

ERNEST HEMINGWAY: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN *THE SUN ALSO RISES* AND
A FAREWELL TO ARMS

by

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Ernest Hemingway: Narrative Structure in The Sun Also Rises

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ABSTRACT

With respect to the work of Ernest Hemingway, it is generally assumed that all questions have been asked and all answers given. This is *not* the case. Our conceptions of such novels as *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* are based on personality cults (both friendly and hostile) and dated critical appraisals that are themselves influenced by biographic and populist notions. In our rush to take sides and attach meaning, we have overlooked the subtleties of the literature. Recent developments in Hemingway studies suggest that in some cases we have even missed the point entirely. Indeed, a careful, unprejudiced re-examination of these two novels indicates that we may have been reading them erroneously.

Both novels are first person narrative presentations, yet, to date, no one has bothered to base a critical investigation *entirely* on this literary specificity. Using the tools of recent narrative theory, this discussion attempts just such a reading. This reading, which pays careful attention to the rhetoric of each narrator, contradicts standard critical interpretations. It finds that Jake Barnes is not a bitter survivor of the so-called "lost generation," but that he is a triumphant spiritual hero. It also finds that Frederic Henry is not a romantic, existential hero, but that he is a liar and a con-artist.

While these novels share their narrative perspective, the peculiarities of each require separate approaches. Because Jake

Barnes' attitude toward his material constantly shifts and changes, it is necessary to follow the events of *The Sun Also Rises* in a methodical, linear fashion in order to understand their final effect on this narrator. Frederic Henry, on the other hand, employs a deliberate rhetoric throughout *A Farewell to Arms*. In this novel, it is more productive to examine instances of this rhetoric, rearranging the events in terms of the degree of suasion used by this narrator in his attempt to blind the reader to the facts. Since the subject of a first person narrative presentation *is* the narrator, in each of these cases authorial intention and ultimate meaning become quite clear when, in the end, we come to understand these narrators.

DEDICATION

For Noelle, Eliot and Dustin

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgments	vi
I. Introduction	1
II. <i>The Sun Also Rises</i>	17
III. <i>A Farewell to Arms</i>	78
IV. Conclusion	118
Bibliography	123

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When you first start writing stories in the first person if the stories are made so real that people believe them the people reading them nearly always think the stories happened to you. That is natural because while you were making them up you had to make them happen to the person who was telling them. If you do this successfully enough you make the person who is reading them believe that the things happened to him too. If you can do this you are beginning to get what you are trying for which is to make the story so real beyond any reality that it will become a part of the reader's experience and a part of his memory. There must be things that he did not notice when he read the story or the novel which without his knowing it, enter into his memory and experience so that they are a part of his life. This is not easy to do.¹

Ernest Hemingway chose to write his first two successful novels "in the first person." His faith in this method of presentation is expressed clearly in the fragment from a draft of *A Moveable Feast* above.² To "make the story. . .real beyond any reality" would seem to be the exclusive domain of first person presentation. In shunning the literary conventions of third person where an obviously fictitious narrator communicates obviously created events, in adopting a "persona" that appears to speak for him (and, in some cases, appears to be him), the author implies that a real person is reporting real events ("the people reading them nearly always think the stories happened to you"). At the very least, this possibility seems more likely in

¹ Larry W. Phillips, ed., Ernest Hemingway On Writing (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984), p. 5-6. Phillips does not indicate the source of this fragment.

²Frederic Joseph Svoboda, Hemingway & The Sun Also Rises: The Crafting of a Style (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1983), p. 112. Svoboda identifies this fragment as from an early draft of this text.

a first person presentation. Paradoxically, by exposing the primary literary convention of telling, the author seems to deny it. A first person narrative presentation seems to be more sincere than a third person narrative presentation simply because it admits to being a narrative presentation.

This effect, of course, is a complex and devious literary illusion, but one which Hemingway discovered was more successful than its third person counterpart in terms of making the story "appear" real. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that Hemingway's intentions in this endeavour were simply sensational. The complexity of his work demands that we look beyond these remarks. (The "iceberg theory" applies to his few aesthetic statements as well as to his fiction.) In a handful of short stories and these two early novels, the "appearance" of reality is an integral part of the story. Confident that this "appearance" would not stand up to repeated readings (those "things" the reader "did not notice"), Hemingway employed it only as a literary device to enhance his story's meaning. In these narratives, it is not the narrator's observations that should concern us, but the narrator observing. First person presentation always contains at least two stories - the story the narrator tells (the noticeable story) and the story *of* the narrator (the implied story) which is available only in his "telling." As Seymour Chatman claims, "the implied message is always the credible one, just as a person's tone of voice is

always more credible than the words he speaks."³ Yet, if we are to take the narrator seriously, if we are to accept him as someone worth wondering about, it is essential that the story he tells "appear" as real as possible. This is not a concern of a third person presentation where we often do not give the narrator a second thought. A recently published short story confirms that Hemingway understood these distinctions and took full advantage of them.

"Great News from the Mainland" appeared in 1987 in *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: The Finca Vigia Edition*. The story is set in Cuba and concerns telephone communications between a father (who is a writer), his son (who is in a hospital on the mainland for psychiatric treatment) and the son's doctor. A dominant force in the story is a dry hot wind which blows

out of the south bending the fronds of the royal palms until they were parted in a line forward and away from the grey trunks that bent with the heavy wind. As the wind increased the dark green stems of the fronds blew wildly as the wind killed them. The branches of the mango trees shook and snapped in the wind and its heat burned the mango flowers until they were brown and dusty and their stems dried. The grass dried and there was no more moisture in the soil and it was dust in the wind.

Indeed, the description of the wind begins the story told almost entirely in the third person and the past tense. The protagonist (Mr. Wheeler, the father), referred to as "the man"

³Seymour Chatman, Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 234.

and thereafter as "he" by the narrator, receives a return phone call from his son's doctor.

The call he had put in on the telephone came through from the mainland and the man said, "Yes, Dr. Simpson," and then heard the cracker voice say, "Mr. Wheeler?"

Immediately, the credibility of the doctor is undercut. Referred to as that "cracker voice" on the telephone, this doctor engages in a long conversation with the protagonist (which takes up most of the story) that abounds in circumlocution, verbiage and exaggeration on the doctor's part. It becomes apparent that the doctor is lying to the protagonist about the effectiveness of the treatment the son is getting and is more concerned with receiving payment for this treatment than administering it. The weather becomes a subject towards the end of the conversation and, even in this, the doctor cannot talk *straight*.

"How's the weather over there?"

"What's that? Oh the weather. Well it's just a bit off from what I'd describe as typical for this time of year. No it's not entirely typical. There has been some unreasonable weather to be frank. You call up anytime Mr. Wheeler.

The reader is reminded of the hot wind which begins the next, climactic part of the story, occurring two days later. The narrator tells us that Mr. Wheeler ruminates about the wind.

The winds always come in Lent, Mr. Wheeler remembered. That was the local name for them. All bad winds had local names and bad writers always became literary about them. He had resisted this. . . he refused to use the foreign word for this wind. There had been too much bad literature made about the foreign names for winds and he knew too many of those names. Mr. Wheeler was writing in longhand because he did not wish to uncover the typewriter in the Lenten wind.

A phone call arrives from the son which mirrors the call from

the doctor in its obtuseness and deception, as the son assures Mr. Wheeler that he is doing well, but it is apparent to the reader that the opposite is true. And then, in the last few lines of the story, an interesting change takes place.

"Hi Papa," Stephen said in a hoarse voice. "I'm fine Papa really fine. This is the time. I've really got this thing beat now. You have no idea. I've really got a grasp of reality now. Dr. Simpson? Oh, he's fine. I really have confidence in him. . . . Everything's fine really. Glad everything's so good with you. This time I've really got the answer. Well we mustn't waste money on the telephone. Give my love to everyone. Good-bye Papa. See you soon."

"Stevie sent you his best," I said to the houseboy.

He smiled happily, remembering the old days.

"That's nice of him. How is he?"

"Fine," I said. "He says everything is fine."

Suddenly the person of the narrator changes from third to first. It becomes obvious that the narrator of the story has been Mr. Wheeler himself and that, in light of the events, he has decided to own up to his own deception with the reader. This is to say that he has decided that he has become "too literary" about the "hot air" of the doctor and his son, as "bad writers" become "too literary" about the hot air of the "Lenten wind," and that through a shift into first person he atones for his own "hot air"--the story. It has been dramatically established that "hot air" is destructive and the narrator, in his final act, dissociates himself from that destruction, thereby negating the voices of the son and his doctor and their version of the events.

In terms of making the story appear real or true (and these terms are synonymous for Hemingway), the shift into first person

has succeeded, but this story also has a level of implied meaning. What does the narrator's final act suggest about the clarity of his own voice? Certainly a son in a psychiatric hospital suggests a father who has failed somehow. Is this narrative act another instance of that failure? The end of the story implies that it is the father who has failed the son rather than (as it appears to suggest) the son who has failed the father. More importantly, however, in either case, the last lines of the story focus attention on the narrator.

In any first person presentation, the narrator must be one of the reader's primary concerns. Yet, for the most part, this has been ignored in Hemingway criticism, especially with reference to these first novels. Part of the problem is, of course, the way we approach fiction. Mark Schorer has lamented that

[m]odern criticism has shown us that to speak of content as such is not to speak of art at all, but of experience; and that it is only when we speak of the *achieved* content, the form, the work of art as a work of art, that we speak as critics. The difference between content, or experience, and achieved content, or art, is technique. When we speak of technique, then, we speak of nearly everything. . . . We are no longer able to regard as seriously intended criticism of poetry which does not assume these generalizations; but the case for fiction has not yet been established.⁴

Hemingway was aware of the absurdity of this situation and, as early as 1925, tried to tell us. In a letter to Horace Liveright, his publisher at the time, he claimed that his stories were "written so tight and so hard that the alteration

⁴Mark Schorer as quoted by Wallace Martin, Recent Theories of Narrative (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 10.

of a word [could] throw an entire story out of key."⁵ He was, however, ignored and as he became, in later life, the worst enemy of his own credibility, other such admonitions were disregarded. It is time we began to listen. Fortunately, recent developments in critical theory have exposed the intricacies of fiction and, as biographical biases are being challenged by close readings of the texts, we are able to approach Hemingway's aesthetics and his work in a fresh manner.

To begin with, a novel or short story (any act of story-telling) is a communication. Even if one is to concentrate solely on content (as in the traditional novels of the nineteenth century), one has to assume that there is a reason for the telling. H.G. Wells, "in the tradition of Charles Dickens, saw the novel as the vehicle of understanding, the instrument of self-examination, the parade of morals and exchange of manners, the factory of customs, the criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogma and ideas."⁶ Aristotle distinguished between tragedy and comedy as "representing men" as "better" or "worse than in actual life."⁷ Implied is a communication of social or moral standards. What is more, both these examples suggest the rhetorical function of literature--that the story is told for a reason other than to entertain. Recent theories of fiction, studies of narrative,

⁵Ernest Hemingway, Selected Letters 1917-1961, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), p. 154.

⁶H.G. Wells as interpreted by Martin, p. 20.

⁷Aristotle, The Poetics, II.4.

have emphasized this rhetorical function by concentrating on how a story is told. According to Chatman, structuralist theory "argues that each narrative has two parts: a story. . . , the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and a discourse. . . , that is, the expression, the means by which the content is communicated. In simple terms, the story is the *what* in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the *how*."⁸ Narrative, then, can be seen as a relation between events and their recounting. The emphasis of narrative theory seems to be on the recounting, but it must be stressed that a poetic that highlights the means of presentation rather than the objects or events of imitation does not discount those objects or events. On the contrary, story details become even more significant as we become aware of their specific arrangement and the degree to which they are emphasized. In fact, this poetic is an attempt at a synthesis of the two parts of narrative; ultimately what amounts to a complete view. "No part of [a] work," according to Tvetzan Todorov, "can be declared a priori to lack signification."⁹ And, it is reasonable to expect that a new reading that emphasizes discourse as well as story will give us grounds for new interpretation. "By changing the definition of what is being studied," argues Martin, "we change what we

⁸Chatman, p. 19.

⁹Tvetzan Todorov, The Poetics of Prose, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 240.

see."¹⁰

With respect to Hemingway's fiction, critics have tended to concentrate on story rather than discourse. *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* have been the focus of discussions of the "lost generation," the effects of World War I, the Hemingway "code" and existential philosophy. The discourse of these texts has been virtually ignored except in studies of style.¹¹ Narrative theory is not concerned with mere style. It suggests that we have been overlooking a major part of the fictional equation; that we have failed to understand the poetics of prose; that what we have considered random and haphazard is, in fact, orchestrated and intricately constructed. It suggests that a proper understanding of any fiction cannot be achieved unless a full consideration is given both of story and of discourse.

Narrative theory posits a vast rhetoric of fiction, an intricate discourse that comprises the complicated construction of story. It suggests that when we find in the works (as we find in these two Hemingway novels) a complex structure of telling that orchestrates the story rather more than is necessitated by

¹⁰Martin, p. 15.

¹¹Jackson J. Benson, "Hemingway Criticism: Getting at the Hard Questions," Hemingway: A Revaluation, ed. Donald R. Noble (Troy, N.Y.: The Whitston Publishing Company, 1983), p. 38. Benson points out that only Earl Rovit, Delbert E. Wylder and Sheldon Norman Grebstein have attempted thorough studies of the narrative structure of Hemingway's work. Yet, in spite of these dated attempts, the "tricky disguises and complex forms of the Hemingway persona still baffle us," Benson claims. These three critics are extensively cited later in this discussion.

the events, we should assume that the writer is drawing our attention to that telling. Certainly by foregrounding the teller, a first person narrative presentation draws our attention to the telling, but this is only an extreme example of the way the discourse directs or manipulates the reader. Narrative theory suggests that a sophisticated artifice of rhetoric, which can only be discovered in the way the narrative statement is presented, is employed in every fictional discourse.

As to this presentation, there would seem to be more than two choices; in fact, there would seem to be a variety of choices based on a scale that runs from direct presentation, what Chatman calls "a kind of overhearing by the audience," to indirect presentation or "mediated narration [which]. . .presumes a more or less express communication from narrator to audience." This "is essentially Plato's distinction between mimesis and diegesis, in modern terms between showing and telling."¹² In literature, however there is never a state of pure mimesis. The illusion that the scene unfolds before the reader's eyes is based on the degree of the narrating voice. As Wayne Booth argues in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, "the author cannot choose to avoid rhetoric; he can only choose the kind of rhetoric he will employ."¹³ The forms the author's voice can

¹²Chatman, p. 46.

¹³Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 149.

take are almost infinite as both Chatman and Booth indicate,¹⁴ and, as Chatman stresses, "insofar as there is telling, there must be a teller."¹⁵

The notion of the teller, or narrator, is axiomatic to the theory of discourse and the degree to which this device is exploited is critical to the understanding of the narrative. The extent and force of manipulation exerted upon us as readers may not always be apparent, but we are usually aware of some kind of narrative voice. This awareness becomes most acute with respect to the person of the narrator. Recent theorists have shown the inadequacy of the classification of narrators into the first and third person, as well as the use of such comprehensive terms as subjective and omniscient narration. In terms of what they reveal about narrative situations, these classifications are distracting. In an effort to be more precise, Gerard Genette expands and refines the term "point of view," suggesting as an alternative three types of "focalization" that describe three basic, but not comprehensive, narrative situations based on the knowledge shared by narrators and their characters. Genette's emphasis on the focus of the narrative divides between "narrators who know more than their characters" (non-focalized narrative), narrators who say "only what a given character knows" (internal focalization) and narrators who say "less than

¹⁴See Chatman, Chapters 4 & 5 or Booth, Part II, Chapters VII, VIII & IX.

¹⁵Chatman, p. 146.

the character knows" (external focalization).¹⁶ While Hemingway, of course, was unaware of these particular critical classifications, it can be demonstrated that he understood the suasive nature of the narrative situations described by Genette and that he was fully aware of the rhetorical power of discourse.

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of the movement of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing.¹⁷

In the "iceberg theory," Hemingway acknowledges the writer's ability to command the reader's participation in the discourse by playing with his need to understand. The omissions or gaps in the narrative satisfy this need in a way that ensures reader involvement. Hemingway's narratives hinge on this ability to invite the reader to help *write* the story, which is a sophisticated manipulation of the reader's attention and a masterful use of the rhetoric of discourse.

The remarks that open this discussion confirm that Hemingway was also fully aware of the unique rhetorical function of a first person presentation. The logistics of this kind of presentation, the special effects available to the writer, have

¹⁶Gerard Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 189.

¹⁷Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 192.

long been conceived of in terms dominated by the notion of reliability. While this function of the narrator is of the utmost importance, it is only a symptom of a much larger issue. Any first person narration is dependent completely upon filtering the discourse through a single consciousness. Reliability is only one aspect of that consciousness. Other possibilities are as infinite as the behavioral possibilities of any *real* person. It follows that to understand a first person narrative, one must understand the narrator. This becomes particularly critical in Modernist texts where, more often than not, the emphasis is on character. "Modern art narrative," claims Chatman, "depends on the convention of the uniqueness of the individual."¹⁸

With respect to Hemingway, it is not unreasonable to suggest that character *is* story in a first person presentation. Certainly both *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* hinge entirely on their protagonist/narrators. Both Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry are concerned with autobiographical events that profoundly affect their lives, and both feel the need to relate these events, yet for profoundly different reasons. Their acts of narration entirely concern themselves, and the understanding of their stories depends entirely on understanding them. In each case, in order to judge the meaning of the events, we must judge the narrators. In order to do that, we must evaluate their actions, and the only act they commit that we can be sure of (to

¹⁸Chatman, p. 113.

briefly return to the notion of reliability) is their act of narration. Therefore, their telling of the story becomes crucial to our understanding of it. To paraphrase Jean Pouillon, the only way we know these narrators is through the images they develop. We "apprehend [them] as we apprehend ourselves in our immediate awareness of things, our attitudes with respect to what surrounds us."¹⁹

Yet, not only must we concern ourselves with the images developed, but with how they are developed (in terms of syntax, omission, repetition, understatement, mis-statement, implication, etc.), in other words, with the narrator's rhetoric. As critics, we must seek out the "things that [we] did not notice when [we] read the story" the first time, in order to complete the iceberg. In other words, we must accept our role in the writing of the story.

In order to do this properly (in deference to our communication model), we must work on two levels. Just as there are levels of sending the message (author, narrator), there are levels of receiving the message (narratee, reader).²⁰ One of the roles we accept when we begin to read is that of the addressee of the narrator--the narratee. As narratees, we accept the fictional narrative as real, treating the events as if they *really happened* and the narrator as if he *really existed*. As

¹⁹Jean Pouillon as quoted by Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, p. 193.

²⁰This simplifies the communication model as suggested by Booth and detailed by Martin, p. 154.

Hemingway suggests above, this is only possible if the story is "made so real" that "the person who is reading [it] believes that the things [could have] happened to him too" (which appears to be the basis of Pouillon's remark). One assumes that any lasting work of literature does this. The effect of this "serious pretending"²¹ is to allow us not only to accept the *what* (the story) of the narrative, but to allow the second act of narrative receiving to occur--that of the reader. Having accepted the fictional narrative as sincere in our role as narratees, we function within the fictional world as one of the characters, yet, at the same time, we maintain our own identities, distinct from this fictional world, as readers. As readers, our job is to determine the meaning of the act of literature, to understand the illusion, seeking its methods, discovering its poetics. Ultimately, our job is to uncover its *why*. To do this we must concentrate on its *how*, its discourse.

This approach to these two early Hemingway novels would seem more legitimate than a thematic or philosophic consideration. Indeed, it will more accurately identify theme and textual philosophy. When the attempt is made to "make" stories that are "real beyond any reality," it seems likely that the author (particularly this author) considers himself to be dealing with some fundamental human truth. The reader is meant to uncover that truth and when he is invited into the text in a specific manner, as he is when he discovers a first person narrator, he

²¹Term suggested by Martin, p. 181.

must accept that invitation. Ernest Hemingway *chose* a first person presentation in these two narratives for a specific reason. Of that, there can be no doubt. It is the first clue to the meaning of the texts, the first directional marker toward that fundamental truth. Turning to the novels, we must concentrate on *truly* knowing these two narrators, starting with the only fact we have--their discourse. Only by paying particular attention to the pictures these protagonists paint of themselves and the emphasis and arrangement they give to the details of the story, can we begin to properly interpret the texts.

