

“The Road Not Taken” in Hemingway’s “The Snows of Kilimanjaro”^{*1}

SILVIA AMMARY

Although the speaker of Robert Frost’s poem “The Road Not Taken” tells us that the road he takes is “less traveled,” in the second and third stanzas, he makes it clear that “the passing there” had worn these two paths “really about the same” and that “both that morning equally lay/ in leaves no step had trodden black” (835). The poem is told from the point of view of a speaker who imagines that he will contemplate his life later, “I shall be telling this [...],” and whether he will have made the right choice or not. In fact, the only marker for the present tense is the word “hence.” Ambiguity is felt in Frost’s most famous words: “I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”² We are never told whether or not the difference made in the life of that person was good or bad; whether it enriched his life or made it miserable. Even the few clues that we have—the telling all this with a “sigh” and that both roads were equally fair—are vague. Is the “sigh” an expression of satisfaction and contentment that the speaker has taken a successful path? Or is it an expression of regret and remorse that he has not taken the other road and has left behind the possibilities it might have offered? If the roads are equally fair, then why does the speaker say “that has made all the difference”? What about the title of the poem? Which road is “the road not taken”? Is it the one the speaker takes, which according to his last description is “less traveled by,” i.e., had not been taken by others, or does the title refer to the supposedly better-traveled road that the speaker himself fails to take?

^{*}For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debammmary01813.htm>.

Frost never answers these questions, leaving the readers to create their own interpretations. Even Frost himself, after a public reading of the poem, admonished the public “to be careful of that one; it’s a tricky poem—tricky” (Thompson 14). An initial reading of the poem reveals a searcher-speaker who sees a forked road and chooses the nonconformist, “the less-traveled” path, thus discovering meaning for the self; however, a close reading of the poem reveals that the speaker admits three times within six lines that the roads are the same and that they are indistinguishable: one is “just as fair” as the other, they are “worn really about the same,” and each “equally lay.” The reader of the poem would like to believe in a world of clear, forked-road choices, but there is really no other path in Robert Frost’s most famous and most ambiguous poem “The Road Not Taken.” There is only one path; the other path remains simply an illusion, an abstraction, and a missed and lamentable chance. One interpretation of the poem could be that Frost wants the individual to make a choice (unless one wants to stand forever in the wood in front of the forked path!), and even if that choice will always be determined by fate, chance or destiny, one should make the best of it. Only then can one understand the nature of the choice made and the nature of the self that has made it.

The theme of the lamentable chance permeates Hemingway’s fiction. In fact, his world is one filled with loss. On the surface, Hemingway’s short stories and novels seem to deal with violence, death, tension and threat, but those aspects constitute just the tip of the iceberg or the surface structure; the remaining hidden and larger part reveals a sense of loss matched with a sense of longing, confusion, remorse and nostalgia. What can be noticed is that Hemingway develops his fiction from a sense of nostalgia for something that was there and is not anymore in his earlier writing to a sense of remorse at a missed chance, i.e., at something that never was. The short stories about Nick Adams, *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and, finally, *The Old Man and the Sea* all deal with the first kind of loss; the emotional and spiritual aftermath of losing something one had before. This takes the form of longing and nostalgia. Nick

Adams is involved in loss most of the times: be it the loss of a girl, older values, his country, his family and his friends, etc.; Jake Barnes yearns for a sense of order and love in a world which is losing all purpose and meaning; Frederic Henry narrates his story to come to terms with the loss of his love Catherine; Robert Jordan also fears the loss of love and life, even more than he fears death; and finally Santiago loses the biggest fish ever and the biggest challenge of his life (Adair 12).³

In Hemingway's later fiction, especially in *Death in the Afternoon*, *The Garden of Eden* and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," the sense of nostalgia changes into a sense of remorse for the lost chance. In *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway catalogues all the things that he had loved about Spain but was not able to get into the book. In *The Garden of Eden*, Hemingway said that the theme of the book is "the happiness of the garden that a man must lose" (Baker 460). Harry, the protagonist of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," ruminates on the path not taken and the lost chance of becoming a writer. The reminiscences he had always intended to write about, italicized in the text, remain unrecorded and just part of his imagination. They remain snapshots and imagistic scenes. They remain in his memory and flashbacks. He dies without reaching the summit and without seeing the white peak of Kilimanjaro, since what happens in reality is that Harry dies on the filthy plain next to the hyenas. The mocking of the nostalgic notion that one could have lived one's life differently in Frost's "The Road Not Taken" is paralleled by Harry's regret on his deathbed that he had not written all those stories and novels, and his belief that he could have if only he had not "sold" himself to rich women, but had become a professional writer instead (i.e. somebody who writes for money, instead of marrying for money).

