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## Bowen Family Systems Theory in the Life and Works of Ernest Hemingway

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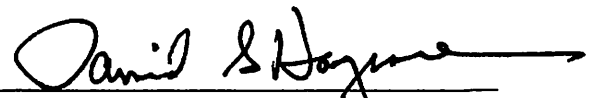
Bowen Family Systems Theory in the Life and Works of Ernest Hemingway

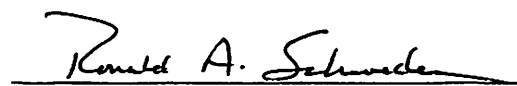
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Allison Brooke Morgan

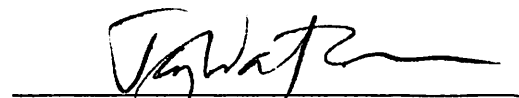
A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford  
May 2007

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Hargrove for his time and effort in helping me with this project. Without his guidance, I would never have been introduced to this intriguing theory and would have never known where to begin the task of applying it to literature. I would also like to thank Dr. Ron Schroeder and Dr. Watson for taking time to be my readers and for their insight and support. Last but not least, a huge thank you to my wonderful family and friends for their support, love, and encouragement.

## ABSTRACT

ALLISON BROOKE MORGAN: Bowen Family Systems Theory in the  
Life and Works of Ernest Hemingway  
(Under the direction of David S. Hargrove)

For my thesis I researched Bowen Family Systems Theory, a psychological theory that concentrates, not on the individual, but rather on the system within which an individual is involved as a means of explaining behavior. After further explaining this theory in terms of its eight concepts, I looked at the life of Ernest Hemingway, his relationships, his writing style and central theme, his success, and his hardships. For his works, I concentrated on Hemingway's collection of organic short stories entitled *In Our Time* for the application of Bowen Theory. My research has led me to conclude that Hemingway managed anxiety through a variety of means, but most notably through alcoholism and writing.

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## Chapter I

### Psychology and Literature

Psychological perspectives on literature and its writers have been important in the critical analysis of literature. Sigmund Freud's psychological theory of the unconscious mind, also known as psychoanalysis, has traditionally been the predominant psychological theory used in literary analysis. Freudian theory is designed to understand the individual and his or her behavior, as do most psychological theories; however, unlike most theories in the field of psychology, it focuses on the abnormal mind and its unconscious desires (Leahey 283). Psychoanalysis explores abstract ideas such as the interpretation of dreams, repression of latent desires, and the connection of the conscious mind to the unconscious mind by way of the id, ego, and superego (303).

As Thomas Hardy Leahey points out in his text, *A History of Psychology*, there is "no doubt that Freud shared the goal of the other founders of psychology—to create a psychology that was a science like any other" (284). However, despite his desire to prove the scientific nature of psychology, his theory is rather subjective. Rather than conducting experiments and collecting detailed data, Freud "investigated the mind by clinically probing it" and assumed outward behavior a product of the unconscious mind (283). Also seemingly contradictory to his desire to prove psychology a science, in a letter to his friend Wilhelm Fliess, Freud described himself as "not at all a man of science, not an observer, not an experimenter, not a thinker" (283).

He continued saying, “I am by temperament nothing but a conquistador—an adventurer, if you want it translated—with all curiosity, daring, and tenacity characteristic of a man of this sort” (283).

While Freud’s theory and discoveries were revolutionary to the field of psychology, his subjective theory raises questions of reliability. Psychoanalytic theory, demanding information that is unknown, thrives on assumptions and personal interpretation instead of a coherent collection and analysis of data. In her graduate thesis entitled *Family Systems Theory as Literary Analysis: The Case of Philip Roth*, Sarah Eden Schiff elaborates on this idea of the subjectivity of Freudian theory saying, “psychoanalysis [. . .] is expressly more ‘subjective’ in its reliance on free association, transference between the analyst and the analysand, and an implicit understanding of the patient’s victimization by his or her innate desires or lacks” (1). For this reason, I would like to suggest that Murray Bowen’s Family Systems Theory is an appropriate alternative to psychoanalysis with regard to literary analysis.

Bowen Family Systems Theory is a useful alternative to psychoanalysis in regard to literary interpretation because of its objectivity. Schiff addresses the issue that although Bowen Theory is a relatively new theory in the field of psychology, it is appropriate in literary analysis since it strives “to demonstrate that the study of the human can be more objective; in other words, it can be a science” (2). Bowen Theory allows us to look at facts and the relationship between facts. Diagrams can then be used to array these facts in a systematic way. Bowen Theory is also effective because it differs from most psychological theories in that it focuses on an individual’s behavior not as a product of the individual’s conscious or unconscious mind, but rather as a product of the nature of



the individual's surrounding relationships. By collecting facts about both an author's life and works and using Bowen Theory to interpret each, we can then begin to explore the possibility that the life an author leads is just as much a product of his works as the works are a product of his life. I am particularly interested in understanding the life and work of the great twentieth century American writer Ernest Hemingway according to Bowen Family Systems Theory. However, before we can look at Hemingway's life and works, we must first define and have a better understanding of the theory that will provide the framework of analysis.

## Chapter II

### Bowen Family Systems Theory

In the 1950s, while researching the causes of schizophrenia, psychiatrist and professor Dr. Murray Bowen introduced a new way of looking at psychology. While other fields of psychology were operating on the idea of the individual as the level of analysis, Bowen completely revolutionized this traditional way of examining behavior. He based his theories on the “idea that the basic unit of emotional functioning might not be the individual, as previously thought, but the nuclear family” (*Extraordinary Relationships* 6). From Bowen’s research and ideas came the Bowen Family Systems Theory--a theory that explains behavior of an individual completely in terms of relationships. Bowen Theory, like all theories, does not provide any concrete wrong or right answer but rather helps us gather answers from a range of information. It provides an infrastructure to generate hypotheses to explain behavior. Bowen theory states that in order to fully understand an individual’s behavior, we must view it through the systems of relationships in which the individual is involved. Therefore, the family becomes the template of behavior.

Dr. Roberta M. Gilbert reinforces the idea of the objectivity of Bowen Theory in her book, *The Eight Concepts of Bowen Theory*, when she explains that the theory “is based on observation rather than on what people think, feel or say about themselves and others” (2). However, Schiff points out that Bowen Theory “entails more than applying traditional concepts of individual psychology to the family unit as a whole” (17). Instead,

Bowen Theory achieves a level of objectivity through its unique eight basic principles which can be measured concretely. These eight principle concepts on which the theory is based provide the foundation for the rest of the theory's ideas. The eight concepts are the nuclear family emotional system, differentiation of self, triangles, cutoff, nuclear family projection process, multigenerational transmission process, sibling position, and societal emotional process.

### **The Nuclear Family Emotional System**

In order to understand the other concepts of Bowen Theory, we must first completely understand the concept of the nuclear family emotional system. This concept explains the idea that the family rather than the individual is the main focus with regards to behavior. The nuclear family refers to the "immediate family," or the parents and children, and is the smallest unit of a family. An extended family is made up of many nuclear families. The "emotional unit" refers to the idea that whatever affects one person in the unit affects all others in the system. This concept operates on the assumption that anxiety is always present in the nuclear family and is dispersed amongst the system. Anxiety does not just stem from or affect one individual (*The Eight Concepts* 5).

Bowen divided the anxiety that occurs within the nuclear family into two types: acute and chronic. "Acute anxiety occurs in the human on a daily basis" and refers to the everyday stresses of life such as fender-benders and stock market swings (7). Chronic anxiety is more "programmed into us during our years in our family origin" and is "more or less automatic" (7). It is a more innate anxiety and is not tied to any one specific event in our life. Gilbert also says that "no matter how we may try to deny it [. . .], the family

determines a great deal about us, both our weaknesses and our strengths” (9). In this sense, we have a natural fusion, or “togetherness,” with our family (9).

Lastly, the concept of the nuclear family emotional system describes the four typical relationship patterns that anxiety takes. These patterns include marital conflict, dysfunction in one spouse, impairment of one or more children, and emotional distance. As Schiff mentions in her thesis, “some families only operate according to one model while others exhibit characteristics of them all” (27). Regardless, an increase in tension amongst a family system will increase at least one of these patterns, and clinical problems and symptoms develop most distinctly during times of high anxiety (“Georgetown”). The first of these patterns mentioned, “marital conflict,” describes the spouses’ tendency to “externalize their anxiety into the marital relationship” (“Georgetown”). In this pattern, spouses rarely take responsibility for their own problems, focus on the problems in the partner, and seek to control the other’s actions.

The “dysfunction in one spouse” relationship pattern is also known as the “overfunctioning-underfunctioning reciprocity” (*The Eight Concepts* 17). In this dynamic, one spouse serves the role of the “overfunctioner,” often exerting an unspoken power over his or her partner. The underfunctioning member yields to this pressure and becomes passive in most situations and decision making processes and is more likely to avoid problems altogether. The overfunctioning member is often seen as the “decision maker” and usually demands agreement. The underfunctioning member typically relies heavily on the partner’s opinion and asks for advice unnecessarily (18). While the overfunctioning spouse is usually viewed by the outside world as more successful and the

underfunctioning spouse typically viewed as depressed and passive, both equally contribute to the relationship problems (Schiff 28).

The third pattern involves the impairment of one or more children. This situation occurs when parents handle high anxiety situations by focusing heavily on one or more of their children to help alleviate the tension (“Georgetown”). This severe child focus can drastically affect his ability to develop a unique sense of self. The focus on the child can lead to a permanent impairment in development, which often takes the form of drug addiction, delinquency, and critical mental illnesses (Schiff 28).