Since this operation involves a very close scrutiny of textual details, it is necessary to quote at length from the texts. Since this is cumbersome, I have attempted to keep it to a minimum, quoting only those passages that have received little critical attention, those which I felt were required for reference by the reader in order to follow the discussion or those that are necessary for emphasis.

CHAPTER II

THE SUN ALSO RISES

At the beginning of the original Chapter II of *The Sun Also Rises*, part of what was cut from the beginning of the novel at Scott Fitzgerald's suggestion, Jake Barnes discusses his decision to tell his story in the first person, stressing his discovery that to be objective is impossible.

I did not want to tell this story in the first person but I find that I must. I wanted to stay well outside of the story so that I would not be touched by it in any way, and handle all the people in it with that irony and pity that are so essential to good writing. I even thought I might be amused by all the things that are going to happen to Lady Brett Ashley and Mr. Robert Cohn and Michael Campbell, Esq., and Mr. Jake Barnes. But I made the unfortunate mistake, for a writer, of first having been Mr. Jake Barnes. So it is not going to be splendid and cool and detached after all. "What a pity!" as Brett used to say.¹

In these deleted pages, and in the final version of the novel, Jake only occasionally addresses the reader directly about his act of narrative. Each time he does so, as for example when he questions his attempt to present Robert Cohn "clearly" (p. 45), he returns to the personal effects of the events. In each instance there is an implied warning to the reader to be wary of accepting completely a version of these events that is so highly charged subjectively.

Yet, at the same time, this constant reiteration of his awareness of the danger of producing a self-serving narrative

¹Svoboda, p. 34.

gainsays, in fact abandons, any such notion. The one undeniable characteristic of Jake Barnes is his self-effacement, a condition that borders on self-reproach. This characteristic indicates his desire to be as objective and as honest as possible. He constantly emphasizes his disgust with the way he has acted, as for example when he first begins to treat Cohn badly.

"It's from them," I said. I put it in my pocket. Ordinarily I should have handed it over.

"They've stopped over in San Sebastian," I said. "Send their regards to you."

Why I felt that impulse to devil him I do not know. Of course I do know. I was blind, unforgivingly jealous of what had happened to him. The fact that I took it as a matter of course did not alter that any. I certainly did hate him. I do not think I ever really hated him until he had that little spell of superiority at lunch--that and when he went through all that barbering. So I put the telegram in my pocket. The telegram came to me, anyway. (p. 99)

This passage demonstrates why Jake is concerned about the honesty of his story. Even in remembering the incident, he feels the rage he felt at the time. The uncharacteristic use of the two qualifiers, "blind, unforgivingly," attests to the intensity of the emotion remembered. The final sentence, repeating the information of the first paragraph, unnecessary except as a justification in the present of this action of the past, confirms an emotional intensity that still rages within. His effort to present the facts competes with his anger.

Critics have often noted Jake's intelligence, honesty and objectivity² in telling his story, but they have not realized

²For example see Delbert E. Wylder, Hemingway's Heroes (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), p. 34 & 39

that it is an intelligence compromised, an honesty qualified and an objectivity often thwarted by emotion. It seems apparent that Jake's narrative comes close upon the heel of the events.³ Their profound effect on him is obvious, but what may not be as obvious is that he is still coming to terms with them. He has understood them intellectually but is not yet emotionally fit to deal with this story. There are things he cannot bring himself to discuss *directly* because the emotional wounds are still too raw and there is a great deal of misplaced anger. Therefore, we get a rather incomplete, but not inaccurate, picture. On the contrary, if we examine his discourse with this in mind, we discover through instances of idiosyncratic syntax (as in the example above) or juxtaposition, repetition, omission, understatement and irony a very accurate picture. In addition, an examination of story details, with a special emphasis on those that have received little critical attention, seems to confirm this assessment, suggesting that nothing is superfluous or unintentional; that the *whole* story contributes to the meaning. And always, it is how the story is told, the focus of the representation of the events, that must be considered, especially when that focus is as constantly shifting as it is in *The Sun Also Rises*.

²(cont'd) or Scott Donaldson, "Humour" in *The Sun Also Rises*, "New Essays on *The Sun Also Rises*", ed. Linda Wagner-Martin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 26.

³See Sheldon Norman Grebstein, *Hemingway's Craft* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), p. 72.

This novel runs the gamut of Genette's proposed scheme of narrative focus. Jake, as we have seen, occasionally addresses the reader directly, establishing that as narrator he has a clearer understanding of the events than he had when they occurred (nonfocalized narrative). However, he usually attempts a dramatic presentation of the events, focusing them through the limited understanding of his former self (in his role as hero), giving the illusion of the immediacy of these events (internal focalization). Yet, more often than not, in keeping with Hemingway's "iceberg" theory, this narrator chooses to say less than he knows either as narrator or hero, adopting what has been called a laconic style (external focalization).

In examining instances of this laconic style (which, we must remember, is not absolute), we should consider Genette's dictum: "narrative always says less than it knows, but it often makes known more than it says."⁴ Not only should we pay particular attention to what is and is not said but, more than that, to what is indicated, for a large part of this laconism is a characteristic use of sarcasm and understatement. Jake's original desire for "irony and pity" must not be taken lightly. As Svoboda notes, the "adoption," in *The Sun Also Rises*, of a first person presentation "was in contrast to the third-person presentation of most of [Hemingway's] earlier stories, moving him away from a 'splendid and cool and detached' stance. He balanced that movement carefully in his acute consciousness of

⁴Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, p. 198.

the role of irony as a balance, thus ensuring that Jake Barnes's telling of *The Sun Also Rises* [would] not become so subjective as to imperil the truthfulness of the presentation."⁵ What Svoboda does not make clear is that Jake is not only ironic with respect to his former self (as hero), but that he is careful (as in the telegram example above) to extend this irony to his present self (as narrator). To find it necessary to claim "not" to know, even though he admits immediately that he does know (why he felt the impulse to "devil" Cohn), indicates that he still is reluctant to let those emotions go; that he still cannot be objective. It also indicates that he is willing to admit this subjectivity (by example), sharing it with his readers. In effect, Jake is being meticulously honest with the reader about his inability to be objective, and that admission confirms his overall objectivity--his concern for accuracy and his lack of self-aggrandizement. Jake is more concerned with what the story means than how it makes him look. The central message of *The Sun Also Rises* is embedded in Jake's fight with himself to be honest, in his effort to understand.

For example, readers often assume that Jake has always disliked Robert Cohn and that he only grows to dislike him more, but a careful reading of Book I must dispel this notion. Indeed, Jake all but admits this in the "telegram" passage above--"I do not think I ever really hated him until. . ."--an admission that is usually ignored. In Book I, the effort to portray Cohn in a

⁵Svoboda, p. 113.

despicable light is at odds with the facts--Jake, aware of Cohn's faults, is his friend in spite of them, in fact, he seems genuinely to care for him. The last episode of the first chapter establishes this as the state of the relationship. After witnessing Cohn's henpecking at the hands of Frances, Jake commiserates with his friend, taking pity on him.

I said good-night and went out. Cohn said he wanted to buy a paper and would walk to the corner with me.

"For God's sake," he said, "why did you say that about that girl in Strasbourg for? Didn't you see Frances?"

"No, why should I? If I know an American girl that lives in Strasbourg what the hell is it to Frances?"

"It doesn't make any difference. Any girl. I couldn't go, that would be all."

"Don't be silly."

"You don't know Frances. Any girl at all. Didn't you see the way she looked?"

"Oh, well," I said, "let's go to Senlis."

"Don't get sore."

"I'm not sore. Senlis is a good place and we can stay at the Grand Cerf and take a hike in the woods and come home."

"Good, that will be fine."

"Well, I'll see you to-morrow at the courts," I said.

"Good-night, Jake," he said, and started back to the cafe."

"You forgot to get your paper," I said."

"That's so." He walked with me up to the kiosque at the corner. "You are not sore, are you, Jake?" He turned with the paper in his hand.

"No, why should I be?"

"See you at tennis," he said. I watched him walk back to the cafe holding his paper. I rather liked him and evidently she led him quite a life. (p. 6-7)

Jake's response--"Oh well. . .let's go to Senlis"--indicates a lack of self-interest and a concern for Cohn's situation. In spite of the fact that the whole scene has not only gone against his practical grain, but irritated it ("If I know an American girl. . .what the *hell* is it to Frances?"), Jake does not take this irritation out on Cohn. That his response to Cohn is "Oh,

well" instead of Oh, hell (it seems apparent that the two words are meant to play off each other) indicates a softening of attitude, anger that is not misdirected and an empathy for his friend. For his part, Cohn is concerned about Jake being "sore," but Jake is "not sore" and good-naturedly assures him that Senlis is a "good place," too. Even the reminder that Cohn "forgot" to get his paper which is slightly, but not disdainfully, ironic indicates Jake's regard for his friend. The last line drives the themes of this passage home.

Yet, Jake has begun his story with an attempt to discredit Cohn, indeed with a vituperative attack on Cohn. Critics have questioned this odd beginning,⁶ but when one understands how badly that attack fails and how closely Jake's relationship with Cohn is tied to his relationship with Brett and the cathartic events of the novel, one begins to see Cohn and this beginning differently. Through his affair with Brett, Cohn forces Jake to confront his relationship with her, instigating the emotional crisis he is forced to undergo. For the narrator, Cohn is a scapegoat--the object, not the source of his anger. In beginning his story, Jake returns to the beginning of the chain of events and to the person who incited this emotional storm.

I mistrust all frank and simple people, especially
when their stories hold together, and I always had a
suspicion that perhaps Robert Cohn had never been

⁶Linda Wagner-Martin, "Introduction," New Essays on *The Sun Also Rises*, p. 12. Wagner-Martin claims the critical consensus about this beginning was that it was a "brilliant 'new' way of bringing. . . reader[s] into the text. . . by keeping them guessing."

middleweight boxing champion, and that perhaps a horse had stepped on his face, or that maybe his mother had been frightened or seen something, or that he had, maybe, bumped into something as a young child, but I finally had somebody verify the story from Spider Kelly. Spider Kelly not only remembered Cohn. He had often wondered what had become of him. (p. 4)

This initial attempt to undermine Cohn is only partially successful. To begin with, the verb betrays the speaker. "I always had a suspicion," instead of I always suspected, implies that in these remarks made after the fact, the "suspicion" is also after the fact. The use of the passive voice and the nominal state of this verb suggest that this is something that has been thought about, considered, rather than a spontaneous reaction or feeling. The invective that follows ("perhaps a horse had stepped on his face. . .or. . .his mother had been frightened") implies a subjectivity that throws the veracity of the speaker into doubt, and the whole attempt is itself undermined by the fact that Cohn's story does "hold together." It appears that Jake's need to "mistrust all frank and simple people" is more a desire with respect to Cohn remembered than a fact of Jake's original feeling for him. In his desire to blame Cohn, in his "blind, unforgivingly" harsh jealousy, Jake wants to forget the facts, but he cannot ignore them. It is especially curious that he emphasizes early in the narrative that Cohn has been faithful to Frances ("During two years and a half I do not believe that Robert Cohn looked at another woman. He was fairly happy..."--p. 5). The implication is clear. It is not Cohn, but Jake's unresolved feeling for Brett, that is responsible for the liaison that destroys the friendship between Jake and Robert and

which throws Jake into emotional chaos, and while Jake never directly makes this judgement, the groundwork for it is laid in the implications of the first chapter.

The conflict that Jake feels about portraying Cohn is dramatized further in the second chapter of the novel. When, as a result of reading W.H. Hudson, Robert attempts to talk Jake into going to South America, Jake, despite having to catch "a boat train" with a "week's mail stories, and only half of them written" (p. 9), takes the time to listen to his friend and attempts to save Cohn from his own self-destructive restlessness. Jake says that he "felt sorry for him. He had it badly" and tries to reason with Cohn. Finding that ineffective, he invites him to a cafe for a drink and, in spite of the fact that Jake takes great pains to appear "hard-boiled," pointing out to the reader that this invitation is simply a way he had "discovered" of getting "rid of friends," he does not abandon Cohn in the cafe. When Robert insists on coming back up to the office, Jake's "hard-boiled" intentions dissolve in pity. Yet, in spite of the fact that his actions indicate the contrary, the narrator continues to insist on his "tough-guy" charade.

I went out into the other room and there was Robert Cohn asleep in the big chair. He was asleep with his head on his arms. I did not like to wake him up, but I wanted to lock the office and shove off. I put my hand on his shoulder. He shook his head. "I can't do it," he said, and put his head deeper into his arms. "I can't do it. Nothing will make me do it."

"Robert," I said, and shook him by the shoulder. He looked up. He smiled and blinked. (p. 12)

Jake's desire to "shove off," which attempts to indicate an

unconcerned impatience, is contrasted with his gentle handling of Cohn. The fact that Cohn is "asleep with his head on his arms" evoking a certain boyishness, the fact that Jake "put" his hand on his shoulder and "shook" him rather than grabbing or otherwise gruffly treating him, and the fact that Jake noticed that upon waking Cohn "smiled and blinked" create a tender rather than harsh picture. Jake further communicates this tenderness in admitting his sympathy for Cohn when he remembers that he spent the last night sleepless and "talking"--"I could picture it. I have a rotten habit of picturing the bedroom scenes of my friends."

These first two chapters, devoted almost exclusively to Robert Cohn, emphasize an obvious conflict between what Jake felt and what he now feels. Yet, his apparent inability to resolve that conflict testifies to the fact that he cannot stay "well outside of the story," handling "all the people in it with that irony and pity that are so essential to good writing." In fact, his pity (which will not last) is ironic. As narrator, Jake wants very badly to have originally disliked Robert Cohn, but he did not. It is obvious that in both of his roles, as hero and narrator, Jake says less than he indicates, trying to persuade the reader of one thing while establishing another.

Significantly, the anger that Jake feels about Cohn surfaces in its most blatant form when Jake recounts the first meeting between Cohn and Brett.

He looked a great deal as his compatriot must have looked when he saw the promised land. Cohn, of course, was much younger. But he had that look of eager, deserving expectation. (p. 22)

The scene in the "bal musette" is reported unemotionally until this moment. Even though Jake has remembered feeling anger over Brett's homosexual friends and the pretentious Robert Prentiss, he has not indicated that he still feels that anger in the narrative. But the memory of Cohn's unabashed attraction to Brett, and her encouragement of it, is more than he can bear to remember.

"It's a fine crowd you're with, Brett," I said.
"Aren't they lovely? And you, my dear. Where did you get it?"
"At the Napolitain."
"And have you had a lovely evening?"
"Oh, priceless," I said.
Brett laughed. "It's wrong of you, Jake. It's an insult to all of us. Look at Frances there, and Jo."
This for Cohn's benefit. (p. 22)

The last sentence implies that Brett's explicit sexual innuendo has been directed at titillating Cohn and her subsequent haughty treatment of him only serves to intensify the flirtation. The irony of her reply to Jake's "You've made a new one there," indicating Cohn--"Don't talk about it. Poor chap. I never knew till just now"--is that "just now" can only be a matter of seconds later (p. 22-3). This short scene clearly establishes Brett's character. Up to this point, Jake has presented her as "damned good looking" (p. 22) and sophisticated, a sort of daring, free woman, without condemning her for it. Even his anger at her homosexual friends has only served to make her slightly admirable in a bohemian manner. Only the most prudish

could condemn her for flaunting convention, yet this short scene with Cohn has established not only her blatant egoism but Jake's willingness, even after the fact (as narrator), to blame anyone but Brett for her actions.

This oblique presentation is extended in the balance of the scene.

"Oh, well," I said. "I suppose you like to add them up."

"Don't talk like a fool."

"You do."

"Oh well. What if I do."

"Nothing," I said. We were dancing to the accordion and some one was playing the banjo. It was hot and I felt happy. We passed close to Georgette dancing with another one of them.

"What possessed you to bring her?"

"I don't know, I just brought her."

"You're getting damned romantic."

"No, bored."

"Now?"

"No, not now."

"Let's get out of here. She's well taken care of."

"Do you want to?"

"Would I ask you if I didn't want to?" (p. 23)

Jake's attempt to condemn Brett is short-lived: "It was hot and I felt happy." The assurance that Brett seeks from Jake about his desire for her rather than Georgette, that he is in fact not bored "now," can only be attributed to her constant need for attention, once we learn the facts of their relationship. Brett effectively wraps Jake around her finger in this scene and, in doing so, forces him to disregard her behaviour and gains through implication his approval of her flirtation with Cohn. This first scene with Brett is one of the most revealing in the novel. It indicates the real conflict (and the focus of Jake's narrational anger).

Getting into the taxi with Brett, Jake "slams" the door. The narrative is now dominated by Brett's coquettish behaviour. In spite of the fact that she has "been so miserable" without him and allows him to kiss her, she begs him not to "touch" her because she allegedly "can't stand it." She manipulates Jake into answering his own question: "Isn't there anything we can do about it?" with a silence heightened by the way she "had of looking that made you wonder whether she really saw out of her own eyes"--"And there's not a damn thing we could do," I said. But Jake's desire, once deflated, is immediately aroused again:

"We'd better keep away from each other." [Jake]
"But, darling, I have to see you. It isn't all that you know."

All the while she is "looking into [his] eyes."

Brett even attempts to blame Jake indirectly for her own sluttish behaviour--"When I think of the hell I've put chaps through. I'm paying for it all now." And he does not hesitate to accept the implication, thus indicating his submissiveness:

"Don't talk like a fool," I said. "Besides, what happened to me is supposed to be funny. I never think about it." (p. 26)

Curiously as narrator Jake has not directly commented on the action (except to condemn Cohn), but he has indicated his feelings. We know, for example, how angry he has been (slamming the door) and we can see how enthralled he is with Brett (to the point of excusing her flirtation, excusing her selfish treatment of him and dismissing her excuses). It is ironic and significant that as the scene ends they are sitting "like two strangers" (p.

Critics have often struggled to find redeeming qualities in Brett. Wendy Martin symbolizes this trend most appropriately when she claims that Brett is the "redemptive woman" who tries "to save men through her sexuality,"⁷ but this point of view, as well as those that lean toward it, would seem impossible once one has come to terms with Brett's first scene. Her selfishness, egoism and sadistic sexual domination of Jake is blatant and overwhelming. Yet, Jake himself wants to find her blameless. He has been in love with her and, even though he realizes (as narrator) that she has caused him a great deal of confusion and pain and has used and compromised him, he still cannot condemn her; the dregs of his old passion stand in his way. He can malign Cohn directly and vehemently, but he can only indicate Brett's shortcomings and the anger they have caused and continue to cause. Indeed as he remembers the incidents, he can only recall the pain, remonstrating against *himself*:

This was Brett, that I had felt like crying about. Then I thought of her walking up the street and stepping into the car, as I had last seen her, and of course in a little while I felt like hell again. It is awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the daytime, but at night it is another thing. (p. 34)

The confusion Jake felt as hero and continues to feel as narrator is most apparent in his first conversation with Cohn about Brett. The contradictory emotions experienced at the time indicate the confusion; the contradiction between the events and

⁷Wendy Martin, "Brett Ashley as New Woman in *The Sun Also Rises*," Wagner-Martin, p. 69.

their reporting indicates that this confusion persists.

"She's a remarkably attractive woman."

"Isn't she?"

"There's a certain quality about her, a certain fineness. She seems to be absolutely fine and straight."

"She's very nice."

"I don't know how to describe the quality," Cohn said. "I suppose it's breeding."

"You sound as though you liked her pretty well."

"I do. I shouldn't wonder if I were in love with her."

"She's a drunk," I said. "She's in love with Mike Campbell, and she's going to marry him. He's going to be rich as hell some day."

"I don't believe she'll ever marry him."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. I just don't believe it. Have you known her a long time?"

"Yes," I said. "She was a V.A.D. in a hospital I was in during the war."

"She must have been just a kid then."

"She's thirty-four now."

"When did she marry Ashley?"

"During the war. Her own true love had just kicked off with the dysentery."

"You talk sort of bitter."

"Sorry. I didn't mean to. I was just trying to give you the facts."

"I don't believe she would marry anybody she didn't love."

"Well," I said. "She's done it twice."

"I don't believe it."

"Well," I said, "don't ask me a lot of fool questions if you don't like the answers."

