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Love and Morals

in

The Sun Also Rises

MASAO NAKAMURA

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this essay is to investigate the relation between Ernest Hemingway's love and morals by pursuing the heroine of The Sun Also Rises—Lady Brett Ashley. This novel has been maintaining its reputation as 'the Bible of the lost generation' since it was published in 1926.

According to Walter Allen, the theme of this novel is "how, when all external values have gone, shall a man live?" Brett Ashley is in love with, and is loved by Jake Barnes, an American newspaperman. But he has been emasculated as a result of wounds on the Italian front, and so they cannot perfect their love. Then she had connection with Robert Cohn, a Jewish writer, to gratify her impulse, which never satisfies her, either. For she has neither respect nor love for him. How does she wander about in search of her ideal lover? And how is the relation between Hemingway's love and morals?

CHAPTER I

Brett Ashley is a lady of thirty-four years from England. During the war she was a volunteer nurse in a hospital, and then she had her own true love. But, unfortunately she lost him by death, and afterward she married a sailor, Sir Ashley, from whom she got the title, Lady. But, when he came back from the war, he had bitterly been wounded in the mind. He wouldn't sleep in a bed and always made Brett sleep on the floor. Finally, when he got really bad, he used to say, "I'll kill you," and always slept with a loaded service revolver. Now she is getting a divorce from such a husband and is going to marry Mike Campbell in Scotland. His whole character is also shattered by the war, and he is addicted
to sensual pleasures in order to forget his realities of life. Brett, who has
behind her such miserable events, is now in Paris and abandons herself to her
alcoholism and to her constant restless shifting from male to male.

Now, whoever reads the novels of Ernest Hemingway immediately finds the
fact that all of the heroines are strikingly beautiful, which is of course one of
the charms of his novels. The author describes Brett as follows:

Brett was damned good-looking. She wore a slipover jersey sweater
and a tweed skirt, and her hair was brushed back like a boy's. She
started all that. She was built with curves like the hull of a racing
yacht, and you missed none of it with that wool jersey.[1]

As stated above she is very beautiful and fascinating, too. But what interests
me most is the description that 'her hair was brushed back like a boy's.' It
seems to be significant. What does it stand for? Judging from a traditional
notion it must be a surprise that the hairdo of a lady thirty-four years old is
boyish, not ladylike. But it is self-evident when we consider it and her unhappy
past connectedly. It is supposed that it stands for her determination to cut her-
self off from conventional society.

The narrator of this story, Jake Barnes, an American newspaperman, has
been emasculated as a result of wounds on the Italian front: "alienation, sever-
ance from the body of traditional human society, could not be expressed more
radically."[2] He 'has given more than his life,'[3] but he has more or less recon-
ciled himself to his condition. He works just enough to make enough money to
eat and drink well on, and spends the rest of his time in cafés, or fishing, or
watching bullfights. In short, he has also broken with society like Brett. Mark
Spilka says;

It (the war) has taken her first sweetheart's life through dysentery
and has sent her present husband home in a dangerous state of shock.
For Brett these blows are the equivalent of Jake's emasculation...[4]

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p. 22.
[4] Mark Spilka, "The Death of Love in The Sun Also Rises," Twelve Original Essays on
Great American Novels, ed., Charles Shapiro (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University
Now, Jake Barnes is in love with, and is loved by, Lady Brett Ashley. One evening he meets with her in a dancing-club, where she is very cheerful and is all smiles for everybody, dancing with him. Before long they leave there and get in a taxi with no particular destination in mind. When the cab starts with a jerk, she says, "Oh, darling, I've been so miserable."(1) Is this Brett herself who laughed and chattered so gaily a little while ago? When in public, she behaves as if she were very happy to keep her misery to herself; when alone with Jake, she becomes melancholy and expresses her feeling. This is Brett. They are in love with each other, but, because of his impotence, they cannot perfect their love, from which her misery derives.

He kisses her and then she turns away and presses against the corner of the seat, as far away as she can get.

"Don't touch me," she said. "Please don't touch me."
"What's the matter?"
"I can't stand it."
"Oh, Brett."
"You mustn't. You must know. I can't stand it, that's all. Oh, darling, please understand!"
"Don't you love me?"
"Love you? I simply turn all to jelly when you touch me."
"Isn't there anything we can do about it?"

.......................................................... we were quite calm.

..........................................................

