







THESIS APPROVED BY


4/6/2012  
Date

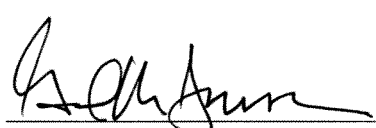
  
Lydia Cooper, Ph.D., Committee Chair

  
Robert Churchill, Ph.D., Committee Member

  
Greg Zacharias, Ph.D., Committee Member

  
Brent Spencer, Ph.D., Graduate Program Director

  
Brent Spencer, Ph.D., Interim Dept. Chair

  
Gail M. Jensen, Ph.D., Dean

MIND THE GAP:  
(RE)READING NARRATORIAL CONSTRUCTION IN SELECTED NOVELS  
OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

---

By  
ERIC C. LOY

---

A THESIS

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of the Creighton University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of  
English.

---

Omaha, NE

April 10, 2012



## Abstract

The following thesis proposes a new theory for understanding the narrative structure in selected novels of Ernest Hemingway. Drawn from close textual analysis, the theory works to reconcile critical difficulties by recognizing an implicit gap between the narrator-character construct appearing in the text and its conceptual origin—a new idea and term called *arche-narrator*. The role of the *arche-narrator* is partially developed through a metaphorical relation to Jacques Derrida’s description of originary expression in *arche-writing*, which initiates the originary breach between intention/conveyed that occurs during signification. Establishing this theoretical premise, I offer the concept of *arche-narrator* as an operational reading method used to trace the complexities of narratorial distance and “gap” in the communication of narrative to reader. In other words, by studying the relationship between the narrative construct and originary *arche-narrator*, new insights can be gained about some of Hemingway’s most compelling narrators and the stories they tell. The novels under study include *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *The Garden of Eden*.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Lydia Cooper for her thoughtful guidance throughout the progress of this thesis. I was able to pursue an ambitious project under a reserved but constant mentorship, which seems to me an ideal atmosphere for the pursuit of scholarship in the humanities. Thanks are also extended to my readers, Dr. Greg Zacharias and Dr. Robert Churchill, for their helpful comments in the research and revision stages. Finally, thanks to the English Department at Creighton University for their support through a Full Fellowship during the 2011-2012 academic year.

## Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter One:	11
<i>Jake Barnes as Arche-Narrator in <i>The Sun Also Rises</i></i>	
Chapter Two:	32
<i>Proximity and Distance as Device in <i>A Farewell to Arms</i></i>	
Chapter Three:	54
<i>Arche-Narrator as Self-Reflexive Analysis in <i>The Garden of Eden</i></i>	
Works Cited	77

## Introduction

*Narrative always says less than it knows, but it often makes known more than it says.*

Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*

The tight, terse style of Ernest Hemingway's prose and the pragmatic narration from his infamously masculine narrators have long been fixed points of critical analysis in Hemingway scholarship. Recent trends in a variety of critical perspectives have specifically led to questioning aspects of narration in Hemingway by pointing to issues of unreliability in Jake Barnes (Fulton 62), Frederic Henry's narrow description and seemingly shallow narrative reflection (Owens-Murphy 90-91), and the difficulty of narratorial ownership between David Bourne and his wife, Catherine (Silbergleid 100). In each study, narratorial authority is either questioned or granted to the explicit narrator-character of the text, implying a direct connection between the speaker and that which is spoken—a simple and straightforward formula, but one which ultimately fails to fully comprehend Hemingway's often complex narrative structures, as will be demonstrated.

Significantly, Hemingway has also been a frequently explored author in narrative theory studies. From Gérard Genette's seminal *Narrative Discourse* to recent work by David Herman, the uncommon frequency and prolific nature of Hemingway's fiction in narrative studies suggest an accommodating, if not ideal, textual source from which to develop and explore theories of storytelling. Curiously, both authors often refer to Hemingway's well-known short story "Hills Like White Elephants" to pursue their respective points, and Genette specifically cites the story to illustrate matters of restraint in narrative "focalization," and ultimately, "distance" (190, 198)—a central idea in this study that will be elaborated later.

The subject of this thesis is therefore narration in Hemingway's fiction, the effort to offer both new readings of three major novels as well as develop from these readings an innovative narrative theory that accommodates the complex communicative frameworks that often structure Hemingway's—and other authors'—stories. Similar to Genette's model of study in *Narrative Discourse*, I wish to offer a new “method of analysis” that seeks the universal in the specific (23), recognizing particular textual examples as manifestations of an underlying, and previously unarticulated, concept of narration. However, in volume and depth, Genette's commentary often favors theoretical abstractions over textual illustrations, despite his attempt to mediate between the two evenly (22). In the effort to maintain a theoretical framework that is inspired by and tightly knitted to precise textual applications, I found inspiration in Wolfgang Iser's rationale for theoretical development in *The Implied Reader* as an attractive and appropriate approach to this goal:

Such a theory, if it is to carry any weight at all, must have its foundations in actual texts, for all too often literary critics tend to produce their theories on the basis of an esthetics that is predominantly abstract, derived from and conditioned by philosophy rather than by literature—with the regrettable result that they reduce texts to the proportions of their theories instead of adapting theirs to fit in the texts. (xi-xii)

My conceptual concerns differ from Iser's, but our commitment to “actual texts” is the same. Demonstrated in the subsequent chapters, a new theory for understanding the roles of narrators emerges from both textual inspiration and a general failure of traditional scholarship to appropriately apply criticism without imposing unnecessarily constricting

models and metaphors upon the art it tries to understand. . In one sense, the theoretical development of this thesis attempts to be thoughtfully descriptive and localized in its method, initiating a new vocabulary within the context of three novels. In another sense, the theory that arises from this practice strives to be universally educative, asserting new conversation in the broad context of general narrative studies.

The innovation of this thesis concerns the development of a new term and narrative concept called *arche-narrator* or *arche-narration*. Specifically, the development of this new narrative position assists theorists, critics, and readers in understanding the commonly used but often-nebulous term “distance,” as applied to narrative structures, by focusing on the essential question: “from whom or where does narration come?” In developing ideas of narrative “mood” and “representation,” Genette uses the “convenient spatial metaphor [of distance]” to describe the chief modalities that regulate narrative information, attributing increased “distance” to distorted “perspective,” which ultimately affects the mimetic representation of a text (162-163). Although clearly illustrating the productive scene of narrative, Genette’s formulation problematically equates the perspective of the reader with the perspective of the narrator, attributing ideas of “distance” equally to both roles. First elaborated in Wayne Booth’s *Rhetoric of Fiction*, the concept of narrator “unreliability” seems to challenge this false equivalency retroactively by reminding us that the narrator’s presentation of a text—and his mediated distance—may or may not be at odds with one or several “norms” of the work, including the function the reader (76-78).

To be sure, Genette invokes and modifies Booth’s critical premise of “showing” and “distance” for purposes other than mine, but the disunity between surviving

established concepts evidences the continually troublesome concept of “distance” in narration. One of the primary goals of this thesis is to contribute a methodical elaboration of *one* interpretive strategy for regarding narrative distance in the effort to clarify and advance Genette’s larger propositions, many of which survive in concept and terms in the various works of James Phelan, Jonathan Culler, David Herman, and others from (post-)structuralist, “Chicago school,” and other traditions who will be cited in this thesis. In the development of my contribution, Jacques Derrida’s description of originary expression—or “writing before the letter,” termed “*arche-writing*”(60)—is used as a conceptual metaphor to delineate and understand the role of the *arche-narrator* as the originary source of narrative expression *from which* narration comes. In other words, while the term “distance” has been used to describe the varying perspective between narrative construct and a narrator/reader communicative/interpretive role, the concept of *arche-narrator* will be substituted as the complementary element of the “distance” paradigm by providing a specific origin of narration that exists separate, or “distant,” from the resulting construct, or text.

The invocation of Derridean linguistic theory and its terminology is important in revealing several important aspects of originary narration that thesis hopes to illustrate. First, by positing an *arche-narrator* opposite the resulting narrative construct, an implicit “gap” is revealed between the two entities. This narrative situation models Derrida’s formulation in the sense that “*arche-writing* . . . cannot, as the condition of all linguistic systems, form a part of the linguistic system itself and be situated as an object in its field” (60). In other words, the narrative model deliberately disrupts any previously held false equivalencies between a “narrator” and his/her narrated presence in the text by

approaching the narrative as one would an enclosed linguistic structure. Second, the troublesome concept of narrative “distance” is clarified through the use of narrative “gap,” a term which underscores the *presence of separation* required by the Derridean model through a manifested space rather than traversed “distance,” a term which misleadingly connotes a measurement of travel or proximity rather than the conceptual-spatial region it is seemingly often intended to signify. Frequently, “distance” and “gap” appear to be used interchangeably in this thesis; however, I believe readers will benefit from the nuance of differentiation, using “distance” as a measure of the oscillating proximity between *arche-narrator* and narrative construct, and “gap” as the implicit linguistic and conceptual division between the two entities. In brief summary of this new terminology, *arche-narrator* and “gap” are the primary terms and concepts proposed in this thesis.

Genette approaches several of these ideas when he discusses the “*temporal distance* between story and narrating distance” versus the “*modal distance* between the story and narrative” (168), as well as the illustration of “narrative levels” revealed in the “act” of narrating (227-234). *Arche-narration* is directly concerned with the “narrating instance” or the “act of narrating” of any given text, but the implications of its Derridean-inspired foundation and theoretical development result in significantly divergent conclusions. A theory of *arche-narrator* informs the “narrating instance” by elaborating upon the conceptual site from which the narration comes. Establishing this role and its position in relation to the narrative construct reveals a greater interpretive perspective for narrative production as a whole, granting autonomy to *arche-narrators* as the narrative source of a resulting construct, demarcating such a crucial functional role from the traditional but ultimately problematic understandings of the roles of narrators and authors.

By this effect, the role of *arche-narrator* as origin of narration may never be assumed directly by the author—nor of the textual narrator—in revision to Genette’s previous understanding (213). Accordingly, new terms and new descriptors signify new understanding of the complexity of narrative production by focusing on its conceptual origin.

The development of this specific conceptual model and treatment of narrative structure is otherwise unprecedented in both Hemingway and narrative studies, but I believe such a pursuit is valuable to both fields. The delineation of a narrative source opposed to its textual presence offers a unique opportunity to better understand the relationship between rhetorically composed fictions and their fictional narrators. In other words, if critics and readers already recognize concepts of “unreliability,” “representation,” or “distance” in narration, an explicit delineation of source and communicative method serves mainly to clarify these concepts. Hemingway scholarship is thus improved by addressing critical problems or misapprehensions of narrative models in Hemingway’s texts, as will be demonstrated throughout the subsequent chapters. The cited critical approaches vary from character analysis to feminist theory, but each issue raised in scholarship, I believe, may be improved through a new consideration of how each of Hemingway’s narratives are communicated through a carefully constructed narration, narrator, and as we will see, *arche-narrator*. For example, this new theory can assist in reclaiming Hemingway narrators from the pitfalls of perceived “unreliability,” instead revising this attribution as—in the case of Jake Barnes—a deliberately conceived strategy in accordance with the norms of the *arche-narrator* rather than the text as

Booth's formulation would suggest. The first chapter will elaborate on this particular point.

The three Hemingway texts under study—*The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *The Garden of Eden*—were selected based on their implicit illustration of Hemingway's evolving narrative technique as well their effectiveness in demonstrating the applicability of the *arche-narrator* theory across a diverse textual sample. In *The Sun Also Rises*, a strong homodiegetic voice complicates its narrative with elusive and biased representation. In *A Farewell to Arms*, the strength of the homodiegetic voice is diluted through an unreflective narrator that often subsumes his identity into the communication of his text—a technique that results in a multi-layered communicative schema for the narrative. Finally, in *The Garden of Eden*, the narrative turns to focus on the implications of its own communication, employing a third-person narration that enables the novel's self-reflexive narrative mode. Across the representative corpus, the theory of narrative construction similarly evolves, illustrating shortcomings of contemporary scholarship as well as demonstrating how each narrative engages the concept of narrative gap to pursue its own thematic ambitions.

From the perspective of contemporary scholarship, the first chapter reconciles criticism that takes issue with Jake Barnes's opaque and often indecisive narration with a theory that incorporates such narrative liabilities into a revelatory characteristic of the narrator's complex construction of his text. The second chapter characterizes similar critical studies as inappropriate and often constricting applications of metaphorical models, resulting in a reductive analysis of narrative construction. In contrast, the *arche-narrator* theory is further developed as a text-based extrapolation, descriptive in its

analysis of Frederic Henry's narration and thus faithful to the text as well as outwardly relevant to general narrative studies. In the third chapter, the tumultuous climate of debatable textual authority surrounding the publication of *The Garden of Eden* is used as a premise to reconcile disparate critical conclusions of the novel under a narrative theory that accounts for the novel's own equivocal thematic commentary on the nature of narrative construction and its implied power of identity formation. In each chapter, negotiating critical shortcomings explicitly places this thesis among contemporary conversations of the texts while implicitly shaping the concurrent theoretical development across Hemingway's representative corpus.

From a theoretical perspective, a conceptual narrative gap is recurrently illustrated through the various manifestations of an influencing *arche-narrator* in the three texts. While a textual narrator-character is present in the text, narrative peculiarities arise in the communication of the text that resist the traditional narrative/narrator paradigm. The extended implications of a new *arche-narrator* paradigm enable critical analysis to better understand these peculiarities in relation to the narrative structure as a whole. In *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake Barnes's role of *arche-narrator* enables the necessary narratorial distance required for his manipulation of textual representation in the effort to process trauma, cope with emotional stress, or delude readers—and himself—from inconvenient truths. In *A Farewell to Arms*, narrative distance is thus manipulated, part of Hemingway's complex communicative schema in constructing the narrative. Frederic Henry's narration oscillates on a spectrum of narrative distance, his role as *arche-narrator* sliding in proximity to the resulting construct, a phenomenon that often accounts for irregularities or moments of reflective departure in his otherwise unreflective

narration. In *The Garden of Eden*, manipulated narrative distance thus becomes the paramount concern in the novel's central conflict between characters David and Catherine Bourne. The third-person narration of the novel frames David and Catherine's struggles for the reader, revealing David's attempts to leverage an autonomous identity through his own narrative construction against Catherine's attempts to gain proximity to his identity by subverting constructed distinctions. In the end, it is David's acquisition of the *arche-narrator* role that enables his actions and fuels the conflict. Illustrated in the three chapters, the theory of narrative gap developed in Hemingway's first two novels is ultimately incorporated into the primary conflict of another novel at the end of the Hemingway corpus.

