Hemingway's "Fifty Grand" and "The Undefeated": Doing What You Can.

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Hemingway's "Fifty Grand" and "The Undefeated":

Doing What You Can

by

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A Thesis

Presented to the Graduate Committee

of Lehigh University

in candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

English

Lehigh University

1975
Approved and recommended for acceptance as a thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

March 10, 1975
(date)

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Abstract

Whether Hemingway intended it or not, "Fifty Grand" and "The Undefeated" work very well as companion pieces or, more accurately, complementary pieces. They are about two men confronting situations in which victory, in the athletic sense, is impossible. They are about two men who are too old for what they are doing. They are about cheats and gamblers, backroom negotiations, the callous world of professional athletics on two continents.

But the stories are as important for the differences they reflect as for the similarities. One of the objects of my thesis is to differentiate between the American prizefight and the Hispanic bullfight—that they are not even reasonable counterparts should immediately signal that Manuel Garcia and Jack Brennan will have very different ways of working and very different goals in mind. Manuel is a "pure" hero, the "ideal" disciple of his code; Jack is the "impure" hero, the "adjusted" one who may not even be sure of his code. Each protagonist is very definitely a product of his environment.

My thesis also deals with these troublesome terms of "tutor," "code-hero," "tyro," and "professional." Without elaborating, I would like to emphasize that Manuel can very well be a "code-hero" without being a "professional," and Jack can very well be a "professional" without being
a "tutor." Thus, against accepted critical views, this thesis suggests that Zurito of "The Undefeated" is cast more comfortably in the role of "tyro" than is Jerry Doyle of "Fifty Grand."

The major conclusion of this thesis is that total victory is impossible, in the ring or out of it. But Manuel and Jack show us what can be done within the microcosm of the Garden or the plaza. We must ask ourselves, since Hemingway's world is essentially about the necessity for action and the perils of passivity, could we do as much?
INTRODUCTION

The Sources

There is little reason to dispute Sheridan Baker's contention that "The Undefeated" was "fiction solidly created from Hemingway's admiration of Manuel Garcia, known as Maera." The description Hemingway gives in *Death In The Afternoon* of the real Manuel Garcia is very comparable to the Manuel of the short story:

He [Maera] was the proudest man I have ever seen . . . He was so brave that he shamed those stylists who were not and bullfighting was so important and so wonderful to him that, in his last year, his presence in the ring raised the whole thing from the least effort, get-rich-quick, wait-for-the-mechanical bull basis it had fallen to, and, while he was in the ring, it again had dignity and passion.

Hemingway may have also fashioned from real life the haggling scene between Retana and Manuel, although, in real life, Manuel made out much better than he did in "The Undefeated." In his early years Manuel was a banderillero for the famous Belmonte (later in *Death In The Afternoon* Hemingway calls Manuel "the best banderillero I have ever seen . . . "3). Although Belmonte was commanding the huge sum of ten thousand pesetas a fight, he would not grant the fifty-peseta raise the young Manuel requested. Hemingway describes their dialogue, although we have no way of vouching for its authenticity:
"All right, I'll be a matador and I'll show you up," Maera said.
"You'll be ridiculous," Belmonte told him.
"No," said Maera, "You'll be ridiculous when I'm through."

The real Maera was not killed in the manner described in "The Undefeated," but died an agonizing, natural death "with a tube in each lung, drowned with pneumonia that came to finish off the tuberculosis." But, like the fictional hero, Maera did have a slight problem with his wrists in the latter part of his career. Hemingway describes in detail a corrida during which Maera repeatedly hit bone with his sword but finally, despite a broken wrist, managed to kill the bull in the proper way without being gored.

The real Maera did have a brother in bullfighting, too. But Hemingway, perhaps in sympathy for the bull fighter he so respected, gives this brother an honorable death, or at least, an occupational death in "The Undefeated." In real life, however, the brother who the aging Maera thought would be his brave successor turned out to be a coward.

In A Hemingway Check List, Lee Samuels relates this publishing history of "The Undefeated":

"The Undefeated" was originally published in German as "Der Stierkampf" in Der Querschnitt [German magazine] Frankfurt, 1924. Its first appearance in
English was in This Quarter—Paris, 1925-26. The first appearance in book form was in The Best Short Stories of 1926—published by Dodd, Mead & Co. in New York, December 4, 1926.

According to Nicholas Joost, Hemingway wanted the story published in English, but it was rejected a number of times by The Dial, then edited by Alyse Gregory. Hemingway, then in Paris, tutored a student named George O'Neil, who also took music lessons from one George Antheil, a literary agent for Der Querschnitt. Through O'Neil, Hemingway met Antheil, who encouraged the editor of his magazine (Hans von Wedderkop) to accept "The Undefeated." It was published, along with "Fifty Grand," in Men Without Women (1927).

The boxing history behind "Fifty Grand" is much more interesting. No one has satisfactorily disputed Phillips G. Davies and Rosemary R. Davies, who claim the model fight is the Jack Britton-Mickey Walker fight in Madison Square Garden on November 1, 1922. James J. Martine agrees, but argues that there was another model—the September 24, 1922, confrontation in Paris between Battling Siki and Georges Carpentier for the lightheavyweight championship of the world. Both viewpoints make sense.

The Davies' newspaper research indicates that, although there were no low blows in the Britton-Walker model, there were gambling irregularities. Britton was a
3-1 favorite the day before the fight, but Walker suddenly became the 2-1 betting choice on fight night, indicating that a large sum of money had been placed on Walker at the last minute. The 2-1 odds are Walcott's odds in the story.

Walker won the fight in a fifteen-round decision, stripping Britton of the welterweight title. But writers wrote testimonials to the gutsiness of Britton, the aging, perhaps finished, champion.³

Nat Fleischer, boxing's historian, ranks Britton as the third greatest welterweight of all time. Fleischer says Britton's real name was William Breslin, placing him even more squarely in the tough Irish-pug tradition that Hemingway presents in the story.

Britton is best known for his fights with Kid Lewis, whom he fought twenty times from 1915-1921. "That kike Kid Lewis" is referred to at the outset of "Fifty Grand."

Interestingly enough, Fleischer's pick for the greatest welterweight was a boxer named Walcott, who won the world title in 1901 before losing it in 1904 on a foul. A comparison with the Walcott of the story is tempting: Fleischer describes the real boxer as a "physical marvel who could withstand terrific punishment and hand out plenty."⁹ Walcott in "Fifty Grand" is the same kind of boxer.
However, the real Walcott was a Black man; his nickname, in fact, was "The Barbados Flash." Brennan's opponent is described as distinctly Aryan. In any case, Walcott should not be mistaken for Jersey Joe Walcott, a heavyweight champ who came along much later.

Soldier Bartlett, the exiled sparring mate in "Fifty Grand," was real too, although it was just chance that brought him into the story. Bartlett lost to Jimmy Kelly in the Garden the night before the Britton-Walker fight, and Hemingway probably just picked up his name.

Martine makes a good case for Hemingway's having also had the Siki-Carpentier fight as a model. According to Martine, Hemingway attended the fight, which turned out to be a double cross by Siki, who was supposed to lose:

He [Siki] fairly battered Carpentier into oblivion. Then, at the moment of the crucial knockdown, the referee stepped in suddenly and stopped the fight, awarding it to Carpentier on a foul. The referee's act started the hundreds of Americans at ringside to shouting "robber." (If a man standing at ringside in a photo of the knockdown is not Hemingway, one critic has offered to eat the New York Times September, 26, 1922, p. 14, and the rest of the paper.) The crowd at the arena became so threatening that the fight officials rescinded the decision of the referee and awarded the bout to Siki. Later Siki related himself how the bout was framed. The Siki-Carpentier battle, which was designed to be "the frame-up of the century," became the greatest double-cross in fight history.

It is highly probable, then, that Hemingway also had this fight in mind when he wrote "Fifty Grand." The name
"Siki" was found in Hemingway's notes along with the phrase "What professional boxers fight for . . . "12

However, I still feel the Davies' findings more valuable. The double-cross aside, the Siki-Carpentier bout tells us little about "Fifty Grand." Is there anyone in the story even remotely similar to Siki, the Senegalese, who trained on absinthe?13 The character of Jack Britton seems close to that of Brennan, and certainly the distinctive Garden atmosphere, the American atmosphere, could have been lifted from the real Britton-Walker bout. Martine does indicate that Siki may have been in Hemingway's mind also when he wrote _The Sun Also Rises_. I agree, because Bill Gorton's Negro fighter certainly sounds more like Siki, and the fight atmosphere sounds more like Paris.

Carlos Baker brings another interesting fact to light about "Fifty Grand": Baker reports that Hemingway, bowing to the criticism of F. Scott Fitzgerald, changed the beginning that had originally been written for the story:

"How did you handle Benny so easy, Jack?"
"Benny's an awful smart boxer," Jack said. "All the time he's in there he's thinking. All the time he's thinking, I was hitting him."

