CHAPTER THREE

ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S QUEST FOR REALITY:

A FAREWELL TO ARMS (1929), FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS (1940),
THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA (1952)

In the present chapter I have carried out detailed studies of three of Ernest Hemingway's novels in order to throw some light on the plane of reality that Hemingway desired to represent. The three novels have been chosen as they show clearly the stage by stage development of Hemingway's idea of reality. The novels are A Farewell to Arms, For Whom the Bell Tolls and The Old Man and the Sea.

Hemingway began his literary career by publishing a collection of short stories, In Our Time in 1925. He wrote eight full length novels, three collections of short stories, a play, a document on bull fighting and a parody of a novel by Sherwood Anderson. After his death in 1961 his reminiscences about his Paris days of the 1920's entitled A Moveable Feast (1964) was published followed by another novel Islands in the Stream (1970).

The publication of In Our Time, made a noticeable impact on the readers and the stories contain in rudimentary form the essential Hemingway. The figure of Nick Adams recurs in many of the stories, Nick as a boy full of illusions about life living with his parents in the Michigan countryside, Nick as an adolescent with a growing boy's problems and finally Nick as a soldier in Europe making his separate peace. The horrifying aspect of the contemporary war scene has been portrayed with compelling force in the stories:

Images of horrible action or objects juxtaposed and repeated in different contexts creates a sense of the
universal reality of that horror. Birth is everywhere accompanied by death; children are everywhere haunted by their knowledge of this fact. Life is so single-mindedly awful it seems a conscious, cosmic prank; it starts in pain, is pervaded by painful initiation, dislocation, guilt, desire, fear of responsibility, and isolation; and it is always bestial violence and death. Man emerges from the carefully controlled individual images and through the cumulative effects of the juxtaposed images as a wounded creature in a ugly and treacherous world.

In Our Time was followed by the publication of Torrents of Spring a parody of Sherwood Anderson's novel Dark Laughter. It was Hemingway's manner of dismissing the comparisons of his work with those of Sherwood Anderson.

In 1926 Ernest Hemingway's first novel, The Sun Also Rises was published. Apart from the fictional element this book may be treated as a document of post-war society in Europe in the early 1920's. The novel is expository and objective in nature and it lays bare with characteristic Hemingway detachment the malaise, futility and jaded unrest of the period as witnessed in the indetermination of Robert Cohn, in Brett Ashley's fevered excitements, in Jake Barnes' ineffectual love for Brett. What T. S. Eliot's Wasteland did in poetry Ernest Hemingway tried to do so in prose. And in order to give his theme credibility Hemingway moulded the language in such a manner, precise, unemotional and detached, fitted with sharp dialogue and understatement, that there could be no confusing this Paris of periods and parties with the romantic Paris of Dumas or Balsac.

Richard P. Adams has pointed out several interesting similarities between the structure of The Sun Also Rises and

The Wasteland. Both works commence with the portrait of a spiritually barren modern city in chaotic disorganization. Jake, Cohn and Brett's relationships are as meaningless as those between the men and women in "A Game of Chess" and the typist and clerk in "The Fire Sermon". If hope dares to arise, it is quickly dissipated. The fishing interlude at Burguete, the early part of the Pamplona fiesta in The Sun Also Rises, the "Death by Water" of Phileas the Phoenician might show the possibility of regeneration and happiness but the impression is soon dispelled. After Brett elopes with the young matador, Cohn reacts with violence and Jake retreats to San Sebastian, the scene of Brett's affair with Cohn. Jake's swimming in San Sebastian may be associated with the death-by-water theme in The Wasteland. Finally Jake returns to Madrid to rescue Brett. Like a typical Hemingway hero "beaten but undefeated", Jake Barnes seems to be left with nothing, no assurances, no promises and no hopes as the novel ends. He simply preserves his manly integrity in the face of harsh circumstances. His feeling, according to Adams, is akin to the speaker at the end of The Wasteland, shoring fragments against his ruin.

The Sun Also Rises is a document of the Lost Generation of the twenties, just as Aldous Huxley's novels Antic Hay and Point Counter Point are documents of post-war London society represented by the leisured class. The publication of Hemingway's second novel A Farewell to Arms shows that the author had taken an important step by suggesting that though apparently caught in a vortex it was possible for man to transcend and triumph over his circumstances. Reality in Hemingway's novels is seen to have two levels. The first level is the objective or experiential reality, that is reality synonymous with the ruthless external world fraught with death,
despair, disillusionment and futility. The second level of reality is the subjective or perceptual reality, where the protagonist is shown to transcend and triumph over the hostility of the impersonal world. The triumph or transcendence is in all cases, momentary. Yet these moments have an eternal value which outlasts chronological time. The momentary vision of reality is seen as a timeless unity which lies beneath the appearance of fragmentation, disillusionment and despair of everyday existence. This dual approach to reality give the novels of Hemingway considerable dynamism.

So in A Farewell to Arms we get a glimpse of the two levels of reality that Hemingway desired to represent. The objective reality constitutes the description of the war front, the behaviour of the army in retreat, the soldiers' behaviour-ism. On the subjective level of reality there is the intense love of Frederic and Catherine and their idyllic togetherness encircled by the presence of the objective reality. A Farewell to Arms is a splendid assertion of the fact that happiness is possible and that man is capable of transcending the intimidating circumstances that a war brings about. Frederic and Catherine find their "home" - in hospital rooms, in hotels and lodgings and are entirely happy together till death parts them.

The writing of A Farewell to Arms permanently established its author as a talented novelist. In 1932 Hemingway made a deviation. Instead of a novel he wrote a treatise on bull-fighting taking meticulous care about technical details. The book was entitled Death in the Afternoon. A series of short stories, Winner Take Nothing (1933) followed and the stories are important from the point of view of thematic development in the novels of Hemingway. Of them one particular story
emphasises with startling inversion Hemingway's obsession with the concept of nada or nothingness. Nothingness becomes a positive fact and not just a negative aspect in Hemingway's novels. The Lord's prayer and a prayer to nada are equated:

Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name they kingdom nada will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nada and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee.  

After Winner Take Nothing Hemingway wrote about his African safari in Green Hills of Africa (1935). But the publication of To Have and Have Not in 1937 marked the end of the long self-imposed exile that began with Nick Adams's separate peace and Fredric Henry's isolated idyll in the Swiss mountains. The novel marked the termination of Hemingway's ideological separation from society, and pointed out the author's changing attitude to reality. Hemingway was no longer satisfied with the individual estranged from society. It was in cooperation and companionship that fulfilment existed. So in the dying words of Harry Morgan Hemingway outlined the future course of his approach to reality, "One man alone ain't got. No man alone now ... No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody chance."  

Deeply moved by the Spanish Civil War which he witnessed for himself, Hemingway wrote a play Fifth Column and the script for a documentary film entitled The Spanish Earth. The Civil War made Hemingway realize the limitations of individual strength and courage and the necessity of human solidarity. He wrote For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940) with this realization.

4 To Have and Have Not, p. 225.
in mind. The title For Whom the Bell Tolls was derived from John Donne's \(^5\) sermon and is of deep significance from the viewpoint of his changing approach to reality:

No man is an Island, intire of it selfe; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mountain of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee? 

Whereas Frederic Henry and Catherine negate society as it were when they abscond in the Swiss mountains, Robert Jordan on the other hand recognizes the value of human cooperation and companionship. Like Frederic Henry, Jordan too falls in love overwhelmingly. But unlike Frederic Henry, Robert Jordan has no wish to choose his idyllic moments of love away from his commitments to external reality. Though he senses that the military orders have gone wrong somewhere he does not show any desire to escape and abandon his duty. His love for Maria simply becomes intensified as the external reality, the impersonal war environment closes in. So if A Farewell to Arms is an assertion of the possibility of human triumph in isolation from society, For Whom the Bell Tolls written a decade later shows that it is possible and also is far more tangible when one recognizes the virtues of human solidarity, companionship and human interdependence.

Hemingway's next novel Across the River and Into the Trees was published in 1950. The novel seems to parody Hemingway's earlier works. Neither in content nor in technique does it show any mark of distinction. The novel was

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written after Hemingway had made a visit to Spain in 1948 and visited the place where he was first wounded. Across the River and Into the Trees is also the tale of a war-battered middle-aged army colonel who returns to Spain and to the exact spot where he received his first war wound. From the point of view of psychological development this is important. Philip Young writes:

Exactly one hundred years before the appearance of this novel Nathaniel Hawthorne published The Scarlet Letter, in which he wrote:

'There is a fatality, a feeling so irresistible and inevitable that it has the force of doom, which almost invariably compels human beings to linger around and haunt, ghost-like, the spot where some great and marked event has given colour to their lifetime; and still the more irresistibly, the darker the tinge that saddens it.'

From Hawthorne himself and Poe, from Hawthorne's Hester Prynne and Melville's Ahab right down to J.D. Salinger's "Zooey" who is unwilling to leave New York ("I've been run over here-twice and on the same damn street") - no one in the history of American letters has demonstrated Hawthorne's insight with as much force and clarity as have Hemingway and his hero. And nowhere in Hemingway is the demonstration more clear than in Across the River and Into the Trees for it is here that Colonel Cantwell makes a sort of pilgrimage to the place where he - and where Nick Adams and Frederic Henry (and Hemingway himself) - was first wounded. He takes instruments, and locates by survey the exact place on the ground where he had been struck. Then in an act of piercing, dazzling identification, he builds a very personal sort of monument to the spot, acknowledges and confronts the great, marked event that colored his lifetime - and Hemingway's writing time - and comes to the end of his journey (or the end so far) not at the place where he first lived but where first he died.6

The Old Man and the Sea published in 1952 is the third and final novel to be studied in detail in this chapter and

6 Philip Young, op. cit., pp 18-19.
it also marks the culminating point of Hemingway's view of reality and his artistic vision. He finds reality implicit in human solidarity and in the interdependence of all living creatures. What was merely suggested in rudimentary form in *To Have and Have Not* and reiterated with conviction in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and the Sea* becomes Hemingway's ultimate view of reality and his philosophy of life. This development in Hemingway shows that the novelist has come a long way from the heroism-in-isolation approach of his earlier works. *The Old Man and the Sea* thus no doubt represents, "an extraordinary change in its author. A reverence for life's struggle, and for mankind, seems to have descended on Hemingway like the gift of grace on the religious. The knowledge that a simple man is capable of the decency, dignity, and even heroism that Santiago possesses, and that his battle can be seen in heroic terms, is itself, technical considerations for the moment aside, perhaps the greatest victory that Hemingway has won."7

Therefore, from the point of view of Hemingway's approach to reality the three novels *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *The Old Man and the Sea* mark important steps in Hemingway's realization of reality. Firstly, Hemingway becomes aware that the individual cannot survive in isolation despite possessing courage, strength, and skill. The ultimate conclusion that Hemingway draws is that the individual is a part of a greater whole and consequently human solidarity and interdependence of all living creatures are undeniable facts. But this view of reality is entirely on the perceptual or subjective level. The external world of violence, cruelty, and caprice remain intact, as a result the level of objective

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7 Ibid, p. 19.
or experiential reality remain as it was, fraught with death, despair and disillusionment. But every time a human being triumphs in an encounter or simply engages in a courageous combat with the ruthless world-order, the subjective and objective realities coalesce, in order to form a timeless moment of unity.