The fourth pattern is emotional distance. In this pattern, family members distance themselves emotionally, and sometimes physically, in an attempt to relieve or reduce anxiety. However, emotional distancing rarely solves a family’s problems because, as Gilbert notes, “they are still emotionally bound and defined by it” (16). Also, family members who engage in emotional distancing risk becoming “too isolated,” and an extreme version of distance known as “cut-off” can occur (“Georgetown”). During cut-off, a family member completely removes himself from all contact with the rest of the system; however, as is the case with distancing, complete separation from the anxiety is unlikely.

### **Differentiation of Self**

One of the most important concepts in Bowen Theory is differentiation of self. Bowen defines differentiation of self as a “concept that describes the factual way an individual is different from all others in the relationship system” (*Extraordinary Relationships* 18). Schiff notes that when Bowen uses the term “self,” he is referring “to that which cannot be traded or lost when with others” (23). The concept of

differentiation of self is based on the idea that people vary in their ability to handle certain situations and circumstances in life, and differentiation is a means of categorizing this “emotional maturity and individuality” (24). People cope with obstacles depending on their level of differentiation. As mentioned previously, we all have some level of fusion with our family unit; however, a drive to be a unique self is present in all of us. This individuality force drives us to differentiate ourselves from the emotional family system. Differentiation of self is the only Bowen Theory concept that considers the depth of the individual. “Basic self” is the term used to describe the differentiated part of self and “vies with pseudo-self against togetherness and for individuality” (*The Eight Concepts* 40).

Differentiation of self helps describe how polar opposites are managed, and it operates on two dimensions. The first dimension is togetherness and detachment/separation. In an anxious moment, an individual may be driven to seek help and comfort from others by fusion (togetherness) or may wish to be alone and completely detached. An individual may also fall somewhere in between these polar opposites. The second dimension is that of reacting to an anxious moment emotionally or through thinking and reasoning. Emotion in Bowen Theory slightly differs from our usual understanding of the term. With regards to the theory, it does not so much refer to feelings as to “automatic behavior.” Therefore, we see that differentiation of self is the position one takes in relationship to the nuclear and extended family and determines how an individual reacts in an anxious situation (*The Eighth Concepts* 28).

Being totally detached or totally fused and reacting completely out of emotion or completely through reason all the time is not a positive attribute and is indicative of a *low*

level of differentiation. A *highly* differentiated person achieves a balance between the polar opposites, recognizes his own tendencies and faults, and adjusts to the anxious situation with this healthy balance between togetherness/detachment and emotion/thinking. Bowen believed that all members of the system should strive to achieve a high level of differentiation, but he also acknowledged the difficulty involved in reaching such a level (“Georgetown”).

A person with a low differentiation of self is more “vulnerable to stress” and recovers from symptoms of anxiety more slowly than highly differentiated individuals. The Georgetown Family Center website, a site dedicated to Bowen Theory and the study of the family, acknowledges that “the less developed a person's ‘self,’ the more impact others have on his functioning.” Individuals with a low differentiation level depend heavily on others’ opinions and acceptance, and often live in a “feeling controlled world” (*The Eight Concepts* 32). Subjectivity, impulse, and emotions dominate the individual’s reasoning process.

On the other hand, high differentiation is characterized by clear values, goals, and flexibility (Roberto 12). An individual with a high level of differentiation is able to reason through a situation and uses thought as a means of making decisions, or in other words, does not allow the facts to be “clouded with emotionality” (“Georgetown”). Highly differentiated people can also accept conflict, criticism, and rejection more easily than a less differentiated person. He is usually confident in his decision making process and better able to handle pressure without simply yielding to others’ opinions. Overall, Bowen believed that a person’s innate “self,” or differentiation level, is relatively stable

over time; however, it can be altered if the “person makes a structured and long-term effort to change it” (“Georgetown”).

## Triangles

The concept of triangles is another important principle of Bowen Theory. Bowen described the concept of triangles, saying that they “provide a theoretical framework for understanding the microscopic functioning of all emotional systems” (*Extraordinary Relationships* 73), and they act as the “molecule, or basic building block of any system of people” (77). A triangle develops when a two-person relationship contains a considerable amount of anxiety and problems. An anxiety-filled, two-person relationship operates much like a two-legged stool as it is delicate, unstable, and prone to collapse. By bringing in a third “leg,” or person, the problematic two-person relationship becomes more stable, thus creating a triangular relationship. The triangle helps dissipate the anxiety between the original two people, making triangles the smallest *stable* system of relationships (Roberto 11).

Triangles usually occur in the presence of undifferentiated people. A highly differentiated person has a high enough level of basic self and responsibility to deal with the stress and problems of a two-person relationship, whereas a highly undifferentiated person turns to a third party in order to avoid or deal with the anxiety. If highly differentiated people notice their involvement in a triangle they are often able to “detriangle.” This term is used to refer to the individual’s ability to observe the emotional triangling going on amongst family members and “controlling one’s own participation” (Roberto 11).



Nuclear and extended family systems almost always have a central triangle and many interlocking triangles. An interlocking triangle occurs when the tension and anxiety is too high for one triangle to contain it (*The Eight Concepts* 50-51). However, as the Georgetown website mentions, spreading the tension by means of a triangle and interlocking triangles can stabilize a system, but ultimately nothing is resolved. This point is important in showing how triangles help *manage* anxiety amongst a system but do not actually *remove* anxiety. While the strictest interpretation of Bowen Theory speaks of triangles in terms of three individuals, a more liberal interpretation allows for the possibility of inanimate objects, escape, obsessions, general concepts, groups, and addictions to serve as parts of the triangle.

### **Cutoff**

As previously mentioned, Bowen Theory also includes the concept of cutoff. In general, the term refers to the “process of separation, isolation, withdrawal, running away, or denying the importance of the parental family” (*The Eight Concepts* 57). Bowen said cutoff can be “achieved either through internal mechanisms or physical distance” (*Extraordinary Relationships* 60), thus suggesting the idea that emotional cutoff can occur in different degrees. The highest and most severe degree of cutoff occurs at both an emotional and physical level, meaning no emotional or physical contact with the other person and/or system. The degree of cutoff directly beneath this is purely emotional, not physical. The lowest degree is not really complete “cutoff,” but instead, occurs in the form of distance. The Georgetown website elaborates on this idea by giving specific examples and saying, “Emotional contact can be reduced by people moving

away from their families and rarely going home, or it can be reduced by people staying in physical contact with their families but avoiding sensitive issues.”

A person usually cuts himself off from the rest of the family in an attempt to remove chronic or acute anxiety. The act of cutoff generally occurs in relationships of a highly undifferentiated person because the only way he knows how to deal with anxiety is to remove himself from it altogether. Emotional cutoff can be bridged by trying to work through problems and accepting responsibility for personal mistakes rather than avoiding the conflict. However, cutoff is never a genuine break from the family and the anxiety within the family because, while it may remove the individual from the situation, it does not stop the anxiety and intensity of feelings. Gilbert furthers this idea, saying that cutoff actually only creates more anxiety. This anxiety will often lead to physical symptoms such as depression; however, identifying cutoff as the source of the symptoms is unlikely since the individual feels removed from the system’s anxiety (*The Eight Concepts* 60).

### **Family Projection Process**

The fifth concept of Bowen Theory is nuclear family projection process, and it describes “the means by which parents transmit problems to their children” (Roberto 13). This principle focuses on the nuclear, or “immediate family,” and supports the idea that, if a relationship between a husband and wife is filled with tension and anxiety, then one of the following three outcomes will occur: distance in relationships, illness, or projection of anxiety onto a third party, such as a child. Parents can project anxiety onto a child by *focusing* on the child out of fear that something is wrong, *interpreting* behavior as if something is wrong, and, ultimately, *treating* the child as if something is wrong.

However, the more differentiated the parents are, the less anxiety will be projected onto the child (“Georgetown”).

The projection process can vary for different children within the same nuclear family as there can be differing amounts of “inappropriate focus” (*The Eight Concepts* 69). The overall concept of family projection process is important because the focus on a child, or lack thereof, has a direct impact on his resulting level of differentiation. When anxious parents focus too heavily on one child, the level of fusion is greater and the “lower the level of differentiation of self” (69). An unnecessary and excessive amount of focus on a child can greatly increase his vulnerability to clinical symptoms (“Georgetown”). Focus also causes “relationship sensitivities such as heightened needs for attention and approval, difficulty dealing with expectations, the tendency to blame oneself or others [ . . . ] and acting impulsively to relieve the anxiety of the moment rather than tolerating anxiety and acting thoughtfully” (“Georgetown”). While this sibling is receiving excessive amounts of focus, the other siblings are “freer of the family emotional process” (*The Eight Concepts* 69) and have a better chance of reaching a higher level of differentiation. These children tend to have more mature relationships with their parents and develop into less needy and more goal-oriented individuals (“Georgetown”).

### **Multigenerational Transmission Process**

Yet another principle of Bowen Theory is multigenerational transmission of anxiety process. Multigenerational transmission process is important because it looks at the “functioning and emotional processes of several generations and gives a greater understanding of the ‘big picture’ that is so important to family systems” (*Extraordinary*

*Relationships 8*). Anxiety is transmitted across generations and manifests itself in the idea that people are attracted to those at a similar differentiation level. This concept involves the idea of the extended family unit and occurs when anxiety in one of the three forms previously mentioned (distance, illness, or projection) is transferred *across* generations. The problems and conflicts in relationships that anxiety causes no longer remain in the single nuclear family unit, but instead are carried into later generations. This transmission is possible because parents directly affect their child's differentiation level, and, once the child matures, he tends to choose a mate with a differentiation level comparable to his own.