Baker goes on to explain:

For years, Ernest had been treasuring this remark as "a lovely revelation of the metaphysics of
boxing." He was shocked when Fitzgerald said that it was nothing but an old chestnut and would have to be cut out. Although he was humble enough at the time to follow Scott's advice, he came to regret the deletion some months later.14

Samuels says "Fifty Grand" first appeared in the Atlantic Monthly (July, 1927).15 Since America was boxing crazy at the time, the story must've been a popular success, but it never inspired the critical attention given to "The Undefeated." For example, Delbert E. Wylder, in his dismissible study of Hemingway's heroes, refers to the story as "Twenty Grand." His editors weren't much sharper, either, because it is listed as "Twenty Grand" in the index, also.16
Chapter 1
Of Boxers And Bullfighters

The main events of "The Undefeated" and "Fifty Grand," a bullfight and a boxing match, are comparable but not equal athletic tests to Hemingway. For this reason it is important that the victories of Manuel Garcia and Jack Brennan, if victory is what each achieves, be placed in different contexts. Most of the critics who have taken the time to study Manuel and Jack, and there aren't many, generally tie them together as examples of the "ageless veteran" showing the inevitable "grace under pressure." Certainly, that is partly true. But in the Hemingway scheme, we cannot so blithely "brotherize" a Spanish matador and a tough Irish-American pug.

We know quite a lot, perhaps too much, about Hemingway's views on bullfighting, but comparatively little about his theories of boxing. Though both activities were transformed into literature and vehicles for commercial journalism, not to mention personal athletic quests, only bullfighting became a Hemingway obsession.

In his short fiction, Hemingway did not really write much more about bullfighting than he did about boxing. "The Capital of the World" is the only other bullfighting story (and that must be qualified since Paco is not a real matador) besides "The Undefeated." Chapters XII
(Villalta) and IV (Maera) of *In Our Time* deal with matadors, and Maera is also the primary subject of "Banal Story."

Boxers, on the other hand, are the subjects of "The Battler" and "The Mother of a Queen" although the profession of boxing per se is not featured. Also, boxers are mentioned in "The Killers" (Ole Andreson) and "The Light of the World" (the peroxide blonde's Steve or Stanley Ketchel).

But Hemingway has given us no "Death in the Afternoon" for boxing. No long magazine pieces were written on boxing, although Hemingway did cover the 1935 Louis-Baer fight for *Esquire*. The index of editor William White's *By-Line: Ernest Hemingway* shows twenty-one pages of bullfighting material and only two for boxing. Bruccoli's *Ernest Hemingway's Apprenticeship* reveals that Hemingway, in his early sports-writing years, wrote a boxing story entitled "A Matter of Colour" for the Oak Park High School paper (it was, as a matter of fact, his first published piece) but little else on the subject. In his longer fiction, boxing is often mentioned but is never really a pivotal focus of the narrative. Perhaps the relative importance of the two sports is best illustrated in *The Sun Also Rises*. Bill Gorton's description of the Vienna prizefight and the "wonderful nigger" boxer is colorful,
but the Pamplona section and the character of Pedro Romero are essential.

Hemingway was a dabbler in boxing but an outright "aficionado" of bullfighting; it's safe to say he was reborn into the Spanish sport. Boxing, like baseball and football, was "American," and every citizen, whether he wanted to or not, knew something about it. Bullfighting, on the other hand, was not on the American menu; Hemingway sniffed it out himself. It is the difference between assimilation and discovery. And, in Hemingway's case, the joy of discovery never waned.

After viewing his first bullfight in the fall of 1923, Hemingway filed a long article to the Toronto Star Weekly, his employer at that time. Even in that first article, which was designed as an introduction for the American ignorant of the sport, are the seeds for Death in the Afternoon nine years later:

I am not going to apologize for bull fighting. It is a survival of the days of the Roman Coliseum. But it does need some explanation. Bull fighting is not a sport. It was never supposed to be. It is a tragedy. A very great tragedy. The tragedy is the death of the bull. It is played in three different acts . . . And underneath it all is the necessity for playing the old tragedy in the absolutely custom-bound, law-laid-down way. It must all be done gracefully, seemingly effortlessly and always with dignity. The worst criticism the Spaniards ever make of a bull fighter is that his work is "vulgar."

Hemingway, naturally, protested "vulgarity" in boxing,
too. In the *Esquire* article about the Baer-Louis fight he wrote: "... The Louis-Baer fight was the most disgusting public spectacle, outside of a hanging, that your correspondent has ever witnessed. What made it disgusting was fear." Hemingway was criticizing the fear of Baer, and the ex-champion's inability, or refusal, to rise from his knees after Louis had knocked him down in the fourth round. Hemingway also protested that Baer was a boxer who simply did not know his trade; in other words, like the "vulgar" bullfighter, he did not fight with dignity and grace. (Hemingway was supported in this opinion by John Kiernan, sports editor of *The New York Times*, who wrote: "Baer had no defense. He never had any from his earliest days in the ring. He scorned to learn anything about it.")

However, Hemingway seems to allow more for his boxers than he does for his bullfighters, at least in his fiction. Though it will be discussed in greater detail later, this dualism can be stated as such: The boxing match, as a microcosm of American society, is less rigid, less dependent on fixed principles than the bullfight, a reflection of Spanish society. A boxer, especially an American one, must often find his own principles even to exist among the gamblers and crooks who try to control him. A matador must play by the rules—it is he against
the bull, and the bull must be killed in the "right" way.

To put it another way, Hemingway is "easier" on his boxers; he demands less of them than he does of his bullfighters. For example, most would agree that Hemingway treats Ad Francis, the washed-up prizefighter of "The Battler," fairly sympathetically. Nick Adams admires Ad's courage and fierce honesty and learns something from Ad's close relationship with Bugs. Yet Ad was probably never a great fighter or, more specifically, was never a great professional in the Hemingway scheme:

"I could take it," the man [Ad] said. "Don't you think I could take it, kid?"
"You bet!"
"They all bust their hands on me," the little man said. "They couldn't hurt me."

"Taking it," though more admirable than the defenselessness of a Baer, does not make a professional. This fact will become clearer when Jack Brennan's "modus operandi" is analyzed later. Similarly, in "Fifty Grand," Hemingway demonstrates a comic tolerance for the vulgarities of boxing:

Hogan was out in the gym in the barn. He had a couple of his health-farm patients with the gloves on. They neither one wanted to hit the other, for fear the other would come back and hit him.
"That'll do," Hogan said when he saw me come in. "You can stop the slaughter . . ." (308)

Later on, Jerry even says that the health-farm
patients "were pretty nice fellows" (310). But a similarly vulgar display of bullfighting is more serious stuff. One of the things wrong with Robert Cohn in The Sun Also Rises is his ignorance of the bullfighting code, and most critics accept this as Hemingway's own view. Need it be said that Cohn was an outstanding boxer?

A juxtaposition of the pre-event rituals in "The Undefeated" and "Fifty Grand" also bears out Hemingway's tolerance of the folly of the American sport. While Manuel's "paseo" is a rather serious business, Jack Brennan's preparation is comic:

"Say, Freedman," Jack asks, "what nationality is this Walcott?"
"I don't know," Solly says. "He's some sort of a Dane."
"He's a Bohemian," the lad who brought the gloves said.

And then:

"Hello, popularity," Jack says to Walcott.
"Be yourself."
"What do you call yourself 'Walcott' for?" Jack says. "Didn't you know he was a nigger?" (321)

The climax of this grand match up, of course, pits Brennan, the champion, and Walcott, the grand young challenger on rise, in a contest of rupture. What greater perversion of ritual and athletic art have we unless it is Terry Southern's setup sissy-fight in The Magic Christian?
There are undoubtedly many reasons why the bullfight held a deeper, more sacred significance in Hemingway's scheme than did the boxing match. But one reason seems elementary—death. Lawrence Broer writes that "the world of Manuel Garcia is no less violent and cruel than that of Nick Adams." Indeed it isn't! Though Nick has an early and vivid initiation into man's mortality in "Indian Camp," death is by no means always with him. But death is ALWAYS with the matador, either his own death or the bull's. Even in The Sun Also Rises, where no matador loses his life, a spectator dies during the morning bull-run. Even when the ritualistic corrida occurs outside of the arena as in "Capital of the World," the quasi-matador is killed. And Retana's first words to Manuel strike a fatalistic chord for "The Undefeated": "'I thought they'd killed you'" (235).

The bullfight, several critics believe, thus led to the "Hispanicization" of Hemingway's values, and one analyzes the importance of the bullfight in this way:

Perhaps the greatest single contribution of Spain and the Spanish people to Hemingway's thought and art is a distinctive attitude toward death. After his traumatic experiences in the First World War, Hemingway found little in his own country that acknowledged the tragic side of life, the certainty of death. His continued interest in death led him to Spain and the Spanish bullfight, where he hoped to study violent death more closely . . . Hemingway's obsession with death leads ultimately to a fear of "nada," nothingness, the complete extinction of human consciousness . . .
If one does not subscribe to the view that the aspect of death makes "The Undefeated" a more "serious" work than "Fifty Grand," he must at least allow that the two works have a different impact and were designed that way. Carlos Baker is one of the few critics to realize this:

The stories are as different in conception and execution as the Spanish temperament is from the Irish-American, or the bullfight from the prizefight. The sign at the center of the Brennan story is a certified check for fifty thousand dollars; a bullfighter's pigtail is the sign at the center of the other. One could almost believe that the stories were meant to point up some kind of international contrast.

