

A SPORTING WAY: A STUDY OF HUNTING AND FISHING  
IN SOME OF THE WRITING OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to trace the development of hunting and fishing as themes over a thirty year period in some of the writing of Ernest Hemingway and to analyze his protagonists' attitudes in terms of the American Indian and British traditions of hunting and fishing.

In the writing during the 1920s, the Hemingway protagonist engages in an Indian-like preparation for the fishing trip, displays respect for animals, accepts responsibility for his actions, yet shows a British concern for the method by which the fish are caught.

In Green Hills of Africa and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," the protagonists take no part in the preparations for the hunt, accept the protection of the professional hunter, and seek the trophy.

In the writing of the 1950s, the Hemingway protagonist follows the American Indian tradition by accepting responsibility for the preparation and outcome of the enterprise, and by entering a mystical relationship with the animals; in this final phase the protagonist also becomes a teacher rather than a competitor.

## INTRODUCTION

When Ernest Hemingway was three, he went fishing in Michigan with his father for the first time. By the time he was twelve, Hemingway was a master shot and proficient at dressing game. From his father he learned the rules of outdoor life, how to build a fire, mount a bird and make bullets in a mould. Dr. Hemingway communicated to his son an enjoyment of hunting and fishing that lasted Ernest Hemingway all his life. The doctor also had a "compassion for wounded animals. . . and a belief that God had provided wild game for the nurture and enjoyment of mankind. He shot all kinds of edible animals for the cooking pot."<sup>1</sup> Hemingway's respect for the beauty of nature and for the dignity of animals may be seen as the result of his father's early training; yet as he matured, Hemingway's attitude toward hunting and fishing -- expressed in his substantial works of prose on these subjects -- was not based solely upon his father's lessons. In his writing on field sports, in fact, Hemingway or his protagonist usually expressed a philosophy which reflected two different traditions, that of the American Indian and that of the British aristocrat.

Ernest Hemingway first became acquainted with Indian methods during the boyhood summers he spent in

Michigan in contact with Indians of the Ojibwa or Ojibway tribe. These Ojibways, like other primitive people, were driven by primal instinct and killed animals only "to obtain food, clothing and other materials."<sup>2</sup> Since hunting and fishing were means of survival for American Indians, boys often were required to prove their skill in both fields as part of their initiation into manhood. In most cases, however, hunting and fishing were cooperative enterprises. "These drives required all the able-bodied men of a community and sometimes women as well. The game taken was normally divided among all the participants although the particular individual who killed a large animal might be entitled to certain parts of its anatomy."<sup>3</sup> Because Indians respected the souls of all animals, they prepared to kill them by undergoing rites of purification. This process of personal purification was common to most primitive people. Sir James Frazer for example, reported a particularly harsh ceremony: "the Indians of Nootka Sound prepared themselves for catching whales by observing a fast for a week, during which they ate very little, bathed in the water several times a day, sang, and rubbed their bodies, limbs, and faces with shells and bushes till they looked as if they had been severly torn with briars."<sup>4</sup>

Primitive men generally respected the souls of animals, but also attributed feelings and intelligence to all living creatures. Therefore, the primitive hunter believed that whenever he killed an animal he became exposed to the vengeance of the animal's spirit.<sup>5</sup> Members of tribes who depended on fish for their subsistence attributed these same characteristics to fish.<sup>6</sup> Members of the Ojibwa tribe, specifically, treated plants and animals as if they were persons.<sup>7</sup> "So far as animals are concerned, when bears were sought out in their dens in the spring they were addressed, asked to come out so that they could be killed, and an apology was offered to them."<sup>8</sup> For the American Indian, hunting and fishing were necessities which demanded the cooperation of all members of the tribe as well as respect for the animals they killed.

The hunting and fishing traditions of the British aristocrat differed sharply from that of the American Indian. Until the ninth century, hunting and fishing in England were available to the average man. But under the Saxons the right to hunt was restricted to the dignitaries of the state; at the same time, hunting became part of the education of a nobleman.<sup>9</sup> Hunters in England were therefore members of the aristocracy who owned the land and the game on it. Others could hunt and fish only at the invitation or with the permission of the landowner,

who retained the right to consume or sell all game killed on his property.<sup>10</sup> The British tradition also distinguished between hunting and shooting. Hunting was carried on either on horseback or on foot with the game driven and killed by dogs or by servants of the hunt. Shooting was done on foot with the game driven by servants and killed by the sportsman.<sup>11</sup> Whether the sportsman hunted or shot, either sport involved great numbers of servants who assumed the responsibility for preparation, for driving the game, and for the removal of the dead animals.<sup>12</sup> Because game had to be carefully managed to assure good sport, the sportsman attached great significance to the method by which the sport was carried on and to the implements of the hunting or fishing excursion, rather than to the numbers of slain animals. Members of the British aristocracy were not motivated to hunt and fish by necessity, but believed that field sports provided a means of preserving "the combined advantages of the mens sana in corpore sano - of keeping up manhood, and of maintaining the physical energies and capacities of the human race at their highest standard."<sup>13</sup> In time, the trophy came to represent the physical proof of these qualities.

Usually Hemingway's attitudes toward hunting and fishing resembled those of most American Indians, but

in some of his writing he or his protagonist hunts and fishes in a manner consistent with the British tradition. This paper attempts to trace the development of hunting and fishing as themes in some of the writing of Ernest Hemingway and to analyze the protagonists' attitudes in terms of the American Indian and British traditions of hunting and fishing.