Important to remember, as Genette reminds readers in his own introduction (32), the roles and positions defined and described in the following pages are continually a matter of fluctuating relationships, a complex set of interactions that resist definitive characterizations of separate parts. In this sense, the Derridean model—both as metaphorical concept and operational theory—seems appropriate in understanding a shifting originary site of narration as it relates to and informs the resulting narrative. My study is perhaps best approached as a provocative example of a new interpretive method for narrative studies, using Hemingway's fiction to advance contemporary understanding of narrative production. The subsequent readings and illustrations of Hemingway are also not intended to be a constricting, autocratic application of the developing theory, but rather an example of how the theory might be variably engaged and modified to assist in critical evaluation. Just as the theory develops and changes over the representative corpus of this thesis, it may be equally modified, addressed, or even refuted in order to

accommodate and understand a variety of narrative phenomenon in a variety of authors and texts. In this process I perceive the advancement of scholarship, and in this conversation I submit my own commentary. In summary, as literary criticism, this thesis aims for credible accuracy and enlightening explication of the representative works. As theory, this thesis establishes the foundation of a new conceptual framework that offers insights into the complex construction of narrative identities and the stories they tell.

Chapter One: Jake Barnes as *Arche-Narrator* in *The Sun Also Rises**Critical Context*

For the traditional scholar, Ernest Hemingway's Jake Barnes is among the most highly contested studies of ambiguity in narration. Under the guise of Hemingway's pragmatic prose, the lens of Jake's subjective narration increasingly exerts its influence over the reader's experience of the text to the point in which readers are unsure about nearly everything except Jake's own ambivalence toward his world. At the time of its publication, *The Sun Also Rises* was generally met with dismissive but focused condemnation of its unclear, indecisive narrative (Wagner-Martin 1). The *Chicago Daily Tribune* went so far as to review Hemingway's first novel to be "entirely out of focus," a book that made "this reviewer almost plain angry" (13). Of course, this particular "focus" that was the bane of contemporary reviewers became a heavily scrutinized topic for subsequent scholars.

In the most recent decades of Hemingway scholarship, analytical trends have focused on Jake's unreliability, particularly as a source of truth, accuracy, and character development. For example, in an effort to render a more accurate sense of the novel's leading woman, Lady Brett Ashley, critic Lorie Watkins Fulton invites scholars to simply "read around" Jake's narration. The goal in Fulton's reading is to reclassify Brett's character as wholly different from her traditional label of "bitch" that results from granting too much authority to Jake's narration. Citing instances of deep contradiction in Jake's rendering of himself, such as Jake's assertion of manhood or "manliness" despite lacking a phallus, Fulton blames Brett's "misrepresentation" on "the fact that we as readers see Brett as Jake sees her, and his ideas about Brett seem conflicted at best" (61-

62). To be sure, despite Jake's hard-nosed approach to work, life, and bull fighting, his view of Brett—similar to his general outlook—is in a constant flux of love, hate, admiration, hope, denial, care, and (feigned) indifference.

The problem with readings like Fulton's, however, is the broad assumption that *Jake* takes his own narration at face value. Certainly, Hemingway's prose rendering of Jake's narration suggests a matter-of-fact, documentarian approach to Jake's account and technique. However, this limited view constricts general character studies, such as Fulton's, and other readings when the critic is forced to consider Jake's story as simply "unreliable," an inaccurate version of the facts. This particular reading also seems to be the probable reason for the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reviewer's professed anger and rather narrow view of the text (Wagner-Martin 13). Fortunately, the detour to this critical dead end is not far from Fulton's assessment when she cites Jake's obvious contradictions in the rendering of his own character. If, as the ambivalent nature of the novel generally suggests, the possibility exists that Jake floats in contradiction within his own narrative, there must be a rupture of accuracy between the narrative source and its manifestation of character in the text. After recognizing this split between the story and storyteller, a new vantage point suddenly becomes clear—Jake, the narrator, is decidedly distant from Jake, the character.

Recent gender studies in Hemingway have begun to recognize this gap in order to explore Jake's ambiguous sexual identity throughout the novel. In fact, J.F. Buckley's own reading of Jake's dichotomous hetero- and homosexual desires depend on such a gap. According to Buckley, Jake reveals his desires in moments of shifting sexual orientation "between his narrating role echoing the heterosexual—and his character role echoing the

homosexual” (73). The particulars of Jake’s sexual equivocality are indeed compelling; however, the key to unlocking such a study rests on the narrative division in place. At the outset of his argument, Buckley concedes, “[A]ny narrator can distance himself from and even comment on his role as character. He can relive, even erroneously, his past, can ‘operate independently’ of the character sharing his name” (74). As it becomes apparent, the “unfocused” narrative of the novel is not a liability on the reader or evidence of its inaccurate, sloppy construction. Instead, this “independent operation” of narrator and character provides a theoretical possibility for exploring the novel’s inherent complexity. For Buckley, the complicated issues of evident desire and multiple sexual identities in Jake resist the traditional “notion of a character/narrator who would be at all unitary.” Instead of a cohesive, coherently rendered narrator, the text offers Jake only as an ambiguous “presented identity” (74)—an identity and narrative source Fulton struggles to reconcile with her character study of Brett.

Buckley’s reading of Jake follows the recent practice of narrative theorist James Phelan who reconsiders the issue of reliability by exploring narrative roles in specific texts. For Phelan, even though the separate functions of character and narrator can be influenced by each other, the ability of a character-narrator to fulfill each of these roles independently from each other may bear substantial influence on the concept of reliability (*Narrative as Rhetoric* 110). Looking at one of Jake’s fellow contemporary narrators—Nick Carraway from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*—Phelan establishes this division between roles in order to demonstrate Nick’s ability to operate in several functional capacities for Fitzgerald’s purposes of driving plot, developing character, commanding narrative authority, etc. The specifics of Phelan’s conclusions about Nick

are not so important to this study as is his theoretical premise. The concept of reliability as contingent upon multiple narratorial identities served by a single character entity serves as a well-matched model for the consideration of Jake. In *The Sun Also Rises*, Phelan's concept is important and the implications are great. Understanding Jake's method of narrative construction appeals to understanding both his multiple roles present in the text as well as the novel's thematic development in general.

The focus of my study is the "presentation" of Jake's narrative identity, both in regards to the source of presentation and manifestation of the identity in the text. Just as Buckley's hetero- and homosexual roles of Jake "are never clearly and concisely dichotomized [in the novel]," the lines are equally blurred between his role as narrator and his existence in the text. Of course, the thematic nature of the novel reinforces this kind of ambiguity, but the responsibility rests with the critic to establish a boundary—a narrative gap—to understand Jake's multiple roles and their influence on the text. In other words, in an effort to establish the needed narrative gap to encourage productive studies like Buckley's, Jake's role as narrator must be excised from the category of character. Terrence Doody discusses Jake's precarious existence between the two realms: "Yet Jake remains a problem precisely because he has not been located in space and time, so he is never as far away from Hemingway as he should be and, therefore, never free enough to substantiate his own agency as the narrator" (104-105). For Doody, the key issue is a lack of distance between the author and his narrator, an issue which results in Jake as "more a function of the style than its source" (105). Following Doody's spatial understanding, it is crucial to note that a close proximity between author and narrator logically results in a substantial breach between narrator and narrative. Jake's closeness

to Hemingway removes him further from the novel. Doody's "problem," however, implies a solution for many critical questions.

This study of narrative technique in *Sun Also Rises* argues for the reader-based recognition of an implicit gap between Jake the narrator and his manifested identity in the narrative construct of the novel. In the effort to navigate the parameters of such a gap, I will first engage both traditional psychoanalytic and linguistic models to establish a conceptual base that sustains the existence of a narrative gap in the text. After establishing this base, I will briefly outline the characteristics of the resulting separate entities of (1) narrator-character and (2) originary source in specific relation to Jake Barnes and *Sun Also Rises*. Following this model of understanding narrative construction in Hemingway, the novel comes into focus after the roles of its storyteller are delineated. Issues of unreliability are no longer seen as an infuriating cause of narrative opacity. Instead, the contradictory nature of Jake as a character is incorporated into the general motif of ambiguity in the novel while the method of this character creation reveals its originary source in a narrator separate from the text. The result is a complex exercise in identity creation, trauma management, relationship conception, and environmental mastery. Jake creates his distance; readers must respect it.

#### *Jake as Arche-Narrator*

Considering this distance between narrator and text, Jake's model holds theoretical foundation in standard narrative studies. Following Buckley's recognition of the disparity between multiple sexual desires and Jake's "presented identity," a theoretical foundation can be traced back to Wayne Booth's classic formulation of the "implied author" in a text. In Booth's design, as "[the author] writes, he creates not

simply an ideal, impersonal ‘man in general’ but an implied version of ‘himself.’” Even despite efforts to the contrary, “[the author’s] reader will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe who writes in this manner” (71). Booth asserts it is “only by distinguishing between the author and his implied image that we can avoid pointless and unverifiable talk about such qualities as ‘sincerity’ or ‘seriousness’ in the author” (75). This particular “distinguishing” is, what I believe to be, the moment of constructed distance in Booth’s own formulation. As an influential element of narrative construction, Booth applies this gap to narrators: “Whether or not they are involved in the action as agents or as sufferers, narrators and third-person reflectors differ markedly according to the degree and kind of distance that separates them from the author, the reader, and the other characters of the story” (155). The step, of course, Booth fails to make is to recognize this same distance between the narrator and his or her *own* character.

Although never far from the issue, later in the text Booth elaborates on the idea of sincerity, or reliability, in the narrator. Booth defines a narrator as “*reliable* when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author’s norms), and *unreliable* when he does not” (158-159). Booth’s summation neatly supports his formulations of the implied author; however, the assessment favors simplification concerning a narrator’s possible roles. Responding to this specific passage, Phelan makes the following critical observation:

Booth’s distinction assumes an equivalence, or perhaps better, a continuity between narrator and character, and so critics look at the character function to shed light on the narrator function and vice versa. That is, the narrator’s discourse is assumed to be relevant to our understanding of his

or her character, and the character's actions are assumed to be relevant to our understand of his or her discourse. (111)

Phelan's exposition of Booth's "assumptions" confirms the possibility of a narrative gap but fails to pursue it to its theoretical end. In Phelan's practical application, Nick Carraway oscillates on the spectrum of "reliable" and "unreliable" in the different narrative functions he fulfills. However, this says little about the narrator's production of himself in the text, the gap between those two particular identities, and the originary source of such a production. Gérard Genette's formulation of the "homodiegetic" narrator as a present character in the story approaches this concept (245), but it fails, in my effort, to delineate sufficiently between the roles of "presence" and the originary "act" of narrating from which this presence comes. In Hemingway, as well as other authors, pursuing this delineation is beneficial in understanding the complex framework of narrator-character production, and the idea often informs interpretations of other literary themes present in the text. Certainly, in a novel like *Gatsby*, the idea of the self-made man looms large; Jake's case is not much different.

In the opening lines of Chapter I in *The Sun Also Rises*, the reader's first impression of Jake comes, surprisingly, through Jake's mediated description of another character—Robert Cohn. After remarking on Cohn's history as a Princeton boxing champion, the narration instructs the reader, "Do not think that I am very much impressed by that as a boxing title, but it meant a lot to Cohn. He cared nothing for boxing, in fact he disliked it, but he learned it painfully and thoroughly to counteract the feeling of inferiority and shyness he had felt on being treated as a Jew at Princeton" (11). From the novel's first lines, Jake's cleverly careful narration blurs the lines between fact and

narratorial inference. In this example, the narration deftly transitions from the empirical report of a simple fact (Cohn's boxing title), to an imperative address to the reader, and finally to a quick, reductive psychoanalysis of Cohn's character and history—all reported via Hemingway's pragmatic prose. On the scale of Phelan's conception of reliability and roles, Jake slides effortlessly from reliable and authoritative to being wholly unreliable.

The pragmatic prose driving Jake's narration is integral to the complexity of the narrative structure that results. Discussing Hemingway's pragmatism, Katie Owens-Murphy recognizes a (William) Jamesian dependence on empiricism and utility in constructing reality. In opposition to the rationalist who "believes in a static, objective truth that exists independently of human beings," the prose of Hemingway reveals a pragmatist who "believes that truth is unfixed and is inextricably tied to our subjectivity, constructed and reconstructed according to our changing needs" (88). In this sense, Jake is the pragmatist *par excellence* as the narrator who actively and obviously constructs a subjective reality, distorting the picture and thus "truth." Ultimately, the concept of unreliability in Jake's narration is simply incorporated into a broader method of utility in narratological construction. Jake appropriates the techniques for constructing narrative, evolving the elements of his story "according to [his] changing needs."

While some readers may feel helpless under the subjectivity of Jake's narrative view, the importance of the opening Cohn passage is the actual revelation of Jake's skewed lens—not the problematic "out-of-focus" picture that results. The conspicuous prejudice in Jake's narration serves to alert readers of the obvious subjectivity in the story they are being delivered. Peppered throughout the opening scenes and chapters of the novel are remarks of qualified observation that reveal this subjectivity. The narrator first

reports, "I never met any one of [Cohn's] class who remembered him" (11). Later, the narrator claims, "I do not believe that Robert Cohn looked at another woman" (13) and "I first became aware of his lady's attitude toward him one night after the three of us had dined together" (14). In each of these efforts of Cohn's characterization, the presented material is qualified with an admittance of bias through utterances like "I never met," "I do not believe," and "I first became aware." As readers, we bear witness to a reality dependent on a single, subjective construction.

Jake's biased portrait of Cohn continues in Chapter II with more remarks of "I think" and "I am sure" (16) in regards to Cohn's relationship to his girlfriend Frances and his love life in general. Importantly, Jake's most famous characterization of Cohn is not free from this same subjectivity. In fact, the characterization recognizes the pitfalls of subjectivity itself: "Cohn, I believe, took every word of 'The Purple Land' as literally as though it had been an R.G. Dunn report. You understand me, he made some reservations, but on the whole the book to him was sound. It was all that he needed to set him off" (17). In a possibly self-conscious turn, Jake's narration inserts the "I believe" frame around his assessment of Cohn and presents this to the reader, all the while pointing to Cohn's own blind reliance on an obviously skewed source of reference. Rather than reading this simply as a "goof" on the reader, critical assessment benefits from reading this passage as instructive as much as informative. It informs the reader of Cohn's characterization as a naïvely romantic fool and reinforces Jake's cold pragmatism. Perhaps most importantly, it instructs the reader to cast his or her own critical eye on sources that exploit failures to recognize bullshit when they see it. Through the various illustrations and descriptions of Cohn at the outset of the novel, the Jake-character's "I" emerges through perpetual

relation and dependence on the despised character. Through the constant barrage of judgment and disparaging remarks, the “I” of the text establishes itself in conspicuous opposition to Cohn’s various identities (e.g. the Jew, the gullible reader, etc.). The issue becomes not a question of accuracy, but rather a model of perception by which the narrative is transmitted to the reader. As the novel progresses, Jake’s constructed “I” of the text continually returns to this schema when developing its narrative.

