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# Language, Emotion, and Imagination: Constructing Human Identity through Hemingway's Work

Gorka Diaz

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LANGUAGE, EMOTION, AND IMAGINATION: CONSTRUCTING HUMAN IDENTITY  
THROUGH HEMINGWAY'S WORK

by

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Thesis

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Eastern Michigan University

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in

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## DEDICATION

A big two-hearted dedication to my wife, Teresa, and to Elisabeth Däumer.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how Hemingway's use of language evokes emotions in his stories and how his particular way of evoking emotions affects readers. Hemingway's style of providing vivid experiences for readers centers on the *image* as the dimension where emotions are offered, but also the dimension where the writer's work converges with the reader's reception of it. The reader reconstructs the text through the act of signifying emotions. This process of signification is made possible only through the use of the reader's imagination. The study of the relation between emotion and imagination emphasizes that readers decode fiction as they decode reality: in the way it affects them.

In the act of reading narrative fiction--as this thesis demonstrates--human beings enhance their identities in the same way that they construct the stories they read: by attributing meaning to the emotions evoked in them while reading. In essence, human beings feel compelled to immerse themselves in fiction because this diegetic process helps them to construct their identities as humans.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

As human beings we feel compelled to immerse ourselves in narrative fiction. From the very beginning of our existence, stories are an important part of our lives. Children discover and interpret the world through stories, and in the same enlightening way, young people are deeply influenced by fictional narratives that they receive in many different formats such as movies, novels, comics, or, more recently, all the genres derived from new technologies. In adulthood, stories offer the opportunity to interpret or give meaning to past experiences that seem to have been forgotten or simply lost in the storage of memory. As human beings we are constantly using stories in our lives; at the same time, we are interested in discovering the reasons for the unavoidable link between human and fiction. As Roger C. Schank notes in the preface to his book *Tell Me a Story*, for years he has been fascinated by the seemingly intrinsic desire that human beings feel for stories. “Children love to hear stories. Adults love to read or watch reproductions of long stories and love to tell and listen to shorter stories” (xliii). Since for one reason or another narrative fiction is a fundamental part of human existence, exploring its significance in human life offers as well the opportunity for a deeper understanding of human nature. Since the advent of literary theorizing, scholars have used different paradigms to discover the key power of narrative fiction. The attempts to answer this enigma have drawn on such diverse approaches as Aristotle’s study of the story-teller’s work and his mimetic attitude toward reality and twentieth-century studies of the reader’s response. More recently, cultural critics have perused the interaction of cultural contexts with the dyad formed by writer and reader. But no answer seems to be entirely accurate, or completely satisfactory, as long as the different approaches and the knowledge they offer are studied independently or merely in opposition to each other. In other words, none of these approaches, taken by themselves, can provide the clues

that might help us to understand the process of narrative fiction--the process which we have engaged in since the dawn of human existence.

In his article "Structuralism in Social Anthropology," Edmund Leach, in an attempt to illustrate the way he is using the word *structure*, recalls an interesting lesson from Bertrand Russell. In this example, Russell explains the entire series of transformations that the music of a piano sonata undergoes before it is listened to in a broadcast version. First, a piece of paper that reflects the music interpreted in the head of a pianist, and second, the movements of the pianist's fingers. Then, the noise produced by the piano imposed on the air, which is converted by electronic mechanism into grooves on a gramophone record. After that, the music is converted into radio frequency vibrations and finally reaches the ears of a listener (40). It is not far-fetched to entertain the idea that within this multifarious process there is something in common between all the different stages through which the music has passed. It is precisely this something in common that Leach refers to as structure: "It is that common something, a pattering of internally organized relationships which I refer to by the word *structure*" (40). The analysis of this process and of the distinct transformations that the music undergoes enable us to study in detail all the elements and stages involved in the entire process. The exercise of splitting the piano sonata process into small units brings us to awareness of the structure. It is the structure itself that offers us the opportunity for gaining a better understanding, not just of the whole musical process but of all elements involved in it and of the interrelation between them.

As in the case of the broadcast piano sonata, narrative fiction undergoes a whole series of transformations in the transition from writer to reader, from composition to reception. And also as in the case of the piano sonata, the most important aspect of this analytic exercise is not the simple discovery of the story's different stages and transformations, but the awareness of the

structure itself that encloses the relationship among all the elements involved in this process. The achievement of knowledge about this structure allows us to go deeper into the understanding of the narrative fiction process. The discovery of this structure, that “something in common” referred to by Leach, will offer us the opportunity to analyze narrative fiction from a richer point of view. If this analytical method--exemplified in the example of the sonata--is applied to narrative fiction, it will offer on one hand the awareness of this structure, and on the other hand the necessary critical attitude to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the structure.

Before trying to apply this method, we should state the elements involved in the process itself. Second we should try to define the different mechanisms and relationships that have a place in a story's transformation from its composition by a writer to its reception by a reader. But before thinking about the possible relations and transformations, we need to describe the elements involved in the process. Conceptualizations of this process tend to vary according to the critical approaches used. For example, in their structuralist study The Nature of Narrative, Robert Kellog and Robert Scholes define narrative as all those literary works characterized by the presence of a story and a story-teller (4). If we follow this definition, it could be affirmed that the story itself is a complete representation of the narrative fiction process--once the story has been constructed by the story-teller. In contrast, according to the reader response approach, the reader and his appropriation of the story would need to be included in the narrative process as its final stage. The answer to these questions might appear obvious according to certain literary critical approaches, but the complex debates within literary theory force us to think more about them.

Formalism considers the text as the cornerstone of the literary process. The text itself provides the necessary tools to study this process where fictional stories are developed. In the same way--and directly influenced by the Russian formalism as its predecessors and obvious

influence--structuralism applied to literature is also mainly focused on the text. These two critical approaches limit the narrative process to the facts presented in the literary work. Thus the work itself proffers the ground for exploring the intriguing questions surrounding the relation between human beings and fiction. Alternatively, other critical theories, such as reader response and cultural studies, move beyond the perspective offered by structuralism and formalism and involve the reader in the narrative process. The insights offered by psychological theorists about the ways in which literature is related to an individual's mental processes (Kellog and Scholes, Narrative 9) emphatically point us to the reader's importance in the narrative process. Similarly, cultural theorists have made us aware of the significant differences between responses to the same text because of such social and cultural factors as a reader's gender, class, race, and culture. If we take to heart the principles of contemporary theorists, then, we are compelled to include among the elements involved in the process of narrative fiction the important relation between story and reader, regardless of where we seek to find its articulation, whether in the text itself or in its appropriation by a reader.

It is necessary therefore to develop a rich approach to the study of the literary process. This approach should avoid any limitations that keep us from understanding the link between human beings and fictional stories. Gary Saul Morson points to yet another dimension of this link when he writes in the foreword to Schank's book, "[d]espite the displacement of the concept of the 'text itself' with the theories of the reader and the cultural context, the theory of the creative process has been entirely neglected" (xiv). Formalists and structuralists, as we have seen, reduce the structure of the narrative process. From their perspective there is no dimension important enough to be studied beyond the limits dictated by the work itself. In the same reductionist way of thinking, the theories centered in the reader have not been able to extend

their point of view, although they have apparently rejected the limitations of the text itself. As a result, these approaches have not been able to resolve the limitation of their predecessors. They have failed in the same mistake, which, as Morson points out, lies in the fact that “many unavoidable problems do not make sense without considering how the work was made” (xiv). For a complete understanding of the narrative process then, we need to include considerations of how the work is made. It is necessary to construct a dialogue between the achievements reached by the different critical approaches that will allow us to discover, and describe, a wider structure where all the elements involved in narrative fiction can be studied as sharing *something common*.

Ernest Hemingway is one of the main figures within the development of twentieth-century narrative fiction whose work has importantly contributed to the evolution of a distinct prose style. As Gerry Brenner and Earl Rovit point out in their book Ernest Hemingway: Revised Edition, Hemingway made the stimulation of an emotion in the reader a cardinal point in his aesthetic (15). In the collection of Hemingway’s journalist work “By-Line,” we can read Hemingway’s explanation about the writer’s work. “When you are excited about something is when the first draft is done. But no one can see it until you have gone over it again and again until you have communicated the emotion, the sights and the sounds to the reader” (185). If this explanation is deeply analyzed, we discover the key place that emotion has in Hemingway’s conception of writing. He emphasizes the writer’s difficult task of communicating a particular emotion to the reader. This emotion is the reason why the writer needs to develop all his strength and abilities; at the same time, this emotion transmitted to the reader becomes a touchstone for judging if a work can be considered done. But even more important is how Hemingway’s statement makes us realize how emotion is presented to the writer *and* the reader. Emotion is moving through the whole narrative fiction process. Thus, I want to suggest that emotion should

be considered as a key element of this *something common* between all the different stages that a narrative undergoes in the stages of its transformation from writer to reader. Emotion recurs in the entire structure, and its presence offers us the chance to understand the mechanism and the relationships of that *something common* that Leach calls the word *structure*. In this study, I shall approach emotion as the pattern that organizes the relationship between all the elements involved in the process of narrative fiction. On one hand, the fiction writer thinks about how he can use the narrative devices to transmit to, or evoke emotions in, the reader; on the other hand, the reader is the one who finally decodes these devices and experiences the emotions evoked by the story. Emotion will guide the dialogue between the different parts involved in the narrative process within the structure proposed here.

In his book Structuralism in Literature, Robert Scholes points out how the elements chosen in any tale may be selected for their ability to evoke reactions (93). Emotions--reactions evoked by the text--are directly related to the devices used to construct the text. So in order to achieve a detailed knowledge of how emotions are evoked, we need to study how the elements of any story work to evoke these emotions. It is during this stage of the dialogue proposed in this study that the critical theories of formalism and structuralism will be used in order to go deeper into the understanding of the first stage of the narrative process. In terms of Russell's example, we might say that a story reflects the emotions that a writer has in mind in the same way that the notes on a piece of paper reflect the music interpreted in the head of the composer. Then, as in the case of the piano sonata, the first stage of the whole process is how the writer gives shape to the emotions he already has in his mind and how he transmits them to the reader.

Keith M. Opdahl explains in his work Emotion as Meaning that a writer of fiction provides us with a verbal guidance that will start up the theaters of our brains, stimulating them

to construct a certain coherent experience (17). The verbal guidance and how the writer of fiction develops it will be studied in the first chapter using a structuralist approach. This analysis will focus on Hemingway's work as that of a modernist author committed to the importance of leading the reader towards the emotion evoked through the text. My analysis will be framed within the context of modernism's concerns about the relation between emotion and literature and, more precisely, of Ezra Pound's influence on the work of Hemingway as a prime example of one of this movement's main interests.

Once we have studied the modernist textual devices used by Hemingway to evoke emotions, we will be in a better position of investigating, in Chapter 2, how a reader assimilates these emotions and how these emotions affect him or her. Once the reader internalizes the elements of the narrative's structure created by the writer, he is able to interpret them in order to create the story in her mind. But how is the story constructed in the reader's mind? The second chapter will explore in detail the mechanism by which the reader creates the story and the key place of emotions in this process. In Semiotics and Interpretation, Scholes proposes that "[i]n reading narrative ... we translate a text into a diegesis according to codes we have internalized" (113). Following Scholes's model, I shall explain how in the diegetic act of constructing the story, the reader remains as him- or herself. The reader uses his real experience to read the story, because in diegesis--in contraposition to mimesis as Scholes explains--we do not take on the identity of another person; as readers we use our own identity to make the "inferential process" to construct the story. Readers translate the text in their minds in order to construct a certain coherent experience: an experience that is based on the emotions evoked by the text. We interpret these emotions according to our own experiences, but to what extent and how do they affect us?

If, as Opdahl maintains, “[w]e are the emotions we feel” (9), then narrative fiction offers us endless opportunities for developing our identity through the simple act of interpreting the emotions evoked by the text. Narrative fiction directly affects our identities because “emotion is the heart of our identity” (9). In the second chapter, the analysis of the reader’s involvement in the narrative process will allow us to understand how the emotions created by the writer are interpreted by the reader and to what extent this process affects the reader’s identity.

