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THE HEMINGWAY VIEW OF MAN'S ROLE
IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Morehead State University, 1970

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The society which is presented in the fiction of Ernest Hemingway can be characterized as impersonal and violent. The Hemingway hero is usually portrayed as one who witnesses or experiences the elements of violence and absurdity in society. The Hemingway hero can best be described as stoical. This characteristic stoicism is a result of the experience of living in a modern, impersonal society. Furthermore, the Hemingway hero indicates a departure from the normal view of heroism in that he does not seek to right all wrongs, attain glory, fortune, or a state of higher grace or virtue. Instead, the hero ascribes to the existential philosophy in that he prefers to mold an existence which is centered on faith in individual effort rather than group dependence. The subject of this thesis is the Hemingway view of man's role in the modern, impersonal society as indicated in the actions of the Hemingway heroes. The procedure
for defining this view of man's role in society will be a thematic consideration of the short stories and novels of Ernest Hemingway. Primary emphasis will be placed on the Nick Adams stories, "Soldier's Home," and the novels The Sun Also Rises, A Farewell to Arms, For Whom the Bell Tolls, and The Old Man and the Sea.

The Hemingway hero undergoes three phases in defining his role in modern society. In the first phase he is initiated to elements of the impersonal society, particularly the elements of violence, loss, and despair. This initiation experience is potentially destructive, and, as a result, the hero makes a decision to separate from society. This separation becomes the second phase in the definition of his role in the modern society. This period is referred to by Hemingway as the "separate peace." During this period the hero follows the existential idea of existence more closely than in any other phase. At this time his desire is to live a life which is stripped of all cultural complications. After the Hemingway hero has been exposed to a particularly destructive aspect of society, he moves toward the natural world. Early Hemingway heroes moved to the natural world in an attempt to salvage stability of mind and body. However, with the later novels there is an increasing complexity of interrelationship of the hero with nature. Robert Jordan believed that he was integrated with all living things, including human
beings. Old Santiago progresses with that realization to the point that he can understand the necessity for one species to prey upon another. He understands that the cycle of pursuit and violence must be counteracted with a sense of love and unity in all living things. Thus, the Hemingway view of man's role in society is the acceptance of the natural drives of all living things as an integral part of existence. Man fulfills his natural drives, and, at the same time, allows all other living things to do the same.

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August 12, 1920 (date)
THE HEMINGWAY VIEW OF MAN'S ROLE
IN MODERN SOCIETY

A Thesis
Presented to
the faculty of the Department of English
Morehead State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Fadia Lowe
August, 1970
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In his portrayal of man in the modern, impersonal society, Hemingway indicates that man's primary role is that of the lonely individual leaving society and returning to the natural world.

Hemingway scholars, particularly Gurko and Killinger, indicate that the Hemingway hero can best be characterized as stoical. The hero's proper response to joy, pleasure, or pain is indifference or endurance. When confronted with suffering or bad fortune, characteristically, he remains calm and unflinching. Indeed, Hemingway appears to judge his heroes by their reaction to stress. Always, the Hemingway hero is involved in activities such as sports, war, or love, where every day may result in a crisis. In addition to subjecting the hero to physical crises, Hemingway judges each hero by his ability to cope with mental stress. Jake Barnes and Robert Jordan are made to cope with great mental
stress. Through sleepless nights Jake Barnes struggles to accept and understand his tragic affliction. While Robert Jordan is physically engaged in the execution of a plan for blowing up a bridge, inwardly he debates the great questions of love, war, politics, and religion. Ultimately, the hero appears to be judged by his ability to withstand stress.

Gurko states that "heroism is a lonely act, and heroes are essentially lonely men." This statement is pertinent in establishing the Hemingway view of man's role in an impersonal, modern society. In each Hemingway story or novel, various individuals and general social structures function as background against which the main character is allowed to play his role of isolation and escape from society and the return to a more natural world.

In playing his role, however, the Hemingway hero indicates a marked departure from the ordinary conception of an heroic figure. The heroism portrayed in Hemingway fiction is not social heroism because it remains, essentially, a private matter. Nick Adams, Jake Barnes, Frederic Henry, Robert Jordan, and Santiago do not seek to right all wrongs, attain glory, fortune, or expanded

experience. They are uninspired by vanity or ambition. In contrast to ancient heroes, they do not seek a state of higher grace or virtue. Instead, their behavior is a result of the "moral emptiness" and indifference they find in modern society. In their lives they attempt to combat this impersonality and emptiness by individual, superhuman efforts toward self-preservation.

The Hemingway hero expects no support in fulfilling his role. Consequently, free will becomes the single most important heroic element. Each major hero feels that he has within himself the power and the right to preserve his humanity in an inhuman world. This individualism is the foundation for the very stringent life style to which the Hemingway hero ascribes. If the hero sees himself in complete command of his life, then failure cannot be attributed to another individual, society, or even the universe. The failure ultimately rests with the hero. He views himself as "the isolated, self-contained individual poised on the brink of nada, but saving himself through suddenly discovered tenacity and courage."

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2Ibid., p. 94.

3Nada is the term used for the fear of nothingness. Further explanations are made in Chapters II and III.

4Gurko, Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism, p. 196.
Thus, the source of heroism in Hemingway's work is "the instinct to remain human,"\(^5\) despite all pressures to the contrary. The heroic task is to learn to accept the precarious position man occupies in society and the world without losing courage or breaking under pressure. At the same time the hero must attempt to preserve the human values that make the whole pressure of living worthwhile.\(^6\)

This study will be thematic in that the Hemingway hero will be evaluated in terms of his initiation, separation, and, in some cases, reconciliation to the impersonal, modern society, and further, how he fulfills his role. Ultimately, it is hoped that the study will show that the Hemingway view of man's role in modern society is that of individually and privately escaping this impersonal society and returning to the natural scene. No attempt will be made to confine the study to chronological order in Hemingway writing. It is felt that a thematic approach affords more flexibility as there are indication of the three thematic elements in many of Hemingway's works.

This study will encompass the greater portion of the fictional works of Hemingway. The following short stories will be considered: "The Killers,"

\(^{5}\)Ibid., p. 200. \(^{6}\)Ibid.
"The Battler," "Now I Lay Me," "In Another Country," "Big Two-Hearted River," "Soldier's Home," "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," "The End of Something," and "Indian Camp." In addition to the above short stories, the following novels will be discussed: The Sun Also Rises, A Farewell to Arms, For Whom the Bell Tolls, To Have and Have Not, Across the River and Into the Trees, and The Old Man and the Sea.

Chapter II will be concerned with a discussion of the initiation to modern society. Chapter III includes a discussion of the Hemingway hero's separation from society. In this chapter particular attention will be given to the establishing of the hero as an existential hero. Chapter IV will deal with the return to the natural world. In this chapter man's role in the impersonal society will be identified. Chapter V will consist of a summarization of the phases which the hero undergoes in defining his role in society.
CHAPTER II

THE INITIATION TO SOCIETY

Initiation marks the first step the Hemingway hero takes in defining his role in the impersonal, violent society of the twentieth century. Typically, it is the youth who experiences initiation, and for him the process involves

... a significant change of knowledge about himself, or a change of character, or of both, and this change must point or lead him towards an adult world.¹

While this general definition of the initiation process and its result would seem to indicate that the experience is confined to the pre-adolescent and the adolescent, in modern society an adult may undergo an initiation experience, despite his assumed maturity. With the adult initiation experience, it is understood that the hero derives from the experience a more complete knowledge of his role in modern society. For this reason, Marcus's classification of initiation stories becomes pertinent.

1. Tentative initiations lead to the threshold of maturity and understanding but do not definitely cross it. Such stories emphasize the shocking effect of the experience, and their protagonists tend to be distinctly young.

2. Uncompleted initiations take their protagonists across the threshold of maturity and understanding but leave them enmeshed in a struggle for certainty. These initiations sometimes involve self-discovery.

3. Decisive initiations carry their protagonists firmly into maturity and understanding, or at least show them decisively embarked toward maturity. These initiations usually center on self-discovery.

The initiation experiences of the Hemingway heroes can be considered as tentative, uncompleted, or decisive initiations to particular elements of the modern, impersonal society. Nick Adams, Hemingway’s first hero, will undergo tentative and uncompleted initiations. In considering the older heroes, the initiation most commonly experienced will be either uncompleted or decisive.

Elements in the twentieth century society to which the hero experiences some initiation are, for the most part, violence, loss, and despair. The most significant of the three is violence. All Hemingway heroes witness or experience violence in some form. Violence may be seen in a cowardly suicide, the impersonal destructiveness of organized crime, war; or,

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2Ibid.
in one case a peculiar combination of love and violence. In some instances the initiate may be exposed to the complexity of human relationships. That is, the hero may be the object of irrational human behavior, and as a result of the humiliation and pain he suffers, emerges from the experience with a sense of loss and estrangement. Interrelated with the experiencing of loss and estrangement in a violent, unstable society, the older hero of Hemingway's fiction may experience despair in the form of nada, that inexplicable feeling of fear and alienation which can dominate the mind, particularly the twentieth century mind.3

Nick Adams becomes the first Hemingway hero to experience painful initiation to the modern, impersonal society. He undergoes his first initiation experience in "Indian Camp." In this story the initiation is to violence in a most shocking and frightening form. After watching his father deliver an Indian woman of her baby by jackknife Caesarian, Nick is exposed to the violence of cowardly suicide. The Indian father in the bunk above his wife had been unable to bear her suffering, and had killed himself by slitting his throat. From the conversation Nick

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has with his father on the way back across the lake, it is evident that he has experienced no more than a tentative initiation. Nick attempts to understand why men resort to suicide by looking to his father for the answer. Dr. Adams' answer is that, "I don't know, Nick. He couldn't stand things, I guess." Because of Nick's youthfulness the answer apparently satisfies him. However, Nick is left with a feeling of shock but very little understanding of the experience. This lack of understanding is evident by the last paragraph of the story: "sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, he [Nick] felt sure that he would never die." For Nick, the father is able to furnish enough adult solidarity and assurance to cushion the effect of a potentially destructive experience. However, Dr. Adams does not help Nick understand suicide. Nick must move away from the family circle and hometown environment before he receives a fuller initiation into the more destructive aspects of modern society.

