



THE OTHER SELF OF EARNEST HEMINGWAY: NICK ADAMS

Maria-Camelia DICU*

*"Constantin Brancusi" University of Targu Jiu

Abstract: *The present article is a reminder of the American writer, Ernest Hemingway. The Nick Adams cycle autobiographical as many critics opinionated, reveals a sensitive boy in the body of apparently strong man, who wanted to raise to his father pretenses. The article comprises glimpses of his adventurous life, opinions of psychologists regarding the otherness, the way that the author wrote about himself as if it were another person. Hemingway's stile as journalistic as it was conquered the hearts and minds of many readers, in writing about real things through the filter of imagination.*

Keywords: short-story, Nick Adams, writing career, writer, writing style

**Contact details
of the
author(s):** d.camelia67@gmail.com

Motto:

*Readers should remember that many works published after a beloved writer's death are the product of speculative —and often controversial— editorial processes.
(Francesca Peacock (7))*

1. Introduction

Ernest Hemingway fulfilled his desideratum in writing directly, personally, using simple and vigorous words. Hemingway was everything he wanted to be a sensitive author, war correspondent, a hunter, a fisherman, a Noble-Prizer a Pulitzer-Prizer and a world celebrity. Yet, he ended his life so disappointingly.

The present article is a reminder of the American writer, Ernest Hemingway. The Nick Adams cycle autobiographical as many critics opinionated, reveals a sensitive boy in the body of apparently strong man, who wanted to raise to his father pretenses.

2. A Life: The Arch Storyteller

Quoting Ana Maria Dudău (Dudău: 2025, p.127), naturalism represents a philosophical concept according to which reality corresponds to something that can be perceived or fathomed. In this context, we can assert that Ernest Hemingway was a writer who wrote about reality, through the filter of imagination.



The conclusions of the study on Hemingway on the Cliffnotes.com seem to strengthen the title of our article: "It seems as if there were always two Hemingway. One was the adventurer – the grinning, bearded "Papa" of the news photographs, the other was the skillful, sensitive author Hemingway, who patiently wrote, re-wrote and edited his work."

Undoubtedly, Ernest Hemingway had a colorful life. He was a war correspondent, big game hunter, angler, writer, world celebrity and winner of 1954 Noble Prize for literature, according to the same CliffsNotes.

Ernest was the second son and first boy born in the family of the doctor Ed Hemingway, a general practitioner and Grace Hemingway, a devout and religious mother of considerable musical talent. The family owned a cabin in Michigan woods cleared by several Ottawa Indians and here we have the first information we find in the cycle of short stories Nick Adams. Nick was thrilled to go to this cabin every summer, where he liked to spend his time hunting, fishing, camping, vegetable gardening and making plans for another summer here. Ernest's adventurous life began at three years old, when he learnt to fish and then at fourth birthday, when his father offered him an all-day fishing trip.

His adventures went on with his twelfth anniversary birthday present, when his grandfather gave him a single-barrel 20-gauge shot gun. At this point, it is worth mentioning CliffsNotes (3) study guide, which refer to Hemingway's love for fishing and hunting during his childhood and adolescence and thus the ingredients for his short stories centering around Nick Adams.

Hemingway's adventurous life went on with football and boxing as a highschooler. Yet, a boxing accident was responsible for his eyesight. His perfectionist father took care to remind him that whatever he did, "he must do it right" (3). Maybe for this reason, he had a stigma, which he could not surpass: the flawed sight and a speech defect.

Hemingway began his writing career while still in high school as a reporter for the Trapeze and a writer of stories for the school's literary magazine.

Nevertheless, he had no passion for further education, so his father called Kansas City Star to have his son employed as a cub reporter. Determined to learn how to write well, he was taught to write short sentences, avoid cliches, unnecessary adjectives and this compose good stories about Kansas City life filled with crime and violence.

Despite the satisfying pace of his life and sure earnings, he was eager to be part of war in Europe. He knew that his defective eyesight would make impossible his desire, but he met Theodore Brumback, a fellow reporter at the Kansas City Star, with vision in one eye, who suggested to the future writer to volunteer for the American Field Service. Finally, he and Brumback left from the Star, too farewell from their families and went to New York for their physical examinations, where Hemingway received a B rating and the recommendation to take some glasses.