Hemingway's subject may be divided into three periods. In his earlier writing during the 1920s, Hemingway's characters customarily engage in an Indian-like preparation for fishing trips and display an appreciation and respect for the animals they catch as well. The characters are all willing to accept responsibility for their actions and wish to share their experiences with others of like interests. Although all of the fish which are caught are eaten, however, the characters show a British concern for the method by which the fish are caught.

Hemingway's work during the 1930s belongs to a different category. In Green Hills of Africa and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" Hemingway and Macomber, like members of the British aristocracy, take no part in the preparation for the hunt. They also know that in times of difficulty the professional hunter, either Pop or Wilson, will take command. Both Hemingway and Macomber

are motivated by the British desire for the trophy; yet while Hemingway viewed the trophy as evidence of his superiority, Macomber might have seen the buffalo head as proof of having conquered his fear and of passing the initiation rite into manhood.

In his later writing the Hemingway protagonist accepts most of the responsibility for the preparation and outcome of the enterprise. Here the American Indian tradition is most obvious. The characters not only treat animals with respect and love, but they also enter a mystical relationship with the animals in which the man's and the animal's spirit come into direct contact. Like the American Indian, the sportsman begs pardon of the animal he has killed. In these later works, the Hemingway protagonist, withdrawn from competition, passes on his knowledge to a less experienced hunter or fisherman. Secure in his mastery of the skills of hunting and fishing, the character becomes an observer looking back on his younger days as a hunter and fisherman in the spirit of Thoreau:

I love the wild not less than the good. The wildness and adventure that are in fishing still recommended it to me. I like sometimes to take rank hold on life and spend my day more as the animals do. Perhaps I have owed to this employment and to hunting, when quite young, my closest acquaintance with Nature. . . Fishermen, hunters, woodchoppers, and others, spending their lives in the fields and woods, in a peculiar sense a part

of Nature themselves, are often in a more favorable mood for observing her, in the intervals of their pursuits, than philosophers or poets even, who approach her with expectation.<sup>14</sup>

Although Hemingway's hunting and fishing stories may be divided into three categories, there is a consistent pattern which unites all of them. Derek Savage has suggested that "the Hemingway world is one of mechanical repetition, and in the series of Hemingway's nine or ten books there is no inward continuity to keep pace with the chronological sequence. It is therefore impossible to consider Hemingway as if there were some coherently developing pattern running through his progress as a writer."<sup>15</sup> I want to suggest that the design which unites all of Hemingway's heroes is the characters' adherence to a system of personal principles by which they judge their own behavior. Delmore Schwartz would seem to agree with this vision of a consistent pattern: "To be admirable, from the standpoint of this morality, is to admit defeat, to be a good sportsman, to accept pain without an outcry, to adhere strictly to the rules of the game and to play the game with great skill. . . It is a sportsman-like morality, or equally, the morality of sportsmanship."<sup>16</sup> To hunt and to fish in a sporting way is to adhere to the discipline of the code. The theme is honor and that universal abstraction is often expressed in terms of the concrete realities

of fishing and hunting. Man's brutality to man and his brutality to nature are the enemies of honor. Killing an animal cleanly is right and graceful; killing an animal without discipline is wrong and brutal.

# I

## FISHING FOR INNER PEACE

Hemingway first communicated his preoccupation with the proper method of hunting and fishing to a mass audience when he joined the Toronto Star as a reporter in 1919. Since his articles for the Toronto Star are not fiction, they offer an opportunity to observe Hemingway's philosophy toward hunting and fishing without regard to such problems of technique as characterization, maintenance of tone, and necessity of dramatization. "Fight with a 20-Pound Trout," for example, proposes some practical tips on catching trout and makes use of the metaphor of battle for fishing. Hemingway used similar metaphors in most of his later writing about hunting and fishing. "The Best Rainbow Trout Fishing in the World" emphasizes another element of the challenge of fishing when Hemingway mentions the danger of fishing the Soo River. (In this article, too, he acknowledges the Ojibwayan fishermen as one source of fishing information.) In "Off the Spanish Coast - It's Tuna," Hemingway also writes about the rewards of successfully meeting the challenge of fishing. Tuna fishing is

a back-sickening, sinew-straining, man-sized job even with a rod that looks like a hoe handle. But if you land a big tuna after a six-hour fight, fight him man against fish when your muscles are nauseated with the unceasing strain, and finally bring him up alongside the boat, green-blue and silver in the lazy ocean, you will be purified and be able to enter

unabashed into the presence of the very elder gods and they will make you welcome.<sup>17</sup>

Tuna fishing is thus seen as an Indian-like test of manhood, but unlike the Indian, the fisherman does not attempt to purify himself before he fishes, but rather automatically becomes purified when he lands the fish.

Three other articles reveal Hemingway's annoyance and even anger about British methods of fishing and hunting. "Fishing for Trout in a Sporting Way" begins with an attack on the advertising industry for duping the Canadian public into believing that fishing in a sporting way requires expensive gear. Hemingway also dismisses the myth of the purity of fly fishing, thus displaying an Indian-like concern for practicality. Sometimes flies work but at other times, he points out, worms, grubs, and grasshoppers work even better. He offers the novice at trout fishing a set of practical rules including advice on the classic way to catch grasshoppers. The tone of the piece is that of the serious, expert anti-snob.

