

HEMINGWAY'S LATER VISION:  
ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES  
AND ISLANDS IN THE STREAM

by

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## ABSTRACT

Across the River and into the Trees has been viewed with disfavour by most critics because it does not conform to their thematic preconceptions. They regard it as the beginning of a downhill trend in the quality of Hemingway's work which is only briefly mitigated by The Old Man and the Sea. Yet rather than a failing novel, Across the River and into the Trees represents not only the penultimate stage of Hemingway's "early" vision (which culminates in The Old Man and the Sea) but also the initial stage of a later vision (which is expanded upon in Islands in the Stream). This later vision involves the integration of love and the heroic code and makes heroism available to the common man. The altered heroic code is never more than an implicit lesson in the exploratory novel Across the River and into the Trees but is more explicitly stated in the later novel Islands in the Stream. Although Across the River and into the Trees displays some atypical awkwardness of language, it lacks none of the technical brilliance of Hemingway's earlier works. The disparity in style stems not from Hemingway's incompetence in relaying an old concept, but rather, from his inexperience in explaining a new one.

This later concept of the hero, as an ordinary man who achieves what he can with a competence which has certain practical limits, replaces the earlier vision of the hero as a special man engaging life with perfect competence. The later hero struggles with an altered code which teaches that a man need not be special and that he need not die alone to die heroically.

Because critics were looking for yet another version of a familiar code, their condemnation of Across the River and into the Trees was based upon this novel's failure to meet their expectations. Hemingway's intentional variations went unrecognized as such, but were, instead, condemned as inexcusable flaws. However, the performance of the earlier Hemingway hero is not the standard by which to judge the new kind of heroism which Cantwell is trying to realize. If the evolution of the traditional hero, culminating in Santiago, can be likened momentarily to a tree, where Nick Adams is the primary root and Santiago the perfectly formed fruit, then Cantwell (and later, Hudson) are the slightly misshapen--but wholly edible--fruits, not of the tree itself, but of a scion off that parent plant.

Richard Cantwell is a hero with the personal history of the earlier Hemingway hero, but with certain qualitative differences which reflect positive alterations to the earlier Hemingway code of behaviour. Although the hero in Across the River and into the Trees still performs with competence, he is now acting in response to the ordinary events of daily life rather than to the unusual demands of special circumstances. The later Hemingway vision of the

hero is not fully realized in Cantwell: although he learns to value approximate success in day-to-day existence, he still feels the need for solitary death; Thomas Hudson, dying in the company of his men, comes much closer to achieving Hemingway's later vision.

To differentiate between Hemingway's later vision and his earlier one is an intricate and controversial problem impossible to tackle in a short treatment. My main focus, therefore, will be on the narrative method in Across the River and into the Trees and Islands in the Stream in order to explicate the "thing left out," the actual subjects of individual scenes and of the novels themselves. Broadly speaking, the subject is (as it has always been) heroism, and "the thing left out" is that a man need not be special and need not die in solitude to die with dignity. Although this message, lost on Cantwell (although not on the alert reader) remains implicit in Across the River and into the Trees, it becomes more explicit in Islands in the Stream. Hemingway presented in Richard Cantwell, and more fully in Thomas Hudson, a courage less absolute, more complex, and infinitely more worthy of appreciation than anything he had presented to date.

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## INTRODUCTION

"How do you like it now, Gentlemen?" the great writer asked upon completion of his novel Across the River and into the Trees.<sup>1</sup>

"Not at all," the critics replied. They liked The Old Man and the Sea much better, but Islands in the Stream substantiated their worst fears: the great man was going down.<sup>2</sup>

In Across the River and into the Trees and again in Islands in the Stream Hemingway failed to provide readers with what they were accustomed to. The format had always been the lone man struggling to embody a code of behaviour which would allow him to lose everything and "still look pretty good in there."<sup>3</sup> The hero was a special individual differentiated from the majority of men by his ability to endure, and by his continuing struggle to achieve perfect competence. He saw personal excellence through self-denial as the means to the desired end: "immortality" through a graceful death. Although the degree of the hero's success varies from work to work, his competence is always evident (although more apparent in later novels) and his objective is always the same: to hold his position (his life) as well as luck and circumstance will allow, in full knowledge of his inevitable loss, and to sell the position dearly, when the time

comes. But in Across the River and into the Trees and later in Islands in the Stream the hero is no longer a perfect performer and his ostensible objective is no longer distinguished by the magnificence of earlier struggles. For Hemingway, heroism was the ability to face adversity with dignity.

In Across the River and into the Trees Hemingway approaches heroism from a new perspective.<sup>4</sup> Given the immutable fact of death, Hemingway is now concerned with what a man can gain in life rather than with what a man will lose in death. If a man is to lose everything anyway, why should he not at least enjoy what there is while he can? Self denial, which had strengthened previous heroes, is no longer a useful concept because it prevents a man from partaking fully of life.<sup>5</sup> Integration with others, not isolation, is the key to individual fulfillment. The courage that the new hero aims at is the courage to accept gracefully his common--rather than his special--human lot.

Where before, living was important primarily because it provided a training ground for dying well, now living assumes intrinsic value; Hemingway replaces his pre-occupation with how to face death by the more positive concern with how to face life. He is less concerned with the loneliness of the mortal struggle of an outstanding individual than with the problems of daily life for an ordinary man. Formerly, immortality could be achieved only through the sense of timelessness gained by the supreme effort of a solitary man in adversity; now it is possible through continuity between the generations gained through



inter-personal relationships. For this later hero seeking "life in death" the immediate benefits of human connection during life seem as desirable as the goal they anticipate. Living well with those close to him prepares him for dying well. Love, then, becomes a primary focus of the new heroic quest for a graceful death.

Most critics have failed to recognize the achievement of Across the River and into the Trees because they have failed to appreciate these changes. They have taken Hemingway's struggle to gain a new objective as evidence of his failure to achieve the old. They have tried to fit a new heroic model into an earlier design and attributed their disappointment to Hemingway's waning powers rather than to their own error.<sup>6</sup>

The new hero is a man who can accept all the implications of mortality. A capacity for error and the need for love are two such implications; he has come to terms with the limitations they impose on his performance. The fully realized new hero can value the practical benefits of approximate success in the absence of absolute victory.

Richard Cantwell, the hero of Across the River and into the Trees possesses the personal history and many of the attributes of the earlier Hemingway hero, but little of his finesse: he is at times awkward to the point of embarrassment; he commits many errors; he seemingly "can't [do anything] well." However, Cantwell is not an inadvertent parody of Hemingway's usual hero, as is frequently assumed by critics.<sup>7</sup> Rather, he is an approximation of the new hero who evolves as a result of Hemingway's new focus and who is most fully

realized, as we shall eventually see, by Thomas Hudson in Islands in the Stream. Cantwell is engaged in learning to accept the fallibility which has informed his life. He cannot, however, come to terms with love--the process of unreserved sharing, in this case between male and female. Encouraged by the woman who loves him, he accepts her claim (through love) to share his life, but steadfastly disallows her right to share his death.

In colloquial terms, Cantwell is a classic example of the "old dog" unable to learn "new tricks." He maneuvers the new course as gracefully as he can but not "well and truly" enough to gain the new objective. Ultimately his background handicaps his efforts to break from the mold, and he must revert to the earlier heroic behaviour and the conventional Hemingway solution--death, alone, in a male world.

I do not pretend that Across the River and into the Trees represents Hemingway at his literary best. Portions of the novel suffer from stilted embarrassing dialogue and tedious digression. But where most critics would have it that the aging writer had grown clumsy at his old game, I will argue that Across the River and into the Trees suffers from Hemingway's inexperience at expressing a new vision rather than his inability to sustain an old one. Across the River and into the Trees was Hemingway's first attempt to express his changed perspective. While this novel's merits may not have been fully appreciated at the time of publication, the value of Across the River and into the Trees becomes more readily apparent

now that we can also consider Islands in the Stream, which defines more clearly the nature of the change.

Thus, while Across the River and into the Trees is not the best Hemingway offering, it at least affirms Hemingway's continuing growth and should be read as evidence against a prevailing notion of Hemingway's literary atrophy. In this paper I will consider the characteristics of the new hero and the tactics which allow him the possibility of facing death gracefully in the company of others, rather than facing it gracefully alone and in the area of his greatest competence. My major focus will not be on the distinction between Hemingway's early and late vision alone (a controversial matter impossible to prove in a short treatment of the subject),<sup>8</sup> but on narrative method in Across the River and into the Trees and Islands in the Stream, in order to explicate the "thing left out," the actual subjects of individual scenes and of the novels themselves.

I will begin with a brief discussion of the earlier Hemingway hero and his tactics for dying, and will then trace in Across the River and into the Trees elements of Hemingway's new vision. Finally, I will comment briefly on the posthumous novel Islands in the Stream where the new vision emerging in Across the River and into the Trees is more fully and explicitly developed.

## CHAPTER I

### PROFESSIONALS: EARLY HEROES, OLD TACTICS

The popular conception of the Hemingway hero is that tough-minded though admirable American with a penchant for sports, wars, wines, women, and male camaraderie.<sup>9</sup> His home is Europe for most of his adult life. He does not believe in a divinity, does not hanker after nine-to-five desk jobs, and cannot seem to make a go of marriage. His own welfare is the focus of his life. He is a professional who practises his trade relentlessly. His code values the excellence of the alert individual and teaches personal discipline in response to universal disorder.<sup>10</sup>

The concept of the Hemingway hero is not formed by any single piece of fiction, but accrues gradually over a large number of works.<sup>11</sup> He is called Nick in In Our Time, and Jake Barnes, Frederic Henry, Robert Jordan, Santiago, or simply "I" in subsequent works. Despite this and other biographical inconsistencies the common experience of these protagonists reveals their shared heroic identity.

The breakdown of private relationships and social institutions dominates the adolescent experiences of the hero. He is gradually

stripped of his idealism. His most significant loss, incurred during World War I when wounded in Italy, is the loss of his belief in his own immortality.<sup>12</sup> The wounded young hero completes his initiation into life with the realization that the world is a violent place, that a man will lose everything except possibly his dignity, and that the only surety in life is death.

If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills.<sup>13</sup>

The world "breaks" the hero but it does not kill him. Rather, it initiates the hero's campaign to make himself "strong at the broken places." He sees his task as that of perfecting strategy to enable him to live as well as he can in a violent world. In the short story "Big Two-Hearted River" the hero prepares to re-engage life.<sup>14</sup> Basically, his position is defensive and his long-range strategy is to salvage what he can from life.

He seeks from life that which is most worthwhile--something "to shore against [the] ruins"<sup>15</sup> of shattered idealism, and he discovers that the thing that cannot be taken from him is the dignity he gains. The things that are worthwhile are achieved through extended performance and personal excellence, as he faces inevitable adversity.

To act with "grace under pressure," that is to perform well during conflict, is the desired code or strategy which enables the hero to transcend death in the absence of a higher, caring authority. The Hemingway hero has discovered that he can rely on nothing except

his own capacity for action, and that through rigorous discipline his mind and body can be trained to react proficiently under stress, regardless of external variables.<sup>16</sup> This competence will give him dignity--the one thing that can be retained when all else is lost--and dignity in the face of inevitable adversity will enable him to gain his objective. Consistent excellence will free the Hemingway hero from the temporal bonds of mortality to experience a timeless state of being. But because the Hemingway code is dedicated to the exclusive struggle of the individual, the man who embraces its certain positive values must also contend with its possible negative implications--the denial of consummate heterosexual love.<sup>17</sup>

The acquisition of the code precludes a satisfactory love relationship for the hero. Hemingway's conception of love is that of a state of one-ness achieved through the mutual commitment of two caring individuals. "When you love you wish to do things for. You wish to sacrifice for. You wish to serve."<sup>18</sup> But the Hemingway hero, committed to violence in a violent world cannot shift his allegiance to love, no matter how much he wishes to. The Hemingway hero cannot afford to participate indefinitely in a relationship which will deprive him of control or, worse still, efface him. The early hero has many love affairs but is never allowed to sustain sexual love and happy marriage. The closest he will ever come to spiritual union is the relationship he might share with his adversary--but it is always a union of two males.<sup>19</sup>

In the major novels the Hemingway hero tries to salvage love

from the lost things of life. He wishes to integrate love into his life, but in every case is prevented from doing so by his overriding commitment to violence. In The Sun Also Rises Jake Barnes is prevented from consummating his love by a war wound. This wound symbolizes generalized violence which is typical of life and which impedes love's progress. Similarly, Frederic Henry's love for Catherine in A Farewell to Arms suffers because of his war experience and his inability to make a "separate peace." Robert Jordan most closely approximates the integration of love and the manly code.<sup>20</sup> Lying with her in sleep Jordan thinks of Maria as "making an alliance against death" with him, a theme which he pursues when he is, in fact, facing death: "I go always with the. . . . as long as there is one of us there is both of us. . . . I am thee also now" (FWBT, pp. 463-64). But although he wishes to, he cannot believe the principle he espouses. Robert Jordan perceives and accepts a fundamental psychological difference between the sexes which prevents the kind of self-negating connection he desires (FWBT, p. 263). Ultimately he dies, as the Hemingway heroes before him have--gracefully, but alone.

