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Existential Elements in the Works of Ernest Hemingway

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Introduction

It does not take a close study of modern literature to discover that Western Civilization is undergoing a tremendous upheaval in all aspects of its existence. In almost every major literary work of the last seventy-five years we experience lonely, fearful, and crippled beings wandering in search of some human values by which to live.

Furthermore the portrayal of these dark struggles are creations not only of the European mind which has suffered through the atrocities of two wars, but is also witnessed in many of the major works coming from America, a country which has prided itself on its optimism and hope.

We find that the picture of man presented in Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway is clearly similar to that presented in the works of Kafka, Camus, Dostoevsky, Joyce, and Sartre.[1] This similarity in theme has caused an American critic, Richard Lehan, to examine what he calls "affinity of mind or spirit"[2] between European and American writers. Lehan characterizes this affinity shared by American and European writers as a concern "with the meaning of identity in the modern world, the nature of good and evil, the possibility of fulfillment in contemporary society, the source of value in a world without God, and the possibility and meaning of action in an ethical vacuum. The new American hero is similar to the

French existential hero because he shares a common world and a similar world view."[3]

This common world view has developed since World War II into the philosophic and artistic movement known generally as existentialism. Using specifically the thought coming from the literature of the last seventy-five years, existential thinkers have developed a view of man and existence which questions and opposes the direction in which the modern world is moving.

Existential thinkers such as Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus have stated that man's existence in the world is absurd. By this they mean that existence precedes essence. Man finds himself and the world in existence, and only then can he attempt to make any meaning out of this situation. Consequently the existentialists believe that at the core of existence there lies a meaninglessness or at best an incomprehensible mystery which can never be understood through reason. The existentialists therefore view man's belief in a rational and scientifically explained reality as only a fearful attempt to escape from this meaninglessness and the abyss of death which underlies it. They contend that only by first facing and coming to terms with this condition can man find an authentic and meaningful life instead of the dull and empty routine which they find dominant in modern society.

What I hope to do in this paper by examining the works of Hemingway is to show the elements in Hemingway's work which can clearly be identified as existential and also to show,

as John Killinger states, "that the similarities in their world view are due not to collaboration but to living in the same milieu."[4] This will be done by comparing certain attitudes and values common to both Hemingway's fiction and to the writings of existential thinkers. These areas will include the presence and awareness of death, the necessity of freedom, the need for courage, and the problem of social action.

Because in the course of this paper reference will often be made to the works of existential philosophers, I think it will be helpful to begin with a brief discussion of the problems and concepts with which existentialism deals. I hope by doing this to lay a groundwork for the analysis of Hemingway's work as it is related to existentialism.

All modern existential philosophy revolves around one basic question. What is the meaning of human existence? Perhaps at first this seems not to be a very unique question for philosophers to ask. However, the peculiarity of this question is seen more clearly when we compare the position of existential philosophy and the definition of man which it implies with that of traditional Western philosophy culminating with scientific rationalism.

The essential difference between existentialism and traditional Western philosophy centers around the relationship between reason and existence. This relationship has been succinctly expressed by William Barrett in the following:

> But the belief in a completely rational cosmos lies behind the Western philosophic tradition; at the very dawn of this tradition Parmenides stated in his famous verse, "It is the same thing that can be thought and that can be." What cannot be thought, Parmenides held, cannot be real. If existence cannot be thought, but only lived, then reason has no other recourse than to leave existence out of its picture of reality.[5]

The purpose then of existentialism is to reinstate the subject of human existence, in all its concreteness, back into the center of philosophy. In order to facilitate this reinstatement existentialists have attacked both traditional philosophy and scientific rationalism as being a threat to man's freedom because of the obsession with reason and its attempts

to construct a system which can rationally explain the cosmos. The result of this obsession with the rational has been, in traditional philosophy, a definition of man which posits man's essence in a dimension beyond his existence and in scientific rationalism a definition of human existence in which man is reduced to an object-like status whose behavior is predictable in accordance with laws similar to those which govern other objects.

The existential view of man, however, is diametrically opposed to both of these views. The existentialist sees man as a free and creative consciousness maintaining a unique place in the universe. William V. Spanos states in the introduction to his book on existentialism:

> As a self-conscious,that is free creature, man constitutes a minority in a cosmos governed by natural law. From a rational point of view, then, he is by virtue of his consciousness an anomaly.[6]

The behavioral view of existence, say the existentialists, means spiritual suicide for man. In effect, it calls on man to give up his unique consciousness and become object-like. As a result the existential thinkers have attacked this view of man and the society which it has created.

In order to justify their view of man and to undermine the rationalistic behavioral view the existentialists began by exploring the human condition in the modern world. They began this exploration by going back to the writings of Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. These men, said the existentialists, were prophets proclaiming that man was spiritually

diseased and foretelling a coming crisis unless there was a turning away from the obsession with reason and a return to the struggle to regain the vitality of existence. Nietzsche and Kierkegaard declared that man had lost touch with all that was vital and sacred about being and that he had lost the courage to face and accept existence with all its hazards, mystery, and uncertainty. Nietzsche expresses this feeling when he speaks of the reaction to the death of God:

> At last the horizon seems open once more, granting even that it is not bright; our ships can at last put out to sea in face of every danger; every hazard is again permitted to the discerner; the sea, our sea, again lies open before us; perhaps never before did such an open sea exist.[7]

Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God and the freedom which it implied marked a beginning point for existential thinkers of the atheistic mode. God was dead. He had been killed by human indifference and by man's belief in rational science and the security it promised. Man, however, must not kill the theistic God only to replace Him by the secular god of reason. For Nietzsche, man must now become superman. He must transform himself into the man-god.