"Trout Fishing on the Continent," written after Hemingway had gone to Europe as an overseas correspondent, contains an amusing section on the problems the tourist finds in attempting to fish in Europe. Here is a good example of Hemingway's dislike for the undemocratic attitude of the landed aristocracy:

In Germany the great difficulty is to get permission to fish. All the fishing water is rented by the year to individuals. If you want to fish you have first to get permission of the man who has rented the fishing. Then you go back to the township and get a permission, and then you finally get the permission of the owner of the land.

If you have only two weeks to fish, it will probably take about all of it to get these different permissions. A much easier way is simply to carry a rod with you and fish when you see a good stream. If anyone complains, begin handing out marks. . . . If this policy is pursued far enough the complaints will eventually cease and you will be allowed to continue fishing.<sup>18</sup>

In yet another dispatch from Europe, "Hunting on the Continent," Hemingway distinguishes between British and Continental hunting and shooting. To Hemingway the British method is not sport as it should be. He prefers hunting on the continent, in which carefully enforced hunting regulations, closed seasons and land kept in timber have kept game from being exterminated; Americans and Canadians, he suggests, might heed the lesson. This article describes hunting possibilities for the average man and yet makes it apparent that to the twenty-year-old Hemingway the most worthy animals of the hunt are the largest and most dangerous.

Fishing and hunting are of great concern to the young Nick Adams in Hemingway's short story, "The Last Good Country," which was published posthumously but presumably written early in his career. The occurrences

in this story closely parallel an incident in Hemingway's boyhood. As his older sister Marcelline relates the events, Ernest and his younger sister, Sunny, were fishing when Ernest shot a rare blue heron in breach of all game laws.<sup>19</sup> Not only did Ernest commit this offense, but he was observed in the act by the game warden's son and paid a fine which closed the case. In the story, however, the character Nick Adams is forced to leave home when he is pursued by two game wardens.

Set in the Michigan woods of Hemingway's youth, the short story is infused with suggestions of the Indian tradition of hunting and fishing. Nick and his sister (whom he calls Littless) are isolated from the other members of their family by emotion as well as by distance. "She and Nick loved each other and they did not love the others. They always thought of everyone else in the family as the others."<sup>20</sup> Littless accompanies Nick when he leaves not because she must but because she wants to prevent greater difficulties for him. Forced to climb many hills and to make their way through overgrown roads, and finally through the bad tree slashings, they arrive in a camp which is marked by Indian firestones. To provide for himself and his sister, Nick must fish and hunt. Like the American Indian, Nick is motivated by necessity. His ability to

manipulate the environment constitutes a test which Nick passes by demonstrating his knowledge of terrain and his ability to make a safe and comfortable camp. Nick even wishes he were an Indian. "You should have been an Indian, he thought. It would have saved you a lot of trouble."<sup>21</sup>

In the wilderness, Nick undergoes a spiritual experience. The woods make him feel "the way I ought to feel in church."<sup>22</sup> Nick expresses an Indian-like concern for the beauty and grandeur of the unmolested forest, "the last good country there is left."<sup>23</sup> He also demonstrates his respect for the more lowly forms of animal life: "This was the third year he had found bait at this same place and he had always replaced the log so that it was as he had found it."<sup>24</sup> Like the American Indian, Nick is conscious of not wanting to waste any part of the trout he has caught and of avoiding unnecessary cruelty. "He's pretty big for the skillet, he thought. But I've hurt him and I have to kill him."<sup>25</sup> Littleless shares Nick's compassion for animals and stops Nick from killing more grouse than they can eat. The ritualistic disposal of the parts of the grouse is reminiscent of the American Indian. Because Nick loves his place in the woods, he has never shared it with anyone else before. Although

the stream contains large numbers of fish, too many people could deplete the supply. Game laws are disregarded throughout the story because Nick believes that if the individual knows enough about the game, the proper balance in nature can be maintained without laws.

The act of fishing for trout fills Nick with joy. "They can talk all they want about playing them but people that have never horsed them out don't know what they can make you feel. What if it only lasts that long? It's the time when there's no give at all and then they start to come and what they do to you on the way up and into the air."<sup>26</sup> Nick may savor this fishing experience, but the effect of the trip as a whole is not exhilarating. "I have to think about things now the rest of my life."<sup>27</sup> Nick must accept responsibility for his actions.

The Nick Adams of "Big Two-Hearted River" is far different from the Nick Adams of "The Last Good Country." Now Nick is older; having lived through the traumatic experience of the war, he has lost confidence in himself and withdrawn into a world in which he can feel little human emotion. This trip must be a solitary one, because only when he is alone can he know what he truly feels, not what he is supposed to feel.

Nick's trip to the Big Two-Hearted River is a

ceremonial journey to find peace, confidence and recovery. As Robert Penn Warren has suggested of Hemingway, Nick apparently believes that civilization, because of the basic inhumanity of men, is evil.<sup>28</sup> Nick passes through a burned-over village which is symbolic of civilization. Like the black grasshopper on the plain, he bears the sooty mark of "living in the burned-over land."<sup>29</sup> Finally things have been left behind except for the cans of pork and beans and spaghetti which he carries and for which he thinks he must apologize: "I've got a right to eat this kind of stuff, if I'm willing to carry it."<sup>30</sup>

The next phase in the journey takes place when Nick, exhausted from his long walk, forces himself to make camp. He has the discipline of the code; he imposes order. "Nothing could touch him. . . He was there, in the good place. He was in his home where he had made it."<sup>31</sup> As William Bysshe Stein notes: "Imitating a sacred rite of construction, the hero erects his tent in a manner ordained by custom and tradition."<sup>32</sup> Like the younger Nick Adams of "The Last Good Country," the older Nick makes camp as one of the last steps in an Indian-like ceremony of preparation for fishing.

