



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

The Procrustean Bed

A Critical Study of Philip Young's Edition
of Ernest Hemingway's Nick Adams Stories

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Abstract

Philip Young was a scholar at Pennsylvania State University and among the first to publish a book on Ernest Hemingway. Eleven years after Hemingway's death, Young edited a collection of Hemingway's works on Nick Adams, a protagonist in many of his short stories.

While editing *The Nick Adams Stories*, Young placed the Nick Adams stories in what he believed to be chronological order. This he did for the common reader to achieve better understanding of Nick Adams as a character. Philip Young's chronological order of the stories is, however, wrong in some cases.

Arranging the Nick Adams stories in a collection calls for them to be taken out of their original context within Ernest Hemingway's short story collections. Hemingway did not arrange them within his collections by chance. Every word he ever published was placed in a specific location for a specific reason within his works and to re-arrange the order in which Hemingway intended his stories to be read only deflates and neutralises the effect they were intended to have.

There are twenty four Nick Adams stories in Young's collection. Three of them do not mention Nick's name anywhere and it can be argued that at least one of the three has no evidence of being a Nick Adams story, thus not belonging in the collection at all.

Sixteen of the twenty-four stories in the collection were previously published by Hemingway himself but eight of them are fragments and partial stories discovered after his death. To publish what Hemingway himself had already decided not to does his memory a disservice and should have been left alone to honour the decisions he made while he was alive.

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Introduction

Philip Young was a Hemingway scholar, a professor of American Literature at Pennsylvania State University from 1959 to 1991 and he wrote what is widely known as the first scholarly book on this author, *Ernest Hemingway*, published in 1952. But even though (and perhaps because) Young was one of the earliest and most influential Hemingway scholars, Hemingway seems to have had mixed feelings about him. When Young sent him a copy of his book in 1952 Hemingway quickly returned it, but later comments make it clear that Hemingway did indeed read the book. The following words fell when discussing Young's book in a 1965 interview with reporter Robert Manning:

"If you haven't read it, don't bother," Hemingway volunteered. "How would you like it if someone said that everything you've done in your life was done because of some trauma. Young had a theory that was like -- you know, the Procrustean bed, and he had to cut me to fit into it." (Manning)

Procrustes, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, was a violent robber in Greek legend. He had an iron bed into which he made passers-by fit by means of hammering or racking their bodies if they were too short and cutting off their legs if they were too tall. His victims invariably lost their lives in the process. (Procrustes) For Hemingway to liken Philip Young to Procrustes in his attempts to make Hemingway's works match his theories is undeniably rather harsh. But Hemingway does, unfortunately, have a point. Nevertheless, Mary Hemingway placed many of her

husband's manuscripts and letters in the hands of Young after Hemingway committed suicide in 1961. Young wrote an introduction to the Hemingway short story collection which was never actually published in the book itself, but as an article in the academic journal *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* later that same year. In this introduction Philip Young says:

I proposed publishing this book almost 25 years ago, maybe I should be excused for taking a special interest in it. Bring out all of Hemingway's Nick Adams stories in one volume, I presumptuously suggested in a 1948 letter to Charles Scribner, and print them in the chronological order of Nick's advancing age. (Young 5)

But it was not until 1972 that Charles Scribner's Sons in association with Philip Young published what they believed to be the fictional biography of Ernest Hemingway's short story protagonist Nick Adams, *The Nick Adams Stories*. There it becomes apparent that Philip Young's methodology and evaluation of internal evidence in editing Hemingway's works is indeed problematic. Young's interpretation of what is a Nick Adams story is questionable and his chronological order of the stories is defective. Young also ventures beyond his artistic licence by taking the stories out of their original context within Hemingway's short story collections and by adding to them previously unpublished material.

Overview

There are twenty-four Nick Adams stories according to Philip Young, sixteen of which were published by Hemingway himself and eight by Young in *The Nick Adams Stories*, published over a decade after Hemingway's

death. The Nick Adams stories published by Hemingway appeared in his short story collections *In Our Time* (1925), *Men Without Women* (1927) and *Winner Take Nothing* (1933). There are various ways to categorise the Nick Adams stories. Philip Young chooses to arrange them in what he believes to be the chronological order and divides them into five sections of Nick's life; "The Northern Woods", "On His Own", "War", "A Soldier Home" and "Company of Two".

