THE USE OF WATER IN THE WRITING
OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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THE USE OF WATER IN THE WRITING
OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ernest Hemingway is generally acclaimed by critics and public alike as a literary artist of high order. Though he received no book-length criticism before 1950, he has since received at least three, and more will undoubtedly follow. As his acceptance has grown and the criticism accumulated, there has been a tendency on the critics' part to investigate elements of his writing that were largely ignored or misunderstood in the early years. Carlos Baker, for example, has devoted a book largely to the thesis that Hemingway is a symbolist, and most of the other recent critics have found that Hemingway's method is more complex than was at first thought. This thesis is the result of an investigation of one of the elements of Hemingway's writing: his use of water as a factor contributing to his remarkable style.

Even to the casual reader, Hemingway's writing affords ample evidence of the importance of water. There are fishing streams, harbors, lakes, and flooded rivers that help to create the setting for his stories and novels. And there is the rain of A Farewell to Arms that drew early critical attention. Clearly, Hemingway uses water to establish a fictional world of verisimilitude, the world
"the way it was." But what other uses does he make of water? This thesis is concerned with that question.

The investigation covers all of Hemingway's major writing. It does not include *Torrents of Spring* or the sports articles published in *Esquire* and other such magazines. The subject logically falls into four main chapters dealing with rivers, rain, lakes, and oceans, respectively. Within each chapter the general order has been a consideration of the short stories and vignettes first and then treatment of the book-length works.
CHAPTER II

RIVERS

Hemingway’s birthplace and residence for the first eighteen years of his life did not have a romantic river to teach the ways of primitive nature. But Hemingway was not denied the lessons streams and lakes can teach; he spent many summers hunting and fishing in northern Michigan, frequently with his father, Dr. Clarence Hemingway.

One of the first stories Hemingway "published" was written for English III, which was taught by Miss Dixon, and it appeared in Tabula, the school magazine. The story was entitled "Judgment of Manitou." Fenton notes the effect of Hemingway’s riverside education when he says, "Dealing as it did with scenes Hemingway encountered each summer at the family home in northern Michigan, it could be said to confirm his absorption in nature and in violence."1

The first issue of Tabula for 1916-17 had another story by Hemingway, then a senior, using his northern Michigan experience. This story, entitled "Sepi Jigigan," dealt with the "paradox of an Ijibway killer who was a kind, decent man, patient with the questions of the young

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summer resident." These early stories show the beginnings of a lasting relationship in Hemingway's fiction; the poles both of violence and pleasure are frequently associated with streams and lakes.

Upon graduation from Oak Park High School in 1917, Hemingway put everything aside for the escape to northern Michigan. "Here, in the immense delight of fishing and camping and a masculine world, with a group of friends more important to him than his high school associations, Hemingway extended each summer another element of his apprenticeship." 3

Hemingway next spent seven months on the Kansas City Star, finally getting a chance to see the war in Europe when he and his friend Ted Brumback were accepted for ambulance duty with the Red Cross in Italy. It is worth noting that to end the Star chapter in the writer's life and to begin the Italian chapter that would end in the all-important wound, Hemingway and Brumback "together with Carl Edgar and Charlie Hopkins ... went up to northern Michigan for a final fishing trip." 4

Hemingway crossed the Atlantic in May, 1918, and was soon in the activity of the near front. The closer to the front he got and the closer to fierce fighting he could get the better he liked it. He asked for different

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2Ibid., p. 18.  
4Ibid., p. 49.
assignments until he had "wangled his way further east to the more active Piave front." He obtained an assignment with the Red Cross Canteen at about the time the Italians were making their counter-offensive along the Piave attempting to push the Austrians back across the river. In his search for action, Hemingway persuaded the Italian commander in the area to allow him to carry cigars, candy, cigarettes and post cards up to the men in the trenches. He lasted six days and part of a seventh at the front, being wounded at night on July 8, 1918.

Both Fenton and Philip Young recognize the importance of this wound to Hemingway. Fenton says, "The fact of being wounded, and as seriously as he was, had immense psychological implications for Hemingway." Young, who finds a remarkable parallel between Nick Adams, Lieutenant Henry, Jakes Barnes, Colonel Cantwell, and Hemingway himself, points out what he considers the immensity of the wound as he discusses Across the River and into the Trees. Young calls the journey to the Piave and the "monument" Colonel Cantwell builds on the exact spot where he was wounded the climax of the book and of Hemingway's life:

At this point as never elsewhere, Hemingway confronts and acknowledges the climax of his life, after a pilgrimage which binds this book to his first one with an iron band. In his first effort to come the full circle before he is done, the hero does not end his journey at the place where first he lived but at the place where he

\[5\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 62.}\] \[6\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 67.}\]
first died. Then in the most personal and fundamental way possible to man, he performs this primitive ceremonial, which is revelation as nothing else can be of his mingled disgust and reverence for that event in his life by which the whole may be known, and by which it was unalterably determined. . . . and as Hawthorne could never escape Salem, the scene of the inherited and acquired sins he held in horror, so Hemingway must someday have made this trip to Fossalta, and found this place by the bank of the river. Now it is done, and the hero can die. No doubt he will die again, before Hemingway is finally finished with him. But never again can he perform so dazzling and apocalyptic an act. For here Hemingway has tightly unified and glaringly spotlighted the core of all he has done; and Cantwell in his eloquent rite squats low over the place of his first death, while his eyes look out at the last one, across the river and into the trees.  

After three months in the hospital, Hemingway got himself assigned to Italian infantry where he served until the Armistice. Back in the States he soon persuaded his old friend Ted Brumback to join him in Michigan. Like Nick Adams in "Big Two-Hearted River," Hemingway, apparently went back to the streams of his youth to try to exorcise some of the horror of other streams associated with war and wounding. 

Hemingway next moved to Toronto, Canada, to work on the Star Weekly. Here he used his experiences of northern Michigan, occasionally writing feature stories dealing with fishing in the streams of Michigan and Canada. According to Fenton, one of the best stories that Hemingway wrote during his journalistic period in Paris was associated

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7Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway (New York, 1952), pp. 92-93.
with trout fishing along the Rhone Canal, near Aigle in Switzerland: "The eight paragraphs -- a little less than a thousand words -- were in the diction and tone of similar passages in the short story he wrote in 1925, 'Big Two-Hearted River,' and in the novel he began the same year, The Sun Also Rises."8

In his final dispatch from Germany, Hemingway described how a Cologne mob had tried to topple a huge equestrian statue of William Hozenzollern. While the mob was attacking the statue, a policeman appeared. Fenton quotes the Hemingway dispatch:

> The mob threw the policeman into the river. In the cold, swift swirl of the Rhine against the base of the bridge the policeman hung on to one of the abutments and shouted up that he knew who was in the mob and would see that they were all punished. So the mob swarmed down and tried to push the policeman loose into the current. It meant drowning for the policeman to let go -- and he hung on. Then the mob chopped his fingers loose from the stone with the hatchet with which they had been attacking the statue.9

Perhaps it is more than coincidence that some of the best of Hemingway's early journalism is written with the swish of a river current in the background.

Shortly afterward, Hemingway went to Constantinople to report on the Greco-Turkish War. "... On October 20... he cabled from Adrianople a fine story of the refugees who were moving out of Eastern Thrace. It was

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8Fenton, The Apprenticeship, p. 141.
9Ibid., p. 167.
harsh and compressed, a vivid recapitulation of civilian tragedy.¹⁰ Hemingway was deeply touched by the pitiful sight of the long line of suffering humanity. In his cable he described the funneled procession at the bridge:

In a never-ending, staggering march the Christian population of Eastern Trace is jamming the roads towards Macedonia. The main column crossing the Maritza River at Adrianopole is twenty miles long. . . .¹¹

A few days later Hemingway cabled the first version of what was later to become "Chapter II" of In Our Time. As Fenton points out, the stripped version that appeared in In Our Time contains, instead of the thirty adjectives appearing in the first three paragraphs of the cable, only about ten adjectives, among which is the word "yellow" in the sentence: "The Maritza was running yellow almost up to the bridge."¹² The rain, the mud, and the swollen river help the reader get the emotional response Hemingway had when he saw the line of refugees.

It is probably during the years he was in Paris that Hemingway studied the bull fight in Spain about which he was to write in Death in the Afternoon, published in 1932. In this book he refers to rivers of Spain as rivers he has loved. In describing cities where bull fights are held, he describes Aranjuez: "[It] is only forty-seven kilometres from Madrid on a billiard smooth road. It is an oasis of

¹⁰Ibid., p. 182. ¹¹Ibid., p. 183. ¹²Ibid., p. 229.
tall trees, rich gardens and a swift river set in brown plains and hills." At the end of the book in a chapter devoted to the things the book should have had in it to give the reader a true picture of Spain, Hemingway describes an idyllic setting in a river near Aoriz:

In the morning there we would have breakfast and then go out to swim in the Irati at Aoriz, the water clear as light, and varying in temperature as you sunk down, cool, deep cool, cold, and the shade from the trees on the bank when the sun was hot, the ripe wheat in the wind up on the other side and sloping to the mountain. There was an old castle at the head of the valley where the river came out between two rocks; and we lay naked on the short grass in the sun and later in the shade.

Apparently only once in Death in the Afternoon does Hemingway use a river with evil connotations, and when he does the river is not in Spain. In one of the conversations with the old lady, the dialog goes thus:

Old lady: ... But what finally happened to the late Radiguet?
He caught typhoid fever from swimming in the Seine and died of it.
Old lady: Poor chap.
Poor chap, indeed.

Hemingway uses rivers to some extent in Green Hills of Africa to create the contrast Baker finds in the book between the plains and the mountains. In the first part of the book Hemingway describes the shooting of a rhino:

He slowed, trotting into the shallow, boulder filled stream. ... With a wooshing

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14 Ibid., p. 273.
15 Ibid., p. 72.
snort he smashed ahead, splashing water and snorting.16

The rhino is an ugly animal, and even though Hemingway makes a good shot, the sight of the dead animal gives him no pleasure:

There he was, long-hulked, heavy-sided, prehistoric looking, the hide like vulcanized rubber and faintly transparent looking, scarred with a badly healed horn wound that the birds had pecked at, his tail thick, round, and pointed, flat many-legged ticks crawling on him, his ears fringed with hair, tiny pig eyes, moss growing on the base of his horn that grew out forward from his nose. M'Cola looked at him and shook his head. I agreed with him. This was a hell of an animal.17

The boulder-filled stream parallels the rough, ugly appearance of the rhino. Hemingway was later to use a boulder-filled stream with evil connotations in "The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber." In both cases, the river suggests unnaturalness.

In contrast, the beautiful kudu is killed, as the climax of the book, after Hemingway crosses a stream in the car. The drive leading up to this stream has been pleasant; the country has been fine; the beautiful and friendly Masai had been inspiring. The stream that is crossed with difficulty seems to provide a dividing line. Once across, the long streak of bad luck which Hemingway had been experiencing in connection with the kudu changes.


17Ibid., p. 79.
Even though it is five o'clock in the afternoon when the car is gotten across, Hemingway does not wait until the next day to begin the hunt. Minutes later he has killed two beautiful kudu. This killing is the emotional peak of the book. Hemingway describes the first kudu thus:

I looked at him, big, long-legged, a smooth gray with the white stripes and the great, curling, sweeping horns, brown as walnut meats, and ivory pointed, at the big ears and the great, lovely heavy-maned neck the white chevron between his eyes and the white of his muzzle and I stooped over and touched him to try to believe it. He was lying on the side where the bullet had gone in and there was not a mark on him and he smelled sweet and lovely like the breath of cattle and the odor of thyme after rain.18

Throughout his early experiences and his early writing, Hemingway was associated with streams. From the trout streams of his youth he drew his first fiction, and to those he retreated after the war. It was beside the river Piave that he received the wound, "the climax of his life."