"I didn't ask you that."

"You asked me what I knew about Brett Ashley."

"I didn't ask you to insult her."

"Oh, go to hell."

He stood up from the table his face white, and stood there white and angry behind the little plates of hors d'oeuvres.

"Sit down," I said. "Don't be a fool."

"You've got to take that back."

"Oh, cut out the prep-school stuff."

"Take it back."

"Sure. Anything. I never heard of Brett Ashley. How's that?"

"No. Not that. About me going to hell."

"Oh, don't go to hell," I said. "Stick around. We're just starting lunch."

Cohn smiled again and sat down. He seemed glad to sit down. What the hell would he have done if he hadn't sat

down? "You say such damned insulting things, Jake."

"I'm sorry. I've got a nasty tongue. I never mean it when I say nasty things."

"I know it," Cohn said. "You're really about the best friend I have, Jake."

God help you, I thought. "Forget what I said," I said out loud. "I'm sorry." (p. 38-9)

To begin with, Jake's remark, "she's very nice," is characteristically understated and ironic. This tendency to sarcasm, that seems always to be lost on everyone except the reader, is absolutely crucial to understanding Jake's nature and, once understood, throws the last pages of the novel into a radical new light. The striking feature of this scene, however, is Jake's emphasis on not blaming Cohn for his (or Cohn's) feelings. At least twice (and perhaps three times, if the last time is not seen as rising and falling) he gets bitter and angry. Cohn accuses Jake of talking "bitter" and Jake immediately apologizes, perhaps realizing the feeling he is experiencing should not be taken out on Cohn. Next, he becomes impatient, snapping at Cohn to not ask a "lot of fool questions," then genuinely angry, telling Cohn to "go to hell." When Cohn reacts immaturely, Jake seems to realize the immaturity of his own anger and defuses the situation. The remark, "Oh, don't go to hell. . .stick around. We're just starting lunch" is a total withdrawal. Such a remark indicates that not even a residue of anger remains in Jake (as hero), but the narrational remarks in the next paragraph--"He seemed glad to sit down. What the hell would he have done if he hadn't sat down?"--again seem Jake's attempt (as narrator) to cloak the situation in a "hard-boiled" light.

The dramatic events, however, do not substantiate this. An unnecessary and elaborate apology immediately follows that contains one of the most directly self-effacing comments (directed in this case to the reader) that Jake has made so far in the novel. "God help you, I thought," establishes Jake's refusal to be angry with Cohn, no matter which way it is interpreted--as an accurate portrayal of the hero's feelings or as a comment after the fact by the narrator--and may suggest the depths of self-condemnation to which Jake, as narrator, has sunk. But the elaborateness of the final long apology to Cohn is what is most revealing. "I'm sorry. I've got a nasty tongue. I never mean it when I say nasty things," seems at this point entirely in character. Jake's first impulse is not to blame others, as when he had not blamed Cohn for the henpecking of Frances or when he had refused to blame Brett for her behaviour. Jake wants to understand, not simply avoid a scene, because he can empathize with everyone. Ultimately, it is his own good nature and this propensity for giving others the benefit of the doubt that gets him into trouble.

Perhaps the most significant and most misunderstood action in the novel occurs in the scene where Brett and the Count visit Jake in his apartment. Standard accounts of this scene deal with the Count's value system or Brett's remark that he is "one of us," but it holds *the* ultimate (and neglected) key to the novel--the key to Jake's relationship with Brett and the conclusive key to Brett's sense of morality.

"What's the matter, darling? Do you feel rocky?"
 She kissed me coolly on the forehead.
 "Oh, Brett, I love you so much."
 "Darling," she said. Then: "Do you want me to send him away?"
 "No. He's nice."
 "I'll send him away."
 "No, don't."
 "Yes, I'll send him away."
 "You can't just like that."
 "Can't I though? You stay here. He's mad about me, I tell you."
 She was gone out of the room. I lay face down on the bed. I was having a bad time. I heard them talking but I did not listen. Brett came in and sat on the bed.
 "Poor old darling." She stroked my head.
 "What did you say to him?" I was lying with my face away from her. I did not want to see her.
 "Sent him for champagne. He loves to go for champagne."
 Then later: "Do you feel better, darling? Is the head any better?"
 "It's better."
 "Lie quiet. He's gone to the other side of town."
 "Couldn't we just live together, Brett? Couldn't we just live together?"
 "I don't think so. I'd just tromper you with everybody. You couldn't stand it."
 "I stand it now."
 "That would be different. It's my fault, Jake. It's the way I'm made." (p. 54-5)

The curious omission indicated by the remark "Then later:" should be a source of concern for any reader. It has been proposed that what has been omitted is an explicit sexual act. Kenneth S. Lynn, in his recent biography of Hemingway, claims that though "there is no way to be utterly positive. . .about Hemingway's meaning, . . .the implication is fairly clear that. . .Jake remains capable of achieving a degree of satisfaction through oral sex, and that Brett has been a most willing mangeuse."⁸ It has been established by the Plimpton

⁸Kenneth S. Lynn, Hemingway (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p. 324.

interview⁹ and in Hemingway's correspondence that Jake retains his testicles:

It came from a personal experience in that when I had been wounded at one time there had been an infection from pieces of wool cloth being driven into the scrotum. Because of this I got to know other kids who had genito urinary wounds and I wondered what a man's life would have been like after that if his penis had been lost and his testicles and spermatocord remained intact. I had known a boy that had happened to. So I took him and made him a foreign correspondent in Paris and, inventing, tried to find out what his problems would be. . . .¹⁰

It seems likely that if Jake is an eunuch he would not care about Brett's infidelities, would not feel any sexual jealousy, and it is a medical fact that even without a penis certain forms of sexual stimulation (as Lynn suggests) will produce what amounts to an orgasm for a man.¹¹ Jake's position on the bed is also a matter of curiosity in light of the bisexual flavour of the bizarre sex scenes in the newly published *The Garden of Eden*. Twice emphasized is that he lay "face down," with his "face away from her," and it is obvious that if she asks if he feels "better" something not unpleasant has occurred. Such an interpretation throws into doubt the theory that Brett suffers an existential anguish over Jake's inability to consummate their love, and therefore becomes a nymphomaniac. After all, it is not

⁹George Plimpton, "The Art of Fiction: Ernest Hemingway," Conversations with Ernest Hemingway, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), p. 120. Hemingway states in this interview that Jake's "testicles were intact and not damaged. . .; he was not emasculated."

¹⁰Ernest Hemingway, Selected Letters 1917-1961, p. 745 (to Thomas Bledsoe, 1951).

¹¹Bickford Sylvester, "Misuses of Psychoanalysis in Criticism," a paper given at the Hemingway Festival, Malaspina College, Nanaimo, B.C. on May 12, 1988.

hard to imagine a mutually satisfying sexual act, especially in terms of partners who appear to have discovered alternatives to what can be considered the limitations of heterosexuality. Further to this notion is Brett's nonchalant, nonsensical self-excusing in the balance of the scene. The fact that she would just "tromper" Jake with everyone else has nothing to do (as Jake assumes it does) with his ability to "tromper" her (using the word in the sense of its implications for a non-French speaking reader, rather than in its literal sense). After all, she does that with Mike and we have no evidence of any sexual disfunction on his part. There is more truth in her statement that "it's the way [she's] made" than Jake, as hero not narrator, realizes, or she intends.

This evidence must further challenge any interpretation that finds redeeming qualities in Brett's character and indicates that the novel be considered from a new angle--one which concentrates solely on Jake as the beneficiary or victim of the events. It also challenges the generally accepted notion that Jake Barnes is Hemingway's version of the fisher king and that *The Sun Also Rises* is his rendition of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.¹² Because of the intellectual climate of the time, Hemingway's friendship with Pound and the disillusion of the post-war generation, this notion fits the novel very conveniently, but it also seems to presuppose, on the surface at

¹²See Philip Young, "*The Sun Also Rises*: A Commentary," Studies in *The Sun Also Rises*, ed. William White (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969), p. 86-90 or Malcolm Cowley, "Commencing with the Simplest Things," also in White, p. 91-106.

least, that Hemingway was riding a popular wave. Whether that is or is not the case (and, this writer is skeptical), it is possible that Hemingway intended that his novel reflect multiple levels of meaning; that the connection to this popular metaphor was oblique rather than direct, and that he took advantage of this facet of his story only in terms of the expanded meaning it allowed. After all, his short stories of the time are multifaceted and multi-leveled.

Lee Thorn has also recently pointed out that "if the wound and its implications had been the real subject of the novel, [the] joint realization of Brett and Jake [that sex is essential to a relationship, which occurs in their first taxi scene] and the consequent impossibility of dramatic build or tension would have ended the novel [there]."¹³

One of the most critically discussed scenes in the novel is the conversation with Count Mippipopolous about values. Earl Rovit's account of this scene¹⁴ is possibly the critical standard. Rovit sees the Count as Jake's "tutor" and the deliberation on values as most significant in terms of the philosophy of the novel. (Significantly, Rovit also pays homage to the fisher king in his discussion.) This interpretation seems to have permanently set the tone for critical inspection of this

¹³Lee Thorn, " *The Sun Also Rises*: Good Manners Make Good Art," The Hemingway Review, Vol. VIII, No. 1, (Fall 1988), 42-49, p. 45.

¹⁴Earl Rovit, " *The Sun Also Rises*: An Essay in Applied Principles," White, p. 58-72.

scene, but it ignores what is most striking, which is not the content of the discussion, but the actions of the characters. The Count, whose intentions toward Brett are obvious, seems genuinely to come to like Jake. Brett begins to become jealous at not being the center of attention any longer, jealous at Jake and the Count actually enjoying each other's company without needing her to mediate. Several of her remarks indicate her growing irritation:

"Doesn't anything ever happen to your values?" Brett asked.

"No. Not any more."

"Never fall in love?"

"Always," said the count. "I'm always in love."

"What does that do to your values?"

"That, too, has got a place in my values."

"You haven't any values. You're dead, that's all."

"No, my dear. You're not right. I'm not dead at all." . . .

"Have another brandy," the count said.

"Get it on the hill."

"No. Have it here where it is quiet."

"You and your quiet," said Brett. "What is it men feel about quiet?"

"We like it," said the count. "Like you like noise, my dear." (p. 61)

In both of these instances Brett is effectively put in her place and unable to take her frustration out on the Count, turns it on Jake, first flirting with the drummer while dancing and then, coquetry turning to malice, subjecting Jake to gratuitous cruelty.

"You are a rotten dancer, Jake. Michael's the best dancer I know."

"He's splendid."

"He's got his points."

"I like him," I said. "I'm damned fond of him."

"I'm going to marry him," Brett said. "Funny. I haven't thought about him for a week."

"Don't you write him?"

"Not I. Never write letters."
"I'll bet he writes to you."
"Rather. Damned good letters, too."
"When are you going to get married?"
"How do I know? As soon as we can get the divorce.
Michael's trying to get his mother to put up for it."
"Could I help you?"
"Don't be an ass. Michael's people have loads of
money." (p. 62-3)

The innuendo of Brett's remark about Michael's "points" is obvious. Equally obvious is her carefree attitude about Michael, which is intended either to shock or anger Jake. For his part, Jake plays the fawning sycophant, suffering the same kind of indignities that he witnessed Cohn suffer at the hands of Frances (Jake wondered at the time how Cohn could "take it") and, like Cohn, he takes it.

Brett becomes even angrier when the Count will not dance with her and (realizing that she is on the verge of losing the absolute attention of both men, Jake because she has been cruel and the Count because he sees through her) she salvages the one liaison she can always be sure of.

"Come on. Let's dance." Brett said.
We danced. It was crowded and close.
"Oh, darling," Brett said, "I'm so miserable."
"I had that feeling of going through something that has all happened before. "You were happy a minute ago."
The drummer shouted: "You can't two time----"
"It's all gone."
"What's the matter?"
"I don't know. I just feel terribly."
"....." the drummer chanted. Then to his sticks.
"Want to go?"
I had the feeling as in a nightmare of it all being something repeated, something I had been through and that now I must go through again.
"....." the drummer sang softly.
"Let's go," said Brett. "You don't mind."
"....." the drummer shouted and grinned at Brett.
"All right," I said. We got out from the crowd. (p. 63-4)

As the narrational comments indicate, Brett's manipulation does not fool Jake but, true to form, he acquiesces. What must be the lewdness of the drummer's sexual remarks (the drummer who "turned to his sticks") engulfs the scene and underscores Jake's nightmare. He takes Brett home, she protests (too much) against his coming up and *he* apologizes to her.

"Good night, Brett," I said. "I'm sorry you feel rotten." (p. 65)

That Jake, as narrator, is unaware of Brett's selfishness and cruelty, and his own naivete, is an unfathomable idea. It is apparent by the narrational comments that at the time he was not unaware of what was happening, but that then he could not act on his knowledge.

Indeed, the conflicting feelings of the narrator, his concerns about being unable "to stay well outside of the story," vanish in Book II. It is as if, in remembering and recording the preliminary events, Jake's original anger has been re-engaged. The bitterness of the hero extends to the narrator, a fact, however, that does not seem to escape him (as narrator). This is most apparent with respect to Cohn. Suddenly Jake seems less concerned with portraying Cohn "clearly," yet, unwittingly perhaps, he subtly warns the reader about this change.

Jake does not see Cohn again until he meets him with Bill in Bayonne. His first narrational remark about Cohn at that meeting is curious and perhaps tongue in cheek. Jake mentions that Cohn "did not see [them] at first" and that he "was a little

nearsighted," which Jake "had never noticed before" (p. 89). This information, which is never referred to again, is a mystery. Is it possible that Jake is ironically referring to his own narrative in this instance? In remembering these events in which the original emotions are invoked, and in which Jake is never able to feel again the "pity that [is] so essential to good writing" for Cohn, is it Jake's narrational vision that has become impaired?

Whether this is the case or not, Cohn is always referred to disparagingly in the narrative from this point on, often gratuitously.

Cohn made some remark about it being a very good example of something or other, I forget what. (p. 90)

Sitting with Bill, waiting for Cohn, Jake develops a metaphor unmistakable in its implications.

. . .we had the bags sent down and waited for Robert Cohn. While we were waiting I saw a cockroach on the parquet floor that must have been at least three inches long. I pointed him out to Bill and then put my shoe on him. We agreed he must have just come in from the garden. It was really an awfully clean hotel.

Cohn came down, finally. . . (p. 91)

On the way to Pamplona, Jake seems to choose carefully what to remember, to Cohn's detriment.

After a while we came out of the mountains, and there were trees along both sides of the road, and a stream and ripe fields of grain, and the road went on, very white and straight ahead, and then lifted to a little rise, and off on the left was a hill with an old castle, with buildings close around it and a field of grain going right up to the walls and shifting in the wind. I was up in front with the driver and I turned around. Robert Cohn was asleep, but Bill looked and nodded his head. (p. 93)

Bill's almost instant dislike of Cohn is also suspicious. Jake has assured us that Cohn was very "nice," "had a nice, boyish sort of cheerfulness," (p. 45) and has indicated, if not said, that people did not immediately dislike him. But, at this point in the novel, a new impression is given the reader.

Cohn had a wonderful quality of bringing out the worst in anybody. (p. 98)

The narrative has obviously become very subjective, a suspicious subjectivity that the narrator lamely tries to deal with through an odd remark attributed to Bill: ". . .this Robert Cohn. The funny thing is he's nice, too. I like him. But he's just so awful."

This last instance is a clear case of the separation of the perspective and the speaker, what Seymour Chatman calls the "crucial difference between 'point of view' and narrative voice." According to Chatman, "point of view is in the story. . . , but voice is always outside, in the discourse."¹⁵ Janet Holgrem McKay elaborates in a discussion of the "alleged" and the "embedded" speaker. "Every example of indirectly reported speech . . . seems to have the potential of including elements that are the responsibility of the embedded speaker."¹⁶ (And, it is not unreasonable to suggest that even what would normally be considered directly reported or dramatized speech *is* indirectly reported in a first person

¹⁵Chatman, p. 153-4.

¹⁶Janet Holgrem McKay, Narration and Discourse in American Realistic Fiction (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p. 6, 12 & 16.

narrative presentation.) In this case, Jake, aware that his bitterness extends to his narrative, attempts to make reparations through another character. It is now very obvious that the narrator is too emotionally scarred to deal with Cohn fairly; that his narrative voice is not objective. The implication is clear--where Brett is concerned (for she is the reason for this change), we must be very attentive in our reading. Now, more than ever before, the perspective will tell us more than the expression. From this point, we not only have to deal with Jake's "laconic" style, his rather incomplete focalization of events, but with his escalating inability to keep his feelings distinct from the discourse.

There is an hiatus in the discourse from these conflicts with the trip to Burguete and an opening up of the scope of the narrative with a consideration of broader issues. The symbolic importance of this trip has been much discussed in terms of its relationship to other parts of the story, as an oasis of calm for a troubled Jake, in terms of its topical allusions, and more recently in terms of its religious significance.¹⁷ A synthesis of these considerations would seem to establish that the episode is designed to shed further light on the character of the hero and the nature of his conflict. That that conflict is his relationship with Brett and not simply a condition of his wounding is an unavoidable conclusion in light of the dramatic climax of the episode which comes when Bill asks about Brett

¹⁷H.R. Stoneback, "Hemingway and Faulkner on the Road to Roncevaux," Noble, p. 135-64.

(and, again, meaning is discovered in the perspective rather than in the expression).

"Say," Bill said, "what about this Brett business?"
"What about it?"
"Were you ever in love with her?"
"Sure."
"For how long?"
"Off and on for a hell of a long time."
"Oh, hell!" Bill said. "I'm sorry, fella."
"It's all right," I said. "I don't give a damn any more."
"Really?"
"Really. Only I'd a hell of a lot rather not talk about it."
"You aren't sore I asked you?"
"Why the hell should I be?" (p. 123-4)

Again, Jake says less than he means. It is obvious from the fact that he would "a *hell* of a lot rather not talk about it" that he still does give a "damn."

The prelude to the Pamplona festival re-engages and intensifies the conflict with Brett. It is a reasonable assumption that without Brett, the festival would have gone well for everyone. Every complication, every crisis, is the direct result of her presence, either because of her present or past behaviour. Mike's "devilling" of Cohn, "I would have thought you'd loved being a steer, Robert" (p. 141), and the unpleasantness it causes is a direct result of Brett. Cohn, of course, must share the blame, but he is not the source of the irritation that everyone feels, only the target of it.

The steer image itself has been the focus of a great deal of the discussion of the novel and it is worth considering in its context. The first mention of the steer and its function comes

during a conversation between Bill and Jake before they first meet the others in Pamplona.

"Can't the steers do anything?"

"No. They're trying to make friends."

"What do they have them in for?"

"To quiet down the bulls and keep them from breaking their horns against the stone walls, or goring each other." (p. 133)

It is quite possible that it is not Jake who is being evoked by these lines. In the evocation of ineffectuality and obsequiousness, most certainly Cohn comes to mind, but the only person in the group who can be accurately described as unable to "do anything," who is always "trying to make friends" (especially with "bulls") and whose function could literally be to "quiet down the bulls and keep them from breaking their horns. . .or goring each other" is Brett. A sort of sexual flipflop occurs in the symbolism here.¹⁸ If there was ever a female who was defeminized (as steers are males that are emasculated), it is Brett. Her mannish appearance and behaviour have been emphasized since the narrative began.

Yet, something else is going on as well. The steer image, as has been pointed out, is introduced just before Brett, Mike and Cohn appear. The significance of this juxtaposition should not be lost. In their own way, each seems predominantly

¹⁸Kenneth Lynn insists that Hemingway was ambiguous about his own sexuality and that often he deliberately mixed gender in his fiction. According to Lynn, Hemingway implied that Brett "had been modeled on a man." "In her inability to accept Jake as he is and live with him simply because she loves him, in her raging need to fornicate at no matter what cost to the feelings of others, and in her unquenchable unhappiness, *Brett was Hemingway*." (p. 325--emphasis mine.)

other-oriented sexually (Mike, a minor character, is portrayed throughout as ineffective, which reinforces Brett's male-like inclination to domination and power) and to be emasculated or defeminized seems to imply, in this case, that one is not sexually neutral but closer to one's opposite. A clear comparison between Brett and Cohn seems to be intended. The narrational voice continues to disparage Cohn, but the narrator is beginning to draw a parallel between the target of his abuse (Cohn) and the reason for it (Brett) through the perspective of his discourse.

