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“Dangerous Families” and “Intimate Harm” in Hemingway’s “Indian Camp”

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In Our Time is a work about men’s responses to violence and their capacity for empathy (and I use the masculine term advisedly). It documents the ways in which what Hemingway later called “dangerous families” can “do terrible things and make intimate harm” (*A Moveable Feast*, 108). “Indian Camp,” the first short story in Hemingway’s best collection of short stories, is a story of the “intimate harm” a father can cause a son. In rereading the story, the feminist theories of Jessica Benjamin, Nancy Chodorow, Robin Morgan, and Sara Ruddick enable us to discover new ways of looking at Nick Adams and to read this paradigmatic male’s development differently than we have in the past. I also want to examine what Hemingway has to say about violence and empathy, dominance and submission, war and peace.

“Indian Camp,” like several of the vignettes in *In Our Time*, centers on suffering, and specifically female suffering.¹ Feminist philosopher Carol J. Adams laments our culture’s “somatophobia,” which she defines as “a shocking hostility to the bodies of disenfranchised others—women, children, non-dominant men, and animals” (70). Hemingway shows the results of violence on precisely these disenfranchised others throughout *In Our Time*. The victims include the Native American woman in “Indian Camp,” the crying “young girl” in chapter II, Nick Adams himself as a boy in “Indian Camp” and “The Battler,” the Native American in the upper bunk in “Indian Camp,” the Hungarians misidentified as “wops” in chapter VIII, the mules in “On the Quai at Smyrna,” and the disemboweled white horse in chapter IX. As the aptly named Adams explains, “Instead of the glorification of anonymous death in massive numbers that we encounter in heroic war writings, the connections between the abuse of animals and the abuse of women remind us of the specific embodiedness and agonizing painfulness of every single death” (79).

What Hemingway seems to be suggesting in *In Our Time* is that men’s characters are determined, in part, by their responses to human

and animal suffering, and (in “Indian Camp”) especially women’s suffering, a conviction that many feminists share. Such a sensibility to suffering is also, of course, biblical and Judeo-Christian: “[R]ighteousness [in the sight of God] is consistently defined by the prophets, and in the psalms and gospels, as a willingness to care for the most vulnerable people in a culture, characterized in ancient Israel as orphans, widows, resident aliens, and the poor” (Norris, 96). In Hemingway’s twentieth-century world, one’s responses to the suffering of women (and, perhaps, to the suffering of children, war refugees, and animals, images of which are closely linked in his writings to the suffering of women²) similarly reveal one’s capacity for humanity.

“Indian Camp,” which Hemingway himself rightly rated as one of the best in the collection, dramatizes what is apparently the young Nick Adams’s first confrontation with profound personal suffering. He witnesses his physician father successfully perform a makeshift Caesarean section, with neither anesthesia nor proper equipment, on a Native American woman whose labor is no longer progressing because her unborn child is in a breech position. Nick then accidentally witnesses the discovery of her husband’s abrupt and unexpected suicide when the doctor belatedly checks on the father.

The story thus presents Nick with two alternatives for responding to women’s suffering—and the suffering in this story is once again clearly *gendered* suffering. The first alternative is to empathize with the woman—specifically, with the (literal) mother—as the Indian’s husband chooses to do. He empathizes with her so thoroughly that he can no longer bear her pain and ends his life.³ Hemingway makes it quite clear that it is her suffering that troubles the man. Nick asks whether the doctor could give her something to make her stop screaming, and the husband’s last movement in the story occurs immediately after the doctor’s response:

“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.”

The husband in the upper bunk rolled over against the wall. (*IOT*, 16)

Like Nick himself, who later in *In Our Time* tends to say nothing when he disagrees with what he is being told,⁴ the Indian makes his disagreement with the white doctor subtly clear. As her husband and (arguably) the father of the unborn child, he, at least, believes her screams *are* important; so, too, do the other men of his community, who find them significant enough to avoid: “The men had moved off up the road to sit in the dark and smoke out of range of the noise she made” (*IOT*, 16).