A brief summary of the story is helpful at this point. The epigraph at the beginning of the story tells the reader that the snow-covered western summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa is called "House of God" by the natives and that the dried and frozen carcass of a leopard was strangely once found there. We are then introduced to the main char-

acter, a man named Harry, and his wife, Helen, who are on a safari in Africa. The safari is Harry's self-prescribed treatment to recover his artistic health:

Africa was where he had been happiest in the good time of his life, so he had come out here to start again. They had made this safari with the minimum of comfort. There was no hardship; but there was no luxury and he had thought that he could get back into the training that way. That in some way, he could work the fat off his soul [...]. (44)⁴

But the disease has spread too far and too deep for such a regeneration or an African purge and catharsis. The story opens on the African savannah where the husband and wife are talking to each other about his leg, which is rotting away from gangrene. Harry's failure to care for a thorn scratch on his knee, which resulted in gangrene two weeks before, fits into the pattern of his neglect of his artistic talent. While Harry continues satirizing her, Helen is trying to make him more comfortable and make him believe that he will survive, but he seems to be enjoying the black humor of the vultures that are waiting for him to die. Harry's sense of failure and regret permeate the story from the beginning.

In a series of flashbacks, Harry's past unfolds. In the first flashback, Harry remembers being in World War I, then thinks about different scenes in numerous winters. We learn that Helen is the last woman in his life, and that though she loved him, he had never really loved her. In the second flashback, Harry thinks about his time in Paris and Constantinople, but all of his memories are colored by memories of the war. In the third flashback, he is in the forest, living in a cabin, and then he remembers Paris and the time spent there near the Place Counterscarp. He briefly returns to the present to ask for another whiskey and soda before flashing back again. Eventually, his flashbacks start to blend into the real world as he asks Helen to explain why he never wrote the stories he wanted to write. He thinks about why he feels such contempt for the wealthy. In the final flashback, he becomes delirious, and he dreams that the plane has

come for him; that the pilot lifts him in, then they fly through clouds and rain where Harry sees, looming ahead of them, the snow-covered peak of Kilimanjaro shining whitely in the sun, "and then he knew that there was where he was going" (56). At this point, the hyena "makes a strangely human, almost crying sound," waking Helen up, who discovers that Harry has died. Hemingway has so contrived the ending that the reader is unaware—until Helen makes her discovery—that the plane trip never took place except in the mind of the dying man: the details of it are rendered with utmost realism. In fact, Hemingway's major trick is that he does not italicize the illusion, as he did with the other flashbacks, and so the readers expect realism, when in fact, the ending is an ironic vision which mocks Harry's profound sense of self-deception.

One of the modes of narrative representation of the un-lived life is the duality of Harry's character. Harry remains an ambiguous character until the end of the story, and the reader retains contradictory images of him; he is mean and selfish, yet was once a man of action and valor. He is a cheat and a liar, yet at times self-searching and sincere. Through his recollections, we see him as a different Harry: adventurous, vital, self-reliant, active, a sportsman, courageous in facing the war, and an avid traveler. However, it is never clearly stated in the text whether this is indeed a portrait of him as a young man, or if it is also part of his yearning for what he really wanted to be, but never actually was. At the end of the story, he arrives at a vision of transcendence flying toward the snow-capped peak of Mount Kilimanjaro, but this vision seems incongruous with his degraded character throughout the story. Therefore, the vision of the mountain is not one of transcendence and salvation for the artist, but the last manifestation of Harry's profound ability to deceive himself. The snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro remains Harry's spiritual destination that he never reaches. In reality, the rescue plane never arrives in time, and Harry's corpse is discovered in the tent by his wife. The rescue and the flight to Kilimanjaro are only what *might have been*. The story narrates his failure to work at his writing and his regrets. The

imagined flight simply reveals Harry's final illusions. There is no *anagnorisis* (so much valued by Aristotle as the redeeming end of the tragic plot) to set in here since the protagonist is already dead, which is so unlike the other typical heroes in Hemingway, who manage to survive thanks to the defensive parapet that they have built for themselves and which enables them to discard illusions if they want to learn how to live life anew, as Henry Frederic of *A Farewell to Arms* and Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises*. For Harry, all this does not happen since there is no epiphany for a dead man. Harry did not follow the ideals of honor, courage and endurance that are necessary to live in Hemingway's painful and chaotic world, and so he fails even to become the typical "Hemingway code hero."⁵

