A PREPARATION FOR DEATH:
TEMPORAL AND IDEAL CONCEPTS
IN
HEMINGWAY'S ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES

by

RODERICK WILSON HARVEY
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Department of English

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is, first, to examine the critical controversy surrounding the publication of Ernest Hemingway's *Across the River and Into the Trees*; and, second, to show what Hemingway was trying to do in the novel, even though he may not have been successful in doing it.

Chapter I examines the major critical responses to *Across the River and Into the Trees*, together with Hemingway's own comments, and introduces the critical study which comprises the following three chapters.

Chapter II examines the relationship between Cantwell's military past and the present, and discusses the effects of this dichotomy.

Chapter III examines Cantwell's code of honor, mainly as it applies in his present peacetime situation, and discusses how he finally re-affirms his ideal principles of resolution and endurance, thus enabling him to accept the idea of his own death.

Chapter IV examines Cantwell's preparation for death through Renata, secondary characters, and various symbols, and shows how he eventually becomes free of bitterness.

Chapter V, a final appraisal of the novel's literary worth, discusses why the novel is not successful as a work of fiction.
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CHAPTER I

THE CRITICAL CONTROVERSY

The publication of Ernest Hemingway's *Across the River and Into the Trees* in 1950 provoked bitter controversy among his many critics and admirers. Indeed, a majority of reviewers proclaimed the novel a total failure, and even more cautious and sympathetic critics found it difficult to justify what appeared to be a virtually complete identification of Hemingway with his main character, a deeply embittered army colonel of exactly Hemingway's age, whose platitudes seemed to many critics both foolish and vituperative. Whether or not such allegations were justified remains, I think, in doubt; it is, however, true that Hemingway made considerable use of autobiographical material when he began writing the novel on an Italian trip he and his wife Mary took in 1948.

For Hemingway, the trip was a homecoming (he had been wounded at Fossalta thirty years before), and he and Mary spent most of their time in Venice in the Gritti Palace Hotel and Harry's Bar, both of which figure prominently in *Across the River and Into the Trees*. Duck shooting and writing a complex novel of the "land, sea, and air" occupied most of Hemingway's time, although he did insist on visiting the spot where he had been wounded as a boy, romantically identifying
himself with Venice, which he had helped defend in his youth. In March, 1949, Hemingway's face became infected with erysipelas, a disease of the subcutaneous tissue, probably as a result of a small, infected scratch at the corner of his left eye, although Scribners later released a more romantic description of the disease's origin:

Last February, while shooting wild fowl in Italy, Mr. Hemingway was the victim of a strange accident. A tiny fragment of shotgun wadding fell into his left eye and its presence was not discovered for several days; by this time, blood poisoning had set in, and it spread so rapidly and so virulently that Mr. Hemingway's doctors despaired of his recovery. He was given only a short time to live.

Feeling that he could not finish the book of large proportions on which he was then working, the writer put it aside, Scribners said. He set to work, instead, on another novel "which had been taking shape in his mind".

Mr. Hemingway confounded his doctors and threw off his illness, but the impetus to complete the novel stayed with him. He has devoted his entire time to it without interruption for the past eight months, and it has grown into a full-length book. 2

Whatever the origin of Hemingway's erysipelas, it seems certain that he began writing Across the River and Into the Trees either during or shortly after his recovery, and that it evolved from a much shorter duck shooter's story. He was still working on the novel when he and Mary left for Cuba; soon he was able to brag to Charles Scribner that progress was incredibly good. In September, 1949, Hemingway arranged to serialize Across the River and Into the Trees in Cosmopolitan, although the novel was not yet finished. During a trip to Paris and Venice that winter, he completed and revised the manuscript; Across the River and Into the Trees was serialized

Most critical reviews of *Across the River and Into the Trees* were extremely disparaging. Northrop Frye, noting "egotism" and "self-pity" in the novel, claimed that the lack of detachment between author and character held *Across the River and Into the Trees* at the "amateurish level". Henry Reed decided that *Across the River and Into the Trees* "hardly seems to creep into existence at all". Discovering a "feebleness of invention, a dullness of language and a self-parodying of style and theme", Morton D. Zabel found the novel "an occasion for little but exasperated depression":

The obvious truth is that his new novel is the poorest thing its author has ever done--poor with a feebleness of invention, a dullness of language, and a self-parodying of style and theme even beyond "The Fifth Column" and "To Have and Have Not".

To Maxwell Geismar, *Across the River and Into the Trees* was a "dreadful synthesis of everything that is bad in Hemingway's former work", holding its own "morbid fascination". Although Alfred Kazin was glad to know that Hemingway had recovered from his illness, he felt that the writer had created a "travesty of himself":

The Colonel is all the Hemingway prizefighters, hunters, drinkers, and soldiers in one. . . the physiological and gastronomical detail in the book is generally so extraneous that it is impossible to believe Hemingway means anything by it; he is just sounding off. . . the Colonel is too full of Hemingway's pettiest, most irrelevant opinions.

Indeed, even *Time* noted that the Hemingway style read like a
"parody of itself". To Philip Young, _Across the River and Into the Trees_ seemed "pretty bad", and to Philip Rahv the novel seemed both "egregiously bad" and "embarrassing". Richard Rovere considered _Across the River and Into the Trees_ "incredibly talky" and "disappointing". Charles Angoff indicted Hemingway's latest work as "another pulp story about a man who is no more than a bag of impulses, and a woman who has no more reality than a talking doll", and Delbert Wylder explained such difficulties by saying that Hemingway had "misused the form of the novel as a vehicle for his own remarks". In Britain, William J. Brown found _Across the River and Into the Trees_ as "evil" and "squalid" as Cyril Connolly found it "lamentable" and "adolescent". The most vicious criticism was delivered by Harold C. Gardiner, who cited "unmanly griping and whining" and "self-pity" as two of the novel's attributes:

The 'great bronze god' of American fiction for so many years has definitely lost his sheen in this utterly trivial book. His name will still carry, of course, and some critical puffs (in addition to winds of wide popular acclaim) will fill somewhat the sagging sails, but I believe that the barque of Mr. Hemingway's genius is here like the famous painted ship upon the equally painted ocean.

Other reviewers were more cautious. Malcolm Cowley admitted that _Across the River and Into the Trees_, although "below the level of Hemingway's earlier novels" and a "tired book", was "impressive in its honesty and bitterness", and was "beautifully finished as a piece of writing". Citing the novel's subject as a "preparation for a good death", Cowley
viewed Cantwell's last days as a "rite of purgation". But Lewis Gannett, seeing Cantwell as a "tired young-old man, in love with lost youth, and rather moony about it", found very few "flashes of the old Hemingway in the book". Reverently, Gannett concluded that Across the River and Into the Trees is "the good Hemingway, saying that the good Hemingway cannot—not yet, at any rate—write the real Hemingway book about the war". Perhaps a more constructive observation was Robert Warshaw's idea that Across the River and Into the Trees fails since it is "a compendium of Hemingway's habitual themes", even though it remains "the saddest story he has written".

A number of critics, however, took a more positive view of the novel, discounting its apparently serious structural and stylistic drawbacks. The mood of the Times Literary Supplement was elegiac:

It is almost as if Mr. Hemingway were writing his swan-song, for the mood is that of The Tempest or Oedipus Coloneus. But it is only "as if", for all passion is not spent, however it may seem. Rather, for the first time passion is under control. At last Mr. Hemingway knows his own strength, and at last he has learned that there is no need to waste it by using it all at once. Across the River and Into the Trees is the first of his novels of which that could be said; but there is no reason why it should be his last.

In the same vein, Charles Poore eulogized (even to the extent of copying Hemingway's style) this "deceptively simple yet amazingly complex commentary on life and love and death and art and war and peace and Venice", saying that Cantwell and Renata were "lovers in the immemorial Hemingway manner". Elliot Paul called Across the River and Into the Trees a
novel of "loneliness, supreme happiness, utter hopelessness", and compared it thematically to A Farewell to Arms and For Whom the Bell Tolls; to him, however, all Hemingway's novels were "inspired art, sound reporting, and prophetic".25

Describing Across the River and Into the Trees as the "saddest novel in the world", fellow author Tennessee Williams admitted that the novel was, for him, the "finest thing Hemingway has done". Indeed, a number of sympathetic reviewers appreciated the sadness of Across the River and Into the Trees. "M. B." in Saturday Night, noting that "most reviewers of the Master's latest have tossed the book into the wastebasket with one hand and seized either a smouldering or a sorrowful pen in the other", defined the "universal sadness" of the novel as Cantwell's "sadness of isolation in a world insane". L. A. G. Strong, moreover, described Across the River and Into the Trees as being "in essence, sentimental", for he felt that what Hemingway had given was "a touching picture of the way a lonely and frustrated man of fifty would like a young girl of nineteen to love him", and singled out the "descriptive writing" and "dialogue" for special praise. And Kate Simon admitted that the mood of the novel was captivating, although it differed from those of Hemingway's previous works:

The artful, rhythmic sentences with their compelling stresses, the words that bear many echoes and undertones, the phrases that quiver with emotion, blur the border between prose and poetry. . . . It is quite possible that many readers will miss in this novel the bright color and the restless excitement of the earlier ones, but although the canvas is
now smaller and painted in grayed tones, there is no less art. The mixture is, on a minor scale, as before and still magical; the Hemingway spell still holds.29

Also concerned with the "magic" of *Across the River and Into the Trees* but considerably more enthusiastic was Fanny Butcher, who wrote that since "Ernest Hemingway has that old black magic with words which few writers have ever had... he can say more in fewer words than any man writing today". But she also argued that Hemingway's lack of a mood or atmosphere in the novel had compelled him to unify *Across the River and Into the Trees* through the "sheer power of technique".30 In the *Atlantic Monthly*, on the other hand, Edward Weeks noticed and commended what he considered a mood of "love" in the novel:

What's best in this story is its love: its heartfelt love of the infantry, its bantering, affectionate love of Venice and the Venetians, its gusty love of sea food and wine, and its love of gondolas with Renata in the lee.31

Surprisingly enough, in the midst of such controversy, *Newsweek* found *Across the River and Into the Trees* Hemingway's "best and most carefully thought out book". In a long article, *Newsweek* described *Across the River and Into the Trees* as "a novel of atmosphere, blues and grays, shaded lights, quiet talk, a sense of ease and friendliness, suddenly captured and suddenly lost", an "old story of youth and age, innocence and experience, love and death; the old legend of beauty and the beast". Paradoxically, *Newsweek* admitted that "it is doubtful whether Hemingway's new style can be as effective as his old one has been". Defending Hemingway against unjust critics was Evelyn Waugh, who (while admitting that *Across the River*
and Into the Trees was "not Hemingway's best book, perhaps his worst") summed up his explanations for the critical attacks on Hemingway's novel:

Why do they all hate him so? . . . I believe the truth is that they have detected in him something they find quite unforgivable—Decent Feeling. Behind all the bluster and cursing and fisticuffs he has an elementary sense of chivalry—respect for women, pity for the weak, love of honor— which keeps breaking in. There is a form of high, supercilious caddishness which is all the rage nowadays in literary circles. That is what the critics seek in vain in this book, and that is why their complaints are so loud and confident.

Even William Faulkner, who was on rather uneasy terms with Hemingway at the time, defended Waugh's viewpoint; although in his letter to Time of November 13, 1950 he further noted that Hemingway "does not need defending, because the ones who throw the spitballs didn't write the pieces in Men Without Women and The Sun Also Rises and the African pieces . . . and the ones who didn't write Men Without Women and The Sun Also Rises and the African pieces . . . don't have anything to stand on while they throw the spitballs".

And with fellow authors such as John O'Hara surrounding him, it is indeed doubtful if Hemingway needed defending. Melodramatically calling his review "The Author's Name is Hemingway", O'Hara wrote that Hemingway was "the most important author living today, the outstanding author since the death of Shakespeare . . . a genius". He obliquely asserted that "the reasons Hemingway is important are not easy to search for, but they are easy to find. They are hard to search for, because he is so competent and deceptively simple and plain".
And O'Hara's closing lines left few doubts as to his own opinion of the novel:

What matters is that Ernest Hemingway has brought out a new book. To use his own favorite metaphor, he may not be able to go the full distance, but he can still hurt you. Always dangerous. Always in there with that right cocked. . . . Real class. 36

So interesting did this critical controversy become that several reviewers summarized and evaluated major reviews of the novel. J. Donald Adams decided that the large number of unfavorable reviews was an indication of the wide extent of Hemingway's literary influence, although he found *Across the River and Into the Trees* "one of the saddest books I have ever read", said "because a great talent has come, whether for now or forever, to such a dead end". 37 John K. Hutchens found that the reviewers had "no middle ground at all", and noted that Scribner's had "stepped up its printings from 100,000 copies to 125,000", probably as a result of the controversy. 38 The most elaborate summary, however, was Ben Ray Redman's "The Champ and the Referees". Indicting in particular O'Hara's review as "an intimate three-way conversation between the reviewer, his typewriter, and a bottle of something or other", Redman wrote that most critics had confused Cantwell with Hemingway and had not viewed *Across the River and Into the Trees* in "critical isolation":

No critic, apparently, asked himself: 'What would I think of this novel if it had been written by a man of whom I know nothing?' But, comes the answer: 'The question is silly. We know all about Ernest Hemingway'. Of course--I remember now--and we always have. I remember the time when there was a valiant effort on the part of some critics to identify
him with the hero of *The Sun Also Rises* and then, of course, he was impotent.³⁹

Redman, who apparently had not read *Across the River and Into the Trees*, observed that "perhaps we really do know too much about Hemingway, or at least his public poses, to judge his work impartially". But to ignore the opinions of the public Hemingway was indeed a difficult task. Even before the novel was finished Hemingway announced that he was "trying to knock Mr. Shakespeare on his ass", and indicated that the action of his latest work was "all offstage as in Shakespeare". Furthermore, he revealed that Cantwell was to be a composite of three men: Charlie Sweeny, a soldier of fortune; Buck Lanham, a West-Pointer; and, most importantly, himself if he had become a soldier instead of a writer. He wished to portray a "highly intelligent fighting man embittered by experience" in a background of "love and death".

When in 1949 he finished the first draft of *Across the River and Into the Trees* he admitted he was "beat to the wide", and singled out as his favorite the novel's final chapter.