Striking out for new places, Nick encounters

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5 Ibid.
initiation experiences of increasing complexity. In "The Battler" he undergoes two initiative processes, both of which leave the young hero struggling for understanding of human behavior. The two experiences can be classified as uncompleted initiations. Nick is knocked off a freight car in the middle of the night by a brakeman who had approached him with apparent friendliness. As he washes his "barked" skin, Nick thinks bitterly, "That was a fine way to act." In this instance it is Nick's innocence and trust of people which makes him the victim of another's violence. This experience becomes his introduction to the absurdity of human behavior and the possibility that he might suffer as a result of absurdity. As Nick makes his way through the darkness, he comes upon a hobo camp belonging to Ad Francis, an ex-prizefighter, and his Negro attendant. In their camp Nick will be forced to make another step toward maturity and understanding of the modern world. Here, the initiation experience will incorporate elements of violence and unreasonable behavior. In the countenance of Ad Francis Nick sees evidence of one man's brutality toward another. He saw that "the man's face was queerly formed and muti-

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lated. It was like putty in color. Dead looking in the firelight, and the sight... made him sick." Nick sees that Ad Francis has lived violently, but before he leaves the camp he is to witness an even more puzzling kind of violence. Nick is welcomed into the camp and invited to have supper with the men. However, before the meal is over Ad turns hostile and attacks Nick. To prevent the fight, Bugs knocks the fighter unconscious with a cloth-wrapped black-jack. Bugs explains, "I didn't want you to hurt him or mark him up no more than he is." Later, as he prepares to wake Ad, Bugs, "I hate to thump him and its the only thing to do when he gets started." Gurko describes Bugs' actions as "a controlled fusion of violence and love." Bugs' love for the prize-fighter is shown in the gentleness with which he cares for Ad while he is both conscious and unconscious. In order to calm the fighter, Bugs is forced to be violent with him, but that violence is tempered with concern. This is the kind of relationship which can most likely exist with those outcast men whose home is the outer circle of society. Nick leaves the camp with the knowledge of the effects of brutality, both witnessed and experienced.

7Ibid., p. 68-9. 8Ibid., p. 76.
9Ibid.
10Gurko, Ernest Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism, p. 185.
Also, he is left with the task of understanding that combination of love and violence which provides the framework for many modern human relationships.

Again, in "The Killers" Nick is to undergo a two-fold initiation experience. Following the plan of "The Battler," this story, too, will encompass violence and the understanding of human behavior. Marcus classifies this story as a tentative initiation into the colorless, impersonal world of organized crime and the "despairing passivity" in Ole Andresen's behavior. In the diner, Nick is first confronted with the horror of an impersonal killing to be transacted by a pair of uniformly dressed, uninvolved killers.

"What are you going to kill Ole Andreson for? What did he ever do to you?" "He never had a chance to do anything to us. He never even seen us."

"And he's only going to see us once," Al said from the kitchen. "What are you going to kill him for, then?" George asked. "We're killing him for a friend. Just to oblige a friend, bright boy." The two killers, with their lack of individuality and business-like approach to murdering a man whom they neither know nor have anything personal against, reveal to Nick a particularly destructive aspect of society.

11Marcus, "What is an Initiation Story?," p. 33.

The detachment and impersonality of their destructiveness is also evident in the gangsters' decision as to what will happen to Nick, George, and the cook. George wants to know what the gangsters plan to do with the three of them and is told, "That'll depend, that's one of those things you never know at the time." After the gangsters leave, Nick rushes out to warn Andresen, and confronts a man who turns his face to the wall and accepts his doom. "There isn't anything I can do about it." At Nick's suggestion to see the police, Andresen says, "That wouldn't do any good." Back in the cafe Nick reacts to the experience.

"I'm going to get out of this town."
"Yes," said George. "That's a good thing to do."
"I can't stand to think of him waiting in room and knowing he's going to get it. It's just too damned awful."
"Well," said George, "you better not think about it."

Nick's desire to get away from this destructiveness is indicative of the shock he has suffered. He emerges from the experience with a limited knowledge of evil. However, he is left with a complete lack of understanding of Andresen's behavior. He does not understand that Andresen's death is to be a reflection of

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13 Ibid., p. 76.
14 Ibid., p. 79.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., p. 81.
of a weakness in the society of the twentieth century. This weakness is the inability of society to protect individuals, even those who operate outside the law.\textsuperscript{17} Anderson's passivity is a dignified acquiescence to the inevitable. At this time, Nick had not reached the point in maturity where he is able to accept inevitable defeat.

The initiation to violence is very much the same for three Hemingway heroes. Young sees Frederic Henry's war career in six phases: casual participation, serious action, wounding, recuperation, retreat, and desertion.\textsuperscript{18} Nick Adams and Jake Barnes experienced the war in the same phases, even though the six steps are not so clearly revealed in the Nick Adams short stories or \textit{The Sun Also Rises}. All three heroes progress from casual participation in the war on the Italian front, through wounding and recuperation, to a realization of their desire to have no further part in the war. Because of the clearness with which Hemingway traces Frederic Henry's development as a soldier, his experience will be considered as typical of that initiation to war in the


Hemingway hero. In addition, Frederic Henry also will undergo initiation to love, loss of love, and death.

Lewis regards *A Farewell to Arms* as the retelling of Frederic's initiation to war and death, love and loss of love.\(^{19}\) Edwin Moseley concurs in that he describes Frederic as an innocent young man who discovers that he is open to hurt and that the length of his survival depends upon a deliberate protection against this openness to hurt. It was to be Frederic Henry's task to understand that suffering and sacrifice is the price one must pay for an ordered existence.\(^{20}\) It is evident that Frederic has undergone some initiatory experience when he says of one of the priests in his outfit:

> He had always known what I did not know and what, when I learned it, I was always able to forget. But I did not know that then, although I learned it later.\(^{21}\)

Lewis sees this "it" as being the entire initiatory experience.\(^{22}\) The knowledge which the priest possessed, and later, which Frederic was to gain, was the acceptance of whatever life offers. The priest knows that one must have the ability to remain balanced and poised in one's own medium. Or, in the language of fighters, one must


\(^{22}\)Lewis, p. 40.
learn to "roll with the punches."

Frederic's initiation to love occurs during his recuperation in the hospital at Milan. In his first meeting with Catherine Barkley, Frederic admits that he has never loved anyone. As they see more of each other, Frederic's feeling intensifies until he is "lonely and empty"23 when he is unable to see Catherine. Seeing her for the first time after his wounding, Frederic is aware of his love for her. "When I saw her I was in love with her. Everything turned over inside of me."24 In Frederic's feelings for Catherine there is a reluctance to become involved. "God knows I had not wanted to fall in love with her. I had not wanted to fall in love with anyone. But God knows I had..."25 Progressing from an initial reluctance to complete devotion to Catherine, Frederic comes to the time when she becomes the single most important part of his life. Their love is so intense that even the war becomes secondary in importance.

Frederic's initiation to violence in war begins with a mortar shelling in which he was seriously wounded. Until the attack, he was no more than a casual participator in the Italian effort. In fact, his explanation for joining the Italian army was that he knew the Italian language. At the time of his wounding Frederic felt a serious

23Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 41. 24Ibid., p. 91. 25Ibid.
commitment to the war. Hemingway describes the shelling and Frederic's wounding in terms of that feeling in which the soul leaves the body, wanders for awhile, and then returns.

