

THE HUNTING METAPHOR IN HEMINGWAY AND  
FAULKNER

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
MARY JIM JOSEPHS  
1973



1293 10100 1588

Michigan State  
University

~~52303~~

7-347

~~W-127~~

~~840-2-1000~~

2-29-1000

• 5 JUNE 1994 •



## ABSTRACT

### THE HUNTING METAPHOR IN HEMINGWAY AND FAULKNER

By

Mary Jim Josephs

This comparative study of Hemingway and Faulkner focuses on the hunting metaphor as a means of perceiving and comparing the value systems of the two writers. The method of the study is close analysis of individual works within the context of the writer's other works on the same theme. This study concludes with comparative readings of The Old Man and the Sea and "The Bear," considering these works as typical of each writer and, therefore, as an appropriate basis for comparing the two value systems through the uses made of the hunting metaphor.

Both these writers portray many characters for whom hunting (and/or fishing) is a central life-long activity. Hunting is portrayed by each of them as a ritual of self-renewal in times of trauma, as a pattern for moral growth and development, as the basis of a set of moral standards which can be transferred to other aspects of life,



and as an arena in which a man can prove his masculinity without getting involved with women.

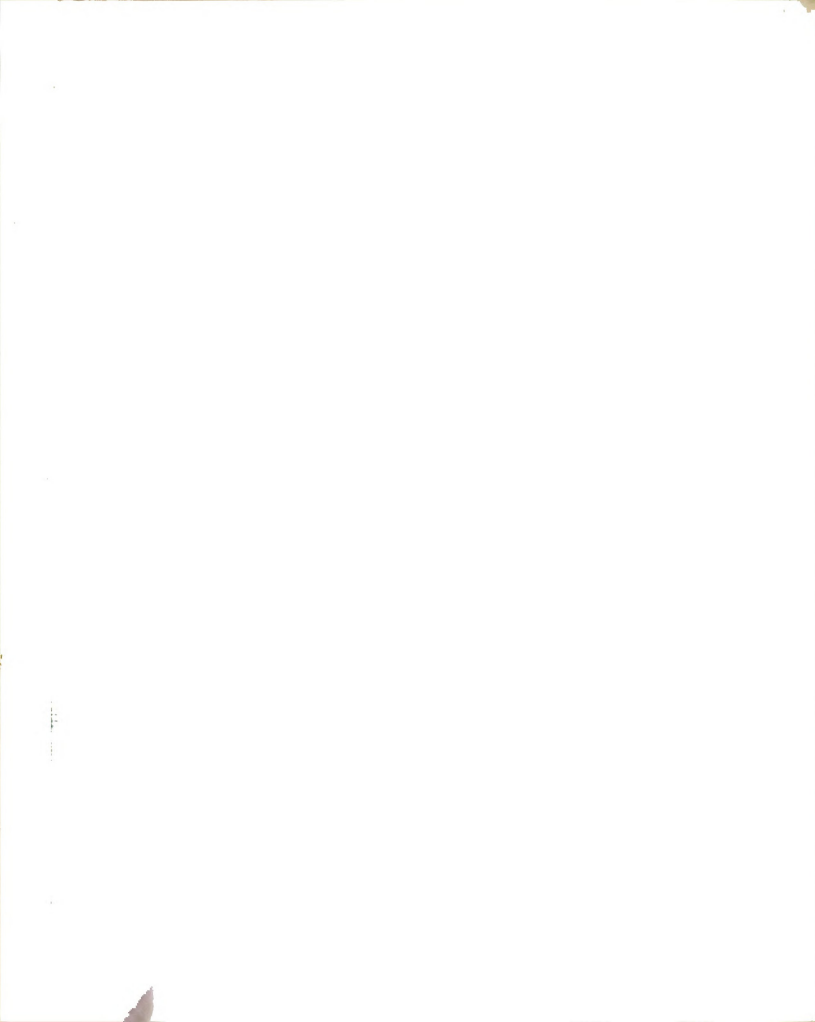
Hunting, fishing and bullfighting--the ritualized killing of animals--create, in Hemingway's works, the occasion for the individual to live more intensely in the present moment. Killing is a private experience for the one who kills, not something to be shared with others, as can be seen in many of the Nick Adams stories or in bullfighting stories like "The Undefeated." For Hemingway's hero there is an isolation of the individual in a present activity which allows him to block out all past and present unpleasantness and dominate himself (in the sense of controlling his responses and even his emotions) as well as the beast he faces. Tradition, in the usual sense, is not an important factor in the killing experience for the Hemingway character; he does not seek or find a link to the past except in the sense of a union with the person he was in the past, in a recreation of his own youth and a reexperience of himself free from present fears and pain.

For the Hemingway character, the highest ethical value is "killing cleanly," as Hemingway explains in The Green Hills of Africa, striking a careful balance of fair practices in relation to the animal of quest, creating an even competition, and never tipping the balance by cheating on the rules. These rules do not serve an abstract concept like "honor," however, they serve to protect the quality of



the hero's own experience. The virtues most respected are discipline and courage, yet, again, there is never an abstract insistence on their value. These are simply the qualities most frequently required in the concrete situations that are important to the hero.

Hunting, for Faulkner, is a traditional activity in which a man unites himself through shared activities and a shared reverence for the wilderness with his ancestors and with his neighbors, as can be seen in stories like those of Go Down, Moses and Big Woods. Hunting is a ritual which spans the space of time, both vertically and horizontally, creating a sense of brotherhood not only in a cherished and shared activity, but also in a common set of absolute values, an ethical code derived from the activity itself. Since there are rituals, a network of absolute values, and persons who exemplify and teach those values, hunting takes on the function of a religious system in the lives of Faulkner's characters. Because the system is grounded to the past by tradition and thus requires learned attitudes as well as learned techniques, an elaborate initiation phase is an important element of the mystique. Faulkner frequently focuses on this initiation phase of hunting and on the relationships of the hunter to the hunted and to the wilderness. It is everywhere implied in these works that these relationships are the mark of a man's sense of responsibility to his fellows and,



consequently, the measure of his moral worth. And even when unspoken the abstract absolute values ring out like echoes in the woods: truth and honor and pride and endurance. . . .

For both these writers the values demonstrated here through the metaphor of the hunt are the same ones dramatized in other ways in other works. In Hemingway's war stories or love stories the qualities of the soldier or the lover are the same as those of the bullfighter or fisherman, and the emphasis is always on the intensely personal experience of the individual in a moment of crisis. In Faulkner's other works he portrays a farmer, a lawyer or a sewing machine agent with the same earthy qualities as the hunter, and the emphasis is on a character as he functions in relation to his fellow man and as he is influenced by his cultural heritage.

Hemingway and Faulkner give us two very different images of the American experience and the contrasts posed are as rich in possibilities as the minds of two great writers and as the parameters of our national consciousness: individual man vs. social man, existentialist man vs. essentialist man, international man vs. national or regional man. Each writer, however, presents men as committed to the preservation of his own dignity and to that of the human race, although they define that dignity by different criteria.

THE HUNTING METAPHOR  
IN HEMINGWAY AND FAULKNER

By

Mary Jim Josephs

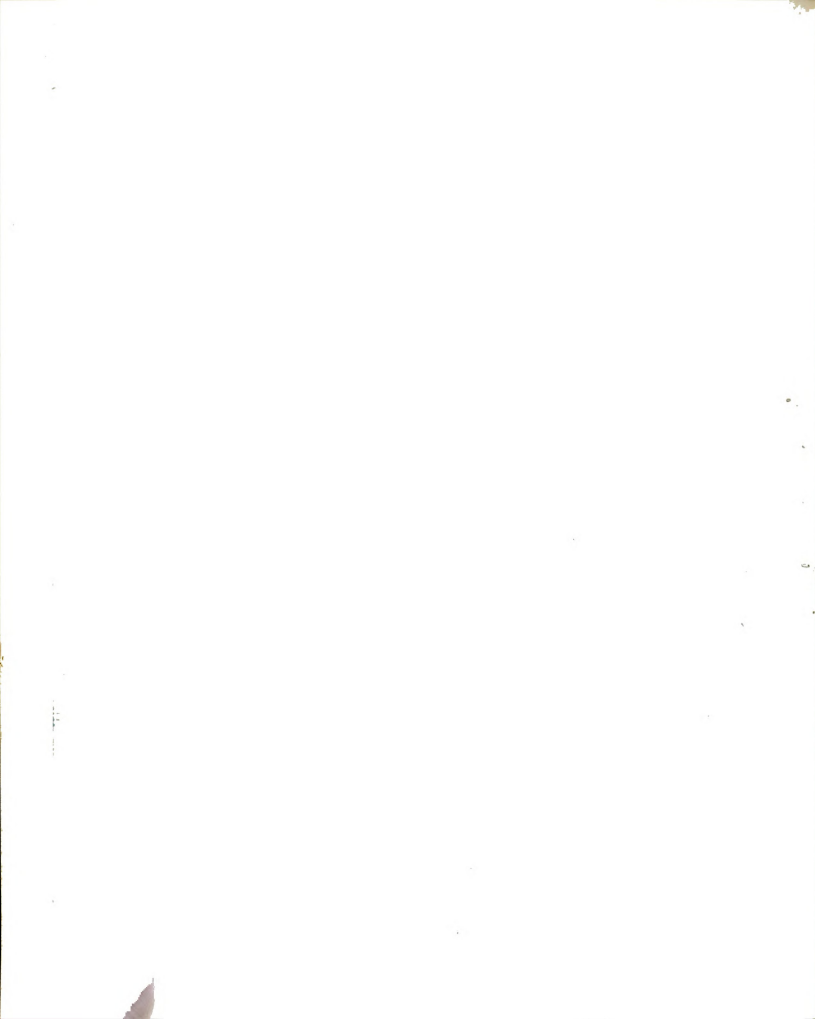
A THESIS

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Comparative Literature Program

1973



G 80268

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE PREFACE	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	iii
Chapter	
I. HEMINGWAY: THE PURIFIED VISION FROM THE KILL . . . . .	1
II. FAULKNER: THE REVENGE OF THE RUINED WOODS . . . . .	124
III. CONCLUSION: A COMPARISON OF <u>THE OLD MAN</u> <u>AND THE SEA</u> AND <u>"THE BEAR"</u> . . . . .	209
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	250

## INTRODUCTION

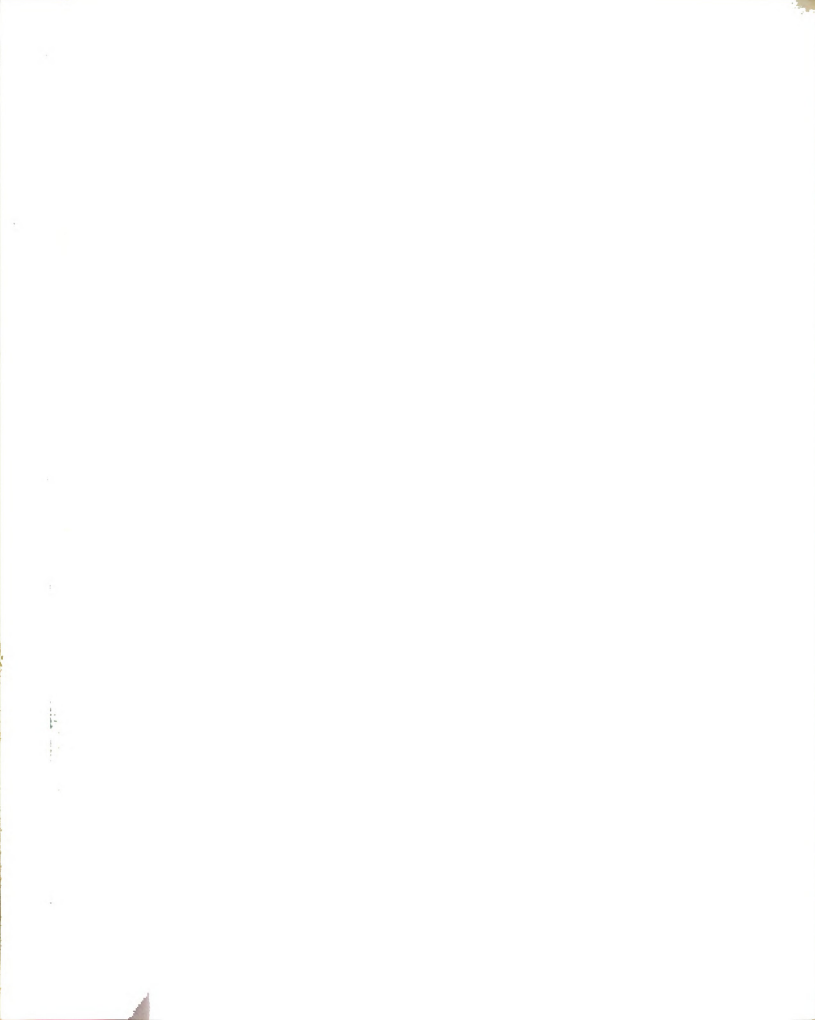
For this study I have chosen one of the many possible metaphors which might be used in comparing Hemingway and Faulkner. I am using the term metaphor in the very simple sense of a dramatization of ideas and feelings, assuming, for instance, that when a man chooses to go hunting he does so because that activity corresponds to ideas and feelings which he wishes to express and that when a writer chooses to write about men who go hunting he does so for the same reason. Among the many other metaphors that might have been used for this study (and were seriously considered) are love, the experience of time, war, and choices of personal ethical values. I rejected the metaphor of love because male-female relationships are rarely portrayed comfortably by either of these writers and I preferred to study them in an area that is generally experienced as positive for both men. I rejected the metaphor of time because I found it to be much more fully dramatized in Faulkner's works than in Hemingway's, and war for the reverse reason. And, finally, I decided that choices of personal ethical values was too general and abstract and could be more clearly approached in a limited



and concrete area. I struck upon hunting which is used in a substantial number of works of each author and which I consider to embody values and attitudes, in each case, typical of the author's total body of work.

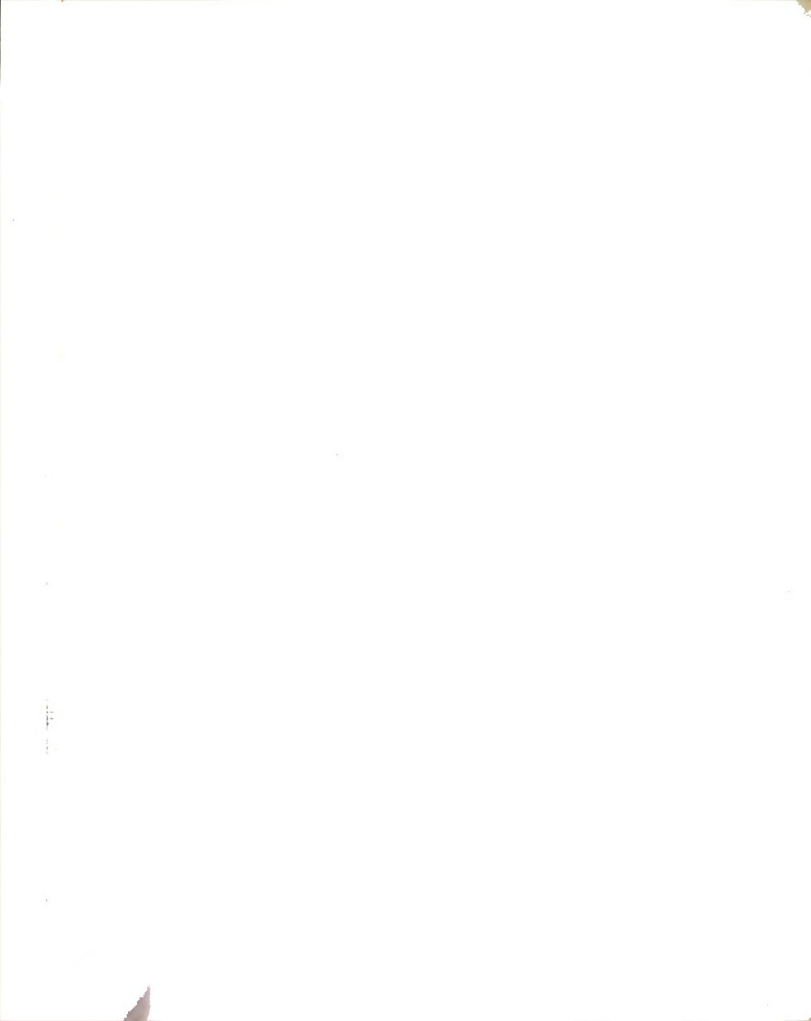
Another term which I use frequently and wish to define in order to avoid ambiguity is ritual, by which I mean an established or prescribed procedure of doing something, designed to bring about, at each repetition, the same result. Further, I want to distinguish between traditional rituals, like the bullfight or hunting deer from a canebrake, for which the procedures have been handed down from generation to generation, and personal rituals, like Nick Adams' imaginary fishing of all the streams he knows or Ike McCaslin's relinquishing himself to the wilderness, which have been found, by experimentation, to be personally efficacious for the individual.

This is intended to be an interpretative rather than a scholarly study. I will try to show, through footnotes where necessary and through a bibliography, a familiarity with Hemingway and Faulkner criticism, however my focus will be interpretation and comparison based on a narrowed range of the works of the two writers. In the two main chapters to follow, I will study the writers separately. In the last chapter, I will study comparatively The Old Man and the Sea and "The Bear," using these works for specific examples of comparison and hoping, by this



structure, to avoid an abstract because generalized set of conclusions or the repetition of a series of examples drawn only from works previously discussed.

I hope that this study will add to Hemingway and Faulkner criticism some important individual insights into the works studied and a general perspective of comparison which lights up some of the previously hidden corners by focusing its light from an altered angle.



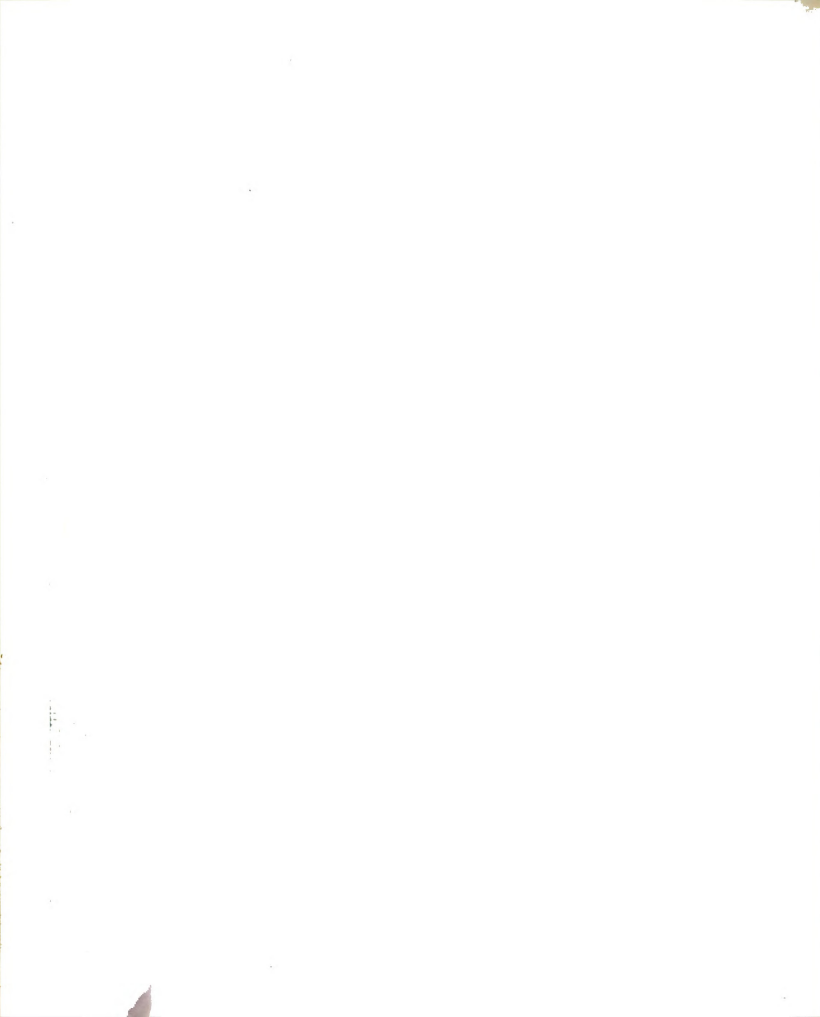
## CHAPTER I

### HEMINGWAY: THE PURIFIED VISION

#### FROM THE KILL

Hunting, fishing and bullfighting--the ritualized killing of animals--create, in Hemingway's works, the occasion for the individual to live more intensely in the present moment. Killing is a private experience for the one who kills, not really something to be shared with others. The one area of exception to this rule is the highly stylized vicarious experience of bullfighting, and even there the experience of the bullfighter himself is emphasized as a very private one, not even to be shared with other bullfighters. In this solipsistic universe, others may get what they wish from identifying with his experience, but they cannot take the experience away from him, or even divide it by sharing it.

For Hemingway's hero there is an isolation of the individual in a present activity which allows him to block out all past and present unpleasantness and dominate himself (in the sense of controlling his responses and even his emotions) as well as the beast he faces. Tradition, in the usual sense, is not an important factor in the killing experience for the Hemingway character; he does not



seek or find a link to the past except in the sense of a union with himself in the past, a recreation of his own youth and a reexperience of himself free from current fears and pain.

For the Hemingway character, the highest ethical value is "killing cleanly," striking a careful balance of fair practices in relation to the animal of quest, creating an even competition, and never tipping the balance by cheating on the rules. These rules do not serve an abstract concept like "honor," however, they serve to protect the quality of the hero's own experience. The virtues most respected are discipline and courage, yet again there is never an abstract insistence on their value. These are simply the qualities most frequently required in the concrete situations that are important to the hero. He believes firmly that these qualities, vital to his masculinity and thus to his sense of himself, can be developed in hunting (or bullfighting) and automatically be transferred to the other aspects of one's life.

This chapter will include a consideration of bullfighting, beginning with Hemingway's non-fiction work, Death in the Afternoon, followed by the fictional works on this theme, and ending with The Sun Also Rises, which has significant bullfighting scenes but also demonstrates by contrast the value of fishing. A discussion of The Green



Hills of Africa will precede that of the fictional works on fishing and hunting, including some Nick Adams stories, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," Across the River and Into the Trees, and Islands in the Stream.

# I.

The bullfight, for Hemingway, is a ritualized contact with "violent death," one of the "simplest" and, therefore (by his definition and his logic), most "fundamental" things in life and, consequently, one of the best subjects through which to learn to write. The bull ring, he said in Death in the Afternoon, is "The only place where you could see life and death, i.e., violent death now that the wars were over. . . ." <sup>1</sup> And so, because of the connection he made between these two things, he went to Spain to study "violent death" and to learn how to write by writing about it.

Hemingway's moral system is neither intellectual nor rational, but rather visceral, both in relation to the bullfight and to the rest of life.

So far, about morals, I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after and judged by these moral standards, which I do not defend, the bullfight is very moral to me because I feel very fine while it is going on and have a feeling of life and death

---

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932, p. 2. All subsequent quotations from this work will be from the same edition.



and mortality and immortality, and after it is over I feel very sad but very fine (p. 4).<sup>1</sup>

He "feels," then, that the bullfight is moral and it is the contact with this "fine" feeling which seems to explain, and even to justify for Hemingway, the killing inherent in the sport.

Once you accept the rule of death thou shalt not kill is an easily and a naturally obeyed commandment. But when a man is still in rebellion against death he has pleasure in taking to himself one of the Godlike attributes; that of giving it. This is one of the most profound feelings in those men who enjoy killing. These things are done in pride and pride, of course, is a Christian sin, and a pagan virtue. But it is pride which makes the bullfight and true enjoyment which makes the great matador (p. 233).

He further justifies the bullfight (and other killing of animals) in an indirect manner, by stating that

. . . people may possibly be divided into two general groups; those who . . . identify themselves with . . . animals, and those who identify themselves with human beings. I believe, after experience and observation, that those people who identify themselves with animals, that is, the almost professional lovers of dogs, and other beasts, are capable of greater cruelty to human beings than those who do not identify themselves readily with animals (p. 5).

The morality of the bullfight for Hemingway, then, is a pagan morality, based on pride, the "feeling of life and death and mortality and immortality," how one treats human beings and, finally, just feeling "very fine." These are

---

<sup>1</sup>Hemingway has said here, in his own name and more firmly, what Jake Barnes says but then calls "bilge" in The Sun Also Rises (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927, p. 206): ". . . That was morality, things that made you disgusted afterward. No, that must be immorality. That was a large statement. What a lot of bilge I could think up at night."

not the elements of a highly developed philosophy thus far, and so it is necessary to trace the development later, in action, beyond what Hemingway states in words on this subject.

The sense of immortality to be gained, or a feeling of mastery of death, is not only part of the moral justification of the bullfight, it is central to the emotional and aesthetic attractions that the spectacle has for Hemingway.

Now the essence of the greatest emotional appeal of bullfighting is the feeling of immortality that the bullfighter has in the middle of a great faena and that he gives to the spectators. He is performing a work of art and he is playing with death, bringing it closer, closer, closer, to himself, a death that you know is in the horns because you have the canvas covered bodies of the horses on the sand to prove it. He gives the feeling of his immortality, and as you watch it, it becomes yours. Then when it belongs to both of you, he proves it with the sword (p. 213).

The feeling of immortality is closely united with the aesthetic appeal of the bullfight, as well as with the moral validity. Hemingway finds beauty in "killing cleanly," says that the bullfighter must consider killing "the best thing he can do" and must kill with a feeling of abnegation and "a sense of honor and a sense of glory" and even with "a spiritual enjoyment of the moment of killing" (p. 232). All this comes together for him in the very moment of the killing:

. . . the beauty of the moment of killing is that flash when man and bull form one figure as the sword goes all the way in, the man leaning after it, death uniting the two figures in the emotional, aesthetic and artistic climax of the fight (p. 247).

Hemingway's metaphors for the bullfight emphasize the ritualized form of the action. He calls it a tragedy with three acts, with precise rules which the bullfighter must enforce. "Act one is the act of the capes, the pics and the horses. In it the bull has the greatest opportunity to display his bravery or cowardice" (p. 96). The horse, the "comic character" in the "tragedy of the bullfight" (p. 6), appears only in the first act. His death tends to be comic because it is a matter of "visceral accidents" which take away his dignity, and dignity is essential to tragedy.

Act two is that of the banderillas. . . . They are designed to complete the work of slowing up the bull and regulating the carriage of his head which has been begun by the picadors. . . . (p. 96).

Hemingway calls this ". . . the most picturesque part of the bullfight and the part most spectators care for the most when first seeing fights." And then,

. . . the third and final division is the death. It is made up of three parts. First the brindis or salutation of the president and dedication or toasting of the death of the bull . . . followed by the work of the matador with the muleta . . . with which the matador is supposed to master the bull, prepare him for killing and finally hold in his left hand to lower the bull's head and keep it lowered while he kills the animal by a sword thrust high up between his shoulder blades (pp. 97-98).

The artistry of the bullfighter is displayed most fully in this last act. He can

. . . create the danger himself by working as close to the bull's charge as possible and will be able to attempt a variety of passes, selecting them himself and arranging them in an emotional sequence. . . . (p. 106).



The bull himself must be forced to play his part in the game or ritual, but much of the excitement of the fight comes from the possibility that he might not play his prescribed role and that the tragedy can end with the death of the matador rather than that of the bull.

The bullfight is a forced ritual, then, in which some participants follow fixed rules and try to force other players into prescribed patterns of behavior. Kenneth Burke reminds us that the origins of ritual and myth are ". . . in drama, and in drama of a purely ceremonial sort. . . ." Burke says further that

The primitive lives in the "pure present," his rituals linking past, present, and future into one (as they seek scrupulously to reenact a past ceremony in the present, for future efficacy, and their past persists in their present quite as the Catholic will tell you that every day Christ is crucified--the event being not merely "historical," but continuous).<sup>1</sup>

The linking of drama and ritual may help to explain Hemingway's insistence on the bullfight as tragedy. Further, the power of the ritual to collapse past and future time into that now which is so emphatic in Hemingway's works helps to explain the multiplicity of rituals (of sport, war and love) within his works. Specifically, in relation to the bullfight, the drama enacted is a repetition of past confrontations with one's own fear (fear of death, fear of

---

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form. Revised edition, abridged by the author; New York: Vintage Books, 1957, p. 317.



loss of youth and masculinity, fear of the animal within oneself) for the purpose of warding off future fear. As are all rituals, this one is characterized by the paradox of time: it is both limited in time (the time of its enactment and of its efficacy) and yet timeless, in that it is outside of time and serves to merge past and future into the present. Because of the limitation in time, the exorcism must be reenacted, but, because of the timelessness, one can count on the efficacy of future repetitions.

The ritual is also a sacrifice, however, in which the bull is made a scapegoat for what one fears and the rules function to assure that one can overcome this personification of his own animal instincts. But Burke refers to the "ambiguity of sacrifice and kill." He says that

In the sacrifice there is a kill; in the kill there is a sacrifice. But one or the other of this pair may be stressed as the "essence" of the two. Hemingway, for instance, stresses the kill in the purifying role played by the sacrificial animal, as against the stress upon the sacrifice in the story of Christ. In both Hemingway and Malraux we get the kill as the act from which the purified vision follows. . . . The sacrificial bulls and wild game die in behalf of the slayer (dying that he may "live more intensely"). (Burke, pp. 40-41).

The drama of the bullfight enfolds a further ambiguity: a confusion of the sacrificer with the sacrificed. It is striking that bulls in Hemingway works (like Macomber's lion, like Hemingway's kudu in The Green Hills of Africa, and like Santiago's marlin) embody the very qualities (honor, pride, endurance, courage) which Hemingway and



his heroes value most highly. Perhaps, reverting to primitive religions in which a fierce animal, frequently the bull, symbolized the strength and grace of the gods, another layer of meaning of the ritual is a religious one in which one kills the god and assumes his powers, at least temporarily. This confusion of identifications is seen in The Sun Also Rises when Jake, Brett, Bill and Mike identify themselves with the bulls and classify Robert Cohn, the outcast, as a steer. Later, following the first fight, they experience a catharsis and the resultant elation after the death of the bulls: "We had that disturbed emotional feeling that always comes after a bull-fight, and the feeling of elation that comes after a good bull-fight" (p. 164). They identify alternately with the bulls and with the force that overcomes the bulls.

As if to confirm the ambiguity of identification of priest and victim, the drama ends with the fusion of man and bull in that "emotional, aesthetic and artistic climax" which Hemingway describes in highly sexual images, even though he characterizes as "erectile writing" Waldo Frank's more explicit sexual interpretation of the bullfight, with the bull as the masculine and the graceful torero as the feminine elements.<sup>1</sup> He would probably have found even more objectionable Hovey's opinion that

---

<sup>1</sup>Or, as Carlos Baker puts it, Hemingway ". . . is never guilty of Freudian fiddle-faddle." (Hemingway: The Writer as Artist. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956, p. 152.)



. . . from one point of view, the bullfight is a ritualized acting out of the universal Oedipal struggle. The bull (a totem, as it were) represents the powerful father; the matador is the son who challenges. That they fight for the possession of a woman is suggested in that, when particularly successful, the matador presents the severed ears of the dead bull to the woman of his choice--the trophies of a symbolic castration.<sup>1</sup>

As much as Hemingway might dislike that interpretation, it is reminiscent of the story in Death in the Afternoon of the brother and sister of a young gypsy who had been killed by a bull, who cut off the bull's testicles and roast and eat them.

The bullfight, for Hemingway, is comparable to war in terms of the relationship one can assume there to "violent death," as indicated in a passage quoted before in another context: "The only place where you could see life and death, i.e., violent death now that the wars were over, was in the bull ring. . . ." (p. 2). Later he says about a particularly bad, and therefore unpleasant fight, "It was about as brilliant an action as the battle of Passchendaele; with apologies for comparing a commercial spectacle with a battle. . . ." (p. 154). Perhaps he would compare a good corrida to the final battle of Verdun. A further military comparison can be made of the situation of the matador to that of a soldier under fire in that both must demonstrate physical courage, technical skill and a

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard B. Hovey, Hemingway: The Inward Terrain. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, p. 108.



high sense of honor to acquit themselves well in the crisis of their situation. The matador may be said to combine the skills and qualities of the soldier with the interests of the hunter.

Hemingway further refines his definition of the bullfight as ritual by insisting that it is not an athletic contest.

The bullfight is not a sport in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the word, that is, it is not an equal contest or an attempt at an equal contest between a bull and a man. Rather, it is a tragedy; the death of the bull, which is played, more or less well, by the bull and the man involved and in which there is danger for the man but certain death for the animal (p. 16).

In a sport, the outcome is uncertain; ~~in a ritual~~ and in a tragedy the outcome is predetermined and the interest centers on how well each participant plays his role. The bullfighter is at once an actor and the director of the spectacle, a besieged warrior who must defend himself and the general who must plan to win the battle according to certain rules of honor.

Finally, the bullfight takes on mystical and religious significance for Hemingway as a ritual in which an animal is sacrificed and in which, as in tragedy, the crowd is united in its mutual vicarious participation in the actions committed in the ring and find themselves changed by the experience. Hemingway speaks at one point of a poor matador who kills "like a butcher boy" as compared to an excellent one who kills "like a priest at benediction" (p. 259). In a light tone he makes the comparison of the



bullfighter to a priest and the fight to a sacrifice when, in an aside on painters, he says that Goya's crucifixion painting, ". . . could serve as a poster for the announcement of crucifixions in the manner of bullfight posters," then proceeds with the following possible announcement for the poster:

A crucifixion of six carefully selected Christs will take place at five o'clock in the Monumental Golgotha of Madrid, government permission having been obtained. The following wellknown, accredited and notable crucifiers will officiate, each accompanied by his cuadrilla of nailers, hammerers, cross-raisers and spade-men, etc. (p. 204).

Again he makes the analogy of bullfighting to an organized religion when he speaks of the "complete bullfighter," who will be a "god" or "messiah" to the art:

What is needed in bullfighting today is a complete bullfighter who is at the same time an artist to save it from the specialists. . . . What it needs is a god to drive the half-gods out. But waiting for a messiah is a long business and you get many fake ones. There is no record in the Bible of the number of fake messiahs that came before Our Lord, but the history of the last ten years of bullfighting would record little else (p. 86).

Finally, in seriousness and with rapture, Hemingway brings together the religious and tragic elements of the bullfight in a rhapsodic passage which captures the hope which sustains the bullfight:

. . . . If the spectators know the matador is capable of executing a complete consecutive series of passes with the muleta in which there will be valor, art, understanding and, above all, beauty and great emotion, they will put up with mediocre work, cowardly work, disastrous work because they have the hope sooner or later of seeing the complete faena; the faena that takes a man out of himself



and makes him feel immortal while it is proceeding, that gives him an ecstasy, that is, while momentary, as profound as any religious ecstasy; moving all the people in the ring together and increasing in emotional intensity as it proceeds, carrying the bullfighter with it, he playing on the crowd through the bull and being moved as it responds in a growing ecstasy of ordered, formal, passionate, increasing disregard for death that leaves you, when it is over, and the death administered to the animal that has made it possible, as empty, as changed and as sad as any major emotion will leave you (p. 206).

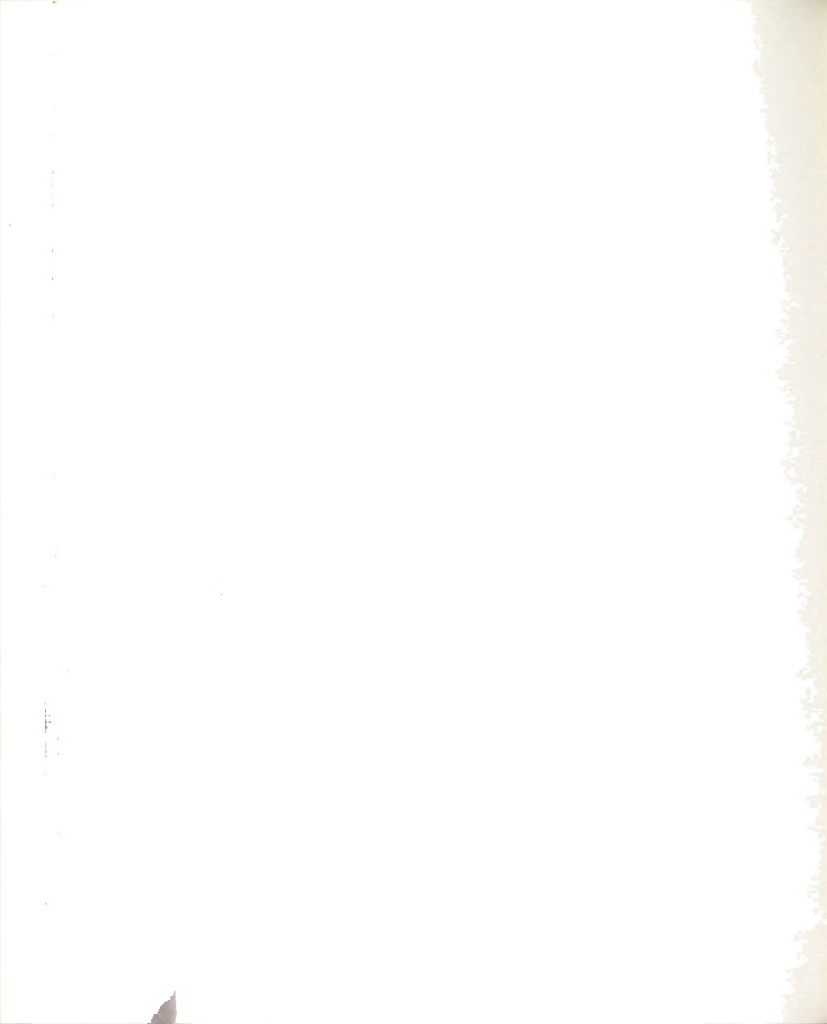
This does, indeed, sound like the tragic catharsis, and Hemingway's point seems proved.

The spectators of the bullfight are for Hemingway a mixed bag. First there are the critics, of whom Hemingway says:

One of the principal evils of bullfighting in Spain is not the venality of the critics . . . but the fact that because these critics live principally on the money they receive from matadors, their viewpoint is entirely that of the matador. . . . (p. 163).

In "The Undefeated," we are shown "the substitute bull-fight critic of El Heraldo" who is not only totally insensitive to the real drama of Manuel's fight as the narrator reveals it to us, but is the very barometer of the lack of understanding of the crowd. Among the spectators there are some few whom Hemingway calls aficionados. In Death in the Afternoon, he gives this definition:

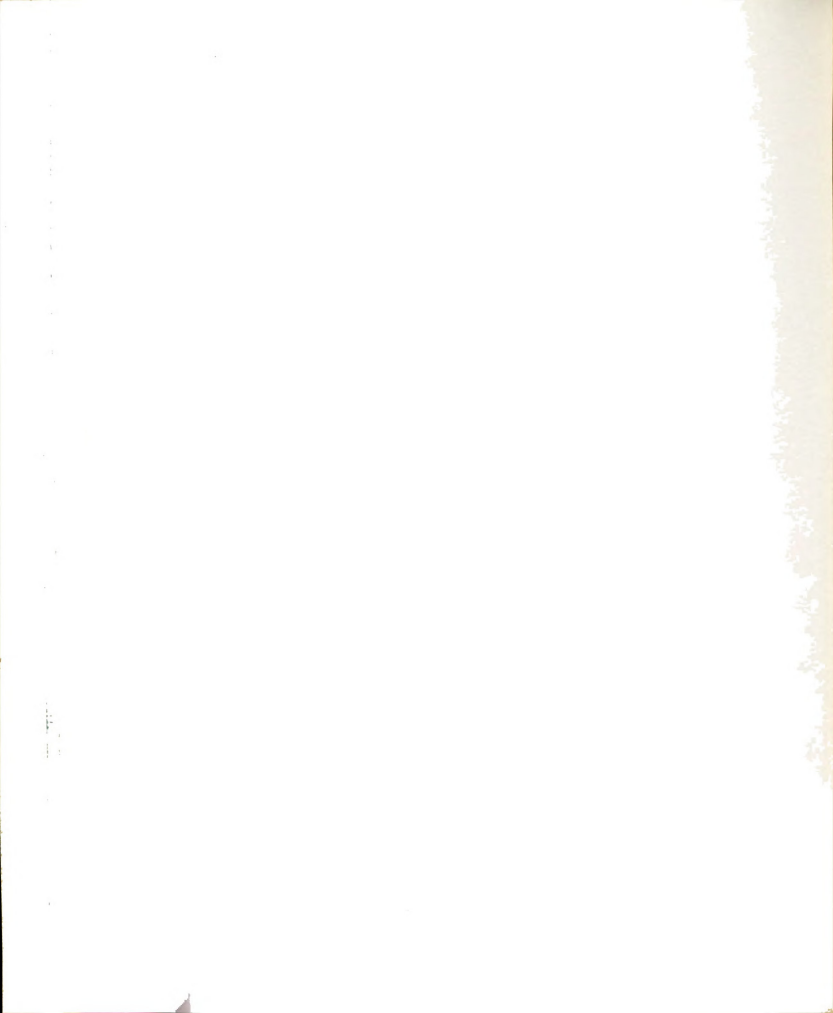
The aficionado, or lover of the bullfight, may be said, broadly, then, to be one who has this sense of the tragedy and ritual of the fight so that the minor aspects are not important except as they relate to the whole. . . . (p. 9).



He speaks with scorn of "the wealthy curiosity trade from Biarritz and the Basque Coast" who ". . . after the first bull stand up to make their well-fed, skull and bones-ed, porcellain-ed, beach-tanned, flannelled, Panama-hatted, sport-shod exits" (pp. 33-34). They resemble the "Biarritz crowd" in The Sun Also Rises, who do not understand that Romero is working with a bull that does not see colors and they think he is afraid of the bull. Jake says of them, contemptuously, "They preferred Belmonte's imitation of himself or Marcial's imitation of Belmonte" (p. 218). Like all tourists in Hemingway works, they do not recognize the "real thing" when they see it.

The special status of the aficionado in Hemingway's value system is made more clear in The Sun Also Rises. Montoya is a model aficionado, who even makes his business and social judgments (i.e., his choice of people to whom he will let rooms and his decision about whether or not to let Romero know the American ambassador has invited him to a party) in the light of serving the cause of the bullfight. He relates to Jake as to a fraternity brother:

He always smiled as though bull-fighting were a very special secret between the two of us; a rather shocking but really very deep secret that we knew about. He always smiled as though there were something lewd about the secret to outsiders, but that it was something that we understood. It would not do to expose it to people who would not understand (p. 131).



In describing the larger group of aficionados who stop in to greet Montoya, Hemingway gives the relationship among them a mystic significance:

Men would come in from distant towns and before they left Pamplona stop and talk for a few minutes with Montoya about bulls. These men were aficionados. . . . When they saw I had aficion, and there was no password, no set questions that could bring it out, rather it was a sort of oral spiritual examination with the questions always a little on the defensive and never apparent, there was this same embarrassed putting the hand on the shoulder, or a "Buen hombre." But nearly always there was the actual touching. It seemed as though they wanted to touch you to make it certain (p. 132).

This is a male-only communion in the vicarious pleasures of the bull-ring, restricted to those who pass the test of the secret society of aficionados.

Although the bullfight is a spectacle with a wide array of support characters--the picadors, the banderilleros, the horses, even the spectators--one must not be distracted from the true center of the ritual: "The tragedy is all centered in the bull and in the man" (p. 6). What is expected of the bull sounds like very little, but that little is essential: "All of bullfighting is founded on the bravery of the bull, his simplicity and his lack of experience. . . ." (p. 145). If the bull is not brave, he will not charge the man, but will retreat defensively near the barreras and has a distinct advantage in his counter-attack when the bull-fighter comes after him, after trying to lure him out. If the bull has previously encountered



dismounted men, he is too wise to follow the lure of the cape or muleta and will cut in on the man at each pass and make the man behave defensively rather than being in control and gracefully carrying out his own plan.

The bullfight has been so developed and organized that the bull has just time enough, coming into the ring completely unfamiliar with dismounted men, to learn to distrust all their artifices and reach the summit of his danger at the moment of killing (p. 106).

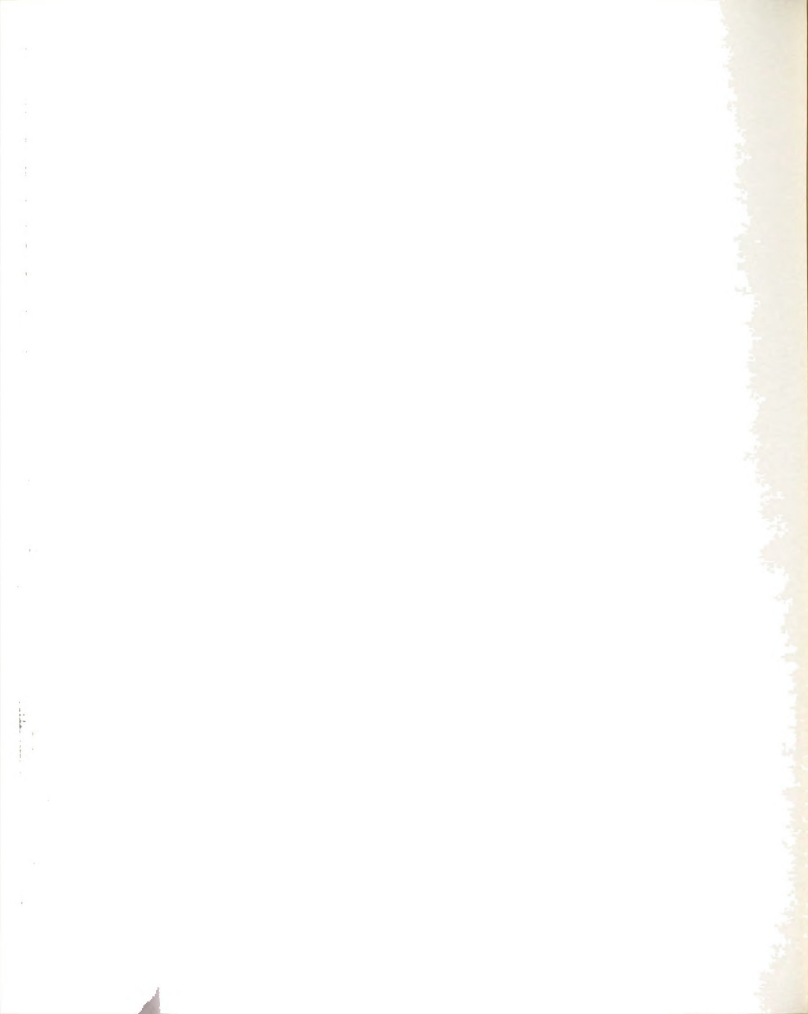
What is expected of the bullfighter is far more complex. He, too, must be brave:

Nearly all bullfighters are brave . . . , the most common degree of bravery being the ability temporarily to ignore possible consequences. A more pronounced degree of bravery, which comes with exhilaration, is the ability not to give a damn for possible consequences; not only to ignore them but to despise them (p. 58).

The true bravery of the matador cannot be measured until the first time he has been seriously wounded:

All matadors are gored dangerously, painfully and very close to fatally, sooner or later, in their careers, and until a matador has undergone this first severe wound you cannot tell what his permanent value will be. . . . (p. 166).