If Nietzsche can be considered the precursor of atheistic existentialism, Soren Kierkegaard is the father of theistic existentialism. Kierkegaard also saw the necessity for a revitalization and a reawakening of man to the vital nature of his being. But unlike Nietzsche, Kierkegaard did not see the path to this goal in the death of God, but rather through the affirmation of God through a leap of faith. For the theistic

existentialist God is not dead, but he cannot be known through reason or intellect. William Spanos states the difference between theistic and atheistic existentialism in this way:

> For the Christian, on the other hand, God is not dead; He is rationally incomprehensible; that is, He is absent. Thus man's freedom becomes the dreadful awareness of the necessity to choose between a life of despair in the realm of Nothingness and a life of precarious joy in the realm which to the empirical eye appears meaningless, but to the eye of faith constitutes on the microcosmic level a reconciliation between existence and essence and on the macrocosmic level (in the words of T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets) an intersection of the timeless with time...[8]

This is the leap of faith about which Kierkegaard speaks. It is a leap which carries the theistic existentialist beyond the atheistic position to a more positive perspective although one which is equally difficult to maintain. Accompanying this affirmation of faith however is the experience of dread. A man must experience dread because, maintains Kierkegaard, only through the experience of dread can a man go beyond his finite and worldly aims to achieve freedom. As Kierkegaard states:

> Dread is the possibility of freedom. Only this dread is by the aid of faith absolutely educative, laying bare as it does all finite aims and discovering all their deceptions... He who is educated by dread is educated by possibility, and only the man who is educated by possibility is educated in accordance with his infinity.[9]

To sum up then, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard are considered the forerunners of modern existentialism because they were the first in the modern age to realize that Western man had lost touch with the concreteness of his existence. Both believed

that the more man became obsessed with reason and rational science the more he would lose touch with the richness of human experience. Reason and science were for the weak willed; for those who wanted the safety of quiet discourse rather than the adventure and danger of the open sea. Kierkegaard states:

> In our time it is especially the natural sciences which are dangerous. Physiology will at last spread so that it will take ethics along. There are already traces enough of a new tendency- to treat ethics like physics.[10]

Nietzsche expresses a similar idea when he says that the intellect is granted to "the feebler and least robust individuals since it has been denied them to fight the battle of existence with horns or the sharp teeth of beasts of prey."[11] For both these men then the path to man's salvation lay in the return to the experience of his existence rather than in the lifeless treatises of idealistic philosophy or the moral platitudes of bourgeois Christianity.

Taking up the themes begun by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, specifically the alienation of man from the power of being and the resulting meaninglessness and dehumanization that this alienation creates, existentialist thinkers such as Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, and Paul Tillich have through their own writings clarified and expanded these themes into an organized field of thought and view of reality which challenges man to reawaken the power of his being and to again become fully human.

The method of achieving this reawakening to being differs

somewhat from one existentialist to another. However, the first stirrings are generally manifested as an experience of alienation from the normal world. For Albert Camus this experience begins when a man senses the absurd; when that once familiar world somehow begins to feel strange and, as Camus says, "all the knowledge on earth will give me nothing to assure me that this world is mine."[12] For Jean Paul Sartre the awakening occurs when a man realizes that he is a free consciousness confronting pure, brute matter and that in this situation he bears the sole responsibility for creating meaning and value in his life. Sartre powerfully recreates this experience in his book Nausea:

> ...I was nowhere, I was floating. I was not surprised, I knew it was the world, the naked World suddenly revealing itself, and I choked with rage at this gross, absurd being. You couldn't even wonder where all that sprang from, or how it was that world come into existence, rather than nothingness.[13]

This experience leaves the protagonist, Antoine Roquentin, a free man, stripped of all his illusions and attachments to existence. He says:

> I am free: there is absolutely no more reason for living, all the ones I have tried have given way and I can't imagine any more of them. My past is dead...I am alone in this white, garden-rimmed street. Alone and free. But this freedom is rather like death.[14]

Martin Heidegger, the German existentialist, states that it is the realization of death which brings about man's awareness of freedom. For Heidegger, the presence of death can serve to drive man above what Margorie Grene calls "the distracting and deceiving care of my day-by-day existence,"[15] thus enabling

him to become a free and creative being rather than a programmed automaton.

Modern existentialism is then, above all, the attempt to achieve the freedom inherent in human consciousness. Consequently, freedom for the existentialist is the essence of man and truth. To violate this freedom, either by escaping from it or by depriving others of it is to be less than human. Sartre expresses this clearly in his essay "Existentialism Is a Humanism." He states:

> ...there is no determinism- man is free, man is freedom...man is condemned to be free.[16]

For Ernest Hemingway and his generation World War 1 was the existential moment of truth. In the mass death by machine gun and poison gas the veneer of a reasonable civilization was quickly stripped away, revealing the nothingness which underlies existence and forcing man to contemplate its meaning. The First World War, with its two million dead and twenty million maimed, made it horribly apparent to those who would see that something was fundamentally wrong with Western man. After the war men were no longer certain of themselves or their place in the world. The war had opened in these men a loneliness and a meaninglessness that many would spend the rest of their lives trying to overcome. Erich Remarque, author of <u>All Quiet on the Western Front</u>, expresses his feelings about the war and the effect it had on his generation:

> How senseless is everything that can ever be written, done, or thought when such things are possible. It must be all lies and of no account when the culture of a thousand years could not prevent this stream of blood from being poured out.[17]

In this passage Remarque echoes the existentialist criticism of Western civilization. For the history of Western civilization is the history of the growth of reason and Western culture is built on the foundation of reason. But as the existentialists maintain and Remarque's comments indicate, reason, no matter how well established, cannot sustain existence because it is unable to drive the uncertainty and insecurity from the human condition. Only by facing and taking the uncertainty of existence into oneself, through and act of courage, can an authentic existence be achieved.