"The Northern Woods" is the heading of the first section in Young's collection. It contains five stories or story fragments, three having appeared previously and two were unpublished. It begins with "Three Shots", which Hemingway wrote as the beginning of the following story, "Indian Camp", but omitted before it was first published in Ford Madox Ford's literary magazine and soon after in *In Our Time*. "Three Shots" expands "Indian Camp" but does not add anything to the plot. Including it in "Indian Camp" would have made it longer, but Hemingway cut it for a reason, making the story more sparse and intense. "Indian Camp" is followed by "The Doctor and The Doctor's Wife" and "Ten Indians" which Hemingway wrote around the same time as the first two, in 1924-1925. The last story in this first part of *The Nick Adams Stories* is very short, almost a mere fragment, called "The Indians Moved Away", another one of the eight items added by Philip Young.

The second section of the collection is "On His Own" which also contains five stories or fragments. The first three are some of Hemingway's best short stories, "The Light of The World", "The Battler" and "The Killers". Later in this essay I will argue that "The Light of The World" should not be a

part of the collection as there is no evidence to support that it is indeed a Nick Adams story. The last two are the previously unpublished “The Last Good Country” and “Crossing the Mississippi”, one being sixty pages long and obviously intended to be something other than a short story; the other a mere five hundred word fragment. “The Last Good Country” will be addressed in detail later in this essay when I argue it was unsuitable for publication in every possible way. “Crossing the Mississippi” comes next and is as previously mentioned, very short and only a shred of a story.

The third segment of *The Nick Adams Stories* is simply called “War”. It includes five stories also, their subject made crystal clear by the title of the section, all of which were published by Hemingway except the first one called “Night Before Landing”. This was written around the same time as the stories in *In Our Time*, in 1924-1925. It is almost completely autobiographical in relation to Hemingway’s travels, for he sailed on the *MS Chicago* to France in the spring of 1918. According to Joseph M. Flora, Hemingway wrote “Night Before Landing” as the beginning of a novel on Nick Adams as a soldier in World War I. Flora refers to it as an “abortive novel” (Flora 67) and Hemingway obviously chose not to take it any further. “Night Before Landing” is one of two beginnings of a potential Nick Adams novel in *The Nick Adams Stories*. The other one is “The Last Good Country”.

The fourth section in *The Nick Adams Stories* is called “A Soldier Home”, a name which suggests to the reader that he is about to meet Nick Adams home at last after the Armistice, healing from his physical and mental wounds. It includes the famous “Big Two-Hearted River” and also

“The End of Something” and “The Three-Day Blow”, all of which were first published in *In Our Time*. This fourth section of *The Nick Adams Stories* then ends with “Summer People”, one of the eight stories added by Philip Young. A “Soldier Home” is where Young starts encountering problems with his chronological order of the stories as is explained and elaborated on later in this essay.

The fifth and final section of *The Nick Adams Stories* is called “Company of Two”, the reference being to the fact that Nick is a now a married man. Out of the five stories in this part of the collection there are two new additions, “Wedding Day” and “On Writing”. The others are “An Alpine Idyll” and “Cross-Country Snow”, both set in the Alps but on very different subjects, and “Fathers and Sons” which is one of Hemingway’s most famous pieces of fiction. “An Alpine Idyll” is one of three stories in the collection that are potentially not Nick Adams stories as will be addressed later.

Chronology

According to Philip Young, he had been wanting to publish the Nick Adams stories in chronological order since 1948, which is when he first suggested it to Charles Scribner. Young had to wait a quarter of a century for his wish to come true because “Mr. Scribner replied that since he did not think Mr. Hemingway would approve of the idea there was no point in pursuing it” (Young 5). The Nick Adams stories originally appeared in three different short story collections by Hemingway over a period of eight years and Hemingway had placed them in a particular order within the collections. If

one were to assume, and I think we should, that Hemingway arranged his stories in that particular order for a purpose, with his own rhyme and reason in mind, what would then be the purpose of rearranging them in chronological order? Philip Young explains his reasons in his previously mentioned intended introduction to *The Nick Adams Stories*:

... Nick himself was scarcely known at all; people had practically no idea who he was or what he was like. The main reason being the jumbled ages at which one met up with him in the various collections of Hemingway's short fiction. He would surface as a soldier, say, then as a boy, then a child, a married man, and a soldier again. The coherence of his adventures was obscured, you might say, and their overall significance was just about visible. (Young 5)

According to this, what Philip Young is offering us mere mortals by rearranging the stories is an explanation, a clarification, a guide to Nick Adams, a chance for us to get to know him in the only order which makes that possible, the chronological one. All this he tries to supply us with by revising the chronological order Hemingway had published the Nick Adams stories in, arranging them in a new order so that we can acquire the understanding and knowledge necessary to enjoy Nick Adams to the full as a literary character of some importance. In simple terms, Young is attempting what Hemingway chose not to do, to explain Nick Adams to us. In order to do so we must apparently be able to read the stories one after another in the order of Nick's advancing years. But even if this is the case, even if publishing the stories in chronological order adds knowledge and understanding to the pleasure of reading about Nick Adams, Philip Young

makes an error in evaluating the internal evidence upon re-arranging the Nick Adams stories, thus adding to the *faux-pas* of publishing this book in the first place. As an example, he places “The End of Something” and “The Three Day Blow” after “Big Two-Hearted River”, a major analytical oversight on his behalf. By doing so, Young undermines his own purpose of trying to explain Nick Adams to the rest of us.

In “Big Two-Hearted River” we meet the adult Nick Adams, changing and learning with the river representing his life. He has been through some rough times, hence the burnt ruins where his journey starts and the heaviness of the pack on his back. He is hiking to get over something difficult: “... the country was burned over and changed, but it did not matter. It could not all be burned. He knew that” (NAS 179). He is weak yet focused and determined; he knows what to do to feel well again. “He did not need to get his map out. He knew where he was from the position of the river” (NAS 180). The Nick Adams in this story knows what he is doing. He is no longer the seeking, wandering child, adolescent, young man we have known so far in *The Nick Adams Stories*, he knows how to make himself feel better when life hands him lemons, he is in touch with his inner self. “His mind was starting to work. He knew he could choke it because he was tired enough” (NAS 187). He knows what he wants, what he can and cannot get and has acquired the good sense to back down if he is in too deep. Thus for Young to place “The End of Something” and “The Three Day Blow” *after* “Big Two-Hearted River” is absurd. “The End of Something” and “The Three-Day Blow” are indeed and undisputedly connected both in time and subject and in them we meet Nick Adams not as an adult man who has just returned from war, but as an adolescent, first in breaking up

with his girlfriend and then regretting it in the company of his best friend. Both stories offer a glimpse of Nick's relationship with his friend Bill, who has now become his main male companion instead of his father as often happens when boys reach a certain age. At the conclusion of "The End of Something" Bill is aware of Nick's plan to break up with Marjorie and he seems fine with it, almost keen for it to happen. In "The Three-Day Blow" we get to know that Bill didn't approve of Marjorie and that Nick doesn't trust Bill with his thoughts on the possibility of getting back together with her, a notion he keeps to himself, while brilliantly agreeing with Bill at the same time. Because as much as he hates to admit it, in his subconscious Nick knows he cannot go back. But in a childlike way, in his mind he pretends he can, for in that thought he finds a way out of the pain associated with missing Marjorie and the plans they had for the future. His adolescent mind refuses to see the situation for what it is. "Nick's belief that something can be undone – 'You can go home again,' ... – is a denial of the lesson nature teaches." (Defalco 48) Nick is in fact still just a boy in "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow", trying to shy away from the pain reality can inflict upon us all and none can escape for long. So for Young to place "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow" behind "Big Two-Hearted River" is ostensibly like the work of someone who has not read the stories. To further support this argument and what is even more astonishing in terms of lack of coherence, is the fact that Young places "The Big-Two Hearted River" in the section of "Soldier Home" while he places "On Writing" in "Company of Two". Yet it is a known fact that the two are part of the same story. That also means that in "Big-Two Hearted River", Nick Adams is a married man. Despite all this, Young places two

parts of the same story five places apart in his chronological order. This suggests that once again, Philip Young is attempting to fit Hemingway's stories into how he preconceives them to be structured. The result produces the feeling of someone trying to squeeze a football through a keyhole, it's theoretically not impossible but what comes out on the other side will probably never resemble a football again.