Hemingway’s story “Big Two-Hearted River” will be analyzed to discover the experiences that Hemingway’s work offers to the reader’s identity.

In the third chapter, the question of race, gender, and identity in Hemingway’s work will be studied. Through the analysis of some of the first Nick Adams stories, I shall critically examine to what extent the emotions evoked by Hemingway are related to the white male heterosexual identity that he is said to promote in his work, as critics such as Peter Hays, Robert Lewis, and Philip Young have argued. Such stories as “Indian Camp” or “Ten Indians” are structured around the theme of a white son-father relationship and the initiation of white manhood. At the same time, however, these stories negotiate the interaction between Native American and white male identities. In the confrontation of these two racial identities, is Hemingway pointing to something more than the archetype of white male superiority over the Native American race? Or is there an alternative reading in the story “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife” behind the male figure of the Doctor described as weak once he admits his physical inferiority when he is challenged by Dick Boulton? The discussion of such questions will lead to a reflection of how stories can teach us much about social differences and the cultures in which we live.

A particular narrative fiction structure will be developed in this work. The triad formed by writer, text, and reader will be proposed as one that involves the entire narrative fiction process. The study of the writer's work in order to evoke emotions will lead to an understanding of the first stage of this process. The analysis of the reader's reception of these emotions will reveal the different mechanisms and relationships that have a place in the transformations that the story undergoes in the reader's mind. Once the structure of the process has been illuminated through the study of emotion's function in the different stages, the stage will be set to analyze how the reading of fiction affects the reader. By studying this final stage of the narrative process, we shall discover how human beings, through reading narrative fiction, enhance their identities in the same way that they construct the stories they read--by giving meaning to the emotions these stories offer.

## CHAPTER 2: HEMINGWAY'S COMPROMISE WITH THE REAL THING

### *2.1. Paris: The First Step as a Writer of Fiction*

On December 20, 1921, Ernest Hemingway arrived in Paris with his wife Hadley. As Michael Reynolds explains in his work, Hemingway: the Paris Years, the writer was initially attracted by Sherwood Anderson's promise that in this European city his writing would improve, and he would meet important people such as Joyce, Stein, Sylvia Beach, and Pound (4). The promise was fulfilled. Hemingway indeed met all the key figures of the literary movement of the time, and his writing, though not immediately, underwent a definitive change that would propel it toward becoming one of the most intense and precise prose styles of the twentieth century. The relation between Hemingway's development as a writer of fiction and the influence of all those modernist writers cannot be denied. Even Hemingway's early publications such as Three Stories and Ten Poems and In Our Time are directly related to the friendship he maintained with Pound (28). But how did the influence of those modernist writers shape Hemingway's style? To understand the possible answers to this question, the name of Ezra Pound is critical.

Hemingway was naturally driven toward fiction in whatever he wrote. Whenever he put words on paper, he was creating fiction (Reynolds 17). He arrived in Paris using unconsciously some of the techniques that Pound's influence helped him to develop later. As Jackson J. Benson explains in The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: Critical Essays, it was during his time at the Kansas City Star newspaper that Hemingway's style gained its basic elements (277). There he was in contact for the first time with the use of short and powerful sentences. All the influences that he received in Paris simply pushed him to develop potential qualities that he already possessed. Hemingway was aware of the necessity to move the readers through the emotions evoked by the text. His work as a journalist had led him toward the ability of involving

the reader in the action presented through the text, but this capacity seemed to him too limited to fulfill his expectations in his work as a writer of fiction. Although he was aware of this necessity, he was not yet able to perform it adequately. After studying the authors that Pound recommended to him, such as Eliot and Joyce, he was able to write the kind of sentences that lead a reader toward pure emotion. The reader should not need to analyze the story to experience the emotion that the writer is trying to transmit. A good story will communicate it without any reflexive work, and Hemingway learned to perform this feat of direct transmission by following Pound's guidelines.

This simple way of writing is a technique directly advocated by Pound and perfectly exemplified in Eliot's explanation of the "objective correlative" in his essay "Hamlet":

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in a sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. (48)

This statement is apparently easy to defend, but is not so easy to perform. Hemingway worked hard to forge a style that would put Eliot's notion into practice, and, line by line, he went deeper into the way of shaping straight declarative sentences. His technique is simple but at the same time demanding. The primary aim is to let the action speak for itself: "Without telling readers how to respond, what to feel, how to judge, let images convey meaning. If action is presented truly, precisely, using only its essential elements, then readers, without being told, will respond emotionally as the writer intended" (Reynolds 31). This technique that powerfully influenced

Hemingway in his early steps as a writer is directly related to the principles of the new poetic or “imagism” promulgated by Pound.

In his 1918 article “Retrospect,” Pound recapitulates the main rules and objectives of the new poetic--which he named imagism--that he had formulated together with H.D. and Richard Aldington back in 1912. In “Retrospect” these three points (direct treatment of the thing, economy of words, and composing in the sequence of the musical phrase) are directly related to the “image” offered to the reader: “An ‘image’ is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time” (4). In this article, Pound reinforces this explanation of the use of language in his own succinct clarification. “Use no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something” (4). Through this demand for straight and austere use of language, Pound points out the conjugation of the two first principles of the new poetic initially articulated in 1912. The direct treatment of the thing will be achieved by using a language based on the avoidance of words that don’t reveal something. His main aim in “Retrospect” is to find the most effective mode of developing an *image*. He counsels avoiding the use of abstractions--“Go in fear of abstractions” (5)--and, specifically, the mixture of an abstraction with the concrete. This common mistake, Pound maintains, “comes from the writer’s not realizing that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol” (5).

It was Pound who told Hemingway that symbols must be natural objects first (Reynolds 29). The symbolic power of an object rests in the fact that the object should first work in the story, enjoying the meaning of the object itself. Before reaching any symbolic power, the object should *be* the object: “I believe that the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, [...] a hawk is a hawk” (Pound 9). The success of creating this particular way of writing implies the premises defended by the new poetic. It was during that initial year of 1922 in Paris, and under

the influence of Pound, where Hemingway definitely began to shape his characteristic style. “No doubt Pound admired Hemingway’s prose as it developed during the period of 1922-24 because it was almost a perfect demonstration of Pound’s doctrine of writing” (Benson 306). In essence, what Hemingway did through his hard and arduous work was to apply Pound’s lessons about the new poetic to his prose fiction. The curious case of the short story “Up in Michigan” (produced through an important revisionary process during the period of time that Hemingway was in contact with Pound) shall serve to illustrate Hemingway’s translation of Pound’s new poetic into narrative.

## 2.2. “Up in Michigan”: The Birth of Hemingway’s Style Following Pound’s Influence

Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes point out in their article “Reading ‘Up in Michigan’” that this story was one of Hemingway’s earliest successful stories: “It was written before he went to Paris in 1921” (25), but that previous version underwent crucial modifications before it was published in Three Stories and Ten Poems in Paris in 1923. This final version of the story tells about the relationship between Liz Coates and Jim Gilmore, a waitress and a blacksmith, respectively, and their strange first date in the warehouse of the bay. She is in love with him, and he apparently doesn’t pay much attention to her until he comes back from a deer-hunting trip with his buddies. The night of his return, Liz waits for him while Jim has supper and drinks whiskey with his friends. When his friends leave, Jim goes to the kitchen where she pretends to be reading a book and kisses her. Liz is frightened, but at the same time “she wanted it now” (Hemingway, Complete 61). They leave the restaurant and walk along the sandy road until they finally arrive at the warehouse on the bay. Once there, he insists on a sexual encounter

despite her resistance, and the whole contradictory dimension of the story arises. Before leaving, she leans in and kisses him.

In their article, Comley and Scholes offer a detailed description of Hemingway's process of composition and revision of this story by analyzing three different typescript versions held at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston (Reading 27). Among the differences between them, there is an important modification that directly addresses the concern of this chapter. In the first version, there is a four-line beginning that is crossed out. There also are two different endings; one of them is an incomplete description of an embarrassed Jim and Liz meeting at breakfast the next morning, and the other one narrates how Liz feels after leaving Jim on the dock asleep (22). Neither the beginning nor either of the two endings are present in the final version that Hemingway completed in Paris in 1922 for the story's publication the next year. What was the reason for Hemingway's excision of this material?

While it is risky to speculate about the reasons that led Hemingway to change the end of the story, there is a fact that can't be denied. During the period of rewriting this particular story, Hemingway was in touch with Ezra Pound. As it is explained by Reynolds, a week after their first meeting in Paris in 1922, Pound was reading some of Hemingway's writing: "We do not know which stories Pound saw in February, possibly a version of 'Up in Michigan' begun in Chicago the previous summer" (Reynolds 26). What we know for sure is that under Pound's influence and guidance, Hemingway set immediately to work improving writing that initially had not satisfied him. The work and decisions made by Hemingway obtained the desired result because he finally succeeded in his purpose of seeing his work printed. Pound was behind not only that first publication but also the literary style of this decisive story in Hemingway's legacy. In a letter written to his editor where Hemingway rejects his editor's suggestion to delete some of

the sexually explicit passages of his story, he affirms that this story “is an important story in my work and one that has influenced many people” (Letters 468).

In their article, Comley and Scholes seek to explain why this particular story was so important for Hemingway. In the above-mentioned letter to his editor, Hemingway’s words imply that this story constitutes a breakthrough in the writing of dialogue. This story is also important because it was the first of many that was set in North Michigan--the place where the writer spent his vacations when he was young (Reading 29). However, if this letter is read carefully and its entirety, Hemingway’s words point directly to the dock scene as his reason for attributing such central importance to the story: “[B]ut there on the dock it got suddenly absolutely right and it is the point of the whole story and the beginning of all the naturalness I ever got” (Letters 468). The dock scene, rewritten during the time that Pound instructed Hemingway that symbols must be first natural objects, is the one that the writer considers as the breakthrough where he began to display his characteristic style.

The last two paragraphs of the story “Up in Michigan” are the perfect place for more closely examining Pound’s influence on Hemingway’s style. On one hand, the direct treatment of the object and the economy of language are clearly present. On the other hand, the use of Pound’s rules achieves in this story the effect pursued: The symbolism arrives as a consequence of a very particular way of using language. Liz confronts her first sexual contact with Jim. This is her first time being kissed or touched by a man in her entire life; “no one had ever touched her” (Hemingway, Complete 61). Once she realizes what has happened to her--that Jim coerced her into sexual intercourse and she lost her virginity--she tries to recover from Jim’s action but cannot. “Liz started to cry. She walked over to the edge of the dock and looked down to the water. There was a mist coming down from the bay” (62). The image of the mist that appears

here for the first time achieves a deep meaning in relation to the event confronted by Liz. The symbolic power of the object is achieved just after the meaning of the natural object is developed in the story. The success of this symbolism that so powerfully enriches the meaning of the story is directly related to its writing style. The described action is clear and direct (direct treatment of the thing) and the language used to do it is equally clear and direct (economy of words). The sequence is simple: Liz has sexual contact with Jim, she cries, walks, and looks down. When she watches the water, she reflects on what has happened, and all she can see is the mist: "There was a mist coming up from the bay. She was cold and miserable, and everything felt gone" (62). The powerful technique used here by Hemingway rests in the fact that he does not say anything about Liz's thoughts to the reader; it is the reader who decodes this scene and the meaning of its symbolism. Hemingway creates here the perfect set of objects, accurate situation, and chain of events which terminate in a sensory experience for the reader, just as Eliot wrote regarding the objective correlative.