Ernest Hemingway, who was on the Italian front, describes an experience which must have had a similar effect on his attitude toward life. He states in the story "A Way You'll Never Be":

> Nicholas Adams saw what had happened by the position of the dead. They lay alone and in clumps in the high grass of the field and along the road, their pockets out, and over them were flies and around each body or group of bodies were scattered papers...The hot weather had swollen them all alike regardless of nationality.[18]

For a whole generation of young men who had experienced similar visions of death, the old bourgeois values were stripped away, leaving them free, though emotionally wounded, to discover some new values by which they would be able to live. Remarque again expresses the feeling that many must have had after the war. He wrote:

> We had as yet taken no root. The war swept us away. For the others, the older men, it is but an interruption. They are able to think beyond it. We, however, have been gripped by it and do not know what the end

> may be. We know only that in some strange and melancholy way we have become a waste land...[19]

The generation of which Remarque speaks could no longer believe in the world of their elders, the world of business and complacency and church on Sundays. A world where an authentic life is replaced by a world of preconceived, well established, and blindly accepted values. The post war generation broke away from these traditional values and set out to explore, probe, and discover the meaning of their existence through an evaluation of their own experience rather than through the preconcieved categories accepted by their elders.

Out of this exploration and probing a new vision and conception of man began to emerge. It began in the Dadist movement and in the seeming disorientation presented in modern art. It began to emerge in the literature of James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, and T. S. Eliot. Finally it emerged as the formulated philosophy of existentialism. William Barrett in his book Irrational Man speaks of the importance of existentialism:

> In our epoch existential philosophy has appeared as an intellectual expression of the time, and the philosophy exhibits numerous points of contact with modern art. The more closely we examine the two together, the stronger becomes the impression that existential philosophy is the authentic intellectual expression of our time, as art is the expression in terms of image and emotion.[20]

It is these points of contact between art and existential philosophy, and in particular, the points of contact between modern existential philosophy and the works of Ernest Hemingway

which I wish now to examine.

In the works of Hemingway we see in flesh and blood a portrayal of the existential condition. A world where the rational has been penetrated by the nonrational; by death and nothingness. It is a world, consequently, where traditional values no longer apply and where a man must rely on himself for creating a meaningful life. The world which Hemingway depicts is one filled with death and loneliness; one in which human beings must use every ounce of courage to keep emotionally alive while moving into an uncertain future.

The area which Hemingway shares with existentialism is in the interrelationship between the elements of death, freedom, value, and courage. These elements are seen as essential for the development of an authentic life in both Hemingway and existential writings.

The first of these elements which shall be discussed is death and its relationship to nothingness. Death for Hemingway and the existentialists is not an abstract concept referring to some future event, rather it serves as the means through which a man concretely experiences the possibility of non-being. It is in this threat of non-being that a man realizes that existence is not reasonable and can never be contained by reason. Consequently, the concept of nothingness is for existentialism the first principle of the philosophy. John Killinger, in his study of Hemingway and existentialism, discusses the meaning of nothingness in the following:

> Nothingness is a convenient designation for

> the inexplicable weirdness that lies beyond the rational boundaries of existence... There is really no adequate definition of nothingness, nor any complete understanding of it...it continually threatens to annihilate man, to engulf and to snuff out his true existence.[21]

This nothingness or "inexplicable weirdness" that lies beyond the rational is for Hemingway, as it is for the existentialists, the fundamental experience. And while much of Hemingway's work deals with this experience and its consequences he describes the experience most explicitly in the story "A Clean Well-Lighted Place." In this story an old man stays late at a cafe drinking brandy. Attending the cafe are two waiters. One is young, confident, and eager to get home to his wife. The other waiter is older and sympathetic to the old man's late night drinking. Through the conversation that the waiters hold, we find that the old man has recently tried to commit suicide because he was in despair. The younger waiter can find no cause for the old man's despair since he is supposed to be wealthy. The young waiter finally loses patience and will no longer serve the old man so he pays his tab and leaves. The older waiter notes that the old man leaves with dignity. After the younger waiter leaves, the other comments on the value of a clean well-lighted place to spend the evenings. He puts it this way:

> Turning off the electric light he continued the conversation with himself. It is the light of course but it is necessary that the place be clean and pleasant...What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was a nothing too. It was only that

> and light was all it needed, and a certain cleanliness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it was nada y pues nada, nada y pues nada.[22]

From the above examples I have tried to show that the experience of nothingness is fundamental to the work of both Hemingway and the existentialists. This nothingness threatens man's existence in three basic ways. First of all it threatens freedom in the form of bad faith. Secondly, it threatens the creation of values in the form of meaninglessness. Finally it threatens man in the form of death. More shall be said later on the first two forms of annihilation, but now, as stated previously, the relationship between death and nothingness shall be discussed. For it is through the awareness of death that nothingness is most concretely experienced.

In Death In the Afternoon, his study of bullfighting, Hemingway describes death as the fundamental experience and speaks of his desire to capture it in his writing. He states:

> The only place where you could see life and death, ie, violent death now that the wars were over, was in the bullring and I wanted very much to go to Spain where I could study it. I was trying to learn to write, commencing with the simplest things of all and the most fundamental is violent death...I had read many books in which, when the author tried to convey it, he only produced a blur, and I decided that this was because either the author had never seen it clearly or at the moment of it, he had physically or mentally shut his eyes.[23]

Hemingway achieved the goal set forth in the above paragraph. In his fiction we see death by suicide, firing squad, bombing, gunshot, goring, and childbirth. From his

earliest short stories, such as "Indian Camp," to his later work, like Across the River and into the Trees, we see his characters confronting death. And it was in the confrontation with death that the awareness of nothingness was born.

However, the awareness of death serves another function beyond that of revealing nothingness and nonrational nature of existence. Death also is a revealer of man's freedom. In the moment in which a man faces his extinction or nothingness, he is also opened to his freedom. Marjorie Grene, in her book Introduction to Existentialism, discusses the role which death plays in the thought of Martin Heidegger. She states:

> Yet it is only in such a resolve as limited by death- in the realization of my existence as essentially and necessarily being to death- that I can rise out of the distracting and deceiving care of my day-by-day existence and become authentically myself. Only in such recognition of radical finitude, in the sinking dread with which I face my own annihilation, can I escape the snare of a delusive present, to create, in a free resolve, a genuine future from a genuinely historical past.[24]

William Barrett makes a similar statement in Irrational Man:

> Only by taking death into myself according to Heidegger does an authentic existence become possible for me. Touched by this interior angel of death, I cease to be the impersonal and social one among many, as Ivan Illyich was, and I am free to become myself.[25]

From the above discussion we see that for Heidegger the awareness of death opened the way for a man to rise above the trivialities which constitute much of his life and to take his freedom and create a meaningful life.