Nick’s second choice, of course, is to identify with his father and deem her screams unimportant. While the former choice damns him to a

death of the self in endless empathy, the second choice damns him to a cold isolation and instrumental rationality in which other human beings are regarded as objects rather than subjects in their own right: "You can't be mister-cool 'her screams are not important' deliverer of babies except at the cost of your own humanity" (Mansell, 148).

Nick makes his choice, of course: He will not choose to empathize with women and die, as the Indian husband did; he will reject empathy and triumph, as his father did: "In the early morning on the lake sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, he felt quite sure that he would never die" (*IOT*, 19). In making this choice, he makes the choice that most men of his generation have made: "The story of Nick's education, so far as we have it, differs in no essential way from that of almost any middle-class American male who started life at the beginning of the present century or even with the generation of 1920" (Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 131). After all, as Sara Ruddick points out, "The ticket to staying with men on the right side of power was objectivity, self-control, and detachment" (6).⁵ But Nick pays a terrible psychological price for his decision—a price that is perhaps suggested by the fact that "in no Nick story does Hemingway show us Nick in the presence of his mother" (Flora, *Hemingway's*, 43).

In order to understand the cost of Nick's decision, it is first perhaps necessary to understand its psychological underpinnings. In *Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*, Jessica Benjamin revises Freudian psychology, which she sees as almost exclusively "intrapyschic," to offer what she terms a theory of intersubjectivity. She suggests that all human beings experience a desire for recognition—a desire for other people to recognize one's subjectivity, one's difference from them: "In the ideal balance, a person is able to be fully self-absorbed or fully receptive to the other, he is able to be alone or together. In a negative cycle of recognition, a person feels that aloneness is only possible by obliterating the intrusive other, that attunement is only possible by surrendering to the other" (Benjamin, 28). Those seem to be Nick's choices: obliterate the Indian woman by declaring her screams, her pain, "not important," or become so attuned to her suffering that, like her husband, he surrenders his identity to hers and (figuratively or literally) ceases to exist.

There is, of course, a third option: to hear the woman's screams, to recognize their importance, and at the same time to respond to them by trying to help. Robin Morgan characterizes this third option as "connectivity" and calls it "the genius of feminist thought, culture and action" (53); she suggests that it insists on *noticing*: "Such a noticing involves both attentiveness and recognition, and is in fact a philosophical and activist technique for being in the world, as well as for changing the world. Noticing, in this sense, requires that survival become a consciously sensitizing process instead of a coarsening one" (53).

Nick's father could, for example, at least have attempted to explain to the Indian woman what he was about to do to her rather than treating her like an animal. There is in the story no reason to think that she has any idea what he is doing to her or is even aware that he is trying to help her rather than kill her; he doesn't even know her name (Wainwright, 184). He could conceivably have been sympathetic to her pain without allowing it to distract him from the medical necessity of operating to try to save both her and her child. Part of his callousness is arguably racist; J. Andrew Wainwright makes the case that the doctor "would not be caught in a white society without his medicine bag and with only a jackknife and 'nine-foot, tapered gut leaders' as operational tools for a *real* lady" (182).⁶ Would he dismiss a white woman's screams as "not important"?

Alternatively, Alice E. Adams suggests that it is sexism, not racism, which drives the doctor's behavior:

The narrator provides information selectively, so that certain questions are unanswerable. Did the doctor know the woman had already been in labor for two days? Did he suspect he would have to do a cesarean section? Could he have brought the necessary supplies? The lack of information, combined with the doctor's dismissal of the woman's pain, suggests that the male focus of the text excludes precisely those questions that address the woman's experience. (45)

In this story, she goes on to point out "the (white) male doctor is cast as a rational thinker whose privilege is augmented by comparison to a mother identified as an incoherent alien or animal" (46).

On the "Literature, Arts, & Medicine" online database sponsored by the New York University School of Medicine, Janice Willms aptly cites the story as one "laden with ethical problems" and addresses several of them in her brief commentary on it:

What justification is there for forcing a child to become part of a brutal sequence of medical events? When, if ever, is it morally acceptable to treat patients as though they were animals? The medical treatment of the laboring woman is unquestionably life-saving, but the cruel insensitivity of the two white men contributes to the unnecessary death of the infant's father. Duties to children and to patients, as well as simple inhumanity, racism, and sexism in the professional relationship are all aired in these five pages.

