

HUNTING AND FISHING AND HEMINGWAY

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HUNTING AND FISHING AND HEMINGWAY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Hunting and fishing made up a large part of the life of Ernest Hemingway, and these sports, in turn, frequently served as a means of communication for some of his most serious ideas.

Other sports, such as boxing, skiing, bullfighting, swimming, tennis, baseball, and football also occupied a place in his recreation. He enjoyed these activities, and, at one time or another, participated in them, but hunting and fishing were the sports in which he excelled and which he continued to pursue during his entire life. He was proudest of his ability to shoot the big kudu or to catch the giant marlin.

Hemingway engaged in hunting and fishing with such intense devotion that he seems to have developed a ritualistic, almost religious attitude toward them, and in a sense these sports took the place of formal religion in his life. From the time he was three, hunting and fishing were important family rites--the annual visits each summer to northern Michigan, the family participation in Sunday target practice, and the regular hunting and fishing done by the boy and his father together.

As a matter of fact, both hunting and fishing are sports which tend to foster a certain ritualism. Both sports require the careful selection and use of equipments: the right bait (natural or artificial), the exact spot to fish (upstream, downstream, or bend in the river), the correct technique of baiting the hook (through the middle of a minnow or the thorax of a grasshopper), the proper procedure in landing the fish (with or without a net), or the selection of a rifle or a shotgun, the size of shot, and the cleaning and oiling of the gun. The choir of attendants (the guides, the gun bearers, the porters, and the hunters) marching single file through the African jungles and the animal hunted (its habits and feeding places) all contribute to the more pronounced ritualism of the big game hunt so dear to the heart of Hemingway during his later years.

Isaak Walton, long before Hemingway, seems to have expressed this same semi-religious attitude toward fishing. To him angling was an art that required intense concentration, practice, patience, much labor, and deep love for the sport itself. Angling could be so pleasant that "it would prove to be like virtue, a reward to itself."¹ Walton said:

. . . No life is so happy and so pleasant as the life of a well-governed angler, for when the lawyer is swallowed up with business, and the

¹Isaak Walton, The Compleat Angler (Philadelphia, 1997), p. 39.

statesman is preventing or contriving plots, then we sit on cowslip banks, hear the birds sing, and possess ourselves in so much quietness as these silent silver streams. . . . God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling.²

Hemingway's exploits with gun and line made him during his lifetime a legend of masculinity--the big-game hunter and great fisherman. He enjoyed this publicity, and apparently cherished it, because he was proud of his excellent marksmanship and his skill. He did little, if anything, to direct attention from himself to his literary work. In fact, he preferred pictures of himself standing over a dead kudu or holding his hand on a big marlin rather than sitting at a typewriter.

Hemingway was, of course, just as serious about his writing as he was about shooting well or fishing with the proper technique. The same attention he devoted to hunting and fishing, he devoted to developing an individual style of writing, carrying over from his youth the same intensity of application, the same semi-religious attitude. Since he came to feel that the only art that would last was that which conveyed the feeling of reality, his main preoccupation as a writer was to describe action and emotion as clearly and as precisely as possible. He had a great passion for stating exactly the way things were--like

²Ibid., p. 114.

shooting quickly and cleanly. He wrote the best he could about the things he knew, and he certainly knew hunting and fishing as few other writers have known them.

Hemingway's ritualistic attitude toward sports definitely affected his writing habits. He arose early each morning and wrote hard until almost noon, or until he reached a stopping place. Then if he had written well, his reward was knowing that he could spend the remainder of the day engaged in his favorite sport. But when his writing had been difficult, he did not enjoy the remainder of the day very much. His careful, knowledgeable fishing inspired him to write the best that he could.

Hunting and fishing also furnished Hemingway many of his characters. Some of them were sportsmen, who hunted or fished with the same expert knowledge and skill with which Hemingway did these things. He showed disgust with his few characters who did not understand hunting or fishing, or who participated in these sports in a disinterested or dishonest manner. It was important to Hemingway that a man not only be a hunter or a fisherman, but be a good one. These sports often put his characters in positions where their courage, stamina, and cunning were put to a test and where their moral qualities underwent significant development.

Hemingway's emphasis upon hunting and fishing and other sports has brought unfavorable criticism from those whose

physical and emotional experience differs widely from his. People who do not care for the out-of-doors or sports activity fail to realize that hunting and fishing require time and careful preparation, and include more than just a casual hour or two on the bank of some creek or out in the woods somewhere. It has been hard for many very intelligent people to assess the importance and value of these activities and to understand their interrelationship with literary pursuits in the life of a man like Hemingway. Some critics dismiss outdoor activities as trivial, unimportant, and completely non-intellectual; and, therefore fail to arrive at a satisfactory interpretation of the author's meaning.

An examination of the relationship of these sports to Hemingway's life and particularly to his literary career may shed light upon what he has to say. The fact that Hemingway is almost the only truly artistic spokesman for the sportsmen of America--a vast and inarticulate fraternity--has never been thoroughly acknowledged and checked for detail. The following pages will, therefore, attempt to point out the use of particular sports material (hunting and fishing); to establish the connection between sports technique and attitudes in these sports and Hemingway's art and life; and to discover, if possible, the meanings that exist for the thoughtful reader.

CHAPTER II

HUNTING AND FISHING IN HEMINGWAY'S LIFE

If anyone ever loved the outdoors, Ernest Hemingway did. He spent nearly all his leisure hours hunting and fishing.

As a child, Hemingway was, of course, greatly influenced by his parents, and his later attitudes toward nature and art began developing quite early. On the one hand was a mother who not only lacked domestic talents, but "abhorred dummies, deficient manners, stomach upsets, house-cleaning and cooking."¹ This necessitated outside help from nurses and other servants. Mrs. Hemingway was emotionally unstable and became upset when her wishes were not granted, a frequent occurrence in the large Hemingway family. She would run to her room and tell the others that she had a sick headache.

Mrs. Hemingway had a great passion for music and felt that she had sacrificed a promising career when she married Dr. Clarence Hemingway. She was never able to overcome this feeling completely and tried to bend her children in the direction of music, hoping that one of them would become a

¹Leicester Hemingway, My Brother, Ernest Hemingway (Cleveland, 1962), p. 19.

great vocalist. She forced her son Ernest to take cello lessons for years, but because he loved the outdoors more than music, he proved to be a great disappointment to his mother. He did not tend in her direction.

On the other hand, Hemingway's father had a great passion for nature and the outdoors. As the mother did not have time for the little practical attentions a child needs, Hemingway turned to his father for affection and guidance-- just as the father wanted. He was so proud of having a son that he took Ernest fishing with him before Ernest was two years old or could say "fish."² Hemingway's father taught him not only fishing and hunting, but a certain pride in these sports. By the time the child was three years old, he had his own fishing rod and knew the names of all the fish that were caught.

Hemingway's father read to him from an illustrated natural history book. By the time the boy was five, he could give the Latin names of more than 280 North American birds. At eight, he knew the names of all the birds, all the trees, flowers, fish, and animals found in the Middle West, and many other places. He learned from his father how to dress trout and sharpen a knife until it was scalpel-keen.

²Ibid., p. 19.

Hemingway also became proficient in hunting at an early age. The family built a cottage on Mallico Lake, in northern Michigan, where they spent a part of every summer. One of the most exciting times at the lake was Sunday target practice. As the father would not allow the children to kill animals promiscuously for practice, they used clay pigeons for targets. Each child, including the girls, was allowed to shoot father's gun. Hemingway loved this excitement and the smell of burnt powder. As Dr. Hemingway was a great wing shot, Ernest became a good wing shot even before he was ten. On the boy's tenth birthday, his Grandfather Hemingway gave him a 20-gauge, single-barrel shotgun. After that, Ernest and his father went quail hunting many times on his uncle's farm near Carbondale, Illinois.

Another member of the family whom Hemingway admired was his Great-Uncle Tyley Hancock. This uncle, a great marksman, taught Ernest fly-fishing techniques that even his father did not know. Also, the stories Uncle Tyley told of his travels around the world fascinated Hemingway. The young boy began to dream of the day when he could see the wonders of the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Hemingway finally got his first taste of salt water while he was still in grade school. His mother took him and his sister, Marcolline, with her to Nantucket. The boy was so fascinated by the ocean that he could hardly wait for the

day when he could go deep-sea fishing. Writing home from Nantucket on one occasion, he boasted that he had been "feeling fine and rough and had gone out in the open ocean where the boat had shipped water grandly."³ To celebrate his experience, he bought a sword of a big swordfish to present to his father's Agassiz Society. Hemingway apparently never forgot the sensations that he experienced on these sailing occasions--the wind and the spray of the salt water on his face, the movement of the boat on the sea, and the flying fish around him.

In these formative years one can see the beginning of what has become the Hemingway legend. His desire to pose for pictures began at this time. Henceforth the family album began to fill with pictures of Hemingway posing in his fishing clothes and holding a fishing rod or a rainbow trout in his hand. His parents were proud of the young fisherman and his nature lore, and they let him know it.

Hemingway's father was also proud of his son's ability to shoot. When Ernest's luck was running well, he could reach out with a gun and bring down out of the sky birds that were more than fifty yards away. So when the pigeons needed thinning out around the barn Hemingway's father called the entire family to watch Ernest shoot. He could down twenty birds with a single box of shells.

³Ibid., p. 27.

Hemingway's mother took great delight in showing him off to her friends. She would have him recite the Latin names of the birds that he knew, and Hemingway liked the attention he was being given. In fact, he never outgrew the desire for attention. Not only was Hemingway good with a fishing rod or a gun, but he knew he was good. His proud parents took care of that.

Also at this time Hemingway began to take an interest in his physique. He wanted to become the big, strong sportsman. The only thing he liked about farm work was hay making because it developed his muscles. Before he reached high school, he had also become an excellent swimmer. He practiced hours in the school pool doing an endurance dive to develop his chest muscles. Ernest also turned his mother's music room into a boxing arena when she and his sisters were away from home. Later he took boxing lessons in Chicago to keep in shape.

Although not an early reader, Hemingway became very fond of books. As a child he preferred to make up his own stories to go with the pictures in his readers. Later in his boyhood he avidly read Richard Harding Davis, Stephen Crane, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Mark Twain--all predominantly "outdoor" artists.

As a boy, Hemingway liked to imitate Mark Twain's fictional characters. When Madelaine, his favorite sister,

was old enough, he permitted her, Tom Sawyer fashion, to help him clean fish and skin game, to carry the snakes and frogs, and to bury the fish entrails around the roots of the apple tree. As Mark Twain had learned the Mississippi, Hemingway learned hunting and fishing--by experience.

The last thing Hemingway did before he left for Europe the first time was go fishing. When he and his friends, Ted Brumback, Charlie Hopkins, and Carl Edgar, left Kansas City to join the American Red Cross Field Service overseas, they went by way of Michigan to fish for trout before going to New York.

Hemingway's memory of his boyhood experiences apparently never left him. When the war was over, the first place to which he returned was Michigan. He was "like an animal that had traveled far and returned to the place where he was raised, finding reassurance that things were as he remembered them and that this was truly the place."⁴ Hunting and fishing were important to him at this time because these sports represented that which was pleasant and enjoyable to him, activities in which he had excelled and which restored his ego. The world of men at war had changed his attitudes, but the simple natural pursuits of his childhood had remained the same. He wanted to fish and to get

⁴Ibid., p. 52.

away from those who did not understand the experiences through which he had gone--the uninitiated, in other words. It was in this environment that he hoped to overcome his bitter war experiences and find out what he wanted to do.

