

The Narcissism Conundrum

The Narcissism Conundrum:
Mapping the Mindscape of Ernest Hemingway
through an Enquiry into his Epistolary
and Literary Corpus

By

Apoorva Bharadwaj

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P U B L I S H I N G

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INTRODUCTION

Ernest Miller Hemingway is a fiction practitioner whose biography is read with as much avid interest as his literary canon. Very few writers have been able to engender such an intense interest in their personal memoirs. Particularly, his epistolary correspondence has been prized highly in the literary world owing to the flashing insights it offers into the deep recesses of his complex mental make-up.

His life has been an enigma. He was a macho adventurer who seemed to be an undaunted warrior whom the trepidation of death could never vanquish. He was equally eminent for the public word he earned for his actions as for his literary work that made him a public icon. Yet this valiant literary champion met an ignominious demise in suicidal superannuation, since he could not terminate the action career he had started despite his debilitating old age, lest the scintillating celebrity image of Hemingway as a tough guy would be dented. He was an illustrious author who had won huge international encomium for his literature, yet he was crippled by a strange narcissistic yearning to prove himself again and again to the outside world. His characters are immortal yet they seem to replicate the mortal career of their creative progenitor.

To discover this Hemingway-within-Hemingway is the attempt made by this book which tries to resolve these mindboggling paradoxes that mark the life story of this Oak Park lad who went on to be crowned Nobel Laureate. The author uses psycho-biographical analysis to map his complex mindscape in order to unearth those thought processes that culminated in the character architecture of his protagonists, thus inaugurating a tradition of a narcissistic self-fictionalization. His epistolary literature has been primarily used as an opulent source of biographical information for profiling the real Hemingway, de-skinning the photogenic cosmetic layers of glamour that this hunter-fisherman-soldier-author had a fetish to don in such a flamboyant manner. Each of his protagonists from the landmark novels of his literary canon has been studied in the framework of Hemingway's chronograph—his childhood, his youth and his twilight phase of life. What emerges from this chronograph is the psychographics of a novelist who camouflaged in his public photograph the declining intellectual graph of a narcissist whose compulsive self-obsession degenerated into poignant self-termination.

The author hopes that this methodical, meticulous monograph dissecting the character anatomies of Hemingway's protagonists using the tool of biographical chronicle will enable the Hemingway aficionados decipher to some extent the narcissism conundrum that haloes Hemingway's mystic persona.

CHAPTER ONE

HEMINGWAY IN PARIS: JAKE BARNES STRUGGLING TO FIND HIS EXISTENTIAL MOORINGS

1.1 Introduction

Jake Barnes is the protagonist of *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). As the novel belongs to the earlier period of Hemingway's career, we can see the Hemingway of that period reflected in the portrait of Jake Barnes. Jake is an American expatriate, who is a journalist by profession. Ernest Hemingway was also an expatriate practising journalism. Jake has been portrayed an aficionado of bullfighting. In this respect too he resembles his author. Jake's opinion is "Nobody ever lives their life all the way up except bull-fighters."¹ Jake also has a hedonistic fascination for wine and feminine pulchritude. In this respect he also resembles his creator. He appreciates wine in the following words: "A bottle of wine was good company."² He even confesses, "I like to drink wine."³ Hemingway himself praised wine as recorded by Carlos Baker in his *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (1969), "I like to see every man drunk. A man does not exist until he is drunk [...] I love getting drunk. Right from the start it is the best feeling."⁴

Jake also shares with Hemingway the trauma of past war wounds. He tells Georgette, "I got hurt in the war."⁵

He also suffers some problems experienced by Hemingway such as insomnia. Another piece of interesting observation has been noted by Carlos Baker, who suggests that elements of Hemingway's relationship with a lady called Duff got into *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) in disguised form.

An analysis of Jake's profile thus brings us to the conclusion that Jake Barnes is the product of Hemingway's narcissistic obsession. When Hemingway was attempting the character-sketch of his first protagonist in the domain of the novel, he was basking in the glory of the heroic recognition he had gained by dint of his military adventures on the Italian

front. The label of “hero” became as prestigious for him as his medals. In his short fiction he had already introduced himself to his readers as Nick Adams. He also carried this mode of self-exhibition into the pages of his novel. He did not like to confess that Jake Barnes was in essence none other than Ernest Hemingway himself, the macho who liked to promote his heroic image. Yet no critic’s eye could fail to discern that Jacob Barnes is Ernest Hemingway in every way. The scholar gives here a complete picture of this protagonist, which reflects Ernest Hemingway in every way. He carries on his back the cumbersome baggage of his First World War experience, starting his journey from his American native place. He migrates to Paris and Pamplona eventually carrying the burden of childhood memories on his psyche. It is interesting to note that Hemingway had started this characterization with the autobiographical name of “Hemingway”, but an afterthought led him to change it into the fictive “Jake Barnes”.

1.2 Jake’s Journey into Hemingway’s Childhood

Each protagonist travels into the author’s childhood in some way or other. Jake is no exception.

When Jake returns to his hotel after being knocked down by Cohn, he scans his mental condition, “I felt as I felt once coming home from an out-of-town football game. [...] I had been kicked in the head early in the game.”⁶ What Jake experiences here is a kind of *déjà vu*, which suggests the memory of some past event was still lingering in his mind. This is the past of Hemingway’s childhood.

As a boy Hemingway had been an active sportsman. When he was in high school there was a vogue among boys of robust constitution to play football. And so Hemingway too turned to football, trying for junior varsity. He worked hard and successfully secured the first-string centre position for himself on a team that registered numerous victories. Hemingway found this sport a good training for life. This is the reason why when Jake is hit, the sensation of hitting gets associated in his mind with the football in the playground, which Hemingway could remember and could re-experience vividly, going back to his Oak Park memories.