In Albert Camus' novel, The Stranger, Meursault, the

protagonist realizes the relationship between death and freedom when he is angered by a priest offering salvation shortly before his execution. Meursault understands that death has always been a present possibility and that this presence is a source of freedom from all the ideological and emotional complexity that people live under. He describes death as a "slow persistent breeze."

> And on its way that breeze had leveled out all the ideas that people tried to foist on me in the equally unreal years I then was living through. What difference could they make to me, the deaths of others, or a mother's love, or his God...Every man alive was privileged;there was only one class of men, the privileged class. All alike would be condemned to die...[26]

In the end Meursault realizes that existence needs no rational or prior justification. Life is good in itself and all men are privileged because all can be freed through the awareness of death.

Jean Paul Sartre, while never explicitly stating that it is death which is a revealer of freedom, nevertheless often illustrates the realization of freedom coming about in the face of death. In Sartre's major work Being and Nothingness freedom appears to a man who while walking along a precipice sees the possibility of death. Also in his novel The Reprieve, Mathew Delarue asserts his freedom when he decides not to commit suicide. He states:

> All hawsers cut, nothing now could hold him back: here was his freedom, and how horrible it was...Dizziness rose softly over the river; sky and bridge dissolved: nothing remained but himself and the water; it heaved up to him and

> rippled round his dangling legs. The water, where his future lay. At the moment it is true, I'm going to kill myself. Suddenly he decided not to do it. He decided it shall be a trial.[27]

The above examples help to show that death serves as a path to freedom. This freedom which is revealed through death, however, is an anguished freedom. Indeed, for the existentialist, anguish is the underlying condition of freedom. Anguish is born of the realization that one's freedom and values are solely dependent on oneself. A man must constantly through courage, recreate his freedom because nothing guarantees the validity of the values which he chooses. Marjorie Grene elaborates on the relationship between freedom and courage in the following:

> Freedom reveals itself rather, when we screw up our courage to see it without pretense, in the dizzying collapse of external sanctions and universal laws, in the appalling consciousness that I, and I alone, have, absurdly and without reason, brought order out of chaos; that I alone, crudely and stupidly, without cosmic meaning or rational ground, have made a world out of nothing: and with that awareness my world itself totters on the brink of the nothingness from which it came.[28]

I think the first evidence we have that the experience of death serves to reveal freedom for the Hemingway protagonist is found in the collection <u>In Our Time</u>. In the short narrative beginning chapter VI Nick Adams and his friend Renaldi have been wounded in an assault on a town in the First World War. With this wounding Nick Adams begins to realize his freedom. He says to Renaldi:

> Nick turned his head and looked down at Renaldi. "Senta Renaldo; Senta. You and

> me we've made a separate peace. We're not patriots.[29]

With the wounding, Nick Adams has realized death and with that realization comes the beginning of freedom. In telling Renaldi that they had now made a separate peace and that they were no longer patriots Nick had taken that first step away from traditional values and the first step into alienation and the beginning of existential consciousness.

The awakening of this consciousness and its attendant alienation is continued in the stories "Soldier's Home" and "In Another Country." In both stories we see the implications of the "separate peace" theme begun in the other episode.

In "Sodier's Home", Harold Krebs has returned from the war to his home in Oklahoma. Before the war he attended a small Methodist college and was a member of a fraternity. But now, after the war, things have changed for him. Krebs no longer lives in the same world that others live in. In speaking of the girls in the town and the life they lead he states:

> He liked the girls that were walking along the other side of the street. He liked the looks of them much better than the French girls or German girls. But the world they were in was not the world he was in.[30]

Later when his mother is pressing him about finding a job she tells him, "God has some work for everyone to do. There can be no idle hands in His kingdom." Krebs responds to this by saying,,"I'm not in His kingdom."

Krebs can no longer accept this world and its conventions,

because he, like Nick Adams, had experienced death and was forced to make a separate peace. The implications of this peace are that Krebs now stands alone and must accept the responsibility of his freedom. He can no longer be like the other boys who will lose themselves in the community. As his mother says:

> The boys are all settling down; they're all determined to get somewhere; you can see that boys like Charley Simmons are on their way to being really a credit to the community.[31]

But for Krebs the traditional attitudes towards work, dating nice girls, and attending church no longer apply. Krebs is in the same position which we find many existential heroes in, a position of alienation and separation from society.

In the story "In Another Country" the main character is in the hospital after being wounded in the war. His knee has been crippled, and he comes with the other young men to the hospital each day to sit at machines which are supposed to rehabilitate their broken bodies. But there is a fundamental change in these men that rehabilitation can never alter. They have all made a separate peace. Each has lost physically that part which held him to society. The main charac ter has lost the knee that enabled him to play football. The major, who had been a fencer, had crippled his hand. The boy who came from a very old family had lost his nose, and in rebuilding his face they could not get the nose quite right. These wounds are symbols of the psychological alienation that these men felt as a result of their confrontation with death. These wounds symbolize their death to society. The protagonist

comments on their alienation in the following:

> The tall boy with a very pale face who was to be a lawyer had been a lieutenant of Arditi and had three medals of the sort we each had only one of. He had lived a very long time with death and was a little detached. We were all a little detached, and there was nothing that held us together except that we met every afternoon at the hospital.[32]

Although nothing held them together, when confronted by society at large they felt differently.

> ...and sometimes having to walk into the street when the men and women would crowd together on the sidewalk so that we would have had to jostle them to get by, we felt held together by there being something that had happened that they, the people who disliked us, did not understand.[33]

From these examples we see the effect that the First World War had on these characters. This process of alienation is also continued in Hemingway's two early novels A Farewell to Arms and The Sun Also Rises.

