

**DRAWING THE (COLOR)LINE: HEMINGWAY'S AMERICA, AFRICA, AND THE  
QUESTION(ING) OF AUTHORITY**

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## ABSTRACT

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(Under the Direction of Dr. Townsend Ludington)

My examination asserts that Ernest Hemingway's modernity lies beyond mere stylistic technique and aesthetic concerns and finds itself in what perhaps is an inadvertent appreciation of W.E. B. Du Bois' prognostication that race would be the pervasive issue for a "progressive" nation looking to the first decades of the twentieth century. I contend that Hemingway not only shares Faulkner's concerns with the issue of race in America, but that he takes them well beyond the bounds of the South or any particular region and extends them to the rest of the nation. Little to nothing has been said about Hemingway's investment in issues of race; this examination intends to end that relative silence.

Hemingway's marked interest in race (de)formation is closely aligned to a vested national interest in and an anxiety over a rapidly changing American racial topography and issues of American (White) identity. The works in this examination become then an expression of what I will call a collective angst in the wake of a perpetually fading color line and, correspondingly, an ever-eroding Anglo power structure. Hemingway's reaction is a simultaneous questioning of (White) self-identity and coveted authoritarian right and a marked re-entrenchment in standard racial typology. The so-called Indian stories work well to explore ideas of miscegenation (I use this term broadly to suggest race mixing and influence in a general sense) and White "vulnerability," and they attest to the author's

ambivalence. Hemingway's African American centered stories continue this exploration of color-line transgression and the deconstruction of White identity, with the added element of violence as a possible means to that end. Thus, Africa becomes Hemingway's imaginative enclave of Anglo agency. Moreover, imperial Africa (more specifically, the metaphorical, geopolitical space inhabited by the Anglo) becomes the site within which he, as White subject-self, can control the placement, demarcation, and enforcement of that coveted color-line. This very emphatic racial awareness, nonetheless, is what also draws Hemingway into the realm of the Modern.

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### **An Introduction: “You Can’t Go Home Again.”**

“Civilization’s going to pieces,” broke out Tom violently.  
“I’ve gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read *The Rise of the Colored Peoples* by this man Goddard? . . . . “Well it’s a fine book and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don’t look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It’s all scientific and stuff; it’s been proved. . . . Well, these books are all scientific,” insisted Tom, glancing at her impatiently. “This fellow has worked out the whole thing. It’s up to us who are the dominant race to watch out or these other races will have control of things.” F. S. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

This excerpt from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* encompasses in a brief segment a pervasive race consciousness and a growing anxiety that haunted the American psyche in the early years of the twentieth century. While the featured segment, when contextualized, clearly mocks the irrationality of the consciously hyper-national Tom Buchanans of early twentieth-century America, it also expresses W.E. B. Du Bois’s 1903 proclamation in his *Souls of Black Folk* that the “problem of the twentieth century” would most assuredly be that of the “color line.”<sup>1</sup> This single proclamation could not have been any truer had it been made ten years ago as an observation in hindsight as opposed to a prognostication uttered over a century ago. Du Bois made the assertion as a sociologist, a historian, and most importantly, a Black man in White America. Relatively few members of the White literary academy addressed, let alone immersed themselves in the politics and sociology of race. Fitzgerald dabbles with the idea ever so slightly in such works as *Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, or, as suggested above, *The Great Gatsby*. Perhaps more than any other twentieth-century canonical representative, William Faulkner would immerse

himself in the issues of biology and ethnicity in an attempt to exorcise the demons and defeatist sensibilities haunting an entire region's generations after the actual sectional strife ceased, generations after its unconditional surrender.<sup>2</sup> This examination argues that race consciousness and a fixation on that color-line first proposed by the likes of Du Bois even pervades the texts of the unlikeliest of the so-called "moderns," Ernest Hemingway. Further, I see Hemingway's fascination with and eventual push toward the African continent, as evinced in several of his later texts, as a means of escaping the challenges to racial privilege being mounted at home, and as a way to clarify notions of racial identity and authority. With its clearly delineated sociological hierarchy, Africa becomes for him the true "land of opportunity," and in some respects "the last good country."

No discussion of Ernest Hemingway is complete without some treatment of the author's contributions to the American literary canon, and that invariably leads to discussion of the author's transformation of the aesthetic landscape with both innovations in style (primarily) and form. Hemingway talked about new things, or if not new things, new ideas in a burgeoning new century. Certainly he explored these ideas in a vernacular new to the scene. His contributions to this way of writing, informed by that which came before it, but beholden to no one (or so Hemingway would have you believe; Gertrude Stein would beg to differ), form the foundations of critical reception and assessment of the writer.

Mimicking the great artists of his day and before--the Cézannes and Mattisses and Picassos---Hemingway crafted a literary style that both expanded the literary landscape via syntax and pulled the image from the literary imagination via diction, often without resorting to full-fledged manifest expression.<sup>3</sup> Critics typically point to his concern with all of the issues engendered by a new century and a nation bent on "Progress," a nation still reeling

from the realities of war.<sup>4</sup> Hemingway's modernity, though, is found in more than his form; his aesthetically forward gaze can be seen in subject matter as well. Existentialist thought pervades Hemingway's works. We see glimpses of this in the early stories of *In Our Time*; we see these ideas come to fruition in such novels as *A Farewell To Arms* and most especially *The Sun Also Rises*, all stories within which tradition and convention prove fruitless for the wayward individual in search of new definition and meaning. Furthermore, gender, as many scholars have noted in recent years, has received the most treatment in the past two decades with a resurgence of critical attention to Hemingway. However, the racial divide in America, I would argue, is the untapped resource for Hemingway scholarship.<sup>5</sup>

At first glance, Hemingway's racial investment seems specious at best. Racial epithets color the text more than actual people of color; the minority presence is seemingly all but non-existent in his oeuvre. However, there is that repeated, seemingly sincere expression of love for Africa. When taken collectively, in the Hemingway race-centered texts—including several not discussed in this examination—there is a marked push toward Africa, so that Hemingway's landing on the "dark continent," his repeated literal and metaphoric return to the continent and profound fascination and "love" for it should come as no surprise.<sup>6</sup> With racial lines of delineation at home blurring, with the old power differential between White and non-White in a state of constant flux, Africa provided the perfect locus within which to reaffirm both those once reliable racial tenets and truths and that closely aligned fading sense of self entrenched in the mythos of White superiority. The consequent anxieties regarding changing dynamics at home create the compulsion to make concrete seemingly abstract notions of racial identity and relative authority.



As Amy Strong further demonstrates in her *Complicated Blood*, Hemingway's treatment of race has often been overlooked by critics old and new who assess the writer's canon within the prism of established notions of modernity.<sup>7</sup> I find this to be a rather astounding reality that cuts to the core of Toni Morrison's assertion that the heart of the American literary imagination needs, as its necessary foil an unspoken but understood alien or minority presence for true self-definitional purposes. Hemingway's acute racial awareness and relative anxiety are what further draws Hemingway into the realm of the modern. Not only do I believe that Hemingway was aware of Du Bois's declaration that *the* defining problem of the twentieth century was that of the "color line," but I think he believed it to be true. Moreover, much of the Hemingway canon stands as a testament not only to his racial awareness, but also to his realization of race's import to the construction of the America he knew intimately.

America in the first decades of the new century shook with the rumblings of a nation not only at war with others abroad, but as a nation at war with itself (more specifically, "foreign" elements at home). Struggling for some semblance of agency, that nebulous racialized "other" threatened to tear down the foundations of difference upon which much of American White identity rested, threatening to expose the mythological basis behind so-called established truth, and thereby undermining any Anglo proclamation of exclusive authority.

Early twentieth-century America was still clearly attempting to fashion a future from a past steeped in lore, loss, and arguably, lies, as reflected in the Native American trading cards, wild west shows, and the revival of the KKK (glorified in the popular culture by the likes of Thomas Dixon, whose novel *The Klansman* and message transgressed lines of media;

Dixon's romantic sentiment sits at the heart of W.D. Griffin's hugely popular film "Birth of a Nation," a film with which Hemingway was very familiar).<sup>8</sup> Turn-of-the-century America bore witness to great growing pains and frantic attempts by the dominant power structure to make necessary adjustments. It was an era of reconstruction, reevaluation, and redefinition. What exactly was the authentic American self Ralph Waldo Emerson and others spoke of just a generation or two before? In line with my evaluation and other recent meditations on race and the literary imagination was a turn-of-the-century-America redefining itself in terms of what America was *not* and/or what it *did not wish to become*.

Part of the dominant culture's crafting of self-image throughout this era of change was a re-definition of what America was not and a push for marked difference. Most notably, that specified negative space became the nexus within which the variations of racist ideology were born, were nurtured, were fostered and perpetuated into the new century. And the new century promised "Progress" for the dominant culture. Whites seized on Darwinian principles to use "science" to explain racial difference and relative social strata. Non-difference necessarily means fallibility and perhaps culpability (in the commission of past crimes); consequently, non-difference suggests supposed (White Western) subjective progression and objective regression may in fact be a shared path. Extending this line of thought to my examination, Hemingway's stories allude ever-so -slightly to the shared destiny of White subject and the racialized "other," making the prospective color-line transgression all the more horrific. Thus, a gothic critical reading of the Hemingway psyche becomes plausible. In *Hemingway's Fetishism: Psychoanalysis and the Mirror of Manhood*,<sup>9</sup> Carl Eby rightly posits that Hemingway came to represent the "psychosocial dilemmas of his age---an age in which many of his white male compatriots felt challenged by the rising power

of racial and sexual ‘others’” (166). Thus, the mere prospect of a shared demise also makes definition and clearly divisible lines of demarcation all the more critical to maintaining a valid claim to agency and ultimate social authority.

Hemingway’s acclaim as modern stems from his very unapologetic and centralized usage of this racial dynamic. I say “usage” because for Hemingway race seems to have been a rather convenient mechanism via which not only his story is furthered, but the dominant White male protagonist is developed. Upon closer examination, though, mere device quickly becomes an equally important part of the Hemingway narrative. While Fitzgerald’s illustration in the opening segment clearly pokes fun at Tom Buchanan for his markedly unsophisticated world reading, for his superficial mimicry of contemporary rhetoric, many Fitzgerald contemporaries clearly were disturbed by what they determined to be a trend toward social devolution. The “Goddard” of Tom’s verbal misstep is actually Lothrop Stoddard, whose work *The Rising Tide of Color* was sanctioned as “scholarly.” In it, he enunciates the conservative angst regarding a perceived encroachment by a rapidly multiplying colored populace from Asia and Africa.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, a marked increased immigrant influx during the first decade of the new century helped foster hysteria and xenophobia; between 1900 and the end of the first world war, over 17 million foreigners (mostly of European descent) emigrated to the United States, and in the years following “The Great War,” various acts of legislation seeking to limit and to control the influx became the standard response of the establishment (Divine et al 795).<sup>11</sup> These sentiments become haunts of sorts, echoes of utterances from a previous decade and the work of such social spokesmen as B.L. Petrum Weale. Weale’s 1910 work *The Conflict of Color* was one of several early twentieth-century sociological works promoted by critics as

“true” scientific theory and scholarship. It was also one of many to engage the notions of a shrinking White dominion in what was perceived to be an increasingly racially unbalanced and hostile world. Additional works like Madison Grant’s *The Passing of the Great Race*, reprinted several times in the years following its original 1916 publication, demonstrate the pervasiveness of the issue and its continued resonance with the reading public.<sup>12</sup> These were publications of which Hemingway was sure to have been cognizant; and equally significant, these were publications that surely informed Hemingway’s own Weltanschauung, or worldview.

This project actually began years ago with a close reading and discussion of Hemingway’s *Green Hills of Africa*. Then, the objective was merely to give an alternate reading to his fictionalized recollection of his first African safari. Each of the several texts included in this examination can be treated similarly and mined for individual latent racial commentary; in every instance, independent race readings are possible. However, when linked with other stories, contextualized, and placed within an overarching framework, a single story or series of stories becomes merely a piece of a telling, more singular, race-centered narrative with Hemingway as central figure. I initially explored that first African text with a single intention: to expose the text for what it does, not for what it is or represents beyond formal parameters. That is where I ended my initial examination.

In the years since, Morrison’s *Playing in the Dark*,<sup>13</sup> a work whose significance I noted early on, has become a staple point of reference for scholars intent on engaging the Anglo text for its racial investment. My own investigation is no different, insofar as it acknowledges a debt to Morrison’s “little” book, a work so entrenched in what surely were not wholly new ideas, but certainly boldly ventured and impeccably timed ones. In an era

marked by post-colonial reading, Morrison's work pays homage to Said's Orientalist textual prescription; but, Morrison's work goes one step further and contextualizes such a reading for an exclusively American audience still haunted by its own racial ghosts.<sup>14</sup>

Written during what may have been perhaps the height of post-colonial discourse studies, my early examination weighed heavily on the end result; my textual exploration of *Green Hills* sprang from Morrison's suggestion in her *Playing in the Dark* that much of the American literary canon necessarily depends on an unnamed, often unspecified "other's" presence as a means of forging and maintaining itself as "American" by definition. Morrison specifically names that site of inspiration the "Africanist presence," but her template works with an expanded racial circle as well. When placed alongside his other race-centered tales, Hemingway's later African stories, particularly his so-called autobiographical fiction, serve as an answer to the earlier Nick Adams centered "American" tales. This juxtaposition prompts several questions: Can we forge a link between Hemingway's African stories and those that precede it? What function does race play in the early tales? What role does it play in any of the texts, for that matter? Put another way, what purpose does "race" play for someone with seemingly little to no real investment in a game of acculturation?

While Strong suggests that Hemingway intended to make race the focal point of several of his texts, she does not attempt to articulate the reasons behind Hemingway's almost obsessive intent in all matters racial in several of his most widely read works. What is more, while Strong does do more than most of the critical readers have done with Hemingway's most recent posthumous publications, most notably his "African" books, she seems to stop with the linkage of the so-called African stories, including *The Garden of Eden* and the autobiographical fiction of *True at First Light*, to a series of race-centered works

written throughout his career. Strong points to Hemingway's actual relationship with individuals in the camps he knew, but she does not go much beyond the suggestion that the latter literary works are a culmination of years of racial interest. I contend that Hemingway's interest in race, outside of any personal connection to the Native American community, is closely aligned to a vested national interest and an anxiety over a rapidly changing American racial topography and American (read White) identity. That being said, each of his individual works grapples with and expresses a collective angst in the wake of perpetually fading lines of perceived racial difference and an established but ever-eroding Anglo power structure.

Hemingway's status then as modern involves more than asking questions of an existential nature, more than examining America from afar, and certainly more than experimenting with style. Hemingway's modernity is in his recognition of race as the pervasive issue for a "progressive" nation in a burgeoning century. While his works may lack the complexity of William Faulkner's, I assert that Hemingway's writings not only share Faulkner's concerns with the issue, but they take them beyond the bounds of region and extend them to the rest of the nation.

In such works as *A Farewell to Arms* and *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway as modern asks among other things what it means to be a man and more specifically, what it means to be an American man. World war prompted the existentialist scramble for meaning as old values were obliterated; similarly, warring racial realities and ideals prompted a comparable scramble for meaning as old markers of race seemed to dissipate just as quickly. What is color? Conversely, what is Whiteness? And what does an affirmation and validation of the former negative space occupied by the "Other" do to the power-wielding Self? Further, what

would a willful self-assertion on the part of the “Other” do to the established power dynamic and the actualized Self?

Hemingway’s texts seem to suggest that as the marked line of authority between subject-self and the subjugated “Other” is shifted or altogether collapsed, imagined difference must be amplified in order to maintain lines of separation and therefore a “true” sense of self. In doing so, Hemingway demonstrates early on that racial configuration is just that: a configuration, a construct, an idea whose days seemingly are/were numbered. Today, several generations later, the essentialist/socialist argument regarding racial definition rages on unabated.<sup>15</sup> It is not my goal to address and decipher all of Hemingway’s intentions and to fully define the author’s psyche while he conceived each of the featured works. What I am attempting to do is to suggest that whether intentional or not, Hemingway’s modernity lies in his very questioning of former racial “truths”; at the core of several of his works are former “truths” regarding the world and conceptions of race, particularly Whiteness. As a necessary part of this discovery process, Africa becomes for Hemingway truly the “last good country,” the last bastion of Adamic potential, ready for the Anglo’s taking, both literally and metaphorically.

I contend that Hemingway’s forays into the African wilderness were, among other things, an attempt to stave off impending change and to preserve some semblance of the known order in which White authority was absolute, and any transgression was by White prerogative. Hemingway’s African safaris became a means of negotiating issues of race that would dog the writer throughout much of his career. Africa became a tabula rasa onto which Hemingway could project and therefore deal with all of the angst associated with the socio-political rumblings at home.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the country had witnessed the expansion of the American West, the subsequent closing of the great frontier, and a marked enthusiasm for international expansion as a means of sustaining and satisfying an ideological appetite for growth, dominance, and the perpetual quest.<sup>16</sup> Race-based myth and stereotype were implemented by the dominant culture not only to establish difference, and thus craft notions of White superiority, but they were also perpetuated well after western expansion officially ceased in order to sustain that mythos. Indian captivity narratives, a staple of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historical documentation, saw a revival in the nineteenth century as local historians sought to preserve and redefine their part in the nation's development.<sup>17</sup> Wild West shows recreated scenes of recent White American achievement and glory in the face of savagery and cruelty as personified in the Native American figure. In seemingly more innocuous forms there were the often less incendiary but equally powerful marketing campaigns of the day involving carefully crafted trading cards found in packages of rice, and the everyday magazine advertisements that innocently perpetuated the age-old Janus typology of both noble savage and beastly degenerate inherent in the single word and image of "Indian." As S. Elizabeth Bird posits in her *Dressing in Feathers*,<sup>18</sup> recreated mythology became a way to "explain to Whites their right to be here and help deal with lingering guilt about the displacement of the Native inhabitants---after all, the 'good' Indians helped us out and recognized the inevitability of White conquest" (Bird 2). Most important here is the correct assertion that conceptual power ultimately is left in White hands. Hemingway's early tales probe this issue.

Hemingway's Native American stories represent the earliest instances of the central Hemingway character exploring and confronting, at least to some degree, ideas of race and



ethnicity. In these tales, we witness Nick Adams's initiation into the world of "Otherness." More importantly, Nick's baptism occurs during a pivotal time of our nation's evolution. The very social foundations upon which the Adams family and so many others rest increasingly shows its fissures and cracks, and the veneer professing perceived racial truths in late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century America begins to peel away.

In terms of Hemingway's "Indian stories," as Strong suggests, "Indian Camp" and "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" work well as complementary texts. She asserts that at the center of the stories are two warring factions of White heterosexual male and "other" (woman and Native American). Moving beyond her assessment of the initial tales' complementary nature, I suggest that these two narratives and the remaining Native American stories all work as complements to one another in a more startling fashion. In all of the Indian stories outside of "Indian Camp" and "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," drink permeates the narrative as both commonplace diversion and the root cause of Indian societal decadence. "Ten Indians" is literally an enumeration of debauchery, with the White male subject making his way through a sea of prostrate and inebriated dark masses. "The Indians Went Away," a fragmentary but equally salient piece, emphatically marks the end of the downward slide of the Native American presence in the Nick Adams collection. Hemingway's closing words to the work, "Now no good," is a marked exclamation point to the sad tale of a people who serve as an important subtext to Nick Adams, American ascendant.

While on the one hand the collected "Indian tales" may be deep-seated expressions of guilt on the part of the collective American conscience, I contend that they are more an act of conscious ordering, manifestations of what Joel Williamson calls "the rage to order,"

prompted by a shattering bedrock of “social truths” whose chips and fissures are becoming more and more apparent.<sup>19</sup> As William Unrau in his *White Man’s Wicked Water* suggests when discussing the nineteenth-century conception and perpetuation of race-based propaganda, “Immoderate, antisocial consumption was then viewed more as evidence of savage deficiency than as an individual malady or community pathology afflicting humans irrespective of social, ethnic, or racial boundaries” (118).<sup>20</sup> Williamson’s ordering process here necessarily becomes one of perpetuating myth in a markedly shifting social construction whose very existence is being threatened; simply put, this ordering process is a deliberate attempt to re-establish and sustain at least some semblance of authoritarian “control.”

Hemingway suggests that racial difference, the justification for the power differential to begin with, and therefore authority and agency predicated on racial difference, are the true myths here. That is what makes his inquiry “modern” in and of itself. However, he, too, submits to the protocol of the old order in the end, failing to move beyond established typology in the creation of his American character. The decimation of Native American tribal communities from alcohol is real. Hemingway’s noting of this is accurate. What is less than definitive is any contrition in the narrative voice, let alone any real sense of White American implication in this crime. What we get instead is a perpetuation of a century-and-a-half-old typology regarding a racialized natural proclivity toward self-destructive behavior and perhaps even more horrific, a fear that this general devolutionary trajectory is not exclusively an Indian problem. I contend that Hemingway’s markedly racialized documentation of difference points to the feared reality of White fallibility and imperfection. White deficiency, heightened by the fear of similarity between White subject Self and racialized, de-centered

“Other,” a fear that the two are actually indistinguishable, represents the ultimate Anglo horror.

We see this profound anxiety most expressly documented in “Fathers and Sons,” one not affixed with the “Indian Story” marker but nonetheless relevant to our examination. Hemingway’s literary imagination violently confronts the prospects of physical miscegenation, the ultimate blurring of racial lines in actual rather than purely metaphorical terms. In this story, an older Nick Adams, his own son in tow, revisits childhood recollections of his father, who becomes metaphorically the Great (White) Father when juxtaposed with the son and inhabitants of the Native American camps. Doctor Adams’s personal history and hunting prowess displace that of the Native figure and become near-legend. More importantly, Nick conjures memories of his first sexual exploits, also linked to the camp and most notably involving a young Native American girl. The situation’s relevance becomes clear as Hemingway juxtaposes Nick’s sexual “taking” of young Trudy Gilby in memories of experimental play with his later, quite violent reaction to the mere suggestion that his own sister’s virginity is somehow jeopardized by Trudy’s half-brother, an interested Eddie Gilby. The mere implication draws from young Nick both the most extreme of racial epithets and images of stark violence, including the threat of scalping. The key issue once more becomes one of control and the feared loss of it as Nick is forced into the role of spectator from that of actor, defender from that of offender, respectively. Once more, controlling that coveted color-line becomes paramount to maintaining White self-definition.

Hemingway’s racial angst was not limited to the realm of the so-called Indian camp, though. In the following chapter, I examine those very issues and concerns as they pertain to that second social pariah of the day, the African American. All three tales included in this

segment are tales that best demonstrate the anxiety Hemingway, as the representative twentieth-century White male, grappled with in a rapidly shifting social climate. The first two decades of the new century bore witness to the “great migration” of African Americans from principally southern towns to the cities of the North; almost two million blacks alone would make the trip northward during those years, for various reasons, including the promise of economic and/or educational opportunities not afforded them in the South. Whatever the reason, for most the migration became in and of itself an act of self-assertion, and feared racial self-assertion becomes that unspoken element lying latent in several Hemingway stories.

While it is arguable that Hemingway’s inclusion of Native Americans in several of his stories is an homage of sorts to his own exposure to and experience with the Obwijway of Michigan, explaining away his persistent and continuous employment of African American figures, many nameless but notably present, becomes more of a challenge. Hemingway’s fear of racial transgression and his consequent grappling for authoritarian control are most pronounced in these stories. In my third chapter, I argue that the racial prism within which we view Hemingway’s Native American stories becomes an equally viable tool in examining what I will call Hemingway’s “Black and White tales.” There are certainly other stories not included within this study that would fall within the parameters of such a label; however, I find three stories in particular most useful to my examination of Hemingway and his negotiation of race and authority: “The Battler,” the more obscure “Light of the World,” and the all but unknown fragmentary tale “The Porter.”<sup>21</sup>

Two of the African American-centered stories incidentally, like the featured “Indian” stories, are part of the Nick Adams collection and all three are clearly part of the young

American collective growth and initiation rite. I purposefully conjoin the first two tales, “The Battler” and “Light of the World,” for reasons of a shared trope employed in the stories. In both short stories boxing serves as *the* key subtext. In the former tale, Hemingway features a White ex-champion turned ex-convict turned vagabond who is cared for by his former prison-mate. This particular caretaker happens to be African American and happens to be the figure of ultimate authority in the story. In the latter story, the action centers on a heated argument between White prostitutes over the rights to a White contemporary fighter’s heart. This fighter, who is notorious for dirty tactics in the ring, is the object of both their affections. As we discern from their discussion, this former heavyweight contender happens to lose to Jack Johnson, the first black man to hold the championship belt. Once more, Hemingway informs his fiction with reality and real-life events. My interest lies in Hemingway’s manipulation of contemporary history. What is more, a shared reverence, enunciated by the prostitutes, for all things white becomes almost absurd, and the Anglo figures themselves become grotesques, each with his/her own version of a shared truth. Quite notably, in both stories, the White figure’s glory is a past glory as he stands in the shadow of the “Other,” defeated. Also, in both stories, the narrative weds a tempered violence with that “shadowed self” and White defeat. Ultimate authority is openly challenged as ideas of civility and the primitive conflate and labels become just that: labels.

Juxtaposed with the aforementioned fight tales is Hemingway’s all-but-unknown fragment, “The Porter,” the subject of my fourth chapter. This story, the third of my examination’s African-American tales, steps outside of the Nick Adams saga. It follows the initiation of a young Hemingway protagonist, Jimmy, further into a world in which violence imbues racial realities. A detailed examination of this fragment demonstrates how

Hemingway both perpetuates stereotype and racial mythos, and simultaneously ups the ante in his inquiry with a direct questioning of not only the validity, but the strength and stability of White authoritarian lines of division. “Everything’s got its place,” the train’s nameless chef shrewdly remarks to the porter during a racially charged discussion about other non-Whites aboard the train; this quip gains special resonance if we consider this tale to be a part of a greater statement by Hemingway on race as defining agent.

Jimmy’s experience is the early twentieth-century’s White American male experience enunciated. From the outset, racial epithets line the young boy’s narrative (none though are used maliciously); typology constricts our perspective of the African American figures, particularly George, the Porter, whose name already aligns him with stereotype and the image of the “happy darky.” He is initially painted as a figure content with drink, cards, and unquestioning service to Whites. Perpetuating the race paradox in typical fashion, the narrative aligns George with the role of a Tom-like caretaker, what Morrison in *Playing in the Dark* calls the “nurse” figure and critic Kenneth Lynn labels the “dark mother” character.<sup>22</sup> He becomes both the child-like figure, subject to vice and indiscretion, and the entrusted man-servant who, like Bugs in “The Battler,” takes the narrative’s protagonist under his wing momentarily to engage a life lesson. Like the lesson of “The Battler’s” dark mother figure, though, the Porter’s teachings are heavily invested in violence.

Unlike the boxing stories, particularly “The Light of the World,” where the ring becomes the site of a sanctioned squareoff between the races, “The Porter” pushes the possibilities of racial warring beyond the confines of rope and canvass and out into the world. Hemingway places Bugs in a position of privilege and insight over his White confidante; however, George’s lesson for Jimmy on the nuances of razor fighting goes a step beyond the

cognizance Bugs displays in “The Battler” in explaining the new-found African American realization of White authority’s illusory status. History once more informs Hemingway’s narrative.

Race riots in Wilmington, North Carolina; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois, and other cities, when coupled with the silent soldier’s march of 1919 in New York City in response to the racism greeting African American servicemen returning from World War I, and the insistence by figures like the “radical” Marcus Garvey and W.E. B. Du Bois that the Black man in America was entitled to more than his current lot, all suggest a race struggling to emancipate itself from the dominant cultural yoke of type and super-imposed definition; images of the dark predatory beast, the incompetent fool, the petulant coward, the a-political and a-societal underling dominated the contemporary White imagination and dictated a protocol for reading the “Other.” Again, we return to this notion of reconstituting definitions and reassigning ultimate agency and authority, concerns that imbue the Hemingway narrative.

The lessons of “The Porter” seem to wager that violence, of the strategic and controlled variety, could easily undo the knot in the Black man’s noose. As George Fredrickson asserts in *The Black Image in the White Mind*, “Like so many other elements in the racist rhetoric and imagery of 1900, [the image of the Negro] had its origins in the proslavery imagination, which had conceived of the black man as having a dual nature---he was docile and amiable when enslaved, ferocious and murderous when free” (276).<sup>23</sup> Hemingway toys with this duality in the public and private personas realized in the George character (and to some extent, in the Bugs figure), whose very name is suggestive of his Black Everyman status. Hemingway seems to suggest that the momentary fear incited by

George in young Jimmy is not merely an isolated incident, not merely the fear of one individual. Again, where do authoritarian lines begin and end? Clearly, greater questions warrant answers. It is this duality that Hemingway carries with him to the African continent, and it is this duality that the Hemingway imagination actively explores while on safari.

The African continent becomes for Hemingway a space to be taken, made his, conquered in an unabashedly colonial sense. *Green Hills of Africa* and later, the posthumously published *True at First Light*, stand as testaments to this racial negotiation and attempt at self-forged stasis. Hemingway suggests expressly that these works stand as narrative experiments that explore new imaginative territory. I contend that not only does Hemingway tread familiar ground in his fictive autobiographies (or autobiographical fictions), but that he walks in the shadows of familiar literary and historical luminaries of what I call “safari fiction.” Hemingway’s works assume the guise of unadulterated “truth,” while simultaneously perpetuating the same typologies and employing the same literary strategies of such established safari books written by Lord Stanley, Robert Ruark, and of course Theodore Roosevelt. Hemingway’s own library, as Michael Reynolds’s indispensable catalogue reveals, demonstrates more than a mere passing knowledge of or interest in the celebration of the White African hunting experience.<sup>24</sup> My examination will expose Hemingway’s vacillation between an embrace of the fellow countryman and native identity and that of the Occidental tourist who surveys, assesses, and consumes the landscape. Annette Kolodny’s conceptualization of the imperial conquest as a necessarily gendered act of active aggression gains particular resonance when applied to the Hemingway safaris of the 1930s and 1950s.<sup>25</sup> As something to be tamed and possessed, as something particularly gendered, Africa expressly becomes Hemingway’s woman of choice.



My final chapter explores the tropes of the safari book and Hemingway's entrenchment in this element. An examination of Hemingway's conception of Africa within the framework of a vision crafted and perpetuated by the likes of Stanley and, closer to home, Roosevelt, will demonstrate his place within this tradition. It is a vision dependent on the crafting of difference and the perpetuation of type. Beast, land, and ultimately figures peopling the landscape fall prey to the colonial gaze. The most glaring of the traditional tropes is the self-reflective, almost narcissistic aspect of the travel text; it is a self-aggrandizement necessarily closely aligned with White identity and a literary imagination actively engaging ideas of racial difference whenever and wherever possible. While Hemingway engages aspects of social egalitarianism, in the end it is this emphasis on difference and a re-constituted color-line that marks his African text.

The African excursion then becomes the White male subject's most express form of racialized identity negotiation; unlike the boxing ring, or even the streets of America, Africa offers the racial stasis and identity assurances Hemingway, as representative of the White patriarchal construct, desperately seeks. Here, he could stave off, at least temporarily, the "rising tide of colored people." Unlike at home and other places in the West, in Africa the lines of racial demarcation were still clearly drawn, even as empire crumbled. What is more, well into the twentieth century, in most of Africa, erasure and re-inscription of these lines remained the prerogative and exclusive domain of a White patriarchy. Africa provided Hemingway with the perfect locus within which to test these tenuous racial boundaries himself. In Africa, Hemingway freely assumes the role of the racial transgressor. We see this in the friendships he forges and the African wife he supposedly takes while there. Always though, lines are transgressed with the relative luxury of the guaranteed return to the safety

inherent in the white skin covering his body and the racial tenets invested in the White patriarchal authoritarian ideal.

It is in Africa, after all, where Hemingway, during the 1930s, happily assumes the role of “brother” to M’Cola (his personal tracker) and other local tribesmen and where, upon his second trip to the motherland during the 1950s, he boasts a second wife in the form of a local tribeswoman. It is also in Africa where Hemingway conversely dons the garb of the great White hunter, of Bwana, an incarnation of the ruling White patriarchy. Africa becomes for Hemingway the nexus within which ideas regarding racial formation and authority can be negotiated, and where racial lines can be transgressed repeatedly, freely, without stricture or reservation. Unlike those encounters featured in the early tales featuring Nick and his Native American and African American encounters, transgression of racial boundaries in the African space is unilateral and exclusively White-initiated; here White patriarchal authority is always ultimately maintained and accomplished without the accompanying doubts, anxieties, and prospective “horror.”

Hemingway’s Africa then is the best of both worlds: an amalgam of primitive and civilized. The safari provides Hemingway the opportunity to assume the garb of both brother in arms and “Great White Father” simultaneously. Moreover, Africa becomes the site within which he, as White subject-self, can control the placement, demarcation, and enforcement of that coveted color-line. Unlike America, Africa, still steeped in colonial dictates, provides the perfect nexus where the extent of racial interaction and ultimately questions of agency and authority remain unquestionably within the White purview. Here it is never a question of who may draw the line and who may transgress it. However, as Hemingway recounts in his last safari book, even the security inherent in this apparent bastion of White patriarchal

values, the African brush, is dissipating as former European colonial strongholds become sites of internal strife, realized violence and revolution, and a blurring color-line. In the end, then, as Hemingway's aesthetic experiment, the text becomes the means by which that long-sought-after racial order and White authority are perpetually preserved.

<sup>1</sup> In his seminal essay collection of 1903, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois explores the true meaning of Blackness and being Black in America at the beginning of what was then a new century. Looking at himself through the lens of what Du Bois terms “double consciousness,” the African American is a torn entity, striving to craft himself in the mold of both his new homeland and his old, seeming to belong wholly to neither. The Emancipation Proclamation left a people physically free, but bereft of home, of livelihood, of the privileges of (political) voice and education, of personal pride and, to a great degree, hope. “What to do” becomes then the quandary for both the White and the Black. This is the burgeoning century’s larger “problem of the color line.” See Du Bois, W.E.B. “The Souls of Black Folk” rpt. in *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings*. (New York: The Library of America, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Faulkner’s *Light In August* (1932) shows a remarkably heightened awareness of this notion of racial epistemology and the attendant horrors of miscegenation in the 1930s American South. Notions of race, power, and authority are foregrounded in Joe Christmas’ own nebulous ethnicity as a White man of “Black blood” and the generally obsessive need to know that drives the narrative, something Alwyn Berland, in his *Light in August: A Study in Black and White* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992) suggests informs Christmas’ “rootlessness, homelessness, and loneliness” (37). See also William Faulkner. *Light in August*. (New York: Vintage International, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Carlos Baker’s *Hemingway: Writer as Artist*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963) provides an excellent insight into Hemingway’s aesthetic aims. See also Erik Nakjavan. “The Aesthetics of the Visible and the Invisible: Hemingway and Cezanne.” *The Hemingway Review* 5:2 (1991): 2-11, for a fine correlative between the writer and the painter and modes of Expressionism.

<sup>4</sup> See Philip Young’s biographical *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration* or, more specifically, his reading Nick Adams through the lens of initiation in “‘Big World Out There’: *The Nick Adams Stories*.” *Novel* 6 (Fall 1972): 5-19. For a rather thorough account of young Nick’s coming to terms with that “big world,” also see Joseph Flora’s *Hemingway’s Nick Adams*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> See Kenneth Kinnamon. “Hemingway, The Corrida, and Spain.” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, I (Spring 1959), 44-61 rpt. in *Ernest Hemingway: Five Decades of Criticism* Linda Wagner, Ed. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1974), p. 57-74. Kinnamon deals expressly with Hemingway’s entrenchment in and reliance on Spanish culture to inform many of his narratives. See also Gay Wilentz “(Re)teaching Hemingway: Anti-Semitism as a Thematic Device in *The Sun Also Rises*,” *College English*, February 1990). Wilentz asserts, along lines similar to my own examination, that Hemingway’s novel manifests a marked fear of the foreign in the form of Robert Cohn; Cohn, Wilentz argues, is representative of the immigrant sea encroaching upon American shores during the first decades of the new century. Jeryl J. Prescott’s “Liberty and Just(us): Gender and Race in Hemingway’s *To Have and Have Not*,” *CLA Journal* (December 1993) explores, among other things, Hemingway’s augmentation of the White hero in *To Have and Have Not*, expounding upon Toni Morrison’s assertions regarding Hemingway’s need for what she terms an “Africanist presence” in defining White masculinity. See also Jeffrey Meyer’s “Hemingway’s Primitivism and ‘Indian Camp,’” *Twentieth Century Literature*, 34 (Summer 1988), George Monteiro’s “‘This Is My Pal Bugs: Ernest Hemingway’s ‘The Battler’: *Studies in Fiction* 23 (Spring 1986), and Robert W. Lewis’s “‘Long Time Ago Good, Now No Good’: Hemingway’s Indian Stories” in *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. Jackson J. Benson, Ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990). In addition, see Hemingway’s employment of cultural typology in his treatment of all things Spanish (the Rousseauian conception of ‘primitive man’ as innocent, for example) as explored in Angel Capellan’s *Hemingway and the Hispanic World*. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985). These works represent a fair percentage of the meager work that has been done on Hemingway and race; while some scholarship has been done in relation to individual stories, few scholars have taken a composite look at Hemingway’s textual dealings with race. However, for a very recent and more thorough exploration of early twentieth-century American popular culture (literature) and issues of race, see Betsy L. Nies’s *Eugenic Fantasies: Racial Ideology in the Literature and Popular Culture of the 1920s*. (New York: Routledge, 2002). Providing a fine complement to my own thesis, Nies’s suggests a pervasive American fixation on an Anglo ideal during the first decades of the twentieth century, something demonstrated quite markedly in some of the day’s literature, most especially in the works of Fitzgerald and Hemingway. Nies’s examination is exceptional in its comprehensiveness.

<sup>6</sup> Because of the intricacies inherent in an exploration of simply any single race-centered Hemingway text, I deliberately limit the scope of my examination to a few of the short stories and the two African safari memoirs. I have not included “An African Story,” or its later fully evolved narrative *The Garden of Eden*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986) or the Cuban-based *To Have and Have Not* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987). For example, in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), Toni Morrison examines the construction of Whiteness in the form of *To Have and Have Not*’s Harry Morgan.

<sup>7</sup> Amy Lovell Stong’s “Complicated Blood: Racial Thematics in Hemingway’s Fiction” (Dissertation. University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 2000). For an interesting treatment of Hemingway’s engagement of the “Jewish problem,” a treatment that parallels my own examination in some ways, see Gay Wilentz. “Anti-Semitism in *The Sun Also Rises*,” “(Re)Teaching Hemingway: Anti-Semitism as thematic Device in *The Sun Also Rises*”. *College English*, (February 1990). Rpt. in *Readings on Ernest Hemingway* Scott Barbour, Ed. (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1990). p. 146-159.

<sup>8</sup> For an extensive examination of the traveling western show, see Paul Reddin’s *Wild West Shows* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999). In it, Reddin posits that these road show dramas, which flourished during the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, helped to forge and reinforce popular conceptions of “the Indian” in relation to our nation’s western expansion and settlement. Purporting to be historical documentation, wild west shows helped to define an America caught between a fading pastoral past and the uncertainty of industrial progress. The Native American figure became that necessary physical fixture onto which the developing American imagination, searching for some tactile remnant of its past, could attach itself. The wild west show became a means of social-historical validation. Each reenactment brought new opportunities to define “the Indian,” and therefore to help further define the American ideal of Manifest Destiny. Also note that Thomas Dixon’s *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku\_Klux Klan*. (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1905) was more than instrumental in romanticizing and literally (re)constructing the Old South mythology and its greatest proponents, the Ku Klux Klan. Hemingway’s familiarity with the film prompted him to note similarities to imagery drawn by Willa Cather. See *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917-1961*. Carlos Baker, Ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1981), p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> See Carl Eby. *Hemingway’s Fetishism: Psychoanalysis and the Mirror of Manhood* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> See Lothrop Stoddard’s *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy*. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922).

<sup>11</sup> See Robert Divine, T.H. Breen, George M. Fredrickson and R. Hal Williams. *America: Past and Present*. (New York: Longman, 1999) p. 795-96.

<sup>12</sup> Both Madison Grant’s *The Passing of the Great Race* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922) and Petrum B. L. Weal’s *The Conflict of Color: The Threatened Upheaval Throughout the World* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1910) became the standard for the Anglo cry of encroachment by the “foreigner.”

<sup>13</sup> Toni Morrison’s *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992) serves as a critical framing device for my own examination as I seek to demonstrate the import of reading the racialized “shadow” figures surrounding the Hemingway protagonist as a means of correctly reading that protagonist.

<sup>14</sup> Edward Said. *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).

<sup>15</sup> See *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity*. Ed. Charles Gallagher (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999) for an especially comprehensive look at race-based argument in recent decades.

<sup>16</sup> For an especially illuminating study of American Western expansion through the decades see Patricia Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987).

<sup>17</sup> See Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James A. Levernier. *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900*. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1990). Derounian-Stodola and Levernier give a particularly comprehensive and thorough treatment of the genre.

<sup>18</sup> See S. Elizabeth Bird's analysis in "Constructing the Indian, 1830s-1990s," *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*. Ed. S. Elizabeth Bird (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

<sup>19</sup> See Joel Williamson's *A Rage to Order: Black-White Relations in The American South Since Emancipation*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>20</sup> William Unrau's *White Man's Wicked Water: The Alcohol Trade and Prohibition in Indian Country, 1802-1892*. (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996) presents an in-depth examination of White/Indian relations within the context of an oft-sanctioned alcohol trade between national governmental constituents and tribal members; it was a relationship, Unrau argues, overwhelmingly marked by loss (of land, moneys, and self-respect) on the part of the engaged tribes.

<sup>21</sup> All of these stories, along with the aforementioned "Indian" tales, are found in Ernest Hemingway's *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, The Finca Vigia Edition (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1987). All of my Hemingway story references are to this edition. Note that "The Porter" was originally slated to be a chapter in a planned novel never completed.

<sup>22</sup> See Kenneth Lynn's seminal biographical work *Hemingway* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> George Fredrickson. *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on African American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1971).

<sup>24</sup> Hemingway scholarship is indebted to Michael Reynolds for, among other things, cataloging a comprehensive listing of the author's readings from childhood through the midlife years. *Hemingway's Reading: 1910-1940, an Inventory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), demonstrates Hemingway's life-long interest in wilderness taming and in the African continent; items in his possession included fictional texts by James Fennimore Cooper and Joseph Conrad and African travel literature by Sir Henry Morton Stanley and Theodore Roosevelt (as representatives of the more well known set).

<sup>25</sup> See Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975). In it, Kolodny engages the frontier trope of land as woman and as something to be "conquered," an image she suggests, that permeates much of Western, and more specifically, American literature.

## **The Indian Camp Stories and the Great (White) Man**

This examination begins with a reading of the so-called “Indian stories” because they account for a small but significant portion of Ernest Hemingway’s initial short-story writings. What is more, these short stories along with others (such as “Light of the World,” “Fathers and Sons,” “The Battler,” and “The Killers,” to greater and lesser degrees) serve as bold explorations of race and marginalization in a burgeoning twentieth-century America. With regard to Native representation specifically, outside of the literary confines of something like the Hemingway stories, the Indian’s literary and historical voice was all but silenced for decades early in the century.<sup>1</sup> Governmental efforts like Roosevelt’s Works Project Administration of the 1930s, an organization established at least in part to promote minority employment and interests, expressly divested a people of history. Writing projects like the state travel guide ignored altogether or limited the Native American to promotional conceit and device only.<sup>2</sup> In “Identity and Exchange: The Representation of ‘The Indian’ in the Federal Works Project and in Contemporary Native American Literature,” Hartwig Isernhagen claims that the “dominant interest of the project [WPA] lay in solving the urgent questions of the present, and that the Indian was not one of these. . . .” (176). Such large-scale initiatives of (re)presentation succeeded in, at least in part, silencing a race. However, racial authority was an “urgent question” of the day. At the very least, Hemingway’s enunciated ambivalence towards the issue of racial authoritative privilege helps break the silence.

As suggested, Hemingway's modernity in part is his recognition of the unrecognized. More to the point of my critical analysis, his so-called "Indian stories" serve as examples of a new American Gothic tradition finding its way into the seemingly exhausted Hemingway canon. If we suggest that as a trope the Gothic's purpose is to help translate a feared and an unannounced, latent presence, to speak the unspeakable, then we see that Hemingway's "Indian stories," more so than any of his other race-based stories, invest themselves in such a tradition. And if we suggest that that tradition necessarily relies on markers of division as it manifests itself, then we also see how this tradition haunts the pages of several of his stories. In *Gothic America: Narrative History and Nation*, Teresa Goddu argues that "American Gothic literature criticizes America's national myth of new-world innocence by voicing the cultural contradictions that undermine the nation's claim to purity and equality" (10).<sup>3</sup> Goddu specifically has slavery in mind as chief among the "cultural contradictions" haunting the American conscience. Gothic literature seeks to expose these often historical contradictions in a limited fashion, she suggests, while simultaneously allowing for their perpetuation. In the Gothic we have the piecemeal revelation of inconsistency with continued repression. Many of Hemingway's stories uniquely seize upon the unspoken notions of racial difference and relative transgression within the context of miscegenation in its broadest terms. By this, I mean a highly intimate, although not necessarily sexual, commingling of the races in which clear division becomes problematic. These Hemingway stories forge a very Modern statement in early twentieth-century canonical literature regarding the tenuous nature of our nation's "established" racial order.

If we place Hemingway's first Indian stories within the framework of a Gothic construct, we see that issues of deliberate racial construction and demarcation are in many



ways pure invention. Daphne Lamothe posits in her essay “Cane: Jean Toomer’s Gothic Black Modernism” that “the most unsettling example of racial transgression proves to be the mulatto whose existence acts as proof of miscegenation, the emblem of subversion of racial categories” (59).<sup>4</sup> I would amend this statement to suggest that, in the case of Hemingway’s literary canon, the mulatto’s nonexistence (outside of “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” the Dick Boulton figure is nowhere to be found) stands as emphatic proof that Hemingway’s principal concerns are with the unspoken and the oft-unseen entities that threaten to subvert the established racial and therefore social order. Racial transgression and the threat it poses always looms large. A text that answers this anxiety to a great degree is James Weldon Johnson’s *The Autobiography of an Ex-colored Man*. Johnson’s work stands as the epitome of “order’s” defiance, with its protagonist flagrantly positing the ultimate “what if” scenario before a wary White audience. In it, Johnson addresses ideas of racial identity and agency as his narrator willfully and opportunistically creates his own racial space, both White and Black, and makes a mockery of established definition. For White America, the mulatto in this sense becomes in and of itself *the* Gothic specter to be feared. What is feared is explicitly what is *not* seen. The object of fear is not the reified, but the abstraction. Hemingway’s Gothic emblem is the Gothic specter of the unseen and unspoken shifting tide of racial authority.