James R. Mellow has made yet another interesting observation in his biography. In one of the omitted inceptions in the manuscript of the novel, Hemingway made Jake remember attending the funeral of a namesake uncle as a young boy. Jake remembers with comic sarcasm how his parents “were going through a period of religious fervor”⁷ and his mother in a tone of a puritanical pedagogue had admonished him about vices like

smoking, drinking, and gambling, adding that she would prefer his dying to his indulging in these disastrously shameful hedonistic perversions. Jake remembers how he had taken his mother's high-handed warning in a spirit of cheeky fun.

This episode, though clipped with editorial propriety, is still important enough to be reconsidered as Hemingway's repeated attempt to recapture the early days of his eventful childhood through his protagonists. He had given Jake his own pious parents and especially his own self-opinionated mother whom he treated with frivolous irreverence, on remembering her elderly exhortations.

Thus childhood had always been a potent influence on Hemingway. Many childhood reminiscences that might seem to be inconsequentially trifling in the biographical accounts of the author acquired deeper significance as they contributed towards the characterization of his protagonists.

1.3 Jake's Journey into Hemingway's Youthful World

As discussed before, Jake Barnes is the young Hemingway who after leaving the confines of the Oak Park world and witnessing the harsh realities of life in the war zone of Italy, had started exploring new avenues for himself with his ambitious pen in Paris. Jake mirrors the youthful Hemingway in all his roles as a journalist, as an expatriate in Paris, as an aficionado of bullfights and the Hispanic culture, as a wounded warrior, as a hedonist, as a passionate lover, as a mentally distressed insomniac, as an aficionado of fishing and male camaraderie, as a son of Mother Nature, as a philosopher with his own code of life. Let us examine all these aspects in detail.

1.3.1 Jake as a Journalist

Jake Barnes is an American newspaperman working for the Paris edition of the New York *Herald*. He is a successful practitioner of journalism and aspires to become a writer. Jake's status as a journalist is especially important because in this sense too he apes his author. Journalism formed an important facet of Hemingway's life as a writer. Hemingway had started his career as a journalist. He had flair for penning articles since childhood. As a schoolboy he contributed many articles to school magazines and won encomium for his dexterity in writing. Later on when he grew up, he developed a burning passion to take up an adventurous career in the army. But his eye defect belied his hopes of

having a dashing military life and then he cast his ambitious glance at a reporter's job. As a reporter too he followed his soldierly instincts, which took him wherever the action was. It was his job as a reporter, which brought him face-to-face with reality outside the myopic world of his native place, Oak Park.

We have a number of accounts from different biographical works giving details of Hemingway's venture into the world of journalism. Through these accounts we learn about Hemingway's ambitious endeavour to become a journalist of repute and his struggle to raise his status from an author writing local interest articles—mundane articles with a touch of humour—to articles of international scale dealing with important political issues, whilst undertaking overseas trips as a foreign correspondent. His career as a journalist shows his enthusiasm, his devotion to work culminating in success scored by virtue of his reportorial merits in his journalistic assignments. His interest in this career and his work experience, must have also made him portray his protagonist, Jake Barnes, as a journalist sharing his own work ethic with the same kind of career profile as that of his author. Jake is an American working as a journalist in Paris. Hemingway had a similar status as a newspaperman. Paris served as the headquarters for Hemingway's international journalism. He sent many articles to different media sources from here. The background of Paris helped him break new ground in the realm of journalistic writing.

The life of Hemingway as a reporter was very eventful. As in this phase of his life he was obsessed with writing, using journalism as a launch pad for his career as a writer, he conceptualized his protagonist as a journalist. At this stage, Hemingway was struggling to make his mark as a reporter. As his work was an important aspect of his life, his experience as a reporter made him present Jake Barnes as a young, ambitious workaholic journalist. Thus Jake is also shown busy with his professional duties, carving a niche for himself in the arena of journalism with his competent reporting and sharp powers of observation. Noteworthy in this context is the opinion expressed by Delbert E. Wylder in *Hemingway Heroes* (1969) about Jake, "He is a working journalist who does, on occasion, take almost ritualistic vacation trips to Spain. Before the trip to Spain that forms the basis for this novel, he tells us that he feels very much a part of the working world."⁸ Jake says, "All along the people were going to work. It felt pleasant to be going to work. I walked across the avenue and turned into my office."⁹

Dr. Mundra notes in his work, *Ernest Hemingway: The Impact of War on his Life and Works* (1988), that Jake "is devoted to his work as a

journalist, attends office regularly, has a strong commitment to his work, [...]”¹⁰

In the concourse of characters that swarm onto the pages of the novel, Jake stands out as a man whose work is part and parcel of his life. He goes to his office regularly and it feels “pleasant to be going to work”. The discussions he undertakes in the early chapters of the novel regarding newspaper work vouch for his competence in the realm of journalism and hints at the respect he commands amongst his professional counterparts. He is happy with his presswork and finds it the best excuse to rid himself of the unwelcome companionship of friends:

I had discovered that was the best way to get rid of friends. Once you had a drink all you had to say was, ‘Well I’ve got to get back and get off some cables’, and it was done. It is very important to discover graceful exits like that in the newspaper business, where it is such an important part of the ethics that you should never seem to be working.¹¹

Jake always leaves for his office early in the morning with a great zest for his work and returns to his hotel room at five o’clock. His love and dedication for his vocation is evident from the following passage:

Brett was gone, I was not bothered by Cohn’s troubles, I enjoyed not having to play tennis, there was plenty of work to do. I went after to the races, dined with friends, and put in some extra time at the office getting things ahead so I could leave it in charge of my secretary when Bill Gorton and I should shove off to Spain the end of June.¹²

It is clear that he is very meticulous about his work and is solicitous about the stalemate that will stall the progress of his work owing to the ritualistic vacation trip he is planning to undertake to participate in the Spanish fiesta. He takes every possible care to see that before embarking upon his Pamplona-bound journey he should complete his newspaper task by devoting some extra time to it, so that his absence does not act as a stumbling block in his office routine. Even when relaxing in the idyllic ambience of San Sebastian he is not oblivious of his duties, “I calculated how many days I would be in San Sebastian and then wrote out a wire to the office asking them to hold mail, but forward all wires for me to San Sebastian for six days.”¹³

His work is the only channel open to him to attain self-fulfilment after his disillusionment with the humanitarian ideals of the war. Jake is ambitious about his future as a writer.