It was about rivers (fishing them, swimming in them, hiking beside them, reporting on refugee humanity crossing them) that much of his best early newspaper writing was concerned. It would seem natural that streams should have an important place in his major fiction.

To begin with, the short stories have frequent references to streams. Besides the vignette mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hemingway uses a bridge over a river as

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18Hemingway, Green Hills of Africa, p. 231.
a setting in "Chapter IV," of In Our Time. In the language of a British soldier, the vignette describes an "absolutely perfect barricade across the bridge" over which the enemy had to climb. The English "potted them from forty yards."

"Hills Like White Elephants" begins: "The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun." Gradually through the conversation of the American man and girl, the reader becomes aware of the situation. The man selfishly wants the girl to have an abortion. She senses that with or without the abortion their ideal relationship is dead. She longs for the baby, but gives in to the man. Hemingway effectively uses the two sides of the Ebro valley to suggest the two courses the woman can see. Soon after the girl says she will go through with the abortion, she looks across the river:

The girl stood up and walked to the end of the station. Across, on the other side, were fields of grain and trees along the bank of the Ebro. Far away, beyond the river, were mountains. The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees.

The girl has elected to stay "on this side [where] there was no shade and no trees," but she is aware of the other

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20Ibid., p. 371.

21Ibid., p. 374.
side with the grain, an obvious symbol of consummated fertility, and the distant mountain, a forerunner of the home symbol Carlos Baker finds in *A Farewell to Arms*. A river divides the two worlds, a river the girl cannot cross.

In the section of "Che Ti Dice La Patri?" entitled "After the Rain," Hemingway describes a flooded river. There seems to be a parallel between the two conditions of the river and the conditions of Italy before and after Mussolini.

A river-bed that, when we had passed, going into Italy, had been wide, stony and dry, was running brown, and up to the banks. The brown water discolored the sea. . . .

The wound Hemingway received by the Piave apparently was to affect several of his short stories. In 1933 he published the story "A Way You'll Never Be" dealing with Nick Adams in a condition in which he is recovering from extreme shell shock. Nick wavers between sanity and illusion, but repeatedly he is troubled by a vision of a yellow house where a river narrowed. In a period of dementia Nick's mind pictures this mysterious river:

. . . Sometimes his girl was there and sometimes she was with some one else and he could not understand that, but those were the nights the river ran so much wider and stiller than it should and outside of Fossalta there was a low house painted yellow with willows all around it and a low stable and there was a canal, and he had been there a thousand times and never seen it, but there it was every night as plain as the hill, only it frightened him.

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23Ibid., p. 506.
Nick shortly composes himself and is aware that the men of
the command dugout he is visiting are watching him. He
lies back down and thinks again.

He never dreamed about the front now any
more but what frightened him so that he could
not get rid of it was that long yellow house
and the different width of the river. Now he
was back here at the river, he had gone through
that same town, and there was no house. Nor
was the river that way.24

At the beginning of the story Nick had ridden a bicycle
through a battered town and along a road where there had
evidently been an attack by the Italians driving the
Austrians back across the river.

In his discussion of the story in connection with the
development of Nick Adams, Young says, "Nearly two decades
were to elapse before Hemingway was to reveal, in Across
the River and into the Trees, that the scenery comes to
Nick because this is the place where he was wounded.25
Young then shows the relationship of this story to "Big
Two-Hearted River" in which Nick dreads the swamp, and
points out that "he is unable to go past the spot where
'the river narrowed' and went into the swamp."26 Young
says that it takes nearly two decades to get all the
pieces to the puzzle, but that Across the River and into
the Trees furnishes the last piece. Colonel Cantwell goes

25Young, Hemingway, p. 25.
26Ibid.
back to the Piave near Fossalta to the place where he was wounded. "The river was slow and a muddy blue here. . . ."\(^{27}\) and the site was at the bend of the river.

"Now I Lay Me" seems also related to "Big Two-Hearted River." In "Now I Lay Me," "I," who turns out to be Nick, keeps himself awake for fear his soul will leave his body if he lets himself go to sleep. This strange fear comes from a wound. The narrator says, "I had been that way a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back."\(^{28}\)

This, of course, is the same sensation Frederick Henry experienced when he was wounded. Young also reminds us that Hemingway spent a similar period when he could not sleep after his wound.\(^{29}\) To keep himself awake Nick would think of a trout stream he had fished along when he was a boy, and fish its whole length carefully in his mind.

The surprising thing about these fishing trips was the intricate step-by-step details of fishing the mind demanded: the number of worms taken in the tobacco tin, the time and way of eating lunch, the catching of insects for bait, the losing of trout, etc. Nick sometimes had to make up entirely new streams.

Some nights too I made up streams, and some of them were very exciting, and it was like


\(^{29}\) Young, *Hemingway*, p. 109.
being awake and dreaming. Some of those streams I really know. I gave them all names and went to them on the train and sometimes walked for miles to get to them.\(^{30}\)

This passage (and indeed the first two pages of the story) seems directly related to "Big Two-Hearted River" and perhaps gives one key to the interpretation of that story, which Young says critics have had trouble explaining.\(^{31}\) Young points out the monotonous sequence with which everything is related, the all inclusive detail, the concentration on actions, and the ritual. What happens to Nick in "Big Two-Hearted River" is exactly what happens to Nick in his dreams in "Now I Lay Me." Both Young and Cowley have been impressed with the "waking-dream" quality of the story.\(^{32}\) It is reasonable to suspect that the Nick Adams who kept himself awake and found solace by fishing imaginary streams in "Now I Lay Me" would seek to live some of these experiences when he came back to America, especially if that Nick had been as severely shellshocked as he appears in "A Way You'll Never Be." However, it seems possible that Hemingway has recorded, with slight changes, one of the imaginary fishing trips his own mind took when he was having trouble sleeping in the dark.

The rivers in these two stories present a retreat from brutality. They suggest natural peace and simplicity.

\(^{30}\)Hemingway, Forty-Nine Stories, p. 462.  
\(^{31}\)Young, Hemingway, p. 15.  
\(^{32}\)Ibid.
They are like the bed image so often seen in Hemingway's work in that they for a moment offer security and a chance to forget the realities of the world that the Hemingway hero knows. In "Now I Lay Me" the rivers often exist only in the mind of the tormented narrator, but there they symbolize the security toward which the mind gropes. "Big Two-Hearted River" may be a product of Hemingway's own insomnonolent mind. If so, the river in it too is a symbol of peace, naturalness, and security. If not, the symbolism is the same.

"Old Man at the Bridge" is about the innocent people caught in the throes of civil war. The setting is a bridge on the Ebro River in Spain. An old man "without politics" has had to leave his animals and flee before the Fascists' artillery. The old man sits down "backwards in the dust" as the Fascists advance toward the Ebro. The river represents the dividing line between past and future, a Fascist future into which the old man is unable to proceed. The use of rivers to symbolize boundaries, dividing lines which may be psychological as well as geographical, is commonplace.

"The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is set beside a river: "... The camp was pitched under some wide-topped acacia trees with a boulder-strewn cliff behind them,

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and a stretch of grass that ran to the bank of a boulder-filled stream in front with forest beyond it. . . ."34

This stream is associated with the cowardice that Macomber shows. The hunter Wilson looks at the boulders in the river as he, Macomber, and Margot sit in the shade after Macomber has "shown himself, very publicly, to be a coward,"35 and the stream reminds him of the cowardice.

That night Macomber relives the scene in which he bolted, and the reader learns that it was from the camp-side of the river that Macomber first shot the lion on the opposite bank. The men cross the creek and go into the grass where the wounded lion has retreated. "The next thing Macomber knew he was running; running wildly, in panic in the open, running toward the stream."36 The next day the hunting party crosses the stream in the car and enters the "park-like wooded rolling country on the far side"37 where Macomber experiences his rebirth; his "short, happy life," and his death.

The river is not good, though its evil nature is not easily recognized. It is slightly unnatural in being "boulder-filled," and it is clearly associated with cowardice and cuckoldry. It becomes a symbol of the state in which Macomber first finds himself. When Macomber is "saved," he leaves the river behind.

34 Ibid., p. 105.  35 Ibid., p. 108.
36 Ibid., p. 119.  37 Ibid., p. 124.
Hemingway's stories were written over a long period of time, and show a variety of uses of rivers in his art. The vignettes show the careful attention Hemingway was giving to setting in his formative period. By carefully describing an action, he could convey emotion. To this function of rivers he added that of psychological or symbolic boundary. In several stories, a river is associated with war and especially the wounding the hero received. In at least two stories, rivers symbolize the natural retreat, the "home" with its connotations of protection and security.

Four of the novels of Hemingway have rivers flowing through them. The first major novel, The Sun Also Rises (1926), uses rivers primarily as setting props with few of the symbolic overtones associated with them in later novels. The Sun Also Rises opens in Paris on the banks of the Seine. Jake likes this river where he enjoys watching such things as "a string of barges being towed empty down the current, riding high." He says, "It was always pleasant crossing bridges in Paris."

In discussing what he calls "'mythological' methods" used by Hemingway, Baker points out that Brett is a modern Circe, which is, of course, what Cohn calls her. Baker asks, "Was not Brett Ashley, on her low-lying island in

38Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (New York, 1938), p. 42.

39Ibid.
the Seine, just such a fascinating peril as Circe on Aeaea?"40 The Circe image is balanced on the island by the beginning of the camaraderie of Jake and Bill Gordon. After a good meal at "Madame Lecomte's restaurant" the two circled the island:

The river was dark and a bateau mouch went by, all bright with lights, going fast and quiet up and out of sight under the bridge. Down the river was Notre Dame squatting against the night sky. We crossed to the left bank of the Seine by the wooden foot-bridge from the Quoi de Bethune, and stopped on the bridge and looked down the river at Notre Dame. Standing on the bridge the island looked dark, the houses were high against the sky, and the trees were shadows.41

The train trip that Jake and Bill take on the way to the fishing at Burguete is the beginning of what Baker calls the "bright mood" of the "world clear of entangling alliances."42 The men enjoy the trip, especially the country through which they are passing:

We ate the sandwiches and drank the Chablis and watched the country out of the window. The grain was just beginning to ripen and the fields were full of poppies. The pastureland was green and there were fine trees, and sometimes big rivers and chateaux off in the trees.43

That night Jake and Bill meet Robert Cohn at Bayonne. The city in the morning is pretty. Jake says, "Bayonne

41 Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 79.
42 Baker, Hemingway, p. 83.
43 Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 89.
is a nice town. It is a very clean Spanish town and it is on a big river."\textsuperscript{44} On the trip from Bayonne to Pamplona by car Cohn sleeps and Bill and Jake again enjoy the country:

After a while we came out of the mountains, and there were trees along both sides of the road, and a stream and ripe fields of grain, and the road went on, very white and straight ahead. . . . Then we crossed a wide plain, and there was a big river off on the right shining in the sun from between the line of trees, and away off you could see the plateau of Pamplona rising out of the plain. . . .\textsuperscript{45}

The pure, the "found" in a world of lostness, the "brief but golden age," as Baker calls it, is the Burguete fishing trip. In the mountains "it was so cold you could see your breath," and trout are "firm and hard from the cold water,"\textsuperscript{46} the bottles of wine come from a spring so cold that moisture beads on them. There is lighthearted badinage and simple food and "no word from Robert Cohn nor from Brett and Mike."\textsuperscript{47} This mountain retreat is a foreshadowing of the "home" symbol Baker finds in mountains in \textit{A Farewell to Arms}, and it is also one of the main elements that makes Baker call it a book with a "sturdy moral backbone."\textsuperscript{48} Both the Seine and the river at Burguete are suggestive of the good life. They stand as shining symbols of the best the world has to offer mankind.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., p. 92.
\textsuperscript{45}Hemingway, \textit{The Sun Also Rises}, pp. 95-96.
\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., p. 123.
\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., p. 129.
\textsuperscript{48}Baker, Hemingway, p. 92.
The famous first sentence of Hemingway's next novel contains the word "river," indicating the increased importance Hemingway was to attach to streams. *A Farewell to Arms* begins thus:

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving in the channels.49

It is this same river that the Italians are fighting over when Henry receives the wound that parallels Hemingway's wound. "Up the river the mountains had not been taken; none of the mountains beyond the river had been taken. That was left for next year."50 The next spring Henry returns to the front where the offensive by the Italians is about to begin. Lieutenant Henry inspects the mountain road that is to be used to evacuate the wounded during the offensive and notices "the river, cloudy with snow-water and running fast through the spites of the bridge..."51 The next afternoon Henry and four drivers take four ambulances up the river where the attack was to occur. They park the ambulances near a brick-yard next to the river. As they sit in a dugout eating and waiting for the attack, a large trench mortar shell bursts in their midst killing one of the drivers and wounding Henry in the legs. He is sent to Milan to recover and to fall in love with Catherine Barkley.