In the beginning of A Farewell to Arms Frederick Henry has no understanding of the relationship between life and death which the existentialists find so important for an authentic life. For example, before Henry is wounded he gives an account of the life he enjoyed; a life of irresponsible hedonism. Instead of going to the mountains he says:

> I had gone to no such place but to the smoke of cafes and nights when the room whirled and you needed to look at the wall to make it stop, nights in bed drunk, when you knew that that was all there was, and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you, and the world all unreal in the dark and so exciting that you must resume again not knowing and not caring in the night, sure that this was all and all and all and not caring.[34]

However, after he is blown up by a trench mortar, death becomes a reality to him. During the retreat of Caparetto he deserts the army when he realizes that he is going to be shot as a German infiltrator. At this point Henry makes his separate peace with the war. He says:

> I had taken off the stars, but that was for convenience. It was no point of honor. I was not against them. I was through. I wished them all the luck. There were the good ones, and the brave ones, and the calm ones, and the sensible ones, and they deserved it. But it was not my show any more...[35]

At the end of the novel when his wife and child have died Henry's alienation is complete and he makes this bitter statement against society:

> 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...Stay around and they would kill you.[36]

I said earlier that existential freedom is anguished freedom because of the realization that one's freedom and values depend solely on oneself and there is absolutely nothing which guarantees the validity of these values or the continuance of freedom. Consequently, a man may try to escape from this freedom because he cannot endure the anguish of free choice. It is the courageous acceptance of freedom rather than its rejection that separates the existential hero from other men. It is in this position that we leave Frederick Henry, Nick Adams, and Krebs. Although Adams, Krebs, and Henry have been set free via their confrontation with death, they have not

as yet asserted this freedom to create an authentic life. Consequently in these stories, and particularly in A Farewell to Arms, we are left with a nihilistic rather than an existential view. However, in The Sun Also Rises, we can see a movement beginning which goes beyond nihilism to an existential position which Paul Tillich calls "the courage to be." This concept of courage is, I believe, the third necessary element for an authentic existential position. Although a man may experience nothingness and in turn experience his freedom he cannot be considered existential until he manifests the courage to assert his freedom. This is what Henry, Adams, and Krebs have yet to do.

Tillich defines courage "as the self affirmation of being in spite of nonbeing." The two aspects of this courage which he discusses provide a clear parallel to the ideas that Hemingway expresses most fully in The Sun Also Rises and For Whom the Bell Tolls as well as some of the short stories. The two aspects of courage which Tillich defines are "the courage to be as oneself" and "the courage to be as part" of the human community. Tillich says of the self:

> But the self is self only because it has a world, a structured universe, to which it belongs and from which it is separated at the same time. Self and world are correlated, and so are individualization and participation.[37]

In The Sun Also Rises we see a portrayal, in the person of Jake Barnes, of the courage to be as oneself. The need for this type of courage was a result of the realization of death and suffering experienced in the war. The war, stripping

away as it did, the veneer of a rational civilization, left men like Jake Barnes, Frederick Henry, and the others physically and psychologically wounded and rendered them incapable of believing in any social commitment. Consequently, they all live in a state of alienation which has been represented in the idea of the separate peace. However, if one is to live with this alienation one needs courage; courage to live despite the despair, loneliness, and meaninglessness that one feels all around; courage to move forward and to try to create some values by which to live.

However, because one can no longer believe in such grand and vague values as a loving God, or in patriotism, or in the striving for social status, one must necessarily begin with one's own being as the foundation of values. These values, moreover, must be derived from and consistent with the reality of one's own concrete, subjective experience; experience which has been stripped of all sentimentality and romance, leaving only what is truly felt rather than what one thinks should be felt. Jean Paul Sartre expresses a similar view in the following quote from his essay "Existentialism Is a Humanism."

> ...but if I have excluded God the Father, there must be somebody to invent values. We have to take things as they are. And moreover, to say that we invent values means neither more nor less than this; that there is no sense in life a priori. Life is nothing until it is lived; but it is yours to make sense of and the value of it is nothing else but the sense you choose.[38]

Sartre continues this line of thought when he states:

> It follows that my freedom is the unique

> foundation of values and that nothing, absolutely nothing, justifies me in adopting this or that particular value, this or that particular scale of values...My freedom is anguished at being the foundation of values while itself without foundation.[39]

Consequently the next step beyond death and freedom which the existential hero must take is toward the courage to be as oneself which manifests itself in the creation of values by which to live.

In The Sun Also Rises we see an example of this attempt to discover and sustain values when Jake discusses philosophies which have all sooner or later dissolved into the void which underlies his life. Jake puts it this way:

> Enjoying living was learning to get your money's worth. The world was a good place to buy in. It seemed like a fine philosophy. In five years, I thought, it will seem just as silly as all the other fine philosophies I had.
>
> Perhaps that wasn't true though. Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about.[40]

By what values, then, do Jake and the other characters attempt to live by? What makes them existential?

Jake lives, after the war, as an expatriate reporter in Paris. His life is scarred by a condition of impotence which was the result of a wound sustained while flying over the Italian front. Jake, like Frederick Henry, Nick Adams, and the others has been wounded by the war and like the others has made a separate peace. His life is characterized by an

attempt to keep things simple; to keep his perception clean in order that he may clearly understand his feelings. This desire for simplicity rather than complexity is also seen in "Soldier's Home" when Krebs says at the end of the story that "he had tried so to keep his life from being complicated... He wanted his life to go smoothly."[41] I believe that this concept of simplicity is one of the key values which Jake and the other characters develop as part of their post war philosophy. This concept of the simple versus the complex is, as John Killinger notes, "similar to the divisions made by many of the existentialists. It corresponds to the vital-comic antithesis of Kierkegaard, to the authentic-unauthentic of Heidegger, and to the sincerity-bad faith dialectic of Sartre."[42] The meaning of an unauthentic life or a life lived in bad faith is given by William Barrett in speaking of Heidegger's concept of "the one." He states:

> None of us is yet even a Self. We are each simply one among many; a name among the names of our schoolfellows, our fellow citizens, our community. The everyday public quality of our existence Heidegger calls "the one." The One is the impersonal and public creature whom each of us is even before he is an I, a real I. One has such-and-such a position in life, one is expected to behave in such-and-such a manner... So long as we remain in the womb of this externalized and public existence we are spared the terror and the dignity of becoming a Self.[43]