"We'd better keep away from each other."
"But, darling, I have to see you........................." (2)

She tells him not to touch her, not because she doesn't love him, but because she is afraid that she can't stand it. She says, "I simply turn all to jelly when you touch me." She is now strained to the breaking point and tries to control herself not to lose her composure. Here we see the sufferings of the two who are not able to perfect their love, though they love each other heartily. Then she regards her misery as the natural consequence of her faults, saying, "When I think of the hell I've put chaps through. I'm paying for it all now." (3) The

(2) Ibid., pp. 25—26.
(3) Loc. cit.
war left them nothing but miseries and sufferings.

At one time or another he has considered his wound from most of its various angles, including the one that certain injuries or imperfections are a subject of merriment while remaining quite serious for the person possessing them. And now he looks upon what happened to him as funny. But it is far from funny for Brett. The irregularity of the following conversation explains to us the complexity of their love, that is, their sufferings.

"It's funny," I said. "It's very funny. And it's a lot of fun, too, to be in love."

"Do you think so?" her eyes looked flat again.

"I don't mean fun that way. In a way it's an enjoyable feelings."

"No," she said. "I think it's hell on earth."

"It's good to see each other."

"No. I don't think it is."

"Don't you want to?"

"I have to."

In Book II there is a scene in which Jake and his friend, Bill Gorton, who is a successful writer and shares with him a love for boxing and other sports, take delight in fishing trout at Burguete. Now they take a rest in the shade.

"Say," Bill said, "What about this Brett business?"

"What about it?"

"Were you ever in love with her?"

"Sure."

"For how long?"

"Off and on for a hell of a long time."

"Oh, hell!" Bill said. "I'm sorry, fella."

"It's all right," I said. "I don't give a damn any more."

"Really?"

"Really. Only I'd a hell of a lot rather not talk about it."

Here he exercises self-restraint and tries not to think about it any further.

As mentioned above all the sufferings of Jake and Brett derive from his imperfection as a result of his wound on the Italian front. But, as for Jake, he

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(1) Ibid., p. 27.
(2) Ibid., pp. 123—124.
makes himself familiar with sports, such as bullfight, boxing or fishing, and is always even cheerful, in spite of the fatal wound for men—impotence. So at the first view his love for Brett seems to be purely spiritual. Externally he keeps a tranquil mind, indeed, and looks upon his wound as funny, and restrains himself not to think about it any further. But is it true that his love for Brett is purely spiritual?

It is unquestionable that he is troubled with his impotence. How does he really think about it? He says to himself, "I never used to realize it, I guess. I try and play it along and just not make trouble for people. Probably I never would have had any trouble if I hadn't run into Brett when they shipped me to England." (1) His words tell us his actual feeling about it. When he was sent back to England and met with Brett, his sufferings arose. But he is afraid that he loses his composure and disturbs others. The expression that 'I try and play it along and just not make trouble for people' is enough to explain to us why he tries to restrain himself and why he calls it funny as if he were indifferent to it.

According to Philip Young, "Hemingway has always been good with secondary characters, finding them in a bright flash that reveals all we need know."(2) Above all, Count Mippipopolous is wonderful. He has his own curious system of values and appreciates good food, good wine, and a quiet place in which to enjoy them. He also loves Brett so much. One day she visits Jake with him and says how she refused his courtship. After they go away in the shadows of night in his car, Jake says to himself, "It is awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the daytime, but at night it is another thing." (3) Once starting to think about it, he can't keep away from it and feels like crying. This is Jake. Indeed his love for Brett is apparently spiritual. But, in fact, he is only forced to behave so on account of his imperfection. It is not a purely spiritual but an unnatural love distorted by the war. Of course it is worth notice that he always tries to keep his composure in public.

As I mentioned before, the same holds good for Brett about self-restraint. But her love for Jake is proclaimed before Count Mippipopolous like this:

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(1) Ibid., p. 31.
(3) Hemingway, op. cit., p. 34.
... I never joke people. Joke people and you make enemies. That's what I always say.

"You're right," Brett said. "You're terribly right. I always joke people and I haven't a friend in the world. Except Jake here."

"You don't joke him."

"That's it."

"Do you, now?" asked the count. "Do you joke him?"

Brett looked at me and wrinkled up the corners of her eyes.

"No," she said. "I wouldn't joke him." (1)

In this way she expresses her true feeling for Jake unconcernedly. And we can here touch on the fringe of the philosophy of the count.

Now, Brett and Jake are in love with each other, but they cannot perfect their love as a result of his impotence. Walter Allen says about Brett as follows:

She has become, seen objectively, a drunk and a nymphomaniac. But in terms of the novel such words are both pejorative and questionbegging; in no sense do they contain her, for the important thing is what she does, how she copes with an inescapable situation. (2)

It is greatly interesting to pursue how she copes with the 'inescapable situation.'