Hemingway extensively uses a language of negation and hypothetical assumptions to highlight the theme of the missed opportunity. The story is filled with conditional phrases such as "if," "in case," "as though"; negatives (never, not, no, at all, etc.); and modal verbal phrases indicating regret about unfulfilled desires, like "would," "could," "might," which all indicate hypothetical situations but never real happenings. Notice the following phrases quoted from the story (the italics are mine):

"*In case* I ever wanted to use them in a story." (39)

"He *would never write* the things that he had saved to write until he knew enough to write them well. Well, he *would not have* to fail at trying to write them either. Maybe you *could never write* them, and that was why you put them and delayed the starting. Well, he *would never know, now.*" (41)

"But in yourself, you said you *would write* about these people; about the very rich [...] but he *would never do* it, because each day of not writing, of comfort, of being that which he despised, dulled his ability and softened his will to work so that, he *did no work at all.*" (44)

"What was his talent anyway? It was a talent all right but *instead of* using it, he had trodded on it. It was *never* what he had done, but always what *he could do.*" (45)

"He *had never written* any of that because, at first, he *never wanted* to hurt anyone and then it seemed *as though* there was enough to write without it. But he had always thought that he *would write* it finally. There was so much to write." (49)

"There *wasn't* time, of course, although *it seemed as though* it telescoped so that you *might put* it all into one paragraph *if you could* get it right." (50)

"No, *he had never written* about Paris. Not the Paris that he cared about. But what about the rest that *he had never written?*" (52)

"He knew at least twenty good stories from out there and he *had never written* one. Why?" (53)

"But *if he lived* he *would never write* about her, he knew that now. *Nor* about any of them." (53)

The above quoted sentences have a clear meaning: Harry has not taken that path and has never done the things that he wished for. Thus, his accomplishments remain in the realm of missed opportunities. The perfection he wanted to achieve through writing remains an ideal that will never be realized, even if the ideal continually bombards Harry's mind. He never attempted to write the many stories that he intended to write, which might have gained a permanent place in literature for him; they remain locked in his memory. Therefore, all his bitter regrets and remarks in his dying moments concerning his betrayal of craft and self do not atone for a wasted artistic life. The scenes of reminiscences remain in his imagination, unfulfilled. "They remain in the limbo of his delirium" (Bluefarb 6). Harry regretfully tells himself that he "could or should have written" about them, but he deserted his talent for the corrupting appeal of becoming a rich woman's kept man. As Marion Montgomery puts it "throughout the story the emphasis has been on the ideal of attempt, not on accomplishment" (282). Those scenes remain outside Harry's work, within the limits of illusory possibility, never to be fulfilled or consumed. Harry can only think back on these moments without any compensation in the present. Repetition, which is an important stylistic device in the modernist aesthetic that Hemingway uses in his fiction extensively, is particularly suitable here as it shows the sense of unfulfilled desires that keep bombarding the protagonist throughout the story (Lodge 157).

Four elements in the story are worth analyzing in order to support such an interpretation of the other road as an illusion: Hemingway's innovative and unusual narrative style, typography, the symbols

(especially of the leopard, the snow and the hyena), and the characterization of Harry's wife, Helen. Although Harry is not a first-person narrator, the narrative reveals his thoughts explicitly. This narrative mode is rather unusual compared to other stories by Hemingway, where the (theoretically omniscient) third-person narrators bury their feelings about their pasts and the pasts of the characters. Their minds become icebergs, and readers must carefully piece together what is bothering the protagonists precisely. By contrast, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" is filled with lengthy passages of introspection through flashbacks. We are not used to Hemingway entering the minds of his narrators as Faulkner does, for example, as he always describes his characters from the outside, and yet in this story, Hemingway breaks his rule of objectivity. The epigraph, the bulky italicized thoughts, and the hallucinations in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" are elements that oppose the typical Hemingway style. We do not have to go deeper into the text to understand or decipher Harry's thoughts.