Just as Nick demonstrates his ability to make order

out of chaos in camp, he is able to pass one aspect of the test by demonstrating his knowledge of angling skills. The grasshoppers, symbolic of destructive elements in the first section of the story, now are put to a positive use as fishing bait. Just as these wilderness grasshoppers have not been affected by civilization, the wilderness river itself symbolizes pure and undefiled nature. Here Nick savors the pleasures of fishing. His pace is slow and as he wades the stream, his tensions dissipate in the "clear flowing current."<sup>33</sup>

Like the American Indian, Nick is not concerned about the quantity of fish he catches. He needs to catch only a few to restore some of his confidence. "Nick had one good trout. He did not care about getting many trout."<sup>34</sup> At the same time that Nick sees the trout, he achieves a kind of communion which unleashes true emotion. "Nick's heart tightened as the trout moved. He felt all the old feeling."<sup>35</sup>

But in the peaceful environment of the river, there is a swamp. "In the swamp fishing was a tragic adventure. Nick did not want it."<sup>36</sup> The tangle of undergrowth and the necessity of keeping to the ground are reminders of the war and brutality. Nick returns to camp. "There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp"<sup>37</sup>; sooner or later, he would have to return to civilization.

Nick has absorbed strength and confidence from his solitary contact with the river and fishing; purified and refreshed, he is able to accept the reality of the tragic as part of the human situation.

Originally published in 1926, The Sun Also Rises offers the next chronological opportunity to examine fishing experience in Hemingway's writing. Both the trip to the Big-Two Hearted River and to the Irati River of Spain in The Sun Also Rises well illustrate the effectiveness of fishing as a means of escape from the problems of living in society, and the degree to which the hero's proficiency at the sport relates to his ability to face life. Like Nick Adams, Jake Barnes bears scars from the war -- in Jake's case, physical impotence and subsequent psychological frustration. Since the war has been over for several years, however, Jake has had longer to live with his condition than Nick, as Jake undertakes his journey not alone but with the sympathetic Bill Gorton.

Jake and Bill Gorton, sharing an interest in fishing, are members of a select group. Superficially, this trip to Burguete is a diversion. On a deeper level, it is a ceremonial journey to find order and respite from the frustrations of the life of the Montparnasse crowd. Like Nick, Jake Barnes and Bill Gorton have travelled miles by

train and on foot as part of an Indian-like preparation for fishing. Passing through the "brown, heat-baked mountains" symbolic of the lives they leave behind, they look toward the mountains of Burguete. "They were wooded and there were clouds coming down from them."<sup>38</sup> By the time they start fishing, the clouds have disappeared.

Bill and Jake use different methods of fishing for trout. Jake is practical and uses worms; Bill insists like the British angler that flies are the only proper bait for trout. "If they won't take a fly I'll just flick it around."<sup>39</sup> The narrator describes only Jake's fishing experience and it is apparent that for Jake, the sport answers the need for a physical challenge. "When I started to pull up I felt that I had one and brought him, fighting and bending the rod almost double, out of the boiling water at the foot of the falls, and swung him up and onto the dam."<sup>40</sup> The washing of the trout symbolizes Jake's immediate though temporary purification. With ceremonial attention to detail, Jake

took the trout ashore, washed them in the cold, smoothly heavy water above the dam, and then picked some ferns and packed them all in the bag, three trout on a layer of ferns, then another layer of ferns, then three more trout, and then covered them with ferns.<sup>41</sup>

For Jake Barnes the peace and tranquility of fishing do not last long. In the good-natured kidding between

Bill and Jake, the reality of Jake's impotence intrudes. Jake can place the trout in the ferns, but his contact with the perfections of nature is more limited than Nick's. Jake's wounds bring more severe consequences. In returning to undefiled nature it is possible for man to cleanse himself, but the experience is neither complete nor permanent.

## II

### TROPHY HUNTING

During the 1930s Hemingway's ego was at a low point because the critics had received Death in the Afternoon with something less than acclaim. Fishing and hunting were familiar antidotes for Hemingway's damaged confidence. In these field sports where competence could be measured by the size of the trophy, Hemingway knew that he could achieve concrete results. Yet his participation in these sports was influenced by the generally bitter attitude toward people which permeates the first chapter of Green Hills of Africa.

Published in 1935, Green Hills of Africa describes in first person narration a month-long safari in Africa and offers many examples of Hemingway's generally anti-social philosophy. When asked if he is happy, the narrator (who is clearly the same man as the author) responds, "Except when I think of other people."<sup>42</sup> Each person in the group which comprises the hunting party serves a different function for Hemingway. First there is Hemingway's wife: "The only person I really cared about, except the children, was with me and I had no wish to share this life with any one who was not there, only to live it, being completely happy and quite tired."<sup>43</sup> Second,

throughout the book Hemingway measures his shooting skills and courage against the standards of the white hunter, Pop, whose dictum "no killing on the side, no ornamental killing, no killing to kill. . ." <sup>44</sup> is one of the rules. Of a different temperament and not as concerned with the perfect shot, Karl is also a member of the hunting party: "Something is always tricking him, the need to do things other than in a regular order, or by an inexact command in which details are not specified, or to have to do it in front of people, or to be hurried." <sup>45</sup> Karl comes to represent a competitor who inspires Hemingway's jealousy despite his determination not to experience this emotion.

