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# Elements of narrative discourse in selected short stories of Ernest Hemingway

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Elements of Narrative Discourse in  
Selected Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway

by

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Selected Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway**

**Gueorgui V. Manolov**

**ABSTRACT**

In the “Art of the Short Story” Hemingway elaborates on his concept of omission as it relates not only to prose writing, but to the special case of writing short stories. Hemingway develops two models to describe his short stories: on the one hand, he describes short stories like “The Sea Change” in terms of omission and exclusion, in terms of leaving the story out of the short story, and on the other, he refers metaphorically to “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” as an airplane loaded with story material which would be enough for four novels. Both models suggest a doubling of the concept of story—in the case of the story left out of the story, Hemingway makes a distinction between the text of the published short story and the underlying events and facts (the story), and in the case of the “loading” of “The Snows in Kilimanjaro” he distinguishes between the vehicle part and the cargo part.

This doubling of the story in Hemingway’s short stories can be examined in terms of first and secondary narratives using Gérard Genette’s analytical method of study of narrative discourse. First and secondary narratives emerge as a result of temporal discordances between the order of the events narrated in

the text of the short story and the chronological order of the events in the story. Thus the effect of the doubling of the story can be mapped onto the dynamic interplay of surface first narratives and submerged, fragmentary secondary narratives in the case of the stories characterized by omission, and in the case of the short stories with loaded narratives, onto the interplay between temporally differentiated first and secondary narratives. Hemingway slides the temporal plane of his first narratives into the future and outside the temporal plane of important events which are then evoked by the characters as secondary narratives capable of affecting the surface dynamics of the first narrative. Instead of presenting the information about these temporally omitted or differentiated events in the discourse of an objective narrator, Hemingway relies on characters' discourse to evoke and thus recreate in a subjective, fragmentary way the story left out.

## Chapter One

### Hemingway's Concept of the Short Story and Narrative Discourse

Ernest Hemingway never published "The Art of the Short Story."

According to Joseph Flora, the essay was written in 1959 as a preface to a proposed student edition of Hemingway's short stories, and it "takes the form of an extemporaneous lecture to college students and shows Hemingway considering other writers, critics, his own work, and the art of the short story" (*Ernest* 129). The proposed short story collection was never produced, and the essay remained unpublished during Hemingway's lifetime. It was finally published in 1981 in the *Paris Review*, and later reprinted in *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, edited by Jackson J. Benson.

"The Art of the Short Story" is a fascinating document which illuminates many aspects of Hemingway's craft of writing short stories. Hemingway protests that he "did not hire out to explain" his short stories, pointing out that "[n]o writer should be" an "explainer," "apologist," "stoolie," or "pimp" "for his own work" ("Art" 8-9). While he generally avoids explaining the meaning of his short stories, Hemingway provides quite detailed accounts of the genesis of some of them, and of his creative process. He points out that in many stories he starts out with

experiences and people he is familiar with, and then transforms the autobiographical information into fiction. In the case of "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" he writes that the characters of Margot, Francis and the White Hunter were based on people he "knew very well in real life," but who as characters were "invented out of" real life (6-7). The short story "The Killers," on the other hand, was based on the case of Andre Anderson in Summit, Illinois, but Hemingway had to think "about that story a long time before [he] invented it, and [he] had to be as far away as Madrid before [he] invented it properly" (11). In both stories he had to separate himself in space and time from his lived experiences to "invent" the stories "properly"—to make them fiction and not autobiography. To this purpose, he changed names, locations and incidents, and he also left out many aspects of the original experiences. In "Big Two-Hearted River," which is a story "about a boy coming home beat to the wide from a war" (3), Hemingway changes the name of the "Fox River, by Seney, Michigan" to the "Big Two-Hearted" because "Big Two-Hearted River is poetry," and he omits any mention of the war and of the "many Indians in the story" (3).

While the name changes and the omissions play an important part in transforming the familiar, the autobiographical into fiction, into something "invented," as opposed to merely reported, Hemingway discusses his penchant for leaving things out of his stories as an important technique in his writing. In the case of "Big Two-Hearted River" the omission of the war adds to the realistic

depiction of the main character who is so “beat” from having been part of the war, that he is “unable to comment on this condition [being beat] and [can] not suffer that it be mentioned in [his] presence” (3). The character’s mind and his “condition” thus become a filtering mechanism through which the story material is presented to the audience. Anything that the character cannot bear to think of is suppressed and omitted from the story, yet paradoxically, it is still there. To Hemingway the omission is a matter of appearance—while “none of the Indians nor the war appeared” in “Big Two-Hearted River,” they both were “in the story” (3). In other words, they were in the story indirectly, exerting their subtle but powerful influence on the story’s shape and content. Such omissions are a way to “strengthen” a story:

If you leave out important things or events that you know about, the story is strengthened. If you leave or skip something because you do not know it, the story will be worthless. The test of any story is how very good the stuff is that you, not your editors, omit. (3)

The distinction between “things or events that you know about” and things and events “you do not know” about is a telling one here. The suggestion is that the narrator of a story who chooses to omit important information would leave traces of the omitted material in the story and thus make it stronger. The logic behind the reasoning for using omission as story technique is similar to the one

expressed in the frequently quoted passage from *Death in the Afternoon* published more than 25 years earlier:

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 an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. (192)

Both of these passages emphasize the importance of knowledge about the subject matter of the short story and of restraint and moderation in how this knowledge is used. This knowledge and the sense that it is there, within the story, informing its shape and content, but not explicitly stated, is what makes the story strong and powerful, what gives it the quality and worth needed to remain viable as a work of art to which readers can come back over and over again.

In contrast, Hemingway points to “The Undefeated” as a short story where he “le[ft] it all” in, where what he knows well, is not omitted, but left in the story (“Art” 11). The story “understand[s] easier, but when you have read [it] once or twice you can’t re-read [it]” (11). Thus the worth of a short story resides in its ability to remain somewhat of a mystery to the reader, to retain some of its important secrets and invite additional re-readings and new discoveries. It has to go beyond being a simple riddle, which once solved, becomes worthless to the reader.

The technique of omission thus brings to the short stories a philosophical dimension, making them expressions of the wisdom and knowledge of their author, but also of something essentially unknowable directly, metaphysical in nature. Hemingway uses the word “metaphysics” in “The Art of the Short Story” to describe the function of the leopard in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” (8) and the function of two lines of dialogue which he omitted from the beginning of “Fifty Grand” on the advice of F. Scott Fitzgerald (5). The original opening of “Fifty Grand” included the secret of the prizefighter, Jack’s “handling of Benny”:

“‘Benny’s an awful smart boxer,’ Jack said. ‘All the time he’s in there, he’s thinking. All the time he’s thinking, I was hitting him’” (3). While Jack’s statement appears to be a joke on Benny’s style of boxing, it also raises questions about the meaning of “smart” and the juxtaposition of thinking and acting. Hemingway does not explain what the line means, but he states that this is the kind of information that he “ordinarily” “leave[s] in” (5) the short story. He is even more restrained about the meaning of the leopard in “Snows.” He asserts that he knows what it means, but that he is “under no obligation to tell” (8). Jokingly, he attributes his silence to “*omertá*” (8) as if the meaning of the epigraph of “Snows” is part of some arcane knowledge shared by a select group of associates sworn to secrecy. The code of silence, *omertá* depends to some degree on a sense of honor, and to break it, Hemingway would have to dishonor himself as a writer. That is why he groups together “explainers” (or writers who explain their own

short stories) with “stoolies” or informants (9). To explain something metaphysical is in essence to bring it out into the physical world of language, to give it verbal form and thus destroy its metaphysical nature.

Hemingway’s reluctance to create explanatory discourse for his literary works reflects his adherence to the advice Gertrude Stein gave him on “one of her wise days”: “Remember, Hemingway, that remarks are not literature” (2). Yet his remarks in the “Art of the Short Story” provide some interesting insights into the way he conceptualized the short story. As we saw, he associates its worth with its omission of important information that the author possesses, but chooses to leave out. With his discussion of background information about personal experiences that formed the kernel of many of his stories, Hemingway opens up the possibility to examine omission in terms of biographical and historical context. With his discussion of cuts in his manuscripts (5), he suggests that what he omitted can sometimes be found in the texts he produced, but chose to exclude from the final versions of the stories. There have been numerous studies of the technique of omission, ranging from studies in style such as Charles A. Fenton’s *The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway* to biographical studies such as Carlos Baker’s *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* to studies of hidden, suppressed, psychological and thematic omissions such as Gerry Brenner’s *Concealments in Hemingway’s Works* to examinations of Hemingway’s manuscripts for textual omissions such as Susan Beegel’s *Hemingway’s Craft of Omission: Four*

*Manuscript Examples* to studies of Hemingway's economy of style and pictorial representation in relation to the arts such as Emily Stipes Watts' *Ernest Hemingway and the Arts*.

The technique of omission can also be examined in terms of narrative structure, especially in light of how Hemingway conceptualizes the short story in "The Art of the Short Story." While the passage from *Death in the Afternoon* quoted above is about omission as it applies to prose writing, including novels, in the "Art of the Short Story" Hemingway modifies a bit his treatment of omission to apply it to the special case of short story writing. In a telling remark about whether Margot Macomber shot her husband deliberately, Hemingway writes:

No, I don't know whether she shot him on purpose any more than you [the readers] do. I could find out if I asked myself because I invented it and I could go right on inventing. But you have to know where to stop. That is what makes a short story. Makes it short at least. (7)

"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is Hemingway's longest short story, but it is still short because it is limited in scope, and once the main action of its relatively simple plot is resolved with the death of its protagonist, it ends.

Hemingway's refusal to explain Margot's motivation, either within the story or in his remarks in "The Art of the Short Story," suggests that the story is limited in its focus on the internal thoughts of Macomber and Wilson, and any revelation

about Margot's motivation or inner thoughts would have gone beyond the boundaries of the story, and shifted the focus to Margot and what happens to her next.

Even more telling is the way Hemingway describes "The Sea Change":

In a story called "A Sea Change," everything is left out. I had seen the couple in the Bar Basque in St.-Jean-de-Luz and I knew the story too too well, which is the squared root of well, and use any well you like except mine. So I left the story out. But it is still there.

It is not visible but it is there. (3)

The word "story" is used in two ways here. In the first sentence it refers to the short story in its published form, and in the second and third sentences its meaning is closer to an account of events and facts relevant to a specific situation regarding the couple (the two main characters in the story). In the fourth sentence ("But it is still there") "it" refers to this sequence of events and facts which Hemingway knows "too too well" about the couple, and "there" refers to the published text. Thus the sentence "So I left the story out" can be completed in this way: "I left the story out of the (short) story." Hemingway never phrases it quite like that, but the implication that he distinguishes between the text of the short story and the story (the detailed chronological sequence of events) behind it allows us to examine the short stories in the context of this duality of the left in—left out story, the paradoxical doubling of story into two stories, with one

occupying a foreground position, and the other staying in the background, but still there, still exerting its influence.

This doubling of story into two stories is easier to conceptualize in the case of the short story than in the case of the novel. It would be much harder to re-write Hemingway's paragraph on "The Sea Change" by substituting "novel" for "story." While it is paradoxical to say that Hemingway left the story out of the story, it is even more so to say that he left the novel out of the novel. "The Sea Change" is fairly short—it consists of one scene lasting several minutes, and it is fairly unified in its effect upon readers, unlike a novel which can have distinctly different sections, producing very different emotional effects on its audience over a longer period of time. The relative simplicity and limited scope of plots in short stories as opposed to the narrative complexity of novels, makes it easier to leave a (simple) story (or event) out of the (simple) plot of a short story. The event or sequence of events which are left out might be very important and revealing about the motivation of the characters precisely because of the limited scope of what is shown, what is included in the short story. To use the metaphor of the iceberg—if the greater part of the story is submerged or excluded from the surface narrative, if the surface narrative is a novel, the excluded part would have to be monstrously big in proportion.

Hemingway's concept of the short story as a fairly short narrative with a limited scope and focus allows us to examine the phenomenon of the doubling of

“story” not only as an effect of omission, but also as an important element in the structural organization of Hemingway’s short stories. The essential characteristic of the two parts, the one left out and the one left in is that they are differentiated, that they do not take the same form—in this way we can see the doubling of the story not only in terms of omission and exclusion, but also of differentiation and inclusion. It is exactly through differentiation and inclusion that the story doubles in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro.” In “The Art of the Short Story,” Hemingway describes “Snows” as a plane carrying a load:

So I invent how someone I know who cannot sue me—that is me—would turn out, and put into one short story [“The Snows of Kilimanjaro”] things you would use in, say, four novels if you were careful and not a spender. I throw everything I had been saving into the story and spend it all. . . So I make up the man and the woman as well as I can and I put all the true stuff in and with all the load, the most load any short story ever carried, it still takes off and it flies. This makes me very happy. (8)

All the true stuff, “the things” that he would use in “four novels” is differentiated from the short story itself—it is loaded upon it, but it is not the same. The essential similarity between Hemingway’s concept of omission and his concept of loading is, from a structural perspective, dependent on the concept of doubling of

the story, on the differentiation of two narratives—the one on the surface or the vehicle narrative and the one which is submerged, hidden, or loaded.

This duality of narratives in Hemingway's short stories can be analyzed using Gérard Genette's method of analysis of narrative discourse, a method which he developed in his *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* and *Narrative Discourse Revisited*. Genette's methodology is an appropriate tool to approach the effect of doubling of the story because his study of narrative discourse is a "study of relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating, and (to the extent that they are inscribed in the narrative discourse) between story and narrating" (*Narrative* 29). The doubling of the story in Hemingway can be located in the relationship of narrative text and story on the one hand, and in the relationship between narrating instance and narrative on the other. In order to study these relationships which define narrative discourse, Genette conceptualizes narrative as a "linguistic production undertaking to tell one or several events" and as such it is "the development—monstrous, if you will—given to a *verbal* form, in the grammatical sense of the term: the expansion of a verb" (30). The grammatical categories which are used to define, describe and study a verb are thus appropriated with certain modifications into the study of narrative discourse. Genette identifies three major categories, three "basic classes of determinations" to arrange the "problems of analyzing narrative discourse" (30-1):

[T]hose [determinations] dealing with temporal relations between narrative and story . . . I will arrange under the heading of *tense*; those dealing with modalities (forms and degrees) of narrative “representation” . . . [under the heading of] *mood* of the narrative; and finally those dealing with the way in which the narrating itself is implicated in the narrative, narrating in the sense [of] . . . the narrative situation or its instance, and along with that its two protagonists: the narrator and his audience, real or implied [under the heading of voice]. (31)

All three categories of tense, mood and voice are important to a study of the doubling of the story in Hemingway’s short stories, but the first one which deals with the “temporal relations” between narrative text and story is particularly useful because it focuses on discordances between the order, duration (speed) and frequency of two different temporal progressions: that of the story, and that of the narrative (or as Genette puts it, “time of the story and time of the narrative” (35)).

Strictly speaking, in Genette’s analytical model, all the information about the narrative is delivered by or is a feature of the narrative text itself. The story of a narrative emerges from our ability to identify events in the narrative, to find their logical connections, and to create chronological progression and arrange the events in them. Genette does not look outside the narrative text for sources of information regarding the story presented in a narrative. Thus a temporal

analysis of a narrative text necessitates that narrated events be identified and organized in a chronological temporal progression such as readers experience in real life, and then be compared to the arrangement of these same events in the text of the narrative. In this comparison between the two, the story and the narrative, Genette finds three different types of discordances according to the three different types of temporal determination: in terms of temporal order any mismatch between the events as they are presented in the narrative and as they occur in the story progression is an *anachrony*; in terms of temporal rhythm or the duration of the various events of the story and the duration (or “length of text” (35)) of the corresponding sections in the narrative any relative discrepancy is an *anisochnony*; and in terms of narrative frequency or the number of times events are narrated in the narrative text vs. the number of times they occur in the story any discordance is either iterative discourse or repeating discourse. Analysis of all three of these temporal discordances in Hemingway’s short stories is necessary in order to illustrate the importance of narrative temporality to the effect of the doubling of the story. Specifically, discrepancies in terms of temporal order allow for the creation of what Genette calls “first narrative” and “secondary narratives” (48-9), upon whose structural relationship of opposition and differentiation we can map the duality of the story left out and the story left in, the doubling of the story in Hemingway’s short stories.

Genette defines first narratives in temporal terms: the first narrative is “the temporal level of narrative with respect to which anachrony is defined as such” (48). First narratives (also called main narratives), or the temporal levels that represent them, are established at the narrative starting point (or the “temporal point of departure” (49)) and any deviation in the chronological progression of the narrated events represents an anachrony with respect to the temporal plane or level of the first narrative. The anachrony might be retrospective (analepsis)—narrating or evoking events that have already occurred, either within the temporal plane of the narrative or outside it, before the narrative starting point; anachronies might also be anticipatory (prolepsis)—narrating or evoking events yet to occur within the narrative timeframe of the first narrative or outside it. Both proleptic and analeptic secondary narratives create temporal progressions in opposition of the one in the first narrative and as such represent a temporary disruption of the main narrative.

Hemingway utilizes this dynamic opposition between first and secondary narratives by placing the story left out (or the loaded story in the case of “Snows”) in secondary narratives which are either fragmentary and only evoked, or well-developed, but differentiated from the first narrative in terms of duration and frequency. In a way, the doubling of the story is an effect of sliding the temporal plane of the first narrative in such a way as to exclude the temporal plane of the story left out (or the loaded story). Quite a few of Hemingway’s short stories

begin after an important event, an event which is then evoked retrospectively in the main narrative. Placing the starting point of the first narrative after (or outside the temporal plane of) this event is in essence a process of moving the temporal boundaries of the first narrative into the future in respect to the omitted event. The doubling of the story in Hemingway's short stories, an effect which includes the technique of omission and of the loading of a story as one loads cargo on a vehicle can be viewed thus as a shifting of the focus from one temporal plane to another, or of trying to tell a story from outside of its own temporal plane.

In addition to temporal order, temporal duration and frequency also provide important markers of differentiation which Hemingway uses to separate the left-in story (vehicle narrative) from the left-out (loaded) story. Genette defines his category of temporal duration in terms of variation in narrative speed. A narrative which progresses at a steady speed, without any "accelerations or slowdowns" provides the "hypothetical reference zero"—it is the perfect "isochronous narrative" (87-8). Real narratives show quite a lot of diversity in terms of accelerations and slowdowns and as such they are anisochronous. Genette identifies four major movements in terms of their relative speed: at the two extremes are the ellipsis in which the narrative space dedicated to narrating an event is zero (or virtually zero) (and thus the speed of narration is infinitely fast) and the pause (or descriptive pause) "where some section of narrative discourse corresponds to a nonexistent diegetic duration" and thus its speed is

“absolute slowness” (93-4). In between these two extremes are the scene which is “most often in dialogue [and] which . . . realizes conventionally the equality of time between narrative and story” (94) and the summary which has “variable tempo (whereas the tempo of the other three is fixed, at least in principle)” and which covers “the entire range included between scene and ellipsis” (94).

Hemingway uses quite a diverse mix of these narrative movements in his stories with scenes dominating the first narratives of many stories characterized by omission (such as “The Sea Change” and “Hills Like White Elephants” for example), but also stories of inclusion (such as “The Snows of Kilimanjaro”). In these stories the secondary narratives whether evoked or well-developed take the form of summaries and occasionally of descriptive pauses recording states rather than events. Scenes have an internal logic of progression dependent upon the dynamic interaction of the participants in the dialogue they represent. In summaries, the speed and logic of movement is controlled more directly and explicitly by the narrator. In stories which are extended memories of a first person narrator (“Now I Lay Me” and “My Old Man,” for example), the dominant narrative movement, the one which can be described as the vehicle narrative is a summary as opposed to a scene, while scenes and summaries take the role of the loaded story. In such stories, in order to differentiate between the first (or vehicle) narrative and the secondary (or loaded) narratives, in addition to temporal order and duration, Hemingway uses temporal frequency.