CHAPTER II

If Jake hadn't been wounded, then he and Brett would have become true lovers. But unfortunately, because of his impotence, Brett wanders about in search of an ideal lover instead of Jake.

Here is a Jewish writer, Robert Cohn, who was once middleweight boxing champion in his student times at Princeton. To tell the truth, he was not fond of boxing, but he learned it painfully and thoroughly to counteract the inferiority complex he had felt on being treated as a Jew at Princeton. He found a certain inner pleasure in knowing he could knock down anybody who was snooty to him. After graduation he failed in marriage. In California he became acquainted with literary people and was backing a review of the Arts. He was sorry when he had to give up the magazine soon after because of his financial

(1) Ibid., p. 58.
(2) Allen, op. cit., p. 95.
difficult. He liked the authority of editing and the prestige of writing, though he was a bad editor and a poor novelist. In other words, he was always looking for internal strength in outward signs and success. By that time he had been taken in hand by a lady who was eager to rise in the world with the magazine. But when they saw that the magazine was not going to rise, they came to Paris, where he got acquainted with Jake as a tennis friend. At the beginning of this novel Jake describes Cohn as follows:

He had been reading W. H. Hudson. That sounds like an innocent occupation, but Cohn had read and reread "The Purple Land." "The Purple Land" is a very sinister book if read too late in life. It recounts splendid imaginary amorous adventures of a perfect English gentleman in an intensely romantic land, the scenery of which is very well described. For a man to take it at thirty-four as a guide-book to what life holds is about as safe as it would be for a man of the same age to enter Wall Street direct from a French convent, equipped with a complete set of the more practical Alger books. Cohn, I believe, took every word of "The Purple Land" as literally as though it had been an R. G. Dun report. [1]

This is very useful to know what Robert Cohn is like. Though he is thirty-four years old, he reads "The Purple Land," which is full of 'splendid imaginary amorous adventures of a perfect English gentleman in an intensely romantic land,' and takes it to the letter. For him it is impossible to distinguish between romance and reality. It is all that is needed to set him off. Jake does not realize the extent to which it has set him off until one day he comes into Jake's office and says, "Would you like to go to South America, Jake?" [2] Jake is surprised to hear it and tries to divert Cohn's thoughts from South America, but it is of no use. Then he says, "I can't stand it to think my life is going so fast and I'm not really living it... I want to go back in the country in South America. We could have a great trip." [3] Hearing it, Jake understands that his desire to go to South America is very serious. For him the real world is irksome, and is always contrary to his expectations, for he lives in his own romantic world, and, to make matters worse, he regards it in the same light with the

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real world. It is very natural that he cannot be satisfied with such a reality. He says, "Listen Jake,"... "Don't you ever get the feeling that all your life is going by and you're not taking advantage of it? Do you realize you've lived nearly half the time you have to live already?" (1) Jake says in reply, "South America hell! If you went there the way you feel now it would be exactly the same. This is a good town. Why don't you start living your life in Paris?" (2) But Cohn does not listen to him any more. All his words fall flat upon Cohn. He has a hard, Jewish, stubborn streak, with which he just repeats that he wants to go to South America, as if he were only a child. Walter Allen says about Cohn:

He is, as it were, the victim of literature, so confused by words and the fine sentiments that inhere in words as to be incurably dishonest and therefore dangerous. He cannot distinguish between literature and life. (3)

It is supposed that Walter Allen interprets Cohn's character precisely. In this novel there is a scene in which Brett says to Cohn, "You're getting damned romantic." In fact, he is damned romantic, and his romantic idea derives from the exotic book, "The Purple Land." As mentioned above Robert Cohn upholds a romantic view of life, in which he is different from the other characters, and this is one of the central points of the novel.

Now I will survey the relation between Cohn, a romanticist, and Brett more concretely. Cohn falls in love with Brett at first sight. According to Jake, he is described as follows:

I saw Robert Cohn looking at her. He looked a great deal as his compatriot must have looked when he saw the promised land. Cohn, of course, was much younger. But he had that look of eager, deserving expectation. (4)

At last he meets with the object of romance which he has been looking for in this country. Immediately he visits Jake and questions him even to the minutest

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(1) Ibid., p. 11.
(2) Loc. cit.
(4) Hemingway, op. cit., p. 22.
details about Brett. Then he pays his highest tribute of praise to her: "She's a remarkably attractive woman." (1) or "There's a certain quality about her, a certain fineness. She seems to be absolutely fine and straight." (2) And finally he says in excitement, ... I shouldn't wonder if I were in love with her." (3) For him it is very natural to be in love with a lady, if she is 'remarkably attractive' and 'absolutely fine and straight.' It will do for him even if 'she' is not necessarily Brett. This is, as it were, his view of love, which is very romantic and ideological.