Hemingway’s paradigm of difference, though not as express in the first featured story as in the other related tales in this examination, is first employed in “Indian Camp.” Hemingway establishes a literal formula that finds its way into several of the race-based stories that follow. “Indian Camp” works as a foundational tale of discovery (for both Nick and the reader), as Nick Adams is not only initiated into the world of the adult, of sex,

violence, and death, but into the world of race and difference as well. Such a narrative construction invested in differentiation lends itself nicely to colonial discourse as Ania Loomba suggests in *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*.<sup>5</sup> With a lineage firmly rooted in an Orientalist tradition, Loomba demonstrates the necessity of polarity to Western ontology:

Said shows that this opposition is crucial to European self-conception: if colonized people are irrational, Europeans are rational; if the former are barbaric, sensual, and lazy, Europe is civilization itself, with its sexual appetites under control and its dominant ethic that of hard work; if the Orient as static, Europe can be seen as developing and marching ahead; the Orient has to be feminine so that Europe can be masculine. (47)

In the Hemingway model, the journey toward enlightenment and discovery consistently invests itself in a schematic of spatial and linguistic separators to underscore racial difference, to emphasize liminality, and eventually to question the very existence of the authority under which this difference was posited. In other words, Hemingway's narrative actively and consistently constructs a paradigm of difference in order to undermine it in the end, employing elements of the Gothic as expressions of the anxiety produced by such an exercise. Hemingway's efforts become part of a grand exercise, Berkhofer would argue, on the part of the Whites "to understand themselves, for the very attraction of the Indian to the White imagination rests upon the contrast that lies at the core of the idea" (111).<sup>6</sup>

From its very inception, "Indian Camp" forges the paradigm with a differential that is associative and spatial in nature: "At the lake shore there was another rowboat drawn up. The two Indians stood waiting" (67). We immediately get the beginnings of a model crafted on association and type. Emphasis becomes a matter of deciphering diction. We get the suggestion of the upcoming journey into the wilderness and into the foreign space. Already we have the implication of difference. The Indian camp is located "across the bay" from the White man's cottage, and implicitly away from "civilization." The "foreign" space itself has

its own connotations and is quickly defined by association. The doctor and crew “start off in the dark.” Their trek toward that indefinable space is a movement from an implicit lightness into darkness. Nick speaks first, asking a question that tempers the text as being one of polarity and difference: “Where are we going Dad?” (67). Implicit in this simple question is the linkage of Whiteness, the patriarch, and the notion of the quest as well as the mystery inherent in the subjective movement toward “Otherness.” Questions reverberate throughout the text as the party silently makes its way through the darkness and toward the camp.

Doctor Adams has been summoned by the camp-dwellers to help an ailing mother-to-be have her baby (there have been complications). As the story opens, Doctor Adams, Nick, Uncle George, and their Indian guides are en route to the camp. This necessarily means a journey “across the lake,” going “through a meadow that was soaked with dew,” entering the woods, and “follow[ing] a trail that led to the logging road that ran back into the hills” (67). Through these various descriptions, Hemingway creates a narrative space separating White man from Red. If as Ruth Analick suggests, both figurative and literal dividers drive the Gothic text, then this descriptive sequence itself becomes the first of several Gothic barriers in the text, emphasizing implicit difference between the races. Greeting the doctor, uncle, and son are stark scenes of the primitive and the savage:

They came around a bend and a dog came out barking. Ahead were the lights of the shanties where the Indian bark-peelers lived. More dogs rushed out at them. The two Indians sent them back to the shanties. In the shanty nearest the road there was a light in the window. An old woman stood in the doorway holding a lamp. (67)

As Amy Strong suggests in “Screaming Through Silence,” the entrance of the Doctor and family into the Indian camp is an entrance into a kind of hell; the Adams party is met, not with personal greeting and handshake, but with perpetual darkness and the voracious barking

of dogs reminiscent of Cerberus's multiple heads guarding the gates of Hades in classical mythology.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, our introduction to the Native American people is replete with repeated references to the shanties amid the trees. The link to the primitive cannot be any more overt.

Further emphasizing the chasm separating the White male subject-self from the racialized "Other" in this paradigm is the other entity noticeably absent from this environment: name. With name comes emotional investment of some kind. Hemingway knows and exploits this basic human truth with the narrative's entrance into the Indian world. Doctor Adams's business takes him to the realm of the bark-peelers; an entire people are instantly reduced to functionality and occupation. Members of the Adams family find themselves among barking dogs and the "shanties where the Indian bark-peelers lived." This descriptive becomes indicative of the text's entirety: simultaneously, both detailed intimacy and detachment are realized in the personal space of the Indian. While the narrative grants us a degree of closeness to the principal White figures, it flatly denies such connection to the "Other" parties of the story such as the anonymous laboring woman at the story's core or her husband who agonizes along with her just feet away. A great part of the intimacy or lack of it comes via the presence or absence of name. Within this framework, deliberate namelessness works to foster the crafted, Orientalist "Otherness" steeped in mystery and *unknowableness*.

Revisiting the opening sequence, we see that overt namelessness makes its presence known immediately as we learn that "two Indians stood waiting" for the Adams contingent as guides, nothing more. Nameless and faceless old women trying to help the ailing pregnant woman through her troubles also greet the Adams family upon their arrival. Boiling Doctor Adams's water is an unnamed Indian woman. Further, Doctor Adams has at his disposal

several subservient Native Americans, all without name. The distancing effort continues as the procedure begins and the now irritable pregnant woman is actively restrained by other anonymous members of the community. In fact, Hemingway's selfsame description of the operation itself is most demonstrative of this marked detachment: "Later when he started to operate Uncle George and three Indian men held the woman still" (68).

Once Doctor Adams arrives, all parties recede into the homogenous background save Uncle George. As for the pregnant woman herself, while her story is so closely intertwined with the doctor and his son, she never moves beyond plot device function for Doctor Adams's (self)aggrandizement and Nick's initiation into the world of violence and death. While Doctor Adams calls her "lady" as he relates her plight to his son, the respect is specious and temporal at best as the narrative quickly dismantles whatever stature she has; the doctor's backwoods fisherman approach to healing this woman sees to that. He quickly replaces the respectable title with the more generic appellation of "Indian woman." During the scuffle with those restraining her, slur quickly supplants label as she is relegated to "squaw bitch," simultaneously a race and gender pejorative. Her life partner becomes mere function, too, as he never moves beyond the "husband" label and, even in death, finds himself unable to shake the catch-all label of "Indian."

Closely aligned with the notion of namelessness, as a separator of subject-self and racial "Other," is the muted voice. As a general observation, none of the Native figures in this story ever speak. All voice, therefore agency, is granted to the White male figure. Hemingway circumscribes authority with the prerogatives of race and in the White figure at this stage these prerogatives go unquestioned. Subjective agency, closely aligned with voice, is effectively monopolized by the Doctor, Uncle George, and even young Nick. Again, we

begin with the myriad of references to the nameless Indian, an image initiated with the rowers bringing the Adams to the camp: "The two Indians stood waiting." Neither says a word as they row the party ashore, nor at any other point in the story. The two Native American figures guide the Adamses through the woods, row the boats, and fend off the stray dogs roaming the campsite upon the party's arrival. Their existence is one of quiet acquiescence, anticipation (waiting for orders) and functionality (they are their occupations).

Once at the camp, the Indian men "smoke in the dark and move out of range of the noise [the Indian woman] made" (68). Even within the Indian contingent, there is a marked avoidance of vocalization. Hemingway's narrator assumes his place in a long tradition of White Western "interpretation." As Katheryn Shanley argues in "The Indians America Loves," "A blindness to the exclusion of Indian voices perpetuates the idea that non-Indians can speak better for Indians than Indians can speak for themselves, perhaps because the raw pain of loss expected from Indians would be unpalatable" (40).<sup>8</sup> The most blatant of these "translations" comes in the form of Dr. Adams's speculation over the suicide that ends the story. The ailing husband conveniently leaves himself open for "objective" interpretation; he suffers silently from an ax wound in the wooden bunk above his wife's, smoking his pipe and eventually slitting his own throat (a point of some importance, I think, and something I will explore a bit later), all without saying a word.

Taking this marked silence to another level are the many Indian women of the story cast by the narrative into roles of mute and pantomime. We never hear from the distressed woman herself, regarding her fears, her frustration, her pain and fatigue. As the least vocal of the tale's principal players, the female figure at the story's center is far from central. The diminution begins already as the neighboring women converge on the pregnant woman's

shanty to help her through the birthing process: “The woman in the kitchen *motioned* to the doctor that the water was hot” (emphasis mine—68). This is the extent of the feminine enunciation in the tale: voiceless gesticulation. Later, after the surgical procedure is performed, an old nameless woman dutifully takes the baby from Doctor Adams’s hand without exchanging a word. What is more, while the women around the birthmother are made to silently behold the spectacle that is the doctor’s miracle medicine, the would-be mother herself is reduced to animal stature. Cries that seem to fall on deaf ears (recall that the doctor tells his son that the screams are not important) and savage bites become the only means of expression for this primitive “Other.” Conversely, as the woman’s screams reverberate throughout the camp, father and son engage in active dialogue; juxtaposed with the crude mime and primal scream are the words of the White patriarch as ultimate agent.

The entire session becomes a forum within which Nick learns life lessons. More specifically, Nick learns valuable insights from the verbal agent of the story: the White patriarch. Here, Doctor Adam(s), namer of all things, is sayer of all things (including things unspoken by those without voice). After performing a medical miracle of sorts, Dr. Adams, the narrative suggests, “was feeling exalted and talkative as football players are in the dressing room after a game” (69). Ultimately, as homage to things said and written, Doctor Adams suggests to Uncle George that his backwoods ingenuity and surgical prowess, given the primitive circumstances under which he labored, merit documentation: “That’s one for the medical journals George “(69). Here Doctor Adams suggests that the written record stands as the paramount measure and validation of thought and truth. Thus, with such a juxtaposition of muted voice and actual enunciation, of civilized and “primitive,” of dark and

light, of object and subject, the linguistic differential becomes yet another Gothic divide between the powerless and those who wield authority.

Closely aligned with the linguistic divide is something I will refer to as the implicit “progressive divide” that separates the Anglo subject from the racialized “Other” here and throughout the catalogue of Indian stories. Formal education, science, and language become markers of Progress for the White subject-self. Doctor Adams is the “great White hope” in physician’s garb. He is a hero of sorts as physical healer (just a few letters separate healer from hero). As proffered healer of the people, Doctor Adams points to the aforementioned medical journals as a standing testament to “truth,” achievement, and success. The narrative necessarily creates a chasm between racial types with such an emphatic underscoring of conquest.

Starkly opposed to the monument Doctor Adams erects to himself is the pronounced silence and degradation of the Indian figure in the text. Robert Berkhofer, Jr., in his now classic study *White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian From Columbus to the Present*, calls this diminished figure forged by the White imagination the “degraded or reservation Indian.” He is a third-space entity standing between the classic models of noble savage or the acquiescent, peaceful and simple native figure we get in Cooper’s Nattie Bumpo, and ignoble savage or the fierce, sexualized and often brutally defiant man-beast haunting the plains of Western lore (30). The reservation Indian as a morally depraved and often dependent type (alcohol often precipitates his descent) becomes yet another Romantic trope, imbued with the sensibilities of an Edenic fallen-ness, and garnering, not ire, but subjective pity. In Hemingway’s conception, we have an entire cast of characters with no apparent means of expressing themselves and no equivalent mastery of anything. Instead, we



are simply given figures who haunt the literal landscape. They are a people unable to care for themselves, with the women and men of the village equally incapacitated in the wake of the pregnant woman's ordeal. It is this incapacitation on the part of the Native American as demonstrated in this story that gives rise to the anxiety haunting the American psyche. Exacerbating this vexation is the issue of miscegenation. Again, if we can stretch the definitional limits of the term, we see that each of the Indian stories has a figure whose racial makeup and/or behavior are questionable. Each story has the prospect of miscegenation, in its loosest construction as a co-mingling of races and lost White authority/control, as the ultimate objectified horror. This tale, while slightly different in its means, is no different in its ends. "Indian Camp's" figure of racial revelation is Uncle George. Through him, the doctor's foibles and folly and that of the greater societal structure are revealed.

If the world of the Gothic seeks to express the unseen and inexpressible, and if it seeks to do so via the shroud and divisor as Ruth Analick suggests, then Uncle George becomes that medium of expression. Uncle George becomes the interstitial space of which Homi Bahbah speaks in his "When Newness is Brought into the World"; he becomes that point of negotiation between White self and dark "Other" in the story.<sup>9</sup> Just as quickly as the Hemingway narrative builds the racial paradigm of divisiveness and difference, so it begins to erode and subvert this selfsame model, with the text—via Uncle George--exploring the anxieties of an American psyche faced with new uncertainties concerning the relationship between race and agency. While we get no actual physical intercession of race in this story, no realized corporeal miscegenation, we do get the Gothic expression of prospective horror in the form of Uncle George, whose part in the story is small but important. Uncle George is

the White figure communing to a degree with the Indian as the story opens, proffering cigars to those who brought him ashore.

Aptly, the story serves as not only Nick's, but George's initiation as well. George's literal baptism into the realities of race in America is most notable:

Later when he started to operate Uncle George and three Indian men held the woman still. She bit Uncle George on the arm and Uncle George said, "Damn squaw bitch!" and the young Indian who had rowed Uncle George over laughed at him." (68)

In this sequence, the imaginary "Other" confronts Uncle George head on and, via the exchange, this "Other" is reified. The biting of Uncle George, literally the White oppressor (actively restraining the agonizing woman), is an overt attempt at self-realization. The bite is a marked movement from a non-entity without real history or place outside of the subjective imagination toward confirmed existence. Like Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* some thirty years later, Hemingway's nameless racialized figure erupts violently against a world intent on muting her voice; Ellison's protagonist attacks a man in the opening sequence of the novel for refusing to "see" him. For both Uncle George and this woman, the bite itself becomes a site of self-confirmation. While he automatically reverts to a curse and racial pejorative, which seems fitting in a racially charged environment, Uncle George becomes the liminal figure in that instant, as an objectified "Other" forces a reaction from the White male subject. As the sequence closes, we see the subservient figure also "laughing at him." Donning the garb of actor and holder of agency, the Indian boatman momentarily seizes control, his laughter coming at the expense of the White patriarchal figure. Further, Uncle George's curse becomes then a weak and futile attempt to reestablish the perceived order of things; the bite and laughter serve as fair warning that this perceived order is tenuous at best.

All of this makes Doctor Adams's post-operative explanation to young Nick and the suicide of the ailing husband that closes the tale all the more significant. After enduring hours of his wife's screams, the nameless father-to-be abruptly slits his own throat without real explanation. Doctor Adams's attempts to make sense of the senseless to his son is well worth noting:

“Why did he kill himself, Daddy?”

“I don't know, Nick. He couldn't stand *things*, I guess” (69)

The answer to Nick's question is non-committal and deceptively simple. To just what *things* is Doctor Adams referring? One possible answer works well within our established paradigm of racial authority and Gothic expression of fear and definitional loss. It also explains Uncle George's sudden and inexplicable disappearance at the end of the tale. The Indian's suicide is indeed the result of “not being able to stand things,” but not the obvious things the narrative seems to suggest, including his own pain and/or the perpetual screams of his wife. The husband's suicide comes in the wake of the marked dehumanization of his wife (“her screams are not important”), the degradation of his people (they all dwell in shanties) and perhaps most key here, his own emasculation. After all, he endures days of protracted labor alongside his wife, unable to assist in any way, only to bear witness to his wife's salvation by the great White healer, Doctor Adams. I would argue that Uncle George alone, as that sympathizer and third space representative, realizes just what it is that drives the Indian to such an extreme.

George's disappearance in the end then deserves our attention. With no one able to explain his disappearance nor his whereabouts, Uncle George is once more aligned with the unknowable Indian; he, too, apparently finds it difficult to “take things” as they are or have become. He is made aware of the mutable lines and laws of race via the bite and the ensuing

laughter he endures and, perhaps most importantly, the makeshift procedure done at the expense of the Indian figure. Uncle George's reaction to his brother's self-aggrandizement bears out this reading: "Oh, you're a great man alright!" Questioning his brother's "greatness," Uncle George, purveyor of cigars at story's inception, becomes the transgressive figure. The sarcasm clearly colors his response to the doctor's ingenious yet regressive surgical performance. What is more, during the procedure itself, racial roles are reversed as the White male figure is assaulted and laughed at by the "Other." Simultaneously, via the regressive surgery, the White doctor himself becomes the actual "primitive" one. Once within the confines of the wooded camp, he resorts to surgery without the proper tools and engages his patient without proper feeling (we never learn why the doctor comes to camp ill-prepared); he performs the operation with jack knife and fishing twine and without anesthesia. Uncle George's silent disappearance in the end becomes representative of the emphatic refrain from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "The horror! The horror!" Suddenly, the Kurtzian fear of racial "infection" from one's "dark" surroundings are realized as self becomes "Other." Thus, while the actual representative of racial miscegenation is absent from this text, Uncle George come to represent, as a Gothic spook of sorts himself, the inexpressible horrific realization of diluted racial purity and blurred lines of authority and control.

Hemingway invites us to compare and reconstruct the rapidly dissolving "ordered" world of the White and that of his corresponding transformative "Other" in "Indian Camp"'s loosely complementary tale, "The Doctor and The Doctor's Wife." Like the former story, "The Doctor and The Doctor's Wife" follows my prescribed exploration of Whiteness and Anglo authority within the American paradigm and a marked investment in Gothic

convention as an expression of a feared racial transgression and authoritarian loss. The first glimpse of this principal tenet comes in the initial description:

Dick Boulton came from the Indian camp to cut up logs for Nick's father [old paradigm] . He brought his son Eddy and another Indian named Billy Tabeshaw with him. They came *in through the back gate out of the woods* (emphasis mine), Eddy carrying the long crosscut saw. It flopped over his shoulder and made a musical sound as he walked. Billy Tabeshaw carried two big cant-hooks. Dick had three axes under his arm. (73)

Immediately we are met with the first of many inversions of the initial "Indian Camp" paradigm. Whereas in "Indian Camp" the doctor and company venture deep into the woods toward the camp, in this story Doctor Adams ventures nowhere. *He* is "the discovered" entity here—exposed for what he is: a thief, a liar, an "Other." Fittingly, he is met by a small band of Native American workers who themselves do the roving, the seeking, the questing. Here, we have a direct inversion of the prior story's principal structure as the band of Indian woodsmen take up arms (they carry saw, ax, hook) and physically and symbolically infiltrate Doctor Adams's personal space. Extrapolating this infiltration's symbolic nature and applying it more specifically to the Adams household, we see that this visit is more than a clash of class or of culture; this meeting is a clash of racial paradigms, both of which are crafted by the White patriarchal subject. The perceived/configured "savage" world wills itself onto the good doctor's doorstep.

Lamothe suggests that in the Gothic universe, psychic angst becomes invested in the physical barrier, the ultimate representative guardian of preserved wholeness and clearly defined order. Within this context, the gate that divides Doctor Adams's compound from the field and woods stands as the principal marker between "inside" and "outside," civilized and uncivilized. The very notion of this inner/outer polarity exists only because of the gate's presence in the text. Note that the gate is conspicuously left ajar by Dick Boulton at story's

end as he leaves the Adams property. The gate initially assumes the special significance of emblematic guardian against the transgressor. In this case, the transgression to be warded off is racial. Within the Gothic paradigm, the horror-inducing thing standing without the gates is the reality of racial interchange, the prospect of miscegenation, and possible displacement.

Furthermore, while the principal Indian figure in this tale, unlike his “Indian Camp” counterparts, is given a name, he is already heavily mired in the trappings of type. We quickly learn that Dick Boulton, his son, and “another Indian named Billy Tabeshaw” are regularly recruited by the doctor to help clear the area of “driftwood” that happens upon his beachfront. Hemingway is quick to craft the primitive association. Our first glimpse of Boulton is of his coming from the wooded area adjacent to the Adams cottage. Lamothe’s suggested Gothic strategies find great applicability here with the Indian figure’s conjured emergence, coming suddenly and without warning, from the dark and mysterious depths of the woods. Moreover, all three Native American figures make their way into the domestic sphere in a fashion that is very reminiscent of the nineteenth-century African American bondsman and/or the twentieth century figure of servitude bound by the strictures of Jim Crow. They come from the wilderness into the domestic sphere via the *back door*.

Further emphasizing this connection between the primitive and the idea of racial difference is a link between the Indian “Other” and racialized conceptions of work ethic. As Valerie Babb suggests in her study *Whiteness Visible: American Literature and Conceptions of Whiteness*, it is the (mis)conception of the “Other” which greatly defines the subject-self in much of America’s later cultural promulgation.<sup>10</sup> She bolsters this point with an in-depth examination of the literary memoir, which enjoyed great readership during the early years of the twentieth century; she emphasizes its effectiveness in forging a sense of “American-ness”

among newly arrived immigrants desperate for acceptance of an understood “American” value system. An indulgence of the very American ideal of self-actualization via diligence and hard work becomes part and parcel of this accepted paradigm. In this story, Dick Boulton, the narrator tells us, is simultaneously both a lazy man and “a great worker,” if this is even possible. The entire introductory character sketch is worth noting: “Dick was a half-breed and many of the farmers around the lake believed he was really a White man. He was lazy but a great worker once he was started” (73). He is, according to this descriptive, a walking contradiction. What is more, he is a walking contradiction whose contrariness can be explained away via a singular factor: race.

In this segment, we see at work Toni Morrison’s suggestion in *Playing in the Dark* that the ethnic character serves as mere function, mere occupational performer, as Dick is described as “lazy, but a great worker” at the same time. His very racial-ness i.e., his color and culture simultaneously brands him as lazy and relegates him automatically to worker status. We know that in fact race is a necessary connector here because the narrator prefaces the character judgment with an express racial declaration: “Dick was a half-breed and many of the farmers around the lake believed he was really a White man” (73). In this assertion we get a conception of self via re-conception of “Other,” an idea masterfully explored by Babb. In *Whiteness Visible*, she contends that via literature and other staples of the American popular culture experience, America forged a stylized tapestry of selfhood closely yet inconspicuously aligned with Whiteness as *the* racial aspiration. According to Babb, immigrants and other “outsiders” to this country’s formation quickly learned from such popular mechanisms as the regional fair, the boarding house, and the literary memoir, what precisely constituted “American-ness” and what steps could be taken to gain acceptance into

the fold. Hemingway exploits these same understood cultural connections in stories such as “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife.”

Dick Boulton is the embodiment of the tenet commonly attached to the American self-conception and identity: the so-called “Puritan work ethic.” In it we have the notion of reward resulting from hard work, a notion that the very secular Benjamin Franklin would eventually master and popularize for generations. The contradictory aspects of Boulton’s being are manifestations of his racial composition. He is both “Red” and “White” simultaneously, both Native American “Other” and Caucasian “Self.” His work ethic directly reflects the White blood that courses through his veins. Dick Boulton’s “redness,” however, necessarily subjects him to criticism and relegates him to the realm of worthlessness. While a great worker once pushed, Dick is implicitly “very lazy” *by nature* within this paradigm. The hyper-simplicity of the initial narrative assessment belies the complexity of his bloodline and anticipates the potentially horrifying complications ahead for both Doctor Adams and the reader.

Of course, the ultimate irony, perhaps to Hemingway’s chagrin, is a point of such import that it colors the story’s entirety. The work ethic featured so prominently at the tale’s inception is almost immediately abandoned by *the doctor* at the story’s outset. The initial description tells us that Nick’s father, one of the many White men around the lake, “hired the Indians to come down from the camp and cut the logs up with the cross-cut saw and split them with a wedge to make cord wood and chunks for the open fireplace.” Dick Boulton and his associates are hired to do the work Doctor Adams refuses to do himself. In this sense, Doctor Adams fits nicely within the Anglo-capitalist model constructed by Patricia Limerick’s *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* in which she



posits that “Frontier opportunity was supposed to permit a kind of labor by which one simply gathered what nature produced. The laborer was to be self-employed; and the status of laborer was to be temporary, left behind when the profits made escape possible” (97).<sup>11</sup> Moving beyond mere profiteering in the hiring of these men to remove, cut and deposit the wood for him, Doctor Adams takes the ultimate shortcut. He engages in the most extreme form of corner-cutting, indeed the direct antithesis to the coveted “work-and-thou-shall-reap-rewards” system of fiscal negotiation: Doctor Adams engages in thievery. This is an irony I will visit again later in my examination. Of primary importance now is the overt racial dichotomy drawn by the narrator, the active bifurcation of the world into “Self” and “Other.”

From the narrator’s attempts to conceptualize the world via the physical racializing of these characters, we move on to the story’s more overt “othering” by way of the more conventional use of the spatial configuration. Whereas the gate and door work as more substantive, concrete conventions to keep the races apart, nebulous distances and unspecified points of origin are equally effective separators. As the story opens, we learn that Dick Boulton “comes from the Indian camp to cut up logs for Nick’s father.” Syntax comes to the fore as Hemingway links race with function, service, and place. Dick comes from the Indian camp. Reader “knowledge” comes via connotation. Soon after, the narration continues, “They came through the back gate out of the woods, Eddy carrying the long cross-cut saw...Billy Tabeshaw carried two big cant-hooks. Dick had three axes under his arm” (73). Description of place does much to amplify difference. Hemingway’s diction forces the imaginative leap, as the imagery forges links between the “native” man and wilderness. With one sentence connecting the suggestive violence of the hand tool with the mystery of the deep forest, we see the implicit savagery of primitive man. The initial ideas are reinforced

throughout the story as we bear witness to the Native American figure as a figure of toil, with images of physical labor and sweat littering the text. The narrative even repeats the image of Dick's tobacco chewing and spitting as a means of underscoring differences between the refined doctor and the backwoodsman. Juxtaposed with this are Doctor Adams's cottage, the images of the lake, and the suggestions of a mill, all physical markers of "Progress," "civilization," and warranted authority.

In a move reminiscent of the slave and the African American bound by the strictures of Jim Crow, the Native American men make their way into the realm of the domestic through the servant's entrance: the back door. The Adams cottage itself becomes the doctor's place of refuge after his confrontation with Dick Boulton. The cottage is the doctor's Eden in this fast changing, devolving world. In fact, after the row with Boulton, the cottage is the first place to which he looks for solace. Twice within the story the narrator establishes this plane of vision with an insistence on the physical if not the figurative elevation of the country doctor. The cottage space becomes his metaphorical "City on the Hill," as he walks *up* the hill leaving the Indians *behind* and *below* him, and psychically *beneath* him. Further, the associative power of the inside/outside juxtaposition is great as the doctor seeks shelter from the savagery reigning beyond the cottage door. The narrator's repeated refrain underscores the importance of place for Hemingway: "They all watched him walk *up* the hill and go *inside* the cottage" (74).

Hemingway again revisits the binary opposition of inside/outside (walls separating the haunted self from the objectified terror itself) after the confrontation. Inside the cottage, at least at a surface glance, order is reinforced by old truths. The story's opening sequence demonstrates that order and illuminates the fissures that threaten to break it. In the cottage,

the doctor, sitting on his bed in his room, “saw a pile of medical journals on the floor by the bureau. They were still in their wrappers unopened. It irritated him” (75). The room is replete with books, a bureau, and related compilations of wisdom and knowledge. For my immediate purposes, the focal points become these magazines that litter the floor. Juxtaposed with the saw, the hooks, the axes of the Native American woodsmen who encroach upon the doctor’s turf, the medical books, the bureau, and the Bible (apparently his wife’s reminder of temperance) serve as markedly different sources of sustenance for the doctor and his wife. The texts of the holy and the rational are implicitly illuminated, plainly visible to the narrative eye, even as the rest of the room is described as darkened, the windows closed with blinds drawn. These are and have been literal beacons of light in the pervasive and consuming darkness. From a purely aesthetic perspective, as the ideological wars rage outside, the illuminated truths on the inside become Gothic specters themselves and anticipate other ideas haunting the Hemingway psyche. Just as the hook, the ax, and the saw are the livelihood of and point of definition for the toiling Indian figure, the books and relative paraphernalia serve to situate the doctor within a world of literacy and psychic ownership.

Significantly, after his confrontation with Boulton, the doctor does not retreat to the kitchen (the room closest to him), but instead seeks the solace of the bedroom and all of these markers of psychic authority. He retires to the site of his bureau and his beloved journals. This space becomes a site of reason, a site where mind is privileged over body. The bureau and stack of books are carefully chosen representatives of “civilization,” concrete manifestations of man’s triumph over the seemingly chaotic, “unreadable” world outside of the domestic sphere. Thereby, the bedroom becomes a study and a bastion of this civility

amid the branch and brush of the savage Indian wood. The bureau is a physical manifestation of the promised intangibles to be garnered via reading, writing, and thinking. The medical journals, reminiscent of Dr. Adams's self-congratulatory reveling after his make-shift Cesarean section in "Indian Camp," stand as a testament to the progression and evolution of the "thinking man."

Bolstering this point of "Progress" is the description of Doctor Adams's wife and her preoccupation with method and manner. The narrator's sparse wording stands on its own, with diction and connotation coming to the fore: "She was a Christian Scientist. Her Bible, her copy of *Science and Health* and her *Quarterly* were on a table beside her bed in the darkened room "(75). Leading into this initial descriptive is Mrs. Adams' admonishment to her husband regarding the virtues of temperance in wake of the potentially volatile run-in with Boulton. She reminds her husband that "he who ruleth his spirit" is the mightier man. The spiritual admonishment coupled with the Bible and Mrs. Adams's status as Christian Scientist all work to underscore and reify the philosophical and ideological foundation on which the Adamses of the world rest.

As we delve further into this seemingly simple segment, we read the concluding exchange between husband and wife as pure grist for the mill of racial purity. This segment exposes the doctor and the text's entirety as a deliberate forgery of sorts. In it, Doctor Adams improvises and crafts false justification for his anger toward Boulton. He lies about the circumstances at the root of the altercation. His lies are a re-emphasis of established associations of "Otherness." When pressed by his wife for the reasons behind his brood, Doctor Adams responds with an answer that is at once disingenuous and provocative:

“Tell me, Henry. Please don’t try and keep anything away from me. What was the trouble about?”

“Well, Dick owes me a lot of money for pulling his squaw through pneumonia and I guess he wanted a row so he wouldn’t have to take it out in work.” (75)

His wife’s initial silence and then subsequent questions, uttered in seeming disbelief, underscore the doctor’s forgery and the crafting of “Otherness” involved here. In this paradigm, the Native American becomes petty, small, and “un-American.” In this sense, Dick Boulton implicitly runs counter to the perpetuated mythology of the aforementioned Puritan work ethic. Therefore, Doctor Adams’s response is an attempted ethical appeal, whereby the lack of apparent decency and integrity are brought to the fore. Interestingly, the doctor’s word choice here is key as wife becomes “squaw.” Thrown in for good measure is the racial pejorative, a definite linguistic marker of difference and “Otherness.”

Doctor Adams suggests that he saved the life of Boulton’s wife, and that gratitude is markedly absent on the part of the Indian. Dick Boulton should feel indebted to the White hero, whose exploits previously included work “for the medical journal.” Implicit in Doctor Adams’s accusation are the markers of racial “Otherness” and inferiority. While Mrs. Adams’s response to her husband’s answer applies the rules of rationale and good faith to the scenario (i.e., “I really can’t believe someone would do a thing like that”), the doctor’s very insistence that indeed someone *would* stoop to such lows attaches a different standard altogether to the Dick Boultons of the world. In this mini-exchange, we have the insistence of a code broken, or more appropriately a code made inapplicable. The doctor infuses his accusation with the implication of the Indian’s breach of a basic contractual obligation to human decency. In the end, though, Doctor Adams’s crafted answer rings hollow to both his wife (as evinced by her marked silence afterwards) and himself, and it eventually drives him into the woods again. His own culpability in the affair stands as an affirmation to his wife’s

initial question; indeed, *he* would stoop to such lows, and the projected horror that once was the “Other” has become the self. Mrs. Adams’s line of questioning drives her husband from the house and into the woods after his conversation with his wife, and it is this very questioning that indirectly drives the narrative itself. It is the questioning, moreover, and the subsequent silence, the intuitive and *unspoken* moment which follows, that deserves our special attention as we attempt to divine the import of this sequence. The haunting presence in this story becomes the unspoken answer to Mrs. Adams’s question, the answer realized but never verbalized by her husband; this same inexpressible horror drives Uncle George away in “Indian Camp.” The question and answer are inextricably tied to notions of racial definition and authority.

Hemingway injects this unannounced fear into the story’s construction from its inception. Despite its title, this tale’s principle figure is not the doctor, nor is it his wife. Instead, Dick Boulton as mystery figure becomes central. In fact, Boulton becomes the focal point of the tale’s first lines: “Dick Boulton came from the Indian camp to cut up logs for Nick’s father.” From this alone, we can infer that it is Boulton who arguably deserves our attention. Dick Boulton is the unspoken fear reified. The confrontational Indian becomes the tale’s first marker of racial upheaval and the relative questioning of the social order. More importantly, Dick Boulton becomes the principle marker of race and racial transgression in the work. He becomes a fearful figure of defiance, of transgressive behavior, of mystery. From the very beginning, he is painted in mythic, almost Jay Gatsby-ish hues; he is a man, we learn, whose reputation precedes him. Metaphorically treading heavily on the White man’s soil, he is the self-made man, as we soon see. Further, the only concrete and therefore definable aspect of the Boulton character we get is via scant physical description and the

dialogue of the altercation between the doctor and him. The narrator simply describes him as “a big man.” Not much else needs to be said. In our first glimpse of him, Dick leads a band of Indian woodsmen, tools in hand. While his son carries a singular saw, and his friend Billy Tabeshaw totes cant hooks, Dick effortlessly holds three axes under his arms. Moreover, as the row between Dr. Adams and Dick escalates, the Indian’s size becomes paramount in Dr. Adams’s eventual retreat to the cottage. This is where our true knowledge of Boulton ends: with the quantifiable. It is precisely here where we find the seeds of fear being planted in the tale, and it is here where racial identification typically becomes paramount to stabilizing these fears.

In the figure of Dick Boulton, we get no such stabilization. The narrator’s man-of-mystery suggestiveness attributed to the Indian comes to the fore early: “Dick was a half-breed and many of the farmers around the lake believed he was really a White man” (73). This singular descriptive does more to illuminate the text’s entirety than anything physical or concrete we get regarding the Indian woodsman. It is precisely this mystery about Dick’s racial configuration that perplexes the doctor and apparently those around him as well. Throughout the story, former race-defining truths fall by the wayside and questions seem to abound in their stead. And they all begin with this enigmatic figure that has to be arguably either White or Native American, but not both, within our paradigm of polarities. Hemingway’s inclusion of this detail underscores its import. Boulton becomes Hemingway’s answer to the mulatto figure at the heart of many race-centered texts at the turn of the century. Yet, unlike the tragic mulatto of Charles Chesnutt, Nella Larson and a host of other prominent twentieth-century African American writers, Dick Boulton’s “half breed” existence is predicated on a bold commandeering of power and open defiance of the powers

that be. Flaunting his own indeterminateness, Boulton is much like James Weldon Johnson's Ex-Colored Man in the tale of the same name.<sup>12</sup> Therein lies the often inexpressible terror that haunts the tale.

The question mark looming grey over Boulton is precisely what empowers him in his exchange with his racial "superiors." Almost immediately, after Hemingway's racial descriptive of Boulton, we discover the latent powers of this Indian from the faraway camp. We immediately see him at work with his Native American compatriots, summoned by the "bossman," Doctor Adams. Boulton speaks, we learn, in Ojibway to his co-workers. This is his native tongue. Or is it? What seems to confound the doctor most are his bilingual abilities, and his equal comfort speaking English. The first time he speaks, we do not hear his voice, however; we neither hear what he says, nor how he says it. At first glance, there seems to be an "Otherness" to even this relation. Yet, almost immediately, this conception is subverted and a new power matrix develops as we bear witness to Boulton wielding agency and giving orders to his crew. After he speaks, the crew silently acquiesces and goes to work dragging logs from the water. This stands as the first of many clues the narrative gives us regarding Boulton's role in the White power differential's erosion.

From this point, the narrative becomes more overt in its exploration of that shifting power dynamic between the races. One utterance from Boulton directed toward the doctor establishes a marked shift in tone and speaks volumes: "Dick Boulton turned to Nick's father. 'Well Doc,' he said, 'that's a nice lot of timber you've stolen.' 'Don't talk that way, Dick,' the doctor said. 'It's driftwood'" (74). In this sequence, Boulton's agency expands beyond the limited radius usually prescribed for Native American. The unspoken perimeters of decorum become the barriers within our paradigm, figurative lines in the sand dividing



White from Red. Boulton's marked turn toward the doctor is a brash movement and an assertion of self-will. His words themselves are directed unabashedly toward the doctor, their intent bold and unapologetic; they are words of accusation.

With the defiant look and the insolent words, Boulton effectively snatches agency from the hands of the powers that be. In hegemonic terms, Boulton inverts the power paradigm. Suddenly, generations of oppression, of objectification, of intentional obfuscation, are erased with a stare and a strategically directed comment. He accuses the doctor of thievery. Not only is the assertion itself bold and unprecedented, but so is the shift in roles of the drama's principle players. Subject stands accused of a crime, of lowliness formerly associated only with the rogue, the "not me," the "Other" (hence, Doctor Adams lies to his wife when prompted for the argument's reason afterwards). Doctor Adams reverts to the perceived shiftless ways of the non-White figure, acting out in desperation much in the way the frontiersman resorted to brutality in "settling" the West. In his assessment of the frontier literature's hero and the hero's negotiation of the savage and the civil, Berkhofer's assertion that "all authors recognized that this balance of good qualities from the two societies could be lost and the White turn into a savage" is easily transposable to our text and Doctor Adams's own ethical breach (94). We'll see this lapse again in Nick's rage-tinged defense of his sister's honor in "Fathers and Sons." The exchange between Boulton and Adams is also noteworthy for an additional and equally salient reason: in it Dick Boulton establishes and demonstrates his proficiency in the common tongue. Yet another transgressive act, another virtual crossing of barriers between the "primitive" and the "civilized," takes place with Boulton's display of linguistic dexterity.

Doctor Adams's admonition (it is a plea, really) for the Indian to not "talk that way" becomes increasingly appropriate, holding multiple readings, all indicative of a definite shift in the power dynamic. First, we can read it as a reminder of the established hegemony and the conceptualized, subservient figure's perceived violation of the understood protocol. Boulton's retort is wrong in tone. However, underscoring this is a related but separate possible reading of the segment. Doctor Adams's response to Boulton's words can also be read as plea, an insistent request for all parties to operate within *established linguistic parameters*; liberties taken in English against the dominant culture's representative stands as doubly insulting. After deciphering the half-covered inscription on the log and identifying the wood's rightful owners, Dick Boulton "reads" for himself the scenario for what it is.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, he uses the hegemony's own "master" language against the doctor, simultaneously implicating him in actual wrongdoing and literally reading the clues of culpability directly to the "guilty" party in question. Reading this within the prism of race and the slave/master paradigm, property bears the brand of owner and calls for a return to said owner, which in this case is ironically *not* the doctor. In a reversal of roles, bondsman informs and chastises master. Such a seemingly unwarranted usurpation is enough to destabilize Doctor Adams's conceptual paradigm and send him scrambling for solid ground.

This scramble begins in earnest anger as the doctor insists that Dick Boulton refrain both from his accusations and, just as important, his use of the appellation of "Doc." Again, language and the seizure of the attached rights it affords are of greatest import. First, the unsolicited nickname ("Doc") is an obviously unwelcomed crossing of formal lines, a tearing down of boundaries between formal and familiar initiated not by the standard bearer of agency, but by his subordinate, his conceptualized inferior. The appellation of "Doc" appears

suddenly as an unexpected haunt, coloring the entire exchange. Second, and perhaps more germane to our examination at this point, the overly familiar address is also a marked subversion of the proper name. In a scriptural sense, it is a perversion of the first order, as Adam(s), progeny of the first credited namer of things, is left powerless as his own name is turned against him. Now he himself is effectively renamed. In this sense, the name and the act of naming become synonymous with agency, with power, and with the non-White.

Further, this act of “re-naming” itself on the part of the Indian woodsman is done deliberately and repeatedly as an open act of defiance and as an openly rebellious perversion of the master (‘s) language. Minority literature, African American literature in particular, has necessarily crafted itself from a thorough understanding of both the concept and the inseparable nature of the name. Contemporary novelists such as Toni Morrison have mastered the art of steeping name/naming in story. *Beloved* and *Song of Solomon*, for example, suggest, among other things, the importance of name to self-conceptualization. In “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” the Native American subversion of White dictates fits perfectly in line with my investigation of race and agency. The title of doctor is abbreviated abruptly and shown little respect. Consequently relative associations of profession are discarded altogether (Uncle George’s biting sarcastic “you’re a great man” comment resonates nicely here).

The depth of the insult becomes apparent in Doctor Adams’s insistence on Boulton’s refraining from the use of “Doc,” Boulton’s overt refusal to relent, and ultimately the doctor’s empty threat of violence that quickly closes the exchange:

“If you call me Doc once again, I’ll knock your eye teeth down your throat.”  
“Oh, no, you won’t, Doc” (74).

Demonstrating Dick’s changed status within their social order and the ease with which he takes over the traditional roles of interrogator and now active antagonist is Dick’s own veiled threat in the dialogue’s coda. After watching the doctor’s retreat to his cabin, Boulton switches codes, speaking to his brethren in Ojibway, again at the doctor’s expense. Eddy responds accordingly, laughing aloud as they depart into the woods as quickly as they first appeared. Symbolic and acting as an exclamation point to the Indian’s brash act of defiance is the open gate left in the row’s wake; Dick Boulton purposefully leaves it ajar to serve as an empirical reminder to the doctor and the reader of the eroding societal barriers in early twentieth-century America.

Doctor Adams’s retreat to the family cottage after the confrontation represents to the twentieth-century White figure a retreat to the domestic sphere and a return to the comforts of civil familiarity. Crossing the threshold is a symbolic crossing of the barrier between civilization and savagery. The introductory passage is worth briefly noting again: “In the cottage the doctor, sitting on the bed in his room, saw a pile of medical journals on the bureau. They were still in their wrappers. It irritated him” (75). Doctor Adams witnesses a world in flux. This is a transitional time in American sociological history, an era in which the line demarcating old from new, past from present/future, antiquated” from “modern” is becoming increasingly blurred. Represented in the bureau and medical journals that adorn its top are generations of knowledge and Western wisdom. As a site of reading and writing, the desk is a grand emblem of Western knowledge and its conveyance. The journals are physical manifestations of thought. The journals themselves are also modes of instruction and validation of established idea and theory (recall Doctor Adams’s self-praise in the wake of

his make-shift primitive Cesarean section performed on the sickly, nameless Indian woman in “Indian Camp”). Then, too, there is the Bible looming large in the background. These texts are also self-congratulatory artifacts of exclusion. Only those versed in the language may partake of the fruits borne of this knowledge tree. Dick Boulton demonstrates he is up for that challenge.

The biblical allusions painted into the scene are appropriate to discuss at this juncture since we quickly learn from the narrator that Mrs. Adams’s own entrenchment in knowledge is steeped in scripture: “Remember, that he who ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city,” said his wife. Her Bible, her copy of *Science and Health* and her *Quarterly* were on a table beside her bed in the darkened room” (75). Mrs. Adams’s admonishment to her husband is telling in its succinct encapsulation of yet another facet of Western conquest. She, too, brandishes weapons against a perceived world of savagery and ignorance; words are her weapons. *The Holy Bible* and a copy of the *Science and Health* magazine seem to illuminate the shaded room, with Hemingway deftly underscoring the darkness of the space as the doctor reflects on the strife outside his home’s safe confines.

In examining Doctor Adams’s recollections as he sits in the darkness, we see that what immediately follows the row with Boulton is just as interesting and telling as the exchange itself. Doctor Adams, red with indignation and embarrassment, feels the eyes upon him as he retreats to the cabin: “Dick Boulton looked at the doctor...They all watched him walk up the hill and go inside the cottage” (74). Insult, precipitated by a commandeering of name and language, is followed by yet further defiance as the subjective gaze is claimed by not only Boulton also but his entire crew of “native” workers. Initiated by Boulton’s insolent

glare, each crew member in turn watches the doctor's retreat to the familiar, the comfortable, the safe. Notably, these are Doctor Adams's recollections.

Description of Mrs. Adams follows and is scant at best, yet also highly suggestive. The narrator tells us that Nick's mother is a Christian Scientist. Philip Young's references to her and such worldly elements as prostitution, homosexuality and adultery in his "Adventures of Nick Adams" and the biography *Ernest Hemingway*, are easily transposable to my examination.<sup>14</sup> Young suggests that "Nick has been in close contact with things a young boy who had stayed at home would normally not meet---with things that the conventions governing the average boyhood do not define or present answers for, and that raise problems which the Scripture-quoting Mrs. Adams (and apparently the doctor himself) would not even admit let alone deal with" (108). Young's claims of general initiation are also easily those of a father and son's baptism into the waters of color and race.

Young's seminal biography discusses at some length the trials, tribulations and lessons gained by Nick Adams *and family* in a rapidly changing world with colliding spheres of ideal and real. Armed with her own texts, Mrs. Adams is the embodiment of Western theology and rational thinking. With this in mind, the post-squabble question and answer segment between husband and wife gains special significance. She questions her husband's emphatic silence and his obvious agitation as he enters the house. Doctor Adams is clearly agitated by the bit of advice his wife proffers as she learns her husband has had an altercation with Boulton. Meant to reassure and inspire, her words come off instead as nothing more than happy rhetoric: "Remember, that he who ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." In response to his wife's aphorism, Doctor Adams offers marked silence. His controlled spirit becomes a euphemism for cowardice. His smoldering anger is evidence of

his own self-awareness. What is more, the truths contained in her aphorism are emblematic of the texts by her side and become, perhaps for the first time, more problematic than reassuring. With false pillars razed, Doctor Adams is no better and no different than the mysterious man marching into the woods. For his part, Dick Boulton offers none of the stabilizing comforts of any singular racial typology inherent in the label of “Indian.” As a threat to the White, as a physically imposing presence, Boulton is not the noble savage. Neither does he fit neatly within the parameters of the “ignoble savage” label or the wild man of lore, as he outwits and out-talks the doctor, using words as weapons in Richard Wright-like fashion. As Bonnie Duran posits in her “Alcohol and American Indian Identity,” the conception of “the savage Wild Man allowed the comparison with a European civilization seen as the pinnacle of social evolution and provided the ideological foundation for the Christian ‘civilizing’ mission” (113).<sup>15</sup> In the end, though, Doctor Adams recognizes the hypocrisy of such a mission and the emptiness of the mission statement in light of the challenge presented by the enigmatic Indian.

Proof positive of Doctor Adams’s realization and this validation of doubt come seconds later with Mrs. Adams’s inquiry into the root of the row. The Doctor’s response is noteworthy both for its content and for its possible meaning: “Well Dick owes me a lot of money for pulling his squaw through pneumonia and I guess he wanted a row so he wouldn’t have to take it out in work.” His words are immediately questioned, first by the wife, then by the reader: “Dear, I don’t think, I really don’t think that anyone would really do a thing like that” (75). Doctor Adams’s words become a matter of incredulity. Young would suggest that the wife’s words point to a woman who like her young naïve son experiences an initiation of sorts into a world of hard lessons and cruelty. Mrs. Adams’s questioning words, however,

also point to interrogation and accusation. The biblical allusion serves as a vivid reminder to her disoriented husband of the principles that have theoretically fortified them both up to this point. Such a reading suggests a marked implosion of the doctor's psycho-spiritual fortification and a blurring of authoritarian lines; these sparse words do much, not to heal, but to exacerbate fresh psychological wounds as the power dynamic shifts from master of the manor to matriarchal figure. Mrs. Adams questions her husband's integrity. Quite simply, Doctor Adams's implication in moral corruption draws him closer to, not further from the featured "Other" of his angst-laden imagination. With power markers blurred, dividing lines of race conflate and the doctor and his Indian laborer become harder to differentiate. Not liking the look of the new composite drawn by his wife, he retreats again to the yard and the unspoiled gaze of his son.