I tried to breathe but my breath would not come and I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and out and all the time in the wind. I went out swiftly, all of myself, and I knew I was dead and that it had all been a mistake to think you just died. Then I floated, and instead of going on I felt myself slide back. I breathed and I was back. 26

Initiation to violence in war does not stop with the experiencing of this personal injury. The soldier must also witness an injured comrade screaming for relief, "choking, then lying quietly with the stump of his leg twitching." 27 Or, he may make the long trip back to the hospital under a constant stream of blood from a dying soldier in the ambulance sling above. 28 This combination of suffering in oneself and others, and the fear influences Frederic to question his position in the war, even to the point of admitting, "I don't enjoy it." 29 This distaste is a contrast to his earlier enthusiasm for fighting for the Italian cause. Then, during the retreat from Caporetto, Frederic reaches the culmination of his initiation to violence

26 Ibid., p. 54.
27 Ibid., 55.
28 Ibid., p. 61.
29 Ibid., p. 70.
in war. While he is being held by the battle police, Frederic watches them question a lieutenant-colonel with "... all the efficiency, coldness, and command of themselves of Italians who are firing and not being fired on."30

"Your brigade?"
He told them.
"Regiment?"
He told them.
"Why are you not with your regiment?"
He told them.
"Do you know that an officer should be with his troops?"
He did.
That was all. Another officer spoke.
"It is you and such as you that have let the barbarians onto the sacred soil of the fatherland."
"I beg your pardon," said the lieutenant-colonel.
"It is because of treachery such as yours that we have lost the fruits of victory."
"Have you ever been in a retreat?" the lieutenant-colonel asked.31

In a comparison of the lieutenant-colonel and the carabinieri, West sees the military police as men who can afford a show of empty patriotism in speaking of the "sacred soil of the fatherland" and the "fruits of victory." However, it is the little lieutenant-colonel who knows the reality of retreat. He has commanded the wounded, diseased, hungry, and frightened soldiers in retreat. As Frederic watches

30Ibid., p. 223.
31Ibid.
the questioning and shooting of the lieutenant-colonel, he understands that war is no longer being fought by rules when a good soldier is shot by men who can do no more than mouth empty words of patriotism. It is then, out of fear and disgust for the war, that Frederic makes his dramatic swim to freedom and Catherine. With her he will experience the final act of his initiation.

Frederic had witnessed violent death on the war front, and had lived with the possibility of his own death. However, when he is faced with the death of Catherine, he fails to endure stoically and feels compelled to appeal to someone for help. "I knew she was going to die and I prayed she would not. Don't let her die. Oh, God, please don't let her die." This desperate belief that Catherine could be saved by his appeals to a God whom neither of them had ever put a great deal of faith in, reveals that Frederic is still an uninitiated hero. Only when he accepts the inevitability of Catherine's death and his complete helplessness in saving her, does he become fully initiated.


33 Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 330.
It seems she had one hemorrhage after another. They couldn't stop it. I went into the room and stayed with Catherine until she died. She was unconscious all the time, and it did not take her long to die.\(^3^4\)

After Catherine's death, Frederic returns to the room to say good-bye, but "it wasn't any good. It was like saying good-bye to a statue."\(^3^5\) As Frederic looks at the meaningless form of the woman he once had loved, he realizes that everything ends with death. This realization gives him a sound identification with the initiated heroes of the twentieth century who had rejected the secure morality of the previous century. West describes Frederic Henry as a hero "who had experienced a growth in awareness."\(^3^6\) Or, he is the hero who has reached a decisive initiation into the modern, impersonal society. He understands that man may hope for love and the ability to believe in great causes, but in the end all one has is a lonely, separated existence until death, the end of everything.

In "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" there is a presentation of the relationship of the uninitiated to the initiated hero. There are three people involved in the story: two waiters and an old patron of the

\(^3^4\)Ibid., p. 331. \(^3^5\)Ibid., p. 332. 
\(^3^6\)West, "The Biological Trap," p. 149.
cafe. The youngest of the three men has "youth, confidence, and a job." 

It is only the older men, the patron and the older waiter, who are initiated into one of the most frightening aspects of modern existence. Their initiation is to nada. Killinger describes this phenomenon as a "feeling neither of anxiety or fear, but a dread of something unknown." 

The older waiter attempts to define this fear himself when he thinks:

What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and man was a nothing too.

The younger waiter has, in addition to his youth, confidence, and job, a young wife waiting for him when he arrives home. Therefore, he is impatient with the deaf, old Spaniard who lingers each night in the cafe. The older waiter is unmarried and lives alone, so he understands the fear that the old patron grapples with each night in the "clean, well-lighted place." Both old men have experienced a complete initiation into the struggle for light against dark, order against chaos, meaning against meaninglessness,

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as indicated in their preference for the neat, bright cafe over the bodegas where one must stand to drink in the dim, disorderly surroundings. Fear of nothingness is an unavoidable part of the modern world and can only be held in check by continued human effort to maintain order in existence. The younger waiter has yet to experience what the older men know and fear.

In more primitive cultures, initiation was to a series of rituals which marked the entry into the adult world. In the society of the twentieth century, the initiate also seeks to adjust to and understand his adult role. However, when the initiation is to violence, loss, and despair, the task of adjustment becomes more complex. Initiation for the Hemingway hero leads to a period of disillusionment with modern society, followed by a decision to separate oneself altogether. This decision is made when twentieth century society fails to provide that stability which is a necessary condition for existence.
CHAPTER III

THE SEPARATION FROM SOCIETY

The Hemingway hero's desire to be separated from the modern, impersonal society is caused by the uncertainty, disillusionment, and pain which he has experienced as a man in the violent twentieth century world. The period of separation is an interim in which the hero denies the claims of society, but as yet has not gathered his forces together enough to fulfill his final role of escape into a more natural world. This period represents, for the Hemingway hero, his bleakest and most nihilistic stage. He is characterized as detached, solitary, or uninvolved. During this alienated period the hero realizes that his salvation lies in his ability to privately free himself from the destructive order of society and return to the life-renewing natural scene, where existence is governed by rationality and harmony.

Hemingway referred to this period of disengagement as a "separate peace." This "separate peace" is an unsubstantial kind of peace which must be won privately and continuously. The means to a
modern separate peace is the existential philosophy of Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Camus. The role of the individual in existential thought is that of separation from all other being, human or non-human.\footnote{1} Killinger states that the three basic tenets of existentialism are that the philosophy:

1. attempts to establish the separate identity of the individual,
2. states that every man faces the choice of being a genuine individual or being a part of the crowd, and
3. recognizes that in a world where every man can thus choose to be himself or remain anonymous, good and evil become mere qualities of the way of life which the individual chooses.\footnote{2}

For an existential existence, the hero must accept isolation and the responsibility for authentic or true living. Or, negatively, the hero may choose blind acceptance of the way of the crowd. Moreover, the hero must determine the relative values of good and evil without the help of society. This situation is described by Sartre as anguish, "the choice of being or not being one's self, posed not once for all but continuously."\footnote{3} This freedom of choice brings the hero in constant contact with nada, a feeling which threatens destruction and the end of existence.\footnote{4}

\footnote{1}{John Killinger, \textit{Hemingway and the Dead Gods} (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1960), p. 2.}
\footnote{2}{Ibid., pp. 6-12.}
\footnote{3}{Ibid., p. 14.}
\footnote{4}{Ibid.}
For the twentieth century hero, particularly the Hemingway hero, violence in its most frightening aspect, that of war, becomes the single most important reason for separation. The turning point for the hero becomes the experiencing of 'das Sein Zum Tode' or being towards death. When a man faces the possibility of his destruction, he is freed of all cultural complications, and for the first time realizes what lies within his soul. After having this experience, the authentic individual can never retreat into society again. Instead, the existential hero will:

No longer seek objectivity in the abstract 'patriotism;' nor in an army of ciphers where the responsibility does not rest with the individual. Violence has isolated him from the formless lump of humanity--he exists. Thus, violence in war becomes the reason for the Hemingway hero's disillusionment with society.

Harry Morgan and Santiago are exceptions. Morgan's separation resulted from his decision to operate outside the law in order to support his family. Santiago, as the supreme existential hero, chose separation in order to fulfill his great task. His separation was the result of a greater wisdom.


Nick Adams becomes the first Hemingway hero to make the decision to separate from society. Nick is presented as a soldier for the first time in an inter-chapter of *In Our Time*. He has received a spine wound. As he sits against a church wall surveying the wrecked street and dead Austrians, he turns to his wounded Italian comrade and says, "Senta Rinaldo; Senta. You and me we've made a separate peace. We're not patriots." Nick indicates that he no longer desires to actively oppose the enemy. Fighting for society's idea of democracy is no longer important to him. His wound has separated him from the rest of humanity and left him in the existential world of individuality. Phillip Young regards Nick's spine wound as a culmination of the Indian suicide, the violence in Ad Francis' camp, and the impersonal killing of Ole Andresen. The injured spine becomes "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual dis-grace." Young notes that Nick does not merely decide to give up active combat; he further decides that patriotism now means nothing. Society no longer has any claims in his life.

To declare one's separation from society is

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7 Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), Chapter VI.

relatively easy. Nick's greatest difficulty after the injury and subsequent renunciation of society is the forgetting of scenes of horror such as a soldier's head held together with bandages or the general lying in the snow with a wound big enough for one to put his fist in. In "Now I Lay Me," Nick remembers and is haunted by these scenes of horror.

I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. I had been that way for a long time ever since I had been blown up in the night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back. I tried never to think about it, but it had started to go since, in the nights, just at the moment of going off to sleep, and I could only stop it by a very great effort. So while now I am fairly sure that it would not have gone out, yet then, that summer, I was unwilling to make the experiment.9

Nick is presented as a young man who suffers from insomnia, or even worse, nightmares. He has the existential fear of darkness, because it is in this time that his soul is likely to leave his body. He maintains stability during the long nights by remembering the trout streams of his youth. After the war, he is to return to these streams in an attempt to preserve his sanity.