The great bullfighter must also have artistic ability and a highly developed technical skill, which are not replaceable by bravery alone: ". . . the two great causes of failure, eliminating bad luck, are lack of artistic ability, which of course cannot be overcome by valor, and fear" (p. 224). What happens when the matador loses his courage, usually because of a painful goring, is what Hemingway calls "nerved-up bullfighting," which results in



drawing the spectators' attention away from the drama of man leading bull to his death and directs the attention on the man as sufferer. This issue of emphasis allows another contrast of Christian and pagan (or what Hemingway sometimes calls "pre-Christian") viewpoints. Just as pride is a Christian sin and a pagan virtue, suffering is a Christian virtue which the pagan has little respect for, and Hemingway chooses the pagan value over the Christian again. In Burke's terms, allowing the attention to go to the man as sufferer would be to emphasize the sacrifice rather than the kill.

When a bullfighter can no longer see the bull come calmly, without having to nerve himself, then he is through as a successful bullfighter. Nerved-up bullfighting is sad to watch. The spectators do not want it. They pay to see the tragedy of the bull; not the man. . . . (p. 166).

The qualities demanded of the matador, then, are bravery and artistic ability; the obligation placed upon him is to use these qualities to dominate the bull at all times and to wear him down to the point where he, the matador, can kill the bull with a sword thrust high up between the shoulders.

The reason the man is required to kill the bull high up between the shoulders is because the bull is able to defend that place and will only uncover it and make it vulnerable if the man brings his body within range of the horn provided he enters according to the rules. To kill a bull in his neck or his flank, which he cannot defend, is assassination. To kill him high up between the shoulders demands risk by the man and studied ability if great danger is to be avoided. . . . (p. 246).



The value in this last maneuver lies totally in the way it is done, not in its success:

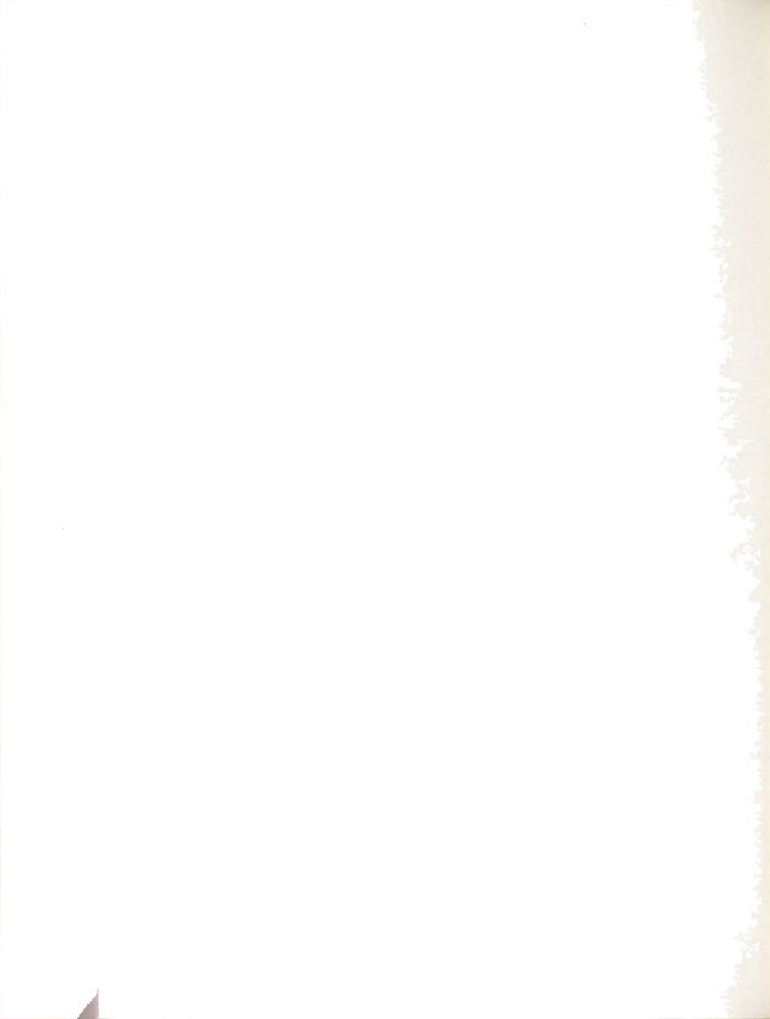
. . . if, as he goes in left shoulder first, the sword strikes bones and refuses to penetrate, or if it strikes ribs or the edge of the vertebrae and is deviated so that it goes in only a third of the way, the merit of the attempt at killing is as great as though the sword had gone all the way in and killed, since the man has taken the risk and the result has only been falsified by chance (p. 247).

The matador must always approach the bull from the front and

. . . should dominate and direct the bull's course. Any other way of fighting, such as making statue-like passes in the direction of the bull's natural voyage, no matter how brilliant, is not true bull-fighting, since it is the animal that is dominating, not the man (p. 152).

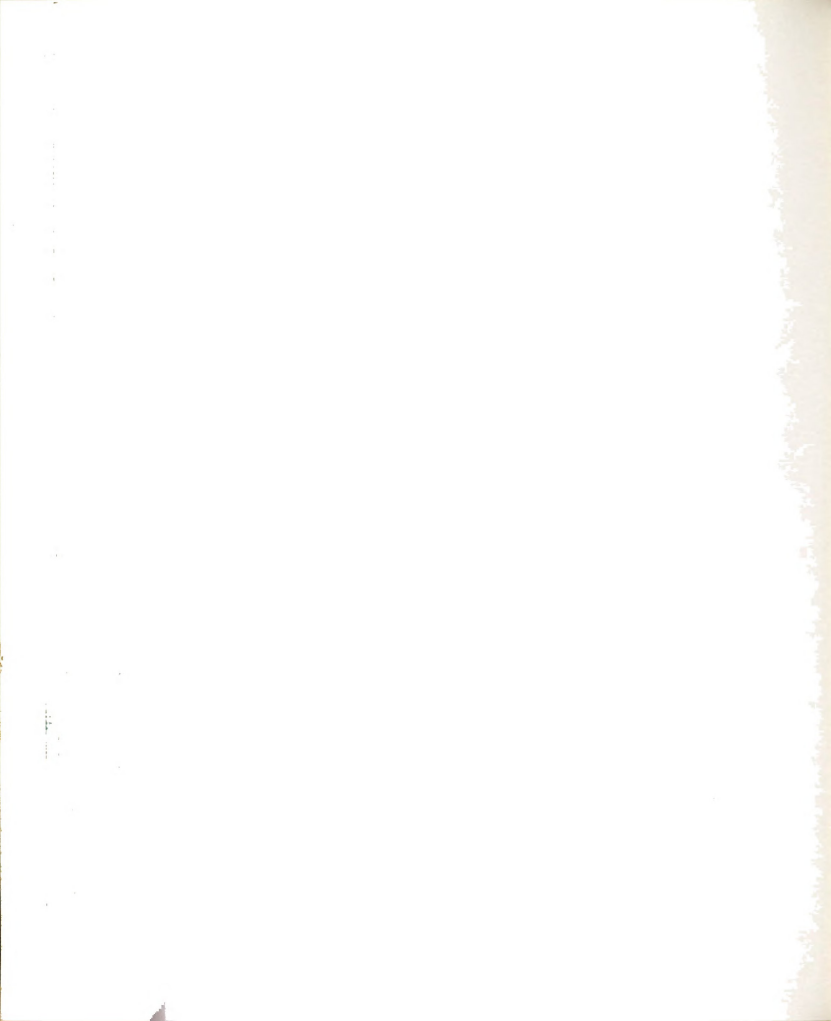
Physical danger is a constant for the unmounted man in the ring with a bull, but he must remain in control of the degree of this danger. The rules of the fight exist to insure that danger is incurred within limits carefully calculated on the qualities of an average bullfighter. The rules exist to protect the matador from needless risk, to protect the bull from "riskless assassination" and to protect the spectators from an emotionless spectacle which will not have the ritual effect they expected. Hemingway says that

. . . the matador, if he knows his profession, can increase the amount of the danger of death that he runs exactly as much as he wishes. He should, however, increase this danger, within the rules provided for his protection. In other words, it is to his credit if he does something that he knows how to do in a highly dangerous but still geometrically possible manner. It is to his discredit if he runs danger through ignorance,



through disregard of the fundamental rules, through physical or mental slowness, or through blind folly (p. 21).

An irony of Hemingway's view of the bullfight is that the matador must not achieve too high a degree of perfection; he must retain enough human imperfection to allow the spectators to identify with him, or the ritual does not work as it should. Again a comparison with the Greek tragedy seems appropriate; the tragic flaw of the hero, which is a necessary element because it serves the function of allowing the audience to identify with him, is analagous to the human imperfection necessary in the bullfighter. In each case the spectator would have difficulty projecting himself into the experiences of a god-like creature who was sure to win in all his clashes with opposing forces. Hemingway describes a very moving scene in which Manuel García, called Maera (after whom the Manuel García of "The Undefeated" seems to be modeled), who had weak wrists, tried many times to place properly the sword between a bull's shoulder blades. The combination of a badly swollen wrist and simple bad luck caused the sword to hit bone and rebound many times with great pain to Maera. Showing contempt for the wrist that was not functioning properly rather than reacting to his own pain (much as Santiago reacts to his cramped hand), Maera continued until the sword went in properly, rather than killing the bull in an easier but less honorable way. Hemingway describes Maera



with his most superlative phrase: "Era muy hombre" (p. 82). By contrast, Hemingway reacts icily to the near perfect performances of Joselito:

When you have a bullfighter to whom bullfighting is as easy as it was to Joselito he cannot give the feeling of danger that Belmonte gave. Even if you saw him killed, it would not be you who would be killed, it would be more like the death of the gods. . . . (p. 213).

Joselito was indeed killed in the ring on May 16, 1920, and Alamendro, a well known banderillero, said, "If they can kill this man I tell you none of us is safe! None of us!" (p. 243). The they of Alamendro's statement does not seem to refer to the earthly and mortal bulls in the ring, but to some supernatural forces. The death of the gods may not be tragic, but it is indeed frightening.

Philip Young says of Death in the Afternoon:

But the aspect of the book which most obviously integrates it with the rest of its author's work is the code which Hemingway admired in the bullfighters. The men are previews of the guide Wilson, who taught Macomber. . . . There cannot be many zones of human endeavor in which more things are classified as "done" or "not done" than in bullfighting. And governing this etiquette, which prescribes one's behavior to the last curve of the last finger, are the all-important qualities of honor and cojones (for which the English "courage" is a euphemism). Here is "grace under pressure" epitomized. The bullfighter is the man with the code, whom the hero studies, admires and emulates. More than this, Hemingway seemed to see bullfighting as a ritual which acts out his conception of men as creatures who pit themselves against violent death, and to see the bullfighter as high priest of the ceremonial. With a behavior that gracefully formalizes



the code, he administers the death men seek to avoid. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Bullfighting does not present a formula for patterning one's life in these works; Hemingway neither followed such a formula himself, nor does he present it as a possibility for Jake Barnes or Nick Adams. Bullfighting offers, rather, a tradition and a set of circumstances which permit the formulation of an idealized sense of integrity, a distant vision of a man whose life is whole and not fragmented and who has his course of action prescribed for him if he can live up to it. In Hemingway's world a man's major task is to set up the moral conditions under which he will live. His works deal mainly with men at this stage of their lives,<sup>2</sup> trying to formulate their conditions with few guides except the notion of "what you feel good after" (Death in the Afternoon, p. 4), and the bullfighter provides a distant model of the possibilities of honor and courage in the world.

## II.

"Capital of the World" is the story of Paco, an apprentice waiter, who is innocent, naïve and courageous.

---

<sup>1</sup>Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>Across the River and into the Trees and The Old Man and the Sea, as well as some of the short stories, deal with a man at a later stage, his conditions long set, who is trying to live out their implications.



We learn of his innocence from the narrator who says that Paco ". . . had no father to forgive him, nor anything for the father to forgive."<sup>1</sup> We deduce his naïveté from what he loved

. . . he loved his sisters, who seemed beautiful and sophisticated; he loved Madrid, which was still an unbelievable place, and he loved his work which, done under bright lights, with clean linen, the wearing of evening clothes, and abundant food in the kitchen, seemed romantically beautiful. . . . (p. 38).

and from what he wanted to be ("He himself would like to be a good catholic, a revolutionary, and have a steady job like this, while, at the same time, being a bullfighter.") (pp. 42-43). And we first believe in his courage because of his confidence in it ("No, he would not be afraid. Others, yes. Not he. He knew he would not be afraid. Even if he ever was afraid he knew that he could do it anyway. He had confidence. 'I wouldn't be afraid,' he said.") (p. 47). And then we are convinced of this courage when we see him unflinching before the two kitchen knives which Enrique, the dish washer, has tied on chair legs to simulate the horns of a bull.

Paco lives by the bullfighter's code, and follows it more faithfully than any of the three matadors who live at the Pension Luarca. He has natural grace and artistic

---

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Hemingway, The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938, p. 38. All subsequent quotations from Hemingway's stories will be from this edition unless otherwise specified.



ability with the cape and he has courage. All he lacks is good luck, which Hemingway deems necessary for any endeavor in life, from fighting bulls to writing. In contrast with Paco, we measure the failings of the "second-rate matadors" of the Pension Luarca, knowing that ". . . second-rate bull fighters never became first rate" (p. 39). The ill matador concentrates on maintaining his dignity by not letting anyone else know that he is ill. The matador "who had once been a novelty" seeks the illusion of bull ring activity by immersing himself in conversations with serious and successful toreros in the café. The cowardly matador, who can no longer prove his masculinity in the bull ring, tries to seduce Paco's sister. Because of her refusal, he ". . . felt the nakedness of his cowardice return." Even a prostitute for whom he buys drinks goes off with the successful picador. He turns to women because he has failed in the bullfight arena, but he fails with women also.

Paco, with his "ready and unpuzzled smile," also presents a contrast with Enrique who "was very cynical and bitter." Enrique has assumed that since he is afraid everyone else is also. He does drop his cynicism abruptly when he sees that Paco is willing to undergo the trial-by-knives ("'No', said Enrique, suddenly not bitter. 'Don't do it, Paco.'") (p. 47). His cynicism does not return and he ends up rushing to bring a doctor to Paco, with a policeman holding on to his arm. We can only wonder what Enrique has learned from Paco.



While maintaining the code of the bullfighter, Paco has had none of the glory. He dies with courage but not with "decorum and dignity" which ". . . rank above courage as the virtues most highly prized in Spain . . ." (p. 39). The contrast between performing in a beautiful suit before an enthusiastic crowd in the traditional trappings of the Madrid bull ring and being stabbed by a knife tied to a chair leg and dying alone in the dining room of a pension which caters to second-rate bullfighters is similar to the contrast which left Paco's sisters and all Madrid "disappointed in the Garbo film, which showed the great star in miserable low surroundings when they had been accustomed to see her surrounded by great luxury and brilliance" (p. 50).

The narrative perspective of the story is ironic but Paco and his suffering are not the butt of the irony. As Leo Gurko points out, Hemingway's change of the name of this story from "The Horns of the Bull" to "Capital of the World" diffuses the emphasis from Paco and his tragedy to the city of Madrid,<sup>1</sup> a sordid kind of place where on every level (the bullfight, religion, politics) the people, in contrast to Paco, have lost their illusions. Much of the irony of the story stems from the abrupt juxtapositions of Paco's world and the rest of Madrid: Enrique binding the

---

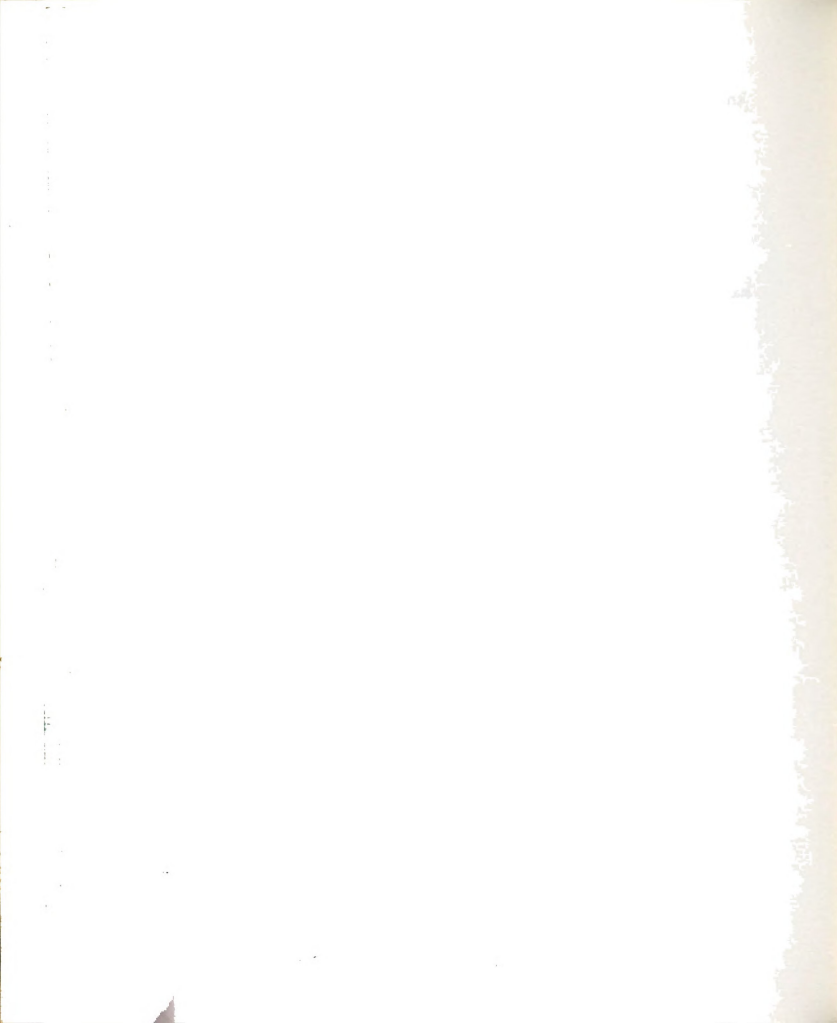
<sup>1</sup>Leo Gurko, Ernest Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968, p. 193.



knives to the legs of the chair while at the same time Paco's sisters are on their way to the Garbo film, the priests are praying in their underwear, the bullfighters chat idly in the café, the tall waiter waits to speak at the Anarcho-Syndicalist meeting, the woman who owns the Luarca sleeps with a bolster between her legs and the ill matador lies on his bed with a handkerchief to his mouth. And, as Paco dies, his sisters are being disappointed by the film, the two priests are going to bed peacefully and the gray-haired picador is taking a prostitute away from the cowardly matador. The effect of these juxtapositions is not to diminish the importance of Paco's death but to show that he, like everyone else, must die by himself and for himself. Hemingway repeats many times over that when one person is suffering or dying, others are engaged in trivial activities, but their time will come, too.

Paco is someone special, however. He is not just one more person dying. Spain may value decorum and dignity above courage, but our narrator does not, nor do we in the context of the story. The narrator finds Paco special enough that he must fight off the sentimentalism of a phrase like, "He died . . . full of illusions," by adding ". . . as the Spanish phrase has it . . ." (p. 51), to distance himself from such a romantic statement.

Paco has followed the code, but he loses, like so many other Hemingway heroes, through bad luck. His luck



is comparable to that of the old man in "Old Man at the Bridge," who has had to leave his pets behind and cannot go further to escape the advancing Fascists.

It was a gray overcast day with a low ceiling so that planes were not up. That and the fact that cats know how to look after themselves was all the good luck that old man would ever have (p. 80).

Paco dies before he is able ". . . to complete an act of contrition" (p. 51). To die with his illusions (rather than to lose them like the rest of Madrid) and having nothing to forgive was all the good luck that Paco would ever have.

### III.

"The Undefeated" is about a very different kind of bullfighter. His name is Manuel García and some of the details of his story closely resemble the story of the real matador, Manuel García, called Maera, told in Death in the Afternoon.<sup>1</sup> Like Maera his endurance and perseverance in the ring, in spite of pain and frustration, is of the order that defines the true hero for Hemingway. Severely wounded, he will not stop until he has killed his bull. Five times he risks death to go in over the bull's horns with his sword. In spite of his serious goring and the fact that his career is probably over, his ability to last and to conquer his adversary make him "undefeated" in the same sense that this word can be applied to Santiago at the end of The Old Man and the Sea.

---

<sup>1</sup>Hovey (pp. 26-27) assumes that Manuel is the same person as Maera; most other critics do not make a connection.



Manuel is an aging matador and it is not made clear how successful he has been in the past; in the context of the story his past success or failure becomes irrelevant. He has the necessary courage to be a great fighter (he has passed the Hemingway test of bravery after being severely gored) and he has instinctual ability:

He thought in bull-fight terms. . . . His instincts and his knowledge worked automatically, and his brain worked slowly and in words. He knew all about bulls. He did not have to think about them. He just did the right thing. His eyes noted things and his body performed the necessary measures without thought. . . . (p. 260).

Like all of Hemingway's experts (or tutors or guides), he can do "the right thing" and do it "without thought." Like Paco, Manuel lacks luck. His final wounding is caused by the inability of the crowd to recognize "the real thing" and his bad luck in tripping over a cushion thrown down by the contemptuous crowd.

Unlike Paco, Manuel has few illusions about the world. He has been seriously wounded in the past (he has just come out of the hospital) and he knows the realistic dangers of his profession. He does not risk his life in the bull ring for the sake of money because the amount he receives is less than a good picador gets. He continues to fight because of a deep need which cannot be satisfied in any other way. When Retana, the bull-fight impresario, says to him, "Why don't you get a job and go to work?" Manuel's answer is, "I don't want to work . . . I am a

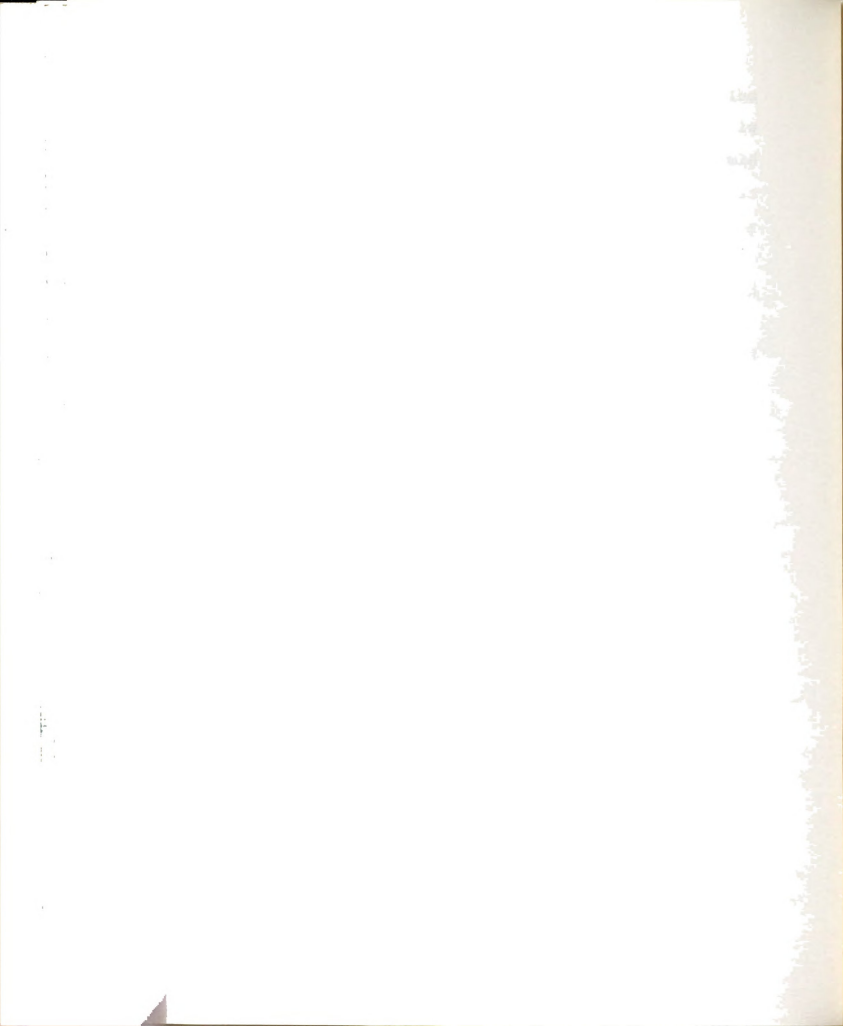


bullfighter" (p. 236). He has a similar exchange later with Zurito whom he is asking to serve as picador for him:

"What do you keep on doing it for?" Zurito asked. "Why don't you cut off your coleta, Manolo?"  
 "I don't know," Manuel said.  
 "You're pretty near as old as I am," Zurito said.  
 "I don't know," Manuel said. "I got to do it. If I can fix it so that I get an even break, that's all I want. I got to stick with it, Manos."  
 "No, you don't."  
 "Yes, I do. I've tried keeping away from it" (p. 243).

Fighting bulls is what Manuel must do, for reasons he cannot verbalize very well; in fact, the clearest statement he can make of his motivation for continuing is to say, "I am a bullfighter."

The surroundings in which Manuel undergoes his ordeal are almost as sordid as Paco's. Retana will only give him a place as substitute in a nocturnal fight. "'I don't want to substitute for anybody,' Manuel said. That was the way they all got killed. That was the way Salvador got killed. He tapped with his knuckles on the table" (p. 237). The knuckle-tapping seems to indicate that the reason why substituting is "the way they all got killed" is largely a matter of superstitious belief. Since the regular matador gets first choice of the bulls and the cuadrilla (or supporting players, like the picadors and banderilleros) there is good reason not to substitute;



however, the explanation from superstition seems best to fit Manuel's reaction. Later, Zurito forces Retana's man to knock on wood after he has said, in reference to Manuel's having just come out of the hospital, "That's where he's going damn quick" (p. 259). The half-light of superstition adds to the gloom of the atmosphere of Manuel's trial in the ring.

It is not just the fact that Manuel is substituting for someone else that makes his situation bad. The nocturnals are second class fights with young or unknown fighters<sup>1</sup> and the bulls are, as Retana says, "What the veterinaries won't pass in the daytime" (p. 237). Therefore, the bulls are less predictable and harder to work with. With bright lights shining into the ring, the crowd becomes invisible in the surrounding darkness, isolating Manuel with the other toreros in a circle of light with only voices of derision and objects which sail out of the darkness to testify to the presence of others. In addition, there is no sun and Hemingway has ascribed almost mystical importance to its presence in the ring:

The sun is very important. The theory, practice and spectacle of bullfighting have all been built on the assumption of the presence of the sun and when it does not shine over a third of the bullfight is missing. The Spanish say, "El sol es el mejor torero." The sun is the best bullfighter,

---

<sup>1</sup>"Kids and bums," in the words of the "substitute bull-fight critic of El Herald," p. 256.



and without the sun the best bullfighter is not there. He is like a man without a shadow.<sup>1</sup>

So, in "The Undefeated," the "best bullfighter," the "complete bullfighter," is not there. We have instead an aging, fallible, sick man who must perform under bad conditions and who does his best and better than his best could be expected to be. We have Hemingway's vision of the odds against which all of us must struggle to assert what we are. We have the elements of tragic heroism.

The "substitute bull-fight critic of El Herald" serves as a reflection of the unsympathetic crowd, unable to recognize the "real thing." Our narrator tells us about a properly accomplished series of maneuvers by Manuel:

"Huh!" Manuel said, "Toro!" and leaning back, swung the cape forward. Here he comes. He side-stepped, swung the cape in back of him, and pivoted, so the bull followed a swirl of cape and then was left with nothing fixed by the pass, dominated by the cape. Manuel swung the cape under his muzzle with one hand, to show the bull was fixed, and walked away.

We then are told the reaction of the audience: "There was no applause." The critic's description of the same suerte is: "'--the aged Manolo rated no applause for a vulgar series of lances with the cape and we entered the third of the palings'" (p. 253). To confirm our understanding that the critic and the crowd do not recognize the "real thing" when they see it, we have the opinion of Retana's man,

---

<sup>1</sup>Death in the Afternoon, p. 15.



acting as Manuel's manager, after one of the unappreciated suertes: "If it was Belmonte doing that stuff, they'd go crazy. . . ." (p. 259). The effect of the reactions of the critic and the crowd is to reinforce the impression of Manuel's isolation in his crisis, with very few to acknowledge what he has undergone and how well he has performed. It is analogous to the scene at the end of The Old Man and the Sea where the tourists misunderstand what they are told about the fish skeleton on Santiago's boat and think it is that of a shark. The hero cannot perform for these people; he must act for those few who understand and, most of all, for himself.

The relationship between Manuel and Zurito in "The Undefeated" is central to the story, but has been interpreted by critics in very different ways. Among those critics who insist upon a separation of the Hemingway heroes into two categories, the "Hemingway hero" or "Nick Adams hero," who is based on the author's personal experiences, and the "code hero," who is different from but serves as a model for the "Hemingway hero,"<sup>1</sup> Philip Young and Earl Rovit see Manuel García as a "code hero," an exemplary figure, and they therefore omit Zurito completely from their discussions of the story; Joseph DeFalco sees Manuel,

---

<sup>1</sup>A distinction first made by Granville Hicks (The Great Tradition, N.Y.: Biblio and Tannen, 1935, pp. 273-74), then elaborated on by Philip Young. These terms are Young's; Earl Rovit's terms for a similar distinction are the "tyro" and the "tutor."



because of his "commitment to the ideal," as the "innocent" and "uninitiated one" and Zurito as the "adjusted one" and the "authority figure" in an "authority-innocent" relationship.<sup>1</sup> I think that both these interpretations blur rather than clarify the story in question for the purpose of making it fit a general pattern the critic sees in Hemingway's works. Zurito is important enough that the story ends with his reaction as the anesthetic cone is placed over Manuel's face. Hemingway's conclusions are very carefully chosen, therefore I find misleading a reading of the story which omits Zurito. On the other hand, to see Manuel, the unilluminated and aging bullfighter, who is committed above all else to the image of himself as a bullfighter and to his honor as such, as "innocent" or "uninitiated" seems an equal distortion. Manuel is a fully initiated hero who chooses, in full knowledge of what he is choosing to undergo a trial of courage and honor. In this trial he can gain, as he knows from many past repetitions of the ritual, a strong sense of his manhood and of his identify as a bullfighter, but he also knows that he can lose his life.

Zurito serves to show what a friend, even the best of friends, can and cannot do for someone in his "moment of truth." The friend can advise the hero not to undergo

---

<sup>1</sup>Young, p. 65. Earl Rovit, Ernest Hemingway. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., pp. 83-84. Joseph DeFalco, The Hero in Hemingway's Short Stories. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, p. 197.

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

the trial; he can make personal career sacrifices, as when Zurito agrees to come out of retirement to serve as picador for Manuel; he can offer comfort before the ordeal, as when Zurito takes Manuel home with him the night before the fight; he can perform well his part of the ritual which gives as good a chance as possible to the hero; he can be there afterwards to give support to the wounded hero, as when Zurito sees to it that Manuel is spared his coleta. But, at the peak moment of the trial, at the hero's "moment of truth," he is all alone and on his own to cope as he can in the light of his abilities, his honor and his luck. As Manuel first goes in for the kill, we are told, "Manuel stood alone, facing the bull" (p. 260). At the most critical moment, after he has attempted twice to kill the bull and the danger is greater because the bull will no longer charge, we are told: "Manuel, running again toward the bull, wiped his bloody face with his handkerchief. He had not seen Zurito. Where was Zurito?" (p. 262). Perhaps it is Zurito's recognition of what he could not do for Manuel and a sense of awe at Manuel's accomplishment which explain that final sentence: "Zurito stood awkwardly, watching" (p. 266). What else can a friend do?

Throughout the bullfight section of the story, the ritual nature of the fight is emphasized. The spectacle begins with the paseo (the beginning parade):



Heads up, swinging with the music, their right arms swinging free, they stepped out, crossing the sanded arena under the arc-lights, the cuadrillas opening out behind, the picadors riding after, behind came the bull-ring servants and the jingling mules. . . . Arrogant, swinging, they looked straight ahead as they marched (p. 247).

When Manuel asks Retana's man how it went, he compares it to another ceremony: "'Like a wedding,' said the handler.

'Fine. You came out like Joselito and Belmonte'" (p. 248).

When the time for the last third of the fight comes we see ". . . Manuel, standing very much alone in the ring, gesturing with his hat in a salute toward a box he could not see high up in the dark plaza." And then,

"I dedicate this bull to you, Mr. President, and to the public of Madrid, the most intelligent and generous of the world," was what Manuel was saying. It was a formula. He said it all. It was a little long for nocturnal use (p. 257).

The formula requires that he salute a President he cannot even see and that he praise spectators that he identifies with his enemy, the bull. (He thinks, as objects rain down on him and his sword is returned among them, "Oh, the dirty bastards! Dirty bastards! Oh, the lousy, dirty bastards! He kicked into a cushion as he ran. There was the bull. The same as ever. All right, you dirty, lousy bastard!") (p. 263). The ritual, the formulas, which force insincere responses, have their value for Manuel also.

He says,

The final stuff with the sword was all he worried over. He did not really worry. He did not even think about it. But standing there he had a heavy



sense of apprehension. He looked out at the bull, planning his faena, his work with the red cloth that was to reduce the bull, to make him manageable (p. 255).

His worry is changed to "a heavy sense of apprehension," from conscious intellectual awareness of worry to an instinctual feeling awareness of it. Manuel makes this transition by "planning his faena"; in other words, by immersing himself in the ritual, he can avoid a conscious awareness of fear. A little later, at a critical moment, we see the same process in operation:

Manuel walked toward him, watching his feet. This was all right. He could do this. He must work to get the bull's head down, so he could go in past the horns and kill him. He did not think about the sword, not about killing the bull. He thought about one thing at a time. The coming things oppressed him, though. Walking forward, watching the bull's feet, he saw successively his eyes, his wet muzzle, and the wide forward-pointing spread of his horns. The bull had light circles about the eyes. His eyes watched Manuel. He felt he was going to get this little one with the white face (p. 257).

Again Manuel is reassuring himself with the present, the now. He watches his feet as he goes out, knowing he can handle this present moment. He does not think yet of the dangerous moment of the killing, just of "one thing at a time," concentrating on the eyes and the wet muzzle of the bull in the present while the fear of "coming things" is just a feeling of oppression which does not mar his feeling of confidence in the present moment. There is a continual elevation of the instinctual ritual of the present over the intellectual concern for the future.



"He just did the right thing. . . . If he thought about it, he would be gone" (p. 260). With this secret to the control of fear, a secret which reappears often in Hemingway's works, Manuel is able to risk death five times on the bull's horns and to kill him finally, in spite of pain and frustration, transcending himself, if not the contingencies of the real world.

#### IV.

In "Banal Story," we find a juxtaposition, much like that in "Capital of the World," of the death of a hero with the trivial concerns of other people. The hero is Manuel García Maera, who is dying of pneumonia in his house, much to the relief of other bullfighters because ". . . he did always in the bull-ring the things they could only do sometimes" (p. 361). This account of Maera's death corresponds to that reported by Hemingway in Death in the Afternoon (p. 82).

There are two sets of contrasts with Maera's death and funeral which are presented in the story. First, there is the trivial world of the writer who is sitting on his electric stove, eating an orange, safe from the bad weather outside, reading his copy of The Forum and thinking to himself, "Here, at last, was life" (p. 360). The "full life of the mind" advocated by the magazine is a series of theoretical, purely abstract questions:



Prize short-stories---will their authors write our best-sellers of tomorrow? . . . Our deepest convictions---will Science upset them? Our civilization---is it inferior to older orders of things? . . . Was there a risqué page in Puritan history? . . . Are modern paintings---and poetry---Art? . . . Have tramps codes of conduct? (pp. 360-361).

The sterile life of abstractions and vicarious experience of the writer is seen in contrast with the concrete experiences and life of action of Maera.

Then there is the contrast of the real suffering and death of a hero with the way he will be remembered: "Men and boys bought full-length colored pictures of him to remember him by, and lost the picture they had of him in their memories . . ." (p. 361). They have sacrificed their living memory of the hero-in-action for a still photograph, as dead as the hero himself. They have killed him deader than dead.

Maera also figures in two of the six inter-chapter sketches from In Our Time. In the first, Chapter XIII, the narrator is a bullfighter. He and Maera are scheduled to fight that afternoon at a festival bullfight (perhaps the San Fermin fiesta at Pamplona) with a third matador, a Mexican named Luis. Maera sends the narrator down to try to persuade Luis to leave the procession of drunken dancers and to come up to the hotel and get himself ready for the fight. Luis' only response is, "Oh, leave me alone. You're not my father" (p. 189). There is the following exchange between Maera and the narrator when he returns:



Well, I said, after all he's just an ignorant Mexican savage.

Yes, Maera said, and who will kill his bulls after he gets a cogida?

We, I suppose, I said.

Yes, we, said Maera. We kills the savages' bulls, and the drunkards' bulls, and the riau-riau dancers' bulls. Yes. We kill them. We kill them all right. Yes. Yes. Yes (p. 189).

The narrator is more willing to make allowances for Luis than Maera is. Maera seems bitterly angry at having to take someone else's risks in the ring. Even a hero should not have to take more than his own share of the risks.

The last point leads to Chapter IX, a one-paragraph sketch about "the kid" who has to kill five bulls in an afternoon because the other two matadors are both injured early in the corrida. When he comes to the last bull, a good one, he is exhausted.

He tried five times and the crowd was quiet because it was a good bull and it looked like him or the bull and then he finally made it. He sat down in the sand and puked and they held a cape over him while the crowd hollered and threw things down into the bull ring (p. 159).

Here is an excellent example of what we were told in "Capital of the World" about the Spanish: ". . . decorum and dignity rank above courage as the virtues most highly prized in Spain . . ." (p. 39). No matter how much courage he has shown in the face of the excessive trial of killing five bulls in an afternoon, the crowd cannot forgive even a "kid" for the physical weakness which brings about such a breach of "decorum and dignity." This sketch gives us more insight into Maera's resentment that he will probably



have extra bulls to kill because of Luis' frolicking at the fiesta. It is a situation in which he can gain no extra money or glory and yet risks losing any glory he has already earned. As in the case of "the kid," the winner really takes nothing.

Another version of Maera's death is the subject of Chapter XIV. In this fictional account Maera is wounded in the bull ring and dies in the infirmary. At the beginning of the one-paragraph sketch he is already wounded and on the ground and the bull continues goring him until the other toreros can get the bull's attention and lead him away. He is rushed to the infirmary and the doctor is called ". . . from the corral where he had been sewing up picador horses" and there is ". . . a great shouting going on in the grandstand overhead. . . ." (p. 207). His death is just another part of the day's excitement to the crowd, and one more case for the doctor, after the picador horses, to whom he will probably return. We are given no indication throughout the paragraph of Maera's emotional reaction to what is happening to him. In "The Undefeated," for example, we have clear indications of how Manuel is reacting: he is not afraid of dying because he knows that no priest has been called (he knows the priest would have been called if the doctor judged him in any danger of death), he is angry and even frightened that Retana and Zurito could threaten to cut off his coleta and mainly

1000  
9000  
8000  
7000  
6000  
5000  
4000  
3000  
2000  
1000  
0  
-1000  
-2000  
-3000  
-4000  
-5000  
-6000  
-7000  
-8000  
-9000  
-10000  
-11000  
-12000  
-13000  
-14000  
-15000  
-16000  
-17000  
-18000  
-19000  
-20000  
-21000  
-22000  
-23000  
-24000  
-25000  
-26000  
-27000  
-28000  
-29000  
-30000  
-31000  
-32000  
-33000  
-34000  
-35000  
-36000  
-37000  
-38000  
-39000  
-40000  
-41000  
-42000  
-43000  
-44000  
-45000  
-46000  
-47000  
-48000  
-49000  
-50000  
-51000  
-52000  
-53000  
-54000  
-55000  
-56000  
-57000  
-58000  
-59000  
-60000  
-61000  
-62000  
-63000  
-64000  
-65000  
-66000  
-67000  
-68000  
-69000  
-70000  
-71000  
-72000  
-73000  
-74000  
-75000  
-76000  
-77000  
-78000  
-79000  
-80000  
-81000  
-82000  
-83000  
-84000  
-85000  
-86000  
-87000  
-88000  
-89000  
-90000  
-91000  
-92000  
-93000  
-94000  
-95000  
-96000  
-97000  
-98000  
-99000  
-100000

wants confirmation that he "was going good" when he was injured (pp. 265-266). But, about this Maera, we know only his physical experiences. At the conclusion of the sketch we are told:

Maera felt everything getting larger and larger and then smaller and smaller. Then it got larger and larger and larger and then smaller and smaller. Then everything commenced to run faster and faster as when they speed up a cinematograph film. Then he was dead (p. 207).

The effect of this emotionless account of Maera's experience is to give it an inevitable and relentless quality and to isolate him within the experience even more than does the shouting of the crowd. He is distanced from all but the factual awareness of what is happening to him and our experience throughout is like Maera's at the end, that of a "cinematograph film," becoming increasingly silent until he is dead.

One of the other sketches, Chapter XII, is about another real matador, Nicanor Villalta. It is a brief scene of the climax of a bullfight with the man and bull engaging with each other as equals. The intensity of the involvement on both parts is the striking element. First, ". . . you could see Villalta snarl at the bull and curse him. . . ." Next, a similar posture of the bull: "The bull looking at him straight in front, hating. . . ." Then the two go at each other: ". . . and the bull charged and Villalta charged and just for a moment they became one. Villalta became one with the bull and then it was over."

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

The two equals have merged into one and only one of them can come out of that coupling. Villalta emerges victorious and can turn his attention away to the praise of the crowd while we see the last impotent act of the bull: ". . . the bull roaring blood, looking straight at Villalta and his legs caving" (p. 181).

In one of the other two sketches we see a poor bull-fighter who, after a particularly bad performance is caught by the crowd and his coleta is cut off. The narrator tells us at the end,

Afterwards I saw him at the café. He was very short with a brown face and quite drunk and he said after all it has happened before like that. I am not really a good bull fighter (p. 171).

The reaction catches one off-guard; the torero is neither surprised, angry, nor resentful about what has happened to him. He may not be "a good bull fighter," but we must admire his lack of pretensions and his honesty. He, too, like Manuel, has no illusions.

The last of the sketches, Chapter X, is a study in realistic details. It is a brief scene of a picador's horse, injured in the ring, but forced to keep moving to a place where the bull will charge him again. There he waits. The details are presented coldly, with no intention of presenting what has happened to the horse either as a tragedy or as the comedy which Hemingway told us in Death in the Afternoon that the "horse part" was intended to be: "The horse's entrails hung down in a blue bunch and swung



backward and forward as he began to canter. . . ." (p. 165). Here is a "visceral accident" which does not inspire laughter. The tone of the telling and the precision of the details fixes our attention with almost hypnotic power.

## V.

The one remaining story with a bullfight context, "The Mother of a Queen," is much more a story about a homosexual than it is one about a bullfighter. Even though in Hemingway's ethics women are the source of many problems and the most comfortable situations are found in the camaraderie of all-male companionship, the man who is sexually oriented toward other males is seen as unmasculine, unreliable and lacking in honor. In the brief story which the author tells the Old Lady in Death in the Afternoon about two young Americans just arrived in Paris, overheard in a hotel room, a degeneration into "corruption" on the part of the younger, who had not understood why his friend had brought him abroad, is implied by what Hemingway calls the "feeble wow" at the end: ". . . the younger of the two, the one who had said he would kill himself rather than go back into that room, had had his hair hennaed" (p. 182). In "The Battler," we are left to guess that the perverse relationship of Ad Francis and Bugs is homosexual. Ad Francis was previously involved with a woman who may have been his sister and his relationship with Bugs is a sinister mixture of affection and sado-masochism.

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

In "A Simple Enquiry," the major's homosexual approach to his orderly is to ask him if he is "corrupt." When the boy seems not to understand, the major's reaction is: "He was really relieved: life in the army was too complicated." He warns the boy, "But don't be superior. . . ." (p. 329). The running blisters of the major's sunburned face make him repulsive to us (and probably to the orderly) and the only characteristic that stands out clearly is his suspiciousness, in the closing line: "The little devil, he thought, I wonder if he lied to me" (p. 330). Hemingway regularly portrays homosexuals as unnatural and perversely unpredictable.

"The Mother of a Queen" is about a Mexican bull-fighter called Paco who does not get around to paying for having his mother buried "perpetually" and so her bones are thrown on the public boneheap. The interest of the story is in its narrative perspective. The story is told in conversational tone by Paco's manager, who, to use Wayne Booth's phrase, is not a "reliable narrator."<sup>1</sup> What seems on the surface to be a factual telling of a series of incidents involving the narrator and Paco, concerning first the burial of Paco's mother and then the payment of some money Paco owes the narrator, can be seen as the spiteful act of a former lover. There are several clues that the

---

<sup>1</sup>Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 211.

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

narrator is the former homosexual lover of Paco. First, there is the fact that he seems now to be Paco's manager, since he pays his bills, lives at his house and drives his car. He seems to have replaced the manager he has referred to when explaining why Paco's mother was not buried "perpetually" when she died:

But when his mother died his manager thought they might not always be so hot on each other. They were sweethearts; sure he's a queen, didn't you know that, of course he is . . . . (p. 415).

The narrator sounds extremely jealous when Paco gives some money to a fellow townsman and this resentment leads to a full-scale lovers' quarrel after which the narrator leaves Paco and his car and goes off not knowing ". . . where I was going to sleep that night" (p. 419). Even though the narrator ascribes all that he is criticizing in Paco to the fact of his being a "queen," it must be remembered that this term applies to a homosexual male who plays a female role. "There's a queen for you. You can't touch them. Nothing, nothing can touch them" (p. 419). The whole narrative has the tone of a bitter ex-lover giving his side of a story.

The fact that Paco is a bullfighter is used by the narrator to contrast with the image he offers of him. Of his relationship with women, the narrator says, "At that time he was spending all kinds of money around women trying to make himself seem a man and fool people . . . ." (p. 416). This period is also the time of the

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

narrator's break up with Paco, so we must consider jealousy of the women Paco is "spending money around" as a possible factor in the narrator's attitudes. Where he really hits Paco at a vulnerable spot is the one allusion to his bullfighting ability. We know from information about Paco's financial affairs that he is a successful bullfighter in Mexico:

At this time he had a contract for six fights at four thousand pesos a fight besides his benefit fight. He made over fifteen thousand dollars there in the capital alone. . . . (p. 415).

To keep us from thinking of Paco as a good bullfighter, the narrator says of Paco's trip to Spain: "He had only fought twice in Spain, they couldn't stand him there, they saw through him quick enough. . . ." (p. 417). We are supposed to believe that Spanish bullfight spectators are more perceptive and knowledgeable about bullfights than the Mexican fans are. So, we are left puzzled about Paco, sure only that the narrator is his confirmed enemy.

## VI.

The Sun Also Rises is an ambiguous literary statement, rich in implications and seductive in its point of view. The main source of ambiguity about an issue as basic as what the book is about is the difficulty in assessing the reliability of Jake Barnes as a narrator. Jake strikes the reader as open and honest, but, because of his own emotional stake in the story he is telling, it becomes

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

difficult to assess some of his value judgments, particularly his evaluations of Brett, Robert Cohn and Pedro Romero.

I see The Sun Also Rises as a book about what it means to be a man. Jake Barnes, the central character and narrator is impotent, which is an ironic touch from an author who talks so much in his works about the importance of having cojones. Jake and his friends live in a restless, warless era, as expatriates in France and Spain. Jake's wound makes him a more dramatic example of the problem that they all share: how does one assert himself as a man in the wake of destruction? We see in the novel a variety of responses, not equally successful as a means of coming to terms with the world and finding meaning in it.