All the hopes and illusions that Liz had built in her mind thinking about Jim were dissipated in the warehouse of the bay. In this place, Liz experiences the cruelty of adulthood and, more precisely, the weakness and defenselessness of the female position under the male power in the standardized female-male relationship of the time. The loss of innocence in Liz's life and all her worries about her future after that incident are symbolized in the mist that is coming up from the bay. She now knows how things work in the adult world. All the romanticism has disappeared from her life and probably it will not come back again. It is through the direct treatment of the thing--in this case, the relationship between these two characters and what they have experienced on the dock--that the reader feels Liz's experiences, and not through the words or thoughts of the female character. Hemingway says no words about the loss of

innocence or Liz's fears; he just writes "There was a mist coming down from the bay" (Hemingway, Complete 62).

In spite of Liz's repeated expostulations, "You mustn't do it, Jim. You mustn't" (62), Jim finally rapes her, thinking that violating Liz is within his rights as a man. He says, "I got to. I'm going to. You know we got to" (62), but the consequences for Liz after the sexual act are not directly and explicitly explained by Hemingway. He lets the actions speak for themselves. He just describes the action through the use of direct expressions and through the avoidance of any kind of abstract explanations. For example, the whole contradictory dimension of the incident arises after Liz, despite having been forced against her will, leans over and kisses Jim: "Liz leaned over and kissed him on the cheek" (62). The action of the sexual consummation seems like a rape, yet Liz's solicitous, even affectionate gesture questions the meaning of Jim's action as a rape. Furthermore, if Liz considers the encounter a rape, why does she kiss Jim before leaving the warehouse? The reader knows about her contradictory attitude by reading the two adverbs used wisely by Hemingway to describe the action: "neatly and carefully" (62). It is just through the use of these words that the writer is able to convey the contradictory dimension of the story.

On one hand, Liz has been forced, but on the other, she seems to accept her fate and assumes the rules of the female position in society by taking care of him. "She tucked [his coat] around him neatly and carefully" (62). The confusion encroaches on Liz's thoughts as the mist comes down the sandy road that Liz walks to go back to bed. Hemingway does not make these thoughts explicit in the story, but he lights them up by creating the *image* of the mist at the end of the story. In contrast to the ending that Hemingway finally rejected, and where he describes her thoughts and worries about being pregnant, the mist ending offers a more powerful

experience. The enigmatic meaning of the last sentence of the story--“A cold mist was coming up through the woods from the bay” (62)--leaves Liz’s thoughts open and forces the reader to figure them out for himself. This way of writing invites the reader to decipher the code through which the author establishes the conditions for the construction of the story’s final meaning. Liz has come into adulthood, this state of life where romance has no place anymore and where the clouds of male power limit her ability to see and to imagine love. These thoughts are related to the emotion that the author wants to provoke through the story, an emotion evoked, not named, by a particular way of using language. The language makes the reader participate actively in the creation of the story’s meaning.

Through the story’s ending, Hemingway produces for us the possibility of experiencing the same feelings and emotions that Liz does. The reader shares with Liz the moment in which she discovers the adult world and what its rules are. Liz is not the only one who grows up coming back from the warehouse in the mist that comes down from the bay. The reader also experiences this moment of growth by following Hemingway’s writing style. Hemingway expects us to fill in the gaps of his narrative. We must construct Liz’s feelings of disappointment, which makes it both stronger and less sentimental than it would be if the author had insisted on telling us about it (Comley and Scholes, Reading 21-22). Hemingway’s stories are as simple as the language he uses, but at the same time their meanings are as enigmatic as the *images* he displays in them and as the emotions these evoke.

### 2.3. *The Image as the Dimension Where the Conditions of Meaning Are Proposed*

As Oddvar Holmesland explains in his essay, “Structuralism and Interpretation: Ernest Hemingway’s ‘Cat in the Rain’,” “[s]tructuralism is not a new critical method which discovers or

assigns meaning. Structuralism seeks to define the conditions of the meaning” (58). Each writer has acquired his particular style through certain influences that he later involves in the development of his stories. In the analysis of the story “Up in Michigan,” I have shown how the conditions of the story’s meaning have been developed by Hemingway through the use of a particular way of displaying language. I also suggested that this use of language is directly influenced by Pound’s dictates on how to offer an emotional experience, or *image*, to the reader.

The conditions of meaning are directly related to the execution of the *image* offered by the story. This was precisely the main and definitive lesson that Hemingway learned from Pound during his apprenticeship as a writer of fiction in Paris: how to use language in order to offer a powerful experience to the reader. The direct treatment of the thing and the economy of words are unified by Pound through the avoidance of abstractions and the excision of superfluous words. This particular way of using language, as Hemingway proves in the story that has been analyzed, is directly related to the way he offers an *image*, which, to use Pound’s words, “presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time,” and which, once it has been assimilated by the reader, is inseparable from the meaning of the story itself.

I have already analyzed how Hemingway uses language to create the *image*, i.e., its verbalization. But there are other aspects of the conditions of meaning that deserve attention. Certainly, how Hemingway presents the final view of the *image* to the readers is an important feature that needs to be taken into account. Roland Barthes, in his article “The Structuralist Activity,” explains how the goal of all structuralist activity is to reconstruct an “object” in such a specific way as to manifest thereby the rules of its functioning as object (871). Barthes also points out that structuralist activity is a *simulacrum* that involves two common operations: *dissection* and *articulation* (872). If the *Image*, as the object of our interest, is dissected, we

should consider two aspects of the object's construction. The first one is the creation of the object through the use of language, or its verbalization. The second one is the presentation of this object, or the conditions for its visualization by the reader, where what is left out becomes as important as what is presented. To gain a better understanding of the conditions of meaning, the *image* needs to be studied as an object in which verbalization and visualization are interrelated in such a way that they maintain the *image* as an object in relation to the conditions of the story's meaning. The first feature has already been studied; the second one is directly dependent on how the writer presents it to the reader to be visualized.

John Graham, in his article "Ernest Hemingway: The Meaning of Style," points out how many critics have reduced the vitality of Hemingway's stories to the simplicity of theme and the use of language--its verbalization. Although these aspects are contributory, Graham maintains that they are subordinate "to a more constant cause: the active presentation of subject and object (observer and thing observed) and the continuous, intimate, and conscious relationship between subject and object" (18). When we read about the mist in the story "Up in Michigan," we know about it from Liz's point of view. Jim is sleeping and he is totally removed from the story's drama at that moment. Liz is the only one who sees the mist because she is the one who has to face the consequences of what has happened on the dock. Here the relationship between object and subject is vitally important. Perhaps the most important of Hemingway's decisions is to tell the crucial events of the story from Liz's point of view (Comlay and Scholes, Reading 42). Hemingway creates through the use of language the mist's *image* in order to propose certain conditions of the final meaning; but the verbalization of it should always be considered at the same time as the perspective from which this *image* is presented--its visualization. How the *image* is presented is as important as how Hemingway executes it through language. In fact,

verbalization and visualization are the two elements or processes discovered through dissection that allow the reader to understand the conditions of meaning through their articulation.

The articulation of these two features is the milieu in which the conditions of meaning are met--a particular dimension that is the *image* itself. In his book A Moveable Feast, Hemingway explains how he used to go to the Musée Jeu de Paume when he was coming back from his room after a hard day of working on his writing. There, "I was learning something from the painting of Cezanne that made writing simple true sentences far from enough to make the stories have the dimensions that I was trying to put in them" (13). We do not know exactly what Hemingway is pointing out when he uses the word "dimension," but the fact that he borrows this word from such an entirely different genre as painting--a spatial art--should make us aware that Hemingway is pursuing a new, extra-lingual dimension through his radically concise writing style.

Just as in the case of the mist at the end of "Up in Michigan," an impressionist painting evokes more, or goes further, than a painting on the canvas. An impressionist painting offers to the observer the opportunity to discover the object on the canvas by himself. This experience is more important than the depicted object itself. The key aspect is not the painting itself, but the emotions that are evoked by the painting through its interaction with the observer. For example, the impressionist painter does not draw a perfectly defined outline of a landscape, but instead he uses light brush strokes to evoke an impression of it. In A Moveable Feast, Hemingway recalls an interesting conversation in Paris between him and his wife about their last spring in Italy: "Yes Tatie, and you and Chink always talking about how to make things true, writing them, and put them rightly and not describe" (54). In the same way as in the impressionist technique, Hemingway did not reduce his work of writing to the limited task of describing things; instead, he preferred to evoke them through the uses of "the lights and the textures and the shapes" (54).

Hemingway was pursuing, through the use of *image*, the creation of a new dimension where the reader could experience the emotion that he was trying to evoke with his writing.

As Hemingway himself recognized, this technique is directly influenced by a spatial art, a spatial art that enjoys a deep enriching dimension that has to be discovered by the observer. Ultimately, it is the observer himself who conquers this dimension in the act of observing the painting. From viewing Cezanne's paintings, Hemingway learned a method of creating this dimension that involves the reader in the construction of the final meaning of the story. In this dimension there is not only the *image* created through the use of language, as the landscape on the canvas, but also the reader's reception of this landscape. This dimension was created not only through a particular style of displaying language--verbalization, but also through a particular way of presenting the *image*--visualization. Just as the impressionist canvas involves the observer in the spatial dimension where the final impression is experienced, Hemingway's writing implicates the reader in the story and moves him along with the narrative to the final evoked emotion. This dimension is not a linear, but a spatial one; more precisely, it is a dimension where the linear and the spatial converge, a dimension "which structuralism enables to explain readily but structuralists have not always been anxious to consider" (Scholes, Structuralism 28).

As Scholes explains, poetic language is favored in a dimension where the linear and the spatial converge, or, to use structuralist terminology, where the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic axis of language interact. "Jakobson has identified poetry as projecting its language from the metaphoric or paradigmatic axis of verbalization onto the metonymic or syntagmatic. Thus poetry deliberately opposes the linear, ongoing diachronic qualities of speech with spatial, obstructive, synchronic qualities" (Structuralism 28-29). As has been explained above, Hemingway uses the poetic technique learned from Pound and applies it to his prose fiction. As

Mary Hemingway affirms in her book How It Was, “[T]he secret is that it is poetry written in prose” (352). Once we accept the notion of Hemingway’s writing as a poetic language, we can apply Jakobson’s definition of poetic language for an understanding of the unique imagist dimension that Hemingway is seeking to create in his stories.

When Hemingway develops the *image* through the use of simple declarative sentences, he is proposing the conditions of the story’s meaning. When he executes the *image* through the use of language—i.e. verbalization--he is developing a linear chain of events that all together evoke an emotional response. Although this narrative offers a stimulus-response, it will not be complete until the poetic of this narrative projects its paradigmatic or metaphoric axis onto the diachronically unfolding chain of events. In other words, the syntagmatic linear verbalization is necessary in order to enable poetic language to project its paradigmatic axis and to establish the final conditions for the creation of the emotional experience. These final conditions for the creation of this experience (*image*) are stated only when the metonymic or syntagmatic and the metaphoric or paradigmatic converge in the poetic language. The *image* is finally executed when the metonymic linear chain of events (verbalization) and the spatial metaphoric axis (visualization) come together in a self-regulating structure.

Thus the metonymic chain of events is only one aspect of the creation of the final impression offered to the reader. Our understanding of the articulation that constructs the *image* would be incomplete unless we include consideration of the spatial paradigmatic axis of poetic language, which is directly linked to the *image*’s visualization. In an interview with the French magazine Paris Review, Hemingway explains one of his most important techniques of writing, the principle of the iceberg. “There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part of it that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part

that doesn't show" (84). This principle can be applied to each one of the simple declarative sentences that Hemingway writes in his stories. The power of his style does not only reside in the simplicity of the linear chain of events or verbalization. The sentence also achieves its strength in relation to the things left out, and it is what is left out that determines how the reader visualizes the *image*.

On one hand, Hemingway writes a sentence; on the other hand, this sentence, or rather its meaning, depends on what wasn't written. The first one makes sense in relation to the second one. Only when the linear metonymic axis is confronted with the spatial metaphoric axis can the final execution of the *image* be achieved. In other words, the *image* requires both verbalization and visualization. The first depends on Hemingway's way of using of language, following Pound's dictates, while the second is achieved through two important devices: the object-subject relation or point of view, as explained above, and the iceberg technique.