The comparison continues. Standing with Brett and Cohn on the wall of the corral, Jake attempts to interest them in the spectacle created by bull-fighting.

"Look up there," I said.

Beyond the river rose the plateau of the town. All along the old walls and ramparts people were standing. The three lines of fortifications made three black lines of people. Above the walls there were heads in the windows of the houses. At the far end of the plateau boys had climbed into trees.

"They must think something is going to happen," Brett said.

"They want to see the bulls."

Mike and Bill were on the other wall across the pit of the corral. They waved to us. People who had come late were standing behind us, pressing against us when other people crowded them.

"Why don't they start?" Robert Cohn asked. (p. 138)

Both Brett and Cohn seem incapable of pure interest; both think only in terms of action, when something will "happen" or "start." These two remarks, so closely linked, cannot be simply coincidental.

That night Jake is "disgusted," so much so that, as narrator, he recalls thinking "To hell with women, anyway. To hell with you, Brett Ashley." Clearly the protagonist has put the blame in the right place, but the narrator recalls that he immediately negated that assertion.

I had been having Brett for a friend. I had not been thinking about her side of it. I had been getting something for nothing. That only delayed the presentation of the bill. The bill always came. That was one of the swell things you could count on.

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 that 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. The world was a good place to buy in. It seemed like a fine philosophy. In five years, I thought, it will seem just as silly as all the other fine philosophies I've had.

Perhaps that wasn't true, though. Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about. (p. 148)

This philosophic statement empathizes with Brett, virtually absolving her of any responsibility. It also pays homage to the Count's system of values, and it seems to have been taken literally by many critics of the novel. These accounts suggest that in a world where no clear values can be found, this rather practical system is a sound, if somewhat cynical and therefore existential, substitute for Jake and Brett. By extension, the desperation and immorality of both characters is excused. Often, the whole novel is seen in terms of this existential attempt to establish value, which is a logical extension of the "wasteland"

interpretations.¹⁹ These interpretations ignore several things, such as the fact that Jake (as hero) refuses to understand that he has not, in fact, been "getting something for nothing"--certainly not emotionally and, as we have seen, perhaps not even physically (although she has persuaded him into thinking so) - but what they ignore the most in this passage is the fact that it is reported in the past tense. As narrator, Jake does not hold these beliefs. The passage even implies its own subversion ("In five years. . ."). In this instance Jake, influenced by the Count, feeling sorry for and blaming himself, once again only tries to convince himself of Brett's worthiness. He ignores her selfishness, her coquetry and her malice. It is his attempt to whitewash her for his own benefit, to relieve her of the responsibility for her own actions by claiming that she has too much to bear and exaggerating her case as that of all women.

One of the most neglected aspects of Jake's character (one which these "existential" value interpretations most ignore) is his Catholicism.²⁰ When he tells Bill in Burguete that he is a "technical" Catholic, it does not mean that he is not a believer. To begin with, Jake makes this remark on the same day that he asserts that he is not a "good guy" and, like that

¹⁹In a very real sense Rovit's discussion of values, Young's discussion of the fisher king and Cowley's discussion, which combines the two and centers on the "code," fall into this category. Unfortunately, there exists a whole school of criticism that insists on variations on this theme.

²⁰See Stoneback for a detailed discussion of Jake's religious impulses.

remark, it must be considered in light of the strain he is under and the confusion he suffers. His wry laconism should also be taken into consideration. Indeed, Jake is a practising Catholic as his trips to church indicate. Shortly after making the philosophical remarks above, he visits the Cathedral with Brett. As if to call into question his apparently new-found utilitarian philosophy, he makes a wry comment in his capacity as narrator.

I went to church a couple of times, once with Brett. She said she wanted to hear me go to confession, but I told her that not only was it impossible but it was not as interesting as it sounded, and, besides, it would be in a language she did not know. (p. 150-1)

That this conversation is reported rather than dramatized is a clue to its intended speaker. Although the remark, "it would be in a language she did not know," is attributed (by implication) to the hero, it seems likely that Jake did not have this thought at the time. Only in his role as narrator (when he is no longer captivated by Brett and incapable of occasional objective judgement and irony) can he make it. The unknown language is not Spanish, it is spiritual.

In the midst of reporting these first days in Pamplona, Jake mentions that he was also "disgusted" with himself for liking to see Mike hurt Cohn. Juxtaposed with this revelation and the church episode, the sincerity of his philosophic musing (all contained in one short chapter) is very suspicious.

Once the fiesta actually begins, the parallel that is being drawn between Cohn and Brett takes a definite direction. Jake stresses that the fiesta of San Fermin "is also a religious

festival," but that

Everything became quite unreal finally and it seemed as though nothing could have any consequences. It seemed out of place to think of consequences during the fiesta. All during the fiesta you had the feeling, even when it was quiet, that you had to shout any remark to make it heard. It was the same feeling about any action. (p. 154-5)

Clearly a dichotomy of good and evil, of Christianity and paganism, is evoked by these remarks and the fiesta itself seems to divide along these lines, to the detriment of both Cohn and Brett through association. The musical religious procession is referred to as "Nada" by a drunken Spanish reveller; an image of the demonic pied piper of Germanic folk-lore begins the celebration; the wineshops smell of "fresh tanned leather and hot tar" connoting death and hell; the paganish "riau-riau" dancers, seeking an "image" (idol?) to dance around, choose Brett who has just been refused entry into the church; Robert Cohn, passed out from drink, is referred to as "dead" several times; and, to drive the comparison home, both Brett and Cohn have wreathes of "twisted garlics" hung around their necks. To view the discourse as simple reportage becomes impossible once these details are considered. The narrator is obviously suggesting that during the fiesta the lines began to blur for him between the source of his confusion and anger (Brett) and the butt of it (Cohn), both of which were effectively evil at this point.

Amidst this chaos, Jake, who is trying to maintain his equilibrium (in one instance he pointedly refuses alcohol), suddenly becomes concerned about Cohn. Having noted that before

the festivities began he once again felt "quite friendly to Cohn" (p. 151), the old sensitivity for his friend seems to return. It is almost as if Jake's "To hell with you, Brett Ashley" has restored his emotional sanity. Four times in a matter of minutes, Jake insists on finding Cohn, becoming quite anxious ("Where the hell is Cohn?" - p. 158), and he ends the evening falling drunkenly asleep in Cohn's room. This odd turn of events is emphasized the next day in a reply Jake makes to a remark by Bill.

"That Cohn gets me," Bill said. "He's got this Jewish superiority so strong that he thinks the only emotion he'll get out of the fight will be being bored."

"We'll watch him with the glasses," I said.

"Oh, to hell with him!"

"He spends a lot of time there." (p. 162)

That Jake sympathizes with the hell Cohn is going through, once again trying to understand his former friend, may indicate that he has temporarily come out from under Brett's spell; that his philosophizing, authorizing him to excuse Brett, has, after all, allowed him to come to terms with the situation, but this respite is short-lived, merely serving to dramatize the extent of his confusion.

The confusion becomes more complicated and acute once Romero enters the equation. The narrator makes it plain that Brett cannot control her desire and her many covetous, lascivious remarks and actions are pointedly noted both in dialogue and narrative commentary. Most curious, however, are connections obliquely made between Cohn and Romero. Immediately after Brett mentions Romero's "lovely" "green trousers," Mike refers to how

"green" Cohn became during the bullfight. This remark is repeated for emphasis (p. 166) and the word seems literally to jump from the page. If this is coincidence, Mike's remark to Jake that he believes Brett is "falling in love with this bullfighter chap" (p. 168)--a remark made only a short time after Brett has seen Romero--cannot be mistaken for anything other than an evocation of Jake's remark to Brett when she first meets Cohn ("You've made a new one there"--p. 22). It is obvious that Jake is suggesting what is about to happen, and in comparing Brett's soon-to-be liaison with Romero to her former liaison with Cohn, he, in effect, discredits it in advance. This evocation of just another in a long line should be kept in mind when one considers Brett's remarks in the final pages of the novel.

It is never clear why Jake decides to introduce Brett to Romero. Delbert Wylder has remarked that "strangely. . . Jake as narrator tells us very little about the reasons for this decision, which is the crucial moral action of the novel."²¹ Yet Jake's behaviour in these first few days of the fiesta gives us a clue. He has begun to question his anger towards Cohn and he seems to have begun to distance himself from Brett. He does not fawn over her the way he did in Paris. It could be simply that the presence of the others is forcing him to subdue his passions, but this explanation seems too simple. It certainly does not apply to Cohn. We have seen Jake at his worst with

²¹ Wylder, p. 52-3.

respect to Cohn in the presence of the others and it seems unlikely that the presence of Bill, or even Mike, would restrain his desperate devotion to, and passion for, Brett. What does seem likely is that Jake is beginning to see Brett in a new light. The confusion expressed in his attempt to philosophize, blaming first Brett and then blaming himself ("To hell with you, Brett Ashley. . .I had been getting something for nothing") has been exacerbated by his recognition of the similarities between Cohn and Brett (one of whom he hates and one of whom he loves) and what could be his growing ability to act on his knowledge that she may not be the woman he wishes she were. (It is possible that Brett's behaviour at the fiesta, which is outrageous even for her--she has been involved or wants to be involved with everyone but Bill and is completely nonchalant about it--is opening Jake's eyes.) It is likely that Jake is beginning to realize that in order to come to terms with his feelings he will have to confront her in some fashion. It is also quite likely that this idea scares the "hell" out of him and that he will avoid it at any cost. Under such conditions, he would not deny her any request, for fear of initiating this emotional cataclysm. Yet his decision does just that. The chaos that ensues is the beginning of the final chain of events that will lead Jake to his own "moment of truth."

Brett is also experiencing a new sensation. With Romero the tables are turned; she is the one who desires. Usually it has been the other way around (with, for example, the Count who was

finally too sophisticated and experienced to put up with her for long, Cohn, Mike and especially Jake). Realizing that for the first time she is taking a gamble, she seeks assurance and approval from the only person whose sympathy she seems not to have completely exhausted--Jake.

"Do you still love me, Jake?"

"Yes," I said.

"Because I'm a goner," Brett said.

"How?"

"I'm a goner. I'm mad about the Romero boy. I'm in love with him, I think."

"I wouldn't be if I were you."

"I can't help it. I'm a goner. It's tearing me all up inside."

"Don't do it."

"I can't help it. I've never been able to help anything."

"You ought to stop it."

"How can I stop it? I can't stop things. Feel that?" Her hand was trembling.

"I'm like that all through."

"You oughtn't to do it."

"I can't help it. I'm a goner now, anyway. Don't you see the difference?"

"No."

"I've got to do something. I've got to do something I really want to do. I've lost my self-respect."

"You don't have to do that." . . .

"I can't just stay tight all the time."

"No."

"Oh, darling, please stay by me. Please stay by me and see me through this."

"Sure."

"I don't say it's right. It is right though for me. God knows, I've never felt such a bitch." (p. 183-4)

Jake is the "goner." Brett, buttressed by his assurance, is ready for action. Her plea that she must "do something" that she "really" wants to do in order to regain her "self-respect" is an excuse as much to herself as to Jake. We know she always does just what she wants. How can more selfish disregard for everyone else re-establish her self-respect? Jake's lame attempt to talk

her out of it is not the act of a prudent man, it is a last ditch attempt to retain his own self-respect, as his easy acquiescence ("Sure") demonstrates. Brett confirms this interpretation.

"I've always done just what I wanted."
"I know."
"I do feel such a bitch."
"Well," I said.
"My God!" said Brett, "the things a woman goes through."
"Yes?"
"Oh, I do feel such a bitch." (p. 184)

The interesting feature of these remarks is that they mirror almost exactly Jake's philosophic consideration of the situation (how the "woman pays and pays and pays"). Suggested by this parallel is that these two have had similar conversations before, and that what had seemed to be Jake's own thoughts on the matter were in actual fact only an extension of Brett's self-excusing.

Having "pimped" for Brett, Jake is beaten by Cohn. There appears to be no attempt in the narrative to make Jake look anything but pathetic in this event. Knowing that the accusation is true, the narrator seems not to try to disguise the consequences. Robert Cohn may come off badly, but Jake comes off both out of control and defeated (emotionally, as well as physically). Even his anger is not complete. Immediately after being knocked down, Jake refuses to "hate" Cohn, as Mike, who has witnessed the event, does.

"I was hoping he would knock down a waiter," Mike said, "and get arrested. I'd like to see Mr. Robert Cohn in jail."

"No," I said. (p. 191)

When Cohn summons him to apologize, Jake goes to him:

"I'm sorry, Jake. Please forgive me."

"Forgive you, hell."

"Please forgive me, Jake."

I did not say anything. I stood there by the door.

"I was crazy. You must see how it was."

"Oh, that's all right."

"I couldn't stand it about Brett."

"You called me a pimp."

I did not care. I wanted a hot bath. I wanted a hot bath in deep water.

"I know. Please don't remember it. I was crazy."

"That's all right."

He was crying. His voice was funny. He lay there in his white shirt on the bed in the dark. His polo shirt.

"I'm going away in the morning."

He was crying without making any noise. (p. 194)

Jake remembers that he "did not care," but the narrative voice is discredited by the details of this incident. The emphasis on Cohn "crying," mentioned twice and intensified by the detail "without making any noise," and the readiness of Jake to forgive--"Oh, that's all right"--seem to create a different image than that of the unaffected tough-guy.

An internal conflict seems to colour the narrator's reportage of these events. The whole scene is cloaked in a ghostly light as Jake insists that he was dazed, comparing it to when he "had been kicked in the head early in [a football] game" in his youth. This, if accurate, would seem to account for his easy acquiescence to Cohn's apology, his lack of lasting anger and his seemingly uninterested attitude, but upon waking in the morning he remembers that just before being hit by Cohn he had promised "to take Bill's friend Edna to see the bulls go through the street and into the ring." As anyone who has ever been "out

cold" knows, a temporary memory loss surrounding the events is inevitable. How is it that Jake, who has been too confused to find his shoes, remembers this insignificant detail so clearly, so quickly, after the fact, much less the whole complicated incident? Is the dazed football player with the "phantom suitcase" (which is mentioned more often than is necessary to establish the ambience of the scene) simply a pose by a narrator who wants to report the facts accurately but cannot, except surreptitiously? If the truth were known (as to motivation as well as action) would Jake appear even more pathetic than he already does?

The dichotomy of Christianity and paganism, of good and evil, suggested by the symbolism of the fiesta is finally functionally culminated in the short scene in which Brett asks Jake to take her into the Cathedral of San Fermin to pray for Romero.

We went in through the heavy leather door that moved very lightly. It was dark inside. Many people were praying. You saw them as your eyes adjusted themselves to the half-light. We knelt at one of the long wooden benches. After a little I felt Brett stiffen beside me, and saw she was looking straight ahead.

"Come on," she whispered throatily. "Let's get out of here. Makes me damned nervous."

Outside in the hot brightness of the street Brett looked up at the tree-tops in the wind. The praying had not been much of a success.

"Don't know why I get so nervy in church," Brett said. "Never does me any good."

We walked along.

"I'm damned bad for a religious atmosphere," Brett said. "I've the wrong type of face."

"You know," Brett said, "I'm not worried about him at all. I just feel happy about him."

"Good."

"I wish the wind would drop, though."

"It's liable to go down by five o'clock."
"Let's hope."
"You might pray," I laughed.
"Never does me any good. I've never gotten anything I
prayed for. Have you?"
"Oh, yes."
"Oh, rot," said Brett. "Maybe it works for some
people, though you don't look very religious, Jake."
"I'm pretty religious."
"Oh, rot," said Brett. (p. 208-9)

Again, Jake's Catholicism should not be dismissed. His remark, "I'm pretty religious," should be taken seriously, as his refusal to take part in Brett's trivialization of the church indicates. His silence in response to her attempt to dismiss her nervousness in the church is pointedly eloquent. That the narrator chooses to stress this silence ("We walked along") indicates its importance. Brett's assertion that she has "never gotten anything [she] prayed for" is not simply a dismissal of religion. It is an accurate indication of her expectations. She has been praying for the "wind [to] drop" and, as she comes out of the church, she looks "up at the tree-tops in the wind." As with so much else, Brett wants immediate results. The juxtaposition of her remark about having the "wrong type of face" for religion with her other remark about Jake not "look[ing] very religious" highlights this childish notion. Brett, like a member of some primitive tribe, has spiritual expectations that are superficial. Jake, on the other hand, realizes that patience and faith are necessary, and he is patient with her, even though the gesture is futile, which as narrator he carefully indicates by his silence and his wry comment, "The praying had not been much of a success." Jake has

finally realized that the differences between them are insurmountable.

That Jake has understood not only Brett's superficiality but his own complicity in her destructiveness is apparent at the end of the fiesta. Having witnessed Belmonte's defiance of physical pain and psychological stress and Romero's "greatness," performing exceptionally despite his "wounding" by Cohn, Jake becomes disgusted with his own performance. On the last night of the fiesta he seems to realize that this "wonderful nightmare" has been self-imposed. He gives up, getting "drunker than [he] ever remembered having been" and looking "strange" to himself in the mirror.

The return trip to France through the "overfoliated, wet, green, Basque country" (a negative when compared to the descriptions of that same country going to the fiesta) ends when Jake sentimentally rubs his "rod-case through the dust" on the car. The great sadness that has descended on Jake has little to do with his wound, it is the direct result of losing his self-respect.

But Jake starts to come to terms with himself immediately. Away from the fiesta he begins to relax, finding it "pleasant to [drink] slowly and to [taste] the wine." His sarcastic remarks about France ("Everything is on such a clear financial basis. . .")--p. 233) would again seem to annul those critical

theories that emphasize value systems²² and which rest on his own self-discredited remark, "Enjoying living was learning to get your money's worth and knowing when you had it" (p. 148). The theory that value can be established in such a simplistic fashion is ironic at this point.

Returning to Spain where life is not so allegedly "simple" as France, Jake feels like a "fool." The irony is that he has been a "fool" and he knows it. His return to San Sebastian recalls not only the respite of Burguete, but Jake's life in Paris before he became embroiled in this emotional storm.

In the morning I walked down the Boulevard to the rue Soufflot for coffee and brioche. It was a fine morning. The horse-chestnut trees in the Luxembourg gardens were in bloom. There was the pleasant early-morning feeling of a hot day. I read the papers with the coffee and then smoked a cigarette. The flower-women were coming up from the market and arranging their daily stock. Students went by going up to the law school, or down to the Sorbonne. The Boulevard was busy with trams and people going to work. I got an S bus and rode down to the Madeleine, standing

²²Perhaps the most reductive of these arguments is the one that Wylder makes regarding what he perceives as the "geographical dichotomy" of *The Sun Also Rises* in which he sees France as "essentially materialistic and sterile" and Spain as "romantic" (p. 38-9). This argument falls in line with Rovit's discussion of values and Cowley's discussion of the "code." "Life in France," claims Wylder, "is less complicated. . .because the value systems are materialistically defined. There no problems of abstract values and emotional responses that confuse. . ." The problem with all the arguments that lean in this direction is that they demand that the novel be read as if it were an abstract discussion dressed in artistic clothes. Svoboda, in his study of the notebooks and manuscript, establishes that Hemingway's story "shifted" on him, "refusing to follow exactly the lines he may have set out for it. . ., that the exact shape of the novel was not wholly predictable" and that Hemingway "worked toward a fiction that acknowledged the ambiguities and paradoxes. . ." (p. 31).

on the back platform. From the Madeleine I walked along the Boulevard des Capucines to the Opera, and up to my office. I passed the man with the jumping frogs and the man with the boxer toys. I stepped aside to avoid walking into the thread with which his girl assistant manipulated the boxers. She was standing looking away, the thread in her folded hands. The man was urging two tourists to buy. Three more tourists had stopped and were watching. I walked on behind a man who was pushing a roller that printed the name CINZANO on the sidewalk in damp letters. All along people were going to work. It felt pleasant to be going to work. I walked across the avenue and turned in to my office. (p. 35-6)

That Jake seeks order and finds happiness through an ordered and sensual appreciation of life is established in both the *Burquete* and San Sebastian sections of the novel, but this early reference to his Paris life has been ignored by those who promote the theory that Jake develops this philosophic attitude as a result of the events.²³ It is not a learned response to life; Jake has always had it, and the respite in San Sebastian is simply the re-establishment of his priorities. The early Paris scene is also revealing in its symbolism. The calm, peaceful, almost idyllic images evoked by the first few lines ("horse-chestnut. . .in bloom,. . .pleasant early-morning feeling,. . .flower-women. . .arranging their daily stock") is interrupted by "the man with the jumping frogs and the man with the boxer toys." That these toys are operated by a hidden "thread. . .manipulated" by a "girl assistant" who stands "looking away" cannot be lost on the reader. The boxing analogy to Cohn is unmistakeable. That Brett had a way "of looking that

²³Most of the existential value interpretations pay lip service to this idea. Mark Spilka, "The Death of Love in *The Sun Also Rises*," White, p. 73-85, is a typical example. Spilka notes that the *Burquete* interlude "is a therapeutic process" that allows Jake to construct "a more positive code to follow."

made you wonder whether she really saw out of her own eyes" (p. 26) also comes to mind when the reader realizes that this puppet on a string image refers to her "manipulation" and the "looking away" is what she constantly does to avoid accepting responsibility for her actions. (In the aftermath of her first meeting with Romero, when Jake has to physically restrain Mike from hitting Cohn, Brett sits "looking straight ahead at nothing"--p. 178.) The "jumping frog" evokes Jake's relationship to Brett and the "CINZANO" lettering foreshadows the role that alcohol will play in the destruction. But Jake concludes with an emphasis on "going to work,"²⁴ implying that these forboding images of what is to be are not natural to him.

