

NICK ADAMS: A REFLECTION OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY OR A SOURCE OF CATHARSIS?

Dr. Samina Azhar

Assistant. Prof, Department of Humanities,
Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology,
Bhopal, India

Abstract

Ernest Hemingway's protagonist Nick Adams who appears in his twenty - three stories and a miniature draws quite a noticeable similarity to his creator. We can call Nick Adams' stories, a development-cycle of a young boy of Michigan, who spends his childhood in the protected atmosphere, enjoying the primitivism of nature he grows up into a man to witness the cruel games of the modern world realities. The disillusioned and mentally shattered Nick in the later stories tries to rise from the ruins of his illusions. His maturation is painful and a sort of compromise with the realities of the world Hemingway too went through the same ordeal in his life. It is apparent that if not completely autobiographical Nick Adams character does contain certain significant autobiographical elements. His significance from Hemingway's point of view is obvious that he appears in all three major collections of Hemingway's short stories. The attempt to look at Nick Adams stories from an autobiographical point of view is not to question Hemingway's artistic excellence but to explore the lives of the author and his protagonist, that have enthralled million of Hemingway's enthusiasts.

Nick Adams one of the most prominent characters of Hemingway's fiction appears for the first time in a miniature 'in our time', and then in the next three volumes of Hemingway's collection, where he undergoes, physical as well as psychological changes. The first major Hemingway's collection *In Our Time* (1925) has seven Nick Adams stories and one vignette; second collection *Men Without Women* (1927) contains five and third one *Winner Take Nothing* (1933) includes three stories. Then there are some stories having an unnamed protagonist in semblance to Nick's character. Some critics consider the unnamed character of *A Very Short Story* the narrator of *The Revolutionist* and *Wine of Wyoming* and the father of *A Day's Wait* as Nick. The resemblance to Nick to Hemingway is assumed on the basis of the similarity between the biographical facts of the author's life and Nick Adams. Joseph M. Flora believes "One reason for the original attraction to Nick's fascination with the life of Ernest Hemingway, for Nick Adams was obviously autobiographical".¹ Various other critics Debra Modellmog, Maurois, and Jackson J. Benson too supports the idea of the presence of autobiographical element in Nick's characterization, Maurois feels, "Nick Adams is the hero created by Hemingway to depict himself".²

Philip Young collected all Nick Adams stories under the title *The Nick Adams Stories* (1972). The aim was to give an account of a boy's journey from childhood's innocence to manhood's maturity. Hemingway's male protagonist goes through various experiences of life, as a boy he is exposed to the mysteries of life and death, grows up and becomes aware of various relationships, goes to war, returns wounded mentally and physically, gets married, fishes in the Fox River and finally becomes a father. Nicholas Adams goes through the ordeals of life in quite a similar fashion as Hemingway had, he is indeed the most prominent and conspicuous character of Hemingway's short fiction.

Hemingway's life can be divided into different phases- life in Michigan, exposure to the world outside Michigan, war experiences in Italy and finally achievement of literary fulfillment in spite of severe health problems. Barring a few dissimilarities Nick Adams' life graph follows the same track. *Indian Camp*, *The Doctor and Doctor's Wife*, *Ten Indians*, *The End of Something*, *The Three-Day Blow*, *The Lost Good Country*, *Summer People*, *The Battler*, *The Killers*, *The Light of the World* and *Crossing the Mississippi* are pre-war or initiation stories. The post war stories are *In Another Country*, *Now I Lay Me*, *A Way You'll Never Be*, *Wedding Day*, *Cross Country Snow*, *Big Two Hearted River*, *An Alpine Idyll* and *Fathers and Sons* there are also fragments of some stories and a vignette. Supporting autobiographical element in Hemingway's stories Arthur Waldorn says, "whatever he reported revealed nearly as much about himself as about his subject. He is always visible whether playful or vehement, unassuming or arrogant".³