In the case of "Up in Michigan," the *image* of the mist is executed to evoke a particular emotional experience in the reader. Hemingway creates it, but this *image* only achieves its meaning when its verbalization converges with the visualization of it. At the end of this story, Hemingway offers a chain of events that finishes with the last sentence: "A cold mist was coming up through the woods from the bay" (Complete 62). If this sentence is read independently or separately from the rest of the story, we could suppose, for example, that Hemingway writes this sentence to inform readers about Michigan's cold mist. When we read these words we could reflect on the fact that the mist comes from the bay, and then, we could deduce that it is cold because it comes from the bay. It could even be said that this last sentence offers a technical explanation of the particularities of Michigan mist. By attending to only the

verbalization of this *image* we obtain an idea of the mist, but not an accurate understanding of its task in relation to the final meaning of the story.

When the linear chain of words converges with the submerged elements of the story, the dimension where the *image* is developed arises. Only when this sentence is visualized in relation to something that is not present in the linear chain of events can the conditions of meaning be established. The mist is a metaphor or symbol of something else, but we can't find this something else in the linear sentence. We have to look in the spatial metaphoric axis to find the meaning and display the dimension where the *image* is constructed. It is necessary to execute a spatial exercise similar to the one that the observer makes when he is viewing the landscape created by an impressionist artist on canvas. When we can relate the mist to the event confronted by Liz, then we are able to signify this *image*. When the reader considers the perspective within which the mist has been presented, then he can understand its meaning in relation to Liz. Once the gaps in Hemingway's narrative are filled out, we are in the position to decode the conditions of the story's meaning, or *image*. It is only through the articulation of both verbalization and visualization, then, that the conditions of meaning are possible.

#### 2.4. Conclusion

There is a correlation between how the *image* is created by the use of language and how the *image* is presented. When Hemingway writes in Death in the Afternoon about the *real thing* as “the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion,” he thinks of offering an intense experience in an instant of time “which would be as valid in a year or in ten years” (2). This instant of time is the dimension that can only be created by using language in a very particular way. Hemingway develops this particular method in his writing in order to propose the

conditions of the story's final meaning. The *image* is the *real thing*, the dimension where the emotion is offered, but also the dimension where the writer's work converges with the reader's reception of it. The amazing aspect of Hemingway's work is that he is able to articulate the linear and the spatial through the use of language, a non-spatial art, alone. The importance of this style resides in its capacity to construct a dimension where, on one hand, an emotion is evoked through the conjugation of verbalization and visualization; and, on the other hand, this emotion is felt by the reader. This is the place where the conditions of the final meaning are proposed. This is the arena where the creation of fiction's meaning takes place.

In this chapter I have isolated the techniques and features that Hemingway employed to provide his readers with vivid experiences. Next I will turn to investigating how the reader reconstructs the meaning of language. The question that should be asked next is how the reader assimilates this emotion that allows for the creation of the final meaning of the story and how it affects him. In order to analyze the process within the reader as he or she constructs the final meaning of the story, I will move in the next chapter toward the study of the relationship between reader and text within the dimension created by Hemingway through the use of language.

## CHAPTER 3: HEMINGWAY'S STRUGGLE IN ORDER TO CREATE LIFE AND NOT SIMPLY TO REPRESENT IT

### *3.1. "Big Two-Hearted River" and the Reader's Imaginative Reconstruction of Nick's Traumatic Experience*

The reader does not know why Nick, the protagonist of "Big Two-Hearted River," makes the fishing trip described in this story. Hemingway does not tell us anything about the nature of the traumatic experience Nick is trying to overcome when he arrives at the devastated town of Seney. The only thing that seems clear enough is that Nick has faced some kind of painful event in his life. When he is again in touch with the woods and the river and able to fish, "he felt that he had left everything behind [...] It was all back of him" (Complete 164). Nothing is directly said by Hemingway; he reduces his narration to a depiction of Nick's actions in the woods. The chain of events is clear, concrete, and direct, but that is all; Hemingway does not offer any explicit clues about Nick's inner life. But since he does not, how is the reader to discover the unspoken goal of Nick's trip within the radical simplicity of this story?

In the first part of the story, Nick arrives by train to the burned town of Seney. Everything is gone; nothing is left of the old town with its hotel and thirteen saloons. Nick picks up his backpack and fishing tools and walks up the hill parallel to the river. After a while he finds a place where the fire line is gone, and Nick keeps walking until he is tired and decides to take a short rest. When he wakes up, he begins to walk until he reaches a good place for camping. He sets up his tent, cooks dinner, prepares some coffee and eats the supper. While he is drinking the coffee, his mind starts working again but he is tired and is able to quickly choke his thoughts. He goes to sleep until the next morning.

In the second part of the story, Nick comes out of his tent, prepares his breakfast and catches good grasshoppers for fishing. He eats his meal, prepares his fishing equipment and goes to the river. He catches a small trout and drops it back into the stream. He returns to fishing and this time catches a huge trout. After fighting for a while, he cannot hold the fish; the leader line is broken, and he loses the trout. He is tired and his hand is shaky; he takes a rest while smoking a cigarette. When he turns toward the stream again, he catches one good trout, loses another one, and finally catches a second big one. He smokes another cigarette, eats his lunch, and looks at the river where it becomes narrow and goes into the swamp. He thinks there should be plenty of big trout there, although he doesn't want to go there because it would be "a tragic adventure" (Hemingway, Complete 180). It doesn't matter; "[t]here were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp" (180).

As the summary of the story shows, Hemingway does not directly name any traumatic human experience in this story. He simply shows a man camping and fishing in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. In "The Death of the Author," Roland Barthes points out that "the writer's language is not expected to represent reality, but to signify it" (875). In "Big Two-Hearted River," Hemingway is not representing a particular reality; instead, he is signifying Nick's painful reality as a narration of acute events. In his article "Writing the Vanishing Real: Hyperreality and Magical Realism," Eugene L. Arva emphasizes the importance of the signification in the narration of a reality of extreme events that, by their traumatic nature, resist representation. In such cases, "[s]ignification needs to be understood not as an imitation of reality (mimesis) but, rather, as its reconstruction, as its signification by imagination" (66).

If this story is read as just a simple mimetic representation of a fishing event, the final result is bound to be a more or less pointless story, which many readers might describe as boring.

We use our imagination to reconstruct the traumatic experience Hemingway is pointing out in this story; and it is by doing so that the story achieves its enriching meaning. Like the readers of magical realist fiction, readers of Hemingway's story are asked to look beyond the realistic details offered by the story and to accept "the dual ontological structure of the text" (Arva 67). Hemingway's story is constituted in two different levels. On one hand are Nick's actions, and on the other is Nick's traumatic experience, which compels him to act as he does. The reader is the one who has to conjugate these different levels. The final meaning of the story is far more intense than the simple representation of a fishing trip. Indeed, the emotion evoked by a man camping in the solitude of a wood is so intense that it is necessary to ask: how is this power produced?

Hemingway is close to a descriptive mimesis in the story, but this text is not a simple realistic representation. The reader is invited to reconstruct Nick's traumatic experience through his actions and conjugate the dual ontological structure of the story. This fact should make us reject the understanding of this story as a straightforward realistic representation. Robert Paul Lamb's article, "Fishing for Stories: What 'Big Two-Hearted River' Is Really About," explains two main theories that have influenced critical understandings of this story. The first one, inspired by Malcolm Cowley and further developed by Philip Young, is the "war wound" thesis (162). In this hypothesis, Nick's fishing trip in "Big Two-Hearted River" is related to a traumatic experience originating in the war and the injuries he suffered there. The second one is the thesis developed by Kenneth S. Lynn that "Nick is escaping not from war memories, but from 'a need to please his mother'" (163). According to the explanation offered by Lamb, Lynn bases his thoughts on the fact that Hemingway's childhood was dominated by his emotionally-conflicted

mother. This fact “produced in him a lifelong confusion over his sexual identity and a fear of his own androgynous impulses” (163).

After analyzing these two interpretations, Lamb displays his own theory based on the nine-page original ending that Hemingway finally deleted. In this initial version, Hemingway wrote about issues of his private life and his struggles as a writer of fiction. Only after hearing Gertrude Stein’s comment that “remarks are not literature” did Hemingway decide to delete this ending (Lamb 162). According to Lamb, the fishing trip is used in the story as a metaphor of writing: “The rushing river is the writer’s life; downstream is his memory of the past, upstream the future and where he stands the present” (178). If this story were primarily realist, it is unlikely that interpretations of the fishing trip’s nature would produce such significant differences. Critics and readers would agree that the meaning of Nick’s trip to Seney is a fishing trip, both literally and symbolically, and that Hemingway is introducing readers to the activity of camping and trout fishing in Michigan. The fishing trip, and fishing itself, would of course have symbolic meanings, but these would appear more obvious and be more obviously related to the events at hand. In this story, however, there is a complex mechanism of meaning under the surface that extends beyond the pure fact and time of this story. As Philip Young asserts, Nick is a man sickened from the experience of war; this is the “whole ‘point’ of an otherwise pointless story” (qtd. in Lamb 162). Regardless if this story is about the wound of the war, the mother’s repressive influence, or the act of writing, it confronts an inner reality--Nick’s reality--grounded in an extreme event which the character is trying to overcome during his fishing trip, and which the reader needs to signify. The story would be pointless without the possibility of understanding the memory or reenactment of the traumatic experience that Nick confronts in the woods.

Nick is interested in ideas, not objects. His interest in the different objects that he confronts through the entire trip represents the possibility of reconstructing his past. He is interested in past experiences, not in present objects. The present objects are the possibility he has of understanding and reconstructing the trauma of his past. Frank Scafelia proposes in his article "Nothing In 'Big Two Hearted River,'" that "Nick's seeing manifests a desire to confirm realities known in memory rather than actual objects in external nature" (78). He wants to recover something that is inside his mind, lost in his memory in a distant past. The important aspect of the story is related to Nick's inner life and is reflected in his exterior desire for action. But how can such an abstract concept be represented? The character is dealing with something that resists representation by a simple mimetic act. This is the reason why Hemingway needs to find an alternative mode of expressing such a reality. As Arva points out, the only way of narrating a reality of this nature is through the signification of it, a signification that Hemingway is able to offer by showing the protagonist in the river, fishing and dealing with the trout and camping in the woods. The question is how a simple narration of this chain of events can achieve the signification of Nick's dramatic reality. The power of this story rests in Hemingway's ability to compel the reader to use his imagination in the act of reading this story. The power of this story doesn't reside in the plot's simplicity or in the beauty of the landscapes described. The power of "Big Two-Hearted River" is directly related to the way "the reader is caught and forced into response" (Rovit 67), a response that will imaginatively reconstruct the story.

Trevor Pateman explains the active role of the reader's imagination in his article "Space for the Imagination." He believes that "the exercise of imagination is all about taking a second look" (3). The reader of "Big Two-Hearted River" must take a second look at Nick's actions because without taking a second look, the final reconstruction of the story will not be possible.

The reader has the opportunity to develop a new way of seeing and looking at the story because Hemingway creates a dimension in his writing where the reader's imagination can be at work--a dimension where the dual ontological structure of the story is waiting to be conjugated. We don't know for sure if Hemingway decided to write a story about the war, the complicated relationship with his obsessive mother, or about the arduous craft of becoming a writer. In any case, and independently of the writer's ultimate aim, the traumatic nature of these three realities does not allow a direct representation of them. Certainly, a direct representation would not be as powerful as the actual story. Moreover, the three interpretations of the story (and there may be more) need not be seen as mutually exclusive, since, as Barthes affirms, "a text is not a line of words, releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (Death 876).