However, a highly differentiated person is less affected by this pattern of transmission of anxiety over generations because a well-differentiated person has a better understanding of thinking and emotional inner guidance systems, which "enables them to tell the difference between reality and patterned functioning originating from within" the family system (83). These highly differentiated individuals go on to marry a mate who also has a high differentiation level, and together they tend to raise children with a similar level of differentiation. Thus, the pattern of anxiety and low differentiation can be temporarily suspended.

The actual family diagram is especially important for this concept of Bowen Theory since it allows us to visually look at the patterns that develop over several generations. Family diagrams often include longevity of family members, health history, locations, dates, professions, marriages, reproductive patterns, and causes of deaths (77-78). Also, since people tend to marry an individual with a comparable differentiation

level, a general ascending or descending level of differentiation of the entire family can be seen over multiple generations in the family diagram.

### **Sibling Position**

Bowen Theory also explains the importance of sibling position, which is the idea that the order in which children are born has a direct impact on their level of functioning. Bowen strongly believed that there are “typical behavioral and attitudinal profiles for each ordinal position” (Roberto 14). This concept is much more “controversial and not as widely utilized as the other key concepts” (14), and Bowen derived his concept of sibling position from the studies of the psychologist Dr. Walter Toman, who devoted his life to researching “what part the constellation of the family played in shaping personality and relationships” (*The Eight Concepts* 85).

A child’s level of functioning may differ from another sibling’s level depending on the amount of focus he receives, which is often a direct result of his position in the family line-up. Gilbert elaborates on this concept when she says, “The research showed that, all things being equal, people would show certain characteristics, depending on where they landed in their families’ constellations, according to the mix of rank and genders there” (86). Therefore, no two children experience the same family system in the exact same way. However, Bowen Theory explains that no sibling position is better than another as they all have certain strengths and certain weaknesses. Bowen did clarify though, that regardless of sibling position, the child who receives the focus of the family projection process becomes “infantilized” (Roberto 14).

Bowen noticed trends in characteristics of children in the same sibling position across families. Overall, he noticed that oldest children tend to have more responsibility

and hold more leadership roles, while youngest children often fall into the role of the follower (“Georgetown”). Middle children often adopt the characteristics of two sibling positions taking characteristics from both the older and younger siblings. As with the other Bowen Theory concepts, highly differentiated people are less likely to fall into the “typical” characteristic patterns of the “oldest,” “middle,” and “youngest” sibling positions (Schiff 51).

### **Societal Emotional Process**

This last concept of Bowen Theory describes how the emotional process and management of anxiety can affect society as a whole. As Schiff points out, this concept “extends beyond the locale of the family and applies to the greater family of a society-at-large” (59). Bowen noticed that the emotional problems amongst families were similar to the emotional problems of society and that society’s nature of handling anxiety was very similar, just on a different scale. Bowen stated that emotional systems “govern behavior on a societal level” and promote periods of both progression and regression (“Georgetown”).

A period of regression to an overall lower level of functioning occurs when society’s members focus heavily on relieving anxiety of the moment rather than concentrating on long-term goals and principles. When society gets overwhelmed with problems such as overpopulation, war, depression, economic issues, and technological advances that overtake senses, a period of regression usually occurs (Schiff 59). During regression, society experiences an increase in violence, drug abuse, divorce, and “less principled decision making” (“Georgetown”). In this sense, society uses violence, drugs,

and other means in the form of triangles to alleviate anxiety much as two members of a single family often pull in a third person or party to relieve the anxiety.

Also, research has been done to show the effects of society's regression on the family unit. Bowen hypothesized that society's overall low functioning level during periods of regression in turn affects the dynamic and importance of the family in society. He said relationships are more difficult to sustain and "societal mores have changed to an anti-family ethic" (*The Eight Concepts* 108). Furthermore, raising children and keeping unnecessary anxiety out of the family dynamic are becoming increasingly difficult because of the intrusion of dangers such as drugs, sex, and violence—factors that society has turned to in times of regression. Society also seems to place less importance on the individual's proximity (both geographically and emotionally) to the extended family.

Gilbert mentions that the eight concepts of Bowen Theory are a unit, just as the family is (117). Together they form a cohesive and complete theory. While certain concepts are more developed and easier to observe, excluding any one concept would make the theory as a whole weaker. The concepts interlock, and many of the concepts build on one or several others. For example, differentiation of self not only explains why triangles often occur but also why family projection process and multigenerational transmission process occur. An individual's level of differentiation directly affects his likelihood of turning to a triangle dynamic in order to alleviate anxiety. If two parents have low levels of differentiation, they will most likely project unnecessary focus and anxiety onto a child in the family projection process. The child who receives focus will in turn operate at a low differentiation level, marry someone of a comparable

differentiation level, raise children of similar functioning levels, and carry on the trend to future generations in the multigenerational transmission process. In this way, we see how the ideas build on each other and ultimately help describe the “big picture” of behavior. Now that we understand more about Bowen Theory and its eight fundamental concepts, we can look at Ernest Hemingway’s life and works and later use the theory to draw some hypotheses.



## Chapter III

### The Life and Works of Ernest Hemingway

#### **The Life of Ernest Hemingway**

Perhaps one of the greatest and most influential American authors of the twentieth century, Ernest Hemingway helped revolutionize modern fiction with his brutal subject matter and simple, direct writing style. Hemingway was often dubbed a “man’s man,” involved in every sport from deep-sea fishing to bullfighting. He was traveled and knowledgeable. He lived a life of adventure based on spontaneity. However, underneath his “macho” image, he fought many of his own personal battles, struggling with alcoholism and depression and a genuine yearning to understand the cruel world around him and the frailty of the human body. To gain a better understanding of the man, his ideas, and his works, we must take a closer look at his life.

Ernest Miller Hemingway was born on July 21, 1899, in Oak Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, to Clarence Edmonds Hemingway and Grace Hall Hemingway. He was the first son of the family and the second of six children. He had one older sister named Marcelline, three younger sisters—Ursula, Madelaine, and Carol—and one younger brother named Leicester (Tyler 2). The Hemingways lived a comfortable life as part of the upper-middle class. Clarence was an obstetrician and Grace was a trained opera singer, who made money teaching voice and music lessons (Tyler 2). However, as Marcelline later documented in her book *At the Hemingways: A Family Portrait*, the couple had very different personalities and interests. Marcelline says, “opposites are said

to attract, and surely no two young people could have been more opposite than my father and mother” (Sanford 49). Grace was talented and pampered and deeply interested in the performing arts. Clarence, or “Doctor Ed,” loved the outdoors and hunting and fishing.

Marcelline tells of her father’s childhood in her memoir of the Hemingway family. She mentions how her father’s father, Anson Tyler Hemingway, was a “serious man, deeply religious and rather formal in manner” (18). He was good friends with a few well-known evangelists, such as Dwight L. Moody. He lived very modestly working as a secretary at the local Y.M.C.A in Chicago, and he and his wife raised their four sons and two daughters in a one story house off his modest salary. Marcelline claims that “the stern religious discipline of that day” and living a life near poverty “both had a life-long effect upon my father” (18). Clarence’s mother, Adelaide Edmonds Hemingway, fostered a softer side in her children though. Marcelline says that even in her overworked days in the crowded household, she was “never too busy to talk with her children about the world of ideas—the things that really mattered” (21). She was not only a good mother figure, but also a warm friend and confidant to her children and grandchildren.

Ed spent his free time as a boy loving the outdoors, a pastime he would eventually pass down to his son Ernest. He loved the river and the old Indian mounds (21). He loved fishing, hunting, and cooking (Baker 2). Perhaps instilled by his father’s strict moral code and his mother’s kind heart, Ed also had a “conscientious desire to do what was right and to serve where he was needed” (Sanford 23). He was touched by the sight of a wounded bird or an orphaned animal and originally thought he would like to pursue a career as an animal doctor. However, by the time he was in high school, “he knew that

being a doctor of medicine and a surgeon was the one thing he must do with his life” (23). He went to medical school at Rush Medical College in Chicago.

Marcelline recalls her childhood with her father. She describes him with a dark beard and mustache, intense and twinkling eyes, and standing “tanned and powerful” (26). He had a good sense of humor but had little patience for anyone who led an inactive life. Marcelline recalls, “He liked physical activity and almost resented anyone’s taking time for resting or purely mental occupations” (27). She believed his love for physical activity was one of his most charming attributes, and he was always ready to go somewhere and do something new. However, she also recalls that her father had “another side to him” (31). He was a strict disciplinarian and believed in physical punishment. Marcelline says, “sometimes the change from being gay to being stern was so abrupt that we were not prepared for the shock that came, when one minute Daddy would have his arm around one of us [. . .], and a minute or so later, we would be ordered to our room” (31). This description coincides with many claims that Ed suffered from manic depression marked by dark moods and occasional vacations away from the family (Tyler 2).

Marcelline elaborates on the differences between her mother and father and describes her mother as both “pampered” and “talented” (Sanford 49). Grace came from a rather wealthy family and grew up traveling often to Europe and the mountains in Colorado. Unlike the Hemingways’ background in outdoor sport, the Halls were a musical family. Grace studied the violin, piano, sang in the choir, and from a young age, loved the opera. Grace, like Ed, grew up with a strong religious background as her family attended the local Episcopal Church in Chicago. The Halls moved to Oak Park,

and it was here at Oak Park High School during Grace's sophomore year that she met Ed. She was not immediately interested in him as "he was interested in nature lore and animals and chemistry and scientific things, while she was drawn to music and the arts" (54). However the two grew closer when Grace's mother fell ill with cancer, and they married in the fall of 1896.