There are four men, Jake, Mike Campbell, Robert Cohn and Pedro Romero, in a central circle of the story which revolves around Brett Ashley and all of them measure their manhood in terms of their relationship to her. Jake and Pedro Romero come to see that there are better measures of manhood, whereas Robert Cohn and Mike Campbell do not.

Mike Campbell is the simplest of Brett's conquests. Mike finds his manhood in being the fiancé of a very attractive woman, in drinking beyond belief, in spending money recklessly, and in talking a good game of sex. In the first scene in which he appears, at the Café Select with



Brett, Jake, and Bill, he is quite drunk and constantly says to Brett, "I say, Brett, you are a lovely piece" (p. 79). He treats money in such a cavalier fashion that in Biarritz, after the fiesta, drinking in a café with Jake and Bill, twice in a row when he loses a dice-roll for the drinks he gives the bartender a good tip although he is spending his very last money. He stops off at Saint Jean de Luz, confident that his finances will straighten out: "Oh, some will come through. I've got two weeks allowance should be here. I can live on tick at this pub in Saint Jean" (p. 229). When Robert Cohn knocks him down, Mike's reaction is quite different from Romero's and Jake's. He does not have their sense of attachment to their honor and so he rolls with the punches, rather than fighting back. "He didn't knock me out. . . . I just lay there" (p. 191). Mike is, above all, a good sport. When Brett goes off with Romero, he just drinks a little more and in the end he is able to say to Jake and Bill, "It was a damned fine fiesta" (p. 231). Mike is the same at the end when he leaves Jake and Bill as he was in the Café Select. He plays it cool and he wins the fair lady. Mike's ways of asserting masculinity are very common ones and he is neither praised nor condemned for them within the context of the book. Even at his nastiest moments, when he is goading Robert Cohn, he is generally supported by the other "chaps." When, at the end, Brett says she is going back to Mike,



because "He's so damned nice and he's so awful. He's my sort of thing" (p. 243), we are inclined to agree with her on all three judgments.

Robert Cohn is the most controversial character in the book. He is the scapegoat of many critics,<sup>1</sup> as well as of Jake and the "chaps." Cohn tries to assert his manliness in ways that are not socially acceptable. He is a good boxer but wins neither affection nor respect from people by knocking them down. The chivalric code which he tries to follow to a life of adventure and romance conflicts badly with the traditional bullfight code of Pedro Romero and the rather stoic code of Jake's friends, which involves accepting things as they are, not making too much trouble for other people and not showing or talking about one's emotions. It is impossible to know if anyone could follow the chivalric code in Robert Cohn's circumstances; Cohn, certainly, is not up to it. His clashes with the world around him leave him looking ridiculous, as in the scene where he tries to fight with Jake for insulting Brett (p. 39), or in the scene where Romero refuses to stay knocked down (p. 202). What Cohn intends as dramatic gestures of manliness and self-assertion end up as incongruous and awkward acts. He subscribes to a ritual definition of manhood, but it is a ritual which can

---

<sup>1</sup>A contrary view is elaborated in Arthur L. Scott's "A Defense of Robert Cohn," College English, XVIII (March, 1957), 309-14.

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

only be played out with the assent of others. He ends up establishing himself as the outsider, the one who is "not one of us."

Pedro Romero, on the other hand, is the darling of Jake's crowd and of the critics of this book. Romero's life is much simpler than those of Jake and his friends because he has a profession which establishes the whole pattern of his life. He lives by the code of honor which is a part of the profession that he has chosen. Romero is not forced to evaluate each new situation and to decide how to respond to it. His profession is an all-encompassing religion which prescribes his responses. He may deviate sometimes from the ethics of his profession, as when he goes off to Madrid with Brett, but he is only briefly out of touch with his code and its meaning for him. Jake says of Romero, "He loved bull-fighting, and I think he loved the bulls, and I think he loved Brett" (p. 216). Jake is completely sure of Romero's relationship to bullfighting; after that, his relationship to bulls is equated to his relationship to Brett. Earlier, when Romero said to Jake and Brett, ". . . the bulls are my best friends," Brett asked "You kill your friends?" and Romero responded, "Always . . ., so they don't kill me" (p. 186). Romero has given her warning that when he sees her as a threat to him, he will do what is necessary to save himself. And that is what happens in Madrid when he pays the hotel bill and leaves Brett.



Robert Cohn and Pedro Romero are each guided by ritualized codes of behavior. Cohn, very unsure of his, has the misfortune of trying to follow it in social circumstances (and maybe even in an era) which make it untenable. Romero, confident of his code, lives in circles where it is considered admirable and he is found to be noble and brave in the role his code assigns to him. But if Romero were transported to the Paris Left Bank of the early pages of this novel he might stifle in its cynical atmosphere. He has found a code, a system of living and behaving, that works for him in his time and place. The risks of his profession give him something even more personal at stake than his definition of himself and they allow him to ascribe meaning to something outside himself in a world in which many people (as we see all around in this book) can perceive no meaning. Romero has achieved a delicate balance of artistry and risk which, for Hemingway, is the secret to success and meaningfulness in whatever one does. He has that "old thing," ". . . the holding of his purity of line through the maximum of exposure. . . ." (p. 168). Romero has also grasped that what one does, in order to be truly meaningful, must be done principally for oneself and only in a secondary sense for others. Jake tells us of Romero's performance for Brett:

Everything of which he could control the locality he did in front of her all that afternoon. Never once did he look up. He made it stronger that way, and did it for himself, too, as well as for

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

her. Because he did not look up to ask if it pleased her he did it all for himself inside, and it strengthened him, and yet he did it for her, too. But he did not do it for her at any loss to himself. He gained by it all through the afternoon (p. 216).

Because of this strength, derived from doing what he is doing for himself, and because he has found a formula that works for him, the ritual of the bullfight is a curative and cleansing exorcism:

The fight with Cohn had not touched his spirit but his face had been smashed and his body hurt. He was wiping all that out now. Each thing that he did with this bull wiped that out a little cleaner. It was a good bull, a big bull, and with horns, and it turned and recharged easily and surely. He was what Romero wanted in bulls (p. 219).

In spite of his style, courage and grace, Pedro Romero is not the ideal of a bullfighter, nor what Hemingway calls the "complete bullfighter" in Death in the Afternoon (p. 86). Hemingway explains that you can never give a full judgment of a matador until his first serious goring. If he shows the same courage before the horns after he has been critically wounded, then you can know he is courageous. Romero shows early promise, but has not yet passed this significant test of courage.<sup>1</sup>

Because Romero presents only the youthful form of the "complete bullfighter," Juan Belmonte is presented to

---

<sup>1</sup>It is interesting to note that Niño de la Palma, the matador upon whom Romero is based, did not pass this test and did not live up to the early predictions of his greatness.



complement the image, as the tested fighter who is now declining in strength and agility, but not in courage. Belmonte has run all the risks and passed all the tests. Because of his age he must now make some compromises (for instance, in relation to the size of the bulls he fights), but he continues to fight, like Manuel García in "The Undefeated," because it is a meaningful thing for him to do with his life. He suffers both the physical pain of his injuries and the psychic pain of not being appreciated by the crowd. But he is a man who has not given up, even in the face of a young sensation like Romero who constantly upstages him: "Romero did always, smoothly, calmly, and beautifully, what he, Belmonte, could only bring himself to do now sometimes" (p. 215). Belmonte and Romero together present an image of the "complete bullfighter," showing the possibilities of manhood within this profession which is a way of life.

Then there is Jake Barnes. Jake's wound means that he cannot find his manhood in relation to women. Brett, whom he loves, is a constant source of frustration to him. In contrast to the profession of bullfighting which provides an ethic for living, with your work at the center of your life and essential to it, Jake's profession is one in which one disguises his work:

"Well, I've got to get back and get off some cables," . . . . It is very important to discover graceful exits like that in the newspaper business, where it is such an important part of the ethics that you should never seem to be working (p. 11).

2020-01-01

1000

1000000

1000

1000

1000000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000000

1000

1000

His relation to his profession imposes his casual style of life in which work is a minor part of life, done at odd moments, and carefully disguised from one's friends. Jake's work is never the subject of conversation with his friends. His profession does not provide a central core of meaning to his life, nor does it give him a sense of his identity; it is only his means of earning a living. In the one scene where we see him working, there is no sense that the work gives him gratification, self-renewal or even a sense of accomplishment:

. . . the Editor and Publisher and I worked hard for two hours. Then I sorted out the carbons, stamped on a by-line, put the stuff in a couple of big manila envelopes and rang for a boy to take them to the Gare St. Lazare. I went out to the other room and there was Robert Cohn asleep in the big chair. . . . (p. 12).

Fortunately, Jake has other activities and involvements that work better for him. He has his yearly trip to Spain which provides both the direct experiences of fishing and the vicarious experiences of the bullfight.

The most relaxed period of the book is the fishing expedition in Burguete. Jake and Bill take great pleasure in each other's company, in the natural surroundings, in fishing, and in their brief camaraderie with Harris. Even food and drink are in Burguete a natural source of pleasure rather than a compensation for other frustrations, as they seem so frequently in this book. (For instance, Jake's lunch with Brett in Madrid in which he gorges himself with



food and also with drink; Brett finally tells him: "Don't get drunk, Jake . . . you don't have to." Jake's response is, "How do you know?") (p. 246). Jake and Bill "utilize" much wine but the spirit is a jovial one of fun and sharing, a mood of present enjoyment reigns, in contrast, for instance, to the last day of the fiesta, when Jake tries to get drunk on absinthe in order to cut the pangs of his depression (pp. 222-224).

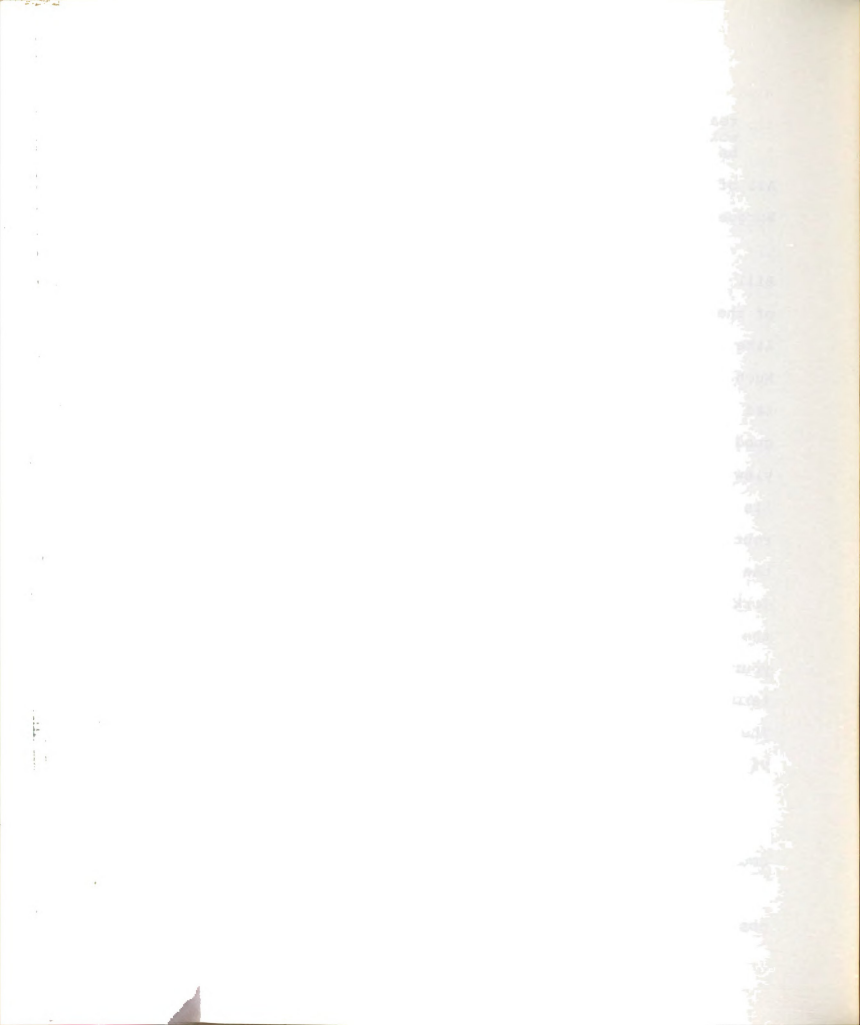
In addition to the changed relationship to food and drink in Burguete, there is a striking difference for Jake in relation to sleep. In Paris Jake has difficulty sleeping. He lies awake thinking of Brett and of his wound, cries some and finally gets off to sleep. He says, "It is awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the daytime, but at night is another thing" (p. 34). In Pamplona, also, Jake has trouble sleeping. He goes to bed drunk, then reads to make the feeling of dizziness pass, but still cannot sleep. He thinks, "There is no reason why because it is dark you should look at things differently from when it is light. The hell there isn't!" (p. 148). On this occasion Jake thinks through his whole philosophy of morality and immorality and getting what you pay for in life, then finally goes to sleep at daybreak. In Burguete, there is a marked contrast and sleeping is no problem for Jake:



After supper we went up-stairs and smoked and read in bed to keep warm. Once in the night I woke and heard the wind blowing. It felt good to be warm and in bed (p. 111).

All of the natural functions seem more natural for Jake in Burquete.

There is much good natured play between Jake and Bill and, since both of them earn a living by writing, much of the playing around is verbal. At times they sound like two stand-up comedians, entertaining an audience. Much of this chatter seems aimless, simply the sophisticated exchanges of two very articulate people, each with a good sense of humor. They joke about the common American view of expatriates, homosexuals, famous people, a revivalist preacher's prayer. Along the way, one of their routines sounds as if it might be more meaningful than the others. Bill tells Jake about the latest rage in New York, Irony and Pity, saying, "You ought to be ironical the minute you get out of bed. You ought to wake up with your mouth full of pity" (p. 115). These seem to be the terms popular with the New York critics of the time. They may give a clue, however, to how we are supposed to view Jake. In the absence of a narrative voice other than Jake's, the tone is hard to establish in much of the book. Irony is certainly a quality which Jake develops in the course of the book and, in fact, the very last line comes from Jake's new-found irony about himself and about the possibilities of life. Perhaps we are to view him with

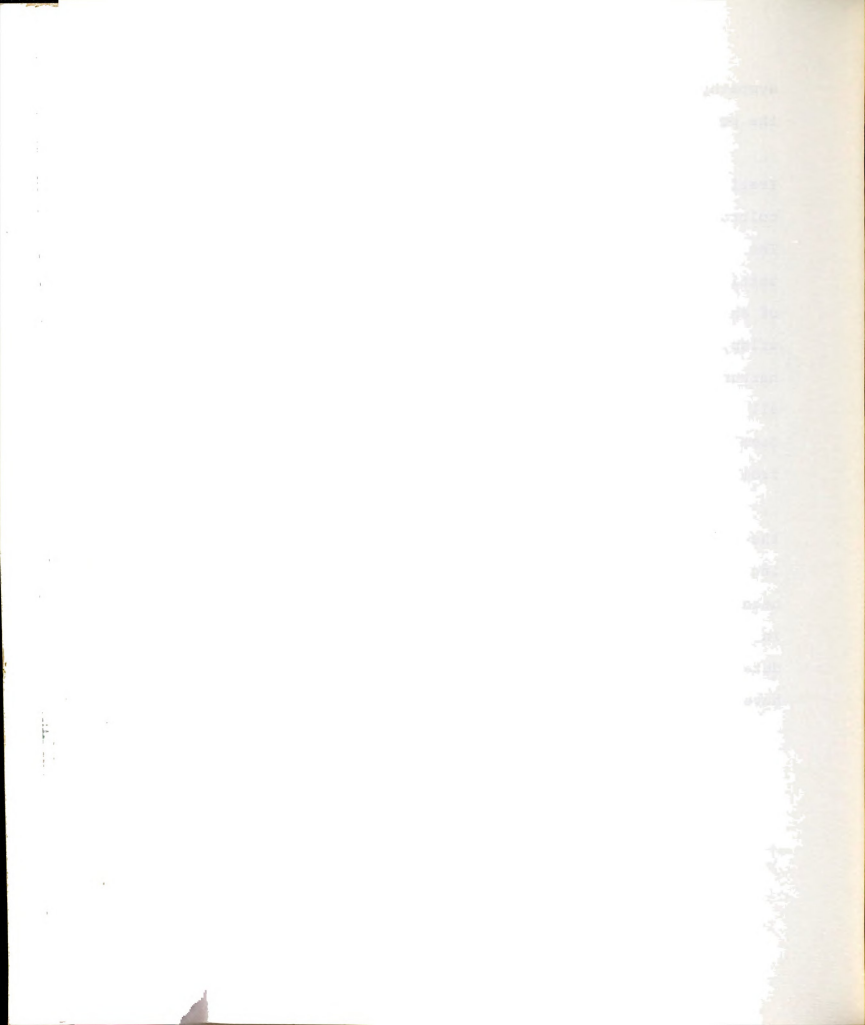


sympathy for his pains and to share with him irony about the possibility that anyone else may be better off.

As Jake and Bill walk out from their inn to the Irati River to fish, Jake describes each contour and coloration of the landscape and all the flora and fauna. The descriptions do not seem to be just Jake's way of setting the scene for the fishing action but a rendering of an essential part of the fishing experience. The cool, crisp, but sunny and cheerful landscape both reflects and nurtures the mood they are in. They are in contact with all the minute elements of the scenery around them and seem to soak up tranquillity and a relaxed state of mind from their surroundings.

In the fishing scenes the action is chronicled with the same minuteness of detail found in the Nick Adams fishing stories. Jake takes a trout off the hook and bangs his head against wood to kill him quickly, just as Nick does in "Big Two-Hearted River." Each movement is precise and detailed, as if no other way of doing the same thing would have sufficed.

As soon as I baited up and dropped in again I hooked another and brought him in the same way. In a little while I had six. They were all about the same size. I laid them out, side by side, all their heads pointing the same way, and looked at them. . . . I took the trout ashore, washed them in the cold, smoothly heavy water above the dam, and then picked some ferns and packed them all in the bag, three trout on a layer of ferns, then another layer of ferns, then three more trout, and then covered them with ferns. . . . (pp. 119-120).



The careful alignment of the fish with "all their heads pointing the same way" and the precise layering of fish and ferns give the impression of pre-established movements, of a familiar ritual that Jake is going through. If one compares this scene to the one in which Jake is working in his Paris newspaper office, we see that in both he acts competently and confidently, but in Paris his mechanical actions have the nonchalance of not caring whereas in Burguete the casualness may come from familiarity and comfort in what he is doing, but there is also a pride of accomplishment. "They looked nice in the ferns . . ." he thinks with pleasure as he sits down to read comfortably until Bill returns for lunch. Even the competition between the two men is on a jovial and friendly level (in contrast, for example, to the keen competition at shooting between the author and Karl in The Green Hills of Africa, which cuts the enjoyment that both men take in their hunting). Jake and Bill are involved in a ritual which brings contentment, self-renewal and escape from an outside world of frustrations, but they neither risk nor gain their manhood. The stakes of this ritual are lower than those of the bullfight, which may explain the relaxed atmosphere of the fishing expedition. But yet, although manhood is not at stake, central to the experiences in Burguete is the fact that they take place in male company. The Englishman, Harris, who fishes with Jake and Bill and joins them for

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

three-handed bridge in the evenings, makes clear the importance of the all-male company: "I say. You don't know what it's meant to me to have you chaps up here. . . . Really you don't know how much it means. I've not had much fun since the war" (p. 129). The comparison with that other all-male pursuit emphasizes that element of the fishing experience.

Jake's relationship to bullfighting is far more complex than his relationship to fishing. Pedro Romero participates in bullfighting in the direct way that Jake participates in fishing. Jake's description of his own fishing scenes is very similar to his descriptions of Romero in the ring, descriptions which emphasize precision of movement, knowledge of correct order and procedure, and the fulfilling nature of the activity. Fishing gives Jake direct involvement and direct fulfillment. Bullfighting gives him vicarious involvement and varying satisfactions and dissatisfactions. And yet, bullfighting has the edge in his affection because here manhood is always at stake, even if it is not directly his own. But, during the course of the fiesta at Pamplona either Jake's degree of involvement with the bullfight decreases or his emotional state in relation to Brett blocks his full involvement at the end of the fiesta. After the first bullfight at Pamplona, Jake has said, "We had that disturbed emotional feeling that always comes after a

00000

00001

00002

00003

00004

00005

00006

00007

00008

00009

00010

00011

00012

00013

00014

00015

00016

00017

00018

00019

00020

00021

00022

00023

00024

00025

bull-fight, and the feeling of elation that comes after a good bull-fight" (p. 164). After the last fight, even though it has been a good one, Jake has no feeling of elation. Even before he learns that Brett has gone off with Romero he says to Bill, "I feel like hell," (p. 223), and he gets drunk on absinthe. Perhaps Jake's growing sense of himself has prevented his identifying so closely with Romero this time.

At the beginning of the book Jake's hero-worshipping attitude toward the bullfighter is apparent in the exaggerated statement he makes to Robert Cohn: "Nobody ever lives their life all the way up except bull-fighters" (p. 10). Jake's knowledge of bullfighting is extensive and he has also the passion of the aficionado, but his early generalization about bullfighters serves as a warning that he has a highly idealized image of them and that this is an area in which we can expect him to be less objective than he is on other subjects. The image the reader gets of Pedro Romero is a hero-worshipper's image. Jake identifies very closely with Romero and sees him as the manly part of himself. He gives Brett to that best part of himself, but the match does not work out. Jake learns, in the course of the book, partly through his identification with Pedro Romero, that a match between him and Brett could not work out even if he had not been wounded. In Hemingway's view of women, the same unwomanliness that Romero objects to

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

would, and does, prevent a successful match with anyone else, also. Jake has progressed much in self-awareness from the person who begged Brett, "Couldn't we just live together?" (p. 55), when he answers her remark at the end about what a "damned good time" they could have had together with "Isn't it pretty to think so?" (p. 247). Unfortunately, the increased self-awareness has brought with it increased cynicism.

A little outside the circle of Brett's admirers in the book is Bill Gorton who, upon hearing that Brett is engaged to Mike Campbell, says, "That's always just the stage I meet anybody" (p. 76). Bill is a fairly successful writer and a successful drunk, also, in the sense that he has ". . . never been daunted in public" (p. 73). Much of his life is dimmed for him by drink, as the trip to Vienna which he can hardly remember anything about to tell Jake, but he is cheerful and drink helps him have a good public face. Bill is a person who needs a group, who is dependent on others for a sense of direction. When Jake explains that the bulls in a herd are only dangerous if you detach one from the herd, Bill says, "Don't you ever detach me from the herd, Mike" (p. 141). Bill's real feelings about his profession come out under the influence of drink, in the scene where he drunkenly shouts to Jake who is talking to Romero, "Tell him I think writing is lousy. . . . Go on, tell him. Tell him I'm ashamed of being a



writer" (p. 175). Bill, like Jake, idealizes Romero, the man of action, and in his presence he is ashamed of his own profession, which is his life and his identity to a much greater extent than Jake's profession is his life. Like Jake, Bill is able to let down his defenses and enjoy himself on the Burguete fishing trip, but his vacation is brief and he is a person who is largely dissatisfied with his life.

A little further out from the circle of Brett's admirers are Count Mippipopolus and Montoya, each representing a set of values important to Jake. Count Mippipopolous represents the world of material values. About a good bottle of champagne he said, "This wine is too good for toast-drinking, my dear. You don't want to mix emotions up with a wine like that. You lose the taste" (p. 59). Later he tells Brett and Jake, ". . . it is because I have lived very much that now I can enjoy everything so well. . . . That is the secret. You must get to know the values" (p. 60). This philosophy sounds similar to the one that Jake later elaborates:

I thought I had paid for everything. Not like the woman pays and pays and pays. No idea of retribution or punishment. Just exchange of values. You gave up something and got something else. Or you worked for something. You paid some way for everything that was any good. I paid my way into enough things that I liked, so I had a good time. Either you paid by learning about them, or by experience, or by taking chances, or by money. Enjoying living was learning to get your money's worth and knowing when you had it. . . . (p. 148).

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

This same philosophy seems parodied by Bill Gorton when he speaks drunkenly of buying a stuffed dog: "Simple exchange of values. You give them money. They give you a stuffed dog" (p. 72).

Montoya represents a quite different value system, one which emphasizes tradition, knowledge of bullfighting, and an almost mystical degree of aficion or passion for the bullfight. Those who share these values esteem them above all else and Jake is shunned by the secret society of aficionados after he betrays their values and brings Brett and Romero together. The material value system and the traditional value system have been able to coexist for Jake until this critical moment when he must make a choice. He tells us what he does but not why. He chooses according to the "exchange of values" system; he exchanges his position among the aficionados for whatever satisfaction he gets from giving Brett what she wants. He turns his back on the intangible idealized values, mystically sensed by Montoya and the other aficionados.

Looking back at the larger pattern of the book, one in which Jake's wound creates an extreme case of the man who has difficulty in finding or expressing his manhood in the modern world, the fishing and bullfighting scenes stand out as contrasts to each other and as episodes which require some explanation within the structure of the book.



Fishing serves Jake much as it does Nick in the Nick Adams stories: it is an available source of calm and self-renewal in troubled times, but it is not more than a vacation possibility. Hunting and fishing, except in the later case of Santiago, are not presented as something that the hero can adopt as a way of life. In Faulkner's works, for instance, the meaningful ritual of hunting can be extended to a whole life style, as in the cases of Sam Fathers and Isaac McCaslin. But the Hemingway heroes, in particular Jake Barnes and Nick Adams, do not consider this a viable option but yet they value highly the tranquil times they find in fishing (as well as hunting, in Nick's case) and count on it as a ritual which exorcizes the effects of life's painful experiences.

Within the structure of the book, the fishing episode serves as a contrast to the Paris and Pamplona scenes. The Burguete passage lasts for about twenty-five pages and is right at the center of the book. It allows the reader, like Jake, to unwind from the tension of the first episode and to get prepared for the even greater mounting tension of the Pamplona passage.

The Pamplona, or bullfight, episode of the book functions in a variety of ways and on different levels within the structure of the novel. Looking at the book on any level, however, this section is the climax and what



follows it is simply an unraveling of some of the knots tied in the story at the height of the action.

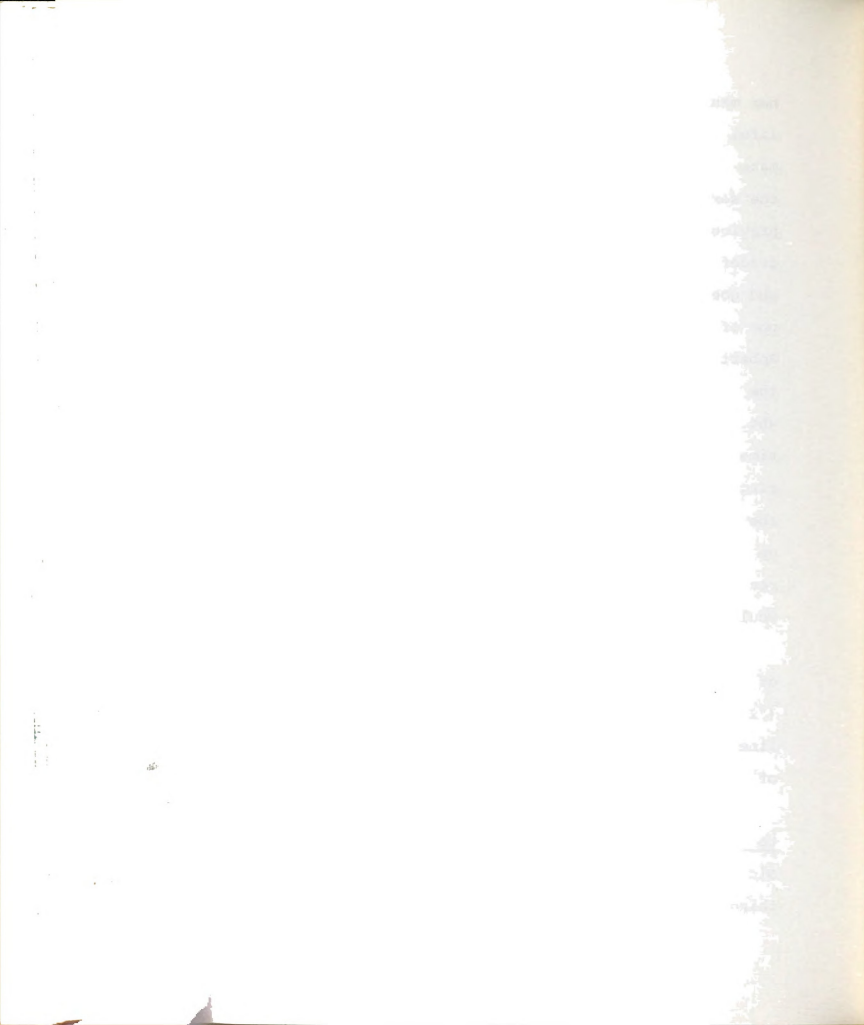
Carlos Baker quotes Hemingway as having written to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, that The Sun Also Rises "was not meant to be 'a hollow or bitter satire, but a damn tragedy with the earth abiding forever as the hero.'" (Baker, p. 81.)

Since Hemingway also described the bullfight as a "tragedy in three acts" in Death in the Afternoon, the reader is tempted to look for a correlation of the bullfight in the total structure of the novel.

The book is easily divided into three sections by the three major locales: Paris, Burquete and Pamplona. The Paris section is colorful and dramatic like the pageantry of the opening of a bullfight. Jake's predicament and his pain in relation to Brett make him like one of the horses who gets his guts spilled, a little "visceral accident" of the show. The Burquete episode is a change of pace between two very tense sections, just as the second third of the bullfight separates and thereby emphasizes the drama of the more colorful first and third parts. Just as in the bullfight, the third section, the Pamplona episode, is the complex culmination of the forces presented previously. In addition to the actual descriptions of Romero's fights, the relationship of Romero and Brett is a competition, like that of man and bull. This reading is enhanced by Brett's masculine characteristics (her chopped off hair,



her man's hat, her aggressive behavior, her independent life) and the way the riau-riau dancers surround her and make her the totem of their pagan ceremony. In addition, the sexual element of the bullfight is confused (as seen previously in relation to Death in the Afternoon); the graceful bullfighter takes on feminine characteristics and goes into an embrace with the bull from which only one of them can emerge whole. Romero is first wounded by Robert Cohn, a bull made dangerous by being separated from the others, not being "one of us," and Jake, the steer who usually calms the others down is wounded also this time. Romero is able still to conquer his bulls in the ring and to conquer Brett, who usually controls completely the men in love with her. Romero's match with Brett ends up as a draw, eventually, in that each of them backs off, realizing that too much is demanded, too many sacrifices would be necessary in the relationship. So, the real loser is Jake, the gored steer, and his tragedy is the loss of his illusions about life. His final comment to Brett ("Isn't it pretty to think so?"), coming as the very last line, emphasizes this profound change in Jake. This theme of the loss of one's illusions is a frequent theme of Hemingway's early works (the theme is central to A Farewell to Arms, "The Capital of the World" and to several of the Nick Adams stories), sometimes considered as a positive thing and at other times as negative. In The Sun Also Rises,



Jake's loss of his illusions is of ambiguous value. He may be freed from the tyrannical hold that Brett has had on him, but he has lost the powerful emotion and the illusion of possible happiness held out by that impossible dream.

Jake Barnes has seen around him many ways that men go about proving their manhood. He sees some ways that do not work at all, some that work in certain limited conditions, and some that work reasonably well in the real world he lives in. He modifies his choices and his attitudes change. He gives up his vision in which the thing of central importance in his life is not being able to have Brett and knows at the end that this would not magically solve the problems of living or of manhood. He is someone who sees the limitations of life but still finds that "The world was a good place to buy in" (p. 148).

## VII.

In The Green Hills of Africa,<sup>1</sup> Hemingway describes and dramatizes the rites of big game hunting as he did those of bullfighting in Death in the Afternoon. His own role is more central to this work since here he can play the master hunter who needs only the aid of information about the local animals and terrain (from his white hunter

---

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Hemingway, The Green Hills of Africa. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935 (1953). All quotations from this book will be from this edition.

1. 1940

2. 1941

3. 1942

4. 1943

5. 1944

6. 1945

7. 1946

8. 1947

9. 1948

10. 1949

11. 1950

12. 1951

13. 1952

14. 1953

15. 1954

16. 1955

17. 1956

18. 1957

19. 1958

20. 1959

21. 1960

22. 1961

23. 1962

24. 1963

25. 1964

26. 1965

and his guides), whereas in Death in the Afternoon he could only play the master spectator, the aficionado, not the bullfighter himself.

In his African book, Hemingway goes into the how of the sport, but is far less explicit about the why of it than he was in the bullfighting book. Kandisky asks him, "Why should any man shoot a kudu? You, an intelligent man, a poet, to shoot kudu." His first answer is indirect, then his response to the repeated question is only the simplest answer possible: "I like to do it" (p. 8). When, later, he tries to justify hunting, he does so only in the most personal sense, giving an apologia rather than a philosophy, explaining himself rather than the sport as a phenomenon. He does, however, generalize his experience in the sense that he identifies himself with all hunters (playing the role of their scapegoat). The implied ritual of his suffering and the union with other hunters is reinforced later when he speaks of the country he's moving through as being like "fall at home," then says ". . . I was thinking that all the country in the world is the same country and all hunters are the same people" (p. 249).

In his justification of hunting, he remembers a time when he suffered badly from a compound fracture of the arm (from his automobile accident in Montana):

. . . Alone with the pain in the night of the fifth week of not sleeping I thought suddenly how a bull elk must feel if you break a shoulder and he gets away and in that night I lay and felt it all, the

1900-1901

1901-1902

1902-1903

1903-1904

1904-1905

1905-1906

1906-1907

1907-1908

1908-1909

1909-1910

1910-1911

1911-1912

1912-1913

1913-1914

1914-1915

1915-1916

1916-1917

1917-1918

1918-1919

1919-1920

1920-1921

1921-1922

1922-1923

1923-1924

1924-1925

1925-1926

whole thing as it would happen from the shock of the bullet to the end of the business and, being a little out of my head, thought perhaps what I was going through was a punishment for all hunters. Then, getting well, decided if it was punishment I had paid it and at least I knew what I was doing. I did nothing that had not been done to me. I had been shot and I had been crippled and got away. I expected, always, to be killed by one thing or another and I, truly, did not mind that any more. Since I still loved to hunt I resolved that I would only shoot as long as I could kill cleanly and as soon as I lost that ability would stop (p. 148).

He has personally earned the right to shoot animals, he feels, but within the limit of responsibility measured by his ability to "kill cleanly," a term which seems to reverberate from Death in the Afternoon and to be the central point of Hemingway's hunting ethics. He uses the same expression again later when articulating his upset over the sable bull that he gut-shot and then could not find:

I did not mind killing anything, any animal, if I killed it cleanly, they all had to die and my interference with the nightly and the seasonal killing that went on all the time was very minute and I had no guilty feeling at all. We ate the meat and kept the hides and horns. But I felt rotten sick over this sable bull. . . . (p. 272).

A little later, but still thinking about his responsibility in relation to the sable bull, Hemingway says, "Every damned thing is your own fault if you're any good" (p. 281). This discounts for him most of the excuses he has been able to offer for himself in a lengthy interior monologue. When he paraphrases the feelings of Pop, his guide, on killing, his respect for Pop lets us know that his own feelings are not very different:

1000

950

900

850

800

750

700

650

600

550

500

450

400

350

300

250

200

150

100

50

0

-50

-100

-150

-200

-250

-300

-350

-400

-450

-500

-550

-600

-650

-700

-750

-800

-850

-900

-950

-1000

-1050

-1100

-1150

-1200

-1250

-1300

-1350

-1400

-1450

-1500

-1550

-1600

-1650

-1700

-1750

-1800

-1850

-1900

-1950

-2000

. . . He hated to have anything killed except what we were after, no killing on the side, no ornamental killing, no killing to kill only when you wanted it more than you wanted not to kill it. . . (p. 16).

Partly in jest and maybe partly seriously, Hemingway suggests some "ornamental killing" when he says he would shoot the histrionic guide, whom they call Garrick, if there were no law against it (p. 264), but, in practice, he stays within the limits that Pop sets.

Hemingway expresses a wide range of emotions that the various phases of hunting evoke in him. He speaks of the excitement in advance:

Now, going forward, sure he was in there, I felt the elation, the best elation of all, of certain action to come, action in which you had something to do, in which you can kill and come out of it, doing something you are ignorant about and so not scared, no one to worry about and no responsibility except to perform something you feel sure you can perform. . . . (p. 116).

Francis Macomber uses almost the same words when he asks Wilson, "But you have a feeling of happiness about action to come?" (p. 33). He calls this feeling "the best elation of all" and it comes, as with Macomber, as a reward for having conquered one's fears and is a form of confidence in oneself and one's ability to handle whatever action is to come.

In the next phase of action, the shooting, he gives this description of himself: "I was watching, freezing myself deliberately inside, stopping the excitement as you close a valve, going into that impersonal state you shoot



from" (p. 76). Here is the old Nick Adams belief in the possibility of controlling one's emotions, clicking them on and off, "as you close a valve." It is as if, when shooting, he makes himself into a shooting machine. In fact, when he makes a mistake in shooting the sable bull because he ". . . shot at the whole animal instead of calling the shot . . .," he blames himself for ". . . overconfidence in being able to do a thing and then omitting one of the steps in how it is done" (p. 272). If he had gone into his machine-like "impersonal state," he would not have made the mistake of omitting a part of his ritual. The "impersonal state," the ritualized actions which cause you to perform each action carefully at its place in the prescribed order, helps mitigate human carelessness and assure that the shooting is done properly and "cleanly."

The third phase that Hemingway speaks of is the period after the kill, a letdown from the anticipation and excitement of the preceding periods.

You cannot live on a plane of the sort of elation  
I had felt in the reeds and having killed, even  
when it is only a buffalo, you feel a little quiet  
inside. Killing is not a feeling that you share. .  
. . (p. 120).

Killing retains the almost mystical power that it had in Death in the Afternoon, but it is a power which, for Hemingway, plunges one into himself rather than turning him outward toward others. This quiet period, the turning inward, is only temporary, but there is another which is

10. 10. 10

11. 11. 11

12. 12. 12

13. 13. 13

14. 14. 14

15. 15. 15

16. 16. 16

17. 17. 17

18. 18. 18

19. 19. 19

20. 20. 20

21. 21. 21

22. 22. 22

23. 23. 23

24. 24. 24

25. 25. 25

26. 26. 26

27. 27. 27

28. 28. 28

29. 29. 29

30. 30. 30

31. 31. 31

32. 32. 32

33. 33. 33

34. 34. 34

35. 35. 35

36. 36. 36

37. 37. 37

38. 38. 38

39. 39. 39

40. 40. 40

permanent: "You can always remember how you shot them. That's what you really get out of it" (p. 293).<sup>1</sup> The horns and the skins which he will take home with him only serve as symbols of the real experience, preserved forever in his memory. And the memories stay distinct within the collection of hunting memories. Having declined to watch his first kudu skinned out ". . . because I wanted to remember the bull as I had first seen him . . .," he then thinks better of this decision and says:

. . . remembering that I had skinned-out or seen skinned-out every animal that I had ever shot, yet remembered every one exactly as he was at every moment, that one memory does not destroy another . . . I held the flashlight for M'Cola while he worked on the second bull. . . . (p. 236).

His experiences are unified, but yet remain individually meaningful to him as they accumulate in his memory. And the skinning-out, too, is part of the ritual.

Hemingway makes distinctions among animals that are as marked as the distinctions he makes among people. Just as he feels comradely sharing with M'Cola and contempt for Garrick, he considers the hyena a "dirty joke," but he lovingly describes the kudu as if he were a magic beast:

I looked at him, big, long-legged, a smooth gray with white stripes and the great, curling, sweeping horns, brown as walnut meats, and ivory pointed, at the big ears and the great, lovely

---

<sup>1</sup>Pop says this but Hemingway uses almost exactly the same words when consoling himself because his rhinoceros is smaller than Karl's: "I had the shot I had made on him to remember and nothing could take that away. . . ." (p. 86).

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

heavy-maned neck, the white chevron between his eyes and the white of his muzzle and I stooped over and touched him to try to believe it . . . and he smelled sweet and lovely like the breath of cattle and the odor of thyme after rain (p. 231).

It is only those animals for which he has respect, the kudu, the buffalo, the sable, the lion, which constitute a worthy opponent and are therefore proper game for the hunt. The hyena and the baboons would not merit this attention. The eulogy of the dead kudu corresponds to his position as the most desirable animal of all, the one whose pursuit begins and ends the book.

Hemingway's wife, called P.O.M. (for Poor Old Mama) in the book, gives us a fairly clear notion of how women fit into a hunting trip in Hemingway's mind. For some reason not explained, she had only a short term hunting license which ran out early in the trip and the book focuses on the latter part of the trip when she has "dropped back into non-combatant status." There is only one hunting event where she is shooting also and this involves the shooting of a lion, the first one shot by anyone in the party. P.O.M. shot at it first, but Hemingway finished it off, but then has to accept gracefully that M'Cola says that P.O.M. killed it. She is carried around on the shoulders of the porters and gun bearers, loving every minute of it, enjoying her "triumph," although she knows she did not kill the lion. Hemingway tries to take all this with good humor and tells her, just a little condescendingly,



"I believe you did shoot him" (p. 43). After this scene, P.O.M. is no longer involved in the shooting, except that precautions must sometimes be taken for her safety. She is a presence ("like a little terrier") around the camp, chats and drinks with Pop, reads, argues (but only in whispered tones) with her husband, prays for her husband to kill a kudu, sleeps and takes baths frequently, enjoys comfortable boots and complains about tight ones, and jokes with Pop about what a "good tracker and excellent bird-shot" her husband says he is. As for being a hunting companion, she shares her husband's experiences less than does M'Cola, who has the advantage of being male and an experienced hunter, which are much more significant factors than intelligence or cultural level. The exciting moments of the safari are always ones that are shared with the men of the party, not with P.O.M.

At several points in The Green Hills of Africa, Hemingway, as he had done previously in Death in the Afternoon, associates the sport to the craft of writing. First, simply in terms of what he is interested in doing, he connects the two:

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 writing, and reading, and seeing pictures was all I cared about doing. And I could remember all the pictures. . . . (p. 285).

Then, lamenting the need to hunt kudu under the pressure of limited time before the rains come, he says:

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

The way to hunt is for as long as you live against as long as there is such and such an animal; just as the way to paint is as long is (sic) there is you and colors and canvas, and to write as long as you can live and there is pencil and paper or ink or any machine to do it with, or anything you care to write about, and you feel a fool, and you are a fool, to do it any other way (p. 12).

The main point of comparison here is that in each activity one needs ample time. Later, in the paragraph immediately following his justification of hunting on the basis of "I did nothing that had not been done to me," he eulogizes the Gulf Stream which he fished around Key West and Havana as one of the things, like writing, which "you can never feel in any other way than by yourself":

That something I cannot yet define completely but the feeling comes when you write well and truly of something and know impersonally you have written it that way and those who are paid to read it and report on it do not like the subject so they say it is all a fake, yet you know its value absolutely . . . and when, on the sea, you are alone with it and know that this Gulf Stream you are living with, knowing, learning about, and loving, has moved, as it moves, since before man . . . and the palm fronds of our victories, the worn light bulbs of our discoveries and the empty condoms of our great loves float with no significance against one single, lasting thing --the stream (pp. 149-150).

Here the permanence of what he writes and of the Gulf Stream is the connecting point. He has already spoken to Kandisky of prose with "a fourth and fifth dimension" which ". . . can be written, without tricks and without cheating. With nothing that will go bad afterwards" (p. 27). The Gulf Stream is permanent by its nature and writing can be so if one can make it real and avoid "tricks" and "cheating."



The book ends with a drawing together of the safari and Hemingway's writing around this concept of permanence. When P.O.M. complains that she "can't see" anymore the face of Mr. J. P. (Pop) in her memory, Hemingway offers to give her this memory permanently: "I'll write you a piece sometime and put him in" (p. 294). As he has said earlier, "A thousand years makes economics silly and a work of art endures forever. . . ." (p. 109).

The central point of The Green Hills of Africa relates to integrating life and art. The theme recurs throughout the book within the framework of an experiment ". . . 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" (from Hemingway's Foreword to the book). The hunting and his writing are connected, memories of the trip and the book he will write about it, killing a kudu and visiting the Prado; there is a constant movement in the author's thoughts and in the shape of the book between art and life. Unfortunately, in response to the author's stated intention, the answer is negative. The feel of a safari, the drama of hunting wild game and the psychological interplay of the people on safari together come through more convincingly in the "works of the imagination" which Hemingway wrote after his safari, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," than they do in the "true" book, The Green Hills of



Africa. As Hemingway says, "a work of art endures forever," but to create one that will endure forever requires a greater distillation and sifting through and choosing of experiences than we have in this book.

#### VIII.

In the last Nick Adams story, "Fathers and Sons," Nick gratefully acknowledges to himself his father's legacy to him:

Nick could not write about him yet, although he would, later, but the quail country made him remember him as he was when Nick was a boy and he was very grateful to him for two things; fishing and shooting. His father was as sound on those two things as he was unsound on sex, for instance, and Nick was glad that it had been that way; for some one 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, and now, at thirty-eight, he loved to fish and to shoot exactly as much as when he first had gone with his father. It was a passion that had never slackened and he was very grateful to his father for bringing him to know it (p. 490).

For Nick, and for the other Hemingway heroes after him, hunting and fishing are central life-long activities. They serve as a means of self-renewal in times of trauma or fatigue; they establish standards for moral conduct, by means of a "sportsman's code" which can be extended to every other aspect of life; they set up a ritualized means for trying to control the emotions and one's very thinking processes; they provide an arena of control and domination to the expert who has mastered all the procedures and understands clearly the forces he is dealing with; and they

20011110

01.100

20011110

01.100000

01.100000

01.100000

01.100000

01.100000

01.100000

01.100000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

set off the boundaries of a realm where women may come but never really share, where a man proves his masculinity to other men and, more important, to himself, without getting involved with females.

In "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," one of the earliest Nick Adams stories, Nick's father becomes very angry at an Indian who works for him. Dr. Adams returns to the house and immediately starts cleaning his shotgun. His wife, nursing a headache, as she frequently does, in a darkened room, irritates her husband further with her bland religious values which do not correspond to her husband's experiences. He can only ignore her admonishments, her pain and her wish to have Nick sent in to her and find comfort in his familiar shotgun and in the masculine company of his son and in their mutual interest in the woods and in the black squirrels that Nick knows about.