Genette's treatment of temporal frequency is extensive because it allows him to gain one of his most original insights into the nature of the narrative of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* which together with Genette's theoretical explorations of narrative is the subject of *Narrative Discourse*. Genette notices that the dominant, the prevalent discourse in *Recherche* is the scene, and more specifically, the iterative scene. Iterative discourse is defined as narrating once what occurs many times (115). "I would write in the morning" is an iterative statement which indicates many similar actions performed at a specific time over a period of time. Iterative discourse is similar to summary in the sense that it is faster than scene, but slower than ellipsis. If summary speeds narration by acceleration, iterative discourse speeds it up by assimilating many individual actions into one which is narrated once (143).

This type of temporal variation based on frequency is important for understanding the effect of the doubling of the story in some of Hemingway's short stories as well, specifically in "When I Lay Me" and in "My Old Man" in which the vehicle narratives are iterative in nature, and the loaded stories are singulative (the term Genette uses to define events which occur once and are narrated once). The iterative discourse suggests habitual action, the regular progression of a set of events, and when in Hemingway such iterative discourse is loaded with singulative sections, they usually indicate events that are out of the

ordinary and that have the potential to disrupt and change the circumstances which make the progression of the events in the iterative sections possible.

The importance of these temporal devices which allow Hemingway to create the effect of the doubling of the story in some of his short stories is to some degree a result of the reticence of the modern narrator, of his unwillingness to comment on the action or provide guidance to the reader about the meaning of his work. In *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Wayne Booth, discussing the subject of authorial silence, notes that in the works of many modernist writers, including Hemingway, “the author and reader may meet, like Voltaire and God, but they do not speak” (272). Booth writes,

With [authorial] commentary ruled out . . . [there are] hundreds of devices . . . [for] revealing judgment and molding responses . . . [including] all the old-fashioned dramatic devices of pace and timing . . . [which] can be refurbished for the purposes of a dramatic, impersonal narration. (272)

The “old-fashioned dramatic devices of pace and timing” are “refurbished” in an important way in Hemingway’s work, in order to create short stories which gain a lot of their power from the dynamic interaction of first and secondary narratives, the interaction of the story left in and the story left out. To use Booth’s insight into the way modernist authors tell their stories, Hemingway knew the story of the couple in “The Sea Change,” and he knew it “too too well” (“Art” 3), but he chose

not to tell it as a narrator in a narrative summary, but through the “dramatic impersonal narration” (Booth 272) of the surface narrative which is a dialogue between the two main characters. Hemingway’s authorial silence may be an indication that the truth about the couple, their story which he knew “too too well,” but which he left out, cannot be shared directly, cannot be expressed in authorial commentary or summary, but can only be evoked or indicated. We are reminded of Hemingway’s joke about being held back by *omertá*—and of his unwillingness to reveal the meaning of the frozen leopard on Mount Kilimanjaro because its meaning is part of the “metaphysics” of the short story. The technique of leaving the story out, or of loading it onto a narrative as one loads cargo on a plane—of the doubling of the story into two stories, one which contains the truth, but which the narrator is unwilling to share directly, and one which is accessible to the reader, but which only hints or provides an incomplete, partial view of the story left out—this model of structuring of the short story is Hemingway’s way of creating his version of the modernist narrative.

Barbara Olson sees the reticence of the narrator (especially the omniscient narrator) in Hemingway’s short stories as an indication of Hemingway’s problem with the function of the omniscient narrator as a kind of God:

So Hemingway was in fact practicing omniscience early in his career, but his narrator-God at that point was a less acceptable,

less tolerable, less orthodox God . . . . The early Hemingway mimed the God he hated, feared, and wanted to ignore, the God in whom he had lost confidence during World War I. It is a God who dooms his creatures to disillusionment, pain and inevitable death. It is a God who hides himself, who withholds the meaning we long for. (39)

The points raised by Olson about the reticence of Hemingway's narrators are important in the context of the doubling of the story, of the dual nature of a story left out and a story left in. Is Hemingway playing with his readers by creating the temporal structures which produce the effects of omission, denying them the possibility of knowledge and wisdom, providing them only with "disillusionment, pain and [the knowledge] of inevitable death"? In other words, is the doubling of the story a device of the narrator-God to torment his readers?

I do not believe so. The models of the short story which Hemingway develops in terms of omission and inclusion, in terms of the doubling of the story, are not designed to deny knowledge to the readers who "long for" it, but to deliver it to them in a different way. Olsen sees the reticence of the omniscient narrator as the message itself—meaning is being withheld from a God who "dooms his creatures to disillusionment" (Olson 39). Hemingway points out in a passage from a *Moveable Feast* that the reticence of the narrator, the omission of the things that he knows well, but chooses to leave out of the story, is a way to

strengthen the story, to endow it with a deeper, metaphysical meaning, a meaning which, although it might not be readily accessible, can nevertheless be sought time after time, yielding its insights in repeated readings:

[In] a very simple story called “Out of Season” . . . I had omitted the real end . . . [in] which . . . the old man hanged himself. This was omitted on my new theory that you could omit anything if you knew that you omitted and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood. (75)

There is a juxtaposition here between “feel[ing] something” and “underst[anding],” between two ways of receiving the wisdom encoded in the short story. The strength of the short story is also a function of its ability to deliver the message (to make the people “feel something”), not of its ability to deny them knowledge, and to torment them. Similarly in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” the main character is a writer who has been saving his impressions and experiences as raw story material to write when he felt ready. Harry, the writer in “Snows” feels that it is his duty to write about the events and social and cultural changes he has witnessed in a truthful, knowledgeable way (Complete Stories 49).

The reticence of the narrator in Hemingway’s short stories points to two important features of his narratives—the use of focalization and narrative distance (which in combination form what Genette calls narrative mood) as a means of, to use Genette’s terminology, “regulati[ng] narrative information.”

Genette points out in *Narrative Discourse Revisited* that the two main modes of narration are the characters' discourse and the narrator's discourse (or *rhexis* and *diegesis*, quotation and pure narrative) (*Revisited* 43). An analysis of the way in which Hemingway uses focalization is a study of the way in which he restricts the flow of narrative information. For Genette focalization is point of view in the sense that it answers the question, "Who sees?" or "Who perceives?" He identifies three major types of focalization: zero focalization which means no restriction of the narrative flow of information and which coincides with the traditional point of view of the omniscient narrator; internal focalization which restricts the narrative information to the vision of one (in fixed internal focalization) or a few characters (in variable internal focalization); and external focalization which limits the flow of narrative information only to what is observable from an outside viewer of the action, without any privileged information about the internal thoughts and feeling of any of the characters.

Hemingway uses both external and internal focalizations as a way to limit undue exposure of the temporal planes which are omitted, or to provide a privileged view of the temporal planes which are included (loaded onto the vehicle narrative) but temporally differentiated. In narratives characterized by external focalization ("Hills Like White Elephants" and "The Killers," for example) the narrative information about the temporal planes outside the temporal level of the first narrative comes strictly from the dialogue of the characters. This

restriction on the flow of narrative information is essential since the temporal planes containing the important past events for the characters in these stories remain essentially beyond the reach of the readers, emerging only as evoked, fragmentary, subjective visions of the past provided by the main characters. Frequently different characters create different alternative secondary narratives which, in the absence of an objective authorial account of events, create the possibility of alternative interpretations of the meaning of the first, surface narrative as well. In stories with narrative loading, such as “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” the internal focalization and the unrestricted flow of narrative information regarding the focalized character’s thoughts and feelings allows Hemingway to create alternative temporal planes (spaces) embedded in the first narrative of the story. Instead of having different characters create different secondary narratives, in stories of narrative loading, the alternative secondary narratives and the first narrative are created by the focalized character. Since an objective authorial account of events is still missing, the tension between secondary narratives and secondary and first narratives emerges as a function of the different ways in which a character perceives and creates the temporal planes of important past events. Often this tension points to unresolved issues which haunt the focalized character. Thus, in both cases of omission and inclusion, of leaving the story out and of narrative loading, focalization is an

element of the narrative structure which works well with temporal strategies employed by the narrator in order to tell his stories his own way.

Understanding Hemingway's concept of the short story as a duality which includes the story which is left in the narrative text and the story which is left out of it (either through omission or through differentiation from the first narrative), is essential for understanding how Hemingway's stories produce their meaning, and an analysis of the short stories as narrative discourse is a good way to seek such understanding.

## Chapter Two

### Temporal Order and the Story Left Out

Hemingway's description of "The Sea Change" in "The Art of the Short Story" creates an interesting duality: "I left the story out. But it is all there" (3). One way to approach this duality, this paradoxical model of the included/left out story in Hemingway's short stories is to examine the temporal order of the narratives, and specifically what Genette calls "first narrative" and "secondary narratives" (*Narrative Discourse* 48). The first narrative is established as a chronological progression which begins with the first narrated event and any deviation from that chronological progression, either retrospective (analepsis) or anticipatory (prolepsis) creates a secondary narrative embedded in the first. Secondary narratives, whether they are external (taking place outside the temporal boundaries of the first narrative) or internal, usually play a subordinate role, supporting the first narrative. They either fill in narrative gaps created by the main narrative, or modify the meaning or the nature of already narrated events. In Hemingway's short stories, secondary narratives frequently transcend their subordinate role and rise in importance to such a degree that they acquire the potential to dominate the first narrative. These secondary narratives can be presented in great detail or barely evoked, but they do become a story that is "left

out,” either literally by being cut out of the main narrative, leaving only subtle traces, or figuratively by being transformed into autonomous units differing in terms of narrative duration and narrative frequency from the main narrative.

From a temporal perspective, the short stories with the most pronounced effect of omission are the ones where important secondary narratives are being suppressed or carefully avoided and their existence and influence on the first narrative can only be inferred from subtle evocations. “Chapter X” from *In Our Time* is one such narrative which, although it lacks any explicit narration of past or future events, has nevertheless the power to evoke such secondary narratives:

They whack-whacked the white horse on the legs and he kneed himself up. The picador twisted the stirrups straight and pulled and hauled up into the saddle. The horse’s entrails hung down in a blue bunch and swung backward and forward as he began to canter, the *monos* whacking him on the back of his legs with the rods. He cantered jerkily along the *barrera*. He stopped stiff and one of the *monos* held his bridle and walked him forward. The picador kicked in his spurs, leaned forward and shook his lance at the bull. Blood pumped regularly from between the horse’s front legs. He was nervously wobbly. The bull could not make up his mind to charge.  
(*Complete Stories* 126)

The narrative's starting point is when the horse is being "whack-whacked" until it "knee[s] [itself] up." The events are presented in a chronological progression until the end of the narrative when the bull is unable to "make up his mind" whether to charge. There are plenty of indicators of the context of the narrative: the picador, the lance, the bull, the *monos*, the *barrera* suggest a bullfight, and also a specific phase in the bullfight. The information from the first sentence (the horse was down), combined with the information from the third sentence (the "horse's entrails hung down") suggests that the horse was mostly likely gored by the bull, an event which occurred prior to the beginning of the narrative. At the end of "Chapter X" the bull is contemplating repeating that very same action: charging the horse and the picador.

One reason the goring of the horse was omitted from the main narrative is that it could easily be guessed by most readers. Another reason might be that placing the dramatic charge of the bull in the beginning could blunt the effect of the less dramatic aftermath. In terms of temporal structure, however, the omission of the goring of the horse, and then the gradual revelation of the details of the aftermath and the likely events preceding it, allow the narrative to create evocatively a secondary analeptic narrative which acquires its meaning through the unfolding of the events in the main narrative. The goring of the horse is one of many dramatic events which can occur as part of the normal progression of events in a bullfight, but the main narrative of "Chapter X" singles this specific

event out, evokes it by showing its results, and then at the end introduces an element of evaluation in the form of the bull's hesitation. The bull is personified here, (as is the horse—the narrator uses the personal pronoun “he” to refer to them both), and the bull is given a “mind,” which he cannot “make up.” The narrator might be projecting onto the bull his own hesitation to treat the goring of the horse as another normal event in a bullfight. In any case, the first narrative rather than establishing a dominant position over what precedes it and forging ahead toward a resolution, seems designed to look back (as the bull looks at the horse with “blood pump[ing]” from his torn underside) from the vantage point of the narrative present to its immediate past, and to create indirectly a secondary narrative about the goring itself, a narrative which acquires new meaning (and new importance) because of this look back. This secondary narrative is left out of the story in the sense that it is not explicitly narrated, but it is “all there” as Hemingway could put it.

It is “all there” in “Chapter X” in another sense as well. As a fragment of a much larger whole, it has the power to evoke it, especially when the whole is as formally organized as a bullfight. Both the beginning and the ending of the fragment appear to be framed by dramatic action: the first charge of the bull and the charges after that until the bull is killed. Thus the temporal extensions both in the past and in the future that the fragment evokes are analogous to the spatial extensions that the visible part of an iceberg evokes in observers.

The evocation of the whole does not mean, however, that it has been narrated. "Chapter X" starts in *medias res*, and to some extent provides an indication of what happened in the immediate past, but not much more in terms of specific developments. A full narrative would cover the whole bullfight (as does "The Undefeated" in which "Chapter X" appears in a shortened and modified form (*Complete Stories* 195)). The beginning in the middle of a larger temporal progression here then does not have the function to create a dynamic entry point into a larger narrative and then return to the events that led to it, before proceeding to a resolution of the main action, as is the case in epic narratives. "Chapter X" ends with a lack of resolution in the traditional sense, in a perpetual standoff between the bull and the picador on the horse. This temporal position between one dramatic event and another one to come is important in Hemingway's stories. Ann Putnam commenting on "A Pursuit Race" observes that the narrative presents William Campbell in his hotel room as somebody who is "waiting out some drama that only death can end," and "A Pursuit Race" becomes thus

a study in the art of waiting, the choreography of holding steady. . . .  
a posture central to many of Hemingway's finest stories, stories in  
which the principal action is the activity of waiting as we see it in  
"Hills Like White Elephants," "A Day's Wait," "Now I Lay Me," "A

Way You'll Never Be," "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," "A Canary for One," and "The Killers" to name only a few. (187)

The waiting, the "holding steady" suggests past events which have made it difficult to hold steady (the going of the horse, for example), or to move forward to a resolution. The "principal action" is the action of the first narrative, and if it is suspended in a state of waiting, its function is also to evoke hidden, suppressed, often much more dramatic and momentous events, temporally differentiated from the principal action, and yet exerting their influence upon it. Such an influence is detectable in such short stories as "Hills Like White Elephants," "The Sea Change," "The End of Something," "The Three-Day Blow," and "Today Is Friday."

In "Hills Like White Elephants" the main narrative is in the form of a dramatic scene, and thus it follows the strict chronological progression of the dialogue of the two main characters. Yet, while the immediacy of the reported dialogue creates the sense that the action is taking place in the main temporal level, the characters repeatedly refer to past and future events and to the way their relationship used to be or could be in the future (as opposed to the way it is at the time of the first narrative). While none of the characters has a sustained monologue creating a developed analeptic or proleptic secondary narrative, their dialogue is full of scattered references to past or future events and states. Putting these references together should not be limited to figuring out what has

happened to Jig and what the American is asking her to do. Gerry Brenner points out that “Hills Like White Elephants” is much more than an elaborate “riddle”:

[R]eaders so stew over the missing or ambiguous term [abortion] that once they discover it or its meaning, they will feel they have solved the story and can mosey on along to the next one. But we long ago learned that the mystery of Jig’s operation, the lexical riddle in “Hills,” is a red herring; it distracts us from the significant decisions of whether to sympathize with Jig and scorn her insistent American man or to sympathize with him and feel disgust for her stubbornness and sarcasm. (“From ‘Sepi Jingan’ 161)

While solving the riddle is important to figuring out the subject of their discussion and to establishing objectively some of the facts of their past (prior to the beginning of the main narrative), it is only the first step in recognizing that both characters are trying to come up with their own version of how things were, how things are at the time of their conversation, and how things should be in the future. Both of them are trying to create their own secondary narratives, and impose them on the main narrative. For the American man things were just “fine” between them until Jig became pregnant and reluctant to get an abortion; her unwillingness to terminate her pregnancy is “the only thing that bothers [them]. It’s the only thing that’s made [them] unhappy” (*Complete Stories* 212).

Temporally the American man’s secondary narrative has two stages: the time

when things were “fine” between them, and the crisis period (Jig’s pregnancy), which has begun prior to the opening of the main narrative and still continues while they wait for the train. His evocations of the future when they will be “fine” “just like [they] were before” are in essence an attempt to return to that first stage before the crisis, to a moment in the past that in the temporal plane of the main narrative seems like a corrective step backward, even though it is an evocation of how things would be if she proceeded with the operation.

Yet, the American man’s secondary narrative is remarkably vague when it comes to details. Besides the evaluative statement that they had a fine time together, there are almost no indications in his references to the past about the nature and the specifics of their interactions. When she asks him to “please stop talking,” he notices all the “labels” on their bags from “hotels where they had spent nights” (*Complete Stories* 214). These details suggest that this earlier stage was characterized by freedom of movement and some degree of intimate interaction. He also tells the girl that he does not need anybody else, which might refer to the potential of their having a baby, but also to other people as intimate partners. The pre-pregnancy stage then emerges as a vague, but idealized, period when he enjoyed the freedom to indulge his senses, both as a traveler and as a lover, without having to share his intimate relationship with Jig with anybody else.

This evoked, idealized secondary narrative dominates the thoughts of the American man at the time of the main narrative. When Jig attempts to interact with him the way she did before her pregnancy by pointing out interesting sights and creating amusing and clever similes and metaphors (hills like white elephants, the hills having a “skin”), the American man is incapable of responding positively because this kind of interaction belongs to a past time frame, outside the temporal frame of their current situation. To respond to her the way he used to in the past, he would have to deny that a change has occurred (the pregnancy which threatens his freedom and exclusive access to Jig), and that this change has created a barrier between the earlier period and the present time of the main narrative. In order for him to return to that early period, he would have to eliminate that change, or more accurately reverse it. His dialogue is dominated by this objective—to establish that the present time of the main narrative is different from the time when they were fine, and that this difference was produced not by him, but by Jig’s behavior.

It is interesting that as the American man recognizes that a change has occurred, he has also not given up on developing his secondary narrative as a parallel narrative to the main action. When the girl says that they “could have everything,” he asserts that they “can” have everything, that they “can have the whole world,” that they “can go everywhere” and the world is still theirs (*Complete Stories* 213). These assertions represent an extension of his

secondary narrative, bypassing the pregnancy, and projecting it into the present and the future—they are proleptic in nature since they predict or envision how things could be if it weren't for the obstacle that has temporarily stalled the narrative's progression. The contrast between the two parallel narratives, the one which is marked by the change of the pregnancy, and the one that is imaginatively projected from an idealized past without the pregnancy, suggests the predicament the American man is facing. He cannot simply move from one narrative into the other in the present time frame, as Jig invites him to do by trying to resume their usual interactions. He has to go back to the moment when the two narratives split, as a fork in the road (to use a spatial analogy), and resume his narrative from there. He believes that what he is asking Jig to do is the right thing because he has "known lots of people that have done it" (213).

The girl challenges directly the idealized secondary narrative of the American man with a sarcastic vision of what happened to the "lots of people that ha[d] done it": "And afterward they were all so happy" (213). This response suggests a marked difference in the way she constructs her secondary narrative of the events preceding the beginning of the main narrative. Terminating the pregnancy, rather than a means of going back and re-establishing the situation in the past when they were happy, would, on the contrary, make the return to a happy state impossible. She, too, divides the events prior to the main narrative's starting point into two stages. The first is characterized by traveling with the

American man, “look[ing] at things and try[ing] new drinks” (212). In that time frame, the American man was a like-minded companion, who encouraged her creativity and made her comfortable expressing her thoughts. It was “nice” when she would “say things are like white elephants,” and he would “like it” (213). Her longing for him to approve and “like” her playful word games might be a sign of her insecurity, but it is also an indication of the ways in which they could “have” the world. Without him, as an audience and a participant in the creative process, her inventiveness loses its meaning. They possess the hills only as long as they both can participate in the imaginative recreation of these hills as white elephants.

