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HEMINGWAY'S NICK ADAMS STORIES: A PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

BY

HAROLD MACGREGOR ARTHUR

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

1968

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH THESIS

OF

HAROLD MACGREGOR ARTHUR

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UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

1968

ABSTRACT

This study is limited in scope to an analysis of the twelve Nick Adams stories. They are viewed as a microcosmic unit of Hemingway's short fiction and represent the cohesive portrayal of one character's development through the formative years of youth and young manhood. The similarity of the background and environment of Nick Adams to that of Ernest Hemingway has raised the issue of autobiography; psychology-oriented critics have suggested the theme of castration. If Hemingway's fiction is autobiographical, a close study of the Nick Adams stories should lead to a better understanding of Hemingway and his literary motivations.

The subject matter of the Nick Adams stories is concentrated, either directly or indirectly, on inter-familial conflicts. Nick's interactions are largely with father-figures or substitute father-figures; mother-figures, with a few important exceptions, are notably absent. The method adopted for this study is to examine carefully Nick's reactions to the significant characters with whom he interacts and to interpret the meaning for him of these experiences in psychological terms. This approach requires both a rearrangement of the Nick Adams stories into chronological order, and a separate study of the maturational development of children in the literature of psychoanalysis. A comparison of Nick Adams' conflicts with the emotional conflicts which a normal child must surmount in passing through the various stages of mental development reveals Nick's apparent fixation at the Oedipal stage of development and its accompanying fear of castration.

The major findings which emerge from a careful analysis and psychological interpretation of these stories confirms the suggestions of psychology-oriented critics that a major theme in the work of Hemingway is a symbolic fear of castration. The significance of this theme is demonstrated by the intellectual and emotional confusion it creates for Nick. The subject of Nick's fear is also the object of his deep affection because of the paternal care and the years of companionship he shared hunting and fishing with his father.

The conclusion of this study corroborates the hypothesis that Hemingway's Nick Adams is the victim of psychic impotence created by a symbolic fear of castration. In these stories Nick's nostalgic return to a past filled with ambiguities, confusion, alienation and death is evidence of his feelings of ambivalence and immobilization over his unsuccessful attempts to resolve his conflict.

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I

The premise of this thesis is controversial. It is based on the hypothesis that Hemingway's Nick Adams is the victim of psychic impotence caused by an unresolved Oedipus complex. The study is limited to those twelve stories in which Nick Adams is the protagonist. In this interpretation, the theme which runs through the stories is the effect on Nick's life of a repressed fear of castration by his father. The result for him is immobilization caused by ambivalent feelings toward a father he both fears and loves. Evidence for this hypothesis can be found by careful documentation of Nick's nostalgic return to the events of his youth, in an unsuccessful attempt to resolve his conflict.

This hypothesis is difficult to prove because the conflict is expressed in terms of Freudian symbols. The subject matter is so distasteful that almost any other interpretation might be considered preferable, especially because of Hemingway's status as a major literary figure. The sample is admittedly small but it is believed the conclusions can be applied successfully to the remaining short stories and the novels, although this is outside the scope of the present study.

Hemingway has been regarded as a spokesman for the "lost generation," but his influence may be due in part to the unconscious recognition by his readers of the symbolic expression in his writing of the universal theme of the fear of castration. Otto Fenichel, M. D., makes many references to the source of such anxiety:

> The idea that one's own instinctual demands might be dangerous (which is the ultimate basis of all psychoneurosis) is rooted in this fear. In this way do fantastic anxieties of physical destruction originate. The most important representative of this group is castration anxiety,

> which eventually becomes the main motive for the defense activities of the ego.[1]

In "Indian Camp," "The Battler," "The Killers," and "A Way You'll Never Be," we shall see that Nick is preoccupied and terrorized by fantasies of physical destruction.

A close reading of the Nick Adams stories reveals Hemingway's intense interest in inter-familial conflicts. They concern Nick's relationship with his father or his mother, or are stories about his father and mother. Some stories describe Nick's problems with girls; most deal with his struggles with authority-figures. The problems presented are ambiguous and leave Nick in an emotional "bind" from which he cannot escape. The result for him is immobilization and disillusionment. Using the Nick Adams stories as a microcosmic unit of Hemingway's fiction, this study will show that Nick's ambivalence is an outgrowth of the ambiguous family situation which prevents a normal resolution of the Oedipal conflict. In these stories we find an almost irresistible gravitation toward the faulty family constellation which creates an environment inimical to Nick's normal maturation.

In the early episodes Hemingway delineates for us within the family context, the parental weaknesses and lack of unity which failed to provide the example of strength necessary for Nick to progress beyond the Oedipal conflict. In the middle stories Nick creates for himself an environment which he peoples with substitute authority-figures to whom he makes the same responses he originally made to his parents in an effort to achieve a belated mastery over his anxieties. Rather

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[1] Otto Fenichel, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York, 1945), p. 44.

than a collection of episodes, the Nick Adams group is a thematic structure of distorted family relationships which builds up to a surprising denouement in "A Way You'll Never Be." What emerges in these stories is an emotional description in symbolic terms of ambivalence, alienation, and disillusionment as Nick relives his past with its traumatic events. The tragedy for Nick is that such inappropriate responses cannot relieve his anxiety nor solve his problem. In the last three stories Nick makes a tenuous adjustment when he is able partially to repress the dangerous Oedipal material. It is the purpose of this study to trace the covert castration fear through the Nick Adams stories and to spell out in detail the meaning for Nick of his nostalgic return to the past.

A major problem, in an analysis of this sort, arises over the question, which is inevitably raised, of the degree to which Hemingway is identifying with his characters. It is difficult to tell when an author is speaking from his aesthetic motivation or his own psychic experiences. In their analysis of Hemingway's work, critics recognize various autobiographical aspects of a psychic struggle with the self. Andre Maurois has written: "Nick Adams is the hero created by Hemingway to depict himself" and again, "He wanted to purge himself of violence by expressing it," and feels that "the child and the man had seen too much."[2] Philip Young calls Nick a "wounded man" and attributes a psychic wound to the traumatic events Nick has suffered or witnessed. He believes the explosion and actual physical wound at Fossalta was

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[2]Andre Maurois, "Ernest Hemingway," Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker (New York, 1961), p. 39.

the climax to these events resulting in a compulsive return to the unhappy events of his youth.[3]

Earl Rovit thinks, "Hemingway wrote his fictions out of a research into himself, trusting to the shock of emotional recognition to tell him when he had located that self."[4]

Constance Montgomery in her interview with a life-long neighbor of the Hemingway's in Michigan has confirmed the existence of an unhealthy parental relationship to be a fact of life in Hemingway's youth. Mrs. Wesley Dilworth described Mrs. Hemingway as she knew her when Ernest was growing up:

> She studied grand opera, but gave it up to marry Doctor Hemingway. She always talked about giving up her career to have children. She thought she was like Madame Schumann-Heink. She gave music lessons. A girl always took care of the children. Doctor Hemingway did also, and you never saw Mrs. Hemingway with the children, it was always the doctor.[5]

A former nurse described Hemingway's unhappy home life by telling of the constant household disorder, with Dr. Hemingway having to do most of the cooking. She asserted, "He'd fix the kid's breakfast and then give the Mrs. her breakfast in bed."[6]

It is significant that Hemingway has revealed in the two

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[3]Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration (University Park and London, 1966), p. 165.

[4]Earl Rovit, Ernest Hemingway (New Haven, 1963), p. 166.

[5]Constance Cappel Montgomery, Hemingway in Michigan (New York, 1966), p. 72.

[6]Montgomery, p. 81.

earliest stories the wellspring of his literary motivation, the desire for and fear of identification with the father. Through many changes of plot and scene he returns in nostalgia to this basic conflict which is intensified by the reversal of roles between parents.

Joseph DeFalco directs attention to Hemingway's device of externalizing Nick's inner attitudes by means of symbolic reflections and points out that, "one of the most important symbolizations takes the form of a ritualization of a familiar activity, thereby objectifying the intense struggle of the characters in their attempt to find a solution of their inner turmoil."[7]

While the major critics present the issue of autobiography, psychology-oriented critics in recent articles suggest the theme of castration. John Thompson in his review of A. E. Hotchner's book, Papa Hemingway, refers to Hemingway's "repetition of his one basic theme, the search for and inevitable loss of some token of masculine display . . . some material he could perfectly control. This was precisely all material that presented fears of castration, scenes of symbolic castration . . . that he had in a symbolic or real way actually suffered a castration."[8]

David Gordon remarks, "The psychological critics of Hemingway have come to focus on the father-and-son theme and the theme of

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[7]Joseph DeFalco, The Hero in Hemingway's Short Stories (Pittsburgh, 1963), pp. 15-16.

[8]John Thompson, "Poor Papa," The New York Review of Books (April 28, 1966) pp. 6-7.

castration."[9] While Stephen A. Reid refers to "this symbolic castration [which] is the ultimate aim of the [bull] fight."[10]

As background for an understanding of the Oedipal fixation, implied by the theme of castration in this study, a normal maturational development is described by Dr. Irene Josselyn in Psychosocial Development of Children. The chapter on the Oedipal period traces the child's growth away from the emotional state of primary narcissism towards a "love of both parents without discrimination . . .:"

> The child loves the persons who have been the source of his security and pleasure. Normally it turns with greater intensity to the parent of the opposite sex . . . and the parent of the same sex becomes a rival. Because of the rival parent's obvious power over the child and because the child wishes to be loved by this rival, the situation as sensed by the child is fraught with danger. A boy recognizes these feelings only on an unconscious level yet he sees his father as a dangerous rival. He is strong and is potentially if not actually punitive. He can destroy that which is most important at this time--the small child's masculinity. The boy fears castration at the hands of his father . . . . The fear of retaliation for his hostile feelings at the hands of the father is only one aspect of the conflict that creates anxiety and confusion for the boy. He also wishes to be loved by the father so as to preserve the previous gratification. The healthy solution is to identify with the father and incorporate the father's goals and standards into his own pattern of behavior . . . . The boy's incorporation of the pattern of the father . . . is for the most part unconscious.

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[9]David Gordon, "The Son and the Father: Patterns of Response to Conflict in Hemingway's Fiction," Literature and Psychology, XVI (1966), p. 8.

[10]Stephen A. Reid, "The Oedipal Pattern in Hemingway's 'The Capital of the World'," Literature and Psychology, XV (1965), pp. 70-78.

The reasons motivating the incorporation make it too dangerous to remain a conscious pattern.[11]

A demonstration of unity between the parents helps a boy's incorporation of the father-image and releases him from the intensity of relationships aroused by the domestic triangle. He can become socialized and find release for competitive feelings in cooperating with others. A boy, such as Nick Adams, denied a normal development can remain trapped in the emotional "bind" of the family triangle. His return to the emotional problems created by such a triangle can be an attempt to break out of the trap.

In this chapter the theme has been identified as Nick's irresistible return to an unsolved Oedipal conflict which brings with it a concommittant fear of castration. The universality of this phenomenon and its normal repression has been described by Dr. Fenichel. The question of the degree of Hemingway's identification with his character, Nick Adams, has been raised, and the opinions of some critics noted. The normal maturational development through the Oedipal stage has been noted for comparison.

This thesis is limited to an analysis of the twelve Nick Adams stories from Hemingway's short fiction. They are the cohesive portrayal of the development of one character and show the underlying pattern of Nick's ambivalence towards his father and the boy's resulting immobilization. Noteworthy is the fact that they were written in approximately the order in which they are presented here but were mixed in

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[11] Irene M. Josselyn, Psychosocial Development of Children (New York, 1961), pp. 64-67.

among Hemingway's other short stories in three volumes which spanned a period of eighteen years. The explication of the following stories will support the hypothesis that Nick's nostalgic return is to the unresolved Oedipal conflict and its resulting fear of castration.

II

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the crippling effect of the inter-familial conflict on Nick and to evidence its development in three stories. The beginnings of castration fear appear in "Indian Camp" as Nick fears castration for himself on an unconscious level when he identifies with one of the characters. In "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" Nick recognizes castration in relation to his father's impotent response to a domineering wife. In "Ten Indians" Nick sees himself as the object of castration as his father separates him from the object of his adolescent love.

In "Indian Camp"[12] we see the initial pairing of the Oedipal longing with the fear of castration in the mind of Nick Adams. The special situation provided by a surgeon-father skilled in the use of a knife accentuates in an abnormal manner the early fantasy of bodily harm which is conjured up for the boy Nick. In this story Hemingway concentrates on the problems raised for Nick by his father, Dr. Adams.

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[12]Ernest Hemingway, The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 91.

All references to the Nick Adams stories will be from the above text; page numbers from this edition will be cited within the text.

Seven of the twelve Nick Adams stories were first published in the United States by Boni and Liveright in 1925 with eight other stories under the title In Our Time, following a limited version published in Paris in 1923. The Boni and Liveright text included "Indian Camp," "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," "The End of Something," "The Three Day Blow," "The Battler," "Cross Country Snow," and "Big Two-Hearted River."

Three hitherto unpublished Nick Adams stories, "Ten Indians," "The Killers," and "Now I Lay Me," appeared in Men Without Women, published in 1927 by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The remaining two Nick Adams stories, "A Way You'll Never Be," and "Fathers and Sons," first appeared in Winner Take Nothing, published in 1933 by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Nick accompanies his parent to an Indian settlement where the doctor delivers an Indian woman of a baby by Caesarian section with a jacknife and without anesthesia. The woman's husband who has been injured, has lain in a bunk above his screaming wife for two days. Nick, who appears to be a boy about six years old, participates in the operation by holding a basin while Uncle George and three women hold the mother until the baby has been born. When all is over the doctor discovers that the husband has fatally cut his throat with a razor, all but severing his head.

Hemingway draws heavily on his own background for the material in his stories. Constance Cappel Montgomery has visited Michigan and written of those early years trying to identify the people and locations in Hemingway's Michigan stories. She found many of the characters were recognizable by people still living in the area, although changed to suit the author's purposes. The settings Hemingway described could be seen in exact detail. Mrs. Montgomery has established the existence of an Ojibway Indian camp on the site of an abandoned lumber mill near the Hemingway cottage.[13] Dr. Hemingway, often accompanied by his son Ernest, tended the Indian families there. A Caesarian and suicide are unknown to either Hemingway's family or to old residents of the area according to Mrs. Montgomery, and were undoubtedly added by Hemingway for his own artistic purposes. It is a most revealing addition for it discloses in the earliest story the central core of Nick's inner conflict, the feelings of ambivalence toward the parent he both loved and feared

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[13]Constance Cappel Montgomery, Hemingway in Michigan (New York, 1966), pp. 57-59.

with an intensity which he would never resolve.