In "The End of Something," a simple event, Nick's telling Marjorie that "It isn't fun any more," is set against a more complex background. One part of the background is the deserted lumbering town, Hortons Bay, and the life has gone out of it just as it has from the romance of Nick and Marjorie. As Marjorie looks at what remains of the mill, "the broken white limestone of its foundations showing through the swampy second growth," she says, sentimentally, "There's our old ruin, Nick" (p. 107). Her words must sound ironic to Nick who is about to tell her

1. 1000  
2. 1000  
3. 1000  
4. 1000  
5. 1000  
6. 1000  
7. 1000  
8. 1000  
9. 1000  
10. 1000  
11. 1000  
12. 1000  
13. 1000  
14. 1000  
15. 1000  
16. 1000  
17. 1000  
18. 1000  
19. 1000  
20. 1000  
21. 1000  
22. 1000  
23. 1000  
24. 1000  
25. 1000  
26. 1000  
27. 1000  
28. 1000  
29. 1000  
30. 1000  
31. 1000  
32. 1000  
33. 1000  
34. 1000  
35. 1000  
36. 1000  
37. 1000  
38. 1000  
39. 1000  
40. 1000  
41. 1000  
42. 1000  
43. 1000  
44. 1000  
45. 1000  
46. 1000  
47. 1000  
48. 1000  
49. 1000  
50. 1000  
51. 1000  
52. 1000  
53. 1000  
54. 1000  
55. 1000  
56. 1000  
57. 1000  
58. 1000  
59. 1000  
60. 1000  
61. 1000  
62. 1000  
63. 1000  
64. 1000  
65. 1000  
66. 1000  
67. 1000  
68. 1000  
69. 1000  
70. 1000  
71. 1000  
72. 1000  
73. 1000  
74. 1000  
75. 1000  
76. 1000  
77. 1000  
78. 1000  
79. 1000  
80. 1000  
81. 1000  
82. 1000  
83. 1000  
84. 1000  
85. 1000  
86. 1000  
87. 1000  
88. 1000  
89. 1000  
90. 1000  
91. 1000  
92. 1000  
93. 1000  
94. 1000  
95. 1000  
96. 1000  
97. 1000  
98. 1000  
99. 1000  
100. 1000

that their relationship is a ruin, also. In the opening passage of the story Hemingway tells how the mill shut down when "one year there were no more logs to make lumber." The machinery of the mill was removed and loaded on the last schooner taking lumber out of the area.

Its open hold covered with canvas and lashed tight, the sails of the schooner filled and it moved out into the open lake, carrying with it everything that made the mill a mill and Hortons Bay a town (p. 107).

With a very similar image, Marjorie leaves Nick near the end of the story in the rowboat.

She was afloat in the boat on the water with the moonlight on it. Nick went back and lay down with his face in the blanket by the fire. He could hear Marjorie rowing on the water (p. 111).

The other part of the background of this story is fishing. Nick chooses the occasion of a fishing trip to tell Marjorie that their romance is over. Their troll fishing and the setting of trout lines is described in great detail, but in a way which makes Nick a neutral guide of the fishing activities. We are told nothing of his mood or feelings but Marjorie's contentment comes through clearly. "She loved to fish. She loved to fish with Nick" (p. 108). We simply see Nick act, as he watches Marjorie and tells her what to do. The focus on Nick has been so objective that when they pull the boat up on the shore and Marjorie says, "What's the matter, Nick?" the reader is taken aback. The one complaint that Nick makes against Marjorie is that she knows everything. "I've taught you everything. You

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

know you do. What don't you know, anyway?" Nick seems to want a mentor or leader role with Marjorie and when her growing proficiency in the activities they share makes that impossible, the relationship is no longer "fun" for him. He tells her, "I feel as though everything was gone to hell inside of me. I don't know, Marge. I don't know what to say" (p. 110).

The ruins of the lumber town serve in the story as a reflection of the romance gone to ruin and the fishing sequences give us an image of Nick as competent outdoorsman and as teacher and guide. The question which remains is why Nick must be teacher and guide and will not accept a sharing and more equal relationship with Marjorie as she approaches his level of ability in fishing. Perhaps it is simply because she is a female, and comradely equal relationships for Nick (and succeeding Hemingway heroes) can only exist with men. Marjorie seems to sense this implication of Nick's action when she refuses to let him push the boat off for her and insists on leaving without either playing the crying and manipulative female role or the helpless female role.

In "The End of Something," we do not see clearly what the relationship with Marjorie has meant to Nick, what there was in it that was important for him, apart from his being able to play a superior role. In the following story, "The Three-Day Blow," we get a better glimpse

one more

in time

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

to meet

of something positive in the relationship as we see Nick trying to adjust to the breakup. Nick and Bill discuss drinking, baseball and books in a somewhat unnatural and forced atmosphere which makes their discussions seem adolescent and meaningless. They then come to the subject of Nick's broken romance and gradually during the exchange about Marjorie and the breakup Nick seems to come out of the numb state he has been in and to come into touch with a deep sense of loss.

All he knew was that he once had Marjorie and that he had lost her. She was gone and he had sent her away. That was all that mattered. He might never see her again. Probably he never would. It was all gone, finished (p. 123).

Nick sees the break as irrevocable and himself as responsible for it. Making an analogy which once again relates the story in the foreground to the setting in which it occurs, Nick says to Bill: "I don't know why it was. I couldn't help it. Just like when the three-day blows come now and rip all the leaves off the trees." And then, "It was my fault" (p. 124). The conversation continues in a juvenile vein until Bill makes a casual comment which changes the whole direction of Nick's thoughts:

. . . We won't ever speak about it again. You don't want to think about it. You might get back into it again.

Nick had not thought about that. It had seemed so absolute. That was a thought. That made him feel better (p. 124).

There is an immediate change in Nick as he realizes he can reverse the decision made in relation to Marjorie. He no

Page 10

Page 11

Page 12

Page 13

Page 14

Page 15

Page 16

Page 17

Page 18

Page 19

Page 20

Page 21

Page 22

Page 23

Page 24

Page 25

Page 26

Page 27

Page 28

Page 29

Page 30

Page 31

Page 32

Page 33

Page 34

Page 35

Page 36

Page 37

Page 38

Page 39

longer wants to sit around and talk idly and suggests to Bill, "Let's take the guns and go down to the point and look for your dad." Nick is no longer a paralyzed adolescent, sitting around drinking and blaming himself for his pain. Everything takes a positive turn and even the cause of his upset, the breakup with Marjorie, can be forgotten now and Nick and Bill can engage with each other genuinely and enthusiastically in hunting. The hunting at the end serves as a symbol of what Nick in his depression has been cut off from, a meaningful activity and a meaningful involvement with another person. Once he realizes he can return to Marjorie, he no longer needs to. A veil is lifted for Nick. "Outside now the Marge business was no longer so tragic. It was not even very important. The wind blew everything like that away" (p. 125). Nick is free to make a step forward in the Hemingway masculine world where things are right when the men hunt together.

In "Out of Season," two recurring themes of these stories are again combined: a romance which is not going well and a fishing trip which does not work out right. The title of the story seems to refer as much to the relationship of the "young gentleman" and his wife as to the fishing. The young gentleman and his wife have argued over lunch before setting out on an illegal fishing expedition with a drunken old man named Peduzzi. The young man's reaction to the argument is to be very solicitous of

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

2000-01-01

his wife's comfort and her reaction is to insist that "It doesn't make any difference. . . . None of it makes any difference" (p. 175). The wife turns back when it seems as if the walk to the fishing place will be too far. The young gentleman and Peduzzi give up the attempt because they have no lead sinker for the fishing line. The young gentleman has given up very easily and his arrangement with Peduzzi that they will meet the next morning melts away by the time they reach the town again: "I may not be going," said the young gentleman, "very probably not. I will leave word with the padrone at the hotel office" (p. 179). His heart has not been in this adventure and fishing must remain for him "out of season," like his romance, at least for the time being.

"Big Two-Hearted River" begins, as does "The End of Something," with a minute description of terrain which reflects Nick's inner state. Here we have not only the ruins of a deserted town, with just the broken foundation of one building remaining, but the whole surrounding area has burned, and "Even the surface had been burned off the ground" (p. 209). The terrain has suffered the ravages of both time and experience.

Some critics, notably Philip Young and Carlos Baker, assimilate material from other Nick Adams stories in order to show that Nick in this story is specifically traumatized by physical and emotional wounds from his

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

experiences in Michigan, in traveling around, and in the war. We do not need to go beyond the story to know that Nick whom we see to be an expert fisherman, has been away from the sport: "It was a long time since Nick had looked into a stream and seen trout" (p. 210). We also see that he is returning to something which is very meaningful to him: "Nick's heart tightened as the trout moved. He felt all the old feeling" (p. 210). And we know that Nick has left unpleasant things behind: "He felt that he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs. It was all back of him" (p. 210).

The idea that one can leave behind "the need for thinking" is a typical Hemingway concept. The reader who does not believe that one can control his thoughts is constantly puzzled in reading Hemingway at phrases like the following: "Don't think about it. . . . It's silly to think about that . . .;" "Well, you better not think about it . . .;" "You better not think at all. . . . Soon you will be with Maria and you won't have to think . . .;" "I wouldn't think about that any more. Anyone could be upset by his first lion. . . ." Such phrases recur frequently in the works and only Jake Barnes shows skepticism about this possibility, when he is speaking of his injury: "The Catholic Church had an awfully good way of handling all that. Good advice, anyway. Not to think about it. Oh, it was swell advice. Try and take it sometime. Try and

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

10000000

take it" (The Sun Also Rises, p. 31). Most of the Hemingway heroes do try to take that advice.

Hemingway further develops this notion in his introduction to Men at War, where he defines cowardice as:

. . . almost always simply a lack of ability to suspend the functioning of the imagination. Learning to suspend your imagination and live completely in the very second of the present minute with no before and no after is the greatest gift a soldier can acquire.

To help them in their attempt to live completely in the present, the Hemingway heroes develop intricate rituals in which they concentrate on each movement of what they are doing. Malcolm Cowley says of "Big Two-Hearted River" that Nick's fishing trip ". . . might be regarded as an incantation, a spell to banish evil spirits."<sup>1</sup> Carlos Baker takes this idea further, seeing everything that Nick does in the story as ritualized. As to the purpose of the rituals, Baker guesses that Nick ". . . is in fact a returned war-veteran, going fishing for fun and for therapeutic purposes," and he speaks of the "exorcism" which is to take place in the high rolling pine plain. (Baker, pp. 126-127.) Neither Cowley nor Baker focuses on the immediate function of the rituals, on how they help in the exorcism or the banishing of evil spirits: the rituals serve to stop the thinking process, by grounding Nick in the present moment.

---

<sup>1</sup>Malcolm Cowley, The Portable Hemingway. New York: The Viking Press, 1944, p. xix.



After the first paragraph, which sets the scene of the story, the focus is on Nick and his actions. Nick is entranced with his surroundings and with his return to activities where he is in control and knows exactly what he is doing. He studies with fascination ". . . the trout keeping themselves steady in the current with wavering fins . . ." and later the grasshoppers that ". . . had all turned black from living in the burned-over land" (p. 209, p. 212). He may identify with the efforts of the trout to hold steady or with the grasshoppers marked by their experience, but he neither philosophizes nor evokes other trout and other grasshoppers he has known. Nick is living in the moment of his experiences.

There is only one serious lapse, one time when Nick begins to think of the past. When he starts to make coffee he thinks of his friend Hopkins and an argument they once had over the best way to make coffee. From there Nick goes on to think about the various events surrounding Hopkins' learning that he had made much money from an oil well in Texas. Nick's memories of Hopkins are told in the same cataloguing style as his movements in camping and fishing. The facts and events are told briefly and brusquely:

Hopkins went away when the telegram came. That was on the Black River. It took eight days for the telegram to reach him. Hopkins gave away his .22 caliber Colt automatic pistol to Nick. He gave his camera to Bill. It was to remember him always by. They were all going fishing again next summer. . . (p. 217).

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

Nothing of this series of memories about Hopkins seems to be very emotion-laden, but Nick finds it threatening. "His mind was starting to work. He knew he could choke it because he was tired enough" (p. 218). His mind working, thinking, seems to be dangerous as soon as his thoughts stray from the present moment and Nick douses his thoughts in sleep this time.

In Part II of the story, the careful style with which Nick's camping activities have been recounted (almost listed) continues as Nick awakens, catches grasshoppers for bait, prepares and eats his breakfast, fishes, eats his lunch, cleans the fish he has caught, then heads back to his camp.

Only rarely do we get a glimpse of Nick's feelings in the midst of his activities. Just as we were told briefly in Part I that, "His muscles ached and the day was hot, but Nick felt happy" (p. 210), there are several such abrupt statements of Nick's feelings in Part II: "Nick was excited" (p. 221); "It was a good feeling" (p. 223); "His mouth dry, his heart down, Nick reeled in" (p. 226); "He did not want to rush his sensations any" (p. 227). When Nick is disappointed at losing the large trout, he sits on some logs and smokes a cigarette and we are given a panorama of what he sees up and down the stream, then we are told: ". . . slowly the feeling of disappointment left him. . . ." (p. 227). It is this focusing on the

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

2000000

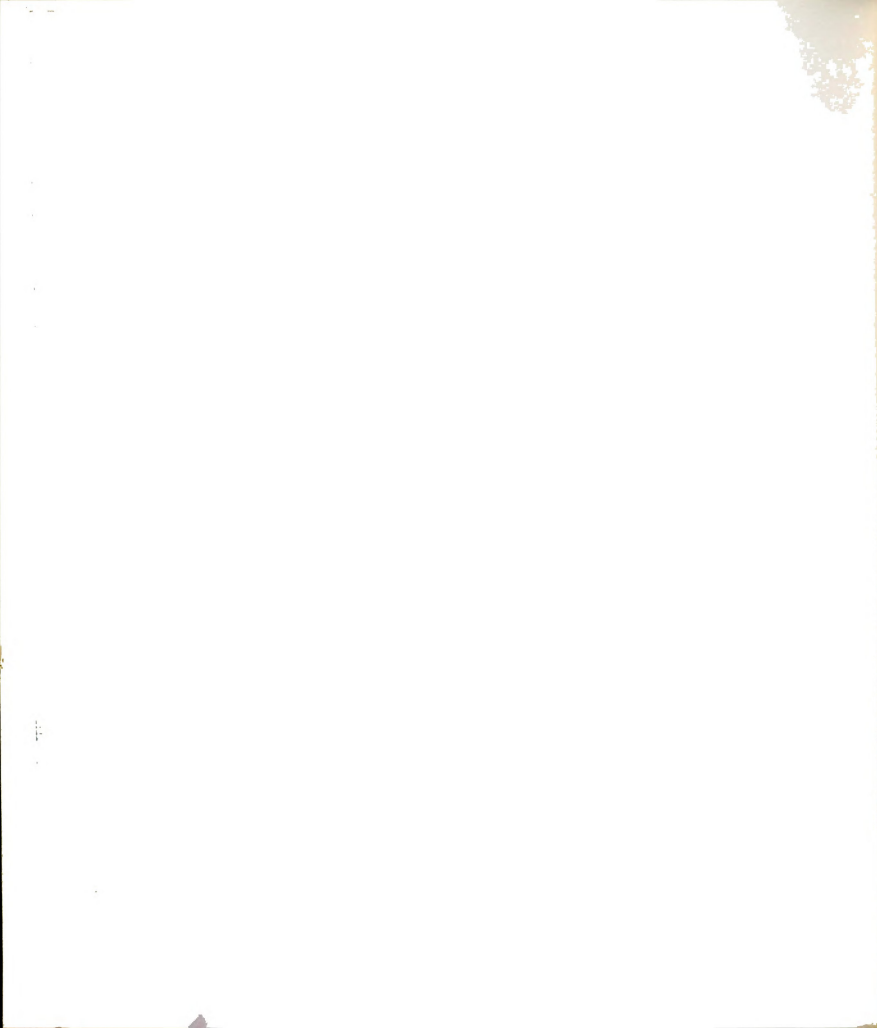
sights up and down the stream rather than on what is going on inside him which has brought the change. In one of the few other places where Nick's feelings are revealed, the statement is first made as one of fact before it is related to Nick's wishes or feelings:

. . . in the fast deep water, in the half light, the fishing would be tragic. In the swamp fishing was a tragic adventure. Nick did not want it. He did not want to go down the stream any further today (p. 231).

Nick's feelings are repressed under a continuous account of actions in which the narrative perspective rapidly but subtly flickers from a third person narrator to an inner monologue from Nick:

Nick knew the trout's teeth would cut through the snell of the hook. The hook would imbed itself in his jaw. He'd bet the trout was angry. Anything that size would be angry. That was a trout. He had been solidly hooked. Solid as a rock. He felt like a rock, too, before he started off. By God, he was a big one. By God, he was the biggest one I ever heard of.

The movement from "Nick" to "he" to "I" here (and the flash back to "Nick" as subject in the next sentence) serves to distract the reader from the fact that he is getting only the factual perspective on Nick's present experiences, whether it comes from inside or outside Nick. This outside, or factual, perspective is exactly what Nick is trying to impose on his own thinking, to pull himself out of the swamp of pain within and into the world of fishing, where he is safe and successful because of his expertise.



Nick relates to the fish competitively, but respectfully. When he gets his first strike the trout turns out to be a small one and Nick gently removes the hook from its mouth and releases it, being careful to wet his hands before touching it so as not to ". . . disturb the delicate mucus that covered him," and cause a fatal fungus to grow on the fish. With the two large trout that Nick catches and keeps he rapidly unhooks them and places them in a bag in the water until he kills them quickly and cleanly with a whack that breaks the neck. Nick follows a code of fair play according to which he sets up a contest of skill and knowledge between himself and a fish, but if he wins he does not inflict undue pain nor take advantage of a fish not yet full grown. He also stops his fishing for the day when he has caught what he can eat that day.

The most dramatic scene in the story is the contest between Nick and the trout that gets away. There is a change of style, from simple to compound and complex sentences, which signals a different level of involvement on Nick's part with what he is doing from the time he feels the strike:

With the core of the reel showing, his heart feeling stopped with the excitement, leaning back against the current that mounted icily his thighs, Nick thumbed the reel hard with his left hand . . .  
 . . (p. 226).

The change in sentence structure to a smooth flowing form of expression gives the feeling that now, for the first time,

No.

001101

001102

001103

001104

001105

001106

001107

001108

001109

001110

001111

001112

001113

001114

001115

001116

001117

001118

001119

001120

001121

001122

001123

001124

001125

Nick does not need to force himself to focus on each detail of what he is doing, but that something has broken free within him and he can give himself over to the experience. After the leader breaks and he has lost the fish, he reverts to the state he has been in since the beginning of the story and the style changes back abruptly to the pattern of short, simple sentences:

Nick's hand was shaky. He reeled in slowly. The thrill had been too much. He felt, vaguely, a little sick, as though it would be better to sit down (p. 226).

Nick fears the state of excitement he has gotten into and he must try to calm himself down now by sitting calmly, smoking a cigarette and naming the things he sees around him. Nick has lost the contest, but to a worthy competitor: "He had never seen so big a trout. There was a heaviness, a power not to be held, and then the bulk of him, as he jumped. He looked as broad as a salmon" (p. 226). Nick is excited and disappointed, but has enough respect for the fish to know that he need not feel ashamed.

Nick has gone on a fishing tip after being away from it for a long time. He has used this sport at which he is highly skilled as a ritualized activity which helps him to stabilize his emotional state and to re-establish himself as a person in control of his life. The fishing has provided parameters for moral conduct as well as setting a framework for all his activities throughout the day. And

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

Nick has within the context of the fishing expedition sufficient challenge for the future: "There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp" (p. 232).

"Now I Lay Me" is a Nick Adams story, written in the first person, in which Nick describes a period of his life about which he tells us that:

I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. I had been that way for a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back (p. 363).

About this terrible fear, Nick tells us, "I tried never to think about it . . ." (p. 363), but, as usual, this proves difficult and most of the story concentrates on the things Nick thinks about at night in order to pass the time and to avoid thinking about dying.

Nick has various cataloguing ways of organizing his thoughts in which he thinks of everything that has ever happened to him, in chronological order, of everyone he has ever known, saying a prayer for each one, then on to categories like "all the animals in the world," birds, fishes, countries, cities, kinds of food and Chicago streets.

But Nick's favorite series of thoughts is one in which he trout fishes along the streams that he knew in his youth and we recognize the Nick of "Big Two-Hearted River" in the vast knowledge of details of fishing, in the thought processes concentrated on a step-by-step listing of the procedural aspects of what he is doing, and in his

various

1940

1941

1942

1943

1944

1945

1946

1947

1948

1949

1950

1951

1952

1953

1954

1955

1956

1957

1958

1959

1960

1961

1962

1963

1964

1965

1966

1967

1968

1969

use of this particular way of focusing his thoughts to help ground him in the present and to help him not to think about something else. Nick describes carefully all the kinds of bait he has used and how each insect acts on the hook. When he has fished down and back up each stream he knows, he begins to imagine new streams, with names for each, which he later remembers as if he had really fished them.

In the midst of a story about the terrors of Nick's life, he seems in his glory in the section where he describes how he thought about trout fishing. This memory is powerful enough to reunite him with himself as a boy growing up as a master fisherman and to obliterate, at least for a time, the intervening traumas. And trout fishing clearly wins out over women, once again, in Nick's mind. When his orderly suggests that what Nick needs to do to get over his shell shock is to get married, Nick thinks". . . of all the girls I had ever known and what kind of wives they would make." He loses interest in this game very rapidly, however.

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 (p. 371).

Once again, in this story, Nick is renewing himself by drawing from a rich bank of experience which is his forever and never fails him.



In "Fathers and Sons," the story in which Nick explains the source of his attachment to hunting and fishing, we see Nick using imagined hunting forays in much the same way he used imagined fishing trips in "Now I Lay Me." Here, rather than warding off the fears from shell shock, he is dealing with a simple case of boredom. While driving across the United States with his young sleeping son:

Nick noticed which corn fields had soy beans or peas in them, how the thickets and the cut-over land lay, where the cabins and houses were in relation to the fields and the thickets; hunting the country in his mind as he went by; sizing up each clearing as to feed and cover and figuring where you would find a covey and which way they would fly. . . . Hunting this country for quail as his father had taught him, Nicholas Adams started thinking about his father (pp. 488-489).

Nick reminisces here about his initiation in sex and in hunting in the Northern Michigan woods. He thinks of the long summer days spent in the woods with the Indian girl, Trudy, and her brother. His father would give him three cartridges a day for his shotgun, ". . . because he said that would teach me to hunt and it wasn't good for a boy to go banging around" (p. 497). Apart from the possible pun here, Nick is clearly linking the two kinds of initiation he went through in the Michigan woods. The distinction he makes between the two is that

. . . some one 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. . . . While for the other that his father was not sound about, all the equipment you will ever have is provided and each man learns all there is for him to know without advice; and it makes no difference where you live (p. 490).



The linking of the two areas makes hunting, like sex, an area in which men dominate (as Nick does with Trudy) and prove their masculinity. The distinction Nick makes establishes the idea of hunting as the more difficult area in which to succeed and, therefore, the area which more clearly shows the degree of a man's masculinity. And Nick makes another distinction of great importance. Nick's memories about Trudy and sex conclude with this comparison:

. . . They all ended the same. Long time ago good. Now no good.

And about the other. When you have shot one bird flying you have shot all birds flying. They are all different and they fly in different ways but the sensation is the same and the last one is as good as the first. He could thank his father for that (p. 498).

Hunting provides a ritual of repetition in which each time one repeats the act he is reunited with all the other times and this ritual, unlike sex for Nick, never lets you down, always brings the same sense of satisfaction.

In "Fathers and Sons" Nick is more at peace with himself and his life than in any other of the Nick Adams stories. It is a good story to end the series. Nick is remembering and sharing with his own son some ideas which have been of central importance to him. And he promises his son a shotgun when he is twelve years old. He plans to pass on to his son the most important legacy he received from his own father.

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

In the recently published collection of the Nick Adams stories<sup>1</sup> there are eight previously unpublished pieces. The first one, called "Three Shots," (pp. 3-6), was originally intended (according to Philip Young's preface) to precede "Indian Camp." Nick, his father and his Uncle George are on a camping trip and the two men go off fishing at night, leaving Nick alone at the camp. Nick has been told that ". . . if any emergency came up while they were gone he was to fire three shots with the rifle and they would come right back." Nick becomes frightened as he walks through the woods back to camp and we are told, "He was always a little frightened of the woods at night." As his fear becomes more intense, there are several interesting elements to it. The silence increases his fear: "Nick lay still and tried to go to sleep. There was no noise anywhere. Nick felt if he could only hear a fox bark or an owl or anything he would be all right." Then the fear suddenly becomes precise and he is afraid of dying, not as a present danger, but as a future event, distant but inevitable. About this fear of Nick's we are told, "He never had it except at night." There is no precise indication of Nick's age in this story, but his father says to Uncle George, in justification of Nick, "He's pretty small." Certain patterns of Nick's fear

---

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Hemingway, The Nick Adams Stories. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972. All subsequent references will be to this edition.



are already established. At night he is afraid of dying. In "Now I Lay Me" and "A Way You'll Never Be," the Nick who must have a light in order to sleep at night because he has been blown up at night and fears he will die if he closes his eyes in the dark, had a not very different fear as a child. The older Nick, too, listens for sounds around him and is comforted by the sound of the silk worms eating mulberry leaves.

Nick in "Three Shots" feels better as soon as he takes action: he fires three shots which break the silence of the night and he is able to go to sleep immediately, long before the return of his father and uncle. Activity, real or imagined, is for the Hemingway characters the antidote to the fearsome dark, full of quiet and inactivity.

Another interesting element of this short piece is the image we get of Nick's father as teacher in the woods. He is teaching Nick to be more at home there than anywhere else: "You don't want to ever be frightened in the woods, Nick. There is nothing that can hurt you."

The longest of the new pieces, though a fragment still, is called "The Last Good Country." Here Nick seems to be an early adolescent and, under most improbable circumstances, he runs away from home with his younger sister because the game warden is after him for having shot a buck and for having sold trout, both out of season. Nick regrets somewhat what he has done and regrets a good deal

1940-1941

1941-1942

1942-1943

1943-1944

1944-1945

1945-1946

1946-1947

1947-1948

1948-1949

1949-1950

1950-1951

1951-1952

1952-1953

1953-1954

1954-1955

1955-1956

1956-1957

1957-1958

1958-1959

1959-1960

1960-1961

1961-1962

1962-1963

1963-1964

1964-1965

1965-1966

that he is being pursued and he does a lot of "not thinking about it." There is a fairy tale atmosphere to the story, made up of evil adult villains, an absence of parents (Nick's father is away and his mother is only a neutral presence--she has gone to bed "with a sick headache"), a set of substitute parents who give affectionate advice and supplies, and a magic protective forest, with a "secret place" for Nick and Littless. Nick is in safe territory deep in the woods and he and Littless take care of each other and live in childish bliss with no need for adults.

The way that Nick has gotten into trouble shows him to be far less accomplished as a hunter than the later Nick. Suzy, the girl who works for the Adams family, explains to Mr. John, the surrogate father, how the situation came about:

He told me he was reading in a book about how you could crease something with a bullet and it wouldn't do it any harm. It would just stun it and Nickie wanted to try it. He said it was a damn fool thing to do. But he wanted to try it. Then he hit the buck and broke his neck. He felt awful about it. He felt awful about trying to crease it in the first place (p. 103).

Nick is not as good a shot here, probably, as he is in works where he is older, and, certainly, he has less respect for the animals he hunts, if he tries to "crease" and "just stun" a deer. Later in the story, in the woods, Nick shoots three ruffed grouse to eat and it is only at his sister's insistence that he does not shoot a fourth which

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

would be an easy shot, but which they do not need for food. When his sister asks if the grouse, too, are out of season, Nick replies,

Sure. But they are full grown and nobody but us would ever hunt them. I kill plenty of great horned owls and a great horned owl will kill a partridge a day if he can. . . . (p. 126).

Nick's morality is practical rather than legalistic.

Nick seems more accomplished at what he is doing when he goes fishing. He follows all the same procedures detailed in other stories. After he takes earthworms from under a log for bait, we are told: "This was the third year he had found bait at this same place and he had always replaced the log so that it was as he had found it" (p. 107). His habitual good luck practice is here also: "Then he walked to where he had left the pole with the line and the hook and baited the hook carefully and spat on it for good luck" (p. 107). When he catches a fish that is too large for the skillet, he thinks, "But I've hurt him and I have to kill him" (p. 108). In the fishing scene we recognize the Nick we know by the preciseness of all his actions, the repeated and now habitual nature of what he does, and his sense of responsibility toward his adversary, the fish. Nick in this story has learned the lesson his father was trying to teach him in "Three Shots"; he is completely comfortable in the woods and his only fear is that his enemy, the Evans boy, might follow him there.

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

There is one strange and slightly ominous element in the story, unexplained in its present context. While fishing, Nick thinks what a big creek this is and then thinks, "It picks up an awful volume of water in that bad swamp up above" (p. 107). There is no explanation of why the swamp is bad, but the reference gives some further view of Nick's thinking and has an echo effect with "Big Two-Hearted River," letting us know that swamps were bad for Nick even before his situation in that story.

The fact that in this piece Nick shares his experiences in the woods with a female may seem unlike Hemingway, but the question of the nature of the relationship of this brother and sister becomes more than ambiguous as the story moves along. At first Nick tries to discourage Littleless from going with him, but she counters his argument:

"If there's two of us they'd look harder. A boy and a girl show up."

"I'd go like a boy," she said. "I always wanted to be a boy anyway. They couldn't tell anything about me if my hair was cut."

"No," Nick Adams said. "That's true" (p. 67).

When Nick allows her to go along, this strange idea that she should "go like a boy" seems to be forgotten. Later, after a full day in their "secret place," Nick returns from fishing and finds that his sister has cut off her hair.

"It's very exciting," she said. "Now I'm your sister but I'm a boy, too. Do you think it will change me into a boy?"

"No."

"I wish it would" (p. 110).



After this point, Littless practices standing and moving like a boy, and Nick sometimes calls her "brother." A little later the relationship veers from the brotherly to the incestuous when Littless asks if they can stay there together in the "secret place" forever, and Nick says "I don't think so. You'd grow up and have to get married."

Littless responds:

"I'm going to get married to you anyway. I want to be your commonlaw wife. . . . All you have to do is live a certain time as man and wife. I'll get them to count this time now. It's just like homesteading. . . . I've got another scheme. We'll have a couple of children while I'm a minor. Then you have to marry me under the Unwritten Law" (p. 120).

Nick does share with a female in this story and gives much care and thought to her needs, but it is a very special, as well as confused, relationship in which Littless can be not only his sister, but also his brother and then maybe his wife. Nick sums the situation up in his own ambiguous way: "He loved his sister very much and she loved him too much. But, he thought, I guess those things straighten out. At least I hope so" (p. 117).

This fragment ends suddenly with Nick and Littless resting in their camp and he agrees to read Wuthering Heights aloud to her. The piece is about sixty-five pages long and it would require a much longer length to work out the plot elements initiated. We get a view of the continuing education of Nicholas Adams as he grows into manhood and assumes responsibilities (even if some of the

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also provides a brief overview of the methodology used in the study.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the study area. It includes information about the location of the study area, the population of the study area, and the characteristics of the study area. It also discusses the data sources used in the study.

3. The third part of the report is a detailed description of the study results. It includes information about the findings of the study, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the implications of the findings. It also discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research.

4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion and recommendations. It summarizes the main findings of the study and provides recommendations for future research. It also discusses the importance of the study and the need for further research.

circumstances seem childishly conceived) and we get an image of Nick's emerging philosophy of living in the present moment:

. . . Nick was happy with his sister and he thought, no matter how this thing comes out we might as well have a good happy time. He had already learned there was only one day at a time and that it was always the day you were in. It would be today until it was tonight and tomorrow would be today again. This was the main thing he had learned so far (p. 122).

One other of the new pieces in the book, "On Writing," relates to the hunting and fishing theme. According to Philip Young's preface, this scene, a stream of consciousness reflection of some of Nick's life, originally concluded "Big Two-Hearted River." There is one striking link between the two stories. After a one-sentence opening paragraph, the next two paragraphs are taken, almost verbatim, but with a very different context, from "Big Two-Hearted River" (pp. 228-229):

Nick had one good trout. He did not care about getting many trout. Now the stream was shallow and wide. There were trees along both banks. The trees of the left bank made short shadows on the current in the forenoon sun. Nick knew there were trout in each shadow. He and Bill Smith had discovered that on the Black River one hot day. In the afternoon, after the sun had crossed toward the hills, the trout would be in the cool shadows on the other side of the stream.

The very biggest ones would lie up close to the bank. You could always pick them up there on the Black. Bill and he had discovered it. When the sun was down they all moved out into the current. Just when the sun made the water blinding in the glare before it went down you were liable to strike a big trout anywhere in the current. It was almost impossible to fish then, the surface of

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

the water was blinding as a mirror in the sun. Of course, you could fish upstream, but in a stream like the Black or this you had to wallow against the current and in a deep place the water piled up on you. It was no fun to fish upstream although all the books said it was the only way (p. 241).

The eighth sentence in the first paragraph and the third sentence in the second, the two which refer to Bill Smith, do not appear in "Big Two-Hearted River," (although Bill Smith is mentioned in the one sequence of reminiscences which does appear in that story), and the last sentence of the second paragraph ends differently in the other story: "It was no fun to fish upstream with this much current" (p. 229). Apart from this passage almost in common, the two stories are very different. "Big Two-Hearted River" is about Nick at a troubled point in his life, a point where he does not dare to let his mind "start to work." There is only one sequence with any reference to the past and the rest shows marked effort to concentrate on processes and the present moment. In "On Writing," we see Nick as a self-possessed and successful writer whose mind roams freely in and out of the present and over many periods of his past life. There are no swamps lurking near the stream he fishes (although the passage which the two stories share is immediately followed in "Big Two-Hearted River" by the references to the swamp where Nick does not want to go because the fishing would be "tragic" there) and no fears crowding the edges of his consciousness. There would have to be a time gap between the Nick seen here and

100  
101  
102  
103  
104  
105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

the one in "Big Two-Hearted River." What links the two stories and is the continuing element in Nick's life is his way of viewing fishing. At both ages the passage fits because Nick would notice the same details in describing the stream and the banks, would recall the same facts about where the fish would be and would have the same preferences about fishing downstream rather than upstream. The use of the same passage twice, evoking Nick at two different stages of life dramatizes this focal organizing point in Nick's life, his love of fishing, which is very central to his identity.

A fishing trip serves as a framework for Nick's reminiscences in "On Writing." At the beginning of the story Nick is fishing alone and at the end he is going back to his camp to write because, "He was holding something in his head" (p. 249). In between these two points Nick's thoughts move between what he is doing and many points in his past: Bill Smith, Bill Bird, fun at fishing before he married, the long summers of his youth, bullfighting in Spain, what is wrong with Joyce's writing, the tricks of writing, the pleasure of writing, and how he would like to write like Cézanne painted. There is a panorama of memories, ambitions, opinions, prejudices and theories that give a good view of Nick as he moves toward the man we see in "Fathers and Sons." He refers to his wife, Helen, and does not yet seem to be divorced.



In relation to fishing, the backbone of the story, Nick makes some important observations. He wonders why he lost "all the old gang" when he married and answers his own question, saying, ". . . he lost them because he admitted by marrying that something was more important than the fishing" (p. 242). He reminisces further about his youth:

They were all married to fishing. . . . He'd been married to it before he married Helen. Really married to it. It wasn't any joke. . . . All the love went into fishing and the summer. He had loved it more than anything. . . . He loved the long summer. It used to be that he felt sick when the first of August came and he realized that there were only four more weeks before the trout season closed. Now sometimes he had it that way in dreams. He would dream that the summer was nearly gone and he hadn't been fishing. It made him feel sick in the dream, as though he had been in jail (pp. 242-244).

He emphasizes his intense involvement with fishing as a youth, to the extent that in his dream not being able to fish is equated, even in his adult life, with a loss of freedom. Fishing for him is a metaphor for youth and the summer is the catalyst for happy memories.

As Nick decides to go back to camp, he removes a fish from his trout sack in the water and releases him unharmed because he is too large to eat. While walking back to his camp, he stops to remove some ticks from behind the ears of a stunned rabbit. He still has a respect for the lives of animals that he might well kill if he could use them for food.



In "Big Two-Hearted River" Nick fished in a ritualized way, focusing on every detail of what he did, in order to re-create himself at a time of strain. In "On Writing" Nick fishes in a relaxed way, his mind skipping from past to present, and the result is that he goes off at the end to write, to create out of that past. "He was not thinking. He was holding something in his head. He wanted to get back to camp and get to work" (p. 249). For the first time, "not thinking" is for a creative purpose rather than for a defensive one.

## IX.

In "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" the sport is hunting, big game hunting in Africa, and it functions within the story in much the same way as hunting and fishing do in the Nick Adams stories. The hunting ritual provides for Francis Macomber not just a context for self-renewal, but the guidelines for moral development.

One of the most noticeable elements of this story is the overabundance of rules. Robert Wilson, the white hunter, constantly speaks in terms like, "It's quite illegal," "It's supposed to be bad form . . .," "You don't shoot them from cars," "It isn't done," "You're not supposed to mention it." We are thrust into a structured, complex world in which there is a rule for everything. Francis Macomber decides to have a drink because, "I suppose it's the thing to do," and then asks Wilson, "What had I ought



to give them?" (The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 3), before distributing largess to the native boys. Macomber exists in a world so full of rules that he cannot distinguish between them and decide which ones he should follow. Robert Wilson's moral system tries to make a clear distinction between the realm of shooting and everything else. In relation to the rich clients he works for, we are told, ". . . their standards were his standards as long as they were hiring him." Immediately, however, there is an exception made. "They were his standards in all except the shooting. He had his own standards about the killing and they could live up to them or get some one else to hunt them" (p. 26). But even in the area of shooting, Robert Wilson leaves himself some negotiating room. He allows a chase of the buffalo by car (which he later admits to Margot is illegal), but then chastises Macomber for not remembering that he must not shoot from the car: "Not from the car, you fool!" (p. 28). He uses an illegal system of dealing with the boys who work with the hunting group whereby he gives them lashes instead of docking their pay as a punishment. And, even though he believes Margot has deliberately shot her husband because she knows she can no longer control him, he is willing to patch things up with the authorities for her.

So, where in this confusion of standards does Macomber find the guidance which allows him to come of age?



Wilson's understanding of the change is that it is because of ". . . a sudden precipitation into action without opportunity for worrying beforehand. . . ." He gives a further explanation: "Hadn't had time to be afraid with the buff. That and being angry too. Motor cars too. Motor cars made it familiar" (p. 33). The motor car explanation is not very convincing, since the hunting party also rode in the car on the occasion of killing the lion (and that time, also, Macomber was told by Wilson not to shoot from the car). As for being angry, one would guess that, living with Margot, Francis has had many occasions for being angry, with no dramatic changes in his character. This leaves us with the first explanation, that the change has taken place because Macomber, by reason of circumstances, was able to act without thinking: the great panacea for Hemingway heroes. In the scene where they are hunting the lion, much of Macomber's attention is turned back on himself, as if seeing and feeling his reactions from the outside, as if observing himself rather than concentrating on the lion. As he loads the gun, we are told,

He saw his hand was trembling. He felt in his pocket for more cartridges and moved his fingers over the cartridges in the loops of his tunic front (p. 14).

As he gets out of the car to shoot the lion, we are told,

Macomber had not thought how the lion felt as he got out of the car. He only knew his hands were shaking and as he walked away from the car it was almost impossible for him to make his legs move. They were stiff in the thighs, but he could feel the muscles fluttering (p. 15).

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

Macomber is grounded, confined within himself here. When the group goes after the buffalo, however, Macomber is concentrating on the animal and the shooting; he is living the action rather than thinking about it. As the car chases the three buffalo across the plain, we see that

. . . as Macomber watched, the buffalo got bigger and bigger until he could see the gray, hairless, scabby look of one huge bull and how his neck was a part of his shoulders . . . they drew up close and he could see the plunging hugeness of the bull, and the dust in his sparsely haired hide, the wide boss of horn and the outstretched, wide-nostrilled muzzle, and he was raising his rifle when Wilson shouted, "Not from the car, you fool!" and he had no fear, only hatred of Wilson, while the brakes clamped on and the car skidded, plowing sideways to an almost stop . . . and then he was shooting at the bull as he moved away, hearing the bullets whunk into him. . . . (pp. 27-28).

There are no self-conscious gestures here, only a projection outside himself and onto the hunted and the action.

Now we come closer to the role of the hunting in Macomber's metamorphosis into a brave man (and I agree with Carlos Baker's clarification of Hemingway's use of bravery: "Dramatically speaking, physical courage is often a convenient and economical way of symbolizing moral courage.") (Baker, p. 190). Macomber may be a neophyte at dangerous game hunting in Africa, but when Hemingway tells us about "the few things he really knew," he says that Macomber knows, ". . . about duck-shooting, about fishing, trout, salmon and big-sea . . ." (p. 21). Before coming to Africa, then, Macomber was well initiated into the masculine mystique of Hemingway's world. In Africa he must

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

familiarize himself with a new situation and extend what he already knows to cover new ground. And, he must learn to deal with the added element of physical danger in the hunting situations where he finds himself in Africa. Francis is a good shot and has a good sense of timing. The distinction, then, between Wilson and Macomber is that, being more practiced in big game hunting in Africa, Wilson knows the appropriate procedures, has developed a moral system which works for him, and, through exposure to dangerous game, has learned to behave "bravely" in these situations. Wilson has learned to live the experience on the level of involvement with the action, not on an intellectual or "thinking" level. This ability may come more naturally to some people than to others, but it is possible to learn it, as we see in the case of Macomber; and his previous knowledge of other forms of hunting and fishing has made it possible for him. And we see that Macomber, Wilson and Margot all know that what has happened to him in this aspect of his life will carry over to the rest of his existence. This knowledge that the change which has taken place is not just something that will affect his future hunting explains Wilson's change of attitude towards Macomber, Macomber's boyish delight in what has happened, and Margot's resentment and final "accidental" act.

What Hemingway has shown us in this story is that, at least for those already initiated into the rites, hunting



can be a framework for self creation and moral growth. In the Nick Adams stories we usually saw Nick returning for self renewal to an old familiar activity and we lose sight of the moral development over the years. With Francis Macomber we have a dramatic example of the creative power to be released within and through the ritual.

X.

Across the River and Into the Trees<sup>1</sup> is a novel about getting ready to die, and the preparations are enveloped within a duck shoot. The duck shoot gives shape to Colonel Cantwell's life in the sense that his life is presented in flashbacks, his series of thoughts and associations while sitting in the duck blind in freezing weather waiting for ducks to fly over. The duck shoot also gives shape to the Colonel's death in that he sets everything in order in his mind, knowing that he is probably shooting for the last time. Most of the Colonel's memories relate to the weekend he has just spent in Venice with an "almost nineteen year old" Countess, whom he loves, but the recollections also cover the professional life of the fifty year old soldier. The Colonel has planned this weekend, it would seem, to round out his life: he does his favorite things in his favorite city with his favorite people.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Hemingway, Across the River and Into the Trees. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950. All subsequent references to this book will be to this edition.

of the  
the  
which  
which  
which

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

Colonel Cantwell is a firm believer in rituals and, early in his recollections, thinks of a very complex one he formulated, just three weeks ago. He returned to Fossalta to the spot where he was gravely wounded during World War I.

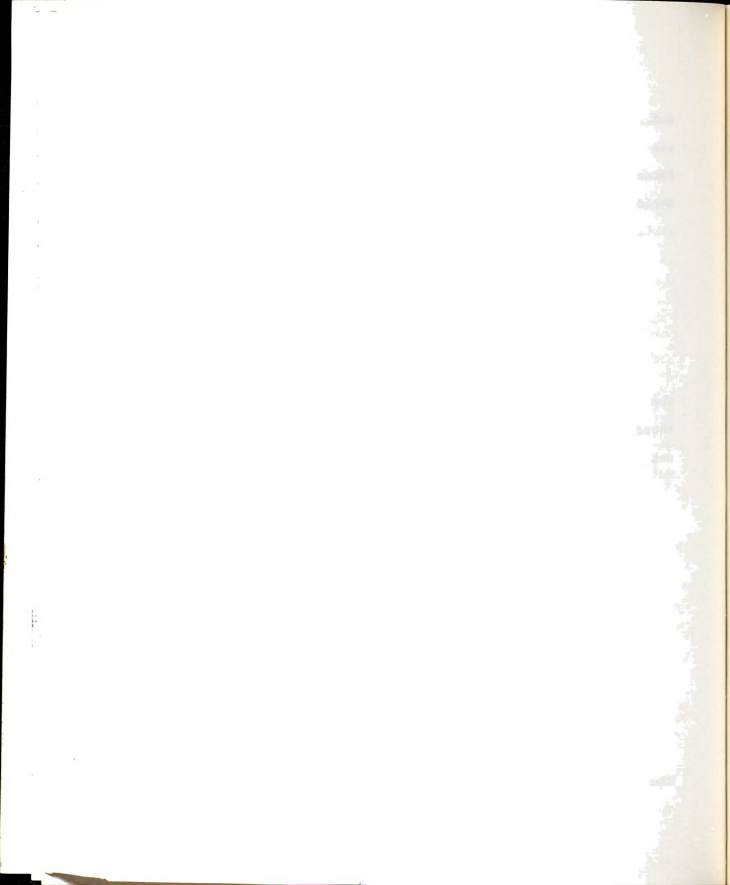
. . . The river was slow and a muddy blue here, with reeds along the edges, and the Colonel, no one being in sight, squatted low, and looking across the river from the bank where you could never show your head in daylight, relieved himself in the exact place where he had determined, by triangulation, that he had been badly wounded thirty years before.

"A poor effort," he said aloud to the river and the river bank that were heavy with autumn quiet and wet from the fall rains. "But my own."

The Colonel then cuts a hole in the earth, puts in a ten thousand lira note and recovers the hole with the core of cut out grass.

It's fine now, he thought. It has merde, money, blood; look how that grass grows; and the iron's in the earth along with Gino's leg, both of Randolph's legs, and my right kneecap. It's a wonderful monument. It has everything. Fertility, money, blood and iron. . . . (pp. 18-19).

He completes the ceremony by spitting in the river. This whole ritual seems to be part of the process by which the Colonel is preparing himself for death. He has both defiled and fertilized the place where he was wounded, a gesture which is as paradoxical as his mixed pride and resentment about that event and about his entire military career. When he is telling military stories to Renata she senses the purpose of the unburdening he is going through.



"Don't you see you need to tell me things to purge your bitterness?"

"I know I tell them to you."

"Don't you know I want you to die with the grace of a happy death?". . . . (p. 240).

She sees that his stories are a ceremonial ordering of the memories and are part of his preparation for the end. When she asks him where he would like to be buried, his choice is very much like his monument at Fossalta.

"Up in the hills," he said, making a quick decision. "On any part of the high ground where we beat them."

"I suppose you should be buried on the Grappa."

"On the dead angle of any shell-pocked slope if they would graze cattle over me in the summer time" (p. 228).

He chooses a hillside shell-pocked by the war, as he is himself, and again chooses to fertilize the war-marked land, this time with his body. And in his last ritual act, he repeats the dying words of General Stonewall Jackson and gets into the back seat of the car, taking the time and effort to close the door "carefully and well" (p. 307). In death, as in life, he defines himself as a soldier in all his ceremonial actions.

It is not simply that the Colonel uses rituals to help him accept his death, but rather that the Colonel has made his life into a series of rituals whereby he has his accustomed ways of doing things. The stylized relationship with the waiter called the Gran Maestro and their elaborate secret club, his special table in the dining room where he sits "with his flanks covered," the minute attention to the

1870

1871

1872

1873

1874

1875

1876

1877

1878

1879

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1886

1887

1888

1889

1890

1891

1892

1893

1894

1895

parts of each meal and the correct wines for each, and the love scenes in the gondola where the images are of military strategy and attack are all parts of a life which, like military life in general, is highly regularized and even ritualized. Some of his interests are unusual for a military man (his love of Venice, his appreciation of nature, his knowledge of art), but even these are incorporated into his life in the routinized style of the military man. The Colonel has taken the belligerent military ideal of manhood and has added some touches of his own and is trying to bring all this to bear on the ultimate problem of facing death like a man.

Since the Colonel is preoccupied with his imminent death throughout the book, when he speaks of not thinking (as so many Hemingway characters have before him), it is clear that he means by that to avoid thinking of death. Most of these comments come in scenes with Renata, as he seeks (and she does also) in their love some respite from the continuing death thoughts. When Renata goes to the Colonel's hotel room with him, we are told:

The Colonel kissed her and felt her wonderful, long, young, lithe and properly built body against his own body, which was hard and good but beat-up, and as he kissed her he thought of nothing (p. 109).