It is then this shared creative freedom (as opposed simply to the freedom of movement and the absence of competition in matters of intimacy important to the man) that appears to be the essential characteristic of the girl’s secondary narrative of the time before the beginning of the main action in the story. The pregnancy itself might be a threat to the man and his way of enjoying their relationship, but it does not affect her ability to relate imaginatively to (and thus “have”) the world she lives in. Moreover, she implies that if they were to go on with the “operation” they would lose their ability to “have everything” because “once they take it away, you never get it back” (213). Her imaginative extension of her secondary narrative in the future if they decide to proceed with the abortion suggests that as the abortion is irreversible, so would be the loss of their ability to

be a creative team together, to be happy sharing imaginatively their lives. The girl is drawing a parallel between their mental creativity and their physical ability to create life—by insisting on killing one, the man inevitably will kill the other as well.

The girl's secondary narrative envisions the crisis not as her being reluctant to have an abortion (or having become pregnant in the first place), but suddenly having the partner that she trusted to be with her while they "could have everything" start to behave in a way that with the passing of "every day make[s] it more impossible" (213) to do so. When she questions him, he admits that he is intellectually and emotionally unavailable to interact with her the way he used to:

"And if I do it you'll be happy and things will be like they were and you'll love me?"

"I love you now. You know I love you."

"I know. But if I do it, then it will be nice again if I say things are like white elephants, and you'll like it?"

"I'll love it. I love it now but I just can't think about it. You know how I get when I worry." (213)

This exchange is about the nature of their past relationship. To him her similes are just word games, idiosyncratic quirks that make her adorable. To her they are her way of connecting with him, of being together emotionally and intellectually when facing the challenges of the world. And if her questions about what is most important about their relationship, her sarcastic retorts and her frustration ("I'll

scream” (214)) are intended to make him re-examine his secondary narrative, his vision of the past, they are also a sign, that she, too, doubts whether her narrative is correct. Maybe she mistook his willingness to indulge her for an intellectual and emotional compatibility that was never there. Her objective is thus either to win him over by making him see things with the intellectual and emotional acumen she thought he possessed in the past, or to revise her idea of him as a man who can share the world with her. Pamela Smiley attributes the differences in vision (of both the past and the future) to “gender-linked language patterns”:

Hemingway’s accurate ear for speech patterns duplicates the gender-linked miscommunications which exist between men and women in the real world. As a result of these differences, there are two Jigs: the nurturing, creative, and affectionate Jig of female language, and the manipulative, shallow, and hysterical Jig of male language. There are also two Americans: in the female language he is a cold, hypocritical, and powerful oppressor; in the male language he is a stoic, sensitive, and intelligent victim. (298)

While the main narrative with its reliance on dialogue allows the characters to develop their different “gender-linked language patterns,” the omission of the events preceding the beginning of the story allows them to create evocatively

secondary narratives and thus create visions that fit either the male or female language.

The main narrative of "Hills Like White Elephants" becomes a battlefield of two different secondary narratives which are only evoked subjectively by the two main characters. This is possible because of the lack of any sustained, objective narrative regarding their past which would have settled clearly who is correct and who is incorrect. The power of the short story lies in part in the temporal placement of the main narrative after the events that have had such a dramatic effect on the relationship and then looking back at them from the limited and biased perspectives of the main characters. At the end of the story, the American man asks the girl if she "feel[s] better." She replies, "I feel fine. There is nothing wrong with me. I feel fine" (214). As there is no objective analeptic narrative about the events prior to the story's beginning, there is also no indication what the girl will choose to do next. If we adopt her secondary narrative, her last words most likely mean that she has given up on him, reasserted her philosophy of life, and decided to look elsewhere for happiness. On the other hand, she might have given up on herself and her last words might be as sarcastic as "I don't care about myself." A clear, unambiguous ending could have elevated and endorsed one of the secondary narratives over the other, made it subordinate to the main narrative, and robbed it of its ability to exert its submerged influence on the story.

In “The Sea Change,” too, there are evoked, submerged secondary narratives, which have the potential to unsettle the main narrative on the surface. Robert Fleming argues that the thing Hemingway left out was the male protagonist’s occupation: he was a writer (“Perversion” 350). Thus the apparent embrace of vice at the end is not necessarily an embrace of sexual perversion, but the perversion of a writer who would use what he learns from his lesbian former lover in his work. Fleming points to the allusions to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in the title and to Pope’s *An Essay on Man* in the mangled quote Phil uses to condemn his lover’s actions, in addition to the fact that Phil has “used [his knowledge that men are made of all sorts of things] well enough” (*Complete Stories* 304) as evidence that Phil is a writer. The story thus acquires a Faustian theme, with Phil selling his soul (by doing something he knows is perverse) in his quest to acquire knowledge and use it in his work.

While Fleming makes a compelling case about what might be left out of the story, from a temporal perspective, there are quite a few evocations of important past events, a full narrative treatment of which is omitted, but which play an important role in the story. Like “Chapter X” of *In Our Time* and “Hills Like White Elephants,” “The Sea Change” starts in the aftermath of an important event. The very first sentence, which is a line of dialogue, introduces an element of omission: the man asks, “What about it?” The “it” is never explicitly linked to its corresponding noun, and the short exchange that follows the first sentence

suggests that the man has just made some sort of proposal that the girl cannot accept:

“No,” said the girl, “I can’t.”

“You mean you won’t.”

“I can’t,” said the girl. “That’s all that I mean.”

“You mean that you won’t.”

“All right,” said the girl. “You have it your own way.”

“I don’t have it my own way. I wish to God I did.”

“You did for a long time,” the girl said. (*Complete Stories* 302)

The man and the girl disagree on the nature of the proposal: to him it is something that she wills not to do; to the girl it is something she does not have control over, and her refusal is not a matter of choice, but of capability. The exchange also reveals that for a long time the man “had it [his] own way,” but now he doesn’t.

This deliberate construction of the opening emphasizes events in the past, events that are referred to, evoked, but never explicitly explained. And it is the characters in their dialogue, not the narrator, who will be providing the little bits and pieces of information about their past. In the context of the story, this first proposal that we encounter in the beginning appears to be a suggestion that the girl leave her lesbian lover. Phil wants the girl back and wants her to himself. He will miss her “all the time. All day and all night. Especially all night” (303). In the

eyes of others they are still a couple: the waiter knows them as a handsome couple, an unusual handsome couple because they have stayed together much longer than other handsome couples (303). The girl and Phil have not broken up (at least not publicly) after she has told him of her lesbian relationship, and the main narrative of the story is about them discussing what to do.

Both of them create evoked secondary narratives of what has happened and of what kind of couple they have been, are, and could be, and the course of the main narrative, their quarrel, is influenced by the gradual emergence of these incomplete, subjectively evoked visions of the past. For Phil, their relationship has been broken by what he considers to be a perversion, vice—the lesbian encounter of his lover, which he considers as a betrayal of his trust, but also of his love for her. He is not quite sure how to respond; it would have been easier if she had been unfaithful to him with another man. In that case he could have simply left her. However, her having an affair with another woman places her in a “jam” (302) in which he feels partly entangled as well. His first idea is to remove the lesbian lover from the picture by asking the girl to abandon the relationship. His wish to go back to a time before the lesbian affair comes out in the frustration of his emotional (but not serious) assertion that he would “kill her [the lesbian lover of the girl]” (302). In his secondary narrative he claims for himself a position of moral high ground, looking down upon the morally corrupt girl.

The girl's secondary narrative suggests that their relationship before the lesbian encounter was much more complex and that Phil's secondary narrative omits several crucial details. Before Phil learned of her relation with another woman he was a different man who "never asked [her] to prove anything," who was "polite" (303). "Polite" is an important term in her discourse—she uses it again when he tells her that her actions are perverse. In this context, "polite" acquires the meaning of tolerant, kind, non-judgmental. In the past he was not quick to name things with deprecating names (like "vice") or to demand that she prove her feelings. In matters of intimacy, she reminds him, he was a different man as well. When she asks him to forgive her she says, "You don't think things we've had and done should make any difference in understanding?" (304). She is comparing their intimate moments with those between her and her lesbian lover as analogous acts of sharing love, and she believes that he is still capable of understanding, or of being "polite" and forgiving. His behavior as a lover has obviously left the impression in her that he is capable of such understanding. He knows, she reminds him, that "[w]e're made up of all sorts of things. . . You've used it well enough" (304). He might have used it in his writing, if we assume that he is a writer, or he might have used it as a lover of the girl. In either case the "all sorts of things" were evidence enough for the girl that he was an open-minded, "polite," "fine" man who didn't fight, condemn or deny what she considers natural. Phil acquiesces with the image of himself painted by the girl, and thus to some

extent validates the girl's secondary narrative. He agrees that people are made of "all kinds of things" and that he has used that fact in the past: "You don't have to say that again" (304).

The girl's secondary narrative then is designed to undermine the strictly moralistic interpretation of events characteristic of Phil's secondary narrative. She is there to ask for forgiveness and understanding, not for her "perversity," but for having a female lover who gives her the love that she needs, and she points to the events of an earlier time frame as evidence that Phil is a man who can understand and forgive. The girl goes out of her way to point out that she has not replaced Phil with a male lover:

"I'm sorry," she said.

"If it was a man—"

"Don't say that. It wouldn't be a man. You know that. Don't you trust me?" (303)

This exchange is indicative that she, too, makes a distinction between the effects on their relationship of her having a female lover as opposed to a male one. In her mind she has not cheated on him, as she would have had had her lover been a man. She perceives what has happened not as a morally corrupt act, but as an extension of her sexual life into new territory, an exploration of another of the "all sorts of things" she is made of. Thus like Jig in "Hill's Like White Elephants," she identifies the crisis in their relationship as his failure to understand, or see her

actions as a natural extension of what their relationship used to be. Like Jig she is trying to bring up the past in order to show her lover that what she has done is not inconsistent with who she is, who he is, and what their relationship is.

The events that reveal the nature of their relationship before her lesbian encounter, a relationship that is only evoked subjectively and differently by the two characters (and to some extent by the waiter as well) is thus the story left out of the story in "The Sea Change." It is "all there" because it is evoked, and yet not there because we lack a thorough, objective narrative treatment of it. The two versions of what that relationship was, the two secondary narratives that evoke it, receive added emphasis at the end of the story when Phil has undergone his sea change. Does his change involve a rejection of the vision of lesbian love as something natural and a reaffirmation of his moralistic vision of himself and his relationship with the girl (and thus a capitulation to and an embrace of vice at the end and a retreat from the moral high ground), or is his moralistic vision simply a mask, a pose, an easy defense mechanism against the uncomfortable knowledge that "we're made of all sorts of things," a knowledge which the girl reminds him he possesses? Warren Bennett argues for the latter when he asserts that

the resolution of the story is not Phil's acceptance of the girl's lesbianism but Phil's ultimate conviction that the nature and

meaning of his relationship with the girl have been unmanly, a conviction that marks the death of his masculine identity. (226)

The temporal structure of the story, however, puts a lot of the information relevant to answering the questions about Phil's change below the surface of the narrative present, deep into the evoked fragmentary analeptic narratives of the main characters.

Similarly, at the end of "The End of Something" Nick's reasons for breaking up with Marjorie lie hidden in events that are not narrated and that precede the main action of the characters fishing on the lake. The appearance of Bill at the end of the story and his questions indicate that Nick (possibly together with Bill) had planned the break-up in advance. Nick is lying down with "his face in the blanket," overwhelmed with pain, unwilling to discuss anything, asking Bill to leave him alone and "go away for a while" (*Complete Stories* 82). This reaction to the break-up suggests that the reason he gave Marjorie, the "It isn't fun any more. Not any of it" (81) line is not exactly true. He still has feelings for her, and his pain might be a sign that he would miss the time they could have been together.

The main narrative consistently points to the fact that a change has occurred prior the time we first see Nick and Marjorie in a boat on the lake. Nick is not responding in the way he used to to Marjorie's observation that the ruins of the old mill appear "more like a castle" (79). The narrator states very explicitly

that “Nick said nothing” (80) to this observation. Nick and Marjorie have known each other for a while at this point, and she would not be making this kind of observation if in the past Nick has shown such complete indifference to it. Marjorie’s observation that the mill looks like a castle is similar to Jig’s observation in “Hills” that the hills look like white elephants. Both indicate an imaginative, creative approach to the world, and maybe to some extent their most intimate desires—Jig wants to have a baby and she describes the hills in terms of images reminiscent of pregnancy, while Marjorie sees an old ruin as a “castle,” the setting of romance and possibly a fairy tale marriage. Nick’s failure to respond suggests that he, like the American in “Hills” cannot participate in Marjorie’s imaginative games because he is focused on something else.

Not only is Nick not responding to Marjorie’s invitation to look at the world imaginatively, he is also very reticent in his interactions with her. Marjorie notices the difference and asks him point blank: “What’s the matter, Nick?” (80). Marjorie’s question is important to her, but it is also important in terms of the temporal structure of the story. It points to the fact that the main narrative, the fishing, the interactions of the characters and Nick’s reticence are dependent for their meaning on the answer to Marjorie’s question, which if provided, would come in the form of a completing analeptic narrative, filling-in the missing details. As Genette points out, these types of completing analeptic narratives perform an explanatory function, creating a chain of causality that leads to the present

moment, and that allows the main narrative to resume its progression toward a resolution (*Narrative Discourse* 63). By denying a direct, and even a delayed explanation in the form of an analeptic narrative to the question about “the matter with Nick,” the main narrative only emphasizes the importance of those preceding events that account for Nick’s sudden decision to end his relationship with Marjorie.

Nick lies to her consistently about what is wrong with him. First he says he “do[es]’nt know” (*Complete Stories* 80), even though he has already spoken with Bill that he was going to break up the relationship. Later in the story he provides another reason: Marjorie “know[s] everything,” and “[t]hat’s the trouble”—he has “taught [her] everything” (81). Marjorie does not accept this argument and presses on until he gives her another lie: it is not “fun” anymore, “love,” their love is not fun anymore (81). If Marjorie believed this statement on its face value, as a sincere statement that there is something in their relationship that they need to work out, she could have attempted to find out why it is not “fun” anymore, whether the reason is in something in her behavior or a change in their circumstances or something else. Instead of pressing this issue further, she stands up and leaves Nick. This is an indication that she gets Nick’s message—he is looking for a pretext to break up the relationship, and he is not interested in working out any difficulties they may have. His message to her is essentially “leave,” even though he does not phrase it this way in order to avoid taking

responsibility for it. Before he delivers that message, Marjorie has not given up on trying to work out whatever problem was bothering Nick. She urges him to stop undermining their relationship by behaving out of character: “Oh, Nick, please cut it out! Please, please don’t be that way!” (81). The juxtaposition of the imploring “please” and the direct, harsh “cut it out” suggests the alarm that she feels about the change in Nick’s behavior, but also her frustration and her sense that he is treating her unfairly, and that at some point she would have to stop imploring and take action to end this abusive behavior. The repetition of “please” provides another parallel to Jig in “Hills” who repeats “please” seven times in a row to indicate her frustration with the manipulative and abusive behavior of the American man (214).

The narrative of “The End of Something” does not provide any explicit information about what happened to Nick before he and Marjorie went fishing on the lake. However, the rich narrative surface of the story has prompted many interpretative readings which find encoded clues to Nick’s motivation and prior history. Horst Kruse notices that the story is full of sexual puns which create a hidden narrative about their sexual relations:

Marjorie “was intent on the rod all the time they trolled, even when she talked,” and she “did not reel it until the boat touched the shore.” She remarks that the fish are feeding and obviously expects

that they will strike, but Nick emphatically asserts that they “aren’t striking” and that they “won’t strike.” (165)

This hidden narrative evokes a frustrated experience of sexual love, with Marjorie intent on it, trying to make it work and Nick putting it down. Kruse reads this hidden narrative to its conclusion by interpreting Nick’s words to Marjorie about not “tak[ing] the ventral fin out,” when preparing the bait, of leaving it in “because it’s better with the ventral fin in” as an indication that Marjorie has lost her virginity in her sexual relationship with Nick and consequently, according to Kruse, “she has lost her attraction for her lover [Nick]” (166). This reading, however, does not explain why Nick feels the way he does at the end of the story. If he had really lost any feelings for or any sexual attraction to Marjorie, why does he need to hide his face and spend time alone? After all he has just gotten rid of what has become a nuisance, an unwanted lover.

The narrator’s decision to leave Nick’s reasons for breaking up with Marjorie (and the events that triggered them) outside the temporal plane of the main narrative, hidden in the ten-year ellipsis that separates the narrative about the mill and its going out of business and the time Nick and Marjorie are fishing on the lake—this deliberate temporal structure of omission, combined with Nick’s inability or unwillingness to state these reasons directly and truthfully to Marjorie, suggests that the progression of the main narrative is really an attempt by Nick to understand, to figure out and to come to terms with the change that has come

over him. The tension between the stated reasons and the real reasons for the break-up is what creates Nick's pain at the end. As readers, we also become aware of this discrepancy, although we are not told what the real reasons are. Bringing those reasons to the surface is a painful process for Nick, and the narrative amplifies their effect by focusing on their influence on Nick and the actions of the story.

The reasons Nick broke-up with Marjorie also play an important part in "The Three-Day Blow," which, although it is a continuation of "The End of Something," can be examined as a separate story, independent of the earlier one. In "The Three-Day Blow" the action begins with Nick visiting Bill in the house where he lives with his father. The two are alone and use the time to drink rye whiskey, talk about baseball, books, and their fathers, before, under the influence of alcohol, in the second half of the story, they look back on the event that is temporally placed outside the main narrative: Nick's break-up with Marjorie and its implications. Bill creates a retrospective narrative by starting with a point before the break-up and then looking forward hypothetically into the future. Nick did the right thing to "bust off that Marjorie business" because if he hadn't, he would be "back home working trying to get enough money to get married" (*Complete Stories* 90). For Bill marriage is loss of freedom for a man. Once a man is married, he is "bitched," and he has "nothing," "not a damn thing." Nick would not only have married Marjorie, but her family as well, Bill reminds him,

and her mother would be telling Marjorie “all the time what to do and how to act” (90). Bill tells Nick that for a while he “was worried” that it would turn exactly like this, and that he is glad that Nick “came out of it damned well” (90). Since the hypothetical scenario did not happen, Nick is now still free and able to enjoy Bill’s company.

Yet Nick, while he agrees with some of Bill’s points, is reluctant to embrace fully Bill’s narrative. He does not contradict or challenge Bill directly, but remains silent, refusing to participate in the dialogue, letting it develop as a monologue, as something separate from him. “Nick said nothing” is repeated three times, with another variation “Nick sat quiet” added to provide a visual representation (what Linda Wagner calls juxtaposition of images (120) (Bill making a statement and Nick not speaking)) of this discrepancy between what Bill is saying and Nick’s inability or unwillingness to agree with it.

While Nick is mostly silent when Bill develops his secondary narrative of what has happened to him, he is not silent on the inside. The narrator makes his thoughts available to the readers through represented speech and free indirect discourse, and in his thoughts Nick is not contemplating what a bullet he had dodged, but instead how empty his life is now that he has lost Marjorie:

It was all gone. All he knew was that he had once had Marjorie and that he had lost her. She was gone and he had sent her away. That

was all that mattered. He might never see her again. Probably he never would. It was all gone, finished. (91)

He agrees with Bill that it was “finished,” but in his account of what happened Nick does not see himself as being better off. His thoughts suggest a loss, an irreversible loss, which overwhelms everything else, a loss that “was all that mattered.” Nick also takes responsibility for the break-up: “he had sent her away.” But he had also “lost” her. There is a slight difference between losing somebody and getting rid of somebody. In Nick’s thoughts both of these things have happened: he has acted in a way to get rid of her, as one gets rid of property, but also if “he had once Marjorie” he had her love, which he has now lost.

He has also lost some of his vision for the future. In Bill’s narrative Nick has not lost anything but gained back his freedom (or avoided losing it). Because of Nick’s actions, Nick is now free to spend time with Bill, drinking and talking about baseball and books, and to go fishing the following day. Nick’s thoughts reveal that he is not as excited about the prospect of all these planned activities as Bill is. To Nick, his newly gained freedom is really an emptiness which has opened up where once he had placed his plans to spend time with Marjorie, either in “Charlevoix all winter so he could be near Marge” or in Italy where “they would have” fun (91).