I do suggest, then, that the generally comic nature of "Fifty Grand," particularly when juxtaposed with the intense and tightly constructed tragic atmosphere of "The Undefeated," undercuts Jack Brennan's battle. But Jack Brennan did not ask to be born a tough Irish-American; there is no way he could have transferred his destiny from a pair of boxing gloves to a red cape. And though Jack's "story" is not inherently dignified, there is no reason Jack himself cannot have dignity.
Though Hemingway's musings about bullfighting often lapsed into the rhapsodic, his journalistic sense compelled him to keep in touch with the pragmatic side of the Spanish spectacle. Both Death in the Afternoon and a 1930 article for Fortune are packed with details about the business of bullfighting. And even in his aforementioned first article on bullfighting Hemingway covers the commercial angles: "Bull fighting is an exceedingly dangerous occupation . . . on the other hand it is very remunerative. A popular espada gets $5,000 for his afternoon's work. An unpopular espada though may not get $500."¹ Thus, we may not be surprised that the central core of Manuel's world is much like Jack's: those that control boxing and bullfighting may be in it for the money; those that watch the sports will judge and even condemn the competitors without realizing the stakes and sacrifices involved.

There are two balancing scenes in "Fifty Grand" and "The Undefeated" which point this out clearly. The boxing story begins in a bar (anything but unusual in a Hemingway story). Though Jack is a respected man within his profession, he is, like all professional athletes, partly a creation of the crowd. According to Jerry, Jack can "say
what he wanted to when he wanted to say it" (301), but that doesn't stop him from coming across as a "big Irish bum" to the "broads" in the bar (300). The waiters in Manuel's bar are similarly contemptuous of the bullfighter when they find that their favorite, Chaves, will not be in the ring. Their contempt finally turns to something worse, indifference: "They had forgotten him [Manuel]. They were not interested in him" (241). Even in the ring, the impression the athletes make on the crowd is at least partly beyond their control since it is attributable to that vague something known as "image." In this respect, Jack fares better than Manuel: "Jack got a good hand coming down through the crowd. Jack is Irish and the Irish always get a pretty good hand. An Irishman don't draw in New York like a Jew or an Italian but they always get a good hand" (320). Manuel, because of his age and lack of that intangible known as charisma, cannot hope to sway the crowd in his direction: "'If it was Belmonte doing that stuff [instead of Manuel], they'd [the crowd] go crazy,' Retana's man said" (259).

Manuel and Jack have been trained to fight in the ring, but the machinations of promoters and gamblers, the men who really control them, force the athletes into back-room in-fighting. The people who live in these backrooms are cold and hard and smart, and the professionals have 19
no real chance against them. As Manuel begins his financial haggling with Retana, he notes the stuffed bull and plate on the wall:

The plate said: "The Bull 'Mariposa' of the Duke of Veraqua, which accepted 9 varas for 7 caballos and caused the death of Antonio Garcia, Novillero, April, 1909." (236)

The plate is written in the style used by contemporary auto-racing writers who report the winner of the race in the lead paragraph and any victims in the second.

Promoter Retana is the clearest example of the hierarchy that manipulates the athlete. He is not without compassion for Manuel, but he is always successful in shunting aside that compassion for a profit:

"You can take it or leave it," Retana said. He [Retana] leaned forward over the papers. He was no longer interested. The appeal that Manuel had made to him for a moment when he thought of the old days was gone. He would like to get him to substitute for Larita because he could get him cheaply. He could get others cheaply too. He would like to help him though. Still, he had given him the chance. It was up to him. (237)

And again: "'Two hundred and fifty pesetas,' Retana said. He had thought of five hundred, but when he opened his mouth it said two hundred and fifty" (238). Retana's profit motive becomes more odious when we consider that, by not granting skillful picadors for Manuel, he is endan-
"Shut the door," Retana called. Manuel looked back. Retana was sitting forward looking at some papers. Manuel pulled the door tight until it clicked. (239)

Jack Brennan is similarly isolated from the man who is supposed to helping him, manager John Collins. Collins neglects to show up when Jack needed him for the interviews. And, when it's time for the financial negotiations, the money men close the door. Though Hemingway does not show us exactly what transpires between Jack and the "wise boys," Morgan and Steinfelt, we have a pretty good idea that Jack, like Manuel, did very little negotiating and a lot of head-nodding. After Jerry and Hogan are finally admitted back into the room, the former makes quite a point of isolating Jack from the money men:

Jack doesn't say anything. He just sits there on the bed. He ain't with the others. He's all by himself. He was wearing an old blue jersey and pants and had on boxing shoes. He needed a shave. Steinfelt and Morgan were dressers. John was quite a dresser too. Jack sat there looking Irish and tough. (309)

There are a couple of other balancing characters in each story that function to isolate the protagonists Manuel and Jack from the gamblers and non-professionals.
Certainly, Jack's opponent, Walcott, can be juxtaposed with Hernandez, the young bullfighter, even though Hernandez is not, on the surface at least, a combatant of Manuel's. And though we never see the sports writers in "Fifty Grand," they perform in much the same way as the "slightly bored . . . substitute bull-fight critic of 'El Heraldo'" (248) in "Fifty Grand."

Earl Rovit writes that Hemingway had a "temperamental obsession to be an 'insider'; that is, a professional who performs rather than a customer who watches." Perhaps that is partly Hemingway's motivation for his frequent excursions into the amateur boxing ring or bullring—if he wanted to write about those sports, then he felt compelled to acquaint himself with them from the inside. Obviously, the spectator boxing writers are not highly regarded in "Fifty Grand":

"You hear what the reporters said about him [Jack]?
"Didn't I! They said he was awful. They said they oughtn't to let him fight."
"Well," I said, "they're always wrong, ain't they?"
"Yes," said Hogan. "But this time they're right."
"What the hell do they know about whether a man's right or not?"
"Well," said Hogan, "they're not such fools."
"All they did was pick Willard at Toledo. This Lardner, he's so wise now, ask him about when he picked Willard at Toledo."
"Aw, he wasn't out," Hogan said. "He only writes the big fights."
"I don't care who they are," I said. "What the hell do they know? They can write maybe, but what the hell do they know?" (305)

Hemingway does a good job in this sequence of covering up for Ring Lardner, a sports writer and Hemingway's first artistic model (Hemingway's earliest stories in his high-school paper are modeled on Lardner, and the editors often referred to Hemingway as "our Ring Lardner"). But the point of the dialogue is in Jerry's unanswered question: "What the hell do they know?" What does the sports writer know about the pain and agony of the boxer? What can he do besides write? Hemingway was treading on thin ice since he was, at times, a boxing writer himself, but his inclination is always toward the man of action, the man in the arena. His condemnation of the observer-critic is much clearer in "The Undefeated." Besides the obvious perjorative tone of "substitute" and "second string," the bullfight critic is a man who does things the easy way. While Manuel drinks water out of a heavy jug, the critic sips champagne; while Manuel is intent only on his life-and-death struggle in the bullring, the critic remembers "a date at Maxim's"; while Manuel sees his struggle through to the end, the critic will write his account back in the office and get the missing information out of the morning papers (256).

The roles of Walcott and Hernandez are less easy to
assess. They, too, are men of action and not obviously odious, particularly the bullfighter. On the surface, they are simply young and therefore have not paid their dues in full as have Manuel and Jack. (In this same respect, we cannot fully blame the younger waiter in "A Clean Well-Lighted Place" for wanting to leave while the older waiter, closer in spirit to the old customer wants to keep the restaurant open.) But Hemingway uses them to show that young bodies do not an athlete make. And there is every indication that Walcott and Hernandez will never reach Jack's and Manuel's level of achievement, physical or metaphysical.

Walcott is more obviously a foil for Jack than Hernandez is for Manuel. Twenty lines into "Fifty Grand" there is a juxtaposition of the two boxers: "'He [Walcott] ain't going to last like you and me, Jerry. But right now he's got everything'" (300). Indeed, Walcott will not last. He is a young man but his face, like Ad Francis', was "plenty marked up" (318). Unlike Jack, who has learned his craft well, Walcott "'ain't hard to hit.'" While Jack was, according to Jerry, "a natural welterweight and he'd never gotten fat" (317), Walcott is not well-equipped for the level at which he is boxing. Jerry reports that he had "arms like a heavyweight" and "not much legs" (318).
However, the clearest comparison of the importance of Walcott and Hernandez in their respective stories is their appeal to the masses. After Walcott steps into the ring, Jerry reports that the boxer smiled and shook his two fists together for the benefit of the crowd.

Jack climbed up and bent down to go through the ropes and Walcott came over from his corner and pushed the rope down for Jack to go through. The crowd thought that was wonderful. Walcott put his hand on Jack's shoulder and they stood there just for a second. "So you're going to be one of those popular champions," Jack says to him. "Take your goddam hand off my shoulder."