On this occasion he succeeds, on others he just tries. In a scene where they are lying on the Colonel's bed and he has been telling her military stories, she remonstrates against his "roughness" of language:



"Please don't be rough in talking," the girl said. "And remember you speak worst of all about yourself. But hold me as close as we can and let's think about nothing."

He held her as close as he could and he tried to think about nothing (p. 229).

That ends one chapter and the next one begins:

The Colonel and the girl lay quietly on the bed and the Colonel tried to think of nothing; as he had thought of nothing so many times in so many places. But it was no good now. It would not work anymore because it was too late (p. 230).

During the early stages of the duck hunt thinking is not a real problem because there are the small details of procedure to concentrate on. In true Hemingway style we are given all the details of weather, terrain, preparations and the shooting itself, and this serves the hero, as always, as a distraction from his life (and death) worries. During the waiting periods of the duck hunt, the Colonel, sitting in the blind, is forced "to think" because of the slowness of the action:

I wish they would fly, the Colonel thought. A few fool ducks might come in. I have to stay ready for them if they do. But none came in and he had to think (p. 282).

When the ducks do come in, the Colonel is pulled out of his worries and totally into the action of the moment. "The shooter, who was not a Colonel now, nor anything but a gun handler, rose in the wooden barrel and got two. . . ." (p. 280). Even his military identity is obliterated for him in this moment when he becomes a shooter again. Here, in the context of the duck shoot, he is able to enjoy himself,

in spite of impending death, freezing cold, few ducks to shoot and a surly and hostile boatman. He has enjoyed the camaraderie of the men and their traditional lying and exaggeration. He is able to ignore the inflammatory actions of the boatman although in other circumstances he has responded aggressively to less provocation (for instance, his angry outbursts toward his driver, Jackson, his physical attack upon the two sailors who have flirted with Renata, or even his angry retort to Renata when she has said about his war stories, "Oh, you are going to have to tell them to me later.") (p. 143). Something about the context of the duck shoot makes the Colonel less volatile. Perhaps the ethics of the situation or respect for his host makes him behave differently. He is determined to have a good time and he thinks of the surly boatman:

. . . I do not understand him but I must not let him ruin it. I must keep it entire and not let him do it. Every time you shoot now can be the last shoot and no stupid son of a bitch should be allowed to ruin it. . . . (p. 7).

He controls his anger and takes advantage of the few shooting occasions he has and is able to say at the end, "This is the best organized and best run duck shoot I have ever shot at and I have had as much fun shooting as I ever had in my life" (p. 281).

Renata is not included in the hunting party. She asks the Colonel, "Don't you think I should go to the shoot?" His response is negative. "No. I am quite sure. Alvarito



## CHAPTER II

### FAULKNER: THE REVENGE OF THE RUINED WOODS

Hunting, for Faulkner, is a traditional activity in which a man unites himself through shared activities and a shared reverence for the wilderness with his ancestors and with his neighbors. It is a ritual which spans the space of time, both vertically and horizontally, creating a sense of brotherhood not only in a cherished and shared activity, but also in a common set of absolute values, an ethical code derived from the activity itself. Since there are rituals, a network of absolute values, and persons who exemplify and teach those values, the activity takes on the function of a religious system in the lives of Faulkner's characters. Because the system is grounded to the past by tradition and thus requires learned attitudes as well as learned techniques, an elaborate initiation phase is an important element of the mystique. Faulkner frequently focuses on this initiation phase of hunting and on the relationships of the hunter to the hunted and to the wilderness. It is everywhere implied in these works that these relationships are the mark of a man's sense of



responsibility to his fellows and, consequently, the measure of his moral worth. And even when unspoken the abstract absolute values ring out like echoes in the woods: truth and honor and pride and endurance . . .

This chapter will include a study of Go Down, Moses and of Big Woods, with "The Bear" omitted from each because it will be studied in the following chapter, in comparison to The Old Man and the Sea. Two variants of "The Bear" will be considered here, however, between Go Down, Moses and Big Woods.

# I.

Go Down, Moses,<sup>1</sup> which Faulkner insisted on considering a novel rather than a collection of short stories, chronicles the history of the McCaslin family through six generations.<sup>2</sup> Several of the episodes, like "The Old People," "The Bear," and "Delta Autumn," have a hunting setting, while others, like "Wasn't," "The Fire and the Hearth," "Pantaloon in Black," and "Go Down, Moses," do not.

---

<sup>1</sup>William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses. New York: The Modern Library, 1942. All subsequent references to this work will be to this edition.

<sup>2</sup>Malcolm Cowley quotes a conversation with Faulkner in which Cowley said that "Pantaloon in Black" was the only story which did not deal with the McCaslins; "'Oh, you mean the story about Rider?' Faulkner said. 'Rider was one of the McCaslin Negroes.'" Malcolm Cowley, The Faulkner-Cowley File. New York: The Viking Press, 1966, p. 113.

Olga Vickery, however, relates the stories to each other in terms of their hunting structure:

Structurally, the framework of each individual story is a ritual hunt. Isaac's pursuit of the magnificent buck and then of Old Ben is simply the clearest and finest example of this hunt motif, but the breathless chase of Tomey's Turl, the lynching of Rider, the determined search for gold by Lucas, and Gavin Stevens' aborted search for Samuel Beauchamp are all variations of the same theme. In each case, the hunt illuminates some facet of the relationship between whites and Negroes, whether personal or social. At the same time a number of suggested parallels indicate that the significance of the ritual of the hunt is determined by the nature of the hunted as well as of the hunters. Only the best hunters and dogs are worthy of Old Ben. The difference between this and Boon's obsessive concern with a tree full of squirrels or Roth Edmonds' irresponsible slaughter of does needs no elaboration. Equally clear is the distinction between the spirited pursuit of Tomey's Turl, the love-stricken Negro, and the grim, relentless tracking down of Rider, the human quarry marked for a violent death, or the impersonal execution of Samuel Beauchamp, "the slain wolf."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the stories there is a vocabulary of the hunt as well as this structuring of relationships in hunt terms to which Vickery directs us. The hunt is used in this book to indicate metaphorically some of the ways people relate to each other and to the world. The metaphor is a rich one, able to sustain a panorama of possibilities suggested by Vickery's statement that ". . . the significance of the ritual of the hunt is determined by the nature of the hunted as well as of the hunters." This range of significance will

---

<sup>1</sup>Olga Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, revised edition, 1964, pp. 124-125.

be my focus in discussing the various episodes of Go Down, Moses. However, "The Bear" will be omitted here, except indirectly, in relation to other stories, because it will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

"Was" is a humorous story about the twin McCaslins, Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy, narrated by Cass Edmonds, then a boy of nine. For years Miss Sophonsiba Beauchamp had been trying to get Uncle Buck to marry her (she eventually succeeded and their child, Isaac, later known as Uncle Ike, was born when his father was near seventy), and this story records a near miss in her attempts. Uncle Buck goes into a dark bedroom in the Beauchamp house, along with young Cass, and starts to get into the bed, when Miss Sophonsiba sets in screaming from the other side of the bed. Mr. Hubert Beauchamp, Miss Sophonsiba's brother, comes in triumphantly: "'Well, 'Filus,' he said. 'She's got you at last'" (p. 21). Mr. Hubert suggests a hand of poker ("Five hundred dollars against Sibbey.") which Uncle Buck loses. Uncle Buddy arrives, however, and plays another hand of poker with Mr. Hubert, winning his brother's freedom.

Surrounding and permeating this story is a set of hunting references which give shape and set the tone of the work. The story is divided into four sections of which the first does not relate directly to the connected anecdote told in the other three. The first part relates to Uncle



Ike, who does not appear in the story told in the last three sections and, in fact, was not born when that story took place. The first part is probably placed where it is as a beginning to Go Down, Moses as a novel rather than as a functional part of the story "Was." Faulkner made such a distinction in regard to the fourth section of "The Bear," for instance, saying that it was there as part of the novel, but should not be included when the story was reproduced separately. This first section has the tone of all the stories about Isaac McCaslin: respectful, questioning, solemn, tradition-laden, slow-moving, awesome.

Beginning with the first sentence of the second section, there is a quick reversal of tone and movement as the reader is plunged into a frenetic scene:

When he and Uncle Buck ran back to the house from discovering that Tomey's Turl had run again, they heard Uncle Buddy cursing and bellowing in the kitchen, then the fox and the dogs came out of the kitchen and crossed the hall into the dogs' room and they heard them run through the dogs' room into his and Uncle Buck's room then they saw them cross the hall again into Uncle Buddy's room and heard them run through Uncle Buddy's room into the kitchen again and this time it sounded like the whole kitchen chimney had come down and Uncle Buddy bellowing like a steamboat blowing and this time the fox and the dogs and five or six sticks of firewood all came out of the kitchen together with Uncle Buddy in the middle of them hitting at everything in sight with another stick. It was a good race (pp. 4-5).

The fox is a pet, kept in a crate under the bed in Uncle Buck's and Cass's room. In the next paragraph we find out



that ". . . the fox had treed behind the clock on the mantel." The fox is returned to its crate as Cass and Uncle Buck rush off in pursuit of the runaway slave, Tomey's Turl. The fox and the hounds reappear at the very end of the story, when Uncle Buck, Uncle Buddy, Tennie, Tomey's Turl and Cass come home. The dogs again get into the room with the fox and chase it out of the house, across the front gallery and finally tree it on the roof: ". . . --a fine race while it lasted, but the tree was too quick" (p. 30). Thus the story has begun and ended with a rapid chase and treeing of the fox by the hounds. These two brief skirmishes of the dogs and fox are indicative of the spirit of the chase element of the story: the chase as game. Just as the dogs regularly chase the fox, with much commotion and no danger, even to the fox, Uncle Buck, Cass and Mr. Hubert's hounds regularly chase Tomey's Turl, likewise with great uproar and no danger, least of all to Tomey's Turl. In each case the ritual of the hunt has degenerated into a game which provides a formalized way of relating. The dogs chase the fox; Uncle Buck chases Tomey's Turl; Miss Sophonsiba (helped by Mr. Hubert) chases Uncle Buck. The fox is treed, but is rescued and put back in his crate; Tomey's Turl is caught but is rescued in the sense that he gets what he wants, not his freedom, but Tennie; Uncle Buck is caught by Miss Sophonsiba and Mr. Hubert, but is rescued by Uncle Buddy.

The story comes full circle with the second running of the fox by the dogs. Thus the story has the form of the stylized action of a fox hunt become game, in which everyone has fun and no one gets hurt.

There is a further hunting reference in the scene where Mr. Hubert gloats over Uncle Buck's mistake in almost climbing into bed with Miss Sophonsiba:

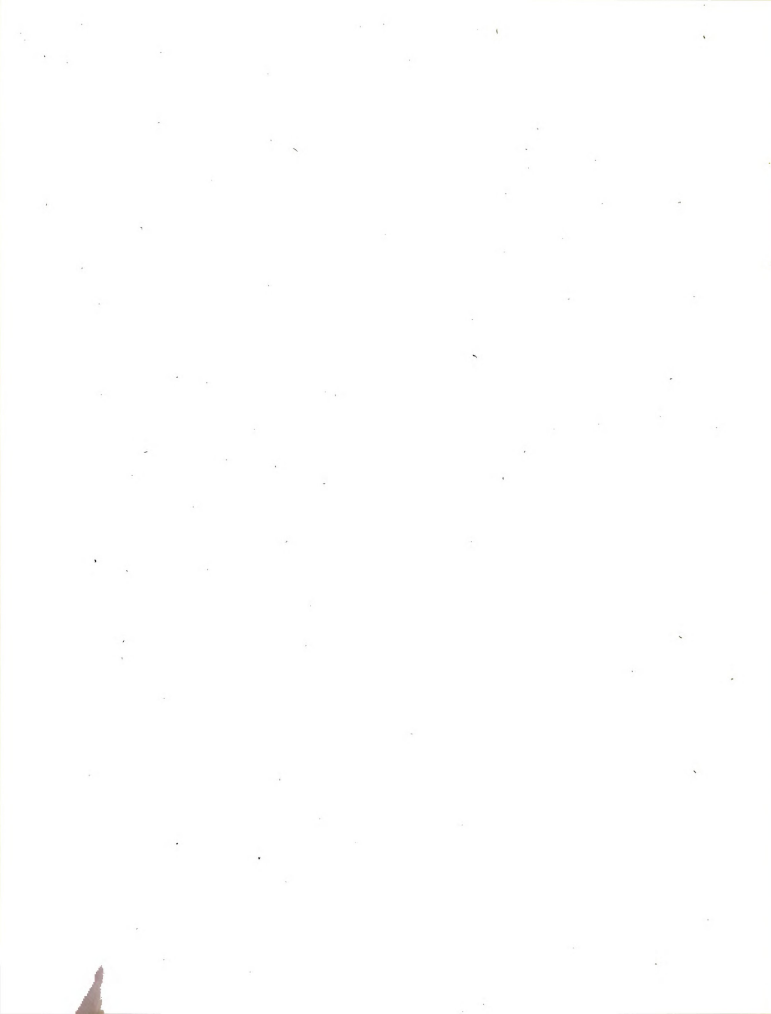
You come into bear-country of your own free will and accord. All right; you were a grown man and you knew it was bear country and you knew the way back out like you knew the way in and you had your chance to take it. But no. You had to crawl into the den and lay down by the bear. And whether you did or didn't know the bear was in it don't make any difference. So if you got back out of that den without even a claw-mark on you, I would not only be unreasonable, I'd be a damned fool. After all, I'd like a little peace and quiet and freedom myself, now I got a chance for it. Yes, sir. She's got you, 'Filus, and you know it. You run a hard race and you run a good one, but you skun the hen-house one time too many (pp. 22-23).

Mr. Hubert's metaphors are a little mixed, but in the first one Uncle Buck has gone into the den of a bear (Miss Sophonsiba) who has the right at least to claw him at this point. In the second one, Uncle Buck is a fox who skins the hen-house and the hounds (again Miss Sophonsiba) have caught him after a good race (just like the good race of the dogs and the fox at home).

This story has been conceived within a hunting framework and uses the nine year old boy, Cass, as narrator, perhaps to show a different kind of initiation which will contrast with that of Isaac McCaslin in "The Old People"

and "The Bear." Cass is the reflector of the people and events of the story and we can see it as Faulkner's presentation of a significant learning point in the boy's life, which is to be followed in Go Down, Moses, considered as a novel, by some key learning points in Isaac's life before we see these two men balanced in debate in the fourth section of "The Bear."

If "Was" is, at least partly, an initiation story, then what does Cass learn here? He learns that adults deal with each other in indirect and manipulative ways from observing the relationships between Uncle Buck and Miss Sophonsiba, Uncle Buck and Mr. Hubert, and Mr. Hubert and Uncle Buddy. He sees that something as important as marriage can have a flimsy basis in a game of accidents and poker, rather than a basis in human choices. Not only a marriage between Uncle Buck and Miss Sophonsiba, but also one between Tomey's Turl and Tennie hangs in the balance in the crafty maneuvers of the adults that Cass is watching. Cass sees blacks treated casually, as pawns in the white man's games, but yet not cruelly and not in any way that involves physical harm or danger. Since he sees the slave also able, through similar manipulative games, to get the white man to do what he wants, Cass is not struck by the horror of slavery as Isaac is later, and he can carry on the life of the McCaslin plantation in much the same spirit that Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy infused



into the network of relationships with the blacks, some of whom were their incestuously conceived kin.

Cass's initiation is an accidental one in which the adults pay little attention to him or to his needs and reactions, whereas Isaac's initiation, carried out by Sam Fathers, seems carefully planned just for him. The non-serious tone of the story reflects the lack of awareness on the part of the adults that the events might have any permanent effect on Cass, or on anyone else. The atmosphere of "Was" is similar to that of an Uncle Remus story, light-hearted and casual, focusing on human relationships as games in which the crafty win but do not really harm the losers. This tone contrasts markedly with the solemn one of those stories about Isaac McCaslin and also with the first section of this story which, by focusing on Isaac, invites us to consider the story in relation to Isaac, not yet born when the events here recorded took place.

"The Fire and the Hearth," like "Was," is a hunting story which is not about hunting, or, it is a recounting of other events which is formulated in hunting references and metaphors. The story focuses on Lucas Beauchamp, born in slavery, the grandson of old Carothers McCaslin, and on his relationships to white men, to blacks and to his McCaslin heritage. Unlike his brother and sister, Jim and Fonsiba, who chose to leave as soon as they were free,



Lucas has lived on in pride on the McCaslin-Edmonds plantation:

He had worked on it ever since he got big enough to hold a plow straight; he had hunted over every foot of it during his childhood and youth and his manhood, too, up to the time when he stopped hunting, not because he could no longer walk a day's or a night's hunt, but because he felt that the pursuit of rabbits and 'possums for meat was no longer commensurate with his status as not only the oldest man but the oldest living person on the Edmonds plantation, the oldest McCaslin descendant. . . . (p. 36).

Lucas has given up hunting now, but it remains as part of his tradition and a shaping factor in his experiences. One evening Lucas has an experience which brings a new kind of hunting into his life. Because of some complicated conniving, involving both Roth Edmonds and George Wilkins, Lucas's son-in-law, Lucas is burying his still (with which he has made whiskey illegally for twenty years) one night when he finds an old gold piece in the dirt of the old creek bottom where he is digging. The discovery changes Lucas's life for the next six months, as well as that of all the people around him. ". . . the dry insensate dust had yawned for an instant and vouchsafed him one blinding glimpse of the absolute and then closed" (p. 39). This "glimpse of the absolute" becomes an obsession with Lucas and he begins to stalk gold all night every night as he no longer does rabbits and 'possums. He even refers to this new activity as "hunting" when defending himself to Roth Edmonds: ". . . I will have to quit hunting every night



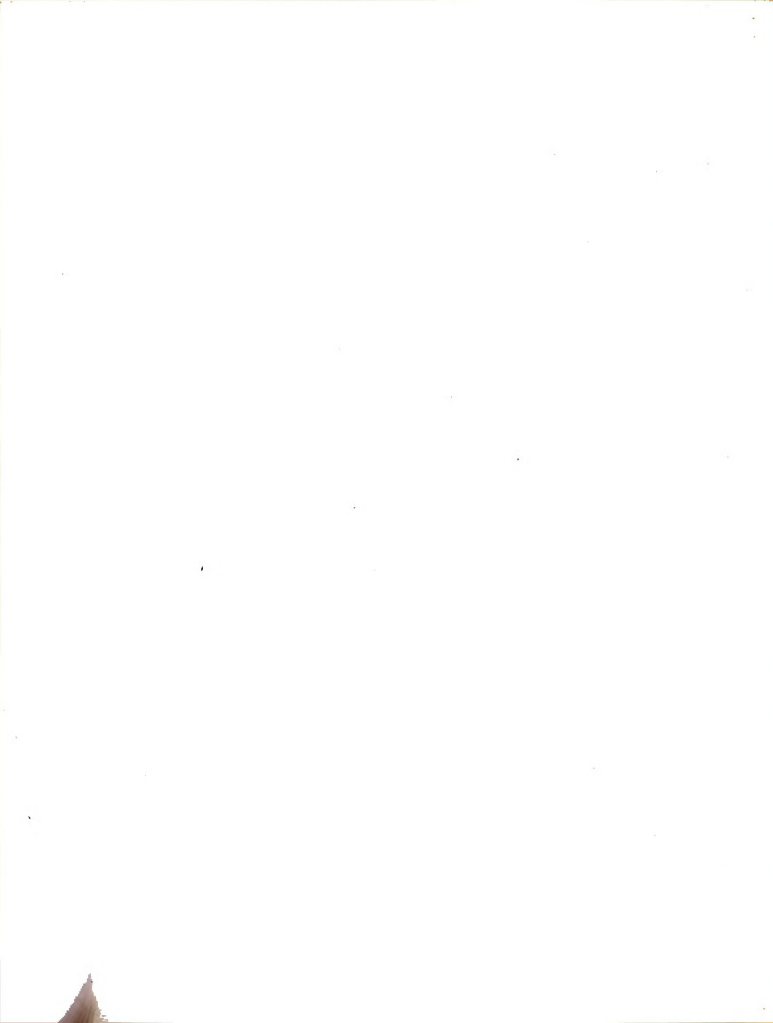
soon now, to get my cotton picked. Then I'll just hunt Saturday and Sunday night" (p. 120). And this new kind of hunting, rather than being done with a rifle is done with a divining machine, the totem of Lucas's new cult:

. . . Edmonds had already turned the light back to Lucas, who still held the divining machine before him as if it were some object symbolical and sanctified for a ceremony, a ritual (p. 87).

In addition to the gold hunting, several other events of the story are presented within a hunting structure. Lucas remembers a group of people who once came and dug in the very spot where he has found the gold piece:

One day five or six years ago a group of white men, including two women, most of them wearing spectacles and all wearing khaki clothes which had patently lain folded on a store shelf twenty-four hours ago, came with picks and shovels and jars and phials of insect repellent and spent a day digging about it. . . . (p. 37).

Lucas makes this group, which he claims found and took away twenty-two thousand dollars, sound like a group of rich thrill-seekers who have come into the wilderness on safari, having just acquired all the equipment they might need. The effect here of this particular way of seeing the group is that it reflects precisely Lucas's attitude toward them, the attitude of one who has been a true hunter toward those who play at it on safari, even before he remembers, further down the page, how he felt about them: ". . . --he was to remember with almost horrified amazement the cold and contemptuous curiosity with which he himself had watched them."



Seeing them as a safari group is an apt metaphor for Lucas's reaction to these intruders.

Another instance where the framing of the event within a hunting metaphor serves to show an attitude of Lucas Beauchamp is a scene in which the sheriff and revenuers come out to the Edmonds place to look for the still which has been reported to them.

. . . --the white sheriff and revenue officers and deputies creeping and crawling among the bushes with drawn pistols, surrounding the kettle, sniffing and whiffing like hunting dogs at every stump and disfiguration of earth until every jug and keg was found and carried back to where the car waited. . . . (p. 62).

Seeing them as hunting dogs, "creeping and crawling," expresses clearly the contempt Lucas feels towards them. Their drawn pistols indicate that they expect some dangerous quarry rather than an old man's twenty year old still and some jugs and kegs of moonshine whiskey. We see them as fools, just as Lucas does.

A little later in the story Roth Edmonds finds one of his mules missing (Lucas has swapped it for the divining machine) and stalks it for "four or five hours" before he realizes what he is really stalking. He and two blacks have followed the tracks until he sees a torch burning in the distance: ". . . he plunged on, heedless of underbrush or log, the flashlight in his left hand and the pistol in his right, gaining rapidly on the torch" (p. 85). He suddenly realizes, "as when the photographer's bulb explodes,"

that the torch is illuminating a mound he knows well, where Lucas Beauchamp and George Wilkins are hunting for gold. Edmonds has really been hunting the hunters and Lucas has made a fool of him again.

Another scene structured as a hunting situation is a key turning point in the dénouement of the story. Lucas's wife, Aunt Molly, no longer able to bear the money hunting, has taken the divining-machine and gone off with it.

"It's Aunt Molly Beauchamp," Oscar said. "She been missing since yestiddy sometime. We been hunting her all night. We found where she went down to the creek and we been tracking her. Only she so little and light she dont hardly make a foot on the ground. Uncle Luke and George and Nat and Dan and some others are still hunting" (p. 124).

The hunt has gone on for a night and a half when they find her the next day,

. . . lying on her face in the mud, the once immaculate apron and the clean faded skirts stained and torn, one hand still grasping the handle of the divining-machine as she had fallen with it. She was not dead (p. 125).

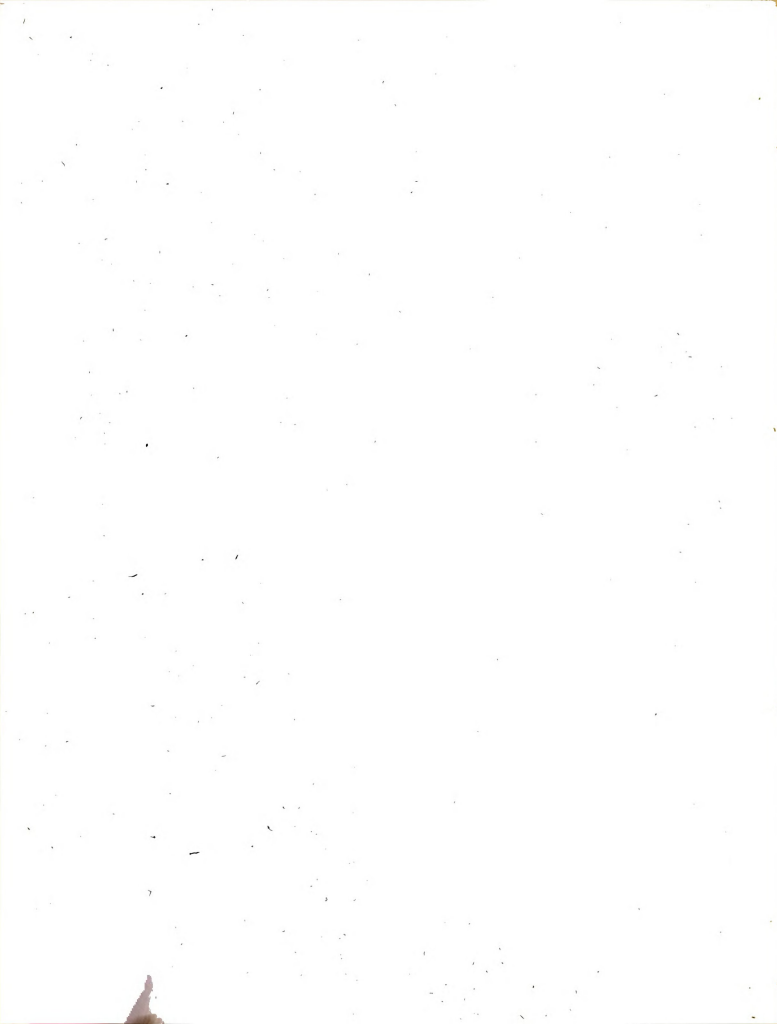
At this point Roth Edmonds is fed up with Lucas and his money-hunting and decides to help Aunt Molly get the divorce she has been wanting. The human quarry of this last hunt has cast the whole adventure in a more dangerous perspective and caused him to call a halt to it all. Lucas finally gives in under the threat of the divorce and gives the machine to Roth Edmonds to dispose of. But Lucas has maintained control of when and how he does what he does.

In a more general way, apart from these developed scenes, Lucas's relationships with others are structured frequently by hunting images or hunting relationships. When Lucas is taken to court for running a still, he is saved by the fact that the judge knows him:

. . . behind the table sat a man whom Lucas did know, who had used to come out in old Cass' time forty and fifty years ago and stay for weeks during the quail season, shooting with Zack, with Lucas to hold the horses while they got down to shoot when the dogs pointed. It took hardly any time at all (p. 73).

"It" here is the matter of settling the charges against Lucas, which are dropped by the judge. The loyalty built up among men while hunting together saves Lucas this time.

A very pivotal and central relationship in the story is that of Lucas Beauchamp to Roth Edmonds' father, Zack Edmonds, who is dead when these events take place. In a series of flashbacks we are told of the events surrounding the birth of Roth, whose mother died in childbirth. Lucas performed a great physical feat of strength to swim a flooded river to bring the doctor, but Zack's wife was dead when he got back. Lucas's wife, Molly, moved into the big house with her own infant to take care of the new baby, Roth, and stayed there for six months before Lucas went to Zack in rage to say, "I wants my wife. I needs her at home" (p. 46). Lucas's rage only increases, along with his suspicions about her and the white man, after she returns to their little house, bringing both the black child



and the white one. He waits for Zack to come for his child, but he does not. After a sleepless night he goes to the big house with a razor in his hand and into Zack's bedroom. They talk, struggle, the razor is thrown away and a gun taken out, they wrestle across the bed and, finally, Lucas fires the gun at Zack and misses. The pattern which is established between them in this encounter is one of a balance of power, with the advantage shifting from one to the other, a pattern which endures in Lucas's relationship to Zack and afterwards in his relationship to Roth. At one point of the struggle, Lucas recognizes what is happening between them.

"I give you your chance," Lucas said. "Then you laid there asleep with your door unlocked and give me mine. Then I throwed the razor away and give it back. And then you throwed it back at me. That's right, aint it?" (p. 56).

This shifting balance of power, which Zack acknowledges also, is characterized, in addition, by a sort of confusion of the hunter with the hunted. Lucas has come into the white man's bedroom to kill him, and yet he feels like a trapped animal:

"For the last time," Lucas said. "I tell you--" Then he cried, and not to the white man and the white man knew it; he saw the whites of the negro's eyes rush suddenly with red like the eyes of a bayed animal--a bear, a fox: "I tell you! Dont ask too much of me!" (p. 55).

Zack has taunted him here beyond his endurance, but Lucas comes back on the attack. Lucas at every point accepts that

he is going to die, that he will either kill Zack and then himself, or that he will kill Zack and then be lynched, or that he might even kill just himself and leave Zack with a guilty conscience.

"No!" Lucas cried; "say I dont even use this first bullet at all, say I just uses the last one and beat you and old Carothers both, leave you something to think about now and then. . . ." (p. 57).

Lucas is not afraid of dying, only of not proving himself a man and a McCaslin man. He wins in this encounter in that he wins the white man's recognition of his equality and never has to call him "sir" or "Mr. Zack." Zack wins only in the literal sense that he avoids being killed by Lucas. Much later, when Zack is responding to his son Roth's questions about the way Lucas relates to him, his reference to their encounter makes it sound like another casual hunting trip:

"We grew up together, we ate and slept together and hunted and fished together, like you and Henry. We did it until we were grown men. Except that I always beat him shooting except one time. And as it turned out, I even beat him then. . . ." (p. 114).

His response does reflect the ambiguity of who beat whom.

As Roth grows up and takes over the plantation, Lucas's relationship to him is similar to the one with his father and yet more casual. Lucas takes Roth less seriously and so the relationship is more like that of Tomey's Turl to Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy in "Was"--something like Brer Fox getting what he wants from Brer Bear, only the



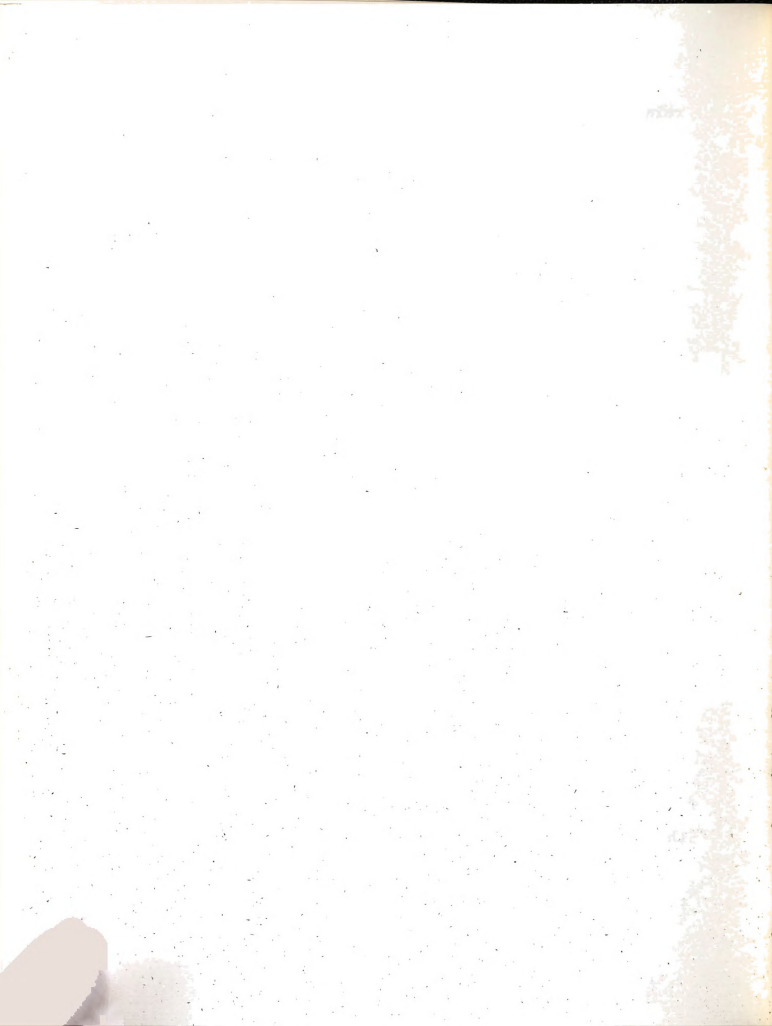
relationship is not treated as lightly in tone here as in "Was." Lucas controls Roth not so much through references to their common ancestor (although he does make such references) as through passiveness and through ignoring Roth's orders unless he is ready to follow them.

Without changing the inflection of his voice and apparently without effort or even design Lucas became not Negro but nigger, not secret so much as impenetrable, not servile and not effacing, but enveloping himself in an aura of timeless and stupid impassivity almost like a smell (pp. 59-60).

Roth cannot break through this protective shell that Lucas puts on and frequently gives him orders in vain. Even when Lucas turns over the divining machine to Roth at the end of the story, he still affirms his belief that the money is there to be found, but he has made his decision: "But I am near to the end of my three score and ten, and I reckon to find that money aint for me" (p. 131).

"The Fire and the Hearth" is more serious in tone than "Was," but yet has many touches of humor. The story is less solemn than the following one, "Pantaloone in Black," as the novel progresses toward the story of Isaac McCaslin.

"Pantaloone in Black" is different in theme from most of the other episodes of Go Down, Moses, but its tone fits perfectly into the increasing level of intensity of the book, moving towards the novel's climax in "The Bear." The story of Rider, a black man, living on the Edmonds place, whose wife has died after six months of marriage,



serves as an image of the black man which is totally reversed from that presented by Lucas Beauchamp. Rider is a man of vast physical power whose grief has broken down the restraints that have held this power in check. The rage of his emotion contrasts markedly with Lucas Beauchamp's impassive style. The comparison is suggested not only by the fact that this story immediately follows "The Fire and the Hearth," but also by the reference to Lucas when we are told that Rider

. . . built a fire on the hearth on their wedding night as the tale told how Uncle Lucas Beauchamp, Edmonds' oldest tenant, had done on his forty-five years ago and which had burned ever since. . . (p. 138).

In addition to increasing the general intensity of the work and providing a counterpoint to Lucas Beauchamp, this episode also further develops the theme of confusion of hunter and hunted. At an early point of the story Rider looks like a hunter as he strides through the woods with his dog ". . . keeping to heel even when a rabbit burst from almost beneath the man's foot. . . ." (p. 142).

Later, when he has killed the white night watchman at the mill, who has cheated him and many of the other mill hands at dice for years, Rider becomes the hunted, and even a jail, which he is strong enough to break out of, cannot protect him from the posse which finally takes him out and lynches him.



The impression that remains of this story at the end is of the depth of Rider's emotion, his boundless grief not allayed by hunger, exhaustion, drink, snake bite, displays of physical strength, or even murder. Only his death relieves his pain and we are left with the image of him, subdued in the jail saying, "Hit look lack ah just cant quit thinking. Look lack ah just cant quit" (p. 159).

"The Old People," when considered as an entity, complete in itself, is diffuse in focus and rambling in tone. When considered as a chapter of the novel, Go Down, Moses, it provides background information on Sam Fathers and on Isaac and helps develop the context for "The Bear." The mood of this piece is serious, even solemn, and the touches of humor found in earlier parts of the book, like "Was" and "The Fire and the Hearth," are not to be found. Hunting is presented here as a serious matter, something to which a man, two men, might dedicate their lives.

In a sense "The Old People" focuses on Sam Fathers, but this effect is achieved largely through a development of his relationship to Isaac McCaslin. There is some presentation of the events of Sam's history, but he is presented most clearly in terms of his effect on Isaac and in a few dramatic images. One metaphorical image of Sam is formulated by McCaslin as an explanation of that "something else which you did notice about the eyes" of Sam, an indicator of his black blood:



"Like an old lion or a bear in a cage," McCaslin said. "He was born in the cage and has been in it all his life; he knows nothing else. Then he smells something. . . . It was the cage he smelled. . . . That's what makes his eyes look like that" (p. 167).

This image of Sam, the master hunter, as a caged lion or bear not only strikes again the theme of the identity of the hunter with the hunted, it also points us toward the following story in which a bear is hunted with a dog called "Lion." Sam's cage, according to McCaslin, is not white people and so they cannot let him go. His cage is his heritage:

". . . Not betrayed by the black blood and not wilfully betrayed by his mother, but betrayed by her all the same, who had bequeathed him not only the blood of slaves but even a little of the very blood which had enslaved it; himself his own battleground, the scene of his own vanquishment and the mausoleum of his defeat. His cage aint us," McCaslin said (p. 168).

Sam's cage is his mixed blood which locks him in with the enemy who enslaved him. His solution is to withdraw to the woods where distinctions of ancestry are less important and to become the priest of the equalizing cult of hunting.

The other striking image of Sam Fathers comes from a scene near the end of the story. Sam, Isaac, Boon and Walter Ewell have gone back into the woods when they were about to leave after the annual hunt, in search of a large buck that Boon has spotted. After hearing Walter Ewell's gun and horn, Sam and Isaac think he has shot the large buck, but then,



The boy saw the buck. It was coming down the ridge, as if it were walking out of the very sound of the horn which related its death. It was not running, it was walking, tremendous, unhurried. . . . It did not even alter its course . . . and Sam standing beside the boy now, his right arm raised at full length, palm-outward, speaking in that tongue which the boy had learned from listening to him and Joe Baker in the blacksmith shop. . . .

"Oleh, Chief," Sam said. "Grandfather" (p. 184).

The image of Sam Fathers in communion with nature, saluting the deer, is so powerful that it has convinced some critics<sup>1</sup> that it is to be seen as an "experience of the supernatural," that Sam has conjured up the vision of the deer as part of Isaac's initiation and that he had done the same for McCaslin before him. At any rate, Isaac believes in what he has seen and one of the marks of Sam's tutelage is that Isaac greets a snake in the final scene of "The Bear" in just the way that Sam has here greeted the deer.

The other part of this story is the beginning of the saga of Isaac McCaslin's initiation, and of his long novitiate to manhood, with its three clearly defined stages.

In the first stage of his training, Sam teaches the boy to shoot rabbits and 'possums in the woods around Jefferson.

---

<sup>1</sup>Notably Cleanth Brooks suggests this interpretation, comparing the scene to the one in which Rider in "Pantaloons in Black" sees his dead wife. Cleanth Brooks, William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963, p. 257.



He taught the boy the woods, to hunt, when to shoot and when not to shoot, when to kill and when not to kill, and better, what to do with it afterward (p. 170).

Sam does not teach just hunting procedures, he teaches a way of life which centers around hunting, a philosophy of hunting and living and a tradition which goes along with the cult. He shares with the boy, through his stories, his own Indian heritage with its special respect for the life of the wilderness and thus provides Isaac with an additional or alternative heritage to his own. This first phase of Isaac's novitiate comes to an end when he has mastered the hunting of small game and is marked by a six months separation, which seems a planned part of the training. Isaac is ten years old and is to be allowed to go to the annual deer hunt in the Big Bottom the following November when, in May, Sam Fathers asks to be allowed to go to live in the Big Bottom. McCaslin says to Isaac, "Maybe he wants to get away from you a little while" (p. 174). Isaac knows that his training is a factor at least in the timing of Sam's departure.

He believed that he and Sam both knew that this was not only temporary but that the exigencies of his maturing, of that for which Sam had been training him all his life some day to dedicate himself, required it. . . . "I done taught you all there is of this settled country," Sam said. "You can hunt it good as I can now. You are ready for the Big Bottom now, for bear and deer. Hunter's meat," he said (pp. 173-174).

And so, Isaac moves into the second phase of his training.



At ten Isaac goes into the Big Bottom for the first time and Sam trains him in the ways of the wilderness. He is marked at once with a deep sense of respect for and involvement with what he encounters in the Big Bottom:

. . . having brought back with him, even from his first brief sojourn, an unforgettable sense of the big woods--not a quality dangerous or particularly inimical, but profound, sentient, gigantic and brooding, amid which he had been permitted to go to and fro at will, unscathed, why he knew not, but dwarfed and, until he had drawn honorably blood worthy of being drawn, alien (pp. 175-176).

To draw "honorably blood worthy of being drawn" is the aim and will be the culminating point of this second stage for Ike. For two years Sam teaches him to be comfortable in the woods, to know the habits of the animals, to find his way with his compass, with tree markings and by the stars, and to stand watch patiently for game. And then this training comes to its climax.

So the instant came. He pulled trigger and Sam Fathers marked his face with the hot blood which he had spilled and he ceased to be a child and became a hunter and a man (p. 178).

Isaac's status in relation to the other hunters is completely changed by this moment and Sam Fathers marks the occasion with a solemn ceremony, a veritable baptism in his victim's blood, as he exhorts Isaac to be worthy of the blood he has spilled. Isaac takes on an additional obligation to worthiness for the rest of his life, for he is not now a "mere hunter" like the others:

. . . Sam Fathers had marked him indeed, not as a mere hunter, but with something Sam had had in his turn of his vanished and forgotten people (p. 182).

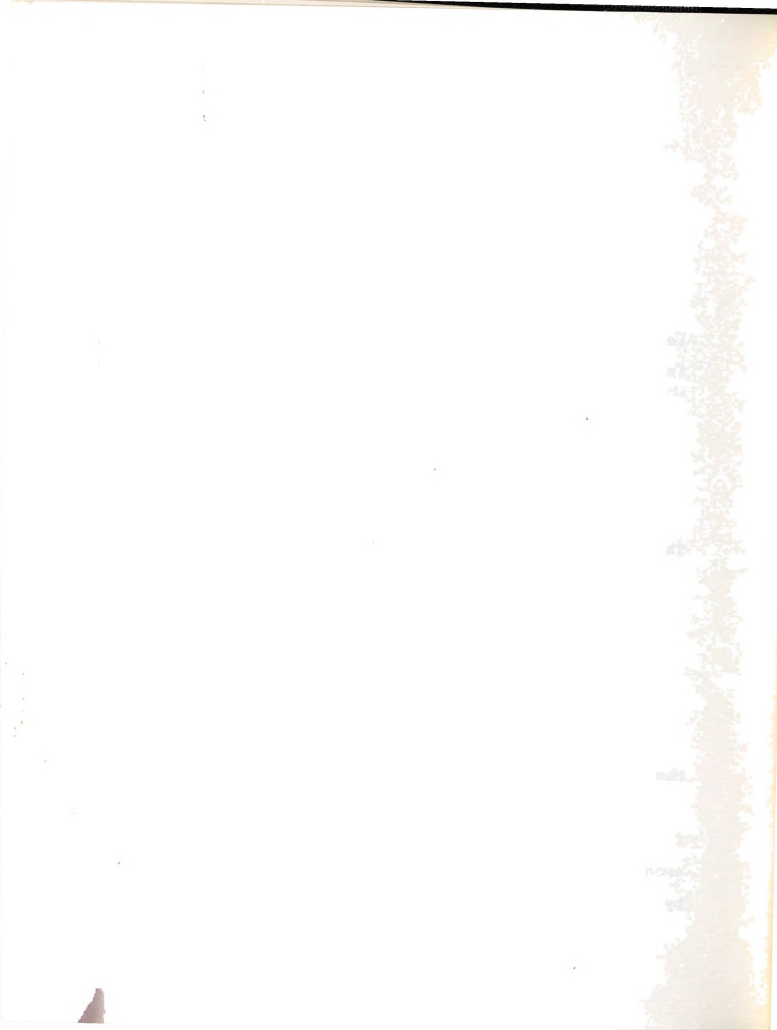
It is this additional "something" which makes Isaac's relationship to hunting and to life in the wilderness different from that of his cousin McCaslin, Walter Ewell, Major de Spain and General Compson. They are "mere hunters" while Isaac is training to be a priest of the cult. Isaac realizes the significance of what has happened to him and is moved to trembling:

Because he was just twelve then, and that morning something had happened to him: in less than a second he had ceased forever to be the child he was yesterday. Or perhaps that made no difference, perhaps even a city-bred man, let alone a child, could not have understood it; perhaps only a country-bred one could comprehend loving the life he spills. He began to shake again (p. 181).

This love that Isaac feels directly is a mark of his identification with his victim, again a confusion of hunter and hunted, this time in a form reminiscent of Hemingway.

Santiago, in The Old Man and the Sea, David, in Islands in the Stream, and Hemingway, in his own name, in The Green Hills of Africa, all express love for the hunted animal.

Isaac and other Faulkner heroes do not emphasize, as Hemingway does, the pleasure of killing, but rather value the symbolic import of the act. Killing the deer symbolizes for Isaac entering manhood and becoming an equal hunter among hunters. Isaac feels special powers granted to him by the sacrament that Sam Fathers has administered to him,



a special absolution which balances the special obligation placed on him by Sam Fathers:

But he could not stop the shaking. He did not try, because he knew it would go away when he needed the steadiness--had not Sam Fathers already consecrated and absolved him from all weakness and regret too? Not from love and pity for all which lived and ran and then ceased to live in a second in the very midst of splendor and speed, but from weakness and regret (p. 182).

Isaac humbly acknowledges his new status, his new consecration and his new obligation. The second stage of his novitiate is over at this point. "The Bear" chronicles the third stage, as Isaac is trained for and attains a further level of manhood, with a deepened commitment to the life of the wilderness.

The relationship of Sam Fathers and Isaac is used as a vehicle of expression for the element of timelessness of the hunting ritual. The ceremony in which Sam marks Isaac with the deer's blood not only establishes a new relationship between Isaac and the other hunters and between Isaac and the wilderness, it also binds Isaac and Sam to each other in a new way.

They were the white boy, marked forever, and the old dark man sired on both sides by savage kings, who had marked him, whose bloody hands had merely formally consecrated him to that which, under the man's tutelage, he had already accepted, humbly and joyfully, with abnegation and with pride too; the hands, the touch, the first worthy blood which he had been found at last worthy to draw, joining him and the man forever, so that the man would continue to live past the boy's seventy years and then eighty years, long after the man himself had entered the earth as chiefs and kings entered it. . . . (p. 165).