Hemingway's emotional bond with Nick is apparent in the fact that he is the only character in his short fiction whose character has been development completed. Nick is 'Wemedge' in *Summer People* a nickname, which was given to Hemingway by his friends. We know his family, his friends and even his neighbors. We are aware of his childhood fear, his adulthood dilemma, his horrid war experiences, and finally his maturation into a husband a father and a writer. Hemingway and his protagonist "so resemble each other that we have come to speak of them in the singular".⁴

Nick Adams stories begin with his childhood stories in northern Michigan where life is enjoyable. *Indian Camp* exposes the uncertainties of life, it is like a pebble thrown in a calm lake and creates a whirlpool of confusion and complications for young Nick. Like all first sons Hemingway always regarded his father as his role model who taught him the rules of sportsmanship. Dr. Clarence Hemingway's love for outdoor life was incorporated into his son's life in such a forceful manner that it became an identity for Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway's had immense respect for his father's self-discipline, professional abilities and charity. Nick's father also a doctor takes keen interest in environment the adventure of outdoor life. He takes Nick out for outdoor activities in *Three Shots* and *The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife*. As a child Ernest was afraid of the dark so his male protagonist. In *Three Shots* lonely Nick is terribly afraid of dark woods he summons his father and Uncle George by firing three rifle shots.

Dr. Clarence Edmonds Hemingway and Mrs. Grace Hemingway never had an equal relationship. Mrs. Hemingway was the superior partner. Her dominance over her husband is obvious in the author's name- Ernest Miller Hemingway both his first and second names come from her side of the family. Nick's parents Mr. and Mrs. Adams also has similar kind of relationship. *The Doctor and*

Doctor's Wife and *Now I Lay Me* throws light on their strained relationship. About his father Nick says in *The Three-Day Blow* "My old man's all right". (45). If studied in the light of the father - son relationship this statement brings out Nick's disappointment in his father. The stories about the Dr. Adams' lack of assertiveness, "verify Hemingway's fixation on and disillusionment with, his own father".⁵ Dr. Adams' invalidity before his dominating wife in *The Doctor and Doctor's Wife* and *Now I Lay Me*, suggest same shock that Hemingway underwent about his father's lack of assertiveness. *The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife* is about an incident that Hemingway witnessed at the age of 12, later he acknowledged "that this story was about the time he discovered his father was a coward"⁶. *Now I Lay Me*, relates to an incident of Hemingway's childhood when they were about to move into their new house designed and financed by Mrs. Hemingway. She burned all things that she thought useless, including his father's precious collection. Nick while trying to sleep recalls same incident when his mother mercilessly burnt his father's prized possession to clean out the basement.

Hemingway's mother Mrs. Grace Hemingway had sensitive eyes because she had suffered from scarlet fever in her childhood and to see through bright light was extremely painful for her. Mrs. Adams in *The Doctor and Doctor's Wife* lies in a room with the blinds drawn. The story is about a quarrel between Dr. Adams and an ungrateful Indian, who instead of being thankful to Dr. Adams for saving his wife ridiculed him so that he didn't have to pay for his favor in work, lying in a darkened room Mrs. Adams preaches her husband, Christian restraint. Nick's mother's staunch religiosity and dominance is similar to that of Mrs. Clarence Hemingway. His mother's dominance over her husband portrays troubled phase of Nick Adams childhood. It is obvious in his little sister Little's utterance in *The Last Good Country*: "Haven't we seen enough fights in families?"(514). She is characterized after Hemingway's little sister Sunny. Sunny was quite close to Hemingway, who loved her more than his other siblings. Her admiration for his brother's strength and courage is positively presented through Little's, who looks upon his brother as a role model. Hemingway never accepted his sisters' selection of husbands, as he was an over protective brother. Like him, Nick is protective about his sister. In *Father and Sisters* Nick remembers threatening to kill Eddie, Trudy's half brother, if he even tries to speak to his sister, Dorothy.

