

**“FROM ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER”: RELIGION AND RITUAL IN THE
FICTION OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

A Senior Honors Thesis

By

LAURA SEALS

**Submitted to the Office of Honors Programs
& Academic Scholarships
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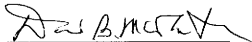
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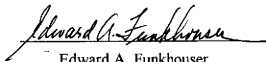
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ABSTRACT

“FROM ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER”: RELIGION AND RITUAL IN THE
FICTION OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY. (April 2002)

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This thesis traces the representation of religion and the development and subsequent decline of ritual as a replacement for religion in the lives of Hemingway's fictional characters. The author's own experiences with religion and ritual during his youth as well as various cultural studies of ritual are presented as a basis for the study of religion and ritual in *In Our Time*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Death in the Afternoon*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The rituals of these works evolve from extremely personal rituals, performed in isolation as a way for the character to control and avoid the tragedies they face, in the early works *In Our Time* and *The Sun Also Rises* to more communal rituals like the bullfight in Spain in *The Sun Also Rises* and *Death in the Afternoon*, and finally to the dismissal of ritual as a viable replacement for religion in the later work *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

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INTRODUCTION

Many of Ernest Hemingway's literary works illustrate his deep concern and interest for both religion and ritual and the changing relationship between the two. For many of Hemingway's characters, ritualized actions and thought processes replace the more formal and organized institution of religion. These rituals range from the quiet and peaceful act of fishing a river the character frequented as a youth to attending ancient festivals and bullfights in Spain. The complex and ever-evolving relationship between ritual and religion in these characters' lives can be understood in both a cultural and historical context as well as a more personal and emotional context. The presentation of religion and its growing replacement by ritual in his works demonstrates not only Hemingway's own cultural knowledge of religion and ritual but also his personal experiences and beliefs regarding religion and ritual.

Formal organized religious belief is broadly thought of as a means of providing the individual believers with an all-encompassing context for their existence, a context that provides meaning, structure, comfort, a moral code to live by, and ultimately a personal myth. In the years immediately following World War I, the period in which Hemingway began his literary career, the formal institution of religion lost much of this cultural meaning for many American youth. World War I created an atmosphere of severe religious disillusionment and isolation in American society. Consequently, religious beliefs and practices evolved and took on different forms and roles in the post-war generation's lives, often diverging significantly from the more traditional and

This thesis follows the style and format of the *MLA Handbook*.

socially normative forms of religion this generation took part in and believed in prior to the Great War. Henry Idema, author of *Freud, Religion, and the Roaring Twenties*, describes this post-war period as “pivotal for the acceleration of secularization in America,” and argues that Hemingway’s works, like many other literary works of this era, “are social documents illustrating the transformation of American culture after World War I” (3). War was not the only change the post-war generation encountered. Idema identifies “industrialization, urbanization, prohibition, the rise of science, the automobile, jazz, the radio, the growth of the movie industry, [and] postwar affluence” as other factors leading to the secularization of American society. The Great War also influenced many young people to form new ideas and opinions about morality. For many young people, including Hemingway, the Puritan morals of their youth no longer made sense in light of their new experiences.

The rapid growth of secularization in American society had a profound effect on both Hemingway’s generation and American culture as a whole. Religious traditions no longer held the same power in young people’s lives. Idema identifies secularization as “the process of erosion of institutionalized religion in a culture” and “the effect on a culture – especially its values and quality of life – of the decline of religion” (5). This new absence of a codified source of meaning in the post-war generation’s lives is reflected in much of the literature of the time period. Writing in 1966, Nathan A. Scott, Jr., author of *The Broken Center: Studies in the Theological Horizon of Modern Literature*, asserts that, from a Christian standpoint, the purpose of the literature of the last 50 years “is to suggest that behind the deep sense of loss in the twentieth century –

of cultural order, even of what our psychologists call identity – is a sense of the loss of God” (147). Scott also suggests that modern reality can no longer be thought of as a mixture of two realms, physical and spiritual, by modern Western people, because “their’s is not a mythological mode of thought, and thus the extremity in which they find themselves is one in which it appears that no credence can now be given to . . . ‘the religious premise’”(149). This raises an obvious question: If modern people no longer accept and turn to religion for answers or comfort, what do they turn to, if anything? Many of Hemingway’s characters refuse conventional religion in exchange for secular rituals. Organized religion is something Hemingway’s characters dismiss intellectually but cannot completely dismiss emotionally and psychologically. As Scott suggests, “Amid the confusion of values of this age, the artist is attempting to invent a system of attitudes and beliefs that will give meaning to his world” (8). For Hemingway’s characters, this system that attempts to give meaning to their lives is one of ritualized action.

Numerous scholars and anthropologists have discussed the nature and intended purpose of ritual, and these discussions offer insight into the importance and place of ritual in Hemingway’s works. Noted anthropologist Victor Turner’s observation of various rituals in the Ndembu tribe in Africa, which he captures in his book *Ritual Process*, and his analysis and interpretation of the meanings of these rituals, offer helpful insight into the nature, meaning, and importance of ritual in societies or groups of people faced with conflict. Turner states that “religious beliefs and practices are something more than “grotesque” reflections of economic, political, and social

relationships”; rather, they are “to be seen as decisive keys to the understanding of how people think and feel about those relationships, and about the natural and social environments in which they operate” (6). If, as I propose, ritualized actions come to replace many aspects of religion for Hemingway and his characters, according to Turner’s observation, the presence of these ritualized actions in their lives indicates that something is lacking in the religious fulfillment brought about by formal religion. These rituals demonstrate the negative feelings the characters hold for the social environment, most notably the religious environment, in which they were raised.

Turner uses his observations of the Ndembu tribe’s rituals to develop definitions for ritual and the various elements of ritual. He notes, “very often decisions to perform ritual were connected with crises in the social life of villages” (10). This connection between ritual and crises within the Ndembu tribe highly correlates with the relationship between ritual and Hemingway’s characters: their decisions to perform rituals are often a direct result of crises in their lives. Turner’s anthropological work also indicates why this connection between ritual and crises exists. Turner identifies the parts of a ritual as the “symbols” and asserts that “in an Ndembu ritual context, every song or prayer, every unit of space and time, by convention stands for something other than itself” (15). The elements of a ritual, or symbols as Turner calls them, do just that; they symbolize something unknown and ultimately unknowable to the person undertaking the ritual. The highly specific actions and elements of ritual convey the “notion of the structured and ordered as against the unstructured and chaotic,” and their ritual use “connects the known world of sensorily perceptible phenomena with the unknown and invisible

realm” (15). According to Turner, ritual provides not only an effective means for dealing cognitively with the unknown but also “a set of evocative devices for rousing, channeling, and domesticating powerful emotions, such as hate, fear, affection, and grief” (42). Although Turner studies ritual in the context of a specific African society, the inferences he makes regarding ritual are translatable to the experiences of Hemingway’s characters. In essence, ritual provides for these characters in crisis, in a cognitively acceptable and concrete manner, many of the still desirable functions of traditional organized religion. Ritual provides the “system of attitudes and beliefs that will give meaning to [their] world” Scott spoke of in his look at religion in literature.

Turner further studies the nature of ritual in *From Ritual to Theatre*, where he identifies ritual performance as an art form. This study of art as ritual and vice versa also lends insight into the meaning and uses of ritual. According to Turner, all ritualized actions are performances. Although there are set rules and criterion for each ritual, as seen in the attention to detail and the great care each of Hemingway’s characters take when performing or watching rituals, the meaning of each ritual transcends these elements and takes on a larger meaning for the performers: “For there is undoubtable transformative capacity in a well-performed ritual, implying an ingress of power into the initial situation; and ‘performing well’ implies the co-involvement of the majority of its performers in a self-transcending flow of ritual events” (80). This transcendent nature of ritual is what allows the performers of the ritual to confront, understand, assign meaning to, and cope with the crises in their lives (11).

Turner’s analysis of ritual as an expression of art also focuses on the patterns

inherent within ritual, patterns that are also present in the rituals performed by Hemingway's characters. Turner labels the four phases inherent in the pattern of ritual drama as: "breach, crisis, redress, and either reintegration or recognition of schism" (69). The need for ritual first arises when a "breach of a norm, the infraction of a rule of morality, law, custom or etiquette in some public arena" occurs and a crisis follows. The redress that follows the crisis is the performance of a ritual. This performance acts as an attempt to limit the breach and resolve the crisis. Finally, the ritual performers either reintegrate if the ritual is successful or will recognize the "irreparable breach between the contesting parties, sometimes leading to their spatial separation" (70). Ritual is an attempt to come to terms with social crises. Social crises are inherent in the lives of Hemingway's characters. The crises they face range from war to a loss of traditional religious faith.

Susan Mizruchi, author of "The Place of Ritual in Our Time," offers an interdisciplinary cultural analysis of the meaning and social importance of ritual that complements Turner's findings. In essence, religion and ritual cannot be understood without looking at the historical and cultural context in which they take place: "ritual acts express an unbridgeable gap – a chasm – between what is sought or aspired to and the historical present. Ritual actors are always at a loss in relation to some prior moment of greater spiritual promise and communal coherence" (468). As such, ritual is a longing for something from a prior moment in time that has been lost to the performer of the ritual. According to Mizruchi, sacrifice, the "quintessential ritual form," is characterized by "its articulation of nostalgia . . . in its most literal sense: *nostos*

("return to home") *algia* ("pain" or "sickness" – a longing to the point of sickness for return, for home)" (468). This explains many of the rituals Hemingway's characters choose to undergo. These rituals remind them of home, of their childhood, and of simpler times. Ritual performers often turn to rituals they first performed during childhood. For example, Nick, the recurring character of *In Our Time*, Hemingway's first book of stories, turns to the ritual of fishing to bring order and meaning to his post-war life.

Mizruchi's study of ritual details three distinct rituals, each of which has a strong connection to the many rituals in Hemingway's works. The first ritual Mizruchi discusses is the ritual of eating and the importance of eating well: "eating right, in conformity with the proper ritual requirements, is next to Godliness" (469). Mizruchi contends that eating and sacrifice are interchangeable (470). As such, it is important to do it well, whether that be in the performance of the act of eating or in the types of food eaten. Mizruchi also discusses the element of violence chronically found in many rituals by describing a brutal, ritualistic murder. She indicates that the gruesome and violent nature of the ritual compensates for some perceived earlier loss and that the ritual "expresses anxieties, conflicts, and resolutions" of the society in which the ritual takes place (475). Mizruchi suggests that the extreme attention paid to detail in violent rituals such as murder indicates why people perform rituals: "by way of minute attention to exacting prescriptions" rituals put their performers "in touch with the inhuman and transcendent" (477). This "minute attention to exacting prescriptions" can be seen in the attention to detail of Hemingway's characters' fishing, hunting, and

bullfighting. Finally, Mizruchi discusses the use of ritual to define the performer's self within the context of his or her historical and cultural self. Mizruchi accomplishes this task by discussing Bernard Malamud's novel *The Fixer*. She asserts that this novel "speaks in vivid and self-conscious terms about an individual, ethnic, and national experience of spiritual crisis" (478). This novel illustrates the question of whether "religion . . . can survive and be reconciled with skepticism, the estrangement from tradition. Does ritual have a persistence that transcends ritual practice?" (487). Mizruchi states that the new rational spirituality accomplished through the performance of ritual in fact rationalizes religion. For the protagonist of *The Fixer*, the rituals he performs "seem to return him, with a dreamlike coerciveness, toward religion, rather than away from it" (488). For modern skeptics, rituals allow them to 'rationally' hold onto a remnant of their more traditional pasts. Likewise, the actions of Hemingway's characters cannot be separated from their, or Hemingway's for that matter, historical and cultural context. Hemingway, who is trying to come to terms with his own crises following his involvement in World War I, and his characters specifically perform rituals as an attempt to avoid and transcend the realities of their existence.