However, a psychic retreat begins well before he physically leaves the room. In between the bullet-points of Mrs. Adams's interrogation, there is marked silence, mechanical action and a momentary respite for the doctor: "His wife was silent. The Doctor wiped his gun carefully with a rag. Then he heard his wife's voice from the darkened room" (75). Mrs. Adams's voice draws her husband back into the realm of the real. Almost immediately after the doctor enters the bedroom, the symbols of bureau and journal confront the reader. Realizing the frailty of these western hegemonic symbols in the face of the physical realities of a now thinking brute (Boulton) and a former Black/White world gone grey, Doctor Adams answers the barrage of questions with all of the safety and predictability that alloyed steel and spring action can provide; when confronted with the truth behind the hollow rhetoric his wife recites from memory, the emptiness that invalidates an entire system of belief, Doctor Adams cleans his gun. He finds meaning in the physical act; mindless ritual provides



temporary comfort. When brought back to the present moment by the questioning voice in the darkness, Doctor Adams is, within my paradigm, effectively spooked by reminders of the horrors with which he himself has just done battle. He heads to the only other place the realities of the world have yet to encroach upon: the untainted parameters of his son's loving gaze.

From the uncertainty that has infiltrated the homestead, Doctor Adams once again flees to the outside. The familiarity and comfort of the old hemlock and his son greet him there. Hemingway significantly ends the tale with this final exchange between father and son. Aptly, it is precipitated by the conflict between husband and wife. If we believe the wife to be representative of a dying value system and world conception, and if we believe that along with the boy, Doctor Adams is an initiate into a new world order, then Mrs. Adams's final words to her husband seem to push him out of the door: "If you see Nick, will you tell him his mother wants to see him" (75). The doctor's response is understated: he simply slams the door. With a terse apology, Doctor Adams is off to the forest in search of his son. However, more than a fearful response to matriarchal encroachment or the threat of emasculation, his anger and frustration are a response to the dead rhetoric his wife now embodies, rhetoric rendered ineffective before the "savagery" outside their cottage door. As the voice of tempered "reason" in the darkness, Mrs. Adams becomes a living ghost of sorts for the doctor and the reader. Doctor Adams's abrupt flight is a response to the rhetorical trap he sees being set for his son, who sits in the woods alone reading.

This becomes most apparent after he relays the message and his son declares his wishes to follow his father's undeclared hegemony instead: "'I want to go with you,' Nick said" (76). Longing for companionship on his lonely quest for understanding, Doctor Adams

grants his son's request. When young Nick declares that he knows "where there's black squirrels," Doctor Adams responds with "All right. Let's go there" (76). Nick knows where to find black squirrels, and most importantly, his father wishes to go there. "Why?" becomes the pertinent question. This particular sequence is emblematic of the story's entirety as Doctor Adams, with psychological wounds from the tangle with Boulton and his wife still fresh, longs for the simplistic polarities of days passed. Nick's green eyes still see the world in definite hues (i.e., black and white). This is important in the context of a vastly changing societal landscape in which Doctor Adams, White male patriarchal figure and principal agent, has his "divine right" challenged, and lines of clear delineation become increasingly more difficult to find. Thus, calming the discord becomes a matter of knowing where to find those black squirrels.

<sup>1</sup> For a most informative and comprehensive look at Native American representation through the years from America's inception to the present date, see. S. Elizabeth Bird. *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996). This collection explores the crafting of Native history and image-making in literature, advertising and film.

<sup>2</sup> See Hartwig Isernhagen's "The Representation of 'The Indian' in the Federal Writer's Project And in Contemporary Native American Literature." *Native American Representations: First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations*. Gretchen M. Bataille, Ed. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Teresa Goddu's *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) takes the reader from the Gothic tradition's inception as a primarily White aesthetic domain, as seen in the writings of Charles Brockden Brown, and later Hawthorne and Poe, to its subversion and appropriation as an exclusively White art form in American letters by contemporary African-American writers like Toni Morrison.

<sup>4</sup> See Daphne Lamothe. "Jean Toomer's Gothic Black Modernism." *The Gothic Other: Racial and Social Constructions in the Literary Imagination*. Eds. Ruth Bienstock Anolick and Douglas L. Howard (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., Inc., Publishers, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Ania Loomba. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. (New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Richard F. Berkhofer, Jr.'s *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978) has become the standard critical point of reference within the context of Native American representation and the cultural trappings of typology.

<sup>7</sup> Amy L. Strong. "Screaming Through Silence: The Violence of Race in 'Indian Camp; and 'The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife.'" *The Hemingway Review*, 16 (Fall 1996), p. 18-32. rpt. in *Ernest Hemingway: Seven Decades of Criticism*. Linda Wagner-Martin, Ed. (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> See Kathryn Shanley. "The Indians America Loves to Love and Read: American Indian Identity and Cultural Appropriation." *Native American Representations: First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations*. Gretchen M. Bataille, Ed. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> See Homi Bhabah. "How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space, Post Colonial Times and the Trials of Cultural Translation," in *The Location of Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 1994). 212-236.

<sup>10</sup> Babb's focus on a crafted "legacy" of White commonality is especially relevant as we explore a Hemingway narrative within the context of history, and its apparent absence for the marginalized textual figures. See Valerie Babb. *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture*. (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Patricia N. Limerick. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of The American West*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987).

<sup>12</sup> In Johnson's classic work, the nameless protagonist, a mulatto, actively transgresses racial and therefore social lines of demarcation in an emphatic demonstration of self-volition on the part of the traditionally marginalized figure. For a brief time, he literally is the "secret agent." See James Weldon Johnson. *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. First Vintage Books Ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> A 1925 letter to his father underscores prejudicial assumptions and their investment in the author's fiction. In a written response to his father's review of "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," Hemingway rather cavalierly explains that he "put in Dick Boulton and Billy Tabeshaw as real people with their real names because it was pretty sure that they *would never read* the *Transatlantic Review*. I've written a number of stories about the Michigan country—*the country is always true--what happens in the stories is fiction*." See *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters: 1917-1961*. Carlos Baker, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), p. 153.

<sup>14</sup> See Phillip Young. *Ernest Hemingway*. (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1952).

<sup>15</sup> See Bonnie Duran. "Indigenous Versus Colonial Discourse: Alcohol and American Indian Identity." 111-29. in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*. S. Elizabeth. Bird, Ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

## **Beyond the (Indian) Camp: Native American Dissolution and Reconstituted Whiteness**

“We are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves . . . . The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined.”  
---- *American Indian Quotations*, N. Scott Momaday.

“Since the original inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere neither called themselves by a single term nor understood themselves as a collectivity, the idea and the image of the Indian must be a White conception.”  
----*Dressing in Feathers*, Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr.

If the Indian camp stories exploit difference along general, primitive lines, then several of Hemingway’s remaining Native American-centered tales explore the space dividing civil from savage along lines of degeneracy and moral corruption. The predominant narrative devolutionary tropes of choice are drink and sex. Critic Bonnie Duran suggests that “The imagery of the stereotypical Drunken Indian—violent, lawless, impetuous—emerges clearly in this analysis as one of the instruments that attuned Western collective consciousness to the notion of a North America awaiting the civilizing and rationalizing mission of the European settlement.”<sup>1</sup> The conceit of the inebriated native litters the Hemingway landscape and will be featured later in this examination. However, in “Ten Indians,” Hemingway explores a singularly different aspect of man’s “Otherly” nature — sexuality--in an attempt to draw clear lines of racial division. For my examination, the emphasis is not so much upon the end result as much as it is upon the means to that end-- i.e., the author’s narrative strategies employed to both forge this degenerative picture and to wrest agency from the clutches of the “alien” encroacher.

“Ten Indians” is very much a tale of initiation as young Nick learns about love, heartache, and rejection. Nick Adams, still a preadolescent at this stage of his development, is teased by neighboring children about the wandering eyes (and other parts) of his schoolboy crush for the moment, a young neighboring Native American girl named Prudence Mitchell. The rumor is soon-after confirmed independently by his father who happens to come upon young Prudence mid-dalliance with another neighboring child, Frank Washburn. While he never expressly says what the young couple was doing when he came upon them, Doctor Adams’s circumlocution leads us to believe she and the neighboring boy were engaged in some kind of sexual play. Most scholarship places the emphasis in this tale on the beginnings of a sexual awakening and awareness for a boy being initiated into the world; or else it becomes a young boy’s first dealings with the harsh realities of love and matters of the heart.<sup>2</sup> What is often overlooked, though, are the *means* to this end of heartache. It is not the heartache that deserves attention; it is the “what” that precipitates the disappointment.

Indeed, “Ten Indians” is in many ways an exploration and ultimate alignment of sexuality with stereotyped “savagery.” Moreover, “Ten Indians” becomes a formal testament to the moral decadence of the racial “Other” (with Nick Adams and the reader as principle witnesses). More importantly, with its focus on the threat of potential intimacy between the races, this story serves as a reminder of the racial “Other’s” close proximity to the self. With such an emphasis on a perceived societal decay in the space of the “Other,” sexuality serves as the perfect nexus for an exploration of the similarity between the races and the prospect of their actual/metaphoric merging. Such an exploration of the “Other’s” apparent degradation begs the question: “is the White centered-self close behind?” The sexual act is a union, a merging of seemingly disparate bodies; momentarily, the two become one, each possibly

indistinguishable from the other. Thus, the physical separation between the races here becomes the tenuous Gothic separator of choice and the threat of literal miscegenation the entity to be feared. The failed sexual connection at story's end then between Nick and Prudence silently evinces the narrative horror of racial transgression and its prospects, prospects that necessarily begin and end with lost authority.

In a rather bold move, Hemingway opens "Ten Indians" with a cogent and somewhat telling descriptive: "After one fourth of July, Nick driving home late from town in a big wagon....passed nine drunk Indians along the road" (253). Rather than place this series of events on some random day, Hemingway chooses Independence Day as a point of reference to begin things.<sup>3</sup> We are reminded again of the date as the story closes and Nick recounts events of the day to his father at the dinner table. Hemingway's choice of dates gains importance as we consider its possible meanings within the context of my own examination. Marking the anniversary of our nation's own break with perceived bondage, Independence Day itself, although mentioned only briefly in the tale, becomes key as we read this tale through the lens of race.<sup>4</sup> The immediacy of the reference gives us an instantaneous portrait of two contrasting America's. Hemingway, in the sparsest of descriptions, gives us an America that is vibrant and wholesome and rooted in traditional values. This America is a middle-America of fathers and sons (the subject, at least in part, of a tale yet to be explored in this examination) exchanging pleasantries at suppertime. This is an America of neighboring children gathering together at a family outing. This is an America of baseball games, barefoot walks through the woods, and apple pie with milk. Joseph Flora suggests that this was, most especially at the turn of the century, a holiday of "family," "community" and "goodwill." Juxtaposed to this portrait of nurturing comfort is one of a much more

dubious, if not cynical, nature. Let us call this the “Other” America, or, to keep this within the framework of our examination, the America of “Otherness.” This America is an America of taboos, both racial and sexual. It is an America of clandestine affairs, of deviant behavior of all sorts, of decadence. More importantly, it is an America of racialization and polarity rooted in these very images and associations; it is an America at war with itself, battling for its very survival.

Hemingway’s narrative opens with this clear juxtaposition of these two Americas at odds with one another. It is, for all intents and purposes, a very deliberate juxtaposition of value systems and a blatant underscoring of a perceived “American” value system:

After one Fourth of July, Nick, driving home late from town in the big wagon with Joe Garner and his family, passed nine drunken Indians along the road. He remembered there were nine because Joe Garner, driving along the road in the dusk, pulled up the horses, jumped down into the road and dragged an Indian out of the wheel rut. The Indian had seen asleep, face down in the sand. Joe dragged him into the bushes and got back up on the wagon-box.  
“That makes nine of them,” Joe said, “just between here and the edge of town.”  
“Them Indians,” said Mrs. Garner.

Mrs. Garner’s constant refrain “them Indians” solidifies the sentiment and the intent of the opening segment. We have, in this brief descriptive, a blanketing of identity: one becomes all. In terms of this brief segment, too, the blanketing of identity is a mass indictment of a people. When the question arises concerning who exactly that last individual was that Joe dragged from the road, one son tersely remarks to another, “All Indians wear the same kind of pants.” Put another way, “all Indians look alike.” Within the confines of a few lines of text, Native American is summarily linked to drink, to vice, to degradation.

In *White Man’s Wicked Water*, William Unrau traces the origins of the “Drunken Indian” as trope in American prejudicial lore and concludes that the accepted image owes *as much to fiction* as it does to actual fact in its formulation.<sup>5</sup> Substance abuse among Native



Americans during the nineteenth century in particular was as much a result of socio-historical factors such as high-pressured, government sanctioned liquor sales as it was symptomatic of community dysfunction. However, the typology persists as a matter of convenience for a subject-self bent on defining itself in terms of what it is not. Irrespective of the fact that alcohol consumption was rampant in many instances among poorer Whites living in outpost towns who were just as starved for escapism during the same period, the “Drunken Indian” image endured well into the twentieth century as a matter of course.

Thus, as Unrau posits, “Immoderate, antisocial consumption was then viewed more as evidence of savage deficiency than as an individual malady or community pathology afflicting humans irrespective of social, ethnic, or racial boundaries” (118). Placing the Native American in that constant, prostrate state of inebriation (with the mass majority of the Native population implicitly on the ground oblivious to the world) elevates those not immediately implicated in the mayhem; *razing* a racial “Other” in effect *raises* the subject-self (and without direct expression). In speaking of contemporary governmental propaganda, Unrau asserts that “Uncontrollable passion and moral deficiency were recurrent themes regarding the abandon with which the Indians consumed alcohol” (52). Reminders of this “truth” abound in our featured story’s first paragraph as evidenced in the exchange between members of the Garner family who suggest that several of the neighboring camp’s Indians litter the town’s roadsides, incapacitated from drink. Whiteness then becomes the amalgam of the unspoken, the antithesis of the featured and critiqued debauchery. Hemingway’s iceberg principle is in full form.<sup>6</sup>

Our introduction to Prudence comes as Nick and the two Garner boys discuss Joe Garner’s recent encounter with a skunk while driving. He had run over one just days prior to

this outing. The two brothers relate the mishap to Nick and disagree about the exact location of the unfortunate event. Their father's reply to their re-hashing of the tale begins a short exchange between Nick and the Garner family about the opposite sex and race; more importantly, this becomes key in reading "Ten Indians" as a work invested in racial stereotype: "One place is just as good as another to run over a skunk" (254). The meaning becomes metaphoric as related racial pejoratives and the person of Prudence Mitchell conflate and become the object of discussion upon Carl Garner's questioning of Nick during his relation of his simple story. Just what was it that Nick saw in the darkness the night before? The back and forth exchange between the boys and the parents suggests much in the way these folk see the world and the way in which young Nick is initiated into it:

"They were *coons* probably," Carl said.  
"They were skunks. I guess I know skunks."  
"You ought to." Carl said, " You got an Indian girl."  
"Stop talking that way, Carl," said Mrs. Garner.  
"Well they smell about the same."  
Joe Garner laughed.  
"You stop your laughing, Joe," Mrs. Garner said. "I won't have Carl talk that way." (emphasis mine 254)

Within the confines of this brief exchange we get label, stereotype, and a subversive, subjective investment. Carl's reply is indicative of the Garner clan's global conception (to Nick's assertive declaration, "I guess I know skunks."). His statement is more than a mere pejorative teasing; it effectively relegates a people to subhuman status.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, not only do ethnicity and species conflate, but so do individuals as Prudence comes to stand for the skunk, and then implicitly all Indian girls; according to Carl, "they smell about the same" (254).

And while Carl is implicated in this for what he says, the elder Garner members must share equally in his indictment for what they do *not* say. Joe and his wife, in their collective

silence, share in Carl's guilt. While Mrs. Garner does reprimand her son for his rather cavalier remarks, she does so indirectly through her husband. What is more, Joe's immediate reaction to Carl's words is not righteous indignation, but rather unabashed laughter. He too is reprimanded. However, Mrs. Garner's tough talk should also be examined more closely. Her chastisement is not for her family's blatant racist attitudes, but *for their exhibition*. She scolds her husband for encouraging such behavior with his apparent approval. Thus, what we get is an emphasis on the words, the communication of attitudes, and *not* the views themselves ("I won't have Carl *talk that way*"). With this assertion, the narrative reminds us of Doctor Adams's admonishment to Dick Boulton in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife: "don't talk that way." We get this again as Mrs. Garner whispers something to her husband after their son declares that his father would never pursue a "squaw" romantically: "Don't you say it, Garner" (emphatic regulated language is a principle factor in self-definition). Most importantly, Mrs. Garner's admonishment belies the "truth" in her eyes. In teasing her son, Mrs. Garner suggests that "Carl can't get a girl, not even a squaw" (254). Thus, the narrative even invests Mrs. Garner's apparent acts of kindness and righteousness with diminution and degradation.

Our conception of Prudence Mitchell, as readers, is cemented by Nick's own father who verifies the rumor and innuendo surrounding the young Indian girl.<sup>8</sup> While engaged in intimate dinner-time talk with his son, Doctor Adams fills in the rather conspicuous blanks for his inquisitive son.<sup>9</sup> As the tenth and last Indian featured in the tale, she becomes representative of a race; as licentious aggressor, she becomes monstrous and representative of a race in decline when implicitly paired with the sexually naïve Nick. Thus, not only does the supper table chat introduce Nick to the pitfalls of love, but it also underscores the

valuable lessons regarding race and White privilege learned earlier in the evening from the Garners.

Hence, Joe Garner's admonishment to young Nick that he "better watch out to keep Prudence" gains importance. Suddenly, with emphasis placed on the right word, "keep," this friendly bit of fatherly advice becomes a foreshadowing of the boy's impending crisis of the heart and an indictment of the Native American girl. Add to that Joe Garner's final declaration to Nick that ends the verbal spar session, and profile is solidified: "Nickie can have Prudence," Joe Garner said, "I got a *good* girl" (254—emphasis mine). By shifting emphasis from the word "got" to the word "good," Joe Garner's joking declaration, his affectionate reassurance to his wife (and nod/wink to the goodness of Nick's own girl) becomes an unabashed contrast of essential essentiality; Mrs. Garner's goodness implicitly runs counter to the very nature of the Indian girl and her contingent of inebriated, wayward souls. What is more, the text suggests that the sheer volition and aggressiveness on Prudence's part (and by implication, the loss of control and the incapacitation of the hapless naiveté) is that thing to be feared by the Anglo hegemony.

All of this comes to pass later, naturally, with Doctor Adams's allusion to Prudence's indiscretions in the woods with Frank Washburn. Nick, vexed at this point by the teasing endured during his travel home, prods his father for something, anything, to allay his worst fears: that the Garners were right about Prudence. It becomes obvious from Dr. Adams's hesitant responses that the two young people observed were indeed engaged in some kind of sexual play when he happened upon them. When first prompted for specifics as to who he had seen that day as he passed the Indian camp, Doctor Adams begins the exchange with a blanket statement announcing that "*the Indians were all* in town getting drunk," once more

reminding the reader of the line separating “civilized” from “savage” and “degenerate.” When pushed for specifics, quite aware of his son’s concerns, the Doctor rather suggestively tells his son that he did in fact see something (or someone) of note: Prudence Mitchell. What is more, she and Frank Washburn, he asserts, were having quite a time as they were “thrashing around” in the woods together. Averted eyes and circumlocution do much to paint the rest of the picture for both Nick and the reader. The tale ends with Nick grappling with heartbreak. The conventional reading stops there.

As Amy Strong suggests in “Screaming through Silence,” the Indian presence in the work is most deliberate and demands attention as it goes beyond mere plot device or simple recount of memory.<sup>10</sup> Going beyond what conventional readings confirm, we see there is yet another life-lesson learned by young Nick (and his father does help initiate the tough love exchange) on this day of days: this experience and its recount works as an affirmation of both the decadence and decline of the racialized “Other” and subsequently, the reification of the White patriarchal self and social structure as evinced in the stable, nuclear families of Garner and Adams. Prudence, clearly not living up to her name, is that racial deviance and decay incarnate. For the Anglo figure, displacing perceived foible and fault becomes paramount to the maintenance of purity and the notion of “Progressive” selfhood; doing so becomes a matter of underscoring certain “facts,” namely that the hyper-sexualized “Other” is *not* the Self. For the likes of Joe Garner and even Dr. Adams, clearly delineating difference and lines of demarcation becomes paramount for those seeking to keep fluctuating conceptions of self and society static. Not transgressing those constructed barriers and keeping actual miscegenation from being realized, all within the context of recounted memory, becomes the narrative purpose then for the author.

Perhaps nowhere is this internalized angst and struggle against “race mixing” more urgently expressed than in the later day Nick Adams story “Fathers and Sons.” In this tale, Hemingway uses the scripted word to both demonstrate Nick’s further understanding of the world through the familial prism, but also to figuratively confront and effectively exorcise that haunting demon called miscegenation. Arguably, nowhere is Hemingway’s fears of racial transgression and the threat of White erasure more evident than in this heavily autobiographical story. In “Fathers and Sons,” Hemingway presents us with an older, more mature Nick Adams (Nicholas now) who travels the roads with his own son now. All of the story’s happenings and observations are framed within the confines of this trip’s conversation and spurred memory; the triggers are familiar settings and questions from his boy. While we learn something of Nick’s relationship to his son and his mixed feelings toward his own father, for purposes of this examination, my emphasis will necessarily be on the site and subject of Nick’s remembered initiation. Nick’s remembrances are never expressly enunciated for his son, but via silent recollection, they are summoned for the observant reader.

Very quickly the sights passing by Nick’s moving car windows turn to triggered memories of long-ago personal exchanges between father and son and remembrances of lessons learned (and not learned) about sex. Further, sexual lessons become inextricably linked to race. This is key because, in this story most especially, sexual matters become representative of things unspoken, unknown, feared. His own father, after all, Nick tells himself, “was not sound about matters of sex” and therefore non-communication and mis-information abound in his memories of early education. And the narrative necessarily binds this education to matters of race as well.

Our enlightenment begins with Nick's boyhood recollection of being bitten by a red squirrel as he looks to collect his post-hunt booty (the squirrel, shot by Nick, apparently lay dormant after falling from a tree; Nick surprises the squirrel which, in turn, reprises him). After being bitten, Nick screams a profanity at the squirrel. Doctor Adams responds with a key question that not only underscores young Nick's oft-mentioned (mis)education, but it more importantly acts as impetus for Nick's enlightenment. Answering young Nicky's exclamation, his father asks "Do you know what a bugger is?" (371). Doctor Adams's definition is entrenched in sinfulness and mired in the perversion of bestiality. As a matter pertaining to this investigation, this sequence gains importance if we read it as a statement about the decay of the social order. What is more, this serves as a connection to and harbinger of the constructed "Other's" demise, that same moral regression we get in such stories as "Ten Indians" and "The Indians Went Away" (while in those stories the sins assume other names—drunkenness most especially—the idea of racial decadence, deviance, and demise is still all-pervasive). Most especially germane are Nick's recollections of the feelings sparked by his father's bequeathed knowledge, feelings to be explored and explained after a further examination of Nick's own sexual initiation.

Indeed, Nick's initiation fits our paradigm of relative "Othering" quite well. Immediately, authorial strategies of placement and association conflate as emphasis once again shifts to location and polarity:

Nicks' own education in these earlier matters had been acquired in the hemlock woods behind the Indian camp. This was reached by a trail which ran from the *cottage through the woods to the farm and then by a road which ran through the slashings to the camp.* (emphasis mine 372)

Like the tales already explored at the beginning of this examination, most especially "Indian Camp" and "The Doctor and the Doctor's wife," "Fathers and Sons" is unabashedly

exploitative in its use of the racial/spatial polarity. Once again this becomes our Gothic expression of forced separateness. Nick's education, an education of the clandestine and unspoken, begins, we are told, in the woods surrounding the camp, separated from the cottage and therefore from civilization. His education is almost primordial, borne amidst the trees and swamp. Setting therefore acts as a primary marker in forging representations of moral being and in constructing a disparate foundation. The woods as home to the Indian, stripped and gutted as they are, become an outward manifestation of the constructed "Other's" moral decline:

The hemlock bark was piled in long rows of stacks, roofed over with more bark, like houses, and the peeled logs lay huge and yellow where the trees had been felled. They left the logs in the woods to rot, they did not even clear away or burn the tops. It was only the bark they wanted for the tannery at Boyne City; hauling it across the lake on the ice in winter, and each year there was less forest and more open, hot, shadeless, weed-grown slashing. (373)

With barkless trees and treeless thickets, with hemlock trees felled and robbed of their outer covering, this is a scene of utter desolation. Clearly, Hemingway points to a land, and by extension a people, in decline. The language markers, word choice and relative associations are meant to emphatically point to a social fabric in decay (note the destructive diction: rot, burn, weed-grown). Physical proximity of this decadence to the centered and, for the moment, whole, subject-self, who is without these markers of difference, produces the horrifying specter of potential infiltration. The subjective, White self realizes this horror when the line of decline is blurred or altogether erased to include in this regression not only the objectified, but the subject-center as well.<sup>11</sup>

We see this translation of the metaphor come into being as memory of the wooded area's decline turns to memory of Nick's first sexual dalliances in that formerly fecund, wooded space. Nick's recalled encounter with Trudy begins with attempts by the narrator to



underscore difference, to emphasize the polarized sensibility dividing the featured races. As in the earlier “Indian stories,” difference is quickly established via spatial situation. Nick and, by association the reader, re-enters his wooded sanctum. Getting to the camp, the narrator suggests, is a matter of walking a trail through the hemlock forest. Once more, perceived savagery is relegated to the wilds of nature, harkening back to Doctor Adams’s sojourn to the camp to treat the ill and to Dick Boulton’s trek to the cottage (apparently from the far reaches of the forest) to help clear the White man’s land of “driftwood.” In each instance, Hemingway’s narrative creates a spatial divide, a divide that is eventually transgressed by the principal players as the narrator employs the Gothic veil to express a collective anxiety regarding America’s shifting power dynamics.

From the spatial differential, the narrative moves to keep the lines of racial delineation clearly and firmly in place with a linguistic marker of discrimination. While certainly well beyond the reductive primordial screams and grunts and the equally disturbing complicit silence encountered by the reader in “Indian camp,” the Native American voice of “Fathers and Sons” is far from the controlling and threatening force it assumes as Dick Boulton of “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife.” In “Fathers and Sons,” unlike in the aforementioned tale, English, the language of the paternal White power structure, is the domain of Nick and Nick only. With her broken descriptives (“I no mind Billy,” “He my brother,” “That all I want do,” “make plenty baby. What the hell.”), Trudy hardly commands the language. Nick underscores this point as he recollects how “it was a long speech for her” (373), in recounting her struggle to link multiple simple declaratives. Billy, the lone other Native American figure actually featured in the story, is all but mute in the story’s retelling. In suggestively linking such concrete examples of “lost voice” and their relative associations,

Hemingway reminds us that these are after all, ethnic “Others,” “with funny names,” living outside of the established power structure.

However, we get our first hints of possible hegemonic subversion and crossed lines of demarcation in the very concept of name. “Trudy,” “Billy,” and “Eddie,” all Native Americans, all don names of the dominant, “oppressive” culture. Nick’s own young son, upon hearing of his father’s childhood friends, underscores this notion of constructed difference by declaring, “Those are funny names for Indians.” Clearly even in his young mind, a color line has been crossed with the Native American action of dispensing and assuming “standard” names--i.e., “Billy” and “Eddie.” In fact, the entire sequence serves to solidify this insistence on difference and clear markers of separation in spaces where they may no longer apply:

“Those are funny names for Indians.”

“Yes, aren’t they?”

“But tell me what they were like.”

“They were Ojibways.” Nick said. “And they were nice.” (375)

In relating his evaluation and assessment of his Indian friends to his son, Nick employs a racial categorization as a catchall of sorts. With a simple descriptive of racial and tribal alignments, the narrative relies totally on prefigured associations of race to tell his son all that he needs to know about these Indians with “funny names.”

The notion of deliberate transgression, especially in all matters racial (and its related fears), as demonstrated in the taking of Anglo names, comes to the fore as the three young children of Nick’s long-ago memories shift discussion to the elder brother of the featured Indian siblings. Nick learns that Eddie, the oldest (and absent) brother, longs for the Adams sister, Dorothy. That being said, I find it useful to examine the sequence in its entirety, especially Nick’s reaction, to glean its full implications:

*"If Eddie Gilby ever comes at night and even speaks to Dorothy you know what I'd do to him? I'd kill him like this."* Nick cocked the gun and hardly taking aim pulled the trigger, blowing a hole as big as your hand in the head or belly of that *half-breed bastard* Eddie Gilby. "Like that. I'd kill him like that."  
 "He better not come then," Trudy said. She put her hand in Nick's pocket.  
 "He better watch out plenty," said Billy.  
 "He's a big bluff," Trudy was exploring with her hand in Nick's pocket.  
 "But you don't kill him. You get plenty trouble."  
*"I'd kill him like that,"* Nick said. Eddie Gilby lay on the ground with all his chest shot away. Nick put his foot on him proudly.  
 "I'd scalp him," he said happily.  
 "No," said Trudy. "That's dirty."  
*"I'd scalp him and send it to his mother."*  
 "His mother dead," Trudy said. "Don't you kill him, Nickie."  
 "Don't you kill him for me."  
*"After I scalped him I'd throw him to the dogs."*  
 Billy was very depressed. "He better watch out," he said gloomily.  
 "They'd tear him to pieces," Nick said, pleased with the picture.  
 Having scalped that half-breed renegade and standing, watching the dogs tear him, his face unchanging, he fell backward against the tree, held tight around his neck, Trudy holding, choking him, and crying,  
 "No kill him! No kill him! No kill him! No. No. No. Nickie. Nickie. Nickie!"  
 "What's the matter with you?"  
 "No kill him."  
 "I got to kill him."  
 "He just a big bluff."  
 "All right," Nickie said. *"I won't kill him unless he comes around the house. Let go of me."*  
 "That's good," Trudy said. "You want to do anything now? I feel good now."  
 "If Billy goes away." Nick had killed Eddie Gilby, then *pardoned* him his life, and *he was a man now.* (377)

The convergence of sex and violence is powerful. The sexual implications loom large for these preadolescents. Immediately, the narrative gives us two possible readings of the Nick Adams reaction to the initial innuendo. First, there is the knee-jerk reaction of an over-protective brother, armed with his own brand of new-found sexual knowledge, coming to the aid of his vulnerable sibling. However, there is something much more ominous at work here as well. Nick's reaction to the innuendo is extreme, to say the least. What we get in this short declaration is more than familial loyalty, more than proffered brotherly love and protection;

the strong language and very select diction itself bespeaks a young White male, our fair representative of the greater patriarchal construct, vowing to protect the honor of not only his sister, but by extension, all White women.

Eddy's supposed interest in Dorothy as sexual object represents an encroachment of sorts by the racial "Other" (the half-breed" indeterminacy in itself is cause for even greater angst) into the sanctum of the White male figure. As Abby Ferber notes in *White Man Falling: Race, Gender, and White Supremacy*, the import of the race and gender linkage to White hegemonic proliferation cannot be overstated: "From the moment the concept of race was invented, interracial sexuality became a concern."<sup>12</sup> Hemingway's seemingly extraneous racial descriptives insure such a textual reading by contemporaries. At this juncture in our nation's history, such an encroachment becomes tantamount to the most heinous of violations. Suddenly, young Nicky, heeding the call of a Thomas Dixon, slips into the realm of Arthurian legend and dons the garb of White knight. Extending that metaphor a bit, Eddie becomes the dark dragon that must be slain. The imperative then is not just a matter of protecting the sanctity of feminine sexuality, but it becomes a matter of staving off the encroachment of that little-mentioned, little-regarded minority presence. What is more, Nick's reaction is one of marked terror. We know this by noting the intensity of his proclamations. Nick's fear is the fear of miscegenation, that dreaded fear of crossed lines of demarcation and anticipated disorder.

As we dig deeper into the Hemingway character's psyche, we come to realize that that goes further than any surface fear of the unknown or a fear of "mixed blood." Nick's fear stems from the same space as Doctor's Adams's frustration in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife." Nick's fear is even more fundamentally a fear of a reciprocal transgression, a

transgression easily initiated from *either* side of the racial color line. And Hemingway's translated fears are certainly nothing new; such fears have deep roots in this nation's history, with laws concerning miscegenation, particularly "violations" of White women, dating back to the seventeenth century.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the Hemingway character's psyche is indeed, as critics such as Philip Young suggest, a psyche that is vulnerable and scarred by life experience; it is furthermore a psyche scarred by the unsettling fact that definitions of race (therefore, notions of racial degree and superiority) and assured dominance are fast becoming unraveled, and in some instances, altogether irrelevant. It is not, however, necessarily a psyche on the mend as many critics suggest of Nick Adams and other Hemingway characters.<sup>14</sup> For, we will see this very same issue haunting the pages of his later stories, and for years to come, his novels (*The Garden of Eden* and *True at First Light* come to mind)

Ironically, or perhaps fittingly, this act of transgression itself is what spawns the rage at Trudy's mention of her brother's boosted prowess and boastful talk. I say ironically, because Nick rages against the very entity responsible for his own sexual awakening and initial lessons in all things amorous. His most vivid memories are attributable in part to "the things done" by Trudy, things "noone has ever done better" (376). Indeed, Nick's remembrances of his encounters with Trudy are nothing more than a catalogue of sensations, of body parts:

Plump brown legs, flat belly, hard little breasts, well-holding arms, quick searching tongue, the flat eyes, the good taste of mouth, then uncomfortably, tightly, sweetly, moistly, lovely, tightly, achingly, fully, finally, unendingly, never-endingly, never-to-endingly, suddenly ended, the great bird flown like an owl in the twilight.... (377)

In this sequence, the narrative demonstrates a decided taking and what I will term a "relative knowing" by the young protagonist. Nick's chain of remembered sensations evoke a sense of

passionate conquest and self-satiation as the catalogue builds from robust “parts” (plump brown legs, well holding arms) with functions delineated, to the “flat eyes” that serve no purpose other than to reflect the will of he who stands before them. Bolstering this idea of relative knowing gained from this “taking” are the words immediately following the “suddenly ended” experience:

So that when you go in a place where Indians lived you smelled them gone  
and all the empty pain killer bottles and the flies that buzz do not kill the sweetgrass  
smell, the smoke smell and that other like a fresh cased marten skin. Nor any jokes  
about them nor old squaws take that away. Nor the sick sweet smell they get to have.  
Nor what they did finally. It wasn't how they ended. They all ended the same.  
Long time ago good. Now no good. (376)

The narrative suggests that a taking of the corporeal has garnered a sense of the essential. Discovery and conquest of the “Othered” body have engendered a new kind of knowledge. Suddenly, an entire people’s complexity is distilled into a primal “understanding” and a sensory chain of knowing; suddenly, a sexual encounter gives way to a profound essential knowledge of a race, a culture, and, interestingly enough, it portends a culture’s apparent demise. Implied in the narrative is a marked state of fallen-ness, a fallen-ness precipitated by moral weakness. Nobility gives way to ignobility, a paradigm of simplistic perfection is corrupted, and the Romantic conception (with requisite fall) is complete.

Berkhoffer’s suggestion is transposable to a twentieth-century model as well, as he posits that “Most romantic of all was the impression of the Indian rapidly passing away before the onslaught of civilization. The nostalgia and pity aroused by the dying race produced the best romantic sentiments and gave that sense of fleeting time beloved of romantic sensibilities. The tragedy of the dying Indian, especially as portrayed by the last living member of a tribe, became a staple of American literature, beginning with Philip Freneau’s poems in the 1780s.”<sup>15</sup> Interestingly enough, it seems that this kind of knowledge

or knowledge-seeking, this means of reading the world via the branded body with color as a label of ownership, is not a reciprocal act. Or, more accurately, this kind of epistemological probing becomes an aggressive act of racial exclusivity, as the very things Nick covets in those backwoods memories are the very things that haunt him decades later.

Hemingway's story "The Indians Went Away" works as a coda of sorts to the greater body of "Indian stories" and as an answer to stories like "Fathers and Sons," if these stories are looked at critically as a thematic unit. In this last of the "Indian tales," the story of the Indian formally comes to a close as the narrative tells us not what became of one particular individual, but what became of an entire people, as Hemingway once more indulges in the romance of the fading, historicized race, consumed by drink and debauchery. What is more, if we trace the (d)evolution of the first of the tales (stories including "Indian Camp" and "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife") to stories such as "Ten Indians" and "The Indians Went Away," we see definite lineal connections between each of them. The points of commonality are several and all stories point, no matter what their particular dynamics, to the same inevitability enunciated perhaps most clearly in this story. Racial concerns link all tales. This includes, but is not limited to, the notions of racial difference and the terrifying prospect of specious and tenuous racial configuration expressed via the Gothic third-space figure who is marked by decadence, but not wholly different from the subjective-self.

As with several of the other stories, "The Indians Went Away" begins with a marked bifurcation, with the Hemingway narrator painting a portrait of polarity to initiate things. The opening paragraph is both a simple homage to the bucolic and the beginnings of an overt sociological cleavage that invests most of the text:

The Petosky road ran straight uphill from Grandpa Bacon's farm. It always seemed though that the road started at his farm and ran to Petosky, going along the edge of the trees up the long hill, steep and sandy, to disappear into the woods where the slope of fields stopped short against the hardwood timber. The Indians brought them, coming through the woods to the cottage by the lake. (34)

In this singular descriptive sequence, with what critic Eugenia Delamotte would classify as the all-important conception of the Gothic barrier facilitating the featured rift, we have two very distinct worlds being subtly crafted once again.<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, even amidst the picture-postcard remembrance of Nick's grandfather's farm, the narrative focus at all times is the road to Petosky. All things, it seems to young Nick, emanate from the farm, with small-town America coursing through his veins. The road's beginning point is apparently a matter of perspective and debate. The important point to glean from this happy confusion is that the road, no matter what the origin, goes *somewhere*. Its endpoint becomes a definite specified space, either end a specified White space (his grandfather's farm and the town of Petosky). In terms of a more universal importance invested in the road's meaning, it stands as a prominent signifier of Progress and all of its relative associations; it becomes the story's very first utterance and Nick's initial memory. Applying DeLamotte's Gothic definition to this painted scene becomes natural as we note the stark line of demarcation separating the open and therefore knowable and the nebulosity and mystical and therefore terrifying realms, as the road "disappear[s] into the woods where the long slope of fields stopped short against the hardwood timber" (34). Thus, an aesthetic toying with perspective becomes a subtle yet strategic Gothic narrative exploit.

Juxtaposed with the farm and the connected road are the woods that pervade the story and Nick's imagination. While dark and cool, a reclusive realm conducive to summer reading (Nick does so at the close of "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife"), the woods are also a site of



mystery and relative uncertainty. And while the family farm remains an implicit fixture on the land where Nick's imagination roams with the same freedom that his hands enjoy as they rummage, spade and till the soil for worms, the woods and its inhabitants do not seem to enjoy the same sense of assurance. Grandpa Bacon's farm begins the tale and there is nothing to the contrary to suggest it does not outlive the teller of the tale. There is a sense of permanence and intractability to the land in general. It is to this essence that Nick and, for that matter, Whiteness, attaches itself in its grasping for authoritative reigns.

Contrasting sharply with this alignment and conception of permanence is that attributed to the "Other" figure haunting the landscape and the pages of the story. The Indian character is, from the story's inception, aligned with impermanence and perpetually dressed in the garb of variability. Implicitly consumed by his own foibles, he is a dying figure.<sup>17</sup> And, what better way to express the uncertainties associated with race and racial configuration than through the Gothic?<sup>18</sup> From the story's inception, the Native American figure takes on the vestiges of Gothic spook. Just as Nick and his family farm become visible signs of the essential and enduring, so too do the Native Americans become signs of the unknowable (recall "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife") and the mutable as evinced in the woods. This contingent includes both the slightly desperate, nameless horde and the singularly respectable Simon Greene, neighboring native fixture. Our first encounter with the Indian comes in the tale's second paragraph as memory of farm and road and woods become quick flash-memories of a people:

In the summer the Indians picked the berries along the road and brought them down the cottage to sell them, pack in the barrels, wild, red, raspberries; firm and fresh shining, pails of them. The Indians brought them, coming through the woods to the cottage by the lake. You never heard them come but there they were, standing by the kitchen door with the buckets full of berries. (34)

Like ghosts, the narrative recalls, the Indians seemingly appear from nowhere haunting the landscape and memory alike. The narrative seems to relegate an entire race to the realm of the senses rather than actual being. Nick, we are told, often “smelt the Indians coming past the woodpile and around the house.” Suddenly, the narrative strips the Indian people of their very humanity. This makes perfect sense in that the very act of further defacing and dehumanizing the individual is the first step toward exorcising any latent feelings of guilt or responsibility towards that individual. The narrative cements this conception in its insistence that “Indians all smelled alike.” This statement is reminiscent of Frank Garner’s assertion that all “Indians wear the same kinds of pants,” and his brother Carl’s unabashedly racist declaration (in an attempt to hurt young Nicky’s feelings) that skunks and Indians “smell about the same.” In each instance the individual is effectively effaced, effectively dehumanized and pushed toward the margins of reality, and affixed with the Gothic sensibilities of spook and specter. In another very important sense, this “Othering” by the subject-self grants a supernatural kind of knowledge to the Self (therein lies the paradox—even if only for a moment) of the objectified “Other” as it is both mystified and quantified all at once. The “smell” then becomes a means of both “orientalizing” and making palpable and concrete the projected unknown. As an active romantic sublimation, it becomes a way of simultaneously maintaining a distance between subject and object and of drawing that feared object closer. Clearly, the narrative gives us the manifestation of a conflicted consciousness.

A ghostlike Native American presence is a metaphysical reminder to the haunted of the debts owed to these people, a manifestation of the guilty collective conscience. What is more, the Indian figure serves as a reminder to that plagued, guilty (read White) conscience not only of the shirked responsibilities, but of the very precarious position in which the White

patriarch, by virtue of his close alignment with these purported foible-laden people, finds himself. Robbed of his land, his individuality, his dignity, and reduced to noble and ignoble typology, the Native American stands before us a diminished figure; yet, his diminution does not guarantee for the White figure racialized disparity. With blood on his hands, both figurative and literal, White America's patriarch is not only responsible for the state of Indian decadence and decline, but he necessarily finds himself lowered in stature because of this culpability. Thus, questions posited generations before by the likes of Reverend William H. Goode, minister to natives in Kansas during the height of governmental trade with the Native contingent and a prominent Anglo representative, continue to reverberate through the pages of Hemingway's crafted Middle America.<sup>19</sup> White America thus finds its own questionable character and moral rectitude hardly distinguishable from that of the so-called degraded "Other." Given such questions, the so-called color-line blurs, identities conflate, and all racial claims to authority and privilege disappear.

<sup>1</sup> See Bonnie Duran. "Indigenous Versus Colonial Discourse: Alcohol and American Indian Identity." 111-29. rpt. in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*. S. Elizabeth. Bird, Ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Joseph Flora's *Hemingway's Nick Adams* or Philip Young's "'Big World Out There': The Nick Adams Stories" in *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. Jackson J. Benson, Ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975). Both examine Nick's initiation into matters of love and sex. Flora takes the initiation a step further in suggesting that this is very much a father-son story as well, asserting that in a story such as "Ten Indians" Nick begins his journey toward "guides" outside of himself and outside of his old familial circle. I would suggest that the lessons learned are also markedly racialized.

<sup>3</sup> Once again, Joseph Flora makes mention of this date's import, but he does not elaborate. Flora's assertion is key and deserves follow-up for all of the holiday's implicit investment in matters of race, ethnicity, and (national) identity: "Whereas the American Indian has no special cause to rejoice over the Fourth, for most Americans it is the important holiday of the summer. In Nick's time in the early years of the century it was, next to Christmas, the greatest holiday of community goodwill and decidedly a family day." See *Hemingway's Nick Adams*, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Hemingway's original title which was changed before publication demonstrates the significance of the allusive date. The initial, proposed title for "Ten Indians" was "After the Fourth." See Hemingway's letter to Maxwell Perkins, dated May of 1927. *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917-1961*, p. 250.

<sup>5</sup> For an especially enlightening look at American governmental relations with Indian tribes through the years, see William Unrau. *White Man's Wicked Water: The Alcohol Trade and Prohibition in Indian Country, 1802-1892*. (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996). Unrau demonstrates that Native American "degeneracy" is/was, in many respects, a forgery of the American imagination and, as well as, in some cases, a product of governmental greed.

<sup>6</sup> It becomes all the more ironic then to note Hemingway's choice of names for the Indian girl, who briefly becomes the apple of young Nicky's eye. That tenth Indian suggested in the title takes the form of one Prudence Mitchell. While the character is steeped in fact, the recollections based on a childhood friend, Prudence Boulton, perhaps this is Hemingway's joke (his tales perpetually are rife with the unexplained joke). Her name itself, Prudence, connotes discretion, caution, wisdom. Even more fruitful and germane to our investigation is the old French derivation (prude femme) which is suggestive of a woman's worthy respectability (Webster's). A prude is one whose sensibilities are easily shocked, especially when it comes to matters of sex. We soon find out that none of these several associations and definitions apply to young Prudence Mitchell. See Carlos Baker's *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* and Michael Reynolds' *Young Hemingway* for details of the story's factual investment.

<sup>7</sup> I find the exchange equally interesting for Hemingway's diction and play on pejoratives. The narrative not only negates Prudy's humanity in drawing a correlation to animal, but also arguably anticipates reader prejudice in its choice of representation. "Coon" is/was a racial pejorative for the African American, a racial slur even Hemingway himself used (See his letter to John Dos Passos describing "The Battler"). In this sense, with coon indistinguishable from skunk, the racialized "Other" and marginalized figure becomes an almost amorphous entity.

<sup>8</sup> Hemingway's memorializing of Prudence Boulton (as Prudence Mitchell) is significant in this instance in that it demonstrates his own personal, real life investment in fetish and racial typology. Claiming that Prudy "did first what no one has ever done better," Hemingway, in reality, began his sexual experimentation much later, and was crafting memory here, according to Jeffrey Meyers. See Jeffrey Meyers's *Hemingway: A Biography*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> I think it rather significant that we never see nor hear from Prudence herself in this story; like Jack Johnson in "The Light of the World," Prudence is a phantom presence.