Marlene Dietrich and Hemingway's military friend Chink Smith delighted him by praising early chapters of the novel. And in Lillian Ross' *New Yorker* "Profile", Hemingway is said to have boastfully described the heady effect of his unfinished manuscript on a travelling acquaintance:

"Book too much for him", Hemingway said. "Book start slow, then increase in pace till it becomes impossible to stand. I bring emotion up to where you can't stand it, then we level off, so we won't have to provide oxygen tents for the readers. Book is like engine. We have to slack it off gradually. . . . Not
trying for no-hit game in book. . . . Going
to win maybe twelve to nothing or maybe twelve
to eleven. . . . I think this best one, but.
you are always prejudiced, I guess. Especially
if you want to be champion. 45

Notwithstanding Hemingway's bravado, it seems certain
that he was seriously working on several major premises. One
was that Across the River and Into the Trees was to be some­
ting new; as he told his friend Jed Kiley, the novel was to
be a "coda", an epilogue to a long book in which he, "threw
away the dog" and "used the tail". Another was that his
new work was to be his best effort; in a cable to Time, he
said that his novel of "love, death, happiness and sorrow"
was the best he could write, and that he had tried to make a
"distillation in it of what he knows about those subjects
plus one other subject, which is war". An interview with
Ben F. Meyer showed how serious Hemingway really was:

"I'm crazy about the new book", he said.
"I'd go hang myself if I thought it wasn't
better. I read the book 206 times to try and
better it or correct errors, and it is as good
as I can make it.
"It's different, of course. You can't go on
writing another book about a bunch of people
on a hill in a war. I'd say the new book is
about love and death, happiness and sorrow
and the town of Venice."
He grinned and added: 48 "I really fired all the
barrels on this one".

It is not suprising, therefore, that Hemingway's
reaction to his uncomplimentary critics was emotional and
defensive:

"Sure, they can say anything about nothing
happening in Across the River, but all that
happens is the defense of the lower Piave, the
breakthrough in Normandy, the taking of Paris
and the destruction of the 22nd Inf. Reg. in
Hurtgen forest plus a man who loves a girl and
dies.
Only it is all done with three-cushion shots. In the last one I had the straight narrative; Sordo on the hill for keeps; Jordan killing the cavalryman; the village; a full-scale attack presented as they go; and the unfortunate incident at the bridge.

Should I repeat myself? I don't think so. You have to repeat yourself again and again as a man but you should not do so as a writer. In writing I have moved through arithmetic, through plane geometry, and now I am in calculus. If they don't understand that, to hell with them. I won't be sad and I will not read what they say. They say? What do they say? Let them say?

Who the hell wants fame over a week-end? All I want to do is write well."

Even laudatory letters from generals H. W. Blakely, Dorman O'Gowan, and Buck Lanham, and the rise of Across the River and Into the Trees as a best-seller failed to console him. He blamed the Lillian Ross "Profile" for Time's "shoddy review", said that the novel's dust jacket photograph made him look like a "cat-eating zombie", and cited the time lag between serialization in Cosmopolitan and book publication as helping his hostile critics. Saying that he had written a "good, straight, truthful book", Hemingway nevertheless asserted that the "truth is becoming a fairly popular sport around here", and complained that he was "the only writer in the United States to have fought and now I am ostracized for it". In the New York Times Book Review, he revealed that he had written Across the River and Into the Trees for those who had loved or were capable of love; obviously, he did not class his critics as such:

Many critics do not understand a work when a writer tries for something he has not attempted before. But eventually they get abreast of it. The critic, out on a limb, is more fun to see
than a mountain lion. The critic gets paid for it so it is much more just that he should be out on that limb than the poor cat who does it for nothing. Altogether I believe it has been quite healthy and the extremely dull thuds one hears as the critics fall from their limbs when the tree is shaken slightly may presage a more decent era in criticism—when books are read and criticized, rather than personalities attacked.

Another irritating factor for Hemingway was E. B. White's New Yorker parody "Across the Street and Into the Grill", which is merciless in its ridicule of Cantwell's language and mannerisms:

A pair of fantails flew over from the sad old Guaranty Trust Company, their wings set for a landing. A lovely double, thought Perley, as he pulled. "Shall we go to the Hotel Biltmore, on Vanderbilt Avenue, which is merely a feeder lane for the great streets, or shall we go to Schrafft's, where my old friend Botticelli is captain of girls and where they have the mayonnaise in fiascos?"

"Let's go to Schrafft's", said the girl, low. "But first I must phone Mummy." She stepped into a public booth and dialed true and well, using her finger. Then she telephoned.

As they walked along she smelled good. She smells good, thought Perley. But that's all right, I add good. And when we get to Schrafft's, I'll order from the menu, which I like very much indeed.

But Hemingway's final reaction to White's parody was unprecedented, for after he had indignantly told A. E. Hotchner that "the parody is the last refuge of the frustrated writer", since "the step up from writing parodies is writing on the wall above the urinal", White's example inspired him to improvise his own parody, one which is included on the Caedmon record "Ernest Hemingway Reading". Called "In Harry's Bar in Venice", this self-parody chronicles the love affair of an eighteen year old colonel with an eighty-six year old Venetian countess who eventually dies of a defective heart;
at the very least, it invalidates the arguments of those who might class Hemingway as a writer without a sense of humor.

Most recent critical appraisals of *Across the River and Into the Trees* have accepted the weaknesses of the novel and have concentrated on explaining how these relate to its strengths. Of course, there are still those who, like Philip Young, find *Across the River and Into the Trees* a "silly" and "painful" book, but these critics now constitute a minority. Leo Lania, for example, still finds that *Across the River and Into the Trees* has "no perspective"; for Richard Hovey, the novel is definitely Hemingway's "worst" and marks a "decline in creativity"; and for Nemi d'Agostino, *Across the River and Into the Trees* remains the "weakest of Hemingway's novels". More sympathetic critics, however, have constructively tried to account for the novel's powerful, yet rather peculiar nature, particularly when viewed together with Hemingway's other fiction. For although they see the novel as portraying Cantwell's preparation for death, expressed through his love for Renata, they agree that *Across the River and Into the Trees* has definite and almost insurmountable shortcomings. As Isaac Rosenfeld has observed:

>This is the most touching thing Hemingway has done. For all the trash and foolishness of this book, perhaps even because of it, because he let himself be lulled and dulled by the fable of himself, he gave away some of his usual caution and let a little grief, more than ordinarily and not all of it stuck in the throat, come through his careful style. A little of the real terror of life in himself, with no defenses handy.

For many later critics, the "belligerent" and
narcissistic personality of Cantwell is overly distracting; Leo Gurko, identifying Cantwell with Hemingway, explains this by saying that Cantwell embodies too many of Hemingway's personal beliefs. Joseph Warren Beach and John Atkins agree that Cantwell seems to be Jake Barnes and Robert Jordan metamorphosed into an aging lover, but they sense, respectively, a "psychological regression" and "sluggishness" which make them hesitate to rank the novel among the best of Hemingway's work. Although Stewart F. Sanderson admits that Cantwell is facing death "unflinchingly", he nevertheless complains that *Across the River and Into the Trees* reads "as if the Ernest Hemingway legend were being interviewed by the press". And, offering an explanation, Joseph Beaver points out that *Across the River and Into the Trees* lacks the "technique in action" which makes *The Old Man and the Sea* a great novel.

For Horst Oppel, however, the action of the novel is less important, since he views *Across the River and Into the Trees* primarily as expressing a rite of "purification and castigation" which Cantwell undergoes while facing death. Indeed, the similarity between *Across the River and Into the Trees* and Thomas Mann's "Death in Venice" has been analyzed by two critics, and both have shown that Venice is a most appropriate setting for Cantwell's death. Robert O. Stephens has pointed out that Cantwell's love for Renata keeps in abeyance the nada concept which so obsessed Hemingway's earlier protagonists; according to John Killinger, through his love for Renata Cantwell ritually "discharges himself from the past". Much recent criticism has concentrated on
this ritual purgation through love, for the intensity of
Cantwell's love for Renata suggests a religion, in the
tradition of the medieval romance; two important studies
which discuss Across the River and Into the Trees in the
context of Hemingway's love ethic are R. W. Lewis' Hemingway
on Love, and Verne H. Bovie's The Evolution of a Myth:
A Study of the Major Symbols in the Works of Ernest Hemingway.
Most critics state that Cantwell seems bitter, and must purge
himself of this bitterness before death, reminding us of
various classical tragedies. Indeed, for Delbert Wylder,
Cantwell becomes a tragic hero in the tradition of "Lear,
Ahab, Oedipus, and Ulysses", and for Sheridan Baker, the
relationship between Cantwell and Renata approximates that of
Othello and Desdemona.

Equally serious but more intricately woven is Carlos
Baker's analysis in Hemingway: the Writer as Artist. For
Baker, Across the River and Into the Trees is "elegaic, a
prose poem on the three ages of man"; Cantwell, a "Roman
stoic", suggests opposites: "tough and tender, brutal and
delicate, rude and remorseful". Observing that Cantwell sees
each day as an "illusion", Baker describes Across the River
and Into the Trees as a "symbolic study of a complex state
of mind". In Cantwell's love for Renata, youth and age unite,
but through this same unity Cantwell must come to terms with
the bitterness of his past. Baker uses comparisons with
other literary works and an intensive study of the novel's
symbolism to show that Across the River and Into the Trees
is, for him, a philosophically unified work; his critique
remains the most incisive analysis of the novel yet published:

Across the River and Into the Trees is not one of Hemingway's major novels. It was not meant to be, any more than Eclogue X was meant to match the Aeneid, or Paradise Regained to duplicate Paradise Lost. One might construct a rough table of correspondences in order to place the book in its relations to the best of his earlier work in long fiction. If A Farewell to Arms was his Romeo and Juliet, and For Whom the Bell Tolls his King Lear, this mid-century novel could perhaps be called a lesser kind of Winter's Tale or Tempest. Its tone is elegiac. It moves like a love-lyric.

In a recent article, Peter Lisca also uses a study of symbols in an attempt to describe Across the River and Into the Trees as a unified work. Using Cantwell's literary allusions (and others of his own), together with parallels in Christian mythology, Lisca essentially extends Baker's analysis but praises the novel more fully as "Hemingway's most complex and indirect novel, a mature work of art by a master who had moved into a phase where none could immediately follow". As Bickford Sylvester shows in his dissertation, this phase includes Cantwell's union with natural forces, a union more successfully developed in The Old Man and the Sea. But the apparent contradictions in the novel seem to have made any definitive critical study a difficult accomplishment.

What is interesting about such appraisals, however, is that those critics who have carefully discussed several aspects of the novel to prove their thematic arguments have misinterpreted another aspect of Across the River and Into the Trees which helps us to understand its structure.

Critics have assumed, almost universally, that the comic
elements of the novel indicate artistic lapses rather than deliberate design on Hemingway's part, and should, therefore, be considered as aberrations rather than structural elements. Although many condemnatory critics mentioned that Across the River and Into the Trees resembled a parody, they used the term only in a pejorative sense. They said either that the Hemingway style read like a parody of itself, or that Hemingway was parodying Hemingway, or that Cantwell was a parody of all Hemingway's protagonists combined. Critics seemed to ignore the ease with which the novel lent itself to E. B. White's devastating parody; in the same way, they ignored the facility with which Hemingway himself had been extemporaneously able to parody his own novel. They forgot that Hemingway's The Torrents of Spring had been an expert, if unappreciated, parody of Sherwood Anderson's Dark Laughter. Even Carlos Baker failed to realize the implications of his own critical judgment when he compared Across the River and Into the Trees with The Winter's Tale and The Tempest, which contain recognizably parodic as well as serious elements.

In order to understand what Hemingway is attempting to do in Across the River and Into the Trees, we must consider its comic aspects as part of its design. Surprisingly enough, the comic element in the novel was virtually unrecognized until Kermit Vanderbilt suggested in 1965 that Cantwell was "essentially a comic hero. . . a grotesque version of the earlier Jake Barnes and Robert Jordan who savored experience and tried to derive meaningful answers
from it... a portrait of the American military man as an ineffectual and befuddled loser". But Cantwell is far more complex than the comic figure which Vanderbilt describes; indeed, to regard Cantwell in one dimension, as Vanderbilt does, is the mistake which most critics have made, although they err in the exclusion of the comic. As we shall see, the mere insertion of comic elements in *Across the River and Into the Trees* does not necessarily imply pure comedy, just as the novel's tragic elements do not imply pure tragedy, for even in *The Torrents of Spring* Hemingway had interspersed his comic portrait of the ill-fated Scripps O'Neil with recognizably serious elements:

In a good soldier in the war it went like this:
First, you were brave because you didn't think anything could hit you, because you yourself were something special, and you knew that you could never die. Then you found out different. You were really scared then, but if you were a good soldier you functioned the same as before. Then after you were wounded and not killed, with new men coming on, and going through your old processes, you hardened and became a good hard-boiled soldier. Then came the second crack, which is much worse than the first, and then you began doing good deeds...  

The only critic to explore Vanderbilt's thesis to date has been Jackson J. Benson, in *Hemingway: the Writer's Art of Self-Defense*. Admitting that "Cantwell is in part Hemingway romanticizing his own position, and sentimentalizing his continued desperate concern for virility", Benson suggests that in *Across the River and Into the Trees* Hemingway "turns back on such expressions of sentimentality to ridicule them for what they are". Comparing Cantwell to
Don Quixote and T5 Jackson to Sancho Panza, Benson observes that in Cantwell's reliving of his own youth he evidences the tart humor... of an adolescent daydream. Cantwell's membership in the Order of Brusadelli, his mock titles, and his acting out the role of a man in constant danger suggest "satire of sentiment". And, as Benson points out, Across the River and Into the Trees is "in part a satire of a middle-aged man who takes himself too seriously". As a result, "one of the continuing themes of the novel is age", since "one of the major illusions of age is to feel that we are still young":

Colonel Cantwell falls in love with a teenager, yearns for her like a teenager, necks and pets with her in a gondola under a blanket, sees himself as a movie hero, rants against established authority, seeks approval from his peers, has difficulty controlling his emotions, makes faces in mirrors, walks with an exaggerated cocky strut, and feels sorry for himself.  