Philip Young concentrates on what he regards as the effect on Nick's character of the violence and death he has witnessed, but Hemingway employs this device only to highlight what he is picturing for us. Hemingway is revealing Nick's unconscious antithetical feelings toward his father, and this is the real subject of "Indian Camp." He had shown a smug, bragging man with the technical competence to perform surgery with a jacknife, and who would not hesitate to do so regardless of the feelings of the patient:

> "Oh, Daddy, can't you give her something to make her stop screaming?" asked Nick.
> "No. I haven't any anaesthetic," his father said. "But her screams are not important. I don't hear them because they are not important." (92)

Hemingway then humbles the doctor-father with the discovery of the husband's suicide and its effect on Nick:

> "I'm terribly sorry I brought you along, Nickie," said his father, all his post-operative exhilaration gone. "Its an awful mess to put you through." (94)

In analyzing this story there is one interpretation, albeit startling, which may fit the facts perfectly. The story can be seen as a classic example of the expression of a boy's fear of castration at the hands of the father.

The father-figure who is a doctor with a jacknife, shows absolutely no mercy or feelings, as he fails to hear the screams of his patient. With indications of great pleasure and pride, he removes from a mother-figure, projected onto an Indian woman,the representation of a boy's Oedipal longing to have a child by his mother. The boy-figure is projected onto the Indian husband. His virtual beheading represents retaliatory castration. Because of his equally important need for love

from, and dependence upon the father, the boy, Nick, sees only two choices for life; symbolic castration or submission to and identification with the aggressor father-figure. Nick chooses submission and security and as they row back across the lake in the early morning "he felt quite sure he would never die." This regression to an earlier stage of complete dependence on the father is exemplified in the childish conversation and the flight from death to nature as Nick trails his hand in the warm water. His fear is revealed as he asks his father, "Do many men kill themselves, daddy?" and "Is dying hard, daddy?"

Nick understands neither the origin nor the nature of the feelings so poignantly revealed in "Indian Camp." For fifteen years Dr. Adams will be the most important person in Nick's life. His ambivalent feelings toward his father are the source of the conflict, the psychic wound below the level of consciousness. The antithetical emotions of love and fear are the sources of the disillusionment. This antithesis acts as a nostalgic magnet which is to pull Nick back to the events of his youth in an effort to understand and work out his unresolved conflict. Nick's whole effort represents his valiant struggle to come to terms in the present with this source of pain and disillusionment in the past.

The two-sided nature of Nick's problem is shown in the second of the Nick Adams stories, "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife." The story divulges the other source of the confusion which plagues Nick during those formative years; the conflict between his parents. Parental unity as a model to emulate is almost completely lacking for Nick. He could hardly have known with which parent he should identify:

his father who acted like a mother or his mother who acted like a father. This story shows his father's cowardice in not standing up to people in his own defense, including his mother. This results in Nick's emotional inability to identify with his father in areas other than hunting and fishing.

This story concerns an argument between the doctor and an Indian he has hired to cut logs. Carlos Baker substantiated that such an incident did occur. He wrote:

> "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" is virtually a playback between Dr. Hemingway and a half-breed Indian sawyer on the shore of Walloon Lake in the summer of 1912, with the youthful Ernest Hemingway as an interested onlooker. This is proved by a letter from his father to Ernest, written some thirteen years after the event.[14]

We can assume that Hemingway is drawing on the people and locations from his own background to show us a thirteen year old Nick faced with the identity crisis of adolescence.

The story has two action sequences. The first concerns the interaction, presumably in Nick's presence, between Nick's father and Dick Boulton, the Indian. The second demonstrates faulty communication between Nick's father and mother. In the first sequence Hemingway raises a moral issue about Dr. Adams' actions and treats it ambiguously. In the second Nick takes a definite position against the mother. Hemingway presents the argument between the father and the Indian in such an equivocal manner that the author hinders a clear evaluation by the reader of the ethics involved. There are logs covered with sand on the shore which have drifted there from the log booms being towed

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[14]Carlos Baker, "A Search for the Man as He Really Was," The New York Times Book Review (July 26, 1964), p. 14.

by the mill steamer. Nick's father wants the Indians to cut them up for firewood for the Adams' camp. If the crew from the steamer could spot them they would be towed back to the mill. If left in the sand unnoticed they would rot. This is the ethical problem which Hemingway has posed. Boulton, the Indian, takes the position that the logs are the property of the mill, while the doctor believes they are his for the taking. The Indian, a large powerful man of superior strength, accuses the doctor in a belittling manner of stealing. The doctor is exposed as a bluffer and a coward when he fails to make good his threat to force Boulton off his property. Yet Hemingway is careful to protect the doctor by showing that his refusal to fight is based on the logic of overwhelming force rather than fear. In presenting this equivocal position Hemingway raises questions for us about the doctor's ethics and courage, but makes it almost impossible for us to pass judgement on him. The reader's confusion on this ethical problem suggests what must have been Nick's feelings. He loves his father but his father's lack of ethics and courage must of necessity hinder his identification with him.

The remaining action in the story deals with the relationship between the doctor and his wife. Hemingway clearly shows us that the doctor cannot communicate with his wife and expect an understanding response from her as he is unable to explain to her his defeat at the hands of Boulton. He apparently finds it impossible to stand up to her in his own defense so he tells her a distorted version of the episode in which Boulton's motives are attributed to his debt to the doctor. Nick's mother is described as a Christian Scientist married to a doctor. She is lying in her room in the middle of the day with the

blinds drawn. The conflict between the doctor and his wife represents a clash of personalities in which the father suffers another defeat. Yet here again the doctor is presented in ambiguous terms. He is shown to be trapped in a situation where communication on an adult level is virtually impossible.

Hemingway sets the stage for the interchange by describing the doctor's irritation at discovering a pile of his medical journals on his bedroom floor with their wrappers still on. Presumably Hemingway is telling us that the wife had failed to call the doctor's attention to their arrival or had withheld them. This indication of her unsympathetic attitude toward her husband and his profession is heightened by the subtle discovery that they have separate rooms. Lying on her bed she calls to the doctor who is cleaning his gun on his own bed:

> "Henry," his wife called. Then paused a moment. "Henry."
> "Yes," the doctor said.
> "You didn't say anything to Boulton to anger him did you?"
> "No," said the doctor. . . .
> "Remember, that he who ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city," . . .
> "What was the trouble about, dear?"
> "Nothing much."
> "Tell me, Henry. Please don't try and keep anything from me. What was the trouble about?"
> "Well, Dick owes me a lot of money for pulling his squaw through pneumonia and I guess he wanted a row so he wouldn't have to take it out in work."
> His wife was silent . . . . Then he heard his wife's voice from her darkened room. [Evidence of separate rooms]
> "Dear, I don't think, I really don't think that anyone would really do a thing like that."
> "No?" the doctor said.
> "No. I can't really believe that anyone would do a thing of that sort intentionally."
> The doctor stood up and put the shotgun in the corner behind the dresser. (101-102)

During their conversation the doctor is sitting on his bed cleaning his shotgun, pushing in the magazine and pumping the shells out on

to the bed again. This symbol of frustration and/or covert aggression reinforces the disclosure of the non-communicative relationship revealed in the dialogue between the father and mother.

Hemingway leaves us to infer that Nick has heard the conversation through the open bedroom window, and that the boy is disturbed as he sees the two significant persons in his life working at cross purposes. It must have seemed to Nick that his mother talked down to his father in clichés, as a parent would to a child, and that his father replied inappropriately and hopelessly as a child would to a powerful authority-figure. The implication for the development of Nick's character is that parental lack of unity encourages the boy to promote the rivalrous situation by choosing his father over his mother. This family schism tends to perpetuate the fixation at the Oedipal level. Nick's wish to go with his father in search of black squirrels rather than to his mother, when she requests her son's presence, is a clear rejection of the mother figure in his life, rather than a healthy identification with his father.

The third story in the sequence, "Ten Indians," is an elaboration of the castration theme and its effect on Nick, a reinforcement of the fears originally symbolized in "Indian Camp." In this story Nick's father demonstrates for him that relationships with women are fraught with disillusionment and that women are untrustworthy and undependable. Joe Garner, on the other hand, demonstrates diametrically opposite attitudes toward women and sex. This is part of the essential ambiguity which Hemingway shows us as he compares the friendly interchange and communication about girls among the members of the Garner family with the implied censure by Dr. Adams of any possible sexual

escapade. We are shown a normal relaxed family environment opposed to a tense overly critical one. In one case a whole family enjoys a holiday together while in the other, father, son, and mother go their separate ways.

Hemingway wants to disclose the relationship between Nick and his father with respect to Nick's Indian girl friend, Prudence Mitchell. He leads into this subject by describing a ride home from a Fourth of July outing with the Garner family in their horse-drawn wagon. Nine drunken Indians have been encountered; not stated is the fact that Prudie is the tenth Indian. Subtly, Hemingway shows us that Nick's father equates her with evil. The very choice of the name Prudence is ironical as she is neither a prude nor prudent as later developments show.

The Garners, with their banter about Prudie, demonstrate the normal pattern of communication in a family able to express itself openly and with humor. The roles of Joe Garner and his wife are clearly differentiated and non-ambiguous without prudishness. Notably absent on this Fourth of July holiday is any mention of Nick's mother. We sense that she is absent from home since Nick refuses Mrs. Garner's invitation to supper because his father would be waiting supper for him at home. The difference between the families is highlighted by the naturalness of Mrs. Garner's request for Nick to tell Carl his mother wants him. Carl and his father respond automatically to Mrs. Garner's request whereas in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" both Nick and his father ignore Mrs. Adams' demand and go looking for squirrels.

The lyrical and sensuous images of Nick's walk home make a smooth transition to the suggestion of his sensuous associations with

Prudie. Nick seems to belong in an age of innocence. He enjoys walking barefoot through the meadow and along the smooth dew-covered path to his home. For Nick, Prudie was part of this innocence.

When Nick arrives home, his father gives him supper and then sits down to read. Hemingway emphasizes that Dr. Adams makes a big shadow on the wall; this is ambiguous for Nick who sees his father as both larger than life and shadowy and unreal. In talking over the day's events while eating his supper Nick discovers his father has been to the Indian camp. Nick prods at him and leads indirectly into asking him about Prudie.

> "Didn't you see anybody at all?"
> "I saw your friend Prudie."
> "Where was she?"
> "She was in the woods with Frank Washburn . . . they were having quite a time."
> His father was not looking at him.
> "What were they doing?" . . .
> "I don't know," his father said, "I just heard them thrashing around."
> "How did you know it was them?"
> "I saw them."
> "I thought you said you didn't see them."
> "Oh yes, I saw them."
> "Were they happy?"
> "I guess so." (335)

The fact that Nick cries at this news indicates the end of innocence for him. His father has tarnished the boy's relationship with Prudie as he indicates that she is involved in sex play and that sex is dirty. When Dr. Adams picks up a knife to cut him another piece of pie, Nick, who has been crying, replies immediately, "No, I don't want any." The father's attitude has a castrating effect in separating him from the object of his love.

As usual Hemingway makes use of the forces of nature to indicate a struggle with ambivalent feelings by his protagonist. This point is

illustrated in the final lyric passage of the story as Nick hears a wind come up in the trees outside while he lies in bed trying to sleep.

> He lay for a long time with his face in the pillow, and after a while he forgot to think about Prudence and finally he went to sleep . . . In the morning there was a big wind blowing and the waves were running high up on the beach. (336)

Nick has successfully repressed his feelings of anxiety and "he was awake a long time before he remembered that his heart was broken" (336). He has regressed from daring to be an individual to a passive-dependent role. Again Hemingway demonstrates Nick's ambivalent feelings toward his father by carefully showing the doctor to be both socially right and individually wrong in his puritanical reaction.

In "Ten Indians" Hemingway has shown, in Nick's early experiences, the basis of an attitude toward women which will develop into a fixed pattern. Even with such a child of nature as his Indian girl, Prudie, relationships with the opposite sex can bring unwanted consequences in the form of unexpected faithlessness. The meaning for Nick of this pairing of a powerful instinctual drive with parental censure may be that there is danger in all heterosexual relationships.

These three stories illustrate Nick's pattern of experiencing pain in relationships with his parent or parents, and they demonstrate Nick's use of the lyrical and sensuous qualities of nature to allay his anxiety and disillusionment. His unresolved conflict, the ambivalence of love and fear, may explain why he rejects a more serious relationship with a girl in the two succeeding stories.

III

If "Indian Camp," "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," and "Ten Indians," offer strong clues as to the nature of Nick's basic conflict, then the next two stories indicate some early consequences of the conflict and foreshadow his attitude toward and relationship to women. "The End of Something" and "The Three Day Blow" are logically sequential and will be treated as having internal unity. They are expressions of Nick's youthful efforts to work through and relieve himself of the tensions developing from ambivalent feelings about both of his parents. Hemingway's lyrical description of the end of the lumbering-town is reflected in Nick's sense of loss over the end of his relationship with Marjorie. The two swamp references are clues to the fact that Nick is dealing with dangerous and unconscious forces.