Yet, while Nick's thoughts reveal how much he misses Marjorie, his brief responses to Bill maintain the impression that he had no other choice, that he "couldn't help it." But he is also not quite certain why it ended, although he says that "it was [his] fault" (91). Bill helps him with the guilt problem by telling him that Marjorie's mother was very "sore" about the break-up because she had told many people they were engaged. This information, whether it is true or not, has the power to shift Nick's feelings of guilt away from him and onto Marjorie's mother. Nick now knows why he "couldn't help it" but leave Marjorie—it was the mother's fault:

"I am sorry as hell about her [Marjorie] but what could I do?" [Nick] said. "You know what her mother was like."

"She was terrible," Bill said.

"All of a sudden it was over," Nick said. "I oughtn't to talk about it."

(92)

Nick here is conveniently using information that he has just learned (the mother telling a lot of people that they were engaged) to explain actions which he performed in the past (leaving Marjorie). "I oughtn't to talk about it" in this context acquires the meaning of a verbal command: he has established how it was, and why he left Marjorie, and he shouldn't be exploring that issue any further.

If Bill helps Nick very directly and deliberately with the guilt problem, he also helps him unintentionally with the pain Nick feels about losing Marjorie. Bill

agrees with Nick that he should not think anymore about the break-up because Bill is worried Nick “might get back into it again.” Nick seizes that possibility and immediately feels better. At the end of the story “the Marge business was no longer so tragic” (92) to him, and he tells himself that he can always go back into town (and presumably reconnect with Marjorie).

The secondary narratives which Nick and Bill create in the latter part of “The Three-Day Blow” thus point to the story left out: the nature of the relationship between Nick and Marjorie and the real reasons he left her. The power of this left out story is evident because while it is suppressed in Nick’s and Bill’s minds and placed temporally outside of the main narrative, it nevertheless remains an unresolved issue for both of them and bubbles up to the surface to dominate the end of the story. Nick has found a way to deal with it by adopting a version of the past that alleviates his pain: he assigns his guilt to the mother, and makes himself believe that it was he who left Marjorie and not the other way around, and it is up to him to take her back. “It was a good thing to have in reserve” (93) he thinks at the end of the story, as if Marjorie is going to be available for him when and if he needs her. His secondary narrative is a rationalization of his actions, and in it he appears to have done the right thing in breaking up with Marjorie, and to be in control of his life. Hemingway’s story provides just enough information to call into question his account, while omitting a developed objective narrative of that earlier period.

“Today Is Friday” also relies in its temporal structure on secondary narratives evoked by the main characters in the first narrative. The first narrative begins on Friday at “eleven o’clock at night” (271) with three Roman soldiers who have participated earlier in the day in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. They visit a Hebrew wine-seller’s wine shop, drink some wine, talk about the day’s events, and leave at the end of the short play. In the same way “Chapter X” of *In Our Time*, being a fragment of a bullfight, evokes the whole bullfight, so does the narrative of “Today Is Friday” evoke the larger biblical story of the Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Within this context the main action takes place in the aftermath of a dramatic event, the crucifixion, and anticipates another dramatic event, the resurrection. The main characters are aware that they have been part of an important event, but their fragmentary secondary narratives about this event differ markedly. In a short exchange their different attitudes come to light:

*3d Roman Soldier*—Jesus Christ. [He makes a face.]

*2d Soldier*—That false alarm!

*1<sup>st</sup> Soldier*—Oh, I don’t know. He was pretty good in there today.

*2d Soldier*—Why didn’t he come down off the cross?

*1<sup>st</sup> Soldier*—He didn’t want to come down off the cross. That’s not his play. (272)

The third soldier has an upset stomach and he exclaims somewhat anachronistically “Jesus Christ,” an exclamation which the second soldier takes as an invitation to make one of his own (“That false alarm!”). For him the crucifixion was a test of whether Jesus Christ was the Son of God, a test which Jesus failed because he “didn’t come down off the cross.” The first soldier is not quite sure that Jesus failed the test, because “he didn’t want to come down off the cross.” The first soldier demonstrates that he knows about Jesus’ “play,” (or plan) which includes death on the cross, and that he anticipates other events to follow.

The first soldier is also the one to urge the others to try the “red” wine, which in a biblical context signifies the blood of Jesus Christ and is part of the ritual of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is intended to commemorate the Passion of Jesus Christ, and specifically his sacrifice. The three soldiers have been involved directly in the event commemorated in the Eucharist, with the first soldier “slip[ping] the old spear into [Jesus]” (273). If the first soldier is knowledgeable of Jesus’ “play,” it is not unreasonable to assume that he might also be knowledgeable of Jesus’ words at the Last Supper concerning drinking red wine as a sacrament. While the second and third soldiers appear to be unaware of the ritualistic nature of their drinking in the wine shop, the first soldier is very excited about the red wine, and he offers it to the Hebrew wine-seller as well. His attitude suggests that he perceives the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ as an

occasion to be celebrated, not because it took care of a “false alarm,” as the second soldier suggests, but because it was part of the “play” or plan Jesus had. It is a celebration because the first soldier is aware that there is more to come as Jesus’ “play” or plan unfolds. The title of the play also points to the commemorative nature of the main action: “Today Is [Good] Friday.”

Within this context of commemoration, the secondary narrative of the first soldier centers on his assertion that Jesus “was pretty good in there today” (272). “Pretty good” is the only description provided of the actions of Jesus Christ. “Pretty good” is juxtaposed to “pretty bad,” which the third soldier associates with the behavior of others subjected to crucifixion: “It take some of them pretty bad” (272). The distinction between “pretty good” and “pretty bad” becomes apparent in the way those to be crucified react to pain when they are being nailed on the cross, an experience the third soldier assumes “must get to you pretty bad” (272). Jesus Christ behaved in a way that “surprised” (272) the first soldier, who “has seen plenty of them” (272). If “pretty bad” suggests despair and personal disintegration which is characteristic of the “plenty” the first soldier has seen crucified, “pretty good,” being the opposite, suggests integrity and hope. The first soldier is pointing to the fact that he is not alone in seeing Jesus that way: “his girl”, who is a “nice-looker” “stuck” to him till the end, unlike his “gang” (273). To the first soldier, then, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is an event of hope that there

is something beyond death, something which can help one be “pretty good” facing pain, suffering and death.

The second soldier on the other hand constructs a different secondary narrative of what happened. To him, it is irrelevant whether Jesus Christ was “good or bad” (272) because he failed to “come down off the cross” (272). For him, there is nothing beyond life, and the most important imperative in human life is self-preservation: “Show me a guy that doesn’t want to come down off the cross” (272). If a person fails to preserve his life, how he behaves while dying is of no great consequence to the second soldier. To him the possibility of Jesus Christ coming down from the cross is alarming because it would undermine his view of the world, and also because it would jeopardize his very existence as part of the oppressive Roman army in Israel. The second soldier is a part of the power structure in his time, and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is a routine exercise of control over the masses. In the secondary narrative of the second soldier “Today Is Friday” loses its commemorative nature as a title and becomes a banal statement about the day being no different than any other on which the soldier gets to do his job and maintain his position of power.

The secondary narratives in “Today Is Friday” thus focus on the event that precedes the main narrative—the nature of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Was it an event of hope, of transcendent life, or just a death with dignity and an example of how to be “pretty good” on the cross? The main narrative remains

unresolved—neither the first soldier changes his mind, nor does the second one. Such a resolution would depend on the nature of the evoked past event. “Today Is Friday” is an interesting case of omission in this respect because the temporally omitted event is described in an external source (in both canonical and apocryphal texts), and it itself has been the source of various disagreements lasting for centuries. Rather than trying to determine the true nature of this event, Hemingway’s narrator incorporates it into “Today Is Friday” as a submerged narrative that exerts great influence on the progression of the main narrative and its meaning and resolution.

Similarly in “A Canary for One” there is a story left out of the story, and it hinges upon the information provided in the last line of the narrative: “We were returning to Paris to set up separate residences” (*Complete Stories* 261). This is the first time the first person narrator in the short story has provided any direct information about any troubling events concerning his relationship with his wife which have occurred prior to the opening of the narrative. His wife, speaking to the American lady, reveals that she and the narrator are both Americans and that they had their honeymoon in Vevey, Switzerland, where they stayed in a “fine old hotel,” in a “fine room in the fall” when the “country was lovely” (261). Before the last line of the story, however, there is no indication of the failure of their marriage, and the relative lack of information about the American couple seems unproblematic since the narrative appears to focus on their companion, the

American lady and her story of taking her daughter away from the man she loved in Vevey back to New York. The information in the last line, thus, completes “a pattern of refocusing” according to Julian Smith, in which “we progress from interest in the American lady alone to interest in the American lady *and* the American couple to interest in the American couple alone” (234). This shift in interest from the explicit secondary narrative of the American lady and her daughter to the missing, but evoked secondary narrative of the American couple and their failing marriage indicates that the first narrative—the train ride—is designed to lead to the discovery of this hidden, left-out story, and to the fact that it is left out. Scott Donaldson argues in “Preparing for the End: Hemingway’s Revision of ‘A Canary for One’” that examining Hemingway’s manuscripts of the story suggests that Hemingway, through his revisions, was preparing to “cushion the shock of his finish” (229) for his readers:

[Hemingway] ended his story at the right time and in the right way. To reveal the separation earlier would have deprived the reader of the retroactive enjoyment that derives from the sense of discovery—discovery of the American lady’s persistently obtuse remarks, of the emotional deadness of the husband’s reactions to his surroundings, of the wife’s patient listening and pointed questions. (237)

The discoveries Donaldson points to are present in the first, surface narrative, but they only acquire their meaning in light of the revelation made at the end, a revelation which suggests that prior to the beginning of the main narrative on the train, the couple had made a decision that their marriage would not work. The “emotional deadness of the husband’s reactions” that Donaldson refers to is exemplified by the husband’s minimal interaction with his wife and the American lady, an interaction which consists of making a joke the American lady misses and of drawing his companions’ attention to a car wreck outside the train window. The couple’s behavior is an indication of the effect the decision to separate has had on them, and of the unwillingness of the husband (who is also the narrator of the story) to let the memory and thoughts of the end of their marriage enter his surface narrative. Both the husband and the wife have the opportunity to at least acknowledge the failure of their marriage to the American lady when she states that “American men make the best husbands” (*Complete Stories* 260) but choose not to. The wife deliberately tries to steer the conversation away from a discussion of their marriage or of American men as husbands and toward the story of the American lady and her daughter’s stay in Vevey. The husband, too, consistently chooses to occupy his mind and his narrative with what he observes from the train window and with what he hears from the talkative American lady, as if deliberately trying to leave no place for any thoughts of his relationship with his wife until the very end of the story.

The secondary narrative of the American lady, however, contains itself a story that is left out—the story her daughter might tell of her experience with the Swiss man she was in love with and of her frustration with her mother’s power over her. Julian Smith has pointed out that “‘A Canary for One’ is a story of traps and cages” (236), with virtually every character experiencing some form of constraint, symbolically represented by the trapped canary. If we extend this metaphor to narrative discourse, we see that the American lady is not only constraining her daughter by making her decisions for her, but also by not listening to her, and thus suppressing her daughter’s vision of how things stand. The American lady is aware that her daughter was “madly in love” with the man in Vevey, but she never thought her daughter’s perspective mattered—at least not as much as that of a “very good friend” who told her that “[n]o foreigner can make an American girl a good husband” (*Complete Stories* 260). She is also aware that her decision to remove her daughter from Vevey and thus break the relationship has affected her daughter negatively, but she never makes an effort to listen to her—instead she tries to get her daughter to “care about things” and forget her lover:

“Did she get over it?” asked my wife.

“I don’t think so,” said the American lady. “She wouldn’t eat anything and she wouldn’t sleep at all. I’ve tried so very hard, but

she doesn't seem to take an interest in anything. She doesn't care about things. I couldn't have her marrying a foreigner." (260)

The daughter does care about one thing (the Swiss man), but the American lady is deaf to it because she cannot "have her [daughter] marrying a foreigner." She is aware that she is suppressing her daughter's perspective, her idea of what is right for herself, and she has done so since her daughter was a child. In a way, the American lady has never stopped treating her daughter as a child, and this treatment produces a physical and emotional suppression, but also a suppression of her daughter's voice and ability to create her own narrative, her own story of her life. If the American lady were to let her daughter have her own way, her own voice, the American lady would lose her sense of control, of being the adult who makes the right decisions for her daughter—a potentially painful loss. Her suppression of her daughter might be her attempt to keep away the pain such loss of control would produce.

Similarly, the husband who is the narrator of the main narrative in the short story has pushed back his knowledge of the separation as one pushes away things that produce pain. Unlike the American lady, however, the narrator of the story is aware that his suppression of the secondary narrative of their failed marriage is not a sign of strength and control, but weakness and escape. The revelation in the last line is almost like a confession of the narrator that he understands the irony of their situation (being praised as a model couple, when in

fact they aren't a couple anymore), but that he has deliberately suppressed it. The suppression and the avoidance of the topic only make it more potent, especially in contrast to the unrealistically upbeat vision of American marriages presented by the American lady, and seemingly exemplified in her eyes by the American couple itself. The suppressed, but evoked secondary narratives thus have the power to subvert the story on the surface, to make "A Canary for One," as Julian Smith puts it, a "good short story that one should re-read immediately" (234) in order to re-examine the surface in terms of what is being left out.

Such suppression of important information regarding past events which has the potential to change the meaning of the surface narrative is also a factor in "A Simple Enquiry." Gerry Brenner has pointed out that the short story shares a "family resemblance" with stories such as "Hills Like White Elephants," and "The Sea Change" in terms of omission:

[These stories] focus upon a foreground semantic riddle that simultaneously obscures and illumines the background network of signs that require discerning reading in order to resolve the textual conundrums of character and interpretation. ("Semiotic Inquiry" 198)

The "foreground semantic riddle" and the "background network of signs" are both features of the surface narrative, but this dichotomy can be examined in terms of narrative temporality. The first narrative of "A Simple Enquiry" starts after an

important event which is evoked but not narrated—the realization by the major that Pinin might be “corrupt.” The “foreground semantic riddle” thus becomes not only a riddle about the meaning of the word “corrupt” and the intentions of the major regarding his orderly, Pinin, but also a riddle about what specific event or events prompted the “simple enquiry.” In the last line of the story, the narrator reports the major’s thoughts as he wonders if “[t]he little devil. . .lied to [him]” about being in love with a girl and not being “corrupt” (*Complete Stories* 252).

The major’s doubt at the end suggests that he was not completely convinced by Pinin’s answers, but also that he has some additional information about Pinin that fuels this doubt. The major points out that he reads Pinin’s letters and that he has noticed that Pinin does not write any letters addressed specifically to a girl (251). However, the way the major thinks of Pinin as a “little devil” at the end suggests that he has noticed something else in the letters or in Pinin’s behavior which makes him believe that Pinin is capable of deception and of being corrupt.

Specifically, the major probably remembers Pinin’s response to his inquiry about being corrupt: “I don’t know what you mean, corrupt” (251). To the major this response is insincere—he does not believe that Pinin, who acknowledges that he is experienced in sexual relations (“I have been with girls” (251)) would not know what corrupt means in this context. The major’s answer, “All right. . . You needn’t be superior” (251), is another way of saying that he views Pinin’s response as a

pose, a feigned ignorance which seemingly places him above not only corruption, but even knowledge of it.

Gerry Brenner suggests another possibility why the major might doubt Pinin's assertions. In his reading of the story, the major is "an exemplary professional figure" as opposed to the conventional interpretation of the major as "a despicable homosexual figure" (202). In this context, the major is simply trying to make sure that Pinin is not corrupt and as such a problem for the army. Brenner interprets the major's advice to Pinin to be careful so that "some one else doesn't come along and take [him]" (*Complete Stories* 251) as an indication that Pinin probably has been "taken" already by somebody and the major knows about it:

[When] the major admonishes or cautions Pinin to guard against being "taken" by somebody "else" who comes along, the "else" cannot refer to himself, for clearly he has failed to "take" Pinin, if such was his intent. The reference to someone else, then, may indicate that the major has detected in Pinin's correspondence some evidence that Pinin has already been "taken" by a homosexual. ("A Semiotic Inquiry" 201)

One objection to this reading of the major's lines is that if he had any specific evidence against Pinin he might have confronted him with it immediately. Yet, it is possible that if the major has no conclusive evidence, but only second

hand information, his phrasing might be intended as a way to elicit an involuntary confirmation from Pinin. Pinin, however, does not reveal anything, and the major's reference to him as a "little devil" might be an indication that he is frustrated with Pinin's skillful evasion of the innuendo that he had already had a homosexual experience.

The narrative itself does not provide any definitive and objective information either way regarding Pinin's corruption or lack of corruption, and this deliberate suppression of reliable information about the true nature of Pinin's past behavior makes it possible for the short story to evade easy interpretation and to end with the unanswered question of the major about Pinin's truthfulness. The story also posits the question about the corruption or lack of corruption of the major as well, and thus the "simple enquiry" of the title becomes a very complex inquiry, not only regarding Pinin, but the major as well. The surface narrative thus points to the missing secondary narratives of Pinin's and the major's pasts.

"The Killers" is another story which raises many unanswered questions about important past events involving the main characters. Hemingway singles out "The Killers" as a story which "probably had more left out of it than anything [he] ever wrote" ("Art of the Short Story" 11). One way to approach what is left in and what is left out of the story from a temporal perspective is to examine Nick's gradual realization of the importance of a past sequences of events to which he

has no access, a realization which occurs in his quest to help Ole Andreson, the Swede prizefighter, do something about his imminent murder.

When, after the killers have left the diner, George asks Nick to “go see Ole Andreson” (*Complete Stories* 220), Nick agrees without hesitation, even though the cook advises him to avoid “mixing up in this” (220). Nick is not a tough guy the way the killers are, and the experience of being tied and gagged is a new one to him: “He had never had a towel in his mouth before” (220). However, he is reluctant to admit that he was scared and helpless when the killers were in control of the diner. After George unties him, he tries to brush the whole experience off: “‘Say,’ [Nick] said. ‘What the hell?’ He was trying to swagger it off” (220). “Trying to swagger it off” is not the same as “swaggered it off”—Nick is not only not a tough guy, but he cannot even create a credible imitation of one. In this context, Nick’s willingness to “mix up in” Ole’s case is a way for him to regain a sense of himself as a courageous person who is not helpless when facing people like the killers. When he gets to talk to Ole Andreson, his first sentence makes him realize how inexperienced he is in the world of tough guys inhabited by the killers and Ole. He tells Ole, “I was up at Henry’s. . .and two fellows came in and tied up me and the cook, and they said they were going to kill you” (220). Nick immediately realizes that what he said “sounded silly” (221). It sounds silly to him because he realizes that in his report he makes himself a helpless victim in the hands of the “two fellows” and a mere reporter of their words. The agents

of action in his sentences are the killers. Similarly when he describes his coming to warn Ole, he attributes the decision to George: "George thought I better come and tell you about it" (221). Making himself the object rather than the subject of his sentences, suggests that Nick is viewing himself not as an agent of action, but as a follower, the way a child will follow the guidance of adults. In Ole Andreson, Nick encounters an adult, a prizefighter, a real tough guy, who refuses to act decisively as an adult. Nick is unwilling to concede to this idea and offers Ole suggestion after suggestion, chance after chance for Ole to take control of the situation and do something about the danger facing him the way an adult would. Time after time he is rebuffed by Ole Andreson:

[Nick:] "I will tell you what they were like."

"I don't want to know what they were like."

. . . .

"Don't you want me to go and see the police?"

"No," Ole Andreson said. "That wouldn't do any good."

. . . .

"Isn't there something I could do?"

"No. There ain't anything to do"

"Maybe it was just a bluff."

"No. It ain't just a bluff."

. . . .

“Couldn’t you get out of town?”

“No,” Ole Andreson said. “I’m through with all that running around.”

. . . .

“Couldn’t you fix it up some way?”

“No. I got in wrong. . . There ain’t anything to do.” (221)

The idea that Ole cannot “fix it,” cannot offer a positive response to solving his problem is unsettling for Nick—after all if Ole Andreson, the prizefighter, cannot come up with the will to mount a decisive response to the danger posed by the killers, what is Nick to do? He turns away and back to another figure of authority to him, George, who was the one who sent him to Ole: “I better go back and see George” (221).