<sup>10</sup> See Amy L Strong's "Screaming Through Silence: The Violence of Race in 'Indian Camp'; and 'The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife.'" *The Hemingway Review*, 16 (Fall 1996), p. 18-32 rpt. in *Ernest Hemingway: Seven Decades of Criticism*. Linda Wagner-Martin, Ed. (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Note that the reckless pillaging initiated on the part of the Indian is necessitated by a system put into place by the White male subject; this realization haunts both the Hemingway and, by extension, the American psyche.

<sup>12</sup> See Abby Ferber's *White Man Falling: Race, Gender, and White Supremacy*. (Lanham, MD; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998) for an interesting account of racial construction in America and the importance of White supremacist conceptions and notions of difference to the maintenance of American identity through the years.

<sup>13</sup> Abby Ferber notes that a series of laws passed in 1681 included such things as banishing "White women engaging in miscegenation...from the colony." The import here, again, is the "violation" of White womanhood, not just a deviation of the coveted color line. As Ferber suggests, "Interracial sexual relations between white women and black men, however, were not tolerated. The birth of a mulatto child to a slave presented no threat to white dominance and was even an economic asset—an additional slave. A mulatto child born to a white woman, however, was a threat to the entire system of slavery and white supremacy. Because it was assumed that the child of a white woman would remain with its mother, racial segregations would be breached." With such a breach, gone is any and all power formerly held by the White hand. See Ferber's *White Man Falling*, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> For instance, see Philip Young. *Ernest Hemingway*. (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1952), for his discussion of a worn and war-shattered Nick's coping mechanisms in a story like "Big Two-hearted River."

<sup>15</sup> See Robert Berkhofer's classic race study, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. (New York: Albert A. Knopf, 1978), p. 88.

<sup>16</sup> See Eugenia DeLamotte's "White Terror, Black Dreams: Gothic Construction of Race in the Nineteenth Century, in *The Gothic Other: Racial and Social Constructions in the Literary Imagination*. Ruth Anolick and Douglas L. Howard, Eds. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc, Publishers, 2004). p. 17-31. In it, using Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* as a frame of reference, she demonstrates that Subject and Object are of singular "blood," and that conceptions of "Other" are merely repressed reflections of Self. In the end, racial essentiality (and "truths" of Whiteness in particular) fails to exist. See also, Teresa Goddu's *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* for a thorough treatment of the Gothic in American letters.

<sup>17</sup> William Unrau, in his *White Man's Wicked Water*, notes the representative tenor of nineteenth-century socio-political opinion of the Indian figure in the testimony of one agent working on behalf of the United States government as liaison to the Shawnee prior to the Civil War: Agent James B. Abbot's words demonstrate both a sincere concern for the Indian and a condescension steeped in racial typology: "It [sic] well known fact that there are between thirty and forty places within and near the Shawnee settlements where spirituous liquors can be obtained, and it well also a *well established fact* that the *moral development* of the Indians *is not sufficient to protect them against the temptations* and sources which are set for them by the unscrupulous liquor vendors, and being possessive with a *natural appetite* for strong drinks, the consequences are that a very large portion of the Shawnees are either habitual or occasional drunkards, and they and their families have to suffer the ruinous effects, which *naturally* follow." See Unrau, p. 98 (emphasis is mine).

<sup>18</sup> Simon Green and his people's demise become Goddu's Gothic metaphor of "cultural contradictions that undermine the nation's claim to purity and equality." The crafted Native devolution both demonstrates a marked narrative divisiveness and insistence on typological formation, and, as the narrative engages a cultural romance—that of the dying race---it admits culpability.

<sup>19</sup> Reverend William H. Goode served as a special minister to Native Americans, in what would become Kansas, affected by governmental trade and liquor sales. His testament is not uncommon. Goode's observations

in wake of an 1864 visit inform my own reading of the Hemingway stories well and underscore this notion of blurring (racial) identities and the emphasis on (White) selfhood: “Our guide informed us that...about thirty barrels and several jugs of whiskey had been discovered in the vicinity of the Council Ground ... a large portion of it the property of a white man. I have seen, I fee, the deep degradation of our Indian tribes; but often I have been compelled to ask myself, ‘Who is the civilized and who is the savage?’ Their principal vices are emphatically our vices. If they get drunk it is upon our whiskey. . . . [A]nd yet we claim to be the ‘civilized’ and freely deal out to them the epithet ‘savage.’” See William Unrau’s *White Man’s Wicked Water*, p. 124.

## **Black Men, White Hope(s): Grotesquery and Truth-telling in the (Square) Jungle**

“It will be admitted by all, and contradictory by none, that we now have existing on earth, two race of men, the *White* and the *Black*.”---Buckner H. Payne

“It was the truths that became grotesques in the hands of the people”  
--- Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg Ohio*

From the remoteness and the perceived wilds of the Indian camp, we move to the site of anticipated civility—the outskirts of town and the town itself. Still, like the so-called “Indian stories,” the following tales feature narratives that both anticipate (White) reader assumptions and altogether subvert and question expectations of racial definition. Hemingway’s “The Battler” serves as a fine entrance into the realm of what I will call the “Afro-centric” Hemingway text. All of the tales are in fact Anglo-centered texts, with a young White male protagonist being initiated into a modern world of violent racial negotiation. However, as Toni Morrison suggests, here the African American figure, the minority presence, works to both indirectly illuminate the Anglo character and properly educate the reader.<sup>1</sup> Thus, while these stories are Anglo in their form, they are markedly racialized in theme, with the Black American male stepping prominently from the background. Payne’s words above, published in *The Negro: What is His Ethnological Status* under the pseudonym “Ariel,” sparked much debate as Civil War Reconstruction began and a still tender body politic began re-inscribing lines of demarcation based on the color.<sup>2</sup> John David Smith suggests that while Payne’s own reading of race may have had a wealth of critics, including staunch racists, for his ultimate questioning of Blacks’ humanity, variations on this race question retained legitimacy within academic and political circles into the

twentieth century: “The controversy generated by ‘Ariel’ not only provides insights into the post-Civil War race question but also offers glimpses into the contemporary discourse on race” (xxvi).<sup>3</sup> Stepping from the realm of “science” into the world of literature, we see that, even over fifty years after Payne’s initial utterance, the principal Hemingway narrative warrant regarding his reader’s binary race-perception rings true; we see the perpetual power inherent in polarity.

The first of these Afro-centric tales of note is “The Battler.” I choose to examine this narrative first for two reasons: First, published as part of the early Nick Adams initiation tales and included in *In Our Time*, it is an early reflection of Hemingway’s awareness of the African American presence, something many critics overlook or discount.<sup>4</sup> Hemingway’s prospective descriptions of the tale, before its publication, casually suggest the proper lens through which to view the story’s principal players.<sup>5</sup> Second, as such, it also serves to forecast and anticipate this and other ancillary motifs visited time and again in other stories by the author. As with the so-called “Indian stories,” this tale and the others that follow work within a paradigm that builds reader expectation via established racial typology, then promptly subverts it to expose the nebulous nature of racial definition.

“The Battler” opens very much in line with reader expectation as landscape and the Nick Adams initiation unfold. The story begins with an allusion to violence, a motif at the heart of the work and at the heart of my examination:

He felt of his knee. The pants were torn and the skin was barked. His hands were scraped and there was sand and cinders driven up under his nails. He went over to the edge of the track down the little slope to the water and washed his hands. He washed them carefully in the cold water, getting the dirt out from the nails. He squatted down and bathed his knee. That lousy crut of a brakeman. He would get him some day. He would know him again. That was a fine way to act. (97)



It seems that Nick has been tossed from a train for playing (rather poorly) the part of a stowaway intent on riding the rails for nothing. The brakeman has other ideas and passes along the lesson to the young man. Nick soon learns the folly inherent in his visceral post-expulsion reaction.

The greatest lesson for Nick and the reader, though, is not necessarily one of economy or ethics; the greater lesson to be garnered follows Nick's brief encounter with the brakeman and lay at the foot of the embankment below the rails. Nick tumbles into the lives of a wandering duo consisting of a White ex-prize fighter and his African American companion. The true lesson concerns the new racial reality as exhibited by the White boxer and his African American ex-jail mate and fellow road traveler. Hemingway's story begins ostensibly with Nick's meeting of this roving band of two and the narrative's true racial implications are not readily apparent until well into the text. Hemingway withholds the tale's narrative import until the last sequence unfolds and Nick Adams is on his way once more to that nameless destination towards which he treks. As the narrative suggests, "He must get to somewhere." Where he finds himself at story's end isn't Kakaska or Macelona, one-horse towns mentioned as the narrative opens. In fact, the physical site becomes secondary to the encounter itself as a site of new-found racialized knowledge. Early on, the narrative points the way toward civilization:

Ahead there was a bridge. Nick crossed it, his boots ringing hollow on the iron. Down below the water showed Black between the slits of ties. Nick kicked a loose spike and it dropped into the water. Beyond the bridge were hills. It was high and dark on both sides of the track. Up the track Nick saw a fire. (98)

And it is the anticipation of the next town and the fire, the next best thing to any town, which beckons Nick as a first confirmation of prospective civility.

Nick happens upon a fire burning for one Ad Francis, former boxing champion, and his Black compatriot, Bugs, a former cell mate. Bugs, we learn, acts as caretaker and confidante to the former fighter. Nick's first moments and the narrative's initial sequences involving the two strangers he encounters serve to underscore racialized reader expectation. In the opening description, we get typology at its strongest. Nick meets Ad first:

The fire was bright now, just under the edge of the tree. There was a man sitting by it. Nick waited behind the tree and watched. The man looked to be alone; he was sitting there with his head in his hands looking at the fire. Nick stepped out and walked into the firelight. (98)

The man in apparent deep thought is one Ad Francis. Immediately, the narrative forges a triumvirate of sorts with Nick, the former boxer and the thriving fire. The linkage is further bolstered by the seemingly automatic bond between the boy and the fighter, contrary to Joseph Flora's perceived disjuncture of the two figures in his Hemingway's Nick Adams.<sup>6</sup>

The point of convergence for the two is the evidence Nick sports as proof of his encounter with the train's brakeman (his Black eye), as Nick's "hello" is quickly followed by "Where did you get that shiner?" (98). The connection between the then nameless man and the fire, and soon enough Nick himself, is significant in that fire stands as the first, and at least temporarily, only sign of civilization as the story opens. All else is wilderness and darkness. Recall that our first glimpse of Nick is his picking himself up from the unforgiving ground and walking through the dark hillside after being tossed from the train. In this sequence, unspoken racial typology is cast and confirmed as shared ideas of Whiteness and civilization conflate in the form of the fire:

“Where’d you get that shiner?” he said.  
“A brakeman busted me.”  
“Off the through freight?”  
“Yes”  
“I saw the bastard,” the man said. He went through here about an hour and a half ago. He was traveling along the top of the cars. Slapping his arms and singing.”  
“The bastard!”

There is an immediate bond and understanding between the man and the boy, an alliance against the system seemingly acting upon them both. There is also the shared understanding of the dynamics of violence and its place within the world. All the while, the understanding is that this brand of violence is better left relegated to the realm of tough talk and hard-boiled machismo. This violence is borne of a mythical kind of bravado, celebrated in the ring and the back-allies of crime fiction lore. The very fact that what mention of violence we do get via Ad is confined to “tough talk” suggests that it is a violence of story. It stands in stark contrast to the actual violence we soon witness with the introduction of Bugs, the African American sidekick whose brand of violence is both unexpected and therefore terrifying. The bond of violence between the sports idol and his young follower is further grounded in their introduction:

You’re a tough one, aren’t you?”  
“No,” Nick answered.  
“All you kids are tough.”  
“You got to be tough,” Nick said.  
“That’s what I said.” The man looked at Nick and smiled. (98)

With Ad’s affectionate display, the communion is complete already minutes into the encounter. Apparently, nothing more is needed to solidify the friendship than these points of seeming commonality: a world view grounded in violence, and the color of their skin. We see direct evidence of racial alignment when we juxtapose this with all that we encounter with the Bugs character.

A bit later, the former fighter, minus his former glory, touts his toughness, and insists that the strange boy call him by his first name, “Ad.” Again, the significance becomes clear when juxtaposed with the surname address granted to him by his “friend” of several years, the African American caretaker, Bugs. Bugs, in fact, shows deference to both White figures with a last name address for each. Even young Nick is afforded the title of “Mr.” by the Black figure. When asked who he is by Bugs, Nick offers last name first to convey the lineage and history denied the racial “Other” in this story (and inherently the relative authority and power a name carries). Incidentally, Bugs never is granted a last name by the narrative; he never is granted the entitlement to lineage and history. Thus, Hemingway’s brief narrative nomenclature exercise makes us further aware of the color line’s presence.

Ad identifies himself as Ad Francis, one time boxer and apparently legend for all times. Considering the enthusiastic reception to this news, Nick is a fan and our initial bond-on-sight thereby further strengthens. On a surface level, Ad is the epitome of the great White hero (and the Hemingway code hero). He has apparently weathered a storm of a life and his tattered body and battered psyche (he admits to being “not quite right”) stand as testament to this. More important to our assessment, and placing this within the context of the forged racial divide, Ad Francis has done what every truly great (White) man does: he has simply endured.

Furthermore, even in his worn state, he assumes quasi-mythic proportions. Unlike his Black companion, Ad, as White representative, has a storied past. We learn through Nick’s exchange with both Ad and Bugs that Ad was once a fighter of some renown. If we cast the boxer as the idealization and embodiment of male physical prowess and power, and if we suggest that the boxer has long been embraced by the Western, the Anglo, as his own, then

Ad Francis becomes the essence of White manhood.<sup>7</sup> Like Nick's father in "Fathers and Sons," who displaces the native and hunts with an eagle's eye, Ad Francis comes to us as a conqueror of men:

"I'm Ad Francis."

"Honest to God?"

"Don't you believe it?"

"Yes."

Nick knew it must be true.

"You know how I beat them?"

"No," Nick said.

"My heart's slow. It only beats forty a minute. Feel it."

Nick hesitated.

"Come on," the man took hold of his hand. "Take hold of my wrist. Put your fingers there."

The little man's wrist was thick and the muscles bulged above the bone.

Nick felt the slow pumping under his fingers. (99)

Nick's response to Ad's declaration denotes an awestruck, honest quality as he credulously verifies the former boxer's identity, just knowing "that it must be true." Ad names no opponent, cites no particular fight in relating his past glory to the boy; instead, in the introduction, there is an almost mythical allusion to a nameless, boundless corpus of slain warriors. We should place particular emphasis on diction, with the words "beat" and "them" taking special prominence in the lexicon of conquest. He is a warrior imparting a secret to an audience of one. His success, he says, is due in part to an unnaturally slow beating heart, the marker of fine physicality. In this sense, he is superhuman (almost). Contrary to his slight physical stature, his bulging wrist muscles attest to this assessment. The description is quite visceral as we witness Nick taking his new friend's pulse to verify in quantifiable terms his physical prowess: "The little man's wrist was thick and the muscles bulged above the bone. Nick felt the slow pumping under his fingers" (99). Even as a weather-beaten figure, Ad Francis is a walking physical specimen and the essence of White paternal greatness. Flora

asserts that “the touch leads to no epiphany or communal fellowship” (88). From my critical purview, the sequence demonstrates a young (White) boy’s indulgences in hero-worship and evinces his connection to this White superman as something that is at once race-based and immediate.

Expectation is met again within the racially constructed paradigm as we shift focus to the boxer’s African American traveling companion and confidante, Bugs. Juxtaposed with the initial celebratory bond between the older and younger White figures is the typology embodied in a surface reading of the Bugs character. Again, Nick’s initial encounter with this apparently secondary figure is one of blatant typology and fulfilled narrative expectation. A surface reading points once more to a forged narrative divide. Juxtaposed with, at least initially, a pronounced Anglo-masculine model is the African American type. Nick’s first impressions of the Black man exemplify this point best: “A man dropped down the raised embankment and came across the clearing to the fire” (100). Immediately, the African American figure’s presence is phantomlike, gothic, and bearing all the markings of racial “Other.” He comes to the fire, toward civilization from the void of brush, darkness, and night. What is more, even in the shroud of darkness, Bugs reveals enough of himself to Nick for the boy to make a race-based identification, to know him as African American: “it was a negro’s voice.” Nick gathers this from listening and watching: “Nick knew from the way he walked he was a negro” (100). Later as he cooks for the group, Bugs “crouch[es] on long nigger legs over the fire....”(100). In each instance, the narrative paints a portrait of difference crafted from implication, association, type and difference.

Hemingway’s narrative typology carries over from Nick’s first impressions and physical readings of the situation to the complexities of the relationship between the two

vagabonds. Initially, the dynamics appear anything but complex. Bugs is deference and servility embodied. Whereas Bugs suggests, “Ads got money,” the White man naturally assuming the role of financial provider for the two, Bugs dons the garb of the domestic worker and the seemingly secondary, less important source of support. The Black man is all but emasculated in the presence of the White figure. With its blatant bolstering at times, of Ad’s overwhelming prowess, the narrative in turn feminizes the Black man, providing fodder for critics who have chosen to contextualize this story within a homosexual framework.<sup>8</sup>

Outside of his sense of allegiance to the former fighter, we know little about Bugs the man as the story begins. Bugs has no discernable past, no real history, outside of his association with the former prize fighter. What we glean is via association and, in more direct terms, manner. Whereas Ad is brash and express in his exchange with the likes of Nick, Bugs is all quiet deference, something Flora calls “cool efficiency” (89). Sociologically speaking, the Black man clearly knows his place. While financial support is apparently Ad’s domain, Bugs’s is primarily as caretaker. As evidence of this, upon proper introductions, Bugs immediately launches into meal preparation for his friend and newly arrived guest. In typically servile fashion, he assumes the role of domestic almost naturally with the requisite request of his charge: “When we going to eat, Bugs?” The story’s narrative assists in cultivating this racially charged image in its description of the Black figure at “work”:

Into the skillet he was laying slices of ham. As the skillet grew hot the grease sputtered and Bugs, crouching on long nigger legs over the fire, turned the ham and broke eggs into the skillet, tipping it from side to side to baste the eggs with the hot fat. (100)

The African American figure springs into action when prompted; with a hearty “right away,” the response is automatic. Ever-conscious of that color line, Bugs is protocol embodied as he expressly serves everyone else before himself: “Watch how that eggs runs,” the negro

warned. “This is for you, Mister Adams. The remainder for myself” (101). And later, he proffers, “May I offer you a slice of bread dipped right in the hot ham fat?” (101). The African American figure is, significantly, the last to partake of the offerings.

Diction is also paramount as the narrative’s ice berg principle takes effect, in what Susan Beegel calls Hemingway’s *strategy of omission*. If we dissect the scenario, we see that the narrative aligns the Black figure with the visceral and the primal, with descriptives of hot fat and greasy skillet sputterings. Most blatant of these crafted images is that of the African American figure, with his “long nigger legs,” hunched before the roaring flames. A bit later, he twice makes the suggestion of dipping the bread in the ham drippings. Again, the connection to the primal and the primitive is undeniable.

Bugs is meek in voice as well, in line with our established type-driven model. The narrative tells us that Nick immediately recognizes the voice coming from the fire at the story’s outset as that of a “negro’s.” Race bears sensory marks, and the featured racial markers are themselves saddled with association. The “negro” is meekness incarnate. As he makes Nick’s acquaintance, Bugs is all mannerism with a polite “glad to meet you” (100). In fact, the narrative subtly interchanges name with racial manner and racial manner with racial descriptive as Bugs becomes the “polite” negro, and “negro” becomes “nigger” (time and again ), the narrative refusing to allow the reader to forget that this is equally a story of racial exchange. Bugs speaks with a “negro’s” voice, walks like a negro, and in fact, is “the negro”—nothing more. As he warns Nick against handing the former boxer his knife, he is “the negro”; as he tends to the cooking requests of both supping vagabonds, he is “the negro”; as he and Nick speak of the former champion’s bouts with the press, the public, and



the law, he is “the negro”; and he is “the negro” as Nick finally takes leave of the duo altogether at story’s end.

The racial divide of the narrative again reveals itself in the short history the two vagabonds, Black and White, have together. Their paths cross, Nick learns from Bugs, in prison. Both men were prosecuted for violent crime. Both men in turn paid their debts to society with time served. However, the narrative serves to make clear a very important distinction between the two men, a distinction forged through inference and scant association. We learn through Bugs’s relation of Ad’s past troubles with his wife and then the law that the two former jail mates are two men with similar fates but altogether different faiths. The narrative pushes ever-so-slightly, coaxing both Nick and the reader to judge the two men differently. Bugs’s terse recount is telling: “I met him in jail,” the negro said. “He was busting people all the time after she went away and they put him in jail. I was in for cuttin’ a man” (103). Immediately, solidarity between the two mates is overshadowed by nuance and division. And that difference is notably one of racial association and implication. Ad is painted as a man of brawn and bodily might (he “busts” people with his fists), Bugs as less than a man, apparently requiring the aid of a knife or a razor to even the score. The narrative associates White with might and fair play, while Blackness is aligned with inadequacy, figurative dirty play and cheating. The narrative inference inherent in Bugs’s relation anticipates the notion of Black underhandedness, something visited again in Nick’s encounter with the prostitutes of “Light of the World” and most especially in Jimmy’s exchange with “George” the porter in the story of the same name. In each instance, the narrative drives a wedge of difference between characters via the associative discourse of race.

However, Bugs's purpose in this text is more complicated than any mere surface or typological reading suggests. In keeping with my examination, both the characterization of Bugs and Ad and the context within which these racial representatives appear are complex and warrant further inquiry. What is more, just as in the so-called "Indian stories," in "The Battler" and the stories that follow, the racially charged narrative—most especially its descriptives of the Black man---exhibits not only a race consciousness or hyper-cognizance on the part of Nick Adams, but it also reveals to Nick the very new and often terrific realities of both shifting racial definition and a color line in constant flux.

While the narrative does much with regards to typology and framing the Bugs and Ad characters within expected perimeters, it simultaneously works to subvert reader expectation and cloud prior racial certainties. The first of the apparent racial truths dispelled by the Hemingway narrative is that of the indomitable White hero. We have a hero who in fact, the narrative demonstrates, is no hero at all. Adolph Francis is very much a diminished figure almost from the story's inception:

In the firelight Nick saw that his face was misshapen. His nose was sunken his eyes were slits, he had queer-shaped lips. Nick did not perceive all this at once, he saw the man's face was queerly formed and mutilated. It was like putty in color. Dead looking in the firelight. (99)

Later on in the same exchange, Nick sees that Ad "only had one ear. It was thickened and tight." Emphasis initially is on that which is seen, on the physical presence. This entire narrative sequence which reveals to Nick and the reader the true identity of this vagabond as being that of Ad Francis--former boxing champion--and this same exchange that demonstrates the former champion's physical musculature and prowess (recall that his wrist muscles bulge and that Nick can feel the "slow hard throb" of his heart) simultaneously becomes a source of revelation of an even greater truth. In the above description, the prize

fighter becomes a grotesque of sorts, offering a new racial truth; with his beaten, almost monstrous countenance, he is somewhat dehumanized by the Hemingway narrative.

Amy Strong points to an actual physical transformation Ad undergoes that suggests a transformation of color and of race. Hemingway's description of the White man turning red and of the Black man's hands taking on a pinkish hue suggests a racial fluidity. Strong argues elsewhere that the Hemingway narrative, in ice berg mode, chooses to note Nick's observance of Bugs' gait and voice in putting together a quick and markedly racial profile (he walks and talks like a "negro") and that these two physical features are arguably two of the most performative of human acts. I agree, and would further add that it is performance, the action itself, and not necessarily just the attention to color and any apparent physical blending that deserves attention. In this story, action speaks just as loudly as words. In keeping with my examination, this story is fundamentally at its core about shifting racial authority and a fluctuating color line, seen first in markers of physicality, and then, more importantly, in characterization and action.

Hemingway's corporeal focus not only serves its expected purpose of underscoring individual experience and theoretically transcending the usual barriers of time and space for the reader, of recreating the scene via the senses, but it also becomes a pronounced experimentation and engagement with the grotesque. "The Battler" anticipates an interest revisited in future stories like "Light of the World." Joseph Flora's reading of this story in conjunction with "Light of the World" is interesting in its recognition of Hemingway's engagement of the trope, something upon which few other critics comment. However, Flora places emphasis on the stories' shared structural trajectory, and the grotesque's role in teaching Nick about love's realities.<sup>9</sup> My focus is on the race-based lesson learned.

Hemingway's narrative explores the grotesque in its hyper-characterization; within a social context, characters are super masculine, and overtly racialized as Black, White, or "Other" ("the muscles bulged above the bone," "his face was White," "crouching on long nigger legs"). In each instance, the distortion approaches the ridiculous, the bazaar. In a literal sense, the grotesque is evidenced in the figure of Ad Francis. Hemingway's preoccupation with the grotesque here and elsewhere, though, is more than specious fascination. As in the so-called "Indian stories," the conventions employed here engage the Gothic as revelation of American fears: that of racial conflation and lost Anglo authority. Further, the narrative interest and genuineness in these stories is the same as Flannery O'Connor's or William Faulkner's: its purpose is revelation. Like his contemporaries, Hemingway employs the grotesque as a means of truth-seeking and truth-telling. With a form and figure severely misshapen, the former champion is the grotesque incarnate: of the downtrodden boxer the narrative tell us "it is the color of putty," he is "queerly formed and mutilated," and "he walks with a limp." However, beyond the initial physical characterization is a far more important distortion as revealed by the narrative. The real incongruity Hemingway exploits and exposes is racial in nature.

The true incongruity revealed through this and other character sketches is the one between racial mythos and, for the early twentieth-century Anglo hegemony, racial reality. Therein lays the true distortion. Immediately, when viewed through the lens of racial authority, the encounter between Nick and the two vagabonds shifts from one of pure typology and a clearly marked racial divide, to one of shifting definition and an unraveling construct. As Strong has noted, Hemingway's original title for this tale was "The Great Man." Moreover, a second incarnation of the story's working title was "The Great Little

Fighting Machine.”<sup>10</sup> Strong suggests that the narrative ever-so-briefly recounts the resurgence of this one-time hero. I would argue that there is no such resurgence of power for Ad Francis at all and that the original title of “The Great Man” is one of marked irony, not nostalgia. With this in mind, the title then challenges the reader with a question as to whom that label of greatness is to be affixed.

True enough that Ad Francis is a former ring warrior, a pugilist of some repute whose muscular wrists, scarred face, and seemingly perpetual income bear the markings of a man with history and a legacy. However, upon closer examination, we see that the case of Ad Francis is one of loss and of degeneration, not of greatness (regained). Hemingway repeatedly employs the word “little” in his descriptions of the former prize fighter. The deliberateness cannot be much plainer than this. Twelve times Ad Francis, the ex-champion prize fighter, former slayer of men, and the embodiment of the so-called “great White hope,” is cast as “the “little man.”

When he first meets Ad, Nick affirms the “great” man’s claims to “superhuman” conditioning as he “count[s] while feeling the slow hard throb under his fingers, all the while listening to the ‘little man’ counting, slowly, one, two, three, four, five, and on—aloud” (100). Ad’s physical prowess is undeniable. However, with his request to hold Bugs’s knife denied, Ad asserts himself, and at the moment of Ad’s supposed resurgence, the narrative tells us that the “*little man* looked at Nick,” and then “the *little man* came toward him slowly, stepping flat-footed forward, his left foot stepping forward, his right dragging up to it” (101). Even in this moment of apparent resurgence and self-affirmation, there is in fact a marked diminution as Ad tries to assert himself. His self-volition is ultimately met with a blow from behind on the part of his traveling companion. As Nick takes leave of the party, with Ad

prostrate on the ground and Bugs nursing him after having struck him down, he listens to the private conversation between the two men and notes Bugs's low soft voice and "*the little man*" complaining of a terrible headache. Thus, from the tale's inception and throughout, until its close, Whiteness is literally made small time and again.

While attention to exteriority (and its disintegration) allows for the beginnings of a subversive reading, there is another, more profound truth hidden in the grotesque face and form of Ad Francis. The powerful White champion, with Black caretaker in tow, whose voice is actually heard first and whose money sustains him years beyond the ring, is actually an *ex*-champion with one foot steeped in a past that is anything but glorious ("You know me, don't you?" "I'm Ad Francis" "Don't you believe it?"). This former great White hope is also a convict, and a degenerate. If he is a master of men when in the ring, Ad Francis is conversely outside of the canvass environs, an irrational, unbridled, out-of-control individual incapable of containing emotion. Outside of the ring, he, too, is feminized (somewhat of an emotional wreck, he goes to jail for "busting people all the time [after his wife] went away and they put him in jail" (103). Bugs suggests that he was deserted by his wife. With little explication, the situation can be read as one of inadequacies breeding dissatisfaction, as a question of dubious manhood.

Also, within my critical matrix, then, the former champion becomes a slave to his "primitive" instincts, effectively becoming that racialized "Other" of the Anglo imagination. With the departure of his wife (and after his release from prison), Ad becomes a vagabond dependent on the personal kindness of his African American former cell mate and the monetary support of his former spouse; we learn that she sends him money. He is a man whose sanity ("I'm not quite right," he proudly posits) becomes increasingly questionable as

the narrative progresses. Most importantly, he is a man who, in spite of his White skin, is clearly *not in control of himself*, let alone those around him; thus, Ad Francis is a man robbed of any and all authority. Gone are the clear markers of racial primacy.

Hard on his luck and very much at the mercy of a Black figure, and but a shell of his former supposedly greater self, Ad Francis in “The Battler” stands as living testament to the illusionary nature of racial configuration. If boxing is representative of manhood crafted and defined, then dark dominance in the ring by the likes of a Jack Johnson--whose capture of the heavyweight champion as a Black man galvanized the race issue in America years after Reconstruction--becomes a metaphor for the encroachment of White authority by a palpable Black volition outside of the ring’s confines. For Hemingway and others of his era, the advent of Johnson’s world championship marked the opening of a new epoch in American social history. The perpetuation of clearly debunked myths is the greater absurdity to be gleaned from a story like “The Battler” and later, “Light of the World.” The White reign over the square jungle, as representative of previously unchallenged world dominance, was also abruptly at an end.

It is the dark traveling companion, Bugs, who becomes the true agent of action and control and who is the ultimate site of subversion for the Hemingway narrative. He effectively commandeers the authority formerly held by the White figure, while the White male subject becomes pliable and putty-like and at the mercy of those around him. Once more referencing exteriority to glean more profound insights into character(ization), we see the fact that the White man’s “dead-looking” color underscores this malleability, this lack of consistency. Ad Francis becomes the objective “Other” who is effectively transmuted by the narrative: “His mutilated face looked childish in repose.” We get the ultimate moment of

White diminution with Ad's complete physical submission to Bugs (he's knocked unconscious) as he lies prostrate and small on the ground, with his Black companion standing over him. In this instance, Ad Francis is not only physically overpowered, but he is emasculated (he is *boyish* "in repose"), he is robbed of his manhood by the racial "Other." Hemingway gives us a racial inversion, as Black and White positions are morphed and even transposed. Thus, if Ad Francis is Whiteness diminished, then Bugs is Blackness augmented and aggrandized. At the very least Bugs comes to represent the idea of Blackness bolstered and that, for the power structure in place, becomes something to be feared. The Bugs/Ad pairing is a grand narrative experiment of sorts within which is exposed a shifting race-based power differential. What is more, within this shifting paradigm, miscegenation in its broadest sense, as in the so-called "Indian stories," proves White racialized authority to be illusory.

While Bugs points to the gratuitous beatings, to the rumors of incest, to a ferocious press, and to the former wife's eventual abandonment (Ad is rumored to have married his sister), as solid reasons behind Ad's "craziness" and related downfall, we can surmise that it is actually the realization of the shifting racialized power differential that drives him to the brink of insanity. Ad's inexplicable freefall is reminiscent of the nameless Indian husband of "Indian Camp" who commits suicide. Even more prescient to my examination is Uncle George and his abrupt disappearance at story's end. Like those central figures, Ad, in the end, just "c[an]’t stand things." New racial truths, or failed ones, drive him to the brink of madness. The realization of his marked impotence, the realization of the fact that he, Ad Francis, former world champion, builder of wealth, and White agent, is in reality no better than the dark, seemingly simple figure frying his eggs, is enough to drive him to lunacy. Truth-be-told, the only thing separating the White master and Black servant are illusory



racial truths, a consciously imposed color line, and a contained violent will. The Ad Francis Nick and the reader initially meet, is a broken man, a convict, a self-declared loon, dependent on his wife, his African American caretaker and distant memories of his past glory for sustenance. This reality proves too much to bear for the “great” White man.

Indeed, the revelation garnered from Nick’s encounter with the grotesque goes beyond illuminating the Black/White dichotomy within the Anglo framework. Nick’s encounter is also an exploration of Anglo psychology. Bugs, like Dick Boulton of “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” represents that entity to be feared: the willful minority figure. What is more, the narrative works to demonstrate how Bugs, as the willful minority, like Dick Boulton before him, effectively exposes the White male subject’s weaknesses and vulnerability and does so within a framework of rules established by the Anglo hegemony. This is the essence of social subversion. Miscegenation within the context of “The Battler” becomes a Black supplanting of White, as the African American literally looms large over a prostrate, “little White man” (101). Miscegenation here is Black assumption of authoritative reigns once held by White hands. Like Dick Boulton’s, Bugs’s facility coupled with his White comrade’s inability to operate within this same framework becomes the greater horror and the point of greater significance. Thus, a racial co-mingling fearfully becomes an actual supplanting of the hegemony by the minority. And all of this begins with a smile.

From the outset, as suggested earlier, Bugs is deceptively cast as the essence of dark typology: he is servile, he is genial, and he is apparently gentle. He invites Nick to sup with him, he cooks for the group, he serves the gathering. He is all manner of politeness, never addressing either of his dinner companions without the proper introductory title of “Mr.”: “Will you have some Mr. Adolph Francis?” and “Mr. Adams is right hungry” (101). He does

all of this with a gentle smile, a smile that belies a latent knowledge and power. George Moneiro, drawing a correlation to Benito Cerino, says of Bugs's smile, "That smile, I would venture, is Melvillean. It is the smile of a black who, too, would be seen as *'less a servant than a devoted 'companion.'*"(128).<sup>11</sup> I would amend Moneiro's statement and suggest that this smile is less a hopeful smile than a knowing smile. We get a sense of the tempered violence that truly defines the Bugs character and his relationship to his White companion in the loaded dialogue he proffers. While inexplicable rage incapacitates Ad, Bugs becomes temporarily the rational voice of the narrative; but a tempered violence also underscores his words. In a bit of historical recount that anticipates a motif explored later in "The Porter," Bugs tells us that he was jailed for cutting a man. If we contrast, rather than compare and link the two former cell mates and their crimes, we see that Bugs and Ad indeed engage in two different kinds of violence, "honor" and respectability seemingly separating one from the other. However, while arguably not within the realm of fair play, Bugs's willful act can garner an even more telling reading.

While Ad's brand of self-affirmation is wild and unbridled ("he's always busting people") Bugs's is, in the mold of civility, a controlled, contained and strategic brand of violence. The Black figure relates to Nick how he served time for cutting a man, recounting his crimes in the most clinical and detached of fashions. We see this later in "The Porter," in which George, the African American Pullman porter, shows us just how methodical and nuanced the razor fight can be. Thus, ironically, in the "cowardly" razor, there is empowerment. We see further evidence of this controlled rage and the authority that imbues the Bugs character in the verbal exchange and limited action of the story.

Our first indicator comes via Bugs's introduction to Nick. After initial pleasantries, Ad's amusement with Nick's exuberance ("Hear that Bugs?") elicits from him an all-telling response: "I hear most of what goes on" (100). This line reveals an undeniable perceptiveness and intuitiveness on the part of the Black man. While donning the servant's garb of simplicity, Bugs directs points of the exchange, asks questions that propel the narrative (questioning both Ad and Nick), and becomes *the* oracle of personal history for the crew and of relative life lessons for Nick. In a grand narrative subversion, Ad cannot speak for himself. Only through Bugs do we get Ad's history; the Black man becomes the agent of voice. Of course, the verbal command of the exchange transgresses lines of the literal with Ad's loss of (self)control.

The blow Bugs delivers to the former champion at story's end instantly orders the rage and squelches White might: "*I* have to do it *to change* him when he gets that way" (emphasis mine 102). Emphasis here is on the subjective and on personal volition. Black dictates predominate. After relaying to Nick some personal history regarding the ex-champion and himself, Bugs again becomes the agent of force as he suggests that it would be best if Nick were not around when the little man awoke: "I don't like to be inhospitable, but it might disturb him back again to see you. I hate to have to thump him and it's the only thing to do when he gets started. I have to sort of keep him away from people" (103). There is a method to the apparent madness, as he suggests most tellingly, "*I know* how to do it." Bugs is sandman and guardian both, keeper of sleep and warden of welfare. In a bold narrative directive, Hemingway places the White figure at the mercy of the racial "Other."

Preceding the authoritative blow is a slight but clear verbal precursor to the physical shift where Black towers over prostrate White; in the tense exchange, just prior to the

physical conflict, Ad's silence in wake of a Bugs request draws a simple but most suggestive rebuke from the Black man: "I spoke to you, Mister Francis"(101). Again, the minority voice asserts itself and will not be denied recognition.

What is more, all of this, the dialogic authority, the assertion of self, the physical dominion of the minority figure, is in each instance carried out willfully and skillfully within the parameters of the established order itself.

To this effect, a marked civility and gentility color Bugs's words and actions. Bugs's insistence on an answer from his ignorant and violently preoccupied cohort is marked by the outward appearance of deference ("Mr. Francis" becomes the refrain). After striking the raging madman, Bugs resumes the servile posture almost immediately, caring for his now ailing friend, "pick[ing] him up, his head hanging, and carry[ing] him to the fire...and laying him down gently" (102). As he tends to his friend, Bugs addresses Nick in subservient phrases littered with "misters" and "all this in a low smooth *polite nigger voice*." (103, emphasis mine). He sips coffee and smiles. Just as quickly as the violence commences, suddenly Bugs is nurse and companion again. This is the true horror, the true spectacle worthy of fear: the minority's mastery of such rage.

Having just done physical harm to his comrade, he now relates to Nick the little champion's sad story of mayhem and madness and loss. Ad grasps for at least some small concession in his labeling of this friend as "crazy." In this gesture, there is hope that the two figures, Black and White, are at least on similar footing in this one realm: lunacy. In this realm, as kindred spirits ("The Porter's" Black figures talk of this notion of kindred spirits as shared perspective and experience), they battle (in)sanity together. It is a mastery Ad, as representative of the White patriarch, has not gained. Ironically, though, Ad insists as the

narrative begins that the two vagabonds share a unique bond, asserting that “He’s crazy, too” (100). What we discover is that Ad is singular in his loose canon status and that Bugs, if crazy at all, is crazy like a fox. “I hear most of what goes on” would make for a most appropriate narrative refrain. Via Bugs’s actions, we see that the simple smile and markers of civility mask a violent potential and most keen understanding of the world’s workings within a racial framework.

Unlike his compatriot, Ad, whose very being is marked by unabashed and wayward behavior, Bugs proves himself to be a master of tempered violence. Joseph Flora also quietly notes the temperamental divide between the two figures and suggests that “the difference between Bugs and Ad is seen in the cool efficiency of Bugs” (Flora 89). The key to Bugs’s “cool efficiency” is control. Here Hemingway inverts the tried and true model, wherein---as Gerald Early posits in *Tuxedo Junction: Essays on American Culture* in a marked criticism of Norman Mailer’s over-dependence on such tropes---“the Black male is metaphorically the White male’s unconsciousness personified” (138).<sup>12</sup> In “The Battler,” Hemingway toys with the natural order and Ad is the id-driven, primordial figure, Bugs, the rational being constrained by ego/superego. The literal, unexpected blow to the White figure is perhaps a metaphor for greater anticipated and feared racial violence. This proves to be most problematic for an order established on the principles and “truths” of White superiority and natural privilege.

The last years of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century were years of testing these social prescriptions. Lynchings increased exponentially in the closing years of the nineteenth century, as an emphatic attempt by the hegemony to reassert itself and to erase whatever gains had been made by a displaced minority presence in wake of any

strides made during Reconstruction. The second decade of the new century, especially after the First World War's conclusion, was marked with racial strife and active revolt on the part of the Black community on a national level.

Germane to my examination, within the world of boxing itself Jack Johnson's successful title defense against Jim Jeffries on July 4, 1910, set off racial strife all over the country. There were riots in cities nationwide following the fight, leaving no doubt as to the correlation between matters of race and the violence itself. New Orleans, Norfolk, Pueblo, Colorado, Wilmington, Delaware and even New York City were just a handful of sites of racial strife, and in some cases murder.<sup>13</sup> In wake of this, many cities around the country enacted a moratorium, preventing the official fight reel from being shown in theaters.

Members of local and state administrations feared a re-ignition of racial passion (not so much on the part of Whites, but Blacks), passion stoked by ideas of racial equality and personal value. Johnson, many observers both White and Black noted, infused the Black community with pride, something for which the greater hegemony had no use, and something of which it had great fear. Critic Randy Roberts notes, "Many of the riots followed a similar pattern. They were started by Blacks who, inspired by Johnson's example, refused to shuffle and briefly lifted their heads and raised their heads in pride" (109).<sup>14</sup>

In terms of our featured story, Bugs comes to symbolize a variation of that most feared entity represented in Jack Johnson: the willful minority. Ad, conversely comes to symbolize White degeneration and self-deception. The Bugs/Ad commingling and conflation is representative and expressive of miscegenation's nightmarish potential. Bugs, after all, says he "likes living like a gentleman" and tellingly, more than his White cohort, he has mastered the art of civility. Just as in Dick Boulton's story, here the racial lines of

demarcation fall away with the clashing of self and racialized “Other.” And, as in the “Indian stories,” the clearly defined color line separating the primitive from the civilized proves illusory. Ad, with his physical deformity, bears the markings, as a grotesque, of this new truth; it is a truth we shall encounter again in our other featured Afro-centric stories.

Hemingway’s employment of the grotesque as a means of reader illumination, which marks “The Battler,” is revisited in grand fashion in his lesser known tale, “Light of the World.” In this story, the nameless principal narrator and initiate, generally thought to be a teenaged Nick Adams by most scholars, travels the road not alone, but with a friend.<sup>15</sup> He and Tom make short work of a nameless Midwestern town, arriving and departing in the same evening, but not before being initiated into the violent world of racial negotiation. The narrative’s brief description proves quite telling as the tale unfolds: “we’d come in that town at one end and we were going out the other.” During the course of what could not be more than hours, though, Nick confronts yet again violence and, most importantly, the realities of racial strife.

Hemingway, in what was to have been an introductory segment for an anticipated student edition of his stories (the introduction did not see the light of day for another twenty-two years), suggests that there is more than meets the eye in a story like “Light of the World,” a story that reads deceptively easily. In a piece published in the *Paris Review*, Hemingway notes: “[Light of the World] is about many things and you would be ill-advised to think of it as a simple tale”.<sup>16</sup> Hemingway goes on to suggest that it is, more than anything, a “love letter to a whore” and an homage to rose-colored memory. In giving us the surface reading, Hemingway is only telling us part of the story; while the gendered story can be granted privilege, so too can the racial one.<sup>17</sup>

In the so-called “Indian stories,” and again in “The Battler,” as we enter the realm of racial “Otherness,” we encounter stories that fit well within a paradigm of often “unnatural” racial divisiveness and a subtext that suggests a relative subversion of that constructed order. As with the other stories we have encountered, “Light of the World” begins with the accepted racial paradigm of polarity featuring subjective White self and racialized “Other.” Significantly, the narrative voice we hear is Nick’s; likewise, the world we see, hear, and smell as we enter the nameless town, encounter the hostile barkeep, and experience the exchange with prostitutes in dispute is Nick’s world. With a first person narrative, conjecture regarding what is being internalized is unnecessary as the world unfolds in hues of Black and White.

Nick’s survey of his surroundings as he and Tom take leave of the opening scene’s diner and enter the local stationhouse is most suggestive: “Down at the station there were five whores waiting for the train to come in, and six White men and four Indians. It was crowded and hot from the stove and full of stale smoke. As we came in nobody was talking and the ticket window was down” (293). The description reads like a catalog of category as individuals are instantly counted, typed, and labeled. Distinction is not specific; it is general as those populating the train station become “whores,” “White men,” and “Indians.” Interestingly, of the entire station population, only six bear the mark of relative respect and humanity: the White *men*. Most telling is the deliberate choice in diction Hemingway makes. The “Others” are relegated to sexual pejorative and racial label. While the narrative tells us that “no one was talking” as the boys enter the station, the silence is broken by “somebody.” That somebody happens to be one of the White men waiting in the crowd. Thus, rather significantly, a White voice breaks the silence.



Furthermore, and more important to my examination, it is a White voice that predominates and becomes the voice of the story throughout. First, Nick as representative of the White hegemony becomes the ultimate voice of relation, the ultimate arbiter of what is seen, heard, and experienced by the reader. What is more, the verbal skirmishes that transpire before the boy's eyes have as their principal participants White figures, not those of any racial minority. One of Nick's initial observations as he and Tom enter the station is about the "Whiteness of faces" that greet him (293). Nick's descriptives are our window into this world in all its various shades of White.

Conversely, the Native American voice, as in several of the tales I examined early on, is muted throughout this story's entirety. The collective silence that greets the boys is primarily theirs. While the White voice colors the exchange between the cook and the group and that of the prostitutes who debate the claims to a shared memory, the Native remains forcibly silent. His purpose, it seems, is to bolster the forged racial divide: "Two Indians were sitting down at the end of the bench and one standing up against the wall," "The ticket window went up and the three Indians went over to it," and "The Indians had gone outside on the platform" (294, 295, 296). In this instance, Nick's descriptives give us a virtual narrative pantomime. In each instance, the voice of the racial "Other" is nonexistent, his stark silence deafening, even as his body crowds the landscape.

As if to emphasize their secondary status, "Light of the World" begins and ends with the nameless, faceless, voiceless Native American bodies adorning the textual backdrop. However, I have argued thus far that the tale fits rather neatly into my suggested paradigm, a paradigm whose anchors are feared racial transgression and a fabricated racial divide. While I have demonstrated that Hemingway, in this tale too, employs the same strategy of forged

divisiveness and of bolstering an apparently fading color line, I have only given attention to the privileging of White voice and the marginalized “Other’s” relative silence. The story’s muted voice is in fact not exclusively the Native American’s.

Moreover, the most pronounced silence emanates from the body of the minority most conspicuously absent from the painted scene: that of the Black figure. Nowhere to be seen, the African American is the most conspicuously referenced of figures in the work. Morrison’s assertion that the minority figure’s presence becomes a necessary referent for the self-fulfilling prophesy of the White literary imagination rings most true in a story such as “Light of the World.”<sup>18</sup> While in each of the preceding stories the minority presence is an actual, corporeal presence, with muted voice or no, in this tale the Black presence is physically absent altogether. Instead, in “Light of the World,” the African American presence is a phantom presence. While in stories like “The Battler” the Black body assumes a feared corporeal reality, here it is altogether relegated to the realm of the imagination. Our only encounter with Blackness comes via recalled images and disputed memory. However, this phantom presence works a greater fear upon the White imagination than any actual presence ever could.