This critically neglected passage emphasizes plot details that are central to the narrative and suggests that Jake's journey is a circle, that he arrives where he began but with an understanding of himself that he had previously lacked. In San Sebastian, then, he returns to himself.

I undressed in one of the bath-cabins, crossed the narrow line of beach and went into the water. I swam out, trying to swim through the rollers, but having to dive sometimes. Then in the quiet water I turned and floated. Floating I saw only the sky, and felt the drop and lift of the swells. I swam back to the surf and coasted in, face down, on a big roller, then turned and swam, trying to keep in the trough and not have a wave break over me. It made me tired, swimming in the trough, and I turned and swam out to the raft. The water was buoyant and cold. It felt as though you could never sink. I swam slowly, it seemed like a long swim with the high tide, and then pulled up on the raft and sat,

²⁴Hailed as one of Jake's values by Michael S. Reynolds, "The Sun in Its Time: Recovering the Historical Context," Wagner-Martin, P. 49.

dripping, on the boards that were becoming hot in the sun. I looked around at the bay, the old town, the casino, the line of trees along the promenade, and the big hotels with their white porches and the gold-lettered names. Off on the right, almost closing the harbor, was a green hill with a castle. The raft rocked with the motion of the water. On the other side of the narrow gap that led into the open sea was another high headland. I thought I would like to swim across the bay but I was afraid of cramp.

I sat in the sun and watched the bathers on the beach. They looked very small. After a while I stood up, gripped with my toes on the edge of the raft as it tipped with my weight, and dove cleanly and deeply, to come up through the lightening water, blew the salt water out of my head, and swam slowly and steadily in to shore. (p. 237-8)

The symbolism involved in these lines is also unmistakable. The "quiet" water through which Jake swims "slowly," "floating," and which "rocks" the raft, surrounded by the "old town, the casino, the line of trees along the promenade, and the big hotels with their white porches and gold-lettered names," is dominated by "a green hill with a castle." The fact that the "bathers on the beach. . . looked very small," dominated as they are by this overwhelming spectacle which is crowned by the romantic image of the castle, seems to beg the second epigraph of the novel from Ecclesiastes. The tone of both passages is similar and, as with the epigraphs, a juxtaposition is intended. The peace of San Sebastian is being contrasted with the turmoil of Pamplona. As Linda Wagner-Martin notes:

The Sun Also Rises is as affirmative as the biblical passage and is in strange contrast to the idea of a lost generation. It is as if Hemingway were contradicting Stein, her friends, and the pervasive tenor of their comments about those people affected by the war. Characteristic of the way poets use fragments of conversation, scenes, and images in a poem, Hemingway is building the structure of the novel so that the reader is led through these juxtapositions to a full

comprehension of the total grid of meaning.²⁵

It is not improbable that Jake comes to some sort of decision in these waters. His dive seems to confirm this. The fact that it occurs "after a while" and that it is accomplished "cleanly and deeply" (which reflects the emotional mood of the rest of the passage) and that Jake comes to the surface "through the lightening water," blowing his head clear and swims "slowly and *steadily* in to shore" indicates a determination of some sort. That the wire from Brett comes immediately on the heels of this trip to the beach is no coincidence. Whatever this decision is, it must undergo a test by fire.

In Madrid, Brett is careful to be discovered "in bed" (she has advance warning by the maid that Jake has arrived), attempting immediately her usual sexual manipulation of him. The narrator is careful to begin undercutting the scene and Brett just as immediately--"The room was in that disorder produced only by those who have always had servants." Jake also indicates, for the first time in his role as hero, that he is aware of Brett's intentions.

While she kissed me I could feel she was thinking of something else. (p. 241)

When, one is tempted to ask, has she ever not been thinking of something else? Jake also notes that Brett "felt very small" which evokes the swimming scene at San Sebastian and his firm resolve. Their conversation is perhaps the most crucial in the novel and deserves an extended consideration.

²⁵Linda Wagner-Martin, p. 6.

"Darling! I've had such a hell of a time."
 "Tell me about it."
 "Nothing to tell. He only left yesterday. I made him go."
 "Why didn't you keep him?"
 "I don't know. It isn't the sort of thing one does. I don't think I hurt him any."
 "You were probably damn good for him."
 "He shouldn't be living with any one. I realized that right away."
 "No."
 "Oh, hell!" she said, "let's not talk about it. Let's never talk about it."
 "All right."
 "It was rather a knock his being ashamed of me. He was ashamed of me for a while, you know."
 "No."
 "Oh, yes. They ragged him about me at the cafe, I guess. He wanted me to grow my hair out. Me, with long hair. I'd look so like hell."
 "It's funny."
 "He said it would make me more womanly. I'd look a fright."
 "What happened?"
 "Oh, he got over that. He wasn't ashamed of me long."
 "What was it about being in trouble?"
 "I didn't know whether I could make him go, and I didn't have a sou to go away and leave him. He tried to give me a lot of money, you know. I told him I had scads of it. He knew that was a lie. I couldn't take his money, you know."
 "No."
 "Oh, let's not talk about it. There were some funny things, though. Do give me a cigarette."
 I lit the cigarette.
 "He learned his English as a waiter in Gib."
 "Yes."
 "He wanted to marry me, finally."
 "Really?"
 "Of course. I can't even marry Mike."
 "Maybe he thought that would make him Lord Ashley."
 "No. It wasn't that. He really wanted to marry me. So I couldn't go away from him, he said. He wanted to make sure I could never go away from him. After I'd gotten more womanly, of course."
 "You ought to feel set up."
 "I do. I'm all right again. He's wiped out that damned Cohn."
 "Good."
 "You know I'd have lived with him if I hadn't seen it was bad for him. We got along damned well."
 "Outside of your personal appearance."
 "Oh, he'd have gotten used to that."

She put out the cigarette.
"I'm thirty-four, you know. I'm not going to be one
of these bitches that ruins children."
"No."
"I'm not going to be that way. I feel rather good,
you know. I feel rather set up."
"Good." (p. 241-3)

Jake's mostly one word replies to Brett (and significantly that word, more often than not, is "no") are sarcastic and accusatory. His remark that Brett was "probably damn good for [Romero]" is blatantly sarcastic. As an aficionado, he knows this is not true. When Brett explains that she realized that Romero "shouldn't be living with any one," Jake's reply ("No") is not an agreement with her, it is a pointed refusal to believe her. His "No" to the fact that Romero was "ashamed" of Brett is not an expression of surprise, but an expression of incredulity that Brett claims to be surprised that a nineteen year old, traditional Spaniard would be embarrassed at having a mistress almost twice his age, especially one that looks the way Brett does (one must remember the looks she elicited in Pamplona).

Jake gets right to the point, pushing Brett to explain why she has summoned him. It is obvious that his intention is to get her to justify her call to him, letting her know that he has decided to no longer be her "jumping frog." Her reply is unbelievable. Even she must be aware of how lame it sounds. To begin with, it is doubtful that she had to make Romero go and, as for the money, the only thing that could possibly make Romero's money any different from the Count's, Mike's or Jake's is that she was too embarrassed to accept it. It is clear that

Romero was embarrassed about her, that he wanted her to change her appearance in order to seem more traditional, to look less like the tramp she is, to, in fact, make her over to his ideal of what a woman should be. That any man would find this necessary would be the ultimate shock to a woman who is used to being worshipped by the opposite sex. Realizing how she appeared to Romero, and also realizing that his perception of her was probably very true (that she does look like "one of these bitches that ruins children"), Brett has had to face herself. In her embarrassment at that discovery, taking money from Romero would only confirm that she is an aging female gigolo. Brett would avoid that confirmation at all costs. Jake's "No" to her remark that she "couldn't take his money," which is intended to imply that a person of breeding does not do such things, is again a negation of what she says and not an agreement with her. From the details of Brett's story it is likely that Romero left her when he discovered what she was really like and realized that she would never change.

At this point, Brett seems to start to understand that Jake is not buying her story. The silence that follows (indicated in the narrative by the injunction, "I lit the cigarette") seems to indicate that Brett is reconsidering what to say to Jake. She becomes even more outrageous in her attempt to convince him, claiming that Romero wanted to "marry" her. Jake's reply, "Really" rather than "No" this time (and both function the same way in the conversation), is an intensification of his attitude

toward her story. It is plainer, as he attempts to make her admit that she is lying and make her see what he "really" believes, effectively challenging her story by openly calling it into question. The blatant absurdity of his joke about marriage making Romero "Lord Ashley" is ignored by Brett. Acknowledging it would simply be an admission of the fatuousness of her story. Instead, she intensifies her effort ("He *really* wanted to marry me") and ignores the rest of Jake's obviously sarcastic remarks (about feeling "set up" and her "personal appearance"). In fact, Jake refuses to be duped and takes pleasure in letting Brett know it. Instead of confronting her, he makes his feelings apparent through wit and sarcasm and lets her make a fool of herself. What happens is unspoken, but it is apparent that she begins to understand. Each claim she makes is more outrageous, culminating in her last remark about not being "one of these bitches that ruins children," which is clearly what she is, as they both realize.

With this reading in mind, it is difficult to accept critical evaluations that see this scene as Brett's "moment of truth"²⁶ or "clarity"²⁷ --that she actually has "sacrificed"²⁸ Romero, "a man she sincerely could have loved."²⁹ One evaluation has even gone so far as to claim that this is an experience of

²⁶ Wagner-Martin, p. 4.

²⁷Michael S. Reynolds, "False Dawn: A Preliminary Analysis of *The Sun Also Rises's* Manuscript," Noble, p. 132.

²⁸Rovit, p. 67.

²⁹Wagner-Martin, p. 6.

"moral purity."³⁰ When the tone of the passage is considered (in terms of Jake's sarcasm, irony and understatement, which by now have become characteristics of the narrative), along with story details that have established character (particularly of Brett and Romero), this kind of reading becomes impossible.

The verbal sparring continues over a drink. Brett, who has protested too much about talking about it, continues to seek Jake's sympathy, ignoring his gibes.

"It's funny what a wonderful gentility you get in the bar of a big hotel," I said.

"Barmen and jockeys are the only people who are polite any more."

"No matter how vulgar a hotel is, the bar is always nice."

"It's odd."

"Bartenders have always been fine."

"You know," Brett said, "it's quite true, he is only nineteen. Isn't it amazing?"

We touched the two glasses as they stood side by side on the bar. They were coldly beaded. Outside the curtained window was the summer heat of Madrid.

"I like an olive in a Martini," I said to the barman.

"Right you are, sir. There you are."

"Thanks."

"I should have asked you know."

The barman went far enough up the bar so that he would not hear our conversation. Brett had sipped from the Martini as it stood, on the wood. Then she picked it up. Her hand was steady enough to lift it after that first sip.

"It's good. Isn't it a nice bar?"

"They're all nice bars."

"You know I didn't believe it at first. He was born in 1905. I was in school in Paris, then. Think of that."

"Anything you want me to think about it?"

"Don't be an ass. . ." (p. 244)

That the first remark is sarcastic and directed at Brett and her pretensions is obvious enough. However, what may not be so

³⁰Leo Gurko, Ernest Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), p.59.

obvious is that Jake turns his sarcasm into a parody of Brett when she fails or refuses to respond. "I should have asked you know" is a direct imitation of the way Brett speaks, mimicking the British upper class expression. The narrator also carefully notes Brett's shaking hand. The usual interpretation of this detail is that Brett is shaken by her ordeal, but it is possible, especially with her willingness to agree that it is a "nice bar," that Jake is pointing out her alcoholism. Certainly the first few remarks imply that Jake is making fun of Brett's predilection for bars. Jake is careful not to respond to Brett's remark about Romero, ordering an olive for his Martini. But when she persists, he makes his sarcasm as plain as possible and finally she acknowledges it. But she does not stop trying to convince Jake of her version of the events; she does not stop glamorizing herself.

"I thought you weren't going to ever talk about it." . . .
"You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch."
"Yes."
"It's sort of what we have instead of God."
"Some people have God," I said. "Quite a lot."
"He never worked very well with me."
"Should we have another Martini?" (p. 245)

When Jake finally realizes that Brett is determined to carry on this charade and that there is no point trying to talk to her, trying to make her face the truth, he orders another drink. This is the first sign of his exasperation.

For his own benefit (which is the next sign), Jake plans lunch at "one of the best restaurants in the world" and his

appetite is voracious.

"How do you feel, Jake?" Brett asked. "My God! What a meal you've eaten."

"I feel fine. Do you want a dessert?"

"Lord, no."

Brett was smoking.

"You like to eat, don't you?" she said.

"Yes." I said. "I like to do a lot of things."

"What do you like to do?"

"Oh," I said, "I like to do a lot of things. Don't you want a dessert?". . .

"Don't get drunk, Jake," she said. "You don't have to."

"How do you know?"

"Don't," she said. "You'll be all right."

"I'm not getting drunk," I said. "I'm just drinking a little wine. I like to drink wine."

"Don't get drunk," she said. "Jake, don't get drunk."

"Want to go for a ride?" I said. "Want to ride through the town?" (p. 246)

Brett's last plea sounds a little too shrill. She, again, protests too much. To begin with, Jake is not getting drunk. Brett would love him to be heartbroken, but he is eating and drinking in celebration rather than despondency. First of all, he has had too much to eat to get drunk--it is not possible to get that drunk, that fast, on a stomach so full. His selection of the restaurant and his obvious enjoyment of the meal indicate that he feels as "fine" as he says he does. These are not the actions of someone who is depressed. Brett sounds as if she has never known Jake at all. And, in fact, what we know of her self-centered behaviour does indicate that she is capable of being an "old" friend without actually knowing anything about the other person. How is it possible that she is unfamiliar with Jake's appetite (unless she has always had the effect of ruining it)? Jake is fed up. It is curious that when he first replies to

her question of likes ("Yes." I said. "I like to do a lot of things."), Jake responds slowly and with determination. This is made evident in the narrative by the use of periods instead of commas before and after the conversational indicator, which is not the case in the other uses of this form in the conversation. When he replies to Brett's rather affected remark about getting drunk with "How do you know?", it is not because he feels the need to get drunk and is being bitter, it is because it has become obvious that Brett *does not* know him. If she has no idea about what it is that he likes to do, how would she know about his feelings? The emphasis that the narrator places on his assertion that he *likes* "to do a lot of things" (which not only is emphasized by the context, the way it is spoken, but by repetition) also serves another purpose. When Jake says that he is "not getting drunk," that he is just "drinking a little wine" because he "like[s] to drink wine," the reader should be reminded of Romero, whose own system of asserting or establishing self included "like[s]."

He seated himself, asking Brett's permission without saying anything. He had very nice manners. But he kept on smoking his cigar. It went well with his face.

"You like cigars?" I asked.

"Oh, yes. I always smoke cigars."

It was part of his system of authority. (p. 185)

By association, the reader should also be reminded of Romero's "greatness."

Pedro Romero had the greatness. He loved bull-fighting, and I think he loved the bulls, and I think he loved 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 her. Because he did not

look up to ask if it pleased 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)

Why those critical assessments that concentrate on values have not emphasized this passage is peculiar. Romero exemplifies the one value that *must* be the basis of any durable system of values--pride. This is not pride in its egotistic sense, but a confidence that allows the self to be subordinated without being sacrificed. Romero does it "for her" but not "at any loss to himself." The most egotistic character in the novel, Brett, is incapable of this. While her sense of self is absolute and dominates everything she does, it is tenuous rather than durable. Jake, too, has demonstrated this tenuousness. But, in these final scenes with Brett, he regains (or, perhaps, finally establishes) his "greatness." He has (to draw a bull-fighting analogy) taken her *recibiendo*, as Romero took his last bull, letting her come to him, "the most difficult, dangerous and emotional way to kill,"³¹ where the matador awaits the charge of the bull "with the sword without moving the feet once the charge has started,"³² which is "the most arrogant dealing of death and is one of the finest things you can see."³³ In his conversations with Brett during these last scenes, Jake has imitated this maneuver. He has not confronted her; he has let her play her hand out with him and has not been duped or even tempted. It is

³¹Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 442.

³²Ibid., p. 442.

³³Ibid., p. 238.

not even necessary for Jake to let Brett know how successful he has been. To begin with, it would be pointless to confront her. She would deny it the way she is denying what really happened with Romero. There is no point in Jake's doing it "for her." In fact, doing it "for her" would be a "loss to himself," in this case. But he has done it "for himself inside, and it [has] strengthened him." He has literally *killed* her emotional hold over him.

Asking her to go for a ride, more to shut her up than anything else, Jake rides with Brett through the clean, good streets of Madrid where it "was very hot and bright, the houses look[ing] sharply white." This image, vaguely recalling San Sebastian and his decision, sets up the final remarks of the novel.

"Oh, Jake," Brett said, "we could have had such a damned good time together."

Ahead was a mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me.

"Yes." I said. "Isn't it pretty to think so?" (p. 247)

These remarks have had more than their share of interpretation. It is universally assumed that the irony of the policeman's "raised. . .baton" indicates Jake's physical inability to sexually perform that function. It is also universally assumed that the policeman's uniform implies the recently ended war which is the cause of Jake's injury. Yet, if Linda Wagner-Martin is right about this novel when she claims that it "is as if Hemingway were contradicting Stein, her friends, and the pervasive tenor of their comments about those people affected by

the war"³⁴ (and Hemingway himself confirmed this in a letter to Max Perkins in 1926 when he stated that he had not taken the Stein epigraph "seriously" but had meant to "contrast her splendid bombast against the simple statement of Ecclesiastes"³⁵), then this story detail may not be important in the way that has been surmised. It may simply reinforce the policeman's authority, reflecting Jake's newly discovered "system of authority." As for the policeman's instrument, Jake has certainly raised his psychological and emotional "baton," establishing self, which *is* the basis and underlying meaning of our cultural use of that particular Freudian metaphor. The narrator, once again, draws our attention to the way the last line is spoken through the use of periods rather than commas. Jake makes this remark with determination. It is not unlikely that the emphasis should be on "think," implying that though it may be an attractive notion, it would be, and has been, an ugly reality. This last remark emphasizes Jake's emancipation from Brett.

Paradoxically, it is Jake's wound which saves him. He has blamed himself for his inability to satisfy Brett but discovers that he is not the problem. His participation in the amoral revelling of the so-called "lost generation" has shown him that to deny responsibility, to place the blame somewhere other than in yourself, is to create a moral vacuum. While Brett, who is

³⁴Wagner-Martin, p. 6.