II

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

Hemingway's second novel, A Farewell to Arms marks his release from the ethics of the lost generation described with such uncanny accuracy in his first published novel, The Sun Also Rises. If The Sun Also Rises is treated as a document of post-war society A Farewell to Arms may be regarded as the author's first attempt to look for a plane of reality beyond the sordid facts of contemporary existence. Hemingway's entirely individualistic interpretation of reality is well illustrated in the pages of the novel. Critical reception of the novel within days of its publication was extremely favourable. Apart from Hemingway's publishers wiring him that the first reviews were splendid and his prospects were bright, Carlos Baker records the immediate critical reaction to the novel:

Percy Hutchinson, the New York Times's Hemingway expert, said that 'the story of the love between the English nurse and the American ambulance officer, as hapless as that of Romeo and Juliet, is a high achievement in what might be termed the new romanticism.' Clifton Fadiman called it 'the very apotheosis of a kind of modernism'. Malcolm Cowley saw the title as symbolic of Hemingway's 'farewell to a period, an attitude, and perhaps to a method also'. His earlier books had virtually excluded ideas in favour of emotions. Now there were signs of a new complexity of thought, demanding 'expression in a subtler and richer prose.'

8 Ernest Hemingway, A Life Story, p. 310.
It is interesting to note that Hemingway had perhaps anticipated the bare framework of his second major novel in a short story and a vignette both included in his collection of short stories *In Our Time*. In the anticipatory story titled *A Very Short Story* a wounded soldier falls in love with the nurse on night-duty in the military hospital. "They wanted to get married, but there was not enough time for the banns, ... They felt as though they were married, but they wanted everyone to know about it, and make it so they could not lose it." These lines could have been written about Frederic and Catherine of *A Farewell to Arms* and not a word would have been out of context. But in *A Very Short Story* the lovers once out of sight part for good.

The second anticipatory instance is the marked similarity between Frederic's reflections after he left the army with those of Nick Adams as the following extract from the vignette preceding *A Very Short Story* will show:

Nick sat against the wall of the church where they had dragged him to be clear of machine-gun fire in the street ... Rinaldi, big-backed, his equipment sprawling, lay face downward against the wall ... Nick turned his head carefully and looked at Rinaldi, "Senta Rinaldi, Senta. You and me we've made a separate peace."

Frederic too makes his separate peace when he deserts the front and escapes to Switzerland with Catherine. However, though partially anticipatory both these earlier works cannot in anyway be compared to the elemental passions, the breath, the intensity, the dynamism of *A Farewell to Arms*.

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9 *In Our Time*, p. 84.
10 Ibid, p. 81.
A Farewell to Arms commences with a description of the impersonal ruthlessness of war and the resultant sense of waste. The soldiers had no personal identity, they were simply numbers filling up an army. Hemingway's clipped language evokes this impersonal war atmosphere in the closing lines of the first chapter:

At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera. But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army.

The first impression that It. Henry makes in the novel is of being just another soldier at the front. He is serious and committed while on duty. At other times, like the rest of his fellow companions he too displays a desperate gaiety, a love for drink, women and small talk. However, right from the early pages of the novel Fredric Henry unequivocally states his lack of involvement with the war. "Well, I knew I would not be killed. Not in this war. It did not have anything to do with me. It seemed no more dangerous to me myself than war in the movies. I wished to God it was over though." Fredric's absolute alienation is remarkable and justifies Aldridge's arguments that Americans in Europe during the first world war whether in the role of spectators or participants were never really involved because they were culturally, socially, intellectually, far too dissociated from the war background:

They were onlookers at a struggle in which, at the time, they had no personal stake. They learned the etiquette without the experience of war, the extravagance and fatalism, the worship of courage and the fear of boredom that men ordinarily learn as the price of survival; and they lost, almost by proxy, the

11 A Farewell to Arms, p. 4.
12 Ibid, p. 38.
illusions they once had. But if the war taught them bitterness, it was a bitterness tinged with longing and detached regret, a romantic distillation of other men's despair. 13

It was with this non-committal frame of mind that Frederic Henry first meets Catherine Barkley, the British nurse. He is impressed by her beauty but never imagines he would fall in love with her. Hence when he goes to meet her, he treats her anger at his advances as part of the sport of love making - "seeing it all ahead like moves in the chess game." 14 But though a newcomer to the war front the impersonality and the horrors of war which form the external level of reality in Hemingway's novels, are not unknown to Miss Barkley. Her girlhood beloved to whom she was affianced died in action. Interestingly, Catherine had first taken up nursing as a career so that she might attend to her beloved, presumably wounded with a sabre out or shot through the shoulder. "Something picturesque," 15 Catherine admitted. But in reality, "he didn't have a sabre out. They blew him up all to bits." 16

The war is a reality, stark, uncompromising and irrevocable reality. Yet, even the participants do not believe in its ideals, its aspirations and its peculiar code of ethics. The general feeling is one of disenchantment and disgust. So the mechanic Passini asserts:

'There is nothing worse than war... What is defeat? You go home.' 17

13 John W. Aldridge, op. cit., pp 4-5.
14 A Farewell to Arms, p. 26.
15 Ibid., p. 20.
16 Ibid., p. 20.
17 Ibid., p. 52.
Later Bassini adds:

'But even the peasants know better than to believe in a war. Everybody hates this war.'

The war atmosphere is so pervasive that even the girls in the whorehouses become "old war comrades" if they stay in one place for more than a few weeks. The sense of war fatigue affects not only the mechanics and orderlies but the doctors, majors and lieutenants as well. The Major of Frédéric Henry's troop confesses, "I am very tired of this war. If I was away I do not believe I would come back." In a similar vein Rinaldi the doctor confesses to his friend Frédéric Henry "This war is killing me" and later adds, "I tell you this war is a bad thing? Why did we make it anyway?" The lack of patriotic fervour among the characters is remarkable. The novel is an ironic comment on the popular misguided notion that patriotic idealism was a morale booster for the soldiers. The novel proves that abstract noble ideals were futile noises with no practical effect. Henry affirms:

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of ear-shot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stock yards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it.

Unhesitatingly Frédéric Henry concludes that "Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage or hallow were obscene

18 Ibid, p. 53.
19 Ibid, p. 55.
20 Ibid, p. 171.
21 Ibid, p. 129.
22 Ibid, p. 131.
23 Ibid, p. 191.
beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads
the names of rivers the numbers of regiments and the dates."^{24}

And so the war continues demolishing hopes, ideals, and
values and creating in its turn men and women who are all
maimed by the war seeking from life a good time in utter des­
peration. In one of the various fronts Frederic Henry becomes
seriously wounded in the knee. He is sent to a military hos­
pital in Milan for treatment. At the hospital Frederic Henry
meets Catherine Barkley once again. Frederic confesses, "When
I saw her I was in love with her. Everything turned over
inside of me."^{25}

Being in love Frederic Henry and Catherine like all con­
ventional lovers dream of marriage and setting up home. But
Catherine's friend Ferguson thinks that the war atmosphere
is such that falling in love is a crime as union in marriage
is impossible. If the war makes lovers, the lovers either
fight and part or simply die. When Frederic and Catherine
deny that they will ever quarrel and part Ferguson readily
replies, "You'll die then. Fight or die. That's what people
do. They don't marry."^{26}

Yet a time comes when Frederic Henry, now fully recovered,
has to leave his beloved and rejoin the army at the front.
The insistent reality of the world of war draws him away from
the haven of love - the subjective or perceptual level of real­
ity in Hemingway's novels. It. Henry's return to the front
occupies a pivotal position in the novel. Right after his
return the Italian troops experience serious set-backs and are

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26 Ibid, p. 112.
forced to retreat. Expectedly, the morale of the retreating army is in a shambles. And suddenly Fredric Henry discovers that together with some more officers he will be shot dead by some self-styled saviours of the nation. Casting aside all illusions of heroism or noblesse oblige Fredric Henry effects his escape by diving into the swirling waters of the Tagliamento. Of this escape Philip Young comments:

Henry stands for many men; he stands for the experience of his country; in his evolution from complicity in the war to bitterness to escape, the whole of America could read its recent history in a crucial period, Wilson to Harding. When he expressed his disillusionment with the ideals the war claimed to promote and jumped in a river and deserted, Henry’s action epitomized the contemporary feeling of a whole nation.27

Fredric Henry’s desertion and return to his beloved therefore, simply prove his lack of commitment to the war. He is purged of the evils of war as he dives into the river and returns to the idyll of love. Thus Henry’s action is “an act of purgation, symbolizing the death of war and the beginning of a new life of love.”28 Fredric Henry sets himself free of all obligations to the war as he reasons with himself:

You had lost your cars and your men as a floor walker loses the stock of his department in a fire. There was, however, no insurance. You were out of it now. You had no more obligation... anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation.29

Looking back to the war he has just one regret, that he will never meet his friend Rinaldi again. But he pushes aside such thoughts. He reflects, “I was not made to think.