As Benson is careful to point out, however, the novel also has a serious side, although his analysis does not consider this serious side in detail. Importantly for my study, however, he observes that in high-school Hemingway was "considered a wit among his class-mates", that "he and his friends initiated verbal games, rituals, and jokes". In considering the humourous aspects of Across the River and Into the Trees, we should not ignore the humourous facets of Hemingway's early years.

There is, however, an ironic quality even in this early humour, as we can see in Hemingway's 1917 Kansas City Star article "Kerensky, the Fighting Flea":

After hard days in old Russia, the life is full of joy for Leo, and who can say that he is not making the most of his opportunities. When he talks of the past it is of a program. That Christmas season the workmen in a sugar refinery near Kiev made a cross of ice and set it up on the frozen river. It fell over and they blamed the Jews. Then the workmen rioted, breaking into stores and smashing windows.

The same irony appears in the 1920 Toronto Star article, "A Free Shave":

Just then I noticed that my barber had his left hand bandaged.
"How did you do that?" I asked.
"Darn near sliced my thumb off with the razor this morning", he replied amiably.
The shave wasn't so bad. Scientists say that hanging is really a very pleasant death. The pressure of the rope on the nerves and arteries of the neck produces a sort of anesthesia. It is waiting to be hanged that bothers a man.

As Benson observes, this sort of humour is "'dark'--'dark' in the sense of morbid and/or destructive, and 'dark' in the sense of obscure. Some of the material that is overtly presented in joke form by Hemingway is very close to what was called several years ago the sick joke". Benson cites the irony and sadness which pervade The Sun Also Rises and the cutting satire of several short stories as examples of this "dark" humour; but it is important to remember that the protagonists of these works are also intensely serious figures; most, like the emasculated Jake Barnes of The Sun Also Rises, could sadly sum up a wasted past with the regretful postscript "isn't it pretty to think so?" and all have recognizably serious philosophical ideas. As Benson puts it, "Jake Barnes may begin as a joke, and remain
in part the object of ridicule as long as he is self-
deluded, but he ends up very nearly sanctified".

Like Jake Barnes, Colonel Cantwell is the object of ridicule throughout *Across the River and Into the Trees*, for his military language and mannerisms make him an extremely incongruous figure. As we shall see, he embodies, for Hemingway, the ideal virtues of resolution and endurance under stress which characterize the pure soldier (or man of honor), and thus the ideal man. Cantwell is obviously bitter, for he remembers injustices of his past temporal existence which have contradicted his own ideal principles. For the purposes of this study, we may define those men who create such injustices as impure soldiers, and their values as temporal values. These values are in opposition to Cantwell's ideal code of values, or code of honor; indeed, Cantwell's "craft" of soldiering, of which he is very proud, includes mannerisms of speech and dress which isolate him as a pure soldier within temporal inequities. But when the pure soldier attempts to live according to his code of honor in peacetime, on a holiday, during a love affair with a young girl, the mannerisms of his "craft" are inappropriate. They seem incongruous, and Cantwell knows it, for he is often ridiculed. This does not mean, however, that he rejects his code of honor and those ideal rules which it represents; on the contrary, in deciding to live according to his "craft" in spite of his incongruity he overcomes his incongruity, and with it his bitterness.
Cantwell is well aware that he has only a few days to live (the time span of the novel is only three days), and thus has little time in which to overcome his enmity. My contention is that throughout the novel he is consciously trying to affirm an ideal existence reflecting the ideal laws of his military "craft", an existence which will permit him to accept past temporal injustices, even though, ironically, he is surrounded by impure soldiers whose values are temporal. He is attempting to transcend temporal concepts, as he realizes that only in this way can he gain a serenity which will permit him to accept his approaching death. We can see Cantwell's attempts to transcend temporal to reach ideal concepts throughout the novel, but it is only as the novel ends that he is able to work out a resolution which enables him to see temporal values in perspective. His ideal existence is finally expressed through a union with his natural surroundings, a union which permits him to resolve successfully contradictions of temporal unrighteousness, to draw the circles of his life together, and to die in peace.

There is a final reconciliation in the novel as Cantwell endorses his ideal principles. He draws together the circles of his experience, and he sees his experience in a new light. He thinks over his code of honor, and its relation to ideal and temporal laws. By testing the illusions which he knows he tries to maintain, he gradually reaches a state where he understands how the code works, and its proper function. Through Renata, he is able to unite the circles of youth and
age, of innocence and experience, and he reaches an understanding not only of what was responsible for his enmity towards temporal rules, but also of how he has undergone catharsis in re-affirming his ideal values. Finally, he is able to see his past without resentment, his limited future without fear, and his death merely as a natural process linking him with all other creatures within a natural union. When he dies, it is as a contented man, not a bitter one.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I


3 Baker, p. 473.

4 Baker, p. 475.


7 Henry Reed, Review of ARIT, Listener, 44 (Nov. 9, 1950), 515.


10 Alfred Kazin, Review of ARIT, New Yorker, 26 (Sept. 9, 1950), 102.

11 Review of ARIT, Time, 56 (Sept. 11, 1950), 113.

12 Philip Young, Review of ARIT, Tomorrow, 10 (Nov. 1950), 55.

13 Philip Rahv, Review of ARIT, Commentary, 10 (Oct. 1950), 400.


16 Delbert Wylder, Review of ARIT, Western Review, 15 (Spring 1951), 240.


34 Baker, Writer as Artist, p. 503.


40 Redman, p. 38.

41 Baker, Life Story, pp. 475-476.

42 Baker, Life Story, p. 475.

43 Baker, Life Story, pp. 479-480.

44 Baker, Life Story, pp. 482-483.


47 Review of ARIT, Time, 56 (Sept. 11, 1950), 110.


50 Baker, Life Story, p. 487.


55"Ernest Hemingway Reading," Caedmon Record TC 1185 (July 1965).


65Joseph Beaver, "'Technique' in Hemingway," CE, 14 (March 1953), 328.


75 Carlos Baker, Writer as Artist, pp. 264-265.

76 Baker, Writer as Artist, p. 287.

77 Peter Lisca, "The Structure of Hemingway's Across the River and Into the Trees," MFS, 12 (1966), 250.


82 Benson, p. 53.

83 Benson, p. 54.


86 Benson, pp. 54-55.
87 Benson, p. 54.


89 Benson, p. 61.
CHAPTER II
PAST AND PRESENT

The military language is one of the novel's most obvious characteristics. And it is appropriate that Cantwell, the man of honor who is attempting to reconcile his code of honor with the inequities of temporal existence, while searching for more equitable ideal concepts, is very proud of his "trade" of soldiering, and only intermittently realizes that virtually all his observations are informed by military terms. The military action in the novel appears through Cantwell's reminiscences, of course, but the novel's plot involves a love affair rather than a military confrontation. Cantwell's pride permits him few moments of insight, of course; as he says at one point to Renata, "I had just slipped into my trade unconsciously", although he later admits that "it isn't much of a trade" (ARIT, p. 93). Recognizing that his devotion to excellence in soldiering has made him deeply embittered and lonely, he admits that "nobody shares this trade with anybody" (ARIT, p. 133), although he is pleased when Renata calls his "trade" the "oldest and the best" (ARIT, p. 114). Moreover, it is obvious that Cantwell realizes that his "trade" is a prominent factor governing his perception, for in remarks such as "I'm so kind I stink. Let somebody else be kind" (ARIT, p. 162), he sees the temporal
unfairness which Nick Adams noticed in "A Way You'll Never Be":

"Oh, absolutely. Americans twice as large as myself, healthy, with clean hearts, sleep at night, never been wounded, never been blown up, never had their heads caved in, never been scared, don't drink, faithful to the girls they left behind them, many of them never had crabs, wonderful chaps. You'll see."²

The aging Cantwell, however, is far more concerned with analyzing such injustices than Nick Adams was, and finds that virtually all actions and objects, even in peacetime, appear to him through a military metaphor which reminds him of the unfairness of his temporal past. And just as all metaphors, if over-used, become repetitious and annoying, so Cantwell's military perception gives Across the River and Into the Trees a peculiar awkwardness which most critics have ascribed to poor writing, but which in fact gives a remarkably complete picture of an old soldier's total reliance on a military past. Most of Cantwell's surroundings, therefore, appear to him in military terms: he uses a "defensive, rather than an attacking, bathroom" (ARIT, p. 77); a small church looks "like a P47" (ARIT, p. 111); and Cantwell lies beneath Renata's portrait and announces that he is "going to maneuver" (ARIT, p. 174). Even Cantwell's food acquires military characteristics, for a lobster "looks a bit like Georgie Patton" (ARIT, p. 115); a shrimp has a "wonderful intelligence service in those
two light whips" (ARIT, p. 193); and the Gran Maestro suddenly finds it necessary to "go and see how the steak marches" (ARIT, p. 121). The apex of Cantwell's military perception, however, occurs in his relationship with Renata, whom he compliments highly by telling that he wishes she were a soldier (ARIT, p. 231). Most protestations of his love for Renata involve an unsuccessful blend of lyricism and military language:

"You are," the Colonel told her. "Also any particular planet that you wish to be and I will give you an accurate location of the planet. Christ, Daughter, you can be a God-damn constellation if you like. Only that's an airplane." (ARIT, p. 99)

Indeed, an area in which Cantwell is notably unsuccessful in his attempt to combine the languages of wartime and peacetime is his sexual relationship with Renata, for even their lovemaking appears to him a military engagement, in keeping with the tradition of courtly love. Renata's contours, which Cantwell says are natural, not a result of "wire and sponge rubber, such as you use in the seats of tanks" (ARIT, p. 113), help him to feel "as young as at his first attack" (ARIT, p. 112), for he has already teased Renata by "throwing in the counter-attack without even thinking" (ARIT, p. 108). When Cantwell tells Renata that he loves her, he feels compelled to label his confession "Top Secret equals British Most Secret" (ARIT, p. 158), and when Renata asks him to "attack gently and with the
same attack as before" (ARIT, p. 155), we know that she realizes that the mannerisms and language of war provide the only medium through which Cantwell can attempt to ratify his ideal principles.

By contrast, Cantwell's actual war memories, which occupy a prominent place in the novel, seem muted and uninteresting, although we occasionally find the naturalistic description which informs such short stories as "In Another Country". As Cantwell admits, "I go back so damn far it isn't funny" (ARIT, p. 73), yet he is easily able to recall such sordid war details as the "dead . . . floating and bloating face up and face down" on the Piave (ARIT, p. 20). Obviously bitter over his demotion from general officer to colonel, he nevertheless finds it necessary to tell Renata every detail of as many military battles as he can remember, constantly emphasizing that "there aren't any such times any more" (ARIT, p. 63). His re-creation of the past, which includes the taking of Paris, the battle of Hurtgen Forest, the merits of various generals, and appraisals of the fighting potential of various belligerent nations, is justified, of course, by the fact that Cantwell is quite aware "how boring any man's war is to any other man" (ARIT, p. 21). But he knows very well that only by re-telling these experiences can he recall his youth, be "a general now, again, and be happy" (ARIT, p. 62).
Quite naturally, Cantwell is also very concerned with the physical signs of his age and experience, and he is especially proud of his battle scars, since they show him to be a man of honor. As Jackson observes, Cantwell has been "beat up so much he's slug-nutty" (ARIT, p. 27), and this physical decline is emphasized by Cantwell's periodically examining himself in various mirrors, often pronouncing himself a "beat-up old bastard":

"You beat-up old bastard," he said to the mirror. Portrait was a thing of the past. Mirror was actuality and of this day.

The gut is flat, he said without uttering it. The chest is all right except where it contains the defective muscle. We are hung as we are hung, for better or worse, or something, or something awful.

You are one half a hundred years old, you bastard you . . . " (ARIT, p. 180)

As a man of honor, Cantwell admires only those other men of honor "who had fought or been mutilated" and has "true tenderness and love" only for those "who had been there and received the castigation" (ARIT, p. 71). Indeed, in his attempt to declare the ideal principles of his code of honor, he develops a romantic pride in his disfigurement:

It looks as though it had been cut out of wood by an indifferent craftsman, he thought.

He looked at the different welts and ridges that had come before they had plastic surgery, and at the thin, only to be observed by the initiate, lines of the excellent plastic operation after head wounds. (ARIT, pp. 111-112)
As an initiated man of honor himself, Cantwell is careful to walk with a "slightly exaggerated confidence . . . even when it is not needed" (ARIT, p. 65), since he believes that other men of honor will notice and accept him (ARIT, p. 188). As a symbol of his honor, Cantwell is extremely proud of his bad hand, which has been "shot through twice", is "badly misshapen" (ARIT, p. 55), and which he "got honorably . . . on a rocky, bare-assed hill" (ARIT, p. 135). Renata's acceptance of Cantwell's bad hand, "the one I love and must think about all week" (ARIT, p. 226), indicates her realization of Cantwell's preoccupation with his marks of honor, for she wishes to "feel" his hand, dreaming that it is the "hand of our Lord" (ARIT, p. 84); and, as a Christian symbol of suffering and devotion, Cantwell's hand functions as a device which both Cantwell and Renata understand is needed to represent their love.