The safari is undertaken as part of the good life, as a diversion reminiscent of the hunting which Hemingway himself condemns in his article, "Hunting on the Continent." Yet as a hunter Hemingway feels he has the obligation to kill the animal cleanly. He remembers his thoughts as he lay in the hospital with a broken arm:

I thought suddenly how a bull elk must feel if you break a shoulder and he gets away and in that night I lay and felt it all, the whole thing as it would happen from the shock of the bullet to the end of the business and, being a little out of my head, thought perhaps what I was going through was a punishment for all hunters. Then, getting well, decided if it was a punishment I had paid it and at least I knew what I was doing. I did nothing that had not been done to me. I had been shot and I had been crippled and gotten away. I expected, always, to be killed by one thing or another and I, truly,

did not mind that any more. Since I still loved to hunt I resolved that I would only shoot as long as I could kill cleanly and as soon as I lost that ability I would stop.<sup>46</sup>

Hemingway strives for shooting accuracy because of an Indian-like compassion for animals. Insisting that he has no guilt at all, he finds justification in terms of the American Indian tradition. "I had no guilty feeling at all. We ate the meat and kept the hides and horns."<sup>47</sup>

As most safaris are constructed, the client or sportsman has little or no responsibility for the preparations for the hunt. Furthermore, the white hunter also bears the burden for rescuing the client from difficult circumstances. In the company of the white hunter, Pop, both Hemingways know that "Pop had brought us here and Pop would bring us out."<sup>48</sup>

For Hemingway, nevertheless, hunting presents a challenge, an opportunity to test himself against the intelligence and strength of an animal. "I felt the elation, the best elation of all, of certain action to come, action in which you had something to do, in which you can kill and come out of it, doing something you are ignorant about and so not scared, no one to worry about and no responsibility except to perform something you feel sure you can perform. . ."<sup>49</sup> Each hunt and each kill test different qualities in the hunter. The death

of the reedbuck, which Hemingway has shot for food is described in detail with understanding of anatomy and compassion for the wounded animal, both qualities of the American Indian. In contrast to that of the reedbuck, the hyena's death is a "dirty joke"<sup>50</sup> with the hyena tearing out and eating his own intestines. The emotion felt by the hunter is humorous scorn.

The single animal which Hemingway wants most to shoot is the intelligent and secretive kudu, an antelope of size and beauty. As the title to Part IV of the book, "Pursuit as Happiness," suggests, the anticipation of the hunt is pleasurable in itself. The animal is not dangerous, yet in the kudu's death Hemingway finds an Indian-like communion with nature: "he was lying on the side where the bullet had gone in and there was not a mark on him and he smelled sweet and lovely like the breath of cattle and the odor of thyme after rain."<sup>51</sup> The kudu has been killed cleanly and the horns, the trophy, are described in natural terms as "great, curling, sweeping horns, brown as walnut meats. . ."<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to the kudu, the rhino is merely an item on a list of dangerous animals worthy of being shot for trophy in Africa. The animal's ability to kill the hunter, however, does not dignify the rhino's death and the

description of the dead rhino is hardly elegiac. "There he was, long-hulked, heavy-sided, prehistoric looking, the hide like vulcanized rubber and faintly transparent looking, scarred with a badly healed horn wound that the birds had pecked at, his tail thick, round, and pointed, flat many-legged ticks crawling on him, his ears fringed with hair, tiny pig eyes. . ."<sup>53</sup> Back in camp the hunting party finds that Karl has shot a rhino that dwarfs Hemingway's. The situation becomes more ironic when they learn that Karl has shot his rhino five or six times, whereas Hemingway has brought his down with a single incredibly long shot. Having brilliantly passed one aspect of the challenge, marksmanship, only to fail at another aspect of the test, the trophy, Hemingway is left with conflicting emotions, satisfaction at the marvel of his shot and jealousy and disappointment which he tries to conceal.

The elation experienced after shooting well and killing an animal cleanly is a transient one. Hemingway longs for something more permanent, namely, to observe animals "long enough so they belonged to me forever."<sup>54</sup> Like the animals themselves, their natural environment, Africa, unexploited by man, has a value. Yet a "continent ages quickly once we come. The natives live in harmony with it. But the foreigner destroys. . ."<sup>55</sup>

If man destroys the beauty of the game's natural environment,

if this last good country can also be ruined, what is of permanence in Hemingway's world? Only the Gulf Stream is deep, wide and clear enough to sink the debris of civilization and continue to flow undisturbed.<sup>56</sup>

At the end of the book, Hemingway acknowledges his love of Africa, the continent where he has been happy. "I knew a good country when I saw one. Here there was game, plenty of birds, and I liked the natives. Here I could shoot and fish. That, and writing, and reading, and seeing pictures was all I cared about doing."<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, Hemingway is still a bitter man at the end of the book. Pop as the moral guide pronounces his judgment on Hemingway's attitude toward Karl. Pop tells Hemingway: "We have very primitive emotions, . . . It's impossible not to be competitive. Spoils everything, though."<sup>58</sup> Lacking the biggest trophy, Hemingway salves his still damaged confidence by maintaining that he has been welcomed into brotherhood by the African natives.

"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (1936) presents a far different protagonist from Hemingway himself in Green Hills of Africa. Perhaps the only thing both characters share is the circumstance of seeking the trophy on safari in Africa. The cynical attitude toward

people which Hemingway holds in Green Hills of Africa is expressed in this story by Robert Wilson, the professional hunter who has little respect for the rich and laconic Americans who pay his salary. Ironically, the Hemingways play the same role in the book as the Macomers do in the short story. Yet neither of the Hemingways, in contrast to the Macomers, can be categorized as a novice at the hunt. According to Hemingway's system of values, he has proven his superiority by demonstrating his capacities as a marksman. In reality both the book and the short story depict a sport which traces its roots to the British aristocracy.