49 Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York, 1929), p. 3.
50 Ibid., p. 6. 51 Ibid., p. 37.
After the summer in Milan, Henry returns to the front. The scene is dismal. To convey this sense of foreboding Hemingway uses several images, among which are the flooded river. Chapter XXX begins with a foreboding reference to a flooded river: "The river was high and the bridge had been blown up in the centre; the stone arch was fallen into the river and the brown water was going over it." The retreating column approaches the flooded Tagliamento in much the same fashion as the retreating Greeks reached the Maritza:

... In the dark the flood looked high. The water swirled and it was wide. The wooden bridge was nearly three-quarters of a mile across, and the river, that usually ran in narrow channels in the wide stony bed far below the bridge, was close under the wooden planking. ... Crossing slowly in the rain a few feet above the flood, ... I looked over the side and watched the river.53

Minutes later, Henry dives into that swirling water in a strange baptism that washes away all obligations to organized society. This event symbolizes Henry's dramatic resignation from an alien and cruel world. The river and the retreat are the extremes of the "Not-Home" concept Baker finds in the novel. It is the event that helps H. K. Russell explain the book as a five-act tragedy. Russell sees the book as the dramatization of a challenge

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52 Hemingway, *Farewell to Arms*, p. 216.
to world order. When Henry deserts society to live a separate life with Catherine, he is, according to Russell, defying the world order. 54 Young says, "It is an unfor-gettable plunge." 55

There is one more important river in A Farewell to Arms. When the couple flee to their mountain home away from the world, they settle by a mountain stream: "The valley was deep and there was a stream at the bottom that flowed down into the lake and when the wind blew across the valley you could hear the stream in the rocks." 56 This stream is in direct contrast to the flooded streams associated with the war. This is the kind of stream Jake Barnes and Bill Gordon would have enjoyed fishing. It fits the "home" symbol.

The two rivers in A Farewell to Arms are poles apart as symbols. The flooded Tagliamento is a symbol of the suffering that the social world with its wars brings to humanity. It is also a baptismal symbol indicating the washing away of one kind of sin, allegiance to society. The Swiss river is the symbol of peace, home, protection, and security.

For Whom the Bell Tolls begins with a reference to a stream in the first paragraph. The bridge that crosses

55 Young, Hemingway, p. 62.
56 Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 299.
this stream is the center of a group of concentric circles, the largest of which encompasses all of the world, so Baker says of the novel. "The bridge, therefore -- such is the structural achievement of this novel -- becomes the hub on which the 'future of the human race can turn.'" 57

Around this stream and bridge Hemingway has written "a prose epic of the Spanish peoples..." 58 Near this mountain stream with its clear, cold swiftness Robert Jordan must fulfill his life in a few short hours. In the sunny hills of the novel, not even death, always lingering in the background, and frequently in the foreground too, seems so evil for Jordan.

As usual, Hemingway gives the reader a feeling of being there. Early in the novel Jordan sits beside this stream waiting for Anselmo to return:

He sat now by the stream watching the clear water flowing between the rocks and, across the stream, he noticed there was a thick bed of watercress. He crossed the stream, picked a double handful, washed the muddy roots clean in the current and then sat down again beside his pack and ate the clean, cool green leaves and the crisp, peppery stalks. He knelt by the stream and, pushing his automatic pistol around on his belt to the small of his back so that it would not be wet, he lowered himself with a hand on each of two boulders and drank from the stream. The water was achingly cold. 59

57Baker, Hemingway, p. 246.

58Ibid., p. 247.

In the detailed story which Pilar tells of the taking of the Fascists in her town and their execution, Pablo's plan was to run the Fascists between two lines of men with clubs and pitchforks and off a cliff and into the river. However, the men were killed before they reached the edge of the cliff above the river. Pilar says, "Pablo had them beaten to death with flails and thrown from the top of the cliff into the river."^60 A river, however, is one of the things that El Sordo associates with life. As he awaits death on top of the hill he thinks:

Dying was nothing and he had no picture of it nor fear of it in his mind. But living was a field of grain blowing in the wind on the side of a hill. Living was a hawk in the sky. Living was an earthen jar of water in the dust of the threshing with the grain flailing out and the chaff blowing. Living was a horse between your legs and a carbine under one leg and a hill and a valley and a stream with trees along it and the far side of the valley and the hills beyond.^61

The vivid scene of the wiring and demolition of the bridge is accompanied by the "noise of the tumbling water." Bright, early-morning sunshine floods the bridge. Just before Jordan hears the signal for him to shoot the sentry, he thinks "that nothing could happen on such a lovely late May morning. . . ."^62 Later, as he works over the

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^60ibid., p. 103.  
^61ibid., pp. 312-313.  
^62ibid., p. 434.
stream, he "looked down and saw it boiling up white below him through the boulders and then dropping down to a clear pebbled pool. . . . a trout rose for some insect and made a circle on the surface. . . ."63 These pleasant details contrast sharply with the sound of grenades and rifle fire above and below the bridge. The scene is also quite different from the river scene in *A Farewell to Arms* when Lieutenant Henry dives into the swollen Tagliamento. The wonderful, sunny morning with the trout stream below gives added meaning to Jordan's thoughts a little later as he lies mortally wounded. "The world is a fine place and worth the fighting for and I hate very much to leave it."64

Hemingway apparently intended some symbolism in the name of the protagonist. As Jordan works on the bridge, under the pressure of the moment, his mind begins working:

\[\text{You and your head. You have a nice thinking head old Jordan. Roll Jordan, Roll! They used to yell that at football when you lugged the ball. Do you know the damned Jordan is really not much bigger than that creek down there below. At the source, you mean. So is anything else at the source. This is a place here under this bridge. A home away from home. Come on, Jordan, pull yourself together. This is serious Jordan. Don't you understand? Serious. It's less so all the time. Look at the other side. Para que? I'm all right now however she goes. As Maine goes so goes the nation. As Jordan goes, so go the bloody Israelites. The bridge, I mean. As Jordan goes, so goes the bloody bridge, other way around, really.}^{65}\]

\[^{63}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 438.} \quad ^{64}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 467.} \quad ^{65}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 438.}\]
Jordan allows himself to think more than most of the Hemingway heroes, as is befitting an ex-teacher. His thoughts on the Jordan River indicate the importance of the bridge operation. The Jordan is a relatively small stream, but it is a tremendously important stream. The bridge and the stream below, Hemingway seems to be saying, are likewise important. The stream below is to the fight against Fascism as the Jordan is to the Jew's struggle for the Promised Land. This is further evidence to support Baker's contention that the bridge is the center of a group of concentric circles, the outermost encompassing the world.

In his next novel, Hemingway turns from the mountain streams of Spain to the coastal rivers and canals of Italy. The first sentence of Across the River and into the Trees mentions a canal. The novel continues to be rich with references to streams, frequently with symbolic meaning implied. The first scene reminds Young that Colonel Cantwell is like Dante when he crosses the canal "with the help of a surly and Charon-like poler."66 (At one point in the novel Cantwell tells Renata he is Dante.) After the novel is opened on the icy lagoon, the scene shifts to the drive the Colonel had made from Trieste to Venice.

66Young, Hemingway, p. 87.
"They made a curve and crossed the Tagliamento on a temporary bridge." 67 The name of the river brings memories of a lieutenant who washed away responsibility to society in its flooded waters. Another familiar river is soon approached:

The car went through the cheerful town of San Dona di Piave. It was built up and new, but no more ugly than a middle western town, and it was as prosperous and as cheery as Fossalta, just up the river, is miserable and gloomy, the Colonel thought. Did Fossalta never get over the first war? 68

At this point the Colonel remembers the visit he had made a few weeks before to the site on the Piave where he was wounded thirty years before. He remembers too the "monument" which he had made and which has been discussed earlier in the chapter.

Going on toward Venice, the Colonel and his driver pass the canals that were fed by the Piave, the canals into which the dead had been thrown. "Unfortunately its canal gates [had been] still in the Austrians' hands down the river," the Colonel remembers, "and they were closed." 69 The dead "floating and bloating face up and down regardless of nationality" had been "hauling" out and buried along the road by the canals.

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68 Ibid., p. 17.
69 Ibid., p. 20.
Later, on the "slow canal" near the Brenta, the Colonel is reminded of the nearness of his own death. His ideal burial place is on the banks of a river:

They passed the long line of boats in the slow canal that carried water from the Brenta, and he thought about the long stretch of the Brenta where the great villas were, with their lawns and their gardens and the plane trees and the cypresses. I'd like to be buried out there, he thought. . . . I'd like to be buried way out at the edge of the grounds, but in sight of the old graceful house and the tall, great trees. I don't think it would be much of a nuisance to them. I could be a part of the ground where the children play in the evenings, and in the mornings, maybe, they would still be training jumping horses and their hoofs would make the thudding on the turf, and trout would rise in the pool when there was a hatch of fly.70

In Venice, the city the Colonel loves, he and Jackson ride the "varnished and lovingly kept" launch with the reconditioned Fiat engine that runs with "metallic agony" and is very much like the Colonel's own heart:

They went under the white bridge and under the unfinished wood bridge. Then they left the red bridge on the right and passed under the first high-flying white bridge. Then there was the black iron fret-work bridge on the canal leading into the Rio Nuovo and they passed the two stakes chained together but not touching; like us the Colonel thought. He watched the tide pull at them and he saw how the chains had worn the wood since he first had seen them. That's us, he thought. That's our monument. And how many monuments are there to us in the canals of this town?71

70Ibid., pp. 34-35.
71Ibid., p. 46.
Baker takes these bridges as having symbolic meaning. The white, Baker guesses, might represent childhood; the unfinished wooden bridge, "interrupted adolescence"; the red bridge, the first war; and the high-flying white bridge could be an "aspect of youthful ambition." 72 He also implies that the black iron bridge symbolizes death and says, "It is no symbolic accident that this crosses the canal which leads into the Rio Nuovo -- the New River." 73 Baker thinks that the two stakes chained together represent Lieutenant Cantwell of 1918 and Colonel Cantwell of 1950, "chained together by the fact that they are the same person, but separated by the thirty-odd years that have come between." 74 However, the stakes could also represent Cantwell of 1950 and Renata of 1950, since both are chained together in a peculiar sort of love, but are separated also by a thirty-years difference in age. Since Renata is almost a symbol of Cantwell's youth, it makes little difference how the stakes are interpreted.