The Old Man and the Sea presents the final version of the earlier hero. He too will die alone. However, there is, for the first time a feeling of completion in his passing. There is now unity where previously there was none. Hemingway has resolved the nagging problem of sustained heterosexual love by eliminating the possibility: Santiago's first wife is dead and he is too old to court another. Sexual love in the

novel is replaced by "creature" love symbolized in the old man's relationship with the marlin and with Manolin--representatives of nature and mankind, respectively. The Old Man and the Sea explores the only possibility for one-ness in the earlier Hemingway vision--the unity-in-death of male adversaries in a violent world.<sup>21</sup> The affirmation of universal harmony in the novel is anticipated in For Whom the Bell Tolls by Robert Jordan's brief sense of integration after Maria has been sent away: "He was completely integrated now and he took a good long look at everything" (FWBT, p. 471, emphasis mine). But whereas Jordan's solitary end, in the absence of a governing principle, seems cruelly unjust, Santiago's alone-ness, in accordance with a principle of "harmonious opposition," is highly appropriate.

In The Old Man and the Sea the universe has ceased to be chaotic. Hemingway has discovered order in the extended effort of champions which gives new meaning and purpose to human endeavour. The Old Man and the Sea presents Hemingway's complete vision of man's natural place in a "violent" world, and Santiago represents the culmination of the early hero because he embodies from the outset the appropriate code of behavior.

The Hemingway hero I have been considering is a professional in his chosen field: his emotion never compromises his duty.<sup>22</sup> He is driven by a fierce pride to excel (ironically performance which commends the hero to society also alienates him). He values the reliability of personal dignity over the impermanence of love; he can guarantee competence but not marriage. The hero is not a



particularly happy man. He is damaged by his adolescent experiences, strong in the broken places but irreparably scarred. He gains his objective--transcendence at death--at the expense of fulfillment in life. He performs perfectly, and he dies alone.

## CHAPTER II

### ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES:

#### HOLDING AND SELLING THE POSITION.

I wish to lead into my discussion of Across the River and into the Trees by placing the novel in the context of Hemingway's other works. It is the penultimate stage of Hemingway's long struggle to discover man's purpose in a rational universe. The protagonist of the novel, Richard Cantwell, like every Hemingway hero before him, is a man with something to learn.<sup>23</sup> Unlike previous heroes, however, he is faced with two not entirely complementary codes. One of these relates to Hemingway's later vision and I will discuss it shortly. The other is a code we are familiar with from previous novels. It teaches the value of competent action in adversity and the propriety of solitary death in an all-male world.

Cantwell brings to this code a dimension of purposiveness and a sense of completion which anticipates The Old Man and the Sea, where the Hemingway vision of natural order and man's place in that order is presented intact.<sup>24</sup> The point is that, under the pressure of unfavourable conditions, Cantwell, like Santiago, extends himself,

and through his efforts experiences the mystical sense of integration of man and nature so much a part of The Old Man and the Sea.

Cantwell's struggle is with his weak heart and with administrative injustice.<sup>25</sup> With death imminent, Cantwell endeavours to live out his remaining time as fully as he can, trying to make of his last three days a microcosm of his entire life. The consequent intensity of his efforts furnishes the life-in-death quality of his Venetian experience, which also anticipates Santiago's concentrated efforts and those of his adversary, the marlin (also a champion of his kind), who "comes alive with his death in him."<sup>26</sup> Cantwell is further related to Santiago and the other champions in The Old Man and the Sea by his "strange eyes."<sup>27</sup> Bickford Sylvester notes that "each of the exceptional individuals of the various species [in The Old Man and the Sea] has something "strange" about his eyes," and that the quality of strangeness signifies his attunement with a metaphysical level of reality, beyond the observable reality, which allows him to perceive a relationship between himself and the rest of nature.<sup>28</sup> Cantwell perceives the "strange" light reflected from the canal, a waterway symbolic of life itself (ARIT, p. 235).<sup>29</sup> Cantwell's integration with nature and the rightness of his return to Venice to die--"where things come full circle" and opposites meet--are a prelude to the "harmonious opposition" Sylvester cites as the guiding principle of the universe in The Old Man and the Sea.<sup>30</sup> He has observed that Santiago contributes to the order of the universe by bringing his struggle "to cyclical completion without relaxing

the tension of life even though he has felt his death in him."<sup>31</sup>  
 The same may be said of Santiago's immediate literary predecessor, Richard Cantwell.

Yet, for all his affinity to previous heroes, and to Santiago, Cantwell leaves critics feeling uncomfortable. Sharing their discomfort, yet not prepared to believe, as is generally posited, that Hemingway had lost his facility for good writing, I have approached the novel suspecting that Hemingway was still writing purposefully, if I could but detect that purpose. Upon closer reading I have perceived that implicit in the novel is an attitude about dying which departs significantly from Hemingway's early vision of heroism. It explains, I think, Cantwell's disquieting effect upon critics who have failed to see something new. Thus Across the River and into the Trees is not only the penultimate phase of Hemingway's usual vision, but also the initial stage of what I refer to as Hemingway's "later" vision.

The change involves a new perception of love and death to replace Hemingway's long held beliefs that love has to be subordinate to a masculine commitment to violence (through activity which opposes nature); and death has to be faced in solitude, or in the company of other male champions. It is true that there is no ostensible change in Across the River and into the Trees--in the tradition of the earlier heroes Cantwell still denies love for masculine company in sport and for the dignity of solitary death. However, it seems to me that for once this behaviour is not presented as entirely

desirable, and that Hemingway has altered his perception. I will try to show that Hemingway believed Renata worthy to accompany Cantwell to the shoot and to share in his death--that, indeed, Hemingway took great pains in Across the River and into the Trees to establish in Renata the qualities which would fit her to share his hero's death. The possibility of a meaningful love relationship based on a new concept of feminine worthiness which does not compromise the hero's capacity to die well is Hemingway's late vision.

In Across the River and into the Trees Hemingway makes certain deliberate alterations in Cantwell and Renata to facilitate the realization: Cantwell is a hero, but his heroism is not defined by spectacular deeds and flawless performance. When dignity is possible within the context of normal daily life the hero is not compelled to deny love--a fundamental human need--as proof of his special ability to function in the face of privation. And Renata, Cantwell's last true love, is the first Hemingway female who has both femininity and the capacity to share a masculine appreciation of violence, and who, the reader is made to feel, should be allowed to share it. Furthermore, and this is perhaps the most significant of Hemingway's changes, Renata is the only character who is endowed with the novel's vision that solitary death is not necessary. She is both mistress and mentor to the dying colonel and, again for the first time, a woman becomes the true insider, the initiated character in a Hemingway novel.

However, as we shall see, Cantwell can only approximate what Renata seeks to teach him, what Hemingway now envisions for the hero:

he cannot revoke his decision to die in solitude. His advice to Renata that sometimes "you don't just hold" a decision, that you have to "switch fast," is wisdom which, regrettably, he cannot follow himself (ARIT, p. 162). Ultimately Cantwell leaves Renata with "the emptiness forever." Yet Hemingway's new vision remains implicit in the work as a whole, wasted on Cantwell but not, I believe, on the receptive reader. My discussion of the novel will explore both Cantwell's strengths and his weaknesses. It falls into two parts: an attempt to show that Cantwell has assimilated the lesson that heroism is possible within a newly acceptable concept of human limitation, and an attempt to substantiate the existence of an implicit new code, which Cantwell cannot learn, about the futility of dying alone.

The great deeds and gestures which, as I have mentioned, characterize the performance of earlier heroes are notably absent in Cantwell's performance, because in Hemingway's new vision heroism is not defined by spectacular accomplishments; however, the denial of love, also not a part of the later vision as I perceive it, characterizes both the early heroes' and Cantwell's performance. I attribute this to Cantwell's inability to learn the implicit lesson in Across The River and into the Trees--implicit because Hemingway had only just begun to formulate it in writing. The kind of courage Hemingway has Cantwell aim for and miss, is the courage to accept--not deny--love in a violent world. In that self-denial is an affirmation of one's courage, the later hero who can act without the benefits of such denial, that is, the man who can accept love, possesses

in fact a greater courage. This is the courage Hemingway desired for his later hero, and consequently, this is the courage that Cantwell aspires toward.

Cantwell is a colonel in the American army in Italy. Despite the fact that he does not perform in an official military capacity in the novel we are almost immediately aware (and continually reminded) that he has been involved in active combat and is, therefore, one of those who has "lived out most consistently and intensely the "distilled essence" of Hemingway's vision of human existence."<sup>32</sup> Colonel Cantwell is on leave for the weekend, and his plans are the normal ones of a man who takes time from his trade. He plans to visit with and make love to Renata, and then to go duck hunting. However, he engages in these ordinary civilian activities as though they were part of a vital military operation, maneuvering with the same concentration and courage that formerly governed his military performance.

When Across the River and into the Trees begins, Cantwell, having already completed his stay in Venice, is at the duck shoot, and the details of his last weekend (and indeed, of his whole life) are revealed through his extended flashback.<sup>33</sup> While waiting in the duck blind, the Colonel recalls the trip down to Venice several days earlier in which he revisited the place where he has first wounded (ARIT, p. 17). His wounding, at the age of nineteen, was his initiation into the violent world he has inhabited for the past thirty-one years. Now, nearing the end of his life, Cantwell returns

again to that beginning. The "monument" he leaves behind at Fossalta signifies symbolically, at least, the completion of the circle of his life.<sup>34</sup> It indicates that Cantwell has finally come to terms with a life which has been inextricably bound to his soldier's trade, and consequently, subject to the "frequent stupidities" of the rigid military hierarchy.<sup>35</sup>

At the duck shoot, the outfit Cantwell chooses to wear indicates once more that he has come to terms with the stupidity of his superiors. He is wearing "an old combat jacket, with a patch on the left shoulder that no one understood and the slight light places on the straps where stars had been removed" (ARIT, p. 3). Richard Cantwell has been demoted from the rank of General to that of Colonel for following "orders that were impossible to fulfill" and consequently losing a battalion:

"It was a good regiment," he said. "You might even say it was a beautiful regiment until I destroyed it under other people's orders."  
 "But why do you obey them when you know better?"  
 "In our army you obey like a dog. . . ."  
 . . . there was nothing to it, Gentlemen. All a man need ever do is obey (ARIT, pp. 242-43).

Cantwell has lost his command and suffered humiliation through no fault of his own, but can bear the injustice with dignity.<sup>36</sup> He can wear his disgraced uniform with equanimity at the shoot--an area where masculine prowess is demonstrated above all else. For Hemingway's earlier hero the world had been an arena where heroic deeds were totally possible, but for the later hero the world is a place where performance is restricted.



For Hemingway the ability to overcome a sophisticated consciousness of inevitable injustice was the dimension that gave man his unique dignity among all creatures.<sup>37</sup>

Cantwell has recognized and accepted the limitations imposed on him not only by the outside world, depicted by the military bureaucracy, but also by his own frailties: "But now I seek perfection. Or, rather, not absolute perfection, but perfection for my money" (ARIT, pp. 180, 131). Thus he is able to replace the earlier hero's desire to excel absolutely at special tasks (such as blowing bridges in a fascist war) with a more realistic ambition to perform competently in everyday matters. Cantwell applies the specialties of his trade to the non-military business of living with an intensity born of the knowledge of his imminent death. Since he cannot stage an effective offensive against mortality he launches a defensive campaign instead. He will hold his position as long as he can with whatever it takes--ability, stamina, discipline, mannitol hexanitrate, or liquor--and then, finally, he will sell the position as dearly as he can.