During this period of rehabilitation in Michigan, Hemingway refused to be influenced by his parents into settling down to a professional career. He looked forward to the seclusion he would have when they returned to Oak Park. He wanted to stay in Michigan during the fall and to hunt and fish. As he roamed afoot through the woods, the fields, and the streams, he loved the "smells of pine needles and new-mown hay, the fresh-caught trout laid in ferns, and the sound of cowbells carrying far on the calm evening air."⁵ These sights, sounds, and smells are recorded again and again in his fiction.

In the winter of 1919, Hemingway went to Toronto, where he wrote for the Weekly Star. But by the spring of 1920, he was again longing to be in northern Michigan, catching trout and shooting grouse. He wanted to be so far in the woods that he could not see one sign of man. He missed the rivers and streams and the woods and wild life of the Michigan peninsula.

On September 3, 1921, Hemingway married Miss Hadley Richardson, his first wife. He accepted an assignment with

⁵Ibid., p. 52.

the Toronto Star, and he and Hadley went to Paris. In spite of his journalistic work, he continued to heed the call of the outdoors. He and Hadley hiked many miles through the forests of Chantilly and Compiègne, observing wildlife-- deer, wild boar, foxes, and rabbits. Weeks later they went trout fishing at Montreux and fly fishing in the Rhone Valley. The same year they went on a long trip through Germany with Bill Bird of Consolidated Press and his wife, bent on fishing and getting feature material for magazines.

Hemingway and Hadley returned to Canada for the birth of their first son, John Hadley Nicanor Hemingway, born October 10, 1923. During this time, according to his brother Leicester, Hemingway was miserable:

The weather was rotten again and depressing and so was the country. He remembered that the summer before he'd been out on the Marne shooting crows and had shot a pike in the river with his .22 automatic pistol. In the fine open country of France he had shot more than twenty quail in one day with a 12-gauge double.⁶

Seemingly Hemingway was never to adjust himself to Toronto. No doubt he was too much the country boy to be pent up in the city. He returned to France as soon as Hadley was able to travel, but they did not live together much longer and were divorced in March, 1927.

In the summer of 1927 Hemingway married Pauline Pfeiffer, his second wife. When she was expecting their

⁶ibid., p. 77.

first child, they decided to settle in Key West because it was "a wonderful quiet place to work in, an inexpensive place to live in, and an easy place to relax and raise children."⁷ Together they rested and fished while he worked on A Farewell to Arms.

While at Key West, Hemingway fished off the coast of Florida season after season. He went often to Cuba to engage in sport fishing. Also, during the first four years Hemingway lived at Key West, he hunted quail in Arkansas, and each fall he went out West to the Rockies to hunt big game, such as elk, bear, and puma. Once while quail hunting with his brother, Leicester, he tried to explain how he felt about hunting. He said, "When you can drop something cleanly that is trying to get away, or catch it when it is fighting to tear loose, you get that old, primitive sensation. It is better to feel it than to analyze it."⁸ The last statement seems to have become an axiom Hemingway followed in his literary style, which attempts to make the reader feel the sensations.

From Hemingway's earliest childhood, Africa had held a particular fascination for him. This interest was probably aroused by the novel Batouala, written by a Negro, René Maran. Hemingway was impressed by the realistic description of life in an African village. Maran wrote, "You smell the

⁷Ibid., p. 100.

⁸Ibid., p. 114.

smells of the village; you eat its food; you see the white man as the black man sees him; and after you have lived in the village, you die there."⁹ After reading the book, he dreamed of making a trip to Africa and of hunting big game.

In 1933 Hemingway and Pauline went on his first African safari. This expedition lasted about five months. The impressions and experiences on this hunting trip gave Hemingway the background material for his stories, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," and for the book of non-fiction, Green Hills of Africa.

After Hemingway and Pauline returned to Key West, fishing each day became a way of life for them. He would get up early and write until noon so that he could fish the rest of the day. In commenting upon his fishing and writing, he told his brother:

Writing is damned hard work, Baron. If I get up early and really write, it gives me a feeling of reward to know you gents are down at the dock waiting to go fishing, and I will have the rest of the day out on the water with you. If I don't do so well, I know I won't enjoy the rest of the day as much either. The anticipation helps me do the best I can.¹⁰

He felt that fishing had a therapeutic value; it restored the activity of his imagination by making him focus his mind

⁹Lazar Hermann, Hemingway: A Pictorial Biography (New York, 1961), p. 94.

¹⁰Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., p. 137.

intently upon pure physical detail. This activity kept him from going stale as a writer. He said that no one could write every day without a break.

Hemingway caught some record fish during this time. He caught a sailfish that weighed 119 1/2 pounds and twenty-five years later remains the record catch for the Atlantic on rod and reel. "The mounted body is on display in the headquarters of the Miami Rod and Reel Club."¹¹ At Bimini, he caught the first big, unmitigated tuna ever taken there, some of them weighing from 514 to 610 pounds.

While Hemingway was making his record catches, he was challenged one evening on the dock by a man who questioned his catches and accused him of faking the pictures that he had taken of his fish. This was quite a blow to his ego. A fight ensued between them. Hemingway later learned that his antagonist was Joseph Knapp, owner and publisher of Collier's, Woman's Home Companion, and The American. After this encounter, Hemingway talked with Mike Lerner and others about the formation of an official group to verify and keep game-fish records.

This idea of record-keeping perhaps reveals a little of the Hemingway legend--the big fisherman. Hemingway had already taken ichthyologists from the Philadelphia Academy of Science out to study the habits of marlin in the Gulf

¹¹Ibid., p. 151.

Stream. And one species of fish, the Neo-Marinthe Hemingwayi, had been named after him.

In 1946 Hemingway married his fourth wife, Mary Welsh. He described her as "a fisherwoman, fair wing shot, strong swimmer, good cook, good judge of wine, and an excellent gardener."¹² These characteristics seem to fit all of his wives, who were outdoor types. Mary said, "Of all the gifts Ernest has given me since I stopped working in offices in London and Paris in 1945 and moved to Cuba to be his wife, probably the best was the opportunity to live outdoors."¹³ It would be hard to picture Hemingway married to a socialite.

In August 1953 Hemingway and Mary went to Africa. His favorite camp on safari was near Mt. Kilimanjaro (the setting for one of his stories). On one side was a beautiful, grassy plain dotted with trees through which a little stream ran. On the other side was the mountain. Here he shot his first lion. Also at the foot of Kilimanjaro, Mary bagged a lion, the head of which now hangs in her present apartment in New York.

Even after two plane crashes and serious injuries, Hemingway described the six months on this African trip as

¹²"A Visit with Hemingway," (author not given), Look, XX (Sept. 4, 1956), 23.

¹³Mary Hemingway, "A Sentimental Safari," Life, LIV (April 19, 1963), p. 92.

the happiest days of his life. Mary was also poetic in her enthusiasm when she wrote:

Safari living was for us a luxury more desirable than diamonds--fresh air, no phones, no time brackets chopping one's days into dull, dutiful segments. There was always the excitement of never knowing what the new day would bring.¹⁴

Hemingway's love of nature has been compared with that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who believed that all nature was divine and good. Rousseau considered himself a lover of nature, and he roamed the fields in the early morning to see the sunrise.¹⁵ Hemingway's attachment was closer and more realistic. He said that he had not missed a sunrise for fifty years, but he at this time of day was usually engaged in some activity, such as writing or a hunting or fishing trip--not merely strolling through the fields emoting.

In an important statement which perhaps reveals more of his attitude and personality than he intended, Hemingway told Scribner, "Shooting gives me a good feeling; a lot of it is being together and friendly instead of feeling you are in some place where everybody hates you and wishes you ill. It is faster than baseball, and you are out on one strike."¹⁶

¹⁴Helen Markel, "A Look Back, A Look Ahead," Good Housekeeping, CLVI (February, 1963), 36.

¹⁵John Charpentier, Rousseau the Child of Nature (London, 1931), pp. 57-60.

¹⁶Lillian Ross, Portrait of Hemingway (New York, 1961), p. 31.

Hemingway wanted to excel in writing even more than in hunting and fishing, but he resented the attacks of literary critics even more than he did the attacks on his fishing record. The great difficulty, however, was that he could measure the horns of his animal or weigh his fish, but he could not measure his literary achievement, not even by success or money, and he knew it. Unfavorable criticism, therefore, seemed to disturb him unduly and to give him a feeling of insecurity which made him long for definiteness and measurability of sports achievement.

Sometime it is difficult to determine whether Hemingway was posing and calculatingly building onto the legend about himself or whether he was simply and naturally moved by his love for shooting. One day while he and Lillian Ross were walking down Fifth Avenue, a flock of pigeons flew by. Lillian described his actions as follows:

Hemingway stopped, looked up, and aimed an imaginary rifle at them. He pulled the trigger and then looked disappointed. He said, "Very difficult shot." Then he turned quickly and pretended to shoot again, and said, "Easy shot." Then he said, "Look!" and pointed to a spot on the pavement.¹⁷

A hostile critic might see nothing more than adolescent bragging in this incident, yet there is a spontaneous quality about it which gives it a certain charm and authenticity of feeling.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 49.

In another incident of somewhat the same type, Hemingway's behavior seems a little gratuitous. Trying on a new coat, Hemingway studied himself in the mirror, then raised his arms as though he were aiming a rifle. When the clerk asked him if he was going to use it for shooting, he grunted and said he would take it.

Once when Hemingway was offered a cigarette, he refused it because he felt that smoking ruined his sense of smell, a sense he found important and enjoyable in hunting. He said, "Cigarettes smell so awful to you when you have a nose that can truly smell."¹⁸ Then he enumerated many of the animals that he could truly smell.

Those who engage in only one sport sometimes fail to see the excitement and pleasure that can be derived from other sports activity. A friend once told Hemingway that all hunting except elephant hunting was dull; that in order for a sport to be exciting there had to be great danger in it. Hemingway decided to publish a defense of his own position that all fishing and hunting carry an element of excitement comparable to the thrill of elephant hunting, and "On the Blue Waters" appeared in Esquire.

In this article Hemingway's description of the ocean--the last wild country left--reveals somewhat the degree of

¹⁸Ibid., p. 27.

pleasure which he experienced as he fished on the open seas.

He wrote:

There is a feeling of excitement when a fish takes the bait because one does not know whether it is a marlin, swordfish, or some other great fish. . . . The excitement comes from the fact they are strange, wild things of unbelievable speed, power, and beauty. Fight them like a wild horse. The fun is when you are fighting them. The pleasure is being on the sea, in the unknown wilderness of great fish and the satisfaction of conquering this thing which rules the sea it lives in.¹⁹

Perhaps Hemingway did not want to be outdone by his friend, who had probably shot more elephants than Hemingway had.

In 1955 Hemingway worked with Spencer Tracy in Cuba, making a film of The Old Man and the Sea. Together they fished for days off the coast of Peru, trying to catch a giant marlin to be used in the film. Some of the fish caught measured over fourteen feet, but these were not large enough. It finally became necessary to resort to Hollywood magic to obtain the desired effect of size, and Hemingway was disappointed and depressed. Life had refused again to measure up to his idealistic expectations.

Hemingway had a tremendous respect for physical courage. His brother said, "During his lifetime he traded in it, developed it, and taught other people a great deal about it. And his own courage never deserted him. What finally

¹⁹Ernest Hemingway, "On the Blue Waters," Esquire, V (April, 1936), 31.

failed him was his body."²⁰ Perhaps he was hunting himself, and the shot he fired at himself he fired as a hunter. It is consoling to think that maybe he finally saw himself in the clear morning sunlight of the Idaho Rockies.

Even the scene of Hemingway's death was one close to nature--away from the large cities and the crowds. His house, just outside of Ketchum, Idaho, was located close to the Wood River, which ran trout-cold down one of the foothills of the Rockies. The time of his death, July 2, 1961, was when everything was at its greenest--almost haying time down in the valley.