"Be yourself," Walcott says. (320)

Hernandez, like Walcott, hasn't been around. He wonders where Manuel got his standard line about the size of the bulls, and Manuel answers, "'That's an old one!'" (245). As a contrast to Manuel's intensity, Hernandez is constantly grinning: he is happy to meet Manuel, happy that the fight is about to start, and happy that the crowd receives him well. If Hernandez's incessant cheerfulness does not make him contemptible, we must at least consider that the life-and-death implications of the struggle inside the ring are passing him by. For deliberate contrast Hemingway gives Manuel a youthful soulmate, one who had "been around" despite his years:

Manuel was thinking about the three lads in back of him [his "cuadrilla"]. They were all three Madrilenos, like Hernandez, boys about nineteen.
One of them, a gypsy, serious, aloof, and dark-faced, he liked the look of. He turned.
"What's your name, kid?" he asked the gypsy.
"Fuentes," the gypsy said.
"That's a good name," Manuel said.
The gypsy smiled, showing his teeth.
"You take the bull and give him a little run when he comes out," Manuel said.
"All right," the gypsy said. His face was serious. He began to think about just what he would do. (247)

The true professional, about whom more will be said later, is always thinking about "what he would do." Unlike Hernandez and Walcott, the true professional in the Hemingway scheme is not a crowd-pleaser.
Chapter 3
A Narrator And A Picador

The most obvious, and most important, matched characters in "Fifty Grand" and "The Undefeated" are Jerry Doyle, the fight manager, and Zurito, Manuel's picador. Only one person will Jack take into his confidence, Jerry; only one character has been around long enough to call Manuel "kid," Zurito.

Jerry is the more important character of the two because he is also the story's narrator. Though "The Undefeated" presents only a few narrational problems in its strict objective form, the controlling voice of an involved character warns us to scrutinize the narrational angle and structure of "Fifty Grand."

Can we trust Jerry? Sheldon Grebstein is the only critic to deal with this question in any detail. He concludes that "the technique of the story suggests the speaker's [Jerry's] credibility" but has reservations because of Jerry's "affection and loyalty to the protagonist":

This need not contradict the narrator's testimony nor invalidate it, but it does impinge on the story's rendition of character and add overtones to Doyle's seemingly flat and laconic voice . . . What the narrator, a horseplayer, does fully understand and covertly communicate is the gaming principle and the gamester's desperation, a vital part of Brennan's
motivation in the crucial moment. Too, by advancing subtle hints, Doyle's narration prepares us for Brennan's ability to keep his feet after a smash to his groin, when almost anyone else would fall. 2

Charles A. Fenton says much the same thing about Jerry's preparing us for Brennan's final action and the narrator's complete understanding of the boxer's world: "He [Jerry] understands everything, he is delicately responsive to whatever occurs in their world. He even has a premature, Cassandra-like glimpse of what ultimately takes place." 3 There is some textual evidence for believing Jerry's prophetic prowess. On the morning after Jack has first told Jerry that he was betting on Walcott, Jerry cautions him several times: "'That's a lot of money,' 'You can't ever tell,' 'Fifty Grand is a lot of money'" (315).

Still, that doesn't seem substantial enough to ascribe "Cassandra-like" qualities to Jerry. Earl Rovit (a la Philip Young) tries another approach to Jerry: "What we have is an exposure in veniality to the non-committed first-person narrator (tyro) and an indication that professionals (tutors) can be trusted only within their special areas of mastery." 4 But that doesn't seem quite right, either, as James J. Martine points out:

The reader must be cautious not to equate the professional Brennan with "tutor" and the first person narrator with "tyro" in this story, as one
critic has done. Jerry Doyle is no innocent; he is the one who suggests that fifty thousand dollars is a lot of money, and that the syndicate might have Walcott throw the fight. The experienced Brennan naively dismisses the possibility of what is actually going to happen. Jerry is wiser than Brennan. 

Martine's observations are essentially correct and will be even more helpful in studying Jack as tutor-professional in the next chapter. But Martine's use of the word "wiser" is bothersome here: though Jerry may be wiser than Jack in some ways, Jerry is not a wise man and it seems that Hemingway makes that point. Jerry's complacent way of doing things, his failure to transcend the world of boxing, and his role as admirer-buddy-second of Jack's contrast with the victory, however Pyrrhic, that Jack achieves in the end. Jack, obviously, sees himself and Jerry as soulmates. "'He [Walcott] ain't going to last like you and me, Jerry,'" Brennan says at the outset of the story (300). Later on, Jack tells Jerry, "'You're the only friend I got!'" (313), and Hogan speaks of their close relationship: "'Well, get your boyfriend off to sleep?'" he asks Jerry (314). However, this alone is not enough to make Jerry a real human being; after all, later in the story we see Jack deceived by two other men he apparently believed in, Steinfeldt and Morgan.

Jerry harbors no illusions about Jack or his relationship with him. He makes a half-hearted attempt to defend
Jack to Soldier Bartlett, but when the boxer answers, "'The hell he's ever been a good fellow,'" Jerry says nothing but, "'Well, so long Soldier!'" (302). A few paragraphs later, in a conversation with Hogan, we find out what, within the story at least, is the only real basis of Jerry's affection for Jack: "'Well, he's always been fine to me.'"

This evidence alone is not enough to indict Jerry... we may, in fact, condone his honesty. The world of boxing calls for a certain distance in relationship to gain perspective; that's what Jack needed in his dealings with the gamblers. But more disturbing is Jerry's professional relationship with Jack. As second, Jerry's job is to take care of his man and prepare him, physically and mentally, for the task ahead. But Jerry seems oblivious to that duty, as does everyone else working with Jack. When Hogan claims that Walcott will "'tear him in two,'" Jerry says only, "'Well, everybody's got to get it sometime!'" (304). Martine says that Jerry is stating here "what well may be the underlying philosophy of the code." Martine presumably is talking about the athletic code rather than Philip Young's "code-hero" code, but I still can't agree. What is the basis for believing it to be the "underlying philosophy"? Certainly it wasn't for Manuel Garcia; indeed, the opposite is true. And in the
glimpses we get of Jack's off-handed training, Jerry seems to be taking a pretty passive part: "'You'll be all right in a couple of days,'" he consoles his boxer, knowing it's not a fact (304).

We think even less of Jerry in his professional role after Collins and the crooks arrive at the training camp. Brennan wants his trainer to "'stick around'" for the conversation, but Jerry says, "'I'll go find Hogan,'" thus following precisely the wishes of the crooks (308). He proves himself either stupid, naive, or uncaring by leaving Jack alone with them. "'You mean they [Morgan and Steinfelt] don't want to see us until a half an hour?'" Hogan asks Jerry rhetorically. "'That's it,'" responds Jerry (309).

Though Brennan sincerely believes Jerry is his only confidant, we see the second unable to fulfill that role when Brennan needs him most. After the gamblers leave, an obviously disturbed Jack asks his trainer to take a walk with him. It is the time for consultation, the time for Jerry to relieve his friend's anxiety. Incredibly, nothing happens. "'Cars kept going by and we would pull out to the side until they were past. Jack didn't say anything'" (310). That is how Jerry blandly describes their mile-and-a-half walk. Jack now has to use other means to open up, and when they arrive back at Hogan's,
he calls for liquor.

Again, Jerry shows himself to be one-dimensional. Jack attempts to describe to him the sense of emptiness he feels as a career boxer and his desire to make it up to his family. Jerry follows this with: "'Hell, I said, 'all that makes a difference is if they got dough'" (312). In the no-holds-barred world of boxing Jack grew up in, that is the truth. But that is the world that Jack is trying, in his own painfully slow way, to transcend. Jack seems to realize that, for all the understanding he gets from Jerry, he may as well be talking to himself; he prefaces most of his comments in this section with, "'You ain't got any idea what it's like.'" And Jerry doesn't.

Finally, Jack decides to tell his trainer about the deal he has made to throw the fight. Though it must be a most painful moment for the boxer, he receives only hollow responses from his friend:

"Listen Jerry," Jack says. "You want to make some money? Get some money down on Walcott."
"Yes?"
"Listen Jerry . . . I'm not drunk now, see? You know what I'm betting on him? Fifty grand."
"That's a lot of dough."
"Fifty grand," Jack says, "at two to one. I'll get twenty-five thousand bucks. Get some money on him, Jerry."
"It sounds good," I said.
"How can I beat him?" Jack says. "It ain't crooked. How can I beat him? Why not make money on it?"
"Put some water in that," I said.
"I'm through after this fight," Jack says

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"... All night I lay awake and worry my can off. I can't sleep, Jerry. You ain't got an idea what it's like when you can't sleep."
"Sure." (313)

Even if we give Jerry the moral benefit of the doubt for not reacting to Jack's scheme, we can hardly grant him the human one. He came up with no answers at a time when his friend was all but begging for them. There is an indication here that Jerry was putting Jack off because the boxer was drinking heavily. But although Jerry is a little more interested and perceptive in their conversation the next morning, he still does little to either encourage or dissuade the boxer.