The tension which permeates the novel results from the strength of Cantwell's determination to perform with consistent competence in the time that is left to him (ARIT, p. 7). He paces himself carefully, striving to keep his experience pure and entire. He finds satisfying significance in seemingly mundane events: "putting the key into the lock was not a simple process, but a rite" (ARIT, p. 109). He takes particular pleasure in the skillful execution of every action because these are the only experiences available to the common man

through most of his existence. Thus it is important that Cantwell see Renata's portrait "as quickly as any man who is civilized and had to read and sign the forms he did not believe in could see an object, as soon as it was visible" (ARIT, p. 171); that he reach for a bottle of champagne "accurately and well" (ARIT, p. 154); that he choose a seat in a restaurant as carefully as he would choose a site for military defense (ARIT, p. 115); and that he practise constant awareness in a bar no less than in a war (ARIT, p. 100). Cantwell praises in Cipriani the quality he most values for himself:

R. "Cipriani is very intelligent."

C. "He's more than that. He's able" (ARIT, p. 100).

But while Cantwell may be satisfied with his estimation and subsequent demonstration of what is important in life, the critics are not so sure. The seemingly dubious merits of Cantwell's abilities and the alacrity with which Hemingway documents them has led some critics to protest "silly writing,"<sup>38</sup> when in fact the text demonstrates neither Cantwell's feebleness nor Hemingway's folly.

That Cantwell has his full measure of human frailty there can be no doubt, and his responses may seem inadequate or inappropriate to those unjust critics who condemn them absolutely. While I do not suggest that Cantwell, with his "wild boar truculence," is flawlessly drawn, it is my hope to show that most criticism castigates him for the wrong reasons.

Critics have denounced Hemingway for the "feebleness of invention" and "poverty of language" which admits superficial heroism in so stilted a manner. Hemingway's doughty style seems to parody itself

in a badly shopworn version of his traditional concerns. But as one critic has observed, "In many, if not most, reviews moral judgements took precedence over literary judgements or swept them from the board."<sup>39</sup> I agree with Redman when he admits the necessity of "thrust[ing] aside our knowledge or half-knowledge [of Hemingway]. Otherwise we shall never be able to see clearly the book in hand, the book-in-itself."<sup>40</sup>

When one follows this advice it becomes apparent that the "book-in-itself" is about a hero learning to accept his shortcomings; he is concerned, as I have suggested already, with doing the best he can rather than the absolute best. He displays "practical competence," or the ability to respond as well as personal limitations will allow. Practical competence is Cantwell's alternative to the earlier hero's "perfect competence," or the ability to respond with guaranteed and unconditional excellence.

Performance is judged according to personal capabilities rather than by imposed rigid standards of excellence. The earlier Hemingway hero is a larger-than-life romantic ideal who, revelling in the rarified atmosphere of perfect competence, can meet these rigid standards because he lives unscathed by the innumerable frustrations and failures experienced by all men--even heroes--in the real world. I have tried to show that Richard Cantwell is Hemingway's attempt to bring to his fiction a life-sized hero who can accept his limitations and content himself with approximate success when absolute victory is impossible. This perception is essential if we are to recognize,

as I believe Hemingway intended us to, that Cantwell comports himself at his death with a dignity equal to that of any of Hemingway's early heroes. Let me illustrate what I mean.

If, when we read that Cantwell closes the car door "carefully and well" we evaluate the action in its immediate context, then it becomes the beautifully controlled gesture of a man engaged in a mortal struggle (ARIT, p. 307). As such it is worthy of an admiration we cannot bestow if we perceive the gesture only in its absolute sense as the expedient action of a passenger entering a vehicle. Cantwell dies of a heart attack quietly in the back seat of his car--a far cry from being knifed, or fatally gored or shot, or any other of the dramatic deaths that early heroes suffered. There is no ennobling cause to elevate the death or underline its tragedy; and Cantwell, at fifty-one, is hardly the pitiable "hero dying young." Yet despite the unheroic circumstances of his death, Cantwell acquits himself as best he can, with a certain "purity of line" achieved through practical competence.

His competence lies in his ability to select and employ successfully certain strategies under stress. But Cantwell's pre-occupation with "trivia" relates not only to the desire to perform well in every instance, but also to his need to cope with fear in a positive manner. Hemingway had always furnished his heroes with patent formulae for bravery: to "not think about it" was one of these; to concentrate rigidly on momentary activity was another.<sup>41</sup> Every successful hero, from Nick in "Big Two-Hearted River" to Santiago in The Old Man and

the Sea, has employed one or the other of these measures to sustain courage in adversity. Thus, when Richard Cantwell attaches significance to almost of unimportant things, be it reaching champagne or chewing meat, he is coping with the problem of fear in the prescribed Hemingway manner.<sup>42</sup>

However, in Across the River and into the Trees the source of his anxiety is neither external nor visible; nor is it in the forefront of the action. Cantwell is reacting to the rather unspectacular internal threat of a weak heart. Its marginal romantic impact (compared to the fortunes of war or rebellious nature, for example) is compounded by the Colonel's responses which seem to lack the flair of earlier heroes'. Cantwell's behaviour may embarrass (where Nick's and Santiago's do not) if one is considering the observable form of the behaviour; but it can also inspire admiration if, as Hemingway intended, one is aware of the function of that behaviour. An example will clarify the point:

"Take a glass of this," the Colonel said, reaching accurately and well for the champagne bucket with the ice . . . (ARIT, p. 154, emphasis mine).

. . . and he shut the door. He shut it carefully and well (ARIT, p. 307, emphasis mine).

These two seemingly trivial tasks--reaching for a bottle and closing a car door--Cantwell evidently takes very seriously. In the first instance the concentrated effort seems absurd; in the second, poignant. The execution of a social drink should not merit the same attention as the performance of last rites, we complain. And if Cantwell's reason for concentration in the first instance was merely to procure

a drink, the observation would be justified. However, his performance is motivated by a different need which is identical to his need later in the car. It is the need to sustain courage while confronting, first, love in the gondola, and then death--love's "opposite number"--in the back seat of the car. Both situations produce anxiety and both elicit the same coping behaviour: that of concentrating rigidly on momentary activity.

"Not thinking about it" is Cantwell's other response to anxiety: "Now on his way to Venice [Cantwell was] keeping strictly controlled and unthinking his great need to be there" (ARIT, p. 20). This technique is one which is understood and employed by Renata as well, notably when she and the Colonel sit down to their first dinner at the Gritti Palace restaurant.

"We are having fun," the girl said. "We are having it again and without sorrow. Isn't he an imposing lobster?" (ARIT, p. 116, emphasis mine). They were not having "fun" in the previous scene (which I shall discuss in another context later) where Renata discloses the fact that she is menstruating and consequently not pregnant (ARIT, p. 110). Now, in the restaurant, her verbalization of the fact of their fun, followed instantly by her interest--which I suspect is partly feigned--in the lobster, indicates her conscious desire to have fun by thinking of something other than the "disappointment." That "something" is food. Cantwell picks up her cue and the meal is an odd assortment of intense conversation strategically interspersed with gastronomic details.<sup>43</sup> "Don't we have fun with food?" she

exclaims a little later over the same meal. Meanwhile we have been treated at length to an elaborate account of menus, wines and lobsters, and amongst other things, the correct way of eating artichoke vinaigrette. What critics have seen as self-indulgence on Hemingway's part is in fact an effective technique for coping with anxiety. "Let's have a fine time," the Colonel said. "Let's not think about anything at all" (ARIT, p. 82).

Cantwell's ability to deal constructively with anxiety enables him to maintain the courage necessary to endure adversity with dignity; and his acceptance of his limitations allows him to achieve a consistently high level of competence regardless of task. I have discussed his "little" successes at some length, and I must now, in all fairness, record some of his more sizeable achievements: he tackles two young sailors and subdues them successfully on Renata's behalf (ARIT, pp. 283-84); he shoots "as well or better than [he] can shoot" on the Tagliamento (ARIT, p. 279); and he is able to endure a minor heart attack on his feet, "resting as lightly as a hawk rests" (ARIT, p. 196).

Hawks, lions, deep-water fish, and all other noble predators, accrue significance in Hemingway's fiction as champions of the natural world; and Hemingway's human champions are often established by their association with one or more of them. In Across the River and into the Trees Cantwell is associated not only with the hawk, but also with the lion, and by implication, with the voracious deep-water tuna he admires in the fish market: as a soldier on

leave he is, figuratively speaking, a "roving bullet" like the pelagic bonito and albacore on display (ARIT, p. 192). The clam seller acknowledges Cantwell's superiority by surrendering his knife to him because he "cuts closer"--that is, takes greater risks--than the average man. In terms of the metaphor, Cantwell is the predatory tuna who lives more fully, or deeply, than the vendor who is a shallow water sole/soul. The vendor's purpose in life is merely to accommodate men like Cantwell, the champions of this world: "The poor sole exists in shallow water, to feed man" (ARIT, p. 192).<sup>44</sup> Fittingly, when the Colonel sits down to lunch for the last time with Renata, he chooses to eat sole (ARIT, p. 269).

Cantwell's ability to cut closer than the average man is important for two reasons: it establishes him as a serious hero in his own right, in the tradition of all great Hemingway heroes, and it accounts for the tension which informs the work. Richard Cantwell is going to die soon and he knows it. He knows it the way Santiago's fish who swims against the current after he is truly hooked, knows it; and the way Macomber's lion who crawls forward after his hindquarters are smashed, knows it.<sup>45</sup> Like the marlin and the lion, Richard--the lion-hearted--Cantwell "comes alive with his death in him," opting for "one day as a lion" over "a hundred years as a sheep" (ARIT, p. 40).

Across the River and into the Trees reveals Cantwell's last three days as a lion which end, necessarily, in his going off in the company of males to hunt and finally to die. Yet, for the first time in



Hemingway there is something unsatisfactory in these proceedings: some peripheral feeling of emptiness, or perhaps disappointment, pervades the final scene. Perhaps it is Jackson's irreverent attitude toward the whole business, his careless disregard mingled with contempt, which subtly conveys the feeling--one that Hemingway himself was wrestling with--that there is but vanity and futility in the Colonel's need to partake of the exclusive male rites of passage. For once the denial of love is unnecessary, as is Cantwell's solitary death:<sup>46</sup> a hero need not die away from other men to die well.

If this is the lesson that Hemingway intends, as I believe it is, it is never verbalized, but lurks instead beneath the surface of the novel. It is implicit in conversations which seem to be little more than "chit-chat"--and not particularly lucid at that. A concrete statement of this altered version of the code seems to be "the thing left out."<sup>47</sup> According to Hemingway, "you could omit anything if you know that you omitted and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood. . . . but they will understand. . . . it only takes time and it only needs confidence."<sup>48</sup> While Hemingway may not have consciously endeavoured to leave it out he was certainly aware that it had been left out, and the immediate effect is the same. "Nothing. Never anything. Always nothing," is Renata's ironical comment, and Renata, as keeper of the lesson and as Cantwell's tutor, is in a position to know (ARIT, p. 132).<sup>49</sup>

The Hemingway tutor, with few exceptions, is traditionally male;

and the Hemingway female is realized only to the extent that she fulfills the expectations of the hero--in eros or in "bitchery." Consequently, critics who have approached Renata with preconceived ideas have found just another "attractive version of a deferential yes-man."<sup>50</sup> Young says she is as "lovely, compliant, devoted, and recognizable as ever."<sup>51</sup> She is "the highly idealized girl who so exists for her lover that she nearly ceases to exist as a person."<sup>52</sup>

It is preposterous to expect that a woman who is "submissive and devoted beyond credibility and to the extinction of her own character" can teach anything to anybody, much less the heroic lesson of how to die to an experienced old soldier who "knows about command."<sup>53</sup> But Renata is not inferior in any sense of the word. Like Cantwell she is a champion in her own right.