³⁵Noted by Michael S. Reynolds, "False Dawn: A Preliminary Analysis of *The Sun Also Rises* Manuscript," Noble, p. 117.

the ultimate emblem of this "lost" generation, may have the luxury of allowing herself to believe that she "can't help [her]self" because she's "never gotten anything [she] prayed for," implying that God has abandoned her, Jake cannot excuse himself by taking refuge in the abstract--he is forced to look to his own body. Compelled to locate the problem in the self, Jake realizes that the solution is also within. Yet Jake does not learn anything new. He does not develop a new system of values. As Michael S. Reynolds notes, "there is nothing wrong with his values: work, duty, sympathy, brotherhood, professional pride, and financial responsibility once sustained middle-class America."³⁶ He simply reasserts himself after a descent into a moral and spiritual hell caused by his obsession with Brett. He discovers that to recognize, or even when necessary to assign, value, one must first value oneself. As H.R. Stoneback notes, "the thrust of the novel is radically spiritual, and it is addressed directly to the radically 'secular age'. . .which seemed for the most part incapable of deep engagement with Hemingway's vision."³⁷ And as Scott Donaldson notes, when Hemingway wrote this first novel, he "tried to balance Miss Stein's quotation. . .with the one from Ecclesiastes" because he "thought that all generations were lost by something and always had been and always would be. . .,"³⁸ the hell with her

³⁶Reynolds, "The Sun in Its Time: Recovering the Historical Context," p. 49.

³⁷Stoneback, p. 151.

³⁸Scott Donaldson, "Humour in *The Sun Also Rises*," Wagner-Martin, p. 23.

lost-generation talk and all the dirty, easy labels."³⁹

As narrator, Jake is still coming to terms with this discovery; the process is not complete but is in progress. That is why the anger still lingers. That is why he cannot yet be truly objective. This is, of course, true to life. Jake Barnes has not had an epiphany (which among us ever does?) which is a cataclysmic event, but a lesson in living, which is a process.⁴⁰ To his credit, Hemingway has presented his narrator's presentation as realistically and undogmatically as possible. But while this narrator refuses to accept "dirty, easy labels" and blame fate, the narrator of Hemingway's next novel, *Frederic Henry*, goes to great lengths to do just that.

³⁹Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), p. 29-31. Donaldson only quotes the first part of this remark.

⁴⁰Compare Bickford Sylvester, "Waste Land Parallels Unifying *In Our Time*: Hemingway's Confirmation as a Modernist," Up in Michigan: Proceedings of the First National Conference of the Hemingway Society, ed. Joseph J. Waldmir (Traverse City, Mi: The Hemingway Society, 1983). Sylvester notes a similar "process" but sees Jake as the extension and culmination of the Hemingway hero of *In Our Time*.

CHAPTER III
A FAREWELL TO ARMS

The case of Frederic Henry as first person narrator of *A Farewell to Arms* is a very different one. With reference to narrational subjectivity, it is an intensification of the case of Jake Barnes. If Jake is a narrator who wants to tell his story objectively, remaining as close as possible to the facts, but cannot as a result of being too close both in time and proximity to the events, Frederic (who is far removed in both time and proximity from the events¹) is a narrator who is intent upon twisting the facts to suit his own purposes--those of exonerating himself from any guilt or responsibility for the events. In fact, it is the guilt Frederic feels that occasions the narrating of the events of *A Farewell to Arms*.

A simple example of the kind of rhetoric employed in the discourse of this novel may be found in a short story of the Spanish civil war--"Old Man at the Bridge." This story is told in the first person by a soldier who has encountered an old refugee who is "too tired to go any farther" during a retreat. It is a perfect example of Hemingway's "iceberg," in that the most important events of the narrative are left out. The soldier finds the old man irrelevant.

"Where do you come from?" I asked him.
"From San Carlos," he said, and smiled.
That was his native town and so it gave him pleasure
to mention it and he smiled.

¹See Wylder, p. 68 or Grebstein, p. 73.

"I was taking care of animals," he explained.

"Oh," I said, not quite understanding.

"Yes," he said, "I stayed, you see, taking care of animals. I was the last one to leave the town of San Carlos."

He did not look like a shepherd nor a herdsman and I looked at his black dusty clothes and his gray dusty face and his steel rimmed spectacles and said, "What animals were they?"

"Various animals," he said, and shook his head. "I had to leave them."

I was watching the bridge and the African looking country of the Ebro Delta and wondering how long now it would be before we would see the enemy, and listening all the while for the first noises that would signal that ever mysterious event called contact, and the old man still sat there.

"What animals were they?" I asked.

Not only must the soldier ask the old man his rather indifferent question twice, but he seems surprised at finding him "still" there to answer it; almost as if during the interval while he has been "watching the bridge and the African looking country," he has forgotten the old man exists. And indeed, his attention is riveted by his fascination with "that ever mysterious event called contact" (underscored by the uncharacteristic use of the qualifying adjective). In fact, the soldier's concern for the old man (as the rest of the conversation indicates) only seems to be the result of the fact that the old man continues to sit in front of him. The soldier tries rather lamely to get the old man to continue on his way but is finally forced into listening (again, indifferently) to his concerns.

He looked at me very blankly and tiredly, then said, having to share his worry with someone, "The cat will be all right, I am sure. There is no need to be unquiet about the cat. But the others. Now what do you think about the others?"

"Why they'll probably come through it all right."

"You think so?"

"Why not," I said, watching the far bank where now

there were no carts.

"But what will they do under the artillery when I was told to leave because of the artillery?"

"Did you leave the dove cage unlocked?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Then they'll fly."

"Yes, certainly they'll fly. But the others. It's better not to think about the others," he said.

"If you are rested I would go," I urged. "Get up and try to walk now."

The soldier's unreassuring assurances to the old man are pointedly glib as his attention continues to be more on the country than the old man, and it is doubtful whether the soldier is capable of the emotional concentration demanded of the "urging" that he claims for himself. The final paragraph contains the key to the story.

There was nothing to do about him. It was Easter Sunday and the Fascists were advancing toward the Ebro. It was a gray overcast day with a low ceiling so their 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.

The fact that the soldier claims to know that this "was all the good luck that old man man would *ever* have" clearly implies that the old man dies at the end of the story--a needless death that the soldier could have prevented by helping him. After all, the soldier, who was also on the bridge when "there were no carts," in other words, when the last of the refugees had past, survived. It must be assumed that he left the old man. The soldier is just another expression of the malevolence of war in the old man's terms (and in the story's terms). The last words of the old man echo the soldier's attitude--"It's better not to think about the others."

It becomes apparent that the reason for this narrative is the soldier's need to absolve himself of any responsibility for this death. This accounts for the emphasis on "urging" and on the lame assurance that there "was nothing to do about him." It is clear that the soldier did not help the old man but equally clear is the fact that helping was what there was "to do about him." In effect, the soldier is attempting to excuse himself with this narrative and many readers have "bought" this excuse, missing the author's point entirely--that the story is about the soldier's callous actions and his rationalizing rhetoric, and not about the old man's troubles.

The distinction between the implied story and the noticeable story is very clear in this instance. The narrator's discourse is an attempt to convince the narratee of the tragic fate of the old man--a fate over which this narrator claims to have no control--but the author's discourse is an attempt to dramatize the narrator's rationalization of his failure to act humanely. In both cases, the reader can see the impersonal, random brutality of war, but, in the case of the author's discourse, the reader feels this brutality more intensely once he, who has identified with the first person narrator, realizes that it is within. Through nonchalance and inaction, the soldier has been just as dangerous for the old man as the enemy. The reader of "Old Man at the Bridge," once he realizes the implications of the story, is shocked at his own seeming complicity in the brutality; having identified with the narrator, he shares the

guilt. This confirms Hemingway's belief that first person narration, which makes "the person who is reading [the story] believe that the things [(the events of the story)] happened to him," is *truer* than any other mode of presentation. This story is made "so real. . .beyond any reality that it [has] become a part of the reader's experience," and that has been accomplished solely through first person narration and would, in this case, be quite impossible in third person.

In his introduction to the anthology, *Men At War*, Hemingway reflected that sometimes "facts can be observed badly." The circumstances under which this occurs are not only the result of an incompetent observer but can be the result of a deceitful observer. If a "writer's job is to tell the truth" and produce through "his invention. . .a truer account than anything factual," it follows that he can misuse this ability to produce a more biased account "than anything factual."² Indeed, this is the definition of rhetoric and like the soldier of "Old Man at the Bridge," Frederic Henry is the deceitful observer.

Critical reception of *A Farewell to Arms* has dwelt upon its love story and its chronicle of war. Grebstein contends that the "tension between them constitutes the novel's major action and shapes the protagonist's moral experience."³ Philip Young has called it the "most romantic piece of realistic fiction, or the

²Ernest Hemingway, "Introduction," *Men At War*, ed. Ernest Hemingway (New York: Berkley Publishing Corporation, 1958), p. 7. (Original edition c. 1942, Crown Publishers.)

³Grebstein, p. 32.

most realistic romance, in our literature."⁴ Young concludes his appraisal with an emphasis on the pessimism of the novel. John Killinger, among others, has dwelt on what can be called the positive message of this pessimism, concluding that Frederic Henry, like "Orestes, [ends]. . .alone, tormented, but very much alive in an existential sense."⁵ As with *The Sun Also Rises* there have been parallels drawn between this novel and *The Waste Land*. Traditionally, critics have accepted Frederic Henry's story at face value and have emphasized the novel's didactic message of despair. There has, however, been a growing tendency since the 1960's to sympathize less and less with Frederic Henry. Contradictions have been discovered in his story, but as yet no one has completely called his account into question.

Curiously, "Hemingway himself provided an important clue to his novel when he remarked to a group of University of Hawaii professors in 1941 that their students should not be reading *A Farewell to Arms*, since it was 'an immoral book.'" During the same conversation he claimed that *The Sun Also Rises* was "very moral." This dissociation must ultimately be understood in terms of the responsibility of the protagonist of *A Farewell to Arms*--of what Scott Donaldson, who points out this remark calls "Frederic Henry's own complicity in the corruption that

⁴Philip Young, "Loser Take Nothing," Twentieth Century Interpretations of *A Farewell to Arms*, ed. Jay Gellens (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 31.

⁵ John Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods: A Study in Existentialism (University of Kentucky Press, 1960), p. 48.

surrounds him."⁶ Donaldson is among the handful of critics that repudiate the attempt to ennoble Frederic Henry's despair and the desolation of the novel. Donaldson paints a picture of a loutish, insensitive protagonist, concluding that Frederic Henry "takes without giving,. . .does not love Catherine as she deserves,. . .uses the doctrine of determinism to evade responsibility years after the fact. . .[and] is one of those first person narrators whose opinions are not to be trusted." ⁷

Working on a more structural level, Robert W. Lewis, Jr. warns that if "one reads [the] story without understanding the direction that the first person narration gives it, one may very well come to a far different conclusion from the point Hemingway is making." Concentrating on symbolism, mask and irony, Lewis concludes that Frederic Henry "was not, after all, prepared for growth beyond romantic love" and is "an ironic or unreliable narrator."⁸

Yet the tone of both evaluations (which are typical of those that question Frederic Henry's story) seems to excuse his self-excusing. Donaldson's "loutish," untrustworthy characterization implies that Frederic Henry's attempt to relate the events is inaccurate only because he is not smart enough or

⁶Scott Donaldson, By Force of Will: The Life and Art of Ernest Hemingway (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), p. 151-2.

⁷Ibid., p. 162.

⁸Robert W. Lewis, Jr., Hemingway on Love (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), p. 39, 53 & 42.

self-aware enough to realize he is rationalizing. Lewis's immature, "unreliable" portrait suggests a similar inability on the part of this protagonist; that Frederic Henry is not wise enough to see through his own sorry self-excusing. Both critics imply that Frederic Henry is doing his best to present the facts honestly, but that he is incapable. Neither seems to be willing to consider the possibility that he is not the incompetent observer but the deceitful (and, perhaps, malicious) observer. The epithets "untrustworthy and unreliable" are euphemistic when applied to Frederic Henry. The telling of *A Farewell to Arms* is his attempt to excuse himself, to sublimate the guilt he feels about Catherine.

In terms of the communication model, there are two distinct discourses implicit in *A Farewell to Arms*. The first is an address by the narrator to a narratee in which Frederic Henry attempts to convince *his* reader of the accuracy of his story (and in the final analysis, in terms of the guilt he feels, this narratee is Frederic Henry himself--the whole novel a prolonged self-assurance, a talking to himself). The second is an address by the author to the reader in which an attempt is made to "produce a truer account than anything factual"--a mimesis rather than a digesis--of an immoral man. There is an abundance of evidence within the text to support a reading of the novel as just such an account; evidence which hinges not on Frederic Henry's inability, but on his unwillingness, to tell the truth.

To begin with, even if one ignores the obvious instances of Frederic Henry's prevarication (such as the conversation with the Swiss border guards or the exchange with the cafe-owner in Milan immediately after his escape by train), there remains throughout the novel a scattering of germanely placed and revealing examples of his obsessive lying and his aberrant relationship with the truth. The most obvious, of course, is when Frederic Henry first admits to lying, shortly after meeting Catherine.

She looked at me, "And do you love me?"
"Yes."
"You did say you loved me, didn't you?"
"Yes," I lied. "I love you." I had not said it before. (p. 30)

There is a curious double-edge to this passage. On the one hand, the narrator, in his apparent honesty about his dishonesty with Catherine, begins to construct an intimacy with the reader that should belie any doubt about his veracity. But, upon further reflection, as a reader one should suspect the narrator's motive. It is difficult not to think of the archetypal gossip who begins every conversation with the assurance that it is confidential. The very fact that Frederic Henry is capable of lying on such a grand scale to someone whose emotional state he clearly hopes to take advantage of at this point (and to play with the most intimate feelings of an obviously vulnerable girl is lying on a grand scale) indicates the immorality (not sexual, but psychological) of his motive. It has to undermine his integrity. The question, half-formed, should haunt the reader's mind: if Frederic Henry is capable of lying to Catherine,

then. . .?

This, of course, does not seem compelling, but it *is* the second instance of his lack of respect for personal honesty (as opposed to public honesty, which often seems when disregarded, as it also is by Frederic Henry, to be so for very unselfish reasons). The first, very slight, occurrence involves Frederic Henry's supposedly close friend Rinaldi. The incident itself is innocuous, yet one is struck by its utter inessentiality. It occurs after Catherine and Frederic meet for the first time.

Walking home Rinaldi said, "Miss Barkley prefers you to me. That is very clear. But the little Scotch one is very nice."

"Very," I said. I had not noticed her. (p. 21)

Why, one is tempted to ask, does Frederic Henry find it necessary to be dishonest in this triviality? There are two possibilities. One is that he is trying to protect Rinaldi's feelings. The other is that Frederic is trying to encourage Rinaldi in a relationship with Fergy for his (Frederic's) own benefit. But, it has been established that Rinaldi has a great deal of affection for Frederic (an affection that the narrator implies is returned). If this is indeed the case, then neither solicitude toward, nor manipulation of, Rinaldi would seem to be necessary. Complete honesty in these matters is implicit in such an intimate male friendship. If, on the other hand, Frederic Henry is simply selfish (as some of the critics maintain) and the friendship is only one-sided--a devotion on Rinaldi's part towards Frederic--then any disregard for Rinaldi's feelings or any attempt to take advantage of his good nature would not need

to be cloaked in deceit. Frederic Henry could count on his friend's acquiescence. In either case, the incident becomes incongruous.

Another equally incongruent incident, one dressed in the camaraderie of the locker-room (perhaps to trivialize its significance), occurs after Frederic is wounded, during his x-ray.

The doctor requested me to write in his pocket notebook, my name, and regiment and some sentiment. He declared that the foreign bodies were ugly, nasty, brutal. The Austrians were sons of bitches. How many had I killed? I had not killed any but I was anxious to please--and I said I had killed plenty. (p. 94-5)

One is struck by Frederic's eagerness to lie, even though the incident (again) may not seem significant.

Early in the novel, we become aware of Frederic Henry's propensity to lie to excuse himself and his penchant for the unscrupulous. When he returns from a leave, Frederic tries to explain why he had not gone to the priest's home area of Abruzzi, instead spending his time in "the smoke of cafes and nights when the room whirled and you needed to look at the wall to make it stop."

That night at the mess I sat next to the priest and he was disappointed and suddenly hurt that I had not gone to the Abruzzi. He had written to his father that I was coming and they had made preparations. I myself felt as badly as he did and could not understand why I had not gone. It was what I had wanted to do and I tried to explain how one thing led to another and finally he saw it and understood that I had really wanted to go and it was almost all right. I had drunk much wine and afterward coffee and Strega and I explained, winefully, how we did not do the things we wanted to do; we never did such things. (p. 13)

But it is, or should be, clear to the reader that Frederic Henry has done exactly what he wanted to do--drinking and whoring--and the adverb, "winefully,"⁹ resounds with more than just alcohol.

On a trip back from the front, Frederic Henry encounters a soldier with a hernia who has thrown away his truss in an effort to avoid the lines.

"Listen, lieutenant. Do you have to take me to that regiment?". . .

"Couldn't you take me no place else?". . .

I thought it over. . .

"Listen," I said. "You get out and fall down by the road and get a bump on your head and I'll pick you up on our way back and take you to a hospital." (p. 35)

The ruse does not work, as the soldier is picked up by his own medical officers, but the incident stresses the inclination of Frederic Henry's mind.¹⁰

As is implied in this incident (which can be seen as an instance of public, and therefore excusable, dishonesty), the narrator is careful to provide a "higher" motive when he admits to being dishonest--the "white lie" is designed to enhance our opinion of him, to emphasize his solicitude, especially in the following scene.

". . .Tell me. How many people have you ever loved?"
"Nobody."

⁹Earl Rovit, "Learning to Care," Gellens, p. 35. Rovit also notes what he calls this "careful" adverb, but his interpretation dwells more on "wine" than the implied homonym, "whine."

¹⁰Scott Donaldson, "Frederic Henry's Escape and the Pose of Passivity," Noble, p. 173. Donaldson suggests that Frederic Henry provides this incident as an example of a soldier trying to "opt out of the war" in order to prepare us for his desertion.

"Not me even?"
 "Yes, you."
 "How many others really?"
 "None."
 "How many have you--how do you say it?--stayed with?"
 "None."
 "You're lying to me."
 "Yes."
 "It's all right. Keep right on lying to me. That's what I want you to do. Were they pretty?"
 "I never stayed with anyone."
 "That's right. Were they very attractive?"
 "I don't know anything about it."
 "You're just mine. That's true and you've never belonged to any one else. But I don't care if you have. I'm not afraid of them. But don't tell me about them. When a man stays with a girl when does she say how much it costs?"
 "I don't know."
 "Of course not. Does she say she loves him? Tell me that. I want to know that."
 "Yes. If he wants her to."
 "Does he say he loves her? Tell me please. It's important."
 "He does if he wants to."
 "But you never did? Really?"
 "No."
 "Not really. Tell me the truth."
 "No," I lied.
 "You wouldn't," she said. "I knew you wouldn't. Oh, I love you, darling." (p. 104-5)

Are we really to believe that Catherine is incapable of accepting this, that she wants to be lied to, that Frederic is simply telling her what she wants to hear. Or is he simply creating that impression, to justify his lying? After all, such an explanation implies a lack of respect not only for Catherine's intelligence, but for the reader's. The fascination of this passage lies in its layering. Frederic and Catherine play a game with dishonesty, both aware that the opposite of what he says is the truth. But, when Frederic does finally *really* lie to her, she is unaware of it and the reader should wonder if there exists a third layer involving himself.

A further incident involving a supposedly close friend occurs at Stresa.

The Count Greffi straightened up when I came toward the table and walked toward me. He put out his hand, "It is such a great pleasure that you are here. You were very kind to come to play with me."

"It was very nice of you to ask me."

"Are you quite well? They told me you were wounded on the Isonzo. I hope you are well again."

"I'm very well. Have you been well?"

"Oh, I am always well. But I am getting old. I detect signs of age now."

"I can't believe it."

"Yes. Do you want to know one? It is easier for me to talk Italian. I discipline myself but I find when I am tired that it is so much easier to talk Italian. So I know I must be getting old."

"We could talk Italian. I am a little tired, too."

"Oh, but when you are tired it will be easier for you to talk English."

"American."

"Yes. American. You will please talk American. It is a delightful language."

"I hardly ever see Americans."

"You must miss them. One misses one's countrymen and especially one's countrywomen. I know that experience. Should we play or are you too tired?"