Regardless of its cause, I am not the only critic to find the doctor's behavior inappropriate. Arthur Waldhorn refers to "Dr. Adams's callous indifference to the squaw's agony" (55). Charles G. Hoffman and A. C.

Hoffman criticize the doctor's "insensitivity to suffering" (110); Thomas Strychacz criticizes his "distanced superiority" (62) and "cold-blooded technical expertise" (64). Judith Fetterley characterizes the Caesarean as "contemptuous and grotesque" (46); Wendolyn E. Tetlow calls it a "butchery-style birth" and notes, "This scene prepares for later stories in the sequence that focus on the inability of men and women to connect with one another physically or emotionally" (54). Jürgen C. Wolter describes the doctor as "inadequately equipped (psychologically and literally)" and criticizes his "superficial self-importance" (92). Ann Edwards Boutelle is critical of the doctor's "cocky indifference to human suffering" (136).

"The doctor's inattention to the woman's emotional distress, to the husband, to anything but the technical problem of performing the operation under such conditions frequently provokes strong negative reactions, especially among women students," writes Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, who teaches a course in literature and medicine to undergraduates and has taught workshops for physicians and other health care professionals (190). As she further observes, "The story is refracted through the child's point of view, foregrounding the problematic way the doctor models manhood for his son and emphasizing how the doctor's professional behavior manifests narrowly patriarchal ideas of virility, heroism, and empowerment" (190).

Of course, the chief defense of the doctor's choice is that it is necessary for him to block out his patient's screams in order to provide proper care. As one physician sarcastically explains,

Physicians must be objective, devoid of any feeling. Care for their patients, yes, but in a paternalistic way, as one cares for children or, ha, barnyard animals. . . . Patients are talked of not as people, but as *cases* . . . Death becomes an unfortunate result, a negative response. Delightful! It is so hard to feel empathy for data, for an item of research. (LaCombe, 59)

As the sarcasm of the above remarks suggests, not all physicians would agree that such detachment is necessary or even appropriate. Another doctor, Jodi Halpern, reasons, "If we take the psychological lives of human beings to be real, then it is irrational to exclude emotions as a source of information about reality" (Halpern, 168)—yet that is precisely what Dr. Adams chooses to do by deeming his patient's screams "not important." Halpern notes that even the physician's own behavior may often be directed by emotion, "perhaps a self-related emotion like pride" (168)—and we are reminded of the exhilaration Dr. Adams initially expresses: "That's one for the medical journal, George" to which George sardonically responds, "Oh, you're a great

man all right" (*IOT*, 18). Yet another twenty-first century physician concludes, "Many problems arise when listening is not a priority of the physician—understanding does not occur, empathy is compromised, the therapeutic alliance may not develop, healing is minimized, and suffering may result" (Connelly, 181). That is an accurate diagnosis of what occurs when Dr. Adams chooses not to listen to his patient: understanding does not occur, his empathy for his patient is clearly compromised, the therapeutic alliance never develops, and not just suffering, but death, ultimately results when Dr. Adams chooses not to hear.

Despite the defenses offered by Howard L. Hannum and William Brasch Watson, then, Dr. Adams is wrong: By choosing to operate without respecting the emotions and human dignity of his patient and her husband, he has violated the Hippocratic Oath, to first do no harm. Even Hannum himself admits that "Dr. Adams has shown . . . a failure to consider effects or the rights of others" and concedes, "at its worst, [this quality] looks like egotism or sadism" (42).