Brett, who loves Jake but has been irritated with his impotence, goes down to San Sebastian with Cohn to gratify her sexual impulse. She has connection with him from a moment's impulse, but for him, who upholds a romantic view of life, it is a very serious matter. That is to say, 'having had a one-night affair with Brett, he believes that he is in love with her and she with him.'(4) According to Brett, "he can't believe it didn't mean anything," (5) which is proved by the following:

"I just couldn't stand it about Brett. I've been thought hell, Jake. It's been simply hell. When I met her down here Brett treated me as though I were a perfect stranger. I just couldn't stand it. We lived together at San Sebastian. I suppose you know it. I can't stand it any more." (6)

This is a scene in the latter half of this novel in which Cohn complains of her indifference. Here we see his romantic view of love: he regards all her outward actions as her sincere expression of love. He never notices his self-complacency to the last, and says, "I can't stand it any more." No gap between romance and reality is found for him.

After their brief affair in the country, his passion for her becomes stronger and stronger, and his sombre character resulting from his racial inferiority complex of a Jew makes it an evil attachment, and finally he feels jealous of the others. Thus not only Brett but also those around him have a hatred for

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(1) Ibid., p. 38.
(2) Loc. cit.
(3) Loc. cit.
(4) Allen, op. cit., p. 96.
(6) Ibid., p. 194.
him. On the other hand, Brett's fiancé, Mike Campbell, is aware of her numerous infidelities and seems to accept them with amoral tolerance. But actually he resents them, so that Cohn provides him with a convenient outlet for his feelings. He begins to bait him for following Brett around like a sick steer. Mike says, "...Tell me, Robert. Why do you follow Brett around like a poor bloody steer? Don't you know you're not wanted? I know when I'm not wanted. Why don't you know when you're not wanted? You came down to San Sebastian where you weren't wanted, and followed Brett around like a bloody steer. Do you think that's right?"(1) In reply to him Cohn only says, "Shut up. You're drunk." He firmly believes that she loves him. James T. Farrel says:

The main characters have only a meager past. They are escaping from their past and usually do not wish even to talk or to think of it. They live for the present, constantly searching for new and fresh sensations. They do not really think; even Jake scarcely thinks about himself or about his own impotence. These people feel quite alike. They form a small clique, stoically accepting the ills of their life.

Robert Cohn, however, is an outsider. He is with them because of his doglike love for Lady Brett Ashley. Unlike the others, he is unable to drown his feelings in banalities, small talk, and new spectacles. Cohn's difference from the others is one of the central points of the novel. The contrast is stated overtly when Lady Brett says that Cohn is "not one of us," and when Jake thinks that Cohn has behaved badly by pursuing Lady Brett. (2)

All the characters except Cohn are 'friends', and moreover, all of them are wounded by the war either in the mind or in the body, which they know well to one another. Their friendship is to act on the basis of this mutual understanding, namely, to leave one another alone. Though it may sound strange, this is, as it were, 'their way of friendship'.

Only Cohn, however, always tries to meddle in another's business without regard to their way of friendship. That's why he is disliked by 'them'. Take the following conversation for instance. Jake and Brett are talking in a bar. Cohn is sitting beside them, too.

(1) Ibid., p. 142.
"I'm going to sit here," Brett said.
"I'll stay with you," Cohn said.
"Oh, don't!" Brett said. "For God's sake, go off somewhere. Can't you see Jake and I want to talk?"

Cohn was gone. "My God! I'm so sick of him!"

"He's probably waiting just outside the door now."
"Yes. He would. You know I do know how he feels. He can't believe it didn't mean anything." [1]

He doesn't know when he is not wanted, and as I mentioned before, he remains unconvinced that "it didn't mean anything." How romantic and obstinate he is!