"I'm not really tired. I said that for a joke. What handicap will you give me?" (p. 259-60)

Again, the narrator sets up the incident supposedly to underscore his own unselfish concern (in this case, even his patient good nature), yet by this time the reader must wonder why Frederic Henry is inclined to lie to achieve an end. Would it not have been just as easy to suggest to the Count that they speak Italian if he is tired, rather than claiming to be tired as well? It is interesting to note that the lie is emphasized in the narration by becoming a referent of the conversation. The Count, of course, is pointing it out to Frederic, gently rebuking him for this unnecessary habit.

The flight to Switzerland begins on a strange note attendant upon a lie.

I stepped in the boat.

"Did you leave the money for the hotel?" [Emilo, the barman]

"Yes. In an envelope in the room."

"All right. Good luck, Tenente."

"Good luck. We thank you many times."

"You won't thank me if you get drowned."

"What does he say?" Catherine asked.

"He says good luck." (p. 269)

It occurs to this reader that Catherine need not go. She is not in any danger and could cross the frontier by land, in daylight. A meeting could be arranged. Yet, unaware of the danger, she is not given the choice. Besides the obvious disregard for her intelligence (are we really to believe that this woman is incapable of making a decision--accept the fact that she needs to be treated like a child?), a certain selfishness on Frederic's part seems indispensable to this lie.

To reiterate, if we are to believe, as the narrative would have us, that most of the lies told to Catherine are told because Frederic is trying to protect her, we are falling into the trap of believing that she is as shallow as she is presented. We are forgetting that it is Frederic who presents her; that her shallowness is his creation, a possible attempt to manipulate us into admiring his purported fatherly concern. It is important to remember that these lies are admitted to in the discourse and that the motive of fatherly concern (if genuine) does not account for the lies told to Rinaldi, the doctor and Count Greffi. That these lies seem insignificant is

unquestionable, but the simple fact of their existence is significant: they are unnecessary, yet they are very conspicuous in the narrative.

At Locarno, Frederic Henry provides a metaphor to describe his true feelings--a metaphor that implies a fundamental double standard.

I do not think they believed a word of the story and I thought it was silly but it was like a law-court. You did not want something reasonable, you wanted something technical and then stuck to it without explanations. (p. 281)

It becomes more and more apparent that Frederic Henry is not the man that his discourse would persuade us he is. After the fashion of this "law-court" story, Frederic Henry's narrative is "not. . .something reasonable" but "something technical." Its technique lies in its suasion, its rhetoric, and once that is understood, it is impossible to accept the discourse as "something reasonable." There is a deliberate attempt made by Frederic Henry throughout the narrative to gain his reader's sympathy and admiration, as in the case of the admitted lies told to Catherine.

Unlike Jake Barnes, who makes no attempt to persuade the reader that he is any different than he appears (with the exception of failing at the attempt to appear "hard-boiled"), Frederic Henry goes out of his way to manipulate the reader into a particular point of view with respect to his own character. In a first person presentation, the reader becomes a confidant of the narrator, sometimes even going so far as to assume the role

of the narrator. Frederic Henry takes advantage of this phenomenon, attempting to create for his reader a larger-than-life guise to assume.

The conversations with Catherine provide perhaps the most blatant example of this attempt. Remembering that the narrator literally puts her words into her mouth, we must be skeptical of how "wonderful" he is. Leo Gurko notes that most of these conversations consist of "her overstatements and his countering understatements [which] produce vacuums. . .[which] are filled with self-praise. 'We are splendid people,' she exclaims. . .they are forever calling one another brave, lovely, and splendid."¹¹ What Gurko does not point out is that in portraying Catherine as the tumescent flatterer and himself as the reluctant recipient of that flattery, Frederic Henry is in fact confirming most of what she says. While the reader recognizes that Catherine is being excessive in her praise, he assumes that Frederic's modesty indicates a basis of reality for that praise.

This is not the only time that Frederic Henry uses this reverse psychology on his readers. Early in the novel, he makes a rather self-denigrating remark about his job as commander of the ambulance section: "It evidently made no difference whether I was there to look after things or not" (p. 16). This remark is repeated a little later, but the context of both undercuts their validity. The first is made after Frederic Henry has established

¹¹Gurko, p. 88.

his fondness for the ambulances themselves, describing them in sensual terms, remarking that the one being torn apart "looked disgraced and empty with the engine open and parts spread on the work bench," indicating his high standards by noting that they were only "moderately" clean and inspecting them "carefully," including looking at the tires for "cuts or stone bruises." The second remark immediately precedes a brief scene that is concerned with Frederic Henry's obsession for the details of his work--automobile parts and gasoline. These pages also establish the respect and confidence his men have for, and in, him. The combined effect of these details is established in opposition to Frederic Henry's apparent modesty--the exemplary condition of the machines and the diligence of the men seems a direct function of Frederic Henry's leadership.

Not only his men but everyone (it would appear) seems to like Frederic Henry. In the mess, he inspires camaraderie and respect, even in those like the priest whom he has teased, disappointed and "hurt" (p. 13). The narrative would persuade us that his ability to win friends, his charm and the confidence he inspires, often works instantly. In Milan, Nurse Gage, "leaning" over him in bed to fix the sandbags that keep his leg in traction, repeats three times, "I'm your friend" (one should also note the sexual overtones of this passage and what Frederic Henry is implying about himself by evoking them) (p. 110).

Comparison and juxtaposition are other devices employed by this narrator to make himself look good. For example, it is

obvious through their actions that the first three doctors who examine Frederic Henry in Milan are incompetent (curiously he recognizes that immediately, even before they speak), but Dr. Valentini, who finally performs the operation, is definitely not incompetent. Like Frederic Henry, Dr. Valentini will have a drink, in fact he "will have ten drinks" (p. 99), but the other three "never drink alcohol" (p. 98). Likewise, Ettore the Italian-American war hero, "a legitimate hero who bored every one he met" because he was such a braggart and (in Catherine's terms) "so conceited" (p. 124), is "no boozier and whorehound" (p. 123). The implications are clear. In the first case a parallel is drawn between the efficient Dr. Valentini and the narrator (which incidently confirms Frederic Henry's good judgement in his immediate distrust of the first three doctors¹²) and, in the second case, the modesty and good taste of the narrator (who is also considered, at this point, a war hero) is underscored: he is not boring, conceited nor a braggart.

Yet, with respect to this last implication, one must remember the night that Frederic Henry, Rinaldi and the Major in charge of the ward at the field hospital get drunk after Frederic's wounding. At one point, Lt. Henry gets so carried away, bragging about himself, that Rinaldi must castigate him: "Don't be so loud, baby. . . . We all know you have been at the

¹²Suggested by Richard K. Peterson, Hemingway: Direct and Oblique (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1969), p. 187 in his discussion of the doctors in Milan.

front" (p. 77). Catherine also has to castigate a bragging Frederic Henry just before his operation (p. 104). With respect also to Frederic Henry's alleged affability and wise judgement, Donaldson points out the suspicious fact that "once he has escaped nearly every civilian he meets either assists him in his flight or reinforces his conviction that the war is senseless and badly managed."¹³

As readers we must be wary of these attempts to manipulate us, of Frederic Henry's effort to establish credibility by convincing us of his competence and worldliness, which, if successful, will force us into corroborating his view of the events. It amounts to a reshaping of the truth by Frederic Henry and indicates that his lying goes far deeper than seemingly insignificant dealings with the other characters, all of which (so far) could be easily explained away as social expedencies.

It is easy to be taken in by the apparent topicality of the narrative; one tends to forget in the process of reading that Frederic Henry is relating the incidents of the past. As Genette says, it is important to remember that "the variety of the relations which can exist between the time of the story and that of the narrative have the effect of reducing the specificity of narrative presentation."¹⁴ As Wylder notes,¹⁵ Frederic Henry has

¹³Donaldson, "Frederic Henry's Escape and the Pose of Passivity," Noble, p. 173.

¹⁴Gerard Genette, Figures of Literary Discourse, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 136.

¹⁵Wylder, p. 69.

had time "to evaluate his experiences" and this accounts, according to Grebstein, for the many "editorial intrusions" by the narrator in this novel, where he attempts another form of narrative manipulation by interpreting the events for us (a situation which does not occur in *The Sun Also Rises*).¹⁶ More importantly, Frederic Henry has had time to plot his version of the events and perhaps even to convince himself that this version is factual. Any narrator, in relating a story, must reshape history. The details he chooses as components of the narration are selected from a variety of possibilities; the emphasis given certain events or objects is his emphasis; the interpretation of the motives of other characters is his interpretation. It follows, as Robert C. Elliott claims, that consciously, as well as unconsciously, the "'I' of the text can never be identical with its creator" (even if that creator is fictitious). This presupposes a "certain amount of hypocrisy"¹⁷ on the part of the narrator. In life, this hypocrisy is often difficult to hide. To Hemingway's credit ("if the writer is writing truly enough"), it is equally difficult to hide in fiction. Take, for example, Frederic Henry's effort to convince us of his bravery in the following passage. The incident occurs on the train to Stresa.

There were some aviators in the compartment who did not think much of me. They avoided looking at me and were very scornful of a civilian my age. I did not feel insulted. In the old days I would have insulted them and

¹⁶Grebstein, p. 73.

¹⁷Robert C. Elliott, The Literary Persona (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 42 & 46.

picked a fight. (p. 243)

Yet, we know this is not true. The situation has occurred before, on the train from Milan back to the front, when Frederic Henry tried to have a seat held for him.

There were not enough places in the train and every one was hostile. The machine-gunner stood up for me to sit down. Some one tapped me on the shoulder. I looked around. It was a very tall gaunt captain of artillery with a red scar along his jaw. He had looked through the glass on the corridor and then come in.

"What do you say?" I asked. I had turned and faced him. He was taller than I and his face was very thin under the shadow of his cap-visor and the scar was new and shiny. Every one in the compartment was looking at me.

"You can't do that," he said. "You can't have a soldier save you a place."

"I have done it."

He swallowed and I saw his Adam's apple go up and then down. The machine-gunner stood in front of the place. Other men looked in through the glass. No one in the compartment said anything.

"You have no right to do that. I was here two hours before you came."

"What do you want?"

"The seat."

"So do I."

I watched his face and could feel the whole compartment against me. I did not blame them. He was in the right. But I wanted the seat. Still no one said anything.

Oh, hell, I thought.

"Sit down, Signor Capitano," I said. The machine-gunner moved out of the way and the tall captain sat down. (p. 158-9)

Frederic's bravery or cowardice (while certainly called into question) is not the issue brought into contention by this comparison--the issue is that we know, even while reading the first passage, that in the old days, Frederic would not have insulted them and picked a fight; the issue is Frederic Henry's unabashed hypocrisy.

When considering these instances of the narrator's inadvertent self-revelation, we must not lose sight of the author. Not only does Hemingway allow Frederic Henry to trip himself up, as anyone constructing such an elaborate fabrication would, but he subtly guides the narrative through shifts in perspective. According to Chatman, the "perspective and the expression need not be lodged in the same person"¹⁸ in a narrative. Throughout the novel, Hemingway takes full advantage of this manipulation of point of view. An incident during the retreat, innocently reported by the narrator, suggests an insensitivity on his part that is hard to ignore.

I left them and went back to Aymo. He had two girls on the seat with him and was sitting back in the corner and smoking.

"Barto, Barto," I said. He laughed.

"Talk to them, Tenente," he said. "I can't understand them. Hey!" he put his hand on the girl's thigh and squeezed it in a friendly way. The girl drew her shawl tight around her and pushed his hand away. "Hey!" he said. "Tell the Tenente your name and what you're doing here."

The girl looked at me fiercely. The other girl kept her eyes down. The girl who looked at me said something in a dialect I could not understand a word of. She was plump and dark and looked about sixteen.

"Sorella?" I asked and pointed at the other girl.

She nodded her head and smiled.

"All right," I said and patted her knee. I felt her stiffen away when I touched her. The sister never looked up. She looked perhaps a year younger. Aymo put his hand on the elder girl's thigh and she pushed it away. He laughed at her.

"Good man," he pointed at himself. "Good man," he pointed at me. "Don't you worry." The girl looked at him fiercely. The pair of them were like two wild birds.

"What does she ride with me for if she doesn't like me?" Aymo asked. "They got right up in the car the minute I motioned to them." He turned to the girl.

"Don't worry," he said. "No danger of ---," using the vulgar word. "No place for ---." I could see she

¹⁸Chatman, p. 153.

understood the word and that was all. Her eyes looked at him very scared. She pulled the shawl tight. "Car all full," Aymo said. "No danger of ---. No place for ---." Every time he said the word the girl stiffened a little. Then sitting stiffly and looking at him tears came down her plump cheeks. Her sister, not looking up, took her hand and they sat there together. The older one, who had been so fierce, began to sob. (p. 195-6)

Not only does Frederic Henry not stop the terrorization of these girls, but even as narrator he condones it (calling Barto's squeezing of the girl's thigh "friendly") and takes part in it--"'All right,' I said and patted her knee." He is supposed to be in love and very soon he will be a father. Why does he not sympathize with these girls who are still children? If his feelings for Catherine are genuine, he should not be able to turn them off so easily; he should not be able to be so callous and unfeeling; he should not be able to take part in this disgusting intimidation of children. He is the officer. One word to Aymo, even in a joking manner, would ease the tension. Just one. The situation is incongruous and grotesque. At the very least, if he is simply trying to avoid a scene or trying not to provoke these men who are possibly in a state of extreme tension, he should not encourage their barbarism by taking part in it. The reader *must* be baffled by this display.

An equally telling incident occurs just before Frederic Henry's escape from the battle police. In a conversation with Piani about Bonello's desertion, Frederic Henry does an abrupt "about face."

"Bonello was a fool." [Piani]

"He was a fool all right."

"What will you do about him, Tenente?"

"I don't know."
 "Can't you just put him down as taken prisoner?"
 "I don't know."
 "You see if the war went on they would make bad trouble for his family."
 "The war won't go on," a soldier said. "We're going home. The war is over."
 "Everybody's going home."
 "We're all going home."
 "Come on, Tenente," Piani said. He wanted to get past them.
 "Tenente? Who's a Tenente? A basso gli ufficiali! Down with the officers!"
 Piani took me by the arm. "I better call you by your name," he said. "They might try and make trouble. They've shot some officers." We worked up past them.
 "I won't make a report that will make trouble for his family." I went on with our conversation. (p. 218-9)

Is the close call with the irate soldiers responsible for the decision to make a report that will not make trouble for the family? Seconds before, Frederic Henry was undecided. One has to assume his brush with danger motivates him. Yet the passage is intended by the narrator to be interpreted as if Frederic Henry is unruffled by this brush with danger. ("I went on with our conversation.") However, since we have never seen Frederic Henry act bravely (and, never will), this interpretation is unlikely.

Donaldson has also remarked that Frederic Henry "does not conduct himself bravely or intelligently as a warrior" and that "during the retreat [when he] is given his one chance to command, [he] makes a botch of it."¹⁹ In addition to the incident above, there are several more occurrences during the retreat that would seem to confirm this opinion. This part of the novel, more than anything else, contradicts Frederic Henry's

¹⁹Donaldson, "Frederic Henry's Escape and the Pose of Passivity," Noble, p. 179.

portrayal of himself. His reaction to the battle police when he is finally arrested is a perfect example. Painted in restrained, understated tones, this preamble to his "heroic" escape down the river contains two specific details that undermine his otherwise apparent fearlessness.

I saw the carabinieri start for me, come through the edge of the column toward me, then felt him take me by the collar.

"What's the matter with you?" I said and hit him in the face. I saw his face under the hat, upturned mustaches and blood coming down his cheek. Another one dove in toward us.

"What's the matter with you?" I said. He did not answer. He was watching a chance to grab me. I put my arm behind me to loosen my pistol.

"Don't you know you can't touch an officer?"

The other one grabbed me from behind and pulled my arm up so that it twisted in the socket. I turned with him and the other one grabbed me around the neck. I kicked his shins and got my left knee into his groin.

"Shoot him if he resists," I heard some one say.

"What's the meaning of this?" I tried to shout but my voice was not very loud. (p. 222)

Frederic Henry loses his nerve, striking out in fear, and he loses his voice. One could argue that under the circumstances these reactions are not unexpected, yet somehow they do not fit the "grace under pressure" balance of the scene and they are *not* admitted. "I tried to shout but my voice was not very loud," is euphemistic in relation to what is really being felt and what is really going on.

It is also appropriate to consider the hypocrisy inherent in Frederic's angry response to the threat of execution. Hours before, he was the executioner himself (and a cold and cruel one, at that). The two sergeants who had hitched a ride on one of the ambulances had refused to help when it got stuck. (And,

it got stuck because Frederic Henry had deserted the retreating column, choosing to make his own retreat down a side road.)

"Halt," I said. They kept on down the muddy road, the hedge on either side. "I order you to halt," I called. They went a little faster. I opened up my holster, took the pistol, aimed at the one who had talked the most, and fired. I missed and they both started to run. I shot three times and dropped one. The other went through the hedge and was out of sight. I fired at him through the hedge as he ran across the field. The pistol clicked empty and I put in another clip. I saw it was too far to shoot at the second sergeant. He was far across the field, running, his head held low. I commenced to reload the empty clip. Bonello came up.

"Let me finish him," he said. I handed him the pistol and he walked down to where the sergeant of engineers lay face down across the road. Bonello leaned over, put the pistol against the man's head and pulled the trigger. The pistol did not fire.

"You have to cock it," I said. He cocked it and fired twice. (p. 204)

Wylder's discussion of this scene emphasizes the fact that in this instance Frederic Henry "accepts and acts by a military code that he later becomes unable to accept or act by when it is applied to him."²⁰ Far from being forced into this act, he commits it out of "spite and frustration," shooting first at the sergeant "who talked the most and whom he obviously disliked the most" and who "challenged his authority." Frederic is in a state of barely controlled panic. He has realized that his decision to desert the retreating column has been a mistake and he has recognized that the two sergeants rightly "do not trust his judgement." Angry with himself, and perhaps fearful of the consequences of his actions, he vents his fury on them. His cold and sinister instructions to Bonello (who still *does* have

²⁰Wylder, p. 78. The following discussion is based on Wylder.

confidence in him)--"You have to cock it."--and the fact that he is able to endure this somewhat lengthy execution callously, imply not that he is unemotionally performing a military duty (as the reportage of this event attempts to suggest), but that he is zealously proclaiming his rage with the failure and exposition of his charade as the combat officer.

When it comes to the threat of his own execution, this memory of complicity in "military justice" must surely arouse a great deal of guilt and fear. Yet, we are not made privy to these feelings. In relating his capture and escape, only bravado and anger are emphasized by Frederic Henry. Even later, when he removes his officer insignias to camouflage himself, he claims to do it only because it is "convenient," not because he is in danger and is justly afraid.

Discrepancies of perspective abound in the novel and, in each case, Frederic Henry's character is called into question. His jealousy toward Catherine's dead lover early in their relationship, his "trapped biologically" response to her pregnancy, his complete insensitivity to Fergy in Stresa--in each case we are invited to examine this narrator, to form a judgement of our own about his worth. These incidents should be seen as disclaimers embedded in the narrative by the author to challenge the credibility of Frederic Henry's story. It is obvious that Hemingway is trying to present the story of an immoral man in the most effective way possible--by showing rather than telling. Hemingway has chosen to distance himself

from this narrator. It would seem that he is determined that the truth should be revealed in this endeavour. He is on record as saying that he "was not to be held accountable for the 'opinions' of his narrators."²¹

This paradox, which creates the refractory nature of this novel, is however confirmation of its intricate artistry and its faithfulness to the truth. "What makes all autobiographies [and this is Frederic Henry's autobiography] worthless," says Freud, "is, after all, their mendacity,"²² yet, as Elliott observes, even though "the autobiographer may not express the historical truth as exactly as the pure historian might wish, . . . he may in compensation create another kind of truth of transcendent validity."²³ In *A Farewell to Arms* this truth concerns the elusive nature of truth, the variability of reality and, ultimately, the consequences of individual action. It is to be discovered in the contradiction between the author's discourse and the narrator's. The only way to prove Frederic Henry's cowardice, insensitivity, dishonesty and selfishness is to show the reader--to let the reader experience it firsthand.

In his explication of the sophisticated symbolic structure of this novel, Carlos Baker contends that the weather, the

²¹Quoted by Donaldson, "Frederic Henry's Escape and the Pose of Passivity," Noble, p. 179, who cites his source as Arthur L. Scott, "In Defense of Robert Cohn," College English, 18 (March 1957), p. 309.