Although "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is probably Hemingway's most well known and highly respected hunting story, it is far more than a chronicle of sporting adventure. The hunt serves as a vehicle for the expression of courage. Once a character has been weakened by the possession of money, he can recover power in only one way - by finding courage. Initially, Francis Macomber has lost his self-respect through allowing his wife to gain power over him. His weakness is balanced by Margot's domination, which in turn is motivated by money. Wilson's power stems from his lack of fear. In the field Wilson represents the touchstone by whom Macomber measures himself.

The action in the short story centers around two formally balanced, skillfully contrasted hunting incidents. During the first day's hunt for the lion, Macomber commits three violations of the Hemingway code. First, in gut shooting the lion Macomber fails to kill it cleanly, an offense by British standards. Second, in his willingness to leave the wounded lion in the bush, Macomber demonstrates a lack of compassion for the game and also the absence of any regard for other individuals who may come upon the animal by chance. Third, in running from the wounded and charging lion, Macomber fails the test of manhood.

In contrast to Macomber, Wilson demonstrates an Indian-like compassion for the wounded lion and a consciousness of the hunter's responsibility for the protection of the non-shooting members of the safari. "You can't very well send boys in there to that sort of a show. Somebody bound to get mauled."<sup>59</sup> Without fear, Wilson faces the charging lion, shoots, and still manages to retain enough poise to comment on how fine a trophy has been shot.

The second day's hunt is similar to the first day's in plot, except that this time Macomber, spurred by his jealousy of Wilson, takes the initiative and displays shooting accuracy and courage. In passing this Indian-like initiation into manhood, Macomber realizes "he

really felt wholly without fear. Instead of fear he had a feeling of definite elation."<sup>60</sup> When Wilson shakes his hand, the act symbolizes Macomber's welcome into the society of men. Like Hemingway anticipating the hunt in Green Hills of Africa, Macomber's elation extends to events in the future. Macomber has a feeling "of happiness about what's going to happen."<sup>61</sup> Although Macomber has shot well, he has not killed the buffalo. For the second time in his brief happy life Macomber faces the buffalo, who is this time wounded and charging, without fear, only to be killed by his wife. Elation and happiness are the rewards for the clean shot and the brave stand. How long these emotions can last is another matter.

### III

#### THE LESSON OF THE MASTER

In 1965 Arnold Gingrich, former editor of Esquire, a magazine which published many of Hemingway's articles, wrote about Hemingway as a fishing companion in the 1930s: "Ernest was a meat fisherman. He cared more about the quantity than the quality, and was more concerned with the capture of the quarry than with the means employed to do it. He was also -- and this is what no true angler is -- intensely competitive about his fishing, and a very poor sport."<sup>62</sup> If Gingrich's picture is accurate, and his description of Hemingway's competitive drive seems consistent with passages from Green Hills of Africa, then Hemingway failed to qualify in the 1930s as a true sportsman according to his own code. But he may have changed later; certainly his protagonist did not remain static. Sixteen years after the publication of Green Hills of Africa and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," Hemingway in The Old Man and the Sea portrayed fishing as a contest in which the fisherman is motivated by a desire to prove his dignity<sup>63</sup> as an individual, rather than to illustrate his superiority by conspicuous display.

In Green Hills of Africa, Hemingway describes what

he has discovered about the Gulf Stream: "that this Gulf Stream you are living with, knowing, learning about, and loving, has moved, as it moves, since before man, and that it has gone by the shoreline of that long, beautiful, unhappy island since before Columbus sighted it and that the things you find out about it, and those that have always lived in it are permanent and of value because that stream will flow, as it has flowed, after the Indians, after the Spaniards, after the British. . ." <sup>64</sup> Hemingway's evaluation of the Gulf Stream as an enduring phenomenon in nature remained constant. In The Old Man and the Sea, Santiago is the solitary individual who challenges the "one single, lasting thing -- the stream." <sup>65</sup> Unlike Hemingway's other protagonists, Santiago is a professional fisherman, yet his occupation in no way detracts from the ethical value of killing the animal in the proper or sporting way.

The first three sentences in The Old Man and the Sea are: "He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally salao, which is the worst form of unlucky,

and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish the first week."<sup>66</sup> Santiago's aloneness is caused by necessity, because Manolin has been forced to leave him -- and by choice, because Santiago has chosen to go far out, beyond other people. The tension between choice and necessity is maintained throughout the book. Although no one can help Santiago on his quest,<sup>67</sup> the boy, Manolin aids him in the important preparations for the day's fishing by getting Santiago's bait and by carrying some of his equipment to the skiff. Santiago chooses to fish where he does because he knows that his chances of catching a large fish are greater in the Stream and because there he believes he can break his string of bad luck.

Santiago's association with the sea and her creatures clearly parallels the American Indian's belief that all beings are united by their possession of a soul, or spiritual entity. As Keiichi Harada notes, the ocean "is considered as a personality. It is feminine because of its wantonness and because it embodies both kindness and cruelty. But more. It is so, because it contains in itself so many elements of fertility and possibility, as many myths of woman demonstrate. . ."<sup>68</sup> Among the creatures of the sea whom Santiago lists as his friends are the flying fish, the turtles, and the warbler, whom

Robert Stephens sees as "standing in analogy to the spirit of man, as it battles the sea."<sup>69</sup> Like the American Indian, Santiago attributes personality to all three animals. Santiago also recalls an earlier fishing experience with Manolin. When they caught one of a pair of marlin, they were moved by compassion for the remaining mate. In begging pardon of the female for having killed her, they offered an example of Indian propitiation.