George is of little help to Nick as he simply echoes what Nick has already found out—the killers will kill Ole. George, like Nick, had hoped that when Nick tells Ole about the killers, he would do something about it. When Nick reports to George that Ole is going to do “nothing” (222) about it, George exclaims, “They’ll kill him” (222). Nick echoes George’s words (“I guess they will”), realizing that George doesn’t have any fix for the situation either. This echoing effect of repeating information is also present in the repetition of the statement that Ole will not leave his room. First Ole tells Nick twice that he cannot “make up his mind” to leave his room (221), then Nick tells it to Mrs. Bell whom he meets outside and who tells Nick that she herself was told by Ole that “he didn’t feel

like” (221) leaving his room. Finally Nick reports to George that Ole is “in his room and he won’t go out.” The effect of this repetition is to suggest that Nick is stuck on this troubling thought: Ole does not have the will to fight back. And here is where Nick wonders (“I wonder what he did?” (222)) about the past events that have led to this point where a man like Ole Andreson can simply give up and be a helpless victim, the way Nick was when he was tied up and gagged. George comes up with a common sense answer, “Double-crossed somebody. That’s what they kill for” (226). George’s answer does not address Ole’s behavior, only the reasons why the killers might be after him. This is not good enough to alleviate Nick’s sense of profound confusion and fear engendered by what he has just witnessed: “I can’t stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he’s going to get it. It’s too damned awful” (222).

This last image of Nick contemplating in confusion and anguish Ole’s fate brings us back to the idea of omission and of the story left out of story. There are two secondary narratives that are evoked here: first there are the events that have led to Ole’s giving up on fighting for his survival. He apparently has ties to the criminal world, which pays back its debtors or enemies by sending them people like the killers. In his brief conversation with Nick, Ole evokes a time in his past when he was willing to fight, or at least run away from danger. He also suggests that over time he has grown tired of this kind of life. Yet there is a huge gap between the first state of defiance and the second state of surrender, a gap

which makes the narrative of Ole's past all the more mysterious and puzzling. Nick's encounter with the killers and Ole represents a firsthand experience with a world he is obviously unfamiliar with. The lack of details regarding who did what to whom and who hired the killers, only makes this world more ominous and scary to Nick. On the other hand, Nick's need to have an authority figure who can "fix" problems, and who can provide guidance to him, suggests that there is a hidden, evoked secondary narrative about his upbringing, possibly about a domineering father or mother figure in his life, who controlled him very strictly. The surface narrative of "The Killers" thus represents a dynamic interaction of these two submerged, evoked secondary narratives, with Nick trying to do what he was taught to do—follow and trust the lead of adults and emerge as a decisive, independent person on his own, only to discover that in the world of adults, of role-models like Ole Andreson, man is alone facing a hostile world, which sooner or later catches up with him. Robert Fleming sees a parallel between Nick's and Ole's pasts:

[W]hat "The Killers" illustrates is that life does not operate as Nick. . . has been taught. Life sets traps for honest, straightforward people who believe what they hear and what they read. For a time the individual may survive even though he follows the false map, as Ole has survived by running or as Nick has survived by following

false and artificial codes of behavior, but in the end, reality must be faced. (“Hemingway’s ‘The Killers’” 312)

Nick’s decision to “get out of this town” (222) at the end might thus be interpreted as a rejection of his past, of the codes that he has learned and used, but which are no longer useful. It is also a rejection of Ole’s vision of life. As Joseph Flora points out, “[a]t the end of ‘The Killers’. . . Nick is markedly changed from the young man he was at the beginning” having “comprehended the potential for total evil in human nature, the potential for impersonal destruction” (*Hemingway’s Nick Adams* 103). The power of Nick’s unsettling insight at the end depends to a great extent on the fact that the hidden mechanism, the details of the secondary narrative which make the situation with Ole possible is beyond his (and the readers’) reach.

The interaction of submerged, evoked, but not narrated secondary narratives of past events and a surface first narrative designed as if specifically to draw attention from the narrative present to what is only evoked is one way to think of the concept of the story left out in Hemingway’s short stories. However, the idea of the story left out can be examined not only in terms of omission, but in terms of inclusion and isolation from the main narrative the way cargo is loaded on a plane, but it is not the plane itself. In this case secondary narratives become explicit and extended, sometimes greater in size than the main narrative.

Temporally such narrative variation requires not only the reshuffling of narrative

and story orders, but also the flexibility of narrative rhythm and narrative frequency, a flexibility which allows a character (and sometimes, a character who is also a narrator) to create a dynamic tension between alternative secondary narratives of past events.

## Chapter Three

### Temporal Variations and the Loaded Story

While in stories like “Hills Like White Elephants” and “The Sea Change” Hemingway uses evocation to indicate the hidden presence and the influence of the story that was left out, in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” he creates extended, explicit secondary narratives, which open up a temporal space within the main narrative, isolated, both visually (through the use of italics) and structurally from the chronological progression of the dominant temporal movement in the story. In a memorable description in “The Art of the Short Story” Hemingway refers to “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” metaphorically as a plane carrying a load:

So I invent how someone I know who cannot sue me—that is me—would turn out, and put into one short story [“The Snows of Kilimanjaro”] things you would use in, say, four novels if you were careful and not a spender. I throw everything I had been saving into the story and spend it all. . . So I make up the man and the woman as well as I can and I put all the true stuff in and with all the load, the most load any short story ever carried, it still takes off and it flies. This makes me very happy. (8)

Hemingway is “happy” and pleasantly surprised that his choice not to leave out “all the true stuff,” as he says he has done in other stories (3), has paid off. The concept of the short story is thus expanded to include not only the model of a narrative from which a story has been left out, but also the idea of a container, a vehicle which “carries” embedded (or loaded) stories as well. This new idea of inclusion, rather than omission, of a vehicle-container carrying a load rather than a story left out of a story, is a way to address the problem Gennaro Santangelo refers to when he argues that “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” has “embarrassed the critic” trying to apply the “iceberg” theory to explain “the riches,” “the plethora of material” in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” (251). The “riches” and the “plethora of material” suggest a way to load a story, not leave stuff out. The distinction between a vehicle which can “take off and fly” and a load which is in the vehicle for the ride, but which is incapable of movement on its own, suggests two important functions of the story—it has to be able to fly or move forward toward a destination or resolution, but it also has to be able to carry content, or loads. The two functions differ somewhat in terms of their temporal dimensions: a vehicle moves in space, but also in time—it covers a specific space over a period of time and thus is guided by the logic of chronological temporal progression. Loads, on the other hand, are far less dependent upon movement and thus on time, because their essential characteristic is to contain something, not move it or change it. The temporal structure of “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” provides an

informative illustration of this notion of the short story as a vehicle carrying a load.

The distinction between the two types of narratives in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” of the main (or vehicle) narrative and the imbedded (or load) narratives is not only visually indicated by the narrator by the use of italics, but also in terms of temporal order and by a difference in what Genette calls temporal rhythm and frequency. Temporal rhythm is created through alternating different temporal movements in the narrative (*Narrative Discourse* 94-5). In “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” the first temporal movement which is established with the first line of the story, a line of dialogue, is a dramatic scene, which develops chronologically, and in which the reading time is roughly equal to the story time. The narrative of “Snows” opens up in *medias res*, with Harry the main character realizing that the pain in his infected leg has subsided and gangrene has set in. The first narrative thus progresses from this point on through several scenes interrupted by secondary narratives until at the end of the story (and a time period of less than 24 hours) it is resolved when Harry dies. Harry is aware of this resolution, or more precisely of the inevitability of this resolution, almost from the very beginning of the story. He tells Helen that he is “dying now” (*Complete Stories* 40) and that the only things she could do for him are to let him “die as comfortably as he can” (40) or to “shoot him” (39). He doubts that amputating his leg would stop the spread of the gangrene, but that option is more hypothetical

because they are in a remote and isolated location in Africa with no surgical instruments and no medical supplies which might make an amputation possible and successful.

Thus the outcome of this first narrative is predetermined from its starting point, at least in the mind of the main character, and he is able to contemplate it as a completed story, looking back to its beginning during the time when he ceased to be a writer and became Helen's "proud possession" (45), and forward toward its end which he knows is near because of the spread of the gangrene. He traces the events before the beginning of the main narrative in analeptic secondary narratives which differ in terms of narrative speed and frequency from the first narrative. While the first narrative is in the form of a scene, his memory of the events that led to his trip to Africa and the infection of his leg are in the form of a summary which condenses long, extended events in the past of the lives of the characters to short passages in the text of the narrative:

[Helen's] husband had died when she was still a comparatively young woman and for a while she had devoted herself to her two just-grown children, who did not need her and were embarrassed at having her about, to her stable of horses, to books, and to bottles.

*(Complete Stories 45)*

The reading time of this passage is much less than the time it took for the events to unfold. Also, the events mentioned constitute series of events which are only

narrated once—"for a while" she engaged in repeating activities related to her horse, to reading books, to drinking, and to raising her children. Genette calls this kind of narrative "iterative discourse" (*Narrative Discourse* 116-7) as opposed to singulative discourse which is a narrative that covers events once that only happened once. Thus the secondary narrative which fills in the details about the events that led to the time of the main narrative is both a summary, and to a great extent, iterative discourse in nature. The secondary narrative is Harry's creation—he is the one who remembers what happened, or what he was told by Helen about her life, and his ability to condense the past, both by omitting what he believes is of little relevance and what is redundant repetition, suggests that he is capable of understanding the importance of these past events in relation to his present situation. Joseph Flora notes this when he writes that "[i]n 'The Snows' Hemingway lets thinking and memory serve as the story" (*Study* 82). In a way Harry, in his thoughts and memories, is creating a coherent, logically connected sequence of events (a story) which represents his life as it began when he ceased to be a writer and which will end with his inevitable death from the gangrene. Harry's knowledge of the end makes this narrative sequence, the present time, singulative scene of the first narrative, a closed, complete narrative, which only needs time to reach its end.

Harry is helpless in trying to change its resolution—he can only control how he responds to it. He tries to rebel against its inevitability by being rude to

Helen, whom he blames, at least for a time, for his present condition. Harry describes this rudeness as a psychological mechanism to keep himself from thinking about death: "I don't know why I'm doing it. It's trying to kill to keep yourself alive, I imagine" (43). As a writer he is particularly skilled in being manipulative in the way he uses language, and almost immediately after he tells Helen that he has "never loved any one else the way [he] love[s] her," he turns on her with the most offensive language: "You bitch. . . You rich bitch. That's poetry. I'm full of poetry now. Rot and poetry. Rotten poetry" (43). Flora calls this behavior "male bitchery" (*Study* 84).

Another way for Harry to control the way he responds to the inevitability of his death is to turn on himself. After re-examining his life after he stopped being a writer, he acknowledges to himself that it was not Helen's fault, but his own that he feels so badly now. He was the one who "destroyed his talent by not using it" (*Complete Stories* 45), and he traded his old life for the "security" of her financial support. He realizes he sold "vitality, in one form or another, all his life" (45) and that Helen was simply one of the many women with money who had bought it.

Both responses, turning on Helen and turning on himself, are a reaction to the realization that the narrative of his present life has reached its end, its resolution. Before Harry's leg got infected, he had a different vision of the way this narrative would develop—he was aware of the fact that he was not being truthful to himself by abandoning writing, but he viewed his time spent in Helen's

world of the rich as research into the lives of people he found boring and contemptible:

You were equipped with good insides so that you did not go to pieces that way. . . But, in yourself, you said that you would write about these people; about the very rich; that you were really not of them but a spy in their country; that you would leave it and write of it and for once it would be written by some one who knew what he was writing of. (44)

Before his life ending injury, he viewed his present life as an investment in and research for a future narrative text about the rich, a narrative the writing of which would allow him to re-enter the life he led before he ceased to be a writer. Thus he imagined his life with Helen ending with his embrace of his true self, but also with a hostile act of exposing the corruption of the “very rich,” and thus hurting them. After the infection, his initial reaction of being rude to Helen can be seen in this light, as an attempt to blame the rich for his failure to continue to be an active writer. Toward the end of the story, however he realizes that he would never write about Helen, or the very rich, because they are “dull and they drank too much, or they played too much backgammon” (53). If his subjects are dull and uninspiring, and he is only writing about them to hurt them, he would really be hurting himself as a writer, Harry realizes. Harry might be a bit better than Julian (a veiled reference to F. Scott Fitzgerald) who was “wrecked” after he discovered

that his perceptions of the rich were illusory, but Harry is not much better off having discovered that he has nothing but contempt for them, and as such they are not of any particular use as story material.

What is of use to Harry as story material comes to him from his life before he stopped being a writer. Flora calls Harry's memories in the italicized sections a "rich reservoir" demonstrating Harry's "keen ability to respond to life, the glory of his gift" (*Study* 84). From a temporal perspective Harry's reminiscences of the things he had saved for later to develop into stories represent an excluded temporal space within the main narrative. The main narrative is closed by the anticipated resolution; it is chronologically driven, and it is singulative, happening and narrated only once. As such it has lost its attraction for Harry. In the past he was "obsessed" with death, but now that it is inevitable, and painless, he has "very little curiosity" for it (*Complete Stories* 41). He was curious about it when it was not inevitable, when it was possible, but avoidable as is the case of his memory of the dying "*bombing officer*," Williamson. The horrific pain from having his "*bowels spilled out into the wire*" makes Williamson scream, "*Shoot me, Harry. For Christ sake shoot me*" (53). This memory triggers another one when Harry and his fellow soldiers wonder if "our Lord" would interfere in ending such unbearable pain before death. In the case of Williamson only the morphine Harry gave him worked, and not even "*right away*" (53). In this reminiscence Harry is not the one dying, but the one learning about death, curious about death,

shocked about death. In the present time of the first narrative of the story Harry is the one dying, painlessly but certainly.

The memory about Williamson, while a secondary analeptic narrative, is clearly different from the memories about Harry's life with Helen and the very rich. His memories of his life with Helen prior to the Africa trip form chain of chronologically and causally connected events that lead to his present situation. The Williamson memory is rather an attempt to understand his present attitude towards death by comparing it to a somewhat analogous situation from his past. Similarly, the other italicized passages lie outside the boundaries of his present life, having occurred before his first life as a writer ended. This idea of two lives being lived consequentially is a function of Harry's imagination as a writer. A story ends and another one begins. When he describes this transition, he uses language that suggests a resolution of one narrative, and a beginning of another one:

It was not so much that he lied as that there was no truth to tell. He had had his life and it was over and then he went on living it again with different people and more money, with the best of the same places, and some new ones. (44)

Before the injury Harry had hoped that he could end this new life with Helen and start yet another one where he is again a writer writing about the very rich. In other words, as a writer he perceived his life as a story that was unfolding and

that he had some control over. With his injury the ability to control the narrative of his life disappears, and the only thing left for him is to wait for the inevitable resolution.

Harry, however, discovers another possibility, and that is to tap into the memories of the closed narrative of his first life. The italicized sections of “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” while still dealing with memories of the past, are different from the memories of his life with Helen before the opening of the first narrative. For one thing, they do not create a chronological chain (or a causal one for that matter) as do the memories of his gradual loss of his talent. The first italicized section contains six parts which are put together because of a similarity in context (they all have something to do with various places and various ways in which Harry spent winters, with the repeating image of snow in all of them). They are not developed into stories, but they suggest that for Harry these were authentic experiences, “true stuff” (“Art” 8) that he can always go to as an antidote to the false stuff of his present life. In “*the Vorarlberg and the Arlberg*”

*he remembered the man who had the fox to sell when they had walked into Bludenz, that time to buy presents, and the cherry-pit taste of good kirsch, the fast-slipping rush of running powder-snow on crust, singing “Hi! Ho! said Rolly!” as you ran down the last stretch to the steep drop, taking it straight, then running the orchard in three turns and out across the ditch and onto the icy road behind*

*the inn. Knocking your bindings loose, kicking the skis free and leaning them up against the wooden wall of the inn, the lamplight coming from the window, where inside, in the smoky, new wine smelling warmth, they were playing the accordion. (Complete Stories 43)*

The main action in this passage is performed by Harry who remembers things and experiences he had in one specific place. In this way a memory of a man trying to sell a fox is associated with the “taste of good kirsch” and the experience of skiing. The order and arrangement of these images and actions is not rigidly controlled by chronology or causality, but by the associative mind that conjures them up. As such these actions can be recalled over and over again in an almost unlimited number of combinations and arrangements. Moreover, the actions mentioned are not expressed by verbs, but by gerunds, which function as nouns, as direct objects of the act of remembering performed by Harry. “Knocking,” “kicking,” and “leaning” as gerunds suggest the continuity and immediacy of the action, rather than its completion expressed by verbs in the past tense such as “knocked,” “kicked,” and “leaned.” The gerund forms also suggest repetition or iteration of the experiences, as Harry has tasted the kirsch many times and he has skied down the slope many times. This temporal liberation from the constraints of chronology and causality, this opening up of the possibility of reliving Harry’s remembered experiences in new ways in the future is in sharp

contrast to the reality of the narrative present of the short story when Harry is waiting for death in Africa.

Harry "*had seen the world change*" (49) and his memories in the italicized sections are his personal account of this change. He had not only observed events, but "*he had seen the subtler change and he could remember how the people were at different times*" (49). Harry is aware of the passage of time, but his ability to remember how "people were at different times" suggests that through the act of remembering or through the act of writing, he can restore imaginatively what the passage of time has transformed or obliterated.

Sometimes this restoration brings back painful experiences, such as the time when he covered a war as a correspondent in Turkey. The italicized section dealing with these experiences is a mini-narrative itself, a narrative nestled inside a quarrel with his wife in Paris. The quarrel starts before he leaves for Turkey and is resolved after he comes back to Paris. While his experiences in Turkey are presented in chronological order, they are linked together by the fact that they are painful and traumatic to Harry. He witnesses scenes of destruction and "things that he could never think of" and after that "much worse" (49). He is also lonely and tries to "kill his loneliness" (48) by spending time with prostitutes and writing a letter to a former lover, "the first one" (48), the one he "could not cure himself of loving her" (48). Those memories, however, are a source of wisdom for Harry, since they taught him about love, kindness and the absurdity of war and

violence. Back in Paris he is able to re-establish his relationship with his wife, whom “he loved again” (49) and the period characterized by the quarrel and by the “madness” (49) of his experiences with prostitutes and war in Turkey having ended. This embedded narrative thus offers a positive outcome, the restoration of Harry’s relationship with his wife and a newly acquired perspective on war and change in the world, a change he felt was his “duty to write of” (49). In contrast, what he learns from his examination of his later life and the events that led to his trip to Africa is that his knowledge of the life of the rich is far less worthy of being written about. This urge to write about what is worthy of being written about, the true experiences that contain wisdom about life and “world change” is what drives Harry’s mind to create the italicized sections, while Harry himself is driven irreversibly toward death.

The section dealing with his experiences fishing in the Black Forest in Germany and living as a poor man among poor men in Paris contains less of a narrative and more of a list of images, of witnessed things and events, a collection of raw material of true experiences:

*And in that poverty, and in that quarter across the street from Boucherie Chevaline and a wine cooperative he had written the start of all he was to do. There never was another part of Paris that he loved like that, the sprawling trees, the old white plastered*

*houses painted brown below, the long green of the autobus in that round square, the purple flower dye upon the paving. (51)*

This is a part of his life where he still has the ability to arrange and rearrange his memories as they come to him in free associations, unencumbered by a fixed chronology, put together only through their power to evoke true feelings in Harry. Harry tells Helen he had “been writing” (54) when he was recreating the italicized passages in his head. In this way he substitutes his present time of the singulative main narrative leading inevitably to death, with a narrative where time does not flow towards a resolution, but back and forth, free from a need to end in a specific point. In the parts of the italicized passages where verbs disappear altogether, leaving long lists of things or images, time’s linear progression is suspended. Genette calls such temporal groupings in which events are put together by a kinship of some kind rather than temporal progression *syllipsis* (*Narrative Discourse* 85), and while the main narrative is moving forward toward its resolution, in the italicized secondary narratives that temporal progression is pushed back in the background, at least temporary, until Harry comes back into the present time of the main narrative.