While waiting to sail overseas, Hemingway wrote optimistic letters to his parents. Nevertheless, a second typhoid shot left him nauseated and aching while rough seas sent him retching to the rails.

The next stop was Milan, where a munition factory exploded and Ernest discovered that the dead people were mostly women comparatively to men.

Next stage in the writer's life comprised more action and for this reason he left for Austro-Italian border, where he was severely wounded. After this episode, returning to Milan, Hemingway wrote about being wounded and the way he felt life slipping from him. Regarding this confession, some literary critics believe that the near-death experience obsessed the writer and that is why he felt prone to test his courage his entire life.

The next episode in Hemingway's life has him returning to the States limp and famous. He received a letter from a nurse whom he had fallen in love. The letter recounted that she had fallen in



love with an Italian lieutenant. That Italian nurse appears to be the model for the character Catherine in the writer's novel *A Farewell to Arms*.

Soon after he returns to his beloved north woods, where he went fishing, wrote some short stories *The End of Something* and *The Tree-Day Blow* and enjoyed a brief romance. He spoke to the women's club about wartime adventures and a woman from Toronto impressed by Hemingway's stories hired him as a companion for her lame son.

After Canada, Hemingway's saga went on with him meeting Hadley Richardson, seven years older and heiress of a beautiful fortune, whom he married, to his mother's relief. For financial safety, the couple moved to Paris, where the living was cheaper. Their household was in the Latin Quarter, "a bohemian enclave of artists" (3). Hemingway was 23 when The Toronto Sun bought articles and political sketches that Hemingway submitted. Hemingway felt appreciated for his authentic style and that he was finally considered an author.

His subsequent adventure found him covering the war between Greece and Turkey, then the Lausanne Peace Conference; after divorcing Hadley with who he had a child, he was married three more times. Yet, the most important was the encounter with Gertrude Stein, the American expatriate and writer. Gertrude adopted the sayings of a garage keeper, and those sayings became the brand of a generation "you are a lost generation" (3).

Hemingway, in turn, used the words as an epigraph for his first major novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1921). The term "lost generation" was used in relation with the young writers in the post-World War I era, a generation who believed their love and hopes "were shattered" by the war. The youth that died was not for patriotic ideals, but for materialistic international interests.

Of course, the American writer's adventures went on with safaris and with literary success too. In 1953 he won a Pulitzer and in 1954, Noble Prize for *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Despite his literary success, unhappiness brought his death. In July 1961, a self-inflicted gunshot brought him to the end of the travels through life.

Ernest Hemingway's legacy is that of one of the finest short story writers along with William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor and John Steinbeck.

3. The concept of "Other" versus the concept of "Otherness"

Along the time philosophers have undertaken the task to analyze these concepts. Among these philosophers and psychoanalysts, the French, Jacques Lacan stirred many controversies. To quote Peter Benson "Lacan's innovation was to re-interpret Freud's theories of the unconscious in terms of the dialectic of Self and Other, rather than in terms of the biological impulses hypothesized by Freud." (2)

In the context of Lacan's innovation and examining his analysis, we can state that there is a clear distinction between the concepts of "otherness" and "other". Thus, "otherness" is viewed as a difference from others, id est, black from white people or Christians from non-Christians. While the concept of "other" refers to the fact that a person imagines him as another self, a better vision, in that person's opinion.

Peter Benson (2) explains the concept of "otherness" from philosophical point of view. First, Benson examines John Stuart Mill, who, in explaining the concept, he points out that other human beings have feelings and bodies like himself. Yet, they "exhibit" acts, which are caused by their feelings.

Another opinion examined of Benson is that of Immanuel Kant's, who considers Moral Law as deduced by pure reason creating a kingdom of Ends – a world of free autonomous individuals".



G.W.F. Hegel “wrote about familiar questions concerning the relationships between observing subjects and their objects of observation” (2), which he called *The Dialectic of Consciousness*.