27 Philip Young, op. cit., p. 13.
29 A Farewell to Arms, p. 241.
I was made to eat. My God, yes. Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine. 30

So from the reality of war the focus shifts to the reality of love. The former an objective experience, the latter a subjective experience objectified. The novel thereby falls naturally into two parts. The first part is mainly a description of the war atmosphere, the attitude of the participants, the hospitals, the officers' mess, the horror, the agony and the immense sense of waste. The climax of this part is reached with the description of the retreating Italian army, its morale shattered, and its men suffering from war fatigue. The retreat is, "epic in sweep in spite of its vivid concentration. And it catches not only the physical collapse of an army but its emotional upheaval, its hysteria, and its panic. To achieve such power and completeness through the limited vocabulary and essentially childlike mind of Frederic Henry without doing violence to his character is a triumph of language to be set beside that in Huckleberry Finn." 31

The other part of the novel is the love story. It transcends the horrors, frustrations and fragmentation of the war environment to form a new world full of love, hope, sincerity and dreams, all so intensely fragile, but much more real to the lovers than the reality of war outside their bedroom window.

Fredric and Catherine are not given more than life-size statures in the novel. Hemingway takes special care to treat his characters without heroics. Frederic and Catherine are just a man and a woman who meet, and fall in love in a peculiar environment. Nevertheless, when these two characters draw close

to each other their union generates an idyllic atmosphere of
great beauty, power and courage. The courage that the lovers
show in life does not forsake them in the face of death
either. And though Catherine dies and Frederic lives on, the
novel produces the impression of an energetic affirmation, a
positive triumph over the futility of war. This impression of
a positive fulfilment is in direct contrast to the unrelieved
pessimism and fragmented atmosphere of Ernest Hemingway's
first novel *The Sun Also Rises*.

In *The Sun Also Rises* the atmosphere is one of irreme-
diable futility, with maimed characters aimlessly driven by
a jaded unrest. There is no suggestion of relief and no
remedy in sight. Simply, the late night dances become more
and more frenzied as emptied cocktail glasses crowd the bar
counter. Life offers no ideals and no objectives. The
characters are just left with bull-fighting, absinthe and
sex. If there is any promise of love or friendship it is a
gentle and tentative assertion never achieving fulfilment as
in the case of Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley. The following
lines reverberate through the novel and are startlingly
representative of the post-war period:

'What's the matter ? You sick ?'
'Yes'. Everybody's sick. I'm sick too.'

The sole redeeming point of this first novel is when
Brett Ashley, the femme fatale character understands the
folly of her relationship with the teen-aged matador Romero.
She breaks the attachment and in the process saves Romero
from ruining his career. Later, in a reflective moment she
confides to Jake, "You know it makes one feel rather good

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32 *The Sun Also Rises*, pp 15-16.
deciding not to be a bitch." And so, this is the peculiar code of ethics that these rootless people possess. No other vestige of belief exists. Religion offers no solace. Not being a bitch is the ultimate redemption —

'It's sort of what we have instead of God'
'Some people have God', I said, 'Quite a lot'.
'He never worked very well with me'
'Should we have another Martini.'

This world of Jake and Brett was also the world of Hemingway in Paris in the 1920's. The Sun Also Rises is considered to be the most accurate portrait of the lost generation of the twenties, and the author of the novel was very much a member of this lost generation. Yet the morbidity, the gloom and the wasteland portrayed in this novel is not the end. This is not the plane of reality that Hemingway desired to represent. There is redemption and there is triumph. Transcendence exists. And these are the things that his second novel A Farewell to Arms asserts.

Therefore in A Farewell to Arms transcendence, triumph and tragedy vie with each other as soon as love begins. The priest in Lt. Henry's army had once defined the feeling of true love, "When you love you wish to do things for. You wish to sacrifice for. You wish to serve." And it is precisely this feeling of selfless devotion that Frederic Henry experiences when he meets Catherine once again at the hospital in Milan. Being in love, a new life of hope, beauty, courage and understanding opens before Catherine and Henry. Yet, because of the peculiarity of the war environment in which their love grows they are always dogged by a feeling that

33 Ibid, p. 245.
34 Ibid, p. 245.
35 A Farewell to Arms, p. 75.
time is limited. They must wrest out of the intimidating circumstances as much time as possible in order to experience the wonder of love. Two lines from Andrew Marvell's poem *To His Coy Mistress* are recited by Frederic Henry, supporting the fact that his is now a battle against time. The quoted lines together with the following two lines are deeply significant in this context:

But at my bade I alwaiss hear
Time wingéd charriot hurrying near ;
And yonder all before as lye
Deserts of vast Eternity.

Though death and the "deserts of vast eternity" are inevitable all is not lost. So before the nothingness of eternity sets in for Catherine and Henry, the hospital room becomes for the lovers "our room". Frederic Henry adds the possessive pronoun "our" with deliberation. There are four instances in the novel where he describes the hospital as their home:

- "anxious to get back home to the hospital, ..."
- "walked on home towards the hospital, ..."
- "went home to the hospital, ..."
- "My room at the hospital had been our own home."

The inversion of all social values seems complete. The hospital during the war becomes the home of the lovers. There is no time to marry, make a home and no time to realize dreams. In the latter half of the novel the lovers shift from home in the hospital to make their home in various hotels and lodges.

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37 *A Farewell to Arms*, p. 105.
38 Ibid., p. 123.
39 Ibid., p. 123.
40 Ibid., p. 140.
41 Ibid., p. 159.
In spite of all this external unconventionality and bohemianism the character of Catherine retains its natural feminine grace and her traditional feminine virtue of self-effacement in her desire to surrender to her man is remarkable. She tells Frederic Henry, "I want what you want. There isn't any me any more. Just what you want." With their love growing each day, parting seemed unbearable. If they were away from each other for sometime their return was "as though we met again after each of us had been away on a long journey." Nevertheless, despite her feminine conventions Catherine is simultaneously uninhibited enough to ignore marriage in a church. Her simple declarations are so intensely moving, "We're really married. I couldn't be any more married. There isn't any me. I'm you. Don't make up a separate me." And much later in the novel Frederic Henry tells Catherine, "I'm no good when you're not there. I haven't any life at all any more."

But the lovers are not destined to enjoy their idyllic togetherness for long. Catherine gives birth to a still-born baby and is on the brink of dying herself as she declares with pathetic indignation, "I'm not afraid, I just hate it." So Catherine dies. The climax of their love is reached. It is another ruthless comment on the sterility of war that the son born to Catherine is still-born and Catherine herself dies in childbirth. The wasteland atmosphere is such that it would annihilate all endeavours of a new life taking shape. Catherine is ambitious enough to violate the rules of the

42 Ibid, p. 110.
43 Ibid, p. 115.
44 Ibid, p. 119.
wasteland, so the wasteland kills her. Carlos Baker is of the opinion that the death of Catherine is inextricably associated with the entire tragic pattern of the novel. "Catherine's dying is directly associated and interwoven with the whole tragic pattern of fatigue and suffering, loneliness, defeat and doom, of which the war is itself the broad social manifestation."

In an extremely moving final paragraph Hemingway describes Frederic Henry's final leave-taking from his beloved:

> But after I had got them out and shut the door and turned off the light it wasn't any good. It was like saying good-bye to a statue. After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain.48

Nevertheless despite the tragic end, despite the fact that Frederic Henry is a broken man at the end of the novel something is achieved. All is not lost in frustration and futility as in The Sun Also Rises. Courage and love are shown to transcend the hostile world-order. Here Hemingway's peculiar code of ethics representing his individualistic interpretation of reality comes to the fore. The following conversation of Frederic and Catherine is fraught with suggestions of a hostile environment. So the lovers decide:

> 'We won't fight'.
> 'We mustn't. Because there's only us two and in the world there's all the rest of them. If anything comes between us we're gone and then they have us.'
> 'They won't get us, I said. 'Because you're too brave. Nothing ever happens to the brave.'
> 'They die of course'
> 'But only once.'49

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48 Ibid, p. 256.
49 Ibid, p. 146.
But much later in the novel a little while before she dies Catherine is forced to confess, "I'm not brave any more darling. I'm all broken. They've broken me. I know it now." And Frederic Henry reflects, "That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you." H.K. Russell makes a penetrating comment on these lines:

Here 'it' and 'they' are the ruthless umpires in the world-order baseball game, detached, devoted to stern justice, theattle police. We might prefer that Hemingway talk about 'Pate'. But that term would give his meaning only conventionally and abstractly. He prefers to take the simplest, emptiest words, 'it' and 'they' and use them in contexts which build into them the force of value terms.

The impression of a ruthless world-order dominating human enterprises is Hemingway's philosophy of life and the plane of reality that he endeavoured to represent at this stage of his literary career. Man is an individual, against cruel, impersonal forces, with death as the inevitable result. If somehow death was evaded the individual was broken for life. Ultimately for man there was simply nothing. Like everything or nothing, nothingness becomes a positive fact in the novels of Hemingway. One would suggest that reality as shown by Hemingway has two levels. The first is perceptual reality, the intensely perceptual and subjective experiences of love, hope and courage that transcends the intimidating circumstances. The second is, experiential or objective reality, comprising of the facts of war, futility, death and disillusionment. That death is ever at the heels of life

50 Ibid, p. 248.
51 Ibid, p. 252.
may be illustrated by comparing the short story "Indian Camp" with *A Farewell to Arms*.

In the short story, Nick's reassurance grows as his father replies to his questions about suffering and death. As the sun rises over the lake Nick feels sure that he would never die. But the child's faith in life does not last. Nick goes to the war front, risks his life and is seriously wounded. He becomes aware of the reality of death as does his successors Frederic Henry, Robert Jordan and Harry Morgan. Just as the birth of a child causes the death of a man in the "Indian Camp," so in the last chapter of *A Farewell to Arms*, not only does the birth of a child cause the heroine's death, but when she cries out in her agony she speaks exactly like Nick Adams: "Can't they give me something?" and Frederic Henry says to himself: "she can't die" just as Nick was sure, he would not die.

