealing to the humanity of both the parties. Frederick Henry's concept of war had been limited to the possibility of a solution imposed by military force, Jordan's is ultimately pacifist.

15. Baker, Carlos - Hemingway : The Writer as Artist (Princeton University Press, 1972) Page 245.

As one of Hemingway's wise old peasants says to another "We must teach them. We must take away their planes, their automatic weapons, their artillery and teach them dignity".¹⁶

At the end of the novel, Jordan lies wounded waiting for his death. It seems as if the hero has come full circle from the predicament of Frederick Henry - he is once more threatened by the forces which kill the very good, the very brave and the very gentle impartially. One is reminded of El Sordo on his hilltop surrounded by death on all sides : "If one must die", he thought, and clearly one must, I can die. But I hate it".¹⁷ Just as Jordan's ideals become more genuine because of his insistence on viewing them realistically, so also his death becomes more meaningful because of his wish to live.

16. Hemingway, Ernest - For Whom the Bell Tolls (Triad/Panther, 1976) Page 289.

17. Ibid. Page 275.

Jordan realises that death is around the corner, yet by giving himself to the rigid set of rules for war and for the attainment of manhood he can still impart some form and dignity to his life. Jordan plays out his lone hand like all those matadors Hemingway admired in the past. He dies in keeping with the Spanish belief that there is a correct way to live and a correct way to die. He is left at the close of the novel working alone, keeping himself in check before the bull, showing himself superior to circumstances, before the final thrusting of the sword. Jordan anticipates Santiago of The Old Man and the Sea who fights against indomitable circumstances and yet remains unvanquished. The individual and the human spirit emerge victorious against all odds. And in a final gesture of defiance and affirmation, watching the enemy come into his rifle sights, Jordan's heart pounds wildly and he asserts --

"I've held it. I held it all right".¹⁸ Because he wins the game, is stern with himself to the end, he is able to achieve what he does and "makes faith seem possible even in our time".¹⁹

18. Ibid. Page 412.

19. Benson, Jackson J. - Hemingway : The Writer's Art of Self Defence (University of Minnesota Press, 1969) Page 168.

CHAPTER - IVHEMINGWAY'S WORLD - MEN AT WAR

When Hemingway wrote the introduction to his 1948 edition of A Farewell to Arms, he used the occasion to explain why he had spent so much of his creative energy writing about war:

"Some people say : Why is the man so preoccupied and obsessed with war and now since 1933, perhaps it is clear why a writer should be interested in the constant, bullying, murderous slovenly crime of war. Having been to too many of them I am sure that I am prejudiced, and I hope that I am prejudiced. But it is the constant belief of the writer of this book that wars are fought by the finest people that there are but they are made, provoked and initiated by straight economic rivalries and by swine that stand to profit by them."¹

1. Hemingway, Ernest - A Farewell to Arms (New York, 1948) PAGE X.

That he was present at the wars and had a right to be, he frequently certified. In the 1942 Introduction to Men At War, he presented as his credentials not only that he had taken part in World War I and had been wounded, but that he had passed through the initiation of war, which is the key to understanding much of the century's experience. Badly wounded he had lost the illusion of personal immortality but along with it he had gained that other insight that men at war must have.

Hemingway recognised that war was essentially a state of mind, a condition of will and the emotions. The clash, dirt, fatigue are all a part of war but the ultimate meaning is emotional. He despised the people who supported war and the ambition, mismanagement and sense of personal glory that carried it along as much as he respected the soldiers at the front. He always espoused the cause of the lowly rifleman, and it was the enormous butcheries of 1916 that first made him realise this. The soldiers' highest purpose seemed to be - " We are here to be killed,"²

2. Cowley, Malcolm - The Second Flowering (Andre Deutsch, 1973) PAGE 7.

while the generals and statesmen far behind the enemy lines plotted and planned the slaughters and advanced their careers.

Hemingway's war writing was enriched by his being able to witness the wars of the century which gave them an emotional pattern mirrored in his own experience. His characterisation of the different wars derived from his different responses to them. In 1918 he was consciously shaping himself and his attitudes:

"I learnt about people", he said of this period, "under stress and before and after it."³ This very stress has been the fundamental theme of all his creative work. His letters have showed an interest and concentration on the frightening reality around him.