His brother wrote that on the morning of the funeral, there was a smell of sage in the cool air, the river gurgled over the pebbled bed, and fish darted out of the shadows to feed.

Hemingway was buried in a little cemetery on a gentle slope where he had looked down into the valley so many times. His grave was beside that of Taylor Williams, an old hunting friend. For years Taylor, called "Beartracks," had been a shooting instructor at Sun Valley. He had died two years before, and Hemingway had been a pallbearer at his funeral.

Thus Hemingway, the sportsman and writer, had returned to die--close to the mountains, the streams, and the fish in

²⁰Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., p. 256.

the great outdoors that he loved. Whether the following verse is over Hemingway's grave or not, it applies to Hemingway as much as it does to the man who wrote it, a man whom he had admired from childhood.

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.²¹

²¹Robert Louis Stevenson, "Requiem," A Treasury of Great Poems, edited by Louis Untermeyer (New York, 1955), p. 991.

CHAPTER III

HUNTING AND FISHING IN HEMINGWAY'S SHORT STORIES

Hemingway's short stories are published in five volumes: In Our Time (1925), Men Without Women (1927), Winner Take Nothing (1933), The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories (1938), and The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (1938). Out of his more than fifty short stories, fourteen deal with hunting and fishing either directly or indirectly. Although this number is not proportionately ^{as} ^{relation} ^{to} ^{the} ^{whole} large, some of these stories are the best and the most popular and the longest.

For the purposes of this study Hemingway's short fiction about hunting and fishing can easily be divided into three groups. First come the Nick Adams stories: "Indian Camp," "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," "The End of Something," "The Three Day Blow," "Now I Lay Me," "Big Two-Hearted River," and "Fathers and Sons." Most of these appear in In Our Time. Next, there are the stories written from Hemingway's experiences on his African safari. "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" were first published in book form in The First Forty-Nine Stories. The third group consists of stories not specifically related to hunting and fishing but

containing some casual mention of these sports. "Up in Michigan," "Out of Season," "Ten Indians," "A Day's Wait," and "Wine of Wyoming" appear also in the collection entitled The First Forty-Nine Stories.

The main interest of Hemingway's first major work, a collection of stories and sketches entitled In Our Time, lies in the random development of Nick Adams from adolescence to manhood. Nick is exposed to violence and pain, but makes an apparent escape into the memories and experiences of his childhood, especially those relating to hunting and fishing. An interesting feature of the book is the short inter-chapters or vignettes--reminiscences from the war and bullfighting that alternate with the longer narratives. These short sketches seem unrelated to the adjacent material, but they do connect with each other and form a necessary background for the stories themselves. Through these little inter-chapters Hemingway reveals something of his attitude toward war and life, especially as this attitude has been conditioned by his early love of hunting and fishing.

Hemingway's youthful activities in hunting and his association of precision shooting with the out-of-doors--fresh air, peace, natural beauty, freedom, and life--gave him a good feeling. His concentration upon the techniques of killing birds and animals cleanly and efficiently was almost comparable to observance of a religious rite or

ceremony. There is no record of his ever experiencing remorse for killing an animal or bird, or of his ever having put himself imaginatively in his quarry's place. But when he applied (or saw applied) this "good," sacred shooting skill to the murder of man, he must have suffered a curious revulsion--a traumatic shock perhaps deeper than his physical wounds. His total disillusionment with the war had much to do with both his physical wounds and his psychic conflict.

Evidence to support this supposition may be found in Hemingway's intense rendition of the coolness with which he and his comrades used their precision skill to take pot-shots at human targets as if they were clay pigeons. The terseness of his prose suggests the subsurface tension particularly in the third, fifth, and eighth vignettes:

We were in a garden in Mons. Young Buckley came in with his patrol from across the river. The first German I saw climbed up over the garden wall. We waited till he got one leg over and then potted him. He had so much equipment on and looked awfully surprised and fell down into the garden. Then three more came over further down the wall. We shot them. They came just like that.

They shot the six cabinet ministers at half-past six in the morning against the wall of the hospital.

Boyle [policeman] shot one [Hungarian] off the seat of the wagon and one out of the wagonbox.¹

¹Ernest Hemingway, In Our Time (New York, 1925); the vignettes are not numbered. The third inter-chapter follows page 31; the fifth, page 61; the eighth, page 101.

It is what Hemingway does not say that proves him to be painfully aware of the end result of all his joyous, youthful hunting experiences. There is the peace, the freshness of the Michigan woods, the "good" feeling? The memory of what has been lost seeps through almost every line of In Our Time and imparts the pervasive but unmistakable bitterness which flavors the book.

Would Hemingway have been better prepared for war if he had been taught by his father to regard the feelings of the hunted? Perhaps not. And yet sensitivity is a quality which interests Hemingway as a writer. A doctor might naturally be expected to be a bit callous to death, or if not callous, at least quite sensible rather than sensitive about it. As a curious matter of fact, "Indian Camp" is concerned with this very quality in Nick Adams' father--- seeming indifference to pain and death.

In Our Time is, then, a reassessment, from a mature viewpoint, of a boyhood and adolescent experience, with hunting and fishing as a kind of matrix for the change. In this sense, many of Hemingway's stories and novels show that his disillusionment and bitterness with war derive from his early attitude toward hunting and fishing as activities which produced physical and moral good feeling.

The conflict between the essential "goodness" or rightness of killing birds and animals and the essential

'badness' of killing men in war (or out) may have also led Hemingway to a particular interest in killing in the bull ring, where there is also such elaborate ritual as he associated with the hunt, the semi-sacred attitude of spectators and participants alike, the precision and physical skill of the performers, and perhaps above all the definite possibility of the animal's vanquishing his would-be killer. The stories about bullfighting are, however, beyond the scope of this study.

Among the stories of Nick Adams, only the "Big Two-Hearted River" deals directly with hunting and fishing, but this story has long been considered the best of In Our Time and a minor masterpiece of American literature. Here Hemingway's emotional and psychological tensions are suggested, and here he shows his impressive knowledge of the techniques and details of a sport he loved.

In "Big Two-Hearted River" Hemingway omits all mention of the war, of the people Nick has met, and of the places he has visited in the recent past. After the Armistice, Nick, still suffering from his physical and mental wounds, returns to his home in Michigan. He feels that this is the good place "because of its association with a certain part of his past--fishing, the river, and the woods--which have not been excised from his life as he is trying to do with

all the rest."² As Nick steps off the train, he sees a burned-over country. The town is gone, and there is nothing but charred stumps and black grasshoppers--symbolizing the wasteland he is trying to leave behind. But the river is still there, and to Nick this is the important thing.

Nick's return to the river is no ordinary fishing trip. Stewart Sanderson says, "It is a kind of therapy for a wounded man who has come to the good place in which to heal his wounds."³ Nick comes alone for one purpose-- to fish, to immerse himself so completely in the physical sensations and details of his fishing that there will be no need to think."⁴ He associates the act of fishing with some deep, inward fulfillment. It has been a long time since he has looked into a stream and seen trout, and he wonders if he will experience the same old sensations of the past. When the kingfisher darts upstream and a big trout shoots out of the water, Nick's heart jumps and he gets the old feeling. He knows then that everything is all right.

In order to lose himself completely in the physical sensations of fishing, Nick does everything slowly and

²Melvin Backman, "Hemingway: The Matador and the Crucified," Modern Fiction Studies, I (August, 1955), 2-3.

³Stewart Sanderson, Ernest Hemingway (New York, 1961), p. 33.

⁴Backman, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

accurately, giving himself time to savor his sensations and emotions. Malcolm Cowley says, "Nick pays so much attention to the meaning and rightness of each gesture that his life alone in the wilderness becomes a succession of little ceremonies."⁵ The meticulous way in which Nick makes camp-- setting up the tent (pegs, ropes, and canvas), building the fire (pine chips and wire grill), cooking supper (beans, spaghetti, and coffee), and the threading of the reel (line and leaders)--tends to become a ceremonial incantation to drive away fears and anxieties. Even the grasshopper he puts on his hook seems to play its part in the ritual:

Another hopper poked his head out of the bottle. His antennae wavered. He was getting his front legs out of the bottle to jump. Nick took him by the head and held him while he threaded the slim hook under his chin, down through his thorax and into the last segments of his abdomen. The grasshopper took hold of the hook with his front feet, spitting tobacco juice on it. Nick dropped him into the water.⁶

Then Nick, like the grasshopper spits on the hook for luck-- probably as a primitive gesture to banish evil spirits.

Nick is an amateur fisherman, but he feels happy because he knows how to fish with expertness. His mastery gives him a sense of security. Like any dedicated

⁵ Malcolm Cowley, "Hemingway at Midnight," New Republic, CXI (August 14, 1944), 193.

⁶ Ernest Hemingway, "Big Two-Hearted River," In Our Time, p. 200. 148

fisherman, he desires to catch the big fish. When he loses a large trout, the excitement has been so great that he feels sick and has to sit down until his disappointment abates. He fishes the river all day until it narrows and goes into the swamp. He knows that swamp fishing is dangerous, and he does not want to go into it yet. The swamp is the "bad place" for him and represents symbolically the terror and complexity of the world that he does not understand. Nick, like Hemingway when he first returned from war, wants to keep his life as simple as possible at this time. Sanderson says, "He knows that one day he will conquer his neuroses, but it will take time and courage and a supreme effort of will."⁷ The story ends with Nick returning to camp encouraged, but thinking that there would be plenty of days ahead when he could fish the swamp.

In "Indian Camp," the first story of In Our Time, Nick Adams is introduced to violence and acute human suffering for the first time. Nick goes with his doctor father to an Indian camp where his father performs a Caesarean operation on a screaming woman without any anesthetic. Then Nick sees the Indian father with his throat cut from ear to ear. Nick becomes so upset by these bloody scenes that he begins to think of his own death. He escapes from this scene of

⁷Sanderson, op. cit., p. 34.

violence into a place of safety--a familiar sphere of physical activity, a fishing excursion with his father. While Nick is sitting in the boat with his father, he loses his sick fear and feels "quite sure that he will never die."⁸ Fishing with his father many times, he feels secure, and the story ends on this note.

In the next story, "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," Nick is not exposed to violence but to a perplexing problem that complicates his young life as much as his earlier brush with human suffering. Dick Boulton, a workman, tries to pick a fight with Doctor Adams in order to avoid working off a large bill due the doctor. The doctor refuses to fight, and Nick's mother, who is a Christian Scientist, will not believe that Dick would act in such a way. This incident convinces Nick that he is completely dissatisfied with his mother because she refuses to admit the existence of evil. In his mind, he sides with his father. The doctor tells Nick that his mother wants to see him, but Nick prefers to go hunting with his father instead. The doctor says, "All right. Come on, then,"⁹ and they go squirrel hunting, leaving the doctor's wife to her Scriptures. Here again the

⁸Ernest Hemingway, "Indian Camp," In Our Time, p. 21.

⁹Ernest Hemingway, "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," In Our Time, p. 31.

protagonist solves a troublesome problem in human relations by betaking himself to nature and sports activity.

In "The End of Something" Nick is confronted with another adolescent problem--something has gone wrong with his love affair. He tells Marjorie, "I feel as though everything has gone to hell inside of me."¹⁰ He takes her trolling for trout and demonstrates his knowledge of fish and fishing before he finally gets her to leave. There appears to be some emotional therapy in this fishing excursion.