It is within this multidimensional space pointed out by Barthes--and whose construction through the use of language I explained in the previous chapter--that the reader is asked to confront not just the author's writing but also his own writing or reconstruction of the text. "The space for the imagination lies between the artist and the medium and connects the two" (Pateman 7). It is the reader who conquers this space between the writer and the story, and it is the story that suggests paths for the imagination to follow. If we think about what enables these three different interpretations of the story, we have to point out the capacity of this story to allow the reader to conquer this space created by the writer. In this space Hemingway has established the paths that the reader will travel through the mental activity of his imagination. By doing so, the reader discovers the unspoken goal of Nick's trip. As Theodore L. Gaillard, Jr., states in his article "Hemingway's Debt to Cezanne," it is in this space that perceptive readers "suddenly

discover hidden dimensions in such a character as the troubled protagonist of ‘Big Two-Hearted River’” (76).

### *3.2. Emotion and the Signification Process of Nick’s Reality*

The three different interpretations explained here have been developed according to Hemingway’s biography, but it is also possible to construct an interpretation according to the reader’s biography. Why should it not be possible to create the meaning of the story by decoding Nick’s actions in terms of the reader’s traumatic experience? In the multi-dimensional space created by the writer, the reader receives the emotion evoked by the text. This emotion is grounded in Nick’s traumatic experience, but it can also be understood according to the reader’s life experiences. Most of the time when we read fiction we feel empathy for the main character and re-live his adventures as our own. “Fiction (and perhaps any narrative) asks us to identify with the characters, taking on their identities and experience as our own” (Opdahl 28). Therefore, Nick’s story allows us to identify with him and his actions on the fishing trip, and at the same time, the process of taking on Nick’s identity implies an interesting process that involves the reader’s identity.

Hemingway clearly follows his famous precept “if you talk about it, you lose it” in this story. He does not name the thing he is pointing out in this story--the unspoken goal of Nick’s trip. It is the reader who needs to signify it. In her article “Hemingway’s Secret: Visual to Verbal Art,” Meyly Chin Hagemann accurately explains the creative link between Cezanne and Hemingway: “Both struggled not to ‘represent’ life but to create it” (112). “Big Two-Hearted River” is not a representation of a fishing trip but a creation of a real moment where Nick’s emotions are deep and intense. Hemingway’s aim in this story is to evoke these emotions and

offer the reader the opportunity of experiencing them as *something real* within the dimension created in his text. Hemingway is trying to shape through words a precise moment when the reader will experience the emotions evoked by the story as he does in life. The only way of *creating life* is by involving the reader in the same mental process that human beings undergo when they feel a particular emotion in reality. The reader's identity needs to be involved in the act of constructing the story, because the reader compares the emotion of the character with his own (Opdahl 29). The reader experiences fiction in terms of his identity. This identity, therefore, will be involved in the final signification of Nick's reality, the reality that Hemingway doesn't talk about in his story because he is afraid of losing it.

We feel we are Nick fishing in Michigan; we fight against the trout in the cold stream. We have identified ourselves with Nick's actions, but how can we identify with Nick's inner life if the writer does not tell us anything about it? Hemingway shows us the development of the actions in relation to the trip, but he never tells us directly about the feelings, thoughts, or emotions that motivated Nick to take the trip in the first place. Hemingway entrusts the reader with decoding or reconstructing this essential part of the story. By reading "Big Two-Hearted River," our identity becomes Nick's identity, but we cannot reconstruct his whole identity without also reconstructing for ourselves the painful nature of the dramatic experience that he is trying to overcome when he arrives in Seney. In order to display the story to our consciousness, we should understand not only Nick's actions but also the reason he acts the way he does. The reader cannot conjugate the dual ontological structure of the text without knowing or understanding the second level--Nick's inner life--that forms Nick's character. We are Nick, but we also experience his identity in terms of our own identity, because we must give meaning to Nick's inner life by using our identity. We have to decode by ourselves this part of Nick that

Hemingway doesn't decode for us. We control this task by using our imagination, because it is the only possible mode of reconstructing the dual structure of Nick's reality.

When Arva talks about the importance that fiction has for the consistency of our reality, he quotes the explanation that Zizek offers in his book Tarrying with the Negative, about how ideas supplement reality: "Ideas do not simply add themselves to reality, they literally supplement it; our knowledge of objective reality can be made consistent and meaningful only by way of reference to Ideas" (qtd. in Arva 67). The reality of a tragic event is not only the event itself; it is also the idea about what an event of such nature is. The knowledge of the objective reality of the fishing trip is first formed by Nick's actions in the river and the woods, and second, by the idea of the traumatic experience that forces him to act the way he does. The idea supplements the reality of the trip and makes possible the process of making it meaningful. The reader doesn't have any problem understanding Nick's reality regarding his actions, but he has problems understanding Nick's idea of his traumatic experience. Although there are some clues throughout the story about this traumatic experience, they are sparse and seemingly marginal. The reader must therefore contribute the idea of what a traumatic experience is, in order to understand the fishing trip's reality as something consistent and meaningful.

We might think about this process of signification in relation to a person who has faced a traumatic episode that has changed his entire life. He has probably experienced a kind of emotion that is common for most of the people who have suffered an event of such nature. He surely has an *idea* of what a traumatic experience is, and he would be able to apply this knowledge to Nick's reality. For example, a patient who has confronted a serious illness and has been able to recover might read Nick's reality in terms of his reality. Nick behaves in the woods as if he were there for the first time after a long absence. The whole story has a dimension of rediscovering

and recovering: “The unspoken goal of his fishing trip is for Nick Adams to relive pleasures of the distant past in order to blot out anguish of recent events” (Gaillard 68). Nick seeks to enjoy at that moment the things he once enjoyed in the past. He needs to feel that he is still alive.

Everything seems novel for him on this trip; for example, when he is going to prepare coffee, he has to think about how he used to do it: “He could not remember which way he made coffee” (Hemingway, Complete 168). Even when he opens a can of apricots, he seems to remember that he used to enjoy opening cans: “He liked to open cans” (168). In this story Nick has a second chance to live the way he used to do, exactly like a person recovering from a serious illness.

In the case of Nick’s and the reader’s traumatic experiences, the causes of both are different, but their ideas of what such an experience would be are equivalent. As a result, the process of signifying their realities would also be similar. The patient who has survived a serious illness usually talks about rebirth or a second life. Exactly like Nick in the woods, the reader of this story experiences the opportunity of making old things new, as in making coffee or opening a can. The emotions of rebirth or of rediscovering life evoked by Nick’s actions are the ones that the reader interprets in terms of his idea of what a traumatic experience is, an idea based on his life’s experiences. Hemingway offers the actions that evoke the emotions and the reader contributes the idea, but it is the emotion that allows the contribution of this idea. The combination or conjugation of both (action and idea) signifies Nick’s reality. The emotions evoked by the story force the reader’s imagination to work in order to reconstruct the dual ontological structure of Nick’s reality constituted by the fishing trip’s actions and the traumatic event’s idea. The emotion evoked by the story allows the construction of the final meaning of the story.

If a person who has suffered a traumatic event in his life is asked to talk about it, he is most likely not going to describe his thoughts or feelings. He will not narrate his fears or anguish; he is not going to explain his idea of such a hard experience. Instead, he will try to describe the particular scenes that were part of this event, such as his memories of the surgery, his daily routine at the hospital, or his recovery exercises. Through the narration of the actions of this event, he is creating an image of the event in order to translate for the listener the emotions he suffered. He will try to develop an image that can make understandable his idea of this particular state. He is signifying the event to himself in order to be able to explain it to the others. In essence, he is using his imagination to understand what really happened to him; “[i]magination, and especially the traumatic imagination, is an activity by which the human consciousness translates an unspeakable state--pain--into a readable image” (Arva 69). When such a person talks about the event, he is fabricating an *objective correlative*, because this chain of events is the only method he has to convey to the listener the emotion he felt during his traumatic event. He tries to signify the emotion that he identifies with this particular painful moment. It is through this picture that the teller’s imagination and the listener’s imagination can work together. This is the only possible way human beings have to understand extreme realities such as the one Hemingway is confronting in his story.

It is hardly possible to express the traumatic events through a direct or mimetic use of language. The imagination compensates for this difficulty as it has been explained above. Hemingway, therefore, succeeds in translating an inner reality of traumatic events into “images that literary language can convey more suitably (in regard to their unspeakable nature) and more effectively (in terms of their accessibility by both author and reader)” (Arva 70). Hemingway is able to turn states or emotions of an unspeakable nature that are not easy to represent by using

language into *images*. Through his particular mode of using language, Hemingway opens the paths that will guide the reader's imagination towards the construction of the final meaning of the story. Hemingway forces the reader to signify what resists representation by using his imagination. He also involves the reader's identity in this process in order to contribute the idea of what a traumatic event is. This idea is indispensable to construct the final meaning of the story. One question remains to be answered concerning the functioning of the imagination: how does the imagination conjugate the image and the idea displayed in this process of signifying Nick's reality?

Keith M. Opdahl, in his work about emotions in literature, explains that the possible answers to the question of how the reader imagines a story are divided between the "propositionalists, who define thought in terms of idea (or word), and the imaginists, who insist we think in picture-like ways" (10). He offers an alternative third code--the affective code--based on emotion. This code allows us to go beyond the limitations of studies of how we read fiction centered on the image and emphasizes the importance of emotion in this process. In this chapter my interest has not been to argue with this code but to develop emotion as a key concept to understand how the reader imagines the text and how fiction is interpreted by us based on the emotions.

Although Opdahl's affective code has been the main influence on my understanding of the importance of emotion in the imaginative process in this chapter, my personal view is slightly different. While he affirms that "the imagination constructs the text *from* the emotions available to it" (125), I believe that the imagination constructs the text *through* the emotions evoked by the text. Emotion forces the interaction of the image and the idea within the multidimensional space where the emotion itself is evoked. It is within Hemingway's *image*--as this multidimensional

space--where the image evoked by Nick's actions and the reader's idea of Nick's traumatic experience can be conjugated. This conjugation is possible only *through* the emotion evoked by the *image* and not from the emotion. The *image* comes first to evoke the emotion, and it is only once the emotion is evoked that the signification process is initiated, and the idea contributed by the reader is conjugated with the image to reconstruct the story by imagination. Opdahl considers the emotion as something that remains unalterable once it has been evoked by the text in order to allow the definitive construction of the text. In my opinion, the emotion is not static but something that develops and changes through the entire process of the story's reconstruction. As Barthes points out, a text "is a multidimensional space where a variety of writings [...] blend and clash" (Death 876). The emotion that the writer wants to evoke through the text blends and clashes with the interpretation advanced by the reader of this initial (writer) emotion.

The writer "objectifies" his emotion--the one he wants to evoke in his text--in an *image* that will trigger an emotion in the reader, who will then interpret the emotion he feels. It is just through this development of the emotion that the conjugation of image and idea is made possible. The understanding of the dual ontological structure of Nick's reality is due to the role that emotion plays in the reconstruction by the imagination of this reality, and not to the emotion itself, understood as something unalterable. The imagination uses the emotion evoked by the story to conjugate image and idea, and it involves the reader's identity in this process within the final construction of the story's meaning. The emotion is not something objective that all the readers are going to receive in exactly the same way; the emotion is the key piece that will allow the development of a meaning based on the reception of it by a particular reader.

In Hemingway's fiction, it is not necessary to think in terms of images (imagine) or ideas (propositionalists) when we imagine the text, because the nature of Hemingway's writing

forces us to think about a different code: the code of the emotion. The emotion is evoked within the *image* displayed by a particular way of using language, but at the same time, the emotion is the one that allows for the final reconstruction of the story using the imagination. Both emotion and imagination are constantly interrelated, modifying and intensifying each other. The emotion evoked by the *image* will allow the reader to interpret it in terms of his identity and to signify the dual ontological structure of the story. It is through the imagination that the idea and the image are conjugated in the emotion that allows the final signification of the story. As Opdhal wonderfully emphasizes in his work, “[t]he story exists to give the reader an emotional reaction” (111). Only through this reaction is the reader able to develop the process of signification or reconstruction of the story. In essence, the reader reconstructs the text through the act of signifying emotions.