Jake, Bill, Brett, Count Meppopopolous, and Harris have all broken free from the mass of men and are now attempting to create authentic selves. As stated, the key to this authentic being is simplicity. These people must return to a simpler system of values and a simpler way of knowing those values

because the war in all its complexity had the ironic effect of returning existence back to its basic situation of being and nothingness. We are reminded of the passage quoted earlier from All Quiet On the Western Front with regard to the effect civilization's complexity had on Remarque. He stated:

> It must be all lies and of no account when the culture of a thousand years could not prevent this stream of blood being poured out.[44]

What Jake and the other existential heroes share in the alienation of the separate peace is a rejection of the moral and social complexities of civilization and a return to an epistemology based on senses and feelings. This idea is stated near the end of the book when Brett tells Jake about her feelings. She says:

> You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch...It's sort of what we have instead of God.[45]

In other words the source of values is no longer to be found beyond man's existence, but rather, for these people, values must come from their own senses and feelings. So we find in Hemingway the rejection of sentimentality and intellectualism because these elements can only complicate and pollute the basic senses. Evidence indicating this placement of values on one's own senses and the rejection of false emotion is found in the scene when Brett, Jake, and the Count are having champagne together. Brett has told Jake earlier that the Count is "quite one of us." In this scene we see why. The Count has been in war and revolutions and shows the scars to prove

it. He explains his values to Jake in the following:

> You see Mr. Barnes, it is because I have lived very much that now I can enjoy everything so well. Don't you find it like that... That is the secret. You must get to know the values.[46]

Brett then asks a significant question:

> "Doesn't anything ever happen to your values?" Brett asked. "No. Not any more."[47]

At dinner Jake comments that "food had an excellent place in the Count's values. So did wine."[48] The Count is one of them because he has made the journey from the unauthentic to the authentic. His values are simple, and he maintains that basic simplicity of sense and feeling by keeping free of unnecessary emotional complications. When Brett suggests that they toast someone with the champagne the Count has brought he tells her:

> This wine is too good for toast drinking, my dear. You don't want to mix emotions up with a wine like that.[49]

The values inherent in an authentic life are also represented in the aficionado, a person who is passionate about bullfights. It is interesting to note that Americans were not considered good candidates for bullfighting. Jake, however, was an exception. When he meets Montoya, the hotel owner, Jake comments that:

> He always smiled as though bullfighting were a very special secret between the two of us; a rather shocking but really very deep secret that we knew about. He always smiled as though there were something lewd about the secret to outsiders, but that it was something that we understood.[50]

When Jake is introduced to some other aficionados he describes their reaction:

> They were always very polite at first, and it amused them very much that I should be an American. Somehow it was taken for granted that an American could not have aficion. He might simulate it or confuse it with excitement, but he could not really have it. When they saw that I had aficion, and there was no password, no set questions that could bring it out, rather it was a sort of oral spiritual examination...they wanted to touch you to make certain.[51]

What unites the aficionado is their understanding that in the ritual of the bullfight existence is reduced to its basic elements; a man, alone, confronting death, armed only with his courage, Hemingway describes the philosophy of the aficionado in Death in the Afternoon:

> They know death is the unescapable reality, the one thing any man may be sure of; the only security; that it transcends all modern comforts and that with it you do not need a bathtub in every American home, not when you have it, do you need the radio. They think a great deal about death and when they have a religion they have one which believes that life is much shorter than death. Having this feeling they take an intelligent interest in death and when they can see it being given, avoided, refused, and accepted in the afternoon for a nominal price of admission they pay their money and go to the bullring, continuing to go even when...they are most often artistically disappointed and emotionally defrauded.[52]

In the final sentence Hemingway comments on the authentic and emotional disappointment that the aficionado feels at a bad bullfight without aficion rather than an authentic one. Pedro Romero is a bullfighter with aficion. He does not defraud the aficionado. "Romero," says Jake, "had the old thing, the holding

of his purity of line through the maximum of exposure."[53] Jake says the other bullfighters "twisted themselves like corkscrews, their elbows raised...to give a faked look of danger."[54] We get the feeling from this that complexity is perhaps a characteristic of the unauthentic and cowardly life. Romero, however, avoids all of these complex movements. He "never made any contortions, always it was straight and pure and natural in line."[55] Romero further demonstrates his style and courage through a successful performance in the bullring after having been badly beaten up by Cohn. In other words, what the aficionado appreciates and what Romero provides is the union of simplicity, style, and courage in the face of death. The man who understands the courage to be as oneself must perform in this way. Not to do so would threaten the values which he lived by and would lead to an unauthentic life. Seen in this perspective the bullfight is a dramatization of the courage to be as oneself and manifests the values of simplicity and courage which are the key elements for an authentic life.

But, in contrast, The Sun Also Rises contains portraits of unauthenticity. Early in the book Robert Cohn's friends, the Braddocks, are presented as boring, foolish people, Jake says that Mrs. Braddock "in the excitement of talking French was liable to have no idea of what she was saying."[56] Later in the novel, when Jake and Bill Gorton are on their way to Spain they meet some American tourists and a group of Americans on a pilgrimage to Rome. These people are also presented as examples of unauthenticity. The American tourist , in speaking of the

pilgrims, says to Jake:

> They've got seven cars of them from Dayton, Ohio. They've been on pilgrimage to Rome, and now they're going to Biarritz and Lourdes.[57]

But the American is little better off than the pilgrims. His conversation with Jake and Bill is a babble about travelling while you're young and seeing America first. Even some bullfighters are presented as being "commercial". Jake says that the bullfighters with aficion stayed at Montoya's hotel while the commercial bullfighters stayed once, but did not come back.