It will be noticed that in spite of the tragic and morbid view presented in *A Farewell to Arms* all is not enveloped in unrelieved gloom as in Hardy's fate-dominated tragic novels. There is a positive side to the novel. Hemingway celebrates individual courage and fortitude. However momentary, courage triumphs over and transcends all impersonal forces. The love of Frederic Henry and Catherine has this quality of transcendence. And because the world-order cannot tolerate this virtual contempt towards its power it has worked out its peculiar mechanics of levelling down all such triumphs. Hemingway himself enters the novel as it were, in the following reflections:

> If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course

53 *A Farewell to Arms*, p. 333.
54 Ibid, p. 331.
it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterwards many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry.55

Even nature, a veritable part of the world-order, becomes an accomplice and portends evil for the lovers. Thus the rain symbolism used in the novel is startlingly effective. Whenever there is rain it brings in its wake bad news or parting for the lovers. Even the characters in the novel are afraid of the rain. Catherine confesses, "I'm afraid of the rain because sometimes I see me dead in it."56 Rain imagery recurs in all the vital parts of the novel. It rains steadily as the Italian army retreats, wet and sullen. As the doctors get ready to operate on Catherine the rain starts falling without intermission. Each reference to rain right up to the final chapter of the novel leaves a shudder of premonition in the reader's mind. Ultimately Catherine dies. And Frederic returns to the hotel "in the rain."57 Thus rain may be identified as an accomplice of the hostile world-order:

Rain is the most obvious symbol in the novel. Catherine Barkley sees herself and sometimes Frederic Henry dead in it. It falls as he leaves her to rejoin his group when his wound has healed. The retreat is enclosed by rain (and this is historical rain), at the beginning of the retreat and when the battle police take Frederic Henry. The last sentence of the novel is 'After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain! The rain does not precisely symbolize the 'they', the world-order with a ruthless disciplining intention; Hemingway has avoided the pathetic fallacy. The rain seems rather to represent a fact about the world-order, its inescapable presence; to be a reminder that it is there, suggesting but not defining as the retreat and the battle police do.58

56 Ibid, p. 131.
57 Ibid, p. 343.
58 H.K. Russell, op. cit., p. 28.
Also in Hemingway's concept of reality there is no providence hence no providential escape from ruthless impersonal forces. There is never a suggestion that a *deus ex machina* engineering the well-being of Catherine and Henry might emerge. This absence of any spiritual anchor or controlling force which is a part of most classical tragedies, is absent in Hemingway's tragic novels. H.K. Russell comments:

A major difficulty in this novel for many readers is the lack of any affirmation of an ultimate beneficent order beyond the materialistic. Frederic Henry's recollected incident of the ants on the burning log makes exactly this negative statement. He had 'a splendid chance to be a messiah and lift the log off the fire'. But he did not. The absence of such a messiah of a supreme order which can intervene in man's behalf, need not, however, imply a loss of human dignity. Rather, the significance of every man's conduct is enhanced, for if human values are to be preserved, man himself must maintain them. The martyr affirms them by his death; the 'broken' man survives if he can with dignity and, by this compromise, keeps his values alive in the world.59

Though it terminates in tragedy and despite the acceptance of the inevitable fact of death *A Farewell to Arms* is a splendid assertion of human love and courage. And the momentary human triumph retaining courage against heavy odds, with grace under pressure, seems to be the supreme reality for Hemingway. The triumph is entirely a personal experience; therefore, it may be regarded as the perceptual or subjective level of reality in Hemingway's novels. The objective or experiential reality consisting of the war environment, the army, the soldiers, the military hospitals, show no signs of change. These features of the objective level of reality retain their impersonal, callous and hostile characteristics

throughout the novel. Presumably, such might have been the background of Hemingway's idea of reality where nothingness and a premonition of tragic doom plays such a vital role:

Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of Fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built, ... 60

III

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

For Whom the Bell Tolls was published in 1940; that is, eleven years after the publication of A Farewell to Arms (1929). This time gap of over a decade brought about a noticeable change in the late 30's in Hemingway's concept of life and consequently his literary theme as well. His philosophy of life which centred round the success or failure of one man's courageous action underwent a transition.

Previously, individual valour was a vital factor in Hemingway's novels as in In Our Time, Men Without Women, Winner Take Nothing and A Farewell to Arms. It explains his admiration for bull-fighting in Death in the Afternoon which he treated not only as a highly skilled sport but as partly representative of the esthetics of tragedy in his own works. The combat between matador and bull is equated with the struggle of an individual against a hostile world-order. But the book is primarily regarded as a unique, authentic and

It was during the mid 30's that the change in Hemingway's attitude came about. Deeply perturbed by the ensuing Spanish Civil War he became an ardent supporter of the Loyalists. He went over to Spain four times in order to witness and assess the situation for himself. To realize funds for the Spanish Republican force Hemingway also made a documentary film entitled The Spanish Earth. This was followed by the publication of Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories, a volume dedicated to the Spanish cause. It was while in Spain that he realized that one man alone against the world could achieve nothing. Therefore, the hero of his next novel Harry Morgan in To Have and Have Not admits as he dies, "One man alone ain't got. No man alone now ... No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody chance."61 It was not an easy lesson to learn, "It had taken him a long time to get it out and it had taken him all of his life to learn it."62 This rudimentary feeling about the necessity of human solidarity in To Have and Have Not gains further dimension and is clearly defined in his next major novel For Whom the Bell Tolls. It illustrates Hemingway's changing Weltanschauung - "No man is an Island, entire of itself"...

It is apparent from the epigraph that the plane of reality Hemingway desired to represent underwent a subtle change from this point. Individual courage was still the source of human triumph, but the individual realized that he was an

61 To Have and Have Not, p. 223.
Inseparable part of all humanity. He could not exist or operate alone. Of the two levels in Hemingway's plane of reality this change in approach affects the subjective or perceptual level of reality in his novels. As always, the objective level of reality comprising of death, disillusionment, fatigue and futility remain unchanged. The inner workings of the human mind undergoes a transition, the external world retains its ruthless detachment.

Formerly, estrangement from society was the essential theme of Hemingway's fiction. This sense of alienation common to the young people of the 1920's is seen in Nick Adams' exploits in the Michigan woods, amongst the Indians and in the First World War. It is also seen in Frederic Henry and Catherine's denial of society and living as virtual recluses in the hills of Switzerland, in the matador's lonesome combat with the bull, and in Harry Morgan's lonely ethos, the desire to maintain independence in the midst of industrialized and mechanised mediocrity. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* on the contrary the author expresses an explicit desire to return to society. Even while in love Robert Jordan unlike Frederic Henry feels the necessity of returning to urban life, to Madrid, to the conversation at the Gaylords, to his friends and companions, to the journalists and other military comrades.

So *For Whom the Bell Tolls* marks a turning point in Hemingway's idea of reality. And like Hemingway, the hero of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* finds the Spanish Civil War greatly instructive. Robert Jordan emphasises: "it is part of one's education. It will be quite an education when it is finished. You learn in this war if you listen. You most certainly did."63

63 *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, p. 135.
Hemingway's own development was marked by his realization of the interdependence of human beings and the necessity of being a member of society. The desire to return to society is drawn with great care in the novel. Pablo, the erstwhile powerful guerrilla leader has a peculiar "sadness" about him as he feels the corrosive solitude of being alone, "Having done such a thing there is a loneliness that cannot be borne." And yet, when with peculiar peasant shrewdness Pablo instantly apprehends disaster and disapproves of Robert Jordan's mission he is reprimanded by a fellow Spaniard in words that suggest the outline of the theme of the novel:

Now we come for something of consummate importance and thee, with thy dwelling place to be undisturbed, puts thy foxhole before the interests of humanity. Before the interests of thy people.

The novel opens with Robert Jordan, the American soldier in the Spanish Republican army lying "flat on the brown, pine-needle floor of the forest." He is accompanied by Anselmo, an old Spanish guerrilla, of remarkable courage and sensitivity. Jordan is a Spanish language instructor who had voluntarily joined the Spanish Republican force. He is on his way to a guerrilla hide-out in order to seek co-operation from the absconding guerrillas so that they would help him blow a strategic bridge in the vicinity of their hide-out. Being under orders, Robert Jordan like Philip Rawlings of The Fifth Column (1938) or like any other dedicated soldier for that matter, makes elaborate plans to blow the bridge. Yet at the back of his mind Jordan has a queer feeling that the orders have gone wrong somewhere. All the same he obeys General Golz's orders like a maxim. The external reality of war and its resultant ethos however erroneous, thus remain irrevocable and

64 Ibid, p. 390.
65 Ibid, p. 11.
unquestioned. The individual is doomed to do and perish in such an impersonal set-up.

Time is a vital factor in the novel. As the story unfolds we are made aware of the limited time-span in which all the action is to take place. Seventy hours, three nights and four days is the total time-span of the novel. In this compressed time Robert Jordan's association with the Spanish guerillas, his love for Maria, his blowing of the bridge, the tragic end of the guerilla band of El Sordo, are portrayed with remarkable dynamism and power by the author. The sense of the lack of time is emphasised repeatedly from the moment Jordan falls in love with Maria. The moments of their togetherness are invested with a sense of permanence so that these moments transcend all chronological time and coalesce into the timeless moment, the eternal now. It is perhaps this transcendence and liberty from a time-bound universe that Hemingway describes as the "fifth dimension" in prose. As they make love Jordan and Maria become aware of "time absolutely still and they were both there, time having stopped and he felt the earth move out and away from under them."67 This almost mystical realization of a sense of timelessness further enhances the idyllic nature of their love. Nevertheless, the fact of chronological time cannot be ignored. So Jordan reflects, "Maybe that is my life and instead of it being three score years and ten it is forty-eight hours or just three score hours and ten or twelve rather."68

Because of the unusual circumstances - with the objective reality typified by the detached external environment pressing upon the intense subjective reality of Jordan's love for Maria - the time reference recurs repeatedly in the novel, becoming

67 Ibid. p. 159.
68 Ibid. p. 166.
intenser each time as time runs out. Beset by the ineluctability of parting from Maria, Robert Jordan tries to "make up in intensity what the relation will lack in duration and continuity." Though a part of Jordan desires to have a long life of love, to cherish his togetherness with Maria he is aware that the present moment is all he has: "You have it now and that is all your whole life is; now. There is nothing else than now." Jordan's conclusive thought has the abstraction of any moral dictum though the undertone of regret is unmistakable: "A good life is not measured by any biblical span."

So the delight of a prolonged courtship ending in marriage is denied to the lovers. From the second night of their togetherness they believe they are man and wife. Like Frederic Henry, Robert Jordan might well have recited the lines from Andrew Marvell,

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurryng near ... (ll 21-22)

Therefore, in the three nights they have they must make up in intensity what the relationship will lack in time. Jordan explains to Agustin, "It is because of the lack of time that there has been informality. What we do not have is time. To morrow we must fight. To me that is nothing. But for the Maria and me it means that we must live all of our life in this time."