Context

The original Nick Adams stories first appeared in three short story collections, *In Our Time* published in 1925, *Men Without Women* published in 1927 and *Winner Take Nothing* published in 1933. In all three books the Nick Adams stories are part of a whole, part of a collection of stories within books which Hemingway obviously and without question assigned themes to.

Hemingway described his short stories of *In Our Time* in a letter to Ezra Pound around the time it was published:

When they are read together, they all hook up....The bulls start, then reappear, then finish off. The war starts clear and noble just like it did...gets close and blurred and finished with the feller who goes home and gets clap. (Quoted in Tetlow 23)

This proves that in the mind of Hemingway himself, the stories within his collection were all linked, not just individual items but a coherent whole. *In Our Time* contains the largest amount of Nick Adams stories of the three collections previously mentioned. The six stories and the vignette are

placed chronologically within the collection by Hemingway himself, from “Indian Camp” where Nick is just a boy to “Big Two-Hearted River” where he is a an adult who has just returned from war. But within *In Our Time* the Nick Adams stories are more. They are part of a whole, a collection of stories which are all interconnected according to the author himself and call out to each other regarding war, crime, early love, difficult marriages, family life, and how important it is for men to have male friends.

Philip Young divides *The Nick Adams Stories* into five chronological sections and gives names to all of them. In an attempt to make the stories fit into his sections and perhaps even to have a similar number of stories within the sections, he overlooks the internal evidence that creates the chronological order of the stories so that their order is incoherent in places, which again undermines the credibility of the collection as a whole. Furthermore, to arrange the Nick Adams stories chronologically in the first place goes against their essence. They are individual short stories, not written or intended as part of each other but as parts of the short story collections Hemingway placed them in. It may be the case with some short story collections that individual stories are in no way interconnected and in no way linked or dependent on each other. But that is rare and most certainly does not apply where Ernest Hemingway is concerned. Every short story in his collections serves a purpose. They are interconnected, interwoven and linked in subject and time. Hemingway’s style is sparse; he never put a word in a sentence if it did not belong there or have a good reason and purpose of being placed there. Is it then likely that he would enter a story or a vignette into a collection of short stories for it to stand on its own? Could a short story placed within a collection by Ernest

Hemingway thus be taken out of its original context at no expense? Hardly. As Joseph M. Flora points out regarding *In Our Time*, “D.H.Lawrence went as far as criticism should go when he called it ‘a fragmentary novel.’” (Flora 67) And if we were, for argument’s sake, to regard *In Our Time* as just that, a novel, the action of removing the Nick Adams stories from their original context is equivalent to removing chapters from a novel to rearrange them with other chapters from other novels. To support this argument further I would like to point out that *The Fifth Column and The First Forty-Nine Stories* from 1938 is an anthology of Hemingway’s short stories published thus far plus five previously unpublished short stories and a play called *The Fifth Column*. Hemingway made sure upon its publication that his three short story collections appeared as they were, not dismantled and rearranged. “When he confronted Scribner’s about the order of the stories in *The First Forty-Nine*, he did not argue that a chronological order would destroy the integrity of his “novels”; he did, however, affirm the special unity of his story collections as collections.” (Flora 77) As a result, *In Our Time*, *Men Without Women* and *Winner Take Nothing* were published in their original state within the collection. In light of this, one cannot help but find it odd for Philip Young to argue that he is helping people understand Nick Adams by taking his stories out of their original context. I firmly believe that in literature, and in life, you need the original context to understand things.

Relevance

If they are indeed not to be left alone in their original context, there are several ways to categorise the Nick Adams stories. One criterion I find very

interesting and one that Young perhaps should have considered is: Does the story have Nick Adams in it?