Harry is also an unreliable narrator. He believes that his wife and the rich life he led are to be blamed for his lack of artistic output. Harry's excuse for not writing is based on the sudden wealth he has acquired without effort or work. Easy money and the women that go along with it brought him a life of comfort and luxury, an artificial world unfavorable to literary creation. Harry became powerless and was drawn to life in the form of hunting, sex and adventure. It is true that procrastination suited him well, allowing him to live a comfortable and carefree life, but one can argue that Harry never really had any talent as a writer, and that he had already been on the road of sloth and self-betrayal even before he met Helen: "it was not her fault that when he went to her he was already over" (44). As an unreliable narrator, Harry is simply projecting his frustrations and regrets on his wife. In fact, this defense mechanism, whereby one projects one's own undesirable thoughts, motivations, desires, and feelings onto someone else, becomes an integral part of the story and highlights the theme of the un-lived life. The wife is much more likeable than Harry since she

cannot be held responsible for his corruption. Harry is the only one to be blamed for what happened:

He had destroyed his talent by not using it, by betrayals of himself and what he believed in, by drinking so much that he blunted the edge of his perceptions, by laziness, by sloth, and by snobbery, by pride and by prejudice, by hook and by crook. (45)

Hemingway's typography is worth analyzing since it is also atypical in this story. The oscillation in typography between the roman type sections and the italicized sections is to represent the contrast between reality and illusion, the present life and the unlived life. In the first style, the narration is typical of Hemingway in so far as it is mostly dialogue-driven, adjective-free, made up mostly of short-declarative sentences, and marked by a style of omission and understatement. This style represents Harry's present at the moment of death. It is the miserable reality that Harry is living now. The italicized sections, on the other hand, convey a different style: the sentences grow longer and become almost stream of consciousness-like, with one clause tacked on another, recording the protagonist's impressionistic, and memory-laden narration. The second section conveys bits and pieces of the unlived life, of the things that were not written, and the tone also seems to change from the one in the roman type section. The scenes of the unlived life, although at times haunted by images of war and combat, generally reveal positive energies, movement, and excitement; within the realm of his imagination, Harry felt alive: sweating, pedalling, crying, sympathizing, winning, losing, playing sports, spending vacations in beautiful resorts, and living an exciting life. The following passage captures the vitality of the life that Harry should have written about. Hemingway uses all kinds of sensuous images (olfactory, visual, gustatory, kinaesthetic, and auditory) to dramatize the life that "might have been":

[...] when they had walked into Bludenz, that time to buy presents, and the cherry-pit taste of good kirsch, the fast-slipping rush of running powder-snow on crust,

singing "Hi! Ho! said Rolly!" as you ran down the last stretch to the steep drop, taking it straight, then running the orchard in three turns and out across the ditch and onto the icy road behind the inn. (43)

Hemingway blends the two narrative styles into one final image of the story: Kilimanjaro. This image combines both worlds: the imagined and the real, the plain and the mountain, the cold and the heat, the past and the present, and, most importantly, Harry's reality and his dreams. Hemingway's mode of representing the rise of the wounded hero to symbolic self-fulfillment is an ironic manifestation of Harry's failures and ridicules the nostalgic notion that he could have lived his life differently. Harry, in fact, is discovered dead on his cot by his wife.

The story has three important symbols significant for interpretation. To start with, there is the leopard. There has been much debate about what it might represent. In his essay "The Snows of Kilimanjaro: A Revaluation," Oliver Evans spends a whole paragraph reviewing different interpretations given to the leopard: a "symbol of worldly pleasure and lechery," "religious blasphemy," a representative "of Harry's moral nature," etc. (604). I am not going to add a new interpretation, but I will simply focus on the leopard's physical perfection, agility, and boldness: it has the power to climb and reach the mountain peaks. However, it is unusual for leopards to be this high: "no one has explained what the leopard was seeking at that altitude" (39). Then, the leopard dies, but he does not disappear without leaving a trace. Likewise, Harry could have left a trace had he fulfilled his aspirations and become a successful writer. It is tempting to see the leopard as a metaphor symbolizing the writer, who died before reaching what would have been the summit of his career. Harry does not even come close to the peak, but dies rotting away in the heat of the lowlands.