As a result Robert Jordan's love for Maria has a peculiar tenderness offset by a sense of pathos since parting is ineluctable. With the hovering of the Fascist planes overhead, with

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70 Ibid, p. 169.
the ring of the bullet sounds and the explosion of grenades in his ears as Sordo's band is wiped out, Robert Jordan tells his beloved: "I love thee as I love all that we have fought for, I love thee as I love liberty and dignity and the rights of all men to work and not be hungry. I love thee as I love all my comrades that have died. And many have died. Many. Thou canst not think how many. But I love thee as I love what I love most in the world and I love thee more." These lines exemplify the growing social awareness of the Hemingway protagonist. The objective reality of war, death and disillusionment encroaches upon the idyllic oasis of love. The subjective or perceptual level of experiences are indivisibly linked with the objective, experiential realities of life. Robert Jordan does not love Maria alone. He is emotionally attached to his lost comrades, to the sense of human dignity in jeopardy and to the cause of Laissez Faire. His little heaven of personal love simultaneously develops his affinity to all the other loves of his life.

What distinguishes the love theme in A Farewell to Arms from the theme of love in For Whom the Bell Tolls is the fact that Frederic Henry's idyllic moments of togetherness with Catherine occur when he is miles away from the battle field. In the latter, love flowers in the midst of destruction, the lover himself being simultaneously engaged in a strategic bridge-blowing project. However, in both novels love fortifies the sense of being alive and becomes intenser since death is so close:

Love appears, then, as an involvement with life, as opposed to death, which in turn means the suppression of life. Love gives the heroes a reason for being alive. Death appears as a threatening force that will take away

73 Ibid, p. 348.
from them all that which they now see as valuable. Death, which had at first seemed a remote possibility which did not worry the protagonists very much, takes on a more palpable reality as each of the novels progresses, and appears as the end of everything desirable. It is then when life instincts manifest themselves in full force. These life instincts which are related not only with sexual love - but with the drives associated with self preservation, overcome with death instincts and man feels saved through love. The irony of this "salvation" is that, once it is achieved, something inevitable happens that destroys the perspective of life that the soldier has come to enjoy; Catherine Barkley dies in child birth, Jordan suffers an accident that brings about his death. But this sad joke comes as a final comment on the ultimate meaning of the experience of living: the very brevity of life increases its value, and its precarious character increases its significance.74

The above argument proves conclusively that the perceptual reality of love and other associated emotional involvements scores over the experiential reality of a detached objective world, though ironically the victory is so temporary and the winner takes nothing. It is noticeable that love, which plays such a dominant role in the perceptual level of experiences in the war novels of Hemingway, is described with such surprising vehemence in To Have and Have Not. In the novel Mrs. Gordon sums up her relationship with her husband with scathing sarcasm:

Love was the greatest thing, wasn't it? Love was what we had that no one else had or could ever have? ... Slop. Love is just another dirty lie. Love is ergoapio pills to make me come around because you were afraid to have a baby. Love is quinine and quinine and quinine until I am deaf with it. Love is that dirty aborting horror that you took me to. Love is my insides all messed up. It's half catheters and half whirling douches. I know about love. Love always hangs up behind the bathroom door. It smells like lysol. To hell with love.75

74 Olga Eugenia Flores "Eros, Thanatos and the Hemingway soldier", in American Studies International Vol. XVIII, p. 52.
75 To Have and Have Not, pp 185-186.
Hemingway was ever sceptical of the urban environment and urban sophistication. In To Have and Have Not by juxtaposing the marital relationships of the rich and cultured couples with the natural grace of the family life of Harry Morgan and his wife, Hemingway tries to indicate that the rich, liberated and cultured women of the world are incapable of selfless love. This idea is common in Hemingway beginning with Brett Ashley in The Sun Also Rises the dissatisfied wife in Cat in the Rain and the rich sophisticates in To Have and Have Not. Where the relationship is one of selfless devotion and happiness the lovers seek complete identification with each other, surrendering their individual identity. This desire for absolute selflessness is expressed by Catherine in A Farewell to Arms. "There isn't any me. I'm you. Don't make up a separate me,"[76] and is reiterated by Maria in For Whom the Bell Tolls: "I would have us exactly the same."[77] Much later in the same novel while bidding Maria farewell Robert Jordan says, "As long as there is one of us there is both of us."[78] And as Maria expresses her reluctance to leave him he says, "Thou art me too now. Thou art all there will be of me."[79]

This desire for complete identification with the object of love shows that the reality of love is an idyll among the ruins in Hemingway's novels. The external world is rendered powerless so long as the lovers are together. Therefore, following the tragic irony of inevitability in Hemingway's novels, Catherine dies, Maria is forced to fly to a safer place, Richard Cantwell takes leave from Renata and Santiago departs for the sea alone as Manolin is forbidden to join him.

Apart from the romantic love and time themes preyed upon by a sense of tragedy, the novel is also replete with socio-

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76 A Farewell to Arms, p. 90.
77 For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 262.
78 Ibid, p. 463.
political implications. These implications form the backdrop which intensifies the romantic theme of the novel. The backdrop forms the objective or experiential reality described with such meticulous care in his novels. Though Robert Jordan joins the Loyalist force Hemingway indicates that both the Loyalists and the Fascists were human after all, despite their ideologies. Never before in the novels of Hemingway have we noticed a political background. This inclusion and yet the detachment from adhering to any party adds a new dimension to his literary achievements. This is apparent from the descriptions of Loyalist and Fascist atrocities recounted by Pilar* and Maria* respectively. The essence of the novel lies in the fact that formerly individual courage was regarded as an isolated episode, in For Whom the Bell Tolls Hemingway has given the sense of courage in a man a kind of profound universality.

Despite the social significance of the novel Robert Jordan who may be regarded as a matured Frederic Henry, feels now that he has experienced the war situation at first hand, he cannot possibly own allegiance to any political banner: "You’re not a real Marxist and you know it. You believe in Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. You believe in Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness."* Jordan does not expect any political recognition once the war is over. He simply wants to return to his previous job, that of teaching Spanish and desires to write a true book of what he had experienced in the war. There is no sense of glorious heroism in Hemingway’s protagonists. They simply do what a man must do, when faced with certain predicaments in life. In

* Ibid, pp 100-126 (Pilar’s description of the massacre).
Hemingway’s code of ethics, if a man fails to react with
courage and fortitude when faced with adverse circumstances, he
fails to be man enough and therefore, can never aspire to be an ideal Hemingway protagonist. Jordan reflects:

He would abandon a hero’s or a martyr’s end gladly. He did not want to make a Thermopylae, nor be Horatius at any bridge, nor be the Dutch boy with his finger in that dyke. No. He would like to spend sometime with Maria. That was the simplest expression of it. He would like to spend a long, long time with her. 83

Jordan’s desire to spend some time with Maria recalls Frederic Henry’s thoughts after he had deserted the war front, “I was not made to think. I was made to eat. My God yes. Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine.” 84

In spite of this sense of alienation from the reasons why a man fought for a certain country, for a certain right, Robert Jordan confesses elsewhere that whenever he was with the regiment he felt overwhelmingly that he was taking part in a crusade:

It gave you a part in something that you could believe in wholly and completely and in which you felt an absolute brotherhood with the others who were engaged in it. It was something that you had never known before but that you had experienced now, and you gave such importance to it and the reasons for it that your own death seemed of complete unimportance; only a thing to be avoided because it would interfere with the performance of your duty. But the best thing was that there was something you could do about this feeling and this necessity too. You could fight. 85

However, despite his crusading fervour Robert Jordan is of opinion that time is out of joint in the world of the mid-

83 Ibid, p. 164.
84 A Farewell to Arms, p. 242.
85 For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 235.
1930's: "I would not wish to bring either a son or a daughter into this world as this world is,"\textsuperscript{86} Jordan's morbid statement intensifies the tragic atmosphere of the novel: "In contrast with the mood of the earlier novels, however, the essential mood of the book is tragic. The characters are caught in a box from which there is no exit except through the inevitable violent catastrophe."\textsuperscript{87}

This awareness of inevitable tragic doom invests the perceptual level of reality with a pathetic urgency and nervousness as the experiential reality symbolised by death, destruction and irrevocable military orders closes in. Thus the two levels in Hemingway's plane of reality seem to be always at war. There are quite a number of themes running through the entire fabric of the novel. They are primarily time, love, death, life, war and politics. The first four are vital while the last two provide the backdrop where time, love, death and life themes are enacted. So, with full consciousness that the bridge-blowing project has become useless, Robert Jordan continues with his duty. The orders made no allowance for changed circumstances. Jordan is fully aware that in such a project, death is inevitable. "If one must die he thought, and clearly one must, I can die. But I hate it."\textsuperscript{88} Jordan's idea of death is not unlike that of the dying Catherine's in \textit{A Farewell to Arms}, "I'm not afraid. I just hate it."\textsuperscript{89}

The fact of death is treated by the courageous Hemingway characters with no fear but great resentment. Jordan becomes almost romantic as he compares dying with the feeling of being alive. His description reveals the characteristic Hemingway

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, p. 354.
\textsuperscript{88} For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 312.
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{A Farewell to Arms}, p. 342.
disposition of absolute sense stimulation, the purely animal or physical ecstasy of living:

Dying was nothing and he had no picture of it nor fear of it in his mind. 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.90

Ironically, though Jordan expresses such an intense feeling for the sense of being alive, yet he is ordained to wrench from the seventy hours he has all that he desires:

May be that is my life and instead of it being three score years and ten it is forty-eight hours or just three score hours and ten or twelve rather... I suppose it is possible to live as full a life in seventy hours, as in seventy years; granted that your life has been full up to the time that the seventy hours start and that you have reached a certain age.91

Apart from Robert Jordan there is no other American character in the novel. The Spanish people are portrayed by Hemingway with remarkable insight and understanding, Hemingway has also tried to capture the nuances in the speech-rhythms of the Spanish language in his prose. The Spanish-English transliteration is a distinctive feature of the novel. Hemingway's fascination for Spain is obvious from the fact that Spain has been the locale of some of his best writing. Moreover in his characteristic manner Hemingway mixed freely with the local Spanish folks and cultivated an understanding of the Spanish temperament. Robert Jordan's generalization is perhaps Hemingway's personal assessment of the Spanish

90 For Whom the Bell Tolls, pp 312-313.
91 Ibid, p. 166.
disposition, "There is no people like them when they are good and when they go bad there is no people that is worse." 92

The perceptual level of reality is heightened in the novel with Jordan's growing sense of companionship with the Spanish guerillas Primitivo, Fernando, Andres, Anselmo, El Sordo, Pablo and his remarkable wife Pilar. Even in that short period the sensitive Robert Jordan recognizes the individual temperaments of each of his comrades. He realizes that the gipsy Agustin is extremely frivolous and unreliable; that Primitivo has more heart than head as observed during his nervous emotionalism when El Sordo's band is attacked by Fascist planes; that Pablo, the erstwhile guerilla leader suffers from war fatigue; that Anselmo, the seventy year old hunter turned guerilla, can be a trusted friend and moral companion; that Pilar is a tremendous source of energy and courage to the guerillas. Jordan realizes that each of his comrades have certain limitations but together they are a force to reckon with, and this awareness is the essential purpose of the novel - the recognition of human solidarity.