The inconsistencies within the Nick Adams stories and the different ways in which he is presented to us in terms of location and narration sometimes make them into more of individual glimpses of different characters with the same name. And sometimes even without a name because in three of the stories the protagonist appears without a name at all. Only five of the twenty-four items in *The Nick Adams Stories* actually refer to the protagonist as Nicholas/Nick Adams. In the remaining stories he is referred to as “Nick” except in “The Light of the World”, “In Another Country” and “An Alpine Idyll”. In those three the name of the protagonist/narrator is not mentioned at all but Young nevertheless decides to include them in the collection as Nick Adams stories. What those three stories also have in common is that apart from “Now I Lay Me”, Hemingway only wrote three Nick Adams stories in the 1st person narrative. And if they were written in a different narrative than almost all the other stories and Nick’s name is never mentioned, are they in fact Nick Adams stories and as a result, do they belong in a Nick Adams collection?

“In Another Country” and “An Alpine Idyll” were first published in *Men Without Women* in 1927. Their themes and subjects fit the title of the book as they both include characters that have recently lost their wives, although the surroundings, atmosphere and circumstances are very different. The protagonist of “In Another Country” is a wounded soldier on foreign ground and he narrates the story in the 1st person. The narrator’s fellow patients are referred to as Italian: “He had been a very great fencer, and before the

war the greatest fencer in Italy,” three of which “were all from Milan” (NAS 169) and he also confirms that they are being treated in a hospital in Milan with the Café they sometimes attend being next to the Scala. The narrator of the story is probably American since he speaks of going to the States when the war is over. Add to all this the fact that “Now I Lay Me”, an undisputed Nick Adams story, is also part of “Men Without Women” and it becomes reasonable that Philip Young would include “In Another Country” in his collection. Also, the autobiographical connection between Hemingway and Adams automatically places Nick as the protagonist of “In Another Country” because Hemingway was in fact in Italy during WW1 and was in fact wounded there. This is supported by Joseph M. Flora when he says that “Although Nick is not named in ‘In Another Country,’ the narrator’s circumstances and the narrative voice have led most readers to feel confident about considering it a Nick story ...” (Flora 72).

In “An Alpine Idyll” we are again greeted by a 1st person narrator without a name. He has been skiing for a month in the Austrian Tyrol with his friend John. They come across a peasant burying his wife and later hear from the innkeeper how the peasant used his dead wife’s open mouth to hang his lamp in the winter months after she died, a fitting subject for the theme “men without women”. Whether “An Alpine Idyll” is a Nick Adams story is a whole other matter. There is no mention of him having a friend called John in any of the other Nick stories. Also, and what I find even more discouraging, is the striking resemblance of this story to “Cross-Country Snow”. In both cases the story is set on a ski trip with two friends sitting down in an inn after an active day on the slopes and having a beer and a chat, a very similar setting although the subject of their conversation in

quite different. I wonder if Hemingway would in fact make two Nick stories this much alike. And I also wonder if having read “Cross-Country Snow” first (as it was published three years previously) might not unconsciously influence readers into feeling that Nick Adams is here again since the protagonist of “An Alpine Idyll” is also skiing with a friend? As much as I can agree with Philip Young on “In Another Country” being a Nick story, his reading of “An Alpine Idyll” leaves me more sceptical.

“The Light of The World” was first published in “Winner Take Nothing” in 1933, which makes it the last of the three anonymous alleged Nick Adams stories. It starts with the narrator walking into a bar with his friend Tom. There they are talked down to by the bartender who calls them “punks” and makes it clear that he doesn’t want them in there. They leave and at the narrator’s suggestion go down to the station where they meet a strange gathering of people and the story starts evolving around a quarrel between two prostitutes over which of them was loved more by a dead prize fighter. The boys leave when Tom sees that the narrator is starting to like Alice the prostitute. It seems to be very common when writing on “The Light of the World” for critics to focus on the conversation between the prostitutes, the biblical references and the fact that this is a brilliantly written short story, one of Hemingway’s best. There does not seem to be much interest among critics to allege or refute whether this is a Nick Adams story or not and I find that fascinating. In “The Light of the World” the narrator does not reveal any practical information about himself, other than that he is either seventeen or nineteen years old. He is very factual and stark in his description of events, until the very end when he reveals that he is somewhat taken by Alice the humongous prostitute. What suggests to me that this story is not about