She is associated with all Hemingway champions, particularly Santiago, by her quality of strangeness which permits her intuitive understanding of nature: "You're a strange girl," Cantwell of the strange eyes, tells her; "Please look at the light on the ceiling," Renata instructs him when, caught up in his bitter description of military stupidity, he seems to have lost, temporarily at least, his perspective on the real nature of order (ARIT, p. 239, emphasis mine). She also shares an affinity with the large and noble natural champions: Cantwell tells her she walks "as well as a wolf or an old big coyote . . . . like all the great predators" (ARIT, p. 285)--like a lion in fact!

In the novel Cantwell acknowledges their kinship in the designation

"daughter."<sup>54</sup> He realizes that, like himself, she has a wish to command: ". . . you wish to command. . . . there's nothing wrong in that. All people such as us have it" (ARIT, p. 143, emphasis mine). He officially recognizes her worthiness when he accepts her as a member of the Order of Brusadelli. Her entry into this heretofore exclusively male world is at no cost to her femininity.

She is a classically beautiful woman whose long and luxuriant hair Cantwell admires to excess. Long hair is for Hemingway the supreme symbol of femininity.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, in her portrait she looks "as though [she] were rising from the sea without the head wet," a description which recalls Venus, the goddess of love and of all that is womanly (ARIT, p. 97). She displays a feminine interest in jewelry, good glass, and grooming to please her man.

Critics have descried her interest in war and soldiery as unfeminine, yet who would call Desdemona, who also listens to her man's accounts of battle and bravery, unfeminine?<sup>56</sup> Although similarly employed, Renata does not listen enchanted like that earlier Venetian lady, wishing that "God had made her such a man."<sup>57</sup> Her role of inquisitor and auditor--hardly in keeping with her critical reputation as an "ethereal lovely"--is not motivated by the promise of vicarious excitement. Rather, it is prompted by love. She is sincerely interested in military matters, but for Cantwell's sake more than her own. She wishes to become part of his life by sharing what is most dear to him--his trade; and more than that, she wishes to help him to exorcise his bitterness so that he can die well, "with the

grace of a happy death" (ARIT, p. 240).

Cantwell is willing to recount whatever Renata wants to hear because she is an equal, not only by virtue of her personal qualities, but also by her ancestry:

"How many people fought in your family?"

"Everybody," she said. "Always. They were traders as well and several of them were Doges of this city as you know."

"But they all fought?"

"All," she said. "As far as I know."

"OK," the Colonel said, "I'll tell you any God damn thing you want to know" (ARIT, pp. 218-19).

But equality is not sufficient qualification for a tutor, who, by definition, must possess greater knowledge or skill than the person he directs. Cantwell acknowledges Renata's superiority--that is, her qualifications to teach--in his early morning bedroom banter with the gift portrait.

He distinguishes between the painted figure on the canvas and the real-life girl at home in her bed. Renata is the "principal" not only of the painting but also of the school in which Cantwell is trying to be "the best God damned boy" (ARIT, p. 173). Renata has the "straight true brain" and "beauty memory" of a soldier that Cantwell can at once identify with and learn from (ARIT, p. 231). Her youthfulness does not restrict her effectiveness: although not yet twenty, she is, in some ways, "as old as hell," with a "strange dark grown-up child's face" and a knowledge beyond her years of the way to achieve grace at death (ARIT, p. 235). She is "a champion before he is a champion" (ARIT, p. 285).

"Renata" means reborn, and the inference most often drawn is that the girl is a symbol of Cantwell's lost youth. This is the way critics see her, and the way they suppose Cantwell sees her. Renata knows that this is certainly the way Cantwell likes to see her. When she presents him with her portrait she remarks: "While it is not truly me it is the way you like to think of me" (ARIT, p. 97). His liking to do it suggests not only his conscious choice to do it, but also his knowledge of the less desirable alternative. And while he indulges the fantasy--that Renata is his youth incarnate--he never loses sight of the reality that she is superior to how he was in his youth: "She'd out-maneuver you the best day you were born and would stay and fight where you would eff-off, discreetly" (ARIT, p. 231). Renata is not the usual Hemingway tutor, nor is her lesson typical of the one given to earlier Hemingway heroes. Her code still teaches grace under pressure, but her tactics are new: the hero need not deny love nor seek solitary death in order to die with dignity. Cantwell cites three of her qualifications for teaching this lesson: a "strange pride," the ability to sacrifice, and "the wisdom of a child" (ARIT, p. 219).

Renata's strange pride, which allows her to serve as well as to command, is a pride that Cantwell can admire yet cannot emulate.<sup>58</sup> Her ability to sacrifice her personal concerns gracefully for the communal interests of love is, again, something Cantwell desires but cannot, as we shall see, find in himself. She is willing to sacrifice her future happiness for their present happiness: she will endure

the emptiness herself so that she and Cantwell can enjoy love together (ARIT, p. 271). Her unsophisticated wisdom enables her to see beyond the red tape and euphemisms of life to what is truly important; it enables her to guide Cantwell gently in the direction he wishes to go. Thus when Cantwell grows too bitter and cynical about his past she offers to fill his glass and suggests he study the strange light that signifies the reassuring harmony which transcends human bureaucracies. Finally, Renata is capable of bearing misfortune gracefully. She is strong enough to withstand the hardship that others would find difficult to bear; she responds first and stalwartly to Cantwell's need although her own is great. She is the moon: "Her sorrows come regularly. But she always fills before she wanes" (ARIT, p. 100). Thus Renata, with "all her smoothness and delight and the strange pride and sacrifice and wisdom" is a fitting tutor to teach Cantwell about love.

Although love is generally present in Hemingway's novels it never results in sustained marriage. The early hero's commitment to struggle, which helped to define his masculine entity and enabled him to triumph over his natural world, precluded any commitment towards lasting love and marriage. His profession (be it soldier, prize fighter, hunter, or even writer) placed him in opposition--to men, nature, or ideas--and made competence in adversity the single prerequisite for self realization, and hence his single concern. Pedro Romero, a code hero in The Sun Also Rises, typifies the early hero's sense of the relationship between his love and his trade.

Romero loves bullfighting (his trade), and bulls, and Brett--in that order (TSAR, p. 248). He considers himself, that is his performance, before Brett, and will accommodate love only in so far as it does not impinge upon his trade. He acknowledges her indirectly by performing in front of her when he can but refuses to compromise his trade or himself by looking directly at her:

. . . he did it all for himself inside, and it strengthened him, and yet he did it for her too. But he did not do it for her at any loss to himself. He gained by it all afternoon (TSAR, p. 249).

He risks nothing and therefore loses nothing. Such selfish love, a by-product of a necessary dedication to combatting adversity, is rejected by the padre in A Farewell to Arms who stresses willingness to serve and to sacrifice for love.<sup>59</sup> Robert Jordan in For Whom the Bell Tolls serves love: he sacrifices himself for Maria (FWBT, p. 466); but he sacrifices Maria and their love in response to his overriding commitment to war. Maria's absence serves the conventional heroic design admirably because it leaves Jordan free to concentrate on his final performance. He dies with grace.

It is Richard Cantwell in Across the River and into the Trees who first recognizes (however inadequately he practises) that love is not subordinate to honour; "You cannot have one without the other," and that there is an affinity between love and conflict (ARIT, p. 123): ". . . he was assisting, or had made an act of presence at the only mystery he believed in except the occasional bravery of men. . . . it is only what man does for woman he retains, except what he does for his fatherland . . ." (ARIT, p. 153).

Cantwell has verbalized at least, the equal merits of a man's love and his trade. The common denominator is courage--the courage to sustain love, and the courage to deny it, respectively.

But Cantwell cannot actualize in his own life what he feels to be true. Like earlier heroes he perceives courage as self denial which disciplines and strengthens him and prepares him for the final contest. Renata demonstrates the kind of courage Cantwell (and Hemingway) is reaching toward, the courage which allows self denial without thought for personal gain. Its reward is not assured triumph at death. It is rather, the possibility of fulfillment, however brief, in life:

C. "What happens to people that love each other?"

R. "I suppose they have whatever they have and they are more fortunate than others. Then one of them gets the emptiness forever" (ARIT, p. 271).

Renata is prepared to shoulder the emptiness in order to share "whatever they have" (ARIT, p. 91).

What they have is an approximation of the kind of love Renata knows to be possible through sharing. It is "something better than there is" and has unlimited potential. There is, for example, the possibility of transcending time and space through continuity. The futurity of children provides an alternate answer to the hero's desire for immortality.

As Cantwell sits with Renata over drinks in Harry's bar, he is contemplating their unborn child. "Do you think [your mother] would mind if we had a baby?" he asks his girl (ARIT, p. 93). Renata



replies that she would have to marry someone--to give her child a home--but that it cannot be Cantwell. Her tone is matter-of-fact where his has been loving. The reason becomes apparent a little later in Cantwell's room: "I have a disappointment for you Richard," she said. "I have a disappointment about everything" (ARIT, p. 110). The disappointment about everything--the weekend, the future, their relationship--is that she is menstruating and therefore not pregnant. She had known it at Harry's and could not reciprocate, under false pretenses, the loving concern of a father-to-be. "She said it as a flat statement" and we are told that its effect upon Cantwell was the same as when "the battalion commander spoke the absolute truth and told you the worst" (ARIT, p. 110). The comparison conveys something of the enormity of Cantwell's disappointment. It is a two-fold loss. Not only does it prevent him from enjoying the full lovemaking he had anticipated, but also, it prevents him from realizing the connection he had desired. If Renata's news hits Cantwell with the force of his commander's report, then we know that Cantwell is devastated, yet he controls his anguish and comports himself with heroic dignity. "My poor Daughter," he says, having satisfied himself that there is no mistake. Here there would be room for conjecture as to whether he commiserates with Renata or laments his never-to-be-born child, had not Hemingway stated that "there was nothing dark about the word and she was his Daughter, truly, and he pitied her and loved her" (ARIT, p. 110, emphasis mine). There is no recrimination here. Rather, Cantwell has accepted the situation: he has seen that the

possibility for connection through children is impossible--Renata cannot conceive on this weekend which is probably their last--and he settles for the possibility of connection through love.<sup>60</sup>

The kind of love Renata desires is based on unreserved sharing. She longs to be a part of Cantwell's past, his present and his future. But her lover's life is bound inextricably to his trade, and, says Cantwell "Nobody shares this trade with anybody" (ARIT, p. 133). The best he can do is to give her privileges. He can acknowledge their great and enveloping love but not, and he makes this quite explicit, at the expense of his honour (ARIT, p. 123). He can tell her about his trade and "insert anecdotes to make it interesting or plausible"; he can carry her emeralds and countenance her membership into The Order; and he can pay her the ultimate compliment of wishing she were male and a part of his trade: "I wish the hell you were a soldier . . ." (ARIT, p. 231).

Yet while she possesses the qualities which make her a champion, and Cantwell can acknowledge and envy them, she can never be a champion in Cantwell's terms because she is a female. Hence he can neither include her in the hunt nor in the other rites of his passage. These things are still part of the exclusive realm of male champions. Her femininity gets in the way. The point is made shortly after Renata meets Cantwell at Harry's:

- R. "And if we were such a thing as married would you practise your trade in the home?"
- C. "No I swear it. I never have. Not in my heart."
- R. "With no one?"

C. "With no one of your sex."

R. "I don't like that word your sex. It sounds as though you were practising your trade" (ARIT, pp. 83-4, emphasis mine).

And Renata is quite right--he is. He is demonstrating the attitude of earlier heroes that men can only be men without women.

Love must be for Cantwell a "limited objective" because of the beliefs he holds (in common with earlier heroes) that a man's trade is his private preparation for death and cannot be shared (ARIT, p. 210). "That [dying] is the one thing we do alone. . . . I would love to have you with me. But it is very egotistical . . ." (ARIT, p. 228). For Cantwell love and his trade are an "either/or" proposition: at any one time his attention must be directed either toward love or toward his trade. Cantwell wishes to forget his trade but he is not successful. Even in the course of a two minute conversation he must apologize twice for his lapses: "I'm sorry," the Colonel said, "I had just slipped into my trade unconsciously . . ." (ARIT, p. 83). It is only a matter of five sentences, which deal directly with the subject of not practising one's trade, before Cantwell is again doing it. Frustrated, he wishes he could eliminate his trade altogether: "I throw my trade out of that God-damn window into the Grand Canal" (ARIT, p. 84).