The question then becomes: Why does Nick (or why does his father) see only two options? Why do they see only potential engulfment in the emotions of others (and therefore death) on the one hand and complete obliteration of the subjectivity of anyone outside the self (and therefore isolation) on the other? Nancy Chodorow points out that because children in middle-class American homes have traditionally been raised primarily by women, boys have an especially difficult time separating from their caregivers; they learn to emphasize boundaries, difference, and autonomy rather than identification, intimacy, and interdependence. Benjamin develops this theory further: "The assignment of subject status to male and object status to female follows from the seemingly unavoidable fact that the boy must struggle free with all the violence of a second birth from the woman who bore him. In this second birth, the fantasy of omnipotence and erotic domination begins" (Benjamin, 81). Curiously, the "second birth" imagery reminds us that Nick watches his father literally cut the son away from the mother. And that "fantasy of omnipotence" suggests a reason for Nick's otherwise oddly irrational conviction of immortality in the story's final line. In joining his father in a refusal to recognize the subjectivity of the (Indian) mother, he momentarily *feels* omnipotent. The (not Indian but archetypal) mother must recognize him as an individual, but he does not reciprocate. In fact, Nick's (and his father's) refusal to recognize the mother as a separate being is reflected in the fact that "the term 'mother,' even in a derogatory sense, is never mentioned in the story" (Wainwright, 182). Nick never separates properly from his own mother, so he remains unable to experience connectivity.

What Morgan called "connectivity," Sara Ruddick calls "attentive love," and it is a virtue she links to *separation* from the mother: "To love a

child without seizing or using him, to see the *child's* reality with the patient loving eye of attention—such loving and attention might well describe the separation of mother and child from the mother's point of view" (Ruddick, 122). The child who never learns to reciprocate, to see the *mother's* reality with the patient loving eye of attention, never truly separates from the mother. The child who cannot separate has no capacity to attend to another's suffering and replaces attentive love with fantasy: "The enemy of attention is 'fantasy,'" defined as "reverie designed to protect the psyche from pain, self-induced blindness designed to protect it from insight" (Ruddick, 120).

Nick never has the chance to learn how to reciprocate, to see his mother with attentive love; just as Dr. Adams forces Nick to become an "interne" too soon, so, too, Nick's father forces Nick too quickly to repudiate both his Oedipal love for his mother and his identification with her. In consequence, Nick indulges in fantasy; the story's last words are clearly a reverie designed to protect his psyche from pain.

"Three Shots," the prologue Hemingway later (wisely) excised from the completed "Indian Camp," confirms this reading of the story (NAS, 13–15). Nick is afraid of the woods at night by himself, a fact that indicates that he is too young to be compelled to witness a Caesarean birth, let alone the unexpected gore of the Indian father's suicide. Some critics have suggested that he is also too young to have been left alone at their camp, too. As Peter L. Hays has pointed out, "But the doctor could have had an Indian woman take Nick to another shanty, or he could have left Nick with the Indian men; he did not have to make Nick a party to the crude operation" (37n6). Nick's obsessive fear of death is abruptly inspired by the singing of the hymn with the line "Someday the silver cord will break"—an image that suggests that he fears his father will sever him, too, from his mother and that the break will kill him.⁷

There is some evidence that, while Ernest himself may never have witnessed a Caesarean like the one performed in "Indian Camp," the father-son relationship portrayed in the story nevertheless had some basis in Hemingway's own childhood. His older sister writes,

When Ernest was a young boy, he signed a family guest book at one of the many family dinner parties *Ernest Hemingway, M.D.*—he was about nine at the time. Daddy laughed about it, but he was pleased that the boy planned to be a doctor. Daddy let Ernie help him in his office at times and watch while he dressed wounds, or when he treated the Ottawa Indians up at the lake. Once I remember it was a gunshot wound that Ernie watched being cleaned out, and another time Ernie helped while my father cleaned out a bad cut suffered by a young boy. In this case Ernie held the boy while Daddy probed into the wound for the

splinters of wood which had been driven into the flesh. Later, Ernie watched an operation. Dressed in a white gown, he was permitted to stand at the top rear of the operating theater at the hospital where Daddy was on the staff as head of obstetrics. Ernie was interested, but he sat down when he felt faint and he did not go again. (Sanford, 134)

When Ernest was only eleven, Clarence Hemingway, while taking a medical refresher course at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, sent Ernest a postcard saying, "It will only be a few years before you and Papa will be visiting clinics together" (qtd. in Reynolds, *Final*, 349).