Why should the end of this first real love create in Nick such strong conflicting feelings that he is unable to understand his own motivations? The picture of Marjorie that emerges from "The End of Something" is that of a romantically desirable girl, a good companion who enjoys Nick's hobby of fishing and his interest in nature. The only explanation that Nick can offer for breaking with her is that Marjorie has learned too well everything he has taught her and is repeating this knowledge back to him as her own. Nick does not fully understand and therefore cannot evaluate his own feelings as he has already repressed the meaning of his earlier experiences. Marjorie senses something is wrong but Nick can only answer vaguely:

> "I don't know." . . .
> "It isn't fun anymore. . . . Not any of it."
> "I feel as though everything was gone to hell inside of me. I don't know Marge. I don't know what to say." (110)

We cannot assume that these words are solely attempts to cover up the fact that the break with Marjorie had been discussed with Bill. This assumption would ignore the meaning of the three previous stories with respect to Nick's feelings about entangling alliances. We are led to infer that Nick and Marjorie have had sexual relations by Hemingway's emphasis on Marjorie's query, "Isn't love any fun?" and Nick's flat, "No" when Marjorie forces him to tell her what really is the matter. Again Hemingway shows us the ambiguity between right and wrong that so confuses Nick. If Nick accepts the culture's prohibition of pre-marital sex as mediated by his father in "Ten Indians," then the alternatives are abstinence or marriage with the consequences of a "castrating wife" who has learned too much, as exemplified in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife." Nick is unable to accept comfortably either of the alternatives, abstinence or marriage into a family where there is already evidence of a dominating mother-in-law.

In "The Three Day Blow" Nick faces the implications of his rejection of Marjorie and tries to understand and work through his ambivalent feelings. The storm is the outward manifestation of the inner conflict. As the story opens, Nick and Bill are enjoying a comfortable level of conversation. The talk is about baseball, drink and books as they imbibe the liquor belonging to Bill's father.

The two-sided nature of Nick's conflict is hinted at when he admires Walpole's Fortitude with the words: "That's a real book. That's where his old man is after him all the time" (118). Nick is indicating his reluctant acceptance of the father as the mediator of the culture. David Gordon speculates that his remark "implies an antagonism so feared it can be represented only by the defense against it, i.e., by

picturing the antagonism as coming from the father."[15] Despite Nick's defense of his father on the subject of drink and his claim that he is "all right and a swell guy" we can infer, based on David Gordon's speculation, and the normal adolescent reaction, that Nick is angry with his father about his prohibition of sex.

The association of Marjorie with the discussion of the attitude of Nick's father is not accidental. A sobering effect on Nick as he sits quietly is noted, in Hemingway's words:

> The liquor had all died out of him and left him alone. Bill wasn't there . . . . All he knew was that he had once had Marjorie and he had lost her. She was gone and he had sent her away. That was all that mattered . . . I couldn't help it. Then all of a sudden everything was over . . . I don't know why it was. I couldn't help it. Just like when the three day blows come now and rip everything off the trees. It was all my fault. (123)

Nick's intense inner turmoil has removed a desire for sex from his life.

After the emotional crisis passes Nick begins to rationalize:

> I'm sorry as hell about her but what could I do? You know what her mother was like! All of a sudden it was over, . . . I oughtn't to talk about it. (124)

Marjorie's mother was in the background reinforcing his own fears of a matriarchal family. Nick's feeling about a potential marriage partner has been strongly influenced by the marital relationship he has witnessed in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife." He turns away from thoughts of marriage to the expression of his manliness and sexual identification through drinking rather than sex. Bill's father permits

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[15] David Gordon, "The Son and the Father," Literature and Psychology, XVI (1966), p. 124.

a limited amount of drinking as compared to Dr. Adams' absolute prohibition. Nick tries out various roles in this story for the purpose of forming his own identification. He cannot yet accept the role of lover, only that of drinker and "philosopher."

In terms of Nick's approach to women, Marjorie has to be discarded. As Leslie Fiedler says, she represents in Hemingway's stories, the fair lady or American "bitch" that could never be trusted. Fiedler says:

> The Dark Lady, who is neither wife nor mother blends with the image of [Melville's] Fayaway . . . In Hemingway, such women are mindless, soft, subservient; painless devices for extracting seed without human engagement. The Fair Lady, on the other hand, who gets pregnant and wants a wedding, or uses her sexual allure to assert her power, is seen as a threat and a destroyer of men. But the seed extractors are Indians or Latins, black-eyed and dusky in hue, while the castrators are at least Anglo-Saxon if not symbolically blond. Neither are permitted to be virgins; indeed, both are imagined as having been often possessed, though in the case of the Fair Woman promiscuity is used as a device for humiliating and unmanning the male foolish enough to have entered into a marriage with her. . . . When Hemingway's bitches are Americans, they are hopeless and unmitigated bitches.[16]

Prudence Mitchell has represented the dark lady to Nick as Marjorie represents the fair lady. A marriage to Marjorie means entangling alliances with their distasteful consequences. This is suggested by the description of her domineering mother who may be equated with Mrs. Adams in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife."

Often when a character has to struggle with a painful emotional

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[16] Leslie Fiedler, "Men Without Women," in Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965), p. 88.

experience Hemingway uses a familiar device to bring the emotion under control; he pairs it with a pleasant experience such as hunting or fishing. "The Three Day Blow" draws to a close when Nick and Bill take the shotguns from the rack on the wall and go outdoors to join Bill's permissive father. In this context, hunting may represent Nick's sublimation for both sex and aggression. Hemingway writes, "Outside now the Marge business was no longer so tragic . . . . The wind blew everything like that away" (125). Nick has repressed the conflict created by his attempt to make a heterosexual adjustment.

The next two stories illustrate the repetition of the interfamilial conflict as Nick interacts with substitute authority-figures which are veiled in ambiguities.

IV

"The Battler" relates the adventures of Nick on a journey away from home. Hemingway shows us Nick as he interacts with three authority-figures in the persons of a brakeman, an ex-prize fighter, and the fighter's Negro companion. Less obvious than in previous stories is the identification of the characters with the theme of inter-familial conflict. In this story Hemingway shows Nick's disillusionment as a result of being faced with a series of ambiguous situations. Nick is not prepared to understand or deal with the forces motivating the three characters with whom he interacts. Hemingway lets us glimpse the underlying dynamics through the ominous portent of five heavily emphasized swamp images. The tamarack swamp and the darkness of the night are suggestive of the unconscious out of which can come symbolic images, disguised as in a dream.

The story revolves around conflicts with authority figures. The first contest is with the brakeman who lures Nick to him with a trick and pushes him off the slow-moving freight train. Nick responds trustingly when the brakeman calls, "Come here, kid . . . I got something for you." Nick knows his response is childish ("what a lousy kid thing to have done").

The importance for Nick of the second incident is emphasized by the ominous description which precedes it. Nick walks along the track with the oppressive tamarack swamp on both sides; it looms ghostly in the rising mist. He crosses a bridge with black water below and hills beyond, high and dark on both sides. Beyond, the country opens out into a beech-wood forest and Nick is attracted by the light of a fire with a man sitting by it. Ad Francis, an ex prize-

fighter, represents a somewhat disguised father-figure as he sits by a fire in the woods, which symbolizes warmth and security.

The interaction between these two characters leaves Nick confused as Ad shows both affection and aggression toward him. Ad sympathizes with Nick about the episode with the brakeman and advises him to be tough and to retaliate, but Nick senses a hostility when Ad announces, "All you kids are tough." Nick feels simultaneously sick and embarrassed at the fighter's mutilated face which he has not noticed at first and which is "dead looking in the firelight." In the dialogue that follows Hemingway is careful to demonstrate that Ad is not wholly responsible for his present condition. It was his ability to absorb punishment that kept him going, as he relates it to Nick in the following dialogue:

> "I could take it," the man said. "Don't you think I could take it, kid?"
> "You bet!"
> "They all bust their hands on me," the little man said. "They couldn't hurt me."
> "You know how I beat them?"
> "No," said Nick.
> "My heart's slow. It beats only forty a minute. Feel it." (131)

Hemingway emphasizes that Ad's mental and physical condition is the result of his stamina and the blows he has been forced to take. He should not be held responsible for his present actions. Ad tells Nick:

> "Listen . . . I'm not quite right."
> "What's the matter?"
> "I'm crazy."
> Nick felt like laughing. "You're all right," he said.
> "No, I'm not. I'm crazy. Listen, you ever been crazy?"
> "No, said Nick. "How does it get you?"
> "I don't know," Ad said. "When you got it you don't know about it." (132)

Hemingway has compounded Nick's confusion. No matter what Ad does

throughout the story, Nick, as in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," cannot pass judgment on Ad's actions because the Battler is not really responsible.

At this point Bugs comes on the scene and Hemingway immediately indicates that the relationship between Ad and Bugs is strange and unnatural. Bugs is introduced as both crazy and subservient, yet he appears to be sane and in control as in the following interchange:

> "This is my pal Bugs," Ad said. "He's crazy too." . . .
> "He /Nick/ says he's never been crazy Bugs," Ad said.
> "He's got a lot coming to him," the Negro said . . .
> "When are we going to eat, Bugs?" the prize-fighter asked.
> "Right away."
> "Are you hungry, Nick?"
> "Hungry as hell."
> "Hear that Bugs?"
> "I hear most of what goes on."
> "That ain't what I asked you."
> "Yes, I heard what the gentleman said." (133)

Although Bugs refuses to take offense at Ad's show of authority, it appears that in reality the Negro is the dominant character and in control.

The climax of the story is reached as the three figures of Ad, Bugs and Nick, gather around the fire and food, a symbol of home. It soon becomes evident that they represent the now familiar triangle which has emerged in each of the preceding stories. The inter-familial conflict erupts over the symbol of the knife and indicates that in this story we have again a reenactment of the theme of castration portrayed in "Indian Camp." As in "Ten Indians" the preparation of food, a

symbol of sex,[17] precedes the appearance of a knife and is described in senuous detail.

> Into a skillet he was laying slices of ham.
> As the skillet grew hot the grease sputtered
> and Bugs, crouching on long nigger legs over
> the fire, turned the ham and broke the eggs
> into the skillet, tipping it from side to side
> to baste the eggs with the hot fat. (133)

When Bugs asks Nick to cut some slices of bread Ad watches him closely. Hemingway fits the pieces together neatly at this point. Just as Nick is about to enjoy his food (a representation of sex), Ad, (the father), asks for Nick's knife (a phallic symbol). Bugs, (the mother-figure), orders him to "Hang on to your knife, Mr. Adams." Ad remains silent until Nick bites into his sandwich, at which point the Battler becomes hostile:

> "Who the hell do you think you are? You're a
> snotty bastard. You come in here where nobody
> asks you and eat a man's food and when he asks
> you to borrow a knife you get snotty." (135)

When Ad advances toward Nick to assault him, Bugs knocks Ad out by tapping him across the base of the skull with a blackjack, a phallic symbol in the hands of the mother-figure.

In this interpretation "The Battler" represents in a disguised form, a struggle between a father and a mother-figure for the possession of a son's masculinity. A helpless bystander, as in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," Nick's disillusionment is complete yet Hemingway is careful to have him take sides with Ad in this contest as he took sides with Dr. Adams against his mother. When Bugs explains to Nick, "I'm afraid I

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[17] Sigmund Freud, <u>The Interpretation of Dreams</u> (New York, 1931), p. 243. Freud says, "in dreams . . . as far as practicable the sexual representation-complex is transposed to the eating-complex."

hit him just a little hard . . . there's nothing to worry about . . . It's all right . . . I didn't want you to hurt him or mark him up no more than he is," Nick is quick to perceive the equivocation and replies, "You hurt him yourself" (136). Bugs, as the castrating figure in possession of the blackjack, indicates that the mother-figure is the one in actual control despite outward appearances. This conclusion is affirmed by Hemingway when he has Bugs explain to Nick that it was not really the beatings that made Ad crazy; they just made him simple. His craziness was really the fault of Ad's wife who masqueraded as his sister and used to be his manager, but "just went off one day and never came back." Bugs had met Ad in jail. "He was bustin people all the time after she went away and they put him in jail" (137).

The blame for Ad's condition is thus placed clearly on the wife who left him when he became simple toward the end of his career. His assaultiveness toward others is blamed on this final indignity. That the physical separation of Ad's wife represents psychological separation and lack of communication, as with Dr. and Mrs. Adams, is suggested by the fact that the wife still sends Ad money and is in effect supporting him. Bugs wants Nick to be gone in order to prevent a renewal of the conflict when Ad wakes up.

The final irony is that Nick is the loser in each of these encounters with authority-figures. The result of this replay of the inter-familial conflict is that Nick's needs remain unmet as a father and a mother-figure each vie to cut off his relationship with the other.

When approached from the perspective of the theme of castration "The Killers" fits the pattern that has been developing in previous stories. Nick is bewildered by the failure of a father-figure to stand

up to a threat to his life. Hemingway does not identify the source of the threat, and makes the characters who are to carry it out appear ridiculous and fail in their supposed mission. The gangsters in this story are external representations of internal fears and Hemingway appears to be less concerned with the stereotype thugs, than with Nick's reaction to the threat to the father-figure and Ole's impotent response. This story, then, may be seen as an extension of the conflict made evident in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," and "The Battler."

From the beginning, Hemingway tells us that the characters and events in this story are ambiguous; nothing is as it seems. Henry's lunch room, formerly a bar, is actually run by George. It is five o'clock but the clock on the wall reads twenty minutes past the hour. The menu advertises food which is not yet ready. The gangsters do not know the name of the town they are in, and Mrs. Bell runs Mrs. Hirsch's rooming house.

The plot revolves around the threat to the life of Ole Andreson. Two gangsters, supposedly working for some remote figure, prepare to ambush Ole in Henry's lunch room. Hemingway is careful to avoid identifying the source of their hostility to Andreson or the reason for it, thereby indicating that this material is either unknown or too dangerous to divulge.

The dialogue between the gangsters and the other lunch room occupants sets the tone. Hemingway depicts the reactions of Nick, George, the counterman, and Sam, the Negro cook, to the power and authority assumed by the gangsters. The three make no attempt to challenge the insults or to resist the demands made upon them, and their unreasoning response is that they must obey this show of authority. Their fears prevent

their reacting to the insults shown in the following dialogue:

> "What do you do here nights?" Al asked.
> "They eat the dinner," his friend said.
> "They all come here and eat the big dinner."
> "That's right." George said.
> "So you think that's all right?" Al asked George.
> "Sure."
> "You're a pretty bright boy, aren't you?"
> "Sure," said George.
> "Well, you're not," said the other little man.
> "Is he, Al?"
> "He's dumb," said Al. He turned to Nick.
> "What's your name?"
> "Adams."
> "Another bright boy," Al said. "Ain't he a bright boy, Max?"
> "The town's full of bright boys," Max said. (280)

The gangsters speak only in clichés and their conversation is highly repetitive as they pick up on whatever remarks Nick and George make:

> "What's it all about?" [asked George]
> "Hey Al," Max called, "bright boy wants to know what it's all about."
> "Why don't you tell him?" Al's voice came from the kitchen.
> "What do you think it's all about?"
> "I don't know."
> "What do you think?"
> "I wouldn't say."
> "Hey, Al, bright boy says he wouldn't say what he thinks it's all about." (282-283)

Since Ole Andreson does not arrive as expected the gangsters leave "like a vaudeville team in their tight overcoats and derby hats" without being able to carry out their supposed threat to kill him with their sawed-off shotguns.