The first narrative, by moving to its resolution, carries Harry to his death, but Harry, being a writer, is able to counteract the inevitability of this movement, by creating temporal spaces outside the main narrative, spaces filled with images and memories of his truest experiences. It is exactly this juxtaposition between

the present which carries Harry to his death and the past which gives him his sense of himself when he felt truly alive that suggests the metaphor of the vehicle and the load, the load which is in the vehicle, but not the same thing.

In this context, Harry's final narrative—the imaginary rescue which takes him in a plane to Mount Kilimanjaro—is clearly different from the italicized sections because it is a continuation of the first narrative, not a return to the temporal spaces of the time before he stopped being an active writer. The rescue is narrated in chronological order, much like the first narrative, and it takes the form of a journey with a definite goal. Since the narrative is the product of Harry's unconscious mind, it takes the form of a psychological projection of Harry's fears and desires. He is clearly afraid of death, which in his delirious mind just before he loses consciousness, takes the form of some kind of monstrous being:

It moved up closer to him still and now he could not speak to it, and when it saw he could not speak it came a little closer, and now he tried to send it away without speaking, but it moved in on him so its weight was all upon his chest, and . . . it crouched there and he could not move, or speak . . . . He could not speak to tell her to make it go away and it crouched now heavier, so he could not breathe. (54)

The helplessness which Harry feels to do anything about the approaching menacing creature speaks of the terror he must be experiencing at this time.

Falling unconscious is a relief as the image disappears and “suddenly it was alright and the weight went from his chest” (54). The journey itself, up to the point when he realizes what the true destination is, is a wish-fulfillment about a different ending of the narrative of his present life, an ending which was not possible while he was still conscious and while his thinking was guided by his rational mind. Yet, even the final realization that he is not going to be returned back to his present life, that he is going to Mount Kilimanjaro, is a psychological projection itself, a vision of death as a journey which leads to a special place of mythical significance. It is an attempt to negate and transform the finality of death, both as it relates to physical life, but also as it relates to the ending of a narrative, into a passage to another place, another form of being, by freezing the flow of time, not ending it. The narrative ends before Harry reaches his destination, as if knowledge of that other form of being is impossible to experience (and narrate) in this world.

This final narrative then, although it is unlike the italicized passages, and although it links to the first narrative of the story, can be considered as another loaded story because it represents Harry’s attempt to impose his own ending on the narrative of his life, an ending which is only possible outside the temporal plane of the here and the now of the present narrative. In the first narrative the progression of time is measured by the gradual spread of the gangrene—which is change over time—until Harry dies. In the imaginary narrative the progression

of time and the gangrene become meaningless once the final destination is revealed. This final journey, however, is not part of the vehicle narrative of “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” as the first narrative of the story ends with Helen discovering Harry’s dead body, a somber reaffirmation by the narrator of the present time of the story, of chronology, and of the inevitability of its resolution.

Earl Rovit and Gerry Brenner notice a similar pattern of temporal juxtaposition in “Chapter XIV” of *In Our Time*. The ending of “Chapter XIV” describes the last moments of the bullfighter, Maera:

There was a great shouting going on in the grandstand overhead. Maera felt everything getting larger and larger and then smaller and smaller. Then everything commenced to run faster and faster as when they speed up a cinematograph film. Then he was dead.

(*Complete Stories* 161)

Rovit and Brenner discuss this ending in terms of a temporal opposition of what they call on the one hand “geological time” and on the other, “the now” or “the perpetual now” (also “suspended time”) (108). Because of the “movement of the narrator into Maera’s point of view, and then his shocking removal in the final sentence” (110) there is a marked change in the tempo which moves at an “accelerating pace” until at the end the last sentence “stops the action like a bullet and shifts the narrative point of view outside of the human context to something almost like the long impersonal view of the ever-abiding earth” (110).

The distinction thus is one of temporal speed—the acceleration and distortion of imaginary time, of the “now” of the dying Maera, and the constancy of chronological, geological time which resumes its flow in the narrative after his death.

Interestingly, the quoted passage from “Chapter XIV” contains another parallel to the ending of “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” and that is the description of the last moments of Meara as a “cinematograph film.” The accelerated pace of early silent films suggests a distorted sense of time and space, a representation of reality quite different from the real life experiences of film audiences. The narrative of the plane trip to Kilimanjaro shows similar acceleration by presenting sequences of selected actions and omitting others which normally come in between:

[H]e heard the plane. It showed very tiny and then made a wide circle and the boys ran out and lit the fires, using kerosene, and piled on grass so there were two big smudges at each end of the level place and the morning breeze blew them toward the camp and the plane circled twice more, low this time, and then glided down and leveled off and landed smoothly and, coming walking toward him, was old Compie in slacks, a tweed jacket and a brown felt hat. (*Complete Stories* 55)

This passage is a summary and as such represents a change in temporal speed from the first narrative which is a scene (with its relative equality of narrative and story time). In one sentence the plane appears “tiny” in the distance, draws near, performs landing maneuvers, lands, and at the end, the pilot, Compie, is walking toward Harry. When the plane lands, the narrative omits some of Compie’s actions—stopping the engine and getting out of the plane. The close proximity of the two actions which frame the sentence—the appearance of the tiny plane and the appearance of Compie with his “slacks,” “tweed jacket and a brown hat” in front of Harry, represents a shortening of narrative time, and as such, a desire to escape the normal (and much slower) progression of real time (or the quasi-real time represented in the first narrative) where there are no shortcuts in the form of elliptical omissions of unimportant actions and events. In this way the plane trip narrative is like a fast paced sequence of movie images which represents in a shortened time period various stages of a longer story action. The end of a cinematograph film creates a sharp contrast between the temporal progression in the film and that in the real lives of the film viewers, and, similarly, the ending of the plane trip narrative, with its slightly accelerated passage of time, is as abrupt in its transition back to the temporal plane of the first narrative as is the case in “Chapter XIV,” where suddenly Maera “was dead”:

[T]here, ahead, all [Harry] could see, as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top

of Kilimanjaro. And then he knew that there was where he was going.

Just then the hyena stopped whimpering in the night and started to make a strange, human, almost crying sound. (56)

The use of “just then” indicates a precise moment when real, or as Rovit and Brenner would put it, “geological” time progression is restored, a time progression characterized well by a passage from Ecclesiastes: “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever” (qtd. In Rovit and Brenner 111). In terms of first and secondary narratives, the juxtaposition is between the relentless flow of chronological, geological time in the first narrative—a flow which includes Harry’s death, and the temporal variations of the secondary narratives, which allow imaginative freedom, if only temporarily.

It is possible to imagine “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” without the embedded narratives and without the reported thoughts and dreams (hallucinations) of Harry. In this version the narrative would follow the model of the story left out of the story, with the surface narrative reporting objectively the lines of dialogue and the actions of the characters, with the important secondary narratives about their past lives only evoked through bits and pieces of information scattered in their speech. Yet, since Harry is a writer, and since his concept of his life is linked to

his concept of a story, of a narrative, the embedding of the italicized passages allows Hemingway to create an alternative narrative space within the mind of Harry, a narrative space which has at times, both temporally and thematically, little to do with the events in the first narrative. Harry is creating his own stories and without a privileged view of his mind, his reservoir of memories, they would never reach the narrative surface. While this privileged view is achieved through internal focalization and extensively reported internal speech, it is also important in terms of narrative temporality since it brings new temporal planes into a dynamic relationship with the first, surface narrative, thus going beyond what is possible through omission alone.

“The Snows of Kilimanjaro” is an unusual story exactly because of the extent of embedded material, and Hemingway is aware that he is risking a lot by doing something he would not do in the past:

I throw everything I had been saving into the story [“The Snows of Kilimanjaro”] and spend it all. I really throw it away, if you know what I mean. I am not gambling with it. Or maybe I am. Who knows? Real gamblers don’t gamble. At least you think they don’t gamble. They gamble, Jack, don’t worry. (“Art of the Short Story” 8)

The difference between “throwing” something away and gambling with something is that when you gamble, you expect a return of some kind. Hemingway is willing to bet “everything” he has saved to write about later on the success of the story,

on its ability to “fly” and carry its load, but he is also throwing it away in the sense that he will not be able to use it later on. In a way, he is like Harry, who is aware that he will never write the stories he thought he would write one day, but who nevertheless conjures up his material one last time, bringing it up and throwing it away, but also betting that the process would create an alternative way to spend his last hours. Harry doesn’t want to “spoil” “the one experience he had never had” by quarreling with Helen (50), and he focuses his remaining strength on bringing everything he had saved into the shape of a narrative: “There wasn’t time, of course, although it seemed as though it telescoped so that you might put it all into one paragraph if you could get it right” (50). The telescoping of time is in essence a collapse of regular time duration and chronology, a simultaneous presence of memories of experiences separated in time and space, yet contained in “one paragraph.” “One paragraph” is a synecdoche, and it stands for a larger narrative, unified (“one”), yet all-containing.

The objective of creating such a narrative becomes a priority for Harry, but also, at the level of the short story, for Hemingway as well. Thus he lends Harry his (Hemingway’s) own saved writing material, betting that if he is to represent the death of a writer truthfully, he would have to show in great detail the writer saying a painful last goodbye to the most important thing in his life, his writing. The more of the “true stuff,” the writing material he had saved for later, Hemingway puts in the story, the more it counterbalances the vehicle narrative

which moves toward its final resolution. The tension and power of the story thus depends on the heaviness of the load (the copious detail of the italicized sections, but also the pain from the realization that it would have to be thrown away) pulling in one direction (and toward one temporal plane) and the forceful drive of the first narrative pulling toward death (and toward maintaining the temporal plane of the narrative present).

Although “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” is unusual in terms of the amount of weight it carries, its structural model of a vehicle carrying a load, of a first narrative with embedded secondary narratives, achieved through temporal variation and a privileged inside view into the mind of the main characters,—this structural model is important to other stories as well, stories such as “Now I Lay Me,” “My Old Man,” and “A Natural History of the Dead.” In these three stories, however, the main narrative is iterative in nature (unlike the singulative scene of the first narrative in “Snows”) and the embedded narratives, the loaded stories are singulative. Another important distinction is the function of the embedded narratives: in “Snows” the secondary narratives create an alternative space which provides a temporal (and temporary) shelter to the main character from the dead end, irreversible chronological progression of the first narrative; in “Now I Lay Me” and “My Old Man,” the secondary narratives are differentiated in terms of narrative frequency from the first narrative because they represent unresolved issues, and as such they are like temporal stumbling blocks which have not been

(and probably cannot be) assimilated in the temporal progression of the main narrative. These stories can thus be examined as collections (and thus containers) of memories, both iterative (and positive) and singulative (and negative) which are carried and brought back to the surface to be examined over and over again by a reminiscing main character.

## Chapter Four

### Temporal Variations and Memories as Embedded Narratives

Hemingway's metaphor of the short story as a vehicle carrying a load which he developed to describe "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" ("Art" 8) can be helpful in approaching short stories with extensive narrative treatments of characters' memories. In temporal analysis memories are analeptic narratives, a fact which immediately qualifies them as secondary narratives, creating a break (and a breach) in the temporal progression of the first narrative which is established in the beginning of the short story. By the very act of remembering something, a character establishes two temporal planes, and in the special case when the narrator is the main character of the narrative as well, there is always either implied or explicit a temporal plane which coincides with the time of narration, and everything else in the story becomes a memory, a secondary narrative. This is the case in "Now I Lay Me," "My Old Man," and "A Natural History of the Dead." In all three stories, the narrator establishes the temporal plane of the act and time of narration either at the very beginning ("My Old Man" and "A Natural History of the Dead") or implicitly in the beginning and explicitly at the end ("Now I Lay Me").

However, if everything in the story (with the exception of the actions occurring at the time of narration) is embedded as a secondary narrative, it is necessary to expand our analysis of memories by examining other temporal determinants like temporal speed and frequency in order to detect any further differentiation and hidden dynamics. Genette's analysis of temporal frequency in the narrative of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, which itself is a first person narrative, led him to discover something unusual: the narrator in the novel had dispensed with a traditional form of narration alternating between summary and scene and substituted in its place a pattern of alternation between iterative and singulative scenes:

It is as though Proustian narrative substituted for summary, which is the synthetic form of narration in the classical novel and which, as we saw, is absent from the *Recherche*, a different synthetic form, the iterative: a synthesis not by acceleration, but by assimilation and abstraction. Thus the rhythm of the narrative in the *Recherche* is essentially based not, like that of the classical novel, on the alternation of summary and scene, but on another alternation, that of iterative and singulative. (*Narrative Discourse* 143)

Such preference for the iterative as the "synthetic form of narration," as the glue which holds together the singulative scenes is noticeable in Hemingway's "Now I Lay Me," "My Old Man," and "A Natural History of the Dead." Specifically, we can

examine the stories as essentially iterative discourse breached by embedded singulative scenes. Thus the vehicle narrative in Hemingway's metaphor is the iterative, "a synthesis by assimilation" (to quote Genette), and the singulative scenes are the loaded story. This temporal differentiation has a very important function in the three short stories—it separates the memories which the reminiscing character associates with being in control and having a sense of confidence from those characterized by tension, insecurity, pain, and trauma. In the iterative sections, the narrator includes events which have been assimilated and grouped together by way of resemblance. The singulative sections contain events and experiences which are inassimilable in iterative series because the tensions which characterize them remain unresolved. Thus the singulative secondary narratives are not only not subordinate, but in essence emerge as potent influences on the first narratives in which they are embedded. Their influence, or their weight, to use the metaphor of the cargo and the plane, creates a dangerous pull that threatens to disturb the forward movement and relative stability of the first narrative.

Such dynamic tension between the iterative first narrative and the embedded singulative scenes characterizes "Now I Lay Me." The opening of the story quickly establishes the two temporal planes which are juxtaposed throughout the narrative:

That night we lay on the floor in the room and I listened to the silk-worms eating. The silk-worms fed in racks of mulberry leaves and all night you could hear them eating and a dropping sound in the leaves. I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body.

*(Complete Stories 276)*

The first temporal plane is that of the night when Nick and his orderly are having trouble sleeping and start a conversation which lasts for a few minutes. It is singulative (occurring once), and for the most part, it is a scene. The second temporal plane is broader in scope and iterative in nature since it includes Nick's various ways of avoiding falling asleep in the dark, actions Nick has performed repeatedly before "that night," and which he performs for some time after that as well, as we learn at the end of the story. The narrative starting point is "that night," and in terms of temporal order, Nick's recounting of his imaginary fishing and praying in the dark are secondary narratives, embedded in the first narrative of the scene taking place "that night." However, both of these narratives are embedded within yet another one. The real first narrative takes place at the time of narration, as the narrator indicates at the end of the story when he uses the present tense: "I know he [John] would feel very badly if he knew that, so far, I have never married" (282). It is from this temporal plane that "that night" of the

first sentence of the story, as well as the period of imaginary fishing and praying in the dark, are a look back and as such are analeptic secondary narratives.

“That night” indicates both the time of the specific night, and the present time of narration from the vantage point of which the night becomes “that night” and not tonight, or this night. In addition to these three different temporal planes, there are others as well, including the time when the narrator was a boy and used to fish streams, the time when he observed his mother burn some of his father’s belongings while cleaning their house and the time when he was wounded and felt his soul depart and return to him. This abundance of temporal planes is a function of the story being what James Phelan calls “a metamemory”—“a memory of [Nick’s] memories” (“Now” 48).

However, if we examine Nick’s memories in terms of narrative frequency, we notice that they all fall into two distinct categories according to the way Nick remembers them: they are either remembered as a series of similar events (and thus through iterative discourse), or as singulative narratives. Whenever Nick wants to indicate repeating action, he uses adverbs such as “sometimes” (“Sometimes I found insects in the swamp meadows”), “often” (“Often I ran out of bait”) (*Complete Stories* 276) and adverbial phrases such as “some nights” (“some nights I could not fish, and on those nights I was cold-awake and said my prayers” (277)). Nick also uses the auxiliary verb “would” to indicate habitual

action in the past: “I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length very carefully in my mind” (276).

In contrast, when narrating actions which only took place once, Nick is very careful to use singulative discourse. He uses adverbs such as “once” or “one time” and simple past tense:

Once I used a salamander [as bait] from under an old log. The salamander was very small and neat and agile and a lovely color. He had tiny feet that tried to hold on to the hook, and after that one time I never used a salamander, although I found them very often. Nor did I use crickets, because of the way they acted about the hook. (277)

The narrator distinguishes very carefully between the one time he used a salamander as bait (singulative discourse) and the many times after that when he didn't (iterative discourse). The distinction represented in the quoted passage is also one of negative and positive emotions associated with using the salamander as bait once, and then not using it on all the other occasions Nick found them. Clearly the salamander's attempt to extricate itself with its feet from the hook was not something Nick wanted to see again.

This distinction between singulative narration of painful, traumatic events and iterative narration of events associated with positive emotions is established in the first paragraph of the story. Nick recounts that his fear of falling asleep in

the dark stems from the time when he “had been blown up at night and felt it [his soul] go out of [him] and go off and then come back” (276). This is a traumatic experience in which he had no control to bring back his soul—it came back on its own. When, however, sometime after his war injury he starts to have the same experience of his soul leaving his body “in the nights,” “at the moment of going to sleep,” he “could only stop it by a very great effort” (276). The initial traumatic experience has been transformed into a pattern of repeating experiences in which Nick, albeit by a “very great effort,” nevertheless triumphs over death on a regular basis. He does so by having “different ways of occupying [himself] while [he] lay awake” (276).

The first method of keeping his soul from “go[ing] out” is through another repeating action narrated through iterative discourse: Nick remembers various trout streams he has fished as a boy, and he recreates in his mind his fishing trips, both remembering and imagining places and events. Joseph Flora points out that the remembered and imaginary fishing trips create a sense of order and control in Nick which helps him keep away the chaos of having his soul leave his body (*Hemingway's* 116). Robert Lewis in “Hemingway’s Sense of Place” asserts that “Now I Lay Me” is a story of “dislocation” and Nick’s return to the familiar territory of his home (and the familiar time of his youth) is a way to combat the sense of dislocation and disorientation he feels in a foreign country (in the “dark”), but also in a difficult time of his life (137). The only singulative instance in

this otherwise iterative discourse is the narrative of the use of the salamander as bait, which, however, is quickly isolated temporally and rejected by Nick in his assertion that he never did it again.

In the event that Nick cannot summon his fishing trips from his past, he has in store another repeating action which he uses to occupy his mind in the dark, and it is remembering his life from his first memories all the way up to the war, and praying for all the people who come to his mind. In essence this is another positive experience because it provides an alternative way to keep awake and keep his soul from leaving him. There are, however, two singulative narratives embedded in this narrative series of remembering his early life as a boy. Both of these singulative narratives involve the burning of his father's collection of "jars of snakes and other specimens . . . preserved in alcohol" (277) and of his collection of native American tools and artifacts: "stone axes and stone skinning knives and tools for making arrow-heads and pieces of pottery and many arrow-heads" (278). In the second burning, Nick remembers that it was his mother who was responsible for it, and she did it while she was "cleaning out the basement" (278). It is indicative that Nick does not collate or assimilate the two burnings and narrate them once through iterative discourse (he could have remembered them in this way: "My mother would burn my dad's collections of various things while cleaning the house"). To him they remain as singulative events, even though he might remember them many times. Unlike the fishing he

does in his memory of the streams of his youth, the memories of these burnings remain essentially unchanged. He can improvise his fishing, and sometimes invent new streams and confuse them with actual streams he has fished in (277), but he never confuses or improvises his memories of these burnings.

Psychological readings of the story, such as the one offered by Richard Hovey, have emphasized the traumatic nature of these narratives of burning, with Nick's mother emasculating her husband by symbolically castrating him through burning the jars with snakes preserved in alcohol. "The mother is remembered as the destroyer [by Nick]. She destroyed possessions on which the father's heart was set" (Hovey 186).