Dr. Hemingway had a younger brother named George R. Hemingway who as Nick's Uncle George appears in *Indian Camp* and *Three Shots*. Nick's friend Bill is based upon Hemingway's boyhood friend William Benjamin Smith. Hemingway and his friends Bill Smith and Bill Home used to visit Kitsos a restaurant on the Near North side of Chicago. This restaurant becomes the model for the restaurant in *The Killers*. Katy Smith was Hemingway's friend Bill Smith's sister, she was married to John Dos Passes. Kate of *Summer People* is her fictional counterpart. Hemingway and Bill Smith nicknamed her as "Butstein", which is also used for Kate in the story. Hemingway's association with the Indian girls probably results in the stories about them. An Indian girl Prudence Boulton used to help Mrs. Hemingway's kitchen; she was the daughter of Dick Boulton. Three years younger to Hemingway Prudence was a very attractive girl. She appears as Prudence Mitchell in Nick Adams' stories. Marjorie who appears in *The End of Something* and *The Three-Day Blow* is in fact Marjorie Bump a waitress at Mrs. Dilworth's Pinehurst cottage. Hemingway met her during his stay in a ghost town called Seney in the

Upper Peninsula of Michigan. She is the girl with whom Nick shares an intimate relationship.

Hemingways used to spend their summers in their summer house on Walloon Lake. It was in the northern house on Walloon Lake where Ojibway Indian used to live. The childhood stories of Nick Adams take place in the same place. Dr. Hemingway used to take his son on professional visits across Walloon Lake to the camps of Ojibway Indians. During his adolescent days Hemingway was quite inspired by the muscularity and primitivity of the Indians. Similarly the Indians and their original culture fascinate Nick, their influence on him is evident in his statement *Fathers and Sons*. "They were Ojibways", Nick said, "and they were very nice" (471). Hemingway had always lamented the loss of tradition. In *The Indians Moved Away* older Nick recalls the exploitation of the Indians at the hands of white men. The moving away of Indians seems as a personal loss to him., he has known them since his childhood and now their going away is like serving ties with the memories of his childhood. *Indian Camp, The Doctor and Doctor's Wife, The End of Something,* and *The Indians Moved Away* reveal the role played by the Indians in molding Nick's character. Dick Boulton and Billy Tabeshaw were among the Indians known to Hemingway both of them appear in *The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife* as Dick Boulton and Billy Tabeshaw.

Hemingway inherited his love for outdoor life- hunting, fishing and shooting from his father. In 1915 when his father was away on vacation Hemingway got involved in an illegal shooting of a blue heron. He along with his little sister Sunny shot the bird and hid in their boat. The game warden's son saw all this and reported. Hemingway took the boat and escaped to long-field farm leaving his mother to cope with the warden. His mother was outrageous at his misdemeanor but his father wrote a supportive letter to him. "If you have a trail", he wrote "insist on a jury trial and plead guilty but innocent of a legal offense".⁷ Nearly forty years after the incident in its fictionalized version, Nick faces the same situation. In *The Last Good Country* Nick is on the run after committing the crime of illegal shooting. He doesn't want to be sent to Reform school. Hemingway had always emphasized the importance of an individual in a society. Similarly social rules and regulations that hinder the freedom of an individual have no place in Nick's concept of life. His fear and abhorration for reform school and pleasure in primitive unspoiled nature can be looked as his rejection of a hypocrite society of game wardens. In the story Mrs. Adams has no real consideration for her children, as she is busy in her imaginary world, instead of looking for Nick she goes to her bedroom, complaining "sick headache" similarly at the time of crisis Mrs. Hemingway too used to rush to her room, declaring headache. Being quite unlike ordinary mother she is also cruel in her comment on Nick's art of writing. Little's statement, "Our mother said everything you write is morbid" (517) applies to Mrs. Hemingway's view of his son's writing. She was shocked at what she called the outrageously indecent stories of Ernest. On several occasions she expressed her disgust and shock on how could her decently brought up son, "pick out words and thoughts from the gutter"⁸.