One of the most intriguing uses of symbolic rivers occurs in the scene of the gondola ride. Besides taking place on water, the events of that ride are very important in interpreting Renata and her relationship to Cantwell. Hemingway uses a river metaphor in describing Cantwell's and Renata's lovemaking:

72 Baker, Hemingway, p. 278.
73 Ibid., p. 279.
74 Ibid., p. 278.
The wind was very cold and lashed their faces but under the blanket there was no wind nor nothing; only his ruined hand that searched for the island in the great river with the high steep banks.\textsuperscript{75}

This reference to the wounded hand and the "river with the high steep banks" offers one key to the entire novel.

Before an interpretation is possible, though, certain factors have to be explained. For example, what actually happens in the gondola? A careful reading indicates that sexual intercourse does not occur. However, even a casual reading discloses sexual orgasm: "The great bird had flown far out of the closed window of the gondola."\textsuperscript{76} Renata apparently experiences the orgasm, and Cantwell's wounded hand produces it.

Hemingway subtly gives a reason for this in the surface story. Earlier on the same night Renata and Cantwell go to Cantwell's room before dinner:

They stood and kissed each other true. "I have a disappointment for you, Richard," she said. "I have a disappointment about everything."

She said it as a flat statement and it came to the Colonel in the same way as a message came from one of the three battalions, where the battalion commander spoke the absolute truth and told you the worst.

"You are positive?"
"Yes."
"My poor Daughter," he said.

Now there was nothing dark about the word as she was his Daughter, truly, and he pitied her and loved her.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{75}\textit{Hemingway, Across the River}, pp. 152-153.
\textsuperscript{76}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 154.
\textsuperscript{77}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 110.
Also, the next day in his room, Renata says, "I'm so ashamed about how things are." One explanation serves here: Renata is unfitted for intercourse by menstruation.

This question remains: what is the reader to make of the events in the gondola on the figurative level, i.e., what is Hemingway's intention in treating the hero and the sex act in this novel way?

The "ruined hand" of the quotation is Cantwell's symbol of experience. It stands for knowledge of the world gained through suffering. It is the symbol of the crucifixion of man by the world. Renata says she dreamed about this wounded hand "every night or . . . nearly every night." She says, "... it was a strange mixed-up dream and I dreamed it was the hand of Our Lord."79

The "river with the high steep banks" suggests many things. In the surface story, it is a reference to the vulva or vagina. This river brings to mind connotations both of the organ of birth and of a river. It suggests a wound, blood, fertility, and continuity. The two elements of the symbol converge to emphasize the aspect of birth or rebirth. In its ultimate meaning, this river is a symbol of regeneration and continuity. The "ruined hand" represents man's experience which leads inevitably to death, to crucifixion; the "island in the great river" is a life...

78Ibid., p. 283.  
79Ibid., p. 84.
symbol, suggesting re-birth or resurrection. In the gondola, life and death, or death and resurrection are conjoined.

Hemingway's intention in eliminating sexual intercourse and substituting female orgasm apparently is to emphasize one aspect of the strange relationship of Renata and Cantwell. Renata is several things to the Colonel, as is seen especially clearly in his comment to the portrait: "Portrait," he said, "Boy or daughter or my one true love or whatever it is; you know what it is, portrait." Through the gondola events Hemingway is saying that the daughter aspect is the most important. Intercourse would have done much to eliminate this. As it is, the "true love" element is weakened.

Cantwell begins to take on the appearance of the spiritual father of Renata intent on initiating her into the ways of the world. What occurs in the gondola is reminiscent of primitive initiation ceremonies in which the elders become spiritual fathers of the young and in some cases go through symbolic acts of giving birth to the novices. There is even a kind of womb symbol in the dark gondola moving in the water where "there was no wind nor nothing." Though Hemingway only dimly hints at this primitive aspect, he does devote much of the novel to Cantwell's efforts to "educate" Renata with accounts of

80 Ibid., p. 173.
his war experiences. This teaching aspect is characteristic of initiation rites.

The name Renata, meaning rebirth, takes on its true significance when the characters are seen thus. Renata, the spiritual daughter, apparently is a transitional figure between the Hemingway heroine, of whom Maria is the ultimate, and the spiritual son of the hero, as seen in the boy Manolin in *The Old Man and the Sea*.

The entire relationship of Cantwell and Renata is best seen as a kind of initiation in which the elder passes on to his spiritual offspring his secrets, his wound, and, at the end of the book, his weapons, symbolized by his shotguns. It is for this reason that the young initiate Renata can come into *El Ordine de Brusdelli*, the secret order of wise and wounded men.

The Colonel, his daughter educated, his beloved Venice enjoyed, the ducks shot, drives back toward Trieste and inevitable death. He relates to Jackson the statement, attributed to Stonewall Jackson, which ends: "No, no, let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees."\(^{81}\) Shortly after, the Colonel crosses the river which flows between life and death.

Thus Hemingway ends his major work in which rivers play important parts. He began with crude stories using

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the streams of northern Michigan as background; he used the river associated with war and expatriation with increasing subtlety; and he ends using streams as complex symbols.

Philip Young, in pointing out the similarities of Hemingway's work to *Huckleberry Finn*, says:

> We even remember the part the rivers have played -- the river that must be crossed before one rests in the shade of the trees, the river beside which the hero suffered his crucial wound, the river in which Frederick Henry was reborn and carried into his long exile.82

There is at last the symbolic river of rebirth by which the hero is born again in Renata.

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82 Young, *Hemingway*, p. 201.
CHAPTER III

RAIN

One of the first elements of symbolism in Hemingway's writing to draw critical attention was his use of rain in *A Farewell to Arms*. Actually, before that he had been using rain as a tonal device and minor symbol in the vignettes and stories. Rain had fallen in *The Sun Also Rises*, and it was there a foretaste of the rain of *A Farewell to Arms*. Some stories published later make use of rain, but no important use of it appears in later novels.

The important influence of the journalistic period on Hemingway's writing was hinted at in the chapter on rivers. Again the Greco-Turkish War furnishes the background for his first polished prose in which rain is used. The vignette begins: "Minarets stuck up in the rain out of Adrianople across the mud flats." It ends: "It rained all through the evacuation."

Though rain is not a symbol of the evil of war, it is a strong factor in setting the tone of abject misery that war brings, to civilians especially.

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Another vignette dealt with the troubles the Greeks were experiencing. Rain plays a more important part in this description of death:

They shot the six cabinet ministers at half-past six in the morning against the wall of the hospital. There were pools of water in the courtyard. There were wet dead leaves on the paving of the courtyard. It rained hard. All the shutters of the hospital were nailed shut. One of the ministers was sick with typhoid. Two soldiers carried him downstairs and out into the rain. They tried to hold him up against the wall but he sat down in a puddle of water. The other five stood very quietly against the wall. Finally the officer told the soldiers it was no good trying to make him stand up. When they fired the first volley he was sitting down in the water with his head on his knees.\(^2\)

Hemphill sums up nicely the effectiveness of the sketch in these words:

In this passage each descriptive detail—the pools of water, the wet dead leaves, etc. —contributes, if rather indirectly, to the rough notion which seems to be Hemingway's obsession: that Life is cruel just as War is cruel. . . . The cabinet members were shot when it was raining. Rain water is cold, wet, and nasty. Hemingway wants us to know how Nick knew that Life is cruel so that we shall know that Life is cruel. The passage is scenically persuasive.\(^3\)

"My Old Man" was an early story in which Hemingway made a similar use of rain. In the story the narrator's father is a jockey who is killed in the rain. The narrator

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 225.

says of his father and their horse: "Second time Gilford
and my old man started, was a rainy Sunday at Autevil, in
the Prix du Marat, a 4500 meter steeplechase."4 The old
man was killed at "the big water-jump," a kind of division
symbol itself. After the accident the boy's image of his
father is destroyed by what he overhears two men say. He
concludes with this comment: "Seems like when they get
started they don't leave a guy nothing."5

Rain here again supports the impression that life is
cruel. The rainy weather helps convey the underlying
comment by the author that the impersonal "they" are un-
feeling, if not vicious. Implied is the comment that the
young person, be he a jockey's son or a young Nick Adams,
is likely to meet with brutality and be stripped of the
romantic vision of the goodness of his fellow men. The cold
wet rain underlines the implication.

In "Fifty Grand" rain is moved farther to the background.
This story deals with what Young calls Hemingway's code
hero, the person who has developed a code to live by in a
world of cruelty. Two of the main tenets of the code are
courage and stoicism, both of which the fighter in the story
exhibits. He is very painfully fouled by his opponent. To

4Hemingway, Forty-Nine Stories, p. 301.
5Ibid., p. 303.
admit that he is fouled would win him the fight but would
cost him his honor and "fifty grand." He endures the pain
and fouls his opponent, thus actually "winning." The fight
is held in crowd-packed Madison Square Garden. Outside it
is raining.

The rain began in the afternoon before the fight,
and Hemingway's mention of it helps to set the tone for
the climax. (Rain is also a foreboding sign because of its
association with coldness and discomfort. Rain suggests
the cosmic side of the suffering seen in the microcosm of
the fight ring.)

Hemingway uses rain in the same way in making a comment
on the transience of human life and the fickleness of fame
in "Banal Story," which concludes:

They all marched in the rain behind his
coffin and there were one hundred and forty-
seven bull-fighters followed him out to the
cemetery, where they buried him in the tomb
next to Joselito. After the funeral every
one sat in the cafes out of the rain, and many
colored pictures of Maera were sold to men who
folded them up and put them away in their
pockets. 6

(Rain is used primarily to create tone and at the same
time to suggest that the events described in the story are
not unique but typical. That is the way life is, Hemingway
seems to be saying.)

In "A Very Short Story" Hemingway makes a related comment
on the fickleness of lovers' vows. The story contains the

6Ibid., pp. 455-460.
germ of *A Farewell to Arms*, though with a great deal of
cynicism attached to the love story. The girl stays in
Pordoneone while the man goes to America.

It was lonely and rainy there, and there
was a battalion of arditi quartered in the
town. Living in the muddy, rainy town in
the winter, the major of the battalion made
love to Luz, and she had never known Italiens
before, and finally wrote to the States that
theirs had been only a boy and girl affair. 7

The rain falls and dissolves the foundation of the
couple's love. Coming with the rain are mud, sex without
love, and broken vows. The rain serves as a symbol of
the elements of the world that wash away the pure and
the unsullied and leave one disillusioned (as Luz even-
tually was) or diseased (as "he" who contracted gonorrhea
was).

Rain plays a part in one of Hemingway's stories of
married love on the rocks. The state of the love affair
is reflected in this description: "It was a windy day with
the sun coming out from behind clouds and then going under
in sprinkles of rain. . . . The river was brown and muddy. . .
off on the right there was a dump heap." 8 The intermittent
rain parallels the man's indecision of which the wife
accuses him and which is seen in his making a fishing date
with the guide and then telling him, "I may not be going,'


said the young gentleman, 'very probably not.'

Everything about the day seems to be bad. Rain is one more element that helps build up the tonal effect of "everything gone to pot."

Rain is again used with symbolic overtones in the death dream of Harry in "Snows of Kilimanjaro." In the dream, Harry is carried in a plane flown by his friend Compie:

Then they began to climb and they were going to the East it seemed, and then it darkened and they were in a storm, the rain so thick it seemed like flying through a waterfall, and then they were out and Compie turned his head and grinned and pointed and there, ahead all he could see, as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro. And then he knew that there was where he was going.