The picture that emerges from Jake's character-analysis is of the young Hemingway exploring new horizons in his career as a journalist in the city of Paris. His interest in his work and his ambition to get recognition as a writer of a high stature took him to the Mecca of literary stalwarts, Paris. Hemingway migrated to the French capital on the advice of Sherwood Anderson. According to Anderson Paris was the place where a young and aspiring author like Hemingway would have found a congenial atmosphere for the flowering of his fecund genius. Hemingway, like his Jake, had become extremely disenchanted with the phoney glory of war and had concluded that writing was the only vocation that would give him the satisfaction and success he was desperately seeking in that insipid post-war life. A number of critics have given weight to the extraordinary importance of the Paris apprenticeship years to Hemingway's career as a journalist seeking literary fame. In the light of these biographical facts Jake's attitude towards his work serves as a significant aspect of his characterization which merits scrupulous study by biographical critics.

Like his protagonist Jake, Hemingway was seriously devoted to his work. His Paris years were marked with hectic endeavours to get a firm footing in the press world. He worked hard and proved his mettle as a budding writer. He distanced himself from lazy expatriates of Paris, not allowing their empty hedonistic lifestyle to hamper his work. He criticized them vehemently for the negligence of their work, which should have been their real aim, as the exodus of other nationals to the French metropolis was mainly prompted by the desire to fulfil artistic aspirations. The same is also true of Jake. No doubt Jake fraternizes with people like Cohn and Brett, yet when the question of his work crops up he finds some way or other of evading them to get back to his newspaper assignments.

Jake is a newspaperman to the core. James T. Farrell links Jake's faculty for keen observation as a spectator with his journalistic vocation that has given him a reporter's eye. He writes in his critique on *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) published in the book *Ernest Hemingway: Critiques of Four Major Novels* (1962), that Jake, the narrator of the novel, is a newspaperman. His occupation has made him a constant spectator looking at everyone and everything that comes within his purview with the ceaseless vigil of a reporter.

Hemingway too had a long training as a newspaperman and was regarded as a veteran "newsman". James R. Mellow writes, "Years later, writing as an "old newsman", he would make a clever distinction between truth and mere fact. "All good books are alike", he said, 'in that they are truer than if they had really happened.'"¹⁴

Thus Hemingway has given his Jake his own profession, his own interest and sense of devotion to work, his own abilities, in all his own image of a journalist-protagonist. For Hemingway the work of a journalist was no less heroic than that of a soldier because it involved action and adventure. As a journalist, Hemingway was active, dynamic and bold.

Hemingway wanted to promote himself more as a writer rather than as a soldier. Though Jake has fought in the First World War, it is the vocation of pen that has given him his true identity. Hemingway was so committed to his work that he did not even allow his passion for wine to interfere with his work. He loved drinking but abstained from it during his writing stints. When he worked as a correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance during the Spanish Civil War, he did not allow his love for Martha to dampen that spirit of rivalry between fellow reporters as they competed in filing their news stories with editors. As a journalist he often had professional squabbles with his third wife Martha, which eventually led to the failure of their marriage.

It was as a journalist that Hemingway was exposed to the harsh realities of life, which broke the rural confines of his conventional Oak Park mentality and made new inroads into his young impressionable mind. Throughout his life, even after achieving a towering fame as a world-renowned fiction practitioner, he had been intimately associated with journalism. Elizabeth Dewberry writes in this connection that in November 1923 Hemingway wrote to Gertrude Stein, saying that he would leave journalism, even though he had practised as a writer for his high school newspaper, acquired training as a cub reporter for the *Kansas City Star*, and had served as a correspondent for the *Toronto Star* on and off from 1920. He complained that she ruined him as a journalist. But Elizabeth Dewberry observes:

Yet Hemingway stayed with the *Toronto Star* until September 1924, and he continued to write for newspapers and magazines at intervals throughout his career, covering the Spanish Civil War for the North American Newspaper Alliance in 1937 and 1938, the tension in the Orient for *PM* in 1941, and World War II in England and France for *Collier's* in 1944, as well as writing intermittently for *Esquire*, *Look*, and *Life*, among other publications, until as late as 1960, all the while producing short stories, novels, and other books and essays of creative nonfiction as well.¹⁵

1.3.2 Jake as an Expatriate in Paris

Jake is an American expatriate and like his author he is residing in Paris. When Hemingway reached Paris, he wrote to Howell Jenkins, “Paris is cold and damp but crowded, jolly and beautiful”.¹⁶

In Paris Hemingway came into contact with other American expatriates like Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound, the literary practitioners who influenced the young writer yearning to grow in him. Since coming to the city of Paris served as a turning point in his life and in his career as an author he gave the same background to his protagonist, Jake. Jake, like his author, keeps moving to different cafés, restaurants, hotels, and bars in the city, which were once frequented by Hemingway and Hadley. He too like Hemingway enjoys a gregarious social life in Paris. The extraordinary importance of Paris in Hemingway’s life is highlighted by James R. Mellow