When Anselmo - Jordan's most trusted friend - dies while blowing the bridge, Jordan is deeply moved. So, during the seventy hours he spends with his Spanish friends, he feels he has learned a great deal about other fellow human beings and about life itself. He has also succeeded in fulfilling his mission. He has blown the bridge, the project which has brought him to these great people. "He looked down at the bridge now and he could see the stream through the torn gap where the centre had fallen, hanging like a bent steel apron." 93

Mission accomplished, en route to escape, Jordan is seriously wounded in the left leg. With great reluctance his

92 Ibid, p. 16.
friends and his beloved Maria are compelled to leave him behind. Robert Jordan reassures the bitterly weeping Maria that he will be with her wherever she goes. At last she leaves, along with the others. So "they were all gone now and he was alone with his back against the tree." Left alone, Robert Jordan thinks, "Each one does what he can. You can do nothing for yourself but perhaps you can do something for another." And as the pain from his smashed leg increases, he thinks, "Dying is only bad when it takes a long time and hurts so much that it humiliates you."

But Jordan dislikes the idea of suicide. The idea brings back haunting memories of his own father who had committed suicide when life became complicated. This virtual escape from responsibility is shameful to him. Throughout the novel, whenever he is in a meditative mood, Jordan compares and idealizes his grandfather, pitting him against his own, less manly, father. This part of the novel may be regarded as overtly autobiographical:

The psychology of this young man is presented with a certain sobriety and detachment in comparison with other full-length heroes; and the author has here succeeded as in none of his earlier books in externalizing in plausible characters the elements of his own complex personality. With all this, there, is a historical point of view which he has learned from his political adventures: he has aimed to reflect in this episode the whole course of the Spanish War and the tangle of tendencies involved in it.

All these aspects of the novel indicate the change in Hemingway's philosophy of life and his consequent approach to reality. He is no longer content with reality manifested

94 Ibid, p. 466.
95 Ibid, p. 466.
96 Ibid, p. 468.
in an isolated act of human courage, he now recognizes reality that is based on human solidarity.

With the pain in his limb becoming excruciating every minute Jordan decides to be of service to his comrades for the last time. He resolves to perish in the attempt to kill as many of the cavalry as possible who would surely try to follow the trail of Pablo and his band. As the cavalry approaches, in complete silence, ensconced in the dark green vault formed by the pine trees, Jordan takes his final look of the world as it appeared at that moment:

Robert Jordan saw them there on the slope, close to him now, and below he saw the road and the bridge and the long lines of vehicle below it. He was completely integrated now and he took a good long look at everything. Then he locked up at the sky. There were big clouds in it. He touched the palm of his hand against the pine needles where he lay and he touched the bark of the pine trunk that he lay behind. 98

At this moment of final leave-taking Robert Jordan feels once again his absolute union with the world:

In the spectacle of Death, in the endurance of intolerable pain, and in the irrevocable loss of a vanished past, there is a sacredness, an overpowering awe, a feeling of the vastness, the depth, the inexhaustible mystery of existence, in which, as by some strange marriage of pain, the sufferer is bound to the world by bonds of sorrow. 99

The novel ends with Robert Jordan resting motionless with his finger poised on the trigger of his gun, awaiting the appearance of the approaching cavalry. And as he waits, he could feel his heart beating against the pine needle floor.

98 For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 471.
99 Bertrand Russell, op. cit., p. 45.
of the forest." These final lines immediately bring to mind the opening lines of the novel, "He lay flat on the brown, pine-needle floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees." The effortless grace of this nuance is beautiful. One is aware that Hemingway, a master craftsman, had painstakingly made the coincidence of the final and opening lines of the novel happen so simply.

However, despite achievements of great merit by the novel, critics are of opinion that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* lacks, the chiselled precision of Hemingway's short stories and the two earlier novels. "The weaknesses of the book are its diffuseness - a shape that lacks the concision of his short stories, that sometimes sags and sometimes bulges; and a romanticizing of some of the material, an infusion of the operatic that lends itself all too readily to the movies." Admittedly, even if the novel has suffered from the stylistic viewpoint, the fact that Hemingway has matured a great deal is obvious from the change in subject matter, wherein there is expressed the keen desire that all human action may be treated as an integral part of all mankind.

But *For Whom the Bell Tolls* not unlike *A Farewell to Arms* lacked the in-depth study of war strategy, the representation of the psychic trauma of the participants, and an overall assessment of the sense of waste involved in the millions dying, that his contemporaries described so well. Whereas Eric von Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Dos Passos' *One Man's Initiation*, S. S. Cunningham's *The Enormous Room*, Arthur

100 *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, p. 474.
102 *Ernest Hemingway-The Man and His Work*, op. cit., pp 237-238.
Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* may be comparatively treated as highlighted documentaries on the war situation, Hemingway's novels concentrated more on the growth of human relationships among the participants in war more than mere description of the writer's reaction to war and its consequent syndromes. Nevertheless, the romantic idyll among the ruins with the love story element, accentuates and intensifies the perceptual reality of personal experiences and consequently throws into relief the ruthlessness of the reality of war. In this respect his war novels may be compared with those of Tolstoy's and with Émile Zola's *Détachés*.

Nonetheless for the fact that there are certain limitations mostly involving a rather prolix narrative style, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* may be treated as a representative novel, giving us a clear idea about Hemingway's changing approach to reality. Like *A Farewell to Arms* this Spanish novel too is a splendid affirmation of human values in full glory, hounded by the impersonal forces of death and destruction. Unlike his previous works where an individual triumphed momentarily over his intimidating circumstances in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* individual triumph is treated as part of the triumph of the whole human race. Aldridge sums up the achievements and limitations of the novel with insight:

> For the first time in Hemingway history his people attach no importance to themselves as individuals. For the first time they affirm life by collective action and collective sacrifice. But their gain in social maturity is achieved at the expense of Hemingway's dramatic formula, his perfected technique conceived in negation and based on the principle of individual selfishness, for bringing to a climax and resolving in art, the basic human failure of his time.103

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103 John W. Aldridge, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
Finally, as in *A Farewell to Arms* so in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* we notice that reality is represented on two levels in Hemingway's novels. The first is perceptual or subjective reality and the second, experiential or objective reality. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* perceptual reality is portrayed in Jordan's and Maria's love for each other, in Jordan's relationship with his comrades, in the sense of courage, fear, sensitivity, brotherhood and bonhomie, all subjective experiences objectified. The second level of reality is the experiential or objective reality. This is portrayed in the descriptions of the horrors and excesses of a civil war, mob frenzies, the impersonal ruthlessness of irrevocable military orders, the errors, the sense of waste, the harsh facts of death, destruction and disillusionment.

IV

**THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA**

The Old Man and the Sea was published in 1952, twelve years after the publication of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). The period between 1940 and 1952 was a lean one for Ernest Hemingway from the point of view of his literary career. He had published just one novel *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950) during this period. Though his literary output was minimal, Hemingway had been very busy in the 1940's. He took active part in the Second World War, went to London to work out war strategies as a correspondent, cruised the Pacific off the Cuban Coast in a gunner-boat on the look out for submarines, divorced his third wife Martha Gellhorn and married Mary Welsh. In 1948 he also made a trip to Italy, the land where he was first wounded. The Italian trip deeply
impressed and inspired Hemingway. The result was the publication of *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950) after a gap of ten years. As in his earlier works, the background of this new novel is also love and death. The protagonist is a fifty-year old Lieutenant Colonel, war-battered, alone, who returns to the place where he had received his first war wound. Moreover he falls in love with a nineteen year old Italian girl. The novel ends with the Lt. Colonel dying in the car after a massive heart attack, on his way out of Italy.

Unfortunately, the novel was not successful. It seemed as if Hemingway was making a valiant effort to recover the style of his previous works, but neither the theme nor the narrative technique could in any way be compared to the Hemingway of the earlier novels. Reviews of the novel were naturally harsh. The reviewer of *London Observer* thought that Hemingway's implicit attitude was out of fashion. The familiar "posture" of his heroes - "despair held bolt upright by courage and virility" - now looked somewhat demode, while the author's stature had seemingly shrunk to that of an "eccentric of the rustic American type, with an original though limited literary talent."