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

12-10-19

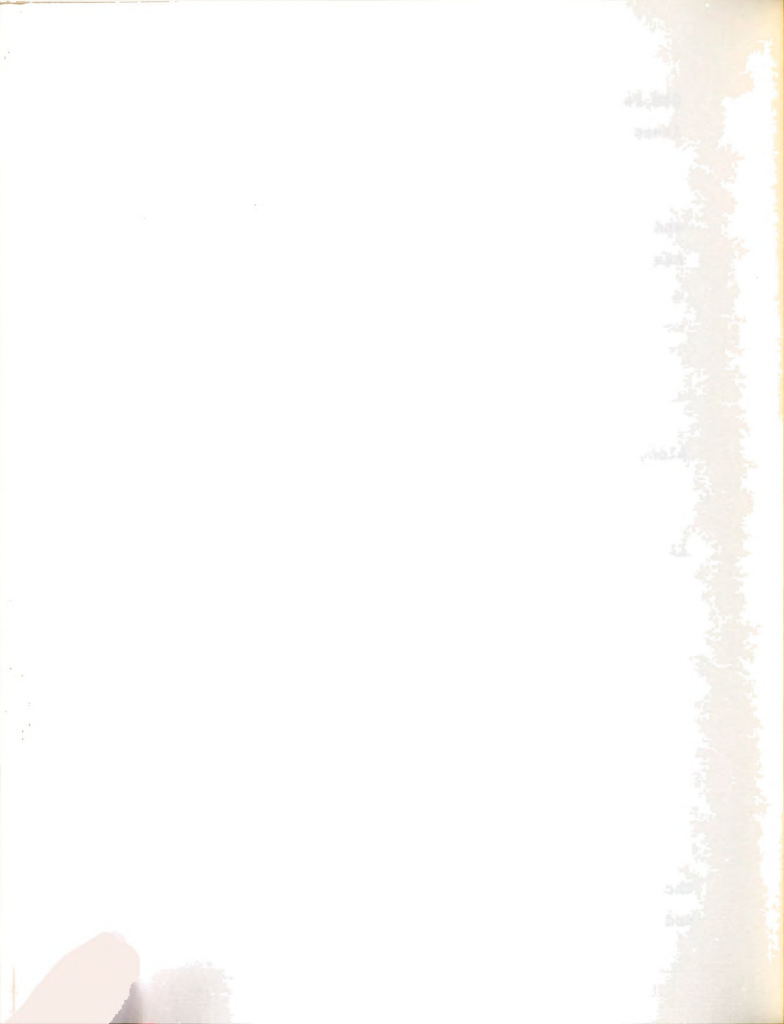
Sam Fathers, who has no children, will live on through Isaac, the child of his spirit. He has gained a victory over death, won a small piece of immortality. And Isaac, in his turn has gained a tradition in which past, present and future are fused. Sam has shared what he remembers and has been told about the Old People.

And as he talked about those old times and those dead and vanished men of another race from either that the boy knew, gradually to the boy those old times would cease to be old times and would become a part of the boy's present, not only as if they had happened yesterday but as if they were still happening. . . . And more: as if some of them had not happened yet but would occur tomorrow. . . . (p. 171).

Along with the hunting procedures the boy has assimilated a context of meaning which is to help him do what Sam Fathers has done: to transfer to the broader realm of life an ethic which he has developed, inherited and assimilated in hunting. And the value of the ethic stems in part from the timelessness of the ritual and its power to bind together people and meaningful moments:

. . . the wilderness watched them pass, less than inimical now and never to be inimical again since the buck still and forever leaped, the shaking gun barrels coming constantly and forever steady at last, crashing, and still out of his instant of immortality the buck sprang, forever immortal; --the wagon jolting and bouncing on, the moment of the buck, the shot, Sam Fathers and himself and the blood with which Sam had marked him forever one with the wilderness which had accepted him since Sam said that he had done all right. . . . (p. 178).

The buck's "instant of immortality" is now Isaac's and Sam's, and Isaac is no longer inimical to the forest. He has been



accepted by it as well as by its priest, Sam, and even when he leaves the wilderness, it now goes with him, just as he knows the woods is forever a home which will welcome him back. The buck, "forever immortal," stands as a symbol for Isaac of all he has gained with the wilderness tradition. The third and final phase of Isaac's training, still under the tutelage of Sam Fathers, is recounted in "The Bear."

"The Bear" comes next in Go Down, Moses, but a study of it, to be done in comparison to The Old Man and the Sea, will be reserved for the next chapter. Not considering it at this point does break the momentum and continuity of the discussion of Go Down, Moses, but it is to be hoped that the value of the comparative study in the next chapter will outweigh the disadvantages of this arrangement. After the discussion of Go Down, Moses, two variants on "The Bear" will be considered.

"Delta Autumn" offers a new story surrounded by some additional elements of the story of Isaac McCaslin. In the new story, Uncle Ike is over seventy but still goes on the yearly hunt, which has had to take place further into the Delta each year. This year Uncle Ike's kinsman, Roth Edmonds (the son of McCaslin Edmonds) is ill at ease as they are driving to the hunting camp and treats everyone, but especially Uncle Ike, with ill-humored coldness. Will Legate, who (along with Uncle Ike) is riding with Roth,

comments that Roth has come on the hunt because "he's got a doe in here." That evening, at the supper table in camp, Uncle Ike is talking about the "old days" when he hunted with Major DeSpain and General Compson, when Legate mentions that it was legal to shoot does back then. Roth Edmonds picks a quarrel with Uncle Ike who responds peacefully and without hostility. A man named Wyatt states the logical reason for not killing does: "We dont kill does because if we did kill does in a few years there wouldn't even be any bucks left to kill. . . ." (p. 347). Roth ridicules for the second time a remark by Uncle Ike and goes off to bed. Uncle Ike, still equable, sends the men off to bed so they will be ready to hunt early the next morning.

At four o'clock, after an almost sleepless night, Uncle Ike pretends to be asleep when the men arise, dress and leave the tent. Roth comes back a short time later and gives Uncle Ike an envelope of money and the message, "say I say no," for a "messenger" who might come looking for him. The "messenger" turns out to be a woman with a child, Roth's child, and this woman is discovered to be a granddaughter of the McCaslin slave, Tennie's Jim. Roth has not only perpetuated the miscegenation of old Carothers McCaslin but has unknowingly renewed the crime of incest in the family. Uncle Ike, in spite of his repudiation of Carothers

22-10-1944

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

McCaslin's sins and his relinquishment of the land (in "The Bear"), can only respond with horror:

. . . Maybe in a thousand or two thousand years in America, he thought. But not now! Not now! He cried, not loud, in a voice of amazement, pity, and outrage: "You're a nigger!"

He makes just one gesture worthy of the young man of twenty-one who carried out the renunciation of any perpetuation of the crimes against the black people: he gives this woman his most valued possession, his hunting horn, "the one which General Compson had left him in his will, covered with unbroken skin from a buck's shank and bound with silver." He tells the woman that the horn is Roth's, meaning perhaps that he would have willed it to Roth, but that he prefers it to go to Roth's unacknowledged child. The horn represents for Uncle Ike the tradition of the hunt and of the wilderness as well as his collected experiences and those of General Compson and a long line of hunters. This tradition (and set of experiences) is all Uncle Ike has to give and he offers it as a further acknowledgment of the crimes of his people against this woman's people. He no longer has the strength to take more than symbolic action in expiation of his racial guilt.

At the end of the story we learn that Roth Edmonds has shot a doe. Taken on a literal level this is a sign of his carelessness as a hunter and of his willing destruction of the wilderness. He has gone out with a shotgun,



rather than a rifle which most hunters see as a proper balance of power between the hunter and the woods, and he has destroyed that which recreates the life of the wilderness. On a figurative level, this fact must be linked to the number of references to the woman Roth has been involved with as a doe and seems to signal his destructiveness to her and to life in general. Looking back through the story at the surly way Roth has treated Uncle Ike, it seems likely that Uncle Ike represents to him the commitments to life and to honor that he is not willing to make and that Uncle Ike's presence, therefore, is a constant accusation to Roth, a reminder of his own shortcomings.

"Delta Autumn," in addition to being the story of Roth Edmonds and an unnamed part black distantly related woman, is also the continued story of Isaac McCaslin. He is old now and feeble but he has the respect of the younger men in the hunting camp, even when he regales them about "the good old days." His memories remind us of his early life, as he remembers that

. . . Sam dipped his hands into the hot blood and marked his face forever while he stood trying not to tremble, humbly and with pride too though the boy of twelve had been unable to phrase it then: I slew you; my bearing must not shame your quitting life. My conduct forever onward must become your death. . . . (pp. 350-351).

This reminder of Ike's past invites us to continue to measure him in terms of the dedication of his life made in his youth, and to ask if his conduct is still worthy of the

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

deer he has sacrificed, of this little part of the wilderness he has destroyed. Because of his particular relationship to the wilderness he has a power that none of the others has to calm the frightened horses and to get them to swim the river near the camp.

It was himself, though no horseman, no farmer, not even a countryman save by his distant birth and boyhood who coaxed and soothed the two horses, drawing them by his own single frail hand until, backing, filling, trembling a little, they surged, halted, then sprang scrambling down from the truck, possessing no affinity for them as creatures, beasts, but being merely insulated by his years and time from the corruption of steel and oiled moving parts which tainted the others (p. 342).

Uncle Ike has a special contact with the wilderness and with wildlife stemming both from his long years of experience and from his special consecration in those initiation ceremonies performed by Sam Fathers. Going back into the woods each fall brings him into contact with that past time:

. . . presently it seemed to him that the retrograde of his remembering had gained an inverse velocity from their own slow progress, that the land had retreated not in minutes from the last spread of gravel but in years, decades, back toward what it had been when he first knew it: the road they now followed once more the ancient pathway of bear and deer. . . . (pp. 341-342).

Uncle Ike returns each year to a time as well as to a place, and it is both the time and the place which are his true home, rather than his house in Jefferson where he spends the rest of the year:

But he spent the time within those walls waiting for November, because even this tent with its muddy floor and the bed which was not wide enough



nor soft enough nor even warm enough, was his home and these men, some of whom he only saw during these two November weeks and not one of whom even bore any name he used to know--DeSpain and Compson and Ewell and Hogganbeck--were more his kin than any (p. 352).

Uncle Ike, like the wilderness, is fading away and must seek meaning and glory in the past. In his own mind he is united to and equated with the wilderness.

He seemed to see the two of them--himself and the wilderness--as coevals, his own span as a hunter, a woodsman, not contemporary with his first breath but transmitted to him . . . the two spans running out together, not toward oblivion, nothingness, but into a dimension free of both time and space . . . where the wild strong immortal game ran forever before the tireless belling immortal hounds, falling and rising phoenix-like to the soundless guns (p. 354).

His union with the wilderness continues to exist in that "dimension free of both time and space," which is the dimension of the rituals which united them. In spite of the timelessness of his contacts with nature and of his consecration to the values of the land, Uncle Ike does not function very effectively in the scenes where we see him. He is an old man who has outlived others' interest in his times. Rather than being a priest of the wilderness, like his mentor, Sam Fathers, he is simply the acknowledged local authority on the history and methodology of hunting in these woods. The younger men (except for Roth Edmonds) treat him rather condescendingly, although with respect for his age. They are vacation hunters, not part of a special mystique of the wilderness, and they can only humor



the old man and take what practical advice he has to offer. Uncle Ike can re-experience in his memory the meaningful events of his past, but he cannot act in terms of them in the present. He cannot take any action in relation to Roth's mistress which would continue the battle he began at sixteen to rectify the wrongs done to her people. He can only make the small private gesture of giving her the hunting horn and give her feeble advice about going back North and marrying "a man in your own race" (p. 363). Again, as in "The Bear," he renounces his responsibilities along with his rights.

The image of Isaac McCaslin as coeval with the wilderness makes him a symbol for it. Civilization has pursued him and is wearing him down as it has the woods:

At first they had come in wagons: the guns, the bedding, the dogs, the food, the whiskey, the keen heart-lifting anticipation of hunting. . . . There had been bear then. . . . But that time was gone now. Now they went in cars, driving faster and faster each year because the roads were better and they had farther and farther to drive, the territory in which game still existed drawing yearly inward as his life was drawing inward. . . . (p. 335).

Uncle Ike does still have some vestiges of his contact with the wilderness. The same force which makes the horses less afraid of him than of the other men also gives him an understanding of what is happening in his time to the wilderness. He understands not only the destruction which is occurring constantly, but the implications of it:

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

No wonder the ruined woods I used to know dont cry for retribution! he thought: The people who have destroyed it will accomplish its revenge (p. 364).

Roth Edmonds' killing of does will leave the woods denuded of game to hunt. Man will have to live with the civilization he creates and this will be the revenge of the "ruined woods."

There are two strong attacks made on Uncle Ike in the course of the story, one by Roth, one by the woman, and the two accusations are almost exact opposites of each other. After Uncle Ike has made the generalization about mankind that "most men are a little better than their circumstances give them a chance to be," Roth lashes out at him:

"So you've lived almost eighty years," Edmonds said. "And that's what you finally learned about the other animals you lived among. I suppose the question to ask you is, where have you been all the time you were dead?" (p. 345).

Roth's cynical view of the world and his own defensiveness cause him to see Uncle Ike as idealistic and sentimental. Uncle Ike goes on at this point to give a definition of God which angers Roth even further:

"I think that every man and woman, at the instant when it dont even matter whether they marry or not, I think that whether they marry then or afterward or dont never, at that instant the two of them together were God" (p. 348).

The "accusation" of godliness conflicts too strongly with Roth's guilty conscience and he responds aggressively. But, in the later scene with the woman, Uncle Ike has divested



love of any of the godly powers he previously attached to it. He exhorts the woman to turn her back on love, that it cannot solve the problem of racism.

"That's right. Go back North. Marry: a man in your own race. That's the only salvation for you --for a while yet, maybe a long while yet. We will have to wait. Marry a black man. You are young, handsome, almost white; you could find a black man who would see in you what it was you saw in him, who would ask nothing of you and expect less and get even still less than that, if it's revenge you want. Then you will forget all this, forget it ever happened, that he ever existed--. . . ." (p. 363).

This is practical but sordid advice, especially from a man who has defined God as Uncle Ike did earlier. The woman responds strongly to the lack of romantic ideals which this advice embodies:

"Old man," she said, "have you lived so long and forgotten so much that you dont remember anything you ever knew or felt or even heard about love?" (p. 363).

Her rebuke focuses our attention on what has happened to Uncle Ike: his idealism has become words, words that dissipate before the reality of a life situation. What he learned once in the wilderness cannot now be generalized to all of life. His tradition fails him; or maybe he fails it.

In the final and title story of the book, "Go Down, Moses," the dehumanization process implicit in the destruction of the wilderness has produced Samuel Worsham Beauchamp, sentenced to death in Chicago for the murder of a policeman.

The man's grandmother, Aunt Mollie Beauchamp, wife of Lucas, has her own ritual to explain what has happened:

Then, sitting on the hard chair opposite him and without moving, she began to chant. "Roth Edmonds sold my Benjamin. Sold him in Egypt. Pharaoh got him--" (p. 371).

The reason that Aunt Mollie holds Roth Edmonds responsible for what has happened is that, after finding the boy breaking into his commissary, he ordered him off the place.

Aunt Mollie is wrong in her explanation but right in her intuition which connects Edmonds to the encroachment of civilization upon the natural and its result, the creation of people like Samuel Worsham Beauchamp who are cut off from any feeling relationship with their own actions. The lawyer, Gavin Stevens, who has been asked by Aunt Mollie to save her boy cannot do that because the die is already cast. What makes this story one of positive impact, rather than just a pessimistic comment on what things are coming to in the modern world, is the number of people who act, independently and together, to make Aunt Mollie feel better. Gavin Stevens and the town newspaper editor pay for returning the body to Jefferson and for a casket and the funeral. Stevens does not tell Aunt Mollie what he has died from and the editor withholds the news item from his paper. Miss Worsham, a white woman who grew up with Aunt Mollie, sits through her mourning ceremony with her. When Stevens comes to pay a call of condolence, he sits down with Miss Worsham, Aunt Mollie, and her brother,



Hamp Worsham, and the four of them "made a circle about the brick hearth on which the ancient symbol of human coherence and solidarity smoldered" (p. 380). When the body is returned, the hearse which takes it from the train goes through Jefferson and out into the country,

. . . followed still by the two cars containing the four people--the high-headed erect white woman, the old Negress, the designated paladin of justice and truth and right [the editor], the Heidelberg Ph.D. [Gavin Stevens]--in formal component complement to the Negro murder's catafalque: the slain wolf (p. 382).

People like the four who follow this casket balance out the destructiveness of the life of the man in it. Their "human coherence and solidarity" is the world's hope for survival of the retribution to be paid for the destroyed wilderness and natural values. But yet, even that man within the casket is just a victim, like a hunted down predator of the woods: "the slain wolf."

## II.

"Lion: A Story,"<sup>1</sup> the earliest version of the events of "The Bear," is a much shorter story (only fifteen pages) with a markedly different emphasis. It is narrated by Quentin Compson, then sixteen years old, and Uncle Ike McCaslin is only one of the older hunters in the group.

---

<sup>1</sup>Harper's Monthly Magazine, vol. 172 (December 1935), reprinted in Utley, Bloom and Kinney, Bear, Man and God: Seven Approaches to William Faulkner's "The Bear." New York: Random House, 1964. My references will be to the latter source.

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

The initiation theme is greatly diminished, although not totally absent from the tale, since the emphasis is not on either the boy or the bear, but on Lion, on his struggle with Old Ben, and on the reactions of people to the clash between the two. Lion is presented, not as the wild beast of "The Bear" who must also undergo an initiation, but as an established member of the hunting group and, like Old Ben, a legend in the community. Lion is both an equal to the men and also their superior.

Lion was like the chiefs of Aztec and Polynesian tribes who were looked upon as being not men but both more and less than men. Because we were not men either while we were in camp: we were hunters, and Lion the best hunter of us all, and Major de Spain and Uncle Ike McCaslin next; and Lion did not talk as we talked, not because he could not but because he was the chief, the Sun-begotten, who knew the language which we spoke but was superior to using it himself; just as he lived under the house, under the kitchen, not because he was a dog, an animal, but for the same reason as the Aztec or the Polynesian whose god-head required that he live apart (p. 135).

This "godhead" of Lion is balanced in the story by "supernatural powers" ascribed to Old Ben. Quentin, alone and afraid in the woods, suddenly realizes that he has forgotten to load his gun and considers the possible implications of his carelessness:

I believed that by getting scared and failing to load my gun, I was going to fail the others and let old Ben through. I had conferred supernatural powers on him now. I had a picture of him lurking back in the cane, watching his chance and waiting for one of us who barred his way to make a mistake, and I had made it; I believed, knew, that he would charge out of the cane and pass me before I could get loaded (p. 141).



Old Ben does not rush forth, however, even if he is what Uncle Ike calls "the head bear." A further equality of the two adversaries of the battle to come is set up when Quentin says of Old Ben, "He was known through the country as well as Lion was" (p. 136).

There are three men in the story with a special attachment to Lion. One of them is Boon Hogganbeck, a part Indian with a face that

. . . looked as if somebody had found a walnut a little smaller than a basket ball and with a machinist's hammer had shaped the features of the face and then painted it, mostly red (p. 133).

And Boon has eyes "like shoebuttons, without depth, without meanness or generosity or viciousness or gentleness or anything at all: just something to see with." The description of Boon tends to dehumanize him and to cultivate the image of a relationship of equals between him and Lion. The image is strengthened by a reference to Lion's topaze eyes as being "as impenetrable as Boon's, as free of meanness or generosity or gentleness or viciousness but a good deal more intelligent."

Boon has a rival, however, in Ad, the Negro who cooks on the hunting trips, and the two of them vie for Lion's attention (even they know he has no affection to give), each trying to get the dog to sleep with him at night. Lion is oblivious to the rivalry of his "suitors" and not involved in their competition, just as he takes no part in chasing coons and wildcats when the other dogs are

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

after "anything that ran and left scent." Lion's aloofness is part of the pattern of the Aztec or Polynesian god to which he has been compared. He sets himself apart from both human beings and other dogs, saving himself for a beast worthy of the battle.

The third man especially attached to the dog is Major de Spain, who seems to rank highest in the dog's attention.

Lion did not belong to Major de Spain at all but just happened to like him better than he did any of the rest of us, as a man might have (p. 135).

Major de Spain has his subtle way of interfering in the competition between Boon and Ad; he waits until they have fought out where Lion will sleep and then goes into Boon's shed or into the kitchen where Ad sleeps and makes the night's winner put Lion outdoors to sleep.

"Damn it," he would say, "if he slept with either one of you for half the night he wouldn't even be able to trace a polecat to-morrow" (p. 135).

At the end of the story when Lion is wounded and then dies, Major de Spain is more profoundly, although less dramatically, moved than the others. He sits with the dog's head on his knee, squeezing water into his mouth from a rag, while Boon goes for the doctor. And although Ad is crying over what has happened to Lion and Boon is crying and running about frantically, not even seeing to his own wounds, Major de Spain is the one who is moved to the point where he never returns to the bottom again. The land is not sold



to a lumber company in this version (and the whole theme of the destruction of the wilderness is not here), and Major de Spain's not returning stems simply from his having no heart for the chase now that Lion is no longer one of the hunters.

In this version of the story there is no Sam Fathers, no priest of the cult of the wilderness. There is only the divinity itself, of the woods, a spirit divided between Lion and Old Ben. And Quentin, the narrator, is far different from the sixteen year old boy of "The Bear," young Ike McCaslin. Quentin is neither a hunter nor a woodsman. When Uncle Ike leaves him on his stand, alone, he is immediately uncomfortable and thinks of Jefferson, "where people were getting ready to wake up in comfort and security."

. . . I thought It's just twenty miles away. What's the matter with you? but then the other side of me, the other thing in me would say, Yes, and you are just a puny assortment of bones and meat that cannot get one mile from where you stand without that compass to help you and could not spend one night where you are and live without fire to keep you warm and perhaps that gun to protect yourself (p. 141).

Quentin is a sensitive narrator, sensitive both to his own responses and to others', but he is not someone wedded to the life and values of the woods. He tells the events of this tale as a human interest story rather than as part of the canon of the wilderness cult. He focuses not really on Lion, as the title might imply, but on people and on



their reactions to Lion and to the events recounted here. The impact on the reader of the actual events is dulled by two factors, both relating to the narrator: that he is not himself a woodsman and therefore does not give a hunter's view (Major de Spain's or Uncle Ike's, for instance) of what happens, and, secondly, that he is not even present at the key action points of the story and can only give a second hand account of what happened. What he recounts vividly are the results of the events:

It was still raining at dark. But we didn't eat supper yet; we waited, and now there was somebody watching the woods all the time, and just before dark Theophilus McCaslin began to blow a horn every five minutes to guide them in. Yet when they did come, nobody saw them at all; we were all inside at the fire; we just heard the noise at the back door and then in the hall; we were still sitting when Boon walked into the room. He was carrying something big wrapped in his hunting coat, but we didn't even look to see what it was because we were looking at Boon. He was wet and muddy and there was blood all over him, streaked by the rain. But that wasn't it. It was his face, his head. There was a bloody furrow (you could see the five claw-marks) wide as my hand starting up in his hair and running down the side of his head and right on down his arm to the wrist; there was a bloody blob hanging on the side of his head that I didn't know until the next day was his left ear, and his right breeches' leg had been ripped off and the leg under it looking like raw beef and the blood from it staining his boot darker than the rain. But that wasn't it either. Because then we saw that what he was carrying in the coat was Lion. He stood there in the door, looking at us, and he began to cry. I never had seen a man cry before. He stood there in the lamp-light, looking big as all outdoors and bloody as a hog, with that tough unshaven face of his crinkled up and more like a dried walnut than ever, and the tears streaming down it fast as rain (pp. 143-144).

2000-2001

2001-2002

2002-2003

2003-2004

2004-2005

2005-2006

2006-2007

2007-2008

2008-2009

This account of what happened after the bear was killed and Lion mortally wounded is the climax of the story and the clearest image retained from the whole tale is of Boon in the doorway, holding the wounded body of Lion, and his look expressing the grief which is the "what it was" that Quentin tries to articulate about his face. In contrast to this highly visual image created by Quentin's attempt, through physical description, to make precise what he is reacting to in the look on Boon's face, there is the colorless scene which recounts the killing of the bear:

. . . Uncle Ike told about it, what Ad had told him: about how Lion had bayed Old Ben against a down tree top and the other dogs would not go in, and how Old Ben caught Lion and had him on the ground, and Boon ran in with the hunting knife and jerked Lion back, but he would not stay out; and how this time Boon jumped straddle of Old Ben's back and got the knife into him, under the shoulder; Ad said that Boon picked Old Ben clean up from behind, his arm round Old Ben's neck and Old Ben striking backward at Boon's head and arm while Boon worked the knife blade round until he touched the life (p. 145).

The events are filtered through three tellers and the fine matter which remains is just the skeleton of the action. This minimum account contrasts markedly with Quentin's rich response to the scene of Boon standing in the doorway. Only the last phrase, "he touched the life," has any metaphorical impact. If he had said, "he touched the heart," the dreariness of tone of the whole passage would have obliterated any importance of Old Ben's death. The last phrase causes us to focus on the bear's life, thus on his



death, and takes our attention away from how that death comes about. The effect of Quentin's second hand account here is similar to that in a Greek tragedy when the most dramatic events, especially violent ones, take place off-stage and are simply recounted on stage. This places the emphasis not on what happens, but on human responses to those events.

"Lion: A Story" ends with the results of the death of Lion in the lives of several of the participants in that hunting party. Major de Spain will not go back to the woods; when Quentin's father and the others who had been there try to persuade him to return, we are told, "he was almost sharp when he refused." Quentin returns anxiously the next summer to hunt squirrels and even he feels the very woods to be different now.

He went on and I entered the woods. They were changed, different. Of course it was just the summer; next fall they would be again as I remembered them. Then I knew that that was wrong; that they would never again be as I remembered them, as any of us remembered them, and I, a boy, who had owned no Lion, knew now why Major de Spain knew that he would never return and was too wise to try to (p. 148).

Major de Spain is "too wise to try" to return because he knows that an era has ended for him. This recognition is personal and private and does not take on the further meaning of the end of an era for civilization which we have at the conclusion of "The Bear." The Major has seen the end of a long series of hunts involving Old Ben and Lion.

Page 1 of 1

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

10/10/2010

This competition, which had become regular and ritualized, between two worthy adversaries had also become symbolic of his attachment to the woods. His way of renouncing the vigorous activities of the hunt in his advanced years is to find no heart for it when Lion, his beloved dog, is no longer part of it. Perhaps Lion represented the vigor of his youth to him, which he pitted against elemental forces (like Old Ben) and this is his way of easing himself into the life of his office and the "unobtrusive clothes and an old-fashioned immaculate boiled shirt" in which Quentin finds him there.

Boon's identification with Lion has been much more intense and direct than Major de Spain's and his grief is more dramatic and more intense. Boon somehow overcame his grief at the time of Lion's death and, a year later, when Quentin returns to the bottom, Boon is now marshall at Hoke's. Boon has arrived at the camp the night before Quentin and has gone out that next day to hunt squirrels around the Gum Tree. Quentin goes and finds him there, hammering away at something.

It was a section of his gun; drawing nearer, I saw the rest of it scattered in a dozen pieces about him on the ground where he sat, hunched over, hammering furiously at the part on his lap, his walnut face wild and urgent and streaming with sweat. He was living, as always, in the moment; nothing on earth--not Lion, not anything in the past--mattered to him except his helpless fury with his broken gun. He didn't stop; he didn't even look up to see who I was; he just shouted at me in a hoarse desperate voice.

"Get out of here!" he said. "Don't touch them! They're mine!" (p. 149).

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

That Boon is living in the moment and no longer thinking of Lion does not mean that his grief over the dog's death has not caused this state of madness he is in. In this version there is an immediate triggering cause to his condition, however, the frustration of his gun being broken when he wants to shoot the squirrels he has trapped. And the fit of possessiveness in relation to the squirrels may be the expression of the possessiveness he felt in relation to Lion but did not dare to express since the dog did not belong to him.

Quentin tells us how the death of Lion affected Major de Spain and Boon, but does not speak directly of the effect of these events in his own life. Even though this is not primarily an initiation story, just as in the case of "Was" in Go Down, Moses, when the story is filtered through the mind of a young boy, it seems appropriate to ask what he has learned from what he has witnessed. Quentin does not learn much of the methods and techniques of hunting, but he learns something important about the woods and about human emotions. When Boon walks in carrying Lion, Quentin says, "I had never seen a man cry before" (p. 144). Quentin sees and compares Boon's reaction and Major de Spain's reaction to Lion's death. Even at his age Quentin has the sensitivity to understand these two responses which are opposite extremes. He understands Boon who lives in the present moment, a present sometimes



shaped by a forgotten past, but always experienced as the present, as if he had just been created. Quentin can also understand Major de Spain, who generalizes his past experience into the present and the future. He understands "why Major de Spain knew that he would never return and was too wise to try to" (p. 148), although he cannot yet articulate his understanding. Quentin knows that Lion and Old Ben, too, represented more than a dog and a bear to the people who loved them.

At the end of the story there is an apotheosis of Lion and Old Ben, commensurate with the "godhead" and "supernatural powers" attributed to them earlier. When Quentin enters the woods to meet Boon at the Gum Tree, he goes by way of "the holly knoll."

Soon the earth began to lift beneath my feet and then I saw the hollies, the four pale trunks making the four corners and inside them the wooden cross with Old Ben's dried mutilated paw nailed to it. There was no trace of any grave any more; the spring flood water had seen to that. But that was all right because it was not Lion who was there; not Lion. Maybe it was nice for him now, nice for him and Old Ben both now--the long challenge and the long chase, the one with no heart to be driven and outraged, the other with no flesh to be mauled and bled (p. 148).

This is the first mention of Lion's having been buried and of whatever ceremony accompanied nailing the bear's paw to a cross near his grave. Lion is not there because the spirit he represents to those who knew him cannot be locked away in a grave. Both Lion and Old Ben are free now for

what they loved most: "the long challenge and the long chase," a mythical bear hunt in the sky.

### III.

In the same year that Go Down, Moses was published (1942), with its lengthy version of "The Bear," a short version was published in the Saturday Evening Post,<sup>1</sup> differing considerably from both the longer version and from "Lion: A Story," published seven years earlier. This story is written in the third person, with the narration focused almost exclusively on a boy who is only identified as "the boy." The emphasis of the story is on the boy and what he learns from his experiences in the wilderness. He is a cross between Quentin, the boy in "Lion: A Story," and young Isaac McCaslin, the boy in the longer version of "The Bear." Like Quentin, the boy has a father who is part of the regular hunting party with Major de Spain and although the father is not cynical like Quentin Compson's father is in The Sound and the Fury, he does quote poetry and talk in abstractions, not unlike Jason Compson III. But, like Isaac (and unlike Quentin), the boy is rapidly becoming an expert woodsman and hunter and his father quotes the same poetry that Isaac's cousin, McCaslin Edmonds, quotes to him in Part IV of "The Bear." The story

---

<sup>1</sup>Saturday Evening Post, CCXIV (May 9, 1942). Reprinted in Utley, Bloom and Kinney. My references will be to the latter source.



line is very simple and does not go as far as the other versions: the boy is learning to hunt and is taken to the Big Bottom twice a year with the men, from ages ten to fourteen, the duration of this story. Sam Fathers is his mentor and Lion and Boon Hogganbeck do not figure in this story in which the bear is not killed. This version centers on the boy's experiences in such a way as to invite the reader to consider this as an initiation story.

The boy is initiated into the life of the woods and of hunters as much by the talk he hears in camp and in his father's plantation office as by Sam Fathers. He has listened carefully during his fourteen years to "the best of all talking."

He would hear it, not talking himself but listening--the wilderness, the big woods, bigger and older than any recorded document of white man fatuous enough to believe he had bought any fragment of it or Indian ruthless enough to pretend that any fragment of it had been his to convey. It was of the men, not white nor black nor red, but men, hunters with the will and hardihood to endure and the humility and skill to survive, and the dogs and the bear and the deer juxtaposed and relieved against it, ordered and compelled by and within the wilderness in the ancient and unremitting contest by the ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regrets and brooked no quarter. . . . (p. 162).

He has learned from what he has heard that in hunting men are equals, "not white nor black nor red," that the woods survives them all and their attempts to own it, and that the wilderness itself imposes order on its relations with men, through the natural "ancient and immitigable rules"



of hunting. He learns that what he feels unites him with distant generations of hunters as he experiences

. . . the same solitude, the same loneliness through which human beings had merely passed without altering it, leaving no mark, no scar, which looked exactly as it must have looked when the first ancestors of Sam Fathers' Chickasaw predecessors crept into it and looked about, club or stone ax or bone arrow drawn and poised . . . . (p. 154).

The woods itself is not affected as men come and go and its unchanging nature becomes a connecting link for the men who hunt in it. The boy watches the men drink and anticipates the day when he, too, will take part in this hunters' communion and will drink

. . . that brown liquor which . . . only hunters drank, drinking not of the blood they had spilled but some condensation of the wild immortal spirit, drinking it moderately, humbly even, not with the pagan's base hope of acquiring thereby the virtues of cunning and strength and speed, but in salute to them (pp. 162-163).

The boy learns from the men he has grown up among respect for the wilderness and for the qualities which are of most value there, the same qualities for man and for beast, imposed by the wilderness itself.

Having been initiated into the communion of hunters by his father and his friends, and into the techniques and methods of hunting by Sam Fathers, the boy must take the next steps on his own. He goes out alone each day to become more familiar with the woods, to learn to guide himself about, and to make contact with the bear himself. After he has learned to find the bear's tracks whenever he



wants to, Sam Fathers tells him that if he wants to see the bear, he must give up his gun. He still does not find the bear and realizes the further sacrifice he must make.

It was the watch, the compass, the stick--the three lifeless mechanicals with which for nine hours he had fended the wilderness off; he hung the watch and compass carefully on a bush and leaned the stick beside them and relinquished completely to it (p. 158).

To be worthy of contact with the bear, he must be willing to encounter him with no artificial help. By fending off the wilderness, he has fended off the bear, also. The condition he has accepted places him in special relationship to the bear.

He had accepted not a gambit, not a choice, but a condition in which not only the bear's heretofore inviolable anonymity but all the old rules and balances of hunter and hunted had been abrogated (p. 157).

The balances are abrogated in that the boy becomes something other than a hunter; he is not trying to kill the bear, but only to see him. He is able to now, in fact the bear appears as though part of the woods itself and he sees it in contrast with the symbols of civilization which he has relinquished.

As he looked up, the wilderness coalesced, solidified--the glade, the tree he sought, the bush, the watch and the compass glinting where a ray of sunlight touched them. Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear; it was just there, immobile, solid, fixed in the hot dappling of the green and windless noon, not as big as he had dreamed it, but as big as he had expected it, bigger, dimensionless against the dappled obscurity, looking at him where he sat quietly on the log and looked back at it (pp. 158-159).



The bear appears as an embodiment both of the wilderness and of the boy's dreams, neither of which he fears. He has met the bear on its terms and is emotionally prepared for a communion, a merging of some spirit within him with the bear.

They had looked at each other, they had emerged from the wilderness old as earth, synchronized to that instant by something more than the blood that moved the flesh and bones which bore them, and touched, pledged something, affirmed something more lasting than the frail web of bones and flesh which any accident could obliterate (p. 160).

In this ceremony between the boy and the bear a pledge is made, in affirmation of their mutual relationship to the wilderness: they will do each other no harm. The ritual is deepened in time and meaning for the boy.

It seemed to him that he could see the two of them, himself and the bear, shadowy in the limbo from which time emerged, becoming time; the old bear absolved of mortality and himself partaking, sharing a little of it, enough of it (p. 155).

The boy feels united with the immortality which the bear has inherited from the wilderness. Yet, even in the depth of his experience of identification with the bear and the wilderness, he does not lose sight of the quality that separates him from the bear,

. . . that thin, clear, quenchless, immortal lucidity which alone differed him from this bear and from all the other bear and deer he would ever kill in the humility and pride of his skill and endurance. . . . (pp. 157-158).

The boy has experienced the best of all possible communions, one in which he partakes of the special qualities of the



other without having to relinquish his own identity. He has only had to sacrifice the outer trappings of that civilization of which he is a part.

The boy has used the bear as an entry, a symbol of the wilderness and, through the bear, he has found it possible to shake off an uncomfortable attachment to civilization and see an alternative set of values to which he may attach himself. From early youth his image of the bear has been one of total union with the wilderness.

He seemed to see it entire with a child's complete divination before he ever laid eyes on either--the doomed wilderness whose edges were being constantly and punily gnawed at by men with axes and plows who feared it because it was wilderness, men myriad and nameless even to one another in the land where the old bear had earned a name, through which ran not even a mortal animal but an anachronism, indomitable and invincible, out of an old dead time, phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life . . . the old bear solitary, indomitable and alone, widowed, childless and absolved of mortality--old Priam reft of his old wife and having outlived all his sons (p. 150).

The bear is not only equated with the wilderness in his mind, it is the "epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life," the best of the spirit of the woods, presiding over the woods with a wisdom equivalent to that of Priam reigning over Troy. The boy again sees the bear as equivalent to the woods when he looks at the small dog which has been wounded by the bear: ". . . to the boy it was still no living creature, but the wilderness which, leaning for the moment down, had patted lightly once the hound's temerity" (p. 152).



The boy also learns in the woods and from the hunters' talk that there is more than one kind of hunting: there is hunting to kill and there is hunting to hunt. Even as a child he senses something special about the spirit with which the men "hunt" Old Ben regularly, each year.

To the boy, at seven and eight and nine, they were not going into the Big Bottom to hunt bear and deer, but to keep yearly rendezvous with the bear which they did not even intend to kill (p. 150).

He refers to this event shortly afterward as "the yearly pageant of the old bear's furious immortality." He realizes that the men are acting out some sort of ritual in relation to the bear. When, in camp the first time, Old Ben passes near his stand, the boy comes to a clearer realization:

He realized for the first time that the bear which had run in his listening and loomed in his dreams since before he could remember to the contrary . . . was a mortal animal, and that if they had departed for the camp each November without any actual hope of bringing its trophy back, it was not because it could not be slain, but because so far they had had no actual hope to (p. 153).

Then he, too, starts to hunt Old Ben with "no actual hope" to kill him. This distinction which the boy comes to make and the fact that the bear finds him as much as he finds it repeats the theme of confusion of the hunter and hunted, seen throughout Go Down, Moses. Simply to make contact with the bear and the wilderness he represents, the boy adapts from Sam Fathers and devises on his own a set of

1000

900

800

700

600

500

400

300

200

100

0

100

200

300

400

500

600

700

800

900

1000

1100

1200

1300

1400

1500

1600

1700

1800

1900

rituals for relating to the old bear. The boy's father, in that same room in which he has heard "the best of all talking," tries to explain to him metaphorically what their hunt with Old Ben is really about. His father reads to him Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and then repeats part of it.

He read again, but only the second stanza this time, to the end of it, the last two lines, and closed the book and put it on the table beside him. "'She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss, for ever wilt thou love, and she be fair,'" he said.

His father is trying to explain an abstract concept to him, that the bliss perceived but not attained need never be sullied by not living up to one's expectations; that in this hunt as "yearly pageant" no one need be disappointed when it is over, because the same pleasure is in store for them next year. The pleasure is in the pursuit itself, not in achieving its objective. The boy cannot yet understand his father's terms and replies, "He's talking about a girl." His father makes one last attempt at explaining what he means.

"He had to talk about something," his father said. Then he said, "He was talking about truth. Truth doesn't change. Truth is one thing. It covers all things which touch the heart--honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love. Do you see now?" (p. 163).

The father's identification of truth with other abstract qualities is similar to the end of Keats' poem:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"--that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.



The superiority of the ideal over the actual and the oneness of all true ideal qualities is an abstraction too subtle for the fourteen year old boy to grasp. Perhaps he might have responded better to some of the concrete images of the poem: the urn, the work of art, as a "sylvan historian"; the ceremony of pursuit depicted on the urn (perhaps a wedding in the woods since pagan weddings frequently included a pursuit of the bride); "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter"; those "happy" ideal boughs that never shed their leaves; the sacrifice of a heifer by a "mysterious priest" at a "green altar"; the urn itself, which will remain when those who now see it do not and which is therefore the viewer's link to the past and the future. The boy understands many similar ideas in relation to himself, the wilderness (his concept of the ideal), and the bear (his link to the ideal).

The boy has his own more concrete way of understanding the continuing pursuit of the bear which they do not really aspire to killing. He explains it to himself in terms of relationships among the various characters in the pageant: the old bear, who puts his "freedom and liberty in jeopardy in order to savor them"; Sam Fathers, who has maintained contact with the tradition of his Indian ancestors "in the solitary brotherhood of an old Negro's alien blood and the wild and invincible spirit of an old bear"; a little dog who cannot be dangerous or fierce or humble

1900

1901

1902

1903

1904

1905

1906

1907

1908

1909

1910

1911

1912

1913

1914

1915

1916

1917

1918

1919

1920

1921

1922

1923

1924

1925

1926

1927

1928

1929

or proud and decides, "So all I can be is brave." The boy sees these various characters in relation to himself in this pageant:

There was a boy who wished to learn humility and pride in order to become skillful and worthy in the woods, who suddenly found himself becoming so skillful so rapidly that he feared he would never become worthy because he had not learned humility and pride, although he had tried to, until one day and as suddenly he discovered that an old man who could not have defined either had led him, as though by the hand, to that point where an old bear and a little mongrel dog showed him that, by possessing one thing other, he would possess them both (pp. 163-164).

The little dog's bravery has been for the boy the key to gaining what he wants from the wilderness. The story ends at this point, the bear still roaming the woods, with another exchange between the father and son, as the boy again translates his father's abstractions into concrete terms.

His father was watching him gravely across the spring-rife twilight of the room; when he spoke, his words were as quiet as the twilight, too, not loud, because they did not need to be because they would last, "Courage, and honor, and pride," his father said, "and pity, and love of justice and of liberty. They all touch the heart, and what the heart holds to becomes truth, as far as we know truth. Do you see now?"

Sam, and Old Ben, and Nip, he thought. And himself too. He had been all right too. His father had said so. "Yes, sir," he said (p. 164).

The fact that the bear is not killed, but that the participants relish rather the possibility of hunting him again, makes this story different in impact from any of the other versions of "The Bear." A contrast of the ending of



this version, for example, with that of "Lion: A Story," strengthens the point of this version, that the joy is in the doing, that the pleasure of the hunt is in the anticipation and in the chase itself, not in the accomplishment of its alleged goal. The boy's education in the woods is now complete.

If Sam had been his mentor and the back-yard rabbits and squirrels at home his kindergarten, then the wilderness the old bear ran was his college, the old male bear itself, so long unwed and childless as to have become its own ungendered progenitor, was his alma mater (p. 159).

#### IV.

Big Woods<sup>1</sup> combines two of the stories from Go Down, Moses, "The Bear" (without the fourth section of the novel version) and "The Old People," with two whimsical hunting stories, "A Bear Hunt" and "Race at Morning", with the addition of five inter-chapters, all new, surrounding and separating the four stories. The book is unified by the fact that all the stories take place "at the annual hunting camp of Major de Spain in the river bottom twenty miles from town. . . ."

"A Bear Hunt" is presented by two first person narrators, in two very different styles. In the first four and a half pages the scene is set by a narrator who may be Quentin Compson (he speaks of old General Compson as his

---

<sup>1</sup>William Faulkner, Big Woods. New York: Random House, 1955. All subsequent references to this work will be to this edition.

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

grandfather). This first narrator gives the background of the two major characters of the story, Ratliff, the sewing-machine agent, and Lucius Hogganbeck, son of Boon (whom Major de Spain supports, just as his father did Boon, and the narrator adds, ". . . we liked to believe, as a Roman gesture of salute and farewell to the bright figure which Lucius had been before time whipped him." p. 147). Finally, "to set the stage for Ratliff," the narrator describes the old Indian mound which is to figure in the story:

Five miles farther down the river from Major de Spain's camp, and in an even wilder part of the river's jungle of cane and gum and pin oak, there is an old Indian mound. Aboriginal, it rises profoundly and darkly enigmatic, the only elevation of any kind in the wild, flat jungle of river bottom. Even to some of us--children though we were, yet we were descended of literate, town-bred people--it possessed inferences of secret and violent blood, of savage and sudden destruction, as though the yells and hatchets which we associated with Indians through the hidden and secret dime novels which we passed among ourselves were but trivial and momentary manifestations of what dark power still dwelled or lurked there, sinister, a little sardonic, like a dark and nameless beast lightly and lazily slumbering with bloody jaws--this, perhaps due to the fact that a remnant of a once powerful clan of the Chickasaw tribe still lived beside it under government protection (pp. 147-148).

In the story that follows the "inferences of secret and violent blood, of savage and sudden destruction" are very important because they explain Lucius Hogganbeck's suggestibility in the trick that is played upon him. This articulate and sophisticated narrator evokes an atmosphere of subtle associations to the Indian mound which Ratliff could neither



have formulated nor even understood. And when he has filled in the background, he turns the story over to Ratliff, saying, "Now Ratliff tells about Lucius Hogganbeck and his hiccup" (p. 149).

Ratliff's story of Luke Hogganbeck and his case of hiccups is told in a colorful style, reminiscent of Mark Twain. Hogganbeck had gotten the hiccups from eating and drinking too much of the free food at the hunting camp. When Ratliff arrives at the camp, Luke has had his hiccups for almost twenty-four hours and has not only kept everyone awake all night, but has also angered the whole party by hiccuping loudly in the woods. Major de Spain says to him,

"Get to hell over yonder with them shotgun fellows on the deer stands. How do you expect me to walk up on a bear or even hear the dogs when they strike? I might as well be riding a motorcycle" (p. 152).

The men on the deer stands send him away, too, asking, "Do you reckon any varmint in the world is going to walk up to a hay baler?" When Ratliff arrives, then, Hogganbeck has reached the peak of misery;

So here he was, going three times to the minute, like one of these here clock bombs; only hit was bear meat and whisky instead of dynamite, and so he couldn't explode and put himself outen his misery (p. 151).

Ratliff decides to play a joke on Luke and tells him to go up to the Indian mound and get old John Basket to cure his hiccups. Luke is either too simple or too miserable to understand the ironic tone of what Ratliff is saying to him.

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1886

1887

1888

1889

1890

1891

1892

1893

1894

1895

1896

1897

1898

1899

1900

1901

1902

1903

1904

1905

1906

1907

"Them Indians knows all sorts of dodges that white doctors ain't hyeard about yet. He'd be glad to do that much for a white man, too, them pore aborigines would, because the white folks have been so good to them--not only letting them keep that ere hump of dirt that don't nobody want noways, but letting them use names like ourn and selling them flour and sugar and farm tools at not no more than a fair profit above what they would cost a white man. I hyear tell how pretty soon they are even going to let them come to town once a week. Old Basket would be glad to cure them hiccups for you" (pp. 155-156).

When Luke rushes into the middle of the poker game that night, "wild as a skeered deer," Ratliff does not understand why he is so scared and so angry that as soon as he spots Ratliff, "He swurged all over me like a barn falling down" (p. 150). Ratliff figures out that old Ash, the black cook, is the missing link in the mystery, since he, too, went up to the Indian mound, but it takes some blackmail for him to get Ash to tell him just what he added to Ratliff's rather mild joke.

"I jest dodged him and got dar first en told um he was a new revenue agent coming up dar tonight, but dat he warn't much en dat all dey had to do was to give um a good skeer en likely he would go away. En dey did en he did."

"Well!" I says. "Well! I always thought I was pretty good at joking folks," I says, "but I take a back seat for you. What happened?" I says. "Did you see hit?"

"Never much happened," he says. "Dey jest went down de road a piece en atter a while hyar he come a-hicken' en a-blumpin' up de road wid de lant'un en de gun. They took de lant'un en de gun away from him en took him up pon toppe de mound en talked de Injun language at him fer a while. Den dey piled up some wood en fixed him on hit so he could git loose in a minute, en den one of dem come up de hill wid de fire, en he done de rest" (p. 163).

1. 1000  
2. 1000  
3. 1000  
4. 1000  
5. 1000  
6. 1000  
7. 1000  
8. 1000  
9. 1000  
10. 1000

11. 1000

12. 1000

13. 1000

14. 1000

15. 1000

16. 1000

17. 1000

18. 1000

19. 1000

20. 1000

The only mystery that remains for Ratliff is just why old Ash has turned an innocuous joke into a rather cruel trick. With further threats of blackmail, Ratliff finds out why Ash feels so strongly about Lucius Hogganbeck.

"One time dey was a picnic. Hit was a long time back, nigh twenty years ago. He was a young man den, en in de middle of de picnic, him en two udder white men--I fergit dey name--rid up wid dey pistols out en cotch us niggers one at a time en burned our collars off. Hit was him dat burnt mine" (p. 164).