Nick Adams is how the bartender regards Tom and the narrator as two of a kind in the beginning of the story. "When he saw us come in the door the bartender looked up and then reached over and put the glass covers on the two free-lunch bowls" (NAS 39). This suggests that both boys were somehow not pleasing to the bartender, not just Tom. And shortly after the bartender comments: "All you punks stink." (NAS 40) and Tommy replies, addressing the narrator: "He says we're punks" (NAS 40). Although it is quite obvious from this that it is Tom who is the hot-head of the two and that he is the one responsible for annoying the bartender, it is tempting to connect this to how Hemingway speaks of Native Americans having a different and very distinctive smell, both in "Fathers and Sons" and "The Indians Moved Away". So instead of the narrator being Nick Adams, it is just as likely that Tom and the narrator are both Native Americans and that is why the bartender dislikes them as soon as they walk in the door. Young seems to have decided to include "The Light of the World" in the Nick Adams Stories on the grounds of it having an adolescent male narrator and Young obviously started out with Nick's presence in the story being a given, rather than initially looking for evidence of his presence. In her article "The 'I' and the Voice: Interpreting the Narrator's Anonym in Ernest Hemingway's 'The Light of the World,'" Émilie Walezak says:

The story is told in the first person by a narrator who remains unidentified all through the text, either by name or psychological features, though most critics assume that he is Nick Adams, a recurrent character in Hemingway's short stories. This was prompted by Philip Young's rearrangement of the stories in a collection entitled *The Nick Adams Stories*. (Walezak 137)

What Walezak is arguing that simply because Young included “The Light of the World” in his collection, critics have more or less assumed that it is a Nick Adams story. Walezak, like me, begs to differ and continues:

No critic has ever questioned the enunciator’s unknown identity, as most commentators have simply assumed him to be Nick Adams, and on the few occasions when they have acknowledged the fact that his name never appears in the text, they have dismissed the problem as irrelevant in a brief sentence between brackets or in a footnote, which makes explicit the little importance they have attached to it. (Walezak 137)

Who indeed is the narrator in “The Light of the World” is not a subject for this thesis. It is however clear that there is nothing which suggests that he is Nick Adams rather than anybody else. Including this story, as wonderful as it is, in *The Nick Adams Stories* is thus without reason or merit.

According to Young, he only suggested publishing “Summer People” and “The Last Good Country” as additions to the previously published material. Later in his introduction he continues apologetically:

... it was certainly not my idea that the rest of the new material that was uncovered (much of it by Carlos Baker, at Princeton) be printed here. The notion that We Must Have It All – every scrap that turned up and had Nick in it – has prevailed, which is to say that the trade publisher has out-pedanticked the academy. (Young 5)

Basically what this renowned Hemingway scholar is saying, in the introduction that didn’t get published in the book itself, is that he was bullied

into entering the new material by the publishing house. Not a very brave statement from the editor of a posthumous Hemingway short story collection, and even if this were the case, Young as editor is still responsible. The only way for him not to be accountable for the issue of *The Nick Adams Stories* would have been to abort its publication. Joseph M. Flora in his article “Saving Nick Adams for Another Day” is critical of Young and the publication of *The Nick Adams Stories* as a whole.

Several critics have chosen to accept the expunged opening to “Indian Camp” either as a part of that story or as a story in its own right. A text Young and the Hemingway estate intended as an illustration of Hemingway the exciser (and a text that Young, not Hemingway, titled “Three Shots”). (Flora 65)

For Hemingway to mention the Procrustean bed in relation to Philip Young’s analysis of his work is very interesting. At the time, Hemingway was referring to Young’s book from 1952, saying that Young had to cut him to fit into his theories. A similar scenario manifested itself when Young was piecing together *The Nick Adams Stories*. He came up with a theory and then made the stories fit into it, in some cases involving quite a squeeze. This becomes apparent when he explains in his intended introduction how he divided the book into segments.