Leaving the violence of war, Nick is provided with the final knowledge of another step in separation

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which he must make. In "In Another Country" Nick learns about the impossibility of a lasting love relationship between men and women. Earlier, in "The End of Something" Nick terminates a courtship with his girl friend Marjorie. Nick explains, but in his awkwardness and youthfulness, can only say, "It isn't fun any more."\(^{10}\)

Now, from the more mature major who comes to the hospital daily to exercise a withered hand, Nick learns his most bitter lesson in the futility of love. The major says:

"He cannot marry. He cannot marry, if he is to lose everything he should not place himself in a position to lose that. He should find things he cannot lose.\(^{11}\)

Later, Nick learned that the major had just lost his young wife. In his anger and pain, the major tries to warn the untried Nick that in the modern world only those who can stand alone emerge with anything in the end. Therefore, a man is wise not to learn to depend on love.

In *A Farewell to Arms* Hemingway continues the idea of a separate peace made in the midst of war. Nick becomes Frederic Henry. There is a great similarity in the two heroes. Neither can sleep


until he stops thinking, both have nightmares, both have been wounded and make their separation during a confrontation. However, Henry goes one step beyond Nick in that he

... stands for many men; he stands for the experience of his country; in his evolution from the complicity of the war to bitterness to escape, the whole of America could read its recent history in a crucial period, Wilson to Harding. When he expressed his disillusionment with the ideals of the war, and jumped in a river and deserted, Henry's action epitomized the contemporary feeling of the whole nation.\(^{12}\)

With the development of Frederic Henry as a hero, Hemingway came to be regarded as the spokesman for a nation which felt that it had been involved in a pointless world war. Hence, Frederic Henry's characterization indicates an increasing need for individuality in society.

In a previous chapter it was noted that Frederic Henry progressed from casual participation in the war through a retreat to a final stage of desertion. The first indication of Frederic's disillusionment with his role in the war comes through a conversation between him and an Italian patriot. He recognizes that Gino is truly a patriot while he \([\text{Frederic}]\)

\(^{12}\)Phillip Young, "Ernest Hemingway," in \textit{Seven Modern American Novelists}, p. 163.
... was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and the expression in vain. We had heard them, ... 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. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only names of places had dignity. 13

Frederic reveals that he finds the subject of patriotism disconcerting. War as he witnessed it, particularly the incident by the Tagliamento before his desertion, was repulsive. Existentially, it is living that is valuable, not abstractions such as "glory, honor, courage, or hallow." 14 These words are only entangling concepts, when it is only place and people who are meaningful, because we determine ourselves in relation to the things around us, not the abstractions. 15

After swimming the Tagliamento, Frederic hitches a ride on a train carrying guns. His extreme detachment is shown when he thinks, "The head was mine, but not to use, not to think with, only to remember, and not too much remember." 16 Characteristically, the existential hero chooses to act rather than think. Frederic is certain that his life from now on will be grounded in

13 Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 185.
14 Ibid. 15 Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods, p. 49.
16 Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 231.
actualities such as people and places rather than abstract thought. His separation is made clear when he thinks:

You saw emptily... having been present when one army moved back and another came forward. You were out of it now. You had no more obligations. Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation. I would not have liked to have had on the uniform although I did not care much about the outward forms. I had taken off the stars, but I did that for convenience. It was no point of honor. I was not against them. I was through. I wished them all the luck. There were the good ones, and the brave ones, and they deserved it. But it was not my show anymore.\footnote{Ibid., p. 232.}

Dispassionately, Frederic declared that the war no longer had relevance in his life. His desertion was not prompted by loss of honor. Instead, he simply determined to be disengaged from the conflict.

As the title of the novel indicates, Frederic Henry is to make two important separations. Already he has given up participation in the war, now he must give up his love. After Catherine and Henry flee to Switzerland, the fierceness of their love is even more pronounced. The intensity of their love is heightened by the fact that neither has ties with his native country. Frederic was a long distance from America and only claimed slight connections there, anyway. Catherine never spoke of returning to England. In Italy their love deepened in the midst of an impersonal war; in Switzerland they are strangers in a strange land. It is this separation from society which lends...
intensity to the relationship rather than an unusual capacity for passion in themselves. In thinking of their unusual self-absorption, Frederic muses that often men and women were jealous of the times when their lovers wished to be alone. However, he and Catherine are different:

\[
\ldots \text{we never felt that. We could feel alone when we were together, alone against the others. \ldots But we were never afraid when we were together.}^{18}
\]

In this same reflective mood, Frederic indicates that disaster is impending when he thinks:

If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too. but there will be no hurry.\(^{19}\)

In this juxtaposition of devotion and disaster Hemingway indicates that the person who is to die will be Catherine. This tragedy will also be Frederic's "breaking point."

When Catherine enters the hospital to deliver her child, she and the child must die if Frederic Henry is to emerge as an existentially free character.\(^{20}\)

\[\text{\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.}, \text{p. 249.} \quad \text{\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{20}Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods, p. 48.}\]
A child and wife will place Frederic among those who are involved. Catherine is aware of this during her pregnancy. She worries that his approaching fatherhood will make him feel trapped. He assures her that she and the child are not responsible for his feeling trapped. Instead, he says that he feels "biologically trapped," voicing his old resentment that all must die. As Catherine's condition becomes increasingly critical he thinks:

Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. . . . You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you.21

Carlos Baker explains this "they" which Frederic refers to as "nothing but a name for the way things are."22 It is this impersonal force which puts human beings in the same predicament as ants on a burning log. However, since man is responsible for "the way things are," Catherine's death is indirectly caused by society.23

21Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 327.


23Ibid.
While Henry bitterly resents Catherine's death, she, with this final act, gives him his freedom. As Henry leaves the hospital he is "alone, tormented, but very much alive in the existential sense." Catherine's death has freed him from the complicated life so that he can now turn to a simpler way of living, a movement which is essential for the existential hero who is attempting to define his role in the twentieth century society.

In acertaining his role in modern society, the Hemingway hero learns the necessity for the differentiation between the simple and the complicated life. Killinger believes that knowledge of these two styles of living comes after

... an experience of violence or death, in which the distinction between authentic existence and complicated being is made clearly recognizable.25

This explanation of simple and complicated living correlates with Heidegger's principle of "being toward death" in that once one has been in the presence of death, thereafter he will seek an authentic way of living, stripped of cultural complications. Essentially, the hero will deny the complicated life. Existentially, he is given an almost unbearable amount of freedom. Acceptance

24Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods, p. 48.
25Ibid., p. 33
of this freedom demands that the hero act "sincerely and authentically." Conversely, he may choose to act irresponsibly by following the "more comfortable" way of society.26 In their separated state, several Hemingway heroes fight for the right to live alone--simply and authentically. The desire is particularly notable in the life of Harold Krebs, Jake Barnes, and Colonel Cantwell.

In the creation of the character of Harold Krebs, Hemingway begins his consideration of the hero's attempts to live an uncomplicated life. In "Soldier's Home" Hemingway very carefully depicts Harold Krebs as an accepter of social patterns. He "went to the war from a Methodist college," belonged to a fraternity in which all the men wore "exactly the same height and style collar."27 The Harold Krebs who returned from the war was not the same man who had left Oklahoma two years earlier. Krebs' life represents that struggle between authentic and unauthentic living. In his hometown Krebs discovers that there is a falseness which is totally unacceptable to him because of his initiation to violence and death, and subsequently, his

26Ibid., p. 34.

realization of the importance of simple living. At first he told lies in order to get people to listen to his war experiences, then "a distaste for everything that had happened to him in the war set in because of the lies he had told." Even the times he had acted truly as a soldier "now lost their cool, valuable quality and then were lost themselves." With the realization that he is becoming entangled, Krebs tries to build an existence filled with simple actions, but he must struggle to be free from social patterns and emotional commitment.

For Krebs, the young girls of the town represent emotional commitment. However, they are the only aspect of the complicated world which interests Krebs:

- the young girls had grown up. But they lived in such a complicated world of already defined alliances and shifting feuds that Krebs did not feel the energy or the courage to break into it. He did not want any consequences ever again. Now he would have liked a girl if she had come to him and not wanted to talk. But here it was too complicated.

Krebs sees in an alliance with one of the girls an opposition of the simple and complicated life. To become involved with them would, in a sense, indicate that he accepted the complications of courtship and marriage and the following involvement in the society

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28 Ibid., p. 90. 29 Ibid. 30 Ibid., pp. 92-3.
which they represent. In the end he decided, "It was not worth it. Not now when things were getting good again." 31

While Krebs can choose for himself whether to enter the complicated world of a love relationship, his family voices middle class expectations in that they urge him to assume an active role in society. This role involves marrying, "getting ahead" in a job, and becoming interested in community affairs. Krebs' mother feels that to assume this role is a moral duty.

"God has some work for every one to do," his mother said. "There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom."
"I'm not in His Kingdom," Krebs said. 32

Krebs rejects God's plans for him and, further, says that he is not a part of that world. It is revealed that the father also disapproves of Krebs' detachment. "He thinks you have lost ambition, that you haven't got a definite aim in life." 33 Seeing that Krebs is not responding, his mother appeals to him for the sake of love to conform. Krebs honestly must reply that he loves no one, not even his mother. She cries, and Krebs is forced to behave unauthentically to comfort his mother. He pretends feelings of love and

31Ibid., p. 94. 32Ibid., p. 98. 33Ibid., p. 99.
reverence when he actually feels "sick and vaguely nauseated." Because of the complications of social expectations and religion, his only recourse is to leave the family circle.