Ash had treasured that collar ("Hit wuz blue, wid a red picture of the race betwixt de Natchez en de Robert E. Lee running around hit"). His greatest wish is to find another collar just like that one.

The hunting setting has more than a casual relationship to the story here. It is a masculine story, nurtured by the male atmosphere of the hunting camp. The title, "A Bear Hunt," seems at first unrelated to the action, but the title is used in a double sense. Major de Spain is bear hunting in the story while the other hunters are on deer stands. After Ratliff has been "jumped on" by the angry Lucius Hogganbeck, he says, in relation to the joke he played, "I know when I done made a mistake and guessed wrong; Major de Spain wasn't the only man that caught a bear on the hunt; no, sir" (p. 161). He is using the expression "to catch a bear" in the colloquial sense, "to take on more than one can handle." Ratliff philosophizes on joke-playing and on what has happened to him:



I be dog if hit don't look like sometimes that when a fellow sets out to play a joke, hit ain't another fellow he's playing that joke on; hit's a kind of big power laying still somewhere in the dark that he sets out to prank with without knowing hit, and hit all depends on whether that ere power is in the notion to take a joke or not, whether or not hit blows up right in his face like this one did in mine (p. 153).

The "big power laying still somewhere in the dark" sounds like a bear or other wild force of nature to be dealt with in the woods.

As frequently happens in a Faulkner story, hunting and the woods provides a context for equalization between the races, as if the wilderness itself refuses to recognize certain petty distinctions that men make. The Indians who live near the mound get the opportunity for a little revenge on a representative white man, and the black man, Ash, evens up an old score with Luke Hogganbeck. Ratliff, who does not have any personal grudges to act on here, is a catalyst of that "big power" and unwittingly provides the means for others to get their revenge. As the title of the story suggests, Ratliff goes looking for trouble, and he finds it; he catches a bear.

Putting together the two styles of narration in the story, the first narrator's somber description of the Indian mound sets up several images later used by Ratliff in his story. The reference to "the hidden and secret dime novels which we passed among ourselves" captures the spirit of melodrama of the trial and ritual burning which

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

the Indians act out with Hogganbeck. In mock style they make real his worst fantasy fear of Indians. It is almost as if they, too, had read the dime novels and thus know how best to frighten a white man. The reference to the "dark power" which "still dwelled or lurked there," that "nameless beast lightly and lazily slumbering with bloody jaws," sets up the image which Ratliff uses of the "big power laying still somewhere in the dark." In both cases there is a beast in the jungle which can spring at the slightest provocation.

"Race at Morning" is an initiation story, with a humorous tone much like that of "A Bear Hunt," told by an unnamed twelve year old boy and taking place at Major de Spain's hunting camp, at about the same time as "Delta Autumn." Uncle Ike McCaslin is the oldest hunter in camp, and Will Legate and Roth Edmonds are among the group. The boy is much simpler than any of the other boy narrators (Cass Edmonds, Ike McCaslin, Quentin Compson), but he has a clear sense of himself: "'I don't need to write my name down," he says to the poker players who are teasing him about not going to school, "'I can remember in my mind who I am'" (p. 175). The boy has been unofficially adopted by a man whom he calls Mister Ernest (the only adult whom he calls "mister"), after his mother "had gone off with that Vicksburg roadhouse feller without even waiting to cook breakfast, and the next morning pap was gone, too" (p. 194). Mister Ernest's wife is dead and he and the boy



get along fine "without no women to worry us or take off in the middle of the night with a durn Vicksburg roadhouse jake without even waiting to cook breakfast."

Thematically, this story resembles the Saturday Evening Post version of "The Bear," in which the bear is not killed and the boy's father tries, in poetry and abstract terms, to make him understand that it is better to have the possibility and promise of next year's hunt ahead than to have caught your prey this year. In this story a similar discussion occurs, in more concrete terms, between the boy and Mister Ernest.

"Race at Morning" is the story of a day's pursuit of a deer through the Big Woods, with the boy and Mister Ernest on a mule named Dan, chasing their dogs who are, in turn, chasing the deer. They pass the deer stands of their own camp and of two other hunting camps before they realize, twenty-eight miles from camp that the deer is circling back toward the canebrake where he lives. The boy feels very proprietary towards the deer and is angry when he thinks the deer will be killed by the hunters of one of the other camps.

It was our beans and oats he et and our brake he laid in; we had been watching him every year, and it was like we had raised him, to be killed at last on our jump, in front of our dogs, by some strangers that would probably try to beat the dogs off and drag him away before we could even git a piece of the meat (p. 182).

As they chase the deer back toward the canebrake of their camp, the boy hears Mister Ernest removing the buckshot



shells from his pump gun. Going back towards camp, when the deer, the dogs, the hunters and the mule are all tired, Mister Ernest pretends he has forgotten to load the gun when he is close enough for a good shot at the deer. The boy pretends to believe him and says, "I ain't going to tell them you forgot to load your gun. For that matter, they don't need to know we ever seed him" (p. 191).

As they near camp the boy articulates his understanding of the relationships to each other of the three elements of the chase: the deer, the dogs, and the hunters on the mule.

. . . it seemed to me like I could see all three of us--me and Mister Ernest and Dan--and Eagle, and the other dogs, and that big old buck, moving through the quiet woods in the same direction, headed for the same place, not running now but walking, that had all run the fine race the best we knowed how, and all three of us now turned like on a agreement to walk back home, not together in a bunch because we didn't want to worry or tempt one another, because what we had all three spent this morning doing was no play-acting jest for fun, but was serious, and all three of us was still what we was--that old buck that had to run, not because he was skeered, but because running was what he done the best and was proudest at; and me and Mister Ernest and Dan, that run him not because we wanted his meat, which would be too tough to eat anyhow, or his head to hang on a wall, but because now we could go back and work hard for eleven months making a crop, so we would have the right to come back here next November--all three of us going back home now, peaceful and separate, but still side by side, until next year, next time (p. 188).

The boy sees their contest as a natural manifestation of their individual identities, each of them doing what he does best and is therefore meant to do. They are equals in the

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

20/10/10

contest and bear no malice toward each other. They all know the rules and abide by them. The boy is beginning to understand that the ritual pursuit is meaningful to all of them and gives added significance to what they do the rest of the year. A little later he clarifies somewhat in his mind the relationship of the hunt to what they do the rest of the year, as he realizes that the deer must be relieved to be safely back in the canebrake.

So at least one of us was glad it would be eleven months and two weeks before he would have to run that fur that fast again. So he was glad of the very same thing we was sorry of, and so all of a sudden I thought about how maybe planting and working and then harvesting oats and cotton and beans and hay wasn't jest something me and Mister Ernest done three hundred and fifty-one days to fill in the time until we could come back hunting again, but it was something we had to do, and do honest and good during the three hundred and fifty-one days, to have the right to come back into the big woods and hunt for the other fourteen; and the fourteen days that old buck run in front of dogs wasn't jest something to fill his time until the three hundred and fifty-one when he didn't have to, but the running and risking in front of guns and dogs was something he had to do for fourteen days to have the right not to be bothered for the other three hundred and fifty-one. And so the hunting and the farming wasn't two different things at all --they was jest the other side of each other (p. 195).

The boy's understanding of the hunt and the relationship of the hunters to their quarry seems completed at this point, but a further exchange with Mister Ernest makes a central point clearer. When Mister Ernest says that the boy must go to school next year, he is panicked and in his attack on Mister Ernest, he lets him know that he heard him



unloading his gun and he knows that Mister Ernest deliberately avoided shooting the deer.

"No wonder you missed that buck yestiddy, taking ideas from the very fellas that let him git away, after me and you had run Dan and the dogs durn night clean to death! Because you never even missed him! You never forgot to load that gun! You had done already unloaded it a purpose! I heard you!" (p. 197).

Mister Ernest does not deny the boy's accusation; he explains his understanding of what they really want from the hunt each year.

"All right, all right," Mister Ernest said. "Which would you rather have? His bloody head and hide on the kitchen floor yonder and half his meat in a pickup truck on the way to Yoknapatawpha County, or him with his head and hide and meat still together over yonder in that brake, waiting for next November for us to run him again?"

"And git him, too," I said. "We won't even fool with No Willy Legate and Walter Ewell next time."

"Maybe," Mister Ernest said.

"Yes," I said.

"Maybe," Mister Ernest said. "The best word in our language, the best of all. That's what mankind keeps going on: Maybe. The best days of his life ain't the ones when he said 'Yes' beforehand: they're the ones when all he knew to say was 'Maybe.' He can't say 'Yes' until afterward because he not only don't know it until then, he don't want to know 'Yes' until then. . . ." (p. 197).

The boy cannot understand what Mister Ernest is saying, but must insist that they will "git him" next year. Mister Ernest's explanation of the beauty of "Maybe" has been planted in the boy's head, however, and will perhaps grow there, but at this point the discussion degenerates and the story ends with the boy's assertion of himself by refusing to call the other men of the hunting party "mister."



"Step in the kitchen and make me a toddy. Then we'll see about dinner."

"All right," I said. I got up. "You want some of Uncle Ike's corn or that town whisky of Roth Edmondziz?"

"Can't you say Mister Roth or Mister Edmonds?" Mister Ernest said.

"Yes, sir," I said. "Well, which do you want? Uncle Ike's corn or that ere stuff of Roth Edmondziz?" (pp. 197-198).

It is difficult to say what the boy has learned in this story. He has clarified some ideas about his relationships to other people, to hunting and to himself. Mister Ernest provides a perspective which is beyond the boy at this point but which he is likely to attain some day. He has begun to grapple with the morality of hunting and may reach the level of Mister Ernest's wise grappling with a pragmatic philosophy of hunting.

Comparing the boy to Isaac McCaslin as he is seen in the first two stories of this book, Isaac is more solemn and perhaps more dedicated to becoming a master hunter and to partaking of the mysteries of the wilderness. This boy is more exuberant and fun-loving and better able to perceive his rituals as partaking also of the game, which is only a less serious kind of ritual. Isaac McCaslin, destined to be a prophet of the woods and the leader of hunters, seems a little stuffy and pretentious in comparison with the boy in this story. Perhaps this story at the end of the book, in which the aging Uncle Ike appears as a minor character, was intended to give the reader a different perspective on the beginning.



Although "Race at Morning" is the last story in the book, it is not the note on which the book ends. Big Woods contains five inter-chapters, surrounding and separating the four stories. These passages, printed in italics, provide a backdrop to the stories, a set of geographical, historical and psychological perspectives on the events recounted in the four stories. Some of the passages are new in this work and others include material reworked from other stories.

The first inter-chapter, appearing before "The Bear," begins and ends with the name "Mississippi," separated each time by a colon from the rest of the passage in which it appears. The four and a half pages constitute a loving definition of that word, a history, a description and a salute to that state. It speaks of the "nameless though recorded predecessors who built the mounds to escape the spring floods and left their meagre artifacts," then of Indians, "dispossessed in turn because they too were obsolete," followed by the "canoe bearing three Frenchmen," and then, "a thousand Spaniards come overland from the Atlantic Ocean." The last arrival, the latest possessor of the land, is "the Anglo-Saxon, the pioneer, the tall man, roaring with Protestant scripture and boiled whisky." With the Anglo-Saxon came riverboats and river towns along the bluffs, and the new hero was the steam-boat gambler. Then cotton came along:



. . . one day someone brought a curious seed into the land and inserted it into the earth, and now vast fields of white not only covered the waste places which with his wanton and heedless axe he had made, but were effacing, thrusting back the wilderness even faster than he had been able to. . . (p. 6).

Many of the men pack up and move west to new frontiers and those that remain behind find that they, too, have entered "a new time, a new age, millenium's beginning," where "one vast single net of commerce webbed and veined the midcontinent's fluvial embracement. . . ." The key word to this new era is money:

. . . all men's mouths were round with the sound of money; one unanimous golden affirmation ululated the nation's boundless immeasurable forenoon: profit plus regimen equals security: a nation of commonwealths; that crumb, that dome, that gilded pustule, that Idea risen now, suspended like a balloon or a portent or a thundercloud above what used to be wilderness, drawing, holding the eyes of all: Mississippi (p. 7).

Against this background comes a story out of "the old brave innocent tumultuous eupeptic tomorrowless days," "The Bear."

Following "The Bear," there is an inter-chapter which repeats some of the material of the story, "Red Leaves." It tells about the black slave of the Indian chief, Issetibbeha, who is tracked down to "enter the earth" with his master, as part of the chief's funeral ceremony. This condensed version of the story concentrates on the experience of the slave and omits those parts of "Red Leaves" which relate to the history of the Indian tribe,



to the strange story of Issetibbeha and his dropsical son, Mocketubbe, and to the attitudes of the Indians towards their slaves. This version becomes a hunting story, one that contrasts with "The Bear" and "The Old People" because it centers on the hunted rather than on the hunter.

Looking at this passage as a hunting story, the reader is drawn into the battle of two powerful forces, the slave's manifest destiny to be buried with his master and his instincts of self preservation. From the very beginning there is a sense of futility about the slave's flight, as if he, the other slaves and the Indians all know how the pursuit must end. After running thirty miles away from the plantation, he turns back toward his doom. When he comes into a clearing where his kinsmen are involved in a ceremony with drums, he realizes that he is no longer one of them:

. . . all of them, Guinea or not, had been his brothers until that moment two days ago when Issetibbeha died, now irrevocable and alien to him, of another race, another world, another time.

"We have expected thee," the headman said. "Eat, and go. The living may not consort with the dead. Thou knowest that" (p. 101).

While collaborating with his fate in certain ways, especially by compulsively returning to the plantation rather than running further away, the slave also acts instinctively to save himself, but his intellectual processes get in the way of the instinctual ones. When he stops to rest, knowing that his pursuers will take hours to



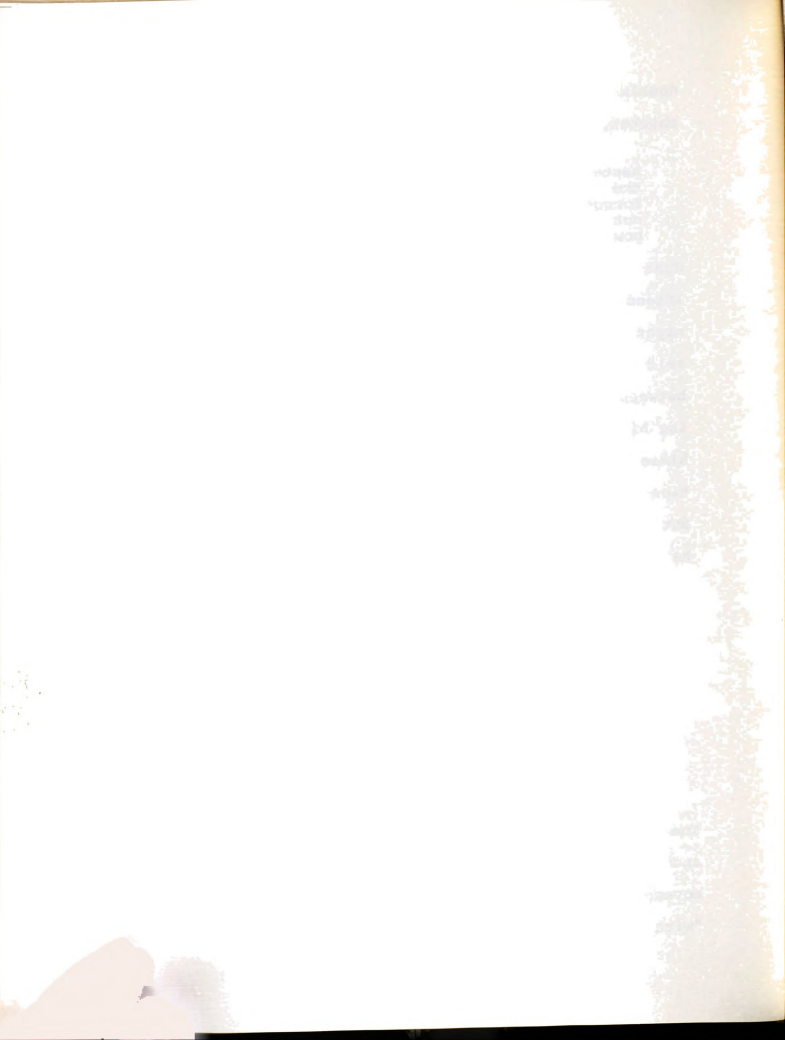
double back and arrive where he is lying in a pawpaw thicket, he realizes that

. . . the effort of resting, the need and the haste to rest, made his heart thud the same as the running had done. It was as though he had forgot how to rest, as though the six hours were not long enough to do it in, to remember again how to do it (p. 100).

Just as he is unable to rest at will, when he gets up, intending to keep going "steadily and quietly through the night," he is unable to hold back his pace and finds himself running again at top speed. His actions alternate between moves of self preservation and moves toward sealing his fate. He takes off his dungaree pants and coats himself with mud, as if casting off the sign of civilization and protecting himself with the wilderness itself. But, he is drawn inevitably back to the plantation, where he watches the activities of the People from a tree before deciding to run again. He rests behind a log and, not having eaten all day, begins to eat ants from a "slow procession" moving up the log.

He caught them and ate them slowly, with a kind of detachment, like that of a dinner guest eating salted nuts from a dish. They too had a salt taste, engendering a salivary reaction out of all proportion. He ate them slowly, watching the unbroken line move up the log and into oblivious doom with a steady and terrific undeviation (p. 103).

The "slow procession" is like the funeral procession to come and the slave, in spite of (and even by means of) erratic movements in different directions, is approaching his doom "with a steady and terrific undeviation."



In the following scene, the black man comes to an important realization in an encounter with a snake.

At sunset, creeping along the creek bank toward where he had spotted a frog, a cottonmouth moccasins slashed him suddenly across the forearm with a thick, sluggish blow. It struck clumsily, leaving two long slashes across his arm like two razor slashes, and half sprawled with its own momentum and rage, it appeared for the moment utterly helpless with its own awkwardness and choleric anger. "Olé, Grandfather," the Negro said. He touched its head and watched it slash him again across his arm, and again, with thick, raking, awkward blows. "It's that I do not wish to die," he said. Then he said it again--"It's that I do not wish to die"--in a quiet tone, of slow and low amaze, as though it were something that, until the words had said themselves, he found that he had not known, or had not known the depth and extent of his desire (p. 104).

After the snake takes him by surprise, he deliberately lets it strike him two more times, in order to escape, through death, the death that is planned for him. The "rage" and "choleric anger" of the snake, however, contrast with the calm unhostile approach of the Indians. When he greets the snake, saying "Olé, Grandfather," he is using a form that he has learned from his Indian masters, a form of respect to the creatures of the wilderness. This form is used by Sam Fathers in "The Old People" and by Isaac McCaslin, who learned it from Sam Fathers, in "The Bear." Its use here in a situation of danger is in contrast to the use in the other two stories where the user is at ease with the wilderness and with the beasts he encounters. The slave can only imitate the way of his masters, cut off as he is from his own origins and from any sense of belonging where he is.



By exposing himself to death, the black man realizes what this whole pursuit is all about: he does not want to die. It is as if his flight to this point has been instinctive and now his intellect has caught up to the situation and he knows that he is lost. He gives up at this point, when he does not die from the snake bites, and waits for his captors to catch up with him. When he hears them coming, he begins to sing and they wait respectfully until he has finished. Then Three Basket comes over to him and says, "Come. . . . You ran well. Do not be ashamed."

When they return to the plantation, his captors ask him if he wants to eat. He says he does, but cannot swallow the food. The same thing happens when he tries to drink water: his body will not obey his commands. There are no more stalling tactics possible and the inexorable has realized itself: "'Come,' Basket said, taking the gourd from the Negro and hanging it back in the well" (p. 109). This is the end of the story, a very understated conclusion for such an intense situation. The low key ending throws the reader back on the pursuit, as opposed to its outcome, and leads one to the realization that what is important here is not the conclusion--that was never in doubt, anyway--but the pursuit and the inevitable force at work in the black man's fate.

The effect of separating out this one story line of "Red Leaves" is an emphasis on the inevitability of the



slave's doom, a force so inexorable that three strikes from a cottonmouth cannot kill him when he is destined to die, along with his master's horse and dog, in a prescribed ceremony. He is part of a ritual that he has not chosen and cannot avoid. The use of this passage as a connecting link between "The Bear" and "The Old People" serves to emphasize the force of the wilderness, which Sam Fathers is in touch with and which Isaac McCaslin is struggling, with success, to align himself with. We see the hunt here from the point of view of the quarry and must therefore see differently the surrounding hunt stories. The hunted is always a noble beast, worthy of pursuit, and the wilderness itself is neutral and absolute, yet as inexorable in its force as is the fate of Issetibbeha's slave. The values of the wilderness are pure and absolute as long as they are untainted by money values, the snake in Eden in "The Bear."

The third inter-chapter filters out one story thread of "A Justice," the story of how Ikkemotubbe (Doom) had the People make the steamboat walk the twelve miles from the river to the Plantation, so that it could be used as an addition to the House and everyone could sleep inside. The passage begins, "This is how Herman Basket told it . . .", as does also the second section of "A Justice," in which Sam Fathers tells Quentin Compson a complicated story about the People. The passage ends with Herman Basket's final reaction to this major project of the Man:

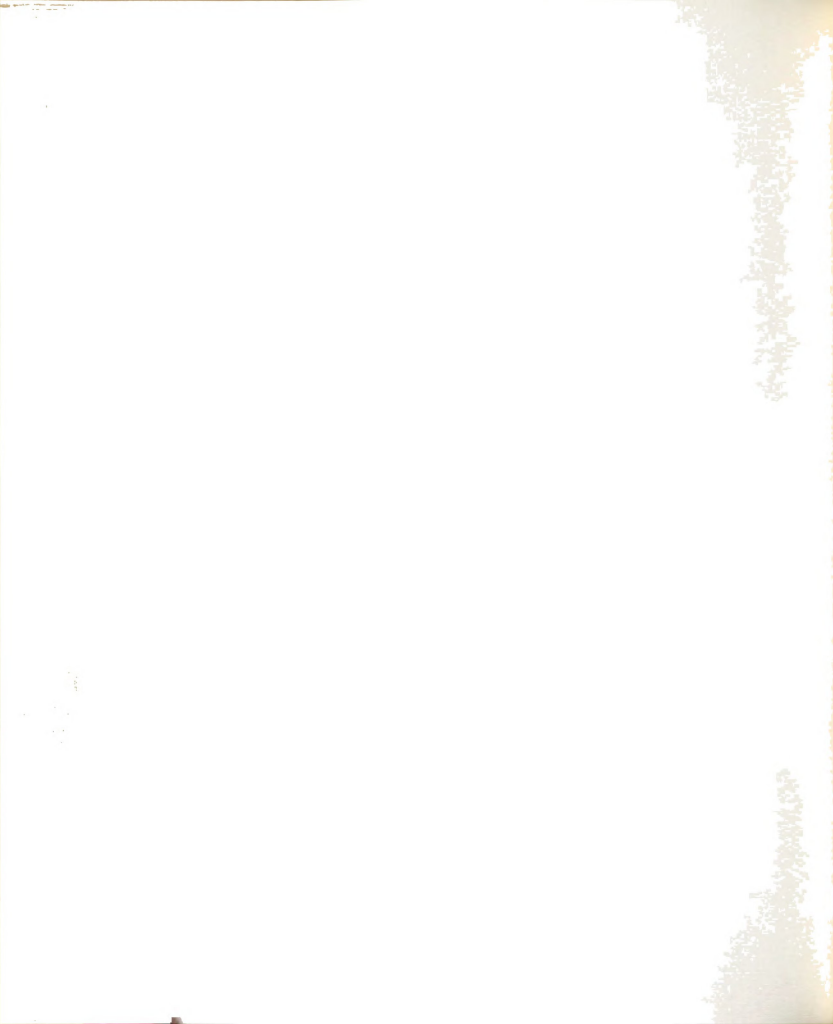


Axes were used to chop through one side of the House and through the side of the steamboat next to it and now anyone who wished could go from the House to the steamboat or vice versa without having to come outdoors, and now there was room for all to sleep inside. But (Herman Basket said) not he. As soon as he lay down inside the House or the steamboat either, he would become so nervous just remembering how tired the steamboat had used to make him that he would have to rise and take up his blanket and go outside and find a thicket so dense and distant that he couldn't see either one of them. Only then could he compose himself for sleep (p. 142).

Herman Basket is rejecting the labor to which the Man has forced the People, who hold idleness as a high value. His rejection takes the form of turning his back on the result of the labor, the more civilized practice of sleeping indoors, and returning to the greater freedom of the wilderness.

As a link between "The Old People" and "A Bear Hunt," this passage continues the subject matter (Sam Fathers' stories of the People in the old days) and theme (the superiority of the wilderness value system to that of civilization) of the former, while returning to the more jovial tone of the latter. Ratliff, the main narrator of "A Bear Hunt," is not unlike Herman Basket. They each represent, in their tradition, the uneducated but perceptive viewer with a good sense of humor, the typical Faulkner narrator.

The fourth inter-chapter returns to the theme of the destruction of the wilderness and uses the train as a



symbol of that destruction, because the train has connected Mississippi to

. . . the Northern cities and the Northern money, the Yankee dollars arriving between sheets and even in drawing rooms to open the wilderness, nudge it further and further toward obsolescence with the whine of saws; what had been one vast unbroken virgin span was now booming with cotton and timber both.

The trains, the cotton and the timber are just external symbols of the change, of the destruction of the wilderness. The force of destruction itself is money, for the land is not just "booming with cotton and timber," it is

. . . booming with simple money: increment's troglodyte which had fathered twin ones: solvency and bankruptcy, the three of them booming money into the land so fast now that the problem was to get rid of it before it whelmed you into strangulation (p. 165).

Just as civilization has money on its side in its battle with the wilderness, the wilderness, too, has a powerful and destructive force, the Mississippi River, the Old Man. The struggle of these forces has set up a cycle, "or rather, not a cycle but a mad and pointless merry-go-round":

. . . the timber which had to be logged and sold in order to deforest the land in order to convert the soil to raising cotton in order to sell the cotton in order to make the land valuable enough to be worth spending money raising dykes to keep the River off of it (p. 166).

This cycle is first measured against the lifetime of Isaac McCaslin, during which "the wilderness dwindled southward

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

into the notch of the hills and the Old Man." Civilization seems to be winning, for

. . . the very spot where he and Sam were standing when he heard his first running hounds and cocked the gun and saw the first buck, was now thirty feet below the surface of a government-built flood-control reservoir whose bottom was rising gradually and inexorably each year on another layer of beer cans and bottle tops and lost bass plugs . . . . (p. 170).

But the Old Man strikes back, in the name of the wilderness, destroying but yet ennobling man as it gives him an opportunity to measure himself:

. . . lapping, tentative, almost innocently, merely inexorable (no hurry, his) among and beneath and finally over the frantic sandbags, as if his whole purpose had been merely to give man another chance to prove, not to him but to man, just how much the human body could bear, stand, endure. . . . (p. 168).

In the same way, the destructiveness of the flood is compensated by an enrichment of the soil, "the earth itself one alluvial inch higher," as the cycle moves on.

Uncle Ike McCaslin is now part of this cycle, as if separated from his own mortality, coeval with the wilderness and the River (almost its personification as the Old Man, yet lacking its destructiveness). He identifies himself very closely with "his native land" ("he had been born of it and his bones would sleep in it"), meaning that dwindling part of it,

. . . the wilderness itself, where he had served his humble apprenticeship to the rough food and the rough sleeping, the life of hungers: men and horses and hounds, not to slay the game but to pursue it, touch and let go, never satiety. . . . (p. 170).



By this "touch and let go" pursuit and constant rejection of all that is destructive to the land, Uncle Ike has earned the right to see himself as part of the "last stand" of the wilderness:

. . .--the Big Woods, shoved, pushed further and further down into the notch where the hills and the Big River met, where they would make their last stand. It would be a good one, too, impregnable; by that time, they would be too dense, too strong with life and memory, of all which had ever run in them, ever to die--the strong irritable loud-reeking bear, the gallant high-headed stags looking longer than comets and pale as smoke, the music-ed and untiring dogs and the splattered horses and the men who rode them; himself too. Oh yes, he would think; me too. I've been too busy all my life trying not to waste any living, to have time left to die (p. 171).

Uncle Ike, like the wilderness (or with the wilderness) is making his last stand. He has apotheosized the three elements of the hunt--the wilderness, the game and himself as hunter--into immortal elements of an eternal ritual, "too strong with life and memory . . . ever to die."

As a connecting link between "A Bear Hunt" and "Race at Morning," this passage serves to bring the focus at the end of the book back to Isaac McCaslin and to his relationship to the wilderness. In the last two stories of the book he appears as a minor character, the oldest hunter at Major de Spain's hunting camp. His age in the last two inter-chapters is consistent with the view of him in these last stories and the effect is one of completion, as if the reader has gone through the cycle of Isaac McCaslin's life, along with a complete cycle of nature,

10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00

10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00

10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00

10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00

10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00

10000 00  
10000 00  
10000 00

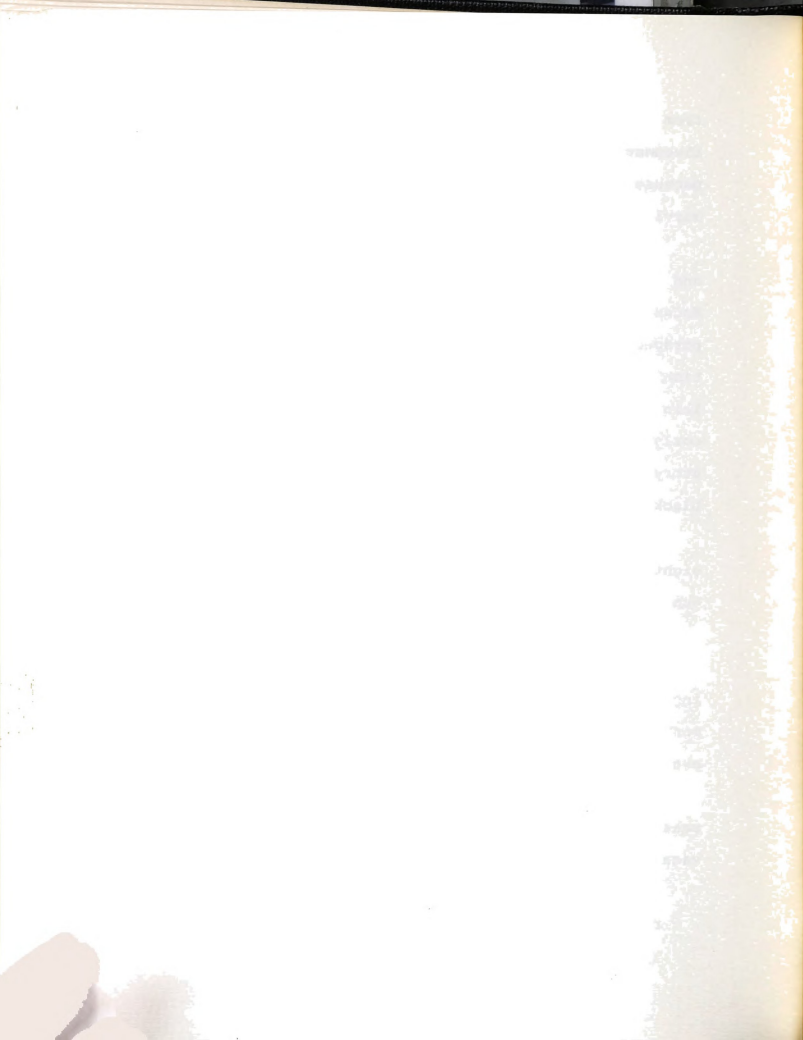
from wilderness to civilization and, because of the destructiveness of civilization, back toward the wilderness again, because the earth, nature itself, is ultimately all that survives.

The last inter-chapter, following "Race at Morning" and concluding the book, continues to focus on Isaac McCaslin, with a switch from third person to first person perspective and from a generalized view of Isaac in relation to the dwindling wilderness to a personal narration. This passage is adapted from material which appeared previously in "Delta Autumn," with the omission of the whole story line relative to Roth Edmonds' relationship with his black mistress.

In this version of the story, Uncle Ike, past eighty, goes hunting with the grandsons of men he first hunted with. His thoughts move back and forth between the present and various points in his hunting experiences in the past. He realizes that his own reactions to approaching the wooded delta are different from those of the younger men. To Isaac, the hunting camp is home (although the exact spot moves further south each year) and his house in Jefferson is just a temporary resting place between hunting seasons, while for the others hunting is only a yearly vacation.

. . . "Well, boys, there it is again."

Because to them, there it was. They are too recent to have any past in the history of its



change; to them, it has simply moved intact in geography. Only to me has it exposed geography as the dying of a body exposes its defenseless mortality (p. 201).

Isaac's different perspective on the woods does not proceed simply from more years experience, but rather is rooted in his heightened level of involvement with the wilderness, both as a place and as a concept. This difference in relationship to the woods is symbolized by the fact that only his hand can calm the frightened horses and lead them through the water of the river to get to the camp.

Uncle Ike presides over the ceremonies of the hunting camp--the setting up of the tents, grace before the rough supper is served--and sends the men off to bed after the meal. After a night in which he lies peacefully awake, he is surprised and annoyed when Roth Edmonds goes out the next morning with a shotgun rather than a rifle, and he tries to call him back.

But he is already gone; the tent flap falls again and now there is only the murmur of the rain, the waft of light and the cold wet smell of actual rain snatched, jerked out of the tent again; I cry: "Roth! Wait!" But it is too late, not just now, this morning, not even yesterday, but already too late much longer ago than any of these. . . . (p. 211).

It is not too late just for Roth, but for civilization as well, and it is not his cheating at this moment by using his shotgun rather than a rifle, but his whole life style and attitude toward the wilderness that Uncle Ike laments. A short time later Will Legate comes into the tent and the



exchange between him and Uncle Ike is a little different from that in "Delta Autumn":

"Why a tarpaulin for a dead deer?" I say.  
 Then I answer it myself: "Who killed it?" I say.  
 "It was Roth," answering that too. "It was a doe."  
 "I tried not to wake you," Legate says.  
 "All right," I say. "Bring it in."  
 "All of it?" Legate says.  
 "All of it?" I say. "You mean he shot two of them?"  
 "That other one is pretty old and tough," Legate says.  
 "Bring her in!" I say. "Feed her to the dogs if you like. But don't let her lay out there in the woods" (p. 211).

Roth's violation of the hunter's code is more flagrant here than in "Delta Autumn"; not only has he shot two does, he is about to leave one lying to be eaten or to rot in the woods. He is not worthy of the beast he has slain. The passage ends with Uncle Ike's trembling thoughts of how man has violated the land, concluding with a paragraph that switches back to third person narration:

This land, said the old hunter. No wonder the ruined woods I used to know don't cry for retribution. The very people who destroyed them will accomplish their revenge (p. 212).

The passage, as well as the book, ends thus on a pessimistic note of man's destructiveness, but yet the natural cycle dramatized by the book makes the conclusion less gloomy. Beyond the revenge of the "ruined woods" lies the hope of another cycle.

Big Woods adds up to a more significant statement than the sum of the four stories included, largely because

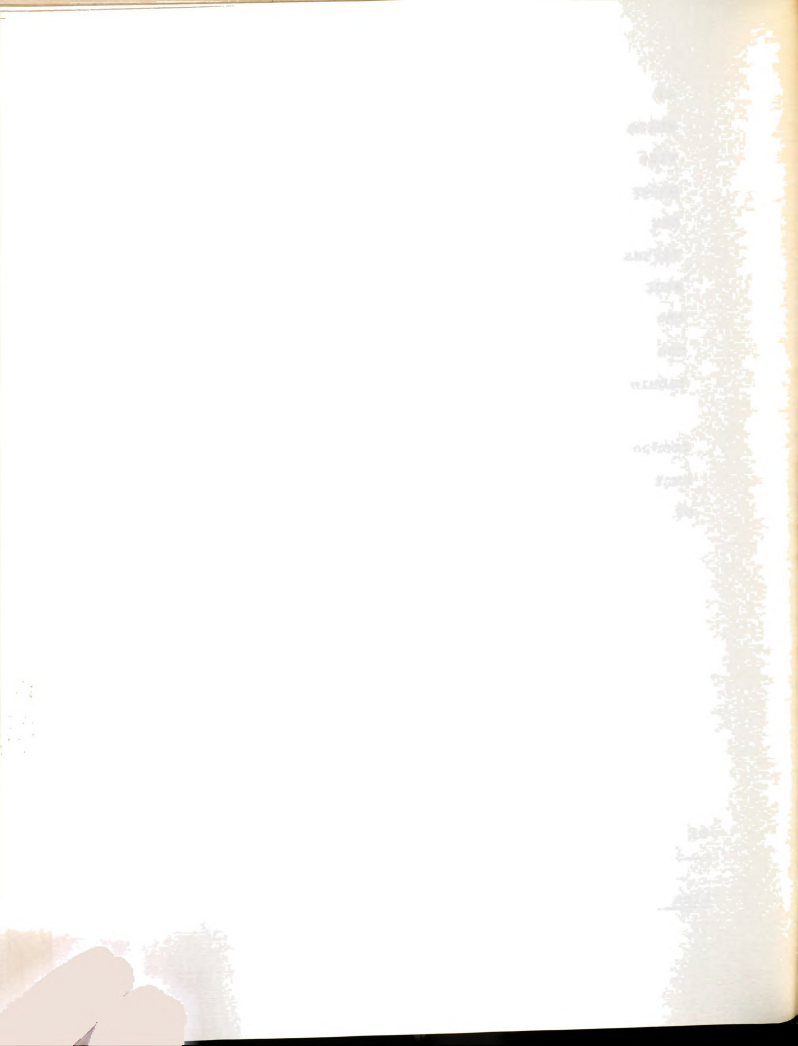


of the effectiveness of the inter-chapters. These passages, which Faulkner once called "interrupted catalysts,"<sup>1</sup> provide more than just background material for a better understanding of the stories. As catalysts they release the metaphor of the wilderness as a citadel of absolute values, which is the basic premise of Faulkner's hunting stories. But yet they preserve the balance of paradox at the core of the works by restating the opposite truth to one just dramatized, helping to preserve that delicate tension in which timeless values seem to be corroded only by the encroachment of time itself. They expose, but yet condone, the values of the artificial male society of the hunt in which men pledge themselves to the creative force of the wilderness, yet cannot be worthy of the beasts they slay; shun "town meat," but commune with each other with "town whisky"; try to prove their manhood with a rifle, but are not above substituting a shotgun; hound their quarry to death, while realizing that life can put them in the position of the hunted; love the woods, but yet sell off the timber and plant cotton.

The structure Faulkner uses to contain, balance, and even explain the paradoxes is that of the cycle. The concept of the cycle, as he uses it, offsets the pessimism of any temporary development among men through the promise

---

<sup>1</sup>James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate, editors, Lion in the Garden. New York: Random House, 1968, p. 83.



of a resurgence of the creative forces which lie within man as well as within the wilderness. "The woods and fields he ravages and the game he devastates will be the consequence and signature of his crime and guilt, and his punishment" (p. 205). The "ruined woods" will take its revenge on those who have destroyed it, but it will recreate itself after the destruction, and so will man.



### CHAPTER III

#### CONCLUSION: A COMPARISON OF THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA AND "THE BEAR"

##### I.

At the center of The Old Man and the Sea is the character of the old man, Santiago. "I am a strange old man," he tells the boy in respect to his strong eyes which have not been weakened by the strain of turtle-ing. He is strange in his strengths, rather than in his weaknesses. His failings are very ordinary ones, like an inability to comprehend or formulate his experience in intellectual terms, but such a weakness is compensated for by a very close contact with his feeling self which gives him an emotional understanding of his experience which is sufficient for him and, by virtue of his influence upon the reader, comes to be sufficient for the reader, also. His strengths are "strange," beyond the abilities of other men: his eyes, his strong right arm that vanquished the Negro from Cienfuegos, his humility, his self discipline (like his drinking shark liver oil daily for strength when most of the other fishermen could not bear the taste) and, most of all, there is the old man's endurance. Santiago, too,



relates his endurance to his "strangeness" when he thinks, in the depth of his trial with the fish, "I told the boy I was a strange old man . . . Now is when I must prove it" (p. 66).<sup>1</sup> And on the next page, he says to the fish, "If your're not tired fish . . . you must be very strange."

We are not given much information about the old man's past. We know that when he was the boy's age he "was before the mast on a square rigged ship that ran to Africa" (p. 22). This information serves as background to his recurring dream of lions on the sandy beaches of Africa. We know of his famous arm-wrestling bout, which gives us an idea of his strength, and we know that he went turtle-ing for two years, in spite of which he has excellent eyesight. He once had a wife, which reinforces our sense of his loneliness, with no one but the boy, at this stage of his life. We know very little about his fishing career, except that he and the boy once went eighty-seven days without catching a fish, which shows that he has also been unlucky in the past, and then we have the boy's opinion of him as a fisherman: "There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you" (p. 23). This is the image we have of Santiago going into his ordeal and the one which survives at the end of the story.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952 (paperback edition). All subsequent references will be to this edition.



Another thing that we know about Santiago and which remains as a constant in his story is that he is unlucky. As the boy's parents have said, the old man is ". . . now definitely and finally salao, which is the worst form of unlucky. . . ." Recognizing that he is unlucky, the old man takes all the possible precautions of meticulous care to try to compensate for the luck factor. After baiting and putting out each of his lines with utmost attention to detail, he thinks:

But, he thought, I keep them with precision. Only I have no lucky any more. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. That way when the luck comes you are ready (p. 32).

He is exact, as much as one can imagine a fisherman being. And that, along with his amazing endurance, helps him to kill the fish he is finally lucky enough to hook. But his luck ends there and his victory is short-lived. After the sharks have eaten half the marlin, the old man thinks again about his luck:

Maybe I'll have the luck to bring the forward half in. I should have some luck. No, he said. You violated your luck when you went too far outside.

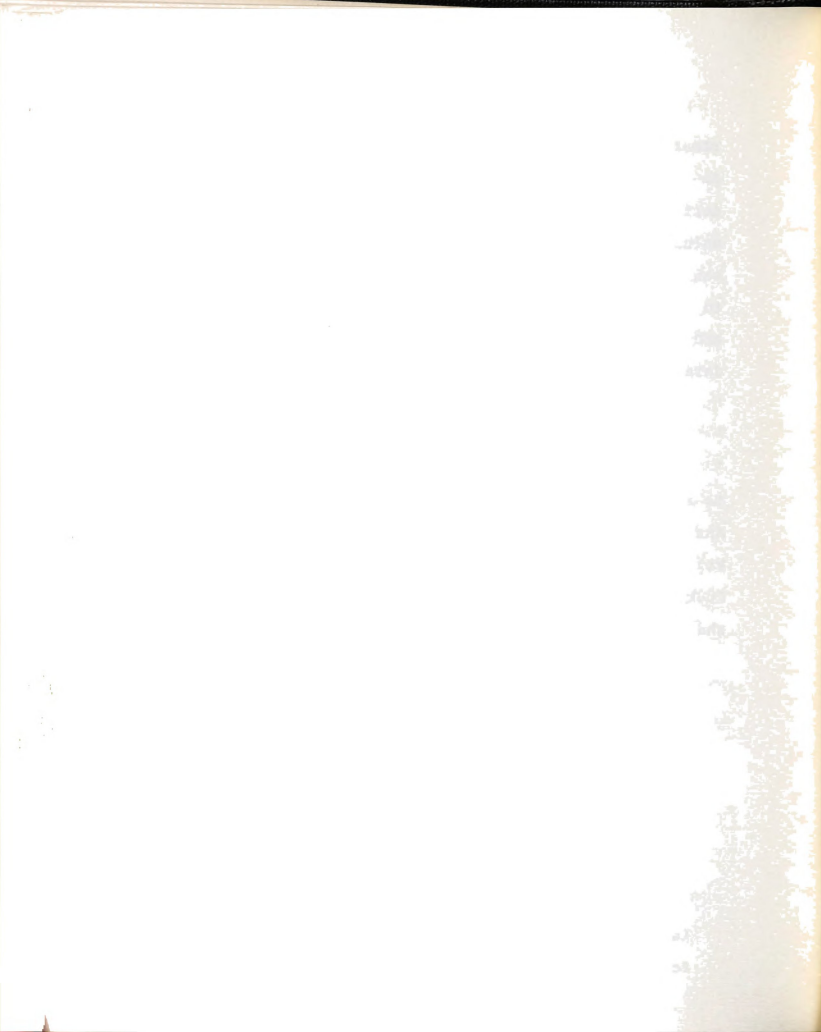
"Don't be silly," he said aloud. "And keep awake and steer. You may have much luck yet.

"I'd like to buy some if there's anyplace they sell it," he said.

What could I buy it with? he asked himself. Could I buy it with a lost harpoon and a broken knife and two bad hands?

"You might," he said. "You tried to buy it with eighty-four days at sea. They nearly sold it to you, too."

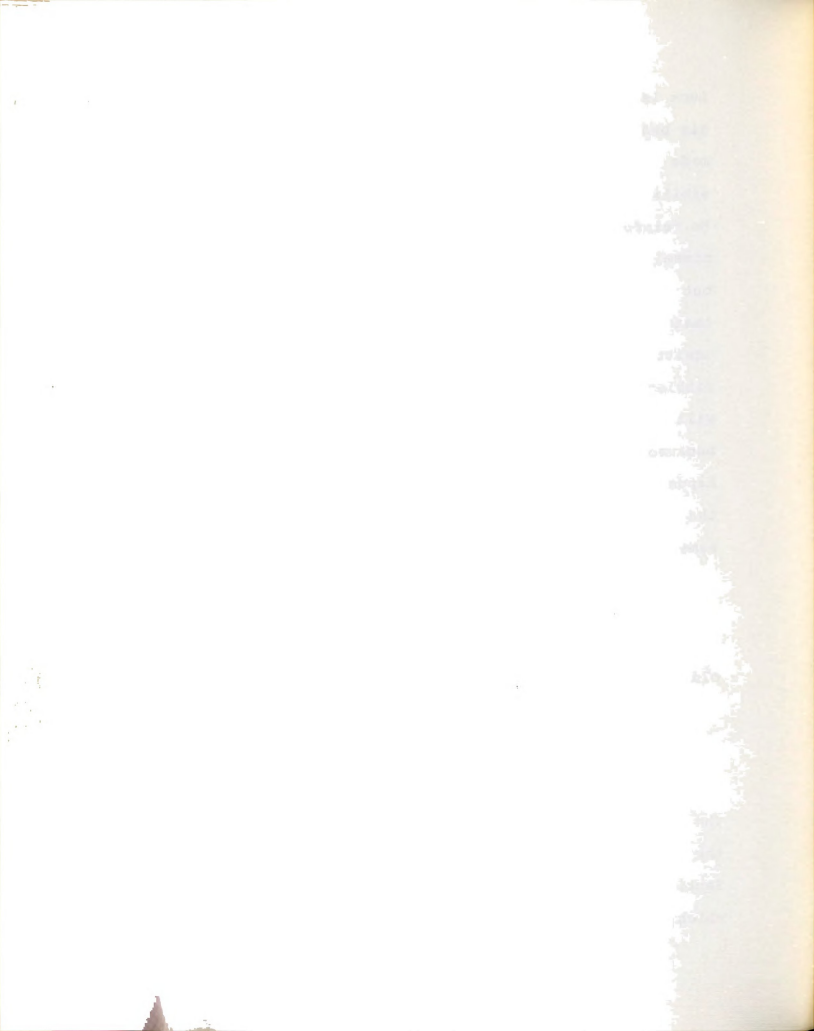
I must not think nonsense, he thought. Luck is a thing that comes in many forms and who can recognize her? I would take some though in any form and pay what they asked (pp. 116-117).