Simply put, Jake’s formulation of Cohn at the outset of *Sun Also Rises* reveals more about Jake’s narrative tendencies than Cohn’s actual character. To be sure, this technique is more than an exercise in the problems of an unreliable narrator. After highlighting the subjective framing surrounding much of Jake’s narrative characterization, the novel conspicuously presents itself and its characters as Jake’s version of those elements. Lest the reader invest blind faith in Jake’s account, like Cohn and his ostensive love of W.H. Hudson’s “The Purple Land,” the entirety of *Sun Also Rises* benefits from an awareness of this narrative construct. Psychoanalytic studies may pursue character development beyond the restrictions of Jake’s discourse; linguistic studies may pursue narrative construction without burden of the Jake-character’s contradictory nature in the text. These critical paths will be discussed later, but for now the focus remains on the ultimate construct of Jake’s narrative efforts—the presented identity of “I” that exists and interacts in the text.

If we are to consider Cohn, Brett, and the events of the novel as existing in the framework of Jake’s narration, we must then reconcile the existence of Jake’s own character within the text. As demonstrated, Jake’s manifested identity in the opening chapters of the novel comes through in the self-conscious observations featuring the “I”

qualifiers. As the “I” passages quietly pile up, the function of the narration moves past the point of general description and characterization and into the role of building Jake’s narrative identity. To borrow Jacques Lacan’s famous model, we might consider this as the “mirror stage,” or the point of self-recognition that leads to the establishment of an “I”-identity in which, in Jake’s case, the narrator “experiences in play the relation between movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment, and between this virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates” (75). In this sense, Jake’s utterance of “I” in the text serves as the projected narratorial construct of himself within the confines of his own narrative. The “I” builds its world, interacts with other characters, and unfolds a narrative, all in relation to the consumptive reader. In simpler terms, the “I” construct is the narrator-character of the novel.

Returning to Booth’s schema, his model importantly asserts that the term “Narrator” is usually taken to mean the ‘I’ of a work, but the ‘I’ is seldom if ever identical with the implied image of the artist” (73). While Booth’s observation is particularly apt for distancing the narrator of any prose or verse work from the work’s author, it is equally enlightening when applied to situations of self-conscious narration and issues of unreliability. In a recent study, Susan S. Lanser makes a concerted effort to explore the relationship between the “I” of an implied author and the enunciation of “I” by the textual narrator. Her conclusions on the status and oscillations of “attachment” and “detachment” in this relationship—and the “literature” that results in the gray area between—rely on the important observation that “every ‘I’ is ultimately the beholder’s ‘I,’ by which [she means] the ‘I’ that the reader constructs in the process of reading” (208). She resists Booth’s implied author concept in the essay, but it is this concept of reader-

based construction in which her argument finds theoretical, or at least rhetorical, basis. In Jake's instance, a critic may follow Booth and Lanser's line a single step further to sustain readings similar to Buckley's by reminding the reader of the possibility that a narrator may not be identical to the character he has created, resulting in a distance between the narrator-character "I" of the work and the originary narrative source. In other words, while the narrator is *usually* taken to mean the "I" of a work, a split similar to the author and narrator may exist between the narrator and narrator-character.

The preceding development of the "I" function in *Sun Also Rises* demonstrates the necessary synthesis of textual analysis and reader-based construction to create the appropriate climate for Jake's narrative. This particular synthesis engages ideas put forth by Ansgar F. Nünning who argues for the reconciliation of rhetorical and cognitive approaches in addressing unreliability within narrative. For Nünning, "the projection of an unreliable narrator does not hinge upon the reader's frame of reference or on conventions of reading alone, as cognitive approaches suggest." It remains essential to incorporate the rhetorical element, which insists that such a projection "presupposes the existence of a creative agent who furnishes the text and the narrator with a wide range of explicit signals and inference invitations in order to draw readers' attention to a narrator's unwitting self-exposure and unreliability" (104). The combination of theoretical approaches carries with it the necessary framework for Jake's narratological construction. As the narration of *Sun Also Rises* acknowledges and even directly addresses its readers in a plea for sincerity, the novel simultaneously drops "invitations" that allow the reader to infer otherwise. General critical analysis benefits significantly in the recognition and application of this framework when addressing issues of Jake's unreliability in relation to

a variety of critical pursuits. The essential consideration, of course, is the recognition of the implicit gap between the narrator and his narratorial construct; by establishing a process between person and persona, divergent theoretical approaches may follow each path.

Of course, even if the “I”-identity of the homodiegetic narrative is accounted for as the narrator-character of the novel, I have thus far said little about the originary source that produced the text. Looking closely at the summary of scholarship and theory included in the attempt to engage the complexity of Jake’s narration, it becomes apparent that there is a need to develop a concept that accounts for the originary source of such a character. In Lanser’s development of “attached” texts, she attributes their value and meaning as dependent “on the equation of the work’s presumptive author with the text’s primary “I” (208). Texts such as these, like autobiographies, generally engage the standard formulation by Philippe Lejeune: author = narrator = character. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the reading of detached texts expectedly abandon this model. Literature exists in the gray area between extremes; a designation Lanser dubs “*equivocal*—literally *equi-vocal*” texts. Her compelling contention is that equivocal texts—literature—“*rely for their meaning on complex and ambiguous relationships between the ‘I’ of the author and any textual voice*” (210). Certainly, complex and ambiguous is Hemingway’s Jake, but Lanser misses an important mediation between the two figures. Returning to Lejeune’s autobiographical compact, it requires only a slight adjustment to demonstrate the path of narrative: author → narrator → narrator-character.

In a novel like *Sun Also Rises* in which the presence of narrative mediation is so strong, the paramount concern must be in delineating the roles of narratological construction.

To expound on the formulation just put forth, the foundational model of originary expression is adapted from Jacques Derrida's description of "arche-writing" as a "'form of expression' linked by correlation to the *graphic* 'substance of expression.'" This "Writing before the Letter" that Derrida describes constitutes "not only the pattern uniting form to all substance, graphic or otherwise, but the movement of the *sign-function* linking a content to an expression" (60). Certainly, the mediation between author and narrator-character that I propose mirrors this movement from "form" to "substance" with the presence of an *arche-narrator* from which the narrative text is constructed. If the "I" of the novel represents the resulting substance of expression, an *arche-narrator* fills the productive role on which the substance depends. Just as the presence of a gap remains an important step in delineating the roles of narratological construction, Derrida affirms a similar breach in the sense that "arche-writing . . . cannot, as the condition of all linguistic systems, form a part of the linguistic system itself and be situated as an object in its field" (60). Similarly, it is critically crucial to separate the "I" of the text and the *arche-narrator* which produces the construct because the *arche-narrator* cannot simultaneously create and occupy the same narrative space. If we wish to augment Lacan, the "I" of the novel truly is a separate entity of self-recognition created to interact with the environment of Jake's narrative, and thus, the *arche-narrator* exists as the originary source from which the narratological construction comes. Returning to our simple formula, I specify:

(implied) author → *arche-narrator* → narrator-character.

In summary, Jake's unreliable status as narrator in *Sun Also Rises* suits Lanser's idea of "equivocal" literature and the ambiguous narrative relationships therein. But it is not until the formulation of an *arche-narrator* that the reader can account for the origin of

“I” as the “voice *within* the text” (Lanser 211) that is neither detached from nor attached to the author. In the distribution of narratological roles, it becomes necessary to respect the implicit gap existing between the “substance of expression” in the novel and the form that predicates such a substance. Adapting Derrida’s model, the origin of expression cannot occupy the same environment it produces, and therefore the “I” of Jake’s narrative, with its direct reader engagement and self-conscious subjectivity, must be separated from the origin of narration. This origin, certainly not Hemingway, is Jake as *arche-narrator*. When readers and critics respect this gap between Jake’s roles in the construction of his narrative, issues of unreliability in character development or the “out of focus” narrative that seems to appear can be correctly identified as consciously rendered traits of the *arche-narrator*’s constructed narrative. Thus, Booth’s original formulation of reliability from a narrator-character acting “in accordance [or not] with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author’s norms)” (158) is revised to one acting (or not) in accordance with the *arche-narrator* producing the homodiegetic narrative. It is only after such a revision can we unburden ourselves from the needless liability of “reading around” narrative construction and, instead, correctly assess traits of the construction as “explicit signals and inference invitations” which can serve as gateways to readings beyond the surface of the novel.

*Jake’s World, Jake’s Struggle: Theoretical Application*

As demonstrated earlier, from the outset of *Sun Also Rises*, Jake’s narration calls attention to itself as a subjectively skewed lens through which the reader views his world. When we pay attention to the narratological complexities at work in *Sun Also Rises*, the linguistic construction of the novel appears not to be an attempt at a documentary account

of Jake's drunken exploits and tumultuous relationships, but rather an artistic endeavor consumed with the using language as a means of constructing, reconstructing, and ultimately distancing oneself from a perilous environment. Time and again, Jake's narration reveals itself as an actively influential force at work in the novel constantly *prescribing* the world of the narrative, shaping and shifting perspectives, and using the constructed "I"-identity to mediate events in the novel with the implied psychology of the *arche-narrator*.

To begin with an exaggerated example, Jake demonstrates the constructive power of language when he joins his friends' table at a restaurant in Paris. At Jake's side is Georgette, an escort of sorts, whom he picked up only minutes earlier. When Jake introduces Georgette to his friends, he boldly proclaims a humorous pretense: "I wish to present my fiancée, Mademoiselle Georgette Leblanc." One of the women in attendance quickly asks if Georgette is related to a famous singer of the same name. Georgette declines, says that her name is actually Hobin, and the following exchange occurs:

"But Mr. Barnes introduced you as Mademoiselle Georgette Leblanc. Surely he did," insisted Mrs. Braddocks, who in the excitement of talking French was liable to have no idea what she was saying.

"He's a fool," Georgette said.

Oh, it was a joke, then," Mrs. Braddocks said.

"Yes," said Georgette. "To laugh at."

"Did you hear that, Henry?" Mrs. Braddocks called down the table to Braddocks. "Mr. Barnes introduced his fiancée as Mademoiselle Leblanc, and her name is actually Hobin." (26)

In this early episode, Jake does more than simply play a joke on his friends, and within this example he also demonstrates much more than an unreliable narrator muddling the facts in transmitting them to his audience. Here, Jake exemplifies the constructive power of language in creating an identity for Georgette suitable to his purposes. Even when Georgette attempts to set the record straight, she is unable to free herself from Jake's construct in relation to the audience of Mrs. Braddocks. Mrs. Braddocks, although aware of the name change, is still under the assumption that Georgette is Jake's fiancée.

The episode is significant in that it mirrors Jake's general narrative technique of identity creation in relation to an audience or reader. Within the novel, Jake's narrator-character is able to apply this technique to situations with other characters of the novel. Considering the novel as a whole, Jake's *arche-narrator* is able to apply this technique in relation to readers of his narrative. He is not unreliable in the sense of misconstruing facts or abandoning the norms of the implied author; rather, he is quite reliable in the sense that the "I" construct of his narrative follows the intentions of his originary identity. The "I" of the text suits the *arche-narrator*'s purposes, whether that is to create, recreate, or skew perspectives in relation to the reader. I will address the significance of this observation later.

First, it is important to understand how the *arche-narrator* employs such a technique. Jake's tactic is subtle yet powerful. In Jake's first meaningful exchange with Brett, the dialogue holds the key. Awkwardly rehashing emotions and an old flame, Jake's narration bluntly puts forth:

"It's funny," I said. "It's very funny. And it's a lot of fun, too, to be in love."

“Do you think so?” her eyes looked flat again.

“I don’t mean fun that way. In a way it’s an enjoyable feeling.”

“No,” she said. “I think it’s hell on earth.”

“It’s good to see each other.”

“No. I don’t think it is.” (35)

The significance of the exchange rests, not in the oppositional sentiments expressed by each character, but by the way they articulate their understanding. Jake’s character, in the effort to shape and influence the reality he presents to Brett, employs the objective “is” verb in each assertion of his belief. Brett, on the contrary, uses “think,” explicitly revealing the subjectivity of her stance. The narrative technique we can glean from this dialogue is the interchangeable nature of a subjective “think” and objective “to be” in Jake’s story. While Hemingway’s pragmatic prose suggests the documentary approach, this façade quickly crumbles in light of an *arche-narrator* concerned with shaping the reality he presents. Even simple objects of the “to be” verb are not free from the subjective lens of Jake’s narrative construct, and yet they can tell us much about both Jake and the object to which he refers.

Partway through Book I of *Sun Also Rises*, Jake’s narration suddenly confesses, “Somehow I feel I have not shown Robert Cohn clearly” (52). This simple statement is perhaps one of the most explicit examples of “inference invitation” in the novel, one that encourages the examination of a sentence that embodies the narrative techniques described above. First, the sentence reveals a narrative source that is concerned with “showing” a person in the story. From this we can easily see an instance of a character in Jake’s story as, not necessarily a person, but a presented identity shaped by Jake’s

linguistic expression. Cohn is no different than Georgette “Leblanc” just as the reader is no different than Jake’s friends in the earlier episode, and this is the closest the reader gets to an admission of subjectivity from the narrator. Second, the narrative source admits concern for the “clarity” of the picture he renders. To be sure, the narration makes no attempt to establish the “truth” or transmit “accuracy.” Instead, the only concern is for the clarity of its own subjective presentation. The lens of the narration remains in Jake’s possession and under his influence; he only wishes his lens to remain clean. Third, the narrator’s admission to “show” Cohn establishes the external audience upon which the previous two points depend. In regards to “showing” and “showing clearly,” the issue simply begs the question, “To whom is Cohn being shown?” Of course, it is the reader of the novel.

While these three points are relatively easy to come by when the passage is interrogated with the correct set of questions, the largest inference remains to be made. For such a sentence to exist in the text, for a narrator to maintain the ability to utter such a sentiment to a reading audience, an originary source must exist external to the narrative construct. As *arche-narrator*, Jake is able to recognize his narrative construct at work, reflect on it from a removed perspective, and then facilitate the production of his story through the “I” of the text to the reader. This is the gap at work. The narrator-character of the novel is manifested as a self-conscious storyteller; however, it is important to remember that this manifestation is only a projection of an originary expressive form. The storyteller simply cannot exist in the same framework as his narrative.