On the other hand, Count Mippipopolous, though he also loves Brett so much, never behaves badly like Cohn. He acts on the basis of 'their way of friendship', too, and it means that he is 'one of them'. One day when he pays a visit to Jake at his apartment house with Brett, holding a great bunch of roses, Jake feels tired and pretty rotten. Brett kisses him coolly on the forehead, saying, "What's the matter, darling? Do you feel rocky?" [2] Then his strained mind relaxes at once, and he says, "Oh, Brett, I love you so much ... Couldn't we live together, Brett? Couldn't we just live together?" [3] Soon she sends Count away for champagne, and he goes out of the room without any complaint. Here we can see a great difference between Count and Cohn. If he were Cohn, he must refuse to go out so soon. Count is mad about her, but he knows that Jake also loves her heartily, so he tries to leave them alone. Now Jake, who is asked not to be obstinate by Brett, recovers his self-possession, and says, "Oh, sure," ... "I know you're right. I'm just low, and when I'm low I talk like a fool." [4] Thus he exercises self-restraint not to bother her any more.

How does Bill Gorton behave to Jake? He is greatly surprised to know 'the matter' between Brett and Cohn, and says:

"what bloody-fool things people do. Why didn't she go off with

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[2] Ibid., p. 54.
[4] Ibid., p. 56.
some of her own people? Or you?—he slurred that over—"or me? Why not me?" (italics not in the original) (1)

It is clear that Bill also thinks Cohn as an outsider. However that may be, the italics are significant. For he understands the reason why she went down to San Sebastian with Cohn, and he checks himself before finishing his words, and jokes about himself, while shaving, "It's an honest face. It's a face any woman would be safe with." (2) Here we see Bill trying to leave Jake's past—his emasculation—untouched. His tender compassion upon Jake is expressed like this.

As mentioned above, 'they' keep company with one another, but never talk about their agony brought to them by the war. (It is supposed that this is the moral code which Ernest Hemingway believes.) These people get together and form a small clique. Their attitude toward one another is in marked contrast to that of Cohn toward Brett. This is obstinate, but that is tolerant and gentle. Furthermore, all of them except Cohn cut themselves off from conventional society, but, on the other hand, Cohn, one of the victims of romantic literature, still connects with the past and continues to live in the traditional society. After all, he is separated by a great and impassable gulf from 'them,' for whom he is the very outsider and 'not one of them.' Mike says to him:

"Do you think you amount to something, Cohn? Do you think you belong here among us?..."

"Do you think Brett wants you here? Do you think you add to the party? Why don't you say something?" (3) (italics not in the original)

Here his hatred for Cohn is expressed decisively, which is representative of 'their' feelings to him. 'They' regard him as an outsider, but he can't believe it yet.

However hard he may be abused, he is always willing to suffer in public and to absorb insults for the sake of his true love. On the other hand, he is also 'ready to do battle for his lady.' When Mike says to him, "Go away! Go away now!", and starts toward him, he pulls himself up in a fighting posture as if he

(1) Ibid., p. 102.
(2) Loc. cit.
(3) Ibid., p. 177.
were a chivalric hero. According to the author, 'Cohn stood up and took off his glasses. He stood waiting, his face sallow, his hands fairly low, *proudly and firmly waiting for the assault, ready to do battle for his lady love.*' (1) [italics not in the original] When the chance finally comes, he knocks his rivals down like a genuine knight-errant. With Mike and Jake he has no trouble, but when he enters Pedro Romero's room to rescue Brett, the results are miserable. At first he severely beats up Romero, the young bullfighter, but Romero never gives in and finally hits him in the face. As for Brett, she tells Cohn off bitterly. Then 'Cohn cries, wretchedly proclaims his love for Brett in public, and tries to shake Romero's hand.' (2) No one will shake hands with him. When Brett remains with Romero, Cohn leaves the town alone.

Now let me try to compare Cohn with Jake. Cohn's public suffering contrasts with Jake's private grief, his deliberate self-exposure with Jake's self-restraint. It is very natural that the attitude of Brett toward the two should be different. She neither respects Cohn nor loves him. How about Jake? M. Spilka says:

> ... when men no longer command respect,...  
> ...............................................................  
> ... ,there can be no serious love.

Brett does have some respect for Barnes, even a little tenderness, though her actions scarcely show abiding love. At best she can affirm his worth and share his standards and perceptions. When in public, she knows how to keep her essential misery to herself; when alone with Barnes, she will express her feelings, admit her faults, and even display good judgment. (3)

In chapter I we know already that Brett is in love with Jake, and now we understand that her love for Jake is based on her respect for him. Then, what is the function of Cohn in this novel? Needless to say, he is a representative of conventional society, and therefore he is treated as an outsider. It may be said that he was destined to be an outsider when the author decided to make him a Jew in this novel. And his disappointed love means the death of romantic love.