CHAPTER II

Hemingway's personal experiences with religion during his formative years in Oak Park, Illinois, a Midwestern, upper-middle class suburb of Chicago, are important influences on his views and definitions of religion, views that he often presents through his characters in his literary works. The religious nature of both Oak Park society and Hemingway's relationships with his religiously devout parents, Clarence and Grace Hemingway, indelibly shapes his views on religion. Larry E. Grimes, in "Hemingway's Religious Odyssey: The Oak Park Years," provides an in depth characterization of the social and religious nature of Oak Park between the years 1899 and 1920, the years of Hemingway's youth. In fact, the very church Hemingway was baptized into, the First Congregational Church, epitomized the religious nature of Oak Park: "His baptism was into a particular part of Protestant Christianity, a lumpy mix of liberal theology, Victorian morality, and sentimental piety" (37). This sort of "muscular" Christianity, as it was known to many, allows its followers the power to live a good life with the knowledge that "nothing but human weakness (a failure of the will) can prevent triumph of goodness in private lives or in the public domain" (40). Because God no longer predetermined humanity's fate, it became necessary for the followers of this particular type of Protestantism to lead an exemplary life, a moral life. Grimes turns to the words of Dr. William E. Barton, the minister who performed Hemingway's baptism, to illustrate the emotional impact this type of Protestantism was bound to have on Hemingway and the other young men of Oak Park: "Barton advocates this 'sanguine and muscular' attitude in such sermons as 'The Gospel of the Average Man,' wherein

he celebrates the heroic qualities of the common man who 'does his daily job in his monotonous and faithful way but give him a gun, or set him in a place of danger, and say to him, 'Now die a hero or live a coward,' and you shall discover that all the years he has been an undeveloped hero'" (39). The religious nature of Oak Park was present in every facet of civic life. Grimes asserts that "no difference exists between pulpit and civic lecturer, between preacher and school superintendent" (42). As a result, all citizens of Oak Park, from their early years in school to their adult years, are influenced by and subjected to the all-encompassing religious and moral aspect of the town. In early twentieth century Oak Park, there is no clear delineation between church and culture, morality and civic duty (42).

Mark Spilka, author of Hemingway's *Quarrel with Androgyny*, offers an interesting look into the parenting style and techniques of Mr. and Mrs. Hemingway as well as the affect their views on religion had on the young Hemingway. Many of the characteristics and actions of the characters that populate his fiction can be directly traced to many of the characteristics of the Hemingway family examined by Spilka. Spilka describes Mr. and Mrs. Hemingway's child rearing practices: Grace "schooled them in the musical arts and exposed them to literature . . . ; Clarence taught the girls as well as the boys how to shoot, fish, boat, swim, and cook. Both parents favored strict moral and religious precepts . . . and both stressed conduct and behavior over . . . active attention to feelings" (22). This strict moral and religious upbringing along with a love for outdoors and other "masculine" activities is what Spilka describes as "muscular Christianity" (23). This type of Christianity is encapsulated in both parents' view on

how life should be lived. Grace's outlook on life was "pastoral, Christian, and romantic in the English tradition" while Clarence's "was more firmly founded in the American romance of pioneer life" (33). Both parents instilled in their children a love for the outdoors and physical sport; in fact, they decided to buy a summer cottage in Michigan for the sole purpose of raising their family as muscular Christians (46). Summers in Michigan provided Ernest with the ideal place and time to perfect his attempts at masculinity. Consequently, the wilderness of Michigan became a sort of haven for young Hemingway, much as it does for Nick Adams.

Hemingway's personal experience in World War I and the effects these experiences had on his religious views and psychological health created the stimulus for many of literary works. Grimes asserts in the introduction to his *The Religious Design of Hemingway's Early Fiction* that "when the liberal theology, sentimental piety, and Victorian morality of Hemingway's childhood were forced to do battle against the irrational forces and terrible realities of World War I and its aftermath, they failed Hemingway in the fray," and the results of this failure are evident in his literary works (3). Hemingway's denial of Protestantism does not include a denial of God in his fiction. God and the presence of a religious dimension to his characters' lives are still much sought after and desired. In fact, he and his characters attempt to practice their prior religion through the performance of rituals and still greatly envy and "admire people for whom religion still works" (3). The religious dilemma that arises in Hemingway and the characters' post-war lives is a strand that runs throughout much of Hemingway's career. The search for meaning, order, and comfort is of utmost concern

to all of his characters, and each one attempts to recover a suitable context for their existence.

CHAPTER III

Both Ernest Hemingway and many of the characters that populate his fiction sought secular rituals to replace certain aspects of religion that were still desirable in their post World War I lives. Throughout the course of his career, these rituals, as well as the attitudes the characters and Hemingway hold for them, greatly change in their nature. The rituals undertaken in Hemingway's first short story collection, *In Our Time*, are characterized by hopeless desperation. Nick, the recurring character of many of the stories that make up *In Our Time*, as well as many of the other characters, refuse the religion of their parents and turn to certain rituals as a blind attempt at a return to normalcy and sanity after their horrific experiences in World War I. Many times throughout the stories, it appears as if Hemingway, and even to some extent Nick and the other characters, realize the futility of their desperate attempts, the same futility they found in the religion of their youths. As Hemingway grew older and his own ritualistic attempts to regain a spiritual and religious aspect to his life changed, the rituals presented in his literary works also changed. Throughout the course of his career, from *In Our Time*, to the novels *The Sun Also Rises* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, to his treatise on bullfighting in *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway's presentation of ritual as a viable substitute for religion begins with desperate secular attempts to regain some sort of normalcy and order in the characters' lives after returning from war and eventually includes rituals with deep religious ties whose value lie in their technical precision and beauty. They include extremely personal rituals performed alone and in isolation and later on rituals performed in large stadiums in front of a crowd. The

movement to include more externalized, more public rituals indicates that substituting the purely private cannot fully replace religion, which itself has a public aspect to its nature. The failure of religion and the evolution of ritual and the attitudes of Hemingway and his characters toward ritual is clearly developed in the stories of *In Our Time*.

In Our Time was published in 1925, although the stories that comprise the collection were written earlier in the years directly following Hemingway's return from World War I. This collection of short stories primarily tells the story of Nick Adams, a young man whose life experiences often mirror those of Hemingway. Biographer James R. Mellow, author of *Hemingway: A Life Without Consequences*, states, "Through the character of Nick Adams . . . Hemingway created a fictional persona for himself and for his time. Chronologically, his life would roughly parallel but not necessarily intersect with the circumstances of Hemingway's life" (267). In fact, the character of Nick Adams allows Hemingway to comment and form opinions on many of the actions and experiences of his own life. Nick and the other characters of *In Our Time* have difficult issues with their parents, search for meaning and order in their disillusioned lives, avoid any situation that requires the showing or feeling of emotions, and long for a return to pre-war normalcy. Consequently, the experiences and actions of Nick and the other characters demonstrate the failure of religion in their lives, and their response to this failure marks the birth of ritual as a type of pseudo-religion Hemingway and his characters utilize. Although most of these rituals and attitudes are used in direct response to the characters' experiences during the war and their feelings

after the war, the seeds of these rituals and attitudes are planted well before these characters' involvement with World War I. The stories of *In Our Time* set the scene for religion's failure and offer an in-depth look at the ultimately ineffective and harmful characteristics of the rituals these characters perform.

The *In Our Time* stories "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" and "Soldier's Home" specifically address the failure of religion for their main characters as well as their aversion to the religion of their youths. These two stories present this situation at very different times in the young male protagonists' lives. Nick Adams, the son of the doctor in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife", is a young boy when he consciously decides to choose a different path than the Christian Science to which his mother adheres, while Harold Krebs, the protagonist of "Soldier's Home", is a young soldier facing life as a civilian for the first time after returning from World War I, when he feels he cannot partake in religion as he did before the war. For Nick, the decision to avoid religion stems almost entirely from his strained relationship with his mother, while Harold's inability to take religion seriously arises from his experiences in war.

Nick's mother, the doctor's wife, is the personification of the type of religion Nick, and to some extent his father, rebel against. Hemingway presents Nick's mother as a controlling and religiously zealous woman, a woman who clearly desires to control and manipulate everyone around her. When her husband inadvertently slams a door, she need only catch her breath to elicit an immediate and almost conditioned apology from her husband. She is quick to question her husband for coming into the house in the middle of the day. When she hears of the confrontation her husband has with Dick

Boulton, an employee, she states in a motherly overtone, “I hope you didn’t lose your temper, Henry” (Hemingway 29). She goes on to quote from the bible in order to reprimand her husband. As she continues to pry her husband for information regarding the confrontation, her controlling nature becomes more evident: “Tell me, Henry. Please don’t try and keep anything from me” (30). Although Mrs. Adams appears to be interested in her husband’s side of the story, she does not accept his explanation of the confrontation and strongly voices her opinion on the subject. It is as if her opinion in their relationship is the final say in any discussion. She states, “Dear, I don’t think, I really don’t think that anyone would really do a thing like that” (30). Following this confrontation between the doctor and his wife, Nick and his father share an important moment that reiterates the near hatred Nick feels for his mother. As Nick’s father prepares to leave the cottage and go for a walk, his wife tells him, “If you see Nick, dear, will you tell him his mother wants to see him?” (30). When he reaches the woods, Nick is already there reading. Nick ignores his mother’s wishes and tells his father, “I want to go with you” (31). Nick’s conscious choice to disobey his mother’s order and accompany his father into the woods is a specific act of opposition to his mother and her religion.

The descriptions given of Nick’s mother and Nick’s own avoidance of her in “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife” offer a glimpse at both Nick’s and Hemingway’s views and attitudes regarding their mothers’ religion and their relationships with their mothers. Joseph M. Flora offers this description of Nick’s mother:

The doctor’s wife is a Christian Scientist – itself a suggestion that he does not

have his house in order. The religion is not particularly efficacious for Mrs. Adams – she is in bed with a sick headache. Her Bible is really a weapon rather than something that gives her spiritual direction. She can quote scripture, but very selectively. For her the Bible is essentially a closed book, and she cannot be reading it in her darkened room. (38)

Essentially, Mrs. Adams believes she is in control of her household. She is religiously overbearing on her family, and her husband and son resent her. Although there are striking differences between Nick's relationship with Mrs. Adams and Hemingway's relationship with his own mother, Grace Hall Hemingway, the subtle similarities cannot be ignored. James R. Mellow, in his biography *Hemingway: A Life Without Consequences*, portrays the relationship between Hemingway and his mother as tumultuous and strained. Mellow quotes two letters written during the summer of 1920, one from Mrs. Hemingway to her husband, Clarence, and another from Mrs. Hemingway to Ernest, as evidence for their intensely strained relationship: “Of course Ernest called me every name he could think of, and said everything vile about me; but I kept my tongue and did not get hysterical . . . Oh! But he is a cruel son” (Mellow 119). As this letter indicates, although Hemingway spent much time away from his mother, he was not afraid to confront her as Nick and his father were afraid to confront Mrs. Adams. In the Mrs. Hemingway's letter to Ernest she states, “stop trading on your handsome face, to fool little gullible girls, and neglecting your duties to God and Your Savior, Jesus Christ” (120). Mrs. Hemingway, much like Mrs. Adams, feels it is her duty to monitor her son's religious attitudes and is religiously overbearing on her young

son. As these letters indicate, this aspect of his mother's personality is one that will profoundly influence young Hemingway's decision to abandon the religion of his youth. Joseph M. Flora also comments on Nick's decision to go with his father rather than return to the cottage and his mother: "Nick's rejection of his mother (and to that extent his rejection of the family as a meaningful frame for his life) is quite total" (43). Nick, at such a young age, is already beginning a pattern of avoiding and rejecting aspects of his life that are perceived to be unfulfilling. Nick and Hemingway's relationships with their mothers are essentially very similar; Nick, however, is simply ill prepared to handle the strong personality of his mother.