Nothing in Ernest Hemingway’s life, before or after, would match the importance of the years that were centered in Paris. It would not be too much to say that Paris changed Hemingway’s life as a writer—for better and worse, and significantly in both cases. A writer’s truths may be provisional truths, more exhilarating than the actuality. It was in Paris, as a young man, that Hemingway became the master of that conjunction of the real and the fictive that marked his work.¹⁷

Thus the same Paris is the city where Jake is living and sharing the experiences and views that his creator had about the city. Jake too is not blind to the seamy picture of Paris life which did not escape Hemingway’s penetrating eye even when he was looking at the French city through the rose-tinted lenses of a romantic expatriate. Jake finds Paris life “rotten” and feels bored, frustrated and “low” as he surveys the lifestyle of the people there who fritter away their creative energies hanging around the bars, cafés, and restaurants of the city. Some of Hemingway’s opinions regarding expatriates in Paris are noteworthy—“He had nothing but scorn for the loafing expatriates who crowded the Dome and the Rotonde warming their hands at the charcoal braziers.”¹⁸ He criticized the American expatriates for they had come to Paris ostensibly aiming to work yet they did nothing but crowd public places on the Left Bank merely discussing writing.

As long as Jake is in Paris he feels hellish and then as he moves to Spain he finds Spain reinvigorating. He finds Spain natural, undefiled and pure whereas he finds France materialistic. Thus Jake’s attitude towards France and Spain is the same as that of Hemingway.

The label of “expatriate” is the identity, which sticks to Jake. While conversing with Jake, Bill, who is Jake’s friend, points him out as a typical example of the expatriate crowd loitering aimlessly—

“You’re an expatriate. You’ve lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you.”¹⁹

The feeling of being an expatriate had also penetrated deeply into Hemingway’s psyche. “After several home-comings to the flat in the rue du Cardinal-Lemoine, he was beginning to feel like a veteran expatriate.”²⁰

Though Paris suited the writer in Hemingway, the man Hemingway found Spain much better. The same is the case for Jake, who as a journalist stays in Paris and enjoys his work there and as an aficionado of the rich tradition of bullfighting he rejuvenates his rotten life by immersing himself completely in the rituals of Spanish culture. Jake’s journey from France to Spain parallels Hemingway’s journey in a quest for life, which took him from the sophisticated urban world of restaurants and hotels to the primitive world of bullring and bullfighters. Jake and Hemingway both found the world of Paris meaningless compared to that of Pamplona. Thus Jake is the expatriate Hemingway moving from one country to the other to quench his thirst for life-giving experiences.

The French capital serves as the first destination for Jake who begins his journey leaving behind his native town to give his life a new turn. But he is utterly dissatisfied and shocked to find that the city, which seemed to him an idyll of art, has been invaded by the modern men—the American expatriates who have defiled its milieu. Their recreational lives of perverted pleasure become intolerable for the creative Jake. Only when these degenerate expatriates are no longer around can he enjoy refreshing evening walks along Parisian streets. Hemingway too enjoyed walks on the Paris streets in the evenings along with Hadley. But, like Hemingway, Jake ultimately realizes that Paris is not the place he had been searching for. He eventually discovers his Eden in Pamplona.

Jake is “rootless” in the sense that he has lost touch with the country of his roots. His family background is obscure. Thus he is an expatriate not only in the sense that he is away from his native place, but also he is away from his parental home, sharing no bonds with his parents and siblings. Thus, it is not just a geographic but a psychological schism as well. Leo Gurko writes in this connection, “An American expatriate living in Paris, he is cut off from his native country: this is beautifully emphasized in the scene where he receives a wedding announcement from Aloysius Kirby in Kansas City, his hometown, and does not have the faintest notion who Kirby is.”²¹

Jake's family status can be attributed to the personal history of Hemingway's relationships with his own family. Hemingway left his home in Oak Park in an embittered mood as he could not get any succour from his family, and then he left the country itself disillusioned with the state of affairs.

Hemingway's expatriation began with crossing the border to Canada and getting a job at the *Toronto Star Weekly*. He decided to migrate to Paris, being completely disenchanted with the American scenario, loaded with the hopes of finding a better place to grow artistically, and expecting life to be different from America. He went to Paris with Sherwood Anderson's sponsorship on contract with the *Toronto Star Weekly*. Hemingway's exile began on 8 December 1921 and this exile was not prompted by the vogue of mass expatriation of young Americans, but by a yearning to scale new heights in the domain of literary art.

Thus dissatisfaction drove Hemingway from one place to the other in search of a better life. Jake is also dissatisfied which is why he is always roving from one place to another, even though he has realized that mobility is not the solution to a problem. When Robert Cohn insists on going to South America he rightly says, "Listen, Robert, going to another country doesn't make any difference. I've tried all that. You can't get away from yourself by moving from one place to another. There's nothing to that."²² Hemingway seems to be voicing through Jake the inference he had reached after his abortive expatriate sprees to diverse places in search of a blissful world.

Although Jake has his professional ambitions and is devoted to his work, he is a typical expatriate in the sense that he follows the lifestyle of the expatriates in Paris who move around cafés indulging in wine and sex, who feel "empty", "rotten", and "bored". We often come across such expressions as, "I felt tired and pretty rotten",²³ which voice Jake's disillusionment with Parisian life.

However, Paris turned out to be the Muse's Bower for Hemingway because in Paris Hemingway and Hadley had spent precious time and Hemingway worked very hard as a writer. Hemingway claimed that it was in the city of Paris that he began his real vocation, writing in his copybooks poems and stories about Michigan and Bill Smith and fishing and the people of Horton Bay.