²²Sigmund Freud as quoted by Elliott, p. 71.

²³Elliott, p. 71.

emblematic people and the landscapes achieve their symbolic effect "through a subtle process of reiterated suggestion."²⁴ It would appear that a similar sophistication exists in the narrative structure of the novel. That same subtle process is used to establish the nature of Frederic Henry's character. The mettle of this narrator and the means by which that is indicated in the text constitute the subject of this discourse. If the authorial purpose of a narrative communication is truth, then the purpose of this narration is for us to see the *real* Frederic Henry.

Dialogue is another source of contradiction in *A Farewell to Arms*. We must remember that Frederic Henry is not transcribing conversations as they occur but reporting them after the fact. According to McKay, in "reported" conversations "there are two speakers, the reporting 'I'. . . (the embedded speaker). . . and [the] reported [or alleged] speaker." The problem inherent in this situation seems obvious. It is similar to the authenticity of the historical accounts of first person narrative presentations. "Every example of indirectly reported speech," claims McKay, "no matter how it is reported, seems to have the potential of including elements that are the responsibility of the embedded speaker, and this possibility is often deliberately exploited in literature." The reader must "evaluate what he

²⁴ Carlos Baker, "Ernest Hemingway: *A Farewell to Arms*," The Merrill Studies in *A Farewell to Arms*, ed. John Graham (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), p. 34. (Originally published as Chapter 17 of Wallace Stegner, ed., The American Novel from Cooper to Faulkner (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1965), p. 192-205.)

knows of the relationship between the reporting and the reported speaker, the general reliability of the reporting speaker, the reporting and the reported speaker's attitudes toward the situation being described, and so forth."²⁵ This evaluation becomes particularly crucial in this novel with reference to Catherine, not only, as we have seen, in terms of what she says but in terms of the reader's impression of her. It may account for some of her apparent submissiveness or what some critics have called her "flatness."²⁶ It is obvious that Catherine cannot be as shallow as she is presented. And does it not seem that Frederic must understand her better than he leads us to believe? The woman who lives only to please is Frederic's creation, not the real Catherine, who is revealed between the lines as more thoughtful, perceptive and intelligent than we have been led to believe. Frederic Henry has purposefully painted an incomplete portrait of Catherine in order to prevent her from contradicting his story.

Not only does the reported dialogue conceal Catherine, but it obscures or biases the events it purports to present. Consider, for example, the already mentioned remarks made to the doctor during Frederic Henry's x-ray. ("He declared that the foreign bodies were ugly, nasty, brutal. The Austrians were sons of bitches. How many had I killed?"--p. 94.) In this instance, while there is no effort made to present the dialogue as

²⁵ McKay, p. 12-16.

²⁶ See Lewis, p. 52-3, as an example.

conversation, there is still a subtle effort made to make it appear firsthand. Even though it is reported as indirect speech, rather than direct speech, the lack of a conjunction at the end of the first sentence and the deletion of any response to each of the statements make the speaker appear eager and the speech emotionally charged. The doctor's enthusiasm seems barely restrained and the reader forgets that the scene is not unfolding before his eyes, even in the fashion of the once-removed context of the novel. Indeed, this speech is at two removes from the reader--it is not remembered dialogue depicted but remembered dialogue reported. Yet, it is given the appearance of immediacy, which seems to legitimize Frederic Henry's bravery (even though it is ironic with respect to his wounding, it establishes the doctor's respect for him as a soldier from the front) and tends to enhance him in the reader's eyes. Yet, in the final analysis, it could simply be a fabrication on the narrator's part and its status as reported, remembered speech seems to suggest just that.

Ultimately, it is Frederic's guilt about the way he has used Catherine that prompts the telling of this story. Despite his declarations of love, from the beginning it has been primarily sex with Catherine that he has desired. For Frederic Henry, sex is as much a drug and an escape as alcohol. In their first conversation, he is "certain, seeing it all ahead like the moves in a chess game." In the hospital in Milan, where he assures the reader that he "had not wanted to fall in love. . .but God knows

[he] had. . .," it is Catherine who is concerned with romance, not Frederic.

"You mustn't," she said. "You're not well enough."
"Yes, I am. Come on."
"No. You're not strong enough."
"Yes. I am. Yes. Please."
"You do love me?"
"I really love you. I'm crazy about you. Come on please."
"Feel our hearts beating."
"I don't care about our hearts. I want you. I'm just mad about you."
"You really love me?"
"Don't keep on saying that. Come on. Please. Please, Catherine." (p. 92)

During his escape, he contends that he "was not made to think," but to "eat and drink and sleep with Catherine." Significantly, it is sleeping with Catherine he is concerned with--not making love. At Stresa, he gives himself away:

"I wish we did not always have to live like criminals," I said.
"Darling, don't be that way. You haven't lived like a criminal very long. And we never live like criminals. We're going to have a fine time."
"I feel like a criminal. I've deserted from the army."
"Darling, please be sensible. It's not deserting from the army. It's only the Italian army."
I laughed. "You're a fine girl. Let's get back into bed. I feel fine in bed." (p. 251)

Lost in "mindless" sex, Frederic Henry can forget everything.²⁷

Donaldson draws an interesting parallel in this connection.

Throughout the book, Frederic paints himself as a man more sinned against than sinning, as a passive victim of circumstances. Yet the portrait is not, finally, to the life, as Hemingway shows by daubing in occasional brush strokes of his own. One of these is the analogy between Frederic and the crafty fox. Walking one evening in the

²⁷Donaldson notes both these instances. He also reminds his reader that it is Catherine who "insists on their being 'one person' throughout." "Frederic Henry's Escape and the Pose of Passivity," Noble, p. 181.

brisk mid-January cold of the mountains above Montreux, Frederic and Catherine twice see foxes in the woods. This is unusual, for foxes rarely show themselves. And when a fox sleeps, Frederic points out, he wraps his tail around him to keep him warm. Then he adds:

"I always wanted to have a tail like that.

"Wouldn't it be fun if we had brushes like a fox?"

"It might be very difficult dressing."

"We'd have clothes made, or live in a country where it wouldn't make any difference."

"We live in a country where nothing makes any difference."

This peculiar exchange suggests a good deal about Hemingway's protagonist. Catherine has done all anyone could to protect him: she pulls his cloak around the two of them, makes a tent of her hair, administers sex and humour, urges him off to a neutral country where to her, at least, "nothing makes any difference." But it has not been enough, and Frederic still thinks conspiratorially of disguises and how to keep himself safe and warm. Like the wily fox in the woods, he pretends to an innocence he does not possess. . . . The comparison itself constitutes a *caveat* against accepting as gospel Frederic Henry's presentation of himself.²⁸

Even description is a major element in the expository narrative of this novel. Frederic Henry shuns any explanation of psychological motives which, according to Genette, "are always difficult to carry off without recourse to general considerations of a discursive kind, qualifications implying a personal judgement on the part of the narrator,"²⁹ yet his representation of objects sets the psychological tone or mood of the story. From the very first page, Frederic's deterministic sense of doom informs every line.

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

²⁸Ibid., p. 182-3.

²⁹Genette, Figures of Literary Discourse, p. 143.

water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves. (p. 3)

This much commented upon passage, like the novel itself, sets up an expectation and then destroys it, moving from summer to fall, colour to dust. All of the description in the work, seen through Frederic's eyes, reinforces this movement and foreshadows the action. We tend to forget as we are reading that we are being psychologically manipulated by the narrator, forced, as it were, into complicity with his despair and his deception. As Harold Toliver observes, "lying is never more convincing than when it is buttressed by apt observation, philosophic aplomb and circumstantial evidence."³⁰

In *The Poetics of Prose*, Tzvetan Todorov claims that "there are two essential levels of verisimilitude: verisimilitude as discursive law--absolute and inevitable--and verisimilitude as mask, a system of rhetorical methods tending to present these laws as so many submissions to [a] referent." In the latter case "narrative. . . ceases to be, in the speaker's consciousness, a docile reflection of events and acquires an independent value. . . . [W]ords are not simply the transparent names of things, they form an autonomous entity governed by its own laws and susceptible of being judged for itself. The importance of

³⁰Harold Toliver, Animate Illusions: Explorations of Narrative Structure (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974), p. 8.

words exceeds that of the things they were supposed to reflect."³¹ Frederic Henry's words are more important than his story--they tell another story. *A Farewell to Arms* cannot be judged independently of Frederic Henry; Frederic Henry cannot be judged objectively by accepting this narrative's apparent presentation of the events. Even to accept the possibility that Frederic Henry is a representational Eliotic "hollow man" becomes impossible once we become aware of the inconsistencies in the narrative. There are ultimately too many discrepancies between T.S. Eliot's surfeit of ennui and the tragic defeat that Frederic Henry would have us believe he suffers innocently and, more importantly, there are too many discrepancies as to the actions and the character of this protagonist to accept his innocence.

Ultimately, Frederic Henry creates his own world; he sets up his final defeat. Nowhere is this made more apparent than in the "log and ants" anecdote. Frederic recalls this incident immediately after complaining remorsefully about "all this dying to go through." The incident is supposed to relate Frederic's conviction that the nebulous, malignant "they" he continually refers to is simply a reflection of "the way things are." What, in fact, it does relate is that Frederic Henry is incapable of sensitivity and unwilling to be morally responsible. It becomes impossible to believe the philosophic stance of someone who rails against "they," "the gods" or God who, when he gets the

³¹Todorov, p. 80-4.

chance to be God, purposely acts according to what he claims to most abhor. It becomes impossible to believe anything about him, at all.

Once in camp I put a log on top of the fire and it was full of ants. As it commenced to burn, the ants swarmed out and went first toward the centre where the fire was; then turned back and ran toward the end. When there were enough on the end they fell off into the fire. Some got out, their bodies burnt and flattened, and went off not knowing where they were going. But most of them went toward the fire and then back toward the end and swarmed on the cool end and finally fell off into the fire. I remember thinking at the time that it was the end of the world and a splendid chance to be a messiah and lift the log off the fire and throw it out where the ants could get off onto the ground. But I did not do anything but throw a tin cup of water on the log, so that I would have the cup empty to put whiskey in before I added water to it. I think the cup of water on the burning log only steamed the ants. (p. 327-8)

In relating this incident, Frederic Henry identifies himself as a charter member in the club known as "they." The issue of sincerity becomes axiomatic with respect to everything Frederic Henry does.

Incidents of Frederic Henry's inconsistency, his penchant for lying, his cowardice and his selfishness are crafted by Hemingway to culminate in the explosive image of this scene--a scene that establishes irrevocably Frederic Henry's real beliefs and real character--one, which because of the contradiction inherent in it, is incompatible with tragedy, romance or innocence. "Man's situation, as Sartre sees it, is absurd and tragic; but does that rule out integrity, nobility, or valor, or the utmost effort?"³² For Frederic Henry, it does.

³² Walter Kaufmann, Existentialism From Dostoevsky to Sartre (New York: Meridian Books, The World Publishing Company, 1956),

Wylder notes that Frederic Henry "has a strong tendency to rationalize every action, especially those which make him feel guilty. He is willing to blame the world or the system or fate, but seldom himself."³³ Even the last few lines of the novel attempt to shift the blame. The doctor, after offering to take Frederic Henry to his hotel, appears to apologize for Catherine's death, as if unsure of himself:

"It was the only thing to do," he said. "The operation proved---"

"I do not want to talk about it," I said. (p. 332)

In cutting him off so abruptly, Frederic Henry appears to agree that medical incompetence (or, at least, lack of good judgement) is responsible. The doctor's language also recalls the three incompetent doctors in Milan who punctuated their conversation and qualified their intentions with the very same adverb ("*only* one thing. . .I can *only* say. . .--p. 96 & 97). Yet, be this as it may, ultimately it is not medical incompetence that is to blame. If Frederic had really been capable of loving Catherine, he would have not only been more careful about getting her pregnant, but he would have been more concerned with providing her with the care she deserved for the birth itself. At the very least, he would not have insisted that she accompany him on a dangerous flight to a dubious existence in Switzerland but would have left her in Milan with her friends, who were nurses, and the one doctor whose competence he knew could be counted on. We know from his "trapped biologically" response to the pregnancy

³²(cont'd) p. 47.

³³Wylder, p. 67.

and from the fact that throughout it he has never really considered the prospect of fatherhood, nor the possibility that Catherine's condition is delicate, that it has been nothing more than an annoyance to him. (At one point he suggests that they go bobsledding and when she asks whether it might not "be rough," he nonchalantly replies, "We can see." - p. 296.) We know that he has been more concerned with himself than with Catherine or his present and future obligations as the head of a family.

Despite his efforts to shroud these last scenes in darkness and the rain that Catherine saw herself "dead in," despite his desperate prayers and despite his last pathetic attempt to make the reader feel sorry for *him* ("...it wasn't any good. It was like saying good-by to a statue"), we are aware that Catherine is not the victim of malignant fate or a vengeful God. She is the victim of an irresponsible man who has accepted her love without returning it--a man who has used and neglected her.

Finally, it is apparent that Frederic Henry cannot live with the horrible truth. Telling his story is the ultimate act of rationalization. *A Farewell to Arms* is Frederic Henry's alibi. By making this alibi tangible, giving it a concrete form, he hopes to legitimize it, convincing himself of its truth; he hopes to be done with guilt and confusion once and for all. As Donaldson has observed, "it is 'only human' to defend oneself, even against one's own accusations."³⁴ But Frederic Henry is

³⁴Donaldson, "Frederic Henry's Escape and the Pose of Passivity," Noble, p. 182.

unaware of how confused he is. His attempt fails precisely because he does not understand how ingrained his weaknesses are. He deceives himself too easily to be competent enough to deceive the reader. Yet, since writers write in isolation, this grand experiment in justification may have worked for the only reader Frederic Henry has in mind--himself. "All of *A Farewell to Arms*," Donaldson contends, "may be considered the narrator's *apologia pro vita sua*."³⁵

When Hemingway claimed that *A Farewell to Arms* was an "immoral book," this is precisely to what he was referring. It is a living example of immorality--immorality in action, as it were. The subject of this novel is not love, war, existential philosophy or the so-called Hemingway "code"--it is Frederic Henry.³⁶

³⁵Ibid., p. 182.

³⁶Donaldson also makes this claim. Ibid., p. 178.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Michael S. Reynolds has remarked that "approaching a Hemingway novel today is like restoring a Renaissance painting that has been clouded by several layers of varnish."¹ Two very great obstacles block our way into the texts--biographical biases and established critical standards. This is not to say that we should ignore the relationship between a man's life and his work or that the groundbreaking work of critics such as Baker and Young is irrelevant. On the contrary, these two sources of information are essential to any attempt to understand the material, but we must not lose sight of the fact that they are *only* sources of information. We must not assume that the last word is in, that the last word has been spoken. These texts have withstood the test of time remarkably well. It would be presumptuous of us to think that we have all the answers.

To some extent, Hemingway's life still overshadows his work. A recent television movie (1988), predicated in hype and sensationalism, which was nevertheless exceptionally faithful to the facts, is proof enough of that. Biographies are still being published. At times these too seem to wallow in

¹Michael S. Reynolds, Hemingway's First War: The Making of *A Farewell to Arms* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 261.

sensationalism.² Hemingway remains larger than life in our cultural consciousness. This is perhaps unfortunate since it serves only to distract us from the texts themselves. However, in 1968, Carlos Baker, in his own biography of Hemingway, contended that it would be "the year 2000 before anything like a definitive work [could] be undertaken"³ and we must remind ourselves that our obsession with this fascinating figure is still grounded in our need to understand.

Certainly, the most detrimental effect of this obsession is the tendency to equate the fictional characters with the author himself. Charles M. Oliver, the editor of *The Hemingway Review*, claims that we are "accustomed to the critical assumption that Hemingway and [his narrators] believe in the same things."⁴ This is not however the case. As we have seen, Hemingway himself claimed that "he was not to be held accountable for 'the opinions' of his narrators."⁵ Indeed, how is it possible to hold someone accountable for opinions as disparate as those of Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry? Do we not, when we assume that all of

²Perhaps the recent biography most susceptible to this kind of criticism is Lynn's *Hemingway*. Yet the editor of the *Hemingway Review*, Charles M. Oliver, has recently stated that this book "is certainly the most complete work so far on the growth and disintegration of Hemingway's mind." "Book Reviews," *The Hemingway Review*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, (Fall 1988), p. 65.

³Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (New York: Avon Books, 1968), p. 5.

⁴Oliver, p. 66.

⁵Quoted by Donaldson, "Frederic Henry's Escape and the Pose of Passivity," Noble, p. 179.

Hemingway's heroes are "essentially the same," as Reynolds contends, accuse him of "merely repeating himself?"⁶ Yet, how are we to account for the contradictions implicit in a diatribe against using existential excuses such as *A Farewell to Arms* and the message of a short story like "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (to use an extreme example)? Narrative theory suggests what would seem to be an obvious answer.

In his proposed communication model, Wayne Booth insists that not only must we contend with the author and the narrator, but with an abstraction he calls "the implied version" of the author.⁷ Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan perhaps explains the "implied author" most succinctly.

The implied author is the governing consciousness of the work of art as a whole, the source of the norms embodied in the work. Its relation to the real author is admitted to be of great psychological complexity. . . implied authors are often far superior in intelligence and moral standards to the actual men and women who are real authors. . . . the two need not be, and in fact are often not, identical. An author may embody in a work ideas, beliefs, emotions other or even quite opposed to those he has in real life; he may also embody different ideas, beliefs and emotions in different works.⁸

Thus, these contradictions are not incompatible. And, with respect to the two novels under discussion here, there does not seem to be a contradiction once the discourse of the author has been separated from that of the narrators. Jake Barnes triumphs

⁶Reynolds, Hemingway's First War: The Making of *A Farewell to Arms*, p. 260.

⁷Booth, p. 70.

⁸Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics (New York: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1983), p. 86-7.

over the obstacles to his freedom as he recognizes his moral responsibilities and Frederic Henry sinks into a morass of self-pity as he is condemned for shirking his.

The other great stumbling block to Hemingway's texts, the established critical interpretations of these works, poses a similar problem. When we adhere strictly to considerations of the Hemingway "code" in any of its various guises (whether in terms of the "lost generation," the "wasteland," the "wounded" hero, World War I, or "grace under pressure") are we not engaging in reductive criticism? "Why reduce," as Arnold E. and Cathy N. Davidson claim, "something as lively as the engaging text to, essentially, in T.S. Eliot's term, a formulation, a simple coda somehow concealed in the more complex and multifaceted text?"⁹ The work of the early critics who discovered these patterns is invaluable, but it must not prevent our return to the text. Indeed, as critics it is our job to question these interpretive standards, and a narratological enquiry into the texts seems to justify that task. The literary tools now at our disposal were not available to Baker, Young and their contemporaries. While their work is monumental, they lacked the critical advantages available to us in narrative theory. However, as with the biographical approach, time itself seems to be eroding the foundation of these ideas. As Oliver has recently remarked, "the 'code' [is a] term not taken seriously

⁹Arnold E. and Cathy N. Davidson, "Decoding the Hemingway Hero in *The Sun Also Rises*," Wagner-Martin, p. 84-5.

in Hemingway Studies for several years."¹⁰

Toward the end of his life, Hemingway wrote, "I sometimes think my style is suggestive rather than direct. The reader must often use his imagination or lose the most subtle part of my thought."¹¹ This idea echoes what Genette sees as the fundamental premise of narrative theory: "we should not confuse the *information* given by a focalized narrative with the *interpretation* the reader is called on to give of it."¹² I suspect that we are only just beginning to uncover the elaborate techniques of Hemingway's fiction; with narrative theory only just beginning to appreciate the genius of this author. That we will eventually understand is a matter of course. He saw this coming himself. In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech he said:

Things may not be immediately discernible in what a man writes, and in this sometimes he is fortunate, but eventually they are quite clear and by these and the degree of alchemy that he possesses will he endure or be forgotten.¹³

It is my hope that this discussion has, at the very least, pointed toward that "degree of alchemy" in *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*.

¹⁰Oliver, p.64.

¹¹ Quoted by Linda Wagner-Martin, p. 16. Hemingway writing in *Playboy*, as collected in The Uncollected Prose of Ernest Hemingway, ed. Clinton Burhans (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967), p. 692.

¹²Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, p. 197.

¹³Quoted by Gerry Brenner, Concealments in Hemingway's Work (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), p. 10.

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