"The Three Day Blow" reveals, among other things, how Nick feels about the end of his affair with Marjorie. Nick knows that Marjorie is not in the same class either financially or socially with a doctor's son, but basically he does not enjoy being a snob. He has shared his fishing knowledge with Marjorie, and now it is difficult for him to sever this seemingly pleasant relationship. He tries to find excuses for himself and for the girl in a typical adolescent conversation about sports, drinking, women, and literature. It is interesting to note how often the subject of fishing enters into their conversation. Bill and Nick finally decide to drink a toast to fishing. The story ends with the boys taking their shotguns and going through the

¹⁰ Ernest Hemingway, "The End of Something," In Our Time, p. 40.

meadow to meet Bill's father, who has been out hunting. Once outdoors with the wind blowing in his face and his gun on his arm, Nick no longer sees his affair with Marjorie as very tragic or even important.

In "Now I Lay Me" Nick has been to war--another world of guns and precision shooting, with mud, cold, dirt, boredom, and despair instead of cool, green woods and limpid waters. Nick is wounded psychically as well as physically. Plagued by insomnia, he cannot sleep without a light in his room. He discovers that he is living in a sick world which he cannot understand. At his age there is only one escape left for him--back into the pleasant memories of his childhood, especially the happy hours spent fishing in the cool streams of the country he had roamed. In this place, he feels that he can regain the faith he once had in the essential goodness of his skill in sports. At the front he carefully calls up old images--grandfather, parents, new house, and most of all, fishing. He says:

I had different ways of occupying myself while I lay awake. I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy, and fished its whole length very carefully in my mind; fishing very carefully under all the logs, all the turns of the bank, the deep holes and the clear shallow stretches, sometimes catching trout and sometimes losing them.¹¹

¹¹Ernest Hemingway, "Now I Lay Me," The Fifth Column & the First Forty-Nine Stories (New York, 1938), p. 461.

Mentally, Nick experiences the same excitement of fishing that he felt as a boy in Michigan, and he is able momentarily to expunge from his mind the boredom and horror of war.

When John, Nick's soldier friend, tells him that marriage is the best solution to his problem of worrying and insomnia, Nick attempts to think about girls. Nick says:

I had a new thing to think about and I lay in the dark with my eyes open and thought of all the girls I had ever known and what kind of wives they would make. It was a very interesting thing to think about and for a while it killed off trout-fishing and interfered with my prayers. Finally, though, I went back to trout-fishing, because I found that I could remember all the streams and there was always something new about them, while the girls, after I had thought about them a few times, blurred and I could not call them into my mind and finally they all blurred and all became rather the same and I gave up thinking about them almost altogether.¹²

At this time, the subject of girls and marriage seems to be too complicated, and Nick does not try to think about them for long. It is interesting to note, too, that Nick does not attempt to re-live the happy hours of hunting with his father; he has had enough of shooting in the war. So he recalls his fishing experiences; in them he finds security and peace of mind.

In "Fathers and Sons" Nick is thirty-eight years old and is the father of a young son. As Nick drives through quail country with his son asleep on the seat beside him, he begins to think of his own father. Nick is grateful to

¹²Ibid., p. 461.

his father for two things, fishing and shooting, and he is glad it has been that way. He thinks, 'Someone has to give you your first gun, or the opportunity to get it and use it, and you have to live where there is game or fish if you are to learn about them. . . .'¹³ As he meditates on these matters, he tries to forget the unpleasant incidents that apparently caused his father to take his life. But at this time of the year (fall) it is hard for Nick to dismiss his father entirely from his mind because

His father came back to him in the fall of the year, or in the early spring when there had been jacksnipe on the prairie, or when he saw shocks of corn, or when he saw a lake, or when he saw a horse and buggy, or when he saw, or heard, wild geese, or in a duck blind; remembering the time an eagle dropped through the whirling snow to strike a canvas-covered decoy, rising, his wings beating, the talons caught in the canvas.¹⁴

The predominant image of his father is always the fisherman or hunter--not the white-coated doctor.

In the course of the story, Nick re-evaluates his childhood in its relation to his father and hunting and fishing. His young son's questions help him realize how difficult it is for a father to give a child satisfactory answers about sex or life or death. He himself finds it is easier to talk about shooting. When the boy asks Nick to

¹³Ernest Hemingway, The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (The Modern Library, 1938), p. 588.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 594.

describe his grandfather, Nick tells him that he was a great hunter and fisherman. He says nothing about his being a doctor. To Nick, sports activity seems more important than the medical profession, of which his father was a member. The story ends with Nick promising his son that he will take him to the tomb of his grandfather. One feels that Nick is at last beginning to understand his parents, even though his mind is by no means free of the strong impressions of his immaturity.

The Nick Adams stories are clearly autobiographical. Both Hemingway and Nick spend their boyhoods in Michigan; both have doctor fathers who teach them hunting and fishing; both are injured in the war and return to the woods and streams to recuperate from their injuries; both of their fathers commit suicide; and finally both of them are writers. Neither Hemingway nor Nick ever loses his passion for hunting and fishing and writing.

"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," his best hunting stories, were written from knowledge and experience Hemingway acquired on his first African safari in 1933. In fact, the safari was a new hunting experience for him. He had shot grouse in northern Michigan, quail in Arkansas, ducks in Idaho, elk and antelope in the northern Rockies, but on safari Hemingway sought animals, dangerous and not unlikely to attack the

hunter. He experienced the fear and excitement of looking up and seeing an angry, wounded buffalo charging down upon him. Perhaps for the first time as a hunter his physical courage was tested, forcing him to rely upon his expert marksmanship to save his life exactly as he had in war.

Conditioned by his early love for hunting and fishing, Hemingway had little patience with the wealthy sportsmen and their wives who came to Africa on safari for the sole purpose of adding their names to the social column in their hometown newspapers. He admired those hunters who lived by the sportsman's code and were not afraid to face dangerous animals.

In "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," Hemingway introduces Macomber as a wealthy American sportsman "who was good at court games and had a number of big-game records, and who had just shown himself very publicly to be a coward."¹⁵ Macomber disgraces himself before his wife, his British white guide, and his gunbearers by running from a wounded and charging lion. He loses his self-respect and experiences mental anguish as he realizes the stupidity of his actions. Then Margot, Macomber's wife, held to him only by financial considerations, revels in her domination over him. She, in turn, humiliates her husband

¹⁵ Ernest Hemingways, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 103.

in front of Wilson, who sees her as the rich American "bitch" she is. He thinks, "They are the hardest in the world, the hardest, the cruellest, the most predatory and the most attractive, and their men have suffered or gone to pieces nervously as they have hardened."¹⁶ Margot's final humiliation of Macomber comes when she sleeps with Wilson. She knows her husband is a coward and her action in openly having sexual relations with another man is her scornful repudiation and punishment of Macomber.

Macomber has been living long in a world of wealth and women, containing more predatory prey than the African veldt; consequently, not until he faces the wounded lion is he aware that he has lost his moral courage. He is so frightened that he breaks all the rules of the sportsman's code. He wants to shoot from the car; then in panic, he gut-shoots the lion and is afraid to go into the tall grass to finish the kill; he suggests sending in the African beaters; and when the lion charges, he runs like a scared rabbit. Wilson, Margot, and the reader see Macomber as the weak, cowardly playboy he is.

Hemingway's admiration for the professional big-game hunter appears in Wilson's relations with the Maccombers. Wilson does not enjoy hunting with amateur socialites like

¹⁶Ibid., p. 107.

Macomber, but he makes his living with all kinds of people, satisfying their foolish desires. He has his own standards about shooting and killing, and everyone has to follow them when hunting with him. He admires precision shooting and shows great disgust when Macomber gut-shoots the lion. When Macomber suggests that they forget the wounded lion, Wilson suddenly feels "as though he had opened the wrong door in a hotel and seen something shameful."¹⁷ Leaving a wounded animal is an unpardonable sin in the code of a true hunter.

Macomber, after his first day on safari, realizes that as a sportsman he knows

. . . about motor cars, about duck-shooting, about fishing, trout, salmon and big-sea, about sex in books, many books, too many books, about all court games, about dogs, not much about horses, about hanging on to his money, about most of the other things his world dealt in and about his wife not leaving him.¹⁸

But not until this fiasco--the crisis in his life--is he aware that one does not learn safari by reading about it in a book. Perhaps Macomber is somewhat like the critics who have difficulty understanding or appreciating the amount of physical activity in Hemingway's outdoor stories because those people themselves often have never engaged in such sports activities but have only read about them.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 120.

Macomber, however, is willing to test his courage again. During the second day's shooting, he suddenly loses his fear. When the buffalo, like the lion of the preceding day, is wounded, takes cover, and charges without warning, Macomber does not run but stands solid and shoots until the animal is practically upon him. He feels fearless and happy in his new-found self-confidence and courage, but his happy life is short-lived; for his wife, presumably shooting at the buffalo, too, puts a bullet through his head. Wilson explains the change that came over Macomber when he says:

It had taken a strange chance of hunting, a sudden precipitation into action without opportunity for worrying beforehand to bring this about with Macomber. . . . He'd seen it in the war work the same way. More of a change than any loss of virginity. Fear gone like an operation. Something else grew in its place. . . .¹⁹

It is ironic that Macomber loses his life just as he finds his soul. But he does find it, and this is the important thing.

"The Snows of Kilimanjaro," like "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," takes place on the plains of Tanganyika in Africa. It is the story of the final afternoon and evening in the life of a writer named Harry, dying of gangrene in the leg and waiting for a plane to fly him to a hospital in Nairobi. Harry has been possessed for years with curiosity about death, and now that it is on him, he

¹⁹Ibid., p. 132.

feels "a great tiredness and anger that this was the end of it."²⁰ Born to be a professional writer, he "had chosen to make his living with something else instead of pen or a pencil."²¹ Now he is dying before he can write all the stories that he should have written. Possible Hemingway's own brush with death when he suffered from amoebic dysentery on his first safari and his flight over the snow-capped mountain of Kilimanjaro to Nairobi for treatment provided the origin for this story. At least Hemingway had plenty of time to reflect upon his own death before his literary work was completed. In this story Hemingway uses the hunting trip to allegorize the whole plight and meaning of an artist's life.

Harry, quite significantly, returns to Africa (as Nick had returned to Michigan) because it represents the "good" life he had enjoyed before he married a rich woman who detested men who worked. Here he wants to start all over again as a writer and hopes "that in some way he can work the fat off his soul the way a fighter goes into the mountain to work and train in order to burn it out of his body."²² But before Harry has the opportunity to write or to hunt, he scratches his knee on a thorn as he is trying

²⁰Ernest Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 152.

²¹Ibid., p. 158

²²Ibid.

to photograph a herd of waterbuck. He neglects to treat his wound properly and gangrene sets in.

Harry, the hunter, has come to a proper place to die. As he looks across the plain to the edge of the brush, he sees

. . . a few Tommies that showed minute and white against the yellow and, far off, he saw a herd of zebra, white against the green of the bush. This was a pleasant camp under big trees against a hill, with good water, and close by a nearby dry water hole, where sand grouse flighted in the morning.²³

This is all marvelous as long as he can keep from thinking, but as Harry turns from the Tommies and herd of zebra, he observes three big vultures squatted obscenely nearby, while a dozen more fly overhead. They seem to smell his gangrenous leg--a reminder of his impending death.

Wounded and dying, Harry is unable to immerse himself so completely in sports activity as Nick did: he cannot forget his wasted talent. Confronted with the truth about himself, he is forced to meditate upon his problem as he lies upon his cot in the shade of a mimosa tree. Although Harry has no one to blame but himself for his misused literary life, he turns his anger upon his wife. He thinks, "She shot very well this good, this rich bitch, this kindly caretaker and destroyer of his talent."²⁴ But he knows that

²³Ibid., p. 151.