With the failure of *Across the River and Into the Trees* still galling his mind Ernest Hemingway began work on parts of his posthumously published novel, *Islands in a Stream*. And then all on a sudden he began work on *The Old Man and the Sea*. Throughout the writing of this novel Hemingway was aware that this would be a novel with a difference. Expectedly, reviewers were impressed and praised unreservedly the story of an old man far out on the sea. Among the many reviews of the novel, Hemingway personally requested Bernard Berenson to

104 *Ernest Hemingway, A Life Story*, op. cit., p. 740.
write his impressions of the novel. Berenson obliged:

Hemingway's Old Man and the Sea he wrote, is an idyll of the sea as sea, as un-Byronic and un-Melvellian as Homer himself, and communicated in a prose as calm and compelling as Homer's verse. No real artist symbolizes or allegorizes - and Hemingway is a real artist - but every real work of art exhales symbols and allegories. So does this short but not small masterpiece.105

Hemingway's contemporary, William Faulkner, himself a powerful writer, also reviewed this vital novel. He hailed the novel as the best Hemingway had written so far:

Time may show it to be the best single piece of any of us" he wrote, "I mean his and my contemporaries. This time, he discovered God, a Creator. Until now, his men and women had made themselves, shaped themselves out of their own clay: their victories and defeats were at the hands of each other; just to prove to themselves or one another how tough they could be. But this time, he wrote about pity: about something somewhere that made them all: the old man who had to catch the fish and then lose it, the fish that had to be caught and then lost, the sharks which had to rob the old man of his fish; made them all and loved them all and pitied them all. It's all right. Praise God that whatever made and loves and pitied Hemingway and me kept him from touching it any further.106

Later, in an interview with George Plimpton in 1958, Hemingway makes some penetrating observations about the writing of his novel:

The Old Man and the Sea could have been over a thousand pages long and had every character in the village in it and all the processes of how they made their living, were born, educated, bore children etc. That is done excellently well by other writers. In writing you are limited by what has already been done satisfactorily. So I have tried to do something else. First I have

106 Ibid, pp 767-768.
tried to eliminate everything unnecessary to conveying experience to the reader so that after he or she has read something it will become a part of his or her experience and seem actually to have happened. This is very hard to do and I've worked at it very hard. 107

Moreover, like in his earlier novels in *The Old Man and the Sea* also Hemingway stresses the fact that the natural world is better than the social world in all respects. In his first novel *The Sun Also Rises* the only moments of unalloyed happiness for Jake and Bill occur when they are on a fishing trip in the countryside, outside Burguete. Catherine and Henry of *A Farewell to Arms* enjoy idyllic bliss when they abscond in the Swiss mountains. Robert Jordan meets his Maria not at Madrid but at a rustic guerrilla hide-out in the Spanish hills. His moments of happiness and self-realisation take place in the natural environment of the Spanish mountains. Santiago's triumph and contest with the sea are totally alien from the social world. And yet this inclination for gaining fulfilment in the natural world is not uncommon to American literary tradition:

That Santiago tests his championship and experiences his spiritual renewal away from the village in unspilled nature again links *The Old Man and the Sea* to familiar tradition. Numerous American heroes escape to nature to preserve their sense of selfhood, their vital freedom. Natty Bumppo moves west to ahead of the frontier; Thoreau immerses himself in Walden; Huck takes to his raft on the Mississippi; Jakes Barnes goes fishing at Burguete. Santiago, whom Hemingway associates with the enduring vitality of the sea in the title and by the colour of his cheerful and undefeated eyes, clearly derives strength of body and character from his intimate relationship with the sea, his 'la mar'. 108

Hemingway's approach to his subject is no doubt primitivistic and recalls the works of Mark Twain, Cooper, Melville and Conrad to mind. Hemingway's heroes are mostly akin to the heroes of Joseph Conrad, both finding the natural world conducive towards their expressions of physical and spiritual courage and epic heroism. Society, to these writers appear to be too confining and morally unsuitable as it were, beset by snares and treacheries, for such individualism. Society appears as a wasteland teeming with ineffectual Prufrocks, Kafka's Mr. K, the early Huxleyan heroes, Jake Barnes, Brett Ashley, the cultured sophisticates of To Have and Have Not, the hypersensitive heroes of Scott Fitzgerald and the Babbits of Sinclair Lewis.

Hemingway's penchant for the primal emotions exhibited in such one-man sports as bull-fighting, hunting, fishing, etc., give his works a sense of aesthetic primitivism. Though an extremely conscious artist and craftsman, as meticulous about details as Flaubert, Hemingway tried to approach the literary arts with a sort of intellectual bohemianism. It is revealed by his marked dissociation from urban life and social conventions. Personally too, he preferred living in the comparatively rustic environment of Cuba rather than sophisticated New York. His speech drafted for the Nobel Prize Committee after he had received the award in 1954 reiterates the importance of "loneliness" and the necessity of venturing into virgin territory:

Writing at its best, is a lonely life. Organizations for writers palliate the writer's loneliness but I doubt if they improve his writing. He grows in public stature as he sheds his loneliness and often his work deteriorates. For he does his work alone and if he is a good enough writer he must face eternity, or the
lack of it, each day. For a true writer each book should be a new beginning where he tries again for something that is beyond attainment. He should always try for something that has never been done or that others have tried and failed. Then sometimes, with great luck, he will succeed. How simple the writing of literature would be if it were only necessary to write in another way what has been well written. It is because we have had such great writers in the past that a writer is driven far out past where he can go, out to where no one can help him. 109

One may well deduce that for Hemingway reality lay not in drawing-room conversation or going to the polls, reality lay in man's encounter with the natural environment, where each individual is called upon to test both his physical and spiritual courage, fortitude, endurance and skill, and find out if he is man enough. Santiago did the same as did the former Hemingway heroes.

Hemingway introduces the old man very simply in the opening lines of The Old Man and the Sea. "He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream." 110 Like the six simple monosyllabic words that make up the title of this great novel, the protagonist Santiago too is a simple fisherman who is at present salao, that is extremely unlucky. Even the sail of his skiff furled around the mast, all worn and patched "looked like the flag of permanent defeat." 111 Though the tools of his profession appear decayed and forlorn, right from the second page of the novel we are told that the old man is not just another fisherman. "Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same colour as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated." 112 And later on he tells the boy Manolin, "I am a strange old man." 113

110 The Old Man and the Sea, p. 5.
111 Ibid, p. 5.
112 Ibid, p. 6.
113 Ibid, p. 10.
It is this inexplicable strangeness in him that drives him far out into the sea, alone, after eighty-four days of failure to take a fish. Though old he cannot think of fishing in company with other fishermen. What he does, he does alone. And yet Santiago's lonely trip is profoundly educative and the old man learns that he is a part of the universal scheme of things. Like all code heroes of Hemingway Santiago too possesses courage, honesty, endurance and skill, qualities of a successful sportsman. Santiago achieves the proportions of the hoary-headed King Lear out in the ravages of storm and rain. The lesson of true humility and the loss of pride that Lear experienced during his encounter with the hostile natural environment is experienced by Santiago also.

As the novel progresses it appears as though Santiago's trip far out into the sea is actually an exercise in self-education. Through Santiago's ambitious venture and his combat with an unknown, more powerful adversary Hemingway tries to show that one man alone can never win. And in victory or in failure the protagonist recognizes the solidarity and interdependence of all living creatures. This idea is an intensified reiteration of the theme of his two previous novels, *To Have and Have Not* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. From the 1930's onwards this is the plane of reality that Hemingway desired to represent. All human endeavour has a sense of tragedy involved. Courageous combat with an unknown, inscrutable force is where triumph and transcendence lies. In such an unequal matching of opponents victory or defeat become inconsequential. While in combat the brave individual learns the limitations of his powers, acquires the grace of humility and most important of all learns the importance of human
solidarity and interdependence of all creatures in the universe. And beyond all there is death and nothingness, awaiting their turn. This is the external, objective or experiential reality for Hemingway. The moments of love or transcendence represent the subjective or perceptual reality. The two levels of reality, experiential and perceptual, enrich Hemingway's works a great deal. Hemingway himself writes that *The Old Man and the Sea* touches the climactic point of his philosophy of life:

> Whatever I learned is in the story but I hope it reads simply and straight and all the things that are in it do not show but only are with you after you have read it ... It's as though I had gotten finally what I had been working for all my life. 114

As desired by the author, the story unfolds simply but a world of meaning and suggestions are implied in every line, characteristic of Hemingway's impressionistic manner of writing. So, the night before Santiago sets out to the sea he tells his very young friend Manolin, "I may not be as strong as I think", the old man said. 'But I know many tricks and I have resolution.' 115 It is as if the sea lures Santiago to its depths, purges him of his innate pride and the one time champion of that small Cuban village learns the grace of true humility and develops a sense of belonging to all earthly creatures. Bidding his young friend good-night, the boy being a source of strength, comfort and energy to him, the old man lies down on his makeshift bed:

> He was asleep in a short time and he dreamed of Africa when he was a boy and the long, golden beaches and the white beaches, so white they hurt your eyes, and the

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115 *The Old Man and the Sea*, p. 20.
high capes and the great brown mountains. He lived along that coast now every night and in his dreams he heard the surf roar and saw the native boats come riding through it. He smelled the tar and takum of the deck as he slept and he smelled the smell of Africa that the land breeze brought at morning.\textsuperscript{116}

This was no doubt an idyllic dream, and it recurred almost every night giving the old man great pleasure and happiness. Dreams of personal glory did not visit him anymore:

He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like cats in the dusk and he loved them as he loved the boy.\textsuperscript{117}

Like the boy, the lions too symbolize power, strength and courage and thereby provide spiritual sustenance to the old man. So, in the very early hours of the morning, while it is still dark, the old man dips his oars into the sea and goes in search of fish and to re-establish himself in the eyes of the boy and the fishing community.