".... shells aren't bad except direct hits; you just take chances on the fragments of the bursts. But when there is a direct hit, your pals get spattered all over you; spattered is literal."⁴

3. Fenton Charles - The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway (New American Library, 1961) PAGE 60.

4. Ibid.,

"You've got to see it, feel it, smell it, hear it, "this dictum followed by Hemingway clearly confirms the truth evident in all his writing.

His personal involvement in the Spanish Civil War was far greater than in the First War. This war was motivated by idealism. Consistent with his prediliction for the underdog it became for him the peoples war against the Generals. By the time of the writing of For Whom the Bell Tolls, Hemingway's thinking had undergone a drastic change since his experiences in Italy. He still hated war but there was one thing that was worse than war and that was defeat. Wars have to be won and the people that made them got rid of and it had to be seen that they never occurred again. At the time of his writing For Whom the Bell Tolls the gloomy shadow of Fascism was lengthening over Europe and as the Republican cause gradually became "our cause", he absorbed the Partisan mind. And like always Hemingway had to be there where the action was, filming the documentary The Spanish Earth. Hemingway learnt a lot in Spain. He learnt that it was in war that men lived most fully. Soldiers had to stay constantly alert in wartime to avoid being dragged down by death.

The emotional intensity of living by death's dispensation became one of Hemingway's subjects after witnessing the wars of the century. In Spain he was astonished how people could behave in the face of death. Although most of his novels and sketches depict more cowardice than courage, his war reporting was peopled with men who suffered, but did not panic - there were no Nick Adams, Bonellos or Pablos.

For his readers though, the real Hemingway at war was not so much a reporter and interpreter, as much as a writer who rendered the experience of war truly and intensely. This is what all his news-paper editors wanted from him - an intensity of experience with which he had enlivened his fiction. The sights and sounds of battle and more particularly the shattering sound of exploding bombs was the new experience the world had to learn. Hemingway was careful to make it a very real sensation of war. But even more frightening than the sounds of battle was the dull silence that followed which spelt only one thing and that was death. And behind all the sensations of war was the sense of one's own potential death which perhaps is the central experience in his novel For Whom the Bell Tolls.

For Hemingway these were not merely soldiers' wars but writers' wars as well. The problem was not only to 'experience' but to 'express the experience' in an effort to write history ungarbled. When he wrote in Green Hills of Africa that war was the best school for writers, he recognised it not only as a major subject and as an unexplored terrain for twentieth century writing but also as a setting for a great cross section of experience and one of the hardest subjects to write truly of⁵. In his war writing Hemingway admitted the possibility of an incomplete rendering of experience. Consequently to avoid helping the enemy he had to censor himself or accept external censorship. After the war all could be told but emotion recollected in tranquility was quite another thing. In Men At War, Hemingway writes:

"If during war conditions are such that a writer cannot publish the truth because its publication would do harm to the State, he should write and not publish."⁶

5. Hemingway, Ernest - Green Hills of Africa (New York, 1935) PAGE 70-71

6. Hemingway, Ernest - ed. Men At War (Fontana 1966)

Hemingway chose to write - and publish - a reconstructed view in his war reports, to sacrifice a completeness of vision for the intensity and immediacy of experience. He saved the fictional critiques for afterwards.

Hemingway's fictional characters are soldiers, prize fighters, sportsmen, matadors. He was greatly occupied with death and violence and above all he was tormented by recurring visions of violent death - evident in much of his writing. His world was ultimately one at war with the individual.

The key to his obsession with violence can perhaps be traced back to the first story in his first book of short stories called In Our Time, a title derived from the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer: "Give Peace in Our Time, O Lord". The most conspicuous thing about this collection, however, is that there is no peace at all in the stories. Another aspect about this volume is the gradual development of the central figure of Nick Adams, from boyhood, adolescence to manhood and herein lies the subtle and tenuous link between the stories. Indian Camp, the first of these stories relates the incident of a doctor with his young

son for help, performing a Caesarian section operation - without anaesthesia and with a jack knife - on an Indian woman. In the mean-while, her invalid husband unable to bear the tortured screams of his wife for two whole days, cuts his head off.⁷ In this story it is not so much the violence that is emphasised as the effect it has on the young Nick. He stands in the shadow of a bewildering violence. This psychological scarring is carried through during the six episodes of the collection In Our Time, ultimately in Nick going to the First War, being wounded and opting to desert - an episode enlarged considerably in A Farewell to Arms. The pattern of violence and death is set. The posture of youthful rebellion evident so much in his early writing, however, seems to have mellowed considerably by the time of his writing For Whom the Bell Tolls. The hero is still a wounded psychologically battered man, but he has learnt a lot since the old days about how to live and function with his wounds, and he behaves well. He dies with a flourish, having done his duty proving to the world that life is worth living, yet there are causes great enough to die for. This symbolic