We are often reminded that Cantwell, although he considers himself a man of honor, is not a youth in a battle situation where he can easily show his honor; on the contrary, his last three days are marked by signposts of physical deterioration which make it very difficult for him to concentrate on his effort to express his ideal rules. His cardiac condition makes him susceptible to dizziness, buzzing in his ears, and occasional twinges of pain, so it is not surprising that
he is constantly preoccupied with the mannitol hexanitrate pills which supposedly relieve these symptoms. Often, although he admits that he "ought to take the pills", he decides "the hell with the pills" (ARIT, p. 183), since he is aware that no drug can cure his rapidly failing heart. Indeed, the failure of Cantwell's heart indicates the failure of all Cantwell's physical reserves, for he reaches a stage where even mannitol hexanitrate produces nausea, and he is anxious to "lie down and take a seconal" (ARIT, p. 9). Finally, he admits that he has strength enough only for "rest and very light exercise" (ARIT, p. 281), as even a modicum of effort produces physical collapse:

Coming out of the telephone booth he, suddenly, did not feel good and then he felt as though the devil had him in an iron cage, built like an iron lung or the iron maiden, and he walked, gray-faced, to the concierge's desk and said, in Italian, "Domenico, Ico, could you get me a glass of water, please?" (ARIT, p. 196)

Cantwell's heart is more than a symbol of his dwindling physical reserves, however, for in also symbolizing the capacity for love which he gains through Renata, whose own heart is in excellent condition, it emphasizes the haste with which he must act if he is to endorse his code of honor before he dies. When Cantwell looks at Renata, he feels "his heart turn over inside him, as though some sleeping animal had rolled over in its burrow" (ARIT, p. 83); and, when he embraces
her, he feels "his heart broken" (ARIT, p. 114), although he knows that "you are not supposed to have a heart in a soldier's trade" (ARIT, p. 135). And he wishes to "trade it in on a new one" (ARIT, p. 118). Just before he dies, he regrets that his "lousy chicken heart... certainly couldn't hold the pace" (ARIT, p. 294). He tries to sound complacent and analytical, but fears that he may be unable to ratify his ideal principles before heart failure overcomes him:

"It's just a muscle," the Colonel said. "Only it is the main muscle. It works as perfectly as a Rolex Oyster perpetual. The trouble is you cannot send it to the Rolex representative when it goes wrong. When it stops, you just do not know the time. You're dead." (ARIT, p. 138)

Such concern exacerbates the many emotional problems which Cantwell's fear of dying has helped to develop, although he ironically boasts that "us healthy bastards shall inherit the earth" (ARIT, p. 79). He wants to be respected, but often emphasizes that this is not enough for the true man of honor. When he is told, for example, that "you are very well-liked in this city", he replies that "that is a very great compliment" (ARIT, p. 75), but he is also careful to describe himself as a "truly unpopular guest" (ARIT, p. 161). Complimented by Andrea's greeting as "my ancient and depraved Colonel" (ARIT, p. 79), he nevertheless observes at another time to Renata that "we have my small necessities of honor in the same
proportions as we have our great and enveloping love" (ARIT, p. 123), stressing the maintenance of his honor at all times. Cantwell apparently does have drinking problems, but is quick to assert that all facts of his life are under control, since "I was never lost in my life" (ARIT, p. 162). Placing great stress on his honesty, since he "hasn't lied enough for a three-star general" (ARIT, p. 117), Cantwell is paradoxically able to voice appreciation for liars, who are "as beautiful as cherry trees . . . in blossom", and whom he has been carefully observing all his life (ARIT, p. 278). He likes to feel that his own search for ideal concepts includes a sympathetic appreciation for the temporal values which he rejects.

But the facility for sympathetic appreciation which Cantwell prizes is warped by his own aversion to any sentimentality: he can never forget his determination to avoid being a "sucker for crips" (ARIT, p. 26), and he never wants to be described as just a "chicken colonel on the winning side" (ARIT, p. 26). He must continue to live surrounded by temporal inequities, even as he tries to transcend them, and he is determined not to surrender to them; thus, refusing to place himself at "the mercy of the court" (ARIT, p. 9), he sees himself as an isolated "tough boy":

And what is a tough boy, he asked himself. You use it so loosely you should be able to define it. I suppose it is a man who
will make his play and then backs it up. Or just a man who backs his play. And I'm not thinking of the theatre, he thought. Lovely as the theatre can be. (ARIT, pp. 48-49)

Even Venice takes on the characteristics of a "tough town" as Cantwell compares it to Cooke City, Memphis, and Chicago (ARIT, p. 36). He says that he "never saw a city boy . . . that was worth a damn" (ARIT, p. 10), identifying cities (and civilization) with temporal injustices, knowing that unless he learns to understand the reasons for such wrongs he cannot escape from the limitations imposed by his own bitterness. In order to see temporal concepts in their true perspective, he must try to understand their superficiality. And in order to view such superficiality in a reflective way, he must consciously try to temper his own enmity.

When Cantwell is able to enter into a unity with his natural surroundings in his search for ideal principles, to "understand nothing . . . knowing only that it is beautiful" (ARIT, p. 31), his heightened sensitivity during his last three days makes him appreciate the beauty of Venice and its citizens. A passing girl seems "a beautiful, hard piece of work" (ARIT, p. 38); he recalls Gabriele d'Annunzio's actress, whose "so transformable face . . . gave you all love, glory, and delight and sadness" (ARIT, p. 51); and he notices the "long, easy striding Venetian legs" of two "lovely
looking girls" who are "beautiful and hatless and poorly but chicly dressed" (ARIT, p. 78).

Most of Cantwell's appreciation, however, is reserved for Venice itself, which he as a man of honor often describes as "my town" or a "lovely town". It is in an appropriate symbol of ideal values, of course, that Cantwell passes his last three days—a city which reminds him of ancient civilizations, with their accompanying wars, deaths, and cultural values; and a place where traditions, values, and lives can come full circle. As Cantwell puts it, "it is my city, though, because I fought for it when I was a boy, and now that I am half a hundred years old, they know I fought for it and they treat me well" (ARIT, p. 26). Thomas Mann's description in "Death in Venice" is appropriate here:

"A ticket for Venice," repeated he, stretching out his arm to dip the pen into the thick ink in a tilted ink-stand. "One first-class ticket to Venice! Here you are, signore mio." He made some scrawls on the paper, strewed bluish sand on it out of a box, thereafter letting the sand run off into an earthen vessel, folded the paper with bony fingers, and wrote on the outside. "An excellent choice," he rattled on. "Ah, Venice! What a glorious city! Irresistibly attractive to the cultured man for her past history as well as her present charm."3

Significantly, Cantwell and Renata make love in a Venetian gondola, a symbol uniting their love with the Venetian cultural environment. And we can see, therefore, that Venice is an ideal place in which the man of honor can attempt to ratify his principles of existence; as
Renata points out, in Venice "we had fighting men, always. We respect them . . . understand them a little, [and] . . . know they are difficult" (ARIT, pp. 239-240). Only in Venice can Cantwell and the Gran Maestro, both men of honor, celebrate through a formal handshake their allegiance to the "human race, the only club either paid dues to", and to "their love of an old country . . . which they had both defended" (ARIT, p. 55). Impure soldiers and their temporal unrighteousness, however, are not welcome in Venice, for the city does not accept those who, like Robert Browning and his wife, are not "tough", although, as a place where a search for ideal principles is possible, the city does welcome such romantic figures as Byron, with whom Cantwell identifies (ARIT, p. 48). Furthermore, Venice has its decadent side, the results of temporal mismanagement in past history; as Cantwell is well aware; the "ugly Breda works" represent a "miserable view of Venice" (ARIT, p. 35), reinforcing his view of himself as a man isolated within temporal inequities. The tradition producing the "great, slow, pale oxen" (ARIT, p. 24) which Cantwell admires was begun, as he knows, by the Torcellos, who established Venice as a sanctuary from both attacking barbarians and disease (ARIT, p. 28).

As in "Death in Venice", there is an atmosphere of decadence, of decay, of the fall of past glories
and civilizations. In admitting that he is a "Torcello boy", therefore, Cantwell establishes his kinship with Venice's past cultures; as Renata points out, even incest, a social taboo which their relationship suggests, would not be "so terrible in a city as old as this and that has seen what this city has seen" (ARIT, p. 98). Such a city, which brings together temporal and ideal concepts, is an appropriate setting for the last days of a professional soldier who feels compelled to pass his final hours in a search for ideal principles of resolution and endurance without relinquishing his tenacious hold on the sustaining power of his own recollected past.

What makes Cantwell's "wild-boar truculence" (ARIT, p. 71) especially incongruous in this situation is that even though Renata is the only Venetian to whom he can wholly relate, he identifies so closely with his Venetian milieu that he associates everything American with the injustices of his temporal past. Most Americans find Venice boring, thinks Cantwell (ARIT, p. 73), and he makes sure that Renata stays away from such unnatural American influences as the "pin curls" and "metallic instruments" of his three previous wives, implying that they would destroy the timeless relationship which he wishes to have with her (ARIT, p. 179). At one point, Cantwell proclaims "the hell with anything American
except me" (ARIT, p. 177), but he cannot totally forget his American background; one of the most humorous sections of the novel occurs when he teaches Renata how to speak "American", and she produces such malapropisms as "Put it there, Pal. This grub is tops", while they plan a halcyon American trip through "Lodges and Tourist Camps", knowing they can never take it (ARIT, p. 206).

Often, however, Cantwell quite inadvertently reverts to the sarcasm of the man of honor helplessly trapped within temporal inequities. He is able to visualize a visiting American in Harry's Bar, generally considered a caricature of Sinclair Lewis, with a virulence which indicates his hatred of those impure soldiers who bring their temporal rules to a city where a search for ideal considerations is much more appropriate:

He had a strange face like an over-enlarged, disappointed weasel or ferret. It looked as pock-marked and blemished as the mountains of the moon as seen through a cheap telescope and, the Colonel thought, it looked like Goebbels' face, if Herr Goebbels had ever been in a plane that burned . . . . He looks like a caricature of an American who has been run half way through a meat chopper and then been boiled, slightly, in oil. (ARIT, pp. 87-88)

Such excesses of condemnation towards Cantwell's previous temporal affiliations show his bitterness to be pervasive, and we can see that his declaration of ideal concepts must exist together with a catharsis, in order to prepare him for death. Since he is on holiday rather than in battle, his code of honor,
appropriate enough in battle, seems incongruous, and many of his reactions to peacetime situations are grossly exaggerated. In effect, therefore, he is using unnecessary force in solving his problems, and he knows it; but his knowledge of his own incongruity, even though he cannot prevent occasional caustic outbursts, makes him surmount it, and his search for ideal principles becomes, as we shall see, a successful one. Like other Hemingway protagonists, he has his code of honor to live by; unlike those other protagonists, he has no physical resources left to fall back on, and must face death only with a code of honor originally meant for wartime, but now applied to a holiday in peacetime.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 Ernest Hemingway, *Across the River and Into the Trees* (New York: Scribners, 1950), p. 83. Further references to this edition will be included in my text, accompanied by the designation ARIT.


CHAPTER III
THE CODE OF HONOR

The ideal principles which comprise the code of honor are directly related to the language and mannerisms of the pure soldier. And Cantwell's need to maintain his "trade of arms" while trying to become a "kind and good man" (ARIT, p. 65) searching for ideal values in peacetime requires, as we might expect, considerable effort on his part. He tries constantly to be "kind, decent, and good" (ARIT, p. 65), for it is in this way only that he can hope to apply his code of honor to a situation which excludes actual war, the basis for that code. Ironically, his assertion of ideal rules comes at a time when he knows not only that his code of honor seems incongruous out of the military context, but also that he has very little time in which to understand fully this incongruity, for we are often told that Renata is his "last and true and only love" (ARIT, p. 143)—in effect, his last chance. In an effort to avoid thinking of imminent death, therefore, Cantwell tells himself "come on, boy . . . no horse named Morbid ever won a race" (ARIT, p. 77), and admonishes himself to "keep it clean . . . and love your girl" (ARIT, p. 273). As Renata tells him, "you have to be good now until you say good-bye" (ARIT, p. 278), and Cantwell often tells her that although he "could have made a rough response" to one of her remarks, he "won't be rough" (ARIT, p. 272), as he is "trying very hard to be gentle" (ARIT, p. 87).
Even Renata's portrait witnesses Cantwell's promise that "I'll be the best God-damned boy you ever witnessed today" (ARIT, p. 173). But Cantwell knows that building his hopes on anything more than a day-to-day promise is an impossibility; he and Renata both realize that they can neither marry nor have children (ARIT, p. 99), and that they must work together in Cantwell's catharsis; for he must accept his sense of his own incongruity in order to ratify his ideal principles of resolution and endurance, thus permitting him to die in peace.

And it is true that Cantwell has reached a point at which, as he tells Renata's portrait, "your defense and my defense is no damn good" (ARIT, p. 172), that he is now forced to consider those "limited objectives" in life which he once rejected (ARIT, p. 210), mainly because his code of honor, taken from its military context, seems unreassuring as he approaches death. But his protestations that he "hates nothing" and has only a "point of view" are attempts to disguise a savage bitterness which he often recognizes, although many of his outbursts are involuntary and uncontrolled. Telling himself not to be "bitter nor a stupid", he says that he's "on a trip to have fun" (ARIT, p. 27), that during a holiday he should forget temporal unrighteousness. Calling himself "Richard the crap-hearted . . . the unjust bitter criticizer" (ARIT, p. 229), he nevertheless says that he expects "nothing from anyone that they did not have to give him" (ARIT, p. 65). In fact, Cantwell's acrimoniousness is
one of the novel's most obvious characteristics, for it is so pervasive that it colours his most mundane observations:

There's no more privacy in the army than in a professional shit-house. I've never been in a professional shit-house, but I imagine they run it much the same. I could learn to run one, he thought. Then I'd make all my leading shit-house characters Ambassadors and the unsuccessful ones could be Corps-Commanders or command military districts in peace time. Don't be bitter, boy, he said to himself. It's too early in the morning and your duty's not completed yet. (ARIT, p. 168)

Indeed, although Cantwell believes that it is "better to die on our feet than to live on our knees" (ARIT, p. 40) and although he tries very hard to maintain his dignity, he often involuntarily reflects malignly on the effects which injustices have produced in him, saying, for example, "I'm so kind I stink" (ARIT, p. 162) and "when the hell was I ever hurt?" (ARIT, p. 157) at inappropriate times. Whenever Cantwell actually thinks of the temporal laws governing impure soldiers, he becomes resentful; for, although a bitter man, he is an intelligent one, one whose intellect is as "far beyond the Gran Maestro's as calculus is distant from a man who has only the knowledge of arithmetic" (ARIT, p. 63), one who knows how greatly his virulence has changed him. It is not surprising, therefore, that he tries to avoid thinking of temporal unrighteousness while he is with Renata, who, sensing this, repeatedly tells him to "not think of anything at all" (ARIT, p. 82). As the novel proceeds, however, Cantwell finds, as does Harry in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro", that such a philosophy is no longer viable, that he cannot prevent involuntary thoughts of how his code of honor was
debased by temporal inequities. And perhaps, like Harry, he is unfair to his few remaining companions, for actually thinking of his incongruity makes the situation even more difficult:

You kept from thinking and it was all marvellous; You were equipped with good insides so that you did not go to pieces that way, the way most of them had, and you made an attitude that you cared nothing for the work you used to do, now that you could no longer do it.