It was in Paris that he established intimate relationships with Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound who exercised an Herculean influence on his early writings.

In Paris Hemingway broadened his field of activity by entering the circle of American expatriates. He met Gertrude Stein whose apartment at

27 rue de Fleurus was the meeting place of artists and writers like Ezra Pound, James Joyce and Ford Madox Ford. Vocational intimacy with these individuals proved advantageous to Hemingway in the formative phase of his career. Thus Paris catapulted Hemingway's career to success.

It was in Paris that Hemingway's quest began for what he called the "one true sentence."²⁴ In Paris Hemingway distanced himself from the loafing expatriates who had left America dissatisfied by its taboos, cultural impecuniosity and the shackles of prohibition and who came to Paris in the hope of finding new avenues for their lives. Jake too criticizes the loafing expatriates he finds in Paris who lead lives of perverted pleasures. In his articles Hemingway exposed the sham images of Paris offering his "wise" advice to his readers "It is from tourists who stop at the large hotels that the reports come that living in Paris is very high. The big hotelkeepers charge all they think the traffic can bear."²⁵

And yet Hemingway used expressions like "What a town",²⁶ speaking to Sherwood Anderson, describing the thrill he experienced on seeing the city. He also wrote to Anderson "Written a chunk of my novel and several articles",²⁷ thus giving him the report as to how Paris had proved congenial to his work.

In Paris, coming into contact with Pound and Stein Hemingway took large strides in his literary endeavours, developed an interest in painting and also successfully completed his apprenticeship as a budding author by capturing the attention of the print media. Jake too has a flourishing career as a journalist in Paris. But in spite of having a fruitful life in the city, Hemingway like Jake in the novel criticized the bohemian life of Paris. He wrote in his articles for the *Toronto Star*, "You can find anything you are looking for at the Rotonde—except serious artists."²⁸ And he wrote in another of his derisive articles about this degenerate city of chic and glamour, "Paris is the Mecca of the bluffers and fakers in every line of endeavour from music to prizefighting."²⁹ This derisive castigation was inspired by the aversion he had for the rising tide of meaningless modernism and the love he had for the primitive. Jake too has the same outlook of Parisian life.

Writing about the comparative merits of the two countries, Spain and France for Jake, Delbert E. Wylder in *Hemingway Heroes* (1969) says, "Spain then is at the center of tradition and represents the old truths, the old concepts, the old ways. France is the new way, the materialistic direction, the country of twentieth century change"³⁰

Thus the predilection of the protagonist for Spain rather than France shows his primitivism.

But it is to be noted that Hemingway had enjoyed his days in France and had many times enthusiastically appreciated it in glowing terms. Jake too appreciates France as compared to Spain for its simplicity "It is the simplest country to live in."³¹

After fiesta, Jake enjoys a quiet time alone in France—"I was through with fiestas for a while. It would be quiet in San Sebastian."³² And in San Sebastian he does indeed achieve mental relaxation, staying there alone away from the din and bustle of the societal life. Jake finds it easier to live in the materialistic world of France.

I felt comfortable to be in a country where it is so simple to make people happy. [...] Everything is on such clear financial basis in France. It is the simplest country to live in. No one makes things complicated by becoming your friend for any obscure reason.³³

Paris had a monumental impact on Hemingway. We can say that Paris had completely changed this Oak Park lad. Michael Reynolds writes,

Paris was changing him in ways that he did not see in the mirror; slowly his turn-of-the century values from Oak Park were eroding. Behavior that once shocked him had, through its daily presence, become almost normal and acceptable for others, if not yet for himself.³⁴

Paris not only exercised a powerful influence on Hemingway but it also elicited warm expressions exuding poetic efflorescence from his young heart as he fell in love with this beautiful city. J. Gerald Kennedy records Hemingway's passion for Paris phrased in the following words:

Paris is very beautiful this fall. It was a fine place to be quite young in and it is a necessary part of a man's education. We all loved it once and we lie if we say we didn't. But she is like a mistress who does not grow old and she has other lovers now. She was old to start with but we did not know it then. We thought she was just older than we were, and that was attractive then. So when we did not love her any more we held it against her. But that was wrong because she is always the same age and she always has new lovers.³⁵

Thus we can say that Jake, an expatriate American in Paris, shares the opinions, the lifestyle, and the experiences of his expatriate American author who had passed some precious years of his youth in this City of Light. But just as Spain had fascinated the primeval instinct in Hemingway as against the corrupt and disorderly world of Paris, Jake also leaves the suffocating world of Paris and finds the natural world of Pamplona

enthraling. This phase of expatriation was so important in Hemingway's life that a number of books have been authored on it portraying Hemingway's experiences as an expatriate in Paris, which gives us an in-depth insight into the character of Jake who has adopted a number of experiences of his author. Hence we can say that Jake like Hemingway is an expatriate in search of life thus once again proving that he is the progeny of his author's personality, a fictionalised version of the young Hemingway.

1.3.3 Jake as an Aficionado of Bullfighting and Hispanic Culture

One of Hemingway's most remarkable features was his passion for Spain and its tradition of bullfighting. Unlike most Americans who thought bullfighting a brutal game, Hemingway exalted it as a grand act of tragedy. "Writing to Greg Clark at the *Toronto Star*, he gushed that it wasn't a sport but a tragedy, 'and God how it's played. The tragedy is the death of the bull, the inevitable death of the bull—the terrible, almost prehistoric bull.'"³⁶

He found this game a perfect model of his "code" of life, "grace under pressure", which formed the core of his philosophy. It is a well-known fact that Hemingway glorified the spirit of primeval life. Passion for bullfighting in Hemingway exemplified his love for the primitive. Though he liked Paris and had some rich memories of this French metropolis banked in the repertoire of his mind, he preferred the primordial world of Spain to the modern culture of France and the thing that fascinated him the most in Spain was the sport of bullfighting.