In speaking about Lacan as an innovator, Berson, specifically refers to the philosopher’s innovation in finding two versions of “other”. “Other” with capital letter designates the concept of “otherness”, as the sociologists view it, that is, “different from”. “Other” with small letter represents our concern. This “other” refers to the counterpart of ourselves, a partner of dialogue. Just as in the case of Nick Adams for Ernest Hemingway.

4. Nick Adam’s Cycle

In the context of the previous philosophical opinions, the cycle of Nick Adams stories is considered autobiographical by many critics, the ‘other’ of Hemingway. The persona represents the alter ego of the writer, a desideratum of the writer. Nick Adams is a fictional character. Yet, there are many similarities, which made the critics consider him autobiographical. For example, Hemingway and Nick are the sons of a doctor. On the other hand, both fathers are dominant in relation to their sons.

Nick Adams is the protagonist of some dozen short stories. The volume, *The Nick Adams Stories* was published in 1972 by Scribner Publishing House. As *Cliff Notes* explain, Nick Adams witnesses or is part of a traumatic event. (5)

Intriguingly enough, Harold Macgregor Arthur, University of Rhode Island (1), in his master’s degree thesis, “Hemingway’s Nick Adams Stories: A Psychological Interpretation refers to psychology-oriented critics who suggested the theme of castration. In demonstrating his statement, Macgregor mentions Nick’s interactions with father-figures or their substitutes. Macgregor’s analysis also encompasses a comparison of Nick’s conflicts with the emotional conflicts of a normal child while passing through various stages of mental development. The above-mentioned comparison reveals “Nick’s fixation at the Oedipal stage of development and his fear of castration”. (1)

Interestingly, Richard R Lingeman (4) in his April 25, 1972, article published in New York Times refers to some unpublished works of Hemingway during his lifetime. Among these unpublished works – surprise – some Nick Adams Stories. They were 24, with 8 never published (6).

Even more interesting is the quotation from Hemingway himself: “The only writing that was any good was what you made up”, in *On Writing*. Lingeman asserts that the American writer rejected autobiographical writing, “letting experience into imagined” (4).

5. Hemingway’s Style

As for Hemingway’s writing style, it is reminiscent to the years of apprenticeship at the Kansas City Star, when he was taught to write short sentences, avoid cliches, unnecessary adjectives and this compose good stories.

The twentieth century American literature had two writers, whose writing style was great: Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner. Yet, there is much difference between the two. Faulkner’s inscribes in modernism though his use of stream of consciousness, while Hemingway’s is journalistic reminiscent from the war reports.

Perhaps Hemingway’s journalistic style as it is, began with Kansas City Star and continued with his war reports. Ernest Hemingway’s prose is characterized as simple, direct and unadorned.

On the other hand, the American writer adopted the simple style of writing, when literature was filled pages of heavy writing. In 1954, when Hemingway was awarded the Noble Prize, the committee recognized his “forceful and style-making mastery of the art of modern narration”. (5)



Nevertheless, we find out from CliffsNotes, that his style was not al spontaneous. On the contrary, he worked hard in revising his texts. In Hemingway's words "a writer's style should be direct and personal and his words simple and vigorous". (ibidem)

Thus, Hemingway fulfilled his desideratum concerning the writing style.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Nick Adams cycle with 24 stories of which 8 published posthumously, reveals the feelings of a boy who wanted to raise to his father's pretenses. Whatever his hidden purpose, Ernest Hemingway show his readers a sensitive author, who managed to write about real world through the prism of his imagination. Hemingway's writing style enchants his reader through a journalistic style – simple, direct and unadorned. Hemingway lived adventurous life. When he was a young boy, his father gave him the present of one day fishing trip while his grandfather gifted him a gun. Even from the advent of his life, he was taught with adventure. Consequently, his entire life was an adventure. When in school he played football and boxed. Then his father had him a cub reporter at Kansas City Star. Then together with a colleague reporter went, as war correspondents, on front. He had several marriages and several divorces. He went to African safaris. He lived in Paris in a period where many artists found a refuge. Even if Hemingway disapproved autobiographical writings, in examining some psychologists we reached the conclusion that Nick Adams cycle is mostly autobiographical.



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