The snow is another symbol in the story, which here becomes a dangerous trap from which no escape is possible; it blinds and isolates with its whiteness. It is hostile to animals and humans and presents an obstacle to growth and movement, so all that remains to Harry is

solitude, silence, emptiness and death. White is the absence of color,⁶ and therefore is most suited to the unfulfilled desires, empty illusions and to the "might have been." The snow in Hemingway's story also exemplifies the pure, the unspoiled celestial presence, a source of light and power on the peaks of the mountains, a presence that Harry will never feel or sense. In this sense, the snow-peaked mountain symbolizes the eternal heights of art that Harry never achieves, and so he remains in the humid rotting savanna.

The third symbol is the hyena, a scavenger and the most despised of all African animals because of its filth and aggressive efforts to destroy and steal other animals that are wounded or suffering on the plains. In its hunger for destruction, it represents Harry's physical death, but also his spiritual death, the life of sloth and carelessness he lived, and the scavenger-like qualities in Harry which prevented him from achieving his goals. Harry had a romantic weakness for the glittering world of wealth and was lured by the dreams of "high life," so he became too dependent on the artificial world of luxury and lost the freedom necessary for the artist while trading his artistic talents for money and comfort. This exchange was not worth it, and at the end of the story, Harry is found dead by his wife after she was woken by the cry of a hungry hyena. The story ends with the hyena's voice: "Outside the tent, the hyena made the same strange noise that had awakened her. But she did not hear him for the beating of her heart" (56).

As for Helen, she becomes a character foil to Harry. Her character received rather harsh criticism: she was labeled as the "bitch-woman" and the destroyer and corruptor of the writer's talent.⁷ Despite the fact that Hemingway has often been (wrongly) accused of siding with his male characters,⁸ I would rather see him taking Helen's side in this story. Helen seems to be Harry's victim and the butt of his sarcasm and criticism. From the perspective of her husband, Helen is seen negatively; he calls her "silly" and "a bloody fool," (40) always implying how little she knows and understands. Harry thinks that her money has kept him from leading the life of a writer. She and her rich

friends wreck people and things alike in order for them to flourish: "he thought they were a special glamorous race and when he found they weren't it wrecked him just as much as any other thing that wrecked him" (53). However, another image of her emerges in the story. Helen shows to be a positive illustration of life and acts positively to Harry: she proposes to read to him, worries about his rest and gives him the right nourishment. Helen keeps to her usual pattern: she bathes, joins Harry for a drink before dinner, sits and eats with him and reassures him of her love. While Harry dreams of a past of unfulfillment, Helen does not dream of the past, nor does she fear the future, but she accepts things as they come and has a realistic view on life, unlike Harry, who is sorry for the missed chances. The deep contrast between the couple underscores their basic inability to communicate with each other.

The modernist Hemingway does not end his stories and novels with an achievement or a fulfilled ambition, but instead he withdraws into domains of 'vision,' of controlling but imaginary order, distanced and aloof from an actual world. In fact, writers of the modernist period often lament missed opportunities, as well as exceptional but wasted chances for picturesque heroic actions, for brave and splendid performances in the world's eyes. Hemingway in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," like Proust in *Remembrance of Things Past*, creates these unaccomplished visions through memory; not rational or forced but spontaneous and involuntary memory. Hemingway shows the hero's moment of death when time is running out, and when the experiences and the sensations of life from the time before continually bombard the consciousness. The present moment is eternalized when special instances are remembered that incorporate all the experiences of a lifetime. The past, present and future (imminent and certain death) exist in the protagonist's mind at the same time: the memory of the past and the fear of the future determine the protagonist's perception of the present. At one point in *Remembrance of Things Past*, Proust exhibits the theme of the road not taken just like it can be found in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro":

And I begin again to ask myself what it could have been, this unremembered state which brought with it no logical proof of its existence, but only the sense that it was a happy, that it was a real state in whose presence other states of consciousness melted and vanished. I decide to attempt to make it reappear. I retrace my thoughts to the moment at which I drank the first spoonful of tea. I find again the same state, illumined by no fresh light. I compel my mind to make one further effort, to follow and recapture once again the fleeting sensation [...]. (2712)