Cantwell's proposed solution, to love by eliminating the other thing entirely, is not Renata's however. Amending his roughness but expressing the same sentiment, Cantwell has asserted, "I love you and my trade can gently leave." "Let me feel your hand. . . .

you can put it on the table," Renata counters (ARIT, p. 84). The hand is, of course, his wounded one. By calling his attention to it, and by suggesting that he leave it where it will be in full view while they are talking love, Renata indicates the need to integrate love and his trade, love and violence. To this end, she encourages him to use his split hand when they are making love as well (ARIT, p. 152).

But the final test of love is the ability to sustain it in opposition, that is, the capacity to share the final mortal struggle with a loved one and still die with dignity. Although Cantwell comes much closer to realizing this kind of love than previous heroes, he must ultimately adhere to the early pattern: solitary death in a male environment.

Duck hunting is Cantwell's way of entering into the exclusively masculine realm which has always existed in one form or another in every Hemingway novel. Going to the duck shoot does for Cantwell what going to war did for other heroes: it provides him with an arena in which to display his competence. By the same token, his going to the duck shoot will affect Renata as the earlier heroes' going to war affected other heroines: it will leave her with the emptiness, which is the inevitable burden of the female in Hemingway's novels who is attached to a man hopelessly committed to violence. The hunt furthers the process of isolation which will prevent the hero from sustaining a love relationship. Since Renata's implicit function in the novel is to teach Cantwell that sustained love and

death in the company of a loved one does not automatically preclude dignity, the issue of accompanying Cantwell to the shoot becomes a central one.

Renata employs various tactics over several scenes in her efforts to secure an invitation to the shoot. I want to look closely at these scenes, interpreting passages which seem rather cloudy on a first reading to show how, cumulatively, they comprise Renata's definite, 'though not readily discernable, effort to help Cantwell to see something about himself and the nature of his beliefs. I begin with the scene where Renata and Cantwell are dining at the Gritti.

During the course of the meal the Barone Alvarito drops by to furnish Cantwell with information about the hunt. His appearance is brief yet it interrupts the pleasant intimacy of the meal. When he has gone, and after the Gran Maestro, who has just appeared, has been dispatched for the cheese, Cantwell is able to turn his attention once again to Renata. He finds her "quiet and a little withdrawn since she had seen Alvarito" (ARIT, p. 131). When Cantwell asks her what the matter is she replies pettishly, "Nothing. Never anything. Always nothing."

But in reality it is not "nothing." We are told that "something was going on in her mind and it was an excellent mind." Her thoughts, triggered by Alvarito's appearance, have temporarily removed her from the reality of the restaurant (ARIT, p. 131). Alvarito, like Cantwell, is a champion--he has a "strange" rare smile--his presence

reminds the girl of the hunt and the world of male championship where she is not welcome. The appearance of the Gran Maestro compounds her feelings of exclusion for he too belongs to this male world (ARIT, p. 55).

Renata is excluded from the hunt and she wishes to go. She is indeed qualified to go in every respect except her gender. This is what is the matter, but she will not confront Cantwell directly about taking her with him; instead she dismisses his concern for her quietness with a kind of martyred resignation:

C. "What's the matter, Daughter?"

R. "Nothing. Never anything. Always nothing."

C. "You might as well pull out of it. We haven't time for such luxuries."

R. "No. I agree. We will devote ourselves to the cheese."

C. "Do I have to take it like a corn cob?"

R. "No," she said. . . ."Put your right hand in your pocket."

C. "Good," the Colonel said. "I will."

But Cantwell has received the message. Not only does he understand the reason for her mood, but he indicates that he is not prepared to remedy the situation--that is, he will not take her with him so she "might as well pull out of it" and enjoy the time together while they have it (ARIT, p. 132). Renata's acquiescence is perfunctory. Although she suggests they devote themselves to the cheese she continues to sulk, and her persisting mood prompts Cantwell's next remark--half question, half exclamation--"Do I have to take it like a corn

cob?" Cantwell's exasperation, directed at Renata, is really meant for himself. He is not comfortable with his decision to go to the shoot alone, but he is unable to alter it. He is aware that "sometimes you don't just hold [with a decision because] that is for stupids. Sometimes you have to switch fast" (ARIT, p. 162).

Renata has already told him that he "should never be stupid" (ARIT, p. 104). Feeling disappointed in himself, therefore, Cantwell does not want to contend with the added burden of Renata's sullenness. "Not understanding the colloquialism" Renata can still respond to his implicit plea, and indicates her good faith by asking him to touch her gift emeralds in his pocket.

He put his right hand in his pocket and felt what was there first with the tips of his fingers, and then with the insides of his fingers, and then with the palm of his hand; his split hand (ARIT, p. 132).

Violence (symbolized by the wounded hand) connects with love in Cantwell's ritual act. An understanding has been reached. Now they can resume their companionable evening: Renata suggests again that they devote themselves to the cheese--"with happiness" this time (ARIT, p. 132).

But the issue is raised again before the end of the meal. Cantwell affirms his love for the hundredth time that day and Renata responds with the seemingly unrelated suggestion that they buy some good glass (ARIT, p. 141). The connection between love and good glass is the feminine association of love with marriage, with a home, with linens and dishes and good glass, with security and permanence. Cantwell protests that he knows nothing about the

security and permanence of love: "I don't know about glass"; Renata offers to teach him: "I could teach you. It would be fun." Challenged, Cantwell cites a nomadic life as a good reason for not collecting glass, and when Renata counters this, the forthcoming shoot becomes Cantwell's immediate excuse. There is more truth in the excuse than Cantwell cares to think about. Driven finally by his response to the confrontation she had avoided earlier, Renata comes directly to the point: "Can I come duck shooting?" "Only if Alvarito asks you" is Cantwell's safe reply--"safe" because the Colonel feels confident that the Barone, also a champion, will share his feelings about the relationship between love and honour (ARIT, p. 123). "I can make him ask me." "I doubt that," the Colonel scoffs.

Cantwell's confidence, founded on the belief that Renata will appeal to the Barone as a woman, is justifiable. But Renata is closely bound to Alvarito by the fact that they are both champions and are akin to deer (ARIT, p. 129, p. 285). If Renata approaches Alvarito as an equal, rather than as a female, Cantwell cannot answer for him and he must withdraw his doubt. His concession to her worthiness motivates, in turn, Renata's concession: "For that I will not go and be a nuisance" (ARIT, p. 142). The issue is dropped, the evening enjoyed, and Renata finally seen home.

The following morning Cantwell makes plans to meet Renata for breakfast: "Should we have breakfast at the Florian . . . ?" he asks (ARIT, p. 196). "I'll be there in twenty minutes if you want



me," she replies (emphasis mine). Now, for someone who has received an unsolicited invitation for breakfast, this is a strange stipulation. If the Colonel did not want her to meet him for breakfast, he would not have proffered the invitation. But Renata is not asking about breakfast. She is asking a much more significant question which relates to the issue of the preceding evening. Cantwell had withdrawn his doubt: the possibility for Renata to share the hunting experience exists. She is ready to meet him anywhere if he wants her. Because of their amicable agreement the night before, there is no way in which Renata can gracefully revoke her concession to stay at home--this must come from Cantwell--so she approaches the subject obliquely, hoping that Cantwell will pick up on her thoughts. He does: "I want you," the Colonel says, and hangs up.

It can be debated whether or not Cantwell understood the intent of Renata's conditional response. I believe he did. The terse reply, gruffly spoken probably to conceal great emotion, would be an appropriate response for this very tough, lovestruck man who has spent a wakeful night in debate with a portrait and his conscience, and a morning at the fish market. He has admired the champion tuna and acknowledged the presence of the shallow water sole (the significance of which I have noted earlier). He is like the pelagic tuna and does not wish it otherwise. He is a champion who will extend himself in adversity according to a solitary code. Necessarily then, he must go to the shoot alone. Yet Cantwell cannot visit the place where they keep the wild ducks without Renata (ARIT, p. 199). He likes to share it

with her. The approaching duck hunt is an extension of the activity which he enjoys most when he shares it with Renata. Hence Cantwell's brief affirmation: "I want you." This does not indicate that Cantwell has decided to share the duck hunt with Renata; rather, it suggests an ambivalence in the Colonel which was not there when Alvarito approached him the night before. Cantwell is torn between his desire to take Renata along and his desire to die with dignity. For Cantwell, the two are mutually exclusive.

But immediately upon hanging up the telephone, Cantwell has a minor heart attack which brings his imminent death more fully into focus and sharpens his perception of what he must do. Grey-faced, he "rests lightly" and "without illusion" (ARIT, p. 196). Renata and all she stands for has been his illusion: continuity through love, futurity through children, and the notion he has lately entertained that perhaps she might, after all, go with him.<sup>61</sup> He is now without this illusion; he is dis-illusioned--not everyday, as Renata had suggested, but only now on this particular day (ARIT, p. 232). Thus he is a hawk, resting lightly, a champion because he has no illusion. Much as Cantwell desires it, and "pretty" as it is to think so (TSAR, p. 247), for him there can be no integration of love with violence. It is at this point, as if to ratify his decision, that Cantwell removes Renata's stones from his pocket and consigns them to the concierge's care. As I have tried to indicate, Cantwell's state of mind before his attack was ambivalent concerning Renata and the shoot, and I believe he was more inclined to entertain

the possibility of her company after his visit to the market. While he had planned to leave the stones in the safe on the way to the market, when he returns to the hotel he is greeted by the concierge who could have relieved him of the stones had Cantwell wished. Cantwell's thoughts are certainly not far from the stones: they are on their Venetian owner and the issue for which the emeralds are actually a symbol. He also reassures Renata that he still has the stones and even takes the trouble to tell her where he is carrying them. He usually carries them in a trouser pocket, but this morning he has them in his left breast pocket, close to his heart. For these reasons I believe that Cantwell had changed his mind about returning the stones after visiting the market: he meant to keep them for his breakfast date at least.

But the heart attack brings Cantwell back to reality--his reality at least--and he relinquishes the emeralds, and with them his fond illusion of a "me/thee" principle of immortality (FWBT, p. 463). "But what about you, boy?" the Colonel asks the concierge. "You're not immortal, are you?" (ARIT, p. 197, emphasis mine). The question, prompted by the concierge's complacent belief that he will still be around when the envelope is called for, reveals Cantwell's rankling inner frustration with his own mortality and the now irrevocable decision it prompts.

Thus when Cantwell finally meets Renata twenty minutes later, he has come to an irrevocable negative decision. "Please Richard. Are you all right? Please?" Now "Please Richard" is a strange

morning greeting for a lover unless it is considered in the light of the preceding telephone conversation. The thing uppermost in Renata's mind is her rightful place at the hunt, thus her first "Please Richard" means "please, Richard, can I go with you?" But Cantwell has suffered his attack between their telephone conversation and their encounter and he has walked the better part of a mile. He has had to pace himself carefully on the way and it is more than likely that he is still pale and shaken when he arrives. Renata's concern with the hunt is abruptly replaced by her concern with his health. Hence the second "Please?"--that is, "please be alright, Richard."

Cantwell's "sure" is in response to the second please and not the first. When Renata asks him about his morning he hastens to mention that he did not look at the wild ducks. It is a kind of sop which prefaces, and in some small way perhaps softens, Cantwell's decision. "Thank-you," she says. "For nothing," he replies. Only Cantwell knows what this does not lead to: Renata jumps to the conclusion, based on the fact that he withdrew his doubt and that he omitted the wild ducks from his morning program, that he is prepared to allow her to go with him. His calm negative is unexpected, and triggers Renata's insightful next remark which, the Colonel is prepared to admit, is directly applicable:

C. "I never go there [to the duck place] when we are not together."

R. "Don't you think I should go to the shoot?"

- C. "No. I am quite sure. Alvarito would have asked you if he wanted you."
- R. "He might not have asked me because he wanted me."
- C. "That's true," the Colonel said, and pondered that for two seconds (ARIT, p. 199, emphasis mine).

Cantwell has drawn ammunition from their previous conversation, attributing to Alvarito what he knows to be of no consequence. Renata, in some ways as "old as hell," verbalizes the true meaning behind Cantwell's evasion. She displays compassion by continuing the fiction Cantwell has set up, using "he" instead of "you." Cantwell, already familiar with this explanation because he is familiar with his own motivation, needs little time to ponder. But the conversation is becoming threatening, and Cantwell abruptly changes the subject to one of breakfast. Whereupon Renata declares that breakfast at the Florian is worthless (ARIT, p. 200).