Clarence Hemingway was clearly a demanding father. According to Grace Hemingway's scrapbook, Ernest was taught to load, cock, and shoot a gun at the age of two years and eleven months (qtd. in Spilka, 103). When Ernest was four, she wrote, "He is a good pistol shot. Hits the bull's eye quite frequently in target practice" (qtd. in Spilka, 103). His birthday present that year was an all-day fishing trip in the rain with his father (Baker, *Life*, 5). When Ernest was five, his father took him on a seven-mile hike that "blistered his feet so badly there was blood in his socks and shoes" (Griffin, 10).

Clarence punished his children with a razor strop (Baker, *Life Story*, 9). Ernest's older sister Marcelline recalls that her father once took the children to the state prison and told them that that was where they would go if they were disobedient (Sanford, 119). When Ernest was about fourteen, he and a friend shot a porcupine while out hunting, and Clarence forced the two of them to eat it (Sanford, 81). Although most of Ernest's friends had their own library cards by the time they were fourteen, at the age of nineteen Hemingway was still using his father's card to check out books so that his father could monitor what Ernest read (Reynolds, *Young Hemingway*, 41). Clarence gave his children very little spending money: "Before Hemingway went to war, his weekly allowance was 17 cents—a penny for each of his years—barely enough for tram fare to Chicago's Loop and back" (Reynolds, *Young Hemingway*, 91). Nevertheless, recalls Marcelline, "We had to keep track of how we spent our allowances and show our account books to Daddy once a week" (Sanford, 129). Marcelline also remembered Clarence's method of calling his children home (shades of Captain von Trapp in the film *The Sound of Music*):

Sometimes my Father used to stand on the front porch and whistle loudly. Then he counted how many seconds it took us all to come running from the various neighbors' yards where we were playing. He was proud when we could make it home in two minutes. Very early in our lives we learned to come instantly when we heard this call. (Sanford, 31–32)

Ernest still responded immediately and instinctively to the familiar whistle years later, when he was twenty-eight years old. His parents were traveling in Florida, Marcelline recalls, and "When they returned by ship to Key West, Daddy told me he saw a hunched-over figure sitting on the dock fishing. Something about the set of the shoulders looked familiar to Dad, and he gave the family bobwhite whistle. Instantly the figure looked up and leaped to his feet. It was Ernest . . ." (Sanford, 227). It is perhaps no wonder that after he left Chicago in 1921, Hemingway saw his father only twice in the last seven years of his father's life—and as Michael Reynolds observes, "[O]ne of those encounters was unavoidable and the other accidental" (*Paris Years*, 134).

Hemingway's father, who "disapproved of drinking, dancing, smoking, and cardplaying" (Mellow, 12), could also be harshly judgmental. "I remember Mother saying once that she would rather see me in my grave than something—I forget what—smoking cigarettes perhaps," Ernest wrote to his father in a letter defending his divorce from Hadley (*Selected Letters*, 259). But in Leicester's book, it is Hemingway's father, not his mother, who utters the parental curse in response to news of Ernest's divorce (103). In the defensive 1927 letter in which he breaks that news to his father, Ernest added, with some bitterness:

Many times last winter I would have been very content with anything so simple as being in my grave but there were always enough people who would rather not see me in my grave to whom I owed certain responsibilities to make me keep on going. I just mention this so no one will mention seeing me in my grave. (*Selected Letters*, 259)

Perhaps he hoped his father would take the not-very-subtle hint. Certainly Ernest became preoccupied with this relationship in some of his earliest writings: "In his Chicago juvenilia, he wrote several stories in which the son could not please the demanding father or some other figure whose admiration he sought" (Reynolds, *Paris*, 59). Significantly, "[w]hen 'Indian Camp' appeared in the *transatlantic*, he did not send a copy home" (Reynolds, *Paris*, 191). Nor did he show his parents *Three Stories and Ten Poems*. Ernest knew his parents well: His father sent back every copy of *In Our Time* that he had ordered, refusing to let Grace keep even one copy for herself. "He would not tolerate such filth in his home, Dad declared" (Sanford, 219).