Since the threat is abortive, it may be assumed that through the actions of these bizarre characters, Hemingway's purpose is to emphasize the effect on Nick, Ole, George and Sam of the unwarranted assumption of power by the gangsters. What follows is a demonstration of the fact

that internal needs and fixed patterns of conduct dictate the response that will be made to the stimulus of fear. The three remaining characters in the lunch room react in various ways. George is literal and accepts at face value the threat to Andreson and sends Nick to warn Ole. Sam the cook is passive and uses the defense of denial:

> "I don't want any more of that," said Sam the cook.
> "I don't want any more of that." (285)

and later:

> "You better not have anything to do with it at all." Sam the cook said.
> "You better stay way out of it." (286)

Sam represents complete non-involvement, but it is Nick's reaction that is important; he is very much involved but is unable to influence the outcome.

The climax of the story comes when Nick attempts in vain to warn Andreson of the threat to his life. There is a tone of futility and hopelessness here. Like Ad Francis in "The Battler," Ole is another ex-prize-fighter hero with a mutilated face, lying fully clothed on the bed.

> "I was up at Henry's," Nick said, "and two fellows came in and tied up me and the cook, and they said they were going to kill you."
> It sounded silly when he said it . . . .
> "There isn't anything I can do about it," Ole said . . . .
> "Don't you want me to go and see the police?"
> "No," Ole Andreson said. "That wouldn't do any good."
> "Isn't there something I could do?"
> "No. There ain't anything to do."
> "The only thing is," he said, talking to the wall, "I just can't make up my mind to go out. I been in here all day." (287)

The dialogue between Nick and Ole brings to the surface the underlying dynamics. Nick (the son) is trying to stir Ole (the father) into taking

action against the aggressor. The phallic symbol of the gun with its threat of death and the immobility of the fighter because of fear indicates that the threat is to Ole's masculinity and, through identification, to Nick's as well. The theme of castration again becomes evident.

Ole is like Nick's father. He is only aggressive in his own profession, the ring. Mrs. Bell feels sorry for him because, "He's an awfully nice man" and, "He's just as gentle" (288). He makes no attempt to escape or to fight back but lets indecision and resignation take possession of him and render him immobile.

The differing reactions of Nick and Ole are reflections of their respective patterns of response to fear. It is significant for Nick's developing pattern of ambivalence and disillusionment that no one fights back in this story. Ole remains and passively accepts his fate while Nick runs away saying:

> "I'm going to get out of this town," . . .
> "I can't stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he's going to get it. It's too damned awful." (289)

In this story we see Nick struggle to make an adjustment to a father-figure about whom he is ambivalent. A prize-fighter is a hero-figure to an adolescent boy, yet Hemingway has disclosed a seemingly cowardly side of Ole which leaves Nick confused and disillusioned. Again, as in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," Hemingway has so clouded the issue that it is impossible for Nick to pass judgment on Ole's actions. Ole appears to be a coward, yet his inaction can be rationalized by the apparent threat of death. Since the "sin" Andreson has committed has not been identified, attention is concentrated solely on Nick's reaction to Ole's behavior. Nick is on the horns of a

dilemma from which there is no escape. He can neither identify with nor condemn the hero-figure in this story.

Dr. Josselyn has pointed out that if a boy is to give up his Oedipal longings for his mother he must identify with and incorporate the father's goals and standards into his own pattern of behavior. He strives to be like the father whom his mother loves in order to be able to renounce his mother as a sexual object.[18] If the mother does not show unity with, and strong affection for, the father, or if the father demonstrates unworthy traits such as cowardice, as in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," the boy's feelings are ambivalent and result in repression and disillusionment.

It is a well established psychological fact that authority-figures are parent substitutes for a youth. In this story Hemingway has shown us Nick's ambivalence toward a parent-surrogate who exhibits both strength and weakness. The comparison of Ole with Dr. Adams is striking; as doctor-surgeon and prize-fighter, both are aggressive and successful in their professions, but in their personal lives they display cowardice and immobility in the face of what may be imaginary or unsubstantial threats. Although the story ends with George's admonition "You better not think about it," Nick's confusion is so great he must "get out of this town" in order to repress his anxiety.

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[18] Irene M. Josselyn, Psychosocial Development of Children (New York, 1961), p. 66.

V

In "Now I Lay Me," Hemingway reveals in a more direct manner the effect on Nick of the inter-familial conflict which has shaped his personality. Nick's mother is disclosed as the major source of the symbolic castration of Dr. Adams and as the cause of Nick's ambivalence toward his father. In this story Hemingway initially uncovers the dynamics of Nick's struggle to gain control of a fear that has prevented his sleeping in the dark ever since the night he had been severely wounded in the bombardment at Fossalta. This traumatic experience has had ego-shattering impact and we are shown Nick's struggle to remain awake in order to prevent the destruction or death of the ego which he has associated with sleep:

> I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. I had been that way for a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back. I tried never to think about it, but it had started to go since, in the nights, just at the moment of going off to sleep, and I could only stop it by a very great effort. (363)

Nick has identified ego-control with masculinity and physical strength, and his fear, developing from his war wound, of loss of control by the ego is a severe over-reaction. It is paired in intensity and psychic association with the uncovering of long forgotten and repressed material.

As the story opens, Nick lies on the floor in a room listening to many silk worms eating mulberry leaves. On one level it might be said that the silk worms remind Nick of the idea of collecting worms

for fishing, but it would appear that here the silk worms serve as a much more important symbol.

Since remote times the silk worm has been shrouded in mystery and mythology, and the legend that has developed around it, together with its oriental origin, partly accounts for the symbolism with which it is associated. Its short life-cycle and the metamorphosis which it undergoes increases its symbolic value for literature. The silk worm eats continuously and voraciously and is nocturnal in habit. When several hundred mature caterpillars feed in a single group they make a faint rustling noise not unlike falling rain in the springtime. This is the sound to which Hemingway frequently refers. The continuous feeding is a race to fill their fluid reservoirs during their month-long life-span with the substance from which they will produce the silk filament. At this point the caterpillar is prepared to spin its cocoon as a protective covering during its transformation into a silk moth.[19]

Symbolically, this death of the caterpillar in the cocoon is representative of the unconscious wish to return to the security of a womb-like existence. For Nick, the wound he has received at night serves as a catalyst for both the wish for security and the fear of dependence. Just as the silk worm reserves for the daytime its brief periods of rest, so Nick does not want to sleep in an unlighted room at night, for fear that "if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body." This thought closely resembles the description of the silk worm. Having exhausted its supply

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[19]William F. Leggett, The Story of Silk (New York, 1949), p. 22.

of silken fluid, and being itself exhausted from three days of incessant spinning of its cocoon, the caterpillar is now a shrunken wrinkled insect which ceases spinning and commences to sleep through its pupal or chrysalid stage preparatory to its transformation into the imago. It next emerges from the cocoon as the moth.

This metamorphosis of the ugly caterpillar into a white silk moth is symbolic of the "great awakening" of the Chinese, the "psyche" of the Greeks, and can be likened symbolically to the renewal of the shattered ego in Nick's case. Prior to this metamorphosis, repressed thoughts come to consciousness in a kind of waking dream in which reality is confused with fantasy.

As the story begins Nick is successful in controlling his anxiety by returning nostagically to his favorite activity of fishing. "I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length very carefully in my mind" (363). When he had exhausted actual streams he would resort to his imagination, "Some nights too I made up streams, and some of them were very exciting, and it was like being awake and dreaming. Some of these streams I still remember and think I have fished in them, and they are confused with streams I really know. I gave them all names and went to them on the train and sometimes walked for miles to get to them" (364).

Nick confuses imaginary streams with real streams to the point where he remembers the imaginary ones more strongly than the real. His confusion of imaginary with real details is indicative of a cocoon-like hypnotic state, not unlike that of the womb, which serves to relieve his anxiety by a concentration on the pleasant thoughts of fishing. The presence of latent anxiety is indicated by reference to the swamp

meadows, symbols of danger, where he could find no worms for bait, only insects, and to the salamanders and crickets which made him uneasy because of their struggle against the hook, a symbol of immobilization.

The activity of fishing serves two apparently contradictory purposes for Nick. Water is a symbol of the unconscious and catching a fish is suggestive of bringing up into consciousness something of value to the fisherman. A contradiction arises from the fact that while repressed ambivalent material brought to consciousness can be of great value to those whose ego can control and make use of such an insight, it can also be extremely threatening because of the guilt aroused. Nick tells us that "Some nights I could not fish, and on those nights I was cold awake and said my prayers over and over and tried to pray for all the people I had ever known" (365). Praying is an indication that Nick's fishing expedition, although successful, has brought to the surface repressed Oedipal material which has been causing anxiety and fantasies. On those nights Nick tries to remember everything that has ever happened to him from his earliest memories until he reaches the war and back again. These memories are symbols which, when interpreted in psychological terms, clearly disclose the inter-familial conflict which has shaped his personality. The material is now so near to consciousness that it must be dealt with by Nick, at least on the symbolic level.

His earliest memories are of his "mother and father's wedding cake in a tin box hanging from one of the rafters, and, in the attic, jars of snakes . . . that my father had collected as a boy and preserved in alcohol, the alcohol sunken in the jars so the backs of some of the snakes and specimens were exposed and turned white . . ." (365). In Freudian terms the tin box symbolizes the female genitals, especially

when it contains the wedding cake; the snakes symbolize the male organ. Because of his Oedipal strivings and fear of the punitive father, this anxiety-provoking material emerges slowly.

On another occasion he remembers moving to a new house built, significantly, by his mother, and he remembers that those jars from the attic containing his father's specimens had been thrown on the fire, "and how they popped in the heat and the fire flamed up from the alcohol" (365). Although he remembers the snakes burning, he has repressed the memory of who burned them.

Another sleepless night brings forth the memory that it was his mother who had destroyed all of his father's artifacts while he was away on a hunting trip. Inappropriately, Nick's mother "was standing there smiling to meet him" as she calmly reported, "I've been cleaning out the basement, dear" (366). Nick was present as his father raked through the fire remarking, "The best arrow heads all went to pieces" (366). This is a picture of an ineffectual and needlessly stoical man, and a woman whom he allows to rob him of his proper masculinity. The implications of this interchange between Nick's parents are clear; the mother has performed an act of castration on the father which he has accepted without a challenge.

Nick reports that, "In remembering that, there were only two people, so I would pray for them both" (366). Significantly he fails to pray for himself, the third person present. One wonders why Nick is impelled to pray under these circumstances. Does Nick's need to pray stem from a feeling of ambivalence toward his parents which makes him feel both hostile and guilt-ridden? Are these the painful feelings which it has been necessary to repress for many years? The anger which is

induced in the reader by the description of the mother's unfeeling actions must reflect Nick's own childish and impotent rage at the undermining of his father's role and authority. While sympathizing with his father, Nick cannot but feel angry at his father's passivity in not asserting himself in the face of her arrogance. Nick's continuing inability to remember part of the Lord's prayer is indicative of his own ambivalent feelings. He is blocked in remembering the line "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," because he is not yet prepared to forgive either of his parents for their role reversal with its consequent unnatural behavior, or himself for his own natural hostility. Obviously Nick's nostalgia has returned him to the early childhood level of the prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," as the title of the story indicates.

Nick has regressed to the microcosmic world of childhood in order to strengthen his ego by delimiting the problem to manageable proportions. He deals only with segments of his childhood experience at a given time, i.e., fishing (both real and imaginary), praying, observing parental relationships, cataloguing perceptions, and listening. His denial of reality is an ego-defense of childhood, untenable in adult life, so it can be assumed Nick's inability to distinguish between the real and imaginary streams which he "fishes at night" is evidence of his regression. Nick is trying to put his shattered ego back together in order to cope with life. Like the caterpillar's silken filament he has spun a thread of words in his effort to synthesize his disparate life experiences. His renewed ego-control allows expression of some hostility toward his parents, and is analagous to the "great awakening" or metamorphosis of the silk worm.

Having digested traumatic impressions from childhood and synthesized them, he has attained a precarious ego balance. This enables him to return to adult concerns in conversation with his orderly, John, who is also nervous and unable to sleep. Nick introduces the subject of marriage by asking John, "Tell me about how you got married" (368). John urges marriage for Nick as a panacea for insomnia, "You ought to get married, Signor Tenente. Then you wouldn't worry . . . A man ought to be married" (370).

Having initiated the subject Nick wants to end it as John persists in urging marriage. Nick now has a new thing to think about and considers "all the girls he had ever known and what kind of wives they would make," but, "Finally, though, I went back to trout fishing, because I found that I could remember all the streams and there was always something new about them, while the girls, after I had thought about them a few times, blurred and I could not recall them into my mind and finally they all blurred and all became rather the same and I gave up thinking about them almost altogether" (371). Once again Nick is prevented by the mental block of a castrating mother and a passive father from moving forward into a heterosexual relationship.

In the next story, we see a Nick almost completely unable to distinguish fantasy from reality.