Further evidence of this narrative gap can be seen in the instance in which, instead of construing or neglecting to report certain details, Jake’s narration actually spills over

the limits of his construct. After the group arrives in Spain, Jake shares a frustrating exchange with Cohn on the subject of Brett. Cohn fears that Brett and Michael expected to meet him in San Sebastian because he wrote to Brett suggesting that very idea. In a moment of heated exclamation, the narration reads, ““Why in the hell didn’t you stay there and meet them then,?’ I started to say, but I stopped. I thought that idea would come to him by itself, but I do not believe it ever did” (106). The striking element of this example is, of course, that the quotation presented to the reader is not actually present in the action of the novel. Jake’s narration claims that he “started to say, but [he] stopped,” signifying an explicit breach between the narratological construct of “I” in the text and Jake’s narrative creativity. The breach is demonstrated through the multiple roles acting independently within the same instance. First, the *arche-narrator* as the origin of the expression renders the full thought in the construct of the narrative as this information is transmitted to the reader. Second, the narrator-character stops short in his exclamation to Cohn, withholding that same information from a fellow character in the context of the novel. The “I” of the text silences himself to others, while the *arche-narrator* projecting the “I” speaks to the reader. For this particular phenomenon to function in the novel, a narrative gap is necessary for each role to operate independently.

It is important to note that the presence of such a gap in the novel is not merely a gimmick of Jake’s subtle narration but instead a method of interaction with significant thematic implications. After the fiesta in Pamplona begins and the Paris group sees Pedro Romero in the bullfighting ring, Jake shares a quick meeting with Romero to discuss Romero’s skill. Jake seems initially struck at the confidence of the young man even when discussing poor performances. On one of Romero’s remarks, Jake observes, “He was not

at all embarrassed. He talked of his work as something altogether apart from himself. There was nothing conceited or braggartly about him” (178). In a moment of admiration, Jake recognizes a similar ability to distance oneself from his “work”—to stand outside of a situation and reflect on the context of one’s own identity. In this example of Jake’s recognition of gap at work in another character, he appears to place value in the purifying effects of Romero’s gap on his role as a bullfighter. By distancing himself from his work in the bullfighting ring, Romero is able to reflect, comment, and assess his position in his construct of the ring.

In the end, Hemingway’s originally problematic style in *Sun Also Rises* becomes an effective gateway toward greater theoretical perspective only after traditional formulations of narrative construction and reliability are appropriately reconsidered. Deceptively dense, the narratological construction of *Sun Also Rises* that has beleaguered reviewers and critics for decades benefits from such a reconsideration by establishing a new foundation from which to read and understand the Hemingway corpus and homodiegetic narratives in general. With the recognition of narrative gap and the placement of a functional *arche-narrator* as the mediating step between the implied author and constructed narrator-character of the text, readers and critics are able to navigate the hazardous web of Jake’s world while reconciling the discrepancy between manifestations in the text and the means of narrative transmission from which they come. Through this appreciation of style and content, narrator and narrative, Hemingway studies move forward in a contemporary theoretical climate, and Jake, perhaps, becomes a little less misunderstood.

Chapter Two: Proximity and Distance as Device in *A Farewell to Arms**Critical Context*

Narrator Frederic Henry of *A Farewell to Arms* represents a significant departure from Ernest Hemingway's Jake Barnes, primarily, because Frederic is not a writer. In contrast to journalist Jake's ability to write, reflect, and shape his narrative, Frederic appears bound by his status as a simple ambulance driver in the Italian army, and he often resorts to extended passages of pragmatic description. The novel's scope is narrow and the colors are drab, and Frederic's focus is relentless. However, as most critics agree, Frederic's particularly terse narration maintains—as well as underscores—Hemingway's masterful portrayal of a deeply conflicted and wounded hero struggling to make sense of the madness around him. Subsequently, contemporary readings of *A Farewell to Arms* have focused on this mastery of narration, establishing the novel “as a work of consummate writing craft, perhaps more profoundly *about* language and style themselves than about war and love” (Lewis 95). Ironically, Hemingway's linguistic restraint in presenting Frederic and his story has brought the critical focus sharply upon the language of the novel.

In examining Hemingway's use of language in *A Farewell to Arms*, critics often attempt to apply metaphorical concepts to Frederic's narration. Taking a cue from the novel's primarily descriptive text, Randall S. Wilhelm likens its rhetorical design to still-life portraiture, particularly in the effort to engage objects of a scene as thematic propulsion and a distancing “strategy for revealing hidden desires, motivations, and anxiety” (66). Mary Prescott frames her reading of the novel with the idea of personal recollection, depicting Frederic's story as a struggle to shape his consciousness by

“formulating associations based upon his memories” (42). Trevor Dodman carries this concept a step further and presents the novel as, not only a memory, but a shell-shocked “trauma narrative” preoccupied with remembering and retelling Frederic’s traumatic past as a means of coping (249).

Importantly, studies such as these—representative of the varying interpretive models available for approaching the novel—distinguish their methods by focusing on respective schemas that account for the novel’s construction. In other words, they attempt to fit Frederic’s narrative into a model that contextualizes the novel into a broader concept; the novel becomes simply an instance of such a model, an occurrence within a long tradition. Wilhelm, for instance, argues artistic technique and motivation when addressing the stylistics of the novel, while Prescott and Dodman attribute these same stylistics as literary depictions of psychological phenomena. The varying focuses of these studies often intersect, but, as a result of their imposed models of interpretations, their conclusions remain divisive. Subsequently, the application of any framework to view the narration of *A Farewell to Arms* quickly becomes reductive. As a work characteristically defined as an exemplar of pragmatic description, *A Farewell to Arms* resists metaphorical construction altogether by featuring a narrator who “clearly prefers the realm of concrete particulars to that of abstract universals” (Owens-Murphy 91). From a narratological perspective, Frederic’s story of description operates best as a localized production, and likewise, narrative criticism should begin with the language of the narrator and move only as far as generating concepts to explain the narratorial phenomena that Hemingway creates.

This study aims to reconcile the observations of current and traditional literary criticism of *A Farewell to Arms* with a more moderate narratological approach. James Phelan has laid much of the groundwork for this type of reading by commenting on “Distance, Voice, and Temporal Respective in Frederic Henry’s Narration.”<sup>1</sup> According to Phelan, the complexity of the narrative, and the very power of the novel, can be explored by tracing the mediated distance between Hemingway’s pen and Frederic’s voice, particularly in relation to the authorial norm of *A Farewell to Arms* that regards war and nature as highly destructive (57). Phelan recognizes that the distance and relationship between author and narrator “is always operating in our interpretation of a first-person narrator’s statements” (54). At the end of his essay, Phelan leaves the narratological issues of the novel open to further study, and it is in this capacity that my reading moves forward. Phelan’s demonstration of the important distance between Hemingway and Frederic once again mirrors the premise of an implicit gap between, not author and narrator, but originary narrator and the narrator-character in the text as established in the first chapter of this thesis. It is my goal to implement a similar reading strategy for Frederic and *A Farewell to Arms* in the concurrent effort to both demonstrate a consistent viability of the theoretical model across two considerably different Hemingway narratives as well as explore new perspectives from which to read Frederic’s narration and understand its integral thematic and structural significance to one of Hemingway’s best works.

As I indicated earlier, the critical approach for a considerable majority of *A Farewell To Arms* scholarship operates on the basis of constructing rather limiting

---

<sup>1</sup> All subsequent citations to Phelan in this chapter refer specifically to this essay.

<sup>2</sup> See also Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 158-159; Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 158.

metaphorical analogies for Frederic's narration. However, despite their limiting nature, elements of the reading appear to touch upon a greater narratorial concept at work, and some studies even express a dependence on such a concept. In Wilhelm's work with still life in Frederic's narration, the study is premised by "Henry's divided nature regarding the events in the novel, seeing him as an 'untrustworthy' narrator largely unaware of the implications of the story he is constructing." By establishing Frederic as an "unaware narrator," Wilhelm reads the narration of *A Farewell to Arms* as a window to Frederic's subconscious identity and an "epic confession of anxiety and guilt" (66). Perhaps unrealized by Wilhelm, implicit in his reading is the delineation between Frederic as conscious identity and the separate existence of himself—or rather his subconscious narration—as a character in the novel or "story he is constructing."

Prescott is decidedly more explicit in her development of Frederic's dual roles in the construction and resulting construct of the novel. In creating her model of Frederic's narration as an operational memory, Prescott breaks down the traditional boundaries between past and present and argues that the two "meld" in Frederic's mind. In other words, the traumatic events of Frederic's past are not simply resurrected in his mind but created anew and relived as original and authentic experiences through the phenomenon of memory and the modern view of a fluid human consciousness. By creating a "now" presence for the novel's action in the mind of its narrator, the narrator ultimately "shapes his present, his consciousness, his very 'I'" (42). Prescott and Wilhelm may disagree on the level of Frederic's *awareness* of influencing his own story, but apart from this issue the two critics parallel a similar regard for the novel as a feature of the narrator's mind. Accordingly, each demonstrates an identical reliance on a gap between the narrator of the

novel—the mind as creator—and Frederic’s “I,” the ambulance driver in the text and, thus, the narrator’s mind. Likewise, Dodman’s reading essentially reiterates Prescott’s argument with a new emphasis that “the narrative consciousness in charge of these memories is one that has been traumatized.” The implications of this range from addressing underlying motivations in Frederic’s narrative to, importantly, a “disarticulation of the self” resulting from trauma that creates “holes in [Frederic’s] existence,” which he must confront in order to reconstruct a shattered identity through memory (251).

It is my contention that the critical consensus about the narration of *A Farewell to Arms* is indicative of an underlying concept that unifies the novel’s thematic significance with the manner in which it is presented to the reader. In other words, while the critical focus of the novel has been primarily on metaphorically characterizing its narrative and linguistic capacities, it would perhaps be more beneficial to establish a base understanding of the separate narratorial roles operating in Hemingway’s work and, from this base, expand thematic commentary into otherwise neglected regions of significance. By focusing on Frederic’s multiple narrative roles and the distances negotiated between them, I believe that new insights can be gained into the complexity of Hemingway’s accomplishment.

#### *Closing the Gap in Frederic’s Narration*

One common view of Frederic’s role as the novel’s narrator is that he functions as an “unselfconscious but faithful recorder” of his experiences (Phelan 63). In opposition to Hemingway’s earlier Jake Barnes narrator, Frederic must be regarded as an entity that is incapable of consciously influencing or shaping the narrative that unfolds in the text.

Certainly, on the surface this concurs with Frederic's general character disposition—he is neither a writer nor a great thinker; he is an ambulance driver in the Italian army. In other words, unlike the previous depiction of Jake Barnes *using* Hemingway's pragmatic prose to create the necessary façades and narrative slants required to tell his own story, Frederic's story is reported coldly, simply, and in earnest. On the spectrum of narratorial distance between originary source and textual manifestation, Frederic's *arche-narrator* maintains a close proximity to his "I" of the text. As Prescott and Dodman maintain, the novel unfolds in the narrator's mind, and from this we can infer an authentic, self-reflexive element in the narrative as opposed to a construct penned for the presentation to a reading public. Simply put, Frederic's narrator-character remains close to its source because the actual narrative production operates in an identical way.

The immediate complication of a novel unfolding in a narrator's memory or mind, of course, is the lack of explicit reflection made for the reader. While the recorded events and dialogue may or may not have implicit meaning for the narrator himself, the significance of these elements are left to the inference of the reader in Hemingway's delicate balance of communication. This idea is summarized nicely by Phelan who says, despite such an unreflective narrator, "Hemingway has communicated more to us than Frederic is aware of in two main ways: by asking us to see meanings in Frederic's accounts that Frederic himself is not aware of, and by using the dialogue of other characters to offer perspectives whose significance Frederic does not fathom" (63). This important reading strategy will be implemented in our examination of Frederic's narratorial distance and the significance therein.

In addition to Phelan's point, Richard A. Lanham reveals a syntactical device at work in the narration of *A Farewell to Arms* that similarly communicates significant meaning despite an unreflective narrator. Lanham observes that the bulk of Frederic's narration lacks an illustration of causal relationships, as in how the passage "We crossed the river and I saw that it was running high. It had been raining" (*AFTA* 163), lacks an obvious "because" to demonstrate causality between the rain and the river (Lanham 30). For Lanham, instances like these in *A Farewell to Arms* reveal a syntactic democracy called *parataxis*, in which hierarchic or causal relationships among words and concepts are left for the reader to assemble (29). Because the examples pile up in such an obvious pattern, Lanham argues that "the syntax has become allegorical, has come to be *about* connection, *about* a refusal to subordinate. The narrator here registers things passively, as they impinge upon his consciousness. He refuses, the syntax suggests, to make complex, unequal connections, to relate, to explain X in terms of Y" (30). Lanham's summation surely aligns with the contemporary regard for Frederic's narration, especially at the most basic premise that the language of the novel, in addition to other elements, appears to convey meaning otherwise displaced by an unreflective, "unselfconscious" narrator.

Frederic's "unselfconsciousness" as a narrator is evident from the first lines of the novel. Unlike Jake Barnes's conspicuous "I" framing demonstrated in the previous chapter, Frederic initially refuses to grant himself autonomy in his own story. In the brief opening chapter of *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederic's identity is subsumed into a collective "we," ostensibly representative of his ambulance unit in the Italian army. "In the late summer of that year," the novel opens, "we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains" (3). The presentation of a collective

consciousness continues with instances of “we heard” (3), “we could look” (4), and “we crossed” (5). An “I” does not appear until the second chapter. Furthermore, the narrator’s identity is not revealed until Chapter V, and his full name is withheld until Chapter XIII. Ben Stoltzfus argues that this deferment of identity serves Hemingway’s strategy to cause a direct questioning of identity among readers as well as reinforcing the notion that Frederic is unsure of his own identity (109-110). On some level, these observations may have merit for a broad psychoanalysis of Frederic or an informed guess at Hemingway’s rhetorical strategy. However, in terms of the novel’s narrative construction, this deferment of identity most readily coincides with Frederic’s proximity to the narrative production in his mind. In other words, Frederic’s “unselfconsciousness” in producing a narrative does not immediately necessitate an autonomous identity within the text. The story is not produced with a reader in mind; it is instead a self-reflexive exercise that unfolds and adapts alongside Frederic. Because Frederic remains so close to his narrative, the two often appear as one.