The story of Harold Krebs, a soldier just returning home from World War I in "Soldier's Home", offers another look at a struggling relationship between a mother and her son and illustrates the consequences horrific war experiences can have on a young man's ability to accept the traditional Christian doctrine his mother has taught him. Harold has a difficult time readjusting to life in his static hometown. For a young man who has undergone an almost complete metamorphosis into a jaded, antisocial man, it is hard to accept that "nothing was changed in the town except that the young girls had grown up" (IOT 92). Harold, whose basic beliefs have not stood against the test of war, retreats from society. In fact, for Harold religion, women, and anything that will bring consequences to his life are not worth the troubles they bring him: "Now he would have liked a girl if she had come to him and wanted to talk. But here at home it was all too complicated . . . It was not worth the trouble" (94). Harold, in his attempt to remove all consequence and complication from his life, elicits his mother's concern for his future.

The confrontation that ensues illustrates just how deeply religion has failed Harold. His mother asks him, “Have you decided what you are going to do yet, Harold?” to which he replies, “I hadn’t thought about it” (98). This is unacceptable to his mother and, according to her, God: “God has work for everyone to do. There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom” (98). Harold, unable to avoid the matter any longer, finally admits everything he has been feeling. He tells his mother that he is “not in His Kingdom”, that he does not “love anybody”, and that he is unable to pray (98-101). This confession clearly distresses his mother. She offers to pray for him, which Harold accepts, seemingly only to appease her and remove some of the pressure she is placing on him. Although this scene is obviously very emotional and important for Harold’s mother, it has little effect on Harold: “Still, none of it had touched him. He had felt sorry for his mother . . .” (101). Religion, like his mother, offers Harold little comfort. At this point in his life, only solitude can offer Harold any semblance of peace of mind.

As religion fails Nick and the other characters of *In Our Time*, something else begins to take shape in their lives. Throughout his life, Nick attempts to replace religion with ritualized actions. The emergence of rituals in Nick’s life marks the formal emergence of ritual as a possible substitute for religion. Consequently, the stories of *In Our Time* illustrate many of the characteristics of these rituals that will determine whether or not this substitution will be effective or beneficial throughout the course of Hemingway’s literary works. Each story offers a building block, another piece of the ritual puzzle, leading to the final story of *In Our Time*. “Big Two-Hearted River”, which is broken into two parts, offers the definitive version of early Hemingway

rituals, the desperate, secular attempts at a return to normalcy and sanity in a post World War I world.

The stories "Indian Camp" and "The Three Day Blow", both involving Nick Adams, demonstrate a very important element of the rituals that will soon take over his life. Every important character in these stories, including Nick, is concerned with masking or avoiding reality. They accomplish this by paying extreme attention to professionalism and practicality in everything they do. In effect, these characters' actions become extreme attempts at controlling their exposure to the realities of human existence. When these realities become too difficult for the characters to deal with and comprehend they turn their strict attention to their own actions in an attempt to make sense of the situation.

"Indian Camp" shows Nick as a young boy accompanying his father on a medical call to the nearby Indian camp. Although the story begins in an idyllic manner, a young boy joining his seemingly successful and knowledgeable father in attending to a woman's labor, it soon sheds a different light on Nick's father. Hemingway portrays Nick's father as a man very outwardly confident in his knowledge. The father explains to Nick that the Indian woman is having a baby. When Nick replies that he already knows this his father quickly retorts, "'You don't know. Listen to me'" (17). He clearly wishes to establish his control over the situation. Nick's father handles the delivery in a very methodical and unfeeling manner. Although the labor is obviously emotional and life altering for the mother and her husband, it is purely technical for Nick's father. In fact, when Nick's father finishes delivering the baby, he congratulates

himself on a job well done: “‘that’s one for the medical journal, George,’ he said. ‘Doing a Caesarian with a jack-knife and sewing it up with nine-foot, tapered gut leaders’” (19). Nick’s Uncle George, who has also accompanied the doctor to the labor, recognizes and sarcastically reprimands his brother’s pride: “‘Oh, you’re a great man, all right’” (20). Nick’s father is so intent on perfecting his own craft that he has little time or desire to notice those surrounding him. When the laboring woman cries out in pain Nick is quick to ask his father, “‘Oh, daddy, can’t you give her something to make her stop screaming?’” (17). His father dismisses this plea, however, and replies that “‘her screams are not important. I don’t hear them because they are not important’” (17). The only thing important to Nick’s father is a job well done. The pride Nick’s father feels in his precision and technical perfection as a surgeon is a basic element of the rituals in Hemingway’s works. As Nick and his father prepare to leave, Nick’s father decides to check on the baby’s father. He discovers the man with his throat slit; he had brutally committed suicide while his wife gave birth. Nick’s father tries unsuccessfully to block the image from his young son, but “Nick, standing in the door of the kitchen, had a good view of the upper bunk when his father, the lamp in one hand, tipped the Indian’s head back” (20). Nick’s father’s strict professionalism, attention to detail, and tendency to ritualize his every day life as a physician allow him to ignore the gruesome realities of childbirth; however, the violent image of the dead man reiterates all that is being hidden and ignored.

Nick’s actions and concerns in “The Three Day Blow” also demonstrate the professional aspect of the rituals he undertakes. In this story Nick and his friend Bill

spend an afternoon together getting drunk. As their drinking and conversation progress, Nick becomes increasingly concerned with being a practical drunk: "he wished to show he could hold his liquor and be practical" (53). This echoes Nick's father's actions in "Indian Camp". Drinking, which itself becomes a ritual in many of Hemingway's works, is an action whose very nature is aimed at losing control. A scene depicting Nick alone in the kitchen exemplifies the importance he places on doing things correctly and practically and on being in complete control of his actions and surroundings. As Nick comes into the kitchen with another log for the fire he knocks over a pan of apricots: "He carefully picked up all the apricots off the floor . . . and put them back in the pan . . . He felt quite proud of himself. He had been thoroughly practical" (53). Nick, who is thoughtful enough to realize the fire needed another log, also has the presence of mind to clean up his own mess. The outward happiness these mundane, ordinary occurrences bring Nick is an important element in most of the rituals in Hemingway's works.

There is another characteristic of the rituals emerging in the stories concerning Nick: the rituals are all done in response to some crisis in his life. This is a definitive element of ritual according to anthropologist Victor Turner. As noted earlier, ritual serves as a "set of evocative devices for rousing, channeling, and domesticating powerful emotions, such as hate, fear, affection, and grief" (Ritual Process 42). The story "Now I Lay Me", another Nick Adams story although written after *In Our Time* and found in the short story collection *Men Without Women*, offers perhaps the clearest connection between crisis and ritual even as it builds on the importance of

professionalism and attention to detail outlined in “Indian Camp” and “The Three Day Blow”. In this particular story Nick has been wounded in the war and is recovering in a hospital room at the front. Although Nick has escaped with his life still intact, the effects of the wounding and his gruesome war experiences have left him terrorized:

I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. I had been that way for a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me (Complete Short Stories 276)

Nick responds to his desire not to sleep with a variety of rituals ranging from fishing in extreme detail in his mind to praying for everyone he has ever known. Both these actions, although they take place in his imagination, must be done to perfection. This allows him to prolong each ritual as well as gives him the satisfaction of performing them correctly. Nick describes this requirement for perfection in his nightly rituals in extreme detail:

I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length very carefully in my mind; fishing very carefully under all the logs, all the turns of the bank, the deep holes and the clear shallow stretches Often I ran out of bait because I would take only ten worms with me in a tobacco tin when I started. When I had used them all I had to find more worms, and sometimes it was difficult digging in the bank of the stream . . . and often I could find no worms. (276)

Even though this scene takes place completely in Nick's mind, he does not allow himself the ease of simply imagining more bait into existence. On nights Nick does not fish he prays for everyone he has ever known. This also demonstrates his extreme devotion to detail and correctness. Joseph M. Flora notes in *Hemingway's Nick Adams* that "Nick has learned the value of order. Lest chaos come, he has discovered that he needs a careful ordering of his night thoughts" (116). These night rituals emerge as a direct response to the crisis Nick faced in war. While World War I does play an important role in most of the rituals undertaken by the characters, death and the failure of personal relationships also contribute to their need to perform rituals.

The stories "The End of Something", "The Three Day Blow", and "Cross Country Snow" present another aspect of the rituals that occur in *In Our Time*. These stories demonstrate that the rituals Nick performs occur exclusively in isolation and at the same time work to isolate him even further from other human contact. Not only are these rituals very isolating, they are also exclusively masculine. If they do happen to involve another person that person is always male. "The End of Something" and "The Three Day Blow" are companion stories and deal with Nick's breakup with his girlfriend Marjorie and his actions immediately following this ordeal. At first, it appears as if Marjorie is the perfect girl for Nick: "She loved to fish. She loved to fish with Nick" (IOT 36). Despite her love for nature and typically masculine activities like fishing Nick is unhappy with her. When Nick finally admits to her that their relationship "'isn't fun anymore. Not any of it,'" he breaks it off (40). Although Nick appears to be conflicted regarding his decision to leave Marjorie, his actions and

thoughts in “The Three Day Blow” reaffirm his decision, thus isolating him further from any feminine contact. As noted earlier, “The Three Day Blow” is the story of Nick and his friend Bill getting drunk and talking philosophically about typically masculine topics in Bill’s cottage. This cottage, which Flora notes is “exclusively masculine,” serves as a safe place for Nick, an isolated place in which he can forget about Marjorie and his feelings for her. Nick and Bill discuss everything from baseball to fishing. Bill even advises Nick that he made a wise decision in leaving Marjorie: “‘If you’d gone on that way we wouldn’t be here now. Probably we wouldn’t even be going fishing tomorrow’” (57). Even when Nick realizes how alone his actions have made him he continues to do them: he quickly dismisses his feelings of loneliness and goes with Bill off into the woods. “Cross Country Snow” also demonstrates the isolation and masculine qualities of his rituals. At this point in his life Nick is married. Despite this, he is once again isolating himself from the woman in his life through the use of ritualized actions, in this case, skiing. Nick and his friend George are skiing on a snowy, isolated mountain in Europe. Once again, Nick is happiest in the company of men performing a sport in a professional and careful manner in a remote location far from his everyday life.