Hemingway always leaves much unsaid, and in "A Way You'll Never Be" he is most obscure, yet he provides enough clues for the reader to perceive that Nick is in fact returning to the scene of his wounding at Fossalta. Still convalescing, Nick comes from Fornaci allegedly to demonstrate to the Italians the imminent arrival of American troops. The battalion has recaptured the town from the Austrians in a successful

counterattack. As Nick rides his bicycle through the empty town he is preoccupied with the position of the dead. He is alone, and has seen no one since he left Fornaci. The tone is depressing as Hemingway catalogs in detail Nick's impressions of the scenes of death and destruction through which he passes. He is on his way to visit the battalion which is dug in along the river bank. The futility of the struggle and the common identity in death of the participants appears to be of overwhelming importance to Nick as he observes the dead of both sides. His depressive concern with the mortification of the body is shown in the descriptions of them:

> They lay alone or in clumps in the high grass of the field and along the road, their pockets out, and over them were flies and around each body or group of bodies were the scattered papers. . . . The hot weather had swollen them all alike regardless of nationality. (402-403)

As he leaves the town Nick's attention is directed to the river. In this first reference to it, Hemingway tells us that Nick has been there before and foreshadows the importance to Nick of this particular river as he describes Nick's reaction that "it was all very lush and overgrown since he had seen it last and becoming historical had made no change in this, the lower river" (404).

In "A Way You'll Never Be" Nick is no longer able to maintain his ego defense of repression, as he becomes the victim of his own overpowering emotions, and is unable to distinguish fantasy from reality. The father, always passive in relation to the mother, becomes in Nick's fantasy a punitive figure and the instrument of the realization of a son's worst fears.

This confused and disorganized story is paradoxically one of the

most difficult stories to understand and explicate, while at the same time one of the most revealing. Its significance lies in Hemingway's disclosure that the meaning for Nick of the wound he received at Fossalta is symbolic castration. It was the traumatic event which confirmed for him a repressed fear of castration by his father. Fenichel has explained that a boy at the phallic phase, age four or five, has identified himself with his penis, and that castration anxiety is the fear of castration by a punitive father. It represents the climax of the fears of body damage,[20] and in this story Hemingway describes the mental process through which Nick associates his wound with castration. To be castrated, then, is to be deprived of masculinity, which represents a loss of identity and in this sense, a form of death.

Throughout "A Way You'll Never Be" Nick is preoccupied with death and fearful of losing his own tenuous identity. Nick's wounding has brought on a traumatic neurosis beyond his capacity to contain it. We see him slipping in and out of reality as he struggles to maintain a mental balance. Fenichel confirms the existence of such a possibility when he says:

> There is no doubt that a certain percentage of what is described as traumatic neuroses actually are psychoneuroses that are precipitated by some accident . . . . Severe traumata that upset the entire economy of the mental energy also of necessity upset the equilibrium between the repressed impulses and the repressing forces . . . this is a general reason why repressed forces make a more or less open reappearance after traumata . . . . If a person had developed a certain amount of castration anxiety . . . the

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[20]Otto Fenichel. The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York, 1945), pp. 76-77.

> experience of a trauma is apt to . . . remobilize the old anxieties. The effect of castration anxiety is particularly clear in cases where the trauma has accompanied physical injury. What is most characteristic in the reaction to a trauma is that associated connections are immediately established between the trauma and the infantile conflicts that become activated. Old infantile threats and anxieties suddenly reappear and assume a serious character. The trauma may be experienced as a repetition of the older traumata of childhood. Staudacher studied a war neurosis precipitated by the explosion of a grenade in which the patient's reaction was determined in all its details by a childhood sexual experience.[21]

Nick has been more or less successful in repressing his infantile fears, but the wound has so upset his mental economy that the old repressions are no longer able to control the conflict. Fenichel lists the symptoms of traumatic neuroses:

> (a) blocking of, or decrease in, various ego functions.
>
> (b) spells of uncontrollable emotions, especially of anxiety, frequently of rage, occasionally even convulsive attacks, and,
>
> (c) sleeplessness or severe disturbances of sleep with typical dreams in which the trauma is experienced again and again; also
>
> (d) mental repetitions during the day, of the traumatic situation in whole or in part in the form of fantasies, thoughts, or feelings.[22]

Nick displays all of these symptoms in "A Way You'll Never Be," indeed the title itself strongly implies a departure from the normal.

As Nick approaches the location of the battalion he has an encounter with an authority-figure in the form of a sentry which makes

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[21]Fenichel, p. 123.

[22]Fenichel, p. 124.

him very nervous. The importance of this incident to the story becomes apparent on closer examination. The sentry is described as a young second lieutenant with a stubble of beard and red-rimmed bloodshot eyes who points a pistol at him. In "Fathers and Sons," Hemingway describes Nick's father as having large deep-set eyes, a beard covering a weak chin, as being an expert shot with a gun, and as being very nervous. Evidently, then, Nick responds to the sentry as he might have to his father. The encounter is ostensibly a struggle over Nick's "tessera" or identification card, but again, as in "Indian Camp," "Ten Indians," and "The Battler," it is a reenactment of the theme of castration. Symbolically it is a struggle between Nick and a father-figure over identity, in the form of a "tessera," with the pistol, a phallic symbol between them.

> "Who are you?"
> Nick told him.
> "How do I know this?"
> Nick showed him the tessera with photograph and identification and the seal of the third army.
> He took hold if it.
> "I will keep this."
> "You will not," Nick said. "Give me back the card and put your gun away. There. In the holster."
> "How am I to know who you are?"
> "The tessera tells you."
> "And if the tessera is false? Give me that card."
> "Don't be a fool," Nick said cheerfully. "Take me to your company commander." (404)

Nick perceives the extreme and somewhat inappropriate nervousness of this officer. Hemingway indicates this is something other than a normal response of the sentry when he has Nick remark that only three shells had burst high since he left the edge of town and since then there had been no shelling. In spite of the comparative calm Nick notices that:

> . . . the face of this officer looked like the face of a man during a bombardment. There was the same tightness and the voice did not sound natural. His pistol made Nick nervous.
> "Put it away," he said. "There's the whole river between them and you."
> "If I thought you were a spy I would shoot you now," the lieutenant said.
> "Come on," said Nick. "Let us go to the battalion." This officer made him very nervous. (405)

In evaluating this symbolic episode it is important to recognize that Nick's feelings toward his father are ambivalent. As he arrives at the battalion headquarters he turns from a weak, rather cowardly and indecisive sentry, to his old friend Captain Paravicini, the calm, objective, commanding officer of the battalion. If the sentry represents the negative threatening aspect of Nick's relationship with his father, the source of his fear of castration, the captain represents the positive side that he trusted and needed as a source of dependence and security. Thus, he sees Para as "thinner and more English looking than ever" (405). His response to Para is friendly and relaxed. He is not defensive and he is able to unburden himself and discuss his discomfiture as long as Para is not authoritarian.

Hemingway emphasizes the recurrent theme of a lost identity when he has Para fail to recognize Nick in his "American uniform" made by Spagnoli. The ambiguity of the uniform indicates Nick's uncertainty as to his own identity. One may suspect dissembling by Nick, to conceal the reason for his visit, by his strange explanation, "They've put me in it . . . . I am supposed to move around and let them see the uniform, . . . If they see one American uniform this is supposed to make them believe others are coming" (405). Nick explains that he is supposed to have cigarettes, postal cards and chocolates to distribute but there

were none. It would seem clear that Nick has not been sent to play this inappropriate role. In reality, he is driven by his own emotional demands back to the scene of his traumatic war wound at Fossalta in order to try to regain mastery over the great anxiety brought on by the sexualization of this wound. As Fenichel says:

> Whenever the organism is flooded with a very large quantity of excitation it attempts to get rid of it by subsequent active repetitions of the situation that induced the excessive excitation. This takes place in games . . . and in dreams as well. Between the original flood of excitation and these repetitions there is one fundamental difference: in the original experience the organism was passive; in the case of the repetitions, the organism is active and determines the time and degree of excitation . . . in order to achieve a belated mastery.[23]

That Nick's image of himself has suffered a devaluation is evident as he focuses on his negative characteristics:

> "I'm sure your appearance will be very heartening to the troops." [said Para]
> "No" Nick said. "I know how I am and I prefer to get stinking. I'm not ashamed of it."
> "I've never seen you drunk." . . .
> "Let's not talk about how I am," Nick said. It's a subject I know too much about to want to think about it any more." (406)

He is afraid his anxiety will be detected when Para asks:

> "How are you really?"
> "I'm fine. I'm perfectly all right."
> "No, I mean really."
> "I'm all right. I can't sleep without a light of some sort. That's all I have now." (407)

Despite efforts to cover up his anxiety, Nick's disturbed condition is obvious to Para, who strongly urges him to take a nap. Hemingway implies Nick's illness is mental as well as physical when he has Para say:

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[23] Fenichel, pp. 44-45.

"I said it should have been trepanned, I'm no doctor but I know that." (407)

Supposedly Nick has had a head wound which Para knows of, but he exposes his own fears when he replies:

"Well, they thought it was better to have it absorb and that's what I got. What's the matter? I don't seem crazy to you, do I?"
"You seem in top-hole shape."
"It's a hell of a nuisance once they've had you certified as nutty," Nick said. "No one ever has any confidence in you again." (407)

Nick is afraid he is going crazy. He is in a conflict between his unresolved Oedipal wishes and his fear of castration. As Fenichel states:

> A simultaneity of punishment and temptation is, as a rule, also the basis of the frequent fear of going crazy . . . . Sometimes the idea of insanity has, unconsciously, a more specific significance. Experience may have established the equation head = penis, and therefore insanity = castration. A child may, depending upon various experiences, connect various ideas with insanity.[24]

As the tension mounts Nick is overcome by panic. This leads to a depressive state with inappropriate reactions giving evidence of the blocking of various ego functions. Through Hemingway's stream-of-consciousness technique we are shown Nick's mental processes as he is overtaken by "spells of uncontrollable emotions, especially of anxiety, frequently of rage, occasionally even of convulsive attacks," which are, according to Fenichel, symptoms of traumatic neurosis.

As Nick lies on the bunk, he is at first disappointed that his depressive state is so obvious to Para. He is filled with shame as he remembers his inadequacies as an examplar for that "platoon of the class of 1899, just out at the front, that got hysterics during the

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[24]Fenichel, p. 197.

bombardment before the attack . . . he wearing his own chin strap tight across his mouth to keep his lips quiet. Knowing they could not hold it when they took it, knowing it was all a bloody balls" (408). He recalls his feelings as shame turned to aggression and rage:

> If he can't stop crying break his nose to give him something else to think about. I'd shoot one but it's too late now. They'd all be worse. Break his nose . . . . Break that other silly bugger's nose and kick his silly ass out of here. (408)

From rage he turns to the painful memory of making the doomed foray up the hill: "Making it cold up that slope the only time he hadn't done it stinking" (408).

Thoughts of this hill lead him back in memory to another hill in Paris, and to his girl friend, Gaby Delys, a promiscuous fan dancer. As Nick continues to free-associate, with ego-repressions no longer in force, he comes closer to the source of his unconscious desires and fears. The tone becomes light and gay as Nick recalls experiences with Gaby:

> You called me baby doll a year ago tadada
> You said I was rather nice to know tadada
> with feathers on, with feathers off, the
> great Gaby, and my name's Harry Pilcer, too,
> we used to step out the far side of the
> taxis when it got steep going up the hill. (408)

Subtly repressed Oedipal thoughts come to the surface as Nick imperceptibly slips from a waking dream of Gaby to thoughts of his mother. There can be little doubt that "his girl" in the following revealing quotation represents his mother:

> And he could see that hill every night when he dreamed . . . Sometimes his girl was there and sometimes she was with someone else and he could not understand that, but those were the nights the river ran so much wider and stiller than it should and outside of Fossalta there was a low

> house painted yellow with willows all around it and a low stable and there was a canal, and he had been there a thousand times and never seen it, but there it was every night as plain as hell, only it frightened him. That house meant more than anything and every night he had it. That was what he needed but it frightened him especially when the boat lay there quietly in the willows on the canal, but the banks weren't like this river. (408-409)

What really frightens Nick is that he has returned to Fossalta to verify the presence of that low yellow house, the stable, and the river which ran so much wider and stiller than it should. He has unconsciously associated, in symbolic terms, the house and the stable with the female body and genitalia, the river with the uterine fluid, and the boat with himself. These, then, are the unconscious Freudian symbols with which he has been obsessed in his dreams, only to find that they do not exist in reality:

> He never dreamed about the front now any more but what frightened him so that he could not get rid of it was that long yellow house and the different width of the river. Now he was back here at the river, he had gone through that same town, and there was no house. Nor was the river that way. (409)

What has happened is that Nick has sexualized the terrain at Fossalta and paired it with his wound. It is not the actual Oedipal sexual instinct that he fears any more but rather its displacement on to the terrain at Fossalta. If his dream and the reality are not the same; if there is no real place at Fossalta, then Nick wants to know what he has been obsessed with each night that causes him to wake up soaking wet. He asks himself "then where did he go each night and what was the peril" (409)? Obviously this peril that leaves him more frightened than any bombardment is the fear of castration. Associated

with the Oedipal longings is the strong fear of retaliation by the father.

Nick has come so close to facing repressed Oedipal material that he is roused from his reverie and braves the adjutant and soldiers who are staring at him. With his ego again in temporary control Nick sits up, returns the stares of the adjutant and the soldiers, and reverts to his original defensive explanation for his presence. He apologizes for the lack of chocolates, postal cards and cigarettes, calls attention to the uniform, and implies the imminent arrival of American troops. In Para's absence, the adjutant has been closely observing Nick's uneasy rest and asks Nick, "Do you think they will send Americans down here" (410)? Sensing the adjutant's disbelief and lacking confidence in his own identity, Nick catalogs the qualities of American soldiers in minute detail. Notably these characteristics are opposite from what he thinks are his own and they reveal his inferior opinion of himself:

> "Oh, absolutely, Americans twice as large as myself, healthy, with clean hearts, sleep at night, never been wounded, never been blown up, never had their heads caved in, never been scared, don't drink, faithful to the girls they left behind them, many of them never had crabs, wonderful chaps. You'll see." (410)

As the adjutant continues to query him closely in a tone of disbelief, Nick feels that his own uncertain identity is being questioned again. As his anxiety and anger begin to increase, "He felt it coming on now. He would quiet down" (410). Nick is unsure how to react to the adjutant. "In that army an adjutant is not a commissioned officer" (409). Since the adjutant is not a superior officer and lacks authority over him, Nick struggles to contain his mounting tension by

assuming a posture of authority himself. The adjutant is puzzled by Nick's Italian medals and his ability to speak the language while claiming identity as an American. Nick responds to the adjutant's questions in a patronizing manner; however he has no defense for the question, "But why are you here now?" Nick can only reply grandiosely, "I am demonstrating the American uniform . . . soon you will see untold millions wearing this uniform swarming like locusts" (410-411).