A careful reader is able to recognize these limits of Frederic’s narration early in the novel. Similar to the case of Jake Barnes’s narration in *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway crafts the opening chapters of *A Farewell to Arms* as a model of conditioning for his readers to understand the parameters of the narratological construction. As Frederic returns from a sightseeing trip in Chapter III, his friend Rinaldi quizzes him on his adventures:

“You’re dirty,” [Rinaldi] said. “You ought to wash. Where did you go and what did you do? Tell me everything at once.”

“I went everywhere. Milan, Florence, Rome, Naples, Villa San Giovanni, Messina, Taormina—”

“You talk like a time-table. Did you have any beautiful adventures?”

“Yes.”

“Where?”

“Milano, Firenze, Roma, Napoli—” (11)

In this early exchange of dialogue, Frederic’s limitations as a storyteller are quickly and obviously revealed. Rinaldi asks repeatedly for significant, sensuous details of Frederick’s “beautiful adventures” but instead he receives a meager report of locations, an experience he compares with listening to a “time-table.” As Phelan observes, Hemingway often manages the communication of his themes through the dialogue of other characters (63). In this instance, however, it is not thematic commentary on the nature of love or war that is being expressed. Instead, Frederic’s limitations as a narrator—and thus the limits of his narration in the novel—are communicated to the reader through Rinaldi’s dialogue. To be sure, if Frederic’s inability for descriptive and reflective narration were not understood through inference during the first chapters of the novel, Hemingway articulates this concept explicitly through dialogue.

The novel’s brief third chapter contains one more characterizing element of the story’s narrator. While summarizing a conversation he had with the priest over dinner, Frederic shares his regret of choosing a vacation filled with drunken exploits in cities instead of the cold, serene quiet of rural Abruzzi. At one point in the summary, Frederic stumbles in his communicative capacity and admits his incompetence: “I tried to tell about the night and the difference between the night and the day and how the night was

better unless the day was very clean and cold and I could not tell it; as I cannot tell it now. But if you have had it you know” (13). This brief aside from Frederic reveals two simple ideas, each with extensive implications for the narratological construction of the novel.

First, Frederic clarifies the nature of his capacity as a storyteller by revealing that, in some cases, he is simply unable to communicate a concept or feeling to another person. This illustration with the priest, with “I could not tell it,” refines the narratological characterization of Rinaldi’s dialogue by suggesting that Frederic’s inarticulate nature is not an instance of voluntarily withheld expression, but instead a handicap of a Frederic’s character. The concept disrupts traditional typing of “unreliable narrators”—as demonstrated in the previous chapter<sup>2</sup>—by placing Frederic’s narration on the plane of “inability” as opposed to “unreliability.” In sharp contrast with Jake Barnes’s rhetorically powerful narration, filled with deliberately misleading remarks or contradictory passages, Frederic finds himself ill equipped to manage a linguistic narrative, and at times he must abstain from expression altogether. Not only is Frederic incapable of manipulating his narrative, he is occasionally incapable of simply producing his story.

Second, in this passage Frederic opens a window to his awareness of communicating a narrative. In a rare and brief address to the reader, Frederic admits he “cannot tell it now. But if you have had it you know” (13). The utterances of “now” and “you” mark a dramatic and severe departure in Frederic’s proximity to his own narrative experience. By simply acknowledging the act of relating his story to a readership independent of himself, Frederic betrays the cerebral “memory experience” model submitted by Prescott and Wilhelm. Here, despite his limitations, Frederic *is* a storyteller

---

<sup>2</sup> See also Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 158-159; Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 158.

and not merely processing a traumatic past through memory. This “slip” of consciousness in an otherwise “unselfconscious” narrator requires a radical reconsideration the novel’s construction. In some passages, Frederic appears to uphold the memory model, such as the illustration of the non-autonomous identity featured in the first chapter of the novel. However, only a few pages later, Frederic demonstrates awareness of his role as a narrator and explicitly addresses a separate identity. Recognizing this complex situation quickly reveals the inadequacy of the metaphorical models proposed by traditional scholarship for *A Farewell to Arms*. Just as Hemingway mediates the communication of the novel’s central ideas over several planes, Frederic’s narration appears to demonstrate a similar complexity.

To reconcile the complex narratological construction of *A Farewell to Arms* with contemporary critical readings, it would appear most appropriate to implement a theoretical framework, rather than a metaphorical comparison, capable of accommodating Frederic’s inconstant narration. In other words, there simply may not be a convenient, non-literary comparison available to characterize the innovation of the novel—we must look to the text, the language of the novel. Within the first few chapters of the novel, Hemingway clearly defines the parameters, limitations, and inconsistencies of his embattled narrator. Considering the inherent, subtle fluctuation of the communication, Frederic’s narration appears to oscillate on a spectrum of distance between narrative origin and the resulting narrative construct. For example, at times when Frederic appears relinquish his narrative capacities to the point of lacking an autonomous identity in the novel, Frederic has closed the gap between his narrative construct and his role as the originary source of narration. In situations like these, like the opening

descriptive sequence of the first chapter, Frederic's identity appears to have been absorbed by the narrative itself. Importantly, in this role as an *arche-narrator*, Frederic is prohibited from occupying the same system as his narrative, maintaining an agreement with the conceptual model adapted from Jacques Derrida and *arche-writing* (60). However, while respecting this delineation, Frederic situates the position of his originary narration in such close proximity to the resulting narrative that the two are often indistinguishable from each other—a situation apparently resulting in a “memory” reading of his story.

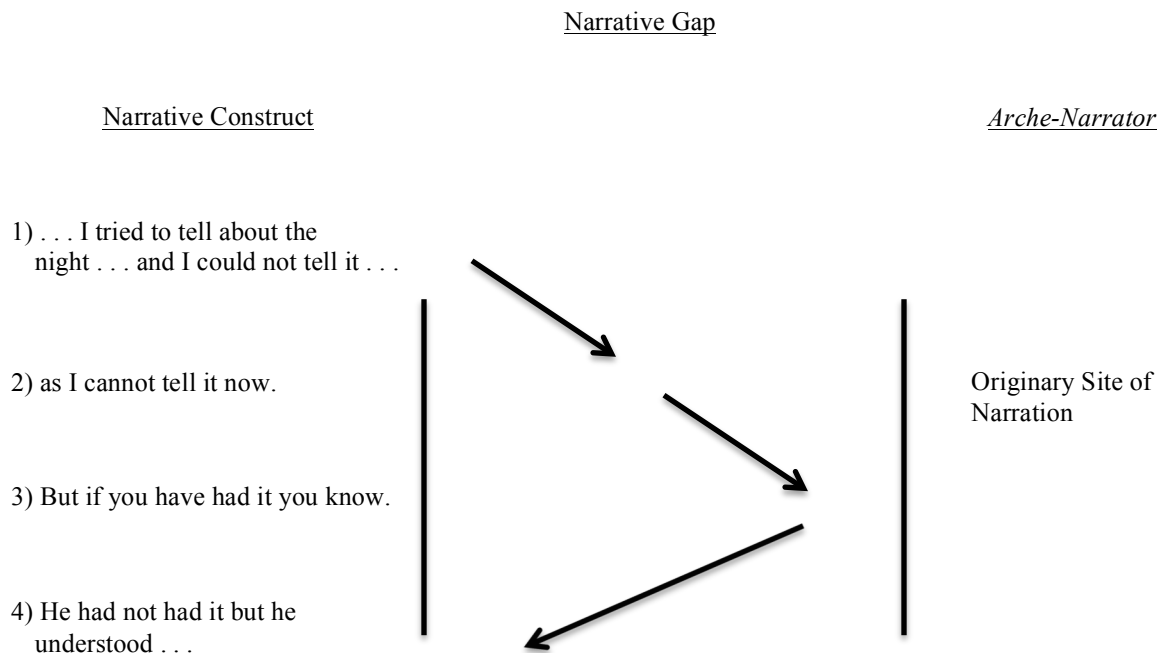
At other times, however, Frederic establishes a considerable distance between the source of narration and the resulting construct, like in his moment of address to the both the story being told as well as an independent identity in the line, “But if you have had it you know” (13). To be sure, there are several ways one could interpret this passage, and exploring each possibility is valuable for the implications they have on reading the remainder of the text. In one reading, “you” may refer to the priest to whom Frederic is speaking in the scene. However, within the larger context of the novel, the “you” may have an alternate referent. At various points in the novel, Frederic essentially relinquishes his authority as an officiating narrator and gives his narration over to reported dialogue, as in the extended scene with a British Major in Chapter XXI: “Was I on somebody's staff? No. He was. It was all balls . . . He said it was all balls. They thought only in divisions and man-power . . . They were all cooked . . . Did he think they would attack this fall? Of course they would. The Italians were cooked” (134), and the passage continues in this manner. The passage is significant as a recurring motif of Frederic's narration not simply because it slips into reporting conversation via indirect discourse in

which Frederic's narration assumes the diction of another character, but because of the manner in which the narration maintains a third-person address to refer to "he," the British Major. This rather exemplary illustration of indirect discourse in *A Farewell to Arms* is consistent with the rest novel in that it maintains an implied third-person attribution to another character. The scene with the priest, however, disrupts this consistency with a startling "you." Because the second-person address is inconsistent with other similar passages in the novel, it seems to be, at least, suggestive of an address to the reader—an idea I will address in the upcoming paragraphs.

Another interpretation might favor Frederic's preference for quickly and succinctly contextualizing his experiences, as in his reflection, "One had so many friends in the war" (156). Compared to the "you" passage with priest, it is possible that Frederic is haphazardly substituting "you" for "one" as he attempts to abstract some kind of universal point from his conversation. One humorous example of this technique comes with the inept doctors who arrive to discuss Frederic's injury and Frederic remarks on their incompetence: "A doctor who cannot take out your appendix properly will recommend you to a doctor who will be unable to remove your tonsils with success. These were three such doctors" (95). In this example, "you" is used by Frederic to create an illustrative example of his point; he is not referring to anyone in particular. However, the "you" of the scene with the priest does not remain consistent with this usage or the rest of the narration that generally abstains from second-person address except in directly reported dialogue. In another scenario, Frederic uses the second-person pronoun while he makes a similar contextualization as he observes the infamous rain: "It rained all night. You knew it rained down that rained. Look at it" (197). The difference between this

passage and the scene with the priest is the monologic versus dialogic structure. “You knew it rained” is wrapped in the middle of a stream-of-consciousness, free association monologue existing, ostensibly, in Frederic’s mind. “You,” in this passage, most readily refers to Frederic himself because of its preceding imperative, “Look at it.” The narrator, in this scenario, is talking to himself.

By most critics’ interpretive strategies, whether Frederic is reporting his dialogue via indirect discourse, making some fleeting contextualization of his experience, or if he is, in fact, directly addressing the reader as “you” remains uncertain. However, if we consider a spectrum of narratorial distance in mapping the sequence of Frederic’s narration, a traceable fluctuation is made apparent. Consider the following diagram with explanation:



In the first sequence, Frederic is reporting the scene as if he were a part of it, and thus in close proximity to the narrative: “I tried to tell [the priest] about the night and difference

between the night and the day and how the night was better unless the day was very clean and cold and I could not tell it.” This first sequence is traditional narration. Then, in the second sequence, Frederic qualifies his inability to “tell it” by differentiating the original, authentic experience with the priest from the current time of his relating the scene in the narration of the novel: “as I cannot tell it now.” This differentiation between the time and place of the scene and the act of expressing the narrative is indicative of Frederic’s movement away from the primacy of his narrative construct and towards the locus of production, which is the role of the *arche-narrator*. As his narrator-character moves away from the construct, Frederic’s narration gains the necessary perspective to reflect, comment, and address the communicative process. The implicit gap that arises from this movement is the underlying phenomenon that enables readers to make distinctions between the different narrative sites.

Subsequently, it is Frederic’s remark, “now,” in the second sequence that casts the third sequence’s antecedent to “you” into doubt. It is my contention that, by tracing the movement of Frederic’s narration across a schema of narratological distance, this new reading strongly suggests a direct address to the reader. To support this assertion, one might consider that the identity of the “you” is implicitly carried in the syntactical momentum represented in the “But” conjunction at the start of the third sequence, which connects the entire clause to the previous sentence. In terms of content, the syntactical connection is not terribly enlightening, but considering the *site of narration* based on narrative distance reveals a surprisingly clear link between the narrator’s second-person address and the “now”-ness of his previous sentiment. The “you” is carried away from the scene with the priest by a narrator distancing himself from the action of the novel he

is creating. By placing “you” in the same time frame as the act of communicating his story, the second-person address most readily refers to whom he is speaking, e.g. the reader. Finally, Frederic’s narration returns to the action of the novel when he once again addresses the priest as “he” and continues in the same fashion of traditional narration as before. To summarize this complex narratological move by Hemingway: Frederic first establishes the scene of his narrative; he then differentiates time-space locales between the action of the novel and his current communication; following this differentiation, he uncharacteristically employs second-person address, which, through mapping narratological distance across the sequence of narration, most readily refers to the reader, drawing the narrator away from the action of his text.

The first scene with the priest is the most extreme example of Frederic’s fluctuating narration, but it is also of paramount significance in Hemingway’s characterization of his narrator in the opening pages of *A Farewell to Arms*. Through the dialogue of other characters, the subsumed identity of Frederic into pragmatic description and a collective “we,” and the oscillating narratological distance that Frederic demonstrates between his communicative and character roles in the novel, Hemingway subtly yet powerfully illustrates both the nature of Frederic Henry and the communicative complexity of the novel as a whole.

*But Not Too Close: Frederic’s Distance as Device*

The previously illustrated examples of oscillating narratological distance in *A Farewell to Arms* mark dramatic shifts from the majority of a narration that features Frederic as an “unselfconscious but faithful recorder” of his experiences (Phelan 63). To this point, I have discussed the nature of Frederic’s narrative role and illustrated

deviations from this norm in several instances of Frederic distancing himself from the narrative construct. What remains to be studied is the significance of this narrative effect in relation to the complex communicative scheme created throughout novel. In one sense, instances of increased distance in Frederic's narration call attention to the artifice of the novel and potentially usurp the narrative's authenticity as an occurring event instead of a constructed text. However, this attention to the novel's artificiality is only problematic if we approach the text from a narrow psychoanalytic view and attempt to read Frederic's narration as a kind of "memory confession" of sorts. From a narrative perspective, these deviations from Frederic's normal mode of narration can be incorporated into a strategy of the author to emphasize important moments character enlightenment or thematic insight for the reader. In other words, by highlighting instances of narrative gap in the novel and tracing their use and evolution in the text, once problematic passages of narration become gateways of insight into Frederic's character, meanings of the novel, and Hemingway's masterful management of multiple narrative planes.