As it turns out, Hemingway arranged it (consciously or otherwise) in five distinct stages – that is, the original fifteen stories occur in five sections of Nick’s life, three stories to each part. “The Northern Woods,” as the first section is called, deals with heredity and environment, parents and Michigan Indians. “On His Own” is all away

from home, or on the road, and instead of Indians, prizefighters. “War” is exactly that, or as the author put it later on, “hit properly and for good.” Then “A Soldier Home”: Michigan revisited, hail and farewell. And fifth, “Company of Two”: marriage, Europe revisited, and finally looking backward, a sort of coda. (Young 6)

Hemingway did not arrange the Nick Adams stories, consciously or otherwise, into stages of any kind. They were published within three different short story collections and although they appeared in some sort of chronological order within some of them, their context is first and foremost within these original collections and the “five distinct stages” are entirely made up by Philip Young. Young proves this by failing to arrange the stories coherently within the segments as previously shown with the examples of “The End of Something” and “The Three-Day Blow” on the one hand and “Big Two-Hearted River” and “On Writing” on the other.

The New Material

The previously unpublished material in *The Nick Adams Stories* consists of the following stories and fragments: “Three Shots”, “The Indians Moved Away”, “The Last Good Country”, “Crossing the Mississippi”, “Night Before Landing”, “Summer People”, “Wedding Day” and “On Writing”. “Three Shots” is, as mentioned before by Flora, an excised opening to “Indian Camp”. So for Hemingway readers it is an addition to an otherwise amazing story on Nick at the earliest age Hemingway chose to present him at. It gives us more of Nick and more of Hemingway’s words, as do in fact “Crossing the Mississippi”, “Wedding Day” and the rest of the new material.

“Crossing the Mississippi” contains a reference to a baseball game which puts an exact timestamp on when the story is taking place, mid October 1917: “‘Got any dope on the Series?’ Nick asked him. ‘White Sox won the final game,’ the news butcher answered ...” (NAS 134). This makes “Crossing the Mississippi” into a note in Hemingway’s diary rather than a short story since Hemingway himself travelled to Kansas City by train in October of 1917 to become a journalist for the Kansas City *Star*. So even if Nick Adams is named in the fragment, one can see why Hemingway chose not to publish it. Even though Nick Adams is indeed a semi-autobiographical character at times, this fragment is not a Nick Adams story, it is a Hemingway diary entry. Even Philip Young admits in his intended introduction to *The Nick Adams Stories* that publishing the above mentioned items, which can only be described as shreds, is questionable:

A lot of people are wondering how the author would have felt to know that such trivial fragments as “Crossing the Mississippi” and “Wedding Day” have been presented to the public as “stories”, and that his new book opens with something called, “Three Shots” which he discarded as a completely false start before beginning again from scratch to write “Indian Camp.” It’s a pretty safe bet he wouldn’t be happy about it. (Young 5-6)

It must have been sad for Young to be inclined to write such harsh criticism on a collection his name is forever tied to.

By publishing “The Indians Moved Away”, Charles Scribner’s Sons and Philip Young did Hemingway nothing but a disservice by clumsily shedding light onto what most writers keep to themselves; how they recycle

their work and leave the leftovers out for reason. In “Fathers And Sons”, the last story of the collection, Nick says: “So that when you go in a place where Indians have lived you smell them gone and all the empty painkiller bottles and the flies that buzz do not kill the sweet-grass smell, the smoke smell and that other like a fresh-cased marten skin” (NAS 266-267). In “The Indians Moved Away” Nick says: “Indians all smelled alike. It was a sweetish smell that all Indians had. He had smelled it first when Grandpa Bacon rented the shack by the point to Indians and after they had left he went inside the shack and it all smelled that way” (NAS 34-35). This is all very fine and coherent except for the fact that in the story Hemingway indeed had published (“Fathers and Sons”) this smell belongs to and is eternally connected with Trudy, Nick’s first girlfriend/sexual partner. Trudy is not mentioned in “The Indians Moved Away” and there the smell is connected to a shack that used to be inhabited by an Indian who got run over by a train on the 4th of July. So Hemingway evidently used the description from “The Indians Moved Away” in “Fathers and Sons”, and very nicely so. But I fear Young and the Scribners were not doing him any favours by making that evident to the rest of us.