Jake Barnes is an extension of the wounded hero who has disengaged himself from society, particularly that middle class society of the Mid-West. He keeps company with an international group of expatriates, a dissolute collection of amusing but aimless people—all of them, in one way or another, blown out of the paths of ordinary life by the war.  

Jake himself works for the Paris edition of the New York Herald, but he has no enthusiasm for his job. The high spot of the year is the two-week vacation he spends in Spain watching the bull-fights. The fact that he is completely cut off from the United States is emphasized in a scene in which he receives a wedding announcement from someone in his hometown, and does not have any idea who the person is. Killinger refers to Jake as the

.. . truly expatriated American. . . . He is like a man without a country, his existence sheared of complication even to the extent of abandoning his fatherland. But the expatriation must be spiritual as well as geographical. A mere transplanted

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Because of his wound and his ability to become involved with society, Jake Barnes can be considered an authentic Hemingway hero. "Jake leads a simple, unentangled life--he is Jake Barnes, no more, no less." The extent of Jake's disengagement is shown in contrast with Robert Cohn. Cohn is a conformist who "gets his likes and dislikes from Mencken." He is a man who can not accept his true self; instead he is always trying to imitate some one, particularly those who belonged in Jake's group. He is an emotional man who allows his sense of obligation to interfere with his own happiness. He would like to have gone to South America, but will not go alone when his mistress refuses to go with him. Jake advises him, "Tell her to go to hell." Cohn replies, "I can't, I have certain obligations to her."

Jake Barnes is a man who is deprived of sexual, marital, or paternal relationships by the wound he received in the war. However, he is able to bear the

handicap stoically, even though the thought of the injury is constantly oppressive. This stoicism is evident when a woman, whom he had picked up in a cafe, invites him to kiss her, but he brushes her aside. She wants to know what is wrong with him, so he says:

"Never mind."
"What's the matter? You sick?"
"Yes." 40

While the dinner progresses Jake thinks that he had forgotten how dull it could be. 41 Still, the girl is trying intently to discover exactly what sickness it was that Jake suffers from.

"It's a shame you're sick. We get on well. What's the matter with you, anyway?"
"I got hurt in the war." I said.
"Oh, that dirty war."
We would probably have gone on and discussed the war and agreed that it was in reality a calamity for civilization, and perhaps would have been better avoided. I was bored enough. 42

Even though he still suffers, Jake indicates that he has accepted the tragedy and intends to keep functioning as best he can. Jake is able to function to the fullest extent possible because he is in control of his life. He is the existential hero who has chosen to be "responsible to himself for all his actions." 43 Jake is particularly rigorous with himself in his relationship with the woman.

40 Ibid., p. 15. 41 Ibid., p. 16. 42 Ibid., p. 17.
43 Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods, p. 68.
to Brett Ashley. Knowing Brett's destructive effort on men, Jake, nevertheless, introduces her to Pedro Romero. Later, he regrets having made the introduction, but nonetheless, he remains loyal to Brett even though he fears she will be detrimental to Pedro's career in the bullring. After the fiesta Jake goes to San Sebastion alone, attempting to salvage some dignity and self-respect after the dissipation of Pamplona. However, he is summoned to Brett's aid in Madrid. Jake realizes his responsibility when he reluctantly leaves San Sebastion for Madrid:

Send a girl off with one man. Introduce her to another to go off with him. Now go and bring her back.44

Jake understands that it was his introduction which caused the trouble Brett is now in; therefore he must take some decisive steps to help her. It is this ability to hold himself personally accountable for the events precipitated by some action on his part which makes Jake an authentic existential hero. Jake Barnes is a man who can see both the negative and positive sides to his character. In a discussion with Brett, Jake reveals just how clearly and coldly he evaluated himself.

44Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 239.
"Everybody behaves badly," I said. "Give them the proper chance."
"You wouldn't behave badly." Brett looked at me.
"I'd be as big an ass as Cohn," I said.45

The severity with which Jake judges himself emphasizes the fact that he is a man who had will power and self-discipline. He realizes, as Frederic Henry did, that to survive in modern society one must sublimate understanding for action. "I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it."46

Richard Cantwell of Across the River and Into the Trees represents a continuation of Hemingway's study of the wounded, separated hero. In contrast to Nick Adams, Frederic Henry, and Jake Barnes, Cantwell is the Hemingway hero grown old and facing death. In this case, death is to come by heart attack rather than in battle. Hemingway indicates in his portrayal of Cantwell that age does not change the way in which his hero is to attempt to conduct his life. As a result of the wound he received on the bank of the Possalta, Cantwell has undergone the experience of facing death, which leads to a simple mode of living henceforth.

In addition to the experiencing of the possibility of violent death, Cantwell is able to

completely free himself of the past. Arriving in Venice for a final weekend, Cantwell stops his driver at the exact spot where he had been seriously wounded thirty years ago. There he symbolically frees himself of the man who had ceased to exist in this spot thirty years ago.47 Looking out over the river, Cantwell remembers:

I couldn't spit that night, nor afterwards for a long time, but I spit good now for a man who doesn't chew.48

This observation is, of course, a reference to the intense dryness of the mouth and throat which may be experienced in moments of great fear and distress. His ability to "spit good" indicates that Cantwell is not haunted by this potentially destructive experience from his past. Instead, each subsequent encounter with the possibility of death has increased his ability to function simply.

If one looks beyond Cantwell's boastful, self-pitying conversation, it can be seen that he is a man who has full recognition of his role. Essentially, he is the hero who has learned to "act within situation, not to elude situation."49 Existentially,
one's situation is that condition which makes up life. Cantwell's situation is that of an old man dying of a faulty heart. While he would not have chosen this "situation," had the choice been his, once the plan for his life is made he attempts to function capably in his particular circumstances.

"I guess the cards we draw are those we get. You wouldn't like to re-deal would you dealer? No. They only deal you once, and then you pick them up and play them."

This observation then becomes Cantwell's explanation to his mistress as to why they cannot marry and have five sons. While he would prefer this plan, if Cantwell is to remain authentic he must play as well as he can with the "cards" he receives. Cantwell is successful in playing his role of existential simplicity to the time of his death.

Turning from a separation caused by war experiences, Hemingway depicts a disengagement from society by lawlessness in To Have and Have Not. Before the depression Harry Morgan supported his family by hauling legitimate cargo and conducting fishing trips. When approached with an offer to smuggle Chinamen into the country, Harry refuses.

"I'm all for you. But I can't do it."
"Why not?"

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50 Hemingway, Across the River and Into the Trees, p. 110.
"I make my living with the boat. If I lose her I lose my living."

If the economic system in the United States had remained stable, Harry Morgan probably would have continued to operate within the law. However, opportunities to use his boat legally became infrequent. Morgan's decision to use his boat for illegal cargo was made definitely when he was cheated by a wealthy fisherman who gave him a "cold check" and left town.

So there it was. I was broke. ... And the day before I turned down three thousand dollars to land three aliens on the Keys. All right, what was I going to do now? I couldn't bring in a load because you have to have some money to buy the booze and besides there's no money in it any more. The town is flooded with it and there's nobody to buy it. But I was damned if I was going home broke and starve a summer in that town. ...

"You carry anything?" Frankie asked. 
"Sure," I said. "I can't choose now."

Behind Morgan's decision to break the law and to involve himself in the transportation of liquor, Chinamen, and revolutionaries, there is a determination to provide for his family, a sentiment which indicates a departure from existential thought. It is this feeling of responsibility for the welfare of his family which, in his eyes, makes his unlawfulness justifiable. Morgan is a


52 Ibid.
man who does not understand the events of the depression. "I don't know who made the laws but I know there ain't no law that you got to go hungry."\(^{53}\) Gurko describes him as a man who distrusts anyone or anything, particularly the government. He is the individual who must depend on himself. However, he is deprived of independence by government intervention.\(^{54}\) In an effort to survive, Morgan chooses to disregard the laws. This separation from the law of society in the cause of increasingly grave acts of violence by Morgan and against him. Finally, this lawlessness leads to his violent death.

Heretofore, separation from society has resulted from the experiencing of violence in one form or another, particularly that of war or crime. Santiago, Hemingway's final hero, also separates himself from the fishing village in order to go out into the depths of the ocean alone. He is not driven to become disengaged by a traumatic experience. Instead, his separation is made through understanding and wisdom concerning the fulfilling of his role in society.

Santiago forbids Manolin to go out in the skiff with him for three reasons. One, the old man realizes  

that he would be betraying himself if he allowed the boy to come along. Setting out to break his extraordinary run of bad luck by catching a great fish becomes Santiago's great trial. Santiago realizes that one must be alone of there is to be a victory at the end of the experience. The second reason Santiago fishes alone is that if there is to be anguish and suffering in the struggle, it must be endured alone. This ability to suffer alone is related to Hemingway's belief that in a private contest with the natural world the individual man reaches the highest degree of self-realization, the final reason for Santiago's determination to fish alone.\textsuperscript{55} As holding the marlin becomes increasingly agonizing the old man thinks of the boy:

\begin{quote}
I wish I had the boy.
But you haven't got the boy, he thought. You have only yourself and you had better work. ..\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

In his thoughts at this point Santiago shows his readiness for the trial in his willingness to struggle without the boy and his recognition that he has the skill to endure. The reason a man must study the world in which he lives and show proficiency in dealing with

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{55}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 169.
\end{footnotesize}
that world is that "they can live in it successfully only to the degree that they handle themselves with skill." 57 To perform capably in situation, or within a particular condition of life, the hero must have mastered a specific skill. Santiago is very knowledgeable about fishing and also very professional in the act of fishing. He thinks of the fish lines and knows that "He kept them straighter than anyone did." 58 While out in the ocean he is able to free himself from thoughts of everything but "that which I was born for." 59 It is this combination of psychological and professional readiness which equips Santiago to endure and emerge victorious from his ordeal with the marlin.