One technique of narrative distance in *A Farewell to Arms* includes the same qualitative "I" framing that was abundant in the opening of *The Sun Also Rises*. Although rare, Frederic's narration occasionally uses this technique to economize a passage of time or reflect a particular attitude. At the opening of Chapter XVIII, Frederic uses this framing device to portray a summer with Catherine: "We had a lovely time that summer. When I could go out we rode in a carriage in the park. I remember the carriage, the horse going slowly, and up ahead the back of the driver with his varnished high hat, and Catherine Barkley sitting beside me" (112). Like with Jake Barnes's narration, the "I remember" frame calls immediate attention to the subjectivity and inherent artificiality of

the scene being presented. Instead of reporting an authentic event, Frederic presents a memory. In this particular passage, the effect of the framing device casts a nostalgic atmosphere on the scene, sacrificing realism in order to create an impressionistic exemplar of a day in Frederic's summer with Catherine. This idea is confirmed at the opening of the following chapter, which says, "The summer went that way. I do not remember much about the days, except that they were hot and that there were many victories in the papers" (117). In this example of Frederic's narration, narrative distance is used to convey an understanding of emotional growth and attachment between the lovers to the reader. As Frederic pulls away from the narrative construct and frames his narration with qualifiers, the subsequent description becomes a type or representation of a summer day, which apparently suits Frederic's narrative goal in expressing a particular sentiment about his relationship with Catherine. Importantly, it is narrative gap that enables the creation and communication of this idea.

Another technique of narrative distance in the novel includes Frederic's brief moments of reflection in an otherwise non-reflective narration. In fact, many of Hemingway's most memorable quotations in *A Farewell to Arms* come through Frederic's brief, but powerful reflective passages. I will examine three of these passages. The first of such passages appears just before the massive retreat of the Italian front. Frederic's friend in the ambulance unit, Gino, appeals to patriotism and says that the Italian army's summer effort "cannot have been done in vain" (184). Frederic responds immediately, but instead of addressing Gino, he responds to the reader:

I did not say anything. I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain . . . I had seen nothing

sacred and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity . . . Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the number of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates. (184-185)

The effect of narrative distance enables Frederic's narration to deliver such a powerful sentiment in the middle of a scene, and perhaps the most powerful element of the passage is the level of complexity at which it is presented. First, Frederic halts the progress of the scene's action in order to deliver his dramatic aside to the reader. Similar to the theatrical convention, Frederic's aside exposes the seams of construction in his narrative by disrupting the action's natural progress and, instead of describing the scene, commenting on its conceptual relevance to Frederic's worldview. Words like "always" and the ever conspicuous "you" once again signal Frederic's transition into his contemplative mode.

Second, this passage also marks another explicit characterization of Frederic's narrative technique. It is important to recognize that this characterization marks a unique turn from the previously discussed examples. In the examples previous, Frederic's narrative capacity was characterized through dialogue, non-autonomous narration, and inferences made from indirect discourse. In this passage, however, Hemingway manages yet another avenue of communication through Frederic's explicit reflection. Frederic's preference for "concrete names," a worldview that Owens-Murphy develops into her reading of pragmatism (91), accurately describes his "unselfconscious" recording method

of narration that prefers simple, accurate description. The inherent irony, of course, is that, while Frederic maintains a pragmatic diction, his break from the scene betrays the pragmatic structure of his narration by creating an abstract space from which to deliver his reflective aside. Once again, Frederic's narration takes advantage of the gap that narrative distance creates in order to communicate larger concepts to the reader.

The second passage of pressing reflection in Frederic's narration occurs when he and Catherine lie in a hotel room before their harrowing voyage to Switzerland to escape the war. As Frederic describes his relationship to Catherine and their "courage" as a couple, he departs from this description to abstract another universal tenant of his evolving philosophy:

But with Catherine there was almost no different in the night except that it was an even better time. If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry. (249)

In this oft-quoted passage, Frederic once again separates his narrative voice from the physical scene, thus distancing his position of narrative origin from the narrative construct in general. If we were to comprehensively map these passages that take advantage of narrative distance, the origin of this example would be one of the most removed from the narrative construct because it takes advantage of both reflective commentary and second-person address to generate its emotional weight. Also, the "you"

in this passage most severely disrupts the “memory model” of narration because of the pronoun’s structured opposition to the third-person “people” and “those” of the preceding lines. *If* Frederic is indeed making another abstraction—instead of addressing the reader—it marks, at the very least, a substantial suggestion towards reader-address because of the misbalanced use of pronouns in creating and communicating Frederic’s view.

Finally, Frederic’s narration also features one more similar reflective abstraction during the novel’s tragic and climactic ending. When Frederic learns that his baby has died and that Catherine will soon succumb to the delivery, he begins his famous tirade on human mortality and the senselessness of war and life:

Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or gave you the syphilis like Rinaldi. But they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you.

(327)

Frederic’s emotional outburst marks the final commentary of the novel and final departure from the confines of the narrative construct. Most readers likely find Frederic’s melancholic message to contain Hemingway’s final “message” of the novel, but the significance of the message is underscored by the evolving technique of reflection represented in Frederic’s narration. Compared to the previous passage, the balance of pronouns used in Frederic’s final abstraction shifts dramatically to the second-person,

revealing an even greater emphasis on the inherent “separateness” of the reflection from the construct of the novel. Frederic is not only lamenting on his tragic situation, he is now universally condemning, via narration, the tragic nature of life and death.

By crafting and implementing a theory that accommodates the complex method of communication in Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*, an understanding of the structure and method of narration becomes increasingly apparent and accessible. Although the narration of Frederic Henry marks a significant departure from the thematic preoccupations and narrative awareness of Jake Barnes, his narration employs a similar manipulation of narrative proximity and distance in developing and communicating the novel’s major themes. In the Hemingway corpus, Frederic’s unselfconscious narration represents an evolution of narrative communication, with the framework of narrative distance incorporated into a multi-layered narrative construct. As an unselfconscious narrator, Frederic’s oscillation in the narrative gap between originary source and resulting construct serves as a conceptual transition between Jake’s self-aware distance as a narrator and David Bourne’s imposition of distance and the resulting conflict in *The Garden of Eden*, as will be illustrated in the following chapter. In opposition to Jake’s self-aware manipulation of narrative distance, Frederic’s role of *arche-narrator* is employed but never controlled, resulting in the fluctuating narrative distances implicit in the novel’s passages of reflective departure. It is this same fluctuation of distance that marks the central conflict between two self-aware characters in *The Garden of Eden*, one grasping for autonomy through a role of *arche-narrator* and the other obsessed with dismantling the constructs that sets the other apart.

Chapter Three: *Arche-Narrator as Self-Reflexive Analysis in The Garden of Eden**Critical Context*

Following a certain understated critical consensus, perhaps it is appropriate to say that Ernest Hemingway's murkiest work comes in the 1986 posthumously published novel *The Garden of Eden*. Much like the tumultuous history of the 1500-page manuscript that spent more than fifteen years under the pencil of Hemingway, the considerably cropped 247-page Scribner's edition edited by Tom Jenks represents a similar upheaval in Hemingway's traditional body of work. There is little room for debate concerning the wide discrepancies between the manuscript version and the Scribner text. Along with any major editing or excision project, the result is not simply a new "version" of Hemingway's manuscript but a new work of its own accord. Following the historical and textual study of the manuscript is certainly interesting as a window into Hemingway's writing processes, his embattled female relationships, and his equivocal thoughts on human sexuality. Most studies of the manuscript—such as Mark Spilka's exhaustive exploration—have demonstrated the complexity of Hemingway's idea for *Garden*, including its characteristic as a "claustrophobic concentration upon the surface details of eating, drinking, swimming, diving, [etc.]" and a general stylistic departure from its "narrative status as an expansive account of an inner journey" (Spilka 34).

Recognizing the distinct characteristics of the manuscript version, however, it is my intention to follow the recent critical moves of scholars like Robin Silbergleid and grant a particular literary authority to the Scribner text (97). The resulting Jenks novel—as opposed to Hemingway's "claustrophobic concentration"—renders its picture with less clarity but equal provocation. The window to Hemingway's own processes, relationships,

and thoughts may be less apparent than through the manuscript, but the novel itself provides an intriguing entry to the corpus as a complex and ambiguous narrative that presents new challenges in understanding Hemingway's narrative structure and thematic implications. These new challenges, while dismissing questions of "authorial intention" as Wayne Booth does (*Rhetoric* 75), offer exciting opportunities to trace evolutionary advances in style and narrative constructions. From the philological perspective, *Garden* offers a compelling example of Jerome McGann's theory of social authorship. According to McGann, "Authority is a social nexus, not a person possession; and if the authority for specific literary works is initiated anew for each new work by some specific artist, its initiation takes place in a necessary and integral historical environment of great complexity" (48). So although Scribner's *Garden* certainly does not represent Hemingway's "final intention" or maintain the same "authority" as his other works, the idea persists that this kind of "authority" is merely a problematic illusion that ignores the pragmatic and obvious circumstance that authorship "takes place within the conventions and enabling limits that are accepted by the prevailing intuitions of literary production—conventions and limits which exist for the purpose of generating and supporting literary production" (48). Such a consideration does not raise one text over the other but rather establishes a particular egalitarian atmosphere among the available texts, with the Scribner novel operating as a separate but equal source of literary study in the Hemingway corpus.

As with the liability of narrative ambiguity in "true" Hemingway classics like *Sun Also Rises*, it is integral to my study to clear the murky nature of the Scribner narrative as an editorial failure and instead reclassify these previous liabilities as productive

characteristics of a new literary work. As Silbergleid recognizes, between the manuscript and novel “we find neither a stable identity nor a stable text” (97), but through this instability we can explore the evolution of Hemingway’s narrative technique in relation to the traditional thematic concepts of his more canonical works.

Silbergleid’s insistence of an authentic literary production in the novel version carries a convention set forth in early responses to the published work. A 1987 article by Malcolm O. Magaw connects *Garden* to the rest of Hemingway’s works by tracing a line from early pictures of the Hemingway hero to an advanced and complicated image at the end of Hemingway’s career, as seen in *Garden*’s protagonist. Magaw contends that “in David Bourne, Hemingway is presenting . . . his final portrait of the artist as a young man and hero—a portrait that coalesces the early Jake Barnes/Pedro Romero hero in his *aficion*-imbued Eden before and outside time, on the one hand; with the post World War II man in tune with history, with time, and with memory on the other hand” (270). Even with the hazy portrait and “stylistic unevenness” resulting in the Scribner text, Magaw is adamant to affirm the “legitimate presence of the Hemingway genius” seen through Hemingway’s evolved conceptualization of his hero.

Furthermore, a 1992 feminist study of *Garden* by Kathy Willingham positions itself in line with literary studies of the Scribner version by positing that the female lead of the novel, Catherine Bourne, engages in an obsessive preoccupation with authorship similar to David while using her feminine body for expression. Willingham quickly points out that the “novel, seen alone or in tandem with the manuscript, not only serves as an exemplum of the deliberate anxieties which the woman artist experiences, but also prefigures many contemporary theories concerning *l’écriture féminine*” (293). For

Willingham's purposes, the manuscript becomes a source supplemental to the published text that can be used to confirm or elaborate upon an element in the artistic work of *Garden* as a whole. Essentially endorsing McGann's contention of social authorship, Willingham grants equal authority to either textual version in creating her character study, which allows, for her, an access point to Hemingway's realized artistic vision.

The immediate significance of both Willingham's and Magaw's studies, of course, is the assertion that the novel—in juxtaposition with the manuscript—draws compelling and legitimate characters that are an evolution of Hemingway's artistic endeavor, originating with the artist-hero figures seen in Jake and Pedro in *Sun Also Rises*. Silbergleid carries this tradition into a contemporary critical reading by positioning the novel version at the center of *Garden*'s thematic importance. As past critics dismissed the narrative liabilities of the edited version and looked to character study for relevance in the text, Silbergleid reconciles critical perspectives of the male and female leads by demonstrating that the novel's narrative preoccupation exists in the very struggle for authority between the characters David and Catherine (97). In the effort to understand the greater thematic implications of Hemingway's work, Silbergleid's reading appropriately relinquishes the possibility of access to biographical or psychoanalytic study of Hemingway himself (98) and instead approaches the text as a novel, a literary production, a work of art.

The textual and critical history of *Garden* is significant to its narratological study because it offers a compelling example of theorist Tamar Yacobi's considerations of "Authorial Rhetoric, Narratological Reliability, [and] Divergent Readings," ideas he puts forth through a reading of Leo Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata*. In particular examples of

*Kreutzer Sonata*, Yacobi demonstrates the phenomenon of several critical interpretations and positions: the first two positions concern narratorial reliability (or unreliability); the third focuses on the author's ideology. Yacobi's intention, in the end, is "to show that the diverse interpretive positions (of *Kreutzer Sonata*) are best mapped and correlated as alternative hypotheses under the umbrella of a proper theory of interpretation, wide-ranging yet specifically narrative oriented" (109). In other words, Yacobi contends that the various critical perspectives demonstrate, above all, a distinct preoccupation with the narrative construction of the text—a critical climate that requires a kind of theoretical vehicle that accommodates various interpretations while providing insight into the narrative nature of the work.

It is my contention that the critical climate surrounding *Garden* has reached a similar juncture in which various interpretations, readings, and critical agendas implicitly call for an operational theory that accommodates these views while maintaining a particular underlying theoretical consideration for the work itself. Yacobi's goal with *Kreutzer Sonata*, in reconciling various critical views, directly correlates to the principles of reliability and unreliability at work in the novella. In comparison, while my theory certainly accommodates readings of critical issues like reliability in Hemingway, the ultimate demonstration lies in the position of a narrative gap between ordinary sources of narrative and constructs they produce. This is the operational hinge upon which the contemporary conversation of Hemingway's works swings. In regards to *Garden*, I will demonstrate the functionality of this theory in relation to the foundational and subsequent criticisms of the work particularly as the theory manifests itself in the mirrored instances of narratorial production in the work between the two protagonists as well as the two

stories—the husband/wife and the elephant hunting stories—existing in the novel. With the recognition of a narrative gap in place, *Garden* settles as a profoundly compelling work situated at the end of Hemingway's body of work. Representing a complex and evolved exploration of the characteristics and qualities that persist in his most canonical heroes and stories, *Garden*—in all of its textual variations—offers a study in Hemingway narratology that demonstrates and confirms some of Hemingway's deepest artistic contemplations.