Once again I will quote from M. Spilka:

He (Cohn) is the last chivalric hero, the last defender of an outworn faith, and his function is to illustrate its present folly—to show us, through the absurdity of his behavior, that romantic love is dead, that one of the great guiding codes of the past no longer operate. (1)

Brett loves Jake so much, but she is not satisfied with him because of his impotence. So, upon a sudden impulse she has a one-night affair with Cohn, which never satisfies her, either. Because she has no respect for him, still less love.

CHAPTER III

About Hemingway's realism James T. Farrel says:

Hemingway's realism is, by and large, one which deals with sensations—with shocks to the senses. He has tended to reduce life to the effect that sights, scenes, and experiences make upon the nervous system; and he has avoided complicated types of response. (2)

In the stories and novels of Ernest Hemingway we often find his intense awareness of the world of the senses, which is one of the things that make the early works seem so fresh and pure. (3) Here are such sentences as this from *Green Hills of Africa*: "...drinking this, the first one of the day, the finest one there is, and looking at the thick bush we passed in the dark, feeling the cool wind of the night and smelling the good smell of Africa, I was altogether happy." (4) Reading these sentences, we can easily understand Hemingway's realism which deals with sensations. But isn't there anything else? What interests me in such sentences is the fact that happiness is here equated with a set of merely agreeable sensations, though we traditionally connect happiness with a more complicated state of being. (5) How does Hemingway get to hold such

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(1) Ibid., p. 241.
realism as this?

In his first collection of stories, *In Our Time* (1925), there is an interesting story, "Soldier's Home," in which a pious young man, Krebs, of a methodist college gets to refuse God through his experiences of the war. It is supposed, in this case, that God stands for the stable value in the past traditional society. Thus young men cannot believe in the old value, namely, God, and, on the other hand, there is not yet a new standard of value they can rely on instead of the old one. Some wander about in search of a life worth living, and others abandon themselves to pleasure in order to divert their mind from the uncertainty before them. Now we understand why Gertrude Stein says to them, "You are all a lost generation." How should they live on? That is a serious problem with which all the young people at that time as well as Hemingway himself were equally confronted. And the problem is strongly concerned with the theme of *The Sun Also Rises*: "how, when all external values have gone, shall a man live?" (1)

In this novel Hemingway makes such young people like this get away from the society of America to Paris or Spain, and describes how they live on there. The following is considered the definition of them, which is given by Bill Gorton. He says to Jake:

"You're an expatriate. You've lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you. You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed by sex. You spend all your time talking, not working. You are an expatriate, see? You hang around cafés." (2)

They come to Europe only to be ruined by 'fake European standards,' and realize that there exists no God for them in Europe, either. Indeed they cannot give any meaning to life, but they cannot help admitting that their bodies are still alive none the less. In other words, none of them can deny the fact that their physical sensation never deceives them at all. If there is something reliable left to them, it is nothing but this fact, on the basis of which Hemingway's morals are to be formed. Thus we understand where his realism derives from.

Now Walter Allen says about Heminway as follows:

He said he wrote *Death in the Afternoon* 'to tell honestly the things

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(1) Allen, *Tradition and Dream*, p. 95.
(2) Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, p. 115.
I have found true' about bullfighting. He wrote his novels and stories in order to tell honestly the things he had found true about life; but his criterion of truth was almost what could be assessed in terms of physical impact. It was the one thing he could be sure of. It was both his limitation as a writer and the source of his power. It meant that he was debarred from the expression of whole areas of human experience; it also made him an almost unrivalled interpreter of the life of physical sensation, of the exhilaration of hunting and fishing, of violent exercise, and of the primitive emotions, love and death. For Hemingway honesty to what is felt is all.(1)

These sentences fully explain to us the characteristics of his realism which deals with sensations, though it has demerits as well as merits.

Hemingway describes Nick Adam's fishing and camping activities along a trout stream in "Big Two-Hearted River". Here I will refer to the story in order to survey what he means through the descriptions of physical sensation.

First of all, we cannot but admit what Harry Levin says about the story. He says, "Its striking quality is the purity of its feeling, its tangible grasp of sensuous immediacy, the physical sensation that Mr. Hemingway is so effective at putting into prose." (2) This story also is full of the pleasure of physical sensation. Nick finds extraordinary pleasure, moreover, in his fishing, eating, or pitching camp. And it is worth notice that the descriptions of them run to considerable length and they are all carefully detailed. It seems almost as if they were meant for a fishing manual. But when we observe Nick more carefully, we get to know what Hemingway really means through them.