The adjutant's prying has come too close to the source of Nick's own anxiety as to why he returned to Fossalta. In a desperate effort to keep from being overwhelmed by it again he delivers a harangue to the men on the characteristics of American locusts as bait. He resorts to lecturing, as if to a class, about an aspect of his favorite activity of fishing, on which he is an authority. This is an automatic response which functions to divert his mind from the strong feelings aroused by the adjutant's provoking question. Nick's effort represents a concentration of all available mental energy on the task of mastering this intruding overwhelming excitation. As Nick starts to describe the sound made by a locust, the ego function of memory is disturbingly blocked and he cannot recall the sound and has to stop talking.

The adjutant sends for Paravicini and tells Nick, "I can see you have been wounded" (411). Nick replies that he has some very interesting scars but would rather talk about grasshoppers. As Nick launches again into his inappropriate lecture on the effectiveness of two kinds of locusts as bait, it becomes apparent that he is comparing them with soldiers:

> ". . . I will tell you about the American locust.
> We always preferred the one that we called the

> medium-brown. They last best in the water and fish prefer them. The larger ones that fly making a noise somewhat similar to that produced by a rattlesnake rattling his rattlers, a very dry sound, have vivid colored wings, some are bright red, others yellow barred with black, but their wings go to pieces in the water and they make a very blousy bait, while the medium-brown is a plump, compact, succulent hopper that I can recommend as far as one may well recommend something you gentlemen will probably never encounter." (411)

Nick appears to be saying that the smaller, silent, less distinguishable and more compact soldiers hold together better, both physically and mentally, than the larger, more flamboyant and colorful ones who make a noise like a rattlesnake. Their large size, emotion-laden colors, and dangerous sound is associated with the failure to hold together in the hazardous environment of war. Nick then suggests that all young officers in small arms courses should be taught the correct procedure for catching a sufficient supply of these locusts by stretching a seine or net between two officers running into the wind and imprisoning them. The pronounciation of the word seine (sane) fits too well with Nick's fear of his own condition to be overlooked. It reinforces the contrast between the sane and those who, like Nick, are predisposed to go to pieces under severe stress. He concludes the "lecture" with a reiterated admonition, "Gentlemen, either you must govern or you must be governed" (412), implying that either one must rule his own emotions, such as fear, or be ruled by them.

Nick has managed to maintain a tenuous control over his anxiety, but as he leaves the dugout to cool his helmet in the river he meets Para returning with the runners. Para alert to Nick's condition, takes him back to the dugout and insists that he return to Fornaci:

> ". . . There's nothing for you to do. If you move around, even with something worth giving away, the men will group and that invites shelling. I won't have it." (413)

The father-figure upon whom Nick has projected his need for dependence and security has suddenly become authoritarian:

> "I won't have you circulating around to no purpose." Captain Paravicini said.
> "All right," said Nick. He felt it coming on again. (413)

Although Para is acting in Nick's best interest, as a father-figure he is too close to Nick's neurotic conflict for Nick to be able to accept this. As acting major, Para stands in a new relationship to Nick. This role is too threatening with its implication of power over Nick.

> "You understand?" [asked Para]
> "Of course," said Nick. He was trying to hold it in.
> "Anything of that sort should be done at night."
> "Naturally," said Nick. He knew he couldn't stop it now.
> "You see I am commanding the battalion," Para said.
> "And why shouldn't you be?" Nick said. Here it came.
> "You can read and write can't you?" (413)

This contemptuous and insubordinate outburst indicates to Para that Nick is having some kind of a seizure and he gently urges him to lie down.

Again on the brink, Nick, overcome by traumatic hysteria, is no longer able to suppress his great fear, castration by his father:

> He shut his eyes, and in place of the man with the beard who looked at him over the sights of the rifle, quite calmly before squeezing off, the white flash and clublike impact, on his knees, hot-sweet choking, coughing it onto the rock while they went past him, he saw a long, yellow house with a low stable and the river much wider than it was and stiller. "Christ," he said, "I might as well go." (414)

The man with the beard bears a remarkable resemblance to both the sentry with the beard in this story and to the description of Dr. Adams in "The

Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" and in "Fathers and Sons." Hemingway has paired together in Nick's mind, in one mental picture, the sexualized Freudian dream symbols of the "low house painted yellow with willows all around it and a low stable and . . . a canal," with an image of his father projected onto the Austrian rifleman who had actually wounded him at Fossalta.

Nick's experience is comparable to the traumatic accident accompanied by physical injury, described by Fenichel, which can upset the equilibrium between the repressed impulses and repressing forces so that associated connections are immediately established between the trauma and old infantile threats and anxieties, which suddenly reappear and assume a serious character. Nick's life-long fear of retaliation by his father for his Oedipal longings has been displaced, quite understandably, on to being wounded by a man with a gun.

This story represents the climax of the Nick Adams group. It furnishes the proof that a pattern, conscious or unconscious, underlies the seemingly episodic group of stories concentrating on the single protagonist, Nick Adams. The theme is the fear of castration stemming from the Oedipal stage of development. A severe war wound inflicted by an unknown enemy, has a traumatic effect on Nick when it becomes associated in his mind with his unconscious Oedipal longings. Although Hemingway lets us glimpse the Oedipal conflict, he does not indicate that Nick is able to perceive or resolve the problem. Nick's struggle to contain his conflict continues in the succeeding stories, and a gradual ego-control of overpowering emotions makes possible a tenuous adjustment to life.

VI

Earl Rovit says of "Big Two-Hearted River," ". . . it describes the self-administered therapy, of a badly shocked young man, deliberately slowing down his emotional metabolism in order to allow scar tissue to form over the wounds of his past experience."[25] Rovit in no way identifies Nick's problem with the theme of castration and nostalgic return to family conflict, but his comment is particularly appropriate to such an interpretation. It may appear that this story has no discernable plot and that nothing of significance happens. The plot is simply that Nick goes alone to make his own camp and fish for trout in an unnamed river. However, in this river near the camp is a swamp where Nick will find it too dangerous to fish.

Repeated readings suggest that this story is wholly symbolic rather than literal. Evidence for the symbolic viewpoint is initially seen in "Now I Lay Me." Hemingway describes there how Nick sometimes fishes in imaginary streams as well as real ones as he attempts to ward off the death of the ego which he associates with sleep. In that story Nick says:

> I had different ways of occupying myself while I lay awake. I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length very carefully in my mind; fishing very carefully under all the logs, all the turns of the bank, the deep holes and the clear shallow stretches, sometimes catching trout and sometimes losing them. I would stop fishing at noon to eat my lunch; sometimes on a log over the stream . . . and I always ate my lunch very slowly and watched

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[25] Earl Rovit, Ernest Hemingway, (New Haven, 1963), p. 82.

> the stream below me while I ate. Often I ran out of bait . . . always though I found some kind of bait, but one time in the swamp I could find no bait at all and had to cut up one of the trout I had caught and use him for bait. Sometimes I found insects in the swamp meadows in the grass or under ferns and used them. Sometimes the streams ran through an open meadow and in the dry grass I would catch grasshoppers and toss them into the stream and watch them float along swimming on the stream and circling on the surface as the current took them and then disappear as a trout rose. Sometimes I would fish four or five different streams in the night. Some nights too I made up streams, and some of them were very exciting, and it was like being awake and dreaming. Some of those streams I still remember and think that I have fished in them, and they are confused with streams I really know. I gave them all names and went to them on the train and sometimes walked for miles to get to them. (363-364)

In the process of making up streams that were very exciting to him Nick's mind selects out those facets of fishing with symbolic value for him. They represent unmet needs which he is trying to satisfy as in a wish-fulfilling day dream.

In "Now I Lay Me" this purposeful thinking is a device to contain his anxiety, yet it is significant in that it leads inexorably to a consideration of the ambiguities in the family conflict. In "Big Two-Hearted River," Nick may be regressing to an even earlier stage in his emotional development where he is able to ignore this conflict. In his struggle to contain the trauma which has overwhelmed him in such a disturbing manner in "A Way You'll Never Be," Nick may be trying to rebuild his shattered identity and establish his own masculinity. Only when alone and closely associated with nature can he concentrate on the task of building ego-defenses against the emotions engendered by the inter-familial conflict. "Big Two-Hearted River," then, can be seen as a

description of the strengthening process of Nick's ego in releasing tension and attaining partial satisfaction of his drives through the symbols of fishing. Nick has passed beyond the stage of inappropriate non-adaptive behavior seen in "A Way You'll Never Be."

"Big Two-Hearted River" is divided into two parts. Part I might be called "Making camp and eating"; Part II, "Fishing for trout." The detailed ritualization of Nick's every physical movement represents his very great effort to ward off and gain control of a painful inner turmoil. The felt need for Nick to escape from a condition of mental tension places this story within the pattern which has been developing since Nick's childhood. "Big Two-Hearted River" represents Nick's effort to regain a tenuous ego-control over his emotions following the traumatic events of "A Way You'll Never Be."

Hemingway always sets the tone for his stories in his opening descriptive paragraph. When Nick disembarks from the train at Seney and looks around, the landscape reflects the psychic conflagration that has taken place in his mind in "A Way You'll Never Be." Hemingway reports:

> There was no town, nothing but rails and the burned over country . . . . Even the surface had been burned off the ground. (209)[26]

The tremendous conflagration described here may be representative of the searing effect on Nick's mind of the wound at Fossalta and the resulting

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[26]Montgomery, Hemingway in Michigan (New York, 1966), p. 143. Constance Montgomery has established the occurence of a great fire in a town called Seney in upper Michigan, but the records show there was no such devastation as Hemingway described in this story.

confrontation with long repressed Oedipal material. Fire as a symbol both of violence and sex is indicative of the past that Nick is trying to master. If there is significance in the fact that the well adjusted soldier-grasshopper is gathered by a seine (sane) in "A Way You'll Never Be," it should not be overlooked in this story that the place from which Nick leaves in order to regain his balance is called Seney. Even the grasshoppers at Seney have been blackened by the fire.

Hemingway emphasizes the important symbols of the river and the trout. He reports that Nick stands on the bridge over the river for a long time watching "the trout keeping themselves steady in the current with wavering fins" (299). Soon he sees the "big trout" at the bottom of the pool holding themselves against the current on the gravel bottom. Hemingway re-emphasizes the importance to Nick of these two symbols when he continues to reiterate that Nick is happy. "Nick's heart tightened as the trout moved. He felt all the old feeling;" the symbols of the river and the fish remain unchanged. In this story it may be assumed that the river is a symbol of an unconscious libidinal urge, the bridge a link with the unconscious, and the trout a symbol of masculinity. Nick, then, is happy at the prospect of extracting proof of his masculinity, in the form of a big trout, from the river.

As Nick hikes toward the location on the river where he wants to camp one senses his increasing well-being. "He felt he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs. It was all back of him" (210). Although Seney was burned "it did not matter. It could not all be burned. He knew that" (211).

Nick is gaining confidence that in his own life everything is not ruined. Although hot and tired, Nick enjoys his hike to the camp

site. He selects a high spot at the edge of the meadow, near the river, where he can see the trout jumping. As Nick concentrates on the details of making camp, the importance of this camp to him as a symbol of home and security becomes evident.

> He crawled inside under the mosquito bar with various things from the pack to put at the head of the bed under the slant of the canvas. Inside the tent the light came through the brown canvas. It smelled pleasantly of canvas. Already there was something mysterious and homelike. Nick was happy as he crawled inside the tent. He had not been unhappy all day. This was different though. (215)

Like the cocoon in "Now I Lay Me," this womb-like camp represents security for Nick, in an environment which he regards as home. Away from the trauma he has experienced, and the distractions and conflicting emotions aroused by his parents, Nick is able to make his own home close to nature. The narrator tells us:

> Now things were done. There had been this to do. Now it was done. It had been a hard trip. He was very tired. That was done. He had made his camp. He was settled. Nothing could touch him. It was a good place to camp. He was there, in the good place. He was in his home where he had made it. Now he was hungry. (215)

Nick's exultation over having "made" his camp may have two meanings. It is physically his own home away from the environment associated with conflict, and psychologically it stands for a beginning ego-control over his emotions.

For the next two and one half pages Nick indulges in the sensuous pleasures of preparing and eating his evening meal. This excessive preoccupation with food would seem to imply a temporary regression by Nick to an earlier stage of development, where the incorporation of food was associated with both sex and security. Nick's anxiety has been

reduced to the point where he may now enjoy his food:

> He had been that hungry before, but had not been able to satisfy it. (216)

Hemingway stresses Nick's declaration of independence as Nick states out loud his "right to eat this kind of stuff" as he mixes the odd combination of pork and beans and spaghetti. Emphasis is also placed on the sensual aspects of food preparation as Hemingway describes it in these ritualistic terms:

> Nick put the frying pan on the grill over the flames. He was hungrier. The beans and spaghetti warmed. Nick stirred them and mixed them together. They began to bubble, making little bubbles that rose with difficulty to the surface. There was a good smell . . . . The little bubbles were coming faster now. Nick sat down beside the fire and lifted the frying pan off. He poured about half the contents out onto the tin plate. It spread slowly on the plate. Nick knew it was too hot. He poured on some tomato catchup. He knew the beans and spaghetti were still too hot. He looked at the fire, then at the tent, he was not going to spoil it all by burning his tongue. His tongue was very sensitive. He was very hungry. Across the river in the swamp, in the almost dark, he saw a mist rising. He looked at the tent once more. All right. He took a full spoonful from the plate. "Chrise," Nick said. "Geezus Chrise," he said happily. (215-216)

The rising mist in the swamp toward which Nick glances apprehensively from across the river may be said to be a symbol representative of the intrusive past with its ambiguities. Nick is relieved as he finds himself able to eat and enjoy two helpings of food, symbolic of sex, unhindered by the fear of such interruption. After making coffee and thinking of his old friend Hopkins with whom he had camped in the past, "his mind was starting to work" but "he knew he could choke it because he was tired enough" (218). Nick goes to bed and to

sleep, forgetful of the fear and anxiety from the past. This ability to enjoy once again his food and go to sleep alone in the dark is evidence of his temporary regression to the security of a womb-like existence in association with "mother nature." In this setting Nick is now able to limit his nostalgia to the happy associations of hunting and fishing. He is able to fend off the painful memories of the ambiguities which prevent his enjoyment of the present.

