

Ernest Hemingway

Alan Haffa

Biography (1899-1961)

- Father was a physician and outdoorsman
- At 17, began career as a journalist for KC Star
- Joined the Ambulance Corp for WW I and went to Italy; injured
- Married four times
- Paris in the 20s; Lost Generation: Stein, Joyce, Fitzgerald, Picasso
- Correspondent for WWII
- Committed suicide, 1961



Major Works

- 1925, collection of short stories, including "Big Two Hearted River"
- 1926, *The Sun Also Rises*
- 1929, *A Farewell to Arms*
- 1930s, Moved to Key West, FL
- 1940, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
- 1952, *The Old Man and the Sea*; won the Pulitzer and Nobel

Style

- Minimalist: “ice berg principle”—key omissions
- Understatement: whatever “point” his stories have are subtle and implied, rather than explicit
- Masculine themes: hunting, fishing, drinking, bull fighting, war and fighting
- Simple grammar and vocabulary
- Short, declarative sentences
- Simple descriptions



Code Hero

- Name given by Philip Young to a hero who struggles with death and destruction
- Knows he will lose the struggle
- Lives according to a code that helps him endure
- Enjoys sensual pleasures of food, sex, drink



“Big Two Hearted River”

- Nick Adams takes a train to go fishing and camping
- Psychological drama
- Daily tasks of cooking and setting up tent reveal the tension and his desire to escape
- Recalls friend, Hopkins, may have died in the war
- By making the coffee as “Hop” did, the tension is resolved: “Nick drank the coffee, the coffee according to Hopkins. The coffee was bitter. Nick laughed. It made a good ending to the story. His mind was starting to work. He knew he could choke it because he was tired enough.”
- Part II: Fishing and the river going on into the swamp: “In the swamp fishing was a tragic adventure. Nick did not want it. He did not want to go down the stream any further today.” Symbolic of repression?

"Three Day Blow"

- Nick drops by Bill's
- They drink whiskey and talk about baseball and the World Series
- Books and their Fathers and Drinking
- Nick's ex, Marge; Bill thinks it is good, but as the alcohol sets in, Nick has regrets: "Nick said nothing. The liquor had all died out of him and left him alone. Bill wasn't there. He wasn't sitting in front of the fire or going fishing tomorrow...All he knew was that he had once had Marjorie and that he had lost her. She was gone and he had sent her away. That was all that mattered."
- "All of a sudden everything was over," Nick said. " I don't know why it was. I couldn't help it. Just like when the three-day blow comes now and rips all the leaves off the trees."
- The two young men decide to go hunting: "Once outside the Marge business was no longer so tragic. It was not even very important. The wind blew everything like that away."

A Farewell to Arms, 1929

- The romance between Frederick Henry, an American soldier, and Catherine Barkley, a British nurse.
- Auto-biographical
- Their love blossoms while he recuperates from knee surgery
- He is sent back to front; she is pregnant
- Chaos of retreat; Henry avoids arrest by jumping into a river and hiding on a train
- Reunion and escape to Switzerland
- Catherine gives birth to a stillborn child and dies



Background to For Whom the Bell Tolls

- Spanish Revolution, 1932
- Republican Government
- Fascists and Catholic Church versus Loyalists and Communists on Left
- Setting is the spring of 1937; war was at a standstill, a month after German troops razed the Spanish town of Guernica
- Explores how individuals are affected by war and whether idealism can survive in wartime



Plot of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

- 1937, American Robert Jordan goes to Spain to fight for Republic; he is to blow up a Fascist bridge
- Pablo, leader of a band of guerillas, opposes the plan
- Pilar, Pablo's woman, is a strong member of the guerillas
- Jordan makes love to Maria, a woman raped by the Fascists
- Pablo tries to provoke a fight
- The men decide he is a threat and must be killed; Jordan agrees to do it; Pablo changes
- They awake to a Fascist in camp; Jordan shoots him; more shooting at neighboring camp
- Jordan cancels plans and writes General Golz; the letter reaches him too late; the offensive has begun and the bridge must be blown
- The bridge is blown but most of the group is killed
- A bullet strikes Jordan's horse, falling on his leg, which is broken. Pilar and Pablo leave with Maria
- He contemplates suicide, but decides to fight to the last and shoots a Fascist as he is approached

Idealism Dies During War

- Maria loses her physical innocence through rape
- Robert Jordan came to the war with the idealism of the Republican cause, but came to question the Republican leadership
- During war, winning is all that matters, and principles go out the window—willingness to kill Pablo for example
- War is seen to be subjective and immoral; there is no clear cut good and bad side

Morality: When is it right to Kill?