In a heated dispute that becomes the central focus of the story, two of the original five prostitutes tussle over a distant memory involving a former boxing champion who may or may not have been a one-time lover of either or both of the women (“Steve” according to the two prostitutes, “Stanley” according to history). While the object of their amorous collective desire is their focal point, it should not remain ours. The women both lay claim to the heart and soul of one Steve Ketchel, one time middleweight boxing phenom and one time contender for the heavyweight crown (history suggests this is Stanley Ketchel). More

importantly, the crown for which he vied was a crown held by the first ever African American heavyweight champion, Jack Johnson.<sup>19</sup>

As suggested earlier, Jack Johnson, for Hemingway and members of the Anglo hegemony (both followers and non-followers of boxing) during the first decades of the twentieth century, represented a new racial reality of unbridled Black volition. In light of his new celebrity, Johnson flouted his in-ring prowess and the acquisitions that came with this new-found celebrity, including money and, in his case, White women. In brazen fashion, Johnson repeatedly crossed the coveted color line, baited an establishment fear of miscegenation and openly ran with several and even married a White prostitute. This, as the burgeoning film industry exploited the monstrous Black male/helpless White damsel juxtaposition and already latent racial audience anxieties. The likes of Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* broke all attendance records and galvanized White fear.<sup>20</sup>

What is more, Jack Johnson dressed the part (some called him a dandy) and, like Hemingway's Bugs, spoke the language of "a gentleman." In short, Johnson did what few minorities could, all the while daring the establishment to stop him. As Andrew Lindsay suggests in *Boxing in Black and White*,<sup>21</sup> Jack Johnson's impact on a nation ripped with racial anxiety cannot be overstated:

During the six full years of Johnson's reign, 359 Black Americans were lynched, an average of five every month, while this Black champion rubbed his physical superiority, sexual conquests, and wealth in White faces. The vast majority of these mob murders were for crimes either petty or imaginary, *many carried out under the pretext that a White woman's virtue or safety had been violated*. These lynchings spelled out to the Black population where it stood, and must remain. If not for his celebrity, Johnson could have been killed many times over for a litany of social transgressions in early twentieth century America." (emphasis mine 14)

If we see the lynching bee as White America's response to Black self-assertion and its method of checking Black advancement and aspiration, then we can readily see the

significance of a Jack Johnson figure, championship belt in hand, in the era of Jim Crow. What is more, of the catalogue of racial taboos and violations listed above, it is the brazen sexual conquest, Black of White, that carried the greatest significance and smarted the most in the White collective conscience (recall Nick's violent reaction to the implication of his sister's violation by the "Other" in "Fathers and Sons"). With a litany of press-based threats to Johnson's person at his disposal, critic Al-Tony Gilmore demonstrates the visceral hatred purveyed by national newspapers in response to Johnson's open cavorting with White women and the accusation and rumor that followed such relationships.<sup>22</sup> Gilmore asserts in *Bad Nigger* that "Many Southerners, who normally lynched, murdered, or maligned Blacks upon the slightest intimation of their being even remotely associated intimately with White women, wished that Johnson was in their area of the country" so that they could exact a brand of justice fit for such "crimes" (96). America's legal answer to Johnson's transgression was, out of the ring, new legislation (state and local acts to halt the showing of his fight films, a call from the likes of Teddy Roosevelt for an outright ban on the sport, and federally, The Mann Act, which eventually put Johnson behind bars) and, within the ring, a national search for a "great White hope" to dethrone Johnson. Thus, Flora's assertion in his reading of "Light of the World," that "Tom is grateful that he had seen the movies of Ketchel's fight against Johnson" gains special resonance given the racial tenor of the country following the fight (Flora 86).

Johnson's fight with a recently retired Jim Jeffries was touted by the press almost universally as the fight of all fights. Jeffries was coaxed out of retirement, not by riches, not by the lure of the spotlight alone, but by an American populace hungry for a champion who looked like them. Jim Jeffries was the new "White hope" incarnate who would recapture and

return the heavyweight crown to its rightful owner: White America. Gerald Early's reminders regarding the pastime so many loved to hate at the turn of the century are particularly salient and they underscore the profound investment in racial claims made upon the sport: "Boxing is an American pastime. Moreover, one must not lose sight of the fact that modern professional boxing in its traceable history was a product of Britain; boxing in its course to its present identity is not just Western, not simply American, but particularly Anglo-Saxon" (134). In this sense, Johnson was a usurper of sorts. Johnson had stolen the title from them two years before in his knockout of Tommy Burns in Australia. Before the Jeffries fight, a series of so-called "White hopes," including Jack O'Brien, Al Kaufman, and Stanley Ketchel, had tried to retake the title and remove Johnson's trademark smile from his face.<sup>23</sup> It was an effort with national investment. Famed author Jack London was among the throng who expressly rooted against that "golden smile." All efforts failed miserably.

The fight of 1910 seemingly held even greater significance for an invigorated public than Johnson's initial crowning as heavyweight champion Down Under because, quite simply, it was held on American soil.<sup>24</sup> Johnson's title defense against Jeffries---held, rather significantly, on July 4<sup>th</sup>, and billed officially as "The fight of the century"---was about, most of all, reaffirmation of White supremacy, inside the ring and symbolically, outside of that square jungle. In his autobiography,<sup>25</sup> Johnson himself recognizes the full significance of this bout as he recalls all that surrounded the so-called "Fight of the Century":

The ring was built in the outdoors in the center of a natural amphitheater. It probably was the most picturesque fight scene ever staged in the history of boxing. A tremendous crowd was in attendance and there was a suspense that at times was almost unnerving. The fight meant more than any that had ever taken place among heavyweights. My staunch and eager friends were numerous but there was a bitterness against me that probably was more manifest than upon any other occasion. Rumors had come to me that there actually was talk of a chance shot at me if I whipped Jeffries. It was hinted that gunmen had been hidden in the crowd and that if my boxing opponent did not dispose of me a bullet would. (56)

Johnson paints a scene that is epic in nature, reminiscent of the swords, of the coliseum, of gladiators. The ring's staginess and expected racial performance comes to the fore. Johnson spares nothing in underscoring this particular bout's import to the hegemony as the stage is erected and wagers against him are made en masse. As perhaps his own greatest cheerleader, Jeffries echoes the popular sentiment, his own predictions and thoughts before the fight in the *Reno Daily Telegraph* also openly bearing the mark of race:

*"I'll lick this Black man so badly he'll never want to see a boxing glove again. . . no matter what my condition is, or what it isn't, I'm going to lick Johnson. I don't care whether the fight lasts four rounds or forty, it will be all the same to me. This will be my last fight, and it may be Johnson's last fight, too. I've had to do a lot of training to put myself in shape, and I've had to give up a lot of pleasure; it's no fun for a man of my inclinations [translation—White] to have to deny himself everything, to knuckle down and work his blamed head off just on account of a coon."* (emphasis mine Johnson Appendix II).

Johnson would later admit his full awareness that "It wasn't just the championship at stake--it was my own honor, and in a degree *the honor of my race* (Johnson 143).

As Randy Roberts suggests in his *Papa Jack*, "No longer the respectful darky asking, hat in hand, for massa's permission, Johnson was seen as the prototype of the independent Black who acted as he pleased and accepted no bar to his conduct. As such, Johnson was transformed into a racial symbol that threatened America's social order" (111). Most of all, Jack Johnson represents to an early twentieth-century American mass a perversion of sorts, a

de-formation of normative concepts.<sup>26</sup> In that deformity, there lives a new truth. It is a (de)formation Hemingway explores and exploits thoroughly in “Light of the World.”

Just as in “The Battler,” the first of my featured African American-centered texts, “Light of the World” is also quite appropriately a story with a heavy investment in the grotesque. And we see this investment not only in the ghostly presence of the curiously absent Black heavyweight champion, but in the figures dispensing his story. Like Ad Francis, whose smashed facial features and extremely violent temperament approach ridiculous proportions, Alice and Peroxide, this tale’s featured prostitutes, and even the cook, become absurd lenses through which Nick and the reader see truth and learn lessons. The cook in particular becomes the one true conduit of quantitative fact in the story. The cook, as literally the story’s “Whitest” character, becomes *the* fundamental function of inquiry, questioning the narrative and subverting expectation along the way. It is this very sense of absurdity itself, glowing white, that forces the racialized truth free from the narrative. With his allusion to Jack Johnson, the cook reminds us that this is very much a story about race.

Nick himself is not exempt from participating in this ludicrous narrative exercise in polarity, as his initial impressions of the train station personalities attest: “I looked to see who said it. It was one of the White men . . . his face was white and his hands were white and thin”(293). Just as the narrative forges difference with the emphatic silence of the racial “Other” who shuffles in the background, in Nick’s descriptive the narrative crafts difference with a pronounced whiteness. Nick fittingly describes the prostitutes as “ordinary looking,” and more importantly as “*peroxide blondes*.” In the absence of specified color, mere Whiteness shines brightly. His description of the cook is also quite telling. The cook, the featured pariah of the story, has his skin color and therefore his Caucasian ethnicity

exaggerated, brought to the fore, and into question, so that this becomes an interrogation of Whiteness as well.

Nick finds the cook's coloring remarkable, and others in the diner, other White men more specifically, mock it, directing Nick to "look at his hands." If White masculinity is the standard against which, within my paradigm, all else is to be measured, then why do other members of the hegemony mock it? The cook falls well short of the established mark and is made to suffer for it for the same reason Ketchel's composite fails to sit well with the modern reader: his Whiteness becomes an absurdity. The cook's racialized being is almost metaphysical; he is *beyond* White in complexion and therefore a grotesque. With his tightly puckered lips and hands all aglow, he is further pushed to the margins as a figure of effeminacy, arguably yet another figure of "Otherness" to be utilized by the narrative. However, it is from the cook's mouth that we get verifiable truth. The cook follows the lead established by the likes of Dick Boulton, and to some degree Uncle George, Bugs, and others in the litany of characters who step from the shadows to convey wisdom. Within my paradigm, inversion reigns supreme as "Otherness" yields greater perspective. "Otherness" yields objectiveness, not mere objectification, and in turn, a fair amount of new agency. As "unconventional" as he is, though, the cook has a function in the text as truth-seeker. As with an O'Connor narrative, the grotesque in Hemingway's tales works to shock the system and draw attention to the essential truth at the narrative's heart. The cook insists that Stanley Ketchel is in fact the "Steve" Ketchel over which the women squabble. This fact alone is worth noting. Stanley Ketchel's name was synonymous in boxing circles of the early twentieth century with underhanded dealings and with an overt flouting of established guidelines and accepted behavioral code. In a word, he was a purported cheat.<sup>27</sup>



As per the iceberg principle, Hemingway's mere mention of Ketchel's name works to undermine confidence inherent in any story associated with him. In terms of the fight story the prostitutes share, boxing lore suggests that Johnson and Ketchel agreed to what was supposed to be a low intensity exhibition match featuring two key players in the game. However, with racial tensions and the sheer vitriol surrounding the Black heavyweight being what they were, exhibition of skills became a test of racial prowess and authority. What was to have been a low-intensity exhibition match between two of boxing's best (Ketchel as middleweight champ, Johnson as heavyweight powerhouse) ended with a knockout. True to form, Ketchel abrogated the deal, taking cheap shots that floored a surprised champ, and this eventually sealed the "White hope's" fate. Ketchel attempted to seize his opportunity as one of many so-called "White hopes" of the era, whose sole purpose was to expose the champion's heretofore unseen vulnerability and demonstrate the truth behind White physical prowess and dominance. The bout ended, however, with Johnson's beating and knocking out of Ketchel. Ketchel's loss becomes the core of the discussion between the story's two prostitutes, with Peroxide reviling Johnson for his own brand of perceived foul play and on a grander scale for derailing Anglo plans. This is the truth behind the cook's inquiry and allusions, a truth lost on the prostitute, whose vision has been clouded by her own fearful racial myopia.

Again, polarity is the established narrative approach upon first reading, as White is pitted against Black, with Peroxide extolling the physical and essential beauty of her lover. Peroxide, Ketchel's biggest champion, marvels over his prowess (apparently both in and out of the ring): "He was like a god, he was so white and clean and beautiful and smooth and fast and like a tiger or like lightening" (296). Later in support of her claim that Ketchel loved her

truly, Peroxide offers “we were married in the eyes of God and I belong to him right now and always will and all of me is his. I don’t care about my body. They can take my body. My soul belongs to Steve Ketchel. By God, he was a man” (296). Yet, Peroxide’s catalogue of virtues and emphasis on color are meant to make Steve Ketchel more than a man. With the whiteness of his skin fervently extolled, Ketchel is instantly deified. What makes him “like a god” within my model are the carefully strung-together descriptives of “clean” and “beautiful” and “smooth” and “White.” In *Blacks in Eden*, Lee Greene explores totemic construction in relation to a nineteenth-century southern Anglo hegemony and (Black) literature that engages such a construction.<sup>28</sup> As one of the more “significant motifs” employed in such texts, Greene points to “a focal character’s adherence to (or rejection of) a value system that privileges Whiteness to the point of deification” (213). The prostitute’s absurd elevation of the former “White hope” stands as a testament to the universality of such systems. Hemingway relies on the essence of the polarity to aid his reader in fully appreciating the inherent meaning.

In contrast to the god-like White man, Johnson is cast as the villainous “big dinge,” the “big Black bastard,” and “the nigger.” Rather significantly, Hemingway himself refers to Johnson, in a rare instance where he speaks of the champion at all, as “the smoke.”<sup>29</sup> Johnson in this light is relegated to the realm of the non-human. By implication, the “unWhite” Johnson, though standing brazenly atop the world as champion with belt in hand for the better part of seven years, is everything Ketchel is not according to Peroxide’s world view: he is unclean, he is ugly, he is unskilled. More importantly, he is Black. Speaking of Negrophobia in the Antilles, Franz Fanon posits in *Black Skin, White Masks* that “Everything that is the opposite of these Negro modes of behavior [wicked, sloppy, malicious, instinctual]

is White . . . In the collective unconscious, Black=ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality. In other words, he is a Negro who is immoral. If I order my life like that of a moral man, I simply am not a Negro” (192). Fanon’s fifty-year-old commentary is easily extrapolated to Hemingway’s racialized narrative and our study of Anglo America.<sup>30</sup> Peroxide’s claim that the world just doesn’t produce fighters like her man Ketchel anymore underscores the notion of a world transformed, and it lends credence to my model of a feared integration and loss of definitional boundaries. The changing racial topography draws the reaction from the prostitute. Fittingly, Alice, who, like the cook, disputes the particulars of Peroxide’s story, wears a silken dress that “change[s] color” as she moves, emblematic of her acceptance of a morphed-world reality (293).

Like the cook, Alice proposes an alternative to the story being told, she, too, challenging Peroxide’s narrative authority. Both she and the cook are grotesques, he with his glowing White hands, she with a girth the likes of which no one has seen (“you couldn’t believe she was real when you looked at her”). The historical truth, like the bodies that convey and contest them, is also a grotesque distortion of a still greater truth. It is the cook’s interjection as Peroxide begins her relation that calls into question Peroxide’s narrative authority, and on a surface level, the veracity of the prostitute’s story itself and the greater memory being conjured.

The cook’s comments do more than demonstrate the dubious nature of one woman’s memories; his comments also serve to underscore the absurdity of the inherent value system under-girding the perceptions and commentary that craft those memories. For many during the early years of the twentieth century, Peroxide’s memories represent a warped collaborative memory of a perceived past. If we forge heroes as amalgams of all things we

deem important and value most, then Peroxide's statement that Ketchel was the "greatest, finest, Whitest, most beautiful man that ever lived," is a collective memory built upon a shared perception of glory and greatness steeped in the trappings of racial discourse. Within this paradigm, the Whiter the skin, the greater the man becomes the standard, with racial superlatives forging the all-important necessary linkage.

If Peroxide's memory is demonstrated to be faulty or absurd by the cook's simple but consistent questioning, then by association that greater collective perception (embodied in the prostitute) must also be questionable. Truth be told, Stanley Ketchel was just a man. In the case of his bout with Jack Johnson, he was a man out-classed by his larger, stronger, and, yes, darker opponent. What is more, he was a man just desperate enough at times, legend has it, to enlist the help of others in "winning" his matches. While Peroxide's reminiscences paint a picture of a hyper-adaptable fighter with skills transferable to any situation, the historical records indicate otherwise.

Reflecting on his viewing of the Ketchel-Johnson fight footage with Mohammad Ali just prior to his fight with yet another "White hope," Jerry Quarry, noted essayist and avid sports historian and critic George Plimpton suggest in *Shadow Box* that "at one stage of the bout, Johnson bullied him to the canvass, and then, almost apologetically, picked him up and set him on his feet as one would a child, so that watching the film, I half expected Jack Johnson to dust him off" (154). Suddenly, when viewed through the prism of historical truth, Peroxide's words ring false and a greater accepted and perpetuated White mythos crumbles.

The cook continues with his inquiry, insisting, "Didn't Jack Johnson knock him out though?" Ever the good woman, Peroxide stands by her man; ever the good demagogue, she stands by her fallen idol and shaken rhetoric: "It was a trick. That big dinge took him by

surprise. He'd just knocked Jack Johnson down, the big Black bastard. That nigger beat him by a fluke" (295). In the prostitute's speech there is no concession, just excuses, racially charged vitriol and an understood affirmation of Whiteness. Facts are clearly twisted as the bigger (and blacker) Johnson becomes the trickster and social miscreant. Ketchel's own dubious nature is all but ignored. Then, even in defeat, Ketchel is victimized and by extension lionized by an adoring (White) hero-worshipper. A clear outright victory by Johnson would mean certain and instant dissolution of the established authoritarian bedrock upon which early twentieth-century White American laurels rested. Hemingway demonstrates the slippery nature of racial definition and the increasing difficulty of building upon that polarity of race. As Alice challenges Peroxide's story particulars, and by extension, the mythological model she constructs with each detail, Peroxide meets the barrage with desperation: "This is true, true, true and you know it. Not just made up . . ." and later "leave me with my memories. With my true wonderful memories." The truth in memory and perception is something Hemingway would later revisit in such writings as *The Sun Also Rises* (Brett Ashley's conception of denial) and *Green Hills of Africa* (suggesting that the lines that separate memory and truth often blur).

Couching the entire previous quoted sequence on memory in proper color-entrenched discourse, Peroxide's remembrance of the disputed bout is a marked White-washing of historical fact. Just as her romanticization of lurid sexual liaisons are a symbolic cleansing of the body via rhetoric and emphatic Whiteness, the prostitute's memories of Ketchel are a conscious sanitizing of a painful remembrance. In fact, the entire sequence between the prostitutes, more specifically Peroxide's fairytale treatment of her life, is an active employment of "White face" as the re-creation of self necessarily becomes a performative act

of hiding the dirtier self. Thus, in the end, Hemingway shows us that theirs is a false Whiteness.

Moreover, we can extend this motif to the title itself and view it as a blatant mockery of the notion of revered Whiteness; it is a mockery of the forged reverence for that which does not actually exist. Hemingway's title is marked irony and "The Light of the World" is a false beacon, not to be followed, not to be believed. Thus, Nick's lesson is a simple one: Racial "truths," like so many others he has encountered on his sojourn, are not necessarily truthful at all. In Hemingway's narrative the inversion is complete, as good becomes evil, hero becomes demon, and "White" becomes "Black" within the retooled race paradigm. This new paradigm is perhaps too much for young Nick to fathom, let alone understand, as his horrified response to the cook's inquiry suggests at story's end: "Which way are you boys going?" "The other way from you" (295).

Hemingway's narrative also suggests that the security inherent in the rules of the ring is a false security.

Even within the perimeters of the ring, lines between civil and savage blur with each rule transgression, with each casting off of the garb of type. Authoritarian assumptions of superiority and associated "truths," the text suggests, will fade with the challenge. And, even in the face of the "truth," certain quantifiable realities can be re-created. With the Ketchel memory, Whiteness is made "great" again. Placing this within my racially-grounded paradigm, we see that Peroxide's revisionist strategies are but a taste of the deeper systemic shock being experienced by the greater hegemony. While we do not want to conflate and possibly confuse narrative character with the writer himself, all too often narrative clues and patterns reveal a greater truth about the author and the social construct working within the

text itself. Once more, Hemingway, as perhaps an unwitting modern spokesman on race in America, suggests that lines of racial demarcation are not always clearly drawn and definitions on either side are far from fixed. With lines blurring, the narrative subversion begins and the Black figure is now victimized and unnecessarily demonized and White virtue is dubious at best. Once more, the prospect of race-based identity blurring, of miscegenation in a broad, metaphorical sense, becomes the specter to be feared.

<sup>1</sup> Toni Morrison. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and The Literary Imagination*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992). Ralph Ellison, in his noted essay “The World and the Jug,” *Shadow and Act*. (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1994), seems to anticipate, some thirty years earlier, Morrison’s assertions, as he suggests in a statement confined to the South that “Southern whites cannot walk, talk, sing, conceive of laws or justice, think of sex, love, the family or freedom without responding to the presence of Negroes” (116).

<sup>2</sup> Buckner H. Payne. *The Negro: What is His Ethnological Status? Is He the Progeny of Ham? Is He a Descendant of Adam and Eve? Has He a Soul? Or is He A Beast in God’s Nomenclature? What is His Status as Fixed By God In Creation? What Is His Relation To The White Race? Second Ed. Cincinnati: The Proprietor, 1867, Rpt. in Anti-Black Thought: 1863-1925: The Negro Problem, An Eleven-Volume Anthology of Racist Writings*. John David Smith, Ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993). 3-73.

<sup>3</sup> John D. Smith. “General Introduction.” *Anti-Black Thought, 1863-1925: “The Negro Problem,” An Eleven-Volume Anthology of Racist Writings*. 6  
John David Smith, Ed.. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Ernest Hemingway. *In Our Time*. (New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Carlos Baker. *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917-1961*.  
Carlos Baker, Ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1981), p. 157. In a letter to his friend and fellow expatriate, John Dos Passos, dated April 25, 1925, Hemingway describes the story as “a swell new Nick story about a busted down pug and a *coon* called The Battler.”

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Flora. *Hemingway’s Nick Adams*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p 88. Flora suggests that the initial encounter between the boy and the ex-prize fighter produces no “communal fellowship,” and later that the real connection is between Nick and Bugs.

<sup>7</sup> Gerald Early’s *Tuxedo Junction: Essays on American Culture*. (Hopewell, New Jersey: The Ecco Press, 1989) underscores the importance of the sport’s Anglo roots in tracing the history of its apparent “appropriation” by non-Whites. Hemingway’s entrenchment within such an ideological framework becomes apparent in Carlos Baker’s recount of the author fresh on the heels of his first African safari; a 1935 Bahaman trip found Hemingway marking the time with fishing excursions (with shark in his sights) and, according to lore, boxing sessions with local toughs. Baker notes that during an interruption of his fishing, “[Hemingway] took advantage of the interval to issue a *challenge*. He would pay \$250 to *any Negro who could stay in the ring with him* for three three-minute rounds, using six ounce gloves. He had no fears about losing.” (emphasis mine). According to Baker, the White man won every time, even when goaded into going it gloveless and fighting bare-knuckle style. See Carlos Baker. *Hemingway: A Life Story*. p. 274-75. Hemingway’s challenge, its specifics, and the resulting lore all demonstrate the writer’s own investment in the rhetoric of the day.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Philip Young. *Ernest Hemingway*. (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1952) and his *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966) or Robert W. Lewis, Jr., *Hemingway on Love* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), p.13.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Flora. *Hemingway’s Nick Adams*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p. 85. While my reading’s emphasis is different, I too wish to underscore the importance of the grotesque to Hemingway in dispensing his brand of knowledge and “truth.”

<sup>10</sup> Baker, Carlos. *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917-1961*.  
Carlos Baker, Ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1981), p. 155. This was Hemingway’s working title as he negotiated his contract with Horace Liveright in March of 1925 and put the finishing touches on the collection that would become *In Our Time*.



<sup>11</sup> See George Monteiro. "This Is My Pal Bugs: Ernest Hemingway's 'The Battler': *Studies in Fiction* 23 (Spring 1986).

<sup>12</sup> Gerald Early. *Tuxedo Junction: Essays on American Culture*. (Hopewell, New Jersey: The Ecco Press, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> See Darlen Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanely Harrold Eds. *The African American Odyssey* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000) and John Hope Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes*. (New York: Knopf, 1974) for excellent histories of the nation's racial tenor during these years.

<sup>14</sup> Randy Roberts. *Papa Jack: Jack Johnson and the Era of White Hopes*. (New York: The Free Press, 1983). Roberts provides a comprehensive and excellent analysis of the Johnson era within a socio-political context.

<sup>15</sup> Philip Young's collective *The Nick Adams Stories* is the first to situate this story within the Nick Adams paradigm. While the narrator is in fact a first-person, nameless narrator, because of the attendant similarities to Nick and Nick's world, scholarship has followed Young's lead.

<sup>16</sup> See Robert Trogden Ed. *Ernest Hemingway: A Literary Reference*. (New York: Carroll & Graff, 1999), p. 314.

<sup>17</sup> Barbara Maloy, "The Light of Alice's World," *Linguistics in Literature* 1 (Spring 1976); 74-86. Maloy offers Lewis Carol's Alice as a means of reading Hemingway's text and its narrative experimentation with notions of reality and illusion (what we know to be true). Joseph Flora's explication of the text, while providing a useful alternative intertextual reading of "Light of the World," pointing to Hawthorne as a possible influence, only glosses over the racial subtext informing the story. More recently, Howard L. Hannum's "Nick Adams and the Search for Light," *Studies in Short Fiction* 23 (Winter 1986), rpt. in *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. Ed. Jackson J. Benson. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990, 321-30) extends a reading by Matthew Bruccoli and looks to religion and the need for something redemptive as a means of reading this "simple story." Gregory Green's "A Matter of Color: Hemingway's Criticism of Race Prejudice." *Hemingway Review*, 1 (Fall 1981) 26-32 actually does what few critics have done in its treatment (albeit slight here) of race as a lens through which to read the story. Framed within an inquiry of Hemingway's narrative technique of omission, Green's article explores the Ketchel figure within the parameters of history and the Hemingway story and the idea of the unspoken. Here that unspoken suggestion becomes the absurdity inherent in the idea of what Green calls a "promise of a [White] redeemer" tied to the Johnson boxing era. However, Green seems to read Hemingway as more of a racial sympathizer than an unsettled initiate himself.

<sup>18</sup> Once more, see Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*.

<sup>19</sup> See John Lardner. *White Hopes and Other Tigers*. Philadelphia: Lippincot, 1951. Also, see Jeffrey T. Sammons's *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society*. (Chicago: University of Illinois, Press, 1988) for a fine study of the cultural impact and meaning of the sport. For exceptional histories, see Bert R. Sugar's *100 Years of Boxing*. (New York: Rutledge Press, 1982) and A.J. Liebling's *The Sweet Science*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), a classic point of reference for the pugilistic historian.

<sup>20</sup> Hemingway recalls in a letter to friend and noted art historian Bernard Berenson his memories of seeing the film when he was a boy with his paternal grandfather. See Carlos Baker's *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917-1961*. Carlos Baker, Ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981). p. 811.

<sup>21</sup> See Andrew Lindsay. *Boxing in Black and White: A Statistical Study of Race in the Ring, 1949-83*. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2004). Lindsay provides an interesting examination of the shifting racial dynamic of the sport through the years.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Tony Gilmore's *Bad Nigger! The National Impact of Jack Johnson*. Port Washington, (NY: National University Publications, 1975) provides an excellent insight into the furor that the larger-than-life figure of Jack Johnson unleashed on America in the early twentieth century.

<sup>23</sup> See again, Gerald Early. *Tuxedo Junction: Essays on American Culture*.

<sup>24</sup> Jack Johnson took the heavyweight title from then champion, Tommy Burns, in Sydney, Australia, in December of 1908. Johnson would lose the title seven years later to Jess Willard in 1915, also on foreign soil, this time Havana, Cuba. See John Grombach, 's *Saga of the Fist: The 9,000 Story of Boxing in Text and Pictures* for a concise, but thorough overview of the sport's major happenings.

<sup>25</sup> Jack Johnson. *In the Ring and Out*. (London: Proteus Publishing, Limited, 1977).

<sup>26</sup> See Randy Roberts. *Papa Jack: Jack Johnson and the Era of White Hopes*. (New York: The Free Press, 1983) for an in-dept study of Jack Johnson's impact on the world outside of the ring.

<sup>27</sup> See George Plimpton's *Shadow Box*. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977).

<sup>28</sup> John L. Greene. *Blacks In Eden: The African American Novel's First Century*. (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> See *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917-1961*, p. 64. In a letter to former fellow ambulance driver and friend, Howell Jenkins in March of 1922, Hemingway touts the virtues of Ketchell and never mentions the heavyweight champion by name. Curiously, none of the letters in the published collection directly address Jack Johnson or his reign as champion.

<sup>30</sup> Franz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. (New York: Grove Weildenfeld, 1991). Fanon's text and theoretical approach informs my reading of Hemingway and his narrative strategies of omission.

### **Killin'em with Kindness: Hemingway's Blackness and the Tempered Storm**

“Knowing in the cells of his existence that life was war, nothing but war, the Negro (all exceptions admitted) could rarely afford the sophisticated inhibitions of civilization, and so he kept for his survival the *art* of the primitive . . .” –George Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*

“I want you to overcome ‘em with ‘yeses’ undermine ‘em with grins, agree ‘em to death and destruction, let ‘em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open”--  
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

“The Porter” brings us one step closer to that nightmarish space inhabiting the literary imagination of Hemingway, where the White/Black collision results in displaced racial definition and lost racial privilege and authority. This tale takes us outside of the realm of the “square jungle” and out into the wilds, where rules and measure ultimately are exposed as irrelevant and altogether arbitrary, where lines between “civility” and established decorum and “savagery” prove altogether illusionary. Like “The Battler” and “Light of the World,” “The Porter” is painted in hues of black and white. Additionally, like the other two stories, the porter’s tale paints with exaggerated strokes, fervently pointing to difference and the line separating the races, insisting on its existence. Unlike “Light of the World” and even “The Battler,” though, “The Porter” explores head-on the clash of White and Black bodies outside of the contextualized ring, enunciating it, announcing it without reservation. “The Porter” does this by going beyond the mark established by the other two tales in crafting a story of racial typology and objectification.

Like the other Afro-centered stories, the opening sequence of “The Porter” sets the narrative tone in crafting a tale of race-based polarity. Following their established pattern,

“The Porter” is a tale predicated on a narrative, at least initially, of difference. The story’s setting is a train, its time-frame a day, its featured characters a White man, his young son who paints the scene (much like in “Light of the World”), and the train’s hired help, all Black. Our introduction to Jimmy, the narrative’s first person protagonist, and his father, establishes the racial dichotomy early on as White is quickly linked with literacy and civility. We bear witness to a man, soon revealed to be the young boy’s father, winding down his day with a book. What is more, Jimmy’s father instructs his son to lay out his shoes before retiring for the night. Beyond this, nothing is ever expressly stated, no further explanation is given. Hemingway’s knowledge of his reading audience requires nothing more to convey meaning.<sup>1</sup> Historically speaking, shoes were typically left out by travelers of Pullman cars for the train’s staff to shine during the night. The process is predicated on an unspoken code. What is more, the train’s staff at this time would have been almost exclusively Black. During the early decades of the twentieth century, a time reflective of the era in which the young Hemingway came of age (1910-1930) and the heyday of the Pullman Porter, Pullman porters supplemented their rather meager incomes by buffing shoes and completing other menial tasks for the train’s predominantly White patrons.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, during these formative first years of the new century, rampant lynching, especially in the South, Jim Crow, and the impact of *Plessy v. Ferguson* all became a part of the national consciousness.<sup>3</sup> Thus, connotation alone draws the racial binary in the narrative.

Likewise, the Porter’s words and actions build on this divisive foundation. His words are at first all business, servile, and understandably deferential. All inquiries he makes of Jimmy’s father are adorned with “sirs.” Furthermore, countering the leisure of the Anglo

hegemony, while the Whites sleep, those of color accommodate and therefore metaphorically elevate their “superiors”:

I got dressed in all but my shoes and reached under the curtain for them. They were shined and I put them on and unbuttoned the curtain and went out in the aisle. The curtains were buttoned all down the aisle and everyone seemed to be still asleep. (572)

Further emphasizing the racial divide and tilted power structure are Jimmy’s first actions upon waking and dressing himself. Jimmy reaches for the shoes he had left out the night before, with little to no thought; the protocol is unquestioned and automatic. As if by magic, the young boy’s shoes have been polished and buffed for him. Jimmy awakens early, dons his shoes, only to find virtually everyone else asleep, including, in this case, the featured porter.

His initial encounter with this porter tells us much about Jimmy’s own place within the featured authoritative paradigm: “I was hungry and I looked out of the window at the fall country and watched the porter asleep” (572). If we apply a post-colonial theoretical framework to the descriptive segment, we see this young boy intuitively engaging in the rites of his father and his father before him. Hemingway’s narrative bestows an understood and unquestioned privilege to him. Diction gains special significance. The narrative does not say that Jimmy “sees” the porter asleep; instead, Jimmy actively *watches* him. As he watches the elder Black man, Jimmy intuitively seizes agency and control via the all-important gaze. What is more, the gaze quickly shifts from the oblivious man-servant, to the alternating scene of the countryside quickly passing by the train’s window, forging an association between the two: “. . . I looked out of the window at the fall country and *watched the porter asleep*. It looked like *good shooting country*” (emphasis mine 572). Inherent in the wondrous gaze is

an unmistakable sense of authority, of privilege, of tasted conquest. Hemingway's narrative makes it difficult to separate the gaze from the land from the man (or boy).

Our first real engagement with the porter comes via the prism of Jimmy's eyes: "The nigger porter was asleep in one corner of the leather cushioned seat. His cap down over his eyes and his feet were up on one of the chairs. His mouth was open, his head was tipped back and his hands were together in his lap" (572). The description is brief, succinct, and telling. From the outset, a color line separates the subjective "seer" and objective "seen." Immediately, the porter, still nameless at this point, is cast as a type. The entire story, in fact, reads as one invested in stereotype. Diction moves to the fore again as the narrative instantly reduces this Black man to mere racial designation and function. Moreover, the racial designation is an epithet laden with generations of negative association ("the nigger porter"). The man's pastime secures the established typology as we encounter a Black man asleep, feet in the air, mouth open, a variation of the lazy, fool-hardy caricature popularized in the day's minstrelsy. Jack Santino notes in *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: Stories of Black Pullman Porters* that even the Pullman Company's own advertising forged and maintained the idea of the servant type:<sup>4</sup>

In its publicity photos, the Pullman Company showed the public a kindly, avuncular porter. These images were directed at travelers who may have wondered at some time or other if these men ever resented their menial status. The figures in the publicity shots reassured passengers. They created misleading images of happy, simple men who got no greater pleasure in life than waiting on rich White people, and who wanted only a pat on the head and perhaps a shiny quarter for their efforts. (116)

There is in this exercise a marked effort by the establishment to exorcise Blackness of its sister association: that of the mysterious, threatening presence. Thus, a crafted buffoonery works to maintain a totem both within and without the company. A bit later in the story, we

get more blanket typology with a reliance on the same connotation, with a narrative mentioning of “four other niggers sitting at a table playing cards.” Again, description is terse, but the linkage, in Jimmy’s eyes, between racial “Other” and leisure and vice is unmistakable.

Hemingway even exploits the most blatant of stereotypes in the naming of the porter himself, finally, as the boy and man become better acquainted. In an encounter with the chef of the train, the porter is addressed as “Uncle George.” Immediately, Jimmy, as narrator, seizes upon the opportunity to extend the typology. As smiling caregiver to the train’s patrons, George becomes the dark and kindly (and seemingly vacuous) “Uncle” figure of nineteenth-century American plantation lore.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, from that point forward, the porter’s name is “George,” an all-encompassing label in and of itself laden with its own set of historical connotations. Hemingway’s audience would have intuitively accepted this narrative conceit as unvarnished truth.

As suggested in Santino’s *Miles of Smiles*, the “George” nomenclature is a blatant assumption of White ownership (a labeling or branding of human chattel), with possible links to George Pullman himself. While an exact genealogy of the label is still debatable, most scholars agree, Santino posits, that the one-size fits all “George” nomenclature emanated from the founder and owner himself, “father” if you will, of the railroad company itself and all those who worked for it. With such a broad-stamped label, establishing individual identity separate from and outside that of the “father” becomes a moot exercise. The child-like Black figures that held the porter positions were seen to be in the charge of their employer, George Pullman and company. In fact, Santino suggests, many Pullman porters saw their employment with the Pullman organization as a double-edged sword. The

company both gave them status among Blacks because of its relative high pay scale and travel opportunities (compared to the few opportunities afforded the African American community at large), and conversely entrapped them in a cycle of endless hours working for that increased pay, and often, on the basis of well-crafted technicalities favoring the company, without pay at all. Indeed, for many of Pullman's "children," it was a modern incarnation of indentured servitude, with Pullman as a new kind of "master."

Appropriately, we never learn the porter's real name in Hemingway's story. The train's chef also never becomes more than a job title and a function (the chef is the porter's proclaimed kindred spirit, the one friend with whom the porter really shares his thoughts and dreams). Moreover, the chef, too, never rises above the status of type. Clearly, the Hemingway narrative takes great strides in erecting and maintaining the coveted color line in its initial characterization. In a conversation between the two workmates, the chef rather appropriately asserts that "Everything's got its place" (573) as he and the porter make light of other lightly-complexioned non-Whites aboard the train, men with whom he dined the night before. As for the chef and his own characterization, he falls within the perimeters of the vice-driven and beastly body of the conceptualized Black, seemingly salivating at every turn in anticipation of drink, what he christens "courtesy." In Pavlovian fashion, the constant refrain associated with the drink-fixated chef becomes "he wiped his lips." Suddenly, the racial divide becomes all-pervasive.

Bolstering my model of forged and forced difference is the Black man's apparent aggrandizement of the phantom (White) father (Jimmy's), whose physical presence is limited to the tale's opening lines but whose influence extends much further. Throughout their initial minutes together, George praises the boy incessantly for his father's phenomenal drinking



abilities, often a universal measure of manhood both within and without the Hemingway literary universe. Reverence for the father is demonstrated moreover in George's rather emphatic insistence that Jimmy's father is a "type of *noble Christian gentleman*" (emphasis mine, 575). The connection to goodness, to civility, and to Western-ness is most apparent in the narrative's selective diction.

The racialized dichotomy continues to the end of the narrative as George momentarily indoctrinates the young boy into the world of savagery and "Otherness." George demonstrates his proficiency with the razor for his young spectator. Again, the narrative selection for this lesson is key, as Hemingway's narrative juxtaposes the image of apparent civility ("noble Christian") with that of the commonly stereotyped and racially charged association and the image of the African American ("the razor"). Underscoring this intention are George's own words as he himself labels the razor as a "nigger weapon," confiding in the boy that "bending the razor back over the hand is the only progress the nigger ever made" (576). This proves to be a key admission given the era's economic, social, historical, and of course political associations with the idea of "Progress" (Theodore Roosevelt, early emblem for the likes of the author, embraced the Progressive ideal early in the century).<sup>6</sup> Conveniently, as he razes his race, disassociating himself from his own race, speaking outside of his own skin for a moment, the porter raises the White.

As George engages Jimmy in the lesson of the razor, narrative detail comes to the fore: "'Returning to the razor' George said. He reached in the inside pocket and brought out a razor. He laid it close to the palm of his hand. The palm was pink" (575). Significantly, in describing George's introduction of the razor to young Jimmy, the only elaborate detail given is not one of size or shape, but one of color (and it is assigned to the man). Moreover, this

focus on pigmentation, on the pinkness of George's palm, returns us to our reading of "The Battler." The imagery here is reminiscent of the carefully crafted associative description of the boxer's tale, where Bugs crouches on "long nigger legs" and "wipe[s] his lips with the pink palm of his hand" (103). Again, physical markers of race subtly work to underscore a narrative of difference. Further, we see an immediate connection between the two seemingly ancillary Black figures with George's lecture on the razor if we recall Bugs's rather matter-of-fact admission that he was jailed for cutting a man.

Further dividing the races is a specious comparison of Jimmy's father and "George" within the framework of drink as a function of self-definition, and by implication, manhood. Unlike Jimmy's father, whose drinking inhabits the space of legend (or so it seems), George, to the contrary, complains at the story's conclusion that he needs a remedy for a body sick with drink; he has indulged in the spirits with both Jimmy's father and now the chef and pays for it dearly. We bear witness to the quasi-salivation and drink lust of the Black porter as the story opens and repeatedly as it progresses; we bear witness to the Black porter's own vice-laden stumble and fall toward plain debauchery and inglorious alcoholic defeat as the story closes. Unlike his White counterpart, although quite indulgent, the Black man apparently cannot handle his liquor, apparently burdened and crushed by the weakness borne of his race. With this further questioning of his manhood, the narrative divide is complete.

However, if we compare this tale's Black figure with the principle found in "The Battler," we see another telling similarity beyond the forcibly cultivated narrative of difference and racial type: like Bugs, George, who also wields a Black bone handled weapon, by profession, is a caretaker of sorts. More importantly, he is a caretaker wiser than

his initial introduction at first suggests. Also, like Bugs of “The Battler,” the title character of “The Porter” in fact provides, upon closer examination, not merely a forum for the exaltation of Whiteness and a narrative of racial differentiation, but a forum within which Whiteness can be simultaneously critiqued as well. Like Uncle George and Dick Boulton in the so-called “Indian stories,” and, more germane to this chapter’s dealings with the African American figure, like Bugs of “The Battler” and the cook of “Light of the World,” George the porter, through his words and actions, questions or prompts a questioning of the racially defined hegemony. In “The Porter,” it is through George that we see the arbitrary and rather tenuous nature of the established color line. Technically, and more important to our exploration of narrative discovery, it is through Jimmy’s eyes, the green eyes of the hegemonic representative, that we bear witness to this formal questioning of established truth. As in all of the other stories included in this examination, racial construction and typology, upon closer reading, eventually give way to subversion of expectation and the established racial order.

Hemingway’s inversion of the established order comes early on as we are introduced to the story’s principal players. Whiteness in “The Porter” serves the same purpose Blackness does in “Light of the World”: as a phantom presence with an attached truth whose primary import is not fully realized and appreciated by itself. The narrative juxtaposition of White “gentleman” traveler with servile and apparently docile Black figure which opens the story is an instantaneous but quickly dissolved model, telling only part of the story. Just as the imposed value of Blackness comes to the fore with its absence in something like “The Light of the World,” here the relative absence of Whiteness in actual form forces the reader to reconsider its implications and contextualize its value. Why is the father figure, so prominent

in the “Indian stories,” markedly missing from this text? That opening pairing of the races marks the last time the narrative gives us any direct contact with the father. Hemingway’s narrative subverts expectation in all but omitting this White patriarch from the story; furthermore, what we do get is a filtered presence and very questionable glory.

Hemingway’s narrative continues, exploring the idea of racial inversion, or the inversion of established racial association as evidenced in its treatment of name and naming, something visited earlier in this treatment in relation to “The Battler” and “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife.” In those stories, the racial “Other” takes ownership of the naming act, Bugs calling attention to the import of name with his inquiry and Dick Boulton emphasizing his agency with his intentional corruption of the doctor’s name. The disparity between the White and the Black treatments of the naming issue speaks volumes, suggesting a simultaneous White reliance on assumption, typology, and a specious knowledge, and a Black level of inquisitiveness heretofore unseen and certainly unexpected. Jimmy’s surprised response to George’s bold familiarity and informality suggests as much: “How do you like the railroad business, *Jimmy*?” “How did you know *my name*?” (574). The sequence is reminiscent of Bugs’s, not Ad’s, insistence in knowing Nick’s name as he joins the vagabond party of “The Battler.” Further, George’s response denotes an astuteness that is meant to serve as notice to the established order and to those wielding authority. Bugs’s retort to an Ad inquiry that he “hear[s] most of what goes on” is easily transposable to this story of the seemingly happy, servile “darky” who knows more than his vacuous smile suggests. Like Bugs’s insistence in knowing Nick’s name, George’s nominal awareness is a subversion of expectation as the Black figure gains intimate knowledge of his racial foil. In this sense,

George momentarily obtains a level of knowledge exceeding that of the controlling agent; his is an active seizure of authority.

As suggested earlier, the significance of the narrative's omission and/or super-limited inclusion of Jimmy's father is significant. Jimmy's father, within our established paradigm of Anglo authority, represents the ultimate father figure. He is father to both his son and, as sole mature hegemonic representative, to an entire race of people. As such, he is to be an exemplar to many. It is a precedent the narrator establishes early on in the Nick Adams canon. In "Fathers and Sons," Nick's father is a master-hunter, a wicked marksman whose keen eyesight is, according to the son and his personal testimony, unmatched by anyone. In "Indian Camp," Doctor Adams is the surgeon so skilled in his art that he performs a Caesarean section without much more than what's found in a tackle box; a hook and fishing twine are all he needs in the performance of his art. In this sense, he becomes the master-healer. In "The Porter," we find the same model replicated in the form of Jimmy's father. Like the doctor of the former tale, Jimmy's father is repeatedly referred to as a "great man" (although we learn rather quickly the relative value of "greatness" via (Uncle) George's terse commentary). Most importantly, the similarities and alignment with the other stories featured in this examination continue in the narrative assessment of this so-called "greatness."

In a rather key omission, the narrative reveals very little about the man laying claim to the title of "father," as we see that Jimmy's father is a man without noted occupation and without name. These are key omissions, important holes in the construction of his narrative self in that both are often barometers used to define manhood in an Anglo-patriarchal construct. He is a man bereft of identity markers. Further, while the initial associations are

with the book and the bottle, it is the bottle that receives the most attention from the narrative and for good reason. We quickly find out that the father's own attachments to greatness are fleeting and trivial, and later, perverted. He reads in the dark, tersely replying in response to a suggestion that "he turn on the light" that he "do[esn't] need it" (571). What he apparently does need is the bottle and the flask in his quarters. While we bear witness to the constant salivation of the chef, who is in perpetual anticipation of his next drink, the all-but-absent father's propensity for drink and his capacity to do so becomes the material of mock-epic. The porter's question and commentary regarding the White man's drinking are especially enlightening.

"That your father that stayed up here reading?"

"Yes."

"He certainly can drink liquor."

"He's a great drinker."

"He certainly is a great drinker. That's it, a great drinker."

I did not say anything.

"I had a couple with him," the porter said. "And I got plenty of effect but he sat there half the night and never showed a thing."

"He never shows anything," I said.

"No sir. But if he keeps up that way he's going to kill his whole insides."

I did not say anything. (573)

As the chef joins the conversation, the mock aggrandizement becomes even more apparent:

"The young gentleman's father is the world's champ."

"At what?"

"At drinking." (573)

What is notable about this entire sequence is, firstly, the commandeering of conversation and of language itself, the realm typically the purview of the Anglo agent, by the minority figure. Not only does the porter initiate the apparent praise-laden conversation, but he sets his dialogic sights on the father as he does so. What is more, during this sequence, not only does George direct the conversation (the father and his drinking become the focal point for the

two), but he controls it with his questioning and sharp commentary. Jimmy's constant refrain of "I did not say anything" stands as compelling proof of the White figure's loss of agency. Gone are the privilege, the surveillance, and the gaze. His narrative refrain also becomes a powerful and lasting testament to the weight of this Black man's words and the truth behind the words spoken. These words underscore the essence of previously unspoken truths made real via speech. Jimmy is literally forced into a muted state; incontrovertible words render the boy speechless. With George's dominance and with Jimmy's relative voicelessness, the young boy, and therefore Whiteness itself, is effectively silenced.