It's during that conversation that Jerry gives a hint he knows what's going to happen. But what further development do we see in this "delicately responsive narrator," as Fenton calls him? We see Jerry at his best in the Garden describing the fight because that is, from all evidence, the only thing he knows. Jerry steps out of the strictly descriptive narrator's role to editorialize only twice—to comment on the way Irishmen draw in New York and to note how the audience loves Walcott's display of sportsmanship (both 320). Neither is significant beyond the touch of atmosphere they lend. Jerry does seem to have a notion, at least in retrospect, of what Jack was going through in the ring after Walcott has
delivered his low blow: "He [Jack] was holding himself and all his body together and it all showed on his face. All the time he was thinking and holding his body in where it was busted" (325). But the real significance of Jack's victory, his ability to adjust and thereby transform himself from brainless boxer to human being, passes Jerry by.

As a counterpoint, we could consider the conclusion of "My Old Man," the story, as Baker has noted, closest to "Fifty Grand" in type of narration. Hemingway leaves us with the young Joe pondering his father's death and what he, the son, has learned: "Seems like when they get started they don't leave a guy nothing" (205). In "Fifty Grand," however, the narrator does not even speak directly within the retrospection over the last eight pages. Martine feels that Jerry Doyle is portrayed as "detached and objective because it is essential to his [Hemingway's] point that his reader trust their [Doyle's and Hogan's] judgment." But I think we trust young Joe's judgment in "My Old Man." An author need not sacrifice emotive power for truth.

Grebstein provides the best summary of Jerry as narrator:

In short, the I-witness of "Fifty Grand" can be named an "almost-reliable" narrator, dependable enough for the reader to accept his account as substantially true, thus assuring the story of its basically "realistic" and "objective" quality, yet
biased to the extent that we must read between the lines. In this Hemingway achieves an imitation of life: we can agree on what happens; we cannot agree on the precise meaning of what happens. 9

The Hemingway Manuscripts tells us that Hemingway originally intended to call "The Undefeated" "The Bullfighter, A Story" or just "The Bullfighters." 10 Is this significant? Who would be the other bullfighter referred to in the plural title? Hernandez, perhaps, but we see little of him. It could be that the story was written about Zurito, though the veteran picador is not a "bullfighter" in the same sense that Manuel Garcia is. Critic Gurko, in fact, positively extends the title of the story to include Zurito: "He [Zurito] is at Manuel's side, compassionate and powerful, during all the crucial moments, in the café, the arena, and the operating table. The title of the story plainly refers to Manuel, but it may also be stretched to include Zurito." 11

Whether or not Zurito is that important, and it is a moot point, the picador is significant to an analysis of the story's structure. Rovit notes that "The Undefeated," like "The Snows of Kilmanjaro," is a story in which there is one element of the usual tutor-tyro dichotomy missing; he contrasts the absence of the tyro (Hemingway hero) in "The Undefeated" with the presence of Jerry in "Fifty Grand." 12 But though Jerry has been shown to be a rather poor excuse for the tyro, Zurito, at least partly, fills
the bill.

Zurito is, in many ways, the consummate tutor-professional. Ten years older than Manuel, he has been around long enough to call Manuel "Kid"; no one in "Fifty Grand" could call Jack, the tutor-professional of that story, "Kid." Zurito's professional qualities are enhanced by his trade nickname, "Manos." Only the best ones are called "Hands," and Manuel thinks, "He [Zurito] was the best picador living. It was all simple now" (244). Once in the ring, Zurito, "a bulky equestrian statue" (248), performs his picking with the studied grace, enthusiasm, and pride of the tutor-pro. It is he who gives the first order to Manuel—"'I'll climb onto one of those ponies while you collect the kids!'" (245)—and throws himself into the heated action:

"I got him that time," Zurito said.
"He's a good bull," Manuel said.
"If they gave me another shot at him, I'd kill him," Zurito said. (251)

Even the bored critic notices Zurito's technique:
"The veteran Zurito resurrected some of his old stuff with the pike-pole, notable the suerte--" (251). Just before Manuel enters the fight, he looks at Zurito for strength and searches frantically for him when there is trouble in the ring: "He had not seen Zurito. Where was Zurito" (262). Only the picador has seen enough bullfights to
candidly assess Manuel's style:

"Why, that one's [Manuel] a great bull-fighter," Retana's man said.
"No, He's not," said Zurito. (259)

But, still, Zurito cannot be jammed into the tutor-professional mold. He is too interesting. Though his hands have aided his career, he is still self-conscious about their size. Though he demonstrates that his skills have not all been lost, he feels, unlike Manuel, "'I'm too old'" (243). Though Zurito has seen scores of bull-fights and undoubtedly dozens of gorings, he admits to Manuel, "'I don't want to see you. It makes my nervous'" (244). The professional, Manuel, has never seen the Charlie Chaplins. Presumably, they just don't interest him and he sees them as something unrelated to his craft; similarly, it's doubtful that Jack Brennan would have responded to any comic reduction of boxing. But Zurito has not only seen them, he thinks "'They're pretty funny'" (245).

In the simplest sense Manuel is an idealist and Zurito, a pragmatist. Zurito wants to cut off Manuel's coleta not because he is a nasty fellow--indeed, his sympathy comes forth in the end when he spares the symbolic pigtails but because he truly does not want to see Manuel injure himself. Zurito cannot understand Manuel's motiva-
tion for continuing to fight because Zurito's instincts lean toward self-preservation and not toward Manuel's idea of self-fulfillment.

Joseph DeFalco is the only critic to deal with Zurito as he is presented at the close of the story. Hemingway's text reads: "The doctor's assistant put the cone over Manuel's face and he inhaled deeply. Zurito stood awkwardly, [my emphasis] watching" (266). DeFalco says:

As the father-authority figure, Zurito has witnessed, symbolically, the "crucifixion" of the son in defense of the ideal. This leaves the "adjusted" Zurito somewhat abashed, as the narrative reveals.

The religious interpretation notwithstanding, I agree that Zurito is "somewhat abashed." There is a lot of the tutor in Zurito but, strangely, a lot of the tyro, also. The fatal bullfight has been essentially a learning experience for him or, at least, another vivid illustration of something he had learned before. Zurito is what DeFalco calls an "adjusted hero," and his comments on that point will be relevant to the fuller study of Jack in the next chapter:

His [Zurito's] inability to comprehend Manuel's motivations reveals that his "adjustment" is in one sense a compromise of the ideal. That is, one must act this way if he is to survive in the world. Yet this conduct may not be the "best" way from the moral and spiritual standpoint. Manuel refuses to make such a compromise. Thus the ideal remains uncorrupted and Manuel rises in stature.
Carlos Baker feels that "The Undefeated" and "Fifty Grand" may be seen as "complementary studies in superannuation."¹ Baker's point is well-taken and this study reaches the same conclusion. But it is necessary at the outset of this chapter to draw the differences between Manuel Garcia and Jack Brennan and to realize that they were not by any means entering their respective rings as professional equals.

Probably the most basic difference between them is in their respective levels of achievement or, to put it another way, their skills. Though he now has little or no chance against the young bruiser Walcott, Jack was once a great fighter, and, for that reason, he can still fill the Garden; he is an ex-champion on the way down more than he is a has-been when we see him in "Fifty Grand." "There wasn't anybody ever boxed better than Jack," says Jerry (321), and we can believe him. Manuel's talent is more difficult to assess. In the opening exchange between Manuel and Retana, the promoter indicates that Manuel can clearly be labeled a has-been or an athlete who used to be skillful, but has lost his stuff: "'They [the fans] don't know who you are any more,'" says
Retana (237). However, Manuel is still capable of flashing the old brilliance if we believe him when he relates to Zurito his performance in a recent bullfight: "'The papers said they never saw a better faena'" (243). And during the bullfight, Manuel's work with the cape inspires at least one of the observers to exclaim, "'Why that one's a great bullfighter'" (259).

But, in judging Manuel's talent, it is most important to note Zurito's blunt rejoinder to that praise: "'No, he's not!'" (259). Manuel is simply "too old," as the knowing veteran Zurito tells him. Jack, too, is over the hill, but still has the ability to put on the all-important "good show":

From now on Walcott commenced to land solid. He certainly was a socking-machine. Jack was just trying to block everything now. It didn't show what an awful beating he was taking. (323)

And Jack, unlike Manuel, knows exactly what he can and cannot do in the ring: "'I think I can last,' Jack says. 'I don't want this bohunk to stop me!'" (323). And Walcott can't.

This extra competitive edge that Jack possesses and Manuel doesn't--call it talent, added experience, finesse, stamina--has a profound effect on the characters of the two men. Though Jack is vulnerable to the attacks of verbal assailants like the "broads in the bar," their
abuse does not make a dent in his pugnacious armor. In five curt phrases (302-302) Jack sends Soldier Bartlett packing for town. Jack calls Solly Freedman, Walcott's manager, "a hick," then calmly starts a conversation with Freedman about Walcott's nationality. And in the boxers' verbal sparring before the bout, there's no doubt that Jack gets the decision. "That was Jack. He could say what he wanted to when he wanted to say it," Jerry said at the outset (301), and we find that's true.