This is rain put to an apparently different use. The rain is like a waterfall in being so thick. It is encountered in the dream just before the image of the white top of Kilimanjaro. This curtain of water divides the living from the dead and serves the same symbolic purpose as the river in Across the River and into the Trees. It also functions as a baptismal agent that cleanses the dying man before he goes on to Kilimanjaro.

Bardacke’s comment on Hemingway’s use of natural objects as symbols sums up the comments on Hemingway’s stories:

\[9\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 277.} \quad 10\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 174.}\]
Hemingway, in spite of his insistence upon objective method and realistic tone, depends strongly upon a background of association and symbols for the depth and mood of his stories. His mountains, rivers, and woods are often symbols of nostalgia. [Rain and snow repeated over and over again in both his novels and short stories suggest various aspects of death and disillusion.]

In his first major novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway used rain to heighten mood and imply more than the object itself. The depths of the novel are reached during the latter days of the Pamplona festival when Circe has turned the men to swine. The contrast between the cold cleanliness of Burguete and the pagan orgies of Pamplona is even clearer when rain falls:

In the morning it was raining. A fog had come over the mountains from the sea. You could see the tops of mountains. The plateau was dull and gloomy, and the shapes of the trees and the houses were changed.\(^1\)

Coming as it does before Mike hits Jake and beats up the bullfighter, the rain is a kind of sign portending evil. It is associated with the pain Jake suffers at having to betray his honor as an aficionado by helping unite Brett and Romero and the pain he suffers at the same time by helping arrange an affair for the woman he loves. The rain seems to be more sign than symbol. It is also clearly a device for conditioning the emotional climate of a portion of the novel.

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\(^{11}\)McCaffery, *Ernest Hemingway*, p. 341.

In *A Farewell to Arms* is Hemingway's most pronounced and extended use of rain. Philip Young contends that rain is not a symbol, however: "The novel has one stylistic innovation that is important to it. That is the use of an object, rain, in a way that cannot be called symbolic so much as portentous."\(^{13}\) Baker is much freer in his use of the word symbol. He says, "The short first chapter closes with winter, and the establishment of rain as a symbol of disaster."\(^{14}\) H. K. Russell also believes that "rain is the most obvious symbol in the novel."\(^{15}\)

The most obvious use of rain and the most frequent use in the novel seems to be for setting tone. Beginning on page one, the tone of doom is set partially by the use of rain. Hemingway says, in connection with some unsuccessful fighting for a mountain, ",.,. in the fall when the rains came the leaves all fell from the chestnut trees and the branches were bare and the trunks black with rain."\(^{16}\) The first few references are important because within the first thirty pages rain is firmly associated with defeat, disease, and misery. He associates rain with disease and death:

> "At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with


the rain came the cholera."\textsuperscript{17} He says with irony that actually only seven thousand soldiers died of the disease before it was checked.

Again Hemingway uses rain as a device for establishing a setting fit for parting lovers when Lieutenant Henry starts back to the front after his wound. Frederick Henry and Catherine Barkley walk in the streets of Milan in a mist that turns to rain before he leaves. They go to a hotel where Catherine says that for the first time she feels "like a whore."\textsuperscript{18} The mood could hardly be enhanced in a better way than by having the parting occur at night in a drizzle.

One of the most effective uses of rain for tonal effect comes during the Caporetto retreat. Especially effective is the scene in which Henry and the one remaining driver stop at a deserted farm house to wait for dark. Hemingway evokes a mood nearing despair. Darkness falls, and from the window of the barn loft bare mulberry trees are seen in the falling rain. The wine is old and bad. "It would be a black night with rain,"\textsuperscript{19} This same general mood is continued through the arrest at the bridge, the escape in the river, the train ride, and all the way to Stresa where he meets Catherine. The morning after he arrives the sun shines through.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 2. \textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 114. \textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 163.
The next use of rain for mood comes when Lieutenant Henry rows all night with Catherine fleeing arrest for desertion. There is mist during the later hours of rowing. Hemingway has the mist turn to rain in the early morning before the couple land in Switzerland. The reader, accustomed to an undeniably evil connotation, is prepared for another mishap. When the two land, Catherine says, "Isn't the rain fine? They never had rain like this in Italy. It's a cheerful rain." The reader, elated because the escape seems good, accepts this comment and goes on cautiously, and it turns out that it was not an ill omen in disguise. Hemingway puts the emphasis on the excitement and happiness of the two people and the rain is forced to give up temporarily its accumulated associations and actually contribute to a new tone. This is added evidence that the home symbol that Baker finds has been reached.

Rain is used once more in the novel as background to sorrow and suffering. Just previously to this it has been used as a sign pointing to the death of Catherine and the baby, and is beginning to take on symbolic overtones, but when Frederick Henry learns that his son is dead, it is used almost exclusively as a tonal element. Henry sits down and looks out of the hospital window. "I could see nothing but the dark and the rain falling across the light from the window. So that was it. The baby was dead."21

20Ibid., p. 208. 21Ibid., p. 244.
Hemingway frequently uses rain as a portent. Early in *A Farewell to Arms* he establishes a bond between rain and a mood of doom, despair and defeat. This bond is developed along the lines of the stimulus-response idea. After so much association of rain and drabness, Hemingway is able to bring about a foreboding atmosphere by rain alone. Even while he is establishing the bond, he uses rain as a long-range sign by having Catherine and Lieutenant Henry talk of the rain after his wound and operation; she says she is afraid of rain, and he finally gets her to admit the reason for her fear. She says, "All right. I'm afraid of the rain because sometimes I see me dead in it."\(^{22}\) She also says she sees him dead in it sometimes. Of course, only one of these signs points to a correct end, but the alert reader is aware that probably one or both of the main characters will be "dead in it" before the book is over.

A few pages later this use of rain is made again. Lieutenant Henry and Catherine are planning a convalescent leave before he has to go back to the front. The night Catherine tells Henry she is three months pregnant it turns cold. The next day it rains. At first the reader thinks perhaps this rain is a tonal device, but presently Lieutenant Henry comes down with jaundice and loses his chance for a leave with Catherine.\(^{23}\)

\(^{22}\text{Ibid., p. 94.}\) \(^{23}\text{Ibid., p. 106.}\)
When Lieutenant Henry reaches the front, there are rumors of an Austrian offensive, but most of the Italians think it is too late for that. When a day of wind and rain comes, the reader is warned that some dire event is in the offing. The night following the storm the attack begins, but is repelled. Another attack is repelled about dawn, but rumors that the front to the north near Caporetto has broken are confirmed when the retreat is begun the next day in the rain.

It rains intermittently as the retreat continues. The ambulances are finally abandoned to the mud, and Lieutenant Henry and his three drivers continue the retreat on foot. As they prepare to cross a river, it begins to rain again. The reader is aware that the situation is dangerous and the beginning of rain may indicate trouble. In a moment a spearhead of the advancing German army is seen, and shortly thereafter the driver Aymo is killed by mistake by a frightened rearguard unit of the Italian army.²⁴

No more use is made of rain as a sign until the second night Lieutenant Henry is in Stresa with Catherine. That night a storm comes up and there is much rain. The two people seem happy and safe, so the rain can mean only one thing -- trouble. The barman comes shortly and warns Lieutenant Henry of the threat of arrest. He and Catherine flee in the barman's boat.

²⁴Ibid., p. 160.
The last use made of rain as a sign is the spring rain that comes, ending the idyllic winter life for Catherine and Lieutenant Henry. Rain here points to the end of the happy life and warns of the coming tragedy. This same sign of doom is held up when Lieutenant Henry notices that it is raining as Catherine is taken to the operating room. These last two uses of rain produce a sign that begins to take on the aspect of a symbol.

The last sentence of *A Farewell to Arms* ends with the word rain. "After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain."25 This, and the fact that rain has constantly been used in the novel either to set a tone of doom and defeat or to signal imminent trouble or tragedy are reasons to suspect that rain has become a symbol. Upon investigation it appears obvious that rain has grown gradually from a mere tonal device used with others to set the background, to a sign or omen, and finally to a symbol that stands alone. It is also obvious that what began as an impersonal and insignificant background element to a war that was being fought way off in the mountains has become larger, more personal, and more terrible as it is associated with retreat and death in general, the death of Aymo, the death of the infant son, and finally the death of Catherine. Rain becomes the symbol of the very nature of the world man

25Ibid., p. 249.
must live in, with the aloof, uncontrollable, unavoidable cruelty inherent in that world.

Russell has this further comment on the symbol of rain in the novel:

The rain does not precisely symbolize the "they," the world order with a ruthless disciplining intention; Hemingway has avoided the pathetic fallacy. The rain seems rather to represent a fact about the world order, its inescapable presence; to be a reminder that it is there, suggesting but not defining as the retreat and the battle police do.26

Hemingway has used rain extensively in eight short pieces and two novels. Although there is a range of uses, with some overlapping, rain is used in at least three relatively distinct ways: for tone, as omen, and as symbol.

 CHAPTER IV

LAKE S

As streams play an important role in the education of the young Hemingway, so do the lakes of northern Michigan. Streams are inextricably associated in his writing with growing up, reporting war, and being wounded. Lakes, too, furnish background to important experiences. Nick Adams, the original Hemingway hero, tastes love and samples violence beside the lakes of Michigan, and another major wound, this time of a psychic nature, is associated in the mind of Robert Jordan with a lake in Wyoming.

One of the first stories published by the beginning writer, "Up in Michigan," appeared first in the book entitled Three Stories and Ten Poems (1923); it shows the effect of the summers the Hemingways spent on Walloon Lake, and is a forerunner of several of the Nick Adams stories. The story, incidentally, is one of the few which is told from the woman's point of view. It is a simple story of a young girl's painful initiation to sexual intercourse. The story is set on the shore of a lake. "It was very beautiful in the spring and summer, the bay blue and bright and usually whitecaps on the lake out beyond the point
from the breeze blowing from Charlevoix and Lake Michigan.\textsuperscript{1} With this background, young Liz Coates falls in love with Jim Gilmore, a husky young blacksmith.

One night after Jim had been celebrating a deer hunt with drinking, he walks with Liz. "There was no moon and they walked ankle-deep in the sandy road through the trees down to the warehouse on the bay. The water was lapping in the piles and the point was dark across the bay."\textsuperscript{2} This description of the lake and shore emphasizes the dark and lonely aspects of the scene and is in definite contrast to the daytime scene described earlier. Later, while Jim lies sleeping on the planks of the dock, "Liz started to cry. She walked over to the edge of the dock and looked down to the water. There was a mist coming up from the bay. She was cold and miserable and everything felt gone."\textsuperscript{3}

Hemingway has apparently used the lake (night view) as a symbol to suggest the pain and loneliness of this first sexual act. The "mist coming up from the bay" parallels the confusion and mystery Liz feels as a result of the experience. This story is an early example of Hemingway's ability to take almost the same set pieces and by emphasizing slightly different aspects to create a contrasting

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 183.
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
mood. Young would perhaps call this an example of the pathetic fallacy, as he was to say about Hemingway's use of rain in *A Farewell to Arms*. Baker, in direct contradiction, would say that Hemingway never used the pathetic fallacy. "Beginning with a standard of performance which rigorously excluded the pathetic fallacy, Hemingway adhered to it with a faith just short of fanatical." There is little doubt, at any rate, that some of Hemingway's success in style rests with his ability to convey emotion through description, which he does in this early story.