Furthermore, and most substantively, George's allusions to the "greatness" of the absent father are intentional bits of authoritative subversion on the part of the Hemingway narrative. Jimmy's father, as "great drinker," as "a world's champion," is an alcoholic. We learn via piecemeal suggestion that he spends his night hours immersed in a book and drink. What is more, he "never shows anything" in terms of the effects of drink on his body, suggesting a very high tolerance level and proficiency reserved for those with years of experience. Additionally, juxtaposed to George's commiseration and shared drink with the chef (kindred spirits, says George) which has at its roots a shared pain steeped in racial oppression, are the father's solitary binges that have no clearly delineated cause. He simply drinks. And this is the legacy we are left with as the story closes, because we learn nothing else of the father. Thus, what we have in this particular sequence is an active tearing down of type and an emphatic blurring of formerly set racial definitional boundaries as White becomes linked with intemperance, irrationality, and self-serving euphemism, Black with reason and the voice of truth. Fittingly, George, as purveyor of this new truth, becomes the

embodiment of that new, (con)fused, and feared racial nexus, much the way Dick Boulton does in “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife.”

Hemingway’s subversion of the established racial paradigm and his exploration of that nexus where White and Black become indistinguishable in relation to established “knowledge” are fully realized in the story’s final and most important sequence as the porter and the chef commune and young Jimmy learns the lesson of the razor. As the porter and his young charge get better acquainted, Jimmy witnesses Black life seldom seen outside of the realm of the White imagination. He is privy to two Black friends unmasking themselves without inhibition. The narrative subversion continues as apparent Black playfulness drawn from caricature and type (they laugh and they engage in seemingly meaningless, if not incoherent banter), takes on the vestiges of the blues in its overall sentiment: “How is the railroad business?” “Rails are firm” “Goodbye to a noble soul” (574). Far from meaningless banter, this segment is instead a pain-laced mockery of American institutions and business enterprise; the railroad, America’s lifeblood for so long, and baseball, as America’s pastime, become easy targets for two men looking in on these institutions from the outside.<sup>7</sup>

Their mockery is the blues reconfigured, in that like a blues composition, their dialogue is multi-layered.<sup>8</sup> Ralph Ellison speaks of a blues aesthetic in his *Shadow and Act*, asserting that:

The blues speak to us simultaneously of the tragic and the comic aspect of the human condition and they express a profound sense of life shared by many Negro Americans precisely because their lives have combined these modes. This has been the heritage of a people who for hundreds of years could not celebrate birth or dignify death and whose need to live despite the dehumanizing pressures of slavery developed an endless capacity for laughing at their painful experiences. (256)

Within the confines of our story, once the apparent whimsical veneer is stripped away, a very real rawness steeped in awareness is exposed. Thus, the Hemingway narrative subverts



expectation once more, exposing the Black world as something painful, real and meaningful. Apparent in this seemingly playful segment is both a communion of sorts between the chef and the porter (with one conversationally riffing off of the other) and more importantly, an understanding and experience of their shared marginality and outsider status. Their word play is a critique and mockery of worlds from which they, as Black men, have been excluded. They are “kindred spirits,” says George, “Gentleman with the same outlook on life” (575).

Instantly, too, the Black man has, at least linguistically, entered the realm exclusively reserved for “the gentleman,” the White.<sup>9</sup> The narrative reveals via its forced air of gentility (“Does the young gentleman drink, too?” “It’s a pleasure, sir.” “Goodbye to a noble soul”) the Black figure’s awareness of the performance inherent in American racial identity. So much of racial definition depends on the fulfillment of expected behaviors. The Black man puts on a smile to mask the pain. George’s self-awareness makes its presence known even more with the departure of the chef and the intimate commiseration between George and young Jimmy.

With the chef’s departure, George immediately assumes the role of teacher, engaging Jimmy in the lesson of razor war. The placement of the sequence is itself key in reading the work as a subversion of order. It demonstrates a marked deliberateness on the part of the Hemingway narrative to delve deeper into the pitfalls of marginality. The “lesson” comes immediately on the heels of the inadvertent confessional moment shared by the two Pullman professionals. Now the porter speaks candidly about the art of the razor. George initiates the conversation rather fittingly with “Did you ever see a man cut with a razor?” (575). Outside

of its inherent shock value, it is a loaded question whose implications are at once violent and ugly.

The entire sequence and its subject become a metaphor for the African American predicament. The question and the image evoke typology, yes, as associations with race converge with the object, as in “The Battler.” In that story, Bugs, exhibiting full gentility as he speaks, candidly admits he served jail time for blade-play of his own. The racial lines blur with the politely whispered bloody confession. However, there, too, stereotype quickly gives way to complete mis-type as Bugs, not Ad, asserts himself as oracle and purveyor of wisdom and true understanding. Like Bugs, George the porter reveals himself to be such a wise man, shockingly cognizant of his surroundings and his predicament as a Black man framed by a White construct and, most importantly, by the performative quality of race and the arbitrary nature of racial designation. “Would you like to have it explained?” “Yes.”: thus, the lesson commences:

“The use of the razor,” he said, “is an art not alone known to the barbering profession.” He looked at me. “Don’t you make them big eyes,” he said. “I’m only lecturing.”

“I’m not scared.”

“I should say you’re not,” said George. “You’re here with your greatest friend.” (575)

The instructional session’s initial moments are noteworthy and fall within the confines of my paradigm quite nicely. The words suggest three things of importance: First, they suggest that things are not always what they seem. The razor’s wielding is not the exclusive purview of the barber, posits George. With this assertion, the narrative pushes both Jimmy and the reader outside of the normative perimeters. Suddenly, the shift from would-be brute to gentleman is seamless and the lines separating savagery from civilization disappear. Jimmy’s horrified reaction (“Don’t you make them big eyes”) underscores this “lost” moment, this moment

where definition fails, and becomes this tale's requisite nod to the gothic, with George as the feared specter. Second, specious and steeped in performance, the Anglo and African American relationship is a tenuous one at best. Having rattled the boy with the mere allusion to a breakdown of this social order (via violence), George quickly steps into the role of the familiar: the non-threatening caretaker, nurse, "uncle" figure; "I'm your greatest friend," he says reassuringly. Finally, the sequence suggests that fear is at the root of this race-defined relationship. What is more, it is a fear of, in this instance, racialized violence, and of the chaos, upheaval, and (self) destruction inherent in such violent revolution.<sup>10</sup> George's metaphorical razor talk serves as a reminder to the hegemony that the established and maintained social order is arbitrary, and that the balance is a fragile one at best. The only thing maintaining that balance and order is the temperance of the violent will. Even more terrifying than this is the prospect of this violence being *controllable* by the servile initiate; fittingly, George's lesson proceeds in an eerily calm and methodical fashion.

George commences his teachings with what he deems to be the functional triumvirate of razor mastery: "You have observed," he said, "Keeness of edge and simplicity of action. Now a greater than these two. Security of manipulation" (576). The first two qualities examined are linked to the tool itself. Sharpness and ease of use are necessary attributes of the blade and are suggestive of basic functionality. The third quality, however, becomes the focus of further exploration for the porter and necessarily deserves greater attention in this examination. George keenly suggests that the third is the most important of the aforementioned attributes. Underscoring the building importance of his mini-lesson, George reiterates the significance of that third quality: "You observe it?" George said. "Now for that

great requisite skill in the use of” (576). True mastery, says George, is found in the manipulation of the tool, not in the tool itself.

George proceeds to demonstrate with great alacrity the nuances of razor fighting before his mesmerized young pupil-of-the-hour. The elder porter takes apart his imaginary foe with great skill and a marked methodology. He ends the lesson with a curt reminder that “the razor’s a delusion, Jimmy. It’s a nigger weapon. A regular nigger weapon” (576). First glance suggests racial division and underscores the associative powers of an image. Further reading and inspection, however, reveal the forged aspect of these associations on the part of the narrative:

“Bending a razor back over the hand is the only progress the nigger ever made. Only nigger ever knew how to defend himself was Jack Johnson and they put him in Leavenworth. And what would I do to Jack Johnson with a razor. It none of it makes any difference, Jimmy. All you get in this life is a point of view. Fellow like me and the chef got a point of view. Even if he’s got a wrong point of view he’s better off. A nigger gets delusions like old Jack Johnson or Marcus Garvey and they put him in the pen. Look where my delusion about the razor would take me. Nothing’s got any value, Jimmy. Liquor makes you feel like I’ll feel in an hour. You and me aren’t even friends.” (576)

The razor becomes a grand metaphor for the African American plight and his “lack of progress” within the shadows of the greater American construct. This is, after all, the era (early twentieth century) of Progress, a sociological and philosophical ideal strategically intertwined with accepted theories of social Darwinism and therefore mired in the trappings of racial discourse; the political and economic woes of the Black community in post-Reconstruction America conveniently provide a basis for the “scholarly” promotion of racist ideology.<sup>11</sup>

More importantly, “The Porter’s” narrative suggests that awareness and knowledge of the racial differential in America’s illusory nature are the all-important factors in enduring

and even eventually subverting the established order. “Skill in the use of” becomes the prescriptive template for African Americans framed and constricted by the White patriarchal construct. “Skill in the use of” becomes a formula to be followed. While the narrative relies heavily on typology and racialized dogma, the greater implication is clear. This is more than racial epithet, blatant despair of a “lowly race,” and Anglo propaganda. It is a critique of a system whose sole defense is in fact typology and perpetuated dogma and the sustaining of illusory division. Moreover, George’s lesson demonstrates a marked awareness of the dynamics and lines of division that do mark Black/White relations and ultimately separate the races in America. George’s harsh criticism or candid realizations regarding the stagnation of Blacks in America is both a reflection of a perceived reality and a warning to the hegemonic authoritarian.

The porter’s critique suggests that discretion and a true understanding of the paradigm by the minority are necessary for survival and key to change. The seemingly strong, the Jack Johnsons and the Marcus Garveys, are eventually broken by their own boldness, figuratively cut down by their own razors. It is the man “skilled in the use of it” who walks away victorious. Those who engage the enemy knowing the dynamics of the relationship, those knowing the nuances of the power structure, those knowing the established boundaries well, and those accepting that construct on the site of battle, are at a distinct advantage from the beginning. Simply put, knowing how to play the game ensures not only survival, but eventual success against the seemingly indomitable opponent. Gaining a thorough knowledge of the system and the empty rhetoric supporting it that constricts the individual is the first step towards exposing the artifice inherent in the racial construct and tearing down those confining walls. This becomes the worry of those holding the reigns within my

examination's paradigm; this becomes the object of fear for the White patriarchal figure: a racial "Other" whose shrewdness matches or exceeds that of the current agent.

Miscegenation within this story's confines becomes then the nightmarish point of convergence where Black and White identity markers conflate and Black supplants White. George knows this. He and the chef are "kindred spirits" who share this "point of view," this secret knowledge. With George's words of wisdom and the lesson at an end, Jimmy and the reader become privy to this new knowledge. The question Hemingway seems to posit is, "what does one do with this newfound knowledge?"

With the life lesson over, George reverts to role-playing and expectation: "I wish I could have gone back with George to the kitchen. But during the *regular daytime* George talked like *anyone else*, except even less, and *very polite*. . . ." (emphasis mine 577).

Narrative emphasis is on civility and expectation and all hints of that latent violence revealed in the faux fight is gone. Divisive lines are erected once more with the return of protocol. As Santino asserts, "Being a servant was a *role the porters played*. They put it on and took it off with that White jacket they once admired from afar. . . . To give service was a job, *a skill, an art*. They vigorously resisted the tendency to internalize the role, with its attendant stereotypes, and confuse it with their personal identities, their self-worth" (111-12). Santino rightly employs language of the stage and of craft in his assessment of the porter's self-perception and self-awareness.<sup>12</sup> At lesson's end, the costumes return. Voice, so fervently espoused by the porter in describing his bond with the chef (he calls it "point of view"), is intentionally muted once more and the "polite," smiling mask of subordination is donned again.

It is this duality, this forged racial binary of White and Black, repeatedly employed in the so-called “Indian stories” and revisited and re-instated at the end of a tale like “The Porter,” that provides comfort to a nation seeking to preserve a quickly fading social order. Hemingway’s texts, then, when taken together, become the nexus where past and present America engage in a tug-of-war. To Hemingway’s chagrin, even within the literary realm, the author must make concessions and face down this new reality. Hemingway demonstrates in each of the tales featured in my examination that “Redness” and “Blackness” and “Whiteness” as race markers are conceptual at best and subject to inquiry and (re)negotiation. Ultimately, this same attempt at self-preservation drives Hemingway to Africa on two extensive safaris, one in the mid-1930s and another some twenty years later.<sup>13</sup> When placed within my paradigm, Hemingway’s trips to the African continent become sojourns, quests for that which he can no longer find in America: a sense of racial stability and definitional validation. What formerly drove men west in what I will call the invention of America, drives Hemingway east in his attempt to preserve those same founding ideals: “to construct geographical racial boundaries.”<sup>14</sup> In the African bush, the White man’s shadow is always dark. Thus, the safari becomes a metaphorical crusade to salvage and maintain racial boundaries and the all-important idea of Whiteness.

<sup>1</sup> See Hemingway's discussion of his so-called ice-berg principle in his "The Art of the Short Story." *Paris Review* 79 (1981) rpt. in *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. Ed. Jackson J. Benson. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 1-13.

<sup>2</sup> See John Hope Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes*. (New York: Knopf, 1974). and Darlene Hine, William Hine, and Stanley Harrold Eds. *The African-American Odyssey*. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000) for wonderful general histories of American segregationist practices.

<sup>3</sup> *Plessy v. Ferguson*, significantly via the medium of the train, upheld the predominantly southern Jim Crow tradition of public segregation of the races. Additionally, as Franklin notes, during the first two years of the new century, over 200 lynchings underscored the hyper-contentious relationship between the races, most especially in the South. See p. 342. However, with rioting in cities to the west and north during the first two decades of the new century, we see that racial strife was not an exclusively southern phenomenon.

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent comprehensive, historical account of the Pullman porter struggle specifically (strangely, very little has been done on the topic), see Jack Santino's *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: Stories of Black Pullman Porters*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Charles W. Chesnutt toys with the typology at the turn of the century in the figure of Uncle Julius. See Chesnutt's *The Conjure Woman and Other Conjure Tales*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> Hemingway's interest in history, specifically American histories of war, social history, and The West, is well known. He owned multiple historical volumes along with several titles by Wyndam Lewis, as well as several of Roosevelt's books (most importantly, his hunting accounts). See Michael S. Reynolds' *Hemingway's Reading, 1910-1940: An Inventory*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>7</sup> While the boxing ring would continue to provide a livelihood for Blacks and other men of color (that would change with the reign of Jack Johnson), baseball closed its doors to African Americans in 1887. In an official dictum, the International League capitulated to individual White player requests that Black players no longer be signed, and altogether barred African Americans from the game. This move prompted Blacks to form a league of their own, and inter-racial play would not return to "America's pastime" for another sixty years. Once more, see Darlene Clark Hine and William C. Hine. *The African American Odyssey*, p. 255-57.

<sup>8</sup> Ralph Ellison. "Blues People." *Shadow and Act*. (New York: Quality Paper Book Club, 1994). Elsewhere in the collection, in "Richard Wright's Blues," Ellison notes that "The blues is an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one's aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain, and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by squeezing from it a near tragic, near comic lyricism." (59). We see that this sensibility colors the porter's relationship with his coworker, the nameless chef.

<sup>9</sup> Recall Bugs's admission in "The Battler" that his arrangement with the former boxer, his role as caretaker, allowed him to live like a gentleman.

<sup>10</sup> For example, of America's contentious engagement with immigration, more specifically a growing Asian immigrant population, Lothrop Stoddard suggests in his *The Rising Tide of Color: Against White World-Supremacy* (cited elsewhere), "Unless some such understanding is arrived at, the world will drift into a gigantic race-war—and genuine race-war means war to the knife. Such a hideous catastrophe should be abhorrent to both sides." See p. 308. Polarity and a sense of urgency underscores Stoddard's prescription. More germane to my thesis regarding White fears of Black is Weale's *The Conflict of Color*. In it, Weale examines the threat of a burgeoning revolt against Empire, even in wake of perceived "Progress." Weale asserts, "But though a steady cultural improvement is increasingly the order of the day, it must not be supposed that this means any diminution of the dangers of the black problem...For he will finally constitute himself, or try to constitute himself, an imperium in imperio, wherever he lives among the large communities of men; and he may even demand as his right that just as he is restricted in many ways by the white man, so shall he restrict the white man in certain other ways...In other words, the negro will not only demand his own reservations, his own lands,



his own communities, but he will clamour for a *policy of retaliation*.” See p. 245 (emphasis mine). Echoes of these concerns can be heard years later in the pages of *True at First Light* and the drums of the Mau Mau.

<sup>11</sup> For an especially insightful look at how the “science” of eugenics shaped American cultural perception and its particularly timely popularity at last century’s beginning, see Betsy L. Nies’s *Eugenic Fantasies: Racial Ideology in the Literature and Popular Culture of the 1920s*. Nies suggests that eugenics, with its emphasis on such empirical applications as phrenology, served first and foremost to help reconstitute what she calls the “classical White male body,” shattered by world war and displaced by shifting ethnic populations. Madison Grant led the charge on behalf of Whites with such works as *The Passing of the Great Race*. In it, Grant, speaking from a privileged position and touting ideas of “Progress,” posits, “Mankind emerged from savagery and barbarism under the leadership of selected individuals whose personal prowess, capacity or wisdom gave them the right to lead and the power to compel obedience” (6). While Nies correctly suggests that writers like Hemingway both publicly and privately ridiculed racist eugenic ideology (see Hemingway’s *The Torrents of Spring*), I argue that Hemingway’s collective work demonstrates that he, too, fell prey to this attempt at White corporeal reconstitution.

<sup>12</sup> Santino, *Ibid*.

<sup>13</sup> See Michael S. Reynolds. *Hemingway: The 1930s*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997) and Reynolds’ final volume in the Hemingway biographical set, *Hemingway: The Final Years*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Abby Ferber’s argument regarding the driving force behind the White supremacist movement in America is easily transposable to my examination of Hemingway’s African sojourn: “Every white supremacist organization desires the reestablishment of racial segregation, and in order to prevent future threats of integration, they desire some form of geographical separation.” See her *White Man Falling*, p. 132. Also see Jane Tompkins’s *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) for an interesting account of White masculine identity construction.

## **The African Stories: (Re)drawing the Color line, or Imagining the Continent in Shades of Black and White**

“...Almost nothing is true and especially not in Africa.”—Ernest Hemingway, *True at First Light*

“Should...the conjecture...that the immense and rich interior of the country is pierced by a fine navigable water be realized, we may expect such an advance in the civilization and commerce of Africa as will *give to it a real place in the society of nations, and a sense of completeness to our own ideas of the globe.*” —J.C. Fremont, *Four Years in the Wilds of Africa* (emphasis added)

For Hemingway, the featured race stories of America are a means of exploring and expressing deep-seated fears of racial instability and false definitional constructions that threaten a formerly untouched conception of White selfhood. The African tales work as an antidote then to fearful (dis)ease and a means of stabilizing and reaffirming a perceived crumbling social order. If Hemingway imbued in the Indian figure and Native American culture an Edenic romance, a quality discussed by S. Elizabeth Bird in her “Introduction: Constructing the Indian, 1830s—1890s,” and if the Hemingway representation necessarily envisioned this same Edenic paradigm as being threatened and in a state of decay, then Africa became the new site of sublimated inspiration for the author. While this examination could very easily include extensive treatments of such works as *The Garden of Eden* or at the very least short stories like “Snows of Kilimanjaro” or “An African Story” (an extracted tale taken from the aforementioned novel) it does not.<sup>1</sup> Omissions of select texts are intentional. I have chosen to limit my selections for this segment because certain texts deserve fuller treatments than can be given here and, more importantly, the works included are representative enough of my general working thesis.

The so-called “Indian stories” and the African American-centered works featured in my previous chapters all demonstrate a narrative intent on forging difference and crafting racial polarity where, the author seems to eventually concede, there is in actuality none. Conversely, in the African-centered autobiographical novels, the fictionalized *True at First Light* and *Green Hills of Africa*, the narrative heavily extols notions of sameness and egalitarianism, only to prove them false in the end, as the marked difference of colonialism becomes the order of the day.<sup>2</sup> And this emphatic demonstration of difference pervades even the simplest of tales, marking the narrative of several African-based short stories and setting the stage for what we encounter in the longer works. Thus, both the African-based short stories and the autobiographical novels ultimately employ what Toni Morrison insists drives much of the American literary canon—the racialized binary opposition—which becomes a means of White self-discovery.

A little discussed and oft-forgotten short story that deserves attention is Hemingway’s “The Good Lion.”<sup>3</sup> I wish to start with this story because it represents a pivot point of sorts for a narrator seeking to retain some semblance of his former (clearly defined) self. “The Good Lion,” like “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife” and “The Battler,” gives us a narrator in flux, caught between a confident embrace of clearly marked racial borders and the angst-laden prospect of perimeter erasure. To that end, “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” to some degree and “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” to a much greater degree reestablish those missing racial borders and bring us closer to the realities of White subjective reaffirmation. Accordingly, only with the African novels do we get a Hemingway narrative brimming with that oft-faded, racially defined (self)confidence.

Presenting the reader with the perfect juxtaposition of elements germane to our established model of polarity, “The Good Lion” takes the form of a fable, simultaneously set in the heart of deepest Africa and southern Europe. In the brief span of a couple of pages, this mini-fable presents us with Hemingway’s essential race conflict in its rawest, most direct and least ornate form. Its language has a definite fairy tale quality to it, while its moral compass—and it does seem to offer a moral in the end---smacks of parable. Hemingway reaches back to a tradition rooted in morality as he begins the tale of a flying lion striving to fit into his surroundings:

Once upon a time there was a lion that lived in Africa with all the other lions. The other lions were all bad lions and every day they ate zebras and wildebeests and every kind of antelope. Sometimes the bad lions ate people too. They ate Swahilis, Umbulus and Wandorobos and they especially liked to eat Hindu traders. All Hindu traders are very fat and delicious to a lion. But this lion, that we love because he was so good, had wings on his back. Because he had wings on his back the other lions all made fun of him. “Look at him with the wings on his back,” they would say and then would all roar with laughter. “Look at what he eats,” they would say because the good lion only ate pasta and scampi because he was so good. (“The Good Lion” 482)

This opening segment establishes the rubric of warring ideologies at work throughout this tale and the greater part of the catalogue of race-centered texts included in this examination. In it, the narrative lays out, within the matrix of an African landscape, Hemingway’s paradoxical conception of race and the uncertainties of boundary.

To be sure, marked notions of difference color the text’s entirety. Published alongside a complementary piece called “The Faithful Bull” in *Holiday Magazine* in 1951, “The Good Lion” demonstrates Hemingway’s splintered racial conception going into his final safari of East Africa in 1953.<sup>4</sup> Years after his literary dealings with the likes of Dick Boulton and his confrontation of ideas of racial “purity” in the “Indian stories,” years after his exploration of the color line defining Black/White relations in America, Hemingway’s fixation remains

intact, unabated, possibly even stronger than it once was. This fixation begins and ends with both an emphatic enunciation of difference and a fundamental questioning of such definition.

In “The Good Lion,” goodness becomes the refined, the literate, the European (foods, wines, and city locales); all else is evil. Africa strategically is the backdrop for a Manichaean showdown; apparent good and evil, or in this case, “good” and “bad” lions are the tale’s featured characters. As readers, we identify with the lion protagonist, “the good lion.” We love the lion, the narrator tells us, because he is good. It is an argument of essentiality. By tale’s end, though, we are left a bit unsettled, and uncertain as to just how “good” this good lion is, and just how implicitly different he is from those around him. We are also left to consider just how good, by implication, we are as champions for this “good” lion.

The “bad lions,” the narrative insists, eat zebras and wildebeests as well as Swahilis and Umbulus, feasting upon beasts and man alike. They are meat-eaters, consumers of the flesh. More importantly, they are man-eaters. We see in the chief lioness’s menacing address to our protagonist that they are petty, accusatory, and threatening: “You are a worthless liar and the son of a griffon,” the wickedest of all the lions said. “And now I think I shall kill you and eat you, wings and all” (483). When asked about his time in Africa by his father, upon his return, the good lion responds very simply, “Very savage, father.” The lions snarl, snap, and roar as they engage one another and laugh at our featured protagonist: “They only stopped to growl with laughter or to roar with laughter at the good lion and to snarl at his wings. They were very bad and wicked lions indeed” (482). What is more, like monstrous vampires, they feast upon the blood of their victims. Aptly, of the story’s principal antagonist, the evil lioness, the narrator tells us, “She had blood caked on her whiskers” and “her breath ... was very bad because she never brushed her teeth ever.” (483). Thus, these

“bad lions” are the essence of incivility, they are savagery incarnate. They even roar in “African lion dialect,” further distancing themselves from “the good” (483).

Conversely, our protagonist is good and the picture of gentility. The good lion, unlike his evil lion peers, who “growl in African lion dialect,” speaks “exemplary French” and Spanish, “beautifully.” Following in the footsteps of Dick Boulton of “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” our protagonist is the master of language. His being a “lion of culture” means those who literally snarl beneath him as he flies away from their threatening claws are bereft of culture. Further, we learn that he hails not from the African continent, but from the shores of Italy. His father, he boasts, “lives in a city where he stands under the clock-tower and looks down on a thousand pigeons, all of whom are subjects.” Speaking of his father’s wealth, the good lion adds “there are more palaces in my father’s city than in all of Africa and there are four great bronze horses that face him and they all have one foot in the air because they fear him. In my father’s city men go on foot or in boats and no real horse would enter the city for fear of my father” (483). Emphasis here is on an African continent bereft of riches and glory. Conversely, Venice, says his father, has night lighting that counters the darkness of the Continent. This stands as yet another sign of civility and implicitly places the protagonist in the reader’s good stead. The good lion boasts that his father is “a noble lion,” a line somewhat reminiscent of the porter’s praise of his young charge’s drink-dependant father in the story of the same name. Yet, even as that story closes, the lines of demarcation quickly fade; gone is the clear color delineation between good and evil, civilized and savage.

What is more, at this tale’s end, our good lion becomes a special hybrid of sorts; in pejorative terms, he is a “half breed” whose narrative equivalent is Dick Boulton of the so-called Indian stories. He is that feared racial other, or more appropriately here, he is that

transgressive figure embodied, the product of a “civil” and “savage” union. The other lions label the good lion a “griffin” and he is in truth a lion with wings. The griffin according to Greek myth was a lion with head and wings of an eagle. As such, there is the added implicit nobility inherent to the creature, but also the emphatic blending of blood.

While all of the contrasting images and connotations make for a wonderful juxtaposition in my paradigm of difference, the closing segment of the fable also proves most useful in examining Hemingway’s racialized story construction. In his return to his homeland, the good lion is a changed lion. The narrator tells us this expressly. We see the change in his marked descent to the ground and in his taking to all fours to make his way to Harry’s Bar, a fallen angel forced to the earth. The narrator expressly tells us that while “In Capriani’s (Harry’s) Bar, nothing was changed...*he was a little changed himself from being in Africa.*”(484). After placing an order at the bar, the good lion then does the apparently inexplicable: he orders not pasta and scampi, but Hindu trader sandwiches. It seems that the change is complete. The lion’s surprising revelation is illuminated all the more by the narrative’s insistence that “Africa had changed him” (484). This statement and the lion’s action suggest more than some superficial embrace of the primitive; it implies a fearful inhabitation, possession, and supplanting of one’s apparent essential self. Civil does not temporarily embrace savage; it *becomes* savage. There is in this the Conradian conception of the Continent’s “darkness” infiltrating and affecting ontological change. Thus, a narrative intention to build on the dark/light, good/evil, civil/savage polarities both abruptly calls into question the veracity inherent in such a paradigm and underscores assumptions underlying it. Not at all a simple tale, “The Good Lion” is a study in contradictions. While clearly defined

racialized spaces no longer exist, “Other”-induced anxieties persist. Such a sequence works to simultaneously weaken and bolster conceptions of racial essentiality.

In “The Good Lion,” Hemingway once more gives us—on the eve of his final African safari--closing images of a subverted order where associated notions of Black and White, of East and West, conflate. However, he also very overtly pushes the Westernized African mythos: the continent of the White literary imagination. When added to such stories as the “Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” and “Snows of Kilimanjaro,” “The Good Lion” becomes part of Hemingway’s collected vision of Africa, part of the Western ordering of perceived continental chaos we see taking place in his autobiographical safari books.

Like the “Indian stories” and those tales featuring the African American presence, “The Good Lion” as an African fable and stories like “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” engage the established differential paradigm and then at least question its very nature in the end. Unlike the other featured race stories, though, “The Good Lion” and “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” simultaneously point to an essential (Anglo) truth that pervades and will not altogether wilt in the face of such questioning. That is, unlike many of the other race stories, these African stories do more to substantiate and perpetuate the Western mythos (of Western greatness and Eastern nefariousness) than question or negate it. While “The Good Lion” seems to suggest the fallibility of absolutes, the folly inherent in the racialized polarity and permanence of category, it simultaneously reverts in the end to the tried and true configuration of East/West *essentiality*. While drawing into question such a conception, the fable ultimately brings us back to that which we question initially: the essential nature of race. In “The Good Lion,” Hemingway makes a final telling concession



to the traditionalist paradigm in suggesting that the Continent's primitivism had infected our protagonist: "African had changed him."

The utter lack of concreteness and definition with regard to racial configuration and associated vulnerability makes "The Good Lion," at least to some degree, an exceptional Hemingway African tale. Ambiguity mutes our return to the familiar. The other stories, both short work and longer text, ultimately revert in more express fashion to the tried and true racialized paradigm. We see this greater adherence and loyalty to the established model in something like "The Snows of Kilimanjaro."<sup>5</sup> While Harry in "Snows" embraces the simplicity and honesty of life lived in Africa, the very embrace of this perceived simplicity, this sublimation of Africa as site of regeneration and rebirth, is itself a validation of the noble savage conceit and an affirmation of Anglo-invested typology. Harry indicts the trappings of civility (read as money and comfort and convenience), his wife, and finally himself in his aesthetic undoing, for his unproductive years as writer. Africa, he says, becomes the place for him to "start again" (44). Underscoring her husband's reverence for the continent, Helen (for still other reasons) declares her love for Africa, and her love for "the country." She enunciates the glee she feels shooting game and, true enough, wildlife and the country itself take precedence over any of the native countrymen.

What is more, at the heart of the tale sits not Africa, or the African, but Harry, as White Western male representative, the essence of grace under pressure; after all, he bravely and truthfully faces certain death as infection seizes upon his gangrenous body. A story whose title takes itself from the glorious African mountain that evokes a sense of majesty from all those who behold it becomes more a representative of an ideal aesthetic overlooking the vast, populated countryside than an exploration of a country and its people. Instead, we

get nameless dark bodies in the act of service underscoring one Western man's self-realization. Individuals are diminished in Harry's presence ("the boys lighting a fire"). Our protagonist becomes "B'wana," his wife and traveling companion, "Memsahib," both titles of respect, of reverence, of Whiteness. The narrative strips name, age, and other markers of individuality from "native" figures who prepare food orders for the couple ("I'll have them mash some potatoes with the klim," "molo letti du, whiskey-soda"), bear the burden of the Mrs.'s "fun" as she hunts ("the two boys had a Tommy," "He saw...the other boy with the dishes" and "they were coming along behind her") and tend to the protagonist's ailing gangrenous leg ("Did Molo change the dressings?" (44) . "Does B'wana want?" becomes representative of the narrative's entirety and Hemingway's later, more extensive encounters with the African continent, this implicit refrain lacing every East/West exchange.

The narrative's African experience, Harry's African experience, in "Snows of Kilimanjaro," becomes one of reversion and reflection. If the Indian stories and the African American stories are largely forward-looking exercises and a fearful query of racial configuration, the safari stories are very much a literal ordering for the Hemingway protagonist, wherein Africa becomes the site of White re-construction. They are experiences that re-inscribe that coveted color line to some degree of certainty and restore Whiteness to some degree of prominence. More specifically, irrefutable authority in these stories always rests in White hands. Unlike all of the other texts featured in this examination, the African short stories, "Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" especially, never fully realize the notion of a subverted social construct, nor do they feature a liminal figure of consequence truly threatening to transgress and upset established authoritative perimeters. Moreover, any transgressions we do see more clearly established in

the “true” safari books, *Green Hills of Africa* and *True at First Light*, are exclusively the prerogative of White privilege.

This very privilege is predicated upon an assumption of difference and superiority, a superiority ontologically rooted in Whiteness; White Being necessitates subjective elevation. In “Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,” the minority presence is stripped of all sense of maturity, of humanity, and any semblance of individuality. We see racial diminution almost immediately with the opening sequences’ master/servant dynamic. Macomber’s initial presence is distilled via an order: “Tell him to make three gimlets,” he says, as he and his wife and Wilson try to forget the young man’s act of cowardice earlier in the day: anticipating command in Pavlovian fashion, the nameless cook (African) assumes a purely perfunctory role in response: the “mess boy” had started them already.

Throughout the tale, the Hemingway narrative relegates various members of the Macomber wait staff to the status of “boy” (“mess boy,” “native boy,” or just simply “boy”). In other instances, the diminutive becomes the type, the label, and the function, with native workers assuming job titles and little else. The catalogue includes hunting party gun bearers, skinners, cooks, and personal servants. The narrative’s active stripping away of individuality approaches absurdity as even the dark body is reduced to constituent parts. For example, a victory celebration in honor of Macomber’s forged lion killing becomes a montage of arms and shoulders of the cook, the personal “boys” the skinner, and the porter, which bear the weight of our illustrious White hunter being carried into camp. Macomber’s personal attendants are, according to the narrator, dumbstruck after Macomber’s initial public defeat and humiliation by the lion: “Wilson could tell that the boys all knew about it now and when he saw Macomber’s personal boy looking curiously at his master while he was putting dishes

on the table he snapped at him in Swahili. The boy turned away with his face blank” (7). The narrative takes great strides to underscore the myth of the White hunter’s invulnerability and Macomber’s rather exceptional, fallen status.

Yet, even diminished, Macomber retains a position of privilege. Ironically, his very fallen-ness itself, as a quasi- anomaly, underscores Anglo grandeur. White aggrandizement extends to the other principal figures as well. Margot Macomber is Memsahib, or “lady” to those “Others” in her presence. She is necessarily included in the racial mythos as Wilson assures her cowardly husband that professionalism guarantees that his troubles in the brush will remain there and that the embarrassing story will remain between the two of them: “Don’t worry about me talking,” he said. “I have a living to make. You know in Africa no woman ever misses her lion and no white man ever bolts.” (8). Narrative focus on native “complicity” in this myth’s maintenance ensures this, as a servant stares, post-debacle, at Macomber in wonder and is summarily chastised for doing so. At one point during a conversation after the botched lion kill, as the three principals (Macomber, his wife, and the hunter for hire, Wilson) sit for lunch, the servant type becomes a phantom presence; he is not even granted a body: “Oh no,” she said. “It’s been charming. And tomorrow. You don’t know how I look forward to tomorrow.” “That’s eland *he’s offering* you,” Wilson said. In this instance, the narrative even erases the servant’s humanity, removing all but the faintest signs of his very existence. This all becomes paramount in crafting a narrative of Whiteness. “Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” is a tale not of Africa or the African, but a tale of the great White hunter, and as Morrison would suggest, a tale of White affirmation, and by extension, American affirmation.

Thus, a work that could very easily conform to my paradigm of a floating color line, with its fallen would-be hero and his red-skinned nemesis, instead becomes emblematic of Hemingway's movement *not away from* but *toward definition* and a further solidification of the White subjective self. While he's described repeatedly as the "red Mr. Wilson" and his hands are brown, ultimately the hired hunter, Wilson, stands simply as the "white hunter" time and again. Wilson in turn becomes the White paragon on these African game trails; with his steely blue eyes, rough-hewn weathered exterior, and hunting expertise now legendary, he is the epitome of the coveted Hemingway hero's "grace under pressure." He is, after all, the one who shoots the lion that frightens Macomber, and later it is he who finishes off the rhino slightly wounded but not killed by the cowardly hunter. Even later in defeat, Francis Macomber himself, donning the garb of White representative, chooses the hunt as his means of self-redemption. The Hemingway narrative exploits this trope to a greater degree in the longer African works rooted in the author's trips to the Continent.

In his African books, most notably the safari "recollections," *Green Hills of Africa*, and *True at First Light*,<sup>6</sup> Hemingway expounds upon and further explores this notion of White aggrandizement. The two greater African texts go well beyond the simple paradigm maintained by the complementary short stories in their attention to not only the trope of White masculinity, but also in their reintegration of that liminal racial figure of indeterminate or questionable status, alluded to but never realized in something like "Macomber."<sup>7</sup> The difference, though, between the nebulous figure previously examined and the transgressive figure of the African stories is a difference of both degree and kind. In the African-based short stories, gone for the most part are the transgressive, marginalized figures we saw in the American tales, the Dick Boultons and or the Bugses who metaphorically encroach on Anglo

authority and “civilized” turf. Likewise, in the safari novels we see no “Others” supplanting White authority. In their stead stands a complex narrator who himself acts as an amalgam of worlds on both sides of the color line.

In Hemingway’s African novels, his longer, autobiographical works, the narrator himself, as White male representative, becomes the new, featured liminal figure. The importance of this is that the Anglo hegemony is always intact. Thus, ultimate authority rests with the White male subject and is in fact never in jeopardy, contrary to what the Hemingway narrator gives us in the several tales of Nick Adams. Here, polarities of Black and White, of savage and civil, in fact all lines of demarcation, can be erased and redrawn with the confidence that (White) order will prevail. Casting himself as both protagonist and antagonist within the schema of racial stability, the White subject insures his own preservation. Africa then becomes that tabula rasa upon which Hemingway, as creator, re-writes the world according to the White literary imagination. *True at First Light* and *Green Hills of Africa* are fictionalized autobiography, or maybe more precisely, autobiographical fiction, with an emphasis in the latter work on the fictive element. An emphasis on the fictive elements means an emphasis on the crafting of narrative and the creation of reality. It is a forged reality, and a representation, something greater than what Carlos Baker links to a chronologically conscious restructuring of history for effect and aptly labels “architectonics.”<sup>8</sup> To this aesthetic conceptualization, I would add imagination.

Whereas in the shorter African fiction the Hemingway narrative must grapple with a subverted order spiting efforts to maintain a racialized difference, the novels provide Hemingway an opportunity to effectively mute this difference while simultaneously and effortlessly maintaining Anglo order. In the longer, more developed African novels,

Hemingway works hard to initially reduce and eliminate disparity, to build a narrative of sameness and equality between the racial types drawn, something Norman Fairclough calls a type of “false egalitarianism.”<sup>9</sup> However, the narrative’s reversion to and employment of colonial discourse in the end only subverts any “new world order” and firmly reestablishes notions of difference and a fading order an ocean away in America. What is more, these novels, most especially *True At First Light*, aggrandize Whiteness, via the model of polarity, and in doing so, they succeed in reviving and re-membering the seemingly shattered, White subjective Self.

*True At First Light*’s entire opening sequence, with our narrator—as Occidental tourist, White hunter, and temporary African--engaged in personal reflection and recollection on years gone by and a historicized Africa, is a testament to the narrative strategy at work. Further, this sequence encapsulates in two paragraphs what transpires over the following three hundred pages of the published manuscript (note that the original manuscript more than doubles this total). An examination of the first of these paragraphs is quite productive in deciphering Hemingway’s Continental vision and just what it is that the narrator does to craft and maintain order in a “new” Africa:

Things were not too simple in this safari because things had changed very much in East Africa. The white hunter had been a close friend of mine for many years. I respected him as I had never respected my father and he trusted me, which was more than I deserved. It was, however, something to try to merit. He had taught me by putting me on my own and corrected me when I made mistakes. When I made a mistake he would explain it. Then if I did not make the same mistakes again he would explain a little more. But he was nomadic and he was finally leaving us because it was necessary for him to be at his farm, which is what they called a twenty thousand acre cattle ranch in Kenya. He was a very complicated man compounded of absolute courage, all the good human weaknesses and a strangely subtle and very critical understanding of the people. (13)

The segment's first sentence signifies a key narrative admission and a candid realization. Things had indeed changed very much since the last time Hemingway, as thinly guised narrator, stalked lion in the African bush and sat by the campfire exchanging stories with Pop, Philip Percival, his lead hunter, friend, and mentor while on safari. Hemingway's last safari comes during a time of great Continental upheaval as the former "race for Africa," with its attendant clamoring and claim-making by various Western nations, becomes a race to save crumbling Empire as former European strongholds give way to native cries for self-determination. Movements are afoot already in Hemingway's East African hunting ground in 1953, and we get the slightest of references to the revolution-minded Mau Mau warriors in Hemingway's narrative. Like disease, the rumblings of revolution infect the camps of Wakamba and Masi, and the rumors spread as the attendant fears increase among those loyal to the White way. A decade after Hemingway's safari, lands formerly stalked and surveyed fall from German and British hands (for example, Tanganyika gains political independence in 1961). France would lose control of its holdings during this time in Algeria as well.<sup>10</sup>

As for the White hunter references in the above sequence, they serve a plurality of purposes. In the segment, we get the Hemingway prescription for the heroic loner figure, the so-called "code hero": he is observant, quietly skilled, and self-reliant. This is Hemingway's featured hunter, Philip Percival; Hemingway deems this figure complicated. As we peel away the various layers, though, we see that he fits my paradigm of polarity as well. The narrative grants him the label of "the white hunter," which sets him apart from all others. The labeling establishes the tone of both differentiation and "egalitarianism" that mark the text's entirety, with connotations of selfhood (read White) and "Otherness" imbued in the diction. This diction has a strong associative power as the "White" label forces binary pairing, and an



understood, phantom Black presence suddenly marks the text. The colored tag does something else quite effectively, too. It simultaneously places the Hemingway narrator outside of the colonial circle, which works as a terrific distancing technique that creates the semblance of space between the imperial presence and the narrator. Further, it simultaneously crafts, momentarily, an alliance between Hemingway as narrator and the non-White objective body. In this way, through his labeling of his friend and mentor as “the white hunter,” Hemingway temporarily becomes non-White, too. Via this subtle narrative strategy, he is African; the narrator, a hunter himself, establishes a temporary “false egalitarianism,” an affected kinship and bond, with the continent and its people. However, I suggest multiple facets to this narrative discourse.

Just as important to my examination as the crafted equity is the validated polarity and White aggrandizement that also colors the descriptive. “The white hunter had been a close friend of mine for many years,” says the narrator. While the Hemingway narrator is outside of Empire, he is aligned with it, too. The White hunter, Hemingway tells us, is worthy of respect, and of trust. He supplants the father and necessarily becomes the father; he becomes “Pop.” Pop in turn, semantically at least, becomes Papa, and Hemingway, as Papa, soon enough becomes that same great White hunter, who is trusted, respected, revered. Of Pop, Hemingway tells us that “He had taught me by putting me on my own and correcting when I made mistakes. When I made a mistake he would explain it....”(13). With lessons to give to a mature, but still-learning Hemingway, this White hunter (*the* White hunter) takes on the vestments of teacher as well, a role Hemingway himself, as the featured character in both African novels, relishes in his interaction with others, most especially his wives and the native “boys” who comprise his hunting crew. In fact, we see variations on this typology as

Hemingway hunts in the brush, doles out medical advice, and waxes poetic on the state of American letters in his recounts, all incarnations I will explore in the next chapter. So with the opening sequence to his *True at First Light*, Hemingway's narrative gives the reader a reversion to a time, a place, an order, "when things were simple." And immediately following this mini-treatise on "the White hunter," the narrator enunciates rather succinctly an underlying tension that drives the narrative's entirety: "There are people who love command and in their eagerness to assume it they are impatient at the formalities of taking over from someone else. I love command since it is the ideal welding of freedom and slavery" (15). Toni Morrison would suggest that the tension between these two ontological states defines much of American literature.<sup>11</sup> Hemingway's texts, when read through the lens of racialized authority, certainly benefit from such a critical application.

Morrison suggests in her "little book," *Playing in the Dark*, that the American Romantic tradition necessarily defines itself as a system of binary oppositions and that that becomes a means, as it was from its inception, of self-exploration through subterfuge and sublimation and projection; this becomes a wonderful prism through which to view Hemingway's assertions. Power and authority are at the heart of several prominent works, and are themes, Morrison suggests, that repeat themselves again and again through the years, throughout the American canon. Freedom is yet another of these coveted themes. I find it interesting that Hemingway draws as his central thematic here freedom and slavery, binaries necessarily tied to the issues of race. Newness is another. Hemingway's own point about authorial interpretation and explication is well-taken and to a great degree probably true. However, the humanist's job is to interpret, to explain, to find and assign meaning to that about which little or nothing is readily known. Hemingway's textual clues are too blatant not

to interpret. And their connection to the investigation set in motion by Morrison's canonical inquiry and the racial paradigm I have constructed is more than solid. Just as America became a clean slate for self-exploration of early settlers, so, too, Africa becomes a tabula rasa of sorts for the Anglo in general, for wealthy Americans like Hemingway, more specifically.

Europeans, suggests Morrison, were running from their own personal demons when they arrived on American shores, and these demons found their way into our nation's early literature and that of succeeding generations. Furthermore, Morrison's suggestion that Americans as "new world seekers" were in perpetual motion, always running from some nebulous, often unquestionable thing, could not be more true in relation to Hemingway and could not be any more applicable than when discussed in relation to Hemingway's autobiographical African novels, most especially *True at First Light*. The narrator's rather candid admission regarding command stands as testament to the truth of Morrison's assertions. Morrison explores the trope of slavery, and at great length, in her study, pointing to such critically untapped works as Willa Cather's *Saphira and the Slave Girl* as proof positive that well after the last slaves were freed, twentieth-century citizens, documentarians and artists alike, were driven to explore and define the boundaries of freedom through the tropes of bondage and the associative dark body. Engaging in such an exercise (or exorcism) becomes for the aesthetic explorer a matter of authoritarian validation.

Here Hemingway dons the garb of such an explorer, enunciating the latent racial anxieties of his nation. What is more, Hemingway, as character and liminal figure, metaphorically assumes the roles of both master and slave, of great White hunter and Kamba native both, in exploring these very same boundaries. While Hemingway's emphasis seems

to be in relation to duty, it is quite clear that power, authority, and the power structure at large are what capture his imagination.

While Hemingway's African narrative opens on a note of uncertainty, with talk of political and social change and a brief mention of political rumblings littering the literary landscape, and even as we bear witness to a seemingly socially liberated and culturally understanding narrator (read as the White hunter relinquishing his claims to race privilege), the narrative itself insists on crafting and maintaining a cultural and racial divide. Like its predecessor, *Green Hills of Africa*, Hemingway's second safari narrative succeeds in doing so via a heavy investment in colonial discourse, with its attendant images of servitude, its reliance on now arcane pejoratives (even our narrator admits this), and its eventual and ultimate aggrandizement of Whiteness.