Manuel Garcia, on the other hand, is distinctly non-verbal. His reticence is linked not only to his Spanish temperament that emphasizes action over words, but also to his lowly position in the athletic bargaining market—he does not draw. Unlike Jack, who can bulldoze his way through most situations, Manuel must feel his way. From the beginning, Manuel is intimidated, a feeling that Jack knew nothing about. Retana does not answer Manuel's first knock and call at the door although Manuel seems to know intuitively "there was someone in the room. He felt it through the door" (235). Unable to verbally negotiate with Retana, Manuel, on three occasions, "taps his knuckles on the table," perhaps as an alternative to speech. But tapping gets you nowhere against a promoter. From the time he walked in the door, Manuel was a loser: "He [Manuel] was still playing with the idea of refusing
[Retana's offer]. But he knew he could not refuse" (237).

It is the portrait of a rather ineffectual man that Hemingway paints in the saloon, too. Whereas Jack was recognized in Hanley's, the waiters have no idea Manuel is a bullfighter until they notice his coleta; then they don't know which bullfighter he is and are more preoccupied with Chaves' being "cogida" (240). Though the waiters get off on the subject of bullfighting and promoters, an obvious spot for Manuel to register his expertise, he again remains silent: "They [the waiters] had forgotten about him. They were not interested in him" (241). In contrast to the sense of ordered ritual inspired by the old customer and his brandy in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," the waiter in "The Undefeated" slops the liquor over the glass into the saucer, and Manuel pours it back in and drinks it. As the waiter walks away, unconcerned, and the drunk dozes, equally unconcerned, Manuel "leaned forward on the table and went to sleep" (241). The net effect of all this is the reduced stature of Manuel. If Jack Brennan is a dog, then he is a proud and pugnacious bulldog, too restless to sleep, snapping back at what the Bartletts and broads and Steinfelts of the world give him; Manuel is a mongrel, kicked about by the Tetanas, ignored by the menials like waiters, grubbing for his brandy, and sleeping on the tables of saloons.
The question is: does the "mongrel dog" status of Manuel adversely affect his performance in the bullring? And does the "proud bulldog" status of Jack help him in times when he is physically powerless, such as in the Walcott fight? I think the answer may be "yes" in both instances, but that may say very little about the characters. Hemingway has given us short stories and not biographies, and we must accept their respective athletic statures as effects without knowledge of the causes. We must be content with analyzing the protagonists as we see them most clearly in the stories—as athletes, as performers, as professionals, as men doing a job in the ring.

II. In The Plaza

A good place to begin is to look at Philip Young's description of the Hemingway code hero:

The code hero, then, offers up and exemplifies certain principles of honor, courage, and endurance which in a life of tension and pain make a man, as we say, and enable him to conduct himself well in the losing battle that is life. He shows, in the author's famous phrase for it, "grace under pressure" . . . he is Jack, the prizefighter of "Fifty Grand," who through a super-human effort manages to lose the fight he has promised to lose. He is Manuel, "The Undefeated" bullfighter who, old and wounded, simply will not give up when he is beaten . . . This, to epitomize the message the code hero always brings, is life: you lose, of course, what counts is how you conduct yourself while you are being destroyed. 3

Surely, Manuel Garcia is a code hero, perhaps the
clearest code hero in the Hemingway canon. And the code under which he lives is bullfighting. He is too old for it, as Zurito says, and could find easier work as a clown or picador, but his reply is always the same: "'I am a bullfighter!" (236). Though obsessed with the ritual and form of his code, the code hero is not necessarily unrealistic or even particularly romantic about his profession. As Gurko points out, "bullfighting is not a glorious dream, as it was to Paco [of "The Capital of the World"] but a brutal reality."4 He knows that substituting was dangerous because "that was the way they all got killed" (237). But, in the end, he will be where his code tells him to be—in the ring fighting the bull.

Once in the ring, Manuel is all business, but in this single-mindedness is the concern for appearance. Remember that the code insists that things must be done in the proper way, and so Manuel asks Retana's man, "'How did the paseo go?" (247). Indeed, throughout the early part of the corrida, Manuel exchanges bits and pieces of strategy with Zurito and the others, and it could be argued that Manuel is most verbal when he's at work in the ring. However, the corrida, as the prizefight, comes down to a test of one-on-one, Manuel against bull.

Though we have seen the reliable Zurito balk at the notion that Manuel is a great bullfighter, and critic
Nahal goes so far as to call him "a poor, a mediocre bull-fighter," Manuel knows what he is doing. Even when it is Fuentes' turn to duel with the bull, Manuel keeps his mind on business: "Manuel, standing at the barrera, noticed the he [the bull] always charged to the right. 'Tell him [Fuentes] to drop the next pair on the right,' he [Manuel] said to the kid who started to run out to Fuentes with the new bandilleros" (254). And Manuel, once on center stage, is, of course, all business:

Manuel noticed the way the banderillos hung down on his [the bull's] left shoulder and the steady sheen of blood from Zurito's pic-ing. He noticed the way the bull's feet were . . . Manuel walked toward him, watching his feet. This was all right. He could do this. He must work to get the bull's head down, so he could go in past the horns and kill him. He did not think about the sword, not about killing the bull. He thought about one thing at a time. (257)

However, part of knowing yourself as an athlete is knowing your limitations or, more properly, appreciating your opponent's strengths. Jack Brennan certainly knows Walcott's punching ability. And even though Manuel does not possess theforesworn pessimism of Jack about the fight (that feeling is just not in Manuel's temperament), Manuel has a sense of inferiority before and during his encounter with the bull that most critics miss. Before he enters the ring, for example:
The bull would come to him in the next third in good shape. He was a good bull. It had all been easy up to now. The final stuff with the sword, was all he worried over. He did not really worry. He did not even think about it. But standing there he had a heavy sense of apprehension. (255)

And even while Manuel concentrates all his professional experience on besting the bull, he is aware of his mistakes and vulnerability: "Too damn close, Manuel thought" as the bull brushes by him (258); and, in another instance, "Didn't they [the attendants by the bull] know enough to keep back? Did they want to catch the bull's eye with the cape after he was fixed and ready? He had enough to worry about without that kind of thing" (260).

In Young's original conception of the code-hero, only the positive aspects (honor, courage, etc.) are stressed. In Rovit's concept of the code-hero, which he calls the "tutor," the negative aspects form the basis:

He [the tutor] is so simple ... that he is closer to brute animality than to humanness. Thought and action (or reaction) are simultaneous for Manuel; he is "just a man who backs his play," and hence his responses will be inevitably adequate to the challenge that he is trained to accept.

Rovit adds, in a footnote to the above: "One could argue that the bull in 'The Undefeated' and the lion in 'The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,' are perfectly representative tutors in action. Hemingway's rendition of their thoughts is at least as intelligent as those of
Rovit's point has merit, and, indeed, Hemingway at one point in the narrative writes almost an essay on the subject of the athlete who simply "backs his play":

He [Manuel] thought in bull-fight terms. Sometimes he had a thought and the particular piece of slang would not come into his mind and he could not realize the thought. His instincts and his knowledge worked automatically, and his brain worked slowly and in words. He knew all about bulls. He did not have to think about them. He just did the right thing. His eyes noted things and his body performed the necessary measures without thought. If he thought about it, he would be gone. (260)

But to say that the tutor, at least in Manuel's case, lacks "humanness" is to miss one of the crucial points in Manuel's battle. Indeed, what breaks down in Manuel is the machinery of the tutor, and, as he fails repeatedly to kill the bull, with it goes the haughtiness of the code-hero. Rovit writes that Manuel "has the same contempt and indifference for the crowd as Belmonte" but that is not true as Manuel's battle nears the end. To be indifferent to the crowd, as Belmonte or Jack Brennan were, you need that extra competitive edge, that sense of starting out on top that Manuel does not have. He is contemptuous of the crowd; after all, he told Retana at the outset that, "'They'd come to see me get it'" (261). And he curses the crowd as he steps around the cushions they have thrown down at him: "'Oh, the dirty bastards!"
dirty bastards! Oh, the lousy, dirty bastards!" (263). But he is never indifferent to the crowd, partly because of the bullfighter's sense of ritualistic appearance, but more because of his desire to be appreciated and regain his popularity and a place in the sun. That is the touch of humanness we can most admire in Manuel. Surely, it is his code that compels him to finish the job in the proper way, but this touch of humanity, this desire to strike back at what humiliates him, is a factor, too.