The bond between the father and the son suffered a jolt when Dr. Hemingway withdrew himself into a shell at the time when the young Hemingway most needed his support and guidance. He was a staunch puritan, therefore must have resisted discussing taboo subjects with his son. Like Nick's father he left his young son to cope on his own with the complex world. Nick suffers

the same lack of communication with his father in *Fathers and Sons* he remembers his father's indifference. "After he was fifteen he had shared nothing with him"(469)

Hemingway never went to college so does Nick; there is no reference to Nick as a college boy. Like Hemingway he is always on the move learning the ways of the world. Hemingway got the taste of street life when twice he ran away from home. He worked on farms and restaurants and led a life of a vagabond. In the process he confronted violence and evil on the road. Nick Adams' Chicago stories are the outcome of Hemingway's exposure to the evil and violence of the world outside Michigan. *The Battler*, *The Light of the World* and *The Killers* are about Nick's experiences of the crazy, immoral and evil world of homosexuals, prostitutes and gangsters.

Hemingway went to war in 1919 with all his youthful illusion about war and courage. The war brought him some horrible experiences, which became a part of his tortured psyche throughout his life. The gruesome reality of human mortality shattered all his concept of courage and bravery. Nick is also aware that all good things in life - love, ideals, companionship and peace are temporary. The bloodied faces of men, the fear of death, the sound of explosions, the smell of and his own blood dismantled his illusions about war and courage. *Night Before Landing* which was written as a fragment of a novel - Along with Youth was later included in the Nick Adams Stories by Philip Young is about Nick's journey to France, as a soldier. According to Joseph De Flora "A major reason for his setting it aside was, undoubtedly, the magnitude of his own wounding that Nick mirrored".⁹

Liquor played a significant role in Hemingway's life as he was a heavy drinker and a firm believer of the therapeutic effects of alcohol. He referred to it as "giant killer" and probably drank to hide his inner fears and insecurities. Nick drinks in *The Three-Day Blow*, *Night Before Landing* and in other stories either to show off his maturity or to hide his fears. In *Night Before Landing* Nick and his friends drink to boost their courage for they have to face the artillery of the enemy. In *Three-Day Blow* Nick keeps on drinking to forget the pains of losing Marjorie: "He was still quite drunk but his head was clear" (49). The consumption of alcohol changes his depressed mood: "None of it was important now; the wind blew it out of his head. Still he could always go into town Saturday nights" (49). In another story *A Way You'll Never Be* When Captain Paravicini offers him some grappa, Nick quite honestly admits how he use to drink to overcome his fears, "I was stinking in every attack" (384).

Hemingway's life had always been associated with violence. It became an integral part of his life first as a son of a doctor who loved outdoor games then as a journalist and soldier he witnessed the brutality of violence. Nick's association with death and violence begins with the jack-knife Caesarian and ear-to-ear slashing suicide in *Indian Camp*. Then he encounters violent Bugs in *The Battler* who attacks him and the professional killers in *The Killers* ready to kill a man whom they have never seen. Finally, he goes to war and comes across the most gruesome reality of modern life and comes back psychologically and physically deformed. It is clear that Nick was injured more than once. It is the spine injury in Chapter VI and stiff leg in *In Another Country*. His leg injury is similar to that of Hemingway's, Nick's "legs stiffened any time they were out straight for long"(387).

In Chapter VI (in our time) after being hit in the spine, he sits against the wall of the Church and declares his 'separate peace', with the violent world. Nick's 'separate peace' coincides with

Hemingway's abandonment of society in the twenties. The violence that he has confronted on the streets, in the restaurants and in the form of Caesarian and suicide reaches its crescendo in this Chapter. Nick's wound is not only physical but also psychic as well like the Fossalta experience of Hemingway. It comes as an emotional, psychological, physical, spiritual and moral blow to Nick. Like Hemingway, his whole personality goes through a drastic transformation by what he has seen and been through in the World War I. The effect of shrapnel injury remained with Hemingway, throughout his life like Nick he was wrecked with insomnia and depression.