Attitude towards death formed one of the major criteria on which Hemingway tested a man's worth. For Hemingway it was a touchstone determining the stature of a man. Hemingway measured a man by the yardstick of courage he showed in facing the ultimate truth of life, death. It is this courage, which the matador displayed in the bullring. The bull represents death, which the matador courts in the arena of the bullring. Hemingway appreciated this concept in the light of his own system of thought and found it akin to his own philosophy of life and death.

Gertrude Stein, the writer Hemingway eulogized in his early youth, played a pivotal role in the development of Hemingway's interest in this Hispanic ritual. Hemingway first came to Paris and was then attracted towards Pamplona. Jake's journey also follows the same route. In the initial part of the story we find him working as a foreign correspondent in Paris and in the latter part, going to Pamplona as an "aficionado".

Hemingway's first trip to Spain was with William Bird and Robert McAlmon. Jake too undertakes his trip to Spain with his companionable friends. The Jake who appreciates each and every aspect of this sport right from the morning bull runs and the ritualistic celebrations of the fiesta to the art of the bullfighter is none other than Hemingway himself. Jake is not only a passionate admirer of the sport, but is expert in understanding the intricacies of this art. He analyses the conduct of the bullfighter in the bullring with a critic's acumen so that unlike other spectators who just witness and enjoy this game, he can study and evaluate every fine move made by the bullfighter as he faces the menace of the bull. Hemingway too had studied this sport very meticulously and had even authored a book entitled *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), which shows the author's in-depth knowledge of this taurine sport. Let us study the history of Hemingway's passion for bullfighting.

The story of Hemingway's association with Spain began in the early 1920s when he was in Paris. Hemingway's first visit to Spain was in the year 1921 when a French ship on which he was travelling made a brief stopover in the north-western port of Vigo on 18 December. But his romantic affair with Spain began in 1923, when he arrived in Pamplona for the annual bull runs where young men ran alongside fierce fighting bulls to honour the city's patron San Fermin. It was Gertrude Stein who urged him to visit Pamplona, an upland city on a golden plateau in the Basque country of Navarre for the July fiesta of San Fermin, which was a week-long event involving the best matadors and the bravest bulls in all of Spain. At that time Hadley was pregnant and Hemingway thought that the bullfighting experience would exert a healthy, reinvigorating, pre-natal influence on the baby. He wrote in one of his letters, "Bullfighting ought to have a stalwart pre-natal influence don't you think?"³⁷

Thus Hemingway and Hadley went to attend the fiesta and were enthralled by the atmosphere they found there—grand religious processions, rituals of wine-drinking, dancing of "riau-riau", the entire milieu charged with the primitive exuberance which had a healing effect on the war-scarred Hemingway coming from the high seat of modernistic civilization, Paris. The lover of Nature which was in Hemingway right from childhood could not help loving this primeval world which was still immune to the hysteria engendered by technocracy. As a child in Oak Park Hemingway loved to accompany his father on his hunting and fishing expeditions, killing young birds and catching fish, which instilled in him a love for the primitive pleasures these traditional pursuits offered. This same love was revived in Hemingway by the Pamplona festival. He rediscovered the primitive, the natural man in him who was paralysed by

the maladies of modern warfare of strife in Italy, and the chic fanfare of life in Paris. Thus we find that as soon as his protagonist, Jake crosses the Spanish border, leaving behind the world of Paris, a radical change comes into his mood. This change is symptomatic of the fact that Jake is entering into a natural world of primeval landscapes, the world to which he actually belongs. This world has a cathartic effect on Jake. Pamplona for Jake is what the Upper Michigan woods were for Hemingway. When Jake is in Paris he wanders aimlessly from one café to another. In Paris he also drinks but here the ritual of drinking is perverted. But in Pamplona even simple activities like eating, drinking, and dancing follow well-established rules which Jake, the man of Nature, knows, understands and observes. Jake participates in the procession of the patron saint of the festival of San Fermin and attends mass every day. Thus Jake enjoys the fiesta with an almost religious fervour. After his trip to Pamplona Hemingway became an ardent aficionado. He became a hero-worshipper of the toreros Nicanor Villalta and Manuel García and had decided that if he had a son he would be christened Nicanor Villalta Hemingway. Hemingway really named his first son John Hadley Nicanor.

Even in his writings we find him celebrating the spirit of fiesta. His first novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) was also entitled *Fiesta* as it glorified the values of the primitive Spain represented by the ritual of the bullfight. He had even composed a vignette of a matador in action, under the influence of Gertrude Stein and others which was based on a friend's anecdote, even before he had himself personally experienced the action of a bullfight in 1923. He soon wrote five more vignettes based on bullfighting which were published in the *Little Review* on 1 April 1923. In 1924 Hemingway wrote his most famous story of a matador, *The Undefeated* (1924). This story was first published in *This Quarter* and later published in *Men Without Women* (1927). Hemingway also expressed his passion for bullfighting in an article entitled, *Bullfighting, Sport and Industry* (1930), which was published in *Fortune* in 1930. From 1923 to 1931 Hemingway made regular visits to bullfighting sessions. During all these years Hemingway worked painstakingly to enhance his knowledge of tauromachy, mustering information about all the aspects of this sport. His *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) is his magnum opus, the outcome of his intensive research on the toreros and the taurine ethics. Throughout his life he kept on exercising with the pen of an aficionado his appreciation of various bullfight festivals and the bullfighters participating in them.