7. Hemingway, Ernest - In Our Time (Boni and Liveright, 1925).

wound has had a deep effect on Hemingway's fiction. The shock of physical sensation, the sudden severance from past experience and securities, the mystery and impersonality of its source, and the anger, fear and bewilderment are all part of the wounding. The wounding is "unreasonable", for the victim cannot understand why it has happened to him. It gives him a profound distrust of those who -- remote from the experience itself -- try to formulate explanations or assurances concerning it. They are obviously "faking", for they would clearly not talk of it at all if they had any actual experience of it and they would most certainly not talk of dignity, honour, glory and sacrifice, because these words are invariably betrayed when tested by the reality of experience. Explanations or descriptions become a betrayal of reality. Hemingway's writing seeks to avoid this betrayal painfully. In this painful scrupulousness is the model for working on language : where writing seeks to restore its actual distance from reality.

Conrad, whose patrimony Hemingway sought, enveloped his tales in flourishes of words. In a way,

he always seemed to know that the world he was describing/writing upon was slipping away through the word-whorls even before he completed his writing. In his feverish descriptions is the other side of the attempt of the writer who knows the problem of rendering the real. Hemingway works from the opposite direction. The image is of a miner who works hard for his seam of gold, panning it, the traces on his calloused hands gleam. The history of painful labour in extraction is immediately denied, submerged in the reality of the process of writing, of which ^{the} reader is unaware - the words stand alone: the efforts of the writer at war with his tools - words.

The spectre of the war haunts Hemingway's earliest short stories; many of the Nick Adams stories, of In Our Time are given in terms of the author's own experience with violence. The securities provided by the family and the natural setting ~~are~~ never free of the tortured sketches of war and violence. On the other hand, these brief inter-chapters act as a sombre reminder of the fact of war and as a supervisory deity in the affairs of Nick Adams. Nothing can exorcize the recurring nightmarish spirit.

The first character of Hemingway's creation provides the clue to the rest of his heroes- they are all moulded from the same clay - reappearing under different names and guises. In fact the similarity between Hemingway himself and his heroes has not gone unnoticed - a fact which has led many critics, particularly Philip Young, to delve into Hemingway's biographical history.⁸

Yet it is the writer and not the man who is of primary interest to the reader, although the media has through the years made much of Hemingway as soldier, aficionado of the bullring and as big game hunter. Ultimately the Hemingway that emerges from the colour photographs and the magazines appears to be somewhat larger than life. Yet, inspite of it all, his technical achievement has been stupendous, particularly in view of what we regard today as the contemporary American style. But here we are so conditioned to his influence that we hardly ever notice it anymore. He brought to American writing an honesty and objectivity and purged it of sentimentality, literary embellishments and a superficial artfulness. He revitalised the art of dialogue writing. His influence, however, has been negative in the realm of 'popular literature' through no fault of his. The

8. Young, Philip - Ernest Hemingway (University of Minnesota Press 1964)

world he has evoked in his novels spawned a new generation of writers who seized some of his tricks - usually a mixture of violence and sex - and brought forth what we call today "the pulp novel". These writers of "the tough detective school", in particular, demonstrate what happens when the style and attitudes which has meaning in one novelist are taken over by others for whom the meaning is quite different.

Hemingway's prose style is easily recognisable. For the most part it is colloquial, marked by a studied simplicity of diction and sentence structure. The words used are spare and ring with a curious freshness. As Ford Maddox Ford remarked justifiably, the words "strike you, each one, as if they were pebbles fetched fresh from a brook", for the effect is one of sharpness and clarity. Events are recorded with the utmost objectivity in the sequence they occurred and there is absolutely no intrusion of the omniscient narrator who provides nothing but the stimulus. The vision is sharply etched and the words are written as though held tightly in check. The effect is one of understatement and irony particularly effective when the subject is, as is often the case, violence and pain.