Similarly, James Phelan sees the narratives of burning as traumatic and related to the experience Nick had with his war injury:

I also favor the view that Nick is a witness rather than a participant in the scene between his parents because that role fits the logic of analogy on which the story is built. Just as the mortar shell hits Nick unawares, so too, does his mother's emasculation of his father.

("Now" 58)

From the point of view of temporal frequency it is important to note that the narrator chooses singulative discourse to narrate both of these events (the injury from the shell and the burning), and as such to keep them unassimilated into the positive flow of events contained in the iterative sections of the story. James

Phelan makes a similar observation but in terms of temporal order. While Nick starts to narrate his memories about his youth in the past tense (“I found I could only remember back to that attic in my grandfather’s house. Then I would start there and remember this way again, until I reached the war” (*Complete Stories* 277), he suddenly shifts to the present tense of “I remember” (277) and thus, as Phelan states “bypass[es] the step of remembering himself remembering, leaping over the summer of memories and directly recalling events of his boyhood” (“Now 56). This direct recall suggests that the memory of these burnings has not changed, has not been modified with time. As such it remains essentially singulative in nature, fixed in his mind, as he is fixated upon it.

Also fixed in his mind is the memory of “that night.” After finishing his singulative narrative of the burnings of his father’s collections, Nick mentions two other ways of keeping sleep away, both in iterative discourse: he remembers the names of animals and places, and when there is nothing left to remember, he listens to any noises in the dark. On “that” particular night he is listening to noises silk-worms produce while eating mulberry leaves. Yet, what makes the night memorable to Nick is the singulative scene that follows. Nick and his orderly discuss their difficulties falling asleep, with the orderly wondering whether Nick had a problem sleeping: “Say, Signor Tenente, is there something really the matter that you can’t sleep? I never see you sleep. You haven’t slept nights ever since I been with you” (280). Nick is truthful in his answer, but not very revealing:

“I don’t know John . . . I got in pretty bad shape along early last spring and at night it bothers me” (280). John, who is married and misses his family in Chicago, suggests that it is not normal for Nick not to sleep, that “[a] man can’t get along that don’t sleep” (281), and he offers Nick his prescription for Nick’s problem—marriage. This is where the scene becomes uncomfortable for Nick since he does not want to agree with John, who becomes more and more insistent that Nick marry:

“You ought to get married. Why don’t you pick out some nice Italian girl with plenty of money? You could get any one you want. You’re young and you got good decorations . . . Don’t think about it, Signor Tenente. Do it . . . A man ought to be married. You’ll never regret it. Every man ought to be married . . . remember what I said.” (281)

Nick tries to deflect the pressure from John by evasive language (“I’ll think about it,” “I can’t talk the language enough” (281)), or by trying to end their conversation outright (“All right . . . Let’s try and sleep awhile” (281)). Similarly, earlier in the conversation when John mentions that his wife “runs [their place back in Chicago] fine” (279), Nick tries to change the topic: “Don’t you think we’ll wake them [the other men sleeping in the other room] up, talking?” (279). Both the forceful way in which John tries to impose marriage as a solution on Nick and the example of John’s wife “run[ning]” a place remind him of his mother and her

imposition of order and control over his father by cleaning (and thus running) their place with complete disregard for her husband's wishes.

After his deflection of the question of marriage, Nick returns to the much more comfortable activity of remembering, with John having given him an idea for a new repeating activity—he tries to remember all the girls he knew and imagine “what kind of wives they would make” (281). After a while, however, all girls “blurred and [he] could not call them into [his] mind and finally they all blurred and all became rather the same and [he] gave up thinking about them almost altogether” (282). The “blurring” of all girls into one image that is altogether the same, suggests the difficulty Nick has of seeing women as anything but a copy of his mother. This unsuccessful attempt to incorporate women into a repeating, self-sustaining creative activity similar to the ones which involve his memories of fishing in streams demonstrates the essential difference between, on the one hand, fishing, praying and naming things and places, and on the other, imagining women as wives. The first three activities provide Nick with a sense of control—he is patient and knowledgeable enough to experience imaginatively the triumphs of catching fish, of remembering people and praying for them, or mastering terrain through learning names of places and things. In a way his memories are his collections of things, analogous to his father's collection of snakes and hunting artifacts made of stone. Like his father, Nick is a hunter (fisherman) and collector of specimen (streams, people from his past, and names

of places, things and animals), and he is afraid that a wife, like his mother, would clean his collections up (and thus destroy them) if he ever got married.

James Phelan sees the scene of “that night” as essentially a positive experience for Nick since it is “both reassuring and alluring,” with the “act of remembering” comforting Nick that “he is right not to get married” (“Now” 62). The scene of “that night” is, however, also the moment when Nick is forced to consider marriage in relation to his fear of the dark and of death. At the end of the first paragraph of the story, Nick tells his readers that he is not afraid of the dark anymore: “So while now I am fairly sure that it [his soul] would not really have gone out, yet then, that summer, I was unwilling to make the experiment” (276). Thus, while Nick has realized that the fear he had of sleeping in the dark was irrational, he has not yet realized that “that night” the fear of death from falling asleep in the dark has been linked also to marriage as well. In the last paragraph of the story, Nick states that he prays for John and that he is glad that John’s “class was removed from active service” because “he would have been a great worry to [Nick]” (“Now” 282). While Nick might be genuinely concerned about John’s safety, he is also worried about the role John plays in his life—specifically the role John assumes in the narrative of “that night.” John’s statement that “[Nick] ought to get married” carries the same disregard for Nick as his mother’s statement, “I’ve been cleaning out the basement, dear” (278) carries for his father. When John visits Nick several months after their

conversation “that night” he is “very disappointed” that Nick has not married yet. John is pressuring Nick to get married because he is not aware that Nick is trying to heal himself not by surrendering his soul to darkness and death or to a woman in marriage, but by taking control of his own life and engaging in repeating activities (like fishing and praying), activities which involve creativity, skill, patience and perseverance and which, he hopes, would gradually restore his confidence in himself.

The scene of “that night” serves as an indication, then, of what he still fears, and it is similar to the singulative scenes of the two burnings, of the placing of the salamander on the hook, and of being blown up. All these singulative scenes of trauma are embedded in repeating activities which give Nick a sense of control and comfort, and which are narrated through iterative discourse. At the end of the story Nick has not found a way to overcome his new fear (of getting married), and the narrative of “that night” is emblematic of the unresolved issues which still exert their influence on his life.

“My Old Man” also ends with a singulative scene which indicates that the main character, Joe, who is also the first person narrator of the story, has unresolved issues. Joe is a boy, and has just lost his jockey father, who was thrown off his horse and killed while competing in the Prix du Marat steeplechase. Upon overhearing two of the spectators call his father a “crook” who “had it coming,” he is reassured by a friend of his father’s that Joe’s “old

man was one swell guy” (*Complete Stories* 160). Joe, however, is not so sure, and he ends his narrative with a thought expressing doubt: “But I don’t know. Seems like when they get started they don’t leave a guy nothing” (160). Joe’s last words in the story might be interpreted in various ways in terms of what they reveal about Joe’s evaluation of his father, but before we examine them in greater detail, it is important to note that they represent a marked difference from the way the story begins—in the opening paragraph Joe is much more direct and explicit in making a generalization about his father:

I guess looking at it, now, my old man was cut out for a fat guy, one of those regular roly fat guys you see around, but he sure never got that way, except a little toward the last, and then it wasn’t his fault, he was riding over the jumps only and he could afford to carry plenty of weight then. (151)

In this opening Joe establishes the temporal plane of the first narrative which coincides with the act and time of narration (the “now” of the present tense “I guess”). The rest of the story is a look back, a memory, and thus an analeptic secondary narrative. Before he begins with a narrative representing a sequence of events, Joe, however, seems intent on providing a generalization about his father’s natural propensity to be obese (and thus unfit for a jockey), and his success in keeping the weight off until the time when he was “riding the jumps” only and “could afford to carry plenty of weight.” In this respect Joe does not see

this later development as a flaw in his father—it wasn't his father's "fault," Joe writes, not because his father couldn't help but gain weight, but because gaining weight did not interfere with his work and thus did not make him a "faulty" jockey. The narrator's remarks in the opening of the story, remarks which occur at the time of narration and thus follow temporally the events of the last scene in the story, far from being accidental, indicate the narrator's need to create a positive image of his father before Joe tells his story by providing a general impression of his father's physical condition and of his character. The opening thus presents not only an overview of an important aspect of his father's life, but it also anticipates a later period in the narrative in which the father's reputation and character would be questioned. The narrator appears in the beginning of the narrative (almost like a prologue in a play) in order to set the terms by which his father may be evaluated or understood.

The opening of the story also establishes the temporal framework of the story because it indicates the end of the story and his father's death (by the phrase "toward the end"), and it provides an overview of his father's relative success in keeping off his weight. The opening is also a summary of his father's life from the perspective of the relationship between what his father "was cut out to be" and what he made out of himself. In this respect the opening points to a repeating pattern—his father's natural tendency to gain weight had to be counteracted continuously and repeatedly throughout his life. Joseph DeFalco

points to a parallel with the short story “A Pursuit Race” in which the main character, who is an advance man for a burlesque show, “must always stay ahead of the show” (58):

The jockey-father is engaged in a “pursuit race” of his own, for he must keep ahead of the ominous “fat” which heralds old age and the subsequent loss of his means of existence. As he slowly loses ground, he cannot simply accept his fate . . . he seeks to postpone the inevitable by involving himself in fixed races. (58-9)

As DeFalco suggests the story is about more than Joe’s father, Butler’s maintaining his low weight, but the opening creates a background (narrated once, but containing a repeating pattern of actions, and thus iterative in nature) to the foreground of the singulative secondary narratives in the story. There are other repeating actions in the story which are narrated through iterative discourse, and, together with Butler’s efforts to keep off gaining weight, they represent the vehicle narrative in which Joe is confident and relatively happy. The singulative summaries and scenes introduce the times and moments in Joe’s narrative characterized by unresolved tension, and occasionally by pain and trauma. These singulative narratives remain unassimilated in the series of actions represented through iterative discourse and thus introduce an element of instability. In the opening of the story, Joe attempts to create a pattern of stability in the narrative—the danger his father faces of becoming obese is

counterbalanced by his actions. In the events narrated in the singulative sections in the story, however, the balance suggested by the opening is challenged directly to such an extent that Joe is left at the end of the story without the certainty and confidence he demonstrates in the beginning. Even though Joe, the narrator, begins the story with “I guess,” which suggests a degree of uncertainty, he is able to move from the specific experiences of his life to a generalized statement about his father’s life. At the end of the story, Joe, the character, having lost his father, and his father’s horse, Gilford, is far less willing to make such generalizations.

The opening sentence of the story also suggests another pattern of temporal differentiation which is important in the story—after the period in which Joe’s father is able to counterbalance his natural tendency to gain weight, he nevertheless gives in toward the end. Thus the relative success of the first period is followed by a phase of retreat, of giving ground and then of adaptation to the new circumstances. Butler’s gaining weight at the end would have been a failure had he remained the kind of jockey he is in the beginning of the story. This pattern of alternation of repeating action narrated through iterative discourse and characterized by relative stability and a singulative narrative of transition which ends the stable period and creates new conditions for another iterative section—this pattern informs the temporal structure of the whole story.

The first repeating action narrated by iterative discourse is the section in which Joe describes how his father would exercise to keep the weight off: “He’d pull on a rubber shirt over a couple of jerseys and a big sweat shirt over that, and get me to run with him in the forenoon in the hot sun” (151). Joe is impressed by his father’s dedication to his work, riding at “four o’clock in the morning” and then, “with the dew all over everything and the sun just starting to get going” (151), going for a run together with Joe. Butler would get his son involved as much as possible, and in the process he makes him feel as a partner and friend. Joe would help his father change from his riding clothes into his running clothes, and then he would run with him. Joe would run, and he would look back at his father, “sweating heavy,” “just dogging it along with his eyes on [Joe’s] back” (151). Butler is an inspiration for young Joe because even in the midst of this strenuous exercise, he would have a positive disposition and a sense of humor. When he notices that Joe is looking at him “dogging it along,” he would “grin” and tease Joe, “Sweating plenty?” even though he would be the one “sweating plenty.” Butler’s optimistic attitude is contagious for Joe: “When my old man grinned, nobody could help but grin too” (151).

Joe is proud of his father’s commitment to his work and his relentless drive to stay fit as a jockey, even though his father tells him that it “[s]ure is hell keeping it [the weight] down . . . it ain’t like when you’re a kid” (152). Observing his father work hard in the “hot sun” makes Joe feel “fond of him” (152), but he

also learns from his father's behavior that there are no shortcuts, and that his father would work even harder than the other jockeys in order to overcome any disadvantages he might have.

The energetic training described by Joe is thus not only a means to an end, but also a lifestyle and a philosophy of life which Butler teaches to his son. Even though it is "hell" keeping the weight down, Butler never waivers, never skips strenuous exercise. In this respect the iterative discourse which is used to narrate this section of the story is appropriate because it suggests a mode of living one's life and not a onetime event, the rule and not the exception.

Paradoxically, it is exactly this philosophy of life, of working hard and being the best jockey he can be that gets Butler in trouble. His vigorous training makes sense only if he rides to win, only if he measures his success with the effort he puts on the track to help the horse he rides finish first. When he wins the Premio Commercio race at Milan's San Siro course, he asserts himself as a jockey and his belief in competing fairly. However, since it appears that he has agreed (or has been ordered by his employer) to throw the race, he gets fired, and he leaves Italy for France where he finds himself blacklisted and never gets a regular job as a jockey.

Joe's narrative of these events is singulative in nature, marking the end of the period of training with his father. Joe is not quite aware of the real reasons his father loses his job, but he is aware that the events of the day his father wins the

Premio Commercio cannot be assimilated into the events of the iterative discourse which precede them. There is a sharp break between the section containing Joe's descriptions of the way his father would exercise and the section dealing with Butler's win at San Siro: Joe use the adverb "once" to start the section: "I remember once at San Siro, Regoli, a little wop, that was riding for Buzoni, came out across the paddock going to the bar for something cool" (152). Regoli is younger than Butler, "cool and kid-looking" (152), and Joe notices that his father is upset about something, "looking red-faced and tired and too big for his silks" (152). Butler looks at Regoli, and Joe wonders if Regoli did something to upset his father. His father only says, "Oh, to hell with it," (152) a remark which doesn't reveal much to Joe beyond the observation that something is wrong, and that his father has made up his mind about something.

Another unexplained observation Joe makes is that his father is having "an argument" with two other men, presumably the owners of the horse he was riding after he wins the Premio Commercio. Joe does not get to hear what they are arguing about, but at the end, just before the two men leave, he hears one of them call his father "son of a bitch" (153). As in the case with Regoli, Joe notices that something is wrong:

My old man sat there and sort of smiled at me, but his face was white and he looked sick as hell and I was scared and felt sick inside because I knew something had happened and I didn't see

how anybody could call my old man a son of a bitch, and get away with it. (153).

As a way of explanation of his behavior, his father tells him, “You got to take a lot of things in this world, Joe” (153). Joe does not ask anything further—he simply reports that “three days later [they] left Milan for good on the Turin train for Paris” after having sold their belongings which they could not fit into “a trunk and a suitcase” (153). Joe’s reluctance to try to figure out what really happened suggests that he might be unwilling to part with his perception of his father as his hero. He has observed his hard work and his dedication to being the best he could be, and Joe’s instinctual realization that his father had done something which makes it impossible for him to respond to such verbal abuse as being called “a son of a bitch,” undermines Joe’s confidence in his father’s character. Joe follows his father’s lead here—Butler tries to shield his son from the unpleasantness of the argument and the truth about his predicament by sending Joe to buy a newspaper and then avoiding the topic altogether. The issue at the heart of Butler’s loss of his job then remains suppressed and unresolved for Joe. He takes his father’s word that he has to accept “a lot of things in this world” as they come.

The singulative narrative of Butler’s win at Premio Commercio thus completes a pattern of iterative discourse narrating events which the narrator understands and feels confident about, and events narrated through singulative

discourse, which the narrator is reluctant to examine in depth and integrate in a repeating pattern because they are painful and because the truth about them has the potential to disrupt some of his most important beliefs about his father. Joe tries to emulate his father by acknowledging that something has gone wrong, but refusing to dwell on the incident and moving on.

After the Premio Commercio Joe's narrative gradually re-establishes its iterative nature. Joe and his father settle in Maisons outside Paris and while his father is waiting for his racing license to arrive from Italy, Joe gets to play with "a couple of kids" and "go off bumming in all day" in a "swell forest" (154). In addition to having some time to play, Joe also observes his father as he develops good relations with the other jockeys who are out of work. They all sit at a café and talk all day. Butler is not "tight" with his money, and the other jockeys like him because he would buy them drinks (154). Another repeating activity involves their visits to races in "Enghien," "Tremblay," and "St. Cloud" where Joe would observe the horses and the races from "the trainers' and jockeys' stand" (155). These are positive experiences in which Joe had "fun" and "sure learned about racing" (155). For Joe, who is in his father's care, this period is relatively stable and positive, and the activities he narrates are assimilated in repeating series of events. For Butler, it is a much less positive experience: he gets his license, and he rides "a couple of times," but he never gets "any engagement" (154), any stable work as a jockey.

The pattern of alternation of iterative and singulative discourse applies to this second period of relative happiness for Joe as well. Again Joe introduces a singulative narrative with the explicit use of the adverb “once”: “I remember once out at St. Cloud. It was a big two hundred thousand franc race with seven entries and Kzar a big favorite” (155). He had been to St. Cloud before to watch races, but this race is different from the others—in his memory it is differentiated from the others, and its details remain fixed. The race stands out in Joe’s mind because like the Premio Commercio race it challenges his sense of what is right and what is wrong. The St. Cloud race is fixed and George Gardner, Kzar’s jockey, tips his friend, Joe’s father that he will throw the race and that the winner will be another horse, Kircubbin (155). Butler bets “five thousand” on Kircubbin, and at the end of the race with the surprise Kircubbin win, he collects a large sum. Joe is torn between his admiration for Kzar, which is clearly the superior horse, and his realization that the fixed race and the inside information has made it possible for his father to gain some degree of financial independence: “Honest, watching the race I’d forgot how much my old man had bet on Kircubbin. I’d wanted Kzar to win so damned bad. But now it was all over it was swell to know we had the winner” (157).

Butler does not share Joe’s emotional involvement in the race—when Joe shows his enthusiasm for the race (“Wasn’t it a swell race, Dad?”(157)), Butler looks at Joe “sort of funny” and points out that it wasn’t really a race since

George Gardner held back “that Kzar horse from winning” (157). In the Premio Commercio Butler does not explain to Joe why the two men are angry with him, but in this race he has no problem pointing out that the system is corrupt and that he, and his friend, George Gardner are benefitting from it. While Joe can forget about the betting, and buy into the illusion that he is watching a race, Butler’s interest in the race is strictly financial.

What makes the whole experience unsettling for Joe is that he realizes that he, too, is aware of the corruption in the system, but has chosen to suppress that knowledge, or the knowledge that his father might be involved in it as well:

Of course I knew it [the Kzar race] was funny all the time. But my old man saying that right out like that sure took the kick all out of it for me and I didn’t get the real kick back again ever, even when they posted the numbers upon the board and the bell rang to pay off . . . And I thought, I wish I were a jockey and could have rode him [Kzar] instead of that son a bitch. And that was funny, thinking of George Gardner as a son of a bitch because I’d always liked him and besides he’d given us the winner, but I guess that’s what he is, all right. (157)

This passage demonstrates Joe’s predicament: he suspects that races are fixed, but until his father states explicitly that this is the case, he can make himself believe that he can be wrong, or he can conveniently forget about the corruption

and root for his favorite horse. Joe's use of the expression "son of a bitch" is indicative of how he feels after his father indicates explicitly that he is not above participating in the corrupt system. In the Premio Commercio it is Butler who is called "a son of bitch," presumably for failing to throw the race (and thus for reneging on his word to the corrupt owners or for disobeying their orders). Butler's failure to stand his ground in the argument and answer the insult is an indication to Joe that Butler might have played a part in fixing races in the past as well. At the time of the Premio race, this thought is too painful for Joe to contemplate, and he suppresses it. In Joe's mind the loyalty of a jockey should lie with the horse he is riding. Gardner violates his commitment as a jockey to Kzar, and as such becomes "a son of a bitch." Indirectly, however, Joe is applying the same term to his father for being part of the system, and for failing to deny explicitly during the Premio race that he had not done it (thrown races) in the past.