*Production and Conflict: Pages and People*

More than any other novel in the Hemingway corpus, *Garden of Eden* presents a distinct preoccupation with the faculty of writing and authorship. On the surface, the novel's protagonist David is a writer who has just finished his second novel and has begun work on more stories. It is important to note, however, that this explicit reference to writing is only one of many examples of David's capacity for narrative construction within the text. In fact, it is this particular facet of David's character that provides the central tension in *Garden*. As the exemplar of construction through language, David mirrors his role as a writer through the way he perceives, or rather, *prescribes* his reality in the text. As his point of view shapes and influences the unfolding narrative, distinctions are made among characters in order to render them into being. Through the use of labels, gender construction, and projected personalities, David attempts to stabilize, or master, his world with the placement of concrete parameters. As the exemplar of fluid identity, Catherine operates as the antithesis to David's enacted construction, resisting David's attempts to define and thus confine her to a single identity.

The primary conflict is set up in the opening pages of the novel. During a conversation over breakfast one morning, David tells Catherine, “I have these flashes of intuition . . . I’m the inventive type.” Catherine’s response to David is playful but ominous: “I’m the destructive type . . . And I’m going to destroy you” (5). Just as David constructs and authors his stories, he prefers stable characterizations through the authority of his narrative invention. As for Catherine, she prefers to tear down these distinctions and allow her identity shift and merge within her environment—particular with David’s identity. The first indication of Catherine’s preoccupation with destroying barriers of identity comes shortly after the breakfast conversation. The narration observes that the couple’s tanned skin and faded hair from the ocean has caused the couple to develop similar physical features. In fact, so similar were these features that most “people thought they were brother and sister . . . some did not believe that they were married and that pleased the girl very much” (6). Here, Catherine’s pleasure coincides with a perception that the two were not simply married but shared a common history and heritage. For her, the proximity between her and David’s identities is increased to the point of familial relations. Additionally, Catherine appears pleased with the general ambiguity and inaccuracy that results from the couple’s indistinction from one another. While the erosion of identity allows her closeness to David, the condition also results in a subsistence that accommodates both husband/wife and brother/sister relationships—a liberating environment of equivocality suitable for Catherine’s desire to live apart from the confines of “self.”

Not nearly satisfied, Catherine soon continues her “role-play” in the following exchanged:

... “And you love me just the way I am? You’re sure.”

“Yes,” he said. “So much yes.”

“Because I’m going to be changed.”

“No,” he said. “No. Not changed.”

“I’m going to,” she said. “It’s for you. It’s for me too. I won’t pretend it’s not. But it will do something to you. I’m sure but I shouldn’t say it.”

“I like surprises but I like everything the way it is just now at this minute.”

(12)

The surprise, of course, is Catherine’s cropped haircut that appears the following day. The narration remarks that it was “as short as a boy’s,” (14-15) and Catherine confirms this gender play. “‘You see,’ she said. ‘That’s the surprise. I’m a girl. But now I’m a boy too and I can do anything and anything and anything.’” (15). At this point, traditional critical models usually emphasize the gender-bending motives of Catherine as a feminine discourse using the physical body (Willingham 47). However, closer examination of the context of Catherine’s actions reveals that her play of gender is simply the recurring manifestation of her identity-deconstruction. In other words, her preoccupation is not primarily with feminine sexuality or gender confusion, but rather a resistance to David’s “authoring” of her into a stable identity characterizes her actions. Her rebellion is playful but direct: “Why do have to go by everyone else’s rules?” (15).

While femininity is one of the identities she attempts to destabilize, the battle remains focused on the relationship between her and David. In a sense, Catherine’s preoccupation is with the actual *between*. Following the recognition of narratorial gap

between originary source and textual manifestation, Catherine's abandonment of "everyone else's rules" continues to be motivated to close the proximal distance between her and David's identities. In David's characterization of Catherine, he sets her apart from himself, but Catherine resists when she reveals that she instructed the barber to cut her hair "just the same as [David's] . . . exactly" (16). In a bedroom scene at the close of Chapter One, David's attempts to stabilize Catherine's identity become desperate:

"Dave, you don't mind if we've gone to the devil, do you?"

"No, girl," he said.

"Don't call me girl."

"Where I'm holding you you are a girl," he said. He held her tight around her breasts and he opened and closed his fingers feeling her and the hard erect freshness between his fingers."

"They're just my dowry," she said. "The new is my surprise. Feel. No leave them. They'll be there. Feel my cheeks and the back of my neck . . ."

(17)

The repeated address of "girl" and David's physical invocation of Catherine's sexual femininity become David's last efforts to fit her into his construction and "hold" her in place. Catherine immediately combats both by dismissing the address and shifting David's physical contact to androgynous features of her body.

From the narrative perspective, Catherine's obsession continues to be with "change" and identity destruction. In the same bedroom episode she asks David to change and become Catherine and then tells him he was "so good to change" (17). This fluid nature of identity at the outset of the novel threatens David's authority of narration

in the text and in his life. He seems to concede defeat to Catherine's resistance as "his heart said goodbye Catherine goodbye my lovely girl goodbye and good luck and goodbye" (18). As Catherine continues her resistance to David's "idea" of her, David witness his construct crumbling before him. David's undermined narrative authority fails to hold Catherine in place, and she slips into the ambiguous and shifting realm of fluid identity that veils her character for the remainder of the novel.

Traditional theories often characterize this central struggle of the novel as a Catherine's attempt to establish her own narrative in competition with David's role of authorship. When Silbergleid sees Catherine's "means and ability to control [David's] writing" as the major conflict of the novel, she continues to describe Catherine's actions as her own "writing" or "art" (99). Certainly, Catherine demonstrates a degree of "inventiveness" on her own part, particularly with the introduction of another girl, Marita, into the relationship (100-101). However, if the novel is truly "about narrative and narrativizing" and "narrative serves as the means by which Catherine and David vie for power over the course of the text" (100), Silbergleid's reading requires the supplement of accounting for Catherine's motivation and destructive inclinations. It is my contention that Catherine's actions are founded in her original desire for close proximity to David's identity—that is, in her desire to erase distinction between her and David and merge their "selves" together. As David writes, invents, or constructs in fiction or in his reality, narrative gap interposes a distance between him and the manifested content. As an author, he simply requires such distinction for definition. Catherine, threatened by autonomy and motivated to be one with David's identity, works to destroy the narrative gap in place.

Returning to the Derridean tradition of post-structuralist theory, here I establish David as the *arche-narrator* of his text. Serving as the originary source for writing and linguistic construction in the novel, David is responsible for laying the foundations of his construct. Complicating this simple formula, however, is the formulation of displacement in Derrida's non-center of meaning (*Writing and Difference* 279-280). As David lays these foundations, it follows that his governance over his "text"—whether novels or reality—is paradoxically rooted in the function of his actions, which not only removes him from the construct but dissolves him from presence. In Derrida's reconsideration of the classical paradox of "the center [of meaning]. . . which while governing the structure, escapes structurality" (279), he resolves that instead "there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function" (280). Elsewhere, Derrida recognizes that this arche-writing is "that very thing which cannot let itself be reduced to the form of *presence*" (*Grammatology* 57). By adding this nuance to the reading, *arche-narrator* ceases to appear as a character on the outside looking in, but rather a catalyst of creation that transcends the role of character. As David's attempts to assert narrative authority in the novel, he subsequently jeopardizes his fixed presence as a participant of the structure. One result of David's dissolution from the structure of the text, of course, is his distancing from Catherine.

David's imposed distance in the narrative intimates a linguistic and theoretical foundation. Derrida calculates an "originary violence of writing" (37), which, among other things, can be attributed to instances of division between elements of structure in language. In Derrida's formulation, because meaning itself is derived through the

difference and *différance* of associated signs, the gaps between signs become channels of substitution by which traces to the non-site of the originary source are endlessly followed. Simply put, in language and writing—which Derrida sees as functionally identical—signs can be seen to set up barriers of difference on which they depend for meaning. In the system of language and signs, of course, the pitfalls of Derrida’s theory overwhelm the user because an outside perspective cannot be accommodated. For readers of fiction, however, a narrative schema offers the ability to observe a structure in its entirety and trace outside of the structure to the site of narrative function.

In *Garden*, the strong homodiegetic perspective seen in *Sun Also Rises* is abandoned in favor of a seemingly unpartisan third-person narration. Certainly, David’s operation as *arche-narrator* does not come through in the written pages of the text, but instead he enacts this role through the operation of his character. As *arche-narrator*, his perspective informs the meaning of elements in the novel including, as demonstrated earlier, his attempted formulation of Catherine’s character. Importantly, David mirrors this operation through his status as a writer and author, and in turn, Catherine is threatened by this operation. Following the initial loosening of tension in Chapter One, Catherine reaffirms her precarious position when David begins reading review clippings of his latest novel. As the two read about David’s work, Catherine stops and says, “I’m frightened by them and all the things they say. How can we be us and have the things we have and do what we do and you be this that’s in the clippings?” Just as before, Catherine is preoccupied with maintaining the “we” of her and David’s relationship—she is threatened by David’s establishment of an autonomous “you,” from her perspective, that separates their two identities. For Catherine, implicit in the clippings is David’s assertion

of an “I” construct that carries his identity away from hers. The distinction between the two characters is based on David’s capacity as an author; however, in a break from traditional critical readings, Catherine is not motivated by jealousy or an impetus to create on her own account and establish herself as a narrative authority. Rather, she is motivated by the will to destroy David’s operation of these functions because it undermines her attempts to shed distinction and merge their identities. Catherine cannot accommodate the gap put in place by the narrative process.

As the tension from this conflict builds, Catherine begins to shift her focus from challenging David’s narrative operation at the source to dismantling the manifestations of his efforts—namely, herself. “She changes from a girl into a boy and back to a girl carelessly and happily,” David thinks. “What was it that she had said about destruction?” (31). It appears that Catherine, in the attempt to undermine David’s narrative operation, looks to dismantle herself. She destroys and shifts her identity almost as soon as it is in place, emphasizing the superficial nature of their construction. Her method appears to be centered on exposing the structurality of her and David’s reality, which opens the possibility of abandoning the structure and fulfilling her wish to merge with David. David, dependent on this structure to create the meaning of his reality, opposes Catherine’s actions explicitly. Driving through Spain with Catherine, in conversation David attributes a certain stability to the existence of their environment: “The country is here. You don’t have to do anything about it. It’s always here. The Prado’s here.” Catherine exploits David’s process of construction by again highlighting its subjective and superficial nature: “There’s nothing except through yourself . . . And I don’t want to die and it be gone” (53). For Catherine to destroy David’s function as a narrative constructor, she

works to disparage the process itself. In Catherine's perspective, even something like a country can simply disappear when the constructor ceases his or her operation. David, the emblem of linguistic and narrative construction, relies on forgetting the superficial aspects of his processes and viewing the results of his efforts as autonomous and stable.

Following Friedrich Nietzsche's famous formulation of the language process in "On Truth and Lying in a Nonmoral Sense," Catherine exposes the "truth" of her reality for what it really is—a "moveable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred and embellished" (878). In opposition to Catherine's awareness of this construction, David is dependent on the element of Nietzsche's truth-making process in which the embellishment is forgotten and truths are revealed as "illusions which we have forgotten are illusions" (878). It is an ironic yet poignant twist on David and Catherine's actions and perspectives in the novel. As the epitome of narrative and linguistic construction, David must be oblivious to the nature of his own processes. If the manifestations of his construction are to maintain validity and autonomy, he must sever himself from the operation and view the world as stable and distinct. He depends on the gap between himself and construction and between the elements within his construction to distinguish meaning. This is why he is able to say with such conviction that "The country is here." On the other hand, Catherine, as the opposing force to David's narrative authority, works with a keen awareness to this process. By exposing the subjective structurality of David's constructs, she works to undermine this process and dismantle the entire structure with the ultimate goal of closing the narrative gap that separates her identity from David's.

Catherine recognizes a certain risk involved in destabilizing one's reality. As she works to undermine David's narrative construction by destroying its processes, she subjects herself to the perilous realm of existing without distinction. Reflecting on her actions, she says to David, "When you start to live outside yourself . . . it's all dangerous. Maybe I'd better go back into our world, your and my world that I made up; we made up I mean. I was a great success in that world. It was only four weeks ago. I think maybe I will be again" (54). Here Catherine attempts to reconcile her wish for close proximity to David's identity by figuring the constructed reality of their situation as "our world," still a construct but one originating from a single and unifying source. This movement back into the constructed "world" is an attempt to alleviate the uneasiness Catherine feels when she dismantles the structure. "I was thinking so much about myself that I was getting impossible again, like a painter and I was my own picture. It was awful," Catherine says (54). The awareness of structurality and her attempts to dismantle it impose an oppressive burden on Catherine's mind. She resists Nietzsche's method of "forgetting the lie" and is subsequently plagued by the nagging knowledge of truth's superficiality.

Catherine's ambivalence toward her commitment to the destruction of David's narrative processes is short-lived. Soon after she considers returning to the accommodating shelter of her and David's "world," Catherine engages in the gender "changing" she exhibited in the first chapter. Lying in bed with David, Catherine claims she will "only be a boy at night," and David confirms this change when he agrees with, "All right, boy." (56). The utterance of David's "boy" reinforces Catherine's efforts to shift gender identities, and he yields vulnerability of his position. "I lied when I said I

didn't have to," Catherine responds, fully committing to the destructive nature of her efforts. She is now required to attack the structurality of her environment, and she focuses her efforts on David: "Now you change. Please. Don't make me change you. Must I? All right I will. You're changed now. You are. You did it too. You are. You did it too. I did it to you but you did it. Yes you did. You're my sweetest dearest darling Catherine. You're my sweet my lovely Catherine. You're my girl my dearest only girl. Oh thank you thank you my girl—" (56). From the narrative perspective, Catherine's will to change hers and then David's identity represents not an issue of gender confusion or a sexual fascination but a preoccupation with the ability to change. She is motivated by the implication of undoing David's narrative authority through destabilizing the "truth" represented in David's world. As David loses control, Catherine moves closer to erasing the gap imposed by the narrative process. It is a dangerous challenge, as Catherine recognizes, but now she has the permission of David to attempt this destruction. Abandoning her claim to restrict her "changing" to nighttime activities, Catherine says she will go "to the Prado in the morning and see all the pictures as boy." "I give up," David responds (56).

