

EFFECTS OF TRAUMA ON THE
NARRATIVE STRUCTURES OF
ACROSS THE RIVER AND
INTO THE TREES AND
THE NAKED AND THE DEAD

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THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE OF THE TRAUMA OF WAR functions through family stories, cultural representations appearing in film and television and, of course, various narratives and novels that position war in the integrity and structure of story. Ernest Hemingway and Norman Mailer are two of the most important illustrators of the effects of war and trauma in twentieth-century American literature. Hemingway's narratives have always been linked to the experience of war. James Nagel observes that perhaps it is normal to link the theme of psychic discord expressed in Hemingway's narratives to the experience in war related to Hemingway's time spent at various fronts (213). The disjuncture expressed in the various narrative structures in Hemingway's fiction reveals a connection between the trauma of war and representations of subjectivity and objectivity. Mailer's fiction also connects to his experiences in war and with violence. Critics have sometimes cast Mailer as a misogynist and a violent-centric writer whose fiction reflects the damage done to man by a violent and chaotic world.

Narrative tension in the narrative structures between external and internal perspectives in American war fiction corresponds to the trauma of war—World War I and World War II. Trauma is best explained in the classical sense—as being an experience that is not fully assimilated as the experience

occurs. The experience of trauma during war operates as a complex play between the knowing and not knowing that occurs in reaction to a breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world.¹ The question surrounding the expression of narrative tension in American war fiction arises in relation to *how* a body of literature deals with subjects who are illustrated as speaking from the abject position in relation to the representation of war trauma, rather than engaging trauma in a more traditional subject or object narrative position in the structure of the fiction.

Modern and contemporary American narrative structures that attempt to embody traumatic experiences of war treat an experience not occurring within normal subjective or objective expressions of narrative understandings. Therefore, narratives deploy a structure and a point of view that differs from earlier structures involving more defined and stable positions of subjectivity and objectivity. In the narrative presentation of war in literary structures, the awareness experienced in relation to trauma is abject; it is knowledge that operates from without and within and sometimes from another space of understanding. The novels and narratives that arise out of the experience of World War II, in particular, engage a structure that uses a point of view that attempts to speak from and not to the abject experience and understanding of trauma and war.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND THE TRAUMA OF WAR

American war narratives following World War I and World War II reference a relatively inchoate tradition of American war writing initiated by the fiction following the first truly American war, the Civil War. The narratives that draw on the Civil War engage a narrative structure of questioning and concern with subjectivity and objectivity. Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) and Ambrose Bierce's "Chickamauga" (1891) represent this new attempt of constructing a war narrative. In these war stories, the structure of the narrative appears to oscillate between traditional presentations of narrative subjectivity and objectivity as these authors attempt to speak of the dark knowledge of war and trauma. Robert Penn Warren in *The Legacy of the Civil War* argues that the fictions following the Civil War engage the idea that to have history one has to have stories, and the nature of these stories is to be fallen, to face the dark side of one's own nature, and to have some dark knowledge one cannot bear having. Warren's notions preface a tension that ultimately surfaces in the narratives of modern and contemporary American war

fiction. Authors, during the period following the Civil War, understood that capturing the tension of war trauma in a narrative structure requires a move beyond romantic dialogue or realistic narrative summary.

American narratives surrounding the Great War or World War I subsequently reflect an increasing awareness of trauma and the abject nature of the experience of war on the structure of the narrative, while representing the possibility of ordering the traumatic chaos of war. World War I, described by H.G. Wells as the “war to end all wars,” appears initially in the American landscape almost as an afterthought. President Woodrow Wilson’s reluctance to engage America in the European conflict contributes to an early American sense of distance with the conflict. As America enters the war in April of 1917, however, an era of conscription and service weaves through the American consciousness.² The conscripted masses of American soldiers face a war-torn landscape unlike any experienced before in war, resplendent with men fighting from muddy trenches, attacking from armored tanks, bombing from war planes, and gassing from canons. The horror of war surrounding the newly minted American soldiers introduces a new understanding and mental chaos into the psyches of soldiers. Jennifer Keene asserts that few combatants directly confronted the irrationality of the war landscape. Instead, Keene argues, these men remained adamant in believing in order that could be discerned in the chaos of frontline life (49). The narratives of the period reference this attempt at projecting order into and onto the chaotic structure and experience of the traumas of war. The fictions of the Great War and after reflect an increasing desire to witness and project some semblance of order within the chaos of war, as seen in the content and structure of the narratives.

Narratives written following World War I appear torn between the traditional impulse of repression and the psychoanalytic credo of repetition. There is no question of the trauma experienced by the participants and witnesses of World War I. First-hand narratives such as Richard Aldington’s (1929) *Death of a Hero* and Erich Maria Remarque’s (1929) *All Quiet on the Western Front* attempt to capture the churned and shattered landscapes—mental, physical, and geographical—shaped by narrative point(s) of view. David Craig and Michael Egan suggest that the understanding of World War I is best described by the phrase—the “obliteration of humanity” (12). Craig and Egan observe that the “filth, terror and injuries of war had, since pre-historic times, been glorified out of recognition by the chroniclers and bards,

because of the psycho-social need to repress traumas and keep morale well-tempered" (13). Scenes of trench warfare populated by dead and decomposing bodies, blind stares of the veterans marching out of battle, and bombed-out ruins of buildings are imprinted in the fabric of the culture as collective images of the trauma of this war. These scenes operate as a cultural palimpsest employed by the authors of the time, exerting incredible influence on the structures of the narratives that attempt to fully engage the trauma of the period.