Hemingway had a very sensitive ear for personal accents and mannerisms which gave his dialogues a peculiar individuality bringing a particular character to life. This gift was all the more pronounced in his writing of the Spanish colloquial style which he used in For Whom the Bell Tolls. In the colourful swearing words of Pilar, for instance ("Go and obscenity in the milk of thy cowardice" Pilar said to Pablo, " I know too much about thee and thy cowardice."⁹) the language and the people are merged into one.

The Hemingway style, is however, particularly significant in relation to the content. The tightly controlled check on the mind of the hero and the tension in his life is clearly paralleled by the strictly disciplined sentences. The short stacatto words seem as if they were echoes of the stacatto bursts of the bullets in the battlefield. The prose is tense because the atmosphere is tense.

9. Hemingway, Ernest - For Whom the Bell Tolls (Triad/Panther) PAGE 193.

The atmosphere is ultimately one where the world is at war - war either literal as armed conflict or figuratively as marked everywhere with violence and pain, whether real or potential. This is a world peopled with strong, violent men whose morality is succinctly summed up as :

"What is moral is what you feel good after"¹⁰

Happiness is nothing but an interlude in their lives - pleasure seized in haste. It is ultimately an extremely narrow world. Yet one is compelled to recognise it as a very real world as the history of the past decades tell us. It is the world we live in however much we might deny it.

In comparison with the "boy scout" spirit of the soldiers who went to the first war to save the world for democracy, the men who went to the second war seemed terribly aware. The illusions of courage, nobility, sacrifice and honour had all been lost to them that first

10. Hemingway, Ernest - A Farewell to Arms (Granada)

time. Their lives had been spent in a world which had so far been in war with itself. Childhood was no longer - as it was for Hemingway - a memory of campfires and trout fishing in the Michigan woods. The generation of the twenties had found themselves lost in a world they had never made. "The generation of the forties could never be lost because the safe and ordered world had never been theirs"¹¹. Quite suddenly the world was exploding into nothingness, and because the new war generation had no illusions they found themselves beyond disillusionment. Everywhere men were disappearing into uniform and hardly anyone knew when they left. There were no longer any parades or triumphant marches. The spectacle of death was neither touchingly poignant nor exciting. For a second time in a century, America was witness to the truth of war, but this time they saw it nakedly without illusion or romance.

11. Aldridge, J.W. - The Devil in the Fire (Harper and Row, 1972) PAGE 9

The absence of genuine technical innovation in the majority of the novels of the Second War is a direct result of a difference in the responses which the two generations were able to make to war. Whereas Hemingway, Dos Passos and Cummings were impelled to discover a fresh literary technique with which to present the sudden and awesome experience of war, the writers of the Second War were denied the means of technical discovery. Discovery of technique occurs only in moments of profound and new experience, when time worn methods of expressing seem irrelevant and inadequate. In other words technique is as much a product of fresh experience as fresh subject matter is the product of successful technique. But the truth of the Second War was that it was no longer a new experience ; the emotions it aroused were old ones and it could be expressed in the old ways.

The works of the new war generation abounds in examples in which Hemingway's war is fought all over again in a style synthetically Hemingway's. The Hemingway influence is an example of the extent

to which a set of literary mannerisms created out of the fresh experience of the war, has been transferred and adapted to almost an identical experience in the second. Hemingway's style has thrived because it is uniquely the language of wartime. The tightly controlled words expressing suffering and an intimate awareness of death has become almost synonymous with certain fixed responses to war, with the result that once a writer attempts to deal with war and his responses to it, he almost always presents them in Hemingway's terms. The surface resemblance is there, but the life is not. The life can belong only to Hemingway ; for it is part of a world he created out of experience he felt for the first time when it was fresh and new and which he endowed with a meaning which was exclusively and intimately his own. The reason for this is that Hemingway, Cummings and Des Passos felt intimately as individuals for the subject of war. In each case the emphasis was on the simple and concrete and the individual soldier rather than the masses. The evil of war was a personal affront, it could be concretely blamed and attacked. What sharpened their response to the horror of war was

the contrast between the two eras - the security and comfort of the past years and the abrupt awakening to the reality of the present. To the second generation writers the passage of time made the fact of war even more complex. But they were perhaps unaware that even as they grew in awareness, they would be more deeply affected by the futility of what they saw and their work would suffer a corresponding loss of power.