“The Last Good Country” is a very special entry in *The Nick Adams Stories* for many reasons. To begin with, Hemingway wrote it in 1952 “as his last agonized decade begun” (Flora 83), twenty years after writing the last of the other Nick Adams stories. People change in twenty years and Hemingway was no different which probably contributes greatly to how distinct “The Last Good Country” is in the company of the other stories. There are peculiarities like his sister now being called “Littless” instead of “Dorothy” as in “Fathers and Sons”. Nick himself is also different, more

troubled, less curious, flat and more obvious than the one we have gotten to know, the one that keeps things to himself and makes us guess everything all the time. “The Last Good Country” is too long to be a short story and it ends too abruptly to be considered finished. One cannot help but feel that Hemingway meant for it to become a larger piece which he then abandoned for some reason. Joseph M. Flora substantiates this by saying “... soon moved to becoming a novella, if not a novel [...] Hemingway was unable to finish the story” (Flora 83). With this in mind, one is left with two questions: If Hemingway was happy with this story, why didn’t he finish it? My answer is that he cannot have been or he would have. And subsequently one must ask: If Hemingway was not happy with this story, should it have been published? Young admits in his article that “The Last Good Country” required considerable editing “...where a good deal has been cut from what Hemingway wrote [...] the cuts were either necessary, to piece together two long and different openings present in the manuscript, or desirable, where the text was wordy, or the pace slow, or the taste dubious” (Young 6). It is impossible to sit quietly for a while after reading these words by the editor of *The Nick Adams Stories* and wonder whether there “The Last Good Country” is in any way really the work of Ernest Hemingway as we know him.

“Night Before Landing” was written in the same time period as the stories in *In Our Time*. It is almost completely autobiographical as Ernest Hemingway travelled on the *MS Chicago* to France in the spring of 1918 to join the Red Cross in Italy. He wrote “Night Before Landing” as the beginning of a Nick Adams novel, an idea he soon abandoned, but Young nevertheless decided to publish this fragment of a novel as a short story.

“Summer People” is the only previously unpublished piece in *The Nick Adams Stories* which Hemingway is known to have been happy with but decided not to publish for other reasons. Chronologically it is in the correct place in the collection, after war and before marriage and it is a good, clean and wholesome Nick Adams story, not the best one but certainly not the worst one either. Hemingway wrote it in 1924 and it was in all likelihood the first Nick Adams story he ever wrote. So why not publish it at the time? Probably because it “was far too close to home” (Young 16). Kate was a friend of Hadley, his wife at the time, and the boys were his closest friends. He did not want to hurt them.

“On Writing” was originally written as an ending to “Big Two-Hearted River”. As in the case of “Three Shots”, Hemingway excised “On Writing” for a reason, as Joseph M. Flora explains: “He probably sensed that keeping “On Writing” might cause mis-readings of narrative voice and lead readers to interpret stories too narrowly” (Flora 69). “On Writing” is very descriptive, explanatory and unusually enlightening for Nick Adams. It details many of his inclinations and fears and would at the time have made “Big Two-Hearted River” into a completely different story. “Had Hemingway *not* deleted the ‘On Writing’ section of ‘Big Two-Hearted River’, Nick might have ceased to serve as the valuable lens that he did, a lens that enabled Hemingway to portray the world with both puzzlement and wonder” (Flora 77-78). I will say in Young’s defence regarding the publication of “On Writing” that in light of Hemingway having been dead for over ten years, it has considerable historical value. It might have been a good idea to publish it as a manuscript for our information. But there is no justification to publish “On Writing” as a fully developed short story.

Conclusion

Philip Young, renowned as he may have been, did Hemingway, his readers and critics, and himself a great disservice with the publication of *The Nick Adams Stories*. To take the Nick Adams stories out of their original context and re-arrange their order was as effective as dissecting a novel and putting the chapters back together in a different sequence. The publication of the additional eight stories or story fragments previously unpublished was not only unnecessary but possibly harmful. Even though Ernest Hemingway is no longer with us this does not leave room for publishing every snippet of writing he ever left behind. Hemingway left information out for a reason, kept things beneath the surface in order to show us only and exactly what we need to make sense of his writing. Hemingway's readers, publishers and critics should respect that.

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