²⁴Ibid., p. 158.

he himself has destroyed his talent by not using it, by trading it for security and comfort.²⁵

Harry tries to console himself with the idea that he is only a spy in the country of the very rich, and that he will leave them as soon as he has written about them. But he knows that he will never write about any of them because to him the rich are too dull and repetitious. Harry, like Hemingway, fails to see anything glamorous about the wealthy, and he even scorns those with whom he eats, drinks, and hunts. There is only one escape for Harry at this time-- back into the memory of the "good" life he had lived before he met his rich wife.

In the flashbacks, Harry relives all the stories that he has not written--those he will carry to the grave with him. In many of them he is in high altitudes and snow. Probably the snow suggests relief for his fevered body. The "good" life that Harry has lived contains war, sex, skiing, hunting, fishing, drinking, and ranching--these are the backgrounds for stories he never wrote. Not one time does he go back into the world of the dull rich--this is the life that has destroyed him physically, morally, and artistically.

As the stinking hyena makes a noise outside Harry's tent, he feels death upon him and imaginatively experiences

²⁵Hemingway, like Harry, struggled against the temptation not to work, and for seven years he did hardly any writing, spending his time hunting and fishing.

his escape. Harry thinks it is morning and the rescue plane has come to carry him to Nairobi. As they take off, Harry looks down and sees the animals, the forests, and the plain, symbolizing the predatory world in which he has lived too long. This is his last earthly look at the things about which he failed to write: the plane by-passes Arusha and does not stop to refuel.

When the plane comes out of a rain-squall, Harry sees the square, snow-covered top of Kilimanjaro, wide as all the world, and he knows that there is where he is going. Perhaps Harry sees the mountain as a symbol of his immortality as a writer. At least the mountain is permanent, and all that is permanent about man is his art. Close to the western summit is the dried and frozen carcass of a leopard. Golden says, "The leopard is a symbol of the literary artist Harry might have been."²⁶ The force that drove the leopard up the mountain is comparable to the inspiration that compels an artist to write the best that he can in spite of the allurements of the world and the weaknesses in his own nature that tend to defeat him. It is tragic that Harry lacked the courage to reject his life of ease in time to save his artistic gifts. The story ends with Helen, Harry's wife, waking in the middle of the night down on the plains

²⁶Taylor J. Golden, "Hemingway on the Flesh and the Spirit," Western Humanities Review, XV (Summer, 1961), 275.

of Africa, and calling to a husband who does not answer.

"Up in Michigan," "Ten Indians," "A Day's Wait," "Wine of Wyoming," and 'Out of Season' are not hunting and fishing stories, but these sports activities are mentioned in them. It is interesting to note that the background for these stories are places where Hemingway either hunted or fished during his lifetime. His protagonists are men and women who, like himself, engaged in hunting and fishing during their leisure hours.

In "Up in Michigan" Jim Gilmore, a blacksmith, goes fishing in the spring and summer, and deer hunting in the fall. In "Ten Indians" Nick's doctor father goes fishing instead of attending a Fourth of July celebration with his son. The father in "A Day's Wait" shoots quail and enjoys the cool crisp autumn air on his day off. In "Wine of Wyoming" the setting is a sportsman's paradise--trout streams to fish, and muskrats, jack rabbits, prairie dogs, prairie-chicken, and grouse to shoot. These stories describe the "good" life that Hemingway found only in the great outdoors away from crowded cities and sordid society.

"Out of Season" is one of the few stories in which Hemingway depicts a fisherman who is not dedicated to the sport. It is the story of a man and his wife who set out to fish an Alpine stream. They come to a place where fishing

is forbidden, hire a drunken guide, and ruin the entire day by forgetting to bring lead for the lines. The man is actually relieved when he realizes that he will be unable to fish. Against this background and through the action and dialogue, the tension between the man and his wife is realized. Their problem is never stated, but one is aware that it is the people who are "out of season." Poor fishing is equated, oddly enough, with poor human relations.

A careful look at the out-of-doors characters in these short stories of hunting and fishing reveals that many of them are about people with painful memories or under physical and emotional pressures which they attempt to relieve. These heroes are usually too egocentric to understand their experiences or the people around them. They seemingly prefer to withdraw into a simple world of physical activity, such as hunting and fishing, observing or practicing certain private rituals that tend to drive away their fears and anxieties temporarily and give them a feeling of courage and security. In this environment it is not necessary or important to understand the feelings of dumb brutes, but it is important to shoot quickly and cleanly or cast a rod correctly. Students of Hemingway soon become aware of this fact. Colvert says, "To the Hemingway hero dedicated to the search of values in the life of

action--often violent action--skill, knowledge, and courage are the primary essentials."²⁷

In Hemingway's earlier story, "The Big Two-Hearted River," Nick, disillusioned by the war, is able to immerse himself so completely in the physical sensations and details of his fishing that he does not have to think. He is able to excise from his mind temporarily his bitter experiences and the complexities of the world that he does not understand. But this is not true of Hemingway's later heroes, Macomber in "The Short Happy Life" and Harry in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." They are unable to forget their problems by participation in sports activity. In fact, they are forced to face the truth about themselves--one a coward and the other a writer who has destroyed his talents by not using them. Oddly enough, it took an African safari to free them from the world that had destroyed them--wealth and women. Thus all of these short stories are a reassessment of the protagonists' experiences with hunting and fishing as a kind of matrix for the change.

²⁷James B. Colvert, "Ernest Hemingway's Morality in Action," American Literature, XXVII (November, 1955), 378.

CHAPTER IV

HUNTING AND FISHING IN HEMINGWAY'S NOVELS

In 1926 Hemingway published his first real novel, The Sun Also Rises, which became a best seller and launched Hemingway's reputation as a novelist at this time. Then followed Farewell to Arms (1929), To Have and Have Not (1937), For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940), Across the River and into the Trees (1950), and The Old Man and the Sea (1952), the only one of these novels dealing directly with hunting and fishing. It is interesting to note, however, that The Old Man and the Sea is considered by many authorities to be Hemingway's best novel, winning the Pulitzer Prize for him in 1952 and being perhaps responsible for his receiving the Nobel Prize in 1954.

The themes in Hemingway's novels are not made manifest by hunting or fishing, as in The Old Man and the Sea and in his most admired and best-written short stories; yet these activities do appear significantly in all of the longer works. Hemingway repeatedly describes the sea, the lakes, the mountains, the trout streams, the birds, the animals, and the "good" feeling associated with the great out-of-doors that he loved. Careful use of detail seems to invite the reader to inquire why the hero engages in hunting or

fishing and to learn the relationship of these endeavors to the life depicted in the book. There does not appear in the novels the tone of blank despair found in such a piece as "The Big Two-Hearted River," where the lack of other human beings and the omission of Nick Adams' past seem to create a strange impression of doom and resignation.

Hemingway's novels usually deal with the same particular problem: man's struggle for a decent existence in the face of violence, death, and the intricacy of life. In such a struggle man must have something to fall back upon in order to preserve his inner freedom, to obtain strength to check the course of violence, and to have courage to overcome the fear of death and the fear of life. His heroes seek an assertion of life in communion with nature and in sports activity, particularly hunting and fishing. These activities symbolize "home" or the "good place" and represent the things the hero knows and understands, thus giving him strength to face the unknown intelligently and courageously.

The Sun Also Rises

Probably the favorite theme of many major writers of the post-World War I period was the upheaval in moral values and the death of love.¹ Contrary to some critics, Hemingway,

¹Mark Spilka, "The Death of Love," in The Sun Also Rises, from Ernest Hemingway: Critiques of Four Major Novels, edited by Carlos Baker (New York, 1962), p. 18.

in The Sun Also Rises, seems to take a more optimistic view on the latter subject, for against a background of sports activity he presents a moving story of abiding love. There is in the novel a flagrant display of sexual deviation (prostitution, nymphomania, and homosexuality), but this parody of normal love only makes more real the depth and substance of a natural love as warm and bright and lasting as the sun itself.

Jake Barnes, the protagonist in The Sun Also Rises, is introduced as an American newspaper reporter. Emasculated by the war and living in Paris among a so-called lost generation of expatriated playboys, artists, writers, and intellectuals, Jake tries to face the full implication of his wound and adjust his life accordingly. His real problem begins when he meets and falls helplessly and hopelessly in love with Brett Ashley, who seems to have been wounded emotionally by the war as Jake was physically. Brett understands Jake's problem, and Jake understands hers. Each tries to prove to the other that sexual relations are not the most important thing in life or love. Perhaps Brett's promiscuity and affairs with other men make Jake see the artificiality, the emptiness, the incompleteness of love based primarily upon sexual union.

Brett runs into a problem of her own when she has an affair with Robert Cohn, a weak romantic who substitutes

book learning for real living. He actually becomes bored with sports activity. He is so emotionally subverted that he will not accept Brett for what she really is to him, and thinks she is serious about her intimacy with him. To him, sex is everything. Later in the story, when he tries to take her away from Romero, the bullfighter, Brett rejects him and Cohn cries like the adolescent that he is.

It may be that to the Hemingway hero sexual union without love seemed as disgusting as gut-shooting an animal or incorrect fishing techniques. Georgette, the prostitute, sees love only as a simple monetary exchange. Harry in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" says, "Love is a dunghill, and I'm the cock that gets on it to crow."² Richard Gordon's wife in To Have and Have Not says, "I know about love. Love always hangs up behind the bathroom door. It smells of lysol."³ Apparently Brett is also aware that sexual relations without real love is like participating in some sports activity without genuine appreciation for its art. She always returns to Jake after each affair because he symbolizes to her the spiritual quality of love not found in any other man. Jake says, "In the first place, you had to be in love with a

²Ernest Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," The Hemingway Reader (New York, 1953), p. 590.

³Ernest Hemingway, To Have and Have Not (New York, 1937), p. 186.

woman to have a basis of friendship. I had been having Brett for a friend."⁴ In other words, emasculated Jake represents true love stripped of all the things that many people in the Twenties had traded it for--money, security, and sex.

To escape the fetid life in Paris, Jake decides that he needs a healthier moral climate in which to live; so he leaves France and goes to a trout stream at Burguete and later to the bull ring at Pamplona. Here he hopes to relieve the moral and emotional pressures by submerging in pleasant and relaxing physical activity. The fishing trip in the clear air of the high country by the Irati River emerges in sharp relief from the barren plains of sterility and impotence of Parisian life--a sort of oasis in the moral desert appears:

The trees were big, and the foliage was thick but it was not gloomy. There was no undergrowth, only the smooth grass, very green and fresh, and the big gray trees were well spaced as though it were a park. "This is country," Bill said.⁵

It is in the trout stream, "the good place," that Jake and Bill Gorton immerse themselves and are made clean and whole again. Jake, who is usually insomniac, is able to sleep well after lunch.

Perhaps Bill, a great lover of sports, is another symbol of the Hemingway code. At least there is the manly

⁴Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, from The Hemingway Reader, p. 205.

⁵Ibid., pp. 179-180.

camaraderie, joking, drinking, fishing, and comparing of catches that Hemingway always enjoyed. To Bill and Jake the sacred sport of fishing seems more important than religion. When they visit the monastery at Roncesvalles and comment on what a remarkable place it is, Bill asks, "It isn't the same as fishing, though, is it?"⁶ Even the meal at the river is treated as a mock-religious ceremony. Bill says, "Let us rejoice in our blessing. Let us utilize the fowls of the air. Let us utilize the product of the vine. Will you utilize a little, brother?"⁷ After the fishing, Jake is happy and ready to move on to Pamplona, where his courage and self-respect will be tested.