Now, Renata is a Venetian who, it is clear, has seen the square flooded and is familiar with the Florian when Cantwell suggests they breakfast there. Why then would Renata consent to meet him in a place that she doesn't like if a pleasant breakfast is her interest? We know Renata has an excellent mind, also that she can out-maneuver Cantwell his best day, so I do not think the seeming flightiness can be attributed either to dim-wittedness or to a "woman's prerogative." The only interpretation which explains Renata's sudden decision to eat at the Gritti is that Renata did not come to the sad square for breakfast. She has made it conditional upon her being asked to the hunt: "I'll be there in twenty minutes if you want me" (emphasis

mine). An invitation to share his masculine world is the proof of Cantwell's feelings that she desires.

However, the coveted invitation is not forthcoming. Cantwell will go alone to the duck shoot and die a solitary death. To allow Renata would be to make the Colonel weak in his own eyes and weak, so he thinks, in the eyes of other champions such as the Barone. Cantwell fails to perceive that choosing to invite Renata would also be an act of courage because he would have denied himself rather than another. Had he chosen to fulfill Renata's needs (at the expense of pride), he would have sustained no loss to his honour: "what you do to give pleasure to another whom you love is most honourable" (ARIT, p. 104).

Renata's understanding of these things about Cantwell's sense of what is necessary is clearly illustrated by the following brief exchange:

R. "Oh, Richard," she said. "Oh, my dear."

C. "I love you."

R. "Please love me."

C. "I do." . . . and he kissed her once more. . . . Then she broke away suddenly, and hard, and looked at him, and said, "I suppose we had better go back to Harry's."

C. "Do you want to play historical personages?"

R. "Yes," she said. "Let us play that you are you and I am me."

C. "Let's play," the Colonel said (ARIT, p. 261, emphasis mine).

Cantwell tells her he loves her, but Renata responds by pleading for

love with the emphasis, I think, on love--that total commitment to another which allows unreserved sharing of all experience. Cantwell's "I do," is reminiscent of a marriage vow, but not, ironically, an affirmation of the sustained love which is implied by marriage and which Renata desires. It is, rather, re-affirmation of the sincere but restricted love he has already expressed, a love qualified by his dedication to violence. It is this truth that causes Renata to break from his embrace. Cantwell is incapable this time of the "lovely quick decision" (to change his mind about the shoot) that she admires in him (ARIT, p. 103). Her suggestion to return to Harry's is her way of terminating an awkward and painful situation. Cantwell's suggestion that they play a "parlour game" is wholly appropriate. It is the kind of innocuous activity one resorts to when conversation is difficult but silence is infinitely worse. Renata has indicated both her frustration and her insight; Cantwell has indicated his inability to make things otherwise.

"Please keep on trying. That's all the hope we have," is Renata's parting counsel. She is asking him to "keep on trying" to reconcile love with his perception of masculine dignity. "I'll keep on trying," he replies. They kiss goodbye and the Colonel, like earlier heroes, enters into an exclusively male world, alone with his destiny.

Thus, the implicit lesson of the novel, that a man need not be special or die a solitary death to achieve dignity, is lost on Cantwell. Although he wanted it badly, he could not, in the final

analysis make that "lovely" decision to allow Renata to accompany him into the arena of his death. Richard Cantwell is flawed, not by his performance, although it is not perfect, but by his limited vision. He values the courage which comes through denial of love above the courage--greater could he but see it--which comes through the acceptance of love. He lacks, ultimately, the courage to accept his place in the brotherhood of man by virtue of a shared positive need--love; he persists in the view that men are brothers because they share a common end--death.

However, Richard Cantwell manages to come closer to changing his perspective than any previous Hemingway hero. He demonstrates a capacity to accept limitations to performance due to human frailty, both his own and others, and to accept his best rather than perfection.

Across the River and into the Trees not only anticipates the culmination of Hemingway's earlier vision, then, but also initiates Hemingway's later vision. In the sunken oak hogshead Cantwell approximates the earlier vision of integration between man and nature that Santiago achieves in The Old Man and the Sea, and further, the new vision of human integration Hemingway is striving toward; Cantwell kills a lone male duck with controlled effort as Santiago will kill a lone male fish. But Cantwell has been thinking of Renata immediately preceding his performance. He is imagining how it would be if he looked around and saw her and then shot the duck, when fantasy merges into reality. In one fluid sentence fantasy is reality: "'I'd try to pull one down like this,' he said,



hearing the wings in the air" (ARIT, p. 281). Thus Across the River and into the Trees adds a feminine presence (psychologically, at least) to the masculine world of struggle.<sup>62</sup> It is an approximation of the integration of woman and man and nature in harmonious opposition.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF THOMAS HUDSON

I have presented Across the River and into the Trees as the initial stage of a new phase of Hemingway's development. Islands in the Stream is the next stage in that development and accordingly the implicit message of the former novel is more explicit here.<sup>63</sup> It is not possible within the confines of this paper to treat Islands in the Stream with the thoroughness required to show in detail how Hemingway's later vision is more fully developed in this novel. My discussion of the novel will be limited to those portions which bear directly on the case I have outlined in the preceding chapter: that Hemingway is moving toward a new conception of heroism in which perfect competence and solitary death are unnecessary. I will show that Thomas Hudson is a more fallible hero than his predecessors, and that, by dying in the company of those who love him, he comes much closer than Richard Cantwell to understanding the communal nature of love. Although at the close of the novel it is too late for Hudson to apply his understanding of love to a heterosexual relationship, there is evidence, earlier on in the final section, to suggest that

under other circumstances--that is, if Hudson had not been mortally wounded--he could have sustained to the end a love relationship with his first wife. While the focus of my discussion must necessarily be the "At Sea" section of the novel where the hero actually faces death, I would like to work into my discussion by giving a brief summary of the preceding two sections, noting those things about Thomas Hudson which connect him with or separate him from previous heroes.

In "Bimini" we discover Thomas Hudson, a painter and also a father--two unprecedented features in a Hemingway hero--living alone in a remote fortress of a house on an island (IIS, p. 4).<sup>64</sup> He has built himself a "carapace of work" and discipline into which he has retired, and he employs the strategy (familiar to us from Across the River and into the Trees) of "not thinking about it" to prevent himself from feeling lonely and discouraged over the loss of his first wife and his boys (IIS, p. 7). Thomas Hudson, the painter, has retired from life in order to be "selfish only for his painting, [and] ruthless only for his work" (IIS, p. 9); however, Thomas Hudson, the father, plans to leave the protective routine of his life for five weeks of summer holiday with his sons.

Hudson is revealed as a loving but not always skillful father. Unlike Cantwell who did everything well no matter how trivial, Hudson cannot always do everything he attempts as well as he would like: when his son is threatened by a shark, Hudson is unable to kill it although he is shooting at a range that, according to Eddy,

"nobody could miss," and he is unable to give David, his second son, the paternal comfort that Roger can: "David had gone with Roger. . . . David was always a mystery to Thomas Hudson. He was a well-loved mystery. But Roger understood him better than his own father did" (IIS, p. 135).

Despite several tense moments, the five weeks pass quickly and delightfully for both father and sons, and as the holidays draw to a close Hudson regretfully contemplates a return to work and routine (IIS, p. 90). But with the sudden death of his two younger sons shortly after their visit, Hudson's carefully constructed world crumbles as he deliberately breaks his own rules (IIS, p. 188). Following Eddy's suggestion, he closes up the house on the island and plans to stay in Paris awhile, and then to take up residence in his Cuba house. "Young Tom can keep you company," says Eddy, and "you can paint good over there . . ." (IIS, p. 184).

But in the "Cuba" section we learn that young Tom is dead and cannot keep his father company, and that Thomas Hudson does not paint anymore (IIS, p. 296). He does, however, do a great deal of drinking, and in the absence of humans he nourishes a rather erotic relationship with his cats.<sup>65</sup> There is total disintegration of the ordered world Hudson had made for himself on Bimini. Towards the end of this section, Hudson meets his first wife, whom he has continued to love although they have been separated for some years.

The relationship between Hudson and this woman is strikingly similar to that between Cantwell and Renata. The two women have

much in common: they are both classically beautiful with the long hair which so enthralls their lover; they are both worthy of sharing in the masculine appreciation of violence--Renata has the "straight true brain" and "beauty memory" of a soldier, and Hudson's ex-wife makes plans like a "good general" (IIS, p. 7); they are both attuned to the process of integration--Renata, through her recognition of the magical light, and Hudson's wife through her recognition of the importance to Hudson of his painting (IIS, pp. 296-98); and finally, they both desire a love which differs from that which the hero is prepared to give. Just as Renata will meet Cantwell anywhere if he "wants" her fully, so Hudson's wife will give up her career and her men if Hudson really needs her: "Couldn't you be more needing and make me necessary and not be so damned give it and take it and take it away I'm not hungry" (IIS, p. 298).<sup>66</sup> But Hudson, like Cantwell, maintains an exclusivity based on pride which puts the welfare of the individual before the communal interests of love. The discussion between Hudson and his ex-wife is interrupted by Hudson's return to duty. At the close of "Cuba" we see something very similar to what was presented in Across the River and into the Trees (and earlier novels): the hero leaves his love to engage in a death-in-life struggle in the company of males.

I will now turn to the climactic "At Sea" section of the novel, in which Hemingway's new idea, that heroic death need not be solitary, is almost realized by his hero. Hudson's progress toward this realization is informed by his desire, satisfied in the novel through dream, to

sustain a total love relationship with his first wife. His subconscious wish, evident in the dream, to surrender his ego to love, facilitates his ability to learn from Ara and Willy certain vital lessons about the nature of pride and of love, which in turn, enable Thomas Hudson to die well in the company of others. I will begin my analysis with a brief look at Hudson's dream, then move on to discuss his pride, and finally, his death.

It will be remembered that at the conclusion of "Cuba" Thomas Hudson had left his love to engage in what becomes a mortal struggle with a worthy male opponent. On patrol, Hudson discovers the existence of this enemy while investigating the charred remains of an island village. Out of the remnants he is able to glean many details about the nature of this enemy and his flight. Finally, satisfied with his information, Hudson rests on the beach and dozes off thinking about the consequences of being alone in pursuit (IIS, p. 322).

In his sleep Hudson dreams that he is having intercourse with his first wife. She desires a mutual give and take experience, while he wants only to take: "You," he said. "Who's going to make love to who?" "Both of us," she said. "Unless you want it differently." "You make love to me. I'm tired" (IIS, p. 323). His gun, symbolic of his trade (and his pride), is in the way: "Let me take the pistol off and put it by your leg. The pistol's in the way of everything," she tells him (IIS, p. 323). Hudson gives her permission to "lay it by the bed . . . and make everything the way it should be" (emphasis mine). "Then it was all the way it should be" (emphasis mine).

Instead of Hudson's typical "give it and take it" response, there is, finally, a shared total experience of a kind never sustained in Hemingway's published works.<sup>67</sup> Although Hudson has already suggested that his wife make love to him, she asks again, "Shall I be you or you be me?" With the barrier of the pistol no longer between them, complete involvement is possible, and Hudson resolves to try to be the woman as she is able to be him.

"Try to lose everything and take everything too," she instructs him. "Alright . . . it's wonderful," Hudson discovers. "Do you know what we have?" she asks. "Yes," he said, "yes I know. It's easy to give up."

The "it" is egotistical pride which isolates a man and drives him to dedicate himself to violence before love, and to his trade before his woman. But at this point the insight is confined to a dream.

When Hudson wakes it is to the knowledge that the only girl he has is "the pistol between his legs," and he dedicates himself to his new sea trade as relentlessly as he had devoted himself to his painting. Like his painting, the chase provides a focus which prevents Hudson from thinking of other things, and gives him a sense of purpose in the absence of love and honour (IIS, p. 307). As Hudson was "selfish for his painting and ruthless for his work," so he becomes selfish and ruthless for his command.