The second singulative section in the short story thus deepens the tension introduced by the first—the ideals of fair horse racing and of hard work associated with being a good jockey, ideals which Butler exemplifies for Joe while he is exercising to lose weight and while he is teaching Joe about horses and races in the iterative sections of the story—these ideals are challenged directly in the Premio and St. Cloud races. In the first, Joe suppresses the challenge by refusing to consider the possibility that his father might have thrown

racers, and in the second, St. Cloud race, he loses his “kick,” or his innocence, realizing that in these races where betting is involved, corruption is part of the game.

After the Kzar race, Joe’s narrative again assumes its iterative nature with descriptions of the way Butler and Joe spent their time when his “old man had a big lot of money” (157). Butler takes to coming to Paris from Maisons “oftener” (157), taking Joe with him, betting on races, losing money, and then drinking whisky and whiling away the hours at the Café de la Paix in Paris. For Joe it is again a time of positive experiences, observing interesting people while at the Café and talking to his father about “regular” horse races. After gambling and losing, his father would “feel sort of doleful,” but after “his first whisky” at the Café “he’d be fine” (158). Joe enjoys the time when his father has had something to drink because he shares his experiences of being a jockey and riding in fair races:

And then he’d get started talking about things. About riding down in Egypt, or at St. Moritz on the ice before my mother died, and about during the war when they had regular races down in the south of France without any purses, or betting or crowd or anything just to keep the breed up. Regular races with the jocks riding hell out of the horses. Gee, I could listen to my old man talk by the hour, especially when he’d had a couple or so of drinks. (158)

The “regular” races Butler talks about are regular because they are not interrupted by the war, but also because they are not fixed. Since there is no betting and no cash prizes for the jockeys and horse owners, the races are fair, with the “jocks riding the hell out of the horses,” and not holding them back as George Gardner holds Kzar. In his stories Butler reveals that he values real, “regular” races, in which the best horse and the best jockey win. It is indicative that Joe enjoys listening to exactly these kinds of stories and not stories about betting and fixed races. Joe and his father never lose sight of what they value in racing, even if in their everyday experiences they encounter mostly corruption and disillusionment.

Joe notices that his father is betting regularly and losing, having given up any attempt to get a job as a jockey. Butler also is drinking and, as a result, gaining weight. Thus Joe witnesses the gradual decline of his father as a jockey. In the first iterative section his father is putting a lot of effort in his exercises in order to stay competitive. In the second iterative section, Butler rides only occasionally spending most of his time at Cafés and watching races. In the last iterative section, Butler’s main occupation seems to be betting and drinking. However, in all these three iterative sections, Butler never changes his idea of what a regular race is and what a good jockey is. Joe is aware of this constancy of his father’s ideals, even if notices that in his life his father come short of many of these ideals.

When Butler buys Gilford, “after a selling steeplechase” it appears that he has found a way to make money in horse racing, while at the same time recommitting to his ideal of fair racing. As an owner and a rider of his horse, his interests are to win, earn the “purse,” but also prove to himself and others that he is still a good jockey. Butler has “figured that training him [Gilford] and riding him, himself, he [Gilford] was a good investment” (159) both financially and in terms of regaining his sense of being a jockey. While Joe describes the purchase of Gilford with singulative discourse (“One day at Auteuil, after a selling steeplechase, my old man bought in the winner for 30,000 francs” (158)), he reverts back to iterative discourse when he describes how proud he was of his father and of Gilford, how he cared for the horse.

Yet this iterative section ends again with a singulative narrative of Gilford and Butler’s second race, the Prix du Marat. For a while Butler is in the lead, but then he is killed after an unsuccessful jump in which Gilford injures one of its legs, and is shot and killed soon thereafter. The third singulative narrative section thus presents another transitional period for Butler in which he is diminished as a man and jockey. His death at the end is not his fault, but neither is the corrupt system which he tries to fight unsuccessfully in the first singulative narrative by refusing to throw the race, nor the fact that he is blacklisted and has to resort to using the corrupt system to make money to provide for his son (Butler tells Joe that when they get “a decent stake” (158) they will go back to the States so that

Joe can “go to school” (158)). Butler tries to earn his living and his reputation as an honest and a good jockey, but he is thwarted by the corrupt system of horse racing, and at the end, by the accident which brings about his death.

Joe’s narrative of his father, his “old man,” reflects in its temporal structure the juxtaposition of the constancy of Butler’s values, and the gradual decline of his ability to function as a jockey and to fight the system. The iterative sections are periods where he tries to push back against the challenges presented by nature (his tendency to gain weight and his growing old) and by the corrupt system of horse racing. The iterative narratives provide an affirmation of underlying pattern of Butler’s life. The three singulative sections, on the other hand, represent crisis periods in which Butler attempts to break free and assert his values, only to be pushed even lower from where he started.

This temporal organization which allows for the embedding (loading) of singulative sections into an iterative (vehicle) narrative suggests that Joe is not as naïve a narrator as he has traditionally been considered. James Phelan traces the creation and development of tensions in the story, which he defines as a discrepancy between the values of the narrator and the values of the authorial audience of the story—in essence he makes the case for considering Joe as incapable of seeing what the authorial audience sees and understands about the action and internal logic of the story, and specifically about the character of his father. Phelan writes:

In the authorial audience we recognize that Joe's understanding [at the end of the story] is still limited. The nuanced evaluation of Butler that we have developed through the course of the progression now functions as the standard against which we measure Joe's conclusions. In that measuring, we see that the tension is altered but not resolved. Joe rightly understands that there was more to his father than he knew, but the only alternative he can now imagine is the bettors' belief that he was a crook. ("What Hemingway" 10)

Joe knew even before he heard the bettors' disparaging remarks that his father had used the information George Gardner provided to make a lot of money. It is unlikely that the bettors' vague remarks about the father being crook would change Joe's evaluation of his father. What is more important—throughout the narrative Joe demonstrates that his father's values about fixed racing never change—even after he wins a lot of money in the Kzar race, he still elevates the "regular" races in which he participated during the war, and in which the jockeys ride "the hell out of horses" above the corrupt races in France and Italy.

In addition to that, as Phillip Sipiora notes, "the final act of narration is not a rejection of the evaluation that Butler was a swell guy," as the "actions and language" of the story "reveal Butler to be a loving good father, in spite of his uncertain past and willingness to bet on fixed races" (57). The last line of the story in which Joe states that it "[s]eems like when they get started they don't

leave a guy nothing” (*Complete Stories* 160) is an expression of Joe’s understanding of the underlying pattern of Butler’s life of pushing back only to have things taken away from him. What the bettors say about his father is in essence an act of taking away from his reputation in the same way as his ability to compete in Italy and then in France was taken away from him when he refused to throw the race at San Siro, and as his life and his horse were taken away in the last singulative section of the short story. Joe sees the bettors’ remarks as another attack in a series of attacks on his father, but this time it is even more painful because it is an attack after his death, after he is no longer able to fight back.

Thus we come back to the beginning of the story and the introductory remarks by Joe, and we see that he is a skillful narrator who creates a pattern of temporal differentiation, of a background and foreground, of a vehicle narrative and a loaded narrative, which allows the readers to experience Joe’s pain of losing his father, but it also shows his ability to assess him correctly and to create a narrative which captures the essential truth about his father, and the immediacy of Joe’s responses to the actions narrated in the story.

“A Natural History of the Dead” is also a narrative which attempts to capture the responses of its narrator to his observations of the dead. The story is an interesting case of narrative loading through temporal differentiation. It contains two seemingly incompatible parts—a section in the form of an essay

and a narrative in the form of a dramatic scene. The story has been examined as being ahead of its time—as metafiction by Stetler and Locklin, who argue that while “[s]tories within stories and plays within plays are as old as literature itself” the attaching of an essay to a narrative was new and different “in its day” (252). It could be argued, however, that the opposite is true, that the short narrative in the form of a dramatic scene is attached to the longer essay. Susan Beegel has pointed out that in an intermediate state as demonstrated by an examination of the manuscripts, “A Natural History of the Dead” had a “coda,” or an ending which followed the short dramatic narrative and re-established the essay form (“That Always” 92). Beegel sees the coda as a narratorial explanation of the meaning of the dramatic narrative which ends the published version of “A Natural History,” and as such as being incompatible with Hemingway’s theory of omission:

The coda’s ending is neater and more direct than the published ending, yet it has its own poetic quality, and it does nudge the reader to an interpretation of the story he is left to infer with more difficulty from the doctor’s “Hold him very tight.” . . . That Hemingway omitted the coda is doubtless a tribute to his literary judgment and self-discipline. With his “theory of omission,” Hemingway was too shrewd a writer to spoil a story’s drama by

revealing the backstage machinery of personal experience that generated the fiction. (“That Always” 92-3)

“A Natural History of the Dead” is thus interesting not only as a story of inclusion, of narrative loading, but also as a story of omission. The dramatic narrative which ends the story is temporally secondary to the narrative starting point established in the beginning of the story. In the beginning of the story the narrator announces his project as an examination of whether a study of the dead would “increase[e] that faith, love and hope we also, every one of us need in our journey through the wilderness of life” (Complete Stories 335). The narrator (or the essayist) searches his memory for the experiences which he has had in a war with the war dead.

While there are passages which contain short descriptions and short accounts of various actions, the first part of “A Natural History of the Dead” is characterized by a movement from general statements to specific instances of either actions or observations which provide illustration and support for the general parts. Thus, for example, when the narrator makes the point that the “sight of a dead woman is quite shocking” (336) he provides as evidence the memory of an incident, which he witnessed, and which he describes in vivid, graphic detail. The pattern of making general statements and of providing support for them is a pattern of repetition and induction—of making inferences

about the general, common way things were, from the observation of specific incidents.

It is the pattern of scientific inquiry—the positive experience of making sense of specific incidents by discovery of general truths that govern and determine how things work. The first temporal plane of such a text is the present time, the time frame within which new knowledge is being created. The retrospective looks into the past serve simply to establish patterns of action which can be used to create rules and laws with predictive function—the finality of the past events is thus transformed into the timelessness of the general statements designed to have a predictive function and thus apply to all time frames. The positive experience in the process comes from the ability of the scientific inquiry to account and explain all specific incidents, all available data.

The dramatic narrative that ends “A Natural History of the Dead” is thus anomalous—it does not lead to a generalization, and moreover, the narrator who is the producer of knowledge, the explainer of specific events in terms of general rules, disappears in his function as a commentator of the action. In the narrative section that ends the story, the narrator has lost his ability to explain, or to manipulate and direct the action—he has become an observer, an observer without a privileged view of the minds of his characters.

The characters themselves represent two alternative viewpoints on the dead—the artillery officer wants to cling to any possibility of survival, any spark of

life, no matter how desperate or hopeless the situation. The army doctor on the other hand has learned to let go of cases where he knows he can do little to save lives. The first viewpoint is the one the narrator sets out to test in the beginning of the story; the second is what he appears to have learned about the dead. The first is rejected, the second tacitly accepted. Yet, the disappearance of the narrator as a scientific voice at the end suggests that he is not quite happy with his findings—he lets the army doctor speak the last words (“Hold him very tight” (*Complete Stories* 341)) of the story, words which express his attitude toward the lessons he has learned from observing the dead—rather than strengthen his faith, his findings are a source of a profound sense of loss and emptiness in the face of which one can only “hold tight.”

The effect of the doubling of the story in “A Natural History of the Dead” is thus achieved in terms of temporal differentiation—on the one hand there is the temporal frame of the present time with all the events used as examples and illustrations neatly organized in terms of categories and groups—and on the other there is the unassimilated, uncategorized, unexplained (and thus left in the past, in its own temporal plane) narrative scene about the conflict between the army doctor and the artillery officer about what to do with the soldier who was still alive, but was left for dead in a cave which served as a temporary cemetery. “A Natural History of the Dead,” however points to other elements of narrative discourse, specifically focalization and narrative distance as making important

contributions to the success of the creation of loaded secondary narratives into the main (vehicle) narrative through temporal variations.

## Chapter Five

### Characters' Discourse and Narrator's Discourse

The creation of first and secondary narratives which can be used to explain the doubling of the story in Hemingway's short stories is a function also of the act of narration ("narrating instance" in Genette) and of the presence of a narrator who produces them. In fact, it is exactly the presence of a narrator who produces a narrative text that makes our analysis of narrative discourse possible. For Genette the "narrating situation is"

like any other, a complex whole within which analysis, or simply description, cannot *differentiate* except by ripping apart a tight web of connections among the narrating act, its protagonists, its spatio-temporal determinations, its relationship to the other narrating situations involved in the same narrative, etc. The demands of exposition constrain us to this unavoidable violence simply by the fact that critical discourse, like any other discourse, cannot say everything at once. (*Narrative Discourse* 215)

While it is important to isolate certain aspects of the narrative, such as its temporal structure, and examine it in detail, it is also important to get a sense of the big picture within which the temporal structure functions as one of the

elements of narrative discourse. Specifically we can examine the function and the nature of the narrators in Hemingway's short stories characterized by doubling of the story, as well as the mode of presentation of narrative information which Genette calls "narrative mood."

In this context we can examine Hemingway's statement, "So I left the story out" ("Art 3) regarding "The Sea Change," as a statement not only about the doubling of the story in his short stories, but also about his role as a narrator. This role is not easy to define—on the one hand he knows the story, and on the other he does not share it with his readers. He is omniscient in the sense that he knows more than the characters (he knows their story and its background), but his silence makes him the equivalent of a narrator who is an external observer.

Yet, as an omniscient narrator he knows where to stand and observe, where to place the beginning of the narrative, whom and what to listen to and where to end his narrative. In other words, while the omniscient narrator may choose to avoid providing any information about the past and the internal thoughts of the characters directly to the readers, he can also regulate the narrative information which is contained within the narrative text by selecting the temporal dimensions of the first narrative and letting the characters produce in a fragmented way what he has omitted. Such narrative position is evident in "Hills Like White Elephants" and "The Killers." The narrator in both stories limits his contributions to describing simple actions and very rarely to providing a glimpse

or two into the minds of the characters. Genette considers the narrators in both stories to be using external focalization—in “some of Hemingway’s novellas, like ‘The Killers’ or, even more, ‘Hills Like White Elephants’” “the hero performs in front of us without our ever being allowed to know his thoughts or feelings” (*Narrative Discourse* 190). In fact, the narrative of “Hills” “carries circumspection so far as to become a riddle” (190).

Yet, in both stories the narrator provides glimpses of the internal thoughts of some of the characters. In “The Killers” after Nick is untied, the narrator states in a matter-of-fact way: “He had never had a towel in his mouth” (*Complete Stories* 220). This is information which only Nick and an omniscient narrator can possess. On the other hand if we assume that the story is focalized through Nick, we notice that there is a part of the story when Nick is not present and that is when Max tells George that they have come to kill Ole. In this part of the story the narration is not focalized through Nick (because he is not present). Thus the narrator demonstrates that he possesses knowledge which is beyond mere observation, and also that he is not focalizing his narrative exclusively through Nick.

Similarly in “Hills Like White Elephants” the narrator who objectively reports the observable actions of the characters on occasion allows us some privileged information into the characters’ minds: “He did not say anything but looked at the bags against the wall of the station. There were labels on them

from all the hotels where they had spent nights” (214). In the first sentence, the narrator objectively reports the actions of the American, directing the readers’ attention to the fact that the character is observing an object (their bags). In the second sentence, the narrator provides information which is not available to an external observer—the labels on the bags remind the American of all the hotels he and the girl had “spent nights.” The narrator could have simply stated that the American looked at the bags which had hotel labels on them. However, the choice to reveal how the American man sees them—specifically the reminder of the nights and of the way their relationship used to be is important in terms of supplementing the American’s fragmentary secondary narrative.

This variation in point of view within the same story is not unusual. Genette acknowledges that his categories of zero focalization (or non-focalization), internal focalization, and external focalization, are almost never used in a pure form, but he suggests that, while it is not a rule, many authors choose a dominant mode of focalization and for the most part stick with it (*Narrative* 194-5). In the rare occasions when they decide to break the adopted rule of focalization, they create “alterations” (195), which become all the more important since they stand out as breaking the code guiding the dominant focalization pattern. In this context the dominant mode of focalization in “The Killers” is external focalization, with the two cited alterations serving as the exception to the rule.

Similarly, in “The Sea Change” the narrator uses external focalization for the most part until he enters the mind of a minor character (the waiter) and then the mind of Phil. In both cases the narrative information provided from the privileged view is limited—the narrator never really stays within the mind of any of these characters to alter dramatically the dominant mode of external focalization is the story.

Thus in most cases where Hemingway uses a narrator whose dominant mode of focalization is external, we can view the rare glimpse of the minds of the characters as supplementary, complimentary, and occasionally contradictory information to what we learn from their reported speech—their dialogue. In the case of “The Three-Day Blow” Nick’s internal thoughts which narrator provides undermine what he says explicitly to Bill. It is thus essential to provide this privileged view into Nick’s mind in order to create his secondary narrative in terms of the dynamic interplay between what he tells Bill and what he thinks privately. And it is through the reported speech of the characters that the secondary narratives, the usually partial and fragmentary secondary narratives which point to the story left out are created. Thus the external narrator functions to provide the narrative starting point, the temporal plane of the first narrative from which the characters through their dialogue will probe the narrative planes of the omitted events.

Barbara Olsen does not see the narrators in such stories as “Hills Like White Elephants,” “The Killers” and “The Sea Change” as using external focalization. She points to the instances of privileged view mentioned above to suggest that the stories have an omniscient narrator who, however, is flawed because of his reticence, his unwillingness to provide a context and directions for his readers. In her study of Hemingway’s omniscient narrators she sees the relative success of this form of focalization in relation to the extent to which Hemingway accepts his role as a narrator-God.

To the extent that the narrator is unwilling to assume a dominant position over the narratives presented in his characters’ discourse, I could agree that Hemingway is not willing to assume the role of a narrator-God. Indeed the doubling of the story is in essence an attempt to escape an objective narrative, or to deny it access to the surface. It is thus in this context that most of the stories discussed so far avoid presenting the narrative information without some sort of restriction. Whether it is the restriction of external focalization of stories like “Today Is Friday,” or limited internal focalization of stories like “The Three-Day Blow,” or the detailed internal focalization of “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” the creation of secondary narratives appear to be designed as a direct challenge to the possibility of a comprehensive first narrative. Even such a loaded story as “Snows” can be examined in terms of omission—we never get an objective account of Harry’s life with Helen or of his life prior to that. What happens to him

in the final hours of his life is meaningful in terms of what happened to him in the past, and a good deal of the story is dedicated to his trying to figure this out. As a narrator, however, he does not have all the answers, which the author of the story has.

Even in autodiegetic narratives in which the narrator is the main character of the story (for example, "Now I Lay Me" and "My Old Man") the narrator is conscious of the different ways in which his story can be told, and that the truth in his narrative is to be located in the dynamic opposition of the vehicle narrative and the loaded narrative. Thus the effect of the doubling of the story in Hemingway's short stories is a way of creating representations, distorted copies of the omitted story, which present parts of it, or evoke it, but never match it completely.

The nature of the short stories as narratives which are limited in scope, and the reticence of the narrator to assume the traditional, God-like role of explainer, of commentator and of a depository of truth, allows Hemingway to create the effect of the doubling of the story, of the duality in which the story is both in and out. In the cases where the narrator does stand in front of the audience to comment ("My Old Man" and "Now I Lay Me") he is also a character and the discourse that is being created is not the same as the discourse that a non-focalizing narrator (like God) can create. Joe in "My Old Man" and Nick in "Now I Lay Me" are equally unable to create the objective narrative which

Hemingway the author appears to have in mind when he says that he knows the story well, but he has chosen to leave it out. The narrator's discourse in Hemingway's short stories is limited deliberately in order to allow for the narratives created by the characters to attempt to tell the story left out. This is Hemingway's special way of telling his stories.

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