The greater counterpoint to the authentic life, however, is Robert Cohn. Cohn is an ironic figure in the book. His suffering is a fantasy in which he indulges, and is nothing like the real suffering which Jake endures. Cohn understands nothing about the anguish of freedom and the necessity to become a Self. It is because he does not understand the conditions of existence that he behaves badly. He lives with the romantic ideas of going to South America and refuses to believe that Brett would marry someone she didn't love. Throughout the novel Cohn moons after Brett like a lovesick adolescent because he cannot believe his short time with Brett did not mean anything. Brett finally tells Jake that she hates Cohn's suffering. She hates Cohn's suffering because it is not real. It is a suffering based on what Cohn thinks he should feel rather than what is truly felt.

In The Sun Also Rises, then, we have a portrayal of the courage to be as oneself, a man standing alone in freedom

attempting to create values while confronting the emptiness which underlies his being. I have tried to show that these values are, of necessity, simple values based on sense and feeling rather than on the complexities of intellectual speculation. However, although a man may, by asserting the courage to be as oneself, create an authentic self, the problem still remains of integrating that Self back into the world.

In the works of Hemingway discussed so far we have first seen the stripping away of the unauthentic self; the movement away from the one like many about which Heidegger speaks. In The Sun Also Rises Hemingway defines, in Jake and the others we have discussed, the nature of the authentic self and this definition parallels Tillich's concept of the courage to be as oneself. In the works which will now be discussed, I believe Hemingway goes beyond the courage to be as oneself to what Tillich calls the courage to be as part.

The "courage to be as part" is a higher form of the courage to be because, while demanding the courage to be as oneself it also demands the participation of this self in the world. I quote again the passage about the self of Tillich's:

> But the self is self only because it has a world, a structured universe, to which it belongs and from which it is separated at the same time. Self and world are correlated, and so are individualization and participation. For this is just what participation means: being a part of something from which one is, at the same time separated.[58]

It is this attempt at participation which Hemingway discusses in For Whom the Bell Tolls. Robert Jordon, an American pro-

fessor, joins the Communist forces as a dynamiter during the Spanish Civil War. At the beginning of his service Jordon found a great fulfillment in his participation and seemed on his way to a commitment to Communism. He describes his feeling as a one of communion in the following:

> You felt, in spite of a bureaucracy and inefficiency and party strife something that was like the feeling you expected to have and did not have when you made your first communion. It was a feeling of consecration to a duty toward all of the oppressed of the world... 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.[59]

However, after a year of fighting, Jordon's sense of communion becomes corrupted and begins to dissolve in the violence and brutality of the war. Jordon gradually rejects communism as a method of achieving the courage to be a part because he cannot believe that the collective has more reality than the individual. The main cause of this force which prevents Jordon's commitment to Communism is the problem of guilt. Jordon, because he is part of a group, must now not only accept personal guilt, but also he must accept responsibility for actions committed by the group. The only way for Jordon to alleviate his guilt would be to rationalize the killing as a political necessity. Although he tries, he is unable to do so. He says:

> I believe in the people and their right to govern themselves as they wish. But you mustn't believe in killing, he told himself. You must do it as a necessity but you must not believe in it. If you believe in it the whole thing is wrong.
> But how many do you suppose you have killed?...
> More than twenty. And of those how many were

> real fascists? Two that I am sure of...I have to keep you straight in your head. Because if you are not absolutely straight in your head you have no right to do the things you do for all of them are crimes and no man has the right to take another man's life unless it is to prevent something worse happening to other people.[60]

But in another conversation with himself Jordon admits his pleasure in killing. He says:

> Stop making dubious literature about the Berbers and the old Iberians and admit that you have liked to kill as all who are soldiers by choice have enjoyed it at some time whether they lie about it or not...You have been tainted with it a long time now.[61]

It is because of this taint of guilt from too much killing that Jordon must reject communist ideology. Although he desires to participate in the world he cannot do so to the extent called for by the Communist collective because he cannot place the reality of the collective before that of the individual. Tillich states that:

> A collectivist society is one in which the existence and life of the individual are determined by the existence and institutions of the group. In collectivist societies the courage of the individual is the courage to be as part.[62]

What Hemingway is saying in <u>For Whom the Bell Tolls</u>, and which is consistent with existentialism is that the life of the individual with its plenitude of concrete experience transcends a rationally devised political and social system. The participation that Jordon seeks is indeed one of brotherhood with his fellow men, but it is not the brotherhood of communism. Perhaps the key to the kind of participation that Jordon seeks is in the sermon by John Donne from which the title

of the book is taken. The key part of the sermon is in the last few lines:

> ...any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde: and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.[63]

This sermon echoes Meursault's statement near the end of The Stranger. I quote:

> Every man alive was privileged; there was only one class of men, the privileged class. All alike would be condemned to die one day...[64]

The kind of brotherhood which Jordon discovers is the union of those in the existential situation. It is a brotherhood which maintains both the courage to be as oneself and the courage to be as part. But the courage to be as part is not a political or societal participation, rather it is a realization of a participation in the human condition; a condition which contains all experience; love, death, courage, fear, and cowardice. Indeed, the fact that Jordon fights, now, with the poorly organized guerrillas reflects his attitude toward the regimentation and anonymity of large scale military operation. The events Jordon experiences in the mountains, his love for Marie, the death of Sordo, the cowardice of Pablo and the courage of Anselmo are meaningful not because they are means to a political end, but because they are the fundamental elements of human experience. It is the meaningfulness of these experiences in themselves that Jordon must affirm. With this type of affirmation then, Jordon maintains the existential position in a more encompassing way than the earlier Hemingway characters who were concerned with

the problem of developing a self which could live the existential condition. Jordon understands the condition and has developed the courage to be a self. The problem was to develop the positive aspect of this condition, namely, the courage to participate with others in the same situation and to see it as the basis of an authentic life for all men.

With this discovery of the self and the realization that what one shares with others is the existential condition Hemingway has found the basis for participation. In the movement from the courage to be as oneself to the courage to be as part Hemingway has elevated the existential view, which was before only an individual process, to a universal position. And courage is the force which enables the individual to move from self assertion to participation.