### 3.3. Conclusion

The use of imagination is the path that needs to be traveled to signify Nick’s reality. As human beings, we understand reality in the way that it affects us. We decode the emotions evoked by Nick’s actions in terms of our own life experiences; we understand the nature of his fishing trip by taking the character’s identity and experiencing it as our own. The important aspect of Hemingway’s writing is how he is able to provoke the involvement of the reader’s identity in the act of reading fiction. Hemingway’s style, as I explained, compels the reader’s involvement through the creation of a multidimensional space developed by a particular way of displaying language. He forces the reader to decode fiction as he decodes reality: in the way it affects him.

By reading this Hemingway story and through the act of identifying himself with Nick's identity, the reader is caught and forced into the process of *re-creating* a particular event of his own life. On one hand, the reader becomes Nick; on the other hand, the reader has to use his identity to contribute the idea of what a traumatic event is in order to signify Nick's reality. The reader signifies the evoked emotion by using an equivalent emotion that he has experienced in his life. He uses both Nick's actions and his own idea to develop the process that will make Nick's fishing trip understandable. As has been pointed out above, the story forces the reader to conjugate two different levels of the story: Nick's actions and Nick's traumatic experience. Through the conjugation of both levels or the reconstruction of the story by the imagination, the reader has the chance of re-signifying a traumatic event faced in his life because he has to use it to signify Nick's actions in his fishing trip.

In the act of reading and signifying this story, we enhance our sense of identity. It is the imagination that enables this growth of our identity. "Big Two-Hearted River" is a thought-provoking story where Hemingway demands everything from us but, at the same time, offers everything. By reading this story, we can discover the deepest aspects of our reality that have been hidden or lost in the storage of our memory. Nick forces us to look back to our memories in order to find something that can help us to signify his actions in the woods. During the exercise of reading this story, we feel that we are rebuilding old memories or even creating new ones, because "memories are formed and given consistency only through the working of imagination" (Arva 68).

We are interested in discovering the hidden side of reality. We want to shed light on this land that remains inaccessible to our knowledge. As in the case of the signification of Nick's reality, the imagination is the path that needs to be traveled to signify our reality, because "we

are who we are only by producing images of ourselves and our world through imagination” (Arva 70). An appealing mode for reaching some kind of understanding about our incomprehensible surroundings is to employ narrative fiction that forces us to use our imagination. “Big Two-Hearted River” is the perfect example of how Hemingway writes about the hidden depth of Nick’s soul, by demanding that the reader dive into his own soul in order to understand the story.

## CHAPTER 4: HEMINGWAY'S MULTIPLE VOICES IN RELATION TO RACE AND GENDER WITHIN HIS FICTION

Masculinity always seems to be at the center of Hemingway studies. The author has been traditionally defined as preoccupied and obsessed with the construction of white male identity. As Amy L. Strong emphasizes by quoting from Mark Spilka in Race and Identity in Hemingway's Fiction, Hemingway is seen as an author “who gave us male definitions of manhood to ponder, cherish, even perhaps to grow up by” (qtd. in Strong xii). His short stories and novels used to be read by underlining the powerful position of their male characters in contrast to the weak female figures, usually seen as a threat to them. But Hemingway's fiction offers us a much wider landscape of possibilities and invites alternative readings of his work, particularly when it comes to gender and race.

Hemingway's reputation has changed amongst scholars through time, especially after the release of such posthumous works as The Garden of the Eden. Also, the publication of books such as Nancy Comley and Robert Scholes' Hemingway's Genders, or the previously cited study by Strong, attest to an effort to revise the simplistic image of Hemingway as a racist, a misogynist, and a womanizer. Although it is unquestionable that gender is a constant concern in Hemingway's stories, these recent studies affirm that his female characters' complexity and individuality equal that of his male characters. Lawrence R. Broer and Gloria Holland emphasize this point in the introduction to their book, Hemingway and Women, when they state that they see the female characters “not as Hemingway accessories but as accomplished women, heroines in their own right, diverse and complete as individuals” (xiii). Hemingway's work offers the reader multiple interpretations of his stories in relation to gender or race. Our duty as readers is

to decode them by using our imagination and resisting or avoiding the stereotypes that surround his persona and work.

In the same way that there are multiple modes of reading Hemingway's stories, there are also a wide variety of readers for these stories. The audience is formed by different readers whose responses, internalizations of the story's structure, and guidelines for emotional response depend on their gender, race, sexuality, or culture. Whatever their background, these readers can find a gap to construct their personal interpretation. One of the most important aspects of Hemingway's stories is that they bring to the reader the possibility of establishing a vivid dialogue about their meanings. Based on the plurality of perspectives and different readings offered by these stories and the range of emotional responses evoked by them, the framework for a discussion is wide. Such dialogue between multiple perspectives can avoid the reductionist and dangerous way of understanding Hemingway's work and the controversies surrounding the writer's reputation.

#### *4.1. Space and the Emotion of Power in "Indian Camp" and "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife"*

The Nick Adams stories "Indian Camp" and "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" are the perfect scenario to open a dialogue about race and gender in Hemingway's fiction because these two particular stories have been frequently commented on and discussed by readers, critics, and theorists. These narratives have produced many discussions due, in part, to the different and many times contradictory responses that they provoke in their readers. For example, Strong argues that these two stories have been traditionally read as narrations of initiation between father and son where the figure of the Indians is viewed as complementing the character of Nick

(Race and Identity 16). Different scholars, such as Peter Hays, write about the Indians in terms of “trace elements” but never as major characters that achieve their agency by themselves, independently of the main white characters (6). By contrast, Strong claims the necessity of reading these stories as Hemingway’s effort “to address the tragic and unjust circumstances of Native Americans in twentieth-century America” (7).

Different codes such as race and gender are a delicate subject to talk about. People are emotionally linked to them and because of this, the emotional code (explained in the previous chapter) offers a richer analysis of the other codes involved in the story. The initial emotion that a particular story evokes in the reader leads him to think through a particular code, and the analysis of this code will allow us to question the different roles that the characters play in these stories. The study of the changes that the characters--and the roles they play--undergo throughout these two stories will show us the multiple voices related to gender and race.

These roles are not static but changeable according to the evolution of the plot. As Thomas Strychacz points out in his book, Hemingway’s Theaters of Masculinity, in relation to the story “Indian Camp,” “the role depends on how easily external factors (such as culture, class, medical experience, and so on) can be brought to bear on a particular situation” (58). In the stories “Indian Camp” and “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” space is an interesting external factor that bears on particular situations precipitating the change of the characters’ roles. Space, in Hemingway’s stories, is clearly racially divided. Symbolizing power, space serves as a liminal terrain negotiating the emotion of power or racial dominance evoked through these two stories. Space is not something static, but constantly negotiated. As Strong states in her article, “Screaming through Silence: The Violence of Race in ‘Indian Camp’ and ‘The Doctor and the

Doctor's Wife," "it is precisely the story's location that highlights the racial inequality between the two cultures" (21).

In both stories the physical space is defined at the very beginning. In "Indian Camp," it is a young Nick who asks: "Where are we going, Dad?" (Hemingway, Complete 67). He obtains a precise answer: "Over to the Indian Camp" (67). It seems that this is the first time that Nick goes to the camp, not physically distant from his own house, but very far away from his own culture. In "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," the spatial limits are defined in the first line of the story when we read: "Dick Boulton came from the Indian camp to cut up logs for Nick's father" (73). Now the three Indians (Dick, his son Eddy, and Billy Tabeshaw) undertake the opposite trip of the one made in "Indian Camp" by the three white people (Nick, his father, and Uncle George). The three Indians come *from* the Indian camp *down to* the white camp. This time, they are the ones who cross the boundaries of the others. This is precisely stated by the description of how they entered the Doctor's land: "They came in through the back gate out of the woods" (73). The fact that there is a gate implies ownership and an invasion of property.

White men believe in property, but Indians have a different opinion about the appropriate use of available resources. Thus, this interference in the others' spaces makes the characters feel alienated and confused. They remind each other when they are out of context and when they should leave. For instance, in the "Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," Dr. Adams asks Dick to leave three times, each time more aggressively: "If you think that the logs are stolen, leave them alone and take your tools back to the camp [...] All right. If you think that the logs are stolen, take your stuff and get out [...] Take your stuff and get out" (Hemingway, Complete 74). Space is neither common nor shared by both cultures; it is not only a physical barrier but also a mental one when it comes to interacting with each other. Space, therefore, is directly related to the change of roles

that the characters undergo in both stories, and the emotion of power and dominance that these situations evoke.

The contact between cultures is unavoidable. In “Indian Camp,” Dr. Adams, Nick, and Uncle George go to the Indian camp to help an Indian woman who is in labor. These three white men begin a journey through the river. Indians must row their boat in order to carry them there. This journey is not only physical but also metaphorical. Here, Dr. Adams and his companions seem to embody the figure of the classic hero who enjoys certain power and must travel to an “underworld”--the Indian camp--accessible only through waters, to confront death. Although in this case it is not the hero who is confronting death but an Indian woman; they are helping members of another race whose medical resources are not sufficient for the problem at hand: “She had been trying to have her baby for two days. All the old women in the camp had been helping her” (Hemingway, Complete 68). In this story, the white men achieve power and the role of dominator by crossing the boundaries of the Indian space.

Linda L. Helstern, in her article “Indians, Woodcraft, and the Construction of White Masculinity: The Boyhood of Nick Adams,” emphasizes that “‘Indian Camp’ is, first and foremost, a story about the power of medicine” (64). Although medicine represents the visible technological superiority of the white race, there is much evidence to suggest that this story is mainly about power or, more precisely, about the emotion of power or dominance that one race exerts over another. This emotion is, on the one hand, symbolically represented by space, and on the other hand, constantly negotiated through the interaction between the respective territories of Indians and whites. The limits between spaces do not only affect the physical or material boundaries explored in the stories, but also the immaterial or internal boundaries that divide the two racial identities presented in these stories. In the same way that the spatial boundaries are

negotiated, the emotion of racial power evoked through the stories is also negotiated, creating a constant tension that characterizes the manner in which these two races coexist in the larger geographic space of northern Michigan.

Maria Bullon-Fernandez explains further the idea of how some narrations explore the boundaries of private space using Chaucer's Canterbury Tales as an example. In "Private Practices in Chaucer's Miller's Tale," she states, "[t]here is a constant emphasis in the tale on how the different characters both create their own private spaces and transgress against those of others" (145). As Bullon-Fernandez explains, the immaterial sense of privacy is what belongs to the self and refers to one's mind and soul, while the material sense refers to one's private property and one's body (147). This explanation can also be applied to these short stories by Hemingway. For example, when the doctor performs the caesarian and crosses the material private boundaries of the Indian woman (her body), he is also crossing her immaterial private boundaries by coming to the rescue of the failing Indian medicine, a fundamental aspect of her Indian culture and identity.

As has been pointed out above, the physical space symbolizes the emotion evoked by the act of racial dominance. This act implies not only the invasion of the others' material private boundaries, but also the invasion of the others' immaterial private boundaries. When the white men arrive to the camp they give presents to the Indians: "Uncle George gave both the Indians cigars" (Hemingway, Complete 67); the cigars are not a form of payment for rowing them across, but a gift. This sign can be seen not as an altruistic gesture toward the Indians but as a "subtle, unequal dynamic of dominator/dominated" (Strong, Screaming 21). The constant juxtaposition of the two races (light/dark, clean/dirty, civilization/wilderness) constructs a mental barrier unavoidable for both sides. Therefore, the initial privileged position and the emotion of

power that the three white characters might feel when they arrive to the camp interacts with the emotions of shame or inferiority that the Indians might feel.