Hence the emphasis on incongruous discussion in the novel, for in order to believe that he is successfully endorsing his ideal aims, Cantwell finds that he must constantly present himself to Renata as more composed than he actually is. When she asks him why he is bitter, he replies that "it is just that I am half a hundred years old and I know things" (ARIT, p. 217); and, supporting this picture of an experienced man trying to draw the circles of his life together, Cantwell introduces many allusions to art, history, politics, literature, and various personalities, all of which reinforce the concept of an attempt at ideal completion, a satisfying ending to his life. As Lisca points out, Cantwell mentions specifically "Breughel, Hieronymus Bosch, Wagner, Bach, Degas, Goya, Titian, Tintoretto, Michelangelo, Piero della Francesca, Mantegna, and a few other painters and musicians". In literature, Cantwell brings up by name or quotation "Dante, Blake, Shakespeare, D'Annunzio, Byron, Browning, Max Reinhardt, Christopher Marlowe, Rimbaud, Edgar Quinet, Verlaine, and Francis Villon". Writers alluded to include "T. S. Eliot, Richard Lovelace,
and John Donne. Several examples should illustrate the extent of these cultural echoes in Cantwell's conversations with Renata:

"No. I told her about things once, and she wrote about them. But that was in another country and besides the wench is dead."
"Is she really dead?"
"Deader than Phoebus the Phoenician. But she doesn't know it yet." (ARIT, p. 213)

This directly refers both to T. S. Eliot's lines from "The Jew of Malta" in his "Portrait of a Lady", "Thou hast committed--/Fornication: but that was in another country,/And besides, the wench is dead", as well as to Part IV of "The Wasteland":

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,  
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell  
And the profit and loss.

A current under sea  
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell  
He passed the stages of his age and youth  
Entering the whirlpool.

Another example is provided by Renata's quotations from Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed":

"I love you my last true and only love", she quoted, "When lilacs last in the door-yard bloomed. And out of the cradle endlessly rocking. And come and get it, you sons of bitches, or I'll throw it away. You don't want those in other languages do you, Richard?" (ARIT, p. 211)

There are numerous other literary echoes, as well as references to various historical events and personalities, and we may well question the exact function these serve in the novel. Lisca, observing that most critics have assumed that these references serve no artistic function and "serve
only to parade the author's knowledge of the world and occasionally to vent his spleen", accepts them as ways of revealing Cantwell's personality, and as a way of bringing the world as Cantwell knows it into the novel. While this is true, these references to literary and artistic products repeatedly draw attention to Cantwell's respect for other men who have successfully been able to evaluate and surpass their temporal existence through the ideal craftsmanship of their own enduring works. The pure soldier like Cantwell, whose own values are equally ideal, should understand and refer to these cultural products in ways no impure soldier could hope to understand. For the ideal cultural creations of great artists, writers, and composers often are in distinct opposition to the injustices of the world, and it is important to note that all works of culture referred to in the novel are ones generally accepted as significant. The most common references in the novel are to Shakespeare and Dante, two figures who complement each other. As T. S. Eliot puts it, "Shakespeare gives the greatest width of human passion; Dante the greatest altitude and greatest depth". Cantwell, referring to "sad stories of the death of kings" (ARIT, p.236), seems to be drawing attention to the contradiction between his ideal concepts and temporal rules, and tries to invest himself with a certain nobility, almost as if he sees himself as a tragic hero:

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the death of kings--
How some have been deposed, some slain in war,
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,
Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed,
All murdered . . .

And Cantwell deliberately refers to Jackson as Burnham (recalling Birnam Wood in Macbeth), seeing himself as a tragic hero whose acerbity has complicated his final attempt to ratify ideal principles:

I have lived long enough. My way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have, but in their stead
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honor, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

Cantwell justifies the use of these references by saying that Shakespeare, who "writes like a soldier himself" is the "winner and still the undisputed champion" (ARIT, p. 171). And he often compares his relationship with Renata to that of Othello and Desdemona, saying that "they were not Othello and Desdemona, thank God", but insisting that he has "fought as many, or more, times than the garrulous Moor" (ARIT, p. 230). There are a number of parallels between the two relationships: both take place in Venice; both concern the love of an aging soldier for a young girl; both involve sensitive protagonists whose code of honor, a source of pride, can be destroyed by the intensity of their love relationship. And, like Othello's Cantwell's "occupation's gone", for he realizes that he must live according to his code of honor without the surroundings of war which gave both him and Othello such comfort:

Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And O ye mortal engines whose rude throats
T' immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation gone; 10

Similar concepts inform the references to Dante, although these rely less on direct quotation and more on the actual structure of Dante's works. Cantwell calls Dante an "execrable character" (ARIT, p. 218), but suggests that Renata read his works. When Renata tells him that "you sound like Dante", he replies that "I am Mr. Dante . . . for the moment" and, as the novel puts it, "for a while he was and he drew all the circles. They were as unjust as Dante's but he drew them" (ARIT, p. 245-245). These references to Dante draw attention to the parallels, amply detailed by Lisca, between Across the River and Into the Trees and the Divine Comedy: for, as Lisca points out, "like Dante, 11 Colonel Cantwell . . . lays out his levels of perdition". Lisca's most important point, however, is the role of Renata as confessor in purging Cantwell's bitterness:

... as Dante is guided by Virgil, in Across the River and Into the Trees Colonel Cantwell guides Renata, who is, in one of her aspects, the Colonel's own youth—reborn through the horrors of war and its aftermath. But in her aspect of ideal love and her role as confessor, it is Renata who, like Beatrice, guides the Colonel to perfection. 12

The ideal values which Cantwell affirms through catharsis are fundamental to Hemingway's personal conception of the ideal man. As Hemingway himself described it in his many
letters to Colonel Charles T. Lanham, it was the modern combat soldier who best portrayed his vision and essence of human existence. As well as the fact that Hemingway himself was a frustrated soldier, we should note that there were a number of Hemingway's military friends—among them Colonel Charles Sweeny, Lanham, and Eric Dorman O'Gowan—who entered into his conception of the ideal soldier. It was Lanham, however, whose code of professional ethics provided Hemingway with a model for his own paradigm of human existence. In "Hemingway's Unpublished Remarks on War and Warriors", Sylvester writes that "Lanham in action personified absolute purity of professional purpose—unbroken resolution and endurance in the face of exhaustion, together with the ability to maintain intelligent efficiency without tightening up, and to sustain wit and gaiety in the face of the most terrible odds". Such a description fits exactly Hemingway's conception of the ideal man, the pure soldier who is all the purer for adversity, and exemplifies those ideal principles of resolution and endurance which Cantwell is trying to ratify.

But Hemingway also wrote to Lanham that he considered injustice the central issue of the soldier's existence; indeed, he wrote that *Across the River and Into the Trees* was about "an intelligent fighting man opposed by the world". To use Lanham's phrase, however, the "more than merely mortal" were able to maintain their equanimity in spite of their awareness of the inevitable unfairness and stupidity involved in the "big picture" of war as controlled by the military
bureaucracy. Although we know little of Colonel Charles Sweeny's military career, we do know that both Lanham and Dorman O'Gowan suffered disastrous military reverses which can apparently be traced directly to the stupidity of those in command. The career of O'Gowan, whom the British historian Sir Basil Liddell Hart called "one of the most brilliant soldiers that the British army has produced in modern times", was ruined when his commanding officer, Auchinleck, was relieved of his command in Africa in 1942; and Hemingway wrote that O'Gowan should have received the highest command if there were any justice in the world. This sort of unrighteousness makes it extremely difficult for the pure soldier to live by those ideal rules of resolution and endurance which should be maintained under the most inequitable circumstances. For the stupid decisions of these impure soldiers merely create injustice and distract the pure soldier—like Cantwell—from the just and fair practice of his military "craft", eventually evoking in him feelings of intense and involuntary bitterness. In Cantwell's case, the irony is that even in peacetime he insists on following the language and mannerisms of his "craft" even though he appears incongruous, for only in this way can he eventually endorse the ideal values of the pure soldier.

If the pure soldier represents Hemingway's ideal man, then, we can see that war must represent the purest form of human conflict as it presently exists. Other forms of conflict, notably those involving sports, are common in
Hemingway's fiction, yet no other form includes the elements of risk which make war the ultimate conflict. Even bull-fighting permits only the testing of one man's skill. But war, with its attendant risk of violent death, provides a situation in which a man's character is tested in the most unfavourable circumstances. The testing of men at the front, therefore, provides Hemingway with a microcosm in which he can portray man's ultimate endurance—or his disintegration. The result is that war becomes for Hemingway the atmosphere in which his characters exist—or are destroyed. If they endure, it is by their own efforts; if they are destroyed, it is through their own deficiencies. It is important to realize, I think, that Hemingway did not condone the horrors of war for its own sake. Rather, he used war to create fictional situations in which his characters could reveal their true characters. For in battle, pure soldiers such as Lanham and Cantwell originally evidence the resolution and endurance which mark them as pure.

An interest in this process gives the pure soldier a key to understanding the history of temporal existence, as such history is composed largely of military battles lost and won. Indeed, when Hemingway organized Men at War, he borrowed arbitrary divisions from "the most intelligent writer on the metaphysics of war that ever lived, General Karl von Clausewitz". Several of these divisions reveal Hemingway's own sense of the fundamental nature of war: "War is Part of the Intercourse of the Human Race"; "War is the Province of Danger, and therefore Courage above all
things is the First Quality of a Warrior"; "War is the Province of Physical Exertion and Suffering"; "War Demands Resolution, Firmness, and Staunchness"; and "War is Fought by Human Beings".19 The injustices produced by impure soldiers, moreover, cannot influence the actual testing of men at the front; thus, the closer men come to testing their resources against violent death in war, the greater chance they have of revealing their true characters.20 Living continually in the presence of death, men learn discipline, adaptation, and heightened emotional stability.21 Under these conditions, the pure soldier such as Cantwell develops and displays those character traits of resolution and endurance which mark him as such. Indeed, in Death in the Afternoon Hemingway wrote that "one of the simplest things of all and the most fundamental is violent death",22 and in his introduction to Men at War he discusses the effect of its omnipresence:

Danger only exists at the moment of danger. To live properly in war, the individual eliminates all such things as potential danger. Then a thing is only bad when it is bad. It is neither bad before nor after. Cowardice, as distinguished from panic, is almost always simply a lack of ability to suspend the functioning of the imagination. Learning to suspend your imagination and live completely in the very second of the present minute with no before and no after is the greatest gift a soldier can acquire.23

Cantwell's inability to suspend the functioning of his imagination in peacetime, and to live for the moment
in his declaration of ideal principles, is a major source of his incongruity. He jokes about the worth of his own life, saying "what's a man's life worth anyway? Ten thousand dollars if his insurance is paid up in the army" (ARIT, p. 188); and he jokingly tells Renata that "what you win in Boston you lose in Chicago" (ARIT, p. 148), trying to imply that he is unconcerned as he tries to forget temporal injustices. His code of honor will not permit him to relinquish the language and techniques of his "craft", even in peacetime, but he involuntarily remembers past disappointments of wartime, observing that "it is the mistakes that are no good to sleep with" (ARIT, p. 243), although these mistakes are the product of those impure soldiers controlling temporal life rather than himself. There is an element of sacrifice here, of course, since Cantwell's acerbity is the result of such inequities, and there is ample justification for the Christian imagery which informs the novel. As Lisca points out, Cantwell's right hand has been "pierced twice", significantly on "a rocky, bare-assed hill", and we can see the obvious Calvary parallel. Cantwell rises from his shooter's barrel on Sunday, the third day, implying the Easter theme. The number three is often introduced in the novel: its time span is only three days, and it has been thirty-three years since Cantwell was first wounded and thus baptized into his
"craft". When we examine the symbolism of the characters' names, we find that Renata means "reborn", just as Cantwell suggests "can't-get-well"; and, as Lisca puts it, "it seems clear that the Christian theme is a prominent part of the novel's ritual preparation, bringing together the imagery of death and the themes of self-examination, reconciliation, and confession".24

Baptism as a pure soldier or man of honor occurs through being wounded on the battlefield; this happened to Cantwell thirty-three years before. It is significant that this baptism occurs in battle, in a situation from which temporal unfairness is removed, and is truly a ritual initiation:

When you go to war as a boy you have a great illusion of immortality. Other people get killed, not you. It can happen to other people; but not to you. Then when you are badly wounded the first time you lose that illusion and you know it can happen to you. After being severely wounded two weeks before my nineteenth birthday I had a bad time until I figured it out that nothing could happen to me that had not happened to all men before me. Whatever I had to do men had always done. If they had done it then I could do it too and the best thing was not to worry about it.25

After baptism as a man of honor, the greatest need is the maintenance of a capacity for "soundly based belief", for what Baker calls "informed illusion". And such illusions must be tested and evaluated, just as the young boy's illusion of immortality is tested and evaluated. As Baker describes it, after the loss of any illusion, the important thing to maintain is the original capacity for
belief which made the illusion possible.26 We can see this in Cantwell's relationship with Renata throughout the novel, as he continually tries to analyze their relationship in order to regain the state of youthful awareness which he sees in Renata, apparently distant because of his experience. As Cantwell puts it, "every day is a new and fine illusion. But you can cut out everything phony about the illusion as though you would cut it with a straight-edge razor" (ARIT, p. 232).