The fact that the rituals Hemingway presents in *In Our Time* are isolating and take place in remote settings makes sense in light of the final and most important characteristic of these rituals. Nick’s father raised Nick to enjoy and appreciate the outdoors and outdoor sports. Consequently, nature comes to represent a peaceful place for him. Nature offers solace, solitude, and the image of an uncomplicated childhood,

even if that image is clouded by time. As a result, most, if not all, of the rituals Nick and the other characters of Hemingway's literary works perform take place in nature. For example, Nick fishes the streams of Michigan in his mind during his sleepless nights at the hospital in "Now I Lay Me". Nick, who has already retreated from the cottage into the woods when his father finds him in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife", and his father also turn to nature for an escape from their troubles. In fact, when Nick tells his father that he knows where there are some black squirrels his father says, "'Let's go there'" (31). The hemlock woods they walk through are described as cool "even on such a hot day" (31). The temperature difference is a physical manifestation of the separation between the solace of nature and the heat of the cottage. Nature offers Nick and his father a peaceful escape and place for avoiding their problems. The importance of returning to nature will characterize many of Nick's later rituals.

The final story of *In Our Time*, "Big Two-Hearted River," parts I and II, offers a definitive look at the important characteristics of these early Hemingway rituals. This story also offers a sort of decision on Hemingway's part as to whether or not the rituals Nick performs are effective and in fact return Nick to a place of spiritual health and stability after his war crisis. This story's placement at the very end of the book indicates that it takes place after Nick's experiences in the war, and according to Flora, "At least one of the things "Big Two-Hearted River" is about is the trauma of war" (147). Nick inadvertently emphasizes the psychological damage he is trying to escape when he identifies with black grasshoppers: "he realized that they had all turned black from living in the burned-over land . . . He wondered how long they would stay that

way" (IOT 181). Nick, who himself has figuratively been turned black by his horrific war experiences, wonders how long he will stay that way. Every ritualized action Nick takes in this story is in direct response to the psychological aftermath of the crisis he faced in World War I.

"Big Two-Hearted River" finds Nick in the woods of Northern Michigan near the area he frequented as a child with his parents. Once again nature provides a setting where Nick can perform his rituals in solitude. In fact, in returning to Michigan Nick has literally returned to the place of his youth in order to fish the river in complete isolation. He does not think of his wife or family at home, he does not encounter any people in the deserted town of Seney where he starts his journey for the river, and he even admits to himself that he "did not like to fish with other men on the river. Unless they were of your party, they spoiled it" (202). Nick, who has completely isolated himself, does not want any human contact as he fishes the river and attempts to make peace with himself.

The activities that fill Nick's day are basic and include setting up camp, cooking his meals, and fishing. Nick approaches each activity as a task he can and will perform correctly and without complication. The detailed description of Nick setting up camp illustrates the level of importance he places on perfection: "He smoothed the uprooted earth. He did not want anything making lumps under the blankets . . . With the ax he slit off a bright slab of pine from one of the stumps and split it into pegs for the tent. He wanted them long and solid to hold in the ground" (185). He continues in this highly careful and orderly approach to pitching a tent. In fact, his extreme attention to detail

ritualizes the event, and when he finishes he “was happy as he crawled inside the tent . . . Now things were done. There had been this to do. Now it was done” (186). Flora notes, “Work never seemed more purposeful or more rewarding than when Nick sets up camp. The process takes on the aura of ritual” (160). Nick approaches fishing in the same methodical and ritualized manner, and much as when he was setting up camp, the control and precision he demonstrates in fishing makes Nick happy: “Nick felt awkward and professionally happy with all his equipment hanging from him” (IOT 199). Similar to his father’s actions in “Indian Camp” and his own actions in “The Three Day Blow”, Nick’s ability to remain in control of his surroundings and mental state rests on his ability to be professional. His professional and technical skill in performing his rituals mask his fears and allows him to avoid reality.

Although Nick’s rituals allow him to be “professionally happy,” his reaction to the deeper part of the river illustrates just how tenuous his grip on happiness and sanity actually is. Nick is perfectly comfortable fishing in the calm waters but is unwilling and unable to relinquish control of the situation by venturing into unknown territory: “Nick did not care about fishing that hole. He was sure he would get hooked in the branches” (208). While the rituals Nick performs provide him with acceptable coping skills for shutting out the horrors of war from his memory they do not allow him to reengage with life. Nick, as illustrated in the previous quotation, is unable to deal with any complications in his life and is still avoiding reality. These rituals are simply perpetuating his isolation from humanity and his own emotions and his need to be in control of every situation. These rituals have not healed Nick or provided him with the

sense of purpose and meaning he so desperately seeks. They simply allow him to continue in his pattern of avoiding life.

CHAPTER IV

Hemingway published his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, in 1926. This novel, Hemingway's first literary work following the publication of *In Our Time*, tells the story of Jake Barnes and his journey with friends to the Fiesta of San Fermin in Pamplona, Spain. Jake's story illustrates the kinds of social crises and traumas former soldiers, much like Nick and Krebs of *In Our Time*, have to deal with in their post-war lives. David H. Lynn, author of *Hero's Tale*, notes, "his disillusionment with traditional social values is not a discovery made during the tale: it is the ground for the tale, shared with a generation wounded by the war and alienated from the past" (92).

Psychologically wounded in the war, Jake has also been physically injured, and this injury is of a sexual nature. The loss of his penis has had a profound impact on nearly every facet of his life and has left both physical and psychological scars. Consequently, all of Jake's day to day activities have become the same sort of ritualized attempts at forgetting and denying his loss and shutting off his mind that Nick Adams performed to keep the memories of his war experiences in check. *The Sun Also Rises* acts as a transition between the purely private rituals performed by the characters of *In Our Time* and the largely communal activities of Hemingway's later literary works. *The Sun Also Rises* presents Jake participating in more communal and external rituals with deep religious ties in addition to his private, daily rituals. Throughout the novel, Jake works incredibly diligently to subdue and mask his emotions, thoughts, and memories with the performance of both private and public rituals and habits. Consequently, this novel offers further evidence that purely private rituals may not be an effective replacement

for the kind of spiritual or religious feeling Jake and the other characters desire in their lives. The closing scene of the novel offers an ambiguous conclusion as to whether or not his more public ritual performances have accomplished their intended goal and reintegrated Jake into a meaningful existence.

Once again, many, if not most, of the characters of *The Sun Also Rises* feel as though the traditional religion of their youths has failed them and that they are ill-suited or simply unable to lead a religious life. A very different attitude towards religion begins to emerge in this novel, however; the characters express a desire and longing for the ability to be religious and regret that they seem to be incapable of accepting religious feeling and performing common religious actions like praying and going to church. Jake and Lady Brett Ashley, the woman he loves but can never have a relationship with due to both the nature of his injury and Brett's inability to commit to a lasting relationship with one person, illustrate the absolute failure and loss of religion in Hemingway's characters' lives. On one occasion, Brett asks Jake to accompany her inside a chapel because she would "rather like to pray a little . . . or something" (SAR 212). Yet even when Brett makes the decision to pray, she still hedges and appears uncertain as to whether or not her decision is appropriate. After a short period of kneeling at "one of the long wooden benches," Jake notices how uncomfortable Brett is, and when she whispers, "Let's get out of here. Makes me damned nervous," they quickly leave the confines of the church (212). Brett goes on to explain her aversive reaction to the church: "I'm damned bad for a religious atmosphere. I've the wrong type of face" (212). Although she tries to make light of her uncontrollable and

unavoidable nervousness in religious settings, it is obviously something that deeply disappoints her. She quickly changes the subject by stating that she wishes the wind would die down. When Jake jokingly states, “You might pray,” Brett voices the true reasoning behind religion’s failure in her life: “‘Never does me any good. I’ve never gotten anything I prayed for’” (213). Brett is not the only character for whom religion fails, nor is she the only character who has difficulty praying. Jake’s situation, however, is slightly more complex. Jake still sees himself as a Catholic: when Brett asks him if he has ever gotten anything he has prayed for he replies, “‘Oh, yes. I’m pretty religious’” (213). But because of the traumatic nature of his life thus far, Jake has extreme difficulty practicing his religion, a difficulty he gravely wishes he could surpass. At one point in the novel, Jake enters a cathedral alone:

It was dim and dark and the pillars went high up, and there were people praying, and it smelt of incense, and there were some wonderful big windows. I knelt and started to pray and prayed for everybody I thought of . . . and myself . . . and while I was praying for myself I found I was getting sleepy, so I prayed that the bull-fights would be good, and that it would be a fine fiesta, and that we would get some fishing. I wondered if there was anything else I might pray for, and I thought I would like to have some money, so I prayed that I would make a lot of money, and then I started to think how I would make it . . . and as all the time I was kneeling with my forehead on the wood in front of me, and was thinking of myself as praying, I was a little ashamed, and regretted that I was such a rotten Catholic, but realized there was nothing I could do about it . . . and I only

wished I felt religious. (102-103)

This extremely self-conscious account of Jake's inability to pray illustrates and reiterates just how deeply his religion has failed him in his post-war life and just how deep a wound this failure has created in his psyche. Jake deeply desires a religious dimension to his life and even makes an effort to pray; but no matter how much effort he exerts he simply cannot.

Hemingway further demonstrates the growing rift between Jake and his religion with an account of Jake and his friend Bill's journey to Spain by train. When they attempt to make reservations for lunch on the train's dining-car they discover that the first four lunch services have been reserved by an American religious group on a pilgrimage to Rome and Lourdes. Immediately, the juxtaposition between Jake, a man unable to maintain any sort of religious practice in his life, and the group of religiously devout, bourgeois pilgrims is evident. The pilgrims are associated with the upper middle-class Christianity practiced by Hemingway's parents in Oak Park, the type of Christianity Hemingway has emphatically rejected in his own life. The mention of the pilgrims' social class demonstrates religion's ties to social class structures and conventional morality. It is not spirituality that Hemingway, and by extension, Jake reject but the socially sanctioned institution of Christianity his parents adhered to. This rejection arises from a distrust of a structure and institution that Hemingway and Jake believe helped create the situations that ultimately lead to World War I. Accepting and conforming to a seemingly corrupt institution that has become a mere social obligation is not something Hemingway or Jake can do. Bill's reaction to the pilgrims further

indicates the degree of Jake's separation from religion. Bill makes numerous snide remarks about how "the gang of Pilgrim Fathers have cornered the dining-car" and even questions a priest, "when do us Protestants get a chance to eat, father? It's enough to make a man join the Klan" (93). Jake, who still considers himself a Catholic in some sense, is inherently associated with his friend Bill and is kept from eating by a group of "real" Catholics. Jake is obviously and completely not a part of the religious community, and "that's what makes [him] so sore" (93).