“Indian Camp” is clearly narrated from the white characters’ point of view. We do not read about the Indians’ feelings when receiving gifts, but only about Uncle George giving them. We don’t feel the pain of the woman in labor, or read about how the knife cuts her womb, but we perceive Dr. Adams cutting it and hearing the woman’s screams. As readers, we discover the Indians’ emotion of shame because they are introduced from the dominator’s perspective. The relation between the subject and the object is clearly presented through the white point of view. The whites are the observers and the Indians are the “thing observed” (Graham 18). The different emotions of dominator and dominated, as much as the different roles developed through these two stories, are directly related to “the active presentation of subject and object (observed and thing observed)” (18).

The roles that the white (dominator) and the Indian (dominated) assume are directly related to space or, more specifically, to the symbolic act of crossing the boundaries of the others’ private domain. The scene of Uncle George giving cigars represents the dominant position of the whites over the defenseless position of the Indians. Although the white man knows that the Indians cannot reciprocate the act of offering gifts, he presents the gift anyway, establishing his dominance through the act of gift-giving. It does not matter if the cigars represent the celebration of the future birth of the child or are simply a nice gesture. Uncle George is perfectly aware of the impossibility of having this gesture returned. His attitude is the perfect representation of the dominator, “who humiliates another by giving more than can be reciprocated” (Graham 21). In short, this is not an altruistic gesture but an act of dominance.

“Indian Camp” might be considered a racist story in the sense that it not only represents the white power over the Indian race but also appears to celebrate this emotion of white power evoked by the story. Such accusation is based, mainly, on a literal and isolated reading of the story. Its surface ideology and Hemingway’s use of language imply that the Indian race is dirty (“the room smelled very bad” [Complete 68]) and uncivilized (“she bit Uncle George... and... laughed at him” [68]). In the same way, white superiority and dominance over the Indian race is clearly pointed out in this particular story. Dr. Adams performs a caesarian on an Indian woman and states proudly: “That’s one for the medical journal, George [...] Doing a caesarian with a jackknife and sewing it up with nine-foot, tapered gut leaders” (69). With this sentence he is not only celebrating his achievement but also emphasizing that this operation will secure him the attention of the exclusively white medical community.

In the story, the emotion of power expressed by the use of a particular white, male discourse is compared with the emotions released in a dressing room after a successful football game, another form of white male recognition of power and physical superiority: “He was feeling exalted and talkative as football players are in the dressing room after a game” (Hemingway, Complete 69). It cannot be denied that Dr. Adams’ and Uncle George’s attitudes are focused on the display of their superiority. The masculine language used to convey their joyful sense of superiority clearly implies the power of one race over the other; as in the case of a football game, there are winners and losers. They show this emotion of dominance by using a very particular--white--discourse.

The discourse of power is used not only to celebrate or praise the dominance of one race over the other, but also to execute this power. As it has been pointed out above, the act of giving cigars to the Indians is a sign used to demonstrate the privileged position of the whites. Uncle

George and Dr. Adams use the discourse of power, but the Indians cannot reciprocate through the use of the same discourse because they are the dominated ones. By referring to the medical journal, Dr. Adams is adjusting his discourse of power to be sure that his sign (the caesarian) can signify within the communication that he maintains with the Indians. He has established the rules and, therefore, the act of communicating according to these rules implies that the Indians assume their role. They cannot answer Dr. Adams' comments; they cannot use the same discourse because they are incapable of using the language of the dominator. The Indians are forced to play the role of the dominated, and they thus fulfill the Western cultural stereotypes of Indians. They are doomed to follow the rules of the white men's discourse. The power of the discourse used by the dominator allows, on one hand, the constant interplay between the boundaries that are systematically broken in these two stories and, on the other hand, the change of roles that the characters experience.

When Uncle George arrives at the Indian camp, he is not only crossing the material private boundaries of the Indian space, he is also invading the immaterial private boundaries of the Indian race. By giving them cigars and knowing that he is not going to receive an equal gift in response, Uncle George is using a particular discourse to establish his position and to relegate the Indians to an inferior position based on his white superior role. Exactly in the same way, when Dr. Adams has successfully completed the caesarian and says that it has been a procedure worthy of an article in a medical journal, he is using the language of the white medical community to praise his surgery. He is judging his actions according to the parameters of a medical journal, a Eurocentric way of judging a medical operation that is radically different, if not antagonistic, to the traditional Indian mode of understanding the act of labor. In essence, he is judging the woman from a white man's perspective. Linda Helstern explains how screams of

labor are expected by the white readers from any laboring woman, but how this white gender mark runs contrary to the stereotype of the Indian able to withstand torture silently (66). White readers, then, use different parameters to judge the behavior of women from different races when giving birth a child; they change their point of view according to the race they are reading about. Hemingway, through the presentation of the event observed, is shaping our reception of the Indian woman character.

Dr. Adams is certainly proud of his accomplishment, but he does not think at any moment about the fact that he has saved the lives of two human beings--those of the Indian mother and her child. He judges his surgery in relation to the parameters that affect him and the white society of which he is a member. In this scene, "Dr. Adams asserts control over the Indian woman's body and the wilderness" (Strong, Race and Identity 57), and through the celebration of this control, he does not praise the power of medicine to save human lives, i.e., the power of healing, but the superiority of one race over another. Dr. Adams uses this discourse of power because his success in the medical procedure allows him to use the discourse of the dominator. On one hand, by using it he is celebrating his role of dominator, but on the other hand, by using this particular discourse he is crossing the immaterial private boundaries of the Indian race. Dr. Adams celebrates the action that has awarded him with the role of dominator in the context of a culture that has traditionally given this power--helping in the labor process of pregnant women; but in this particular situation the Indian medicine has clearly failed (Helstern 64). Therefore, like Uncle George's attitude, Dr. Adams' attitude in the Indian camp not only goes against the material private boundaries delineated by the physical space, but also against the immaterial private boundaries that define the identity of the Indian race.

In the stories “Indian Camp” and “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” the unequal dynamic of dominator/dominated and the emotion of racial power evoked slides in both directions. So far, we have examined the white power exerted over the Indian race, but there are several examples that suggest an inversion of these racial positions. The boundaries of space change, and therefore also the roles played by the characters. If the story “Indian Camp” is read in isolation, it might effectively qualify as racist; or more precisely, as mono-directional, since it shows only one side (that of the emotion of power evoked by the domination of the whites over the Indians). But, as was pointed out at the very beginning of this discussion, by reading Hemingway’s stories uncritically, we lose the possibility of discovering the multiple faces and voices that are hidden within these stories.

“The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife” offers new interpretations of the relationship between whites and Indians. This story, as Strong suggests, “[...] almost serves as a reply to the doctor’s Caesarian hubris in ‘Indian Camp,’ for here the roles between the white man and the Indian have been reversed” (Screaming 25). In this second story, the white man is placed in the weak position and the Indians are now the ones who assume the discourse of power, a discourse that they have adopted from the white man and use to dominate him. We can read this story from the new dominator perspective, which this time is the Indians’ point of view. Through the point of view change, Hemingway offers a new perspective to read about the coexistence of the two races.

In “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife” it is the white man who asks for help from the Indians. Dr. Adams finds his authority challenged when he invites the three Indians to his property to help him with several logs that are buried in the sand. He needs help for a physically demanding job that he is unable to perform. This lack of physical force results in his loss of

power. He is now the one who depends on the help of the others. Dick Boulton, taking advantage of the doctor's dependence, uses this new emotion of power to confront the doctor by adopting a new authoritative moral discourse learned from the whites: "Well, Doc, that is a nice lot of timber you've stolen" (Hemingway, Complete 74). Although the Doctor tries to justify himself by declaring the wood ownerless--"it's driftwood,"--Dick insists on the robbery and humiliates the white man: "Don't get huffy, Doc. I don't care who you steal from. It's none of my business" (74). In short, the doctor is unable either to maintain the role that he played in "Indian Camp" or the discourse he used before.

Once his companions wash the logs, Dick leans over to see the mark in the wood. "It belongs to White and McNally" (74), Dick says. He is using the discourse of property rights, one that Indians have not traditionally ascribed to, but that the white man uses to defend the value and boundaries of his property. The symbolic value of the logging company's name is important as well, and, as Strychacz points out, "The doctor has no ground to stand on because the ground is, morally speaking, not his; the fence around the garden is as morally indefensible as stealing the logs" (59). Although the defense of private property is a common feature of white logic, it becomes in this case the weapon that an Indian man uses to gain advantage over a white man.

When the doctor realizes that he cannot fight Dick verbally because he does not have the law on his side, he goes to the physical level and threatens him: "If you call me Doc once again, I'll knock your eye teeth down your throat" (Hemingway, Complete 74). Dr. Adams knows he is not able to win this fight; the reason he calls Dick and his companions in the first place is because he is not strong enough to cope with the logs alone. Thus, he can employ neither the discourse of rights nor physical force. As the dominated one, who cannot vent his anger in action, he is humiliated both mentally and physically: "They could see from his back how angry

he was” (74). Dick, a “half-blood,” is now the one who enjoys the position of the dominator and the emotion of power. Again, Hemingway uses a specific point of view to present the struggle between dominator and dominated. This time it is an Indian, Dick, who sees the other race as the “observed thing.” When the three Indians “watched him walk up the hill and go inside the cottage” (74), they observed the white race as the dominated one. Through this scene, Hemingway invites the reader to see the duality (dominator/dominated) exchange between these two races.

“Indian Camp” and “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife” are subtle stories in which the emotional coding runs in more than one direction (Comley and Scholes, Hemingway’s Genders 14). All these directions revolve around the emotion of power or racial dominance, which, as the stories show, is not always enjoyed by one side alone. We can find more than one trail to negotiate the space and its racial implications in Hemingway’s narrative. The roles of dominator and dominated are neither static nor definitive but changeable throughout the different racial conflicts that Hemingway’s stories depict.

#### *4.2. The Gender Negotiation in Hemingway’s Stories*

Not only are racial assumptions examined in Hemingway’s fiction, but also gender roles. In her article “Forget the Legend and Read the Work: Teaching Two Stories by Ernest Hemingway,” feminist critic Margaret Bauer draws attention to the multiple layers of meaning within his works that challenge preconceived notions about Hemingway the “monovocally masculine bullfight aficionado, boxer, hunter, deep-sea fisherman, and pitchman for Ballantine Ale and Khaki pants” (qtd. in Bauer 2). Women, at first sight, are depicted as one-dimensional

and secondary characters. But again, deeper readings of the texts suggest the contrary. In important ways, female characters help the reader to define male characters.

In “Indian Camp,” a woman in labor is the reason why the white men violate the private boundaries of the Indian family. Although she lies exposed and screaming through most of the story, there is little in her presentation that would keep a reader from perceiving in her a strong woman who survives a difficult labor and a cesarean section without anesthesia. Instead, we only read about it from Dr. Adams’ point of view: “But her screams are not important. I don’t hear them because they are not important” (Hemingway, Complete 68). Again, the white male point of view definitively presents the Indian woman within the parameters of Western stereotypes of Indians. This perspective, by relegating the woman to an observed object, initially obstructs a reader’s recognition of the Indian woman character as a strong woman who survives such a dangerous surgery. But this reductionist image of the Indian woman assumes additional importance when we compare her with her husband.

As Bauer states, “[t]he turn of events leads one to contrast this strength with her husband’s weakness: he kills himself, apparently, because he can’t take her pain” (4). This labor scene shows us the suffering of a husband unable to stand his wife’s pain: “The mother’s screams of pain have quite literally killed her husband” (Comley and Scholes, Hemingway’s Genders 27). But the fact should not be ignored that the mother’s screams are related not only to the pain of labor but also to the doctor’s surgical actions undertaken without anesthetic. Indeed, the curious parallelism between the doctor’s cutting of the woman and the husband’s cutting of his throat suggest that the Indian male decided to commit suicide not only because he could not stand to witness his wife’s suffering, but mainly because of the role played by the white doctor who “supplants the cultural and parental authority of the Indian father” (Strychacz 56). The

doctor's privileged position and his emotion of power--expressed through his dominator discourse--annuls the Indian male's paternal position and rights. The doctor is constantly crossing the Indians' material and immaterial private boundaries.