Similarly, with his passion for ideal values in the pursuit of the pure aesthetic of his "craft", and his disgust for pretentiousness, it is axiomatic that Cantwell be extremely suspicious of those men who might be "phony", those who might fall into the category of impure soldiers, with their accompanying inequities. Predictably enough, Hemingway detested those impure soldiers whose aims were to gain status rather than to practice the true "craft" of soldiering, and he had nothing but contempt for the officiousness and political ambitions of those in positions of high command.27 In his preface to Men at War, his comment is explicit:

The editor of this anthology, who took part and was wounded in the last war to end war, hates war and hates all the politicians whose mismanagement, gullibility, cupidity, selfishness and ambition brought on this present war and made it inevitable.28

Significantly, Cantwell insists that he does "not believe in heroes" (ARIT, p. 50), and condemns the
attributes of one impure soldier whose temporal motives were accepted by other citizens: Gabriele d'Annunzio, a "writer, poet, national hero, phraser of the dialect of nations, macabre egotist, commander . . . Lieutenant Colonel of Infantry without knowing how to command . . . and jerk" (ARIT, pp. 51-52). And we can also see his condemnation in his relationship with the young Italians who flout his age, in his uneasy alliance with the boatman, whose problems parallel his own, and most of all in his criticism of T5 Jackson, his chauffeur. Cantwell has no use for any "draft dodgers, phonies who claimed they were wounded if a piece of spent metal touched them, people who wore the purple heart from jeep accidents, insiders, cowards, liars, thieves, and telephone racers" (ARIT, p. 236). He calls them "brown-nosers" (ARIT, p. 251), as they have never undergone the ritual baptism under fire to which any man of honor must submit. In a temporal situation governed by impure soldiers, the only way a man of honor can express his ideal code is through actual combat, and "jerks who never fought" obviously have never tried to question their temporal laws (ARIT, p. 251). Evidently, if such men prefer not to fight, they cannot be men of honor; thus, one of Cantwell's favorite targets is malingering, and he gives a list of those methods by which "poor boys who did not want to die" are able to avoid testing their illusions in battle
In Men at War, Hemingway writes of the "deprecation the truly brave man can feel" for the "type of cowardice, or more often panic and stupidity, that produces self-inflicted wounds". And we must not underestimate the emphasis he places on the bravery of the man of honor who is originally baptized as a youth in battle. Such a baptism enables the man of honor to overcome temporal injustices through the maintenance of his code of honor; it gives him the kind of strength Cantwell is trying to regain in his endorsement of ideal principles as the novel proceeds. Hemingway's most explicit discussion of such a baptism is found in the wounding of Frederick Henry in A Farewell to Arms, an event which closely parallels Cantwell's first wounding:

I ate the end of my piece of cheese and took a swallow of wine. Through the other noise I heard a cough, then came the chuh-chuh-chuh--then there was a flash, as when a blast-furnace door is swung open, and a roar that started white and went red and on and on in a rushing wind. I tried to breathe but my breath would not come and I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and all the time bodily in the wind. I went out swiftly, all of myself, and I knew that I was dead and that it had all been a mistake to think you just died. Then I floated, and instead of going on I felt myself slide back. I breathed and I was back.

If a man has not completed this ritual baptism, he evidently cannot be a man of honor. Like Jackson, a "prissy jerk" (ARIT, p. 41) who reads comic books
(ARIT, p. 301), would rather stay in bed on Sunday morning than go duck shooting (ARIT, p. 25), and has never even heard of Gabriele d'Annunzio (ARIT, p. 51), such a man is "in no sense a soldier but only a man placed, against his will, in uniform, who had elected to remain in the army for his own ends" (ARIT, p. 22). Such men are the impure soldiers who make temporal life intolerable for Cantwell, for their stupidity and mismanagement have been responsible for his acrimony. The true man of honor who has been initiated into war, however, is equipped to understand the century's history and experience. And he sees that men like Jackson have virtually no sense of historical continuity or respect for traditional values, for Jackson wishes to demolish the Cinema Palace and put up a "real cathedral" (ARIT, p. 161), his interest in history being limited to the "arrow heads, war bonnets, scalping knives, and different scalps" which he can see in a museum at home (ARIT, p. 16).

In order to concentrate on his attempt to confirm ideal principles while he is surrounded by those such as Jackson, Cantwell must play a number of roles which appear incongruous in peacetime. The first thing we notice about such roles is that they are tightly controlled and deliberate, and it is almost as if Cantwell, while realizing that he is nearing an emotional collapse, is determined not to allow his emotions to overcome him. He is afraid of something, but he does not know what it is.
is, and perhaps his greatest fear is of finding that he
has nothing whatever to sustain him except for his code
of honor, which is extremely difficult to maintain in
peacetime. In this connection, Baker writes that in
Across the River and Into the Trees we can find an arc
of the nada-circle which "runs all the way through Hemingway's
work". Although Baker quotes Carlyle's definition of
nada as "the vast circumambient realm of nothingness and
night", the most explicit definition is Hemingway's
own in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place":

What did he fear? It was not fear or dread.
It was a nothing that he knew too well. It
was all a nothing and a man was nothing too.
It was only that and light was all it needed
and a certain cleanness and order. Some
lived in it and never felt it but he knew
it all was nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada.

Cantwell obviously does fear that he will be unable to
ratify his code of honor, that he will retain his enmity,
that with nothing to believe in he will die a disillusioned
man. Like Mann's Aschenbach, he has used his erudition as
a barrier against these fears, but finds that even this
erudition is ineffective:

For knowledge, Phaedrus, does not make him
who possesses it dignified or austere.
Knowledge is all-knowing, understanding,
forgiving; it takes up no position, sets no
store by form. It has no compassion with the
abyss—it is the abyss. So we reject it,
firmly, and henceforth our concern shall
be with beauty only.

Other Hemingway protagonists have brought various
defenses to act against their suspicions that their
lives are meaningless. Jake Barnes of *The Sun Also Rises* has his cynicism; Mr. Frazer of "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio" always leaves the radio on at night; and the waiter in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" leaves a light on. The defense most similar to Cantwell's, however, is Nick Adams' in "Big Two-Hearted River". Superficially, this story is a description of the mechanical movements of Nick as he spends several days fishing. We have a picture of an experienced fisherman who knows how to cook, bait, and cast, but we also see a man who is keeping himself busy because of some nameless fear at the back of his mind. He must keep physically occupied in order to prevent an emotional breakdown:

He started a fire with some chunks of pine he got with an axe from a stump. Over the fire he stuck a wire grill, pushing the four legs down into the ground with his boot. Nick put the frying pan on the grill over the flames. He was hungrier. The beans and spaghetti warmed. Nick stirred them and mixed them together.34

As Philip Young puts it, this is "a picture of a sick man, and of a man who is in escape from whatever it is that made him sick". The cause of Nick's problem (which Nick obviously knows) is the experience of his past: "the blows which he has suffered--physical, psychical, moral, spiritual, and emotional".35 This is exactly the problem Cantwell faces, although he believes that the injustices of his past experience were created by impure soldiers, and his response is Nick's response of keeping
physically occupied. While carefully eating, walking, and making love, he maintains artificially good manners, being critical of those soldiers whose manners are "not good in respect to a man of my rank and age" (ARIT, p. 187). As with Nick Adams, this is "a game you play . . . moving while you do it" (ARIT, p. 185), but Cantwell knows that this game is necessary in order to maintain his emotional stability. And the roles which he plays are elements in this game, even though they appear incongruous and inappropriate in peacetime. The man of honor, who hates all Fascists, must annoy the hall porter every time his paper is delivered, even after the war is over (ARIT, pp. 175-176). Still alert, the man of honor must be "annoyed with any lapse of vigilance or of security" (ARIT, p. 41), and must always sit at a "table in the far corner" of Harry's Bar, making sure he has "both his flanks covered" (ARIT, p. 115).

Cantwell's deliberate attempt to control his actions in his search for ideal principles, therefore, serves a double function in that it also prevents his emotional collapse.

One of Cantwell's major problems is his knowledge of the incongruous figure which he presents as he tries to live according to the dictates of his military "craft" in peacetime. In wartime, when Hemingway wrote in Men at War that "we must win it. We must win it at all
costs and as soon as possible the effect is one of urgency, but when Cantwell reiterates "if you ever fight, then you must win it" in peacetime (ARIT, p. 286), he sounds totally out of place. But we must realize that only through Cantwell's resolute attempt to maintain his "craft" and language, even in peacetime, can he overcome the sense of rootlessness and alienation which comes when the basis for his code of honor, a wartime environment, has been removed. And the demands of his "craft" have taken precedence over any religious affiliations which might finally give him confidence, even though he tries to maintain the illusion that he could be religious when he muses that perhaps he will "get Christian towards the end" (ARIT, p. 291).

He has, however, a viable alternative to religion, one which is present throughout the novel. Baker defines two tangential circles in Hemingway's work, the Home and the Not-Home, saying that the Home circle (which we see in Nick's tent, or in Cantwell's Hotel Gritti) has two alternatives: the realm of nada, which I have already discussed, or the "idea of male companionship, rough and friendly camaraderie, an informal brotherhood with by-laws which are not written down but are perfectly understood and rigidly adhered to by the contracting parties". As Baker explains it, woman, associated with the Home circle, "stands in opposition, perhaps in a kind of enmity, to that wholly happy and normal condition which two men, hiking or
drinking together, can build like a world of their own".37 Such a world is analogous to the situation of pure soldiers at the front, where temporal inequities cannot affect them. In *Across the River and Into the Trees*, we can see such male companionship in the fictitious Order of Brusadelli, an anachronism appropriately named after an aging profiteer who has accused his wife of "having deprived him of his judgment through her extraordinary sexual demands" (*ARIT*, p. 57) for both members, Cantwell and the Gran Maestro, also face the depletion of their physical and mental resources. As pure soldiers who have tried to exist according to ideal motives, they are united in their "good true hatred of those who profited by war" (*ARIT*, p. 59). They both wish to believe in the efficacy of their ideal canon, but they have to invent a fictitious organization in order to provide themselves with companionship.

The Order of Brusadelli functions as a device which provides companionship and security, but it serves a larger function in the context of Cantwell's catharsis. For when Renata is admitted to the Order as "Super Honorary Secretary", we can see that Hemingway has combined Renata, the Home symbol, with an alternative to that symbol, the Order of Brusadelli. As Lisca points out, "the novel's central image, as well as the Colonel's main concern with the conduct of his last few days, is that of bringing together opposites, sometimes in reconciliation, sometimes as definition". And he further observes, "there seems
implicit in the imagination's grasp of Venice some notion of its being a place where things come full circle, where opposites meet, a place for old endings and new beginnings". He goes on to list these pairs of opposites: life and death, youth and age, ugliness and beauty, Old World and New World, love and hate, war and peace, male and female, and destruction and creation.

As Sylvester puts it, "the significance of all of these is that they reflect a mode of thought quite different from that which dominates Hemingway's earlier work--a final emphasis upon resolution, rather than upon ironic distinction". In the natural surroundings of Venice, Cantwell finds a union which permits him to resolve successfully these pairs of opposites, a union which indicates that his final search for ideal principles has been successful. His natural surroundings have provided an acceptable substitute for a wartime environment, and his ideal code of resolution and endurance allows him to approach his death with equanimity. And this is a new principle for Hemingway; Nick Adams reached no such final vision. As Sylvester points out, "we see emerge at last the principle of harmonious opposition that permits Hemingway--in the major work which follows [The Old Man and the Sea]--to present a consummately realized vision of unity between man and nature. The intensity of experience that makes for life in death can be found in a union with nature's manifestations, a union paradoxically subsuming the violent conflict inescapably prevailing in human affairs". In other words, this ideal
pattern within nature successfully substitutes for the temporal existence of human conflict which has been responsible—because of its injustices—for Cantwell's bitterness. Sylvester continues:

Cantwell has discovered a way in which the universe cooperates in providing man's miraculous feasts. And as he waits in his submerged, tomb-like barrel during the hunt... we see that Cantwell has already become symbolically a part of nature—like Wordsworth's Lucy. Indeed, at one point in the week-end he is reviewing, he had told Renata that he wanted to be buried "up in the hills" outside Venice "on the dead angle of any shell-pocked slope if they would graze cattle over me in the summer time" [italics mine]. "They always have cattle where there is good grass in the summer, and the girls of the highest houses, the strong built ones, the houses and the girls, that resist the snow in winter, trap foxes in the fall after they bring the cattle down. They feed from pole-stacked hay" (ARIT, p. 228). In this fantasy we are reminded, not only of Wordsworth's "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower" perhaps, but of "Thanatopsis", and even of "Leaves of Grass"; there is a Romantic reconciliation here, a serenity that looks immediately forward to Santiago's.

Wordsworth once wrote that the poet "considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature". And, as Sylvester demonstrates, what we have in Across the River and Into the Trees is an early form of the unity with natural forces which prompts Santiago to tell his fish "never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do
not care who kills who". For Cantwell, natural objects become noticeable "monuments": two worn stakes are "our monument" (ARIT, p. 46); a lobster is a "monument to his dead self" (ARIT, p. 115); and Cantwell's ritual defecation, "in the exact place where he had determined, by triangulation, that he had been badly wounded thirty years before" (ARIT, is, in effect, a "monument" celebrating through natural processes a union of time past, present, and future. This sense of unity grows stronger as the novel progresses, and is not complete until Cantwell dies, contented that he has ratified his ideal principles within a natural design, knowing that during this process he has brought together the opposites which coalesce so appropriately in Venice. And this successful union of opposites, so important for his serenity, shows us that Across the River and Into the Trees is a novel which must be taken seriously by critics of Hemingway, for it includes ideas which Hemingway wrote of more successfully in The Old Man and the Sea, published two years later.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. SS, p. 59.
2. Lisca, p. 248.
10. Othello, III, iii, ll. 348-357.
11. Lisca, p. 250.
12. Lisca, p. 250.
20 Stephens, p. 91.
21 Stephens, p. 93.
23 *MW*, p. 17.
24 Lisca, p. 248.
25 *MW*, p. 6.
28 *MW*, p. 5.
29 *MW*, p. 18.
30 Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Scribners, 1929), p. 54. Subsequently referred to as *FTA*.
32 *SS*, pp. 382-383.
34 *SS*, p. 215.
36 *MW*, p. 5.
38 Lisca, p. 245.

44 Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (New York: Scribners, 1952), p. 91. Subsequently referred to as OMAS.
CHAPTER IV

A PREPARATION FOR DEATH

Cantwell's relationship with Renata provides a device through which he is effectively able to ratify his ideal motives, while at the same time undergoing an involved catharsis. His attempt to accomplish both of these is obvious throughout the novel. As he assures a waiter, "I'll damn well find happiness, too... happiness, as you know, is a moveable feast" (ARIT, p. 68). But the general mood of his relationship with Renata is one of sadness, the sadness of "a girl nineteen years old in love with a man over fifty years old that you knew was going to die" (ARIT, p. 91). Their time is short, and often appears too short to permit Cantwell to achieve his goal. Thus, Renata's "sorrows come regularly" (ARIT, p. 100), and she often finds it necessary to reassure Cantwell that in their mixed "sorrow and their happiness" (ARIT, p. 160) they actually are "having fun". This explains her constant repetition of phrases similar to "we are having fun, aren't we" (ARIT, p. 99), for she finds it indeed difficult to convince Cantwell that she actually does love him, and that she knows that he is more complex than the old, disillusioned "sad son-of-a-bitch" which he often calls himself (ARIT, p. 6). She is aware that Cantwell is near death, and intuitively says of their predicament that lovers "have whatever they have, and they are more fortunate
than others. Then one of them gets the emptiness forever" (ArIT, p. 271). And we are reminded, here, of the doomed love affairs of Frederick Henry of *A Farewell to Arms*, and of Robert Jordan of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, although neither of these involves the love of a dying old man and a young girl.