After Fossalta incident probably throughout his life Hemingway was never able to sleep in the dark. He used to work till early in the morning writing stories. Insomnia never let him get a full night's sleep whenever he succeeded in sleeping, the nightmares of the exploding trench mortar would bring him back to the harsh world from deep slumber. The loss faith in personal immortality made him neurotic and depressed. What Hemingway experienced in the war was quite "difficult to write about truly" but the way he expressed them in Nick Adam's stories is quite powerful and appealing. The Fossalta injury changed the whole course of Hemingway's life similarly Chapter VI of *In Our Time* can be considered as the climax of Nick's life. Sitting against the wall of a Church in Italy with spine injury he declares his 'separate peace' with the enemies of mankind. He probably went, to war with the same illusion as the author, to study the human response to stressful circumstances. But what he saw over there was like a splash of icy cold water that numbed all his emotions.

Hemingway was brought up in a disciplined atmosphere, where obedience, decency, morality and religiosity were regarded as the key to pure life. But his First World War experiences severed him from the Christian belief of immortality and of some benevolent divine force concerned about sufferings of human beings. He converted to Catholicism only after marrying for the second time. In a letter to Ernest Walsh he confessed his lack of understanding of Christian percepts and inhibitions. Nick calls it "fake ideal" with which one has to live. Nick's inability to remember his prayers in *Now I Lay Me*, "I could not remember my prayers even, I could only get as far as 'On earth as it is in heaven' and then have to start all over and be absolutely unable to get past that" (347), exposes his disillusionment with religion. Hemingway in an interview admitted his inability to pray for himself. He said, "I can't pray for myself anymore. Perhaps it's because in some way I have become hardened or perhaps it is because the self becomes less important and others become more important".¹⁰ Hemingway's stoic attitude to life creeps in Nick's, indifference to pain or feeling of 'nothingness'. Nada in Nick's post-wound stories appear in his fear of darkness insomnia and as a threat to his mental equilibrium. In *Now I Lay Me* Nick undergoes the same trauma which Hemingway encountered after the injury at Fossalta "If I could have a light I was not afraid to sleep, because I knew my soul would only go out of me if it were dark" (34).

Philip Young did not consider *A Very Short Story* as Nick Adams' story. The war-injured soldier in the story falls in love with a nurse. Their love doesn't culminate in marriage as the girl leaves him to marry an Italian major. The major doesn't marry her and the soldier contracts gonorrhea from a sales girl. The girl in the story is Agnes Von Kurowsky,

Hemingway's first serious love and the soldier is the author himself, the only fabrication is the disease gonorrhea. Hemingway revisited Fossalta, the site of his injury in 1938. Nick too was injured near Fossalta like Hemingway his war memories are associated with the same long, low yellow house, which was there at the time of Hemingway's injury. He revisits it in *A Way You'll Never Be*, in not so correct American Uniform, to lift the spirits of the battalion. He shows the signs of 'black' depression, which his creator suffered, throughout his life.

Hemingway ascribes major part of his own life and experiences to Nick Adams. He always had strained personal relationships- first with his mother, and later on with his father, wives and friends which led to his alienation. Therefore we rarely find Nick in the company of his friends in his later stories. His after-war stories find him all alone, trying to overcome the tragic reality of his life. The opening of *In Another Country*: "We only knew that there was always the war, but that we were not going into it any more" (256) can be associated with his thought of "separate peace".

As the excitement of having a war hero in the family calmed down Hemingway's parents especially his mother started nagging him for a job. After a showdown with his mother he left home and became an expatriate in Paris. He wrote novels and short stories out of his 'lived experiences'. Nick is also an expatriate, a victim of disillusionment at home and front. Like Hemingway he is always on the move. Though he lived his life as an expatriate in different parts of Europe, Hemingway always remained an American at heart. Despite dissatisfaction with the modern and changed America he never let the American spirit in him to die. Nick also remembers his father and friends in Michigan and indirectly yearns for his roots in, *Fathers and Sons* when he says, "I don't want to be buried in France"(472).