The Hemingway hero, from Nick Adams to Santiago, makes that essential separation which can be regarded as preparation for the discovery of the role the hero is to play in modern society. This act of separation is a necessity in that the hero must free himself of the expectations of society and dependence upon that society if he is to discover his place in the natural world.

57Gurko, p. 168.
58Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea, p. 32.
59Ibid., p. 40.
CHAPTER IV

THE RETURN TO NATURE

When the Hemingway hero declares himself separated from society and turns to the natural world, his actions are not to be judged as a shirking of responsibilities. Instead, the decision to become disengaged is a necessity if the hero is to attain moral and emotional freedom. The Hemingway hero views life in society as prohibitive, unnatural, and at times, destructive. It is an act of cowardice to remain in society under these conditions. Eventually, authenticity of character demands the return to nature. In nature the hero does not cease to live a demanding life. In fact, it is only in nature that the hero can mold an existence governed by a sense of discipline and morality. In nature, the hero must depend solely on the self rather than rely on the forms and requirements of society.¹

Leo Gurko, foremost advocate of the return-to-nature motif in Hemingway's fiction, maintains that the hero does not follow the Rousseau belief of purity

¹Leo Gurko, Ernest Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism, p. 172.
in nature as opposed to the evils of society. Instead, return to nature is "a flight from safety and the atrophying of the spirit produced by safety."\(^2\) Hemingway urges that the individual return to a natural scene as a means of freedom and self-awareness, rather than any desire to be free from the corruption of social institutions.\(^3\)

Hemingway did not make a definitive statement of the hero's return to the natural scene until the writing of *The Old Man and the Sea*. However, his work with the theme began with Nick Adams and is evident in the novels following the Nick Adams stories. With each hero there is an increasing complexity of interaction with nature. For Nick Adams, Jake Barnes, and Frederic Henry, nature furnishes that retreat from the destructiveness of society. By returning to the fishing streams and the mountains, each hero hopes to find spiritual renewal. Leaving Paris and the war-torn plains of Italy, the three men find a return to health, mental and physical, in a re-alliance with nature which "waits


unchanged for their return." Robert Jordan is the hero who is chosen to be the one who identifies with "the natural man in the natural landscape." Santiago represents the zenith in that realization of one's role in the natural world. It is the old fisherman who recognizes that harmony of existence between man and all other life has the power to erase the harm done by society.

Nick Adams becomes the first hero to be placed in the natural world. During his recuperation Nick is sustained through sleepless nights by the memory of the trout streams in which he fished before leaving for the war. "Big Two-Hearted River" is written in curiously dispassionate tones, which convey the condition of Nick's mind. Underlying the lack of passion or excitement, there is a sense of tension. Philip Young compares Nick's efforts toward stability with the movements of the trout in the stream. Nick sees "trout keeping themselves

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5 Allen Guttman, "Mechanized Doom': Ernest Hemingway and the American View of the Spanish Civil War," in Ernest Hemingway: Critiques of Four Major Novels, p. 104.

6 Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, p. 44.
steady in the current with wavering fins,"7 while others were "slightly distorted," and then at "the bottom of the pool were the big trout."8 Young interprets the appearance of the trout as symbolic of the level of Nick's emotional stability. Nick must proceed with care and not forget a step of his ritual if he is to remain "steady." There is a distorted quality about the whole fishing trip. Finally, there are deep recesses in Nick's mind which, at this time, must not be examined.9

As Nick approaches the river there is a perceptible change in his thought. While the tension is still foremost, Nick

... felt happy. He felt that he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs. It was all back of him.10

This happiness results from a series of sensory perceptions. "Underfoot the ground was good walking."11 While he walked he enjoyed the smell of sweet fern under his pack, and when he stopped to rest, "the earth felt good against his back."12 Finally, when the camp is

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8Ibid., p. 178.
9Young, Ernest Hemingway, p. 44.
11Ibid., p. 182.
12Ibid., p. 184.
made Nick is completely content.

Nick was happy as he crawled inside the tent. He had not been unhappy all day. This was different though. Now things were done. It had been a hard trip.\footnote{Ibid., p. 186.}

Nick is completely happy because, with the setting up of camp, he has firmly established himself "in the good place."\footnote{Ibid.} For Nick this place is, of course, that scene far away from society. Within the tent Nick could feel safe and in control even if "his mind was starting to work."\footnote{Ibid., p. 191.} The old horrors could be kept at bay by sleep. During the next day there is an increasing feeling of serenity in Nick's actions. Only once, when he is excited over catching the big trout, does he feel "a little sick." Then he must leave the water in order "not to rush his sensations any."\footnote{Ibid., p. 204.} At one point Nick surveys the dark swamp beyond the river and "felt a reaction against it."\footnote{Ibid., p. 211.} The swamp represents a risk which Nick is unwilling to take at the moment. However, "there are plenty days coming when he could fish in the swamp."\footnote{Ibid., p. 212.} This affirmative note indicates that Nick has gained a measure of security and control from this return to nature. Gurko describes this move-
ment as the return to those primitive sources of energy--fire, earth, water, and air--where there is a possibility of mental and spiritual health.19

In the creation of Jake Barnes as a hero, Hemingway continues the return-to-nature motif. Rovit compares Jake Barnes to Eliot's Fisher-King in that "he created his own miracle of rain, irrigating his dead lands out of the fructifying love of life to which his passion for nature testifies."20 This passion for the natural world is a result of the twentieth century denial of Christianity, which is seen as hostile to nature, and the subsequent following of Nietzsche's modern paganism in the form of the advocation of naturalness.21 The return to nature becomes a step toward denial of the complexities of society and the desire for simplicity in living.

To Hemingway human society is the "arena of experience," while nature is the "place of restoration." The Hemingway hero must have the ability to gravitate between the two extremes.22 For Jake Barnes, human

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19 Gurko, Ernest Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism, p. 203.


21 Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods, p. 63.

22 Gurko, Ernest Hemingway, pp. 61-62.
society is represented in the group with which he keeps company in Paris. There is an element of destructiveness in his relationships with these people, particularly Brett Ashley. Consequently, each year Jake returns to the trout streams of Burguete in search of a renewed strength.

As Jake and Bill board the bus for Burguete, there is an underlying sense of exhilaration in their conversation and drinking with the Basques. As the bus comes closer to Burguete, Hemingway indicates that Jake and Bill are approaching "the good place."

We went through the forest and the road came out and turned along a rise of land, and out ahead of us was a rolling green plain, with dark mountains beyond it. These were not like the brown, heat-baked mountains we had left behind.\(^2^3\)

This contrast of parched brownness with the fertile greenness of the land is reminiscent of Nick's earlier movement through the charred land before he reaches the trout stream. Burguete holds the same good effect for Jake that the trout stream did for Nick. The first night in the village, Jake is able to sleep soundly, a condition which he finds difficult in Paris. Setting out for the river the next morning, Jake and Bill are clearly excited with the prospect of a day's fishing. Their conversation is animated and humorous. At one point, Jake can even joke about his injury with some

\(^{23}\)Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 108.
wry enjoyment. The sense of well-being is maintained throughout the trip. "We stayed five days at Burguete and had good fishing... There was no word from Robert Cohn nor from Brett and Mike." Jake is very much aware that for a time he does not have to cope with the difficulties of existence in Paris. Here he enjoys an emotional serenity which is impossible when he is involved with Brett Ashley and Robert Cohn. For a time he can fish, read, eat, and drink well, and sleep deeply, and enjoy an uncomplicated friendship with Bill and an Englishman who is also fishing in Burguete, before he comes to the confusion and unhappiness awaiting him in Pamplona.

Burguete is a mountainous area. This idea of mountains having idyllic and restorative qualities is continued in A Farewell to Arms. Frederic Henry is to be introduced to two mountain sanctuaries, Abruzzi and the Swiss Alps. Carlos Baker describes the conflict in the novel as being an opposition of the "lowland versus highland image." Or, in another instance, Baker analyzes the same contrasts in terms of "home and Not-Home."

The Home-Concept is associated with the mountains;

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24 Ibid., p. 125.

with dry-cold weather; with peace and quiet; with love, dignity, health, happiness, and the good life...
The Not-Home Concept is associated with low-lying plains; with rain and fog; with obscenity, indignity, disease, suffering, nervousness, war, and death...

Frederic's turn from the following of the "Not-Home Concept" to that of the "Home-Concept" indicated his growth in awareness and maturity.

In the early part of his military career, Frederic followed the "Not-Home Concept" in that he lived easily in the crude, sometimes hostile atmosphere of the Italian officers' company. His first introduction to the "Home-Concept" comes from a priest in the outfit. Frederic joins with the other officers in "baiting" the priest. However, he has regard for the man, and often wished he had visited the priest's home in Abruzzi.