Even though Grace never embraced the concept of the outdoor life as Ed did and had a great "aversion to insects," Marcelline said she had "tremendous courage about other things" and "never hesitated to try something new" (Sanford 63). She spent much of her time in service to the church, working with pupils, and trying to instill a love of music in her children. She "liked people to think well of themselves" and was affectionate towards her children (66). However, Marcelline also recalls a rather unusual fascination of her mother's—to have twins. When she did not conceive twins, she became determined to have Marcelline and Ernest "be as much like twins as possible" (61). She dressed them in similar clothes regardless of their different sex and encouraged them to play with the same toys and engage in every activity together (62). She even held Marcelline back one year so that she and Hemingway could attend the same grade in school at the same time (Tyler 2).

Although some sources claim that their marriage was not exactly a happy one due to disagreement over how to raise the children and financial issues, Ed and Grace never divorced. Hemingway later referred to his strict and religious parents as "narrow." Nonetheless, Hemingway was greatly influenced by his parents' sharply contrasting interests as he not only grew to love literature but also acquired a passion for the outdoor life. His love for outdoor adventure and isolated places continued to grow as he spent

many boyhood summers in northern Michigan at the family's estate, Windemere, on Bear Lake. The summer getaway spot was complete with "low green hills, blue water, and pastel sunsets" (Baker 3). Windemere offered the perfect cottage setting complete with lighting by oil lamps and small, cozy bedrooms, a dining room, and kitchen. The setting and environment of the summers at the lake provided opportunity for "manly endeavors," and Hemingway and "Marce" were known to "relish" the activities the outdoors offered (3). The lake and the experiences Hemingway had would later serve as a basis for much of his early fiction.

Hemingway grew up in Oak Park attending the local public schools and becoming athletically and academically successful at River Forest High School. Not only did he swim, play football, and box, he also was the editor of his high school newspaper and literary magazine, *Trapeze*. He also played the cello, but after having "great difficulty in tuning the strings and playing in key," he gave it up his senior year and began focusing on athletics (Sanford 123). Marcelline notes that although few of the Hemingway children wished to pursue music, their mother had given them "a wonderful background in appreciation of music" and the arts (125). Ed wished to teach his children the importance of the dollar and keeping track of finances, so throughout his adolescence, Hemingway held multiple odd and end jobs, such as lawn-mowing, snow shoveling, and delivering papers. Marcelline also recalls the Hemingway children "doing a lot of reading" (133). They earnestly studied the Bible and classic literature, including Dickens, Scott, and Shakespeare. Hemingway took part in many high school extracurricular activities such as the orchestra, glee club, debating society, youth group, rifle club, and track team manager (135).

Upon his high school graduation in 1917, against his parents' wishes, Hemingway did not pursue a college education but instead began writing for the *Kansas City Star*. His father had hoped he would follow in his footsteps by becoming a doctor, but the job as a cub reporter his uncle helped him land at the *Star* was one he did not want to pass up (Tyler 3). Although he only kept the job for a little over half a year, his experience as a journalist helped develop his simple, direct, and forceful writing style.

Also around this time, America entered World War I. Michael Reynolds mentions in his book *The Young Hemingway*, that "in the newsreels, papers and magazines, young Hemingway lived the war day by day" (14). At the time he was writing for the *Star*, he was still too young by a year to fight. However, when old enough to fight, Hemingway attempted to join the army several times but was refused because of an injured eye and did not pass the physical exam (15). Nonetheless, he was determined to experience the war, and "he had to get to the front" (15). Hemingway went against his parents' wishes once again and became a Red Cross ambulance driver on the Italian front. It was here on the front that Hemingway began to experience the cruelty of death and began to notice the frailty of human life. On his bicycle delivering mail and chocolate to soldiers just ten days after arriving on the Italian front, a trench mortar shell "hit and almost buried him" (Sanford 161). He was left with over two hundred pieces of shrapnel in his legs. When he resumed consciousness, he attempted to rescue a wounded Italian soldier but was wounded again, this time, with a machine gun bullet to his left knee (161). Despite his heroic efforts, Hemingway's injuries forced him to leave the front.

With shrapnel in his leg, Hemingway spent time in Milan and Michigan recuperating. Not able to engage in his usual activities, he passed the time by drinking and reading heavily. Marcelline says “he read for hours at a time in bed,” reading anything he could get his hands on (179). He met Agnes Von Kurowsky, an American nurse in Milan, and fell deeply in love with her. Their relationship provided the foundation for the relationship between Henry and Catherine in his famous novel *A Farewell to Arms*. However, their relationship ended when she did not follow him back to the United States. In the biography *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story*, Carlos Baker claims Hemingway’s relationship with Agnes and his war experience had “matured him faster than anything else had done,” and the memories he acquired during his time in Italy “would stay with him the rest of his life” (56).

Around 1920, Hemingway moved to Toronto, Ontario, and became a foreign correspondent for the *Toronto Star*. In September of the following year, he married his first of four wives, Hadley Richardson. Even though his family loved Hadley and viewed her to be a “wonderful wife” (Sanford 210), Hemingway seemed to have doubts from the start, knowing “that marriage would destroy the kind of [busy] life he had been leading” (Baker 79). With the advice of his friend Sherwood Anderson, the newlyweds settled in Paris, never to live in Oak Park again. Anderson claimed that while an exciting lifestyle filled with “fishing and playing tennis” in Italy was possible, Paris was “the place for a serious writer” (82). With a letter of introduction from Anderson, Hemingway became good friends with other American expatriates such as Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ezra Pound. The expatriates, disillusioned with the ever-modernizing American culture, formed a group whose name Hemingway helped coin the “Lost Generation.” His

time spent in Paris is recounted in *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway's collection of memoirs of the years between 1921 and 1926.

In 1923, Hadley and Hemingway had a son named John, and one year later, Hemingway quit working for the *Toronto Star*. In these years after World War I, Hemingway began writing and publishing some of his greatest collections of short stories, the first of which was titled *In Our Time* and published in 1925. During this time, Hemingway and Fitzgerald became good friends and even better competitors. The two both shared a love for drinking and a passion for writing. Fitzgerald's wife Zelda, however, disliked Hemingway and always accused his "macho" persona of being false and compensation for what she believed to be his homosexual tendencies.

As Hemingway began publishing his first works, he began losing touch with his family, and Marcelline recalls that "it was Hadley who kept us in touch with how things were going" (Sanford 220). While *In Our Time* had introduced Hemingway and his brutal subject matter and unique style to the world, it was his novel *The Sun Also Rises* published in 1926 that furthered his reputation as a successful writer. The novel deals heavily with the issues of the Lost Generation and was inspired by the time he and Hadley spent in Spain attending the fiesta of San Fermin and watching bullfighting (Tyler 6). The novel not only sold many copies but was also well received by the critics, despite its pessimism. The following year, he published a less successful collection of short stories entitled *Men Without Women*.

Throughout their marriage, Hadley was viewed by others as "unusually supportive" of her husband's career despite its modest earnings (Tyler 5). She supported him in his passions and "participated with enthusiasm in the lifestyle he chose" (Tyler 5).



However, while in Paris the Hemingways befriended Pauline Pfeiffer, a fashion reporter for *Vogue*. Pauline first became a friend to Hadley but shortly thereafter began an affair with Hemingway. When Hadley confronted Hemingway about the situation, he “insisted he couldn’t help himself and then blamed Hadley for breaking up their marriage by bringing it up” (Tyler 7). The two filed for divorce in 1926. The divorce also marked a period of two years of estrangement of Hemingway from his family.

Hemingway and Pauline, a devout Roman Catholic, married in May of 1927 (Hays 10). Hemingway actually converted to Catholicism, despite his Protestant upbringing. His attitude toward religion had previously been a controversial subject, but he “indicated his Catholic faith was important to him” as he prayed, attended Mass, and donated to the church (Tyler 8). Pauline gave birth to the couple’s first and Hemingway’s second son, Patrick, followed by Gregory a couple of years later. Gregory was a Caesarian birth, a motif that Hemingway would later include in several of his works.

In 1928, Hemingway ended the estrangement from his family with a visit to his family in Oak Park, a meeting that Marcelline mentions “meant much to our parents, especially Dad, for he had missed Ernie” (Sanford 227). However, two months later, burdened with diabetes and financial difficulties, Ed Hemingway committed suicide with a Civil War pistol, an event Hemingway learned about through a telegram on his way to Key West (Tyler 8). Hemingway rushed home shortly after receiving the news. He was deeply affected and disturbed by the nature of his father’s death, and suicide became a more prominent theme in his writings (8). He later blamed his mother for pushing his father to suicide with her “cruelty, egotism, and hypocrisy” (8). There is little evidence

to support Hemingway's claims, but this behavior marked the beginning of a rather unusual pattern of behavior—"maligning people whom he owed a debt of gratitude" (8).

Perhaps his most famous work of fiction, *A Farewell to Arms*, was published in 1929. The early 1930s became an adventurous time for Hemingway as he spent time in Spain as a correspondent during the civil war and in Key West, Florida, where he bought a house (Tyler 9). Hemmingway and Pauline also traveled extensively to Berlin, Switzerland, and Arkansas (8). The publication of *Death in the Afternoon* revealed Hemingway's interest in Spanish bullfighting, but the novel portrayed the sport in a rather tragic light. In 1933, he published yet another collection of short stories titled *Winner Takes Nothing*, and he went on a ten-week safari in Africa, visiting Kenya and Tanzania. His time in Africa inspired his 1935 publication of *Green Hills of Africa*, a slightly less popular work.