Santiago's contest with the giant marlin may be seen as a battle of equal forces. Santiago expresses an Indian-like identification with the fish with whom he shares age, courage, and a physical affinity for the sea.

(Santiago's eyes are as blue as the ocean; and the skin cancer caused by many days fishing in the sun is benign.) At one point, Santiago says to the marlin "I love and respect you."

. . ." <sup>70</sup> Later he refers to the fish as his "brother," <sup>71</sup> both examples of Indian-like identification. Nevertheless, the old man acknowledges one striking difference, "they [fish] are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are more noble and more able." <sup>72</sup> Killing the marlin, Santiago demonstrates his nobility and the triumph of the ritualized methodology of his craft. Yet he does not properly calculate the risks involved in taking the animal back to land. Therefore, Santiago's mistake is an error of judgment.

When Santiago apologizes to the fish, "'I shouldn't have gone out so far, fish,' he said. 'Neither for you nor for me. I'm sorry fish.'" <sup>73</sup> he acknowledges his offense. The sharks which are part of a calculable risk follow the boat and transform the once beautiful marlin into an ichthyological skeleton. The Old Man and the Sea affirms Hemingway's dictum that man must take his chances, must be willing to make a stand and like Santiago choose to go out where other men dare not go. Santiago has been equal to the challenge of the marlin but not to that of the indifferent and capricious ocean whose creatures include sharks as well as flying fish. "The wind is our friend, anyway, he thought. Then he added, sometimes. And the great sea with our friends and our enemies." <sup>74</sup>

When Santiago returns home, his fellow fisherman (in contrast to the tourists) seem to realize the magnitude of his loss. But only one person, Manolin, appreciates the greatness of Santiago's suffering. When Santiago first hooked the fish, he wished for the boy; but this wish expressed Santiago's plea for companionship rather than his need of assistance. After the ordeal is over, the old man tells Manolin how he has missed him and the boy assures the old man that his days of catching fish are still in the future. The relationship between Santiago and Manolin

is that of a father and son and "the love of Manolo for Santiago is that of a disciple for a master in the arts of fishing."<sup>75</sup> Manolin says to Santiago, "You must get well fast for there is much that I can learn and you can teach me everything."<sup>76</sup> By the end of The Old Man and the Sea Santiago has trained Manolin in the discipline of his craft. By his example the old man has also taught the boy a far greater lesson, courage.

As the Gulf Stream serves as the setting for the old man's battle with the giant marlin, so this body of water becomes the stage for the challenge of deep sea fishing in Part I of Islands in the Stream. The members of the fishing party are Thomas Hudson -- painter and protagonist, his three sons, Eddy -- cook and seaman, and Roger -- writer and fisherman. Although the trip is undertaken for the boys' enjoyment, deep sea fishing requires a vessel, a thorough knowledge of seamanship and the behavior of the game, and a considerable amount of expensive gear. In the latter respect deep sea fishing resembles the British sporting tradition. When the party comes upon the giant swordfish, the knowledge of the captain and crew, the readiness of the boat, and the calm weather all contribute to making the boy's chance of catching the game fish a feasible one.

Although Eddy makes all of the preparations for the excursion, from the moment the boy hooks the thousand pound swordfish through the six hour fight, the battle is very much his own. In his introduction to S. Kip Farrington's Atlantic Game Fishing, Hemingway stresses the necessity of handling the fish without assistance:

If records are to be made by fishermen who accept assistance during a fight with the fish, who deliberately rest their rods on the gunwales of the boat, rather than having it momentarily forced down, which could happen to anyone, and in the days of the old style rods would have been penalized by the rod breaking; who tie their rods and reels to the fishing chair so that the chair bears the weight of the fish and his pull, and the angler only cranks the reel, and who allow their fish to be shot for any reason or with any excuse; then big game fishing is not a competitive sport but becomes utterly ridiculous and should be taken seriously by no one.<sup>77</sup>

Although the exhausted boy is not competing in a tournament, he refuses to surrender the rod to Roger or to his father. Yet both men and Eddy contribute indirectly to the effort -- Thomas Hudson as captain maneuvers the boat into the best positions for catching the fish; Eddy tends to the child's physical well being; and Roger who "was as beautiful and sound in action as he was unbeautiful and unsound in his life. . ." <sup>78</sup> acts as fishing guide and confidant. Unlike the protagonists of Green Hills of Africa and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," Thomas Hudson trusts "the boy and the fight to Roger" <sup>79</sup> and is therefore the indirect moral guide removed from

the action. David can be seen as the young Hemingway hero, but he is also the embodiment of the characteristics of his father.

David's experience clearly constitutes an Indian-like initiation into manhood. As Eddy says, "That'll make a man out of you;"<sup>80</sup> and Thomas Hudson observes that "there is a time boys have to do things if they are ever going to be men. That's where Dave is now."<sup>81</sup> The fish can literally kill the boy and his fight is as much a test of courage as it is a test of endurance. With bleeding hands, oozing feet, and blistered back, the boy displays courage by refusing to give the rod to Roger and by handling the fish exactly as he should. In the end David loses the swordfish but in compensation he has "something inside him for all his life and it will make everything else easier."<sup>82</sup> Like Santiago one of the things David experiences is a kind of merging of identity with the fish: "In the worst parts, when I was the tiredest I couldn't tell which was him and which was me. . . . Then I began to love him more than anything on earth."<sup>83</sup> Unlike Santiago, David is consoled by knowing that his loose fish can return to his element unharmed; like the old man the boy has passed the test of courage and has experienced an Indian-like spiritual union with the fish.