The qualities which Cantwell sees in Renata provide an effective contrast to the nature of his own disintegrating physique and embittered mental outlook, and suggest qualities which he is trying to regain, through Renata, while he is visiting Venice, the site of his youthful military action thirty years before. As Lisca points out, Renata represents --consciously for Cantwell--his own youth, for she is nineteen years old, Cantwell's age when he first saw Venice, was wounded, and was initiated as a man of honor. Indeed, she is a sort of presiding genius of Venice, representing in Cantwell's imagination the ideal principles which he sees reflected in his Venetian surroundings. But what Cantwell is trying to regain through Renata is more than a simple vision of his youth; he is attempting to resolve opposites, it is true, and to search for ideal principles through this resolution, but also implicit in this attempt is his need to unify the innocence of youth with the experience which the initiated man of honor can bring to it. In this prospective resolution, therefore, there is a double perspective, one in which Renata's youth is unified with the results of Cantwell's accumulated experience. Mann's "Death in Venice" describes a similar
attempt to express a double perspective, but Aschenbach never does attain the unity of innocence and experience which Cantwell finally acquires. There are, of course, many similarities between the two works, notably the union of beauty and death, and of sex and death; and, for both protagonists, death in Venice is far from accidental. 

In *Across the River and Into the Trees*, however, Cantwell is able to use his natural surroundings in a way which finally reflects his ideal rules, unifying his life in the past, present, and future. His youth is relived through experience, and he therefore finally views it differently; it is regarded analytically and discussed with Renata, and its disappointments are finally accepted in the present. Paradoxically, however, he learns that he cannot appreciate the attributes of his youth until he views them through experience, by which time his youth has disappeared. We can see the same youth-experience dichotomy in Conrad's "Youth", a story told by Marlow, a man of experience, to other men of experience, a story of "romance, of glamour--of youth" which holds them spellbound:

And we all nodded at him: the man of finance, the man of accounts, the man of law, we all nodded at him over the polished table that like a still sheet of brown water reflected our faces, lined, wrinkled; our faces marked by toil, by deceptions, by success, by love; our weary eyes looking still, looking always, looking anxiously for something out of life, that while it is expected is already gone--has passed unseen, in a sigh, in a flash--together with the
youth, with the strength, with the romance of illusions.  

The double perspective transcends temporal considerations to reflect an ideal image in which both the physical and emotional aspects of youth and experience are unified. Physically, Renata is as "lovely as a good horse or a racing shell" (ARIT, p. 149), and Cantwell's description of her as the "figure-head on a ship" (ARIT, p. 149) indicates his reverence for her "youth and tall striding beauty" (ARIT, p. 80). She has a "wonderful, long, young, lithe and properly built body" (ARIT, p. 147), and the many references to her "dark hair, of an alive texture" (ARIT, p. 80) suggest Botticelli's Venus, a pictorial representation of rebirth and vitality. Conrad's description is appropriate here:

Oh, the glamour of youth! Oh, the fire of it, more dazzling than the flames of the burning ship, throwing a magic light on the wide earth, leaping audaciously to the sky, presently to be quenched by time, more cruel, more pitiless, more bitter than the sea—and like the flames of the burning ship surrounded by an impenetrable night.

Just as pronounced as Renata's youthful vitality, however, is a childish intuition—symbolized by her "grown-up child's face" (ARIT, p. 235)—which permits her to understand the rationale of Cantwell's attempt to endorse ideal principles. Like Manolin, the wise child in The Old Man and the Sea who intuitively understands Santiago, Renata knows what is troubling Cantwell, and she functions as his alter ego in helping him to overcome his acerbity. During this process, she expedites Cantwell's
own union with natural forces by representing—like the poet's sister in "Tintern Abbey"—the purity of youth within nature:

If I were not thus taught, should I the more  
Suffer my genial spirits to decay;
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes.

As Lisca puts it, "Renata is the Colonel's idealized love", but we must remember that she is an idealized love who understands her lover's problems. She is totally natural, totally without artifice, as she knows she must be, for she is aware that her innocence is very important in Cantwell's attempt to unify his own experience with that innocence, to unite the ideal code of his youth with that of his age. She often blushes, explaining "I am so excited and I always say the wrong things" (ARIT, p. 80); when Cantwell uses an expletive she does not understand, she says "I don't know what that word means and I don't want to know" (ARIT, p. 223); and, during a serious discussion of lying, she says "isn't it wonderful to have people around who do not lie" (ARIT, p. 116). She understands Cantwell's need of her innocence, and her remarks demonstrating her innocence are gifts to him.

Cantwell, on his part, knows that he cannot undergo catharsis and live according to ideal rules without Renata's help. He is, therefore, very protective towards her, and takes offence even when the Gran Maestro, his companion
in arms, calls Renata "Daughter", his own nickname for her (ARIT, p. 203). She is his only child, his only way of gaining an ideal design unifying innocence and experience, his only hope of a double perspective which will help him to understand the unrighteousness of his past. And, saying that "I don't care about our losses" (ARIT, p. 114), Cantwell admits that although the probability of ratifying his ideal canon may be small indeed, he has essentially no choice but to proceed with his attempt. Neither Hemingway nor Conrad minimizes the difficulties of such a task:

I remember the drawn faces, the dejected figures of my two men, and I remember my youth and the feeling that will never come back any more—the feeling that I could last for ever, outlast the sea, the earth, and all men; the deceitful feeling that lures us on to joys, to perils, to love, to vain effort—to death; the triumphant conviction of strength, the heat of life in the handful of dust, the glow in the heart that with every year grow dim, grows cold, grows small, and expires—and expires, too soon, too soon—before life itself.9

Like Manolin in The Old Man and the Sea, Renata understands the desirability of "informed illusion"; she understands that the man of honor must test illusions to see if they are viable. As Sylvester puts it, "like Manolin ... she responds expertly when her tutor occasionally falls back upon fiction as he thinks of the future they know they cannot have".10 She knows that only through her innocence can she hope to penetrate behind the acrimony which Cantwell often evidences. And in her eagerness to know, and to accept, Cantwell's
war memories, she exhibits the devotion which prompts Catherine Barkley of _A Farewell to Arms_ to tell Frederick Henry "then we'd both be alike. Oh darling, I want so much to be you, too". In Renata's case, such a role can indeed be justified, for she deliberately attempts to identify with Cantwell, thus bringing together youth and experience in an ideal resolution, and absorbing much of his virulence. Saying "let us play that you are you and I am me" (ARIT, p. 261), she wishes to "get rough" when Cantwell "gets rough", and tries to explain away much of his irrational anger (ARIT, p. 227). With insight, she explains that "I hate the war monuments, though I respect them" (ARIT, p. 126); and, although she says that she is "not an inquisitor" (ARIT, p. 226), she does insist that Cantwell continue to recount the inequities of his war experiences, knowing that only through such a process can he effectively undergo catharsis and prepare for his death.

In continually urging Cantwell to "please keep on telling me" (ARIT, p. 234), Renata is able to learn of those temporal wrongs which Cantwell usually conceals; thus, she learns not only of the bombing of Valhalla, the battle of Hurtgen Forest, and the taking of Paris, which she could learn of equally well from other sources, but also of Cantwell's compassion for the wounded in his regiment, which he believes he "destroyed . . . under other people's orders" (ARIT, p. 242). In his hatred of this destruction and mismanagement, Cantwell is forced to
recount memories of his early days as a soldier; he reminds us again of Nick Adams, although he deliberately maintains an ideal canon as Nick could not do, and his memory of "a German dog eating a roasted German Kraut" (ARIT, p. 257) recalls a similar passage in "A Way You'll Never Be":

These were new dead and no one had bothered with anything but their pockets. Our own dead, or what he thought of, still, as our own dead, were surprisingly few, Nick noticed. Their coats had been opened too and their pockets were out, and they showed, by their positions, the manner and the skill of the attack. The hot weather had swollen them all alike regardless of nationality.

Even though Cantwell tells himself that "you could tell a thousand memories like that and what good would they do" (ARIT, p. 257), we can see that he feels compelled to repeat what he can remember of these temporal inequities; as he himself knows, "he was not lecturing; he was confessing" (ARIT, p. 222). He often refers to Renata as his "last and true and only love" (ARIT, p. 86), emphasizing the urgency with which his memories must be confessed, but is anxious not to bore her, although he is sure that "this one has a fine blood line, too, and she can go forever" (ARIT, p. 247). His disclaimer that "I want you Daughter. But I don't want to own you" (ARIT, p. 100) indicates his awareness of the dichotomy between his experience and Renata's youth, and his knowledge of a necessary resolution of this dichotomy in his endorsement of ideal principles. Like El Sordo of For Whom the Bell Tolls, Cantwell finds himself emotionally "out on some bare-assed hill where it
was too rocky to dig"; unlike El Sordo, his love for Renata makes him "armoured and the eighty-eights not there" (ARIT, pp. 128-129). Through his love for Renata, therefore, Cantwell is able to express his ideal laws within the natural design which El Sordo envisioned shortly before his death:

But living was a field of grain blowing in the wind on the side of a hill. Living was a hawk in the sky. Living was an earthen jar of water in the dust of the threshing with the grain flailed out and the chaff blowing. Living was a horse between your legs and a carbine under one leg and a hill and a valley and a stream with trees along it and the far side of the valley and the hills beyond.13

As Lisca points out, Renata often reminds Cantwell of his imminent death, and we can see that her identification with the imagery of death is very important. Their lovemaking is associated with darkness, cold, and wind, and it is Renata who tells Cantwell that she wishes him to "die with the grace of a happy death" (ARIT, p. 240). And, as Lisca describes it, "it is she who, by encouraging and accepting Colonel Cantwell's three long confessions, absolves him".14 For she recognizes her own position, both as a death symbol and as a barrier against death, and she knows the extent to which Cantwell's catharsis depends on this relationship, observing that "this is the good thing about you going to die that you can't leave me" (ARIT, p. 211), reassuring Cantwell that "you are never dull, to me" (ARIT, p. 95). She wishes Cantwell
to know that she wishes to help him prepare for death, and, when he is deliberately "gentle" for her, showing that she is indeed helping him, her protestations of love are most insistent.

There are a number of symbols which emphasize the resolution which Cantwell is trying to gain throughout the novel. The wind from the mountains, like the wind in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro", suggests death, but it also suggests the alteration in Cantwell's approach to death as he attempts to live once again according to ideal principles. With its connotations of change, wind is a particularly apt symbol of Cantwell's purification, of course, for such a wind, appropriately from the "snow-covered mountains a long way off" (ARIT, p. 6), carries with each suggestion of change a hint of accompanying death. It is appropriate, therefore, that Cantwell's catharsis is linked with his sense of the omnipresence of a changing symbol of death. And he is always conscious of this, viewing other natural objects as similar symbols of the imminence of his own death. When he and Renata make love in a gondola, for example, both lovers have to be careful "not to disturb the balance of the gondola" (ARIT, p. 152); and, when their lovemaking is completed, Cantwell observes metaphorically that "we only just made that last bridge" (ARIT, p. 156). In the same way, he compares every malfunctioning machine in the novel to his own highly suspect heart, which he would
evidently much rather identify with the "one hundred and fifty ponies" (ARIT, p. 24) of the "god-damned, over-sized luxurious automobile" (ARIT, p. 307) driven by his chauffeur. Since he has noticed a "slight hydraulic inaccuracy" (ARIT, p. 66) due to unstable current in the elevator of the Hotel Gritti, Cantwell insists on running the elevator himself, as "I checked out on elevators long ago" (ARIT, p. 109). And the "beat-up beautifully varnished" motor boat (ARIT, p. 45), which is driven by a "tiny Fiat engine . . . purchased out of one of the grave-yards of automobiles" (ARIT, p. 43), provides Cantwell with an excellent symbol of his own failing physique:

The motor boat came gallantly up beside the piling of the dock. Every move she makes, the Colonel thought, is a triumph of the gallantry of the aging machine. . . . We have the gallantry of worn-through rods that refuse to break; the cylinder head that does not blow even though it has every right to, and the rest of it. (ARIT, p. 52)

Renata, with her knowledge of "informed illusion", understands exactly how Cantwell interprets such symbols, and acts with sympathy and discretion. She prefers to take her final leave from Cantwell on "that old displaced engine boat" rather than on a "good one" (ARIT, p. 277); as Baker describes it, such a gesture is "a tacit compliment, a loving gesture, to the gallantry of that cylinder head in [Cantwell's] own chest which does not blow, though it has every right to do so". Reflecting the same understanding, her gift to Cantwell of two emeralds
which he is to feel "if you are lonely" (*ARIT*, p. 104) provides either a reminder of Venice itself, as they were cut by a Venetian craftsman, or a symbol of the dichotomy between Renata's youth and his own experience, a dichotomy which must be resolved before he dies.\(^{16}\) As inherited gems which "feel wonderful" when Cantwell touches them with his bad hand (*ARIT*, p. 104), the emeralds bring him into contact with Renata's aristocratic family of fighting men which Cantwell admires, but which he is isolated from by his acrimony. When he finally gives back the gems to Renata, it is a surrender indicating a successful resolution of youth and age, a surrender showing that he has finally combined the two in an ideal design of his and Renata's making. As Baker points out, "the circle of his days will be closed and completed, and he can die, under perfect control and without impediment, in what Mann called a "positive triumph".\(^{17}\)

There are many other symbols in the novel, of course, most of them natural ones, and all function in approximately the same way. All emphasize Cantwell's attempt to complete the circle of his days, and to die a contented man:

The wind and the tide, the motor-boats and the gondolas, the canals and the bridges and the mooring stakes, the far mountains and the spreading plain, the hotel-room home, the elevator, the unstable electric current, and perhaps especially the sea-city itself, are all of them for the Colonel in his heightened state of awareness, signs and symbols of more than themselves. Each of them in its smaller way (like the city in its total way) is one of his monuments.\(^{18}\)
But the symbol which unifies all these is another gift from Renata which Cantwell finally returns: her portrait, a device which allows him to philosophize about the past, present, and future without being accused of sentimentally romanticizing his experience. Even the portrait has several meanings, for although it was painted by a "pederaste with false teeth" (ARIT, p. 96), an image of decay, it depicts Renata as a Venus "rising from the sea without the head wet" (ARIT, p. 97), an image of rebirth and youthful beauty. For Cantwell, the portrait is "lovely to have" (ARIT, p. 114), and he spends long hours in his hotel room talking to it, although he realizes that it also represents his separation from the real Renata and what she brings to him, knowing that he can lose himself so far in the temporal past that he can forget his attempt to ratify ideal principles in the present. Indeed, the fact that the portrait's subject is "eighteen solid stone blocks away" instead of "in bed" with Cantwell as he talks (ARIT, p. 172) emphasizes an aspect of Across the River and Into the Trees which is entirely appropriate to the love of an older man for a young girl: there is very little sexual love in the novel, even though Cantwell is very concerned with demonstrating his fitness for sexual activity. When he and Renata are "standing straight, and kissing true" (ARIT, p. 109), we can see Cantwell's wish for an ideal love relationship which will unite his experience with Renata's youth, but the very fact of his own experience emphasizes
his loss of the youthful sexuality which no ideal formula can offer him. His final resolution, therefore, must be one reconciling opposites rather than celebrating sexual potency.