Even during the last decade of his life he visited Spain three times and witnessed bullfights and met eminent matadors of Spain. In the summer of 1954, he was in Madrid and he attended the festival of San Isidro, Spain's

most fascinating bullfighting event. He saw a number of thrilling bullfights and was particularly impressed by the valour of the matador Chicuelo II. He highly eulogized Ortega's skill in killing a bull; "He goes in cleanly over the horns, holding back nothing. But he has been gored so often he is nothing but steel and nylon inside,"³⁸ Hemingway said. He also saw two famous matadors in Spain, Luis Miguel and Antonio Ordóñez. In 1956 in Zaragoza, an industrial city in northern Spain, he saw Antonio, Liri and Ostos in action fighting bulls. In an article *The Dangerous Summer* (1960) he wrote about the rivalry he saw between Miguel and Antonio and expressed his views about their future careers. He wrote about their contest, "Antonio will impale Miguel on the horns of his pride and destroy him. It is tragic but like all tragedy, pre-ordained."³⁹ The thoughts of travelling to Spain and attending bullfighting festivals filled his desire even during the last days of his life. Throughout his life he had thus remained an ardent aficionado. He kept on coming to Pamplona and Madrid, establishing friendships with bullfighters with unflagging zest and never missing a bullfight. It was Hemingway who patronized this sport of bullfighting and popularised it when it was losing its foothold due to its rejection by sophisticated modern civilization.

This aspect of Hemingway finds its character representation in Jake who is the only protagonist in the gallery of Hemingway protagonists who is an "aficionado" like his author. Though Robert Jordan also loves Spain and exalts tauromachy, yet Jake is the only fictive personage who embodies Hemingway's spirit of *afición* in its highest intensity.

The interest Jake takes in bullfighting and the feelings this sport generates in him reflect the extraordinary importance Hemingway gave to it. Jake is not only an enthusiastic spectator who watches this grand event, he is also a critic who reads rich meanings in the body language of the bullfighters as they battle with the bull. He can appreciate the ennobling beauty of each act of this tragedy with the eye of the master connoisseur and with poetic passion. For Jake this entire ceremony is an experience antithetical to the meaningless life lived in cafés and restaurants of Paris. Jake is one of the few who have *afición*. He is capable of participating emotionally in the action of the bullring, understanding the true spirit concealed behind the bloody exterior of this sport. His bullfight experience is not just confined to the enthusiastic euphoria that this tragedy elicits from the crowd, but going beyond that, attains the stature of artistic and aesthetic appreciation of the mortal tussle between the bullfighter and the bull as the eternal battle between life and death.

Jake not only sanctifies the ritual of bullfighting, he also places bullfighters on a high pedestal. When he sees a church in Pamplona and

experiences an upsurge of religious devotion, carried away by the religiosity of the moment he starts praying. He prays for the bullfighters as if they are his kith and kin. Hemingway also held the bullfighters in high esteem. In his opinion a matador deserved a treatment of venerable appreciation. For him a valiant matador was “the code hero” exhibiting the qualities of honour, courage and pride, the attributes Hemingway prized the most in a man.

Jake is also a hero-worshipper like Hemingway. He singles out Pedro Romero as his hero. The rendezvous with Pedro Romero strikes a chord in Jake’s heart. Jake immediately recognizes in him the real hero he had been searching for. When he witnesses Romero’s first bullfight, it seems to him, “This was the real one. There had not been a real one for a long time.”⁴⁰ With each meeting his admiration for this young and handsome matador matures all the more. He assumes the role of a code hero for him whose grace, courage, precision, honesty and dignity not only impress him, but also guide him, eroding the vestiges of the degenerate psyche he had been dragging along with him right from the aimless days of his Paris stay. Through Romero Jake himself develops a sense of overcoming death and achieving immortality. Romero’s bullfights give Hemingway a vicarious pleasure. After the first bullfight he feels “that disturbed emotional feeling that always comes after a bull-fight, and the feeling of elation that comes after a good bull-fight.”⁴¹ Jake finds his heroic torero is the embodiment of perfection in style and grace:

Each time he let the bull pass so close that the man and the bull and cape that filled and pivoted ahead of the bulls were all one sharply etched mass. It was all so slow and so controlled [...]. In his bulls he was perfect.⁴²

Even when Jake receives the shocking news of Brett's elopement with Romero, the heroic image he has mentally photographed of Romero fighting in the bullring remains intact in his mind commanding respect.

Hemingway too found his heroes in bullfighters. Hemingway paid the highest tribute he could think of to a bullfighter called Maera, “Era may hombre.”⁴³

Hemingway’s letters have preserved with eloquence his love for Spain and its cultural heritage of bullfighting. “Spain is very dusty and hot but much the best country left in Europe.”⁴⁴ In one of his letters he verbally registered the excitement he had experienced of witnessing the thrill of the bullfight to share it with his friend:

You’d be crazy about a really good bullfight, Bill. It isn’t just brutal like they always told us. It’s a great tragedy—and the most beautiful thing I’ve

ever seen and takes more guts and skill and guts again than anything possibly could. It's just like having a ringside seat at the war with nothing going to happen to you. I've seen 20 of them. Hash saw 5 at Pamplona and was wild about it.⁴⁵

On another occasion he wrote, "I get something out of bulls and the men that fight them, I don't know what. [...] I'd like to have enough money so I could raise bulls."⁴⁶ Hemingway said he imagined heaven as a big bullring with two barrera seats reserved for him.