Because he "just [does] not give a damn" he refuses to accept adequate rest and relaxation but fails to perceive that his carelessness affects more than just himself.<sup>68</sup> He fails to realize that he is part of a team, and that in being careless of himself he is also

jeopardizing the safety of his crew (IIS, p. 338). Hudson is very much a man on his own, despite the men around him, until Ara, one of the crew members (and also an initiated character in the novel), articulates the lesson Hudson must learn if he wishes to avoid the solitary fate--now considered unnecessary by Hemingway--of previous heroes: "We have our pride but we have another pride. . . . it is a pride without vanity. . . . all a man has is pride . . . but a man must implement his pride with intelligence and care. Now that you have ceased to be careful of yourself I must ask you to be please. For us and for the ship" (IIS, p. 336). Hudson's inability at this point to recognize and respond to the team of which he is a part is characteristic of Cantwell and heroes prior to Cantwell. Hudson must ask, "Who is us?" to which Ara replies, "All of us" (IIS, p. 336).<sup>69</sup>

But as Hudson draws closer to his adversary and works, of necessity, more closely with his crew, he undergoes a change in his attitude toward the men and their mission. He moves away from believing "there aren't any things any more" to a knowledge that "there is [the] ship and the people on her" (IIS, p. 334). He moves from the need to do everything perfectly himself to the understanding that every man has his talents and his limitations, and that the limitations do not degrade him if he can utilize the talents: "OK," said Thomas Hudson, "I get the picture. But I still command" (IIS, p. 338).<sup>70</sup> Hudson learns to accept the fact that he is not the most skillful man there, but is still the best man for his particular task by virtue of his unique skills and experience. In commanding the ship and



coordinating the pursuit operation, as in painting, Hudson is choosing from amongst various elements and integrating individual qualities to achieve a desired effect:

. . . he had delegated more and more authority to Antonio, who was a much better sailor than he was, and to Ara, who was a much better man. They are both better men than I am, he thought, and yet I still should be in command, using their knowledge and talent and their characters (IIS, p. 371, emphasis mine).

This is an extraordinary comment by and about a mature Hemingway hero. Hudson begins to understand that a man working in isolation is not nearly as effective as a man working in concert with others, that a man has a membership in his species and is a part of a team: each has something to offer; each can help. "In the eternal round, each living thing, man and animal, acts out its destiny according to the drives of its species, and in the process becomes a part of the profound harmony of the natural universe."<sup>71</sup> The most effective approach to life and to death Hudson discovers, lies in the shared effort of worthy, if imperfect men--not in the lonely struggle of an outsized champion, as is the case in the vision culminating in The Old Man and the Sea.

As the chase draws to a close, the intensity of Hudson's experience grows, until finally, when his boat enters the last channel, we recognize once more the tension caused by the extended effort of man in adversity, which is so much a part of Across the River and into the Trees and The Old Man and the Sea. But whereas Cantwell has several days in which to live life--or death--Hudson has only several hours. It is shortly after Hudson enters the channel that he is wounded, and realizes for the first time that he is "probably going to die" (IIS,

p. 430). Hudson's recognition of his own imminent death as he watches his enemy die, parallels Cantwell's experience when he suffers his heart attack in the Gritti. Both heroes come face to face with reality "without illusion," but each responds to the knowledge in a different way: whereas Cantwell rests lightly on his feet and, like earlier heroes, stoically resolves to deny love in order to attain dignified and solitary death, Hudson relinquishes the wheel to another of his crew and is comfortable lying on the deck in the company of worthy companions, although aware that he is dying for no useful purpose (IIS, pp. 430-433).

As he lies upon the deck, feeling the "lovely throb" of the ship's engines against his shoulder blades, he experiences a sense of integration with his crew and his ship, as well as with nature: "Thomas Hudson looked at him [Willy] . . . he felt the ship . . . he looked up and there was the sky" (IIS, p. 435).<sup>72</sup> However, Hudson realizes that although he could paint the sea "better than anyone" he will now never have a chance: "He was quite sure, now, he would never paint" (IIS, p. 435). Nor will he have the chance to realize in his life the kind of love relationship he has dreamed about, the kind of commitment he now feels capable of. Yet Thomas Hudson has at last, and at least, learned about human need, about the rewards of sharing.

Hudson had begun to understand the process of loving someone, and Willy's assertion that he loves Hudson does not fall on deaf ears. But while Hudson has come a long way in his understanding, he is still not quite there. He responds to Willy like a schoolboy who

has seen the solution to the problem at last but is tentative in his approach. Willy, a "strange boy" (IIS, p. 420, emphasis mine), and Hudson's tutor in love, is embarrassed and gently impatient: "Oh shit," Willy said, "you never understand anybody that loves you" (IIS, p. 435, emphasis mine). That is, I think Willy implies, if you understand, you do not say "I understand"; you respond by loving back, which indicates the understanding more effectively than words can. Willy's response recalls that of another tutor, Wilson (in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber"), to another hero who had also verbalized his understanding of a lesson: "Doesn't do to talk too much about all this. Talk the whole thing away. No pleasure in anything if you mouth it up too much."<sup>73</sup> Willy, like Wilson, discourages Hudson from "mouthing it up too much."<sup>74</sup>

But regardless of his response, Willy has appreciated, as has the reader, the import of Hudson's words. Thomas Hudson dies gracefully in the company of worthy companions because he has some understanding of love: he understands that when a person loves he is committed to sharing his life with others, even his final experiences. Thus Hudson dies heroically, but without the specially preserved lines of purity, so important to the earlier heroes, and without the solitude; these things are not longer necessary.

## CONCLUSION

"HOW DO YOU LIKE IT NOW, GENTLEMEN?"<sup>75</sup>

Critics have been so preoccupied with conjecture as to who the "gentlemen" might be, that they have neglected to consider the implications of the "it." They have assumed, and justifiably so, that the pronoun was simply a reference to the novel Across the River and into the Trees, and in a narrow sense, they are correct. However, Hemingway was speaking not only of the book, but also of the new vision of heroism implicit in it.

The early hero was concerned with living well and dying with dignity in a violent world, and was necessarily committed to struggle above all else. His dedication to combatting adversity prevented him from achieving the lasting heterosexual relationships he desired. The criteria for heroism for the earlier hero included the capacity for controlled and excellent performance and the necessity of solitary death, and the performance of the earlier hero aspiring to meet these criteria, was characterized by great deeds and great denials.

Ostensibly there is no change in either hero or tactics in Across the River and into the Trees. Richard Cantwell still denies

love for the male company of hunting, and dies with dignity in solitude. But Cantwell's performance, although controlled and competent, is not distinguished by spectacular deeds. The things he does well are a host of trivial tasks which are a part of everyday living. Although he denies his love for Renata, there is no apparent reason for doing so, and the act is, in effect, a senseless one. For the first time in Hemingway the traditional end for a Hemingway hero is not the desirable end; Cantwell executes his last rites with admirable competence, but the reader is left with a sense of the futility of it all.

In Hemingway's later vision it is not necessary for a man to die in solitude, nor must he preface death by great gestures or denials. Thus sustained love is possible because the demands of love no longer impinge upon the hero's pursuit of heroism. In Across the River and into the Trees it is Renata who perceives this truth and tries to teach it to Cantwell, but in vain. Although he is willing, he is too closely akin to previous heroes to break from the mold.

I have focused my attention on Across the River and into the Trees as the initial stage in Hemingway's new development, and have tried to show how certain changes in both the hero and heroine facilitate the realization of the new vision. However, that realization is delayed until Thomas Hudson in Islands in the Stream, who exemplifies more clearly the later hero that Hemingway had in mind.

For this reason I have felt it necessary to include a brief

discussion of Islands in the Stream where the lesson which is implicit in Across the River and into the Trees is at last articulated. We discover that the flaw which has prevented Cantwell, and all the heroes before him from enjoying lasting love relationships is pride--not the necessary pride one must have in order to perform well, but a vain pride which drives a man to unnecessary lengths to prove himself, usually at the expense of other people. Cantwell is able to recognize that his conception of a solitary death is egotistical--a necessary step in the process of change--but is unable to alter it. It remains for Thomas Hudson, under the tutelage of two of his crew, to consciously implement the behaviour which will enable him to die with dignity in the presence of his men.

"How do you like it now, Gentlemen?"--now that I have modified my romantic view of heroism so as to make it available to the common man (emphasis mine)? This is, I think, the value of Hemingway's later vision: it has application for the average man. And this, I believe, is what is behind Hemingway's obvious delight with a novel which even the most sympathetic of his critics have had a difficult time praising.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lilian Ross, "How Do You Like It Now, Gentlemen?" The New Yorker, 13 May 1950, pp. 36-56.

<sup>2</sup> Irving Howe, "Great Man Going Down," Harpers, 241 (October 1970), 120-125.

<sup>3</sup> Ernest Hemingway, "Today is Friday," in The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), pp. 454-60. Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway (St Paul: North Central Publishing Company, 1966), p. 36, distinguishes two separate entities in Hemingway fiction: a "Hemingway hero" who is seeking a code of behaviour which will enable him to die with grace, and a "code hero" who possesses and teaches that code. In every Hemingway novel (with the exception of The Old Man and the Sea), and in most short stories, both Hemingway hero and code hero are present (sometimes there is more than one code hero). Earl Rovit, in his book Ernest Hemingway (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1963), uses "tyro" and "tutor" respectively, to designate these types. In my study I have used Rovit's term "tutor" in conjunction with Young's term "Hemingway hero."

<sup>4</sup> Ernest Hemingway, Across the River and into the Trees (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950). All subsequent references to this novel appear in the text designated by ARIT.

<sup>5</sup> Bickford Sylvester, "Hemingway's Extended Vision: The Old Man and the Sea," PMLA, 81 (March 1966), p. 133. Sylvester points out that in Hemingway's work generally the Hemingway hero's devotion to violence in a violent world precluded a sustained love relationship. This is not to say that he did not desire such a relationship, only that he felt called upon to respond to life's adversities in order to fulfill his own expectations, and this was always at the expense of love. Thus Jake Barnes' war wound prevents a more permanent relationship with Brett, and Robert Jordan's dedication to the fascist war prevents him from living "happily ever after" with Maria.

<sup>6</sup> See Robert O Stephens, Ernest Hemingway: The Critical Reception (New York: Burt Franklin and Co. Inc., 1977), for a comprehensive collection of critical material on Across the River and into the Trees (and Islands in the Stream).

<sup>7</sup> "This new novel is the poorest thing its author has ever done . . . a self-parodying of style and theme. . . ." from Martin Zabel in The Nation, quoted by Ben Ray Redman, "The Champ and the Referees," Saturday Review, 28 (October 1950), 15-16, 38.

<sup>8</sup> My work is based partly on the work of Bickford Sylvester, some of which is as yet unpublished. Ideally, the reader should be acquainted with all of these works, and at least should be familiar with the published works (see notes 5 and 32) in order to understand fully my generalizations about the "earlier" and "later" Hemingway vision.

<sup>9</sup> My discussion of the early hero comprehends all Hemingway's short stories and novels with the exception of The Torrents of Spring. The ideas set forth in this chapter are, in part, a result of readings in Young, Ernest Hemingway; Young, Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1966); Joseph DeFalco, The Hero in Hemingway's Short Stories (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1968); Earl Rovit, Ernest Hemingway; Leo Gurko, Ernest Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism (New York: T. Y. Crowell Co., 1968); and Sylvester, "Unpublished Manuscripts" (Vancouver: University of British Columbia).

<sup>10</sup> Gurko, p. 237: The theological vacuum left by the withdrawal of God means that "men must sponsor themselves. . . . The twentieth century is a dark, blank, mutilating age to Hemingway. His art is a complex attempt to control its effect. . . ."

<sup>11</sup> Young, Reconsideration, pp. 56-108.

<sup>12</sup> This experience is first recorded in Hemingway, In Our Time (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), "Chapter VI." Richard Cantwell will re-describe the event in Across the River and into the Trees, pp. 17-19.

<sup>13</sup> Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> Hemingway, In Our Time, pp. 195-212.

<sup>15</sup> T. S. Eliot, "The Wasteland," in Selected Poems: T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1952), p. 67.