Hemingway returned home after Fossalta incident and got married to Hadley Richardson. The anxious Nick in *Wedding Day* ponders over the uncertainties of married life. On his wedding day while dressing for the ceremony he wonders "if it would be this way if he were going to be hanged" (231). Carlos Baker describes Hemingway's marriage to Hadley quite similarly. He was so nervous on that day that he even contemplated suicide as he did once tell his first wife. Nick's married life except in an indirect hint is never discussed in detail. His wife never appears in any of the stories only her name has been mentioned in two stories. Nick's lack of enthusiasm as a would-be-father in *Cross Country Snow* is quite like Hemingway's reaction on becoming a father for the first time. He told Stein "I am too young to be a father"¹¹ Nick's disappointment at not being able to go for another skiing tour because of the responsibilities of fatherhood coincides with the confused attitude of his creator on the issue of fatherhood. The deleted part of *Big Two-Hearted River* which appeared as *On Writing* in Nick Adams's 'stories deals with Nick's disappointment at losing out friends after marriage. "When he married he lost Bill Smith, Odgar, the Ghee all the old gang". Was it because they were Virgins? The Ghee certainly was not. No, he lost them because he admitted by marrying that something was more important than fishing"(234).

Hemingway considered Upper Michigan lakeside summer home as a symbol of his past that supplied him peace of mind at the most testing times. Nick's therapeutic visit in *Big Two-Hearted River* where he walks, camps and fishes, "becomes the artistic expression of his (Hemingway's) competitive philosophy of life"¹². Hemingway was a keen follower of rules and codes, in games like hunting, fishing and boxing he always preferred to play straight following all the rules irrespective of the

risks. Nick embraces the same order and discipline while fishing in *Big Two Hearted River*. The real Two-Hearted River is in the north of Seney. "His very ability to do things properly and efficiently wards off the crippling effects of the nada, and helps him to achieve satisfaction from even little things - if they are well performed".¹³ Hemingway employed the same formula to fight against hopelessness of any situation. He led a disciplined life doing even the most trivial thing with acute detail and dedication. Following the fisherman's code Nick wets his hand before touching the trout, so that a white fungus may not attack the mucus that covered the trout. He recalls he "had again and again come on dead trout, furry with white fungus, drifted against a rock, or floating belly up in some pool" (149). The image is same to what Hemingway witnessed during his warring days, the only difference is that he saw swollen dead bodies of human beings.

In *On Writing* Nick talks about his friends from northern Michigan, his Paris days and his wife Helen. In the twenties Hemingway and his circle of friends including Bill Smith, his sister Katy, Carl Edgar Ted Brumback and Irene Goldstein got together in the summer at Hemingway's Walloon Lake cottage. The trip is described in detail in *Summer People*. In "On Writing" Hemingway nostalgically recalls that summer through Nick, "...fishing in the bay, reading in the hammock on hot days, swimming off the dock, playing baseball in Charlevoix Petoskey, living at the Bay, the Madame's cooking, the way the she had with servants, eating in the dining room looking out the window across the long fields and point to the lake, talking with her, drinking with Bill's old man, fishing trips away from the farm, first lying around" (235).

Nick, in the later stories as a writer shares his literary as well as personal inspiration with his creator. His remarks on Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound and James Joyce place him closer to Hemingway. The people who had influenced his creator's art seem to have influenced him as well. Hemingway in a letter to Gertrude Stein once wrote, "I am trying to do the country like Cezanne".¹⁴ We are told that Nick cherishes similar desire, "Nick, wanted to write about country so it would be there like Cezanne had done it in painting" (239). He at length talks about good writing, which he thinks is quite different from what one has experienced, or known. The good writing must be 'made up' or 'imagined'. His insistence on separating art and life is a literary principle on which Hemingway always insisted. Nick shares so much with his author that Debra Modellmog in her essay *The Unifying Consciousness of In Our Time* declares Nick as the author of the stories of *In Our Time*. Her conclusion is based on Nick's claim, in *On Writing*, to have written *My Old Man* and his reference to *Indian Camp*. Writing was a catharsis for Hemingway, he wrote about his experiences of war, his father's suicide and his mother's bitchiness to get rid of them. Nick in "Fathers and Sons" announces about his father's suicide. "If he wrote it he could get rid of it. He had gotten rid of many things by writing them (465). His theory of writing is similar to that of Hemingway. Hemingway once said, "I can't say everything I want to say about my family as long as certain people are still alive".¹⁵ Nick too declares his decision not to write about the living members of his family.