Baker says that the first published Nick Adams story appeared in April, 1924, in *Transatlantic Review*. It was later entitled "Indian Camp"; it marks an initiation to violent birth and violent death in northern Michigan "in a region which was populated chiefly by Ojibway Indians." Like Hemingway's father, Nick's father was a doctor. In this story, Dr. Adams delivers an Indian baby by Caesarian without an anaesthetic, using only a jack-knife. Nick, a youth perhaps ten years old, watches the operation, and before it is over, "his curiosity had been gone for a long time." After the operation is completed, Dr. Adams discovers

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6 Ibid., p. 307.
7 Young, *Hemingway*, p. 108.
that the husband, who had been lying injured in the bunk above his wife, has committed suicide with a razor. "Nick, standing in the door of the kitchen, had a good view of the upper bunk when his father, the lamp in one hand, tipped the Indian's head back."9 This gruesome initiation is bracketed by rides across the lake. The trip home is in the early morning. ". . . Sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, [Nick] felt sure that he would never die."10 Of course, this is wishful thinking, as Hemingway was to demonstrate through the deaths of Robert Jordan and Colonel Cantwell. The wounding of the young hero, however, was here begun.

The lake, which feels warm in the chill of morning, and which must be crossed to get to suffering, birth, and death, is a barrier that separates the world of the young and innocent Nick Adams from the world of the older Nick Adams.

"The End of Something" illustrates another lesson from the Michigan lakes. The story records the break-up of young Nick and a girl named Marjorie over some vague reason Nick cannot explain exactly. The first few paragraphs seem to have little relation to a love affair. Hemingway explains that Hortons Bay was once a lumbering

9Ibid., p. 192. 10Ibid., p. 193.
town until a "schooner moved out of the bay toward the open lake carrying the two great saws, the travelling carriage that hurled the logs against the revolving, circular saws... carrying with it everything that had made the mill a mill and Hortons Bay a town."\textsuperscript{11} It is not until near the end of the story that the reader perceives the parallel between the end of Hortons Bay and the end of the adolescent love affair.

In the third paragraph Hemingway introduces Nick and Marjorie against a background of decay and foreboding:

Ten years later there was nothing of the mill left except the broken white limestone of its foundations showing through the swampy second growth as Nick and Marjorie rowed along the shore. They were trolling along the edge of the channel-bank where the bottom dropped off suddenly from sandy shallows to twelve feet of dark water.\textsuperscript{12}

The couple fish, but do not catch anything. They build a fire on shore and eat supper as the moon comes up. Under questioning by Marjorie, Nick says that love is not any fun any more. Marjorie leaves in the boat. "Nick went back and lay down with his face in the blanket by the fire. He could hear Marjorie rowing on the water."\textsuperscript{13}

The parallel between the end of Hortons Bay and the end of the love affair becomes apparent at this point of

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 205. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 205.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 209.
the story. The lake takes them both and becomes a kind of symbol that suggests to the young adolescent the absorbing and erasing qualities of the world.

Nick is obviously worried over the end of this love affair, and he is still concerned in the sequel story "The Three-Days Blow" in which there is some indication that the parting came over Marjorie's family. However, Nick is relieved when his friend warns that the affair might be started again. Nick felt happy because "nothing was ever lost... there was always a way out." He feels the same optimism he did when he was younger and was riding across the lake feeling that he would never die. Nick is still the illusioned adolescent, but his education is continuing.

In "The Battler" a swamp furnishes the setting for the next lesson in Nick's education "in our time." He has toughened a bit, as the reader can tell by his attitude toward a brakeman who knocks him off a freight train. Nick vows "he would get him some day" and curses himself for having fallen for such "a lousy kid thing" as to have been fooled into thinking the brakeman had something for him. He vows, "They would never suck him in that way again."\(^{14}\) Nick appropriately finds himself in a tamarack swamp. "He stepped along the track, walking so he kept on the ballast between the ties, the swamp ghostly in the rising

\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. 227.
mist."\(^{15}\) He leaves the nightmare of the swamp only to emerge on another unusual scene.

By the side of the railroad he finds a crazy, punch-drunk ex-boxer and a Negro who attends him. The boxer finally tries to pick a fight, and the Negro black-jacks him into unconsciousness and begins immediately nursing him back to his senses. Young says of the Negro:

> The tender, motherly, male-nursing Bugs is too comfortable in the relationship with the little, demented ex-fighter. The companionship which started as a prison friendship and which is self-sufficient financially (the couple is sent money by Ad's ex-manager and wife) seems self-sufficient in other ways. Although Nick understands no more than that something is very wrong here, the reader may get the never-stated but potently suggested notion that it is not only Ad who is "queer."\(^{16}\)

Young Nick Adams leaves the campfire and walks on down the track carrying with him the memory of two lessons in darkness and evil. The swamp is clearly a symbol of the evil that Nick is repeatedly finding in the world. It especially suggests the dark, stagnant qualities of evil paralleled in the unnatural relationship of the Negro and the boxer.

In "Ten Indians" Nick appears younger and more innocent. He is kidded by the boys of a farm family about his Indian girl, Prudence Mitchell. He likes the kidding. When

\(^{15}\)ibid., p. 223.

\(^{16}\)Young, Hemingway, p. 11.
Nick gets home, his father tells him about seeing Prudence "threshing around. . . in the woods with Frank Washburn."  

Nick cries over it, but recovers quickly:  

When he awoke in the night he heard the wind in the hemlock trees outside the cottage and the waves of the lake coming in on shore, and he went back to sleep. In the morning there was a big wind blowing and the waves were running high up on the beach and he was awake a long time before he remembered that his heart was broken.

The waves of the lake, "running high up on the beach," suggest the washing away of sorrow. They also suggest the washing away of illusion that the Hemingway hero must experience to become a Jake Barnes or a Frederick Henry.

This brings us to the windswept water of the long lake in *A Farewell to Arms*. In attempting to explain how Catherine gradually becomes associated with the mountain-home-image, Carlos Baker apparently puts the lake in the mountains:

Because she can make a "home" of any room she occupies -- and Henry several times alludes to this power of hers -- Catherine naturally moves into association with ideas of home, love, and happiness. She does not really reach the center of the mountain-image until, on the heels of Frederick's harrowing lowland experiences during the retreat from Caporetto, the lovers move to Switzerland. Catherine is the first to go, and Henry follows her there as if she were the genius of the mountains, beckoning him on.

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18 Ibid., p. 434.
Since Catherine and Henry enter Swiss waters in the same boat, obviously Baker has reference to the mountain resort of Stresa, to which Catherine preceded Henry. It seems doubtful that Stresa is part of the mountains in which the pair find happiness or that the Stresa end of the lake belongs to the home image. There is a hint of home the first night the couple spend together in Stresa (but there was also a kind of home in Milan, definitely a lowland city). However, Frederick is in danger of being arrested, and there is the psychological nearness of the front with its evil connotations. Generally the lake is described as being cold and black, frequently with low clouds, mist, or rain. When Henry and the barman go trolling, they catch nothing. From the lake "Stresa looked very deserted... there were rows of bare trees... the sun was under the cloud and the water was dark and smooth."20

Actually, the lake seems kin to the river symbol of the retreat. If the plunge Henry made into the flooded Tagliamento is a kind of baptism from which he emerged a new man, then the lake at Stresa stands for the expiation he must endure to purge himself of the stigma of war and prepare himself for the purity of the home-image. An all-night trial that brings pulpy hands and the taste of bile puts more than thirty-five kilometers between Frederick

20Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (New York, 1929), pp. 263-264.
Henry and Stresa. At the Swiss end of the lake things are
different. Soldiers are fine; there is light and amusing
banter; and even the rain looks good. To add emphasis to
the expiation aspect, there is a reference to Henry's hands:

"Let me see your hands."
I put them out. They were both
blistered raw.
"There's no hole in my side," I said.
"Don't be sacrilegious."\textsuperscript{21}

The lake becomes, then, the purifying symbol, the object
that cleanses the evil of war and organized society from
the redeemed Frederick Henry.

In \textit{For Whom the Bell Tolls}, Hemingway uses a lake in
connection with action that takes place prior to the time
of the book. (Near the end of the book, Robert Jordan thinks
seriously of his situation before the bridge is to be blown.)
He is aware of the imminence of death. In the light of
this awareness he remembers certain important events in
his life. The memory of his grandfather, who was also a
brave soldier, brings strength to Jordan, but he is ashamed
when he remembers his own father, who "was just a coward
and that was the worst luck any man could have."\textsuperscript{22} Robert
Jordan's father, like Nick Adam's in "Fathers and Sons"
and Hemingway's own father, had committed suicide.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 294.

\textsuperscript{22}Ernest Hemingway, \textit{For Whom the Bell Tolls} (New York,
Jordan remembers how he had disposed of the gun that his father had used. It was a Smith and Wesson .32 caliber revolver that had belonged to his grandfather:

He had put the gun back in the drawer in the cabinet where it belonged, but the next day he took it out and he had ridden up to the top of the high country above Red Lodge, with Chub, where they had built the road to Cooke City now over the pass and across the Bear Tooth plateau, and up there where the wind was thin and there was snow all summer on the hills they had stopped by the lake which was supposed to be eight hundred feet deep and was a deep green color, and Chub held the two horses and he climbed out on a rock and leaned over and saw his face in the still water, and saw himself holding the gun, and then he dropped it, holding it by the muzzle, and saw it go down making bubbles until it was just as big as a watch charm in that clear water, and then it was out of sight. Then he came back off the rock and when he swung up into the saddle he gave old Bess such a clout with the spurs she started to buck like an old rocking horse. He bucked her out along the shore of the lake and as soon as she was reasonable they went on back along the trail.23

This is a description of a ritual in which the hero is dealing with another wound, this time a psychic wound. The Hemingway hero is concerned with bravery, with facing danger and death with stoicism, and as a result, Robert Jordan's act takes on additional significance. The suicide is not only a wound to the heart of the son, but is a treacherous element that in the life blood and mind of the hero could betray his determination to face danger as the code demands. Robert Jordan drops the gun in eight hundred feet of water to purge himself of this unwholesome element in his being. The lake washes away the guilt by kinship.

23Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 337.
In conclusion, Hemingway can be said to use the lakes for more than just background. The lakes of northern Michigan are not only associated with the education of the Hemingway hero; they frequently represent aspects of that education. In "Ten Indians" and "The End of Something" lakes apparently are symbols of the qualities of erosion or washing away, and it is Nick's innocence and illusion that are being washed away. Also, in For Whom the Bell Tolls, a lake washes away guilt. The lakes in "The Battler" and "Up in Michigan" stand for elements of evil Nick and Liz are finding in life, and the lake in "Indian Camp" separates the world of pain and the world of innocence. In A Farewell to Arms the lake furnishes expiation for a completely disillusioned Frederick Henry. In five stories and two novels significant use is made of a lake which we might identify as a "subjective correlative," an object which symbolizes an emotional attitude on behalf of the characters, and evokes from the reader a similar emotional response.
CHAPTER V

OCEANS

Always writing about what he truly knew, Hemingway naturally used the Gulf of Mexico most in his writing because it was the body of water he knew best, having spent many hours fishing in the Gulf Stream. There is even a story that he captured a 468-pound marlin without the aid of a harness. Though the Gulf finds the most important place in his writing, there are references to other oceans.

The sketch entitled "On the Quai at Smyrna" serves as a good beginning selection in this discussion because it is a story that illustrates a bridge between Hemingway's early experience as a newspaper writer and his later writing. The story appeared first as an "Introduction" to In Our Time, and it deals with the Greco-Turkish War (the Greeks' evacuation of Smyrna in particular) which Hemingway had covered. Several things about the quai apparently impressed the narrator, but one in particular: the method the Greeks used to dispose of the baggage animals they could not take with them.