The Indian husband lies badly injured in the upper bunk, too handicapped to do anything to help his wife. He has to face the fact that a white man is going to heal his Indian wife. "The white doctor supplants the cultural and parental authority of the Indian father" (Strychacz 54). This emotion of power accruing to the doctor provokes an emotion of anger in the Indian that drives him to commit suicide. As Stuart Walton states in his book, A Natural History of Human Emotion, "[a]nger is very much a driving, compulsive force that encourages action of one sort or another" (45). The Indian's action is linked to the delirium caused by his extreme mental state. In his delirium, he prefers to kill himself rather than endure the humiliation provoked by the white doctor. But in doing so, he leaves a widow and an orphan behind. The Indian man commits an egoistic and selfish act when his humiliation incites him to commit suicide. As Linda Wagner points out, Hemingway characterizes male characters as adolescent, selfish, and misdirected, a fact that she views as "evidence of much sympathy on Hemingway's part of the women he portrays" (qtd. in Bauer 8).

Again in this scene we can see how the white man invades the Indian material private boundaries and simultaneously forces the action of invading the other's immaterial private boundaries. On one hand, Dr. Adams makes the Indian father lose control of his space (the cabin) where his wife will give birth. On the other hand, the doctor also forces the loss of the immaterial private boundaries of the Indian father by usurping his role as a father and, even more importantly, by destroying the traditional Indian way of having a baby. At the very beginning of the story, it is said that during the last two days the elder women of the tribe had been helping the

mother have her baby without positive results. The father, powerless, has to face not only losing his role as a father but also the realization “that the old customs are no longer valid and powerful anyway” (Strychacz 56). The father loses, at the same time, his gender and race identity.

Critics often cite “Indian Camp” as an example of Hemingway’s misogynist attitude, but there are many instances in the story that suggest otherwise. When a young Nick asks his father at the end of the story if many women commit suicide and he answers “Not very many Nick” (Hemingway, Complete 69), Hemingway “seems to be suggesting that women’s level of endurance is higher than men’s” (Bauer 7). Many different interpretations of this short story have been articulated. Some scholars, such as William Watson, argue that Dr. Adams is performing as a professional when he keeps reminding his son, “Her screams are not important. I don’t hear them because they are not important” (Complete 68). Watson does not consider Dr. Adams “to be insensitive for ignoring his patient’s screams, for had he allowed them to enter his consciousness, he could have lost this concentration and brought death instead of life to both the mother and the baby” (qtd. in Bauer 5). In contrast, it could be argued that Dr. Adams’ statement also suggests his complete indifference to the Indian woman’s pain. Not only does her pain not exist for him, but the woman herself does not exist to him as full human being. Yet the fact that the labor scene is presented through Dr. Adams’ white male point of view does not mean that this is the only possible interpretation of the story. As in the case of the multiples voices regarding race, the gender issue allows for, and even invites, different readings.

#### 4.3. Conclusion

The *image* of the Indian husband powerless under the white dominance, the *image* of Uncle George offering cigars, the *image* of Dr. Adams executing the caesarian and his

subsequent enthusiasm, or the *image* of Dick's discursive triumph over the doctor, evoke an emotion in the reader of these *images*. Although these *images* are presented from a particular point of view that shapes for us, as readers, how we encounter the different characters, the emotions evoked by these *images* will be different according to the readers. For example, while the *image* of Dr. Adams might evoke an emotion of power in a white male reader, it might provoke an emotion of anger in a female reader. The important aspect of these stories is that the reader will be "concentrated in the emotion rather than on the motivating force" (Graham 19); even more important is that these emotions can vary according to different readers. It is precisely this emotional code that allows the dialogue based on the possible alternative readings that these two stories generate.

We have been compelled to read these stories in a racial and gender code. We interpret the stories in terms of racial or gender dominance because the emotions evoked by the stories lead us to construct the meaning of these emotions according to the unequal dynamic of dominator/dominated. We are familiar in our daily lives with the human struggle to achieve power. We understand the role of superiority or powerlessness that everybody has experienced in his life in one way or another. This confrontation is not something strange for us, and we easily can identify ourselves with these roles and the emotions evoked by the original situation.

Yet the fact that we are able to identify with these emotions does not mean that we agree with the attitude of Uncle George, Dr. Adams, the Indian couple, or Dick Boulton; it simply means that these stories are able to evoke in the reader a particular emotion of racial or gender dominance or inferiority. Our construction of the final meaning of the story will depend on our initial identification with one role or another. The final meaning will depend on the reader's emotion and how he gives meaning to it. If we initially identify ourselves with the role of the

dominator, we will experience a more direct emotion of power or superiority, but if we identify ourselves with the role of the dominated, we are more likely to feel the emotions of anger, shame, or powerlessness. Only through this initial emotion of racial or gender struggle evoked in the story are we in the position of analyzing the different roles played by these characters. It is only through the reader's emotion that we are able to discover the changes of these roles and the new voices that are hidden within the interrelationships of the two races and the two sexes, and the constant struggle for power that defines them.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

I was nine years old the first time I went to see a bullfight with my grandfather in Pamplona. Once inside the bullring, we took our places close to the arena. I contemplated for awhile the row of seats filled mostly with men smoking big cigars and talking solemnly to each other. Finally, I stared at my grandfather. He moved his head pointing to the small door from which the bull had to come into the ring, and he said: “The bullfighter will be waiting for him. You only have to watch them. That’s all.” The bull came out and silence reigned. There are no more memories from that afternoon. I only remember some sort of powerful emotion watching the animal and the man in the ring. I was a child. I was aware that the man in the ring was risking his life, but, at that point, I am not sure if I was completely aware of the whole meaning of death.

That afternoon in Spain when I was nine years old, I had not heard the name of Hemingway, and my interest in literature was confined to reading Spanish comics of doubtful quality. Many years have passed since then, I have seen many more bullfights, I have come to enjoy literature, and now find myself writing the conclusion of a thesis based on Hemingway’s work--ironically an American writer interested in bullfights. This anecdote of my childhood is apparently unrelated to why I decided to write this thesis. But as I think more about it, I find an interesting parallelism between these two facts that offer me a clear explanation of my interest in Hemingway.

The first time I felt deeply moved by Hemingway’s style was after reading his short story “Big Two-Hearted River.” Although I was not familiar with his work and did not completely understand the meaning of this story, I experienced an emotion that made me think about where the power of this story came from. I tried to find an explanation for the origin of this emotion, and the only logical answer that I could come up with pointed to the protagonist’s actions. As in

the bullfight, a simple action was able to evoke an emotion. Neither in my first time in the bullring, nor in my first time reading “Big Two-Hearted River,” did I reach an understanding, but both times I experienced some sort of powerful emotion.

In Ralph Ellison’s collection of essays, Shadow and Act, there is an interesting response to T. S. Eliot’s poem “The Waste Land” in relation to jazz. Ellison points out Eliot’s power of guiding us as readers, without the necessity of understanding all the allusions or intellectual references in the poem: “I was intrigued by its power to move me while eluding my understanding” (159). In the same way, Hemingway is able to guide his readers toward powerful emotions without the necessity of understanding all the allusions or references in his stories. For example, “Big Two-Hearted River” is a simple story where the protagonist goes on a fishing trip. The first time I read this story, I did not know anything about the author’s biography. I did not relate the protagonist’s actions to Hemingway’s private life. I simply read the actions, and these actions evoked an emotion that brought me an intense experience. The same magical process happened in my first time at the bullfights where I did not understand the whole dimension of the interaction between bull and bullfighter, but the sequence of simple actions was able to transmit to me a remarkably intense experience.

In his essay about Dante’s poetry, T. S. Eliot maintains that “genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood” (Eliot 209). Like the bullfight and “genuine poetry,” Hemingway’s stories are able to communicate before they are understood by the reader. Hemingway does not name the emotions that the characters experience in his stories. He simply communicates them to the reader. Hemingway narrates actions in his stories and these actions evoke emotions. It is not necessary to understand these emotions, but it is necessary to feel them. The reader is going to experience them while reading the story, exactly as the spectator of a

bullfight is going to feel a powerful emotion if he has the good luck to witness the interplay between a wild bull and a real bullfighter.

As I have tried to point out, there is a feature that joins bullfights and Hemingway's writing. It is the capacity to create an action to communicate an emotion. But even more curious and remarkable is the fact that Hemingway began to develop this art by watching bullfights in Spain. As he recalls in his work, Death In The Afternoon, "I was trying to learn to write, commencing with the simplest things" (2); he found in the bullfights certain definitive action that gave him the feeling of life and death that he was working toward. In the summer of 1923, Hemingway traveled to Pamplona to see bullfights, looking for subjects that allowed him to write in the simple way that he was pursuing. Hemingway experienced in the bullring of Pamplona a powerful emotion, exactly as I had in the same place when I was nine years old. There, Hemingway found reinforcement for his idea about the importance of the action to evoke emotions, and so did I, reading one of his stories many years later.

It is precisely this magical process of communicating and evoking emotions without the necessity of understanding them that moved me to work on the relation between Hemingway's capacity to create actions--i.e. *images*--and emotions, both those evoked in his stories and those experienced by readers. I firmly believe that Hemingway is one of the best authors when it comes to the craft of writing. He puts down in actions what really happens in the story and evokes the emotion that we experience as readers. When it comes to bullfighting, I always remember my grandfather's words: "That's all." I simply relax and wait for the emotion that sometimes a bull and a bullfighter can evoke in the ring. Only the really good bullfighters are able to create this process of communication with the spectators; in the same way, only superior

writers such as Hemingway are able to evoke these emotions in us that we can hardly ever explain, but that provoke unforgettable experiences.

One of the aspects that fascinates me about fiction is the possibility of bringing new perspectives and new light to our often routine life. When we open a book, we embrace the opportunity of feeling and discovering--or even rediscovering--new emotions. From my particular point of view, this is the gift that fiction brings us. In this thesis I have gone deeper into my understanding of the place that fiction, and its capacity to evoke emotions, has in our lives. As Viktor Shklovsky explains with his famous concept of defamiliarization, “[A]rt exists to help us recover the sensation of life; it exists to make us feel things, to make the stone *stony*” (qtd. in Scholes, Structuralism 83). By reading fiction we can experience again the same emotion that we once experienced earlier in our lives. We tend to read the protagonist’s experiences in terms of our own experiences. This process does not only bring us the opportunity to rediscover events of our life that seem forgotten, but also to discover a new dimension in our own lives that had remained obscured until then.

In the pages of this work I have tried to illuminate how Hemingway uses language to evoke emotions in his stories, how readers internalize these emotions, and how they affect not only readers’ identity but also their understanding of such larger social issues as gender and race from new perspectives that are necessary for improving the world we live in. I think that the study of the relationship between fiction and emotion can provide us with interesting forms of knowledge, that will help us discover new aspects of human life. I firmly believe that the research on emotion and literature can tell us much about social differences and the cultures in which we live. I think that the study of the interrelation between emotion and literature will shed

light on the task that art plays in the construction of human identity as part of a culture that, using Clifford Geertz's thought, shares a way of thinking, feeling, and believing.

In the process of writing this thesis I have enjoyed the study of Hemingway's career as a writer of fiction, but overall, I have come to understand something that a couple of years ago was simply an intuition of mine. Now I feel confident about the importance of emotions in fiction and the fact that stories should be "shown" rather than "told." Hemingway's stories are full of *images* which offer us endless unforgettable and intense experiences. Hemingway's fiction has been for me a good place to begin the study of why human beings feel compelled to immerse themselves in narrative fiction. The act of opening a book is daily repeated all over the world, and by studying the reason for this almost instinctive act, we have a chance to deepen our understanding of human nature.

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