At Pamplona an atmosphere of tension is built up by the mounting excitement of the fiesta with its fireworks, drinking, dancing, and running of the bulls. Jake, who is among fellow aficionados, is an admirer of Pedro Romero, a young bullfighter, who has all the virtues of the code hero--grace, control, sincerity, courage, and manliness. He also represents the last of the true bullfighters who demand acclaim through maximum exposure rather than through appearance of exposure developed as a false aesthetic by the bullfighters who have brought decadence to the ring. Of all Jake's contemporaries, only he and Brett recognize the classic

⁶Ibid., p. 189.

⁷Ibid., p. 184.

qualities of Romero that make him the truly great toreador.

The real test for Jake comes when Brett goes to Madrid with Romero. Jake does not worry about her so long as she is with sexual cripples, but when she goes off with one who really understands sincerity and art, then Jake feels depressed, defeated; the "good place" has been ruined for him. Once again he retreats to the great outdoors for cleansing and healing, to San Sebastian to swim in the clean, cool waters and to forget the hot, passionate frenzy of the fiesta.

Jake's real victory comes when he receives a wire from Brett asking him to come to her. He says, "That was it. Send a girl off with one man. Introduce her to another to go off with him. Now go and bring her back. And sign the wire with love."⁸ Brett tells Jake that she feels good about sending Romero away because she was "not going to be one of those bitches that ruins children."⁹ Perhaps another interpretation of her attitude toward Romero simply indicates the triumph of her love for Jake. Evidence to support this supposition may be found in Brett's refusal to keep Romero for herself or to wire her fiancé, Mike Campbell, to come to her. Brett's love for Jake has been fiercely tested

⁸Ibid., p. 282.

⁹Ibid., p. 285.

and proven to be pure and lasting as the sun which also rises.

A Farewell to Arms

Hemingway's next novel, A Farewell to Arms, also deals with the subjects of love and war and man's struggle for survival in a society upset by these conflicting institutions. The protagonist, Frederic Henry, like Hemingway, was an ambulance driver in the war, badly wounded in the leg, and sent to a hospital in Milan for treatment. Interwoven into this setting is the romance of Frederic Henry and Catherine Barkley and its resulting consequences.

Frederic's first real test comes when he is about to go on leave. His soldier friends tell him to visit Amalfi, Capri, or Naples, where they give him addresses of girls. The priest suggests that he go instead to the Abruzzi and visit his family at Capracotta and engage in sports activity. He says, "There is good hunting. You would like the people and though it is cold it is clear and dry. You could stay with my father. My father is a famous hunter."¹⁰ The mountains of Abruzzi are associated with the man of God and his homeland, a symbol of the priest's religion. In contrast to the war and its destruction, here in the clear, clean, cold country of natural beauty dwell hospitality,

¹⁰Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (New York, 1957), p. 9.

peace, health, happiness, sacred love, and the "good" life of hunting and fishing. The priest's father, the famous hunter, is perhaps synonymous with Hemingway's father, who taught his son the techniques of hunting and fishing correctly and accurately, and an appreciation of these sports. The priest is offering Frederic what he feels is best for his soul--the "good" life.

Frederic does not choose to go to Abruzzi to hunt game, but goes rather to Villa Rosa with Rinaldi where they hunt for beautiful girls instead. Here Frederic spends his time with one-night prostitutes, eating and drinking until the room whirls before his eyes. It is Rinaldi, who later introduces him to Catherine Barkley. From this point on, Frederic's life is changed by his love for Catherine.

The priest is disappointed and hurt when he learns that Frederic did not go to Abruzzi. Frederic says, "I myself felt as badly as he did and could not understand why I had not gone. It was what I wanted to do. . . ." ¹¹ Perhaps the reason he did not visit the home of the priest while on leave is a reflection of the mood of all people who are upset by disease and destruction of war. Living too close to the war too long undoubtedly brought about a certain paralysis of the will and made Frederic restless and insecure.

¹¹Ibid. p. 13.

Later, after Frederic is wounded and brought to the hospital at Milan, he reflects again upon the "good" life mentioned by the priest. He remembers that the priest had told him about trout in the stream at Capracotta and bears on the Gran Sasso D'Italia:

It was cool in the summer at night and the spring in Abruzzi was the most beautiful in Italy. But what was lovely was the fall to go hunting through chestnut woods. The birds were all good because they fed on grapes and you never took a lunch because the peasants were always honored if you would eat with them at their houses.¹²

In this semi-sacred place the priest's father hunted every day, but a foreigner would not hunt here unless he could prove that he had never been arrested. At this point, Frederic seems to develop a new moral sense and his affair with Catherine which began on a level of seduction, develops into a common-law marriage; they try to feel that they are married in the eyes of God, who sanctions their union. Now, morally conscious Frederic does not wish to appear as a foreigner in the priest's homeland (the good place) without a certificate proving he has broken no law.

After Frederic's nightmarish retreat from Caporetto and his total disillusionment with the war, he makes a separate peace, deserts the army, and goes to Stresa to meet Catherine. Here he and the barman go trolling for trout. Failing to catch any fish, Frederic tells Catherine. My

¹²Ibid. p. 76.

life used to be full of everything. Now if you aren't with me I haven't a thing in the world."¹³ His poor fishing is apparently equated with the coming death of Catherine, who is the only value he has left.

Finally the couple move into a chalet above Montreux, not because it is mountainous, but because Switzerland is the only neutral country within reach. Sanderson points out that "the cold air of the Abruzzi mountains, where it is understood that a man may love God, has its counterpart in the crisp winterland above Montreux, where Frederic and Catherine love each other."¹⁴ When this love affair is terminated by the death of Catherine, Frederic is still morally conscious that everyone eventually pays for the things he does. There is still hope for Frederic, and that is a return to the "good" life found in such simple, wholesome pursuits as hunting and fishing in the mountains of Abruzzi, the priest's homeland, where he can purge from his soul the horrors of war and the loss of Catherine, where he can love God as the priest has suggested.

To Have and Have Not

To Have and Have Not has been considered by many of Hemingway's readers to be the least satisfactory of his

¹³Ibid., p. 266.

¹⁴Sanderson, Ernest Hemingway, p. 61.

novels. Perhaps its weakness lies in the method of its construction. Hemingway published the first two parts as short stories in 1934 and 1936 respectively. Later he decided to add other subplots and expand his material into a novel. Despite its weaknesses, this novel does contain some beautiful passages illustrating Hemingway's knowledge of the ocean and deep-sea fishing.

Harry Morgan, the protagonist, is faced with an economic problem brought on by the depression in America in the thirties. Lack of customers has put his fishing business practically on the shelf. Basically, Harry is a good man, but adverse circumstances force him to break the law. He has to keep his wife and children from going hungry. An expert boat-handler and a deep-sea fisherman, like Hemingway, he admires the true sportsman and hates those who are ignorant of the correct techniques. He shows disgust with Johnson, who refuses to follow instructions:

Johnson took the harness off the reel so he could put the rod across his knees because his arms got tired holding it in position all the time. . . . I didn't like to see him hold the rod that way but I hated to be crabbing at him all the time. Besides, with the drag off, line would go out so there wasn't any danger. But it was a sloppy way to fish.¹⁵

Through ignorance, Johnson screws down the drag when Harry is not looking. When a big thousand-pound black marlin hits

¹⁵Ernest Hemingway, To Have and Have Not, pp. 19-20.

the line, all the heavy tackle goes overboard. Harry loses not only his equipment, but also the eight hundred twenty-five dollars Johnson owes him. Johnson's poor fishing is part of Harry's bad luck. From this point on, Harry carries on illicit traffic with Cuba and finally loses his arm, then his life.

In contrast to Johnson, Harry's Negro helps or baits the hooks with the same knowledgeable skill as Nick Adams in "The Big Two-Hearted River."

The nigger came on board with the bait and we cast off and started out of the harbor, the nigger fixing on a couple of mackerel; passing the hook through their mouth, out the gills, slitting the side and then passing the hook through the other side and out, tying the mouth shut on the wire leader and tying the hook good so it couldn't slip and so the bait would troll smooth without spinning.¹⁶

Johnson, ignorant of the importance of baiting a hook correctly, tells Harry that the Negro is an unnecessary expense.

Hemingway, apparently, has little patience with tourists who have the time and money to engage in sports activities, yet do not know the sportsman's code. These rich vacationers are not aware that fishing and hunting require much planning, courage, knowledgeable skill, and proper equipment: Frederick Harrison, one of the least admirable of all of Hemingway's characters, says, "Fishing

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 10-11.

is nonsense. If you catch a sailfish what do you do with it? You can't eat it.¹⁷ It is difficult for those who sit at desks to understand the problems of the outdoor man. They are unaware that one does not learn hunting and fishing by reading a sports manual or taking excursions once or twice a year. One has to live on the ocean like Hemingway or Harry to understand these lines:

Those big flying fish are the best sign there is. As far as you could see, there was that faded yellow gulfweed in small patches that means the main stream is well in and there were birds working over a school of little tuna. You could see them jumping; just little ones weighing a couple of pounds apiece.¹⁸

This is the "good" life that Harry Morgan knows, and as long as he lives in this sphere of sports activity, he is able to maintain his inner freedom and wrest from the world a decent living.

Hemingway believes that the ocean is the last frontier left where man can escape from the over-crowded streams and mountains, which he described in his early stories.

For Whom the Bell Tolls

In For Whom the Bell Tolls Hemingway's greatest interest seems to lie, not in the Spanish Civil War itself, but in the struggle for survival of the ordinary men and women who do not understand what the war is all about and who,

¹⁷Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 12.

perhaps, have no politics, but find themselves involved in the strife anyway. Although the novel is not about hunting or fishing, both activities are mentioned in such a way as to reveal the nature and attitudes of the Spaniards who make up the guerrilla bands (gypsies, peasants, village workmen, and women) with whom Robert Jordan has to work.

Robert Jordan, an American volunteer, has been assigned to blow up a certain bridge at a pre-arranged signal. The reader is aware that destroying the bridge has become an obsession with Jordan. His intense concentration on performing his task correctly and scientifically may be compared to Hemingway's passion, conditioned by his lifelong avocation of shooting correctly or fishing with the right techniques, for knowing the rules and doing everything with expert precision.

Anselmo, Jordan's guide, is perhaps the most representative and the most admirable of Hemingway's guerrillas. He is a simple, honest, courageous man, true to his convictions regarding life and death. In a discussion of hunting, Anselmo reveals his attitude toward killing animals and killing men. He invites Jordan to return after the war and hunt the boar, the bear, the wolf, and the ibex with him. When Jordan asks him if he likes to hunt, Anselmo replies that "he loves hunting more than anything and that

all men in his village are hunters."¹⁹ Anselmo is shocked when Jordan tells him that he does not like to hunt or to kill animals. The old man replies, "With me it is the opposite. I do not like to kill men. . . . To me it is a sin to kill a man."²⁰ Later, when Anselmo shoots the sentry at the bridge, he questions:

How could the Inglis say that the shooting of a man is like the shooting of an animal? In all hunting I have had an elation and no feeling of wrong. But to shoot a man gives me a feeling as though one had struck his own brother when you are grown men.²¹

Anselmo must have suffered a curious revulsion when he applies his good shooting skill to the murder of man. He actually cries at the loss of his moral good feeling. But he has little time for remorse; he dies when Jordan blows up the bridge.

Next to hunting and fishing comes Hemingway's love of landscape. The story opens with Robert Jordan's lying flat on the pine-needled floor of the forest near a clear stream with the cool water flowing between the rocks (a fisherman's paradise), and ends with his lying on this same pine-needled floor of the forest, waiting as a hunter waits for his prey.

¹⁹Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York, 1940), p. 39.

²⁰Ibid., p. 41.

²¹Ibid., p. 442.