- Characters kill each other with seeming ease
- Pablo kills his own men for their horses!
- Several characters including Jordan admit to an exhilaration while killing
- The moral question is never clearly answered
- Jordan acknowledges that war does not absolve him of guilt, but that it is his duty to do so in war and to think about it too much is pointless

Romantic Love

- In the midst of the chaos and violence of war, Maria and Jordan experience real, romantic love
- Maria tells Pillar that “the earth moved” when she was with Jordan, and Pillar remarks that that happens only two or three times in a lifetime
- His love of Maria, more than the failed Republican cause, keeps Jordan fighting

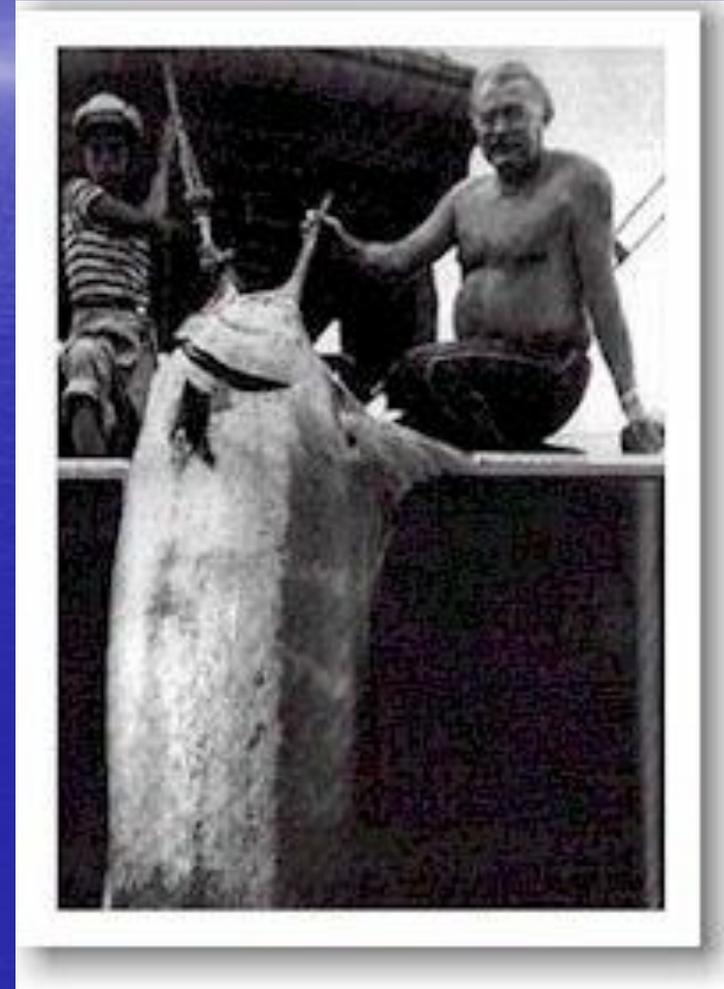


“Old Man and the Sea” 1952

- Santiago has caught nothing for 84 days
- Manolin, his apprentice, has been forced to go with a different boat
- The boy and old man discuss baseball and Joe DiMaggio
- A huge marlin pulls the boat, through the day, night, another day and a second night
- Old man admires and feels kinship with the old, struggling fish
- On the third day he harpoons the fish, lashes it to his boat, and sets up his mast and sail; he thinks the people who will eat it are unworthy of it
- Sharks attack and eat the fish to bones despite Santiago’s valiant efforts to fight them off
- People gawk at the carcass and tourists mistake it for a shark’s remains
- Manolin brings coffee and talks about baseball and agrees to fish with Santiago again

Analysis of Old Man and the Sea

- Honor in Struggle; despite 84 days without a catch, the fisherman tries; Even though battling the sharks is futile, he tries
- Struggle and combat is part of even everyday life, as it is for the fisherman and the fish; but a worthy opponent can make our death or defeat worthwhile or meaningful
- Pride and Bravery and determination are the most important qualities
- Perhaps victory is not necessary for Honor



Summary

- Ernest Hemingway's style is unique and modern by virtue of its minimalist plots, simplistic language, and Code Heroes
- Robert Jordan is a good example of a Code Hero as is the Old Man and the Sea
- Omission is another critical element of his style
- Above all, his style is masculine and confident and adventuresome—like America in the early 20th century