There is ample evidence that Hemingway believed that his father was cruel. He once told his fourth wife, Mary, that his parents "both charged him with family responsibilities beyond his capacity" (Reynolds, *Final*, 178). In one of his *Esquire* articles, "Monologue to the Maestro: A High Seas Letter," he posed to himself the question, "What is the best

early training for a writer?" and answered, "An unhappy childhood" (190). "Dad does not *mean* to be irritable and exacting, and he does not even think that he is other than normal in every way, but the facts are that he is not normal at all, in his disposition or attitude toward us or our friends," his older sister Marcelline once observed in a letter to her mother (qtd. in Reynolds, *Young Hemingway*, 82). Ernest must have resented Clarence's harshness deeply; Ernest once told his friend Bill Smith that, like Nick in "Fathers and Sons," "when his father had punished him and he was angry, he had sometimes sat in the open door of the shed with his shotgun, drawing a bead on his father's head" (Baker, *Life*, 31), and one critic has suggested that Hemingway was guilt-stricken when Clarence committed suicide because the son had in his youthful fantasies and his later fiction figuratively killed his father (Boutelle).

In 1945, Hemingway wrote Mary that when his grandfather Hall was suicidal from the pain of his last illness:

. . . my father removed the cartridges from his [i.e., Grandfather Hall's] pistol (which he had under his pillow) and he was allowed to shoot himself with an empty gun. I was a very little boy (six) but it still seemed to me the cruelest thing I could imagine, much worse than what God who they were always spooking us with, would do. My father was very proud of it. I could never forgive him for that nor for any of his other cruellnesses [sic] nor weaknesses . . .

I think both my father and mother were very cruel (not to me and have no kick ever because I was armored after eleven). My father did such good kind things and so many people worshiped him, but I think he was worn out by over-work almost into a state where cruelty, against the habit of goodness, was almost like the pleasure of a drink. (Hemingway, qtd. in Griffin, 190–91)

It is interesting to remember that Hemingway describes Nick's father as both "sentimental" and "cruel" in "Fathers and Sons" (SS, 489), a story that takes its title from Ivan Turgenev's novel of deadly generational conflict.

Ernest's mother, Grace Hall, expressed her concern to Clarence even before her marriage about "a strong point which I sometimes am not quite sure that you and I understand each other in, and that is the guarding of children from all thoughts and actions of cruelty" (qtd. in Nagel, 65). Interestingly, she links her concern about his cruelty to the treatment of animals (specifically, the use of vivisection—what we would now call dissection and the use of animals in medical research—practices which she believed were inhumane⁸) and Clarence's medical training, much as Ernest does in *In Our Time*. Grace warns Clarence, "Cruelty is to me the unpardonable sin, and if I ever discovered it in one I loved, my love would turn

to hate, bitter hate very quickly" (qtd. in Nagel, 65). Even in the year she was married, when it might reasonably be expected that she would see her future spouse in the best possible light, Ernest Hemingway's mother believed her fiancé capable of cruelty toward his own family and urged him not to indulge this capacity.

In a comment on how "severe" Ernest could be, Hemingway's brother, Leicester Hemingway, implicitly suggests how unforgiving Clarence may have been:

When Ernest banished someone, he prided himself on enforcement of the decision. Should he decide to forgive, the recipient might spend the rest of his life in gratitude at being freed from Ernest's version of Coventry, so strong was his moral position. In years of observation, I have never seen any one of the "forgiven" recover completely the status previously enjoyed. This was a psychological device Ernest learned from having had it used on him. (117)

When his sister Carol married John Gardner despite Hemingway's opposition, Ernest retaliated by telling people who inquired about her that she was dead (Kert, 335). Ernest practiced similar tactics on his own sons: "They could irk him, as all sons do. They'd get on his dirt list and he'd just kind of ignore them" (Toby Bruce, qtd. in Brian, 87). Hemingway once joked to A. E. Hotchner, "To be a successful father . . . there's one absolute rule: when you have a kid, don't look at it for the first two years" (Hotchner, 94).