At Capracotta, he had told me, there were trout in the stream below the town... The peasants all called you 'Don' and when you met they took off their hats. His father hunted every day and stopped at the houses of peasants. It was cool in the summer at night and the spring in Abruzzi was most beautiful in Italy.

As his disenchantment with the war increases, Frederic begins to compare the plains with the mountains. On the plains he sees the devastation of the war, while the

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27Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 73.
mountains represents a sanctuary.\textsuperscript{28}

When Frederic and Catherine are forced to flee from Italy, they decide to go to Switzerland. As they row across the lake toward Switzerland, the mountains become their goal. "There was a high dome-capped mountain on the other shore a way ahead."\textsuperscript{29} When they reach Switzerland, both are quite excited. "Isn't it a grand country? I love the way it feels under my shoe."\textsuperscript{30}

In the mountains above Montreux they spend the winter, and are completely involved in each other and the beauty about them. However, despite their abnormal self-absorption and fascination with the mountains, there is always the knowledge that below the mountains are the plains and disaster.

The mountains were sharp and steep on the other side of the lake and down at the end of the lake was the plain of the Rhone Valley flat between the two ranges of mountains. . . .\textsuperscript{31}

With this threat of the plains looming before them, it is not unexpected that their move down the mountain from Montreux to Lausanne ends in a disaster of death.

In \textit{For Whom the Bell Tolls} Hemingway again writes of people in the mountains. In this case the

\textsuperscript{28}Baker, "The Mountain and the Plain," p. 52.
\textsuperscript{29}Hemingway, \textit{A Farewell to Arms}, p. 274.
\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 278. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 290.
location is the high slopes of the Sierra de Guadarramas in Spain. Baker refers to this place as "a mountain fastness, and island surrounded by the sinister."\(^{32}\)

Again, there is the treatment of the lowlands-versus-highlands concept, because the facists are on the plains outside Madrid, while Pablo's guerrillas enjoy a momentary sanctuary in the mountains.\(^{33}\)

With the exception of Robert Jordan, Hemingway heroes must have isolation in order to live authentically. Robert Jordan represents that temporary suspension of individual freedom to insure the freedom of all men in the world. This relinquishing of isolation is necessary when any man is threatened. The abandonment of freedom is not contrary to existential philosophy. The existentialists seek freedom to act within situation, not freedom to escape the situation.\(^{34}\) Therefore, Hemingway is not inconsistent when he places Robert Jordan with a guerrilla band. Instead, Jordan is meant to be an examination of the "individual as the individual is related to the whole of humanity."\(^{35}\) Anselmo expresses the urgent need of the Spanish people to have the help

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\(^{33}\)Ibid.

\(^{34}\)Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead God, p. 82.

\(^{35}\)Ibid., p. 85.
of all men when he says, in an accusation of Pablo,

"Now we come for something of consummate im-
portance and thee, with thy dwelling place to
be undisturbed, put thy fox-hole before the
interests of humanity. Before the interests
of thy people.

... 

Every man has to do what he can do according
to how it can be truly done. 36

The idea of sacrifice of personal desires is extended
to the extent of willingness to kill in order to support
the cause. Jordan can suspend his distaste for killing
and "feel nothing against it when it is necessary." 37
However, Anselmo regards killing as a sin and feels
that after the war he must do penance. "But if I live
later, I will try to live in such a way, doing no harm
to anyone, that it will be forgiven." 38

Not until the midpoint of the novel does Hemingway
indicate the principle which has aroused such devotion to
the cause. The first half of the novel is devoted to the
establishment of Jordan in the guerrilla band, planning
the destruction of the bridge, delineation of the
characters in the guerrilla band, and finally the devel-
opment of the love relationship between Maria and Robert
Jordan. An unexpected snow storm is covering the

36Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (New
York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 11.

37Ibid., p. 39.

38Ibid., p. 41.
mountain. Both sides are shown in a moment of calmness before the destruction of the next day. The section is used to emphasize the principle of "human wholeness," or that ability of man to stand fast and face the momentary destructiveness of nature and the continual destructiveness of war. Anselmo is used to illustrate man's humanity and steadfastness. Set to watch a road by Robert Jordan, Anselmo suffers in the storm.

The Ingles told me to stay, he thought. Even now he may be on the way here and, if I leave this place, he may lose himself in the snow searching for me. All though this war we have suffered from lack of discipline and from the disobeying of orders and I will wait a while for the Ingles.

Not only is Anselmo steadfast, but he also is a man who has understanding of that interrelationship of man to man. This understanding quality is revealed as he keeps watch on the sawmill across the road where the fascists are quartered.

The fascists are warm, he thought, and they are comfortable, and tomorrow night we will kill them. It is a strange thing and I do not like to think about it. I have watched them all day and they are the same men as we are. I believe that I could walk up to the door of the mill and I would be welcome except they have orders to challenge all travellers and ask to see their papers. It is only orders that come between us. Those men are not fascists. I call them so but they are not. They are poor men as we are.

Darkness covers the mountain as Anselmo continues to

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40Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 192. 41Ibid.
contemplate the necessity of killing them. He is filled
with loneliness, which is experienced as "a hollowness
in him as hunger." In the past he could have prayed,
but now the only comfort he has is his absolute integrity
in the war.

No, he thought, I am lonely... I have no wife
... I have no children... But one thing I
have that no man or God can take from me and that
is I have worked well for the republic. I have
worked hard for the good that we will share later.
I have worked my best from the first of the move-
ment and I have done nothing that I am ashamed of.

It is devotion and sense of duty which keeps him at the
post until Jordan comes for him. Robert Jordan is en-
couraged by old Anselmo's fidelity, and several times
on the way back to the camp assures him, "Listen, I'm
glad to see you, hear? You don't know what it means
to find somebody in this country in the same place
they were left." As Jordan, Anselmo, and Fernando
go back to camp, Jordan thinks of Fernando and decides
that even he might have stayed. Thus, Hemingway inter-
jects this deliberate suspension of action in the middle
of the movement in order to explicate his theme of human
solidarity and the interdependence of all things. This
explanation is in preparation for Jordan's final real-
ization of his role of integration with all nature.

42Ibid., p. 194. 43Ibid.
44Ibid., p. 199.
This unity with all things is vivid in the last movement of the novel. Jordan is injured and must stay behind it the rest of the band is to escape. He watches Maria ride off after he has assured her that he will not cease to exist so long as she is alive. "Thou art me too now. Thou art all there will be of me." Following their departure, Jordan is filled with a sense of unity with everything at once. He is aware of Maria, of his comrades who find safety because of his sacrifice, of the approaching enemy, of the sky and the earth.

He was completely integrated now and he took a good look at everything. Then he looked up at the sky. There were big white clouds in it. He touched the palm of his hand against the pine needles where he lay and he touched the bark of the pine trunk where he lay behind.

In that final moment before his death the "sky, earth, and men fuse into a single unified pattern with Jordan the focal point."

The Spanish earth is central to the understanding of unity in the novel. Robert Jordan is presented as a man who has both real and symbolic ties with the earth. Jordan's real ties to the natural landscape results from his awareness of its beauty and his knowledge that nature

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46 Ibid., p. 471.  
47 Gurko, Ernest Hemingway, p. 132.  
48 Ibid., p. 127.
is the determining factor in his mission. Symbolically, Maria is portrayed as all of life for Robert Jordan.

Robert Jordan's real ties with the Spanish earth are carried from the first sentence of the novel to the last. "He lay flat on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees." Then the last sentence, "He could feel his heart beating against the pine needle floor of the forest." The same relation with the natural world is emphasized throughout the novel. Jordan has an acute awareness of the sights and sounds and smells of the mountains. While there is an element of aesthetic appreciation in his awareness, the vital reason for this continued watchfulness of the landscape is that his mission can be destroyed by an unexpected change in the weather or the terrain. If the snow comes at the wrong time, or an unexpected rain swells the river it will be impossible to blow up the bridge. Therefore, if he is to accomplish his mission, Jordan must be closely attuned to nature.

Jordan's unity with all nature is reinforced earlier in the novel with his love of Maria. Maria is described in terms of nature. "Her hair was the golden brown of a grain field that has been burned

\[49\text{Ibid.} \quad 50\text{Ibid., p. 1.} \quad 51\text{Ibid., p. 471.}\]
dark in the sun but it was cut short...little longer than the fur on a beaver pelt." 

There is an element of naturalness in their relationship from the first night together. Jordan refers to Maria as "rabbit." Their love-making always occurs in the open, and even at the height of their passion both are aware of the earth. After loving Maria, Jordan, always conscious of the weather, wakes to the coldness of the night and sees "the sky hard and sharp with stars." Their most memorable love-making occurs in a mountain meadow.

Then there was the smell of heather crushed and the roughness of the bent stalks under her head and the sun bright on her closed eyes and all his life he would remember the curve of her throat with her head pushed back into the heather roots...and for her everything was red, orange, gold-red from the sun on the closed eyes...and they were both there, time having stopped and he felt the earth move out and away from under them. 

The energy of the sun is transmitted through the lovers to the earth causing the earth to move. On another occasion Jordan held Maria and knew that "she was all of life there was and it was true." Maria becomes symbolic of Jordan's self-realization, of the universal rightness of the cause for which Jordan is offering his life, of Spain, and ultimately, of ever-enduring Nature itself.