After a long time Nick visits a town and finds nothing but the burned-over country. But he is relieved to see that only the river is there as it was. He looks down into the clear water and watches the trout keeping themselves steady in the current. The author says, "It was a long time since Nick had looked into a stream and seen trout. They were very satisfactory... Nick's heart tightened as the trout moved. He felt all the old feeling." (3) When he finds trout in the river as it was, he may be reminded of his dear innocent childhood and the town which was not burned off like this. In any case he is

(1) Allen, op. cit., p. 96.
happy now. It is supposed that he has behind him something unhappy.

...leaving the burned town behind in the heat, and then turned off around a hill with a high, fire-scarred hill on either side on to a road that went back into the country. He walked along the road feeling the ache from the pull of the heavy pack .... It was hard work walking up-hill. His muscles ached and the day was hot, but Nick felt happy. He felt he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs. It was all back of him. (1)

Now we know decisively that he has left society, which is ruined by the war like the burned-over country, behind him. He finds extraordinary pleasure in his fishing and eating, etc. In fact, he fishes just two trout, but it doesn't matter. What is important to him is to devote himself to the pleasure before him, by which he tries to forget his previous troubles. In order to hold his present happiness, even 'the ache from the pull of the heavy pack' is out of the question, and, moreover, he even tries to stop thinking further. For example, in making coffee he remembers an argument about how to boil it with his friend. According to the author, "his mind was starting to work. He knew he could choke it because he was tired enough." (2) These sentences mean that he must try to choke his thinking if he is not so tired. It is wisely said by M. Spilka that "they (sensations) are part of a healing process, a private and imaginative means of wiping out the damages of civilized life," (3) Now we understand what Hemingway means in this story through the descriptions of physical sensation. Anyway, the only one thing that they can rely on is physical sensation.

Here to return to the subject of Hemingway's morals that are to be formed on the basis of physical sensation. Jake says in The Sun Also Rises:

Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. (4)

Many a critic points out that Nick Adams is a sort of shadow of Ernest Hemingway himself and that he has grown up to be Jake Barnes. Then it can

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(1) Ibid., p. 166—167.
(2) Ibid., p. 173.
(3) Spilka, Twelve Original Essays on Great American Novels, ed., C. Shapiro, p. 246.
(4) Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 148.
be said that the above holds good as to Hemingway's view of life, too. Here we see the attitude toward life which puts experience before speculation, and the spirit by which he grasps at his own code of conduct, not the general morals. In the result what he gets as the only one thing worth believing is physical sensation, and therefore it is natural that he should say as follows:

So far, about morals, I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after... (1)

Here reasonable judgment, moral or immoral, is skillfully replaced with sensuous response, good or bad. It is a surprise to know his attitude that all the problems are solved from his own point of view in disregard of others. It is very personal, and is lacking in the universality which is indispensable to morals. If it is possible in his case, then it must be in others'. How does he intend to agree with them? But it seems that he leaves no doubt about it.

Generally speaking, morals should be formed on the basis of universality, but such a general concept never holds good for his morals. Because it depends upon his own physical sensation. In any case this is his morals, that is to say, his code of conduct. Robert Penn Warren says:

...the code and the discipline are important because they can give meaning to life that otherwise seems to have no meaning or justification. In other words, in a world without supernatural sanctions, in the God-abandoned world of modernity, man can realize an ideal meaning only in so far as he can define and maintain the code. (2)

The above tells us how important it is to define and maintain the code in order to give meaning to life in 'the God-abandoned world.'

How does Hemingway embody his morals in Brett? How does he consider the relation between love and his code of conduct?

Brett goes to the fiesta at Pamplona in Spain, where at last she meets with her ideal lover, Pedro Romero, the young bull-fighter.

First of all, Romero is introduced to Jake and Bill by Montoya, an aficionado. When they call on him, he is getting dressed for the bull-fight. He is described by Jake as follows:

The boy stood very straight and unsmiling in his bull-fighting clothes.... Pedro Romero nodded, seeming very far away and dignified when we shook hands.... Romero listened very seriously. Then he turned to me. He was the best-looking boy I have ever seen.(1) (italics not in the original)

The italics tell us what he is like clearly. Then, furthermore, Jake continues his description:

The boy was nineteen years old, alone except for his sword-handler, and the three hangers-on, and the bull-fight was to commence in twenty minutes. We wished him "Mucha suerte," shook hands, and went out. He was standing, straight and handsome and altogether by himself, alone in the room with the hangers-on as we shut the door.(2) (italics not in the original)

It is supposed that the author writes these italics very consciously in order to contrast him with Cohn. Cohn is disliked by Brett, Jake and their friends. For he is lacking in self-restraint and behaviors like a spoiled child toward them, and, after all, he rouses their antipathy. On the other hand, Romero seems 'very far away and dignified,' and is standing, 'straight and handsome and altogether by himself,' though the bull-fight is going to begin soon after. He must be an ideal man whom they have been longing for. Leaving the room, Jake looks at him with hearty admiration.