If Nick is happy and secure in Part I, he is excited, although somewhat cautious and fearful, in Part II. This sharp change in mood and activity is undoubtedly the reason why Hemingway made this arbitrary division. The ritualized activity on the first day has the effect of making Nick feel secure and satisfies his oral needs. The ritualization on the second day prepares him for the active search for identity and masculinity. The excitement may be said to be covert sexual excitation. The many symbols with sexual significance for Nick will be identified as they occur.

Hemingway sets the stage in the first two paragraphs for the contest to follow. This is to be a struggle between Nick and the trout, with the important symbols of the sun, the meadow, the river, and the swamp, as a setting. As Nick awakens on the following morning and looks around he feels highly stimulated:

> In the morning the sun was up and the tent was beginning to get hot . . . . The sun was just up over the hill. There was the meadow, the river and the swamp. There were birch trees in the green of the swamp on the other side of the river. The river was clear and smoothly fast in the early morning. Down about two hundred yards were three logs all the way across the stream. They made the water smooth and deep above them. As Nick watched, a mink crossed the river on the logs and went into the swamp. Nick was excited.

> He was excited by the early morning and the river. He was really too hurried to eat breakfast, but he knew he must. (221)

Hemingway twice makes mention of the antithetical symbols of the sun and the swamp. The sun may be regarded as a symbol of enlightenment, which frees Nick from his passivity. In contrast, the mist of the previous night symbolizes the intrusive past with its ambiguities which distorted his perception and immobilized Nick. The swamp represents the dangerous Oedipal material of Nick's unconscious. In Freudian terms the river represents the unconscious libidinal drive, and the meadow the safe middle ground. The mink, a female sexual symbol, which Nick notices crossing the river on the logs, may enter the swamp without hazard.

Nick puts the coffee on the fire and goes down to the meadow in search of grasshoppers for bait. Being still wet with dew they are easy to catch and Nick assembles fifty of the "medium brown" ones associated in "A Way You'll Never Be" with the stable soldier. Significantly these hoppers become active and difficult to catch as soon as they are warmed by the sun. The sun is seen as beneficent as compared with the inimical forces which lurk in the swamp.

Hemingway again emphasizes Nick's feelings of excitement to be near the river. The preparation of Nick's breakfast and lunch is described in sensuous detail; no step is left out in the preparation of the food. It is as if Nick is carrying out a ritualized procedure before a battle. Nick cooks and eats two big flapjacks covered with apple butter and makes a lunch of two sliced onion sandwiches. He carefully assembles his fly rod, puts on the reel, threads the line through the guides, ties on a leader and fastens a hook on the end of the leader.

Then:

> He tested the knot and the spring of the rod
> by pulling the line taut. It was a good feeling.
> He was careful not to let the hook bite into his
> finger.
> He started down the stream, holding his rod,
> the bottle of grasshoppers hung from his neck
> by a thong tied in half hitches around the neck
> of the bottle. His landing net hung by a hook
> from his belt. Over his shoulder was a long
> flour sack tied at each corner into an ear. The
> cord went over his shoulder. The sack flapped
> against his legs.
> Nick felt awkward and professionally happy with
> all his equipment hanging from him. The grass-
> hopper bottle swung against his chest. In his
> shirt the breast pockets bulged against him
> with the lunch and his fly hook. (223)

As Nick steps into the stream "the water was a rising cold shock." This was the beginning of Nick's struggle with five separate trout. The phallic symbols of the fish, the rod and the knife which appear in this contest would indicate that the subconscious meaning of this fishing expedition for Nick is a search for his masculinity. Descriptions of the topography of the stream and the places Nick chooses to cast his line suggest that this contest might be compared to a struggle on the three levels of the "conscious," the "preconscious" and the "unconscious" posited by Freud. Fishing in the stream proper represents the conscious; the deep hole and hollow log the preconscious; and the swamp the unconscious. Nick tests his ability to venture into these areas in this story.

The first fish caught in the shallows soon after Nick enters the stream is too small and is carefully and compassionately returned:

> He was certain he could catch small trout in the
> shallows, but he did not want them. There would
> be no big trout in the shallows this time of day. (225)

Nick elects to cast next in the "smooth dammed-back flood of

water" above the log dam near the swamp. These are the logs over which the mink was able to cross to enter the swamp. It is significant that as the second trout takes the bait and jumps high out of the water he is seen to be of tremendous size. The swamp, representative of the dangerous Oedipal material of Nick's unconscious, remains heavily guarded by what Nick regards as an enormous fish. The loss of this monstrous trout, as the line breaks after a sharp fight, leaves Nick shaky and so disappointed he must stop fishing. "The thrill had been too much. He felt vaguely a little sick, as though it would be better to sit down" (226). During this contest Nick's rod became "alive and dangerous, bent double, the line tightening, all in a heavy dangerous, steady pull" (226). The struggle with this phallic symbol of the tremendous fish represents dangerous masculine aggression to Nick. As Nick thinks of this trout somewhere on the bottom with the hook imbedded in his jaw, "he'd bet the trout was angry. Anything that size would be angry" (227). If Nick has to prove his masculinity in a contest with such a trout he is ambivalent. This fish is too "dangerous to catch," but Nick is shaken and disappointed at his failure to do so. Nick may be projecting his own repressed emotions of guilt onto the fish when he thinks of the fish as angry. Nick senses this fish would have been too much for him as he describes the fish as "Solid as a rock, solidly hooked. By God he was a big one. By God he was the biggest one I ever heard of" (227). Nick, then, is not up to playing the strong masculine role implied by catching such a strong, angry, dangerous fish symbolizing the penis. He will settle for two large trout, somewhat smaller than this "biggest one."

Nick tests himself in this contest with the big fish. He obtains

an emotional release through the satisfaction of hooking the biggest trout he has ever heard of. But he also faces the reality of his own limitations in not being able to handle such masculine anger. His deep disappointment at being forced to let the big one go is tempered by his own fear of reprisal.

Beyond the log dam Nick ignores a deep pool and walks in the shallows near the meadow shore to where a great elm tree is uprooted. This tree is a symbol of strength which has been overturned, like Dr. Adams. Nick tries again, in the shallow bed of the stream covered with weeds, and catches his first big (male) trout near the roots of this tree. "Nick worked the trout, plunging, the rod bending alive, out of danger from the weeds into the open river" (228).

Nick now has one good trout and does not care about catching many, but as he walks along the shallow stretch watching the bank for deep holes he sees a beech tree close beside the river. Its branches hang down into the water. Nick knows there are always trout in such a place but he "did not care about fishing that hole. He was sure he would get hooked in the branches" (229).

Nick lets the current take the grasshopper bait under the water, back in under the overhanging tree, where a trout strikes. Nick's fears are realized when the line gets caught in the leaves and branches of the tree and the fish is lost. The proximity of the overhanging branches, like the log dam near the swamp, is an ominous sign to Nick that he will be unable to bring up an insight of value to him from the deep hole of the preconscious at this time.

Down stream, near the meadow bank, Nick notices a big log protruding above the water. He sees that it is hollow as the current enters

it smoothly. Nick lets the bait drift into this log and catches his second large trout without a struggle. Although hidden in the log, this trout is near the surface, in the less threatening area of the preconscious where there are no entanglements, and may be brought up without danger. This fifth cast is his catch for the day. Nick sits on this log and eats his lunch but, significantly, food no longer excites him as his libidinal drive has been satisfied.

Ahead of him the river narrows and enters a swamp. It is evident that disengagement from the deeply unconscious and threatening material is desired by Nick as he states;

> He wished he had brought something to read. He felt like reading. He did not feel like going on into the swamp. Nick did not want to go in there now. He felt a reaction against deep wading with the water deepening up under his armpits, to hook big trout in places impossible to land them. In the swamp the banks were bare, the big cedars came together overhead, the sun did not come through, except in patches; in the fast deep water, in the half light, the fishing would be tragic. In the swamp fishing was a tragic adventure. Nick did not want it. He did not want to go down the stream any further today. (231)

The dangerous Oedipal material, symbolized by the swamp, and the deep hole with the overhanging branches, no longer exerts an irresistible pull on Nick. He turns to thoughts of the conscious ego function represented by "reading," or the use of the mind rather than the release of the emotions. Nick has, through this symbolic contest with the fish on the preconscious level, reduced his anxiety and regained a measure of ego-control.

Having decided to end his fishing expedition, Nick opens his knife, an instrument of castration, and cleans his two fish. He is very satisfied to discover they are both males. He cleans out the "long

gray-white strips of milt, /male generative organ of fishes/ smooth and clean. All the insides clean and compact, coming out all together. Nick tossed the offal ashore for the minks to find" (231). Nick has caught the symbol of masculinity but, like his father, he has offered up the substance of it to a female, represented here by the mink. He puts off to some indefinite future date entering the swamp where "fishing is a tragic adventure." He was going back to camp. "There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp" (232).

In "Cross Country Snow" Nick attempts to consolidate his gains in terms of a continuing adjustment. Nick is faced for the first time with the problems and responsibilities of marriage and approaching fatherhood. In this story he is married and has recently learned of his wife's pregnancy and the expected birth about seven months hence. Nick is ambivalent about this unexpected news as is demonstrated in the dialogue with his skiing companion George:

> "Is Helen going to have a baby?" /said George/
> "Yes."
> "When?"
> "Late next summer."
> "Are you glad?"
> "Yes. Now."
> "Will you go back to the states?"
> "I guess so."
> "Do you want to?"
> "No."
> "Does Helen?"
> "No."
> George sat silent. He looked at the empty bottle and the empty glasses.
> "It's hell, isn't it?" he said.
> "No. Not exactly," Nick said.
> "Why not?"
> "I don't know," said Nick.
> "Will you ever go skiing together in the states?" George said.
> "I don't know," said Nick. (187)

It is noteworthy that when Nick actually faces fatherhood his

attitude toward his past begins to change. Approaching fatherhood aids in the repression of unconscious and disturbing material. No longer does he need to defend himself from feelings of confusion over the ambiguities of the family conflict. Although in these stories the conflict always remains a part of Nick's personality, marriage and a new environment has relegated it to a less important place. Even the unseen patch of soft snow which gives him a bad spill is not seen as threatening here. His feelings are covered over like the "wind board crust of snow" over which he can glide, indicating that his ego is in control. His nostalgia in this story is for the pleasures of skiing rather than for the pathological return which leads him to the unhappy past. The past with its conflicts and ambiguities has not been understood or resolved; it has been repressed to manageable proportions.

In "Big Two-Hearted River," Nick has made use of the beneficent influence of nature to help rebuild his defenses against the inimical forces aroused by his traumatic war wound. In "Cross Country Snow" Nick again turns to nature in adjusting to the new situation of approaching fatherhood as he goes skiing with his friend George, who is on a school holiday. Here a snow-covered mountain serves as a symbol of freedom. It provides Nick with an environment in which he can be free and active. Nick enjoys mindless sensations again as he is swept away on the descent from the mountain top:

> The rush and the sudden swoop as he dropped
> down a steep undulation in the mountain side
> plucked Nick's mind out and left him only the
> wonderful flying, dropping sensation in his body. (183)

In "A Way You'll Never Be," Nick was frightened every night by a dream about:

> . . . a low house painted yellow with willows all around it and a low stable and there was a canal. (408)

In "Cross Country Snow" Nick and George walk along the road into a pine forest toward an inn.

> The road dipped sharply to a stream and then ran straight up hill. Through the woods they could see a long, low-eaved, weather-beaten building. Through the trees it was a faded yellow. (184)

Nick will not be able to escape completely from the meaning of the "low house painted yellow" but the reappearance of this same symbol now has fewer threatening implications for him. This does not mean that he is trouble-free. He still must cope with realistic frustrations and adjustments. His approach to these problems will be on a more practical basis. He is loath to give up the many sensual pleasures of skiing. Hemingway's description of the "flying sensation" can be seen in sexual terms:

> He rose to a slight up-run and then the snow seemed to drop out from him as he went down down, faster and faster in a rush down the last, long steep slope. Crouching so he was almost sitting back on his skis, trying to keep the center of gravity low, the snow driving like a sand storm, he knew the pace was too much. But he held it. He would not let go and spill. Then a patch of soft snow, left in a hollow by the wind, spilled him and he went over and over in a clashing of skis, feeling like a shot rabbit, then stuck, his legs crossed, his skis sticking straight up and his nose and ears jammed full of snow. (183)

A residual effect of Nick's past can be seen in his attitude toward marriage and motherhood. In "Cross Country Snow" as Nick enters the long low-eaved house he at first fails to notice that the waitress' "apron covered swellingly her pregnancy" (185). Since "Indian Camp," Nick has been painfully aware of what he has interpreted as the dangers of pregnancy and fatherhood. In this story about the prospective birth

of Nick's child he discovers an unborn baby in the low-eaved house. Such a house was associated in "A Way You'll Never Be" with the womb. The girl's rather extreme touchiness appears to Nick to stem from her unmarried state and unwanted pregnancy. This is a reflection of the same emotional reaction expressed in "Indian Camp." The birth of a baby brings with it torture for the mother and a psychological castration for the father. Nick says, in explanation to George:

> ". . . she's touchy about being here and then she's got that baby coming without being married and she's touchy."
> "How do you know she isn't married?"
> "No ring. Hell, no girls get married around here till they're knocked up." (186)

It seems to Nick that all babies are dangerous accidents.

However, despite the fact that Helen's pregnancy was unplanned, Nick shows a reluctant acceptance of fatherhood. His attitude toward his wife Helen is indicative of a tenuous adjustment. Nick has moved from neurotic preoccupation of the family conflict in "Now I Lay Me," to partial expression of repressed material in "A Way You'll Never Be," and to a beginning assertion of his masculinity in association with nature in "Big Two-Hearted River." Nick's marriage to Helen is evidence of increasing maturity. They plan to return to the United States to have the baby although neither Nick nor his wife want to do so. This means the end of skiing for them, symbolizing the loss of freedom with its carefree sensual pleasure, and the onset of family responsibilities.