Standing in the shadows of such greatness are once and always the darker figures that infuse the text. And these figures are the very same that inhabited the narrative space of *Green Hills of Africa* two decades before this tale's inception, begging the question: How much has in fact changed for the story-teller? However, the narrator's reflections of Pop, Philip Percival, rather suggestively insist on a culturally enlightened hunter seeing the error of his predecessors', and indeed his own, former ways. In speaking of Pop's almost intuitive racial divisiveness and the old man's polarized paradigm of "us" and "them," Hemingway says:

It was always they. They were the people, the watu. Once they had been the boys. They still were to Pop. But he had either known them when they were boys in age or had known their fathers when their fathers were children. Twenty years ago I had called them boys too and neither they nor I had any thought that I had no right to. Now no one would have minded if I had used the word. But the way things were now you did not do it. Everyone had his duties and everyone had a name. (16)

As evidenced in this bit of self-discovery, Hemingway seems to point to a score's worth of personal, piecemeal growth and a definite change of times. With this admission, we get another brick laid in this road Hemingway builds toward supposed egalitarianism, a road laden with self-constructed potholes and reversions. The Hemingway narrator crafts a distance between sin's commission and himself, a tactic he used some twenty years earlier, and now again here, and to greater effect, in *True at First Light*, while fully engaging these very same sins as he crafts his own memory and story. While this revitalized and new-seeing Hemingway does make the effort to learn the names of those attendants at his beck and call, the fact remains that those closest to him, both in terms of proximity and intimacy, are always kept at a metaphorical distance via the tropes of function and "duty."

Arap Meina becomes a darker version of *Green Hills*' Kandinsky, a literary fool of sorts given to histrionics and very much entrenched in the mythos that is Hemingway's whitewashed Africa.<sup>12</sup> Purveyor of gossip and camp news, Meina is the self-proclaimed camp "Informer" and as Hemingway suggests, he is Papa's "closest friend after Ngui and Mthuka" (Hemingway's personal gun-bearer and camp driver, respectively). We quickly see, though, that he is in reality nothing more than a game scout, and according to Patrick Hemingway, this was "the lowest ranked game law enforcement officer in Kenya. There were no white game scouts."<sup>13</sup> Yet, Meina's perpetual gravity and predictable histrionics, especially in the face of authorial fun and games at his expense, do nothing to enliven the figure beyond caricature and type as one embracing his subservience to Empire. He sports a shawl and pork-pie hat and his constant refrain to the White hunter is "brother," fully indulging Hemingway in his game of false egalitarianism. Even Arap Meina's name becomes subject to White authority and privilege as Hemingway admits to initially

accidentally corrupting it, “thinking it was an English public school type name.” His reversion to the misnomer even after his discovery and admission testifies to White narrative privilege.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Hemingway’s insistence on change and enlightenment demonstrated in his recognition of name over label proves false.

Those standing in the shadows of the White hunter include his gun bearer, his drivers, his steward, and his cooks, among others. A virtual contingent of dark bodies serves the Hemingway safari camp from beginning to end. The resonance of Morrison’s assertion regarding minority functionality, most apparent in Hemingway’s first safari recount, fades very little, even in light of the twenty years that have passed and the author’s self-professed newfound understanding of the continent, the country and the people. In this sense, very little in fact has changed as remnants of an old order remain, and in this case, willfully so.

Not long after his realization that blanket characterization and individual diminution via typology and epithet are in fact part and parcel of an archaic, quickly dying order, our narrator inadvertently yet repeatedly reverts to that reality as he crafts his African narrative. Mary Hemingway’s desire to hunt is quickly infused with mystery, insists the narrative, by those natives close to her as she prepares to hunt a lion menacing nearby villagers: “No one knew why Mary needed to kill a gerenuk. . . The boys thought it had something to do with Mary’s religion” (26). Hemingway becomes skilled in the displacement of his own African vision, redirecting personal biases and having them reappear in all places outside of himself. Most telling is Hemingway’s cavalier reversion to the old descriptives recounting these happenings soon after he is told by the game department’s Informer, the ever-dramatic Arap Meina, of a village incident in which a Masai man seriously wounded another in a recent altercation. Meina’s recount, smacking of mock drama, is of two men at odds. However, in

Hemingway's recount to an elder family member via an interpreter, these Masai warriors are relegated to "boys" with markers of identity and manhood jettisoned completely.

Further, Hemingway seems to lament the passage of a by-gone era of unquestioned servitude, suggesting natives "won't go as porters anymore and the fly kills pact animals" (215). In this statement, there is the slightest hint of native volition, and with the casting off of empirical shackles comes self-realization and choice. With this admission, we are privy to Hemingway's own momentary, mini-epiphany: absolute socio-historical authority does not exist anymore. It is confined to the safari camp and the parameters of paragraph and page of narrative fiction. Again, native and function seem inherently intertwined. With the lion hunt over and the hunting party momentarily unable to explore and survey parts of the land because of hyper-rocky terrain (they had hoped to take pictures), White exploration endeavors, depending on the dark body for reification, are for the moment dashed. But this vulnerability is only temporary, as the White hunter takes aim elsewhere.

Individuality, manhood, and agency all become casualties of the White hunter's narrative as the story recounts Mary's dubious triumph in killing her lion and the related celebration of this victory by the camp subordinates:

We came into camp and sat in chairs by the fire and stretched our legs out and drank tall drinks. Who we needed was Pop and Pop was not here. I had told Keiti to break out some beer for the lines and then I waited for it to come. . . It had taken time enough for them to decide who was to carry Miss Mary and then the wild, stooped dancing rush of Wakamba poured in from behind the tents all singing the lion song. The big mess boy and the truck driver had the chair and they put it down and Keiti dancing and clapping his hands led Miss Mary to it and they hoisted her up and stared dancing around the fire with her and then out toward the lines and around the lines and around the cook fire and the men's fire and around the cars and the wood truck and in and out. The Game Scouts were all stripped to their shorts and so was everyone else except the old men. I watched Mary's bright head and the black strong fine bodies that were carrying her and crouching and stamping in the dance and then moving forward to reach up and touch her. It was fine wild lion dance and at the end they put Mary down in

the chair by her camp chair at the fire and everyone shook hands with her and it was over. She was happy and we had a fine happy meal and went to bed. (170)

This scene is reminiscent of Hemingway's recollections of P.O.M.'s (Pauline's) post-lion-kill celebration in *Green Hills of Africa* some twenty years earlier. Like Pauline, Mary is all but deified by the native masses, with Hemingway strategically giving us a clear juxtaposition of light and dark in the above scene. The campsite fire and enveloping night are mirrored by Mary's "bright head" and the surrounding gyrating "black strong fine bodies," carrying her, "crouching" and "stomping" around her. The overtures are undeniably sensual in nature, with Mary's Whiteness being celebrated, worshipped by the Black sexualized type, which only seems to further craft the marked marginality separating White from Black, civil from primitive. Hemingway's Black/White color polarity is in itself quite striking. The lion hunt and post-hunt celebration feature Black and White interaction in the "public" sphere; and we see on the plains, in the brush, and in the camp that the requisite racial separation is never questioned.

Pauline's lion hunt reverberates through the recount of Mary's kill. In *Green Hills*, the story of the lion's demise is itself significant in that Hemingway, with the aid of the P.O.M. character, craftily contains the native "Other" within the trappings of type. Hemingway reminds the reader with the lion episode of the mythologies regarding the Eastern reverence and fetishization of White femininity. Indeed, Hemingway prefaces the entire lion conquest with one key observation regarding his gunbearer: despite his initial apathetic stance toward Hemingway, from the very beginning, M'Cola had a definite affinity for "Mama." Hemingway gives no reasons, no rationale behind the affection. M'Cola simply likes her. This statement is followed immediately by the confusing yet joyous exaltation of



Pauline, the heroine, by the adoring, and conspicuously all-male, throng of natives. While Pauline is not explicitly sexualized by the Black, she is idolized.

In a bit of queer objectification, "Other" exalts "Other." In an instance of Hemingway "displacement," the objectification of the female becomes a "native" crime, shifted from Hemingway, as "brother," to the Black figures in the camp. Hemingway also shifts blame for the subjection of a people onto the shoulders of those very subordinates, implicating them in their own suppression. What manifests itself in this action is what David Spurr calls the "constant crisis of rhetoric"; it is the crisis of authority.<sup>15</sup> "Authority," suggests Spurr, "is in some sense conferred by those who obey it. That they do so under extreme forms of constraint does not change their place in the balance, their indispensable role in granting authority its proper value" (11). Within the colonial context, the subjugate's very presence as subjugate affirms, indeed sanctions, a given authoritative construction. Sparked by M'Cola's excited shouts and cheers of "Hey la Mama! Hey la Mama! Hey la Mama!", a virtual groundswell of rhythmic cheering ensues as Pauline assumes the position of grand Matriarch:

The rolling-eyed skinner picked P.O.M. up, the big cook and the boys held her, and others pressing forward to lift, and if not to lift to touch and hold, they danced and sang through the dark, around the fire and to our tent. The boys came dancing, crowding, and beating time and chanting something from down in their chests that started like a cough and sounded like "Hey la Mama! Hay la Mama! Hey la Mama!" (42)

Immediately we witness a two-fold containment as P.O.M. is swept away by native tide, and native is ensnared by stereotype. The picking up, holding, and touching of P.O.M. is a willful, yet ultimately unlicensed act. There is a blunting of agency as P.O.M. is taken away by "the boys." More important to my paradigm, though, is Hemingway's relegation of men to "boys" and a conjoint reduction of humanity to pure primacy, with guttural noises and

fireside dancing supplanting individuality. While Hemingway does not blatantly eroticize the Western female here, there are definite sexual overtones to the description of the frenzied exaltation and "taking" of P.O.M. by the native men. Hemingway describes a scene of dancing, of cough-like chanting, of bodies pressing, touching, and holding. Simultaneously, and perhaps more significantly, Hemingway also indulges the assumption of Black fascination and enchantment with White.<sup>16</sup>

Once more Hemingway displaces his own Eurocentric fixation onto another. The fact that Pauline does very little herself to incite such a native response is irrelevant here. It is the effect, as seen from afar, that Hemingway wants the reader to see. Whiteness revered, a reverence apparently outside of the Hemingway realm of influence (Edward Said's essential, unbiased truth) is what the reader should glean from this sequence. Hoisted in the air by the natives, Pauline, the purported lion-killer, is the revered "Memsahib," a nickname Hemingway himself repeatedly bestows upon his wife. The imagery here proves most interesting, with the natives simultaneously raising Pauline, both literally and metaphorically, and dancing around the campfire. The physical act, the lifting of Pauline, is a manifestation of a metaphorical raising of estimation. The fire dance becomes then an act of worship, a celebration of "the light," something revisited in Mary's quasi-deification in *True at First Light*. Hemingway's recollections further link Pauline to Empire in the post-celebratory sequence:

Then at the tent they put her down and everyone, very shyly, shook hands, the boys saying "M'uzuri, Memsahib," and M'Cola and the porters all saying "M'suri, Mama" with much feeling in the accenting of the word "Mama" (43).

Emphasis once again is upon title and, consequently, social position. The narrative labels Pauline the "good lady" and, of course, "Mama." Hemingway expressly notes the maternal

label, not only to recall particular "facts," but also to actively suggest interpretation and emphasis. Here, the racialized figure is infantilized via diction, and ultimate authority rests with the White subjective self.<sup>17</sup>

This entire sequence is revisited in great detail in *True at First Light*, as the aforementioned segment featuring Mary's lion kill begins with orders, not requests, from Hemingway to his hunting party supervisor. Even when named, Keiti, named as supervisor, is mere function and underling. Yet, given a name, he is the aberration here, as all "Others" in service to Hemingway (and Empire) are reduced to nameless dark bodies and job titles as the narrative catalogues a "big mess boy," a truck driver, game scouts, and old men among the celebration's attendants. Even those deep within the Hemingway party circle, those closest to the Occidental tourists (like Keiti), are ultimately kept at bay through carefully crafted memory. Most, if not all, close quarter contact between the Africans and the Americans is colored by such racial authoritative warrants.

Yet, Hemingway's segregated narrative transposes itself to the private quarters as well. At one point in the text, what had been a fairly prominent paradigm of White authority and Black servitude becomes even more pronounced with Mary Hemingway's temporary departure to Nairobi for the purposes of Christmas shopping. With Mary's leave, the narrative dependence on and fixation with an order steeped in "slavery" and "freedom" and in a perceived "ultimate authority" become even clearer. Hemingway's first morning sans Mary becomes representative of such an order:

When Mwindi brought the tea in the morning. I was up and dressed sitting by the ashes of the fire with two sweaters and a wool jacket on. It had turned out very cold in the night and I wondered what that meant about the weather for today.

"Want fire?" Mwindi asked.

"Small fire for one man." (235)

The exchange continues with questions from Mwindi and requests from Hemingway regarding the meal to be prepared and the clothes to be readied for the hunter. What Hemingway intends to give us is an interaction that is both respectful and formal, and intimate. Yet, the exchange goes well beyond simple camaraderie parading in the guise of a working relationship. This scene and others like it are, as Patrick Hemingway suggests, very much in the vein of Kazuo Ishiguru's *Remains of the Day*, with a marked emphasis on the inherent dynamics of the master-servant relationship. However, contrary to Ishiguru's model, Hemingway's narrative fails to truly realize the essence of friendship achieved in Ishiguru's crafted relationship.<sup>18</sup> What we are left with instead are emphatic reminders of this ultimately being a narrative steeped in the rhetoric of Empire and notions of duty and servitude, and nothing more.

Images of Mwindi bringing to our White hunter his morning tea open the sequence. Within a span of a few sentences, a fire is proposed, reminders regarding preventative medication are proffered, dress is suggested, and a meal is ordered. Clearly, Mwindi's dedication is not only noteworthy, but implicitly praiseworthy. Mwindi's questioning regarding Hemingway's planned hunting attire ("what you wear?") rather appropriately closes out the segment, providing a bookend to our model of Anglo authoritative validation disguised as respectful camaraderie. Like the typed nominal figure of American antebellum literature, Mwindi (and Keiti above him) is the quasi-familial caretaker. He is the trusted, elder "Uncle" figure. Also, like the African American caretaker, absolute acceptance and inclusion in the White "family" is never reified, and ultimate authority, in White hands, is never questioned:

At this time I called Msembi, the good rough boy who served as mess steward and was a hunting, not a crop raising Kamba but was not a skilled hunter and was reduced, since the war, to servant status. We were all servants since I served the Government, through the Game Department, and I also served Miss Mary and a magazine named *Look*. My service to Miss Mary had been terminated, temporarily with the death of her lion. My service to *Look* had been terminated, temporarily; I had hoped permanently. I was wrong of course. But neither Msembi nor I minded serving in the least and neither of us had served God nor our King too well to be stuffy about it. (264)

Just as the Hemingway narrative expressly engages the ideas of slavery and freedom as it opens, it significantly and expressively addresses and attempts to define servitude as well. As if attempting to both negotiate the void between master and servant and to simultaneously sell the message of sameness, of equity, the narrative pays homage to the ordered polarity of Empire: within the confines of a few sentences we get both egalitarian rhetoric and colonial discourse, neither one seemingly at odds with the other.

Hemingway is rather reductive in his assessment of post-war Africa. Perhaps half mockingly, perhaps not, he suggests, in light of Empire's brand on the African continent, that "we [are] all servants." Yet, truth be told, Msembi's existence is defined by little more than his reduced "servant status" and the designation by the narrative as the "good rough boy who served as mess steward" (264). In the end, Hemingway, like Msembi (both being ideal servants, according to the narrative), insists that he minds not being in such service. Thus, the servant's pain becomes *his* pain as he dons the garb of grand-empathizer. However, Hemingway's brotherhood, in the service of servitude is little more than symbolic. Immediately following his insistent assertion that all bondage is relative, Hemingway reverts to his privileged position as he makes "preparations" for a meal: "So I told Msembi that he could serve dinner in one half of an hour in the mess tent and that plates be laid for Debba, the widow, and myself" (264). Thus, Hemingway's true ability here is his practiced (read

distanced) empathy and his ability to ultimately return to a narrative space where clearly bondage is nothing more than a relative term, where the color line is clearly visible, and where the White voice ultimately is the voice of command.

Like Msembi, as the “good rough boy,” who according to Hemingway, “doesn’t mind serving in the least,” the character of Tony, campmate G.C.’s personal manservant, comes to represent the model African in many respects as much for what he does *not* embody as for what he does. Tony, Hemingway tells us, is “a fine man and one of my best friends” (197). What we do get of him is a multiplicity of descriptives springing from great deliberation. Hemingway’s description is infused with respect and admiration: that much is true. Tony is a Masai and a former soldier with experience as a Tank Corp sergeant in the English Army. The narrative keenly notes the rarity of this African’s military service in such a capacity. What is more, Hemingway describes his friend as “brave” and “able.” However, for all that Tony is, he *is not* and *will never be*, as “one of [Hemingway’s] best friends,” an equal. Even as it invests itself in egalitarian rhetoric, the narrative underscores the racial divide.

True, Tony is admired for the qualities he possesses (he is “brave” and “able”), but also for what he does *not* demonstrate: even as a Masai, Tony is *not* wholly African. Hemingway tells us, “He had a very *un-Masai* build, long short rather bandied legs and a heavy, powerful chest, arms and neck” (197). As “un-Masai,” Tony is a profile in physical prowess. What is more, he is *not* the typical Masai warrior; he *is* in fact a British warrior, a Western warrior with Black skin. His very praiseworthiness then lay in his Westernness. Implicitly, the “unmentionables” become Eastern characteristics. Furthermore, narrative diction becomes key as Hemingway’s words take on a possessive and ultimately utilitarian tone: “[I] envie[d] G.C.” He does so because “he was a good mechanic, loyal, devoted and

always cheerful and he spoke good English, perfect Masai, naturally Swahii, some Chugga, and some Kamba” (197). Value lay in his usefulness. Hemingway’s regret-infused description becomes a virtual catalogue of potential and utility, and reads more like a resume than a placard for friendship. While his British service and language prowess (English carries special importance) are admirable, Tony’s loyalty, devotion, and cheerful disposition are of particular note also, aligning him with the likes of the Informer, Keiti, and other incarnations of the model servant who wishes for nothing more than to please Bwana (and who not only does not mind his servility, but relishes it; the happy darky typology rampant in African American representation comes to mind). Embracing Bwana’s wishes, the African is devoid of personal volition.

And it is Bwana, the American, and not Africa or the African who ultimately receives most of this narrative’s attention. Native deprecation, no matter how slight, becomes a means to an end of certain White aggrandizement. Hemingway’s is a narrative of misdirection, a sleight of hand of the first order, coming straight from a boxer’s bag of tricks with Hemingway feinting with his right and surprising us with his left. Devotional service on the part of the African, as evidenced in such figures as Keiti, Mwindi, and Tony, is not only laudable, but *necessary* for the survival of a system built on the precepts of White mastery and authority. The narrative accomplishes this by conveniently placing Hemingway in the position of not only camp master, but great White hunter, teacher, and final arbiter and law of the land, all spaces of mastery inherited from those Bwanas who came before him.

*True at First Light* opens with a segment that is more an homage to, as Hemingway puts it, his “great friend and teacher Philip Percival” than anything else. His legacy is the great White hunter of lore and legend, and of personal memory. Percival’s role (as retiring

hunter) is a role Hemingway relishes, as he openly accepts the baton and its attendant responsibilities from the recently departed, but certainly not forgotten hunter, friend, mentor, and father figure himself. The narrator recalls early on this symbolic mentoring relationship between the elder hunter and the expatriate writer (himself an old man now), the pre and post-hunt campfire conversations shared. Already in this sequence, we see the narrative impetus to craft the Hemingway hunting legend as Pop gives the writer advice on subduing elephants and the two share details of a fantastic joke reified by “master” word play and implicit African native ignorance:

“And elephants?”

“Never give them a thought,” Pop said. “enormous silly beasts. Harmless everyone says. Just remember how deadly you are with all other beasts. After all they are not the woolly mastodon. I’ve never seen one with a tusk that made two curves.”

“Who told you about that?”

“Keiti,” Pop said. “He told me you had thousands of them in the off-season. Those and your saber-toothed tiger and your brontosaurus.”

“The son of a bitch,” I said.

“No, he more than half believes it. He has a copy of the magazine and they look very convincing. I think he believes it some days and some days not. It depends on whether you bring him any guinea fowl and how you’re shooting in general.”

“It was a pretty well illustrated article on prehistoric animals.”

“Yes. Very. Most lovely pictures. And you made a very rapid advance as a white hunter when you told him you had only come to Africa because your mastodon license was filled at home and you had shot over your limit on saber-toothed tiger. I told him it was God’s truth and that you were a sort of escaped ivory poacher from Rawlins, Wyoming which was rather like the Lado Enclave in the old days and that you had come out here to pay reverence to me who had started you as a boy, barefoot of course, and to try to keep your hand in for then they would let you go home and take out a new mastodon license.” (15-16)

Thus, early on, even in self-deprecating fashion, the narrator forces an attendant mystique; what begins as a joke becomes unabashed aggrandizement as native ignorance gives way to near-legendary hero worship.



Later, while hunting the lion with Mary, Hemingway's recollection of G.C. and his crew coming for a camp visit also harkens back to the days of old: "G.C. turned up after breakfast his beret over one eye; his boy's face gray and red with dust and his people in the back of the Land Rover as trim and dangerous looking and cheerful as ever" (85). The image is at once stark and divisive with the East/West dichotomy readily apparent as the beret and a possessive sensibility (*his* "boy") overtake the narrative. These are G.C.'s "boy's" relegated to the Rover's back, covered with dust, looking "cheerful" and simultaneously "dangerous," at once an amalgam of the racial typologies of "happy darky" and "beastly" Black. Echoing Morrison's assertion that the deliberate crafting of "Otherness" becomes a necessary self-defining practice for the American (even the expatriate immersed in such "Otherness"), seemingly innocuous characterization quickly reveals itself to be a means of self-reflection and self-study for the great White hunter. Explored, questioned, and eventually abandoned in a story like "The Battler," the mythos of the Anglo as the "great man" in his many incarnations thus becomes the point of focus for the autobiographical novel. Moreover, the African safari books seek to reestablish roots in this dying tradition and to re-form that "great man."

<sup>1</sup> *The Torrents of Spring*, with its parody of Sherwood Anderson's sublimation of "the primitive," would work especially well here and deserves special treatment elsewhere in a more comprehensive examination.

<sup>2</sup> See Ernest Hemingway. *Green Hills of Africa*. (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1935). and Ernest Hemingway. *True at First Light*. (New York: Scribner, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Ernest Hemingway. "The Good Lion." *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, The Finca Vigia Edition. (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> See Robert Trogden, Ed. *Ernest Hemingway: A Literary Reference*. (New York: Carroll & Graff, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Ernest Hemingway. "Snows of Kilimanjaro" *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, The Finca Vigia Edition. (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> Again, see Ernest Hemingway. *Green Hills of Africa*, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1935) and *True at First Light*. (New York: Scribner, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> In "Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," the narrative toys with ambiguity in relation to the character of Wilson, the safari's hired White hunter. At various times, narrative emphasis is on his blue eyes and red and brown skin.

<sup>8</sup> Carlos Baker. *Hemingway: The Writer As Artist*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963). Baker suggests that, like Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Hemingway relies on a unique blending of truth-telling, a recount of things "as they are," and time manipulation. Hemingway, says Baker, manipulates time, not truth, to craft drama.

<sup>9</sup> Norman Fairclough. *Language and Power*, (New York: Longman Publishing, 1989). Every verbal exchange, says Fairclough, is colored by an inherent vying for narrative control. Fairclough's "false egalitarianism" can be read as a specious power equation in which parity is nonexistent.

<sup>10</sup> See Sheldon Gellar. "The Colonial Era." *Africa*. Phyllis M. Martin & Patrick O'Meara Eds. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 135-55. Also see Edmond J. Keller. "Decolonization, Independence, and the Failure of Politics." *Africa*. Phyllis M. Martin & Patrick O'Meara Eds. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 156-175. Additionally, see Donald L. Gordon's "African Politics." *Understanding Contemporary Africa*. Second Ed. April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon Eds. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), p. 53-93.

<sup>11</sup> Once more, see Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*.

<sup>12</sup> In *Green Hills of Africa*, the character of Kandisky is a neighboring Austrian shamba owner who befriends the Hemingway narrator and becomes both a convenient sounding board (allowing Hemingway to discuss American literature) and a foil of sorts for our American author (whose colonialist posturing makes our narrator look culturally enlightened).

<sup>13</sup> See Patrick Hemingway's prefatory and appended notes and commentary to *True at First Light*.

<sup>14</sup> See Hemingway's January 3, 1954 letter to Harvey Breit, for example, in which he recounts his African experiences thus far. In it, he refers to Arap as "Arab." *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917-1961*. Carlos Baker Ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), p. 825-26.

<sup>15</sup> David Spurr. *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> Hemingway's exploitation of White anxiety over a perceived hyper-desire of the Black man mirrors tactics used in great force in the decades following the Civil War and well into the twentieth century. In Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman*, for example, Dixon's narrative builds to a climax involving the raping of the White Marion by the Black figure, Gus. Dixon's minimalist descriptive is strong with beastly implication of the Black: "The girl uttered a cry, long, tremulous, heart-rending, piteous. A singular *tiger* spring, and the *black claws* of the *beast* sank into the soft white throat and she was still" (emphasis mine). See *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*. (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1905), p. 303-304. For a great treatment of White America's dealings with its new popular "burden" in the years following Emancipation, most especially its forgery of the Black beast conception as a coping tactic, see George Fredrickson's *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914*. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971).

<sup>17</sup> On the East African Shamba, Hemingway literally and metaphorically engage in what George Fredrickson in his discussion of Black/White relations in the American South (*Black Image in the White Mind*) calls "plantation paternalism." Hemingway's narrative labels of "Mama" and "Papa" seem most appropriate within this context.

<sup>18</sup> Also, Ishaguru explores the boundaries of Empire within the framework of an ideal: duty (to one's master, to one's nation, to an imperial construct). Hemingway's exploration of attendant duties necessarily invests itself, not so much in class, but in the strictures of race, as *the* defining ordering element.

## **The African Novels: (Re)constructing the Great (White) Man**

“Until the lions produce their own historian, the story of the hunt will glorify only the hunter.” --African proverb (*Home and Exile*, Chinua Achebe)

“During the past three centuries the spread of the English-speaking peoples over the world’s waste spaces has been not only the most striking feature in the world’s history, but also the event of all others most far-reaching in its effects and its importance.”—Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*.

While certainly not on par with saber-toothed tiger slaying, Hemingway’s daily jungle hunts do propel much of the African narrative; anecdotal episodes become centerpieces within which the Hemingway safari hero shines. And this safari hunting hero becomes the first of several incarnations of the “Great White Man” shaping the African textual landscape. Initially, throughout the narratives of *Green Hills of Africa* and *True At First Light*, Hemingway walks the line between self-effacement and self-aggrandizement, but he perpetually and very happily returns to the myth-maker role time and again. In his second African novel especially, Hemingway reconfigures the shattered White ontological paradigm encountered in his American tales.

In *True At First Light*, we get one of our first instances of narrator-as-mythmaker as Hemingway, Mary, and crew hunt for victuals while stalking Mary’s lion. Hemingway very quickly earns the distinction of a man endowed with special powers. The natives call it “mchawi,” or witchcraft, and Hemingway suggests, time and again, that the natives “naturally” ascribe this descriptive to the White hunter (often he would have us believe, undeservedly).<sup>1</sup> We see and hear such talk again later after Hemingway and company

dispatch of Mary's thick-miened, roaring colossus. Keiti insists that Hemingway use his powers on the lion, and in the end, Hemingway's magical touch takes down the beast.

As he takes on the role handed to him by Pop, our hero gives a narrative nod to medieval mythmaking: "But I remembered how women almost always fell in love with their white hunters and I hoped something spectacular would come up where I could be my client's hero and thus become beloved as a hunter by my lawful wedded wife instead of her unpaid and annoying bodyguard" (89). And Hemingway's narrative commission, his narrative choice of inclusion, crafts this very fantasy. Early on as husband and wife hunt together, Hemingway puts on a show for both the party and the reader: "Remembering that Miss Mary had asked me to show off, I raised my left hand carefully and slapped it against the side of my neck. This was calling the location of the shot I would try for and anything else was worthless. No one can call their shot that way on a small animal like a Tommy when he may run. But if I should hit him there it was good for morale and if it did not, it was an obvious impossibility" (61). Of course, when the dust settles, and after considerable displays of faux self-doubt ("I walked out to him, hoping I had not shot him in the behind and raked him or given him the high spinal by mistake or hit him in the head and I heard the car coming. Charo dropped out from it with his knife out and ran to the Tommy and then stood there."), Hemingway has his ram, as called, as well as the awestruck admiration of all those who witnessed "the impossible." Mary's quip that "when I said to show off I didn't mean that far off" (62), comes on the heels of a kind of speechless native exaltation that approaches religiosity. Selective memory and diction all but deify the White hunter.<sup>2</sup> We see this again later in relation to his other talents. Insofar as the hunt is concerned, Hemingway graciously

walks that line separating the collective team player from the self-actualized, quasi-heroic individual, and he does so repeatedly.

The hunting trope becomes a means by which the author expands the scope of the White, heroic legend-in-the-making. The White hunter becomes a knight of sorts, an “iron nerved panderer to what a woman expects,” protecting the fair maiden and slaying snarling beasts (89). Before coming to Mary’s assistance as she tails her lion, Hemingway repeatedly demonstrates his hunting prowess and time and again becomes the coveted White code hero, willingly donning the garb of camp protector. When threatened by a roving band of baboons, for example, Hemingway’s Kamba mother-in-law looks to the White hunter for protection. Not one to disappoint, and more to our point of this being a narrative bent on forging a White hunter/hero paradigm, Hemingway dispatches with the primate troop summarily (and does so lying down no less); in the process, he gains the respect of the Informer and Ngui and the admiration and adulation of Debba, who rather conspicuously insists on holding the hunter’s rifle after the heroic show as a means of reifying the fantastic and objectifying White masculinity.<sup>3</sup>

The heroics performed in the face of the baboon threat are a precursor to what we bear witness to in the days and weeks following. During Mary’s absence, in which she shops for Christmas gifts after her lion kill, and just before the holiday itself, nearby farmers being terrorized by a rogue leopard summon Hemingway for assistance. While the narrative later conveys a marked reticence to embrace the public face of “hero” that glosses the likes of *Look Magazine*, Hemingway’s later actions prove this lament specious.<sup>4</sup> Implicating the leopard in his own perceived quasi-self-destruction, in a line reminiscent of “The Snows of Kilimanjaro’s” Harry, Hemingway says, “I wished he had never killed the goats and that I

had never signed any contracts to kill and be photographed for any national circulation magazines and I bit with satisfaction on the piece of shoulder bone and waved up the car” (237). The passage suggests a man of great reticence, a man prompted into action. However, this sequence also conveniently recalls Hemingway’s recruitment by the people to save them. Hemingway tells us that, “The leopard we were hunting was a trouble leopard that *I had been asked to kill by the people* of the Shamba where he had killed sixteen goats and I was hunting him for the Game Department so it was permissible to use the car in his pursuit” (emphasis mine 237). Thus, the narrative presents us with a troublesome and possibly daunting task and a reluctant hero.

In the end though, two shots (the one a complete miss, the other textbook clean by Hemingway’s own admission) take down the leopard. A third encounter later finishes him off after much tracking, crawling, and anxious anticipation. While Ngui fires off a shot, all shots of consequence come from Hemingway’s “well liked, once burnt up, twice restored, worn smooth old Winchester model 12 pump gun” (240). Hemingway summarily dismisses Charo, gunbearer and friend for over twenty years, because the old man, twice mauled by leopards in past encounters, poses a liability to the party. More than this, though, Charo, and others in the party eager to assist the hero, threaten to derail Hemingway’s much-anticipated singular act of bravery. A moment of defiance by a man old enough to be his father ultimately ends with the old man’s acquiescence to an order to take cover in the car. With Ngui acting as tracker, Hemingway follows the fallen cat into the brush, making special note of the danger involved (and imparting knowledge of the hunt) along the way: “‘Gentleman,’ I said in Spanish, “‘the situation has radically changed.’ It had indeed. I knew the drill now having learned it from Pop but every wounded leopard in thick bush is a new wounded leopard. No

two will ever be the same except that they will always come and they will come for keeps” (238). The narrative impulse to instruct smacks of the conventions encountered in the safari books of the day, most especially that of Theodore Roosevelt’s *African Game Trials*, published the year Hemingway spoke of his lost generation in *The Sun Also Rises*: “The dangerous game of Africa are the lion, the buffalo, elephant, rhinoceros, and leopard. The hunter who follows any of these animals always does so at a certain risk to life or limb; a risk which it is his business to minimize by coolness, caution, good judgment, and straight shooting. The leopard is in point of pluck and ferocity more than the equal of the other four; but his small size always renders it more likely that he will merely maul, and not kill, a man” (Roosevelt 58).<sup>5</sup> Like Roosevelt, the Hemingway narrator imparts the knowledge of an experienced sage. With his tracker acting as his eyes, Hemingway in the end slays the spotted beast with a death-blow that rivals his initial hit in its pin-point accuracy and effectiveness.

Congratulatory drinking, toasting and celebration on the part of the hunting contingent follow in somewhat ceremonial fashion. What is more, word spreads fast, suggests the narrative, and locals at the village store spin the yarn that craft the Hemingway legend.<sup>6</sup> A young African, mission-taught servant, enlisted locally as interpreter for his linguistic facility, indulges the idea of the White hero. Speaking of the leopard incident before the others, he asserts: “Everyone said you had fought him with your hands and killed him with the pistol” (253). As a narrative device, the interpreter serves to remind both the Hemingway character and the reader of the old order’s pervasiveness and its insistence on self-preservation; this order refuses to die. Once again, Hemingway’s debt to the safari book tradition is clear as we hear echoes of an anecdotal Roosevelt in Hemingway’s Singh descriptive:



My friend, Carl Akeley, of Chicago, actually killed barehanded a leopard which sprang at him. He had already wounded the beast twice, crippling it in one front and done hind paw; whereupon it charged, followed him as he tried to dodge the charge, and struck him full just as he turned. It bit him in one arm, biting again and again as it worked up the arm from the wrist to the elbow; but Akley threw it, holding its throat with the other hand, and flinging its body to one side. (58)

Like the placard on Singh's wall featuring the bare-fisted conquest of beasts by man, the Interpreter's words indulge heroic lore and iconography.

However, the jungle within which husband and wife hunt Mary's lion provides the ultimate literary stage for a narrative bent on performance and self-illumination. This is especially notable when viewed through the prism of race. Hemingway and Mary track the featured lion for some six months in East Africa. All the while, the narrative takes great pains to have the reader see this as Mary Hemingway's personal quest, her hunt, and her lion. However, the identity of the lion's true pursuer and possessor, Hemingway himself, is never in doubt, and the culmination of that hunt bears this out wonderfully. He reads Gerald Hanley's *Consul at Sunset* as a prelude to the personal battle, drawing strength and, as he suggests, "inspiration," from the text before venturing after "Mary's lion."<sup>7</sup> Yet, he insists this is "Mary's lion." Suddenly, Mary's lion becomes his, possessiveness comes to the fore, and the pursuit is on. The hunting contingent chases the cat into the brush-covered hills after months of pursuit, and the showdown, originally touted as a square-off between the lion and "Miss Mary," rather conveniently becomes a battle of wits and might between Papa and the beast, whose roaring head is "huge and dark" and ultimately demands to be quieted. Fittingly, lessons and tempered, measured pursuit, orchestrated by Hemingway (always preaching patience to Mary) culminate with what clearly is the great White male's moment.

The scene is a familiar one; Hemingway not only borrows from the oeuvre of Western safari literature, but mines from his own literary past for inspiration as well.

Similarly, in *Green Hills*, Hemingway's first safari book, the narrator toys now and again with the notion of feminine agency, always with the same end result: he abruptly takes it away, diminishing the "Other," as he bolsters the Self. We see it again years later in Mary's "conquest." *True at First Light* reverberates with the shots of Pauline's lion hunt heard first some twenty years before in *Green Hills of Africa*. Throughout all of this, the image of the self-effacing Hemingway, the "boldly honest" Hemingway of course remains intact. Focus, though, conveniently remains on Hemingway; all else is a diversion. Hemingway sets the tone for the entire sequence in *Green Hills* with his opening description:

The evening we killed the first lion it was dark when we came in sight of camp. The killing of the lion had been confused and unsatisfactory. It was agreed before hand that P.O.M. should have the first shot but since it was the first lion any of us had ever shot at, and it was very late in the day, really too late to take the lion on, once he was hit we were to make a dogfight of it and any one was free to get him. This was a good plan. . . . (40).

According to Hemingway, the killing of the lion proves most dissatisfying. It is not an orderly execution. There is no build-up, no drama. However, Hemingway creates his own drama via textual manipulation. Hemingway's comment that the ensuing action was "unsatisfactory" and "confused" works to temper the overall vision he conveys through this particular hunting sequence. Narrative focus is seemingly shifted to those usually on the periphery. This is not supposed to be a Hemingway moment; however, it is very much a Hemingway moment.

Through it all, Pauline and "Others" become mere tools used to further the Hemingway narrative. We learn from the above description that Pauline, like Mary in Hemingway's second safari text, was to take the first shot at the lion. Diction is important here, as we see that the sequence of shots is "agreed upon" before the hunt begins.

Hemingway's use of the passive voice itself diminishes any power P.O.M. (Pauline as Poor Old Mama) manifests: it is "agreed upon" that she take the first shot. Agency is implicitly granted to her. However, as quickly as agency is granted, it is taken away. Once the lion is hit, he is up for grabs, and no longer singularly Pauline's.

Furthermore, as the hunt progresses, Hemingway again takes advantage of the ensuing frenzied confusion and uses it as an opportunity to further the cause of self-promotion. He begins the scenario's recount with words of deflation, as he notes promises unfulfilled. Hemingway says in *Green Hills*, after describing the lion's actual last minutes, that he felt "more let down than pleased" (41). There were, he says, no last minute heroics; there was more confusion than real drama. Yet, Hemingway pulls still another sleight of hand in this instance; through syntactical manipulation, the author creates drama. What is more, Hemingway crafts this drama at Pauline's expense. Once again, Pauline becomes a device, a medium through which Hemingway creates his own drama and perpetuates pseudo-selflessness. Hemingway initially leads the reader to believe that P.O.M. is responsible for the lion's undoing and ultimately her own heroics. Very quickly, however, the narrator takes the reader through his own supposed moments of doubt and uncertainty. The moments, however, are short-lived, the lapses into doubt fleeting. Closer inspection reveals that the bullet responsible for the beast's demise fired from Hemingway's gun. We see this very same scenario played out again some twenty years later in *True at First Light*, with Mary's supposed heroics being undercut by the "secret" validation Hemingway receives from G.C. affirming his prowess. Feminine heroics prove illusory, "Other" agency is abruptly nullified, and White masculine authority is bolstered.

Subduing the beast becomes a White male civilizing act. Before his felling, Mary's lion is boldly beautiful, dark and wild. Indeed, in the immediate moments following his shooting, Hemingway tells us, that he is "wonderful and long and dark and beautiful" (167). Before the kill and even in the moments following, the narrative intertwines images of darkness and wildness. In the hours after the hunt, the kill becomes a metaphoric taming of sorts and wild wonder is reduced to aesthetic reverence. Mary's color-coded observations as the villagers prepare to celebrate Mary's triumph attest to this: "My lion looks so noble and beautiful when he is white and naked" (187). Shaven clean and stripped of his savagery, no longer dark and ominous, he is "beautiful", "noble," "white." Reminiscent of Peroxide's praise-song of Ketchel in "Light of The World," the lion's descriptives point to a beast that has been summarily "civilized" by an apparent mystery shot. Walking up to the now still dark body, Mary asks incredulously, "But did I really hit him first?" (66), beginning a controversy at once new but all-too familiar. Pauline asks the very same question during Hemingway's first safari years earlier.

The post lion-stalk and kill celebrations recounted in *True at First Light* become highly sexualized acts of racial typology and performance, with the implicit reverence for Mary as lion-slayer, and as White woman at the center of a mass of naked, Black male bodies; however, the narrative ultimately celebrates the White male hunter. As suggested earlier, we saw this same scenario some twenty years before, only then it was Pauline whose starkly pallor pillar was placed in contrast to the surrounding darkness. However, the celebration now, as then, begins with a narrator's displaced self-aggrandizement. Now, as was the case years ago, an apparent mystery shot quiets the lion's roar, too, a shot for which both G.C. and Hemingway refuse to openly take credit and a shot Mary cannot accept as

hers. The narrative gives Mary the first shot, while rather conspicuously failing to confirm its success. However, with an initial miss or two of his own, Hemingway ultimately fells the beast, with G.C. securing the kill:

He was running now heavy and desperate but beginning to look small in the sights and almost certain to make the far cover when I had him in the sights again, small now and going away fast, and swung gently ahead and lifting over him and squeezed as I passed him and no dirt rose and I saw him slide forward his front feet plowing and his great head was down before we heard the thunk of the bullet. Ngui banged me on the back and put his arm around me. The lion was trying to get up now and G.C. hit him and he rolled onto his side. I went over to Mary and kissed her. She was happy but something was wrong. (165-66)

Mary's annoyance for days afterwards and her insistence that "you killed him" underscores the import of the act initiated by her husband as great White hunter. What is wrong is that Mary clearly realizes that what was to be *her* moment, something that was to be singularly *hers*, has been appropriated. This has become Hemingway's moment.

Following our examination's established paradigm of White male aggrandizement, the darker members of the hunting contingent become instruments of further praise and promotion for the White hero. Keiti, along with Charo, praises the mighty hunter, insisting that the mark of excellence has brought down the lion. Hemingway's sheepish insistence on dumb luck's role rings hollow at best at the center of Keiti's congratulatory hero-worship: "Not lucky. Mzuri [good]"(168).<sup>8</sup> His concession of at least luck being with him in the lion's felling becomes an emphatic narrative cue regarding the dubious nature of Mary's own hunting ability, or at least the questionable prospect of her having subdued the beast on her own. Papa's presence and the shadow he casts draws self-doubt from his wife, who questions the events unfolding before her, and ultimately her own ability. Yet, G.C.'s and our narrator's refrain, "Of course you hit him," pervades the sequence, testing the reader's faith

in Mary. The chorus rings specious, especially in light of the quasi-self-congratulatory and marvel-laden moment shared by the two White male hunters as they recount the seconds leading up the kill:

“How far did you hold over him you son of a bitch?”  
“A foot and a half. Two feet. It was bow and arrow shooting.”  
“We’ll place it when we walk back.”  
“Nobody would ever believe it.”  
“We will. That’s all that matters.”  
“Go over and make her realized she hit him.”  
“She believes the boys. You broke his back.”  
“I know.”(167)

Thus, via narrative craft, the secret revelry shared by the two men becomes ours as we stand in awe of the White hunter’s skill. Calm, cool and collected, engaged in “bow and arrow shooting,” he becomes for the moment, the embodiment of the code-hero idea. The shot that breaks this lion becomes the stuff of near-legend; but, once again donning the garb of pseudo-egalitarian, and once more perhaps nodding to his critics of old who cry “self-involved adolescent,” Hemingway defers to those around him, quietly deriving satisfaction from nothing more than “the truth” itself. It becomes a matter of pure convenience then that this “secret” narrative “truth” is shared with the reader. It is a narrative truth intent on perpetuating a markedly racialized hero typology.

The great hunter is only the first and most pronounced of Hemingway’s assumed roles as he explores and re-creates the White male hegemonic mythos. Likewise, we repeatedly see Hemingway take to the lectern with ruler in hand as teacher. This becomes the second of several figures of White authority we encounter in the text. If skill is necessarily invested in the great White hunter’s authority, then knowledge underscores the authority of the professor. Logically, the first bits of knowledge passed along by Hemingway are those relative to the hunt. We as readers become the first recipients of this special knowledge. We

get this throughout the narrative in recounted conversation, memory, and tangential aside, each conveying the hows, the whats, the whys of various animal hunts (“Try and get your first barrel in between that second ring of the trunk”—Pop’s wisdom comes with the authoritative baton he passes to Hemingway upon his departure from the camp, and that wisdom becomes ours).

Mary, the “Memsahib,” or “Madam,” is woman nonetheless, and per the narrative, defers to the White patriarch, assuming the role of pupil early on and singing her teacher’s praises in the process: Speaking of their anticipated hunting time together, Mary asserts, “I won’t be bad about you taking care of me, and I won’t be irascible. I’ll do everything but like the Informer” (28). Later, we are privy to Hemingway’s reminder to his wife regarding past mistakes, in which he emphatically points to those that are avoided altogether through simple foresight with regard to things like dress. The description is a series of reminders and last minute instructions meant to better his wife’s performance in the field. Ultimately, the segment works to bolster his own authority by diminishing those around him. What is more, the sequence simply exasperates Mary and exemplifies the unbalanced power dynamic between teacher and student: “*Everybody’s always experimenting with me. Why can’t I just go out and shoot and kill cleanly?*” (emphasis mine 56)

The unbalanced economy of knowledge begins at home and then extends to the village as well; a mission-schooled native man, trained in many languages and seeking employment with Hemingway, asks for work and thirsts for knowledge from our implicit White master-hunter: “I could teach you to speak proper Swahili and *you could teach me hunting and the language of animals*” (emphasis mine 182). Teaching those around him about the ways of animals becomes only part of the Hemingway curriculum as we learn via the

narrative that the White hunter administers boxing lessons to neighboring young men as well. Indeed, an integral part of the brief narrative description of “good friend” Tony, the Masai and former Tank Corp sergeant in the British Army, is the teacher-student dynamic that marks their relationship: “I had taught him to box and we sparred together quite often and we were very good friends and companions” (197). Friend, companion, teacher: deference to White authority marks even the closest of relationships, securing the understood power structure at work in the narrative.