During the late 1930s, Hemingway continued reporting on the Spanish civil war. In Spain, he began an affair with Martha Gellhorn, a professional journalist. Hemingway and Pauline were friends with Martha before the affair began, just as Pauline had been friends with Hadley. Even though he was technically still married to Pauline, he began living with Martha in Finca Vigia, a house they rented together in Cuba (Tyler 10). He questioned his Catholicism, eventually left the church, and he and Pauline divorced in 1939. He blamed much of their divorce on Pauline's strict Catholic views that prohibited the use of birth control and thus hindered their sex life (Tyler 9). He and Martha married shortly thereafter, and he lived the next decade relatively quietly as his alcoholism worsened and he suffered from many health problems, including kidney trouble, hemorrhoids, and broken bones from an automobile accident.

His time spent in Spain inspired his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which expounds on the idea of the effect of the loss of liberty. After a brief period of involvement in the navy during World War II, Hemingway went to London as a correspondent for yet another magazine. Martha, who was working for *Collier's* magazine covering World War II, arranged for Hemingway to act as a *Collier's* correspondent with the British Royal Air Force (Hays 13). In London, he met Mary Welsh, who wrote for two different magazines. Although they were both married at the time of their meeting, the two quickly became lovers. Martha and Hemingway divorced in 1945, and Hemingway and Mary spent the summer in Cuba. She soon gave up her career, and they married in March of 1946. It was after World War II that his physical and mental health began to seriously decline, and some critics claim that his writing ability declined also.

He eventually lost his Cuban estate and was forced out of country as the American government grew suspicious of his activities and ties to the country, and he relocated to Ketchum, Idaho. After a few years of disappointment marked by Mary's miscarriage and his unsuccessful publication of *Across the River and into the Trees* in 1950, Hemingway published his popular novella *The Old Man and the Sea*, a work that many believe helped him win the Nobel Prize in 1954. However, his bout of back luck did not seem to change with the novella's popularity, and Hemingway's health continued to deteriorate. His alcoholism and depression continued to worsen, and he struggled to keep his weight under control. He became a victim of two plane crashes that left him with a crushed vertebra, sprained limbs, burns, a ruptured liver, and temporary loss of

vision. His blood pressure and cholesterol continued to climb as his memory loss worsened with the ECT treatments he was being given for depression and paranoia.

Not only did Hemingway's health begin to change but so did his demeanor. Throughout his life, Hemingway was the type to make friends quickly (Tyler 12). He was admired for his charm and charisma and respected for his intelligence, humor, and well-roundedness. However, later in life, he was often "boastful, patronizing, and pugnacious" (Tyler 12). His friendships began ending "abruptly and acrimoniously" (12). In the fall of 1960, he was hospitalized for his psychological problems, which included nightmares, paranoia, depression, and insomnia. At his home in Ketchum on July 2, 1961, only a few weeks before turning sixty-two, Hemingway committed suicide by a gunshot to the head, just as his father had done many years before.

### Writing Style

Often dubbed a "writer of exclusion," Hemingway developed a unique writing style influenced by his career in journalism. His short stories and novels employ a writing style that is simple and direct, much like what we would expect of a newspaper article. He achieves a tone of everyday conversation yet maintains a poetic sound and rhythm. Rather than florid prose, which had become commonplace for the time period, Hemingway used short, simple, clear sentences rather than complex ornate ones. Tyler notes that Hemingway "writes very lean prose, managing to convey vivid images and intense emotion in extraordinarily few words" (35). His style has often been deemed rhetorically controlled and contained. However, the brevity in his writing is purposeful and corresponds with Hemingway's belief in the "Iceberg Theory" of writing. In *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway describes his theory, saying:

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of the iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. The writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing.

(“Hemingway Resource Center”)

In this quotation, Hemingway explains his belief that not every detail needs to be given to the reader in a work of literature. Rather, if the author is writing clearly enough, the reader should be able to understand the aspects that are not directly stated. In this sense, Hemingway’s writing style is like an Iceberg: only one-eighth is visible while the other seven-eighths are below the surface yet still important and existent.

The narration in Hemingway’s stories is not “chatty,” and is unemotional and detached. The narration does not include opinion or interpretation, much like a journalism article. Hemingway also uses an extensive amount of dialogue in his works. Some short stories, such as “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place,” are made up almost exclusively of dialogue. By creating a detached narrator and only giving the reader the dialogue in a work, Hemingway is asking the reader to see “below the surface” of his writing. However, exclusion of information simply because of a writer’s lack of knowledge makes a work “hollow” and incomplete.

### **Themes**

Hemingway’s works are known for brutal and violent subject matter. The subject matter he encountered in his journalism career often carried over to his works of

literature. The hardships and experiences (e.g., miscarriage, war, and suicide) Hemingway dealt with in his life also proved to be a source of his topics in literature. Lisa Tyler claims in her guide to Hemingway's works that "the chief theme of Hemingway's writing concerns how best to cope with suffering and defeat, how to live with dignity in a world that is racked with violence and loss" (25). His works often touch on the incredible vulnerability and frailty of being human, and this theme is reflected in many of his characters who are portrayed as vulnerable, unornamented, and unprotected.

Perhaps, Hemingway developed this theme because of the life he led and the hardships he suffered. Nonetheless, he saw his experience as an advantage over other writers. For example, to be wounded on the battle front but survive was exciting to him because he could write about war in a way that few other writers could. The pattern of depression and suicide in his family and his poor health, addictions, and accident-proneness sensitized Hemingway to the frailty of the human body in an unforgiving world. However, as Tyler suggests in her quote, Hemingway does not necessarily incorporate ideas that solely focus on the nature of the human life; rather, his theme also deals with how to *best cope* with such suffering, violence, and defeat. Hemingway seems to thrive on the idea of competency, precision, and proficiency. Striving to attain these attributes become his characters' way of dealing with an otherwise fragile existence and acquiring a sense of dignity in the process.

### **Hemingway's Work: *In Our Time***

Hemingway is known for and has received much acclaim for many of his novels. However, equally as well-written are his collections of short stories. For the purpose of this project, I think the organic collection of stories entitled *In Our Time* best facilitates

the discussion and application of Bowen Theory since it is a series of stories with repeating characters and themes. Many of the stories trace the life and progression of the protagonist, Nick Adams. As readers, we see Nick progress from childhood to adulthood, and the Nick Adams we see at the end of the series is strikingly different than the young Nick we see in “Indian Camp.” His journey to adulthood includes an array of different life-altering experiences, including marriage, war, and a time of exclusion and exploration. Each short story is separated by a different vignette, unrelated to the story that it precedes, but each conveying a single act or depiction of violence. This technique seems to operate as Hemingway’s reminder of the suffering that comes along with the frailty of human life.

Likewise, many of the short stories focus on violent events—bullfighting, state-sanctioned violence of biased police, execution of criminals, self-inflicted injuries, and war (Tyler 34). The few stories that do not include overt acts of violence depict a psychological violence, such as tense marital arguments (34). Tyler mentions that critics have often accused Hemingway of an obsession and overuse of violence in his works, particularly in *In Our Time* (34). However, she also points out that Jackson J. Benson defends Hemingway against such accusations, “arguing that the author is preoccupied not with violence for its own sake, but with the emotional response of human beings confronted with violence” (Tyler 35). Benson’s point reiterates Hemingway’s theme of human beings’ attempt to cope with suffering in the world.

“Indian Camp” opens the collection and shows a young Nick Adams traveling to an Indian camp with Uncle George and his father, Dr. Adams. Nick’s father has come to help a woman who has been in labor for two days since her baby is in a breech position.

Dr. Adams decides to perform a caesarian section and uses a great degree of precision in both his preparation and actual performance of the surgery. The woman's deafening screams do not affect Dr. Adams, and he admits that he will be unable to stop her pain since he has no anesthetic. Dr. Adams appears confident yet detached in his nature of work, and treats Nick almost as an intern. He explains the Indian woman's situation and describes the surgery as he performs it. Proud of the successful delivery of the baby, Dr. Adams is sure the father must be excited and proud with the child's arrival. When he goes to see the father in the top bunk, he finds that the Indian father has slit his throat with a razor. The screams of his wife in pain had been too much for him to handle.

The irony of the story lies in the fact that Dr. Adams confidence lies in his feeling of competence in his work. He is thorough and precise. However, he overlooked something fundamental—the fact that he could block the woman's screams from his mind but her husband could not. In this sense, Dr. Adams is unsuccessful in his quest to find dignity and proficiency in a world of suffering. The story is a story of loss not only for the Indian woman and her baby but also Dr. Adams and Nick. By witnessing the violence in the story, Nick has lost a degree of his innocence and gained experience and maturity. The story depicts the necessary medical violence of the caesarian section without anesthesia and also the Indian father's suicide.

Nick experiences another form of loss in "The End of Something." In this story, Nick is still an adolescent and is seen fishing with his girlfriend, Marjorie. The two reminisce about the days when Horton's Bay was a successful lumbering town. They continue to fish and eventually make a fire and lay out a blanket in order to picnic. Marjorie notices Nick is quieter than usual and asks him if something is wrong. After



questioning him several times, Nick responds with a simple, “It’s not fun anymore” (Hemingway 81). While not depicting an overt act of violence, this story relays a psychological struggle Nick is learning he must cope with. He is learning to deal with his changing feelings and maturity. Ultimately, it serves as yet another story of loss, as Nick’s relationship with Marjorie comes to an end much as the prosperous days of the lumbering town have come to an end.

In “The Three Day Blow,” we see Nick as a young man. It describes one of Nick’s visits to his friend Bill’s house. They talk about the weather and the fact that the wind has been blowing. Bill predicts “she’ll blow like that for three days” (Hemingway 85). The two young men go inside the house and begin drinking whiskey and discussing baseball and books. Bill comments on how his father’s drinking gets “a little wild sometimes” (88), while Nick says his father claims to never have had a drink in his life. Bill changes the conversation, telling Nick he was wise to end his relationship with Marge and voices his discontent with the prospect of marriage. Nick does not seem as excited about the situation, and with helplessness and melancholy in his voice mentions how everything had ended so abruptly—“just as when the three-day blows come now and rip all the leaves off the trees” (Hemingway 90). When Bill mentions the fact that the relationship may not be over, Nick is comforted in believing that nothing in life is “irrevocable” (92). The boys continue to drink and set off toward the meadow.