It was not until 1948, however, when Norman Mailer's The Naked and the Dead appeared that the general public fully accepted the new war literature. It had a certain brute force which it shared with James Jones' From Here to Eternity. No novel since Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage, contains a more vivid or terrifyingly acute picture of the actual conditions of war time as does Mailer's The Naked and the Dead. Certainly it is no accident that Mailer feels something very close to idolatory for Hemingway, for Hemingway's appeal stems from just that part of his nature which has caused him to become Mailer's instructor in the jungle warfare of modern existence.

Just as Mailer looks backwards at Hemingway, so also Hemingway seeks in Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage for both thematic and structural inspiration. From the beginning Hemingway felt free to use second hand sources. After Hemingway showered Stephen Crane with praise in his Introduction to Men At War, critics began to note similarities between The Red Badge of Courage and A Farewell to Arms. Crane's research methods that Hemingway chose to praise - reading histories, talking to veterans and looking at pictures - were the same methods that Hemingway used in the writing of A Farewell to Arms, but Crane's account of the war becomes doubly significant because he had never seen any war. Another classic to which Hemingway is heavily indebted is Stendhal's The Chaterhuse of Parma. When Hemingway edited Men At War, he chose to include Stendhal's account of young Fabrizio at Waterloo. In this Introduction he writes :

"The best account of actual human beings

behaving during a world shaking event is Stendhal's picture of young Fabrizio at Waterloo Once you have read it, you will have been at the battle of Waterloo, and nothing can ever take that experience from you....."12.

Hemingway had said that in his early career he thought of himself as writing in competition with the great authors of the past. In A Farewell to Arms he seems to have written his Caporetto retreat in direct competition with Stendhal. In fact as if asking for comparison, Hemingway placed his own work juxtaposed between those of Crane and Stendhal.

Hemingway had Stephen Crane before him as the model for writing a researched war novel. Aside from the thematic similarities between the earlier and the later novel, there is one particular scene in A Farewell to Arms which sharply evokes memories of the earlier novel: Henry Fleming, Crane's protagonist

12: Hemingway, Ernest ed., - Men At War (Fontana, 1966) PAGE, 13

deserts his post ; on the other hand he tries to stop a potential deserter. In the ensuing scuffle, Fleming is wounded in the head which ironically becomes his "red badge of courage", because of which he is accepted back into the regiment. This scene is sharply recalled in Chapter Seven of A Farewell to Arms where Frederick Henry offers to help a deserter, but inspite of the wounds and the "bloody patch" on his head, the deserter is recognized for what he is and never mistaken to be a hero as it happens in the earlier novel. As Hemingway indicates in other parts of the novel, the courage to face the enemy or the lack of it is of no particular value in wartime. The very brave are among the first to die. Those who are not brave are killed also, "but there will be no special hurry". Here Hemingway is not so much using Crome as a source as he is paying an oblique tribute to a writer whom he admired and from whom he learned something about writing.

The second generation war writers have seen so much death and destruction that they seem to be frozen in a helpless attitude of horror. "They are all indignant novels, but the protest implicit in them is almost always merely implicit".¹³

13. Aldridge, J.W. - The Devil in the Fire (Harper and Row 1972) PAGE 16

The evil of war is so overpowering that they seem to cancel out all possibility of change - a possibility which must underlie all truly effective novels of protest. There is no single tangible enemy that had once overcome the Hemingway hero. The new generation novelists have been wounded by the shock of too much reality and of talents that have exceeded their capacity to express the full meaning of that shock.

The retreat from Caporetto and Frederick Henry walking out alone into the rain at the end of A Farewell to Arms brings to an end far more than an army and a war romance. They mark the end of a whole way of thinking, feeling and writing about war. Hemingway was fortunate enough to record that end to give it a certain tragic grandeur. But since then there have been too many wars and too many deaths, until now the meaning has been lost and the grandeur long faded. The magnificent tragedy of the First War and the sad but intensely excited young men who volunteered for it have given way to old young men who lived for it a second time and wrote of it

in tones of muffled anger and a deepening sense of futility. This distance cannot solely be measured in terms of war experience. The war served merely to crystallize the differences in their attitudes which stretched back to their childhoods and which had already formed them when the war began.