Across the River and into the Trees

When Hemingway published Across the River and into the Trees in 1950, a few readers of Hemingway felt that as a literary artist, he was through. The book proved a disappointment to many who considered For Whom the Bell Tolls his best novel. There is little suspense, characterization is poor, and one has only limited opportunity to form his own opinions. But along with these weaknesses, the book contains a beautiful description of Cantwell's return to Venice and his hunting trip to the Venetian marshes, where his final purgation takes place and he is able to face death with pride and resignation.

During the ten years that elapsed between the publication of For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940) and Across the River and into the Trees (1950) Hemingway spent much of his time as an observer and a participant in World War II. He was a war-correspondent before joining the American Third Army in 1944. After the break-through in Normandy, he attached himself to the infantry division of the First Army. He saw action in the Hurtgen Forest, where the casualty rate was exceptionally high. He received much new experience in practical soldiering and survived during several devastating, ill-conceived attacks. He used these experiences and gave his ideas about war through his protagonist, Colonel Richard Cantwell.

This fifty-year-old soldier, with thirty years' experience, has been demoted from a general to a colonel as a result of the stupid orders from his superiors, which cost him the lives of most of his regiment. He lives with the bitter memories of three such wrong decisions made in battle and compares them with his loving and losing three women. He says:

You lose them the same way you lose a battalion; by errors of judgment; orders that are impossible to fulfill, through impossible conditions. Also through brutality.²²

Such bitter feeling dominates most of his conversation with his mistress, Renata.

Like Hemingway, Cantwell carries many scars from wounds received in battle. He has a record of near ten concussions, a battered head, body and limbs, and a split hand, which has been shot through twice. Death threatens him in the form of high blood pressure and a tired heart. His last physical examination leaves no doubt that another heart attack will prove fatal. Unlike Hemingway's other heroes, the death that Cantwell faces is not from external danger; it is an inward challenge. With courage, skill, or luck a man may escape death from a bull, big game, or even war itself, but when the human organism fails, there is nothing one can do but face it heroically.

²²Ernest Hemingway, Across the River and into the Trees (New York, 1950), p. 95.

To eradicate from his mind temporarily the horrors and blunders of war, the tired, war-worn colonel decides to return to Venice and engage in duck hunting. This is the "good" life he remembers when he was an eighteen-year-old lieutenant in a foreign army. Then he had been impressed with the natural beauty of the landscape, the men fishing in the river and canals, and ducks and geese in abundance. As Cantwell sits in the car viewing the countryside on the way to Venice, he forgets the war and his coming death. He is happy and has peace of mind:

They made the left turn and came along the canal where the fishing boats tied up and the Colonel looked at them and his heart was happy because of the brown nets and the wicker fish traps and the clean, beautiful lines of the boats. It's not that they are picturesque. To hell with picturesque. They were just damned beautiful.²³

As Nick Adams returned to the streams of northern Michigan to cleanse himself from the horrors of war, so Cantwell comes back to Venice to hunt and to lose himself in the "good" life of hunting before he keeps his rendezvous with death.

He spends some time with his nineteen-year-old mistress, Renata, whose function in the story is to love him and to help him purge the bitterness and cynicism of the war from his mind by encouraging him to talk about his

²³Ibid., p. 34.

experiences in the battles. At first he does not feel his need of mental cleansing, but later he finds that his confessions actually help to relieve the pressures of his mind, and he experiences a solace and inner freedom that he has never felt before. After Renata has served her purpose, he refuses to let her go duck hunting with the men.

The scene of the hunt is the most beautiful part of the novel. Here Cantwell is away from the stupidity of the war. Here he can exhibit his knowledgeable skill of expert marksmanship. As two ducks come over the blind, he brings them both down:

It was a lovely double, shot exactly as he should have shot, with complete consideration and respect for the position of the boat and he felt very good as he reloaded.²⁴

Here in this "good" place Cantwell is not a colonel but a hunter. He is pleased that he can still shoot well. He says, "This is the best organized and best run duck shoot I have ever shot at and I have had as much fun shooting here as I ever had in my life."²⁵

The cold wind and the freezing marshes force him to give up sooner than he had planned, but he is happy, even though his heart tells him that death is near. As he drives across the river and into the trees, he lives up to the Hemingway code. He has courage in the face of death and

²⁴Ibid., p. 5.

²⁵Ibid., p. 281.

prepares for it with military precision. He settles all his accounts and hands the driver a note telling him what to do. Then he dies, close to the great out-of-doors that he loved --near the river, where there is fishing, and among the trees, where there is hunting.

The Old Man and the Sea

The Old Man and the Sea, the only novel to deal directly with the subject of this present study, is perhaps a reflection of Hemingway's mature view of man's struggle against an indifferent cosmos. One senses in this story a profound reverence not present in his earlier works. Apparently Hemingway is more concerned with man's return to society, with human solidarity and interdependence, than with isolation and despair. Santiago is alone but not by choice. Repeatedly, as he brings in the great fish, he wishes for the boy, for human companionship. He also thinks of the old fishermen who will worry about him if he does not return. Santiago is not afraid to test his strength against the unknown elements of the sea. He is aware that his struggle is against the unconquerable forces of nature; yet if he can fight his battle heroically and maintain his dignity, his humility toward man, and his pride in his craft, then it is possible for him to wrest from the struggle a certain victory.

In The Old Man and the Sea Hemingway gave the literary world a beautiful allegory of his literary art and career. He combined a lifelong avocation of hunting and fishing with his artistic talents and produced his masterpiece. Those who thought Hemingway was through were answered by Maurois:

In The Old Man and the Sea Papa was never in better form. It is a fine book: fine in its literary craftsmanship, its knowing treatment of deep-sea fishing and its warm humanity. . . . I cannot help feeling that in this there is a symbol, perhaps an unconscious one. The giant marlin is the big novel Hemingway thought he would come up with and the critics tore to pieces.²⁶

It has been hard for some literary men to reconcile Hemingway the artist with Hemingway the sportsman, and they have made their attacks on the man rather than his art.

In commenting on the success of The Old Man and the Sea, Hemingway said:

The luck was that I had a good man and a good boy and lately writers have forgotten there still are such things. Then the ocean is worth writing about just as man is.²⁷

Hemingway believed that a writer should keep in touch with nature as much as possible. He was as much the ardent fisherman in 1952 as he was in 1902 when his father placed his first fishing rod in his hand. He thought that an

²⁶Andre Maurois, "Hemingway," Hemingway and His Critics, edited by Carlos Baker (New York, 1961), p. 48.

²⁷George Plimpton, "An Interview with Ernest Hemingway," Hemingway and His Critics, edited by Carlos Baker (New York, 1961), p. 34.

artist could only write truly about the things he had experienced. He carried the story of The Old Man and the Sea in his head for twenty years, and when he wrote it, he understood thoroughly the struggle the old fisherman has with the great fish.

In order for Santiago to catch the great fish, he has to go out beyond the fishermen who, because it is easier and safer, work in sight of land. He says:

My choice was to go there and find him beyond all people. Beyond all people in the world. Now we are joined together and have been since noon. And no one to help either of us.²⁸

As a writer, Hemingway felt that he had to go beyond all other writers to capture his great novel. In his message to Sweden apologizing for his not being able to go to Stockholm to receive his Nobel Prize, he writes:

How simple the writing of literature would be if it were only necessary to write in another way what has already been well written. It is because we have such great writers in the past that a writer is driven far out past where he can go, out to where no one can help him.²⁹

Too many writers are perhaps like the fishermen who stay in sight of land, afraid to venture out alone. Hemingway had said that "the further you go in writing the more alone you are."³⁰

²⁸Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea (New York, 1952), p. 48.

²⁹Maurois, op. cit., p. 49.

³⁰Plimpton, op. cit., p.26.

Caucy

As a professional fisherman, Santiago very carefully prepares for his coming struggle with the big fish:

Before it was really light he had his baits out and was drifting with the current. One bait was down forty fathoms. The second was at seventy-five and the third and fourth were down in the blue water at one hundred and one hundred and twenty-five fathoms. Each bait hung head down with the shank of the hook inside the bait fish, tied and sewed solid and all the projecting part of the hook, the curve and the point, was covered with fresh sardines. Each sardine was hooked through both eyes so that they made a half-garland on the projecting steel. There was no part of the hook that a great fish could feel which was not sweet smelling and good tasting.³¹

Santiago prepares for this trip as a general might plan for a military expedition. The reader is told how he baits his hooks, how the fish takes the bait, how the lines are secured and how the fish is killed. Knowing that correct technique requires concentration and physical endurance, Santiago says, "Now is the time to think of only one thing. That which I was born for."³²

Hemingway was both a dedicated fisherman and a dedicated writer--a serious artist with "a horror of the inaccurate, the fraudulent, the deceptive, the half-baked."³³

He told his brother that writing was hard work, but he enjoyed it enormously when everything was going well.

Hemingway says:

³¹Ernest Hemingway, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 37.

³³Plimpton, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

I concentrate in trying to get a book out which will not have one word changed from the way I would write if it were the last and only thing I ever would write--and everything I have found out about life is in it.³⁴

Sometimes Hemingway rewrote a page as many as thirty-nine times, trying to get the exact words. One "bad" novel could ruin his literary reputation just as one wild rush or jump from the fish could destroy Santiago; therefore, Hemingway concentrated intently upon his writing just as Santiago concentrates upon fishing. They are both artists.

In his struggle with the fish, Santiago is conscious that no man is ever alone on the ocean. Although he is beyond all human beings, his thoughts are on baseball and Joe DiMaggio, the boy, and the old fishermen who will worry about him if he does not return. Repeatedly he wishes for the boy upon whom he has come to depend for company. Then he dreams of young lions playing on the African beach. The boy and the lions represent his lost youth, and when he thinks about them, he receives (through his imagination) strength and courage. He even identifies himself with the fish and calls the fish brother. This theme of human solidarity and interdependence seems to be a reflection of Hemingway's mature view of man. Harry Morgan, of To Have

³⁴Carlos Baker, "Hemingway: A World View," Saturday Review, XXIV (July 29, 1961), 6.

and Have Not, learned that a man alone does not have a chance, but he learned this lesson too late.

When Santiago kills the fish and lashes it to his skiff, he has fulfilled his life-long dream. As he reviews his achievement, he thinks, "You did not kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell for food. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman."³⁵ Santiago's words are no doubt a reflection of Hemingway's desire to write the truly great novel.

Santiago's next problem is to get his prize catch home safely. He is aware that he will have to go through shark-infested waters on his return, and he is almost sorry that he has caught the big fish. When the sharks come, he is expecting them; he decides to fight them until he dies. He says, "A man can be destroyed but not defeated."³⁶ When he gets home, all that the sharks have left of his fish is the great white spine, with a huge tail trailing in the water.

As a writer, Hemingway was aware that although he had written as best he could, that he had completed his book, his art was open to the attacks of hostile critics who would tear it apart as the sharks had destroyed the marlin. He had little sympathy for critics who were ignorant of the strain, the sacredness, the courage, and the skill attached

³⁵Ernest Hemingway, op. cit., p. 105.

³⁶Ibid., p. 103.

to a fishing trip or the writing of a novel, and therefore, were unable to understand duly what he had to say in his works. Probably the tourists at the Terrace, who gaze upon the skeleton of the marlin, express the lack of appreciation of the uninitiated when the lady says, "I didn't know sharks had such handsome, beautifully formed tails."³⁷

Although Santiago loses his big fish, he is not defeated. By fighting his battle heroically, he breaks the spell of bad luck that has hovered over him for eighty-four days, and in the end regains his human solidarity. Schorer says:

Hemingway, who has always known the tricks, is strong enough now to have mastered his greatest subject. "I could not fail myself and die on a fish like this," the old man reflects. They win together, the great character, the big writer.³⁸

Thus Hemingway combines all his fishing and literary ability and produces perhaps his greatest novel.