This story shows yet another psychological struggle. Nick has obviously struggled with knowing whether or not he made the correct decision in ending his relationship with Marjorie. The wind represents the ever-changing stage of life Nick finds himself in. Nick is at a place in life where he must decide whether or not he is

going to continue to be a “man’s man” or change his path to become a family man.

However, the comfort he finds in thinking that “nothing was ever lost” and that nothing was “irrevocable” signifies Nick still has a naïve side. He is unwilling to accept the idea that certain decisions and actions can lead to permanent life-altering situations.

“The Battler” also tells a story of Nick Adams as a young man. However, unlike the previous stories, Nick is not in the comfortable and familiar setting of his hometown. At the opening of the story, Nick has hopped a train and now finds himself in an unknown town. Hungry and lost, he approaches a campfire he sees in the distance. He meets a former famous boxer named Ad Francis, who has a missing ear and misshapen lips and nose. Nick soon meets Ad’s friend Bugs, and the two strangers sit down to eat their sandwiches. After Nick cuts a loaf of bread with his knife, Ad asks if he can see the knife. Bugs warns Nick against this, and eventually knocks Ad out when he begins to argue and threaten Nick. Nick finds out that the two men met in prison after Ad’s fame became too much for him to handle. He still gets money from his wife, who is also explained to be his sister. He and Bugs use this money to support themselves. After hearing Bugs’s story, Nick starts back up the tracks heading toward the next town.

This story offers a new dynamic in Nick’s life as he continues his rite of passage into adulthood. Nick must face the challenge of not only being in a new and unfamiliar location, but also of confronting a new and unfamiliar kind of threat. The threat of physical violence is apparent throughout the story. Nick is unsure of the nature and history of the two strangers he meets, and Ad becomes an overt physical threat. Nick is learning how to gain a sense of independence and a taste of the rough side of the world.

He is faced with the challenge to embrace the toughness that reality and a natural setting present.

In "Cross-Country Snow," we see Nick and his friend George enjoying the sport of skiing in Switzerland. They are invigorated by the activity and nature that surrounds them. They take a break at a nearby lodge, and it becomes apparent how close the two men are. They talk about their love for skiing and their unwed pregnant waitress. Through extensive dialogue we realize that their time in the mountains is only temporary since George must return home for his education, and Nick must prepare to return to the United States with his significant other, Helen, who is carrying their child. It is unclear whether or not Nick and Helen are married, but nonetheless Nick tells George that he and Helen will most likely return to the States even though neither really wishes to. George and Nick then begin to realize they may never ski again together because the mountains in the United States are too rocky, and since their lives are changing, they may never have a chance to return to the "swell places" to ski (Hemingway 145). George wishes they would make a promise to each other to go skiing again at some point, but Nick replies, saying "There isn't any good in promising" (147). The two men leave the lodge carrying their skis on their shoulders.

This story shows Nick as an adult and the issues he faces with the time. He is learning to accept change even if it is not necessarily what he wants, and his naïve spirit seems to have left him as he concludes the story with a rather defeatist attitude, telling George that there is no good in making promises, as if he has been let down in the past. The dynamic of the relationship between the two men is also interesting to note. They are obviously very close and share common interests, but they are careful not to become

too close. When Nick mentions his love of skiing, George says skiing is too swell to discuss further. The men appear hesitant to open up fully to each other, perhaps avoiding the vulnerable feeling that may come with showing their true identities.

The stories “Big Two-Hearted River I” and “Big Two-Hearted River II” show Nick years later, possibly after fighting in World War I. The stories show Nick alone in the “burned-over country” (163). The town of Seney has been completely charred, symbolic both of the effects of the war on the land and also of Nick’s now slightly deranged psyche. Throughout the story, limited action takes place. Nick hikes long distances while hauling a heavy pack. He sets up tents and prepares canned food that he justifies eating in the rustic setting since he had been willing to carry it. He observes the black grasshoppers which now thickly populate the land. He prepares coffee and sleeps. The second story focuses mostly on Nick’s attempt to catch trout in the swamp. Nick sees the trout fishing as “tragic” (180), a rather dramatic term for such an action. Nick is consumed with detail, proficiency, and accuracy in even the simplest activities he engages in to the point that we begin to question his mental stability. He seems over-reactive, neurotic, and dramatic. In the end, Nick catches and cleans two fish and then heads back to his camp knowing there are “plenty of days coming when he could fish in the swamp” (180).

“Big Two-Hearted River I” and “Big Two-Hearted River II” are significant because they show Nick in adulthood, possibly after experiencing World War I firsthand. While the war is not directly mentioned in the stories, Tyler points out that Hemingway once said it is a story about a soldier returning from war (41). This coincides with Hemingway’s Iceberg Theory as the war is never mentioned but, with the other clues

provided, it is a scenario the reader should infer. If Nick *is* returning from war, we are able to see the effect the war has had on him. He no longer feels understood by the outside world so he chooses to be alone in nature. Even if we as readers choose *not* to view Nick's adventure as a post-war one, we can see that regardless, it is his attempt to control the world in which he lives. Growing up, he has experienced parental control, constraints and expectations of a small mid-west town, raising a child, and other random, violent events such as the one in "The Battler." In this two-part story, he takes pride in being proficient and having control over the few simple activities that he does engage in—setting up camp, preparing food, and catching and cleaning fish. The action of this story ironically lies in what does not happen, the inactivity. Nick is trying to cope with the roughness of life by moving out of the community and leaving his past behind him.

## Chapter IV

### The Application of Bowen Theory to Hemingway's Life and Works

Now that we have a better understanding of Bowen Family Systems Theory and Hemingway's life and works, we can use the theory to hypothesize about possible connections between his own life and characters. We can also gain a better understanding of the way in which Hemingway managed the anxiety in his life. He was a man who lived dangerously, loved sport, thrived on competency, traveled extensively, and battled depression and alcoholism. How do we make sense of it all? How could a man seemingly so burdened with life produce such great works? While Bowen Theory may not provide concrete wrong or right answers, looking at how the eight concepts apply to both his life and his character Nick Adams in *In Our Time*, we can provide some possible explanations.

#### The Nuclear Family Emotional System

Hemingway's nuclear family consisted of his mother, father, and five siblings, and as the concept of nuclear family emotional system explains, the family operated as an emotional unit. What affected one member ultimately affected all members since the anxiety was dispersed amongst the system. A great deal of the anxiety Hemingway experienced in his life that led to depression and alcoholism did not stem purely from his own life but rather from the anxiety in his family system. When his father committed suicide, the entire system was affected by his death. When Hemingway estranged

himself from his family for a brief period, all members were affected, and as Marcelline recalled, when he returned they were all grateful.

It appears that Hemingway had a great deal of both acute and chronic anxiety throughout his life. With regards to acute anxiety, he experienced war, failed romantic relationships, rivalry with friends, his father's death, tough critics, poor health, and random accidents and injuries. He also experienced a high degree of chronic anxiety, which he inherited from his family origin and which was expressed in his more substantial and ongoing problems of depression, alcoholism, and insomnia.

Hemingway's family system exhibits all four typical patterns that anxiety takes. An increase in any one of these patterns relates to an increase in anxiety, and clinical problems and symptoms develop most distinctly under such circumstances. Hemingway's addictions and depression, therefore, are the symptoms he developed as a direct result of high levels of anxiety in the family. In his text *The Thirsty Muse*, Tom Dardis silences critics who claim that alcoholism is a purely genetic disease when he says that "this factor alone is insufficient to produce alcoholism; an environmental 'trigger' is also required" (11). In Hemingway's case, the acute and chronic anxiety served as his "trigger."

Hemingway exhibited a tendency to handle anxiety through "marital conflict" in his relationship with Hadley. He did not take responsibility for his problems and blamed Hadley for their divorce since she brought his affair up for discussion. Likewise, he blamed Pauline for their divorce because of her strict views against birth control. His anxiety also followed the "dysfunction in one spouse" pattern; he serving as the underfunctioner, and Hadley as the overfunctioner. Hadley was supportive of his career

and unique lifestyle, helped keep the lines of communication open with his family, and confronted Hemingway when there were problems in the marriage rather than avoiding them. Hemingway, on the other hand, did not accept responsibility for problems and sought refuge in an outside affair. He also blamed his mother for his father's suicide and continued underfunctioning in many of his relationships throughout his life by turning against people whom he had previously regarded as good friends.

The Hemingways' anxiety also followed the "impairment of one or more children" pattern. Grace focused heavily on her two eldest children, Marcelline and Hemingway, in an attempt to pass them off as twins. Perhaps, this intense focus on Hemingway and desire for him to be something he was not negatively affected his ability to develop a unique sense of self. Her focus may have contributed to permanent impairment, which took form in his alcoholism and depression. Ed showed anxiety in the pattern of emotional distance with his occasional vacations away from the family during manic depressive episodes. Ed projected this form of coping with anxiety onto Hemingway, who followed with a similar sequence of avoidance and escapist techniques.