Certainly Ernest learned very early to suppress his own emotions ("*I was armored after eleven*"). As a child, he once inadvertently drove a stick into his throat, "gouging out parts of both tonsils," according to his brother, Leicester:

Our father told him to concentrate on whistling when he felt like crying as a way to take his mind off the pain. And whistling became Ernest's stoic reaction to pain from that time on. A picture of the wounded hero taken in an Italian hospital during World War I shows him whistling through clenched teeth. (26)

As Leicester Hemingway somewhat dryly observes, "Stoicism was something . . . that Ernest learned early and well at Windermere" (25). And Ernest dutifully passed the lesson on after Clarence's suicide, insisting to Leicester, who was then all of thirteen years old, "At the funeral, I want no crying. You understand, kid? There will be some others who will weep, and let them. But not in our family" (qtd. in Leicester, *Hemingway*, 111).

Ernest apparently became a demanding father in his own right, perpetuating the kind of parenting he had received. Mariel Hemingway, the

daughter of Ernest's eldest son, has publicly said as much, emphasizing that he would not let his sons cry ("Ernest"). Ernest's son Gregory wrote in *Papa: A Personal Memoir*, "I confess I felt profound relief when they lowered my father's body into the ground and I realized that he was really dead, that I couldn't disappoint him, couldn't hurt him anymore" (118).

Rose Marie Burwell suggests that what she calls Hemingway's "empathetic faculty" was damaged in childhood because neither of his parents could give him the attentive love he needed (21). She notes that for many of Hemingway's heroes—including Thomas Hudson, Roger Davis, David Hudson, and David Bourne:

One of the forms that the powerlessness of childhood takes is wanting or being compelled to please a parent, and in the process becoming implicated in parental actions that are cruel and/or frightening—for example, Nick Adams's exposure to a suicide and a caesarean section performed without anesthetic in "Indian Camp." (Burwell, 82)

Clearly, Hemingway tried to please his father by participating in activities that, as a sensitive boy, he must have found frightening. Thus Burwell is probably accurate about Hemingway's compromised capacity for empathy in his private life. But no one could write as Hemingway does without extraordinary sensitivity to the feelings of others. Through his cultivation of his own artistic talent, Hemingway was able to at least partially transcend the scars left by a difficult childhood. In the semiautobiographical 1936 short story "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," when Harry, the writer and the story's protagonist, chooses quarreling to pass the time as he lies dying of gangrene, an anguished Helen tells him, "You might think of other people." "For Christ's sake," he responds, "That's been my trade" (SS, 53). Thinking of other people was Hemingway's trade, too, and he clearly spent much of his time as an artist working out the ways in which we become who we are: "The most complicated subject that I know, since I am a man, is a man's life" (Hemingway, "The Christmas Gift," 86). It is interesting to read "Indian Camp" as Hemingway's own retrospective analysis of the "intimate harm" that his own "dangerous family" caused him.

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NOTES

1. Alan Holder argues that what he calls Hemingway's "childbirth sequence . . . centers on the victimization of women" (104). Linda W. Wagner

observes, "of the stories included in the collection, only five or six have a focus other than a woman character or a relationship" and concludes, "It seems very clear that, at this point in his career, Hemingway was as interested in women characters as he was in men—perhaps more interested" (66).

2. Steven Trout remarks of "On the Quai at Smyrna," "This war clearly differs from the Western Front experiences of the other narrators: this is a war made against women and babies—against whole civilian populations—and even against the poor mules" (26). Hemingway seems to blur the distinctions between these various classes of victims deliberately; Wendolyn E. Tetlow notes that in describing the procession from Thrace, Hemingway "intended the people to appear as animals" and changed "rode hard" to "herded" to emphasize that "the population is being herded like animals toward slaughter" (24–25).