The Greeks were nice chaps too. When they evacuated they had all their baggage animals they couldn't take off with them so they just broke their forelegs and dumped them into the shallow water. All those mules with their forelegs broken pushed over into
the shallow water. It was all a pleasant business. My word yes a most pleasant business.1

Apparently the water of the harbor received more than crippled mules. The narrator remembers "there were plenty of nice things floating around in it." He adds, "That was the only time in my life I got so I dreamed about things."2

The ocean in this sketch is only an edge, a shallow, stagnant harbor, one that ironically "harbors" dead bodies. For the Greeks, the water is at once a barrier and a mode of escape, with the Turks irrepressibly pushing them in their efforts to flee. It is associated with the misery war brings, and in its evil connotations, this water is like the muddy water of the flooded Tagliamento which was crucial in another disastrous retreat. The references Hemingway makes to the harbor here and in Death in the Afternoon are the only ones in which oceans are associated with war.

In "Cat in the Rain" the sea is farther in the background, but it perhaps serves a more symbolic function. In the story a young American couple stop at an Italian hotel. "Their room was on the second floor facing the sea."3 The girl sees a cat in the garden below crouched under a table out of the rain. She wants the cat, which

1Ernest Hemingway, The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories (New York, 1938), p. 188.
2Ibid.
3Ibid., p. 265.
represents what Baker calls "comfortable bourgeois domesticity." She is tired of the short hair and the European hotels, and longs for candles, her own silverware, and new clothes. In addition, she seems to be falling out of love, to be growing disillusioned with the vision of romance.

In the distance "the sea broke in a long line in the rain and slipped back down the beach to come up and break in a long line in the rain." This is reminiscent of the waves of the lake in "Ten Indians." Those waves "were running high up on the beach" and suggested the erasing of the innocence and illusion of Nick Adams in Michigan.

The sea in this story also stands for the erasing qualities of experience. It represents the uncaring coldness of the world to the young wife, and in its regularity also suggests the monotony of a romantic-appearing life. (The girl paradoxically longs for what most women consider a monotonous life.) At the end of the story the sensitive hotel-keeper sends the cat to her room, and she has one buffer to soften the throes of disillusionment.

The next story Hemingway published dealing closely with an ocean is entitled "After the Storm." The hero and narrator is a forerunner of Harry Morgan of To Have and Have Not. He is an animal-like creature who uses a knife in a fight when he has to keep a man from choking him to

death. Like Harry, he owns a small boat and probably makes his living with it. After the fight he flees to his boat. The Gulf around Havana is quieting from a terrible storm. The narrator finds a liner lying just below the surface of the ocean in quicksand and tries desperately to salvage some of the "five million dollars worth in her." He is repeatedly frustrated in his attempt to break the glass on the port hole. He eventually gives up and leaves. When he returns a week later, "the Greeks had blown her open and cleaned her out." 5

The ocean here is a powerful, impersonal force that can take five hundred lives in a moment or can guard its treasure against a man, yielding finally to someone else. The ocean dwarfs the lone man and his puny efforts. It silently and unconsciously tantalizes him with wealth, and then leaves him the role of have-not. The situation adds meaning to Harry Morgan's much-discussed dying words concerning man's chances alone in the world.

There is a significant reference to sea water in one other story, "The Mother of a Queen." The narrator, a man named Roger, quarrels with a Mexican bullfighter for whom he has been working. Roger gives an example to prove a point that the bullfighter is worthless:

He had only fought twice in Spain, they couldn't stand him there, they saw through him

5Hemingway, Forty-Nine Stories, p. 474.
quick enough, and he had seven new fighting suits made and this is the kind of thing he was: he had them packed so badly that four of them were ruined by sea water on the trip back and he couldn't even wear them.\(^6\)

The passage indicates that not only the suits were spoiled by sea water, but that something is basically wrong with the bullfighter, who is probably a homosexual.

A disturbing amount of information about the narrator also comes through. His quarrel with the matador sounds a great deal like a disenchanted lovers' quarrel:

"My God," I said to him, "you go to Spain. You stay there the whole season and only fight two times. You spend all the money you took with you on suits and then have them spoiled by salt water so you can't wear them. That is the kind of season you have and then you talk to me about running your own business. Why don't you pay me the money you owe me so I can leave?"\(^7\)

The seeping water that ruins the matador's clothes perhaps symbolizes, and certainly suggests, the sullied relationship of the two men. It also indicates Roger's growing disgust with the bullfighter. The story is reminiscent of corrosive sea water in its final effect on the reader.

In these stories, Hemingway has used oceans both as tone-suggestive background and as symbol. As usual, he has taken aspects of the environment of his stories, and by emphasizing those selected items, has aided the emotion-carrying qualities of his narrative. But, in some of the

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 515. \(^7\)Ibid.
stories, oceans when examined in isolation take on connotative meaning. They become more than just bodies of water.

Carlos Baker has gone the furthest of the critics in calling Hemingway a symbolist. In the last chapter of his book on Hemingway, Baker concludes that Hemingway has succeeded in fusing Dichtung and Wahrheit, or poetry and truth:

The Dichtung in Hemingway might be provisionally defined as the artist's grasp of the relationship between the temporal and the eternal. That grasp is expressed, in his fiction, through the considered use of imaginative symbols. Most of them come, by way of the artist's imagination, from the visible eternal universe -- the mountains and the plains, the rivers and the trees, the weather and the seasons, the land and the sea.8

Because of the fusion of these two elements Baker predicts Hemingway's survival power.

This brings us to a passage in Green Hills of Africa in which Hemingway expresses his desire to deal with the lasting aspects of life, using the Gulf Stream in his simile:

When, on the sea, you are alone with it and know that this Gulf Stream you are living with, knowing, learning about, and loving, has moved, as it moves, since before man... then the things you find out about it, and those that have always lived in it, are permanent and of value because that stream will flow, as it has flowed, after the Indians, after the Spaniards, after the British, after the Americans and after all the Cubans and all the systems of government, the richness, the poverty, the martyrdom, the sacrifice and the venality and

8Baker, Hemingway, p. 292.
the cruelty are all gone as the high-piled scow of garbage . . . spills off its load into the blue water . . . . The stream, with no visible flow, takes five loads of this a day when things are going well in La Habana and in ten miles along the coast it is as clear and blue and unimpressed as it was ever before the tug hauled out the scow; and the palm fronds of our victories, the worn light bulbs of our great discoveries and the empty condoms of our great loves float with no significance against one single, lasting thing -- the stream.

The passage not only serves to point up Baker's contention that Hemingway has "cast his lines" in the permanent, but it indicates the importance Hemingway attached to the Gulf Stream as a setting for basic and enduring forces. The Old Man and the Sea is a study of such forces, and it is on the Gulf Stream that the story is set. So also is the earlier and weaker To Have and Have Not.

In his first important long fiction, Hemingway makes use of an ocean. Near the end of The Sun Also Rises, the fiesta at Pamplona ends, and with it the sordid and feverish activities of the expatriates. Mike, Bill, and Jake go their separate ways; Jake, in particular, goes to San Sebastian apparently to recover from "fiesta-ing." San Sebastian is a pleasant old town that "even on a hot day . . . has a certain early-morning quality." Jake reads, eats, drinks, and swims.

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9Ernest Hemingway, Green Hills of Africa (New York, 1935), pp. 149-150.
The swimming is an important act:

The tide was about half-way out. The beach was smooth and firm, and the sand yellow... The sand was warm under my bare feet... Out beyond where the headlands of the Concha almost met to form the harbor there was a white line of breakers and the open sea... I waded out. The water was cold. As a roller came I dove, swam out under water, and came to the surface with all the chill gone... I swam out to the raft... Then I tried several dives. I dove deep once, swimming down to the bottom. I swam with my eyes open and it was green and dark. The raft made a dark shadow.10

The swimming is almost a ritual. Jake is washing away the bad taste of the ordeal at Pamplona in the clear green water of the harbor. The harbor itself is a place of pleasant retreat that is protected from the open sea. The tide is going out and swimming is easy. There is significant contrast between this harbor and the one in "On the Quai at Smyrna." The next day Jake swims again, and after the second swim he receives word from Brett in Madrid asking him to come get her. Young calls the interlude at San Sebastian "an intensely muted coda [in which] a solitary Jake, rehabilitating himself, washes away his hangovers in the ocean."11 Young adds, "Soon it is all gone, he is returned to Brett as before, and we discover that we have come full circle, like the rivers, the winds, the sun, to the place where we began."12 The ocean here

10 Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (New York, 1938), p. 245.
12 Ibid.
is a symbolic agent that cleanses and revives. It is like
the river in the mountains where Bill and Jake had found
natural happiness earlier in the book. The ocean is
stimulating in its cold saltiness, but it is also pro-
tective. It is good.

The Gulf Stream that had impressed Hemingway in *Green
Hills of Africa* was to play an important part in *To Have
and Have Not*. Much of the major action of the novel takes
place in the Gulf between Florida and Cuba. Harry Morgan,
the frontier-type individualist, loses one of the important
tools of his trade to a marlin in the Gulf. That loss
starts Harry on the road to doom by depriving him of the
means of making an honest living. The loss is caused by
the carelessness of the wealthy Johnson. He had chartered
Harry's boat for sixteen days, but left owing over five
hundred dollars for fishing trips and lost fishing gear.

The ocean becomes the watery, trackless jungle where
Harry fights for the survival of himself and his family.
He carries any cargo from illegal liquor to Cuban revolu-
tionists. The ocean takes the liquor when things get too
hot, and the bodies of friend and foe alike in the battle
for survival: Tracy (friend, killed by a mad Cuban for
nothing) and Mr. Sing (foe, killed by Harry "to keep from
killing twelve other chinks" and to make money). On the
ocean Harry loses his arm and finally his life.
In the tense moments before the fatal battle with the Cubans, Harry calls attention to the setting sun:

"Have a drink," said Harry looking out across the gray swell of the gulf stream where the round red sun was just touching the water. "Watch that. When she goes all the way under it'll turn bright green."  

Even though he is uneducated (perhaps because he is), Harry is aware of the beauty of the natural world. His awareness of his surroundings is sharpened by the knowledge that what lies in store in the next few minutes may mean his own death. The vivid image of the sea "swallowing" the sun also serves as a foreboding hint to the reader. In a moment Harry thinks, "It would be a pretty night to cross... a pretty night." There is irony in the "pretty" and double meaning in "to cross," reminding the reader of the death imagery of crossing a river.

Hemingway devotes all of "Chapter Twenty" to a description of the drifting launch and its cargo of dead and dying men. He uses color effectively. The colors used in the earlier image of the setting sun are repeated in this chapter. The red color of the setting sun becomes the carmine of "clots and threads [of blood] that trailed in the water." The green that Harry had predicted is the "Frolic green" that the inside of the cockpit is painted. Ironically, the boat is "gay looking in her fresh white and

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13 Ernest Hemingway, To Have and Have Not (New York, 1937), p. 162.
green, against the dark, blue Gulf Stream water." The only sound coming from the boat is that of sloshing gasoline in the bottom. The Gulf Stream moves on silently in contrast to the noisy and temporary activities of man, reminding us of the simile that Hemingway had used in *Green Hills of Africa*.

While the boat is being towed in, other strands of the plot are unraveled. A disgusting picture of the haves is presented as they enjoy the fruits of wealth in the yachts of the harbor to which the *Queen Conch* is being towed. On the Coast Guard cutter towing the riddled launch Harry makes his statement concerning the passing of the frontier individualist: "No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody f____ing chance."