His bull-fight is good. Jake is very excited about him, and explains to Brett what it is all about. It is, so to speak, a ceremony of death and violence, and at the same time we find even something noble about it. Romero is the whole

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(1) Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, p. 163.
(2) Loc. cit.
show, and Jake does not think Brett sees any other bull-fighter. Thus she is strongly attracted to the young bull-fighter, above all, to his good looks and his courage before death.

She says to Jake, "I'm a goner. I'm mad about the Romero boy. I'm in love with him, I think." (1) Then he advises her to get Romero out of her thoughts, saying, "You ought to stop it." (2) But she gives no ear to it. Now she has lost even her self-respect in order to accomplish what she really wants, and asks him to stay by her and see her through that. And finally she says, "God knows I've never felt such a bitch." (3)

Brett and Jake love each other, but they cannot complete their love because of his impotence; it is an unnatural love distorted by the war. Then she has connection with Cohn from a moment's impulse, but it does not mean that she loves him. In fact, she has a hatred for him, for he follows her around like a sick steer. But finally she finds her ideal lover, Pedro Romero, who has both spirit and body perfectly. Now she is happy and feels altogether changed. Going out for a walk with Jake, she happens to enter the chapel to pray a little for Romero, though the praying is not successful. She just feels happy about him, saying, "I'm damned bad for a religious atmosphere." (4) Now the fiesta reaches the climax and toward the bull-ring they go with the crowd. Brett sits at the ringside between Jake and Bill. Jake describes Romero in the ring as follows:

He loved bull-fighting, and I think he loved the bulls, and I think he loved Brett. Everything of which he could control the locality he did in front of her all that afternoon. Never once did he look up. He made it stronger that way, and did it for himself, too, as well as for her. Because he did not look up to ask if it pleased he did it all for himself inside, and it strengthened him, and yet he did it for her, too. But he did not do it for her at any loss to himself. He gained by it all through the afternoon. (5)

The above shows us the fundamental difference between Romero and Cohn. M. Spilka says,"... where Cohn expends and degrades himself for his beloved, Romero pays tribute without self-loss. His manhood is a thing independent of

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(1) Ibid., p. 183.
(2) Loc., cit.
(3) Ibid., p. 184.
(4) Ibid., p. 208.
(5) Ibid., p. 216.
women, and for this reason he holds special attractions for Jake Barnes." (1) The attitude of Romero is one of the basic attitudes that Hemingway likes most. Before long Jake is disappointed to know that Brett leaves with Romero for Madrid, and he tries to drown his heaviness of mind in drink. The fiesta is over and he goes to San Sebastian alone and spends his time swimming there. Then a telegram from Brett arrives, calling him to Madrid to help her out of trouble. He rushes to the place by the night train. Brett is alone at the hotel when he gets there. According to her, Romero wanted her to grow her hair out, which would make her more womanly, and wanted to marry her, finally. But she made him go. For when she agrees with him, it means her return to the conventional society with which she has ever broken. And it is an unbearable thing for her. She realizes that she shouldn't be living with any one, and says, "I'm thirty-four, you know. I'm not going to be one of these bitches that ruins children." (2) Moreover, she says to Jake, "You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch.... It's sort of what we have instead of God." (3) Here we see an embodiment of Hemingway's morals on the basis of physical sensation, which is treated in Chapter III. This is a moral triumph for her, which can be a substitute for God, and the motto of Hemingway's works, too. Robert Penn Warren says as follows:

Brett the heroine of *The Sun Also Rises*, gives up Romero, the young bullfighter with whom she is in love, because she knows she will ruin him, and her tight-lipped remark to Jake, the newspaper man who is the narrator of the novel, might almost serve as the motto of Hemingway's work: "You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch." (4)

As stated above, we see Hemingway's morals in the attitude of Brett Ashley clearly.

How does Hemingway think about love? He says in *Death in the Afternoon*.

If two people love each other there can be no happy end to it? (5)

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(1) Spilka, op. cit., p. 250.
(2) Hemingway, op. cit., p. 243.
(3) Ibid., p. 245.
This is his view of love, and it holds true as to the case of Brett and Romero. Then what is important for him is to maintain and fulfill his morals, namely, his code of conduct in the process of love. So far as this novel is concerned, it can be said that he puts a moral triumph before love. This is my conclusion.