The author and the protagonist share not only the same fears and disillusionments but also the same passion for reading, writing and sports. Both of them love fishing, shooting, boxing and hunting. Nick's love for fishing is quite amply expressed in *On Writing* "He'd been married to it (fishing) before he married Helen really married to it. It wasn't any joke" (234). In *Summer People* young Nick expresses his desire to become a writer: "He knew he was going to be a great writer. He knew things and they couldn't touch him. Nobody could" (219).

In November 1932, Hemingway took a trip, with his 3-year-old son John, through an American country to join his wife Pauline and two younger sons for the Thanksgiving holidays in Piggott, Arkansas. This trip rekindled his memories of his childhood and the presence of his own son beside him forced him to think about his father as a result the story *Father and Son* happened. With the fourth anniversary of his father's suicide less than a month away and his son sitting beside him Hemingway came out with a story on father-son relationship. It clearly brings about the similitude between Hemingway's disillusion with his father and that of Nick's. Nick remembers his father as an outdoor man, his quick movements', 'wide shoulders', his stinking smell, extraordinary eyesight, hooked hawk nose and the frost in his beard during the cold weather covering the weak chin. The picture is quite similar to that of Hemingway's father. Though Dr. Hemingway's was a highly successful doctor but the discussion on the biological process was taboo in his household. In *Fathers and Sons* Nick recalls his father's puritanical beliefs with recession. Nick seems to be following the same part of puritanical indifference that his father followed. He talks to his son about Bill Gilby and his sister, Trudy, leaving out his intimate relation with her. In 1917 Hemingway told his friend Bill Smith that after his father had punished him he used to sit in the open door of the tool shed up in Michigan, aiming his loaded shotgun at Dr. Hemingway. Nick in *Fathers and Sons* after being whipped by his father for lying "sat inside the woodshed with the door open, his shotgun loaded and cocked, looking across at his father sitting on the screen porch reading the paper, and thought, "I can blow him to hell. I can kill him" (470).

Though Hemingway had a passion for hunting and fishing like his father but he never forgave him for his meek surrender to the dominance of his wife. He conveys his shock at his paternal betrayal through stories about Nick's hurt and the disillusionment with his father's weak masculinity. On December 6, 1928 Dr. Clarence Hemingway's committed suicide a tragedy, which shocked his son. He was aghast to find that the father, who had taught him to admire the virtue of courage, buckled under the pressure to take such cowardly step. He felt deceived by his father as Nick of *Father and Sons*. In a letter to Arthur Mizener praising his biography of Scott Fitzgerald Hemingway referred to his father's suicide, "Yours is good undertaking. Almost as good as the job they did on my father's face when he shot himself".¹⁶ His protagonist recalls the "handsome job" the undertaker did on his father's face.

Hemingway always carried this dissent that at a raw age when he needed him most his father built a hard shell of indifference around himself. As a result, like his protagonist, he became a father to himself. Robert P. Weeks believes, "Nick becomes a father also to himself. He seeks to become the father he lost. This motion necessarily recalls the way in which Hemingway himself comes to create the role of 'Papa' the American father".¹⁷ Nick remembers his father as "sentimental, and like most sentimental people, he was both cruel and abused" (463). He has never visited his father's grave that makes his disgust with Dr. Adams cowardly act more apparent. When his son expresses his desire to pray at his grandfather's tomb "We'll have to go," Nick said. "I can see we'll have to go"(472). But the ironical tone of the statement brings out his contempt. This statement can also be analyzed as Nick's reconciliation with the reality of his father's suicide.