The failure of religion necessitates the creation of some other system to forget and avoid the crises Jake faces. Jake's day to day existence in Paris is completely focused on distracting himself, hiding his emotions, and keeping his mind from working and returning to any thoughts that may be painful. David Lynn notes, "Jake, however, has long since lost touch with any such faith . . . Paris is home, his daily round a patterned series of empty rituals for keeping isolation, loneliness, and meaninglessness at bay" (95). Essentially, what Jake desires from religion is its ability to block out unpleasantness from life. When the religion and morality of his parents fail to allow him to ignore and forget the traumas he has endured he turns away from religion altogether and seeks other avenues of forgetting. Although religion can provide more than the ability to avoid reality, it can also be seen as providing a surrounding context for accepting life's tragedies. When religion loses this effect for Jake he no longer considers it worth his time or effort. Throughout the novel, Jake repeatedly indicates that he does not want to think about things that trouble or worry him. He also repeatedly denies his feelings. It is not acceptable to Jake to allow himself to think or

feel. To do so would only remind him of how incredibly lonely and seemingly meaningless his life has become. Several conversations with his friend Robert Cohn provide excellent examples of Jake's ability to outwardly mask his emotions and true thoughts. When Cohn reprimands Jake for mentioning other women in the presence of Cohn's fiancé and later apologizes, Jake replies that he is not upset: "Why should I be?" (SAR 15). Jake acts as though he never gets upset and never has reason to be, and certainly even if he were he would not allow others to witness a show of such emotion. When Cohn asks Jake if he realizes that "in about thirty-five years more we'll be dead," Jake replies, "What the hell, Robert. What the hell. It's one thing I don't worry about. I've had plenty to worry about one time or other. I'm through worrying" (19). Although Jake has decided to mask his emotions he is not always successful, especially when alone at night: "Perhaps I would be able to sleep. My head started to work. The old grievance. Well, it was a rotten way to be wounded . . ." (38). His nighttime thinking does not end with thoughts of war: "I lay awake thinking and my mind jumping around. Then I couldn't keep away from it, and I started to think about Brett . . . Then all of a sudden I started to cry" (39). These are the crises that Jake continuously reacts to and tries unsuccessfully to avoid in his daily life through the performance of rituals.

In response to these crises, Jake creates a system of ritualized actions and ideals to provide meaning, order, and importance to his life as well as to keep his mind from working. While living in Paris, Jake creates for himself an existence that consists solely of work and play. As Lynn notes, "Alone among the characters of the novel . . . Jake

does work. He puts in hours each day, attending interviews, gathering gossip, dispatching dispatches . . . and conscientiously ensuring that his office will be in order during his holiday. His work matters; it reinforces the integrity of his character” (96). Even the simple act of walking to work carries with it the characteristics of ritual for Jake. The route he takes to the office is well practiced and is obviously something he follows unchangingly day after day. And, much as daily habits and rituals do for Nick Adams, Jake’s ritualization of his daily actions gives him a surface level feeling of happiness: “It felt pleasant to be going to work” (Hemingway 43). Jake creates numerous other daily rituals that also lend a false sense of meaning and purpose to his existence. These extremely personal and daily rituals include everything from work to balancing his checkbook to ensuring he gets his money worth when making a purchase. His rituals adhere to Mizruchi’s statement that a ritual performance “is ordinary. It is not an act confined to extremists or extremes” (469). His life in Paris is extremely ordinary and codified. This code, as Lynn refers to it, “has been for [Jake] a means for imposing a simplifying pattern on the infinitely complex and fluid life that has already wounded him – a means for keeping that life safely at arms length” (97). Living by a pre-established personal code, a pattern, becomes the ultimate ritual of Jake’s existence in Paris. This code, however, ultimately fails Jake: “Enjoying living was learning to get your money’s worth and knowing when you had it. You could get your money’s worth. The world was a good place to buy in. It seemed like a fine philosophy. In five years, I thought, it will seem just as silly as all the other fine philosophies I’ve had” (SAR 152). While it may be a “fine” philosophy, it has not completely worked for Jake, something

that Jake seems aware of. He is still obviously haunted by the pain and trauma present in his life. According to Lynn, "Jake stands on a threshold. What his life has been since the war, and the detached, nearly impersonal safety of a code founded on barter, seems suddenly inadequate. It has neither sufficiently protected him from life nor allowed him to live" (97). The failure of his purely private daily rituals leads Jake to seek a ritualized existence elsewhere. Mizruchi notes that in ritual "there are no guarantees. The classic model ensures that no good comes without sacrifice, but fails to ensure the reverse: that good is its inevitable issue" (472).

Jake's journey to the bullfights of Pamplona provides him with many opportunities to perform rituals and escape from his thoughts of Brett and life. As Jake, Bill, and Cohn make their way to Spain, Cohn backs out of their planned side trip to the town of Burguete for fishing. At this point in time, Cohn has had a well-publicized affair with Brett. Of course, Jake can and will do nothing in response but outwardly accept the affair and deny the pain it causes him. Cohn's decision to meet Brett and her fiancé, Michael, elsewhere and reunite with Jake and Bill in Pamplona frees Jake from having to face the reality that he will never be man enough for Brett and allows him to fish in peace: "'And as for this Robert Cohn,' Bill said, 'he makes me sick, and he can go to hell, and I'm damn glad he's staying here so we won't have him fishing with us . . . We're going trout fishing in the Irati River'" (SAR 108). Fishing alone with Bill provides Jake with a temporary escape from the pain of his life. This fishing trip conforms to many of the characteristics of ritual that emerge in the stories of *In Our Time*. Once again, the ritual is a masculine activity done in the presence of males only,

it works to isolate Jake from contact with the people in his life that continuously cause him pain, and it occurs in nature. Despite the fact that the fishing trip allows Jake to escape from certain people and situations in his life, it is also different from earlier rituals in Hemingway's works. Unlike Nick, Jake goes fishing with a friend. While he performs his ritual he also forms a special bond with Bill. Sibbie O'Sullivan comments on the masculine intimacy this fishing trip invokes between Jake and Bill: "Once Bill and Jake leave Paris they become more intimate; the pastoral Spanish setting invokes an even more private speech which allows them to discuss religion, literature, and personal problems such as Jake's impotency . . . Physical closeness is established by the freedom of movement between each other's rooms . . ." (71). O'Sullivan mentions Bill's declaration of love for Jake as evidence: "'Listen. You're a hell of a good guy, and I'm fonder of you than anybody on earth. I couldn't tell you that in New York. It'd mean I was a faggot'" (SAR 121). Although there are many similarities between the rituals of "Big Two Hearted River" and Jake's fishing trip, a new characteristic begins to emerge in the rituals of Jake's trip. Edward F. Stanton, in his book *Hemingway and Spain: A Pursuit*, compares Jake's fishing trip with Nick's in "Big Two-Hearted River": "Nick is alone . . . Jake has begun to outgrow the solitary stages of convalescence and to reenter the human community . . . with Bill Gorton and Harris. The actions of fishing, eating, and drinking together in the heady mountain scenery are a kind of therapy for Jake" (63). The fishing trip, which shares many of the characteristics of Nick's rituals, marks the beginning of change in the rituals of Hemingway's works. Jake's newfound need for community in the performance of rituals will reemerge in his participation in the

bullfights and festival in Pamplona. In spite of this small change in the nature of Jake's rituals, his first night in the hotel in Burguete indicates how needed this break from reality is for him: "After supper we went up-stairs and smoked and read in bed to keep warm. Once in the night I woke and heard the wind blowing. It felt good to be warm and in bed" (SAR 116). On this fishing trip Jake does not have to worry about sleepless nights filled with thoughts of war and his hopeless love for Brett. In fact, he can and does sleep peacefully with his mind completely empty.

Although Jake does form an important bond with others on his fishing trip, the highly detailed description of his fishing demonstrates that the ritualized manner in which he performs all of his actions is still plaguing him. His rituals have many similarities to Nick's ritual performances of *In Our Time*. Although Jake does not specifically voice his desire to be professional, correct, and repetitive in his fishing, these qualities are obvious and deliberate in his rituals:

As soon as I baited up and dropped in again I hooked another and brought him in the same way. In a little while I had six. They were all about the same size. I laid them out, side by side, all their heads pointing the same way, and looked at them . . . It was a hot day, so I slit them all and shucked out the insides, gills and all . . . I took the trout ashore, washed them in cold, smoothly heavy water above the damn, and then picked some ferns and packed them all in a bag, three trout on a layer of ferns, then another layer of ferns, then three more trout, and then covered them with ferns. They looked nice in the ferns. (124)

Jake performs this activity with extreme precision and care; the description of it is so

detailed it almost reads as if it were an instruction manual meant to be studied.

According to Lynn, it is this “piety of attention” that “creates the resonance of ritual” (102). Jake’s ability to derive pleasure from a well-performed ritual is evident in his admiration for how the trout look laid nicely in the bag. Mizruchi points out that this kind of ritualized existence can be seen as pathological and unhealthy. Her account of a ritualized murder demonstrates the control a ritual performer inherently seeks over a situation, and highlights both the rationality and irrationality inherent within ritual. According to Mizruchi, the actions of the man who committed the ritual murder “highlight why people use ritual: to put themselves in touch with the inhuman and transcendent, by way of minute attention to exacting prescriptions” (477). Mizruchi’s assertions can also be applied to Jake who also pays extreme attention to detail in the rituals he performs.

Lynn offers a different insight into the nature and importance of “the rituals of fishing and the simple clarity of male community” (102). Lynn notes, “The spiritual sensitivity that is Jake’s most telling characteristic throughout the rest of the novel transforms the countryside and its peasants; it transforms every action of the day, from drinking wine to cleaning fish, into something meaningful if done properly” (102). In keeping with Turner’s theories of ritual, “No single detail of the fishing trip is charged with exceptional meaning; the aggregate of actions and the ongoing process that binds them together are what matter” (102). Lynn and Mizruchi offer very different views on the place of ritual in a performer’s life. According to Lynn, ritual can be seen as supplying meaning and order to a person’s life, as a healing force. Mizruchi, who

agrees with parts of this stance, moves one step further and indicates the inherent psychosis of a ritualized existence. The fact that Jake's rituals take place in near isolation is evidence of the unhealthy nature of ritual Mizruchi discusses. On the fishing trip "there was no word from Robert Cohn nor from Brett and Mike" (SAR 130). It is because these people who inherently cause pain in Jake's life are absent that he can experience the peace ritual offers him. The extreme importance of ritual in Jake's life is reiterated in a conversation between Bill and Harris, an Englishman they met in Burguete. The three men decide to walk through the monastery in Roncesvalles: "'It's a remarkable place,' said Harris . . . 'It isn't the same as fishing, though, is it?' Bill asked . . . 'I say not'" (133). It is ritual that temporarily and often fleetingly provides meaning and comfort in their lives, not the church or any traditional religion.

As the intimate fishing excursion comes to an end, Jake and Bill rejoin their friends in Pamplona for the start of the festival. The rituals performed during the fiesta expand on the communal aspect of Jake's fishing trip as well as introduce the growing religious ties his rituals begin to show. Lynn notes, "The Church is not a peripheral anachronism as in Paris or set in contrast to the natural world as in Burguete; it authorizes the fiesta so that . . . Church and peasants together can draw on deep springs of spirit and passion" (105). Jake's description of the fiesta indicates the intensity of the quasi-religious passion it elicits from the participants:

The fiesta was really started. It kept up day and night for seven days. The dancing kept up, the drinking kept up, the noise went on . . . Everything became quite unreal finally and it seemed as though nothing could have any

consequences . . . That afternoon was the big religious procession. San Fermin was translated from one church to another . . . Ahead of the formal procession and behind it danced the riau-riau dancers. (158-159)

The exciting nature of the fiesta and its religious overtones allow Jake to become one with the crowd and join in the communal aspects of the rituals. Stanton suggests that the rituals of the festival and the formation of this community have a beneficial effect on Jake: "His involvement in the eating, drinking, touching, and conviviality of the fiesta is a necessary phase in the healing of his wounds, the cleansing of his memory, the restoration of his confidence, and his reintegration into the human community . . ." (71). Yet, while Lynn and many other critics share this theory that the ritual of the bullfight heals Jake, it is not clear that either Hemingway or his characters agree.