The unlived life is an illusion; just like the other path in Frost’s poem. Eventually, it becomes a sort of “unremembered state” that has “no logical proof of its existence,” a road that is forever lost, no matter how hard one “attempts to make it reappear.” Harry, in fact, never succeeds in getting down on paper those reminiscences he has always intended to write. The snapshots have a Proustian free-associational quality similar to those of a patient under the influence of a hypnotic drug. They appear, reappear, and disappear in the form of flashbacks, but can never be pinned/penned down. The writer has a sacred duty to capture these fleeing moments in time before they disappear forever, preserving these precious times, and rendering them unchangeable and immortal and thus to ensure their survival. For Harry, *that* is too late.

John Cabot University
Rome

NOTES

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²Here it is worth mentioning William Empson’s *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, published in 1930 and one of the most enjoyable and influential offshoots from I. A. Richards’s experiments with practical criticism. I usually use Empson’s definition as the theoretical principle in teaching Robert Frost’s poetry in general, especially in dealing with the way Frost uses metaphors, the multiple meanings that remain

suspended till the end of the poems, as for example in "Stopping by Wood on a Snowy Evening" which remains suspended between "miles I go" and "before I sleep" (839). The tension is not resolved: it is the tension between the pursuit of pure beauty and the demands of the ordinary rituals of life, between a world offering perfect quietness and solitude and a world of people and social obligations. Similarly, in "Mending Walls," the poem remains suspended between "something there is that doesn't love a wall" and "good fences make good friends" (834). The same dynamic applies to "The Road Not Taken."

³William Adair discusses the dynamics of loss in Hemingway's fiction in two parts. Part one deals with how the protagonists of Hemingway feel the sense of loss and pain and the aftermath of spiritual and emotional "hunger," while part two deals with some of the structural and stylistic consequences of these motifs of loss and longing.

⁴All references of the story are taken from Ernest Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories: The Finca Vigia Edition*.

⁵The phrase "Hemingway code hero" has its origin in Philip Young's book *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration* (1966). Young uses it to describe a Hemingway character who "offers up and exemplifies certain principles of honor, courage, and endurance which in a life of tension and pain make a man a man" (56). It is important to note here the difference between the "Hemingway hero" and the "Hemingway code hero." Some people (myself included) have fallen into the habit of using these terms interchangeably. The "Hemingway hero" is a living, breathing character essential to the story's narrative. Nick Adams is an example of a "Hemingway hero." The "Hemingway code hero" is often a living, breathing character as well, but he doesn't always have to take a human form. Sometimes the "Hemingway code hero" simply represents an ideal that the "Hemingway hero" tries to live up to, a code he tries to follow. An example of the "Hemingway code hero" (in human form) would be Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea*, or Catherine in *A Farewell to Arms*. To simplify the theory to some extent, Earl Rovit developed a unique naming system. He refers to the "Hemingway hero" as the *tyro* and the "Hemingway code hero" as the *tutor*.

⁶Melville's description of "The Whiteness of the Whale" in *Moby-Dick* consists of a series of associations and reflections conjured up in the mind of Ishmael as he thinks about what white symbolizes. After cataloguing the numerous ideas associated with the color white, Ishmael wonders if its essential emptiness—the absence of color—is what makes it frightening: "Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the Milky Way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a colour as the visible absence of colour; and at the same time the concrete of all colours; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows—a colourless, all-colour of atheism from which we shrink?" (*Moby Dick* 175). As opposed to Ahab, Ishmael copes by observing, interpreting what he observes and then reconciles himself to whatever

he encounters and does not feel, like Ahab, the compulsion to derive a single answer to explain the white whale.

⁷Edmund Wilson (231) and Robert W. Lewis Jr. (103) give very negative views on Helen. The reason for this conformity of criticism about Helen could be that "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" were written close to each other and are both set in Africa, so several of the assumptions made about "Macomber" are assumed automatically to apply as well to "Snows."

⁸Most of the early criticism of Hemingway, and especially since the rise of the women's movements in the 1960s, Hemingway has been accused of perpetuating sexist stereotypes in his writing, thus embellishing a masculine public image of himself and siding mostly with his male characters. Among these critics are Judith Fetterley and Katherine M. Rogers.

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