The same impassioned worshipful reverence for taumachy is mirrored in Jake. Though Jake tries to project Bill as a person with a genuine sense of appreciation for this art, Montoya, the hotelkeeper and an aficionado himself, is clever enough to discern the difference between Bill and Jake. He emphatically declares to Jake referring to Bill, "But he is not aficionado like you"⁴⁷ Montoya can make out very well that Bill is an interested spectator but he knows that, unlike Jake, he is not a true aesthete of the sport. For Jake bullfighting is a tragedy, which gives real emotion and purges a man who sees and understands it by releasing the tragic sensations of pity and fear. Hemingway had transferred to Jake his own penchant for this Hispanic ritual. Angel Capellan writing about Jake says:

Hemingway's central character reacted to Spain in much the same manner as Hemingway himself. Doubtless, Jake Barnes is the best example of this attitude. Victim of an uprooting from his native surroundings, and prey to the wounds that technological war has inflicted upon him, Jake wanders aimlessly in a modern world not his own, in a search leading him first to Paris and eventually to Spain.⁴⁸

Now the question is why these bullfighting events fascinated Hemingway. Numerous critics have tried to probe this aspect, giving different opinions. But we can conclusively opine that Hemingway was mainly attracted towards this sport owing to his obsession with death. The wound the First World War had inflicted on his physical body left a permanent imprint on his psyche as an experience of death, which came to him but finally eluded him leaving him alive. Since then a strange psychological compulsion made him live and relive that moment of death again and again to get rid of the fierce trauma death had generated in his mind. It is necessary to understand Hemingway's mental state at the time he first undertook his journey to Pamplona that marked the beginning of his *afición*. It was a time when his mind was loaded with the poignant experience of war that was struggling to find some outlet in life or letters. It was the time when he was labouring to secure his status as a creative

writer. It was the time when he had his initiation into the world of politics as a reporter. It was the time when his outlook had been completely changed by the life he saw in the city of Paris. Thus it was the time when Hemingway's life was stormed by a number of developments converging together to give rise to a moment in an artist's life, which leads him to the place where his search ultimately ends in the discovery of an ideal for which he had been searching. Discovery of the passion for bullfighting can be ascribed to such a momentary impulse of great artistic need. It was the time when Hemingway was learning to write, desperately trying to explore a theme, which would become the motif of his work. As the World War I experience had already given rise in his mind to a curious preoccupation with death, the Pamplona experience turned this preoccupation into a permanent theme giving rise to the process of generating a gargantuan canon of literary writing. Hemingway himself admitted, "I was learning to write, commencing with the simplest things and one of the simplest things of all and the most fundamental is violent death."⁴⁹ He went to Spain mainly to have this feeling of life and death that he was working for. Hemingway himself said, "The only place where you could see life and death i.e. 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."⁵⁰ Hemingway was attracted towards both war and the bullring because both presented before man a situation in which he has to exhibit the art of adjustment to death. In fact Hemingway rated the bullfight encounter to be higher than war as a test of man's anti-death courage. He writes in *Death in the Afternoon* (1932):

Now the essence of the greatest emotional appeal of the bullfighting is the feeling of immortality that the bullfighter feels in the middle of a great faena and that he gives to the spectators. He is performing a work of art and he is playing with death, bringing it closer, closer to himself, a death that you know is in the horns because you have the canvas-covered bodies of the horses on the sand to prove it. He gives the feeling of his immortality, and as you watch it, it becomes yours. Then when it belongs to both of you, he proves it with the sword.⁵¹

There are critics who have linked Hemingway's interest in life and death with his experience of death and resurrection in World War I. Dana Dragunoiu is of the opinion that Hemingway deified the act of bullfighting over and above the act of battling in war. He writes:

The significant difference between war and toreo, and one which may have led to Hemingway's denunciation of war and glorification of toreo, is that while the violence of war is random, impersonal, and gratuitous, toreo

turns death into a symbolic ceremony. The matador and the audience attain a feeling of immortality not only because death is dealt to a proxy, but also because the process is formalized and controlled: the faena, Hemingway explains, moves the audience, [...].⁵²

Jake's wound is symbolic of the death experience in war and with this wound he goes to see the tragedy of the wound and death in taumachy. Through this taurine experience of death, a déjà vu experience of his war encounter with death, he achieves a sense of immortality by witnessing a grand manner of refusing the fate of abject surrender before death even after knowing that this ultimate truth of life will have its ultimate victory. Jake's experience represents the fictional analogy of Hemingway's own feeling after witnessing the ritual of a torero.

Thus Spain and its bullfighting ritual gave Hemingway food for his philosophical ruminations on the questions of life, the code of courage and death. "Ernest needed the bulls then to study his own death."⁵³

Many critics have tried to probe into Hemingway's obsession with the concepts of courage and the undaunted defiance of death. We usually associate the virtue of courage with masculinity. Thus in a way Hemingway tried to uphold masculinity through his advocacy of courage. Many writers link this need for overemphasis on masculinity with certain childhood events in Hemingway's life.

Hemingway was the only brother among four pretty sisters. Thus an intimate association with the feminine was inevitable. His mother Grace, for a fairly long time treated Hemingway and his sister Marcelline as twins. She preferred to present both of them as twins. This twin status she extended through kindergarten age and beyond. Marcelline was detained for a year in kindergarten so that she and Ernest could enter first grade together. Marcelline recalled that she and her brother played with similar small china tea sets and similar dolls and when Ernest got a little air rifle, she was also given one. At preschool stage both of them had Dutch boy haircuts. At Christmas in 1902 when Ernest was three years old, a strange anxiety troubled him. He thought that Santa Claus might not recognize that he was a boy. As a result many Hemingway scholars seem to think that this cross-dressing episode of his childhood history must have led to a great psychological crisis in Hemingway's mind. Though in his later boyhood days he had a very vigorous and active outdoor life, perhaps he suffered from embarrassment when as a self-conscious boy he saw his childhood photographs in the album feminising his manliness. This probably sharpened his sense of masculine competitiveness in boyhood sports as well as in hunting and fishing. He may have carried on the same obsession of asserting his masculinity in his youth by displaying a prowess