Although the fiesta of San Fermin is a religious festival, the true focus is on bulls and bullfighting. In fact, the attention and reverence placed on the bulls is almost religious in nature: "the most operative religion in Pamplona seems to be related to the bulls – the wonder they inspire in those who know how to see, their sacrifice in the collective ritual of the *corrida* every afternoon" (Lynn 70). The nearly religious reverence given bullfighting is known as *aficion* in Spanish, a trait Jake shares with many of the locals in Pamplona. Jake is such an *aficionado* that he is known and well respected by Montoya, owner of the hotel where "all the good bull-fighters . . . that is, those with *aficion*," stayed (SAR 136). Those who have *aficion* form an almost secret community or brotherhood. When the other *aficionados* at Montoya's hotel saw that Jake had "*aficion*," and there was no set password, no set questions that could bring it

out, rather it was a sort of oral spiritual examination . . . it seemed as though they wanted to touch you to make it certain" (137).

Although bullfighting provides Jake with a sense of community, its ritualistic nature appeals to his unhealthy and unsatisfying ideals and values. Pedro Romero, the star bullfighter of the festival, held the bull "with the cape and turned him smoothly and suavely, never wasting the bull . . . Romero avoided every brusque movement and saved his bulls for the last when he wanted them . . . Romero never made any contortions, always it was straight and pure and natural in line" (171). Romero is in complete control of his surroundings and the situation. As Jake indicates, they are *Romero's* bulls. He does not allow the inherent dangers in his ritual to move him or break his concentration. He also performs every action deliberately and accurately. Romero epitomizes the type of grace, style, and skill Jake most admires and strove for in his own life in Paris. In Jake's eyes, Romero is in complete control of his situation. Jake's reactions to watching Romero work with the bulls indicate how emotional and spiritual the act and the level of Romero's performance are for Jake: "All the passes he linked up, all completed, all slow, templed and smooth. There were no tricks and no mystifications. There was no brusqueness. And each pass as it reached the summit gave you a sudden ache inside" (223). Jake's love for bullfighting, in other words, can be construed as an extension of his daily rituals and not a movement toward growth or healing. Jake is simply seeking a different, yet surprisingly similar, outlet for his need for control on a much larger and more public scale.

Lynn takes a different stance on the effect the ritualized nature of the bullfight

has on Jake. Lynn suggests it is Romero's ability to overcome "his own fears to challenge death, steadfast to a code of honour, duty, and courage" that allow him to become a code-hero to "a character such as Jake Barnes who aspires to the same ideal of behavior, but whose mind is divided and whom the temptations beset" (107).

Stanton further conceptualizes Romero's role in Jake's life: "Pedro Romero contrasts sharply with the members of Barnes's crew. Because of his constant exposure to danger and his ability to overcome death through his art he lives more intensely than ordinary men . . . Romero is a professional; he has *métier* . . . He is a living example of the kind of practical wisdom Jake is seeking" (51). Jake is not the only character of the novel who greatly admires Romero's abilities at controlling the chaos surrounding him; Brett is also impressed and has decided that she is in love with Romero. Her subsequent affair with the bullfighter is obviously painful for Jake, but it proves to be more so for Cohn, who still harbors intense feelings for Brett. After Cohn takes his anger out violently on Jake he searches for Romero: "'Why he went in and found Brett and the bull-fighter chap in the bull-fighter's room, and then he massacred the poor, bloody bull-fighter'" (SAR 205). According to Lynn, Romero's reaction to this violent outburst through the performance of a ritual for Brett stands as further instruction for Jake:

Romero begins to act the tutor to Jake in his own response to Cohn's assault. *His* integrity survives. The reminders of the beating are only physical, a bruised and swollen face, a sore body. His spirit triumphs in the ring the next day, overcoming lingering pain. Because he discovers within himself the potent

source of skill and courage and expresses it in terms of the code, when Romero presents his art as a testament to his love, the act achieves the sort of human meaning that . . . matters and endures . . . the physical beating Romero suffered allows him to transcend his past performance, overcoming by force of will and spirit the limitations his body would impose. (112)

Ritual, in effect, transcends the physical limitations Romero faces. This use of ritual stands as a model for Jake's own dealings with his physical and emotional traumas and limitations. Lynn suggests that Romero does what Jake cannot; he transcends the reality of his physical body. The art of bullfighting temporarily offers Romero the blinders he needs to overcome Cohn's attack. Romero's graceful and correct performance in the bullring allows him to transcend the physical world that brought him pain. This ability to transcend reality is what Jake seeks from ritual.

The ritual of the bullfight has a much deeper meaning and importance than the sense of community and professionalism it gives Jake. The sacrifice of animals and humans inherent in the bullfight creates an altogether different characteristic of the ritual. Although the killing of bulls is predestined to occur, the death of humans is also quite possible and to an extent necessary for the ritual to occur. One day near the end of the fiesta Jake witnesses the death of a man at a running of the bulls. A bull gores the man in the torso. Jake describes the scene to a waiter in a café: "One man was badly cogido . . . All for sport. All for pleasure" (SAR 201). Stanton notes, "Beneath the surface . . . of the fiesta . . . there is a deeper level of death and sacrifice symbolized by the blood of the bulls, . . . toreros, and the males who run the encierro every morning . . .

. In a very real way the life of the festival is sustained by the blood of men and bulls” (79). Human and animal deaths are necessary aspects of this ritual. According to René Girard, author of *Violence and the Sacred*, the planned violence of sacrifice is an attempt at controlling the uncontrollable, an attempt to control violence:

Ritual sacrifices . . . are multiple, endlessly repeated. All those aspects of the original act that has escaped man’s control – the choice of time and place, the selection of the victim – are now premeditated and fixed by custom. The ritual process aims at removing all element of chance and seeks to extract from the original violence some technique of cathartic appeasement. (102)

The ritual of the bullfight appeals to people like Jake Barnes who have suffered the horrible and unpredictable violence of war precisely because it allows them to exercise control over violence and consequently regain control over their emotions. According to Girard, “The function of ritual is to “purify” violence; that is, to trick violence into spending itself on victims whose death will provoke no reprisals” (36). In the case of the Spanish bullfights, the victims are animals or men who knowingly participate in light of the inherent danger. This leads to an important and somewhat obvious question Lynn and Stanton fail to address. If ritual is intended to exert control over violence and not to end or diminish it, how can ritual be considered a beneficial means for dealing with and healing from the trauma of violence if it does not eradicate the problem? Although Lynn and Stanton assert that it is indeed beneficial, neither Hemingway nor his characters appear to be quite as certain. In fact, contrary to Lynn and Stanton’s assertions, it appears as if Jake eventually comes to reject the blind comfort ritual offers

him and to recognize that it does not truly help him heal.

Stanton and Lynn present the ending of the fiesta as an end of sorts for Jake as well. The town is quiet and calm. All of the noise and excitement of the fiesta is gone. Jake, Bill, and Mike, Brett's fiancé, set out together to their various separate destinations. Jake's first stop is in France. France represents to Jake his ritualized existence in Paris. Stanton states, "Everything is very clear in France: if you have money, you can live well and buy people's respect . . . if life in France is simple and sound with its clear financial basis, life in Spain is complicated . . ." (84). After Jake's intense and often times painful stay in Spain it seems inevitable and logical that Jake's return to France and the safety and comfort of his repetitive, ritualized life he lead in Paris might be imminent. This is not the case, however. Jake's experiences in Spain have had an immense effect on him. Consequently, Jake's stay in France is short lived and he crosses the border back into Spain and the town of San Sebastian. Jake's actions, thoughts, and state of mind following his return to Spain offer an indication as to the apparent success of his ritualistic attempts to regain order and composure in his life. Lynn declares that "a return to San Sebastian offers a clear moral choice, a rejection of what his life has been in Paris . . . His brief stay in San Sebastian is an interlude similar to the fishing trip to Burguete. The tone and detail of his swims recalls . . . fishing. Here again is ritual . . ." (113-114). This contradicts the fact that Jake's swimming in San Sebastian is performed with the same attention to detail and skill as his other rituals and that it only provides Jake with the fleeting sense of solace and peace only isolation from the people who complicate his life can bring.

His stay in San Sebastian is quickly cut short, however, when a telegram asking for assistance arrives from Brett, who is still in Madrid. Jake's return to Madrid and the subsequent encounter between the two suggests various readings. Lynn and Stanton provide one reading that appears to contradict Hemingway's thinking and Jake's actions. According to Lynn, Jake demonstrates his newfound ability to accept his emotions and the reality of his life in his response to Brett's wistful statement, "'Oh Jake, we could have had such a damned good time together'" (SAR 251). Jake responds, "'Yes. Isn't it pretty to think so?'" (251). Lynn asserts that with this response "Jake refuses the comfortable illusion. He may well still love Brett . . . But he at last acknowledges that the what-might-have-been is a meaningless, enslaving fiction" (115). Lynn and Stanton assert that it is the meaning Jake has garnered from the rituals of Burguete and Pamplona that allows him to "possess a complement to his wound: he can act, affirming the lesson learned from experience and tutor, that through art meaning may be reestablished . . ." (Lynn 116). Stanton notes that, "Although Jake calls himself a rotten Catholic, the collective sense of religion and ritual in Spain is one of the first stages of his healing," and argues that *The Sun Also Rises* is "a religious novel not because the protagonist goes to church and prays, but because it contains a sense of ritual, and a striving for unity between man and nature that is at the root of religion" (87). In Lynn and Stanton's opinion Jake finally appears to have control of his life and emotions.

Although Lynn and Stanton both positively assert that the performance of ritual has healed Jake, the novel does allow for other possible conclusions. Jake's continued

reliance on ritual while in San Sebastian indicates that he has not yet moved past his need to transcend the confines of reality and may in fact be a symptom of his problems. Also, bullfighting does not provide Jake with any real feeling or emotion. Although bullfighting expands on the sense of community Jake experiences in his fishing trip it is very similar to his earlier Paris habits. Bullfighting is simply a ritualized imitation of life. It allows Jake to channel his life into an extremely controlled and unreal situation. Bullfighting cannot provide Jake with a system or means for dealing with and accepting real life because real life cannot be controlled as a bullfight can be. For the rituals Jake performs with Bill and the bullfight to actually spiritually and emotionally heal Nick as Lynn and Stanton contend they do, he would need to be more willing to accept his physical limitations and not need such a high level of control in his life. While it is true Jake's response to Brett's wishful thinking does indicate his ability and desire to distinguish between fact and fiction, it is also true that he returns to Brett at her first beck and call. If Jake has truly been spiritually healed it would be illogical for him to return to such a knowingly painful situation. As with Nick at the end of *In Our Time*, Jake is left as ill-prepared to accept and deal with reality as he was before his ritual performances. He still seeks an unhealthy and unrealistic control over life and has failed to remove himself from painful situations. The end of this novel does not allow a reader to see or experience any real sense of personal growth in Jake. This indicates that the more communal ritual of the bullfight is ultimately as destructive a method of healing and spiritual renewal as purely private rituals.

Hemingway's treatise on bullfighting, *Death in the Afternoon*, offers an

intriguing look at the appeal of bullfighting as well as an indication as to why it is not an effective replacement for religion. *Death in the Afternoon*, which Hemingway published in 1932, is a book completely concerned with death: "The only place where you could see life and death, i.e., violent death now that the wars were over, was in the bull ring and I wanted very much to go to Spain where I could study it" (2).