So far then we have discussed the courage to be as oneself and the courage to be as part. In the former, courage is called for to create an authentic self after the realization that one is a being toward death and therefore potentially free. In the latter courage is necessary to move this self back into a participation with one's fellow beings.

But what is the source of courage itself? Tillich states that courage is rooted in the power of being and that this power of being "is greater than the power of oneself and the power of one's world."[65] This means that the power of being has a transcendent quality because "religion," states Tillich, "is the state of being grasped by the power of being itself."[66]

This brings us to the religious aspect of Hemingway's work the key to which is found, I believe, in the concept of courage as it relates to the power of being. Consequently, I think Hemingway's work may to some degree reflect a theistic existential position of the type presented by Tillich.

In the final section of his book, The Courage To Be, Tillich discusses the courage to be as the key to being itself. He states:

> The courage to be in all its forms has, by itself, revelatory character. It shows the nature of being, it shows that the self affirmation of being is an affirmation that overcomes negation...If we speak of the power of being-itself we indicate that being affirms itself against nonbeing... nonbeing drives being out of its seclusion, it forces it to affirm itself dynamically.[67]

The courage to affirm being in the face of negation runs throughout Hemingway's work. Hemingway's characters overcome the negation of death, the negation of bad faith, meaninglessness and guilt.

Perhaps the purest expression of the courage to be as the key to being is in The Old Man and the Sea. Santiago's ordeal is the story of a man's assertion of a type of courage which transcends defeat and asserts the power of being itself. Early in the book it is said of the old man that "he was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride."[68] The old man can maintain true pride and remain humble because he understands that the key to man's being is courage. Throughout the novel Santiago's

courage is stressed as in the following:

> Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated.[69]

After he has hooked the fish Santiago thinks to himself:

> But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures.[70]

Then near the end of the novel is the often quoted statement:

> But man is not made for defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated.[71]

The Old Man and the Sea seems to correspond to the role of courage as Tillich defines it. Tillich states that "courage participates in the self-affirmation of being in itself, it participates in the power of being which prevails against nonbeing...In the act of the courage to be the power of being is effective in us, whether we recognize it or not. Every act of courage is a manifestation of the ground of being...[72]

Santiago remains undefeated, even though the fish is lost to the sharks, because of his courage. For Santiago there is nothing else. Courage is the source of a man's actions in life and it is the essence of participation in being. To maintain courage is to affirm being and the affirmation of being is a religious act. Tillich states:

> There are no valid arguments for the existence of God, but there are acts of courage in which we affirm the power of being, whether we know it or not...Courage has revealing power, the courage to be is the key to being itself.[73]

I think the above quotation expresses Hemingway's overall philosophy of existence. What matters in existence is not

the quality of a man's reason, but the quality of being. A man's values must stem from feeling not from speculation, for only by being in touch with one's feelings can a man have some real certainty about his actions. For Hemingway and for the existentialists, feeling is the reality of existence and courage is the assertion of being. Courage, for Jake, Jordon, and Santiago, in all its manifestations, is an assertion of the power of being and the power of being is the source of the religious impulse.

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Santiago remains undefeated, even though the fish is lost to the sharks, because of his courage. For Santiago there is nothing else. The essence of participation in life is courage. Courage is the source of the authentic man's actions. And in these acts of courage the power of being is manifested. To maintain courage is to affirm being and the affirmation of being is a religious act because it manifests the power of being itself. Tillich states:

> There are no valid arguments for the existence of God, but there are acts of courage in which we affirm the power of being, whether we know it or not...Courage has revealing power, the courage to be is the key to being itself.[73]

I think the above quotation expresses the essence of Hemingway's philosophy. What matters in existence is not the quality of a man's reason, but the quality of his being. And the quality of being is dependent upon the assertion of courage to overcome the negations of guilt, meaninglessness, and death. When a man grounds himself in courage, he gains individual authenticity because he has accepted the responsibility of his existence. Secondly, he gains participation in the human community because all men, knowingly or unknowingly, are struggling with the courage to be. Finally, through participation in the courage to be a man gains a religious or transcendent participation because the assertion of courage is also an assertion of the power of being. Courage, for Jake, Jordon, and Santiago, in all its manifestations, is, ultimately, an assertion of the power of being and the power of being is the source of the religious impulse. For Hemingway and the existentialists this inexplicable being and its assertion through courage are the cornerstones of man's life.

FOOTNOTES

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[10]Marjorie Grene, Introduction to Existentialism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 16, quoting from Soren Kierkegaard papers, Vol. VII, Part 1, Div. A, No. 182.

[11]Friedrich Nietzche, "Truth and Falsity in Their Ultramoral Sense", The Existential Tradition, ed. Nino Languilli (Garden City: Doubleday Co., 1971), p. 76.

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[13]Jean Paul Sartre, Nausea, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Corporation, 1964), p. 134.

[14]Sartre, Nausea, p. 156.

[15]Grene, Introduction to Existentialism, p. 53.

[16]Jean Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism", The Existential Tradition, ed. Nino Languilli (Garden City: Doubleday Co., 1971), p. 399.

[17]Erich Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1921), p. 160.

[18]Ernest Hemingway, "A Way You'll Never Be", from The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1927), p. 82.

[19]Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front, p. 16.

[20]Barrett, Irrational Man, p. 63.

[21]Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods, p. 14.

[22]Hemingway, "A Clean Well Lighted Place", from The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories, p. 32.

[23]Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1932), p. 2.

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[30]Hemingway, "Soldiers Home", from In Our Time, p. 94.

[31]Hemingway, "Soldiers Home", from In Our Time, p. 99.

[32]Hemingway, "In Another Country", from The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories, p. 67.

[33]Hemingway, "In Another Country", from The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories, p. 67.

[34]Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1929), p. 13.

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[45]Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 287.

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[47]Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 136.

[48]Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 134.

[49]Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 136.

[50]Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 191.

[51]Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 192.

[52]Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon, p. 266.

[53]Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 222.

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[55]Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 222.

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[70]Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea, p. 66.

[71]Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea, p. 103.

[72]Tillich, The Courage to Be, p. 181.

[73]Tillich, The Courage to Be, p. 181.

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