Luck is not just gratuitous to the old man. He feels that his bad luck is, at least in part, punishment for his having made the mistake of going out too far. He accepts responsibility not only for what he does but also for his luck. He reinforces this idea a few pages later when he asks himself what beat him. "'Nothing,' he said aloud. 'I went out too far'" (p. 120). He believes, superstitiously, that his luck depends on things he does, wittingly or unwittingly. At an earlier point, when the marlin has nibbled the bait but not bitten it, he thinks, "Then he will turn and swallow it. . . . He did not say that because he knew that if you said a good thing it might not happen" (p. 43). The old man's religion, with the belief that the Our Fathers and Hail Marys might help, is of the same superstitious order, rather than being a firm belief in a God. And Joe DiMaggio seems to be a more real god-like presence in his mind than the God he sometimes prays to. The final exchange on the subject of luck between the old man and the boy sums up the book's perspective on the matter:

"Now we fish together again."  
 "No. I am not lucky. I am not lucky anymore."  
 "The hell with luck," the boy said. "I'll  
 bring the luck with me" (p. 125).

The boy knows that luck is not the significant factor in the most important battles in life. He wants to fish with Santiago again in order to learn what the old man knows, which is more valuable than luck.



The old man's relationship to the world around him is very simple. He loves and is at home on the sea.

He always thought of the sea as la mar which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her. . . . Some of the younger fishermen . . . spoke of her as a contestant or a place or even an enemy. But the old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favors, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them (p. 30).

His simple affection for the sea extends to many of her creatures: the delicate terns or sea swallows, whom he pities, and the warbler who lands on his line, far out, when he is being towed by the marlin; the flying fish, his "principal friends on the ocean"; the turtles, the hawk-bills and the loggerheads; the porpoises ("They are good . . . They play and make jokes and love one another. They are our brothers like the flying fish . . ." p. 48); and the marlins, of whom he remembers the male who stayed by his hooked mate as she was killed and pulled into the boat ("He was beautiful, the old man remembered, and he had stayed." p. 49). But he has contempt for the Portuguese man-of-war, "the falsest thing in the sea," despite its beauty, and for the sharks, not the dentuso or Mako shark, who is "beautiful and noble and knows no fear of anything," but the galanos who are "just a moving appetite."

The relationship between the old man and the boy is a complex one. Santiago has taken Manolin in the boat with him since the boy was five years old and has taught him much about fishing. The boy obeys the orders of his



father, but his attention and affection go to Santiago. Manolin repays the lessons and the love he has received from the old man with returned love, respect and concern for the old man's physical needs. He gets him baits and brings him food, all in a style which leaves the old man his self-respect and takes nothing away from his independence. At six different points in the old man's contest with the marlin he wishes the boy were with him, sometimes giving a specific reason:

"I wish I had the boy," the old man said aloud. I'm being towed by a fish and I'm the towing bitt . . . . (p. 45).

Then he said aloud, "I wish I had the boy. To help me and to see this" (p. 48).

"I wish the boy was here," he said aloud and settled himself against the rounded planks of the bow and felt the strength of the great fish through the line . . . . (p. 50).

"I wish the boy were here and that I had some salt," he said aloud (p. 56).

If the boy were here he could rub it [his cramped hand] for me and loosen it down from the forearm, he thought (p. 62).

If the boy was here he would wet the coils of line, he thought. Yes. If the boy were here. If the boy were here (p. 83).

These six passages, phrased so much alike and spaced throughout the part of the book where Santiago is engaged with his fish, have the effect of a ritual invocation, like a litany. The double repetition in the last of the passages intensifies this impression. The relationship between the old man and the boy is ambiguous: Santiago is the teacher, the



initiated, and the boy is the learner, and yet the boy is the provider, the one who worries about the other's well-being, while Santiago is the supplicant, the one who "prays" for the other's presence and help. The boy serves as a witness to Santiago's feat, even though he is not there, and is moved to tears by his recognition of what the old man has suffered. His attention to the old man's needs is redoubled, as is his determination to be with him and to learn from him. He is now willing to defy his parents' orders so as to fish with the old man.

"What will your family say?"

"I do not care. I caught two yesterday. But we will fish together now for I still have much to learn" (p. 125).

The central focus of this work is on Santiago and his struggle with the great marlin. The adversaries are worthy of each other: the old man is the "best fisherman" and the marlin is "the biggest fish that he had ever seen and bigger than he had ever heard of" (p. 63). In an early assessment of his capability, the old man has said, "I may not be as strong as I think. . . . But I know many tricks and I have resolution" (p. 23). And, as Santiago evaluates the relative qualities of each one of them, he thinks that fish ". . . are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are more noble and more able" (p. 63).

In the early stages of the struggle, the forces show themselves to be well balanced. As the fish pulls the boat out to sea, the old man thinks, "I can do nothing

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

with him and he can do nothing with me. Not as long as he keeps this up" (p. 47). Each of them has made a choice and their choices have brought them together:

His choice had been to stay in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries. My choice was to go there to 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 one of us (p. 50).

No blind fate, but their own choices are responsible for this encounter, and each of them is on his own. In the old man's mind a complex relationship with the fish begins to grow. He first pities the fish, who is "wonderful and strange," then wonders if the fish's back feels as bad as his, and his feeling for the fish grows, but his resolution to kill him holds firm: "Fish, I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends" (p. 54). He tells a bird that ". . . I am with a friend," which is reminiscent of Pedro Romero telling Brett that the bulls are his friends. His relationship to the fish moves from "friend" to "brother": "I wish I could feed the fish, he thought. He is my brother. But I must kill him and keep strong to do it" (p. 59). He reaffirms this brotherhood and shortly afterward moves on to a tentative closer identification with the fish:

There are three things that are brothers: the fish and my two hands. . . .

I wonder why he jumped, the old man thought. He jumped almost as though to show me how big he was. I know now, anyway, he thought. I wish I could show him what sort of man I am. But then



he would see the cramped hand. Let him think I am more man than I am and I will be so. I wish I was the fish, he thought, with everything he has against only my will and my intelligence (p. 64).

How much "man" he is is not a fixed thing, but can vary with how much "man" the fish thinks he is and how much "man" he needs to be. And the two roles in the struggle are beginning to be interchangeable. He repeats his respect for animals in general and his preference to be the marlin: ". . . Man is not much beside the great birds and beasts. Still I would rather be that beast down there in the darkness of the sea" (p. 68). By the time he is close to landing the fish, the old man's sense of identification with him, which has been gradually growing, is complete and he no longer distinguishes between the two of them.

You are killing me, fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who.

Now you are getting confused in the head, he thought. You must keep your head clear. Keep your head clear and know how to suffer like a man. Or a fish, he thought (p. 92).

In a ceremonial sense, the distinction between the priest and the victim, the sacrificer and the sacrificed, has been lost, leaving the relationship between the old man and the fish as ambiguous as the one between the old man and the boy. He is the victim of this ordeal as well as the officiator who offers up the fish to show "what a man can do



and what a man endures." In the final moments of the killing, the old man summons up what he has left, and,

He took all his pain and what was left of his long gone pride and he put it against the fish's agony and the fish came over onto his side and swam gently on his side. . . . (p. 93).

And, in dying, the fish rises above the old man, like an offering, like an apotheosis of himself:

Then the fish came alive, with his death in him, and rose high out of the water showing all his great length and width and all his power and his beauty. He seemed to hang in the air above the old man in the skiff. Then he fell into the water with a crash that sent spray over the old man and over all of the skiff (p. 94).

Even after the fish is dead and lashed to the side of the boat, the old man's mind does not distinguish his role from the fish's very clearly, nor the victor from the victim.

With his mouth shut and his tail straight up and down we sail like brothers. Then his head started to become a little unclear and he thought, is he bringing me in or am I bringing him in? If I were towing him behind there would be no question. Nor if the fish were in the skiff, with all dignity gone, there would be no question, either. But they were sailing together lashed side by side and the old man thought, let him bring me in if it pleases him. I am only better than him through trickery and he meant me no harm (p. 99).

The old man has salvaged the fish's dignity as well as his own, rather than winning his at the cost of that of the fish. For this reason, when the sharks come and strip away the flesh of the fish, the old man feels the loss almost as intensely as if it were his own flesh. "He did not like to look at the fish anymore since he had been



mutilated. When the fish had been hit it was as though he himself were hit" (p. 103). He apologizes to the fish, not for killing him, but for causing this humiliation to them both, sharing still his experiences, present and past, with the fish.

"Half fish," he said. "Fish that you were. I am sorry that I went too far out. I ruined us both. But we have killed many sharks, you and I, and ruined many others. . . ." (p. 115).

He regrets also that he did not think of chopping off the fish's bill and lashing it to an oar butt for a weapon, so that they could have fought the sharks together, to make their communion more complete.

Santiago is a simple old man, more oriented to the process of what he is doing than toward a philosophical questioning of what he does. He does consider, in his own terms, why he kills and the morality of this activity which is more than a profession for him. Perhaps it is the very intensity of his involvement and of his identification with the fish which brings about this self examination. He first considers the justice of his endeavor and his reasons for doing what he does at a moment when his admiration for the fish is overwhelming him, after he has just seen the fish for the first time.

". . . Christ I did not know he was so big."

"I'll kill him though," he said. "In all his greatness and his glory."

Although it is unjust, he thought. But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures.

"I told the boy I was a strange old man," he said. "Now is when I must prove it."



The thousand times that he had proved it meant nothing. Now he was proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it (p. 66).

He does not say why it is "unjust" to kill the fish, but continues immediately to state his own need which is fulfilled in this way. In fishing he finds the kind of competitive situation which allows him to dominate a worthy opponent and to prove his manhood, just as other Hemingway heroes have found in bullfighting or hunting. The last paragraph of the quotation above describes the typical ritual form, in which the past is obliterated in the present and, although "each time was a new time" in the sense that past proof does not suffice in the present and the magic of the ritual must be performed again, yet the past occasions do not exist as separate events, but are telescoped into each other and also into the present moment so that he does not think about the past while "doing it" because he is recreating that past as he lives completely in the present moment of the ritual. The old man is experiencing the paradox of timelessness, the fusion of past and present, which the ritual provides.

The ritual experience of the old man in fishing contrasts interestingly with another experience of his, the arm wrestling with the Negro from Cienfuegos, which also was a competition in which he proved his manhood, but which did not become a ritual upon which he could depend for this effect. After the first victory there was a rematch,



but ". . . he had won it quite easily since he had broken the confidence of the negro from Cienfuegos in the last match." He had only a few more matches before he lost interest in the arm wrestling. "He decided that he could beat anyone if he wanted to badly enough and he decided it was bad for his right hand for fishing" (pp. 70-71). The arm wrestling was not enough of a challenge, once he had "decided that he could beat anyone," to give him a sense of his manhood in the victory, so he decided to save his right arm for fishing, where the possibility of an opponent he could not beat always existed. The possibility of defeat and of personal injury, as in bullfighting, is essential to the meaningfulness of the ritual. Santiago has found the exact level of competition, somewhere between trying "to kill the stars" (which he is glad he does not have to do) and hand to hand combat with other men, to give him a task which is within the range of the possible and yet sufficiently challenging.

At one point during his struggle with the fish the old man considers the question of worthiness in relation to this beast.

How many people he will feed, he thought. But are they worthy to eat him? No, of course not. There is no one worthy of eating him from the manner of his behavior and his great dignity (p. 75).

The old man eats a piece of the marlin meat later, but no other person eats from his body, perhaps because only the old man is worthy of doing so. As for the sharks, the



Mako is worthy because he is "beautiful and noble and knows no fear of anything" while the galanos do not have to be found unworthy since they are beneath contempt or consideration, as if they are not even real beasts.

Santiago considers the question of sin in relation to the killing of the fish later, when the battle has been won and then partly lost.

Perhaps it was a sin to kill the fish. I suppose it was even though I did it to keep me alive and feed many people. . . . You were born to be a fisherman as the fish was born to be a fish. . . . . . . You did not kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell for food, he thought. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive and you loved him after. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him. Or is it more? (p. 105).

The moral issue which the old man raises here is a confusing one for the reader, also. Again we are confronted with a paradox of the ritual: in such a contest the meaning derives partly from an identification of oneself with the opponent such that one loves in the other what he recognizes of himself and, finally, to destroy the other is to destroy part of oneself. And so, to speak of "sin," as the old man does here, is confusing because it implies a set of fixed values rather than the set of fluctuating values of projection and identification as the basis for judgments of the morality of what the old man has done. When he says, "You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman," his statement is much clearer because he is now relating his act to himself, to his needs and to



his feelings rather than to an absolute standard established somewhere outside himself. His pride in his ability and his manhood and his need to define himself, once more, as a fisherman remain as explanations of how he has acted. Just as Manuel, in "The Undefeated," answers the question of why he continues to fight rather than getting a job by saying, "Because I am a bullfighter," Santiago has killed the marlin because he is a fisherman. And when he adds, in self-justification, "Besides . . . everything kills everything else in some way. Fishing kills me exactly as it keeps me alive. . . .," he sounds defensive and indirect, as does Hemingway himself in The Green Hills of Africa when he insists that he has bought the right to hunt because "I did nothing that had not been done to me." The humble old man is at his best when he does not seek to make complicated explanations of his actions, but says simply, "You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman."

## II.

"The Bear," as it appears in Go Down, Moses,<sup>1</sup> is identical to the version which later appeared in Big Woods except that Part IV, in which Isaac's experiences in the woods are seen as influences on his life as inheritor of a Southern plantation, does not appear in the later book.

---

<sup>1</sup>Reprinted in Utley, Bloom and Kinney. My references will be to this source.



Faulkner is quoted in interviews as saying that Part IV is part of the novel, Go Down, Moses, and should not be reprinted out of the context of the novel. The story has, however, been widely anthologized, with Part IV included. To avoid the repetitiveness of discussing the two versions of the story separately, I will sacrifice the effect of simplicity of the Big Woods version of the hunting story and focus on the longer version.

"The Bear," like "Lion: A Story," pits two almost mythical beasts against each other. In "The Bear," however, Lion must be trained to participate in the drama, rather than appearing from the beginning of the story in the role he is to play. Thus, an additional initiation story, that of Lion, is added to "The Bear." Lion is trained, through an ordeal of starvation, to obey commands and not to care "about anything or anybody," just like Old Ben. This initiation emphasizes by contrast the element of Isaac's initiation which is just the opposite, a learning to care, and which has important implications for Isaac's future life.

In both stories there is a strong correlation between Lion and Boon in physical appearance and in intelligence, and Boon is able to kill the bear only when he stops trying to shoot him, ceases using the means of civilization, and goes at him on the more primitive level of personal attack with a rough knife. Boon's tender

and

and

and

and

and

and

and

and

and

and

and

response to Lion's wounding and death is more emphasized in "Lion: A Story" while the actual scene with the bear is more prominent in "The Bear." In both stories the events culminate in a scene of Boon's helpless madness beneath the gum tree full of squirrels and in both Major de Spain decides not to return to the Big Bottom. In "The Bear," Major de Spain sells the land to a lumber company, adding to the story the theme of the destruction of the wilderness by the forces of civilization, which reinforces the effect of Isaac's later act aimed at the decadence of his society.

In both stories there is at the end an apotheosis of Lion and Ben in which they are seen not as dead, but as liberated from the restrictions of life to do what they like best. In "The Bear," Sam Fathers, too, is added to those buried in the woods when Isaac returns the following summer to the scene of the drama of the killing of the bear:

. . . he had not stopped, he had only paused, quitting the knoll which was no abode of the dead because there was no death, not Lion and not Sam: not held fast in earth but free in earth and not in earth but of earth, myriad yet undiffused of every myriad part, leaf and twig and particle, air and sun and rain and dew and night, acorn, oak and leaf and acorn again, dark and dawn and dark and dawn again in their immutable progression and, being myriad, one: and Old Ben too, Old Ben too; they would give him his paw back even, certainly they would give him his paw back: then the long challenge and the long chase, no heart to be driven and outraged, no flesh to be mauled and bled-- . . . (p. 110).



The ritual of the hunt is seen as immortalized, timeless, unending, with each participant freed to take part in what was most meaningful to him, "the long challenge and the long chase." They have been absorbed by nature, incorporated into "every myriad part," and the cycle of the hunt is now part of the permanent daily and seasonal cycles of nature, to be forever repeated in the future.

The other major changes between "Lion: A Story" and "The Bear" are the addition of Sam Fathers as a major character and the replacement of Quentin by the less intellectual but more accomplished hunter, Isaac. Both of these changes serve to strengthen the initiation theme in "The Bear," which replaces the emphasis in "Lion: A Story" on the dog and on his impact on the lives of Old Ben, Boon and Major de Spain.

"The Bear" shares with "The Bear" (Saturday Evening Post version), hereafter referred to as "The Bear" (SEP), an emphasis on the initiation theme. The early training in the woods of Isaac McCaslin is identical to that of "the boy" in "The Bear" (SEP). Among the repeated elements of the initiation are the early learning from listening to the stories of the hunters ("the best of all talking"), the training in brotherhood as well as huntsmanship as he enters the communion of "men, not white nor black nor red but men, hunters," the qualities imposed by the wilderness itself through the "ancient and immitigable rules" of



hunting, the training in methods of hunting by Sam Fathers, the private learning on his own in the woods, and the boy's private relationship to the bear. In both stories the bear, as symbol of the wilderness, helps the boy to formulate a set of values which are a viable alternative to those of the society which has nurtured him but which he knows to be corrupt.

The key episode of "The Bear" (SEP) becomes an interesting, but minor, scene in "The Bear." The father of "the boy" is replaced by Isaac's cousin, McCaslin Edmonds, who quotes Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in trying to explain to the young hunter why he has not shot at the bear, why the pursuit itself is the object of the hunt rather than the killing of the bear. Isaac, like "the boy," does not grasp the abstractions and tries to formulate in his own terms what he has learned from Old Ben, Sam Fathers and the fyce. Whereas "The Bear" (SEP) ends with this emphasis on the hunt as cycle, the beauty of knowing it will be the same next year, "The Bear" goes on to develop the concluding episode of this particular hunting sequence and the effect of these events which is carried over into the rest of Isaac's life, as a hunter and as a man.

"The Bear" combines the events and themes of "Lion: A Story" and "The Bear" (SEP) in a way which adds to rather than detracts from the material of those two stories.



The addition, in the combined story, of the further implications of the events heightens the poignancy of the story of Lion and Old Ben and gives greater significance to the wilderness initiation of Isaac McCaslin.

"The Bear" begins at an imprecise point in time and with an imprecise focus:

There was a man and a dog too this time. Two beasts, counting Old Ben, the bear, and two men, counting Boon Hogganbeck, in whom some of the same blood ran which ran in Sam Fathers, even though Boon's was a plebeian strain of it and only Sam and Old Ben and the mongrel were taintless and incorruptible (p. 5).

Although the story does not begin in media res, the first sentence sounds like a continuation rather than a beginning. Since there are three preceding versions of the story, perhaps this is a continuation of Faulkner's efforts to tell this tale just right. The first sentence focuses on "a man and a dog too," Sam Fathers and Lion, while the second sentence adds another man, Boon Hogganbeck, and another beast, Old Ben, the bear. The balance of "two beasts" and "two men" is amended within the same sentence to make a different distinction among these four, that of tainted (Boon) and untainted (Sam, Old Ben and Lion). Further, the quality of being "taintless and incorruptible" is established as something apart from blood lines since only Old Ben is of unmixed ancestry and since Sam and Boon are on different sides of this distinction despite their shared blood line. This first group of four participants



in the events to come is introduced in a series of shifting alignments and points of identification among them, which strengthens the impression that Faulkner is trying to tell the story precisely this time, trying to establish all the appropriate relationships and all the possible balancing forces among these four characters. The clear impression of this first paragraph is that these four are at the center of the story to be told, that it is a story about them.

The last impression is immediately blurred by the first sentence of the second paragraph: "He was sixteen." This "he" is none of the four mentioned in the preceding paragraph, but is Isaac McCaslin, and the remainder of Part I, fourteen pages, centers on his early education in the wilderness. This beginning of the second paragraph also blurs the time focus of the story. Isaac is sixteen at the time of the climax of the story and this age is stated at the beginning only as a reference point from which the time shifts backwards immediately ("For six years now he had been a man's hunter. . . .") to begin to fill in Isaac's background. None of the events recorded in Part I takes place when Isaac is sixteen years old. This beginning point of seeming imprecision serves a precise function in the structure of the work: we begin with an almost prescient image of the four central actors in the climactic scene and of Isaac seeing and learning from his

1900-1901

1901-1902

1902-1903

1903-1904

1904-1905

1905-1906

1906-1907

1907-1908

1908-1909

1909-1910

1910-1911

1911-1912

1912-1913

1913-1914

1914-1915

1915-1916

1916-1917

1917-1918

1918-1919

1919-1920

1920-1921

1921-1922

1922-1923

1923-1924

1924-1925

1925-1926

experiences, as the five of them will be at that key point. The effect is that we later have a feeling of having foreseen, in our own dreams as well as in Isaac's, the enactment of the drama in the woods.

Later, the beginning of the story no longer seems confused as we realize that there are two beginnings, just as there are two stories, in "The Bear." There is a story about a bear, the object of an annual ritual hunt, who is finally killed when "even he don't want it to last any longer," and there is an initiation story, about Isaac McCaslin who learns "pride and humility" in the woods and acts in terms of his wilderness education by relinquishing his inheritance in civilization, the land which has been tainted by slavery, miscegenation and incest. The story of the killing of the bear is part of the story of Isaac's initiation. The climax of each story occurs when Isaac is sixteen years old. The beginning of "The Bear" blends the two stories by reference to Isaac's age, while separating out the two strands of action by focusing separately on the first group of four, then on Isaac. This beginning also establishes the structural pattern of the work: an intricate system of contrasts and paradoxes, suspended in a state of precarious balance.

The central thematic balance of the story is vested in the paradox of the two qualities Isaac strives to learn: pride and humility. Francis Lee Utley has traced rather

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

thoroughly the development of these themes in "The Bear,"<sup>1</sup> establishing the crucial point that by learning these seemingly contradictory virtues from his society, Isaac is able to transcend the limitations of the culture that has produced him. He must, however, learn each virtue in its pure form and avoid "the arrogance of false humility" and "the false humbleness of pride," the pitfalls in which the two qualities would cancel each other. Since Isaac learns these qualities through his "novitiate to the true wilderness" and uses the strength derived from this part of his culture, the hunting tradition, to repudiate the decadence of the other half of his culture, the plantation world, the themes of pride and humility are the central link of the two strands of "The Bear."

In the commissary exchange of Cass Edmonds and Isaac McCaslin, in a long yet central passage, there is a critical linking of pride and humility, through courage, and also of the two stories told in "The Bear":

. . . an old bear, fierce and ruthless not just to stay alive but ruthless with the fierce pride of liberty and freedom, jealous and proud enough of liberty and freedom to see it threatened not with fear nor even alarm but almost with joy, seeming deliberately to put it into jeopardy in order to savor it and keep his old strong bones and flesh supple and quick to defend and preserve it; an old man, son of a Negro slave and an Indian king, inheritor on the one hand of the long chronicle of a people who had learned humility through suffering

---

<sup>1</sup>In "Pride and Humility: The Cultural Roots of Ike McCaslin," in Utley, Bloom and Kinney.



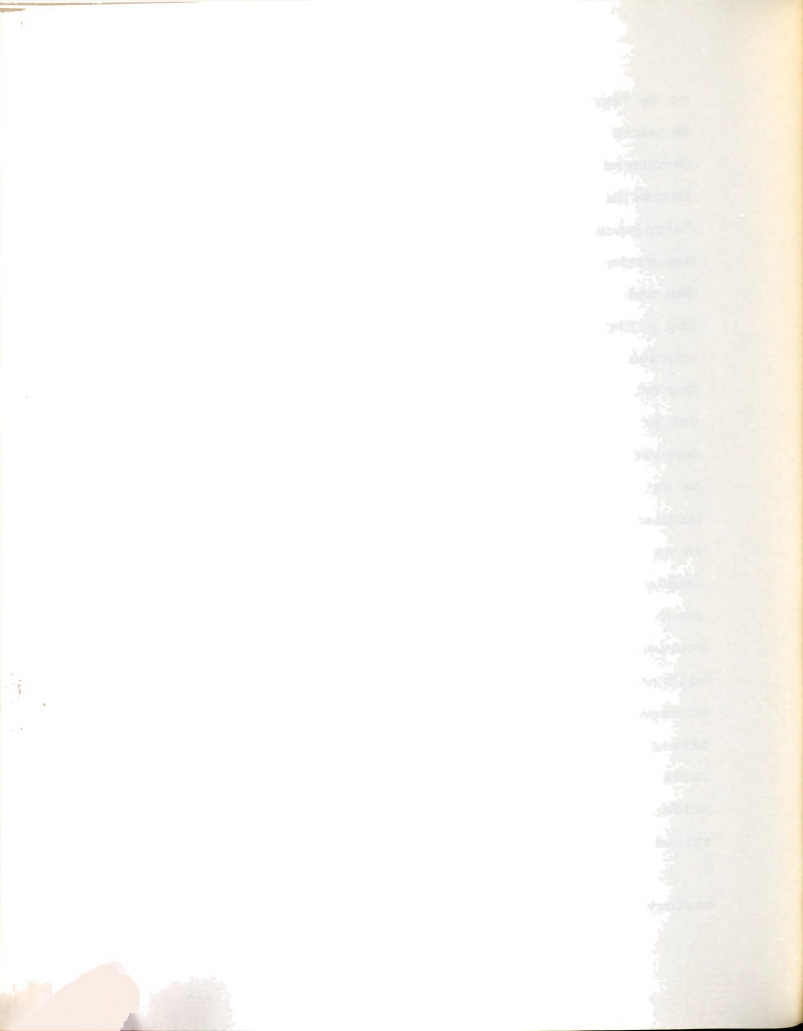
and learned pride through the endurance which survived the suffering, and on the other side the chronicle of a people even longer in the land than the first, yet who now existed there only in the solitary brotherhood of an old and childless Negro's alien blood and the wild and invincible spirit of an old bear; a boy who wished to learn humility and pride in order to become skillful and worthy in the woods but found himself becoming so skillful so fast that he feared he would never become worthy because he had not learned humility and pride though he had tried, until one day an old man who could not have defined either led him as though by the hand to where an old bear and a little mongrel dog showed him that, by possessing one thing other, he would possess them both; and a little dog, nameless and mongrel and many-fathered, grown yet weighing less than six pounds, who couldn't be dangerous because there was nothing anywhere much smaller, not fierce because that would have been called just noise, not humble because it was already too near the ground to genuflect, and not proud because it would not have been close enough for anyone to discern what was casting that shadow and which didn't even know it was not going to heaven since they had already decided it had no immortal soul, so that all it could be was brave even though they would probably call that too just noise (p. 85).

Just as Old Ben takes "fierce pride" in his "liberty and freedom" and jeopardizes that freedom in order to savor it, Isaac takes pride in his ancestors, links himself to Carothers McCaslin by sharing his guilt, and relinquishes his proprietorial heritage in order to remove the taint from his cultural heritage and thus savor it. Like Sam Fathers, Isaac has learned a form of pride from his forbears, and he is humble in his loyalty to his family name. Isaac is, of course, the "boy who wished to learn humility and pride in order to become skillful and worthy in the woods," but at first his goal is not clear. We understand his desire



to be "skillful," but "worthy" is vague. Worthy of what? He wants to get back to the qualities which allowed Carothers McCaslin to found an aristocratic line before he became tainted by his own success and succumbed to the "arrogance of false pride" which ownership breeds. Through Sam Father's teaching, Isaac is able to learn from Old Ben and the fyce the lesson of courage, the clue to attaining pride and humility. Isaac demonstrates physical courage in the face of the bear to rescue the little mongrel dog because he is humble in his admiration of the dog and yet proud to stand up to the power of the bear. He demonstrates moral courage in relinquishing the land because he is proud of the accomplishments of his ancestors and yet humbled by their crimes. Ultimately, however, his gesture is as useless as the noise of the fyce dog, and the other people see his act of repudiation as "just noise." So, Isaac must have the same courage the little dog had: the courage to act, not to impress others, but for himself, with nothing to gain but his own self-respect. It is this courage which unites pride and humility and allows Isaac to attain his goal: to become worthy of bearing the burden of racial guilt. Thus courage, which transcends and blends pride and humility, also is a clue to the union of the two strands of the story.

The linking of the two stories is also based on an analogy between two decisions made by Isaac: the decision



not to shoot at the bear and the decision to relinquish the land. It is at a point where Isaac's attempts to explain his act of relinquishment to McCaslin break down that both of them think back to an event which took place seven years ago, two years before Old Ben was killed. Isaac remembers that Sam Fathers had told McCaslin about the scene where he rescued the fyce from almost under the bear. There follows next the discussion, in italics, remembered from seven years before, in which McCaslin tries to explain to Isaac metaphorically, using the Keats poem, why he did not shoot when he had the opportunity. In Isaac's mind there is a clear link between his decision to relinquish the land, which McCaslin cannot understand, and his inability to kill the bear, which he does not understand.

From the beginning, Isaac sees the hunt in ritualistic terms. He thinks of it as "the ancient and unremitting contest according to the ancient and immitigable rules." And the bear, Old Ben, who is "too big for the very country which was its constricting scope," he thinks of in timeless terms, "an anachronism indomitable and invincible out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life." Isaac, even before he is ten years old and is permitted to go on the hunt, understands it as most of the grown hunters do not: "To him, they were going not to hunt bear and deer but to keep yearly rendezvous with

1891

1892

1893

1894

1895

1896

1897

1898

1899

1900

1901

1902

1903

1904

1905

1906

1907

1908

1909

1910

1911

1912

1913

1914

1915

1916

1917

1918

1919

1920

the bear which they did not even intend to kill." It is Isaac who thinks of the hunt as "the yearly pageant-rite of the old bear's furious immortality."

Isaac also sees his own education in the wilderness in ritualized terms. First, there is the oral tradition which he learns from the older hunters, ". . . the best of all talking. It was of the wilderness, the big woods, bigger and older than any recorded document. . . ." Then, he sees in terms of "apprenticeship" and "novitiate" his early small game hunting and the move to large game:

He entered his novitiate to the true wilderness with Sam beside him as he had begun his apprenticeship in miniature to manhood after the rabbits and such with Sam beside him . . . (p. 9).

His apprenticeship to manhood, in Isaac's mind, begins with his entry into the woods, and is a new life: "It seemed to him that at the age of ten he was witnessing his own birth." Ritualistic also is the identification in Isaac's mind of Old Ben with the wilderness. When the fyce is wounded by the bear, Isaac thinks, ". . . it was still no living creature but only the wilderness which, leaning for a moment, had patted lightly once her temerity." When Isaac gives up his gun in order to see the bear, he thinks of what he has done as

. . . not a gambit, not a choice, but a condition in which not only the bear's heretofore inviolable anonymity but all the ancient rules and balances of hunter and hunted had been abrogated (p. 17).

He ritually cleanses himself of the "taint" of civilization by giving up also his watch, his compass and his walking



stick, in a scene which anticipates the later relinquishment scene where Isaac cleanses himself by giving up the land of his ancestors, the symbol of another taint.

He had already relinquished, of his will, because of his need, in humility and peace and without regret, yet apparently that had not been enough, the leaving of the gun was not enough. He stood for a moment--a child, alien and lost in the green and soaring gloom of the markless wilderness. Then he relinquished completely to it. It was the watch and the compass. He was still tainted. He removed the linked chain of the one and the looped thong of the other from his overalls and hung them on a bush and leaned the stick beside them and entered it (p. 18).

Then the bear appears, as if magically conjured up by the boy's ritual, and is again identified with the wilderness:

. . . the wilderness coalesced. It rushed soundless, and solidified--the tree, the bush, the compass and the watch glinting where a ray of sunlight touched them. Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear: it was just there, immobile. . . . (p. 19).

Even the bear's departure is like that of an apparition:

It didn't walk into the woods. It faded, sank back into the wilderness without motion as he had watched a fish, a huge old bass, sink back into the dark depths of its pool and vanish without even any movements of its fins (p. 19).

The bear appears and disappears and stalks Isaac as much as he stalks the bear. In the boy's mind this is an almost mythical creature with whom he makes contact through the public ritual of the hunt and through private rituals of his own.

The initiation theme of the story contains Isaac's various rituals, public and private, and serves as an



additional force of unity, joining the two strands of the tale. In his sixteenth year, Isaac completes his initiation in the wilderness, marked by the death of Old Ben, and undergoes also another initiation, into civilization and its corruption, through what he learns from the ledgers in the commissary of the McCaslin plantation. In the woods he has become "a man's hunter," respected by the older men for his skill, knowledge and dedication in hunting. In the commissary he tries to be a leader also, tries to assert meaningfully his values in a way that will be understood and acknowledged by those whose respect he has earned in hunting. But Isaac is less successful in this arena. He cannot make his cousin McCaslin, a believer in "truth," in essences, believe in the possibility of a free act. To McCaslin's argument, summed up by "I am what I am; I will be always what I was born and have always been," Isaac can only answer, "Sam Fathers set me free" (p. 88). General Compson, like McCaslin Edmonds, cannot understand Isaac's gesture and says in puzzlement, "It looks like you just quit but I have watched you in the woods too much and I don't believe you just quit even if it does look damn like it. . . ." (p. 95). Even Isaac's wife is unable to understand or accept his decision to relinquish the land and, when she finally discovers that it is not a matter for bargaining between them, she can only withdraw, punitively, from any direct relationship with him. Perhaps Sam Fathers



would have understood and supported Isaac's gesture, but then Sam Fathers was of another world. Those living in the real world of Isaac's act do not understand and, as he grows older, he is increasingly isolated as a man who lives in and for a world which, for other men, is just a two week vacation escape each year. Isaac, as we see him later in "Delta Autumn," is trapped within the circle of his ritual. The early ritual of the bear hunt, through which he gained his moral manhood, was halted by the decisive action (perhaps fatality) of the killing of Old Ben. This event marks the end of an era in the hunting community and the end of a phase of Isaac's growth and, with the selling of the land to a lumber mill, is a milestone in the destruction of the wilderness. What Isaac has gained from this hunting cycle, however, allows him to perform another decisive action, relinquishing the land (perhaps free act, perhaps fatality, as he and his cousin debate). This second decisive event of the story does not work out as Isaac had hoped, however, and he is sent back into a continual reenactment of the hunting ritual, looking for the meaning he once found there. The same forces that cause Major de Spain never to return to the woods and drive Boon to the madness beneath the Gum Tree take their toll on Isaac McCaslin, also.



## III.

The Old Man and the Sea and "The Bear" differ in many aspects of style and theme, but share a substantial core of elements. Each presents a master dedicated to his pursuit. Manolin says of Santiago, "There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you" (p. 23). In comparing Isaac to Santiago, one is tempted to focus on him as an aging hunter, as he appears in "Delta Autumn," but even in youth he is acknowledged to be superior to most hunters. At sixteen General Compson accords him the distinction of riding the mule that will not bolt on the occasion of the final hunt with Old Ben. He tells Cass Edmonds, "He's already a better woodsman than you or me either and in another ten years he'll be as good as Walter" (p. 40). After Old Ben has been killed, General Compson defends Ike's right to stay on with Boon and Sam Fathers in the Big Bottom for a few days, and praises Ike's instincts and accomplishments in the woods as a contrast to some of the decadent pursuits of society.

"You've got one foot straddled into a farm and the other foot straddled into a bank; you aint even got a good handhold where this boy was already an old man long before you damned Sartorises and Edmondses invented farms and banks to keep yourselves from having to find out what this boy was born knowing and fearing too maybe but without being afraid, that could go ten miles on a compass because he wanted to look at a bear none of us had ever got near enough to put a bullet in and looked at the bear and came the ten miles back on the compass in the dark; maybe by God that's the why and wherefore of farms and banks. . . ." (p. 51).



Isaac is a "man's hunter," surpassed only by his mentor, Sam Fathers, and respected by the men who hunt with him.

Both Santiago and Isaac began contact in early youth with the pursuit which was to become a central lifelong style and commitment. The old man, at Manolin's age, was on a "square rigged ship that ran to Africa" (p. 22), and his happy dream of the lions on the sandy beaches remains with him as a pleasant souvenir. Isaac began "his apprenticeship in miniature to manhood" by hunting rabbits and squirrels and "his novitiate to the true wilderness" at ten, when he began making the regular trips to the woods with the men. As a result of the early training, Santiago has a great love for the sea, a sense of being "at home" there, and a love of the sea animals, and Isaac has an equivalent love of the woods and its creatures. The early training and dedication also help to explain the extraordinary sense of self discipline demonstrated by the old man's forcing himself to drink the shark liver oil which will make him stronger and by Isaac's ability to go into the woods alone and teach himself to get around, to survive, and even to be comfortable there.

Santiago's relationship to the marlin is in many ways similar to Isaac's relationship to Old Ben. In each case there is a mutual respect and, at some point, a confusion of who is stalking whom. Santiago wonders if he is taking the fish in or is being taken in by him and Isaac



is shocked that on his first trip to the woods the bear comes to see "who's new in camp this year." The scene where the marlin leaps out of the water to allow the old man to see and admire him is similar to the one where Old Ben appears to Isaac when he has "relinquished" to the wilderness. In both cases, also, there is a sense that the hunt is by mutual choice. Santiago thinks, "His choice had been to stay in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries. My choice was to go there to find him beyond all people" (p. 50). Isaac sees the bear as

. . . jealous and proud enough of liberty and freedom to see it threatened not with fear nor even alarm but almost with joy, seeming deliberately to put it into jeopardy in order to savor it and keep his old strong bones and flesh supple and quick to defend and preserve it. . . . (p. 85).

Isaac and Santiago are each vying with a willing competitor who has taken risks which helped to bring about their encounter. The feeling that the beast is actively participating in the struggle fosters the sense of identification that each has with the animal and the sense that each has of dealing with a creature who is equal or superior to himself.

Both men relate to their activity as to a renewing ritual, a way of reestablishing one's identity. The old man finds himself in an enveloping sense of the present moment:

The thousand times that he had proved it meant nothing. Now he was proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it (p. 66).



In his fishing he is cut off from the past and from other people in an intense personal experience of himself as fisherman. Isaac, too, renews himself in hunting:

He felt the old lift of the heart, as pristine as ever, as on the first day; he would never lose it, no matter how old in hunting and pursuit: the best, the best of all breathing, the humility and the pride (p. 38).

And these qualities of pride and humility, seen to be so thematically significant in "The Bear," are linked also in The Old Man and the Sea. In the early description of the old man we are told that

He was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew that it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride (pp. 13-14).

In both Santiago and Isaac these paradoxically linked qualities point to a simplicity of being, a directness of style and an utter lack of guile.

One further similarity to be noticed in the two stories is in the combination of victory and defeat with which each concludes. Santiago wins his marlin and then the prize is eaten away by sharks. Isaac wins a victory over himself and his culture and then the meaning of that victory will be gradually eaten away by time and the continuation of the evils he has struck out against.

There are some significant differences in the two stories, however, which point to two different visions of the hunt. Although Santiago and Isaac identify themselves with the marlin and the bear, the two relationships evolve



differently. The old man's resolution to kill the fish grows as his respect and admiration for him increase, and in direct proportion to that increase. This increased resolution seems to indicate that there is a strong element of scapegoating in his act: that a part of himself is projected onto the animal and then overcome, giving a great sense of release as well as victory over this outside force.

Isaac's growing personal relationship with the bear, on the other hand, causes him to resolve early that he will never kill him. When he is only ten years old and in the woods for the first time, he knows the bear is looking at him, although he does not see him, and he recognizes that he will never do him harm: "He did not move, holding the useless gun which he knew now he would never fire at it, now or ever. . . ." (p. 14). Either Isaac does not project part of himself onto the bear or the identification is of a different nature than the old man's with the fish. Perhaps Isaac projects and identifies with the qualities he admires most in himself and in the bear, independence, a sense of justice, pride and humility. This identification, then, strengthens his sense of himself and allows him to act firmly in the other world of his life, in a dramatic expression of these qualities. Santiago seeks a victory over his aging self and over his own fears in killing the fish, while Isaac seeks knowledge of himself through a

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

communion with the bear. Isaac can watch the drama of the attack on the bear, but he cannot strike a blow against him. In The Old Man and the Sea, we have a view of an accomplished fisherman near the end of his career and a master of his trade, doing once more (perhaps more dramatically, but not different in kind from his past performances) what he has done many times before. In "The Bear" we watch Isaac go through a lengthy learning process in which he masters not only rules and techniques, but attitudes. Then, we see him apply in one dramatic gesture, in another aspect of his life, what he has learned in those years in the woods.

The emphasis of the two stories, then, is ultimately very different. "The Bear" is an initiation story. There is a closed system of values into which Isaac is initiated and the values are both knowable and absolute. Isaac does not simply learn what to do in the woods, he learns the moral attitudes implied by the rules. Later, in "Delta Autumn," Faulkner shows in Roth Edmonds the contrasting case of an incomplete hunter, a man who knows the techniques of hunting but has not committed himself to the moral values to which the other hunters subscribe. Earl Rovit says, in identifying "The Bear" as an initiation story:

The latter story can be justly called an "initiation" story because the protagonist, Ike McCaslin, is literally initiated into a comprehension of certain mysteries that had been hidden from him;

1. The first part of the report  
describes the general situation  
of the country in 1950.  
It gives a brief history of  
the country and its people.  
It also describes the  
economy and the social  
conditions of the country.  
The second part of the report  
describes the progress of  
the country in 1951.  
It gives a brief history of  
the country and its people.  
It also describes the  
economy and the social  
conditions of the country.  
The third part of the report  
describes the progress of  
the country in 1952.  
It gives a brief history of  
the country and its people.  
It also describes the  
economy and the social  
conditions of the country.

through the process of initiation, he loses an old self and gains a new one. He is prepared for the ceremony by a mentor whose specific function is to play spiritual obstetrician to him and others like him; and, most conclusively, Ike's moment of illumination when he meets the bear is precisely equivalent to his cousin's earlier experience, and presumably to that of the others who have been found worthy.<sup>1</sup>

The emphasis in "The Bear" is on what Isaac learns and how he uses that knowledge. The Old Man and the Sea, on the other hand, is a quest story. Santiago is in quest of a renewed sense of his manhood and of his identity as a fisherman. The story is process oriented, with the emphasis on the quest itself rather than on its conclusion. The old man's victory, and he is victorious, lies in what he has been able to do, not in the ultimate results of his actions. In addition, in the relationship between the old man and the boy, the focus is on the teacher rather than the learner, and the confusion of roles whereby the boy cares for the physical needs of the old man makes Santiago not a true mentor. And Santiago does not have any absolute values to teach, he simply knows "many tricks" from which the boy can profit.

Each story gives us a glimpse of the Edenic past, that prevalent theme in American literature, yet each has its own thematic focus in its use of the idea. The peaceful good time of the past for Santiago is a personal one,

---

<sup>1</sup>Rovit, p. 94.



reflected in his happy memories of his youth and his years on the sea, and in his dreams of the lions playing on the beaches of Africa. His rituals are ones designed to reunite him with that self of the past and, at the end of the story, he has earned his peaceful dream of the lions. Hemingway generally uses visions of a peaceful past or scenes of decay or wilderness destruction with some personal reference to the experiences of his protagonist. The decayed lumber town in "The End of Something" and the burned out timber land in "Big Two-Hearted River" are reflections of the inner terrain of Nick Adams at a certain time rather than social comments. Faulkner, on the other hand, uses glimpses of an Edenic past in a more complex way, mainly through an emphasis on social decadence in the present. The "progress" of social institutions brings about the destruction of the wilderness to provide the materials of civilization. Progress and destruction are so linked that in "The Bear" the selling of the woods to the lumber mill is linked to the social ill of the exploitation of blacks by whites, and Isaac's strike against the latter seems also to hit at the former. The snake in Eden takes two forms in Part V of "The Bear" which conform to the two images of the evil Isaac abhors. It appears as the logging train which brings men and equipment in to cut the trees and then carries out the lumber. Isaac sees it as "a small dingy harmless snake vanishing into



the weeds," and he is horrified by it as he realizes ". . . why Major de Spain had not come back, and that after this time he himself, who had had to see it one time other, would return no more" (p. 104). The snake reappears in literal form right before Isaac comes upon Boon at the Gum Tree. This time he sees it as the symbol of evil, "the old one, the ancient and accursed about the earth, fatal and solitary." Isaac stands up to the snake with "fear all right but not fright" and the snake respects his stand and moves away. Isaac acknowledges its power in the tongue of Sam Fathers who taught him to respect the creatures of the woods: "'Chief,' he said: 'Grandfather'" (p. 111). Isaac's stand against the snake is like his stand against the plantation-style life. He makes a gesture which is designed to preserve his dignity and that of others, and his gesture is acknowledged and respected.

For both these writers the values demonstrated here through the metaphor of the hunt are the same ones dramatized in other ways in other works. In Hemingway's war stories or love stories the qualities of the soldier or the lover are the same as those of the bullfighter or fisherman, and the emphasis is on the intensely personal experience of the individual in a moment of crisis. Hemingway probes the individual in pain to ask questions like, "How will he react when jabbed here? What happens when he feels he is going to die? How can he cope with

1890-1891

1891-1892

1892-1893

1893-1894

1894-1895

1895-1896

1896-1897

1897-1898

1898-1899

1899-1900

1900-1901

1901-1902

1902-1903

1903-1904

1904-1905

1905-1906

1906-1907

1907-1908

1908-1909

1909-1910

1910-1911

1911-1912

1912-1913

1913-1914

1914-1915

1915-1916

1916-1917

1917-1918

1918-1919

the loss of the person or the victory which is most important to him? What really matters most to him anyway?" The perspective of Hemingway's works is psychological, not in the sense that he dramatizes characters as they would be perceived by any particular psychological system, but in the sense that he focuses on the individual viewed in moments of isolation from others when he must, under stress, perform the action which will define him as the person he wants to be, and Hemingway seeks always the lowest common denominator of that individual's experience. The Hemingway character finds it difficult to band together with his fellow men for their mutual good unless the common cause corresponds to his personal needs for self definition. He is prone to negotiate "a separate peace" and go off to fulfill his own needs. He is embarrassed by abstract platonic concepts like "honor" and "glory" and "patriotism" because they cannot be pursued by one man alone and are only meaningful as fraternal bonds to connect men to each other.

In Faulkner's other works he portrays a farmer, a lawyer or a sewing machine agent with the same earthy qualities as the hunter, and those men are likely to be hunters on the side, anyway. Faulkner's perspective is sociological in the sense that he probes a man in his relationships to others in order to ask questions like, "What in his family tradition caused him to be this way?"



How does he respond to the needs of his fellow man? How does he relate to the land he tills or hunts or buys or sells or inherits?" The individual is perceived as the coming together of a complex set of experiences and relationships which cannot be reduced without distortion and he defines himself within that context, as a member of the community. The community's needs and causes become his and the bonds are solidified by the shared belief in the great abstractions, strung together like a litany, in a circular and unending catalogue: honor and glory and patriotism. . . .

Hemingway and Faulkner give us two very different images of the American experience and the contrasts posed are as rich in possibilities as the minds of two great writers and as the parameters of our national consciousness: individual man vs. social man, existentialist man vs. essentialist man, international man vs. national or regional man. Each writer, however, presents man as committed to the preservation of his own dignity and to that of the human race.









MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293101001588