It is a fact that Hemingway used his personal experience in his writings but in reality the writer was an extraordinary storyteller, who made up his stories out of his incredible imaginative power. Therefore his fiction cannot be considered as an exact replica of his experiences. Though a

major part of Nick Adams' life draws its source from Hemingway's life, his made-up fiction attributes originality and uniqueness to Nick's character. The differences between Hemingway and Nick cannot be overlooked. Hemingway's mother was artistic whereas no Nick Adams' story mentions artistic temperament of Mrs. Adams. In the war the author was injured only once but the protagonist suffers from two different injuries (spine and leg injuries). Hemingway's affinity for bullfighting and for Spanish Cause, during the Spanish Civil War, is lacking in Nick; there is no reference to the marital upheaval that the author had, unlike author's four marriages it seems Nick married only once. Hemingway was an accident-prone man; he not only suffered injuries in war but also in various other accidents whereas Nick is injured only in war. In spite of these differences nobody can challenge it that Hemingway wrote about his experience in the form of Nick Adams. Though Hemingway always refused any autobiographical element in his stories, but their background and Nick Adams' reaction to the various incidents in his life cannot be ignored. George Hemphill considers Nick "as a bewildered and attractive projection of Hemingway and not Hemingway himself".¹⁸ The similarity between the creator and the creation is obvious in the family background, war experience post-war disillusion and depression. Nobody can doubt Hemingway's prodigious creative powers but it cannot be ignored that "Nick Adams stories Hemingway defines key aspects of his personality more revealing than he ever did in direct statements about his own life".¹⁹ Without taking anything away from Hemingway it would not be improper to call Nick Adams' stories a medium through which the author tried to project his inner consciousness, "we might be forgiven for assuming that the reactions of Nick are, in general sense, representatives of Hemingway's own reaction".²⁰ Though Nick is not a comprehensive reflection of Hemingway but at the same time we cannot ignore the presence of the shades of his personal experience, incidents and people from the real life. It is appropriate to call shades because the direct implication would be an injustice to the creative and imaginative strength of artist like Hemingway. Hence: Although Nick is not Hemingway he reflects more of Hemingway than any other Hemingway hero".²¹

Works Cited:

- Joseph Flora, Hemingway's Nick Adams (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p. 2.
- Andre Maurois, "Ernest Hemingway" in Hemingway and His Critics: An International Anthology, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961) p. 34..
- Arthur Waldhorn, A Reader's Guide to Ernest Hemingway (New York Farrar, Straus & Grioux, 1972), p. 76.
- Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway (London: G Bell & Son Ltd., 1952), p. 3.
- Gerry Brenner, Concealments in Hemingway's Work (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), p. 18.
- Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), p.33.
- Clarence Hemingway to Ernest Hemingway, July 31, 1915, Hemingway Collection, Kennedy Library. Grace Hemingway quoted in Hemingway: A Biography, author Jeffrey Meyers, (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 195.

- Joseph De Falco, The Hero in Hemingway's Short Stories (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1963), p.1 10.
- Fraser Drew, "April 8, 1955 with Hemingway: Unedited notes on a Visit to Finca Vigia" in Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual : 1971. eds. Mathew J. Bruccoli, and C.E. Frazer Clark, Jr. (Washington D.C. : NCR/Microcard Edition , 1971), p. 114.
- Hemingway quoted in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, ed. Carl Van Vechten (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 201.
- Gregory S. Sojka, Ernest Hemingway: The Angler As Artist. (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), p.24.
- Ibid, p.90.
- Ernest Hemingway in a letter to Gertrude Stein; reprinted in Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters 1917-1961, p. 122.
- Hemingway quoted in "Indestructible: The New Yorker 1947" in Conversation with Hemingway, ed. Mathew J. Bruccoli (Washington D.C. : NCR/Microcard Edition, 1969), p.49.
- Ernest Hemingway to Arthur Mizener, 4 January 1951; reprinted in Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters 1917-1961, p.712.
- Robert P. Weeks, "Wise Guy Narrator and Trickster Outricked in Hemingway's 'Fifty Grand'" in New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, ed. Jackson J Benson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 274. _George Hemphill, "Hemingway and James" in Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Work, ed. John McCaffery (Cleveland and New York: World, 1950), p. 334.
- Joseph Flora, Hemingway's Nick Adams (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p.4.
- Benson Jackson, The Writer's Art of Self- Defense (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 61.
- Joseph Flora, Hemingway's Nick Adams (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p. 189.