Examples of the nuclear family emotional system can also be found in Nick Adam's life. His immediate family, consisting of Nick and his parents, serves as emotional unit. When his father feels defeated in "Indian Camp," Nick is also affected by the Indian's suicide, only in a different way. His father feels anxious in the sense of failure while Nick learns about the reality of death. Nick, like Hemingway, experiences a significant amount of acute anxiety. He witnesses death, experiences war and violence, struggles with a failed romance, and strives to survive in nature. Nick also handles anxiety with the "emotional distance" pattern. He emotionally separates himself from his



mixed feelings over the break up with Marjorie and seeks comfort in the belief that nothing is irrevocable. He is also emotionally distant from his good friend and skiing partner, George. Nick is reserved in his emotion, perhaps feeling that he can never be disappointed if does not allow himself to get attached.

### **Differentiation of Self**

It is apparent that Hemingway struggled with keeping a healthy balance between togetherness and separateness and between emotionally reacting and acting after thinking, leading me to believe he was functioning at a low level of differentiation throughout most of his life. A highly differentiated individual reaches a level of emotional maturity and individuality. Hemingway did not seem to exhibit either quality in balance, his emotional maturity appearing rather low and his tendency for individuality extreme. While a fundamental component of differentiation is striving to be a “unique self,” a balance must be sought between the polar opposites on the two dimensions.

Hemingway did not strike a healthy balance on the togetherness/detachment dimension. Instead, he continually separated himself from his family and external relationships and displayed an extreme state of individuality. He often defied his parents' wishes by not pursuing a career as a doctor, skipping college, and volunteering in the war. He distinguished himself from others with a unique interest in the machismo activities of bull-fighting, boxing, safari hunting, and deep sea fishing. While Zelda Fitzgerald may have been incorrect in her belief that Hemingway's macho persona served as a mask for a homosexual tendency, she nonetheless noticed the extremity to which he took his individuality. Hemingway also completely separated himself from relationships if the anxiety level became too high. He divorced three of his four wives. He sought the

ultimate degree of separation from American society during his state of disillusionment when he exiled himself to Paris to join the Lost Generation in the 1920s. His intense pursuit of the highest degree of individuality relates to an overall avoidance and escapist nature that he maintained throughout his life.

He also failed to acquire a balance between thinking rationally through situations and reacting emotionally. Hemingway had a tendency for a seemingly rash and emotional decision making process. He traveled the globe on a whim and hopped from one marriage to another. Alcohol offered him an emotional escape from the vulnerability he felt about being human in a dangerous and cruel world. Ironically though, even though Hemingway felt vulnerable and victim of a frail body, he continued to act out of pure emotion and impulse as he constantly threw himself into dangerous situations and sports.

Also indicative of a low differentiation level is the fact that undifferentiated individuals are more vulnerable to stress and recover more slowly from symptoms of anxiety. Hemingway struggled throughout his life to manage his stress and recover from the anxiety symptoms of depression, alcoholism, and insomnia. Undifferentiated individuals also are more subjective and impulsive, allowing emotions to dominate their reasoning process—qualities that were characteristic of Hemingway.

In *In Our Time*, Nick shows progression from a young, immature boy to a man submerged in seclusion. He is no longer the same person at the end that he was at the beginning; however, like Hemingway, his desire to attain a unique sense of self is extreme, and he does not maintain a balance between togetherness with others and complete separation. He shows slight detachment in “The Battler” when he embarks on

his own adventure, and also in “Cross-Country Snow” when he emotionally separates himself from George. Nick and George make small talk about their love for the mountains and skiing and about their waitress. However, they avoid significant and emotional topics such as changes in the near future, moving to a new country, and having a child. Nick submerges himself in the most extreme state of individuality and seclusion in “Big Two-Hearted River.” He alone must survive in the wilderness and provide the essential items he will need to survive. Like Hemingway, Nick exemplifies an avoidance and escapist response to the world around him.

Also similar to Hemingway, Nick tends to react emotionally to situations rather than with rational thinking. In “The End of Something,” Nick ends his relationship with Marjorie on the grounds that “it is not fun anymore” (Hemingway 81). The quality on which he bases his breakup is an emotion, a feeling. In “Three Day Blow,” Nick uses alcohol to escape the insecurity he feels in his decision to end his relationship with Marjorie. He also lets the naïve belief that nothing in life is irrevocable cloud his rationale since it appeals to his emotions and eases his anxiety of the moment.

### **Triangles**

Several triangles operated in Hemingway’s life to manage anxiety. However, the most significant triangle is that between Hemingway, an x factor, and alcohol. The x factor is a variable that refers to any range of anxious occasions. Throughout his life, Hemingway experienced anxiety in various situations. Unable to handle the unstable two-part relationship, much as the two-legged stool is prone to collapse, he turned to alcohol as the third “leg” of the stool. He used alcohol as yet another means of avoidance and escape. Early in his career, Hemingway believed alcohol could “dispel

pain with no ill effects” (Dardis 159). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that with such a mentality, he turned to the bottle’s relief in almost every anxious situation. When his romance with Agnes Von Kurowsky ended, he attempted to combat his sadness with alcohol.

Hemingway carried this healing view of alcohol throughout his life and was quoted as saying, “trouble was all my life when things were really bad I could take a drink and right away they were much better” (175). He called alcohol the “giant killer” that assuaged his insomnia (166). However, he did not realize that alcohol’s relief is only momentary and the cumulative effect of heavy binge drinking is more problems. He started his career in Paris priding himself in his ability to keep his writing and his drinking separate, and once said, “I never get the two things mixed up” (157). His control over the substance did not last long though, and soon Hemingway exhibited the fundamental characteristics of an alcoholic. He lived in denial and jokingly claimed he was “no rummy” like many contemporary writers (155). He finally admitted near the end of his life that alcoholism may have played a role in his creative decline (10).

Hemingway was also involved in a series of interlocking triangles as he moved from one marriage to another. His marriages and divorces followed a pattern--- marriage, affair, divorce, and ultimately marriage to the new lover. Therefore, a triangle existed between Hemingway, Hadley, and Pauline. When anxiety in his marriage with Hadley became too much for him to manage, he turned to Pauline as a third party to help disperse the anxiety amongst a three-part dynamic. When his marriage with Pauline began to collapse, he turned to Martha, thus creating a triangle between himself and the two women. Likewise, when his marriage with Martha was failing, he pulled in Mary as yet

another member of a new triangle. It is important to note that all of Hemingway's marriages and divorces followed the same pattern and involved an extramarital affair that led to another marriage. This pattern of fusion with and then abandonment of a spouse reinforces the idea that Hemingway operated at a low differentiation level and was the underfunctioner in most of his relationships, unable to accept responsibility for his actions and to handle marital problems efficiently.

A triangle also existed between Hemingway, American society in general, and Paris. As was the case with many American writers during this time, Hemingway felt conflict between his beliefs and that of American society. He became disillusioned with the world around him after experiencing the atrocities of war and was equally as burdened with America's desire to become modernized. He attempted to relieve this anxiety by removing himself from the anxiety and by relocating to Paris, joining others with whom he felt he could relate. The problem with a triangle that includes a group as one of the parties is that it denies the properties of differentiation of self and subjects the entire group to a stereotype. However, the fact that Hemingway viewed most Americans as fitting this stereotype only *reinforces* the idea that he was functioning at a low level of differentiation. If he had been functioning at a high level of differentiation, he would have been able to think logically and realize that not all Americans fit the stereotype. His move to Paris also supports the ongoing escapist theme of his life.

Much like the dynamic of Hemingway's triangle with Ann and alcohol, Nick has a similar triangle. In "Three Day Blow," feeling uneasy about his breakup with Marjorie, Nick turns to alcohol to ease his anxiety. Dardis points out that as Nick continues to drink, "his feelings about the affair undergo a transformation" and his head is quite clear

(159). Nick ultimately reaches the conclusion that “the Marge business was no longer so tragic” (Hemingway 92).

Much like Hemingway’s escape to Paris, Nick escapes a war torn world he no longer understands or feels a part of by turning to nature to ease his anxiety. The anxiety he feels towards the world is mollified by his attention to detail, precision, competency, and survival in the wilderness. In this case, nature and surviving its demands construct the third party of the triangle.

### **Cutoff**

Hemingway emotionally distanced himself from his family during much of his marriage with Hadley, and she took it upon herself to keep in touch with his family. Hemingway’s emotional distance, the lowest degree of cutoff, eventually manifested into a complete cutoff for two years after his divorce from Hadley. He eventually achieved the highest degree of cutoff, both emotional and physical, living in Key West, Cuba, Paris, and visiting Spain and Africa. His cutoff can be viewed as an attempt to escape the effects of acute and chronic anxiety; however, cutoff does not alleviate anxiety but only masks it. Gilbert claims that cutoff actually creates *more* anxiety, which often culminates in physical symptoms. This idea offers yet another possible explanation for the origin of Hemingway’s depression and alcoholism.

Significant relationships in Hemingway’s life also ended in cutoff. After his father’s suicide, he blamed his mother for causing his suicidal state of mind, and his relationship with her was never again the same. He also cut off people he had grown close to over the years, including Fitzgerald and his own three sons—Jack, Patrick, and Greg. He fought with his sons over what he saw as poor marriage choices and

meaningless goals (Dardis 199). He left his sons out of his will, and Dardis claims that “the three boys were strongly affected by their contact with a man of ungovernable temper and wild mood swings” (199).

In “Big Two-Hearted River,” Nick cuts himself off from the world much like Hemingway opted to break away from America. His cutoff is of the highest degree, both physical and emotional; however, his anxiety about the war-torn land around him is not alleviated, and we see Nick on the verge of madness with his eccentric behavior and obsessions. In “The End of Something,” Nick emotionally and physically cuts off from Marjorie, but this outcome is typical of many dating relationships and therefore is harder to classify as true “cutoff” as it applies to Bowen Theory. Nick does emotionally cut himself off from his friend George, and there is an impending physical cutoff that is implied by the men’s conversation about the possibility of never being able to ski together again.