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52Ibid., p. 22.  
53Ibid., p. 159.  
55Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 264.  
56Rovit, Ernest Hemingway, p. 142.
This idea of intense awareness of self and the role one must play in the natural world is given its fullest development in *The Old Man and The Sea*. In Santiago's life the sea assumes that role of the female entity which is both real and symbolic of all life.

*The Old Man and The Sea* was Hemingway's final statement of the theme of unity of all things within the universe. With the younger heroes, the retreat to nature is depicted as a restorative measure. Old Santiago reverses the process by going far out into the sea for his adventure, and then returning to the village to recuperate.\(^{57}\) This added dimension to the experience in nature enables Santiago, more than other heroes, to have the fullest realization of the meaning of the integration with all things.

Carlos Baker attributes Hemingway's apparent preoccupation with nature as a search for true knowledge as defined by Schweitzer:

"Only that knowledge which adds nothing to nature, either by thought or imagination; and which recognizes as valid only what comes from a research that is free from prejudices and preoccupations, from a firm and pure determination to find the truth, from a meditation which goes deeply into the heart of nature.\(^{58}\)

In this definition of truth, in Hemingway thought, one

\(^{57}\)Gurko, Ernest *Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism*, p. 61.

\(^{58}\)Carlos Baker, "Hemingway's Ancient Mariner," p. 156.
would have to include human nature with the rest of nature. Hemingway studied the non-human universe in an attempt to know the human mind. He believed that when one sought the core of meaning in nature, the goal becomes full knowledge of the human mind and soul. 59

With the awareness of the need to understand nature, Hemingway devoted an astounding amount of writing to the explication of the varied aspects of the universe. He describes the universe as changeless, secular, harmonious, and beautiful. Also, he saw in nature differing levels of greatness and the promise of continuity. 60

Nature's changelessness can be noted in the fact that there is a steady, predictable movement in all living things. While the relationship of men to men may fluctuate with society, man's response to nature remains unvaried. The universe in Hemingway's fiction is described as secular, and this separation from a divinity is carried over in man's relationship to the universe. At times the Hemingway hero may show devoutness, but this feeling is never the central part of his life. 61 The Hemingway hero believes that his

59Ibid.

60Gurko, Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism, p. 160.

61Gurko, "The Heroic Impulse in The Old Man and the Sea," p. 64.
relationship to nature is unaffected by divinity in the same way that the natural processes are unaffected by any supreme intervention. This belief explains Santiago's promise to say prayers and make a pilgrimage after he has caught the great marlin. Santiago has that aesthetic appreciation for beauty in nature which is common to all Hemingway heroes.

The clouds over the land now rose like mountains and the coast was only a long green line with the gray blue hill behind it. The water was dark blue now, so dark that it was almost purple.62

This appreciation for the land and the water is transferred to the natural beauty of the sea animals, particularly the noble marlin. In his first jump the marlin is described as "bright in the sun and his head and back were dark purple in the sun and the stripes on his side showed wide and light lavender."63 The differing levels of greatness in nature are shown in comparison of the old man to the other fishers of the village and by the comparison of the great marlin with lesser fish, and finally, the Mako sharks with galanos.64 The old man, the marlin, and the Mako sharks represent greatness by the fact that they live in the deeper area of

62Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea, p. 35.
63Ibid.
64Gurko, "The Heroic Impulse in The Old Man and the Sea," p. 163.
the sea. When the old man decided to break his bad luck he chose to go far out beyond the other fishermen. There he finds animals of equal greatness. The marlin and the Mako sharks, though natural opponents, represents the greatness in their own species, just as the old man stands out as great among men. Finally, the idea of continuity is seen in the relationship of the man and the boy. Manolin had been serving an apprenticeship under Santiago until he was taken off the old man's boat by his parents. However, Manolin continues to serve the old man and one understands that he will attempt to follow the heroic example of old Santiago when he comes of age.65 The idea of continuity reinforces the concept of the harmonious plan of nature, or the integration of man into the whole of nature.

There is harmony in nature because every living thing in nature has a fixed role to play.66 The Old Man and the Sea is Hemingway's first treatment of the hero who is certain of his role in both society and nature. Santiago recognizes that necessity to leave society in order to fulfill his role. It is natural that the old fisherman would choose the sea as his place of isolation, because he recognizes that he was born to be a fisherman. More specifically,

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65Ibid., p. 167.  
66Ibid., p. 164.
Santiago sees his role as catching the great marlin. By his confidence in his own role, the old fisherman is not arrogant enough to deny that the marlin, too, has a role. Their roles are that of opposition to each other. Santiago must catch the marlin, and the marlin must fulfill his role of escape. The fact that they are in opposition to each other does not prevent the old man from feeling friendship and sympathy for the fish. "Then he began to pity the great fish he had hooked." A small bird perches on the boat and the old man apologizes for not being able to help it to the shore. "I am with a friend." Santiago is moved by the nobility and endurance of the fish, but he refuses to let his feelings detract him from his role.

"Fish," he said, "I love you very much and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends."

At this stage in the struggle there is a determination on the part of Santiago that he be the victor over the fish. As the fish and the old man become closer and closer in their struggle, Santiago realizes that it is no longer important as to which of them will be killed in the end. Both have struggled and endured without loss of integrity.

You are killing me, fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a

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68Ibid., p. 55. 69Ibid., p. 54.
greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who.\textsuperscript{70}

After the sharks attack, Santiago feels sorrow for his "brother," and fears that he has sinned in killing the fish.

You did not kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell him for food, he thought. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive and you loved him after. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him.\textsuperscript{71}

In the modern world people must kill and sometimes be killed just as animals prey on one another. If this necessity for violence and death is counteracted with a sense of unity and love among all natural creatures, then this destructive necessity can be transcended. The acceptance of the cycle of pursuit and death indicated a willingness to allow all creatures to fulfill their roles according to their natural drives.\textsuperscript{72} Santiago accepts this natural plan, and this acquiescence enables him to fulfill his role of isolated individualism in the natural world. Santiago represents a greater heroic movement in that he acknowledges the necessity for temporary isolation in nature and the possibility of returning to society.

\textsuperscript{70}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 92. \textsuperscript{71}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 105. \textsuperscript{72}Gurko, "The Heroic Impulse in \textit{The Old Man and the Sea}," p. 162.
at the end of his experience. After landing his skiff the old man sleeps. When he awakens Manolin is nearby. Old Santiago wishes to know, "Did they search for me?" Manolin assures him that the coast guard had been out and the old man "noticed how pleasant it was to have someone to talk to instead of speaking only to himself and to the sea." At last the Hemingway hero is able to accept society, despite its failures and destructiveness, as an integral part of the natural world.

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73 Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea, p. 124.
74 Ibid.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Hemingway hero eloquently portrays the condition of man in the violent, unstable society of the twentieth century. His message is that of individual freedom from the bonds of a complicated society and private return to the natural world. This return is only temporary. However, the return is essential if man is to find his true role in the modern, impersonal society. Hemingway's message was first spoken in negative terms of retreat. Later, with the publication of The Old Man and the Sea the message has a strong affirmative tone. Hemingway's definition of man's role in society can be studied in three phases: initiation to and separation from society, and temporary return to the natural world.

In discovering his role in modern society, the Hemingway hero must first undergo an initiation process, or, in some cases, a series of initiation experiences. Initiations are classified as tentative, uncompleted, or decisive according to the extent of maturity or knowledge derived from the experience. Usually it is the pre-adolescent or adolescent who
undergoes tentative initiations. Uncompleted and decisive initiation experiences are undergone by an adult, young or old. Elements of the modern, impersonal society to which the heroes are initiated are violence, loss, and despair. Violence, in a multiplicity of forms, is involved in most initiation experiences. Commonly, the hero is left with a sense of frustration in his attempts to establish human relationships and understand human behavior. As a result of painful initiation experiences, the hero chooses to retreat from society in an attempt to find some stability.

Hemingway refers to the hero's decision to become disengaged from society as the "separate peace." This idea of peace is particularly demanding in that the hero must win this peace over and over again. The Hemingway hero is essentially an existential character in that he understands the necessity for individualism and the differentiation of the simple and complicated life. Violence, particularly the experiencing of the possibility of death, enables the hero to choose a life which is free from social expectations and complications. During the period of separation the Hemingway hero is very much alone in that he is not involved in any human relationships. When the hero makes his decision to be separated, his escape is toward a more stable natural world.
In the return to the natural world, Hemingway indicates a growth in awareness of the importance of nature in the hero's discovery of his role in modern society. With the earlier heroes, the return to society is seen as a restorative measure. For them the return to society could more aptly be termed as a retreat from the destruction and confusion of the twentieth century. In the creation of Robert Jordan, Hemingway approaches his final definition of man's role in modern society. During the course of the Spanish Civil War, Robert Jordan discovers the meaning of the integration of all things, particularly the integration of man with the natural world. The character of Santiago serves to reinforce Robert Jordan's discovery and make Hemingway's final statement of the role of man in modern society. It is he who realizes the necessity of accepting the cycle of pursuit in that every species must be free to respond to his natural drives. This freedom must also include the human being. However, Hemingway's message is unique in that the cycle of pursuit must be counteracted with a sense of love and unity for all living things. This realization makes possible the return of the Hemingway hero to society.
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