From The Sun Also Rises to The Old Man and the Sea, Hemingway projects his ideas about life in general through protagonists who struggle for a decent existence in an indifferent world. These heroes usually seek for strength and courage in an exceedingly physical world of which

³⁷Ibid., p. 127.

³⁸Mark Schorer, "Grace under Pressure," Ernest Hemingway: Critiques of Four Major Novels, edited by Carlos Baker (New York, 1962), p. 134.

hunting and fishing are significant and symbolic parts. In this "good" place they tackle their problems intelligently and heroically.

CHAPTER V

HUNTING AND FISHING IN HEMINGWAY'S NONFICTION

Hemingway published Green Hills of Africa in 1935, after his first hunting safari in that country. Upon seeing Africa, he felt that nothing he had read about it had given him an accurate picture of the countryside, the natives, and the animal life. Recalling his adventure for the purpose of publication, he tried to savor again more fully each action, each sensation, each moment of suspense, each beauty of the landscape by writing about them. In his prefatory remarks, Hemingway says, "The writer has attempted to write an absolutely true book to see whether the shape of a country and the pattern of a month's action can, if truly presented, compete with a work of the imagination." The book itself, however, reveals other possible motives in writing about his safari and, in general, sheds considerable light on his concepts of art, writing, and hunting.

John Jones points out that some students of Hemingway consider Green Hills of Africa an attempt of the author to defend and to foster his own legend as a sportsman; while others accept it as a picturesque account of big-game hunting in Africa, but disagree with Hemingway's philosophy of life and his ideas about literature, democracy, American

society, and writers who are interested only in politics, economics, or religion.¹ But Jones believes:

Despite whatever excellencies it may have had as a book about hunting, the book was partly Hemingway's reply to Gertrude Stein, to his critics, and to all who thought his social and political attitudes irresponsible.²

Gertrude Stein had accused Hemingway of being "jealous because she and Sherwood Anderson had taught him all he knew about writing, about bullfighting, and about boxing."³ Her remarks were a blow to Hemingway's pride and seemingly he never fully recovered from the effects her unfavorable criticism had upon him. Years later he bitterly comments, "Miss Stein wrote at some length and with considerable inaccuracy about her influence upon my work."⁴ Apparently his erstwhile benefactress had touched upon a sensitive spot when she criticized his masculinity and his writing, and he never forgave her.

Max Eastman, another reviewer, made a personal attack upon Hemingway's "neurotic sentimentality and his sense of

¹John A. Jones, "Hemingway: The Critics and the Public Legend," Western Humanities Review, XIII (Autumn, 1959), 393.

²Ibid., p. 394.

³Gertrude Stein, The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (New York, 1933), pp. 265-267.

⁴Plimpton, op. cit., p. 27.

obligation to put forth evidence of red-blooded masculinity."⁵ The result of this review was a stupid fracas in the office of Maxwell Perkins, from which Hemingway emerged in the eyes of his public as a somewhat ridiculous "tough guy" who had man-handled one of his critics.

The adverse publicity Hemingway received at this time may have influenced his return to nature, to the hunt, to get away from it all. One wonders if Hemingway is not glorifying his sportsmanship in Green Hills of Africa to cover up his very real sensitivity about writing. He presents himself arrogantly and pretentiously as a dedicated Nimrod, who finds hunting very exciting and writing just another skill, not so important: "I would come back to Africa, but not to make a living from it. I could do that with two pencils and a few hundred sheets of the cheapest paper."⁶ This bravado about literary production is most definitely out of keeping with Hemingway's devotion to his art.

If Hemingway has no intention of enhancing the public image of himself as a sportsman, he certainly takes pains not to diminish it in Green Hills of Africa. He seems to turn his back upon effete literary critics by deliberately

⁵Jones, op. cit., p. 392.

⁶Ernest Hemingway, Green Hills of Africa (New York, 1935), p. 285.

choosing a subject (hunting and fishing) they will know little about or would mistakenly consider worthless. Hemingway exhibits great pride in his African trophies and takes pictures of himself standing over the carcasses of his kills. He records frankly a certain tension among the members of the safari created by the competition between himself and his friend Karl: Hemingway does not like to be beaten in a sport in which he considers himself an expert, and Karl is not only shooting well, but also taking the biggest rhino and kudu. Hemingway says, "I knew I was shooting well again and I wanted to make a shot to impress Droopy [a native servant]." ⁷ Although Hemingway continues to shoot well, not once does he beat Karl. This repeated emphasis upon competition even seems to be Hemingway's method of presenting himself as a good sport who is fair--perhaps in contrast to the critics of Death in the Afternoon who gloat over writers' failures.

In Green Hills of Africa, however, Hemingway does not hesitate to show himself the hero who runs the dangers and does the killing. He is representative of all the attributes given his protagonists in most of his short stories and novels. He has grace under pressure, honesty, courage, skill, toughness, and resignation to pain. For example, he

⁷Ibid., p. 52.

has a narrow brush with death from amoebic dysentery, but he gallantly refuses to give up the safari.

Hemingway's worship of precision, a carry-over from his youth, is a secondary subject of this book. He seems to concentrate most of his attention upon the proper way to hunt. The suggestion is that he does the same thing when he writes, a subtle way of calling attention to his clean, clear style. He is happy and feels that life is really worth living when he squeezes the trigger properly, but he experiences great disgust when he fires improperly at the whole body of an animal rather than at a particular spot. His feelings after gut-shooting a sable are representative: "But that damned sable bull. I should have killed him; but it was a running shot."⁸ He often expresses his pleasure in killing quickly and cleanly.

Hemingway feels close to the natives because they share with him a friendly sportsmanlike understanding of hunting and the rules of the game in a way in which the critics never understand the creative art. Among these primitive people, with their laughter and natural behavior, Hemingway is contented, secure, uncriticized. And he loves the country even better than he loves the people:

I knew a good country when I saw one. Here there was game, plenty of birds, and I liked the natives. Here I could shoot and fish. That, and

⁸Ibid., p. 281.

writing, and reading, and seeing pictures was all I cared about doing.⁹

As Hemingway walks in the easy rolling hills of East Africa, he savors each new sight and sound with the same enthusiasm he felt as a boy when he tramped the woods of northern Michigan. In any place of peace, fresh air, green woods, and game, he feels at home, and he has a very rare ability to make his reader share this emotion.

The conversations around the campfire reflect some of Hemingway's preoccupations. He is concerned with what he thinks corrupting to the writer: economic pressures, haste, and adverse criticism which undermines the artist's confidence. He points out that many authors refrain from outdoor or nonintellectual subjects (hunting and fishing) because they fear the scorn of critics. He calls the New York writers "all angleworms in a bottle, trying to derive knowledge and nourishment from their own contact and from the bottle,"¹⁰ and the critics "the lice who crawl on literature."¹¹ Hemingway castigates sham, and avers that the artist who writes from experience has an advantage over those authors who attempt to create impressions they have never felt or scenes they have never witnessed: "For we [writers] have been there in books and out of books--and

⁹Ibid., p. 285.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹Ibid., p. 109.

where we go, if we are any good, there you can go as we have been.¹² To Hemingway accurate knowledge is essential to the author if he is to convey a sense of reality to the reader. Intimate familiarity with hunting and fishing enabled Hemingway to write about these subjects better and more often than any other serious literary artist of this time. Hemingway was aware of the reason for his superiority.

People who have had little experience with hunting and fishing tend to consider these activities dull and unimportant. They find Hemingway lacking in seriousness and depth. Hemingway, on the contrary, believed that hunting and fishing, as literary subjects, are as important as economics, religion, or politics. As a writer, Hemingway's preoccupation was to survive long enough to get his work done. To him the only lasting things in the world are nature and art. His vitality as a writer is curiously linked with physical activity requiring skill and endurance. Application of these qualities in hunting and fishing supplements the same qualities in literary art. Green Hills of Africa is, then, both a reply to his critics and a projection of his attitudes, not only toward hunting and fishing, but even more importantly, toward writing.

¹²Ibid., p. 109.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Hemingway's early love of the out-of-doors greatly influenced the formation of his character, as well as his writings. He learned to handle a rod or gun with careful, knowledgeable skill and experienced a sense of pride associated with deep inward fulfillment. He was not ashamed to engage in hunting and fishing, neither was he afraid to hang his trophies on his walls or write the experience in his books. He held that sports activity as a literary subject is as important as any other, despite many intelligent readers who fail to realize the basic connection between sport and art. Most of Hemingway's short stories and novels reveal his fondness for hunting and fishing even when these activities are secondary to his major purpose.

Hemingway's youthful activities in hunting and his association of precision shooting with the out-of-doors--fresh air, peace, natural beauty, freedom, and life--gave him a good feeling. There is no record of his ever experiencing remorse for killing an animal or bird, or of his ever having put himself imaginatively in his quarry's place. But when in war he applied (or saw applied) this "good," sacred shooting skill to the killing of man, he must have suffered

a curious revulsion--a traumatic shock perhaps deeper than his physical wounds. Many of his stories and novels suggest that his disillusionment and bitterness with war derive from his early attitude toward hunting and fishing, activities which had produced physical and moral good feeling.

Hemingway was as serious about his writing as he was about shooting well or fishing correctly. The same attention he devoted to hunting and fishing, he devoted to developing an individual style of writing. In fact, precision seemed almost an obsession with him, and he sought technical perfection in nearly everything he did. Most of his admirable characters, too, are technicians, performing each job properly and correctly. Hemingway says:

I concentrate in trying to get a book out
which will not have one word changed from the way
I would write if it were the last and only thing
I ever would write--everything I have found out
about life is in it.¹

He believed that a writer must have knowledge, as well as understanding, and must feel deeply the experience he is projecting if the reader is to acquire the same sense of reality. Hemingway was humble toward his art and devoted to it. Unfavorable criticism disturbed him, especially when he thought it given by the uninitiated, the inexpert.

¹Carlos Baker, et al., "Hemingway: A World View," Saturday Review, XLIV (July 29, 1961), 6.

Hemingway engaged in hunting and fishing with the same intense devotion he brought to his composition, concentrating upon the technique of killing birds and animals cleanly and efficiently. He seems to have developed a ritualistic, almost religious attitude toward his skills. To write, he arose early each morning and worked hard until he reached a stopping place. If he had composed well, then his reward was knowing he could spend the remainder of the day engaged in his favorite sport. Participation in hunting and fishing gave him pleasure, exorcised from his mind certain painful memories, and made simple again a complicated world. These sports often put him in a position where his courage, discipline, stamina, and cunning were tested and where moral qualities underwent significant development.

In a sense Hemingway's return to nature, with its simplicity and its primitive regard for ceremony, adds depth to his writings and lends a mythic force to the best of his outdoor stories, a force not found in the novel of propaganda and of social problems popular during most of Hemingway's life. The disappearance of the American frontier, the tremendous increase in density of population, and the unimaginable complexity of living in a war-torn world--all have made Hemingway's stories of nature a welcome escape, a reassertion of some vital force for the present-day American. Ruark aptly expresses this idea thus:

We are losing a great deal of simplicity of approach to man's natural instincts in this baffling world. We have so much steam heat and air conditioning that we have forgotten wood fires and fresh air.²

Hemingway is, without doubt, the most truly artistic spokesman for the sportsmen of America--a vast and inarticulate fraternity--who worship at the shrine of nature. Through his books those who love hunting and fishing can catch the great marlin and shoot the big kudu, and come home significantly enriched--and, like Hemingway himself, properly proud and properly humble.

²Robert C. Ruark, "Papa Had No Use for Sham," Field and Stream (October, 1961), p. 3.

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