As the conflict between David and Catherine wages on and finally succumbs to its own destructive force, the later pages of the novel slide easily into David's work as an author. In one sense, the autonomy offered by the writing process offers David a sanctuary to escape his relationship troubles. Particularly after the introduction of Marita into the complicated mesh of David and Catherine's relationship, David retreats further into his writing. The narration recognizes the value of his shelter: "As soon as he started to think beyond his work, everything that he had locked out by the work came back to him. He thought of the night before and of Catherine and the girl today on the road that

he and Catherine had driven two days before and he felt sick” (108). David can survive in this mindset for only a short time, and the moment comes in which he reconciles, for himself, the relationship battle with his writing and commits fully to his role of author.

He thinks to himself:

So you worked and now you worry. You’d better write another story.

Write the hardest one there is to write that you know. Go ahead and do

that. You have to last yourself if you’re to be any good to her. What good

have you been to her? Plenty, he said. No, not plenty. Plenty means

enough. Go ahead and start the new one tomorrow. The hell with

tomorrow. What a way to be. *Tomorrow*. Go in and start it now. (108)

At this introspective turning point in the novel, David rationalizes his need to write the African story of his youth with the will to repair his dysfunctional relationship with Catherine. In his mind, David seems to follow the Hemingway-hero trope and believes that if he comes to terms with a past traumatic experience he will be able to move forward. Inherent in this mindset is the destructive conflict of the novel. The method by which David chooses to cope is the same method that threatens Catherine’s own actions and wishes for their relationship.

Evidence of the narrative distance imposed by David’s actions and mentality in the text is explicit and abundant. At the outset of Chapter Fifteen, David is so engrossed in his unfolding story that he hears motor noise as an “intrusion” to the space he occupies in his mind. The narration confirms, “He was completely detached from everything except the story he was writing and he was living in it as he built it” (128). Explicitly recognized as the exemplar of narrative and linguistic construction in his “world,”

David's character is dissolved into the function of constructing his narrative. Through an empathetic stance, David is able to place himself in his own narrative and "feel the weight of the heavy double-barreled rifle carried over his shoulder" (128). Here, David's empathy is enabled through the reconstruction of his young self in the narrative text, an identity with which he connects in order to relive or process the trauma of his youth. However, it is important to note that his "presence" in the story is superficial—a projection of his constructed self. David seems to recognize this as well as the narration reveals, "It was not him, of course, who had stood there that morning . . . It was not him, but as he wrote it was and when someone read it, finally, it would be whoever read it . . ." (128-129). The narrative construct offers David the opportunity to project a presence within the story, but the rule of narrative gap remains true. Empathy allows David to imagine and experience brief moments of connection with his narrative construct, but David must maintain a distance to continue writing and understanding the African tale.

In the "reality" of the novel, David metaphorically mirrors this reflective distance through the literal insertion of a mirror into the hotel room of the trio. In the first interaction with the "new and handsome mirror," David "sat on the bar stool and looked into the mirror as he lifted the talk drink. I do not know if I'd have a drink with you or not if I'd met you four months ago, he thought" (133). In a previous episode in which Catherine convinces him to cut his hair, David looks into a mirror at the barbershop and "it was someone else he saw but it was less strange now" (84). Just as David's narrative constructs offer the opportunity to build and examine a projected presence, David uses the mirrors to establish a distance between him and the image he sees in the mirror. In

both situations, the image in the mirror is treated as a detached reflection that is the result of David's construction.<sup>3</sup>

With the emphasis of narrative construction in place, David's authoring of the African story builds momentum and weight within the novel. Episodes of writing in the "reality" of the novel slip seamlessly into the action of the African story, and David reflects on the importance of moving forward with both. "There is nothing you can do except try to write it the way that it was," David thinks to himself. "So you must write each day better than you possibly can and use the sorrow that you have now to make you know how the early sorrow came. And you must always remember the things you believed because if you know them they will be there in the writing and you won't betray them. The writing is the only progress you make" (166). Progress on the African story is certainly made, and pages of the published *Garden* novel increasingly give preference to the account of this story rather than the narrative of David and Catherine. The writing process pulls David away from the torrential relationship and towards his function of penning the African story. In other words, he spends more energy reflecting on the projected presence in his African stories than on his identity in the Catherine narrative. He meditates on the importance of his writing in a powerful passage: "The understanding was beginning and he was realizing it as he wrote. But the dreadful true understanding was all to come and he must not show it by arbitrary statements of rhetoric but by remembering the actual things that had brought it. Tomorrow he would get the things right and then go on" (182). Demonstrated here is David's commitment to accurate

---

<sup>3</sup> Here David explicitly engages Jacques Lacan's "mirror stage" of self-recognition. See Lacan, "The Mirror Stage" and page 17 of this thesis.

narrative construction in order to understand his past and cope with his present. The opportunity to create and observe a reflected narrative presence is the path he chooses.

Unfortunately for the status of his relationship with Catherine, David's path is divergent from the wishes of Catherine at the outset of the novel to remove distinction and merge identities. The conflict reaches a climax at the end of the novel, and evidence of David's further distance from Catherine is characterized in his actions. In one closing scene, David does not even look at Catherine when she speaks but instead watches her and Marita "in the mirror" (191). At this point, David is so removed from the situation that he mediates the remaining interaction with these characters through the metaphorical construct of the mirror. Modified from the act of self-recognition in the Lacanian mirror, David places others in this context to imply his autonomy. He enacts, ultimately, the writer and constructor *par excellence*, affirming his liberation, separation, and safety in the resulting gap of imaginary construction. Catherine reasserts her last bid for resistance. "You only want things for you, Devil," David says to Catherine. She refutes this claim: "That's not true, David. Anyway I am you and her. That's what I did it for. I'm everybody. You know about that don't you?" (196). In staunch opposition to David's method of construction, Catherine explicitly offers the view she represents. Epitomizing the destructive nature she claims at the outset of the novel, Catherine confirms that her efforts are aimed at erasing distinctions among the characters in her world. The same distinctions that David depends on to create and observe, Catherine endeavors to dismantle in the attempt to close the proximal distances that result.

In the end, Catherine attempts to destroy David's method itself by burning the physical pages of the African stories David has worked on. "She burned every fucking

thing except the narrative,” David says. “The stuff about her” (230). Catherine recognizes that David’s approach to narratological construction is not restricted to his role as a writer but applies significantly to his interaction and understanding in the novel as whole. The more David writes, the process grants his identity autonomy from hers. In other words, he exists without relation to her, and the distance drives Catherine mad. The novel closes with an ambivalent emphasis on David’s ability to construct and its opposition to Catherine. Walking on the beach with his “new girl” Marita, David reflects:

“We’ve been burned out,” he said. “Crazy woman burned out the Bournes.”

“Are we the Bournes?”

“Sure. We’re the Bournes. It may take a while to have the papers. But that’s what we are. Do you want me to write it out? I think I could write that.”

“You don’t need to write it.”

“I’ll write it in the sand,” David said. (243-244)

In the midst of his ruined relationship with Catherine, David offers a microcosm of his process of construction by which everything is rendered in his world. With Marita, David places a dependence on “papers” to legitimize the new relationship between the two, and, in the most telling example of narrative construction, he offers to “write it out” as proof. Here, the ambivalence comes when David admits to the superficiality of all written construction when he writes in the sand. Nonetheless, the practice remains important to him, and he enacts the writing process as a necessary step in creating the relationship between him and Marita.

An understanding partner, Marita appears to accommodate David's autonomy as an author and separate identity. "I want you to have men friends and friends from the war and to shoot with and to play cards at the club" Marita says to David (245). Instead of being *one* with David, as Catherine wished, Marita seems willing to oblige David's wish, "Just be with me" (245). Able to freely work as the author of his works and world, David writes peacefully and efficiently. The novel closes with David reconstructing the African story that Catherine had destroyed, only this time he "found he knew much more about his father than when he had first written this story . . . He wrote on a while longer now and there was no sign that any of it would ever cease returning to him intact" (247).

Concerning the conflict presented at the beginning of the novel, David outlasts Catherine's wish to destroy distinctions of identity by dismantling David's narratological processes. As the author and originator of narrative construction, David retains his authoritative distance over the "reality" of the novel and the authorship of his African story. The narrative gap that results from his functional role as *arche-narrator*, or originary source of narrative construction, provides the operational means for David to both cope with his past and protect his identity from Catherine's attempt to subvert his narrative efforts. In this sense, while *Garden* is certainly preoccupied with ideas of authorship and writing, it is David's functional representation of these faculties in each facet of the novel that dictates thematic implications and critical interpretations of the novel as a whole.

While the novel concludes peacefully with an affirmation of David's narrative method, the brief episode of writing in the sand provides enough equivocal undertones to cast doubt over the legitimacy or permanence of David's actions. In many regards, the

Jenks-edited novel positions itself well in the history of the text's unclear authority by negating a message of certainty in the novel's final lines. As evidenced by the wide array of textual interpretations of *Garden of Eden*, the only certainties of the novel merely approach difficult questions and rarely revealed answers. Such conflict in the novel, characterized through David and Catherine's relationship, is best managed through a theoretical model that traces the development of each character's motivations and techniques of engaging difficult questions of narrative and identity, instead of attempting to infer stable conclusions from extensively debated assumptions. In a certain sense, Catherine's drive for ambiguity is realized in *Garden of Eden*'s inherent opacity, and David's attempts at stable autonomy is ultimately undermined. However, through an appropriate theoretical framework, the opacity of the narrative and its divergent conclusions are reconciled by incorporating this previous critical liability into a functional characteristic of a literary work. As shown in the preceding studies of Hemingway texts, difficulties of interpretation may arise in contemporary scholarship; however, through an extrapolated theory that is based on and limited by the text of its focus, the thematic implications of narrative features can be faithfully described, explored, and better understood without imposing a discordant critical agenda upon the work. In the context of this thesis, the complex narratological construction rendered by Hemingway's narrators is methodically revealed and deconstructed, further evincing the often masterful, and recurrently transcendent, artistic achievement of Hemingway the author.

## Works Cited

- Booth, Wayne. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. 2nd ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983. Print.
- Buckley, J.F. "Echoes of Closeted Desire(s): The Narrator and Character Voices of Jake Barnes." *The Hemingway Review* 19.2 (2000): 73-87. *Project Muse*. Web. 21 August 2011.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Corrected ed. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997. Print.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Trans. and Introd. Alan Bass. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978. Print.
- Dodman, Trevor. "'Going All to Pieces': *A Farewell to Arms* as Trauma Narrative." *Twentieth Century Literature* 52.3 (2006): 249-274. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 January 2012.
- Doody, Terrance. "Hemingway's Style and Jake's Narration." *Hemingway: Seven Decades of Criticism*. Ed. Linda Wagner-Martin. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State UP, 1998. 103-117. Print.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. Pref. Matthew J. Bruccoli. New York: Scribner, 1996. Print.
- Fulton, Lorie Watkins. "Reading Around Jake's Narration: Brett Ashley and *The Sun Also Rises*." *The Hemingway Review* 24.1 (2004): 61-80. *Project Muse*. Web. 21 August 2011.
- Genett, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Foreword Jonathan Culler. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1980. Print.

Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*. First Scribner trade paperback ed. New York: Scribner, 2003. Print.

---. *The Garden of Eden*. Ed. Tom Jenks. Pref. Charles Scribner, Jr. First Paperback Edition. New York: Scribner, 2003. Print.

---. *The Sun Also Rises*. 1st Scribner trade paperback ed. New York: Scribner, 2006. Print.

“Hemingway Seems Out of Focus in the ‘Sun Also Rises,’” *Chicago Daily Tribune* 27 November 1926: 13. *Proquest*. Web. 2 October 2011.

Herman, David. “Narrative Theory and the Intentional Stance.” *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 6.2 (2008): 233-260. *Project Muse*. Web. 29 August 2011.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974. Print.

Lacan, Jacques. “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience.” *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. New York: Norton, 2002. 75-81. Print.

Lanham, Richard A. *Analyzing Prose*. 2nd ed. New York: Continuum, 2003. Print.

Lanser, Susan S. “The ‘I’ of the Beholder: Equivocal Attachments and the Limits of Structuralist Narratology.” *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Ed. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008. 206-219. Print.

Lewis, Robert W. “The Inception and Reception of *A Farewell to Arms*.” *The Hemingway Review* 9.1 (1989): 91-95. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 22 January 2012.

- Magaw, Malcolm O. "The Fusion of History and Immediacy: Hemingway's Artist-Hero in *The Garden of Eden*." *Hemingway: Seven Decades of Criticism*. Ed. Linda Wagner-Martin. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State UP, 1998. 267-282. Print.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch. New York: Norton, 2001. Print. 874-884.
- Nünning, Ansgar F. "Reconceptualizing Unreliable Narration: Synthesizing Cognitive and Rhetorical Approaches." *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Ed. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008. 89-107. Print.
- Owens-Murphy, Katie. "Hemingway's Pragmatism: Truth, Utility, and Concrete Particulars." *The Hemingway Review* 29.1 (2009): 87-102. *Project Muse*. Web. 21 August 2011.
- Phelan, James. "Distance, Voice, and Temporal Perspective in Frederic Henry's Narration: Successes, Problems, and Paradox." *New Essays on A Farewell to Arms*. Ed. Scott Donaldson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print. 53-73.
- . *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology*. Columbus: U of Ohio State P, 1996. Print.
- Prescott, Mary. "A Farewell to Arms: Memory and the Perpetual Now." *College Literature* 17.1 (1990): 41-52. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 January 2012.
- Silbergleid, Robin. "Into Africa: Narrative and Authority in Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*." *The Hemingway Review* 27.2 (2008): 96-117. *Project Muse*. Web. 21 August 2011.

Spilka, Mark. "Hemingway's Barbershop Quintet: *The Garden of Eden Manuscript*."

*Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 21.1 (1987): 29-55. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 October 2011.

Stoltzfus, Ben. "A Sliding Discourse: The Language of *A Farewell to Arms*. *New Essays*

*on A Farewell to Arms*. Ed. Scott Donaldson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.

Print. 109-136.

Wagner-Martin, Linda. "Introduction." *New Essays on The Sun Also Rises*. Ed. Linda

Wagner-Martin. New York: Cambridge UP, 1987. 1-18. Print.

Wilhelm, Randall S. "Objects on the Table: Anxiety and Still Life in Hemingway's *A*

*Farewell to Arms*." *The Hemingway Review* 26.1 (2006): 63-80. *JSTOR*. Web. 29

January 2012.

Willingham, Kathy. "Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*: Writing with the Body." *The*

*Hemingway Review* 12.2 (1993): 46-61. *Project Muse*. Web. 14 October 2011.

Yacobi, Tamar. Authorial Rhetoric, Narratorial (Un)Reliability, Divergent Readings:

Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata*." *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Ed. James Phelan

and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008. 108-123. Print.