### **Family Projection Process**

Grace and Ed, growing up in completely different backgrounds and having sharply contrasting views on some key fundamental ideas, seemed to have had their share of differences. Their anxiety-filled marriage may have caused inappropriate focus on the children, not allowing them to reach high differentiation levels. Four of the six children ended their lives by suicide. As mentioned earlier, Hemingway also favored individuality as a means of coping with excessive focus. Likewise, the opposite also appears to hold true as Hemingway’s *lack* of focus on his sons directly affected their differentiation levels. Dardis mentions that “Greg and Patrick had their share of emotional problems that undoubtedly stemmed from the relationship ”with their father” (199).

In *In Our Time*, we do not see many stories of Nick with his parents. However, the opening story, "Indian Camp," sheds light on Nick and his father's relationship. Dr. Adams focuses on Nick, teaching him the techniques of the Caesarian section and explaining the woman's medical condition. If Dr. Adams' actions during the delivery are indicative of the overall nature of his relationship with his son, then perhaps this excessive focus eventually accounts for Nick's low differentiation level in "Big Two-Hearted River" as he seeks total seclusion.

### **Multigenerational Transmission Process**

With regards to Hemingway's life, the concept of multigenerational transmission process overlaps heavily with family projection process, but we can see it from a broader point of view. Ed had a tendency to distance himself from his family in times of high anxiety, and this trait was projected onto Hemingway who behaved similarly. Perhaps the most significant characteristic of the Hemingway family over generations is the tendency to commit suicide. Ed committed suicide as did four of his six children, one being Hemingway. His low differentiation level more than likely caused him to raise children also with low differentiation levels and poor anxiety management behaviors. Two of Hemingway's three sons also had severe emotional disorders that required hospitalization where they received shock treatment (Dardis 182). Their emotional problems probably were partially caused by the type of relationship they shared with their father, and their illness was similar to his as well (182). Highly differentiated individuals can temporarily suspend the transmission process, but Hemingway, operating at a low level, modeled his father's behavior.



We do not see multiple generations in *In Our Time* and therefore cannot adequately apply it the work. However, we can hypothesize a particular outcome based on the information we are given. As mentioned with the family projection process, if Dr. Adams does indeed focus heavily on his son and gives him inappropriate focus, Nick will likely operate at low differentiation level throughout his life. The child that he and Helen are about to have in the States will likely receive focus and operate at a low level as well, and this trend will more or less be projected to the following generations.

### **Sibling Position**

Hemingway was the second oldest of six children and the oldest brother. Therefore, he does not fit the complete model of an “oldest” or a “youngest” sibling position. Siblings in the middle position often adopt traits of the other positions since they are close in age to one or more siblings and spend more time with them. However, in many aspects of his life, Hemingway acts as the eldest child might by holding leadership positions. In high school, Hemingway was involved in a variety of sports, clubs, and other activities. He shared the editor position of the school newspaper and magazine with his oldest sister, who was the oldest of the Hemingway children. Overall, Hemingway led an active life and was interested and involved in an array of areas. In Paris and in Cuba, he drew crowds to his home with his stories and insight. He was well-liked and well-known. Perhaps, Hemingway adopted characteristics of the eldest sibling position since Grace attempted to raise him and his oldest sister as twins. This would make Hemingway equal to the position of his oldest sibling. However, oldest siblings are usually responsible. Hemingway showed a wide range of irresponsible and rash

behaviors throughout his life; perhaps, his middle sibling position accounts for such differences.

Nick is an only child, and while the only child position has its own designated characteristics, Nick does not seem to fit them. Male only children tend to prefer other people's company throughout life and look for a support system (*The Eight Concepts* 89). They often enjoy attention and intellectual exchanges. Their father figures are more important than their male friends. Nick is rather independent instead of constantly seeking the company of others. He enjoys the outdoors and sports. He is very close to several male friends including George, Hopkins, and Bill. Nick fits the oldest sibling position more so than the only child profile perhaps because Hemingway modeled Nick after himself. Even if Hemingway did not intentionally model Nick's life after his own, he nonetheless involves Nick in events and qualities characteristic of his own sibling position.

### **Societal Emotional Process**

In the time in which Hemingway was starting his writing career, society had just experienced the catastrophic World War I. Bowen Theory suggests that a regression period often follows war and is marked by violence, divorce, and less moral decision making. However, in the United States, the war provided new industries and proved to be a booming era. It was not until a decade later when the Depression struck that a regression period occurred.

Despite, the time of abundant growth and wealth in America, Hemingway and other writers were disillusioned with the atrocity of war and America's overall lack of culture and fine arts. America in the 1920s was rapidly modernizing, and Hemingway

amongst others, looked down on America for its lack of a cosmopolitan way of life. In this sense, Hemingway removed himself from the societal emotional process in the States and traveled the world exploring many different societies and ways of life. Likewise, Nick seems disillusioned with the war and society in general in “Big Two-Hearted River.” The countryside has been burned over with the physical and emotional destructiveness of war, and society appears to be in a state of depression and regression. Just as Hemingway had done, Nick exiles himself and find comfort in nature.

### **Conclusion**

Although psychoanalysis has served as the dominant psychological theory in the analysis of literature, Bowen Family Systems Theory is a reliable alternative because of its objectivity and eight fundamental concepts which provide the framework. Bowen Theory presents a new way of interpreting behavior; rather than focusing on the individual as the subject of analysis, the family emotional unit in which the individual is involved becomes the primary focus.

The eight concepts form a cohesive and complete theory, and like the family they describe, operate as a unit by building on and interlocking with the others. The nuclear family emotional system expresses the idea that the immediate family is an emotional unit, and both acute and chronic anxiety are dispersed amongst the unit. Differentiation of self refers to an individual’s ability to achieve a unique self in the family context and describes how polar opposite ways of managing anxiety are handled. The concept of the triangle describes the most basic, stable relationship within a system and involves three persons or parties. Cutoff explains an individual’s attempt to relieve anxiety by emotionally and/or physically distancing from the system. The family projection process

implies that an anxiety-filled marriage can cause unnecessary focus on a child and ultimately contribute to impairment in the child. Multigenerational transmission process describes the family projection process over several generations. Sibling position clarifies the belief that the order in which children are born has a direct impact on their level of functioning. Lastly, societal emotional process describes how society as whole manages anxiety through periods of progression and regression.

Ernest Hemingway was an American author who lived a life full of adventure and risky behavior and thrived on the “macho” image and an extreme sense of individuality. He traveled the world and was praised for his works. However, beneath the surface he fought many personal battles, struggling with alcoholism and depression. His works often center on the theme of the vulnerability of man in the midst of a violent world. His collection of organic short stories, *In Our Time*, traces subtle, yet key events in the life of its main character, Nick Adams. Nick journeys from boyhood to adulthood experiencing war, love, loss, and ultimately, escape.

The connections between Hemingway’s life and works are apparent in many surface qualities of his writings. His works often include war and travel, both important aspects in Hemingway’s life. Many of the settings are reflective of the places he grew up and the places he traveled. His love for the outdoors, adventure, independence, and individuality are recurring motifs in his works. Likewise, his characters often face similar hardships, challenges, health issues, and acts of violence that he too faced—Caesarian sections, war, failed relationships, alcoholism, and emotional insecurity.

Several themes have emerged from my study of Hemingway’s life and *In Our Time* through the lens of Bowen Theory. First, it is apparent that Hemingway operated at

a relatively low differentiation level throughout his life, often pushing him to reach the pinnacle level of individuality. His individuality, however, serves merely as a drastic means of avoidance and escape from the anxiety in his life. His low functioning level directly correlates with his tendency to operate within triangulated relationships. He was unable to maintain significant marital relationship over time, portraying a pattern of triangles involving lovers in extramarital activity leading to subsequent marriages. These serial relationships in Hemingway's life suggest his inability to be responsible for commitments and problems within the context of relationships. He attempted to assuage his anxiety in relationships by triangulating alcohol into his anxious situations.

Secondly, Hemingway's low differentiation level allowed for emotional reactivity in response to situations and rash decisions. His pattern of risky behaviors and desire to seek adventure not only elaborates on his sense of extreme identity but also ironically relates to his fundamental literary theme of how to cope with violence, loss, and defeat. Hemingway seems to have had a complex view of the human as vulnerable in a violent world. His risky behaviors and fascination with machismo may have served as a way of masking his fear of the world.

Lastly, it appears Hemingway predominantly attempted to manage his anxious moments through alcohol and writing. His alcoholism directly relates to his avoidance of anxiety and hardship. His writing was his only healthy means of managing anxiety. Dardis claims that Hemingway was a man "who thought writing well brought him the greatest happiness" (9). He was able to project anxiety into his writing and develop characters with similar daily struggles. However, as his alcoholism worsened, his creativity and talent for his ultimate joy in life declined.

In conclusion, I have used Bowen Family Systems Theory as a lens through which to look at the life, behavior, and works of Ernest Hemingway. While the theory does not necessarily lead to any concrete wrong or right answers, it has given me an infrastructure from which I can draw some possible conclusions. The job is not complete though. Finding answers to my initial questions has only led to more questions, ones that I may never know the answer to. Nevertheless, I am comforted by the fact that Bowen directly addresses this issue of constantly questioning the human mind when he said, “The human has been slow to learn about his own inner space within his own skull. Thus far we have barely scratched the surface” (*Extraordinary Relationships* 11). However, I think Bowen’s ideas and theories have not only scratched the surface but also have helped change the field of psychology permanently. Bowen’s theory has allowed me to analyze Hemingway’s life and works from a new perspective, leading me to believe this twentieth century author’s writings were truly an expression of his life and a peek into his mind and his philosophy of the world.

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