At the same time, Manuel's set of "rabbit ears," while understandable in his pressure situation, is not admirable in a professional. Had the Garden crowd been displeased with Brennan's style and pelted the ring with beer cans and boos, we may imagine Brennan's reaction—a few choice words, a gloved fist in the air, and a return to business. It may even be that Manuel's lack of professionalism in this case, his obsessive desire to look like "a bullfighter" in the eyes of the crowd, lost him his chance at victory. That is almost impossible to prove since the reasons for Manuel's ineffectiveness are not certain. Critic Kinnamon says that Manuel is the victim of "plain bad luck," 10 that he has drawn a bull that is "all bone," as Hernandez tells him (263). Perhaps even a great one like Belmonte, or the real-life Maera, would've been launched into the air like a comic pole-vaulter upon
impact with the bull's bony hide. Furthermore, the crowd's cushions are an obstacle with which Manuel has to contend, and they may have been a fatal obstacle: "The bull was on him as he jumped back, and as he tripped on a cushion [my emphasis] he felt the horn go into him, into his side" (263). But, somehow, we know that pure "bad luck" has not conquered Manuel. A better bullfighter, or at least a younger one, would've found a way though the bone as Manuel finally does in a fit of superhuman rage. We remember Manuel's weakened position from the start:


No, there is little resemblance between the gritty but on-the-way-down Manuel, and the type of professional Hemingway described in the Toronto Star:

The bullfighters march in across the sand to the president's box. They march with easy professional stride, swinging along, not in the least theatrical except for their clothes. They all have the easy grace and the slight slouch of the professional athlete. From their faces they might be major league ball players.

Ultimately, what we admire in Manuel are his courage and fierce pride. He is, like Ad Francis, a battler. He is a code hero, to be sure, but that is not synonymous
with being a clear-thinking professional. Manuel believes himself to be "a bullfighter," but always has the burden of proof to a skeptical public. And a skeptical bull. And it was only a matter of time before he failed.

III. In The Garden

Rovit writes that Hemingway's "tutor figure has already achieved a self-containment or self-definition before he appears in the fiction; he already is [his emphasis] and the finality of his self-acceptance removes him from the disintegrating experience of becoming [his emphasis]." As an example, Rovit correctly gives Manuel's repeated assertion that "I am a bullfighter." If we accept Rovit's assertion as correct, then it should expel Jack Brennan once and for all from the tutor-figure-code-hero mold. Jack is involved in the "disintegrating experience of becoming" something other than a champion prizefighter.

As "Fifty Grand" opens in the bar, Jack comments to Jerry about Walcott: "'I'm going to need a lot of luck with that boy!'" but, after receiving token reassurances from Jerry, allows that maybe he does have a chance to "'left-hand him to death!'" (300). He still commands power and respect—witness his blunt expulsion of Bartlett. But Jack is beginning to have his doubts:

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"What do you think about the shape I'm in?"

Jack asked me [Jerry].
"Well, you can't tell," I said. "You got a week to get around into form."
"Don't stall me."
"Well," I said, "you're not right."
"I'm not sleeping," Jack said.
"You'll be all right in a couple of days."
"No," Jack says, "I got the insomnia."
"What's on your mind?"
"I miss the wife." (304)

Surely, few experiences are as disintegrating as "the insomnia." We remember Manuel Garcia—unencumbered by any principle by which to live except "I am a bullfighter"—putting his head down on the saloon table and dozing off. Jack is in the process of realizing he cannot make it in the ring any longer and is worried about only one thing—security for his family. Philip Young writes that "Hemingway's characters do not 'mature' in the ordinary sense, do not become 'adult.' It is impossible to picture them in a family circle, going to the polls to vote, or making out their income tax returns."13 But we can imagine Jack stumbling his way through those mundane tasks which seem to be his self-created destiny after the final bout. Jack worries about property, his wife, his daughters, about paying the "nigger rubber" too much, about getting his "money's worth" on a hotel room: "'What don't I think about?!' he asks Jerry at one point. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his affection for his wife and children. Though the author, as well as
the characters within the story, gets a lot of comic mileage out of Jack's niggardliness, it is not necessarily assailable. While he makes it a point to save on phone calls, Jack more than compensates by frequently writing (could you imagine Manuel writing a letter?) his wife; and Jack apparently gave up betting on the horses for the sake of the family. And one can imagine those five-dollar winnings in the cribbage game that so exhilarate Jack going into the family piggy-bank. Hovey points out that Brennan is the only hero in Hemingway's short stories who appears to be happily married: "In his way, Brennan is as close as we come in Hemingway to the American family man, the concerned husband and father who is doing a tough job in order to be a good provider." That is the central character paradox of Jack, and it may be a unique one in Hemingway—he wins welterweight championships, he deals with criminals, he throws fights . . . but he is middle-class. "'You're some boy, Jack!'" John Collins marvels at the conclusion. And he is.

We meet Jack, then, in the process of BECOMING, in the process of shunting off the code of training and acting, training and reacting: "'I missed a lot, Jerry,'" Jack says repeatedly. In a less cerebral way, Jack is a lot like the Hemingway hero, the "tyro" figure in Rovit's vernacular, someone like Mr. Frazer in "The Gambler, The
Nun, And The Radio"; he searches for instruction (from Jerry who doesn't give it to him); he searches for meaning and identity beyond the ring; and, above all, he is not satisfied with what he is.

After a disastrous training period, Jack is more assured than ever that he can't win. For possibly the first time in his life, Jack is entering the ring with the pessimistic feeling that, "'I'm all through. It's just business!'" But, just as importantly to his story, he pledges, "'I'll give them a good show!'" (315). And Jack, unlike Manuel, IS capable of giving them a good show. The Garden is sold out. And, as the money-man Collins notes, "'This is a fight that would draw a lot more than the Garden could hold!'" (320). Jack is a drawing-card.

As the Brennan-Walcott fight progresses, we can see an obvious contrast in styles between Jack and Manuel. Even before the fatal goring, Manuel had a number of close calls with the bull, and Broer notes: "Manuel knows that there are tricks by which he might make the danger to himself, appear greater while actually diminishing the chances of a goring, but his unflinching integrity demands that he adhere strictly to the rules of the corrida."15 Jack's style, on the other hand, gives every impression that he "was an open classic boxer" (323), when nothing could be further from the truth. He is a slick in-fighter, a grab-
ber of the extra edge, perhaps not a rule-breaker, but a rule-bender to be sure. Had Jack been a bullfighter, and a corrida scored on a point system, you can bet Jack would've used those tricks Manuel cannot:

Jack is always calm in close and he doesn't waste any juice. He knows everything about working in close too and he's getting away with a lot of stuff. While they were in our corner I watched him tie Walcott up, get his right hand loose, turn it and come up with an uppercut that cut Walcott's nose with the heel of the glove. Walcott was bleeding bad and leaned his nose on Jack's shoulder so as to give Jack some of it too, and Jack sort of lifted his shoulder sharp and caught him against the nose, and then brought down the right hand and did the same thing again. (322)

Like it or not, that is the consummate boxing professional in action; that is what much of American sport is about. That is Muhammad Ali bloodying and bruising Frazier's face and still giving every appearance of being clean. Even as the tide turns slowly in Walcott's favor, Jack is able to stave off the humiliation-potential presented by Walcott, the "socking-machine":

It was going just the way he [Jack] thought it would. He knew he couldn't beat Walcott. He wasn't strong any more. He was all right though. His money was all right and now he wanted to finish it off right to please himself. He didn't want to be knocked out. (323)

This is the professional whose experience and expertise keeps him in control even when he's not in command.
When Jack is knocked down, he is able to get up at "eight" and regain his composure. (Had he not, of course, the double double-cross would not have been necessary and Jack still would still have gotten his money.) But, suddenly, there arises a situation for which his training had not prepared him: Walcott's low blow catches Jack by surprise, and in Jack's reaction lies the significance of the story. And there is much critical disagreement about Jack's ability to withstand the blow, return one of his own, lose the fight, collect the money and, as far as we know, juke his way into the sunset.

Martine is confusing in dealing with the significance of Jack's final victory. He feels, on the one hand, that ultimately "everyone loses, of course; it is how [his emphasis] that matters." The "how" that makes Brennan more victorious, says Martine, is that the defeat comes in Jack's own terms. "Brennan, though not in 'good shape' physically, is in peak condition morally--in that curious ethic that comprises the code."16

Although Martine cautions against reading "Fifty Grand" as a tutor-tyro story, he insists on viewing Jack as a code hero; or else, he attempts to point out that professional athletes like Jack Brennan, if they are worth anything in the Hemingway canon, live under a code as rigid as that of the archetypal tutor:
Jack Brennan is the consummate professional. Thus, learning the trade well insures a measure of victory in a life that spells defeat. He faces his greatest test in the late stages of his career, alone; alone in the oppressive confines of a crowded arena. Conditioning is everything, it is what prepares man for the supreme effort: physically for the athlete, morally and ethically for the code hero. When the moment occurs, there is not time for thinking, only action. This is the point of the deleted anecdote. [Martine refers here to the one Fitzgerald called a "chestnut." ] One just does not reach for an ethical reserve in time of crisis, it must be there, built through conditioning. 17

Rovit says much the same thing as Martine, though Rovit looks at Jack's victory in a much more negative light:

Brennan breaks the code in betting against himself, and when he is challenged by the foul, he is thrown into a decision-making problem where his training is useless. His exercise of "fast thinking" under stress transforms him from a fully responsive mechanism of instincts into an instinctive machine of avarice. 18

But I have tried to show that the code under which Jack lived for years was no longer real to him; if there were any code, it was that of family-provider. Jack doesn't "break the code in betting against himself" as much as he adopts the means he needs to fulfill another code. And neither Martine nor Rovit will allow the process of thought to enter Jack's mind at the time of crisis. But that is ignoring the very narrator Martine told us we could trust. Jerry says: "All the time he [Jack] was
THINKING [my emphasis] and holding his body in where it was busted" (325). The deleted "chestnut" anecdote shows us what Jack Brennan, the old pro, really felt about the process of thought in the boxing ring . . . until he HAD to think. "'It's funny how fast you can think when it means that much money,'" he tells Collins (326).