Hemingway's fascination and preoccupation with death is present in most of his early characters and his treatment of the bullfight in this literary work helps to identify some of the core reasons this particular ritual is employed by so many of his characters, especially Jake of *The Sun Also Rises*, to deal with their fears. Stanton states, "*Death in the Afternoon* can be seen as a culmination of Hemingway's absorption with mortality, made more immediate by his father's suicide about a year before he began to write the book" (94). The ritual of the bullfight allows the observers to witness and experience controlled death and violence, something that becomes quite necessary for those living in a post-war world. The bullfight initially appeals to Hemingway and his characters' desire for order and ritual while also directly addressing the issue of the fear of death. This combination makes the bullfight an obvious step in the Hemingway characters' ritualized attempts at spiritual self-healing.

Hemingway, whose own voice and thoughts are heard clearly throughout this work, indicates early on the nature of his attraction to bullfighting. He admires and understands the ritualized characteristics of the bullfight and thus considers himself a bullfighting insider and completely knowledgeable on the subject:

I believe that the tragedy of the bullfight is so well ordered and so strongly

disciplined by ritual that a person feeling whole tragedy cannot separate the minor comic-tragedy of the horses so as to feel it emotionally . . . The aficionado, or lover of the bullfight, may be said, broadly, then, to be one who has this sense of the tragedy and ritual of the fight so that the minor aspects are not important except as they relate to the whole. (DA 8-9)

Once again, the bullfight is considered a ritual because it is only when the actions of the bullfight are combined that it takes on any meaning or importance. Each individual step of the bullfight would be unimportant and essentially meaningless if performed on its own. Consequently, great importance is placed on how the congregate of actions is performed. If the fight is performed incorrectly by the matador, the ritual loses its desired effect: "It is to his credit if he does something that he knows how to do in a highly dangerous manner but still geometrically possible manner. It is to his discredit if he runs danger through ignorance" (21). A bullfight becomes much more exciting and emotional to the spectator if the matador increases the appearance of possible death and then goes on to defeat the bull and escape the threat with style, honor, and grace. Hemingway provides exacting detail in his description of the bullfight, demonstrating yet again that extreme attention to detail and to the correct performance an action are requirements of ritual for Hemingway and his characters. He illustrates this with his description of one matador in particular: "Now at any time he could have, without danger or pain, slipped the sword in the neck of the bull . . . and killed him with no trouble. But his honor demanded that he kill him high up between the shoulders, going in as a man should" (81).

Girard's study of ritual speaks indirectly to the intended purpose of the violent ritual of bullfighting. Bullfighting, and ritual sacrifice in general, takes over the goal of religious thinking in a world or time period in which religious thinking is no longer effective as a means of cognitively dealing with trauma or chaos: "Whenever man is truly concerned with obtaining concrete results, whenever he is hard pressed by reality, he abandons abstract speculation and reverts to a mode of response that becomes increasingly cautious and conservative as the forces he hopes to subdue, or at least to outrun, draw ever nearer"(Girard 32). Ritual performances are an attempt to "subdue" these forces, which include death and violence, both important inevitabilities in life and war. Ritual subdues by "removing all element of chance and seeks to extract from the original violence some technique of cathartic appeasement. The diluted force of the sacrificial ritual cannot be attributed to imperfections in its imitative technique. After all, the rite is designed to function during periods of relative calm" (102). Essentially, acts of violence and the threat of death, like those of war, are subdued through controlled "lesser" acts of violence and the prescribed death of an animal who, aside from the danger inherent in their physical strength, can offer no counter attack. Stanton discusses Hemingway's own killing of animals:

Although he never went in over the horn for the kill himself, he witnessed the deaths of hundreds of fighting bulls in his lifetime, caught countless fish in rivers and seas, and shot thousands of animals . . . His need to kill was a measure of his pride, anxiety, and unhappiness. He killed well, with enjoyment but also with desperation, as if the giving of death postponed his own mortality.

(120)

Yet, although Hemingway prescribed to these violent rituals, as evident in his large knowledge of the bullfight and his frequent trips to Spain, in his own life and his own attempts at healing from the traumas of war, avoiding the concept of death, and living in a world where conventional religion is no longer effective, he realizes that ritual in and of itself is not the answer to these problems. Hemingway himself turns to other types of rituals and performances after his fascination with bullfighting. If Hemingway needed more than the ritual of bullfighting could offer him it only follows that his characters would also look to something new. These types of rituals, the purely private rituals of *In Our Time* and the ritual of the bullfight, do not allow the performers to move beyond their pain by learning to accept it, which is the desired ultimate outcome of spiritual or emotional healing. Simply avoiding the issues that cause the character or person pain does not indicate that the character has been healed. The rituals are performed with the sole intention of avoiding and transcending their physical pain and denying their emotional and psychological traumas.

The bullfight, much like the rituals undertaken by Nick in the stories of *In Our Time* and Jake during his days in Paris, does not offer a permanent solution to the problems faced by these characters. In fact, Hemingway inadvertently notes that bullfighting is not a perfect solution in his admission that the art has suffered severe degeneration over time. Hemingway states,

What is needed in bullfighting today is a complete bullfighter who is at the same time an artist to save it from the specialists; the bullfighters who require a

special, almost made-to-order bull to bring their art to its highest point . . . What it needs is a god to drive the half-gods out. But waiting for a messiah is a long business and you get many fake ones. There is no record in the Bible of the number of fake messiahs that came before Our Lord, but the history of the last ten years of bullfighting would record little else. (86)

The many degenerative changes Hemingway notes in his discussion of the bullfight's decline are characteristic of many ancient rituals that have passed their prime, much like religion in the characters' lives. Girard states, "The sheer repetition of the sacrificial act . . . inevitably brings about such change. If, as is often the case, we encounter the institution of sacrifice either in an advance state of decay or reduced to relative insignificance, it is because it has already undergone a good deal of wear and tear" (39). The ritual of the bullfight eventually loses its elevated status as a coping skill in Hemingway's works. Much like the earlier private rituals of *In Our Time*, the type of ritual represented by the bullfight is left behind and dismissed by the characters in his later novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Instead, the characters seem to abandon ritual altogether in favor of a more communal existence. This type of existence, one in which the character rejects his own desire to lead a simple, uncomplicated life behind the veil of ritual and begins to accept the realities of his life experiences and his history, demonstrates Hemingway's shift away from numbing aspects of ritual.

CHAPTER V

Hemingway first marks this final shift away from ritual with the characters of his 1940 novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. This movement is especially evident in the main character, Robert Jordan, who allows his life and decisions to be guided by his relationships with others at the expense of his rituals. The writing of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* marks an interesting period in Hemingway's life. The influences he was under during this period are deeply reflected in this narrative. Hemingway, who demonstrated his interest and love for Spain in *Death in the Afternoon*, took a keen interest in the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War: "During the first year of the Civil War he experienced another sort of conversion – to political and social consciousness – at the same time turning away from the Catholic Church and ceasing to believe in personal salvation" (Stanton 151). His subsequent involvement in the war proved fruitful for his writing career and "produced dozens of newspaper articles, five or six short stories, a play, a novel, and a film" (151). The novel that arose from his interest in Spain and the Spanish Civil War illustrates Hemingway's many other interests and influences during that time period. Biographer Michael Reynolds notes, "In 1928, as he was finishing *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway made his first trip West . . . In December 1928, following Hemingway's Wyoming summer, his father, Clarence Hemingway, put a bullet into his brain" (31). The influence of a new war in a country he loved more than any other, his new experiences in the American West, and the suicide of his father led Hemingway to produce an altogether different type of character, in whom community and loyalty outweigh ritual and duty, and consequently a different type of novel. The

dramatic differences between *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and his earlier works first emerge in the epigraph Hemingway chose to open the novel. This epigraph, which Hemingway takes from a poem by John Donne, foreshadows the complex relationships and sense of community as well as the subsequent psychological healing that occur in the novel: "No man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the maine; . . . any mans *death* diminishes me, because I am involved in *Mankinde*; And therefore never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; It tolls for *thee*" (FWTBT 2).

As in his earlier fictions, the characters who populate *For Whom the Bell Tolls* have suffered severe religious disillusionment and feel religion no longer holds true in their war torn and chaotic lives. The Spanish Civil War saw the alliance of the Spanish Catholic Church with the Fascist party, the party Hemingway and the characters of his novel are fighting against: "The people had grown away from the Church because the Church was in the government and the government had always been rotten" (383). Robert Jordan, an American professor who was visiting Spain when he felt compelled to join the Spanish Republic's fight against Fascism, is ordered to blow up a bridge and seeks the aid of a band of guerilla warriors in a mountainous area of Spain. His conversations with many of the members of this band indicate the severed ties they now have with the Church and with God. Robert speaks with Anselmo, an old man who belongs to the band of guerilla warriors and becomes a father figure to Robert, about the act of killing. Killing men is something that deeply troubles Anselmo yet is something he is required to do in war. Consequently, Anselmo desires to be atoned for this "sin".

When Robert asks who will forgive him Anselmo replies, ““Who knows? Since we do not have God here anymore, neither His Son nor the Holy Ghost, who forgives? I do not know . . . If there were God, never would he have permitted what I have seen with my eyes. Let *them* have God . . . Clearly I miss Him, having been brought up in religion. But now a man must be responsible to himself”” (45). Anselmo cannot believe the God he was raised with could allow the horrors he has seen in war, and consequently he does not have God in his life anymore. This clearly causes him emotional pain; he no longer has anyone except himself to turn to for forgiveness.

Later, as Anselmo stands watch over the road, he contemplates his need for spiritual cleansing after killing a person. As he continues to stand watch “he felt so lonely that there was a hollowness in him as of hunger. In the old days he could help this loneliness by the saying of prayers . . . But he had not prayed once since the movement. He missed the prayers but he thought it would be unfair and hypocritical” (215-216).

Pilar, the current leader and mother figure of the group, also acknowledges the absence of God in their lives: ““there probably still is God after all, although we have abolished Him”” (97). The loss of God in these people’s lives is still fresh, as evidenced by their almost incessant preoccupation with the subject. H. R. Stoneback notes that “in a novel concerned with characters who are loyal to a government that has officially abolished God there is more praying than in most other Hemingway novels: Anselmo prays, Joaquín prays, Maria prays, Primitivo prays, even Pablo prays” (102). According to Stoneback, “What all this praying suggests . . . is that the revolutionary veneer is very thin and the legislated death of God is an empty, desperate gesture” (102). Although

the guerilla fighters Robert Jordan joins supports a communist government that officially states there is no God, they still desperately desire God in their lives. His presence simply no longer makes sense in their communist and war torn world.

The war setting of the novel, in conjunction with the disappearance of God from the characters' lives, aids in creating a situation where loyalty and commitment to others are more important than abiding by a preconceived and ritualized code of conduct. Unlike the characters and situations found in the stories of *In Our Time*, *The Sun Also Rises*, and *Death in the Afternoon* the characters of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are not attempting to recover from war; they are in war, and are experiencing the horrors of war in the here and now. Charles Molesworth notes, "Hemingway saw war as a series of ugly necessities" (90). Robert, Pilar, Anselmo, and the others are forced to commit acts of violence they normally would not commit if it were not for the war. In order to make sense of their violent but necessary actions they turn to each other for support and healing. Pilar tells Robert, "Everyone needs to talk to someone. Before we had religion and other nonsense. Now for every one there should be some one to whom one can speak frankly" (FWTBT 98). Robert agrees and states, "We are not alone. We are all together" (98). Although the war setting diminishes the importance and feasibility of religion in their lives, they have established a sense of community and a system of loyalty and love for each other that in a sense replaces the role of religion in their lives. As Robert becomes a member of the group and grows to care about the people within it, the community's importance over ritual and performing actions correctly and without feeling becomes increasingly clear.