When Ernest Hemingway left Africa in 1933, he vowed to return to the place he loved. Twenty years elapsed between the visit described in Green Hills of Africa and the safari which Hemingway and his wife, Mary, took in 1953. By the time of the second safari, however, the role played by Hemingway (or his protagonist) had changed drastically. In African Journal, published posthumously, Hemingway serves as a quasi-official of the Kenya Game Department and in that position as successor to Pop, the white hunter of Green Hills of Africa who returns to his farm in Kenya at the beginning of African Journal. In his new capacity Hemingway insists that he has abandoned his earlier trophy hunts. "The time of shooting beasts for trophy was long past with me. I still loved to shoot and to kill cleanly. But I was shooting for the meat we needed to eat and to back up Miss Mary and against beasts that had been outlawed for cause and for what is known as control of marauding animals, predators and vermin."<sup>84</sup>

Although Hemingway has the responsibility for protecting his wife Mary and for organizing each hunt, Mary, rather than her husband, is the hunter of a marauding lion. She has recently completed a course in hunting philosophy and has learned to take pleasure in killing. "In six months of daily hunting she had learned to love

it, shameful though it is basically, and unshameful as it is if done cleanly."<sup>85</sup> Mary may be seen as the last of Pop's pupils. "Guided and trained and indoctrinated into the purity and virtue of killing a lion by Pop"<sup>86</sup> she has internalized the code, the ethic. Mary's three month search for the lion is likened to the quest for the Holy Grail and the Golden Fleece. "Everybody has something that they want truly and my lion means everything to me,"<sup>87</sup> Mary says. The ritualistic impression of the hunt is heightened by the fact that the natives believe that this lion has a religious significance to Mary and must be killed before the birthday of the baby Jesus.

In anticipation of the lion hunt, Mary expresses a familiar Indian-like statement. "He's my lion and I love and respect him and I have to kill him."<sup>88</sup> On the last day of the hunt, Mary goes to battle with three disadvantages; her height, her unreliable shooting skill, and her weak physical condition. As dark approaches, Mary shoots the lion in the foot and haunch, neither of which can be classified as a clean shot, and it takes shots from G.C., the game ranger, and from Hemingway to bring the animal down. The lion has tested the skill and sensibility of everyone, not just Mary. Since Mary drew first blood and continued to pursue the lion, it is legally hers but

the experience is far from ideal. She has shot from a very dangerous position and faced the lion on her own terms, but she is disappointed. Only when hoisted on a chair and surrounded by natives in the lion dance does Mary believe that the lion is hers.

Seeing Mary's happiness and knowing the lion hunt is at last over, Hemingway in the role of protector experiences an emotional release. Like the American Indian, Hemingway acknowledges the bond between himself and the animal and says, "and then [I] lay down by the lion and talked to him very softly in Spanish and begged his pardon for having killed him."<sup>89</sup>

In African Journal, one of the last of Hemingway's published works, the progression of Hemingway's role ends and Hemingway becomes the code hero. Removed from trophy competition and competition with other hunters, Hemingway becomes the protector of other hunters and the preserver of a pure hunting tradition.

## CONCLUSION

For over thirty years Hemingway's protagonists journeyed to field and stream. In the early short stories, "The Last Good Country" and "Big Two-Hearted River," and in the trout fishing episode from The Sun Also Rises, the principal characters all find in fishing the order lacking in relationships with people. Each man casts off the impurities of civilization and seeks the serenity of nature. Fishing, with the active skillful role man must play in its proper execution, brings each individual a sense of accomplishment.

Civilization is again the antagonist in Green Hills of Africa as the spoiler of the purity of the environment and consequently the hunting; and in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" an affluent society has contributed to Macomber's cowardice. Although both Hemingway and Macomber seek the trophy, neither is successful. Hemingway, plagued by bad luck, is constantly surpassed by Karl, and Macomber's brave stand results in his losing his life.

In his late writing, The Old Man and the Sea, Islands in the Stream, and African Journal, the sportsman's intimate contact with nature is so rewarding that he feels responsible

for preserving the purity of the environment. Thomas Hudson has instilled the love of fishing and belief in doing it properly in his son David. Hemingway acts as guide and protector for his wife Mary. And Santiago will teach the knowledge he painfully gained to Manolin.

Throughout the short stories and novels, Hemingway stresses the individual's need of killing the animal cleanly, of hunting and fishing in a sporting way. Knowing that he and the animal share a kind of communion, the sportsman must subscribe to a dignified standard of behavior. Perhaps one indication of how successfully Hemingway lived up to his own sporting code is the legacy he left to his sons. Very close to where his father hunted antelope and leopard in Tanzania, Patrick Hemingway now teaches game management and control shooting. John Hemingway, a former fishing editor of Field and Stream, stresses the first Indian-like lessons his father inculcated in his sons. "My father was first exposed to trout fishing in Illinois and Wisconsin. . . by his father, Dr. Clarence Hemingway, and the tradition was handed down immediately to us. He always held strictly to a plan of not wasting any game."<sup>90</sup> From their father, Patrick and John Hemingway have clearly learned a respect for the environment and for the creatures who jointly inhabit it with man.

## VITA

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