The effect of Jack's decisive action is not to turn him into an "avarice machine" of any sort as Rovit claims. On the contrary, it turns him into a real person, and the irony is that Jack outsmarts the men who make their money by outsmarting brainless boxers. Young sums it up this way:

"In "Fifty Grand" is the reverse of the wealthy homosexual fighter in "Mother of a Queen" (who lets the bones of his mother be thrown into the public bone heap, and will not take offense when "I" insults him in every manner he can think of). This, Hemingway seems to be saying with considerable irony in "Fifty Grand," is life and the way to live in it. These are the conditions of life, which is a highly compromising affair, and a man can be a man only by making a deal with it, and then sticking to his bargain if it kills him.

That goes along pretty well with DeFalco's "adjusted hero" idea: in either case the protagonist's ability to compromise, to adjust, rather than the dishonesty of the action itself, is emphasized. Cleanth Brooks says it best:

What is in question is not the purity of the boxer in any conventional sense. The immorality on
one level has to be conceded: the world in which
the boxer lives is depicted with merciless realism.
But the nature of that world cannot impugn the sheer
heroism that the battered old champion displays as
he transcends its shabby crookedness.\textsuperscript{21}

The significance of "Fifty Grand," then, lies not
only in the fact that the "adjusted" protagonist hero has
won, but also in the fact that the Steinfelts and Morgans
of the world have lost. Jack's world is one of moral
relativity and you hang on by knowing your job, being a
pro, and grabbing any breaks as they come along. We have
no assurances, however, that Jack Brennan will have
similar success in the world he has chosen out of the
ring.

IV. Conclusion

Where, then, does this leave Manuel Garcia, the
"unadjusted hero"? There is every indication at the end
of "The Undefeated" that he will soon be dead (Hemingway
uses the words "tired" and "weakly" to describe the maimed
bullfighter, and most critics take his death as a foregone
conclusion) and Manuel has no one to thank for that but
himself. What is the significance of his victory?

One thing, to be sure, is Manuel's display of good
old-fashioned "guts" (or "cojones" to a Spaniard). Though
Jack Brennan withstood a rupture, Manuel Garcia stared
death in the face to achieve his final victory. His fierce pride compels him, after he receives the wound, to think: "'To hell with the bull! To hell with them all!'" (264). And his single-minded belief in his own ability forces him to spring up from the operating table to stop Zurito from cutting off his coleta. Like Francis Macomber, and unlike other surrendering, indecisive heroes like Ole Andreson in "The Killers," Manuel will die happily.

Manuel's character has a greater significance in the Hemingway canon, too: it is a beginning. Broer notes that Manuel was "a far different sort of hero than Hemingway thus far had been depicting. The earlier hero [presumably, Nick Adams] was a passive or defensive individual --a victim of circumstances that forced him either to run or to resign himself to inevitable defeat."22 And Sheridan Baker sees in "The Undefeated" a strain of character that was significant not so much in the short stories as in the later novels. Baker, as well as other critics like Philip Young, sees the final triumph of the Manuel-like character in Santiago of The Old Man and the Sea:

The undefeated loser represents an existential step up from the depths or forward from the wall. If man seems to be beaten by a world without meaning, at least he has his courage, at least he can act.23

But Baker goes on to undercut Manuel's victory with this comment: "[Hemingway's] undefeated losers, at their
strongest, are all men of the lower classes, men of limited understanding, unable to see the world widely enough, it seems, to despair of hopeless situations." Baker is correct: just as Hemingway qualifies Jack's victory by focusing on some of the low comedy and igno-
bility of the boxing world, so he also undercuts Manuel's victory by making the bullfighter something less than a complete man. The presence of death, indeed, the inevi-
tability of it, the unrelenting spirit of Manuel, his absolute bravery, make him, to some degree, larger than life; at the same time, Manuel's limited vision and uncom-
promising nature make him unable to cope with life, a little smaller than life. As Hovey points out: "No great cause makes Manuel Garcia a martyr. No faith il-
uminates him: merely his skill and courage, and the absolute probity of his dedication to his hard craft."25

In "The Undefeated," then, Hemingway gives it to us two ways and, to that degree, disturbs us. Austin McGif-
fert comments on that achievement in this way: "'The Undefeated' is a story in which the acts of wild, irra-
tional heroism require the reader to revise his conven-
tional ideas of what is good and sensible in order to admire the virtues that are placed before him."26

Both stories could succeed, very obviously, on the strength of the athletic atmosphere; they are solid,
action-packed pieces, and we are interested, like the spectators at the Garden or the plaza de toros, in whether or not Jack and Manuel achieve "victory" in the dictionary sense. How many of us have not placed ourselves in the ring with Jack or the arena with Manuel, and felt the adrenalin of competition? But the strength of "The Undefeated" and "Fifty Grand" is that they force us to go beyond the action; we must involve ourselves spiritually and emotionally with the men, which is something the majority of stories about athletes do not do. Perhaps the greatest achievement of Hemingway in these two stories is that he dares to give answers. Much 20th-century literature has avoided that as a reaction against moralism, for fear of being labeled "didactic." But Hemingway has avoided those pitfalls by always undercutting and qualifying the protagonists--they are more imperfect than perfect. But so are the worlds in which they try to make a living and the people with whom they must interact. Jack and Manuel provide an answer in worlds that will allow no absolute victors--be yourself, have courage, do your job in your own way, and, above all, do it with dignity. There are really nothing but Pyrrhic triumphs in a world where you must die or cheat to come out on top . . . so fight as hard as you can for the Pyrrhic triumph. In these stories, Hemingway has, in Rovit's words, "retained
the ideal of dignity without falsifying the ignobility of
the modern human condition." It is no mean achievement.
Notes

Introduction


3 Ibid., p. 198.

4 Ibid., p. 78.

5 Ibid., p. 81.


10 Ibid.

11 James J. Martine, "Hemingway's 'Fifty Grand': The Other Fight(s)," Journal of Modern Literature, II, 1, (1971), 124.


13 Martine, p. 124.


(Surprisingly, Baker himself makes an error in pinpointing Hemingway's real-life model for the story as "the welterweight championship bout at the New York Hippodrome
on June 26, 1922. In the thirteenth round of a fifteen-round contest, Benny Leonard, the world lightweight champion, fouled Jack Britton, the welterweight king, which gave Jack the fight on a foul." (Page 157 in Baker.) However, Baker himself says that Jack is talking with Jerry and Soldier Bartlett "about the opening rounds of another fight." The Benny Leonard fight, obviously, has already taken place, as Martine points out on page 124 of his study.)

15 Samuels, p. 20.

Chapter 1


Chapter 2

1By-Line, p. 96. (We know, then, that Manuel is most definitely not a popular espada. Retana gives him two hundred and fifty pesetas, equal to about $425.)

Chapter 3

1The only time the narrational angle is a problem is in the last part of the story, during Manuel's battle with the bull. For example, on page 262, is Manuel actually thinking: "He had not seen Zurito. Where was Zurito?"? On page 263: "Maybe he was all bone. Maybe there was not any place for the sword to go in. The hell there wasn't!" Hemingway follows that phrase with: "He'd show them," thus returning to third-person narration. On page 264, does Manuel make a conscious declaration to himself: "To hell with the bull! To hell with them all?"? Fortunately, the narrational angle is not so important in "The Undefeated" as it would be in a story with a more psychologically complex protagonist.


4Rovit, p. 61.

5Martine, p. 126.

6Ibid.

7Fenton, p. 344.

8Martine, p. 126.

9Grebstein, p. 60.

10Young and Mann, p. 37, 56.


12Rovit, p. 78.


14Ibid., p. 199.
Chapter 4


2. "Paena"—the series of final passes before the kill.


5. Chaman Nahal, *The Narrative Pattern In Ernest Hemingway's Fiction* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971), p. 95. (Nahal is dealing strictly with Manuel's technique; the critic does not think of Manuel as a poor or mediocre human being.)

6. Again, we wish that the passage had been written as Manuel's direct thought pattern so we could be sure it was Manuel's "heavy sense of apprehension" and not the omniscient narrator's.

7. Rovit, p. 60.

8. Ibid., p. 179.

9. Ibid., p. 33. (The Belmonte to whom Rovit refers is the Belmonte in *The Sun Also Rises*.)


12. Rovit, p. 83.

13. Young, *Pamphlets*, p. 44.


15. Broer, p. 47.


17. Ibid.
18 Rovit, p. 61.


20 Just as he did with Zurito, DeFalco labels Jack an "adjusted hero" on pages 210-211 of his book.


22 Broer, p. 48.

23 Sheridan Baker, p. 3.

24 Ibid.

25 Hovey, p. 27.


27 Rovit, p. 64.
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