Through the course of the novel, the character of Robert Jordan grows to be an altogether different type of person than many of Hemingway's earlier characters. Michael Reynolds notes, "Nick Adams, Jake Barnes, and Frederic Henry are essentially passive men to whom unpleasant things happen. They do not initiate action, nor do they behave particularly well under pressure . . . His early male characters . . . are not self-reliant; they do not take responsibility for their lives" (30). Essentially, "after 1928 Hemingway's central characters became everything his twenties men were not. In palaeontological terms, it is as if one species died out almost overnight, to be replaced by a new and more vital species" (31). Robert Jordan is this different, more vital type of man, and his differences ultimately allow him to move beyond the need to control every facet of his human existence and to accept a community and the human realities of death, love, and consequences Hemingway's earlier characters work so hard to deny. Robert, similar to earlier Hemingway characters, has previously lived a seemingly simple life. He works diligently and receives pleasure from having a difficult task at hand. While preparing his operation to blow up the bridge, "He sketched quickly and happily; glad at last to have the problem under his hand; glad at last actually to be engaged upon it" (FWTBT 40). Also, before he meets Maria, the young woman who has been taken in by the band of warriors, he believes "'there is no time for girls . . . I have enough to think about without girls'" (10). Despite these early similarities to other characters like Nick and Jake, Robert quickly shows he is different.

Robert emphatically abandons his belief that he has no time for women or relationships when he meets Maria. He experiences "a thickness in his throat" in her

presence and tells her ““you have a very beautiful face”” (26-28). Robert realizes he is doing something he is not accustomed to doing: “he realized too that it was hard for him to look at her because it made his voice change so. He was violating the second rule of the two rules for getting on well with people that speak Spanish; give the men tobacco and leave the women alone” (27). Despite this realization, he also understands that “he did not care” (28). He will not deny his strong attraction to Maria or whatever may arise from his attraction. Robert, unlike the typical Hemingway male character, will not deny his feelings in order to avoid complications in his life. Consequently, a relationship between Robert and Maria soon emerges with life-changing results for Robert. Stanton notes, “Maria softens her lover’s shell of aloofness, freeing him from his enslavement to work, teaching him to relax . . . and his skepticism to protect himself from an intimate relationship with women” (176). This softened Robert realizes that, due to the dangerous nature of their mission, his time with Maria may be short, and he tells himself, “so if you love this girl as much as you say you do, you had better love her very hard and make up in intensity what the relationship will lack in duration and continuity” (184). To Robert, his feelings for Maria are real, and whether the relationship “lasts just through today and a part of tomorrow, or whether it lasts for a long life [it] is the most important thing that can happen to a human being” (328). Because Robert understands the importance and truth of his relationship with Maria and also realizes that their time together may be short he is able to finally live his life in the present. His relationship becomes the most important thing in his life. His biggest concern is not a yearning for the past or living his life in limbo waiting for the

possibilities the future might bring. His relationship with Maria has changed him from both his previous self and from the type of man typical of Hemingway's earlier characters. Stanton effectively encapsulates Maria's effect on Robert:

She will teach him to care and to expose himself to the risk and pain of involvement with others . . . Through the magic of Maria's body, through the release of orgasm, Jordan discovers that future goals are mere abstractions and that the only real time is always the present . . . For the first time in any of [Hemingway's] novels, the protagonist has conquered definitively the feeling of nada or emptiness in his life. (176-177)

By allowing consequences and complication to enter his life, Jordan, unlike all of Hemingway's previous characters, has shown spiritual and emotional growth.

Robert continues his growth by becoming a member of the community embodied in the group of guerrilla fighters that is helping him with the bridge. He forms loyalties and strong emotional attachments to Pilar and Anselmo as well as many of the other members. Becoming a member of this small, close knit community that is based on complicated relationships between people, including women, who have and accept each other's faults, allows Robert to become more accepting of reality and of the fact that he cannot control the course of his life or the world. Robert is aware of the possibility that he will die trying to blow the bridge, and instead of denying this possibility through the performance of mind numbing ritual as Jake or Nick would undoubtedly do, Robert acknowledges that he may die and does so based on his commitment to others and to their cause. He tells himself not to worry about the bridge:

“They would all do it together” (FWTBT 182). Rena Sanderson comments on the communal importance within the novel: “To blow the literal bridge in the right way – as part of a communal, cooperative effort – thus entails the building of metaphoric bridges : between men and women . . . between the hero and his past . . .” (1). Robert demonstrates the connections he has made with these people and his ability to accept death in the immediate moments following the blowing of the bridge. Robert is severely injured and must stay behind as the group makes its escape. He understands that he will die shortly and has to convince Maria to leave him behind and follow the others to safety: “Listen to this well, rabbit. Thou wilt go now, rabbit. But I go with thee. As long as there is one of us there is both of us” (FWTBT 498). Robert is truly integrated with another person and puts her safety ahead of his own comfort. As he lays dying in the woods, he turns his thoughts to his friends and lover in order to bring himself some sort of comfort. He has learned that forming relationships and loyalties are the greatest healer. Robert thinks, “It’s wonderful they’ve got away. I don’t mind this at all now they are away,” and tells himself to “think about them being away . . . Think about them going through the timber . . . Think about them O.K. tonight” (504-506). Marc C. Van Gunten indicates that through Robert’s integration into a community “he has transcended the boundary between individual and society, self and other, echoing Donne’s “No man is an *Island*” theme in the novel’s epigraph” (155). He chooses to stay behind in order to protect his new friends from the encroaching army. He sacrifices himself for the good of the community and Maria.

If Robert’s decision to become involved in a relationship with a woman and

commit to a community and a cause that ultimately leads to his own death demonstrates his ability to live and cope without having the perfect, managed experience that performing ritual can bring, it also allows him to accept his tragic past and reintegrate it into his present. Robert has the daunting task of accepting and forgiving a father who has committed suicide and integrating the memory of his war hero grandfather into his own self-perception. As he fends off the enemy and waits for death he tells himself, “you’ve had just as good a life as grandfather’s though not as long” (FWTBT 502). He even says he would like to tell his grandfather about the occurrences of the last three days. Throughout the three day time period of the novel Robert “is haunted by memories – mental narratives – of the deaths of his father and his predecessor,” and ultimately learns that he is not destined to repeat his father’s weaknesses (Van Gunten 145). This is another instance where Robert differentiates himself from the type of man Nick and Jake represent. For instance, through the entire course of *The Sun Also Rises* there is only one instance where the reader learns of Jake’s past or sees Jake remembering any of his past. It is only when Jake is hit on the head and given a concussion that he thinks about a similar occasion during his high school years. We never learn about Jake’s parents or any of his formative years. He has effectively blocked them out of his current existence. Stanton illustrates Robert’s ability to accept and move beyond his past by pointing out that “when Agustin offers to put Jordan out of his misery, the American refuses: he will not follow the tradition of his own family by taking the easy way out in suicide but . . . dying for a cause he believes in, head up, facing the enemy” (185). Mark C. Van Gunten underscores the importance of Robert’s

decision to die in the line of duty and not commit suicide: "Jordan allows himself to be killed by the enemy, thus removing the stigma of cowardice that taints suicide and informs the unoriginality of repetition" (153). Robert's desire to break the pattern established by his father and his predecessor Kashkin, who chose suicide over being captured by the enemy, signals an "authorial anxiety over originality – by 'breaking the pattern' or refusing to conform to previous models Jordan, and hence the author, hopes to avoid (and more importantly escape the destruction of) copying his predecessors" (152). Robert further separates himself from other Hemingway characters by making peace with his history. Rituals are attempts to transcend history and impose order on a situation. Robert does not desire to transcend history or attempt to control how his death occurs. He does not need the types of rituals Nick and Jake perform to give meaning to his life. He makes his own meaning through creating relationships within a community and accepting his history and making informed decisions based on that history. Finally, Hemingway does not present a character set on avoiding life and the complications inherent within it by the performance of isolating and controlling rituals.

CONCLUSIONS

Through the course of Hemingway's literary career, as exemplified in the works *In Our Time*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Death in the Afternoon*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, one can trace the failure of traditional religion and the rise and fall of ritual as a viable means for spiritual and emotional healing. As the forms of ritual undertaken by Hemingway's characters evolve and eventually disappear it is evident Hemingway is attempting to make a statement. The extremely personal and secular rituals of his early works, which are characterized by their practicality, perfection and correctness, isolation of the ritual performer, and their occurrence in nature as opposed to in society, are transitory and do not offer any lasting benefits to those who perform them. While these types of rituals do allow the characters, Nick especially, some form of comfort, they essentially work to further remove the character from reality and humanity, a move that cannot be considered psychologically healthy under any circumstances. Instead of coming to terms with their history and traumatic experiences, the characters who perform these rituals are solely interested in avoiding these realities and exerting an unnatural and ultimately implausible amount of control over their lives.

The emergence of the bullfight as a ritual in the lives of Hemingway's characters indicates a transition from purely private rituals to more communal and religiously sanctioned rituals. Although this ritual marks a somewhat positive step in the search for emotional and spiritual healing, it still conforms to too many of the characteristics of the earlier rituals to be considered beneficial or ultimately effective. The ritual of the bullfight continues to offer the characters the blind hope that they can

control their reality and existence without accepting their physical and emotional limitations. Once again, ritual does not have any lasting, beneficial effects on the characters who perform and enjoy them. The bullfight simply offers a ritualized imitation of life and not a system or means for dealing with real life. Consequently, through the actions of his characters, Hemingway rejects ritual, much as he did religion, as a viable source for emotional and spiritual healing.

Ritual ultimately fails Hemingway and his characters because it is too closely tied to religion and religious ideals. The rise of community and social bonds as a replacement for ritual illustrates the characteristics of ritual that cause it to fail. Unlike ritual or religion, community allows Robert and the other characters to accept and deal with their history, their emotions, and the inevitability of their own death. These characters do not lead an imitation life for fear of the pain a real life can bring. Religion and ritual leave Nick, Jake, and the other early characters emotionally and spiritually stagnant. They experience no growth and ultimately no happiness or fulfillment. On the other hand, Robert, who has allowed himself to love, form relationships, and to have complications in his life, shows immense growth and spiritual health. This implies that Hemingway and his characters should not have been looking for a replacement for religion, but rather an alternative to religion. The type of emotional and spiritual growth Robert experiences in a community without religious ties indicates that religion is not necessary or even beneficial. Robert does not need the promise of eternal life religion provides, for he will live on through his ties with Maria and the others of their community.

These selected works from Hemingway's literary career indicate that if and when religion fails there are completely unrelated alternatives that can lead to meaning in one's life and to emotional health and vitality. Hemingway's own life demonstrates the strong impulse to incorporate a religious or ritual structure in one's life. In fact, many of his works after *For Whom the Bell Tolls* indicate that he continued to search for bigger and better rituals to perform. His personal account of big game hunting in *The Green Hills of Africa* demonstrates his inability to find a positive alternative to religion and ritual that would offer true meaning and importance to his own life. The path taken by the characters of *In Our Time*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Death in the Afternoon*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* suggests that religion is not a necessity for a healthy society or for emotionally stable individuals. Although Hemingway's choice to continue in this type of lifestyle exemplifies the idea that religion and ritual are not necessary or beneficial for a happy and content life, it also indicates that the desire or nostalgia for a religious dimension to one's life may be too powerful to overcome.

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