It was partly by setting the novel predominately on the Gulf where frontier-type conditions could still prevail that Hemingway was able to dramatize the economic and cultural ills of the period. Baker points out one of the major achievements of Hemingway in this novel:

The novel as published contains Hemingway's notes toward the definition of a decaying culture... He was not only seeking to advance his dexterity with a prose instrument earlier forged and tempered, but he was also beginning to attack the problem of cultural synecdoche, the means by which the novelist, presenting and evaluating the things he has known, summarizes dramatically the moral predicament of his times. The assumption in

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To Have and Have Not was that Depressed America at large could be anatomized by using a microscope on Key West in little.\(^6\)

As setting for such a dramatization, the Gulf offers several advantages. One is the contrast between the enduring qualities of the Gulf Stream against the temporality of man. This contrast heightens the irony of Harry's struggle. Another advantage is the availability of a revolution-in-the-making. Also, there was plenty of room and opportunity in the 150 miles of water between Havana and Key West for basic forces to contend.

Hemingway ends the novel with a bit of symbolism. These are the last two sentences:

Through the window you could see the sea looking hard and new and blue in the winter light. A large white yacht was coming into the harbor and seven miles out on the horizon you could see a tanker, small and neat in profile against the blue sea, hugging the reef as she made to the westward to keep from wasting fuel against the stream.\(^7\)

The sea has taken on a hard, new look and suggests the new life facing the mourning Maria. The white yacht is perhaps the heroic Harry who has found a harbor in death. The tanker must certainly be Maria facing a large and powerful life-current alone, taking the easiest way to conserve her meager resources.

Hemingway was to repudiate much of the "message" of To Have and Have Not in his latest novel. Santiago, in

\(^6\)Baker, Hemingway, p. 206.

\(^7\)Hemingway, To Have and Have Not, p. 262.
The Old Man and the Sea, also faces the forces of the Gulf Stream alone, but there is never a cry from his lips that "man alone" is doomed from the beginning. The tooth-and-claw aspect of Harry’s fight is replaced by Santiago’s struggle, which is tempered by pervading love. In the new novel "an extraordinary thing has happened, for somehow or other a reverence for life’s struggle, which this contest dramatizes, and for mankind, for which Santiago stands as a possibility, has descended on Hemingway like the gift of grace on the religious."18 And, as Gurko points out, a new note is obvious in Hemingway’s philosophy: "There is no less tragedy than before, but this has lost its bleakness and accidentality and become purposive. It is this sense of purposiveness that makes its first appearance in Hemingway’s philosophy and sets off The Old Man and the Sea."19

The novel also succeeds in fusing the elements Baker calls "Dichtung" and "Wahrheit." The figurative elements do not intrude but grow easily out of the surface story. Young finds the whole story a metaphor.

... Hemingway has gently but powerfully urged a metaphor which stands for what life can be. And it is an epic metaphor, a contest where even the problem of moral right and wrong seems paltry if not irrelevant -- as in ancient epics -- before the great thing that is this struggle.20

18Young, Hemingway, p. 103.


20Young, Hemingway, p. 100.
Hemingway has again made use of Christian symbols. "Santiago is Spanish for Saint James -- the fisherman, apostle, and martyr from the Sea of Galilee." There also are the mutilated hands and the image of the old man staggering up the beach under the weight of the mast.

Another image is that of the lions playing on an African beach. The old man dreams about those lions night after night:

He was asleep in a short time and he dreamed of Africa when he was a boy and the long golden beaches and the white beaches, so white they hurt your eyes, and the high capes and the great brown mountains. He lived along that coast now every night and in his dreams he heard the surf roar and saw the native boats come riding through it. He smelled the tar and oakum of the deck as he slept and he smelled the smell of Africa that the land breeze brought at morning.

He never dreams now of storms or great occurrences or women, only places. Sometimes he dreams of the "white peaks of the Islands rising from the sea." The old man loves the lions that play in his dreams as he loves the boy. When he sleeps in the boat with the giant marlin pulling him through the ocean, he at first dreams of a school of porpoises "that stretched for eight or ten miles and it was in the time of their mating and they would

leap high in the air and return into the same hole they had made in the water when they leaped."23 This first dream suggests the frustration his mind was experiencing at the prolonged fight with the marlin. After he has slept a while he begins to dream of "the long yellow beach and he sees the first of the lions come down onto it in the early dark and then the other lions and he was happy."24

It is possible to hazard a guess at these symbols, despite the fact that they are dream creations in a character's mind. The long yellow beach with the lions, which the old man loves, is associated with the vigor of his youth. It is the yellow beach and the lions he dreams about when he has slept some during the battle with the fish. There are "great brown mountains," the roar of surf, and the smell of tar and oakum that suggest warmth of young blood, and vitality, and energy. But in his dreams there are also the white beaches, "so white they hurt your eyes," and the "white peaks of the Islands rising from the sea." These brilliant white symbols are a great deal like the top of Kilimanjaro, "great, high, and unbelievably white," that entered the death dream of another Hemingway character. Undoubtedly they are just such suggestive devices in this novel. It is not too surprising that both symbols of vitality and death can be associated with Santiago who, it must be remembered, is "a strange old man." The last

23Ibid., p. 89. 24Ibid., p. 90.
sentence of the book is this: "The old man was dreaming about the lions."25 It leaves no doubt about the outcome of the old man's battle. As he had told himself before, "A man can be destroyed but not defeated."26

Manolin, the young boy, is related to the lion image and, in addition, marks a new departure in Hemingway's writing. Time after time during the battle, Santiago wishes for the boy. The boy suggests in his conscious mind the same vigor that the lions suggest in his sleeping mind. The old man thinks, "The boy keeps me alive."27 This admission implies more than physical aid.

The boy is the first important young male character since the young Nick Adams in the early short stories. He is a great deal like Renata in Across the River and into the Trees in that he is a kind of spiritual offspring of the aging main character. When he says to the old man, "You must get well fast for there is much that I can learn and you can teach me everything,"28 we are reminded of Renata's recurring plea for an education from the mouth of Colonel Cantwell.

The huge marlin deserves some attention. In the issue of Life of September 1, 1952, in which The Old Man and the Sea first appeared, an editor suggested the possibility that the marlin represents the novel itself which

25Ibid., p. 140.  
26Ibid., p. 114.  
27Ibid., p. 117.  
28Ibid., pp. 138-139.
the old man (Hemingway) captures. There are several things to be said concerning this casually suggested interpretation. For one thing, the old man consciously goes far out to sea beyond the other fishermen with the intention of getting a big fish. He fishes in deep water. He says of the fish and his own quest:

His choice had been to stay in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries. My choice was to go there and find him beyond all people. Beyond all people in the world.  

Hemingway had mentioned several times his desire to create in fiction a fourth or fifth dimension. He said of this novel, "It's as though I had gotten finally what I had been working for all my life." The novel may be Hemingway's big fish.

However, this is perhaps too narrow and personal an interpretation. A large symbol frequently can be interpreted on more than one level, and such is probably the case here. The fish suggests any artist's ultimate creation. The old man was born to fish, and when he seeks the big fish, he is doing as he should. Santiago's battle brings suffering and deprivation. The artist who seeks to do his best can expect the same.

On a very general level, the battle says that most men are born to do things of which they are capable (the

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29 Ibid., p. 55.

30 Young, Hemingway, p. 104.
old man says once that men are lucky they do not have to try to kill the sun or moon) and if they try to do their best, they can expect hardship.

The sea is the old man's whole creation. Even in his dreams, all that is left are beaches and mountains rising from the sea. He loves the sea:

He always thought of the sea as la mar which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her. Sometimes those who love her say bad things of her but they are always said as though she were a woman. Some of the younger fishermen, those who used buoys as floats for their lines and had motorboats, bought when the shark livers had brought much money, spoke of her as el mar which is masculine. They spoke of her as a contestant or a place or even an enemy. But the old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favours, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them.31

He knows "she is kind and very beautiful -- but she can be cruel."

Hemingway seems to say that the world for all men is a great deal like the old man's world. It is cruel and beautiful and can be hard on the weak, but if one is brave and humble, the world is a good place.

This marks the latest state of Hemingway's attitude toward the world. It is far removed from the attitude that characterized the years 1928-1938 which saw most of his own deep-sea fishing in the Gulf Stream and accompanied his production of Green Hills of Africa and Death in the

31 Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea, pp. 32-33.
Afternoon. In the course of his writing he has used occasionally other harbors and oceans, sometimes as symbols, sometimes as background, but the blue Gulf Stream has had a lasting fascination for him. It has figured importantly in two of his major works, one of his weakest and one of his best. In *The Old Man and the Sea*, it is the symbol of the world.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Hemingway has shown an acute awareness of natural environment in his major writing. From the high school stories set in the woods of northern Michigan to the allegorical *The Old Man and the Sea*, he has consistently created a sensuous atmosphere that has been rich in suggestion. Among the many natural objects that make up his fictional world of mountains, plains, and oceans, none seems more prominent or important than water; the water that runs through dozens of his rivers, that falls as portentous or disastrous rain, that fills the lakes of Michigan or Switzerland, that flows majestically in the Gulf Stream.

In his treatment of rivers, Hemingway has shown a wide variety of influences and uses. Much of his early impressions and raw materials of writing came from the streams of northern Michigan. Beside a river, the Piave in Italy, the young writer received the all-important wound that influenced his writing as much as any other single event. Rivers were also important in the journalism of young Hemingway. During the period when he was teaching himself to write he chose several effective river scenes for the terse vignettes.
As his art developed, Hemingway used rivers with more subtlety. In stories such as "Hills Like White Elephants" and "Old Man at the Bridge," he makes rivers symbols of psychological barriers. In other stories, such as "A Way You'll Never Be" and "Big Two-Hearted River," the river becomes tied to the psychic wound of the hero in a symbol either of the dark evil of the wounding, or as a safe retreat from evil.

In the novels, the most important river is probably the flooded Tagliamento, at once a tonal device used to suggest pain and evil and also a symbol of baptism that washes away the allegiance of the hero to society. Baker would say that the bridge and river in For Whom the Bell Tolls is the most important, because the bridge is a "hub" on which the fate of the world turns, and the river is to the future of the human race as the Jordan River is to the future of the Jews. The most complex symbolic use of rivers that Hemingway makes is in Across the River and into the Trees. The Rio Nuovo of Venice, the New River, symbolizes a new life in Renata after the death of the hero. There is also the symbolic river by which the experience, the suffering, of the hero is transferred to his spiritual offspring, Renata.

Hemingway also uses rain in a variety of ways. Among the important uses Hemingway makes of rain is to set tone in such vignettes as the one dealing with the shooting of the cabinet ministers, and in such stories as "My Old Man"
and "A Very Short Story." Rain is used symbolically in "Snows of Kilimanjaro." In *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway uses rain as a tonal device, but in that novel rain takes on the added weight of an omen, and finally of a symbol.

Hemingway uses the water of lakes to symbolize the erasing qualities of experience in a cruel world, and to symbolize the dividing barrier between naivety and disillusioning experience. In *A Farewell to Arms* a Swiss lake becomes a symbol of expiation that cleanses the hero, and lake water is the cleansing symbol that washes away guilt in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Oceans have likewise played a part in his writing from the beginning to the present. In an early vignette, a harbor contains dead baggage animals. Ocean waves bring a note of sadness to a young woman in "Cat in the Rain," creating a tone of monotony and disillusionment. The Gulf is the main setting for *To Have and Have Not*; it is used by Hemingway primarily to establish varying moods. In *The Old Man and the Sea*, the Gulf becomes the symbol of the world.

This study has thus disclosed a richness and depth in Hemingway's use of natural objects, especially water, to create mood and to establish larger meaning. It has added some meaning to Hemingway's simile comparing an iceberg to writing, by helping to reveal concealed meaning below the water line. It has shown Renata to be, on a figurative level, a transitional character bridging the
gap between Maria and Manolin. In developing his unique style, Hemingway has used water frequently, continually, and effectively.
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