<sup>16</sup> Part of that discipline included the ability to act upon a principle for the sake of the action itself, through a process called "informed illusion" by Carlos Baker in Hemingway: The Writer as Artist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 273. Informed illusion designates a man's capacity to believe, in the full knowledge of the specious nature of that belief. It allows the benefits of belief--decisive action--without the incumbent hazard of disillusionment. Now in Across the River and into the Trees Cantwell states that every day is a new and fine illusion from which everything which is phony has been cut (ARIT, p. 232). As long as a man knows that his beliefs are not founded upon reality he can never be hurt or disappointed by the revelation. Because the heroic code of "grace under pressure" demands perfect control, informed illusion is necessary because it makes surprise, which inspires uncontrolled responses, impossible. Only when a man is aware of the illusory nature of his belief--of love, for example--is he prepared for its inevitably disappointing end.

<sup>17</sup> The man who places his own dignified performance first in a world which demands that a man struggle against adversity to attain grace, must necessarily sacrifice his interests in interpersonal relationships--love--to this primary concern. See also note 5.

<sup>18</sup> Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 72.

<sup>19</sup> See Sylvester, "Hemingway's Extended Vision," pp. 134-35. In Across the River and into the Trees there is a spiritual bond between the drake and Richard Cantwell; in The Old Man and the Sea, between Santiago and the marlin; and in Islands in the Stream, between Hudson and his German adversary.

<sup>20</sup> Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 456: "He never thought that you could know that there was a woman if there was a battle." All subsequent references to this novel will appear in my text designated by FWBT.

<sup>21</sup> Sylvester, "Hemingway's Extended Vision," p. 131.

<sup>22</sup> The early Hemingway hero is characterized by great deeds, great gestures, and great denials. He is always stoical in the face of his perceived duty. The things he must deny himself in order to achieve his objective serve as a positive indication of the order of his courage. Great gestures and denials increase the hero's capacity and feed his desire for more such responses.

<sup>23</sup> He is learning the best way to endure life and to die with dignity. See note 3.

<sup>24</sup> See Sylvester, "Hemingway's Extended Vision," where an account of the heroic quest for purpose and the final discovery of harmonious order is given. Sylvester says of the marlin "he has found the most intense life in this kind of death--having lasted all the way around while retaining enough strength to meet the final thrust of the harpoon with the same resolute aggression he has shown toward the stream and the weight of the boat" (p. 135). Similarly, Cantwell lasts long enough to visit with Renata, shoot ducks, help the boatman with the return passage, give the Barone a lift, write his orders for the disposition of his property, enter the back seat of the car, and close the door "carefully and well."

<sup>25</sup> Cantwell's struggle against his natural infirmity demonstrates his willingness to oppose nature which is revealed, according to Sylvester, as "necessary to vitality in the mature phase of Hemingway's earlier vision." The greater concentration of effort (required by both Cantwell's weak heart and Santiago's advanced age) "yields the greater intensity which is an indication of life itself" (p. 132). Also see Sylvester, "Unpublished Manuscripts," pp. 126-154 for an explication of Across the River and into the Trees as the penultimate stage of Hemingway's earlier vision of life.

<sup>26</sup> Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 104. All subsequent references to this work will appear in the text designated by OMAS.

<sup>27</sup> Hemingway, Across the River and into the Trees; p. 143.

<sup>28</sup> Sylvester, "Hemingway's Extended Vision," p. 132.

<sup>29</sup> Sylvester, "Unpublished Manuscripts," pp. 146-48: the light originates in the sky, is reflected on the surface of the canal, and then again onto the ceiling of Cantwell's bedroom which is "the sky of the enclosed world Cantwell is for the moment sharing with Renata. Only now the light is transformed by the shifting surface of the canal, and there is a magical merging of associations with the moving rivers and wind . . . [and] sea . . . and [the] moving processes of nature" (p. 147).

<sup>30</sup> See also Peter Lisca, who comments on Venice as the city of opposites--east/west, youth/age, past/present, life/death, etc.--in "The Structure of Hemingway's Across the River and into the Trees," Modern Fiction Studies, XII, (summer 1966), 232-250. As Young has pointed out in Reconsideration, p. 120, Cantwell completes his life which has been governed by violence--that is, he comes full circle--by returning to the place where he was initiated into violence, and there erecting his monument to the immutable end of violence: death.

- <sup>31</sup> Sylvester, "Extended Vision," p. 136.
- <sup>32</sup> Sylvester, "Hemingway's Unpublished Remarks on War and Warriors," in War and Society in North America, ed. R. C. Cuff and J. L. Granatstein (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1971), p. 135.
- <sup>33</sup> The Colonel's interior monologue takes the form of a soul debate in which he reviews the events of his life, searching for the "significant experience with which to face death in good style": Robert O Stephens, "Hemingway's Across the River and into the Trees: A Reprise," Texas Studies in English, 37 (1958), 92.
- <sup>34</sup> Cantwell erects a monument to death of merde, money, blood, and iron which he subsequently refers to as fertility, money, blood, and iron (ARIT, pp. 18-19). For Cantwell there had always been a connection between excrement and death--"death is a lot of shit" (ARIT, p. 219)--and now, by association, there is a connection between death and fertility. Fertility engenders life. The resulting equation is an affirmation of a principle of order: death equals merde equals fertility equals life. Thus death equals life and cyclical continuity is established.
- <sup>35</sup> Sylvester, "Remarks on War and Warriors," p. 138.
- <sup>36</sup> He has exorcised his bitterness and learned to accept administrative injustice with Renata's help. She advocates the purgation of bitterness through a process of re-telling (ARIT, p. 240).
- <sup>37</sup> Sylvester, "Remarks on War and Warriors," p. 138.
- <sup>38</sup> Frederick Yeiser, Untitled Review of Across the River and into the Trees, Cincinnati Enquirer, 7 Sept. 1952, p. iv-15, as quoted in Robert O. Stephens, Ernest Hemingway: The Critical Reception, pp. 346-47.
- <sup>39</sup> Redman, p. 38.
- <sup>40</sup> Redman, p. 38.
- <sup>41</sup> For a recent comment on this strategy see Scott Donaldson, By Force of Will (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 134.
- <sup>42</sup> Cantwell's observation that Renata chews her meat "well and solidly" is ludicrous unless viewed in the context of Cantwell's desire to observe and appreciate every detail (ARIT, p. 127).
- <sup>43</sup> There is a noticeable pattern to the conversation: as soon as the subject at hand becomes too painful to be continued, either Renata or Cantwell reverts to a consideration of the meal.

Thus when Cantwell tells Renata that he must return the emeralds the conversation turns swiftly to lobsters, and when Renata tells Cantwell why she cannot marry him it turns, just as quickly, to wines.

<sup>44</sup> cf. Sylvester, "Hemingway's Extended Vision," pp. 131-32, where the distinction is drawn between Santiago and the shallow water fishermen.

<sup>45</sup> Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," The Fifth Column and the First Forty Nine Stories, p. 120.

<sup>46</sup> In previous novels the hero desired a lasting love relationship but was not allowed to realize his wish. Circumstances, usually reflecting the violent nature of the world, always intervened to prevent consummation: Jake Barnes had his war wound and Robert Jordan his war.

<sup>47</sup> Hemingway, A Moveable Feast (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 75. See also Julian Smith, "Hemingway and the Thing Left Out," Journal of Modern Literature 1 (1970), 169-182.

<sup>48</sup> Hemingway, A Moveable Feast, p. 75.

<sup>49</sup> The female as initiated character is extremely rare in Hemingway's novels. Renata embodies both love and violence, and teaches Cantwell by example as much as by words.

<sup>50</sup> Northrop Frye, "Novels on Several Occasions," The Hudson Review, 3 (winter 1951), 611-12.

<sup>51</sup> Young, Reconsideration, p. 116.

<sup>52</sup> Young, "A Critical Review of Across the River and into the Trees," Tomorrow, 10 (November 1950), 55-56.

<sup>53</sup> Young, Reconsideration, p. 109.

<sup>54</sup> Cantwell addresses her "boy or daughter or my one true love" (ARIT, p. 173). Each designation suggests continuity: "boy" is the transcendental continuity of re-incarnation; "daughter" is the physical continuity of succeeding generations; "one true love" is the spiritual continuity resulting from the union of devoted souls.

<sup>55</sup> A review of heroines in Hemingway will substantiate this point. We are never sure whether the heroine's eyes are brown or blue, but we do know if her hair is long or short. "Cat in the Rain," in The First Forty-Nine Stories, makes a clear connection between long hair and femininity as it shows how a woman's decision

to grow her hair, along with the desire for formal dinners and silver, reflects her (and Hemingway's) conception of femininity.

<sup>56</sup> Shakespeare, Othello, ed. Hardin Craig (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1973), Act I, scene iii, lines 144-165.

<sup>57</sup> Othello, I, iii, l. 162.

<sup>58</sup> Cantwell is not yet capable of serving, although he indicates an intellectual understanding of it (ARIT, p. 153).

<sup>59</sup> Please see note 17.

<sup>60</sup> Renata tells Cantwell that she will accompany him on his solitary journey to death but Cantwell tells her that she cannot go and should get married instead:

He stopped, and thought truly, but off-key, and said,  
"No. You get married and have five sons and call them  
all Richard."

"The lion-hearted," the girl said, accepting the situation  
without even a glance . . . (ARIT, p. 229, emphasis mine).

Cantwell thinks "truly" because children do provide continuity, but "off-key" because they will not be his children. To call them "Richard" is not personal enough to make the connection with Cantwell, but the addition of "lion-hearted" at once forges a link between the Colonel and Renata's offspring.

<sup>61</sup> See note 16. Cantwell explains to Renata that every day is an illusion from which phoniness has been cut (ARIT, p. 232). "Please never cut me," says Renata. "You're not cut-able," Cantwell replies, indicating that Renata is an illusion too, and not phony (it will be remembered that she has honest lashes and does not wear wire and padding as North American women do). Renata is as much an illusion for Cantwell as is the good glass (ARIT, p. 141), and the Roman tailor (ARIT, p. 128).

<sup>62</sup> This is attempted but not achieved in For Whom the Bell Tolls. Jordan is completely integrated with nature, but he has had to send Maria away (FWBT, p. 471).

<sup>63</sup> Hemingway, Islands in the Stream (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970). Islands in the Stream was published posthumously under the editorship of Mary Hemingway and Charles Scribner Jr. Since they assert that no alterations other than deletions were made to the text, I will treat the work as though it had been published, like

Hemingway's other novels, under his auspices. All subsequent references to the novel will appear in my text designated by IIS.

64 Painting is significant as a trade for a Hemingway hero because it involves a process of integration--of line, colour, form, etc. In the novel Hudson is learning to integrate the things in his life--work, marriage, children, love, duty--which process is reflected in his efforts to paint. "That was the thing about pictures . . . the good ones made you happy because they had done what you always tried to do"--to integrate all elements successfully (IIS, p. 224). Periods of disintegration in Hudson's life are characterized by his inability to paint. When he is the closest to integration in life, that is the time when he feels he can paint most truly.

65 Hudson is involved in the war effort--he commands a small cruiser--but is on leave in this section.

66 Hudson's first wife is still very much in love with him. The man she is supposedly "in love with" is not a man she loves: "He's nice, this one, like children are nice. I'm very necessary to him" (IIS, p. 289). She loves the idea of being needed rather than the man, and it is evident that if Hudson could only be more needing, she would leave her "baby" of a man in a minute.

67 Carlos Baker in Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. 538, describes the as yet unpublished novel The Garden of Eden, in which Hemingway presents the intimate love relationships of two couples: a painter and his wife, and a novelist and his wife.

68 At the end of "Bimini" Hudson had said, "We'll play it out the way we can." But we are told that "he knew he did not have much interest in the game" (IIS, p. 185).

69 His reply touches the "no man is an island" theme first presented, with marginal success (in terms of realization of the theme) in For Whom the Bell Tolls.

70 Hudson is realizing that he does not need to be perfect to be in command. This is in direct contrast to Hudson's feelings in "Bimini" when, having failed to kill the shark, he relinquishes command to Eddy (IIS, p. 84).

71 Gurko, p. 162.

72 It is important to note that Willy represents love for Hudson at this point. In Hudson's final picture, then, there is love (Willy), his trade (the ship), and nature (the sky and lagoon).

<sup>73</sup> Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life," p. 132.

<sup>74</sup> Compare this to David's response to Andrew (p. 113), where Andrew is talking too much about David's fish.

<sup>75</sup> See note 1.

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