As with his more complex problems, Cantwell understands this, for he often reminds us that he is "half a hundred years old" (ARIT, p. 180), and is "not a boy" (ARIT, p. 8). He can bring experience and understanding to his search for ideal principles; he can bring the accumulated wisdom of an initiated man of honor, which is considerable, but he cannot overcome the physical problems which make exertion difficult. Thus, even though his endorsement of a double perspective makes him wish to demonstrate his experience through physical effort, as he would have been able to do in his youth, saying "I wish I could fight it again . . . knowing what I know now" (ARIT, p. 45), it is doubtful if his limited physical resources would permit him to use this accumulated experience. He finds a "walk long, although it was a very short one" (ARIT, p. 67), and muses at another time that "everything is much smaller when you are older . . . distances are all changed" (ARIT, p. 12). He finds himself becoming "awfully slow" (ARIT, p. 41), and reflects that "I'm not sure I like speed . . . . I'm getting stupid" (ARIT, p. 14). And, in moments of regret, he apologizes to Renata for such failings, saying that "I am sorry for all the stupidness I say" (ARIT, p. 174), as "much of what I say is unjust" (ARIT, p. 145). In apologizing to Renata
for talking of his "trade", his "dullness", and his "badness" (ARIT, pp. 126, 96, 121), of course, Cantwell shows that he realizes that even as he ratifies his ideal code, he is emphasizing his own inability to recapture the physical and emotional vitality of his youth.

Aware that he has not much time, Cantwell tries very diligently to be a "better man with less wild-boar blood" in the short time which remains (ARIT, p. 65). He tells himself that he is "getting out of the business" (ARIT, p. 160), and smiles his "old and worn death smile" (ARIT, p. 187), knowing that "every time you shoot now can be the last shoot and no stupid son of a bitch should be allowed to ruin it" (ARIT, p. 7). Renata, telling him that "I want you to die with the grace of a happy death" (ARIT, p. 240), helps him to "keep it entire" (ARIT, p. 7), to reconcile opposites as Cantwell prepares for death. As Across the River and Into the Trees draws to a close, the ideal resolution is wholly formed, and we see that Cantwell is able to regard death philosophically, without fear or enmity. Reflecting on death, he is able to appreciate both the horrible images of Hieronymus Bosch and the serenity of the Bach chorale "Komm Susser Tod". 

Death, which Cantwell now knows "comes in bed to most people . . . like love's opposite number" (ARIT, p. 220), can be approached confidently through his ideal principles; it is a "lot of shit" (ARIT, p. 219), but nevertheless it must be accepted as the final episode in existence. Like Harry,
the dying hunter in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro", Cantwell involuntarily fears the thought of his death, but by the end of the novel his ideal code has given him the strength to overcome the "sudden evil-smelling emptiness" which Harry felt at the approach of death.\textsuperscript{20} As Lisca points out, \textit{Across the River and Into the Trees} is a novel of death,\textsuperscript{21} and the final section of the novel is a death march in which Renata and Cantwell combine, finally giving him the ability to overcome his reservations. We know that Hemingway had read "The Wasteland",\textsuperscript{22} and in the omnipresence of death we see an echo of it here:

Who is the third who walks always beside you?  
When I count, there are only you and I together  
But when I look ahead up the white road  
There is always another one walking beside you  
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded  
I do not know whether a man or a woman  
--But who is that on the other side of you?\textsuperscript{23}

Not surprisingly, this consciousness of impending death extends to a number of secondary characters in the novel, all of whom contribute to Cantwell's attempt to live according to ideal principles as he approaches death. These secondary characters emphasize the importance of gaiety in the presence of imminent death, and draw attention to Cantwell's own attempt to maintain gaiety during his last three days. Indeed, when Helen Kirkpatrick of \textit{The Saturday Evening Post} asked Hemingway for his estimate of Lanham, Hemingway placed great emphasis on Lanham's ability to maintain wit and gaiety when faced by the most terrible odds.\textsuperscript{24} In \textit{Across the River and Into the Trees},
these attempts to maintain gaiety are particularly obvious. Andrea, for example, is "merry" in spite of his "ravaged face" (ARIT, p. 79); the Contessa Dandolo was "gay as a girl" and "had no fear of dying" in spite of being "over eighty" (ARIT, p. 47); and the Gran Maestro manages to be handsome "from the inside out" in spite of his "low blood pressure" and "ulcers" (ARIT, p. 62). In Cantwell's case, many of the remarks which critics have ridiculed are deliberately ironic jokes on Cantwell's part. When Renata asks, "do you still love me on these water-worn, cold and smooth stones", Cantwell replies "I'd like to spread a bed roll here and prove it" (ARIT, p. 161); and when she muses "I should sleep well", Cantwell answers "at your age if you can't sleep they ought to take you out and hang you" (ARIT, p. 162). His humour is bleak and repetitive, but it does indicate his attempt to maintain wit and gaiety under the most difficult circumstances. And although he is less stoical than the secondary characters in the novel, his humour does indicate his determination to live as a pure soldier as he approaches death.

Eventually, Cantwell is able to accept the idea of his own death as a natural process expressing his unity with his natural surroundings; it is merely the final stage of a natural cycle beginning with birth and culminating in death. And he would agree with the lines from Henry IV which Dorman O'Gowan suggested to Hemingway, who later incorporated them into "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber": "By my
troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death and let it go which way it will he that dies this year is quit for the next. Indeed, Hemingway also quoted these lines in his introduction to *Men at War*, saying of them "that is probably the best thing written in this book and, with nothing else, a man can get along all right on that". Importantly, Cantwell has rejected the temptation to depart from his ideal principles, if only to avoid seeming incongruous, and has ratified a philosophy which permits him to accept with resolution the inequities produced by those whose values are temporal rather than ideal. He understands the reasons for his incongruity, and therefore overcomes it; like Santiago, he finally becomes able to accept without acrimony the disappointments of his past:

"The ocean is very big and a skiff is small and hard to see", the old man said. He noticed how pleasant it was to have someone to talk to instead of speaking to himself and to the sea. "I missed you", he said. "What did you catch?" "One the first day. One the second and two the third." "Very good." "Now we fish together again." "No. I am not lucky. I am not lucky anymore." "The hell with luck", the boy said. "I'll bring the luck with me." "What will your family say?" "I do not care. I caught two yesterday. But we will fish together now for I still have much to learn." "We must get a good killing lance and always have it on board. You can make the blade from a spring leaf from an old Ford. We can grind it in Guanabacoa. It should be sharp and tempered so it will not break. My knife broke." "I'll get another knife and have the spring ground. How many days of heavy brisa have we?" "Maybe three. Maybe more." "I will have everything in order", the boy said. "You get your hands well old man."
And with this philosophy of acceptance expressed through his resolution and endurance, Cantwell, in the novel's final duck-shooting scene, appreciates the loyalty between a hen and drake with "beautiful winter plumage" which he has shot (ARIT, p. 282). When the last duck shoot is completed, he takes from the boatman a crippled, wing-tipped drake, "intact and sound and beautiful to hold . . . with his heart beating and his captured, hopeless eyes", but magnanimously decides to either "keep him as a caller or turn him loose in the spring" (ARIT, p. 298). It is a simple gesture, but a meaningful one, as it indicates the equanimity with which Cantwell is now able to view his own "crippled" nature, and the sense of positive acceptance which he brings to his rapidly approaching death.

Only a few mechanical things remain to be done in order for Cantwell to resolve all opposites, to unite the circles of youth and age, life and death, and war and peace. As he did with the emeralds, he makes sure Renata's portrait will be returned to her, since it has served its symbolic purpose, and makes sure she will receive his shotguns, emblematic of the man of honor who fought courageously and well at the front. Just before he dies, he quotes Stonewall Jackson's dying words, "let us cross over the river and rest in the shade of the trees" (ARIT, p. 307), not only identifying his own ideal principles with Stonewall Jackson's ideal code of honor, but also viewing his own death as a reflection of Jackson's vision of death as a natural process, linked with
the river and the trees, even as an impure soldier named Jackson drives the automobile in which he knows he will die. This, however, does not concern Cantwell, for his ideal canon enables him to understand T5 Jackson, and the temporal existence which he represents. His life is complete, the circles coalesce, and Hemingway's most complex war novel comes to an end.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. Lisca, p. 237.
3. Seyppel, pp. 8, 11.
11. FTA, p. 299.
12. SS, p. 403.
20. SS, p. 64.
26 MW, p. 6.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

In the previous three chapters, we have seen Hemingway's description of the interaction between temporal and ideal concepts as Richard Cantwell approaches death. What remains to be decided, however, is whether or not the novel presents this interaction effectively. We have discussed the philosophical basis of the novel, together with the fictional devices which Hemingway uses, but we have reached no tentative evaluation of the worth of the novel in relation to Hemingway's other fiction. In some circumstances, of course, such a tentative evaluation would be inappropriate, but in the case of this study, one which relies heavily on reviewers' responses to the novel, a tentative evaluation is mandatory. The question is simple: is the novel to be dismissed as inferior and inconsequential, or should it receive the praise which often accrues to an undiscovered but important work of art?

The answer, I think, lies somewhere between the two extremes. *Across the River and Into the Trees* is probably Hemingway's most unsuccessful novel, but it deserves far more attention than the reviewers were initially willing to admit. It does have a comprehensible structure, as we have seen, but it also has many faults which cannot be overlooked. There are too many incongruities in Cantwell's manner and speech, too many similarities between Hemingway and Cantwell, and too many obvious attempts by Hemingway to engage in
didactic writing. Most of Cantwell's philosophical pronouncements are phrased in rather didactic terms, and we sense the officious intrusion of Hemingway into practically all of them. When this occurs, the fictional impact of the novel is considerably diminished, and its aesthetic unity is threatened.

Hemingway chose to base his novel on the principles expressed in his 1942 introduction to *Men at War*, written during the Second World War. By doing this, he gave Cantwell the opinions of himself when he had been extremely worried about the secrecy and unfairness of those in positions of high command. When in 1950 he showed Cantwell as affected by this type of extreme perspective, in peacetime, he imposed greatly on the reader's credibility, and he developed Cantwell's incongruity to a far greater extent than necessary. There is far too much reliance on *Men at War* in the novel, far too much of the didactic preaching characteristic of wartime, and it is not particularly effective, because it tends to be omnipresent and therefore irritating.

As almost all the critics noticed, Hemingway also chose the most difficult type of protagonist to work with: a man of exactly his own age who appeared to have many of his own problems. Assuming that Cantwell is not meant to be a self-portrait of Hemingway, since he is a fictional character, there are, nevertheless, an amazing number of autobiographical details in Cantwell's physique, personality, and situation. There are the war experiences, the heart disease, the flamboyant poses, the private neuroses— the list is almost
endless. Not only was it difficult for Hemingway to write of such a character; it was nearly impossible for him to convince his readers that Cantwell was little more than a self-portrait. And it was especially difficult for him to convince his readers that Cantwell was more complex than one of a series of apparently autobiographical Hemingway protagonists, each of whom had been exactly Hemingway's age at the time of writing.

There are minor structural elements in the novel which detract from its aesthetic unity. We have already discussed the function of the cultural allusions in the novel, and we have found that they do have a discernible function, but it is difficult to accept the random manner in which these allusions are scattered throughout the novel. Indeed, *Across the River and Into the Trees* has a pastiche quality, almost as if Hemingway had gathered together all the literary, musical, and artistic allusions he could remember, and had interjected them into a fictional milieu which was not sufficient to contain them. We know that Hemingway read widely, chiefly among European authors, and there are cultural echoes far in excess of those few I have mentioned. It is almost as if Hemingway had finally decided to convince his readers that he, the author, was far more cultured than his previous novels and his ebullient public image had managed to imply. Here was no intellectual pygmy, a man who appreciated only shooting, bullfighting, and baseball, but a man who could comment on the finer points of art, music,
and literature. If a reader senses this self-aggrandizement, it will undoubtedly affect his appreciation of the novel.

Finally, Hemingway chose the wrong literary style for a novel which was intended to resolve opposites, to draw circles together as its protagonist prepared for death. He chose the short, clipped style of *The Sun Also Rises*, with its emphasis on laconic conversation, rather than the serene, more mellifluous style of *The Old Man and the Sea*. He chose the style he was famous for, the terse, concise language of men in conflict, and he placed it in a peacetime situation of reminiscence, where it was entirely inappropriate. Such a style tends to suggest breaking circles, rather than drawing them together. And we can easily understand Hemingway's reason for choosing it; he was trying to re-create the past in the present, and he did it in the style of the past. Perhaps if he had chosen a more reflective style, one with chords instead of discords, as he did in *The Old Man and the Sea*, the novel would have been more successful. For in his effort to re-create the past in the style of the past, Hemingway may have unwittingly misused his own art of fiction. As he wrote in *Death in the Afternoon*, "if a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water." The one-eighth that we see in *Across the River and*
Into the Trees may be suggestive, but it cannot be considered successful, and perhaps the best and most effective section of the novel still lies below the surface. We can appreciate what Hemingway is trying to do in Across the River and Into the Trees, and we can appreciate how he is trying to do it, but we must conclude that he does not do it very well.
NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1DA, p. 192.
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