In "Fathers and Sons," the last of the Nick Adams stories, Hemingway describes a very much older Nick who re-examines his own life in the presence of his pre-adolescent son.

In "Fathers and Sons" Nick is touring through a town in a southern state with his son; the mother is not present. This episode in Nick's

life, after his father's death, represents his attempt to come to terms with his life-long conflict. It soon becomes evident however that the ever present ambivalences and ambiguities will continue to work to prevent a full resolution. In the first paragraph Hemingway sets the stage for the antithetical attitudes Nick will display. Contrary to Hemingway's usual terse style, the first sentence is fourteen lines long and reflects the confusion in Nick's mind, but the detour sign which Nick does not obey as he drives through the town symbolizes his inability to bypass the problem and ward off the forces which tear him apart.

In terms of the pattern running through the Nick stories, he will be unable to avoid thinking ambivalently about his father. The flashing lights on the traffic-less main street signal the pendulum-like alternation of Nick's feelings toward Dr. Adams. These feelings leave Nick in a depressed state as he is unable to make up his mind to either condemn him or absolve him of blame for his attitude toward sex or for the interfamilial conflict. The heavy trees on the main street, "that shut out the sun and dampen the houses for a stranger" but "that are a part of your heart if it is your town and you have walked under them" (488), give Nick feelings of both nostalgia and alienation.

Beyond the town Nick commences his defensive habit of classifying and cataloguing the physical details of the country through which he and his son, who is asleep on the seat beside him, are passing:

> Hunting the country in his mind as he went by; sizing up each clearing as to feed and cover and figuring where you would find a covey and which way they would fly. (488)

In thinking about hunting quail as his father had taught him, Nick is led inexorably into thoughts of his father. As in "Now I Lay Me," this detailed description becomes a magnet drawing him back to his unsolvable

conflict. As in "A Way You'll Never Be," his father's outstanding characteristic for Nick is the deep-set far-seeing eyes which he compares to those of an eagle. He remembers, as a child, this superior faculty which his father was quick to point out to him as greater than his own. In recalling this ability Nick pairs it with various negative features such as "hawk nose," weak chin," "nervousness and sentimentality" (489). Nick also remembers that his father "was both cruel and abused," but then Nick is quick to excuse him on the basis of "bad luck" and "betrayal":

> Also he had much bad luck, and it was not all of it his own. He died in a trap that he had helped only a little to set, and they all betrayed him in their various ways before he died. Nick could not write about him yet, although he would, later. (489)

Hemingway compounds Nick's confusion as he contrasts Nick's grateful feelings toward his father, for teaching him to fish and hunt, with resentful and fearful feelings, about Dr. Adams' unsound attitude toward sex:

> He was very grateful to him for two things; fishing and shooting. His father was as sound on these two things as he was unsound on sex. . . . and now at thirty-eight, he loved to fish and shoot exactly as much as when he first had gone with his father. It was a passion that had never slackened and he was very grateful to his father for bringing him to know it. While for the other, that his father was not sound about, all the equipment you will ever have is provided and each man learns all there is to know about it without advice. (490)

This attempt to dismiss his father's attitude about sex as being unimportant represents a denial of the influence of his parents on his life-long sexual conflicts. As in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," Nick's ambivalence is evidence of his inability to pass judgment on

his father. However, Nick immediately points out the ridiculousness of his father's attitude by relating the only two pieces of information his father had ever given him about sex, that a "bugger" and a "masher" are both guilty of the most "heinous crimes," and that

> masturbation produced blindness, insanity and death, while a man who went with prostitutes would contract hideous veneral diseases and that the thing to do was to keep your hands off people. (491)

That Nick is deeply stirred by his father's attitude about sex is demonstrated by his preoccupation with it in this story. Hemingway indicates that Nick must feel resentful and rebellious over his father's prohibitions as he describes Nick's ironic reaction to the word "mashing." Nick had read in the paper that Enrico Caruso had been arrested for mashing, and in his imagination had pictured "the great tenor doing something strange, bizarre, and heinous with a potato masher to a beautiful lady who looked like the pictures of Anna Held on the inside of cigar boxes." Nick "resolved, with considerable horror, that when he was old enough he would try mashing at least once." However, Nick immediately relates that:

> On the other hand his father had the finest pair of eyes he had ever seen and Nick had loved him very much for a long time. Now, knowing how it had all been, even remembering the earliest times before things had gone badly was not good remembering. If he wrote it he could get rid of it. He had gotten rid of many things by writing them. (491)

Nick obviously does not truly get rid of anything by writing it. This story demonstrates, as have the others, that the compulsive need to write reflects the fact that Nick is enmeshed in the emotional conflict of two opposing instinctual drives. The two sides of the conflict

which have immobilized Nick throughout these stories are his love for his father, for the life they had shared while hunting and fishing, and his hatred of him for the feelings of guilt aroused by the need to reject his parent's puritanical denial of sex. Because of his father's prohibitions Nick is afraid that his own instinctual demands might be dangerous. This is the source of his fear of castration.

However, in "Fathers and Sons," Nick goes on to demonstrate the futility of denying the powerful sexual drive by describing in vivid detail his own education in sex acquired in the hemlock woods behind the Indian camp. As usual, Hemingway leads into this episode by a sensuous description, this time of the trail between the Adams' cottage and the place where the Indians lived. As Nick traverses it barefoot again, in his mind, he describes the sexually-associated experiences of various sensations felt through his feet as he walks on soft "pine needle loam," a firm log over the creek, "the black muck of the swamp," the "cropped grass" of the field, "the quaky bog of the creek bottom," the "fresh warm manure" by the barn, to the "brown clean springy-needle ground" of the virgin forest (492). He savors these sensations in anticipation of his sexual encounter in the woods "against the trunk of a hemlock wider than two beds are long" (493).

Hemingway has Nick describe vividly his two liasons with Trudy, (close enough phonetically to be identified with "Prudie" of "Ten Indians") and the sparse Indian talk between Nick, Trudy and her brother Billy, who was present part of the time during their sex play. Between sexual encounters Nick disposes harshly of the elder brother Eddy's reported interest in sleeping with Nick's sister; he goes through the threatening motions of shooting him, scalping him, and then throwing

him to the dogs. Inconsistently Nick is ready to defend his own sister's honor while expecting Billy to accept without question Nick's intercourse with Trudy. Having displayed anger and play-acted in an aggressive manner, Nick is "a man now" and can again enjoy sex with Trudy, this time after sending Billy away.

In remembering all this, while driving with his own son asleep beside him, Nick has defied his father's prohibition again in sensuous rumination and must rush guiltily to his defense. The pendulum swings back to nostalgic thoughts of his father in association with nature:

> His father came back to him in the fall of the year, or in the early spring. His father was with him suddenly, in deserted orchards and in new ploughed fields, in thickets, on small hills, or when going through dead grass, whenever splitting wood or hauling water, by grist mills, cider mills and dams and always with open fires. After he was fifteen he had shared nothing with him. (496)

The pendulum must swing back again and Hemingway writes, "Nick loved his father but hated the smell of him." Nick now remembers the episode where he was forced to wear a suit of his father's underwear that had become too small. The symbolic meaning to Nick must be that he is being forced to accept an inferior position, and to identify too closely, in the contested area of sex, with the feared rival. Significantly, Nick hides the underwear under stones in the creek, preferring to take a whipping for lying rather than submit to such a defeat. Afterwards, from the woodshed, he aims his loaded and cocked shotgun at his father sitting on the porch and thinks:

> ". . . I can blow him to hell. I can kill him." Finally he felt his anger go out of him and he felt a little sick about it being the gun his father had given him. (496-497)

The phallic symbol and the antithetical feelings are evident here.

Strong guilt feelings are paired with thoughts of aggression against the father. Nick defies his father again, in his mind, by returning to Trudy and sex, although ostensibly to get rid of the smell. He attributes to the young Trudy the good Indian smell that is like a "fresh cased marten skin" and sweetgrass.

By the process of association Nick is being faced with the imminent prospect of an adolescent son who will need a father's constructive guidance in sex. He puts off for the present dealing with this problem. He has so associated sex with Indians that he is blocked from answering when the boy awakens and asks his father what it was like to hunt with the Indians and what they were like to be with. "It's hard to say," is Nick's only reply. Unable to answer his son, Nick is led into the second highly sensuous rumination on the sex act in this story:

> Could you say /to this child/ she did first what no one has ever done better and mention plump brown legs, flat belly, hard little breasts, well-holding arms, quick searching tongue, the flat eyes, the good taste of mouth, then uncomfortably, tightly, sweetly, moistly, lovely, tightly, achingly, fully, finally, unendingly, never-endingly, never-to-endingly, suddenly ended, the great bird flown like an owl in the twilight, only it daylight in the woods and hemlock needles stuck against your belly. (497)

This sensuous delight in remembered sex is a defiance of his father. With Trudy, a primitive child of nature and of an inferior race, there can be no responsibility attached to the act.

However, such indulgence must be quickly denied. The consequences are demonstrated for Nick in the first story, "Indian Camp." Nick swings back to a defense of his father again and to the contrast between

old squaws and hunting and fishing. The Indian squaws all ended the same, "long time ago good. Now no good" (498). Drink and promiscuity inevitably lead to the loss of their maidenly qualities. The absence of women in the Nick Adams stories and Nick's preoccupation with fishing and hunting reflect Nick's failure to make a lasting, pleasurable, heterosexual adjustment.

Despite his defiance, the story ends with Nick safely on the side of his father as Hemingway implies that while no lasting pleasurable association with women is possible, hunting and fishing continue to provide unfailing satisfaction as an unconscious substitute for sex. Nick feels that:

> When you have shot one bird flying you have shot all birds flying. They are all different and they fly in different ways but the sensation is the same and the last one is as good as the first. He could thank his father for that. (498)

It is revealing that when the son asks Nick to describe his grandfather, Nick can only reply:

> He's hard to describe. He was a great hunter and fisherman and he had wonderful eyes. (498)

As with the first story, "Indian Camp," this last one ends on a note of compromise as Nick promises to take his son to pray at the tomb of his grandfather. Although Nick does not criticize his father, Nick's son must feel there is an underlying reason for failure to visit the grave.

Nick has demonstrated again his inability to reconcile his ambivalent emotions of love and hate. His own feelings of guilt prevent him from passing judgment on his father.

CONCLUSION

In this study the underlying forces motivating Nick Adams have been reconstructed and documented in the analysis of the twelve stories in which he is the protagonist. A significant pattern emerges from the Nick Adams series. This pattern of ambivalence supports the hypothesis that Nick is the victim of psychic impotence caused by a repressed fear of castration by his father. Although Dr. Adams is the most important influence in his life, Nick's feelings toward this significant person leave him confused and immobilized. The character of Dr. Adams as it is created by his son is crucial to an understanding of Nick's personality. His father presents Nick with innumerable ambiguities in terms of strength and weakness, right and wrong.

A major ambiguity is the parental role reversal exemplified in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," and "Now I Lay Me." In these stories the mother emerges as the dominant figure in the family and Nick sees his father as passively submitting to her will. The meaning to Nick is that his father is weak and has, in effect, been castrated. The fear of a dominant female is seen as the source of Nick's avoidance of a heterosexual relationship in "The End of Something" and "Now I Lay Me." Any display of tenderness between the parents is completely lacking in these stories. It is significant that Nick's attitude toward women is limited to an interest in mere physical sex without tenderness or involvement.

In contrast to his passive submission to his wife Dr. Adams is shown to be aggressive and efficient in his chosen field of medicine

and in his avocation of fishing and hunting where his authority is unlikely to be questioned. Nick's fifteen years of close association with his father, who taught him to fish and hunt, emerges as the strongest single influence in his life, to which Nick turns throughout these stories as a source of strength. In "Big Two-Hearted River" Nick is enabled to use his own association with nature as a means of maintaining his threatened equilibrium. He regains ego-control over the anxiety aroused by his fears of castration.

On the one hand, Nick admires his father's proficiency and prowess in medicine and nature activities, and loves him for sharing these with him. On the other hand, Nick sees his father as cowardly and passive in non-professional relationships yet rigid and opinionated in his efforts to control Nick, in terms of his unrealistic and puritanical interpretations of the prohibitions imposed by society. These two sides of his father continually face Nick with a crisis of identification.

A major source of frustration to Nick is the doctor's prohibition of sex. An insuperable problem arises around this denial of a strong instinctual drive. In "Indian Camp," as a small boy, Nick senses the threat of castration by his father as he associates, on the unconscious level, the doctor's callous attitude toward the Indian mother with his own Oedipal longings. In "Ten Indians" and "Fathers and Sons" Dr. Adams has denied sex in any form. Thus there are two possible reasons for Nick's inability to mature normally beyond the Oedipal stage; the parental role reversal which has hindered his proper identification with the parent of the same sex, and the feelings of guilt aroused by Nick's rebellion against his father's denial of sex

on any terms. The parent who is so passive he cannot display righteous anger towards his wife, represents to Nick a denial of aggression which has a crippling effect on his own development. Nick fears identification with a father whom he perceives as having been castrated; he interprets his father's prohibition of sex as an attempt to castrate him.

Nick can neither wholly identify with nor completely reject this most significant person in his life. This conflict is demonstrated by the pendulum-like alternation of attitudes displayed in "Fathers and Sons." Fishing and hunting is a lone occupation and not a basis for identification with people, yet this is the pattern which Nick must adopt for self-preservation and ego-mastery. Nick's inability to pass judgment on his parent is based on the confusion and ambiguity of this two-sided basis for identification provided by his father. To Nick this parent can be neither hero nor coward.

The sexualized war wound is traumatic because it forces Nick to face up to the ambiguities which he has more or less successfully repressed. In "A Way You'll Never Be" his ego defenses fail and the wound uncovers for him old psychic fears of bodily damage by pairing the long yellow house and low stable with the soldier-aggressor who symbolizes the realization of his fear of castration. It is to Nick's credit that, without understanding the nature of his conflict, he struggles to contain his anxiety and succeeds in attaining a tenuous adjustment to life in "Cross Country Snow" and "Big Two-Hearted River." Nick's postponement to an indefinite future of the "tragic adventure of fishing in the swamp" may well represent the only defense possible for a boy with the background Hemingway has given Nick.

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