ABSTRACT

Chapter I of the thesis deals with the social, political and literary situation obtaining in the 1920s in which Hemingway lived. It was an age of unprecedented violence, and Hemingway had a first-hand experience of it during World War I. Finding American cultural and artistic climate unsuitable for literary and creative pursuits most of the sensitive American writers migrated to France. They chose Paris as the homeland for their restless soul. Hemingway also sought refuge in Paris and wrote about the vagaries of a "lost generation." This was the world of Dada and Nada. The God-abandoned world of the 'twenties is reflected in works like In Our Time (1925), The Sun Also Rises (1926) and A Farewell to Arms (1929).

In Chapter II I have tried to trace the development of Nick Adams in In Our Time (1925). The world of In Our Time is replete with violence and horror. It is in the vignettes and short stories of this collection that the state of Nick Adams is taken out of innocence and initiated into the world of experience. And the experience, here, is that of violence, killings, suicide and death. The theme of violence delineated in these short stories is carried
forward in almost all the major novels of Hemingway. The significance of the violence-ridden consciousness of the boy, Nick Adams who, later on, becomes the Hemingway hero in his major creative works, is discussed at length. Thus *In Our Time* acquires salience in the artistic scheme of Hemingway. The plots of the major novels are variegated, and yet harmonized into a consistent and developing pattern. The unifying factor in this pattern is the theme of violence which Hemingway articulates in all his major novels in simple, lucid and colloquial prose.

Chapter III deals with *A Farewell to Arms* which is short thematically anticipated by the story "In Another Country." Hemingway had first-hand experience of War and it serves as raw-material for his fictional creations. His novel exposes the specious rhetoric of politicians concerning war. The war theme is intertwined with that of love to bring out man's helplessness in an immoral and hostile universe. Against the backdrop of the ravages of war occurs the death of Catherine which raises the novel to the intensity of great tragedy.

In Chapter IV I have discussed *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and the aftermath of World War I. The novel reflects the hollowness of the war-torn generation. Here the major
characters are hedonists; they spend their time in eating, drinking, love-making, fishing and bull-fighting. All this is centred round nada. Jake Barnes, the hero of the novel, has been injured in such a way that he cannot lead a meaningful life with any woman. Barnes and Lady Brett Ashley love each other intensely but realize the futility of their love in sombre moments. In the context of this "lost generation" the theme of violence brings out the unappeasableness of the human spirit in its search for meaning.

Chapter V deals with To Have and Have Not (1937) and For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940). To Have and Have Not is the turning-point in the literary career of Hemingway. Prior to its publication Hemingway's fictional world depicted the individual pitted against the violent forces of the world. For the first time in To Have and Have Not Harry Morgan realizes that an individual has no chance of survival in a society which is dominated by unscrupulous traders, politicians and bureaucrats. He makes his own laws and follows them. In this novel Hemingway explores the social and the environmental factors responsible for producing violent outlaws like Harry Morgan.

In many ways For Whom the Bell Tolls is an extension of To Have and Have Not, particularly in respect of the
social implications of violence. Robert Jordan, the hero of the novel, unlike Harry Morgan, takes up the struggle for the "pursuit of happiness" for the common man. Here Hemingway describes with objective detachment the atrocities committed by the Fascist as well as Loyalist forces. The longest chapter in this novel has been devoted to the violence committed by the loyalists against the fascists, though Hemingway's personal loyalties were with the loyalists. Robert Jordan is a leader of a guerilla group to whom has been entrusted the task of blowing up a bridge behind the enemy lines. The bridge, a focal point in the novel, has strategic importance from the military point of view. Jordan blows up the bridge, loses his life while covering the escape of his companions, and becomes immortal through this feat of self-sacrificing heroism. He is headlong in love with Maria. His idea of love is opposed to what one finds in a materialistic society. To Jordan love springs out of a perfect union of soul and body. He thinks he will continue to live as part of Maria even after his death for the cause of freedom and democracy. In the circumstances in which he is placed violence becomes a necessity and has its own justification. Death for a cause becomes more important even than life.
Chapter VI deals with *Islands in the Stream* (1970), a posthumous novel. The first two sections of the novel were written before *The Old Man and the Sea*, and its final part almost simultaneously with the composition of the latter, which is the reason for discussing it before discussing *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). The central figure in *Islands in the Stream* is Thomas Hudson, a middle-aged painter, who holds the three parts of the novel together. Some beautiful passages in part I (Bimini) of the novel anticipate *The Old Man and the Sea*. Hudson leads a lonely life after breaking away from one wife after another. He loves his children from the depths of his heart, but his nerves are shattered with the death of his sons. For the rest of his life he tries to overcome his terrible sense of loss. After the death of his sons he is engaged in painting in order to ward off the sense of anxiety and loneliness. The middle part of the novel, designated "Cuba," has weak as well as artistically effective passages and this may be accounted for by the fact that the novel was not published in Hemingway's lifetime. The last part of the novel, entitled "At Sea", is as good as *The Old Man and the Sea*. Here the hero plunges into violence with a sense of moral imperative and ends up as a wounded soldier thinking of
painting his fatal wound, which he never could.

In Chapter VII The Old Man and the Sea (1952) has been discussed. An undoubted masterpiece of Hemingway of this novel explores the limitless possibilities/human endeavour and the struggle of the human spirit against the forces of nature.

Man indulges in violence to affirm and justify his existence and emerges victorious even in the face of defeat. The skeleton of the marlin with whom the Old Man fights his existential battle is a trophy of such a victory. Violence in this novel acquires an existential reality. Thus the theme of violence seems to acquire a developing pattern in the novels of Hemingway. It is involved with the activity of the unappeasable human spirit in its quest for meaningful self-affirmation. Violence is also a mode of artistic revelation and intensification in Hemingway's fiction and this has been dwelt on at length.

It is pointed out in the concluding Chapter that the theme of violence in the fiction of Hemingway has been treated consistently, beginning with In Our Time (1925) to Islands in the Stream (1970). To begin with, violence seems to be something senseless and brutal but as
Hemingway proceeds in his artistic exploration of this theme he comes to discover, in his later fiction, that violence is an elemental and existential reality. This theme contributes to an intensification of fictional experience. Hence it is employed by him as an artistic device to create intensities of feeling and emotion and to discover possibilities of life in terms of felt experience. Hemingway's art is at its best when it reflects the states of mind pertaining to violence. Here it not only unifies Hemingway's total work in the field of fiction but also serves as a measure of its artistic intensity and greatness.

When my work was almost complete I got access to Hemingway's another posthumously published novel *The Garden of Eden* (1986). I have added a short note on it in the appendix.