When not slaying beasts in the brush or standing before the metaphorical lectern, Hemingway also tends to the infirm, donning the doctor’s mantel as well. In scenes reminiscent of “Indian Camp,” where Doctor Adams infiltrates the “savage” wood to administer “real” medicine to an ailing woman, Hemingway dons the figurative white coat in the African village and Shamba of *True at First Light*. He wastes little time in presenting what becomes a virtual catalogue of medical mastery to us. Always there is the chasm separating White from Black, knowledgeable from ignorant, powerful from powerless. While Hemingway as narrator makes no claims to specified medical knowledge, as Doctor Adams does in the earlier short stories, the ignorance and surrounding deficiency *naturally* affords him implicit privilege and authority.<sup>9</sup>

The narrative gives us this bifurcation early on with Hemingway tending to the wounds of a young Masai villager injured in a fight with another neighboring villager. Beginning with a racial pejorative (“boy”), the descriptive shows Hemingway as paternal figure and possessor of unquestioned expertise (however limited) and therefore power:



The medical chest had been brought from the dining tent and I dressed the boy's wounds. They were in the neck, the chest and the upper arm and back and were all suppurating badly. I cleaned them out, poured peroxide into them for the magic bubbling effect and to kill any grubs, cleaned them again, especially the neck wound, painted the edges with Mercurochrone, which gave a much admired and serious color effect, and then sifted them full of sulfa and put a gauze dressing and plaster across each wound." (29)

Note Hemingway's infusion of magic and showmanship in his medical administration. Later, we bear witness to Hemingway playing the part of healing agent to the Game Park's Informer and to Mary as well. The dynamics and semantics of each scenario are key. The Informer's complaints of not feeling well (note that the Informer comes to Hemingway for aid) are met with a prescription of rest, aspirin, and the promise of better health: "*I will give you medicine*" (emphasis mine 103). Such an utterance is infused with the politics of race, with an emphasis on possession and the promise of deliverance: "The power to heal resides with me," he seems to suggest. Later, we learn that Mary is ill as well. Much speculation surrounds her ailment:

Mary felt much better at noon and in the afternoon. She slept again and in the evening felt quite well and was hungry. I was delighted with how the Terramycin had acted and that she had no bad reactions from it and told Mwindi, touching the wood of my gun butt, that I had cured Miss Mary with a powerful and secret dawa but that I was sending her into Nairobi tomorrow in the ndege in order that a European doctor might confirm my cure. (222)

The native contingent, including the likes of Mwindi, think her cursed for her slaying of the lion (Mwindi sees it as the lion's retribution—he poisoned her). Juxtaposed with this is Hemingway's own assessment of possible malaria. Again, in this sequence we get racialized conceptual polarity as East and West, superstition and logic, civilization and savagery, clash. Hemingway indulges this divide with talk of "secrets" and "power." Most important is Hemingway's ultimate aggrandizement of the West and of Self ("a *European* doctor might confirm *my* cure" [emphasis mine 222]).

The disjuncture between Black and White is nowhere more clearly defined within the realm of the medical, though, than in Hemingway's late textual mention of his encounters with village Masai suffering from venereal disease ("yaws"). In this short sequence (it spans less than a page), we get a convergence of typology. The contingent of sick Masai (mostly young women) subtly reinforce latent contemporary reader stereotypes of a darker people who are bereft of mores, driven by libido, and socially incorrigible.<sup>10</sup> Reminiscent of Dr. Adams' native encounters in the wooded camps, the Hemingway narrative here juxtaposes the primitive with images of the White healer as ultimate savior.

Not only does Hemingway stand before a lectern and sport the requisite metaphorical white coat, but he also wields a mighty gavel as perhaps the greatest of authoritarian figures: arbiter of law. Even if we only get glimpses of this narrative incarnation, what we do get is most telling. Arap Meina, the Informer, acts as translator and go-between for Hemingway as he pursues romantic matters with the woman he would call his "other" wife, his Kamba wife, Debba.<sup>11</sup> And we learn from one of these exchanges, very early on in the narrative, of Debba's wish to marry her American admirer.<sup>12</sup> Once again "Other" defers to White. Talk of dowry (or its absence here), of Debba's position as potential second wife, and of tribal custom, prompts Hemingway to rather conspicuously defer any and all aspirations to the legal ordinance, tribal or otherwise. Arap Meina's related exchange with our narrator bears closer examination:

“I cannot break the law if we are here to enforce the law.”  
brother, you do not understand. There is no law. This Shamba  
is here illegally. It is not in Kamba country. For thirty-five years it has  
been ordered removed and it has never happened. There is not even  
customary law. There are only variations.”

“Go on,” I said.

“Thank you, brother. Let me tell you that for the people of this Shamba  
*you and Bwana Game are the law*. You are a bigger law than Bwana  
Game because you are older. Also, he is away and his askaris are with  
him. Here you have your young men and warriors such as Ngui. You have  
Arap Meina. Everyone knows you are Arap Meina’s father.” (emphasis mine 37)

Instantly, the narrative gives us the slightest of deprecation (“I cannot break the law.”), while simultaneously solidifying two inseparable tropes, each bolstering the other and working toward the same end: underscoring Anglo authoritative privilege. “You and Bwana Game are the law,” says the marginal figure.<sup>13</sup>

When his own loyalty is called into question momentarily, the so-called camp Informer, Arap Meina, attempts (like G.C.’s man Tony before him) to prove himself a devoted servant to Empire. With the threat of insurgency in the form of the Mau Mau rebels brewing in various neighboring camps, Meina asserts “I truly love and believe in the Bwanas. True all but one or two of the great Bwana’s are dead. . . I should have led a far different life. . . Thinking of these great Bwanas fills me with the resolution to lead a better and finer life . . .” (38). The Informer’s fidelity is almost familial in nature.<sup>14</sup> What is more, he insists on Hemingway’s metaphorical paternity, reinforcing the trope of Anglo as father, and implicitly, the native as child. Simultaneously, this same father figure is granted by this native son the highest of synecdochial complements. Hemingway, as elder Bwana, *is* the law. As such, the native all but deifies the White.

Echoes of this narrative proclamation, although somewhat muted and misdirected, can be seen in later sequences featuring a Hemingway deferred to by local villagers seeking

adjudication of local disputes and even by the local police (they too call him “Bwana”). In what ostensibly becomes a comic relief segment meant to assuage the dramatic tension inherent in the narrative recount of the lion hunt, the Informer once more becomes Bwana’s greatest champion, and at his own expense, of course. Via the Informer’s relation of a dream and underneath the self-deprecation (featuring his White employer) and histrionics, the Hemingway narrator exercises what amounts to divine right:

“Brother what is this of the dream that I am hanged?”  
“it is a dream that I had but I should not tell it to you before I have eaten breakfast.”  
“But others have heard it before.”  
“It is better that you do not hear it. It was not an official dream.”  
“I could not bear to be hanged,” the Informer said.  
“I will never hang you.” (104)

Once more, the narrative authority underscoring the sequence’s entirety deserves our attention. Although relegated to the realm of dreams, Hemingway’s authority here is one of final arbiter, of the ultimate judge and jury. What is more, the dream-world authority is granted credence and reified by the narrative “Other” with what becomes the ultimate deification of the White male figure; Hemingway’s playful assertion (“I will never hang you”) of life/death decision-making agency is an active empowerment of the subjective White self and an implicit diminution of “Otherness.” Once more, through strategic deliberation and narrative displacement, Anglo authority maintains the racial bifurcation necessary for the White hegemony’s maintenance and security.

In *True at First Light*, we bear witness to a Hemingway narrative implementing the African space as a space of creation, of forgery. Africa becomes a blank slate upon which new stories can be written, ideas and theories can be tested, and myths can be created and perpetuated. If the gavel and the prospective noose at Hemingway’s disposal give him god-

like power as makeshift judge and jury of the Shamba, his status as “creator” is solidified with his commandeering of both language and mythos, which underscores much of the narrative. With the creation of a separate language in a world where, according to Hemingway, there are concepts without words (there is no word for “love” or “sorry,” he tells us), our narrator, incarnate, becomes a namer of things and therefore a new Adam.<sup>15</sup> Embodying this new ethos of creation, Hemingway as wordsmith deifies himself again (“and the word is ‘God’”).

Hemingway’s relationship with both his wives, Mary and his purported Kamba wife, Debba, become the pretext for such forgery. Of his linguistic invention Hemingway says: “I never spoke a word of English to her and we retained some Swahili words but the rest was a *new language* made up of Spanish and Kamba” (emphasis mine 35). Emphasis here is on conflation (a cultural mixing), on newness, on a third space, an interstitial space as suggested by Homi Bhabha, beyond subjective and objective selfhood and “Otherness.”<sup>16</sup> While he constructs language itself, Hemingway also weaves this language into myth, forging legend as he writes. Building on his own established reputation as great White hunter, Hemingway extends the parameters of White mythology to include his wife, Mary. In an attempt to rationalize the White woman’s motivation behind her drive to find and kill the dark, wild, much-hunted lion at the heart of the narrative, Hemingway suggests to interested natives that this impetus to kill is part and parcel of her “tribe’s” religion:

I answered that these facts were known and that it was the duty of Bwana Game and, for this time myself, to kill any lions that molested cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats or people. This we would always do. It was necessary for the religion of the Memsahib that she kill this particular lion before the Birthday of the Baby Jesus. We came from a far country and were of a tribe of that country and this was necessary. They would be shown the skin of this lion before the Birthday of the Baby Jesus. (45)

Thus, with this declaration, a new religion is borne of White imagination. This act of creation itself both deifies its maker and casts him as ultimate authority.

The coupling of “novelty” and linguistic formation emanates from an ideological perspective that is itself derivative; it is itself rooted in the gaze of the colonizer. Hemingway is at first quite critical of the gaming industry for its hypocrisy and its specious sale of “novelty” as a pillaging agent:

All Great White Hunters [sic] were touching about how they loved the game and hated to kill anything but usually what they were thinking about was preserving the game for the next client that would come along. They did not want to frighten it by unnecessary shooting and they wanted a country to be left so that they might take another client and his wife or another pair of clients into it and it seemed like unspoiled, never shot over, primitive Africa that they could rush their clients through giving them the best results. (210)

Here Hemingway laughingly mocks a blatantly hypocritical and outdated ideological mode of operation. Yet, the rhetoric driving the writer’s own narrative validates this very ideology time and again in the text. However, this is not the first time we encounter Hemingway attempting to reconcile an ideological disparity. We see colonial ideology and an ideology of Western Whiteness explored thoroughly some twenty years earlier in his first African book, *Green Hills of Africa*.

Within the confines of this first safari text, Hemingway both reformulates the peoples of this “new” land and he imposes a Western-looking Edenic vision upon the land itself. There are present in this text, moreso than in *True at First Light*, actually two Africas: The Eastern Africa true to stereotype and cursed expectation and the Westernized Africa formulated in mythology. Geographically speaking, in an east/west showdown, “the West” shines brightly. Again, Toni Morrison reiterates this point in her double-storied vision of Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*, stating that, "Africa, imagined as evil, chaotic,

impenetrable, is the outer story" (89).<sup>17</sup> With its "impenetrable bush," its "solid, scrubby-looking undergrowth," its "typical desert country," the eastern African landscape is the Africa often ignored, cursed, or deemed worthless. Within *Green Hills*' prism, the natives even trek westward, fleeing the so-called famine country. These deserted lands become Pop's "million miles of bloody Africa" (*Green Hills* 159). Also represented in that novel is Droopy's country, the land of Hemingway's tracker, a land that is rich, lush and never-ending. His country lay to the west, and represents fabled Africa, the Africa of myth.<sup>18</sup> Hemingway's excitement in his simultaneous encounter with a country's history and its newness translates well:

It was a new country to us but it had the marks of the oldest countries. The road was a track over shelves of solid rock, worn feet of the caravans and the cattle, and it rose in the boulder-strewn un-roadliness through a double line of trees and into the hills. The country was so much like Aragon that I could not believe we were not in Spain . . . . (*Green Hills* 146).

Like the Romanesque Masai villagers he encounters during this first trip, the mythic country, for all its newness, has a historic sensibility about it. Europe resonates throughout the hills and valleys of this "new" country. It is Spain transplanted and Hemingway's love for it then is justified.

Furthermore, more than its sister safari text, *Green Hills* immerses itself in the mythology of this Eden-like country, this new country brimming with wildlife, mystery, and possibility. We see this almost immediately in Hemingway's provocative admission to the Austrian neighbor and fellow Occidental tourist, Kandisky, that he would indeed kill an elephant if it were large enough, contrary to the Austrian's stated ideals and convictions (8). The scenario is soon replayed in the text in a reversal of sorts as Hemingway later actively restrains himself from admitting to Pop his deep-seated desire to engage in what Pop deems

as ornamental killing. Moreover, we hear this sentiment echoing throughout the marsh as Hemingway and M'Cola, his gunbearer, hunt for ducks, Hemingway "brown[ing] a bunch to get cripples for decoys and then tak[ing] only fancy shots because [he] know[s] now [he] can get all that [he] can use or carry" (133). With M'Cola's shooting coat filled to capacity, the pillaging continues and an appetite is satiated, temporarily. Indeed, the entire foray into the forest is, in many ways, nothing more than an active and often cavalier stripping of the land (both literally and metaphorically). Thus, as a cloaked spokesman of sorts for Empire, Hemingway not only spouts the appropriate rhetoric, but dons the appropriate garb (of pillager) as well. We hear echoes of these *Green* scenes in all their imperial glory in Hemingway's later mockery of the White gaming system in *True At First Light*. Within the confines of this later text, in each recollection, there are two voices heard: one of appreciative communion and one of lustful, objectified wonder.

In *True at First Light*, Hemingway's shared memories with Mary, memories recollected as he shares quiet time with her looking to boost her spirits after she falls ill, speak to this loudly. As husband and wife reminisce about past hunting excursions, Hemingway recalls: "And we got so close to everything in the big green woods and it was like we were *the first people that were ever there*" (emphasis mine 221). As he introduces Mary to the complexities of hunting, like an older Nick Adams in one of his own short stories, Hemingway revels in the "virginity" one "bring[s] to a beautiful city or a great painting" and implicitly a new land, and in "her own discovery" (213). Diction comes to the fore with words like "virginity," "discovery" and "first" taking on special prominence. Emphasis in each instance is on newness and the Adamic principle under-girding the writer's own vision of the African geographic space.



Debba's function in the narrative is as yet another physical manifestation of White masculine desire, as a literal objectification made manifest. In this sense, Hemingway's representation fails to rise above exploitative imagery and typology. Debba becomes the desired in the way Trudy is the objectified "Other" in "Fathers and Sons," each, at various points in its narrative "relationship" recount, distilled to a corporeal catalogue of visceral descriptives. Trudy becomes legs, breasts, a mouth, while Debba's hands roam freely and her head rests repeatedly in her "husband's" white chest. Cerebral games (Hemingway and Debba engage in a secret language all their own) are reduced to the visceral in Hemingway's remembrance of linguistic lessons between them: "At first I only spoke to her in Spanish. She learned it very quickly and it is simple if you start with the *parts of the body* and the *things one can do* and then *food* and the different relationships and the names of animals and of birds" (emphasis mine 35). However, unlike Nick's recollections of Trudy and their dalliances, nowhere in the posthumously published African narrative do we get even the faintest threat in the form of a reciprocated taking mirroring a young Nick's physical taking of Trudy; we never get the equivalent of the implied threat that comes from Trudy's brother in his expressed interest in Nick's sister. Debba's objectification is unilateral.

The closest instances of a feared reversal of fortune and implicit self-objectification comes in the form of the so-called lion dance, the post-kill fireside celebration engaged in by the Kamba males of the Shamba in Mary's honor. As suggested earlier, the scene, captured before in *Green Hills* and replayed once more here is reductive. The scenario is all too familiar. While Mary (and Pauline years before her) becomes the desired, "dark fulfillment" is certainly never realized. What we do get instead is the objectified Black body, naked and primitive, and the perpetuated myth of dark lust.

Hemingway's earlier descriptive constant of Charo and Mary shooting together before the lion's slaying works to perpetuate the eroticized Black/White tension and simultaneously helps to maintain the necessary narrative bifurcation: "Charo as black as a man can be, Mary bright blonde"(133). In each instance, ultimate agency rests with the Anglo narrator who in the end captures and confines native behavior to standard accepted typology (Black reverence for Whiteness trumps all else). In even the most innocent of scenarios, for example Charo's admiration of Mary, racial politics come to the fore and color Black/White relationships. In this way, as a purely sexualized entity, Mary's reaction to Hemingway's playful pursuit of Debba is most telling: "You don't love anybody else, do you? *White* I mean?" (emphasis mine 99) The import here is of course the emphasis *not* on marital transgression alone, but on racial taboo. This implicitly forges a difference between White and Black, love and lust. After taking down a wildebeest with Charo, Mary is quite affectionate in her post-mortem elation, but she carefully draws the color-line where mandated: "I'd love to kiss Charo, but I know that I shouldn't" (134). While Charo is an old man and while his attachments to the Hemingway party go back a generation, even his relationship is reduced to typology and race-based protocol; such is the fear of miscegenation. Ultimately, lines of authority and Anglo privilege come to the fore.

The fear of miscegenation and authoritative loss extends beyond Hemingway and Mary, though. G.C., Hemingway's friend, campsite neighbor, and fellow Bwana, also draws the color-line, expressly refusing to indulge in even the corporeal dalliance manifest in the likes of Hemingway and Debba's relationship. Of G.C.'s aversion to race-mixing, Hemingway says: "Because he had a career as well as because he had been brought up *properly* he would have nothing to do with African women. He did not think they were

beautiful either nor attractive . . . .” (emphasis mine 140). While he refuses to act on desire, Anglo authority affords G. C. opportunity and choice, and ultimate agency is his. Thus, both the African space and a foregrounded history (he was “brought up properly”) privilege G.C.’s actions.

The narrative seems to suggest quite slyly that while those around him—and G.C. most especially--draw demarcations of color and division, Hemingway ultimately opts to commune where possible, ostensibly “erasing” that coveted color-line time and again in egalitarian fashion. This tells only part of the story. With markers clearly visible, transgressive behavior and the threat to self-definition are minimized. Further, a physical transgression becomes for the Hemingway narrator a blatant manifestation of a more metaphorical racial deviance. And for the likes of G.C., the risks appear too great. It is the symbolic “deviance,” the metaphorical transgression producing the prospect of displacement, which incites true fear in the Anglo figure. In sublime fashion, though, this same fear-inducing, metaphorical transgression produces intrigue. For the White figure enticed with the idea of crossing definitive barriers himself, only Africa can provide a space where such deviation is possible. In this sense, in *True at First Light*, Hemingway himself becomes that very liminal figure, that transgressive “Other” whose presence in multiple spheres (with a shifting sociological landscape in America) normally threatens the Anglophile hegemony. What is more, with Hemingway himself, and not the racialized “Other,” temporarily inhabiting this space, no such totemic toppling is imminent and White authority is always secure.

From the outset, Hemingway’s seemingly egalitarian investment in the “Other” is heavy, with Mary suggesting that as part of Hemingway’s newly crafted mythology, “neither

Papa, nor I are white. We tolerate the whites and wish to live in harmony with them as I understand it. But on our own terms” (*True at First Light* 79). In each instance, the proposed absence of Whiteness, of the Caucasian, is made markedly conspicuous, not through the standard means of omission, but on the contrary, through overt expression. Via language that is blatant, Hemingway attempts to erase from the text markers of color from Western (read non-White) culture to establish a colorless culture rooted in an African essentiality.<sup>19</sup> Or does he? Whether sucking on a piece of shattered leopard bone or hunting by moonlight with only his moccasins and a spear and without the standard accoutrements of the Western hunter (i.e., gun, glass, guide), Hemingway deliberately utilizes the African space to go native. Yet, this exploration of which he speaks is more than the fetishized space Carl Eby discusses.<sup>20</sup> What is more, Hemingway’s nativity encompasses more than simply a satiation of desire, more than celebrated primitivism, and more than dramatized possession. Inherent in such an exploration is agency, the simple freedom and authority to realize such volition.

Hemingway’s self-exploration in *Green Hills of Africa* and *True at First Light* especially is then an active recognition of such privilege, a privilege denied to him by evolving circumstances in his own native country. In America, White being is the threatened entity. In this sense, the narrative likens volition to authority. Moreover, an express embrace of the “Other” actually becomes an active celebration of White authority and agency.

In *True at First Light*, subjective Self and objective “Other” temporarily merge, as an omnipotent Hemingway takes on the guise of the liminal figure. However, while the narrative insists that he wholly assumes a Wakamba identity, Hemingway in the process only symbolically gives up his Westernness. In doing so, he forges a hybrid space for himself, neither fully (him)self nor fully “Other.” This new racial self-conception is part of his new

religion, Mary assures us. Later, as he and Ngugi engage in their leopard hunt (the leopard that had terrorized a neighboring farm) with Mary away in Nairobi seeking a second medical opinion for her ailment and simultaneously preparing for Christmas, Hemingway once more appropriates the skin of the African and fully engages Fairclough's ideas of false egalitarianism: "We were both serious now and there was no White Man to speak softly and knowingly from his great knowledge, nor any White Man to give violent orders astonished at the stupidity of his "boys" and cursing them on like reluctant hounds" (239). Of course, the great irony is that most if not all of Hemingway's animal hunts and their narrative recount are tinged with this soft-spoken yet knowing "White Man" knowledge he mocks. Hemingway insists he is Kamba, and that he is like Ngugi. Ngugi, Hemingway will assert, is his brother for the moment, and thus the racial transgression is complete. With the leopard's killing, Hemingway suggests further, "He was a good leopard and we hunted him well and cheerfully *like brothers with no White Hunters nor Game Rangers* and no Game Scouts and he was a Kamba leopard condemned for useless killing on an illegal Kamba Shamba and we were all Wakamba and all thirsty"(emphasis mine, 241). In this instance, the brotherhood of the hunt replaces authoritative privilege along with labels of "Ranger," "Scout" and White Hunter." Along these lines, and momentarily believing the rhetoric he spouts, Hemingway insists that he and those serving him are, ostensibly, one and the same. Again, emphasis is on the absence of White and the celebration of all things African and upon his own centralized inclusion. There is no White, no Black, only Wakamba.

Aptly, where G.C. and others fear to go, Hemingway, liberated by his "wild" surroundings, treads mightily, and gleefully. In the aforementioned sequence, an express brotherhood of the hunt apparently replaces all authoritative privilege afforded the Anglo,

with “apparently” being the operative term. Their shared primordial passion works as a leveling device. Later, Hemingway bolsters this communal conception as he considers the plight of his Wakamba kitchen servant, Msembi:

At this time I called Msembi, the good rough boy who served as mess steward and was a hunting, not a crop raising Kamba but was not a skilled hunter and was reduced, since the war, to servant status. We were all servants since I served the government, through the Game Department, and I also served Miss Mary and a magazine named Look. My service to Miss Mary had been terminated, temporarily, with the death of her lion. My service to Look had been terminated, temporarily; I had hoped permanently. I was wrong of course. But neither Msembi nor I minded serving in the least and neither of us had served our God nor our King too well to be stuffy about it. (264)

While our narrator criticizes the Anglo and an imbued Anglo totemic ideology, embracing instead the ways of his African brethren and insisting on a Wakamban ontology, Hemingway lives the life of the privileged Occidental tourist. While he insists the days of trophy hunting have come and gone, all of his pursuits retain the Great White Hunter’s sensibility. What is more, while he speaks apologetically of Pop’s racist perjoratives (all are “boys” to him) or G.C.’s apparent intolerance and inadvertent bigotry left over from days of old (he refuses to look at African women), and admiringly of the changes that have been wrought by a new and “modern” African people, Hemingway too repeatedly drops the Occidental four letter word himself (“boys”). He does so while enjoying the comforts of a staff at his beck and call, sipping capanari, reading Western literature by firelight and hunting big game by day with a contingent of specialists (cleaners, guides, and drivers) bought with Western money.<sup>21</sup> Most importantly, he reserves the right to do so *while retaining all other rights* afforded the White figure in Africa. Thus, the entire narrative push toward Africa (and I would argue that all of Hemingway’s racialized stories with an American backdrop are part of a collective reach for this continent of ideals) becomes one grand interstitial exercise.

With Mwindi to draw his bath for him, to provide him with clean clothes, and to dress him (“[Dress me as you wish, but put the boots on very easy” (244)], and with the likes of Msembi and Nguili to prepare him his meals [“We’re having Tommy chops, mashed potatoes and a salad. And it will be here right away” and “He called to Nguili to bring drinks and I read the operation orders”] (78), Hemingway’s egalitarian posturing (“we’re all servants”) falls flat as he bears all the markers of royalty. Behind Hemingway’s prowess as Great White Hunter is a staff of servile natives who insure the maintenance of their employer’s image [*“I sat against the tree and watched birds and the grazing game. Nguili came over for orders and I told him he and Charo should clean and oil all the weapons and sharpen and oil the spears”* (emphasis mine 284)]. Each and every instance—and there are many—undercuts any rhetoric of egalitarianism, exposes Hemingway the liminal figure in all his (White) glory, reorders the perceived racial chaos and reestablishes our featured Anglo authority. Such is the function and purpose of the African space for our narrator: a geographic site to reify, actualize, and reconstitute a racialized new world order predicated on old world ideas of Whiteness.

Mary’s return from Nairobi, where she is treated for her mystery ailment and where she shops for holiday gifts, marks Hemingway’s express return to himself and his race. After all but subsuming himself in his new “religion,” and his new Kamba race, after much time spent as a “brother” and a “servant” and non-white (“no white hunters here”), Hemingway returns to himself as inconspicuously as he left, with Mary acting as the triggering device: “She was slim and shiny in her khakis and hard inside them and she smelled very good and her hair was silver gold, cropped close, and I rejoined the white or European race as easily as a mercenary of Henry IV saying Paris was worth a mass” (290). The embrace they share is a

celebratory one, marking the narrative return of not only the wife, but of both flaxen-haired figures, Bwana and Memsahib.

The narrative's "return" sequence warrants further examination. Mary's homecoming becomes one of a deity's, working as an answer to the husband's own hyper self-aggrandizement (elsewhere she is always "shining"). Early on, Willie, the camp's pilot and the couple's friend, enunciates what the later recurring images only imply. Commenting on Mary's role in Hemingway's purported new "religion," Willie posits: "You must be something along the lines of the White Goddess" (79). While Mary insists that her husband has renounced claims to the race as a part of this new creation, the racial markers litter the narrative scene. In this instance, Mary shines again. With hair that's both silver and gold and in her crisp, clean Kakis, she appears absolutely radiant. She becomes that European princess Hemingway alludes to earlier in the text. Most importantly though, Mary's return, the couple's embrace, and Hemingway's visceral response all mark the temporal Wakamban's return to "the White race." In each instance, the narrative extols the glow and radiance of Whiteness. Most notably though, this shift and return to the White race is effortless, as "eas[y] as a mercenary of Henry IV saying Paris was worth a mass," demonstrating for the final time the fluidity of racial conceptualization. Moreover, this particular shift is celebratory in nature in that it is marked by the authoritative privilege warranted only by Whiteness.

In what seems to be on the surface a denial of the subjective self, Hemingway-as-native necessarily embraces "Otherness" with an outright fervor, the likes of which are unseen in his other non-African based fiction. However, this fervor, we have suggested, for the White narrator, is in actuality an ardent self-loving strategy. Moreover, while we do not



see this degree of marginal investment, as seen in *True at First Light*, in Hemingway's extra-African texts, the exercise is nothing new. His return to Africa in 1953 marks a return to a well-worn path. In *Green Hills*, the Austrian character Kandisky's repeated references and inquiries regarding the people indigenous to the region, when juxtaposed with his indulgence of those servants at his every beck and call, garner a less than stellar estimation of him. However, this again is the author's selective memory and craft at work. Equally important to the text's evaluation are Hemingway's own omissions or purposeful inclusions. With Kandisky staring at him from within the glass, Hemingway at times engages in an unwitting game of imitative pantomime, at once apparently mocking the absurdities and hypocrisies of the imperialist while simultaneously committing the very same sins himself.

Chapters into the tale, miles into the bush, and seemingly years after our introduction to Kandisky, the Austrian's words still ring lucid: "Why are you not more interested in the natives?" (14). Indeed, the convenient remembrance of a phrase that seems to do its spouter a grave disservice also does little to illuminate the author, this self-proclaimed communal sympathizer and egalitarian. While Kandisky's acknowledgment of the natives is limited to "interest" only (he keeps notes on them and suggests a future trip with Hemingway to further "study them"), Hemingway's is all but non-existent. For Hemingway, "disinterest" becomes deliberate, blatant ignorance in an effort to indirectly maintain focus on the Anglo figure and the coveted color-line. Just as Kandisky literally assumes the position of observer and objectifier with regard to the African, so does Hemingway, figuratively via his narrative. Within the context of both "close" relationships and mere associations, the narrative places complementary figures at an emphasized distance. In each instance, they remain background silhouettes, undefined shadows in the presence of the great White Hemingway.

Like G.C's man Tony, or even his own house servants Mwindi and Keiti in *True at First Light*, *Green Hills*' M'Cola, the most intimate of Hemingway's native companions, is described in strictly commodious terms. Of M'Cola, Hemingway says, "He was Mr. Jackson Phillip's gunbearer and he had been loaned to me" (40). Like the other natives, M'Cola is defined by what services he provides. Gauged by his utility, M'Cola becomes yet another exploited body in *Green Hills*. We see this in the bush, time and again, as M'Cola and his countrymen become mere extensions of the imperial arm. At the height of the hunting competition between Hemingway and fellow gamesman Karl in *Green Hills*, the two separated by self-imposed imaginary boundaries cutting through the Great Rift Valley, Hemingway tersely describes M'Cola's role as simply "to carry shells and birds" (128). Description is minimal. As Toni Morrison notes of Hemingway's black characters in general, "The black man is not only nameless," but becomes nothing more than "a kind of trained response, not an agent possessing a job" (70).<sup>22</sup> Hemingway's references are rather frank, his perception almost utilitarian in nature. As the anticipation builds, and time dwindles away, the hunting party enters "Droopy's country" with guarded optimism. At this point Hemingway is burdened by overbearing desire and ego, M'Cola and Droopy bearing all else:

The five of us in single file, Droop and M'Cola with a big gun apiece, hung with musettes and water bottles and the cameras, we all sweaty in the sun, Pop and I with guns and the Memsahib trying to walk like Droopy, her Stetson tilted on one side, happy to be on a trip, pleased about how comfortable her boots were . . . (68-69).

This stands in utter opposition to the painted scenarios in which Hemingway and his accommodating band share victuals and hunting stories, something indulged in to a greater degree in the second African safari book.

What is more, the *Green Hills* reader encounters countless nameless, faceless, dark bodies along the way, most engendering little more than the blanket image or label of "savage." Amidst the preparations for the rhino hunt, Hemingway notes the complexion of Karl's entourage in one cursory sentence, describing it as an "outfit with forty M'Bulus," "good looking savages with a pompous headman who wore the only pair of shorts among them" (61). Much in the vain of those who wrote about Africa before him, Hemingway places immediate emphasis on exteriority, and in the process places himself within the tradition of the safari travel book writer, writers that include nineteenth century luminary Lord Stanley, and later, contemporary adventurer of some renown, Robert Ruark. Charles J. Andersson's 1889 recount, *Four Years in Africa: Embracing Explorations and Discoveries During Four Years' Wanderings in the Wilds of Southwestern Africa*, speaks to this wonderfully, surveying and assessing the human form in cartographic fashion; in describing the Damara people of central and south Africa, Andersson suggests that "The Damaras, speaking generally, are an exceedingly fine race of men. Indeed, it is by no means unusual to meet with individuals six feet and some inches in height, and symmetrically proportioned withal. Their features are, besides, good and regular; and many might serve as perfect models of the human figure . . . . But though their outward appearance denotes great strength, they can by no means compare, in this respect, with even moderately strong Europeans" (36-39).<sup>23</sup> As for Hemingway's descriptives, without explicitly mentioning native nudity, he directs reader attention to marked lack of attire. Subtly, he reads the very nakedness of those before him. Again, reverberations from texts like Andersson's, whose own narrative notes that "neither men nor women wear much clothing" and "boys are usually seen in a state of almost absolute nudity," can be heard in Hemingway's narrative. According to critic David Spurr,

within the imperial vision, "it is the body, rather than speech, law, or history, [that] is the essential defining characteristic of primitive peoples" (22).<sup>24</sup> Thus, the body is at once aestheticized, utilized, and commodified, depending on imperial needs and desires.

Hemingway's evaluation of his own hunting group fails to move beyond this superficiality.

During his initial encounter with native employees Garrick (a nickname granted a "theatrical" native guide) and Abdullah, before the actual kudu tracking begins, Hemingway, as *Green Hills* narrator, sizes up his prospective guides. Garrick and Abdullah are but two of four potential guides available to the party. All of the guides are lumped together and simultaneously categorized: two are clothed, two are naked, all are abruptly deemed savages. Hemingway's assessment adheres very much to Spurr's formulation of exteriority. Of the clothed guides, Abdullah, the narrative tells us, is the short, "thick-nosed educated one" (163). Furthermore, Hemingway expressly tells us that he is notably unimpressed with Abdullah's literal skills as well, as he watches the African scratch his own name into his dry leg with a twig. Tension pervades the narrative voice as well as Hemingway points to the fact that Abdullah is Garrick's tracker. It seems the theatrical one has his own entourage. Perhaps Hemingway perceives a certain presumptuousness amid the ranks of the "savages." For all his perceived histrionics, "Theater Business" is quickly christened "Garrick" by Hemingway. Although the humor is at once apparent and undeniable, the stigma attaches itself. We never learn the African's "real" name.

The images of savagery infest even the closest of Hemingway's outfit relationships. The tracker/guide Droopy, whom everyone seems to adore, is first described by Hemingway in less than flattering terms. Hemingway's description is specimen-like in its presentation. Droopy becomes more of a point of interest than a companion and a man. He is said to be a

"real savage with lids to his eyes that nearly covered them, handsome, with a great deal of style, a fine hunter and a beautiful tracker" (96). Droopy's wardrobe, Hemingway notes, is constant: a knotted piece of cloth, a fez, and a spear. Indeed, the superficial yields a marked impression.

As for M'Cola, whose close connection to Hemingway seems to stem from his ready embrace of the West (he wears shorts and an army khaki tunic), he too has his essence stolen by the hand of empire. While he is repeatedly described as an old man, being significantly older than Hemingway (M'Cola is at least fifty years old), M'Cola does not garner the same sort of reverence that Pop (the party's "Western" elder statesman) does. This old man, time and again, bears the label of "boy." Furthermore, empire brands his children as "no good, *worthless*" (emphasis is mine, 48). Naturally, familial ties implicate M'Cola in this worthlessness as well. A sequence in which Hemingway compares the various sleeping states of his companions further underscores this point. While of Pop, Hemingway notes that, "you could see his soul was close to his body," M'Cola is simply "an old man asleep, without history and without mystery" (73). There are multiple points of interest here. First, the question of agency arises once again, as Hemingway assumes the self-appointed position of privilege. Gazing at the sleeping M'Cola negates the possibility of reciprocation. Second, the narrative divorces M'Cola of history. Spurr points to the negation of history in the African as a typically Western convention that works on two levels, indicating an implied absence of both written text and, consequently, the ability to move toward some destiny. This established void invites creation, invites "forgery," and the Occident happily complies. This narrative denial of African history, notes Spurr, is in fact a stratagem initiated by the imperial construct "in order to construct [its] own vision of an African future . . ." (100).

Furthermore, in this curt corporeal reading, Hemingway performs what may be deemed a literary exorcism. M'Cola, an old man with family ties, is effectively and resolutely denied a soul.

Further stoking the imperial fires are Hemingway's specious acts of munificence, instances of apparent generosity that ultimately incriminate their executer. Tracking kudu amid the salt licks, Hemingway's party is halted by rain. M'Cola, Hemingway notes, almost reflexively creates a make-shift tent for his White superior. Although hired as a guide only, M'Cola acts as the product of assumption, and is effectively "naturalized" (Fairclough 92). Without a word, M'Cola fulfills his role as universal subjugate. Further, while nothing is explicitly said regarding sleeping arrangements, the initial implications are that all members of Hemingway's party (M'Cola included) are to remain outside of the tent, unsheltered. Ultimately though, Hemingway allows M'Cola into his tent. Peter Messent's reference to Hemingway's "The Short Happy Life of Frances MaComber" can be easily transposed to all of the stories explored in this examination when he states that, "the narrative also stands us between the position of the white 'master' race and that of the powerless black colonial 'service.' The issue of authority is foregrounded in the story" (160).<sup>25</sup>

Hence, even Hemingway's "kindness," demonstrated in his ultimate offering to M'Cola a place to sleep, assumes the tone of a superior's command. What is more, it serves to reify the established social order of division, underscoring that seldom-discussed but well-understood color-line. Again, a sense of egalitarianism is proffered; but it is a temporal, ever-revocable offering. Likewise, Hemingway's repeated gifts of beer-bottle residue to the likes of the old tracker, Kamau, have all the markings of the patronizing gesture. By this and other acts of "generosity," Hemingway emphatically reminds us of the ever-present,

asymmetrical power relationship at work here and throughout the narrative, and of incontrovertible White claims to authority.

If we suggest that Hemingway's concern in each of his race-based stories (*Green Hills of Africa* and *True at First Light* especially) is the question of authority and racial hegemony, then the African novel becomes the imaginative and narrative space within which White masculinist agency reigns supreme, even in light of very real political and social change. Like each of the "trouble" tales, stories wherein Anglo political and social authority claims are dubious at best, the African tale also locates those questions in the space of what I call the *limnal* figure. In each instance, the *limnal* figure within our examination's context is racially ambiguous (literally or metaphorically confused or conflated in terms of established expectation). And this limnality, or point of conflation, induces both horror and intrigue in the author, a duplicitous anxiety that can only be explored within the geo-political space of Africa.

In "A Short Happy Life" and "Snows of Kilimanjaro," White self-actualization with Africa as mere backdrop is central to subjective development. In those stories, we see the emergence of White masculinity and the conceptualization of "Bwana," the reification of the Great White Man. In "The Good Lion" even, civilization is pitted against perceived "savagery" and questions of essentiality are posited and frightfully left unanswered. Ambiguities, though present, are actively minimized in Hemingway's American tales of cowardice and redemption. Finally, in the African novels, we see further extension and amplification of this featured White masculine subjectivity as evinced in the narrative crafting of Anglo greatness, the seat of ultimate authority, and its reflection in the rifle, the doctor's coat, the gavel and hangman's noose.

Unlike the other racialized tales included in this examination, all of the African stories, including the short stories, but most especially the longer works, are explorations of racial miscegenation in its broadest sense. These works become more of a subtle exercise in self-aggrandizement and a bolstering of a conservative ideology than a blatant narrative unmasking of latent fear. However, I would argue, it is that latent fear, that racialized anxiety, that drives not only the African narratives, but each of the race-based stories of this examination and, quite probably, each of the racially conscious tales in the Hemingway oeuvre.

In the African stories, both short and long, the Hemingway narrative is one ultimately of hegemonic affirmation and subjective exploration, with the featured “Other” acting as narrative conceit. What Africa becomes then for Hemingway is a formative space within which to work out these anxieties and still take comfort in the security of his own (White) skin. Yet, with the rumblings of revolution heard in the background even as our author makes his way home from his final safari, Hemingway seems painfully cognizant that change is perpetual, and that the only true remaining Imperial stronghold, the last bastion of unquestioned White privilege, lies within the confines of paragraph, page, and the literary imagination.



<sup>1</sup> Patrick Hemingway notes in his appended Swahili glossary (to *True at First Light*) the distinction between “mchawi” (literally “witch” in Swahili) and “uchawi” (noted as “witchcraft, in a bad sense”), p. 318-19. Though eerily precise in his performative prowess, according to his own account, Hemingway is the good “witch.”

<sup>2</sup> In fact, referring to *True at First Light* as Hemingway’s “semifictitious account of his African safari with Mary,” James Mellow in his *Hemingway: A Life Without Consequences*. (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1992), p. 585, suggests that Hemingway’s shooting was not on par with others in his party, partly because of his physical condition and drinking habits. Noting the “great” White hunter, Percival’s, disappointment in his protégé, Jeffrey Meyers draws the same conclusion and paints Hemingway as anything but the master-hunter during this African excursion. See Meyers’ *Hemingway: A Biography*. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> In fact, Hemingway’s phallic fixation and selective memory have Debba possessively fondling Hemingway’s weapon here and elsewhere; the violence of the hunt is sexualized as he tells us repeatedly of her fondness for the sensation of his pistol/holster against her thighs. Additionally, we see Debba’s sexualized hero-worship in her wish to “experience” Hemingway’s masculine show by holding the gun responsible for taking down the baboon threat: “The last one I had shot was screaming and I shot and finished him. The others were out of sight. I reloaded in the brush and Debba asked if she could hold the rifle,” p. 144.

<sup>4</sup> Hemingway’s fictionalized safari recollections (*True at First Light*) first found themselves published in the pages of *Look Magazine* in January of 1954. The January issue featured some 16 pages of text and never-before-seen pictures of the writer’s African experience. See Ernest Hemingway. “Hemingway Writes on Africa.” *Look Magazine* (26 Jan. 1954) p. 20+. Later incarnations of these reflections would be published in *Sports Illustrated* as “The African Journals” of 1971. For a fine recount of these years, see Jeffrey Meyers’ *Hemingway: A Biography*. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> See Theodore Roosevelt. *African Game Trails: An Account of the African Wanderings of an American Hunter-Naturalist*. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909).

<sup>6</sup> This store is owned by a Mr. Singh, a local, Indian settler respected by Hemingway for his former Imperial Army service and quiet courage. His relative silence is paired with the histrionics of the Informer and it belies a respectable quality for the narrator. With quiet strength, he embodies to some degree Philip Young’s code-hero definition.

<sup>7</sup> See Gerald Hanley. *The Year of the Lion*. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1954).

<sup>8</sup> Again, see Patrick Hemingway’s glossary of terms complementing *True at First Light*.

<sup>9</sup> See V. Y. Mudimbe’s *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 44-97. Mudimbe underscores the idea of a Eurocentric privileging of knowledge during the colonial process, asserting of Africa’s White explorer that “he concerned himself with mapping out the continent and, in the nineteenth century, compiling information and organizing complex bodies of knowledge, including medicine, geography, and anthropology” (emphasis mine 47).

<sup>10</sup> Demonstrating the continuum between “Old World” archetypal images of Blacks and those ascribed to African Americans early in this country’s development, George Frederickson suggests the White perpetual emphasis on perceived primordial propensities as evidence of White Progress and a marked devolution of the world’s “colored” people. Frederickson notes, “Heavily emphasized was the historical case against the black man based on his supposed failure to develop a civilized way of life in Africa. As portrayed in proslavery writings, Africa was and always had been the scene of unmitigated savagery, cannibalism, devil worship, and licentiousness.” See George Frederickson. *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914*. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), p. 49. The writings of Richard Burton, Henry M. Stanley and other African explorers, with their attendant phrenological descriptions of nakedness, cannibalism, and general savagery, bear out this “reading” of black skin and the so-called “Dark

Continent.” As Frederickson suggests, phrenology became a sanctioned way of reading the (Black) body (included genital inspection) and a way to perpetuate such stereotypes as Black intellectual inferiority and hyper-sexuality. For an interesting counter-reading of African ontology, and a terrific complement to Frederickson’s scholarship, see Leopold Senghor’s “On Negrohood: Psychology of the African Negro,” in which the author explores Black being, as not “progressive” nor “degenerate,” but as something necessarily primordial (Senghor calls this “e-motion” or “e-move”) and therefore “natural.” Leopold Senghor. “On Negrohood: Psychology of the African Negro.” *Diogenes* 37 (Spring 1962), pp. 1-15 rpt. in *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*. Albert G. Mosley, Ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995). 116-127.

<sup>11</sup> Ironically, Hemingway would berate critics of his work for, according to him, reading too much into what he wrote, looking for that which was not there (at least not intentionally so). In a letter to his friend and correspondent for the *New York Times*, Harvey Breit, a couple of years after his second safari, Hemingway asserts that Carlos Baker could “con himself into thinking I put a symbol into anything on purpose. . . What sort of a symbol is Debba, my Wakamba fiancée? She must be a dark symbol.” See Baker’s *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters: 1917-1961*, p. 867. I would argue that she indeed does become a symbol of sorts for a man searching for a formal metaphoric reclamation of the Black body by the White agent.

<sup>12</sup> Debba is Hemingway’s Kamba girlfriend and, according to him, his second, Kamba, wife after Mary. While Debba’s existence and the existence of a relationship with the writer are never in question, Mary Welch Hemingway’s personal notes and memoir (*How It Was*) fail to corroborate the degree of intimacy shared by the two figures. Mary’s account *does* give the reader a greater sense of the African “character,” outside of Debba, exploring in greater detail the friendships made and cultivated on that last safari. Mary’s interest in and sense of admiration for those around her (she wishes to “learn more”), given her attention to detail, rings true (for instance, Mary’s recount gives us bits of Masai legend to counter Western lore’s re-creation by Hemingway in his book). Carlos Baker indulges the notion of a possible physical relationship (suggesting Hemingway “went native”), but his sources, which include interviews with camp friends, do not corroborate Hemingway talk of any second marriage. While James Mellow’s biography quietly questions the veracity of the given accounts, Jeffrey Meyers’ expressly refuses to grant any truth to the couple’s relative recounts (see Meyers, p. 502). See Mellow’s *Hemingway: A Life Without Consequences* and Meyers’ *Hemingway: A Biography*.

<sup>13</sup> Perpetuating the ideal of Black sanctioned White superiority is something Hemingway would replicate from his engagement of the texts of geographic conquerors like Theodore Roosevelt. In his *African Game Trails*, Roosevelt perpetuates the happy notion of an embraced subservient self-conception by the Black figure. According to Roosevelt, “[they] speedily christened each of the white men by some title of their own, using the ordinary Swahili title of Bwana (master) as a prefix,” an action that comes as naturally to these Wakamba as it does “speedily” (102).

<sup>14</sup> The Mau Mau were (largely indigenous) freedom fighters invested in the cause of Kenyan national liberation. While this movement was afoot for decades (already since the late nineteenth century), the Mau Mau proper did not materialize and become a real threat to British rule until the 1940s. By 1963, the British stronghold would be no more. For a fine comprehensive history on the politics that helped shape the continent, consult Ali A. Mazrui’s *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1986). Mazrui couches his observations within the framework of Africa as (European) forgery, beginning with its “discovery” by those in the so-called “West.” See also Thomas O’Toole’s “The Historical Context” 23-51 in *Understanding Contemporary Africa*. April A. Gordon & Donald L. Gordon Eds. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996).

<sup>15</sup> Norman Fairclough asserts in his *Language and Power*, that all linguistic exchanges are negotiations of an inherent power differential. Further, he asserts that “The producer of the text constructs the text as an interpretation of the world, or of the facets of the world which are then in focus” (80). Thus, Hemingway creates, via his forged relations, a new language, and through the greater prism of narrative exchange, he controls that language and the dynamics of every exchange in the crafted text (further deifying the author).

<sup>16</sup> See Homi Bhabha’s “How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space: Post Colonial Times and the Trials of Cultural Translation,” in *In The Location of Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 1994). 212-236.

<sup>17</sup> See Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*.

<sup>18</sup> See V.Y. Mudimbe. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> By "African essentiality," I mean an understood essence pervading day to day African life as the American Hemingway experienced and knew it to be.

<sup>20</sup> See Carl Eby's *Hemingway's Fetishism: Psychoanalysis and The Mirror of Manhood*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999).

<sup>21</sup> Both Jeffrey Meyers and James Mellow note the exorbitant fees paid to Hemingway just prior to his second African excursion. *Look* magazine reportedly paid the author over \$25,000 (for both a January, 1954 pictorial and article spread). The extravagant fees subsidized the cost of his formal return to the simple life and the "primitive."

<sup>22</sup> Toni Morrison. *Playing in the Dark*.

<sup>23</sup> See Charles J. Andersson, *Four Years in Africa: Embracing Explorations and Discoveries During Four Years' Wanderings in the Wilds of Southwestern Africa*. (Philadelphia, The Keystone Publishing Co., 1889).

<sup>24</sup> See David Spurr. *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel-writing and Imperial Administration*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

<sup>25</sup> Peter Messent. *Modern Novelists: Ernest Hemingway*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

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