3. Many critics attribute the Indian husband's suicide to an inability to bear his wife's pain (Alice E. Adams, 45; DeFalco, 28; Flora, *Hemingway's*, 27; Holder, 104; Seed, 21; Spilka, 192; Tanselle, 144; Waldhorn, 54). Charles G. Hoffman and A. C. Hoffman write that the husband "had not learned how to survive the sufferings of others" (108).

Kenneth Lynn contends that the story had its roots in Hemingway's anguished train trip to Toronto the night Hadley went into labor (125). Indeed, Alan Holder suggests that Hemingway identifies with the Indian husband who commits suicide: "The sensibility that this act indicates, one extremely responsive to the woman's pain (and one perhaps that is pierced with guilt at having brought it upon her), seems very much akin to the sensibility that created 'Up in Michigan' and the following sequence in the first place" (104). Similarly, Joseph M. Flora notes that "Only the implied narrator . . . outside the story has demonstrated the compassion that the woman's suffering demands" (*Hemingway's*, 26) and suggests that Hemingway identified with the husband who himself identified so intensely with his wife (*Ernest*, 18).

4. David Seed observes of the line, "I did not say anything" in "The Revolutionist": "Whenever the same formula occurs in 'The End of Something,' 'Soldier's Home,' and other stories, it always indicates a character's tacit disagreement with the speaker" (28). Thomas Strychacz further notes that Nick's behavior, in turning away and refusing to watch his father's actions, corresponds to the Indian husband's behavior (63).

5. Elizabeth Dolan Kautz similarly suggests that "By portraying the doctor as a masculine performer and teacher, Hemingway presents masculinity as a social construct. . . . Nick's initiation into this masculine realm turns out to be a troubling experience in which he learns the price for entrance into manhood—the suppression of human empathy" (86).

Interestingly, Watson sees the story as Hemingway's "way of asserting the validity of his own calling in the face of his unsympathetic and uncomprehending father, a father whose love and approval he nonetheless still wanted" (44).

6. For an excellent extended discussion of some of the racial implications of the story—and particularly its archetypal opening scene—see Strychacz, 61–63. See also Amy Lovell Strong.

7. Joseph DeFalco writes of this imagery, "The father as authority figure, in his role as law-giver, forces the adjustment away from the protective womb and

guards against the child's dangerous regressive tendencies" but contends that in Nick's case, "The child's failure to accept such a role in the father and reconcile himself to the life processes that role represents is tantamount to a direct denial of reality and a lapse into a fixed level of infantilism" (107). But surely the story's concluding sentence with the phrase "with his father rowing" suggests that Nick *does* recognize his father's "authority . . . as law-giver," and that his conviction that he will never die is related to that recognition.

Bernard Oldsey concedes of the silver cord, "Of course, quite literally it denotes the umbilical cord and thus the beginning of life," (40) but then rather bizarrely adds, "There in the row boat on the lake sitting safely in the stern of the boat is a youthful Nick Adams who has not quite severed the psychic umbilical cord stretching between him and his father [!], the master of life and death questions" (Oldsey, 41). Jürgen C. Wolter makes a similar point, referring to Nick's "father's protecting arm" as "Nick's pre-Caesarean umbilical cord" (93). But umbilical cords generally connect the son with the *mother*, not the father.

When an earlier, abbreviated version of this paper was presented at a conference, a medical student who approached me after the presentation informed me that the umbilical cord is, in fact, a gray or silver color—a fact that Hemingway, as the son of an obstetrician, might well have learned either from observation or from his father.

8. Grace Hall's concern that animal experimentation might foster cruelty was one shared by many Americans at the turn of the twentieth century; see Susan E. Lederer's fascinating discussion of this aspect of the American antivivisection movement. Social historian James Turner writes, "For their sympathizers, animals had become emblematic of the heart and kindness to them one of the highest expressions of heartfulness" (103), adding later, "Deliberate infliction of pain corrupted man's spirit, transformed him, like Dr. Jekyll, into a heartless brute" (112). Turner points out that America's antivivisection movement peaked in the 1890s (94), just as Clarence was courting Grace. For a disturbing discussion of the links between cruelty to animals and domestic violence, see Carol J. Adams.

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