"The old man knew he was going far out"\textsuperscript{118} though he did not make any special arrangements. After all, he was going to his capricious 'la mar' who was beautiful, kind and yet simultaneously cruel and wayward. Younger fishermen treated the sea as \textit{el mar} or masculine, instead of the feminine \textit{la mar} and treated her as an adversary, or a place of their profession or a direct enemy. "But the old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favours, and if she did wild or wicked things it

\begin{footnotes}
\item[\textsuperscript{116}]\textit{Ibid}, p. 21.
\item[\textsuperscript{117}]\textit{Ibid}, pp 22-23.
\item[\textsuperscript{118}]\textit{Ibid}, p. 25.
\end{footnotes}
was because she could not help them."119

As the old man rowed into the dark waters, his first friends from the sea, the flying fish appear. "He was very fond of flying fish as they were his principal friends on the ocean."120 Apart from the flying fish Santiago loved green turtles, hawks, other sea birds and harmless creatures of the sea. The old man was fully conscious of his purpose. Not only had he deliberately ventured far out, he had come out for a big fish. "My big fish must be somewhere."121 As he waits, the plankton, the clouds overhead, the light of the sun, the sun bleached Sargasso weed, the birds overhead, the infinite variety of colourful small fish, form a sort of lavish picturesque mosaic and the old man feels a personal identification with the phenomena of the sea. As his mind rambles about turtles, fishes and baseball, he reminds himself, "Now is the time to think of only one thing. That which I was born for."122

Then, all on a sudden, his big fish, the ideal one for which he had waited all his life as it were takes the hook. But contrary to expectation, instead of towing in the fish the old man finds that it is the fish that slowly but surely leads him away, out of sight of the secure lights of the Havana coast. The old man understands that the fish will give him a difficult time. So the old man "tried not to think but only to endure,"123 as many of Hemingway's previous heroes had done, like Manuel Garcia of The Undefeated, like Robert Jordan of For Whom the Bell Tolls, like Harry Morgan of To Have and Have Not. What worried the old man most was

119 Ibid, p. 27.
121 Ibid, p. 31.
122 Ibid, p. 33.
the fact that he had not yet seen the fish. He simply realized that he was hooked to an immensely powerful force which was towing him and his skiff out to the deep seas. He implored: "I wish I could see him only once to know what I have against me." 124

The old man’s wish to catch a glimpse of the fish is an understandable desire because whatever lies within human understanding and knowledge is easier to reckon with than with unknown things that are simply left to the imagination to grapple with. From the moment he hooked his long awaited big fish the old man felt what a great help it would have been if Manolin had accompanied him. He understood the limitations of human strength, however courageous the individual might be. This is the first ironical lesson that he learns: "No one should be alone in their old age," 125 he thought. The old man then sums up his overreaching ambition in hooking the fish from the depths of the sea:

His choice had been to stay in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries. My choice was to go there to find him beyond all people. Beyond all people in the world. Now we are joined together and have been since noon. And no one to help either one of us. 126

With the fish towing the skiff and the wire cutting his back, with intolerable physical weariness, the old man tells the fish, "I’ll stay with you until I’m dead." 127 With the dawning of a new day, the old man is seen addressing the fish not as a mean enemy but a companion adversary: "I love
you and I respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends. Even, the lonely bird that comes and rests on his skiff for a while, provides companionship to the old man. 'Take a good rest, small bird', he said, 'Then go in and take your chance like any man or bird or fish'.

The immense compassion and awareness of these lines prove that now the old man has understood the universal interdependence of all living creatures. A lesson which like Barry Morgan he had taken a long, long, time to learn. Later on as he eats the raw fish he thinks; "I wish I could feed the fish ... He is my brother". And as he watched a flight of wild ducks "he knew no man was ever alone on the sea".

At last the fish rises to the surface. The old man sees him fully for the first time. He is overwhelmed by the size of the giant marlin. He had never heard of the existence of such a fish. Simultaneously he becomes aware of the limitations of his strength and almost wishes he had not ventured so far out, alone. But he does not despair. Instead, after praying to the Virgin of Cobre for divine assistance, he adds with resolution, "I'll kill him though", he said, 'In all his greatness and his glory.' Although it is unjust, he thought. But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures. And as another day lengthens into night the old man feels a growing sense of remorse and guilt that he will be compelled to kill the fish and ruin its dignity and nobility. As he watches the stars

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128 Ibid., p. 52.
129 Ibid., p. 53.
130 Ibid., p. 57.
131 Ibid., p. 59.
132 Ibid., p. 64.
in the evening sky he thinks of them as his distant friends:

"The fish is my friend too," he said aloud. "I have never seen or heard of such a fish. But I must kill him. I am glad we do not have to try to kill the stars." 133

At last the fish rises to the surface and begins circling, as he holds onto the line in his scarred hands the old man is desperate with pain:

You are killing me, fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who. 134

At last the opportunity arrives. But there is no triumph or elation in Santiago. He kills the fish because there is no other alternative. He drives the harpoon with all his might into the fish:

Then the fish came alive, with his death in him, and rose high out of the water showing all his great length and width and all his power and his beauty. He seemed to hang in the air above the old man in the skiff. 135

The momentary motionlessness of the fish hanging above the old man with his death in him creates a timeless moment, a moment when time and eternity coalesce. This moment the old man would remember all his life. Yet the old man feels no pride of accomplishment, no sense of victory:

Thus the compassionate violence implicit in the slaying of the marlin he loves is revealed as the key to universal harmony in which many partake.

133 Ibid, p. 74.
134 Ibid, p. 92.
135 Ibid, pp 93-94.
Hemingway has at last been able to employ the central paradox of the bullfight and the hunt (Death in the Afternoon and Green Hills of Africa) so successfully to reconcile the forces of love and violence which have hitherto remained separated in his major works of fiction. 136

So after the fish dies the old man says simply, "I am a tired old man. But I have killed this fish which is my brother ... I want to see him, he thought, and to touch and feel him." 137 Sailing side by side like brothers, the fish fastened to the skiff, the old man thinks, "I am only better than him through trickery and he meant me no harm." 138 He realizes the sin of pride and ambition. He confesses: "You did not kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell for food, he thought. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman." 139 On his journey homewards the sharks appear. Santiago realizes that the sharks will destroy his fish. "But man is not made for defeat", he said. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated." 140 These words recall the reflections of Frederic Henry about the impersonal ruthlessness and violence of the universe:

If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. 141

But the old man has reached such a state of transcendence from immediate circumstances that he recognizes and

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136 Twentieth Century's interpretations of The Old Man and the Sea, op. cit., pp 87-88.
137 The Old Man and the Sea, pp 94-95.
139 Ibid, p. 105.
140 Ibid, p. 103.
141 A Farewell to Arms, pp 258-259.
acknowledges the greatness of the giant shark, *dantuso*, which first sets its ruthless jaws on the marlin. "He is not a scavenger nor just a moving appetite as some sharks are. He is beautiful and noble and knows no fear of anything." After a time more sharks follow. The old man knows that he is fighting a losing battle. In a single, inexplicable and involuntary exclamation, he expresses the immense despair of his heart:

'Ay' he said aloud. There is no translation for this word and perhaps it is just a noise such as a man might make, involuntarily, feeling the nail go through his hand and into the wood.143

This comparison of the plight of the old man to that of the crucified Christ, gives the novel an allegorical dimension. Christ's love for the universe, the fact that He is tormented by the very people for whom He has brought the message of love and salvation are equated with the old man's love for the sea, and the sea in its turn unleashing ruthless and brutal forces in order to destroy the old man. Philip Young regards the novel both as a Greek tragedy and a Christian Tragedy:

The novel is a representation of life as a struggle against unconquerable natural forces in which a kind of victory is possible. It is an epic metaphor for life, a contest in which even the problem of right and wrong seems paltry before the great thing that is the struggle. It is also something like Greek tragedy, in that as the hero falls and fails, the audience may get a memorable glimpse of what stature a man may have. And it is Christian tragedy as well especially in the several marked allusions to Christian symbolism, particularly of the crucifixion.144

142 The Old Man and the Sea, pp 105-106.
144 Philip Young, op. cit., p. 19.
Fully humiliated and purged of the sin of pride the old man admitted pathetically that he had made an ethical error in having ventured so far out into the sea, and thereby ruined both the fish and himself. "Fish that you were. I am sorry that I went too far out. I ruined us both." All that was left of the giant marlin was a long naked line of backbone between head and tail. And the old man "sailed lightly now and he had no thoughts nor any feelings of any kind. He was past everything now ..." Reaching the shore, shouldering the mast he staggered homewards and lay down on his bed "with his arms out straight and the palms of his hands up." This is another instance of Christian symbolism in the novel. The old man's prostrate figure is reminiscent of Christ and suggests, "that if the old man has been crucified by the forces of a capricious and violent universe, the meaning of his experience is humility and love of Christ and the interdependence which they imply." Waking up, Santiago sees his young friend by his bed side. He exclaims pitifully "They truly beat me." This undefined, brutal "they" are ever present in Hemingway's novels, always preying upon the individual distinguished by more than ordinary courage and strength all set to break him. This is the experiential or objective level of reality that destroys the subjective or perceptual level of reality in Hemingway's novels. But Manolin's reply acts as an emollient to the old man's despair, "He didn't beat you. Not the fish." Moreover the old man feels happy to learn

145 The Old Man and the Sea, p. 116.
146 Ibid, p. 120.
147 Ibid, p. 122.
148 Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Old Man and the Sea, op. cit., p. 73.
149 The Old Man and the Sea, p. 124.
that he had been missed and the fishermen of his native village had been worried about him:

'Did they search for me?'
'Of course. With coast guard and with planes.'

The old man who had felt the haunting isolation of loneliness, once again feels the reassuring sense of belonging now that he is back home. Human concern, love, comfort, care and companionship would once again prop him up. Manolin expresses his resolution that from henceforth he would fish with the old man whether he was lucky or not. Manolin's defiant manly resolution encourages the old man, he feels ready to take to the sea again once his wounded hands have healed. So by going too far out the old man learns the lessons of true humility, is purged of the sin of pride, gains the sense of human solidarity and interdependence of all living creatures.

Therefore, The Old Man and the Sea may be regarded as Hemingway's ultimate view of reality. The tragic irony of man's fate and the sense of transcendence and triumph are both ever present. What is of the essence is how a man reacts under hostile circumstances, whether or not he can maintain grace under pressure. So the lesson that the old man learns the hard way is Hemingway's final view of reality and the culminating point of his philosophy of life. The sense of aesthetic fulfilment in the novel lies in the fact that a man has fought to the limits of his strength thereby displaying what a man can do and endure when necessary. Santiago emerges victorious despite absolute physical and

151 Ibid, p. 125.
mental exhaustion.

The two levels of reality in Hemingway's novels - perceptual and experiential or subjective and objective - melt into each other in *The Old Man and the Sea*. In *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* the two levels existed as separate parts hemmed in by the sense of tragic loss. In *The Old Man and the Sea* Santiago's perceptual awareness of the sense of the deep inter-connection between the natural environment and the human world as necessary and indivisible manifestations of the universal scheme of things bring the subjective and objective levels of reality mirrored in the novels much closer. The two levels meet in a plane of reality where-in the protagonist gains his vision of reality in a timeless moment. Thus tragedy, destruction and death remain irremediable truths in Hemingway's objective world-view. But simultaneously on the subjective plane by accepting and transcending the hostile predators of the objective world transcendence is achieved but ironically for a limited time only. But it is this sense of transcendence that is of supreme artistic satisfaction and acts as a saving grace, dispelling an overt impression of morbidity and nihilism in Hemingway's novels.