An intriguing aspect of American literary history is its preoccupation with war literature. This obsession seems to have derived partly from the manner in which the American continent itself gave expression to some aspects of human character. Lewis Mumford has developed the argument that America provided an outlet for man's basic desire to return to nature and that once freed of the fetters of European civilization, the settler quickly succumbed to the hunting instinct and since warfare is a specialized form of the hunt it is no wonder that the two should hold a special interest for the new world.¹⁴

14. Mumford, Lewis - "The City in History (New York, 1961) PAGE 42

"There is no hunting like the hunting of man, and those who have hunted armed men long enough and liked it, never care for anything else thereafter".¹⁵ One sees the duality of hunting and warfare presented with special clarity in a work like Hemingway's In Our Time, where scenes from the wilderness counterpoints scenes of war, or in Mailer's Why Are We in Vietnam where the question posed by ^{the} title is explored in the context of an Alaskan big game hunt.

War literature is also reminiscent of the masculinity of pioneering life and its fictional terrain is almost always limited to that peculiar all-male world governed by strictly masculine interests, attitudes and values. All these factors combined have produced an almost poignant treatment of the soldier by the American novelist. Mailer, for example, harks back constantly to his army days when life was both dangerous and morally simplified. His later novels typically revolve around the adventures of a soldier or ex-soldier (wandering stupefied through the horrors

15. Hemingway, Ernest - Quoted in The Preface to The Deer Hunter, by E.M. Corder. (Hodder and Stoughton, 1981)

of civilian life. Like a latter day Hemingway he obsessively raises the question of how he will react in moments of danger.

It has been seen that the attitudes towards warfare and the military establishment expressed in American war novels do tend to vary from those found in the war novels of other countries. Perhaps the most important single divergence lies in the fact that it is the enlisted man not the officer who is almost always the protagonist in the American novel. There is also the basic sense of alienation from war as an institution. Fundamental to almost all of these works is the idea that war is not an integral part of life. The fictional European soldier complains about the discomforts and stupidities of war but not about its endemic quality or the hierarchical structure of the military organization itself ; to him war is part of life and the military organization has strong analogies with the social structure he knew as a civilian. For the American, however, war is an aberration that he hopes may be permanently ended, the authoritarian military organization is an insult to his most cherished concepts of liberty and individuality.

Finally there is the question of which direction the American war novel is likely to take in the future. It has been argued that the novel as a genre is not suited to the treatment of the theme of war. Bernard Bergonzi has said :

"The novel is not an easy form in which to accommodate heroic figures, its natural bias is so much to the realistic, the typical, the ordinary, that the presence of any figure of conspicuous stature and virtue is liable to create ironic tensions".¹⁶

Yet in America, there exists a special interest in "the realistic, the typical, the ordinary", which may allow American novelists to deal successfully with the theme of war without necessarily evoking the heroic image, besides the ironic tensions themselves can become the basis for a considerable body of literature. One must also consider the way the younger generation in the Western world sought to manufacture a

16. Bergonzi, Bernard - Heroes Twilight : A study of the Literature of the Great War (London 1965)

set of heroes in the sixties. Consistent coverage of the battlefield by television and other media has helped to destroy popular belief in the hero-figure, insofar as the hero was traditionally a soldier. One now sees the phenomenon of a younger generation that takes revolutionary figures, notably Che Guevara and Ho Chi Minh and makes them into heroes. This desire to reestablish the hero as part of the national mythos could conceivably become the basis of a literature about the minor wars of the nuclear age.

Whatever new direction the war novel may take in the United States it seems safe to predict its continuing importance and popularity. The theme of "men at war" itself is indestructible and the events of our time revolve as never before around the questions of peace and war. In such a situation one may subscribe to Joseph Remenyi's statement :

"(Great War literature) helps to retain one's sense of value that ridicules absolute indifference or absolute futility. Man is shown as an agent of his own

will, or as a puppet of forces which he cannot control in his tireless integrity and in his selfish pettiness (It) touches the innermost existence of man, and defies the nothingness of human life with an expression of actions and aims which are organically attached to the will to live and the will to die".¹⁷

Peace in our Time was Hemingway's plea at the very beginning, but it has turned out to be an ironic and ambiguous prophecy.

17. Remenyi, Joseph - The Psychology of War Literature, Sewanee Review LII, PAGE 147

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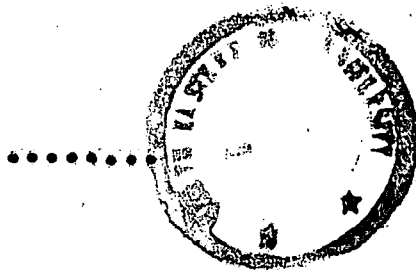
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