War fiction following World War I illustrates a tension between the repression of objective experience and the repetition of the subjective effect of war trauma. Narratives following World War I illustrate subjects who display the interior affects of an exterior encounter with trauma. The narrative presentation of this experience is often described by literary critics as a tendency for the fiction of the time to focus on the "fragmentation of the self." This tension corresponds to the newly emerging study of the effects of trauma on war veterans. Sigmund Freud's theories of trauma and "shell-shock" appear during World War I. Freud, along with other psychoanalytic researchers and physicians such as Charles Meyers, W.H.R. Rivers, and Elmer E. Southard, begins to explore the lingering mental effects of war trauma on veterans and witnesses to the traumas of war. Novels such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's (1934) *Tender is the Night* and Virginia Woolf's (1925) *Mrs. Dalloway* explore shell-shock and the effects of war trauma within the structure and mode of point of view. James H. Meredith observes that these subjects mourn a loss of the traditional meaning of loss.³ The expression of this loss appears in the narratives following World War I in a discontinuity and, indeed, a fragmentation of plot, character, and narrative. Sharon Ouditt observes that narratives following World War I Freudian ideas are alluded to as a "means of representing a world fragmented and disjointed in which narrative progression is frequently disrupted by stories that compete with it for attention" (255). The disruption of the narrative structural unity *vis-à-vis* the emphasis of subjectivity in post-WWI fiction references a shift in narrative structure—authors engage the traumas of the war both in stories' content and structures.

Fiction appearing during World War II and in the post-war period (less than five years following the Armistice of 1945) engages in attempting to address—in narrative form—the atrocious events of World War II, compounded by the cultural hangovers of the Civil War and World War I. World

War II, described by Studs Terkel as the “Good War,” exceeds all prior boundaries and expectations of war. The scope of World War II generates an almost unfathomable, pervasive emphasis on the relationship between “thought” and experience in the narratives chronicling the experience of war. James Dawes observes that artists reflect on this oppressive pervasiveness through a literary style equal to the task of witnessing the unbounded and unprecedented events of World War II (157). The aftermath of the trauma of World War II—the mass genocide of the Holocaust combined with the mass atomic decimation of Nagasaki and Hiroshima—introduces a set of tragic circumstances into the cultural fabric. The trauma of World War II operates on a scale that encompasses an unimaginable subjectivity—war simply pervades all perceptions of experiences—there is no outside war and there is no inside war. There simply is war. The question then arises as how do writers create narrative subjects in a period of total trauma and war.⁴

The question posed at the beginning of this essay is a critical one—*how* might a body of literature deal with subjects who are speaking from the “abject” position of trauma. The experience of trauma operates as a complex play between knowing and not knowing that occurs in reaction to a breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world. The awareness experienced in relation to trauma is abject (see Kristeva’s discussion of the abject). Modern and contemporary narratives embody the trauma and traumatic experiences of war through the treatment of an experience that cannot occur within normal subjective or objective narrative understandings or expressions of understanding. The narratives engage a structure that differs from previous narrative structures’ reliance and adherence to the myth of stable subjectivity and objectivity. In this engagement, the narratives draw on the previously silenced and abjected voice of trauma to generate a different narrative presence in the fiction following war. The fiction of war involves the placing of narrative authority in a voice of trauma.⁵ In giving voice to the trauma of war in the narratives, war fictions engage a previously silenced portion that allows the presentation of a reconstruction of an interior experience of trauma and reveals a necessary component of war. In this narrative reconstruction, the war narratives of trauma create a necessary counter-critique to the hegemonic war narratives⁶ that Paul Fussell in *Wartime Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* argues have turned the experiences of trauma in World War II into sanitized, Norman Rockwell-ized narratives of war (267).

HEMINGWAY AND MAILER: TRAUMA'S TREATMENT IN PRESENTING WWII

Ernest Hemingway's *Across the River and into the Trees* (1951)⁷ and Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) illustrate necessary components and adaptations of the exploration of the narrative engagement of the traumas of war into and onto the structures of fiction. Carlos Baker observes that Hemingway's *ARIT* projects an "atmosphere" that "was darkened by a strange psychological malaise, as if Ernest were using the pages of his novel as the equivalent of a psychiatrist's couch" (477). While Baker—like many Hemingway scholars—is keen to link Hemingway's second-to-last novel to the author's personal experiences, Hemingway's novel does not exist merely as an autobiographical account of trauma.⁸ Instead, Hemingway's oft-dismissed novel captures the sentiment of a culture affected by the trauma of war in the work's evolved narrative structure. Baker is partially correct in his observations; however, the atmosphere of the novel is not merely darkened by Hemingway's personal malaise, so much as the novel presents the dark malaise of a culture attempting to reconcile narratives that speak from the abject position of trauma.

Mailer's *NAD* is the author's first novel, and the reviews—unlike the reviews for Hemingway's second-to-last-novel *ARIT*—refer to Mailer's novel as successful at its attempt of providing commentary on the war; in fact, reviewers deemed it "the best novel yet about World War II." Mailer's work captures the experiences of war in a non-romantic fashion with its focus on the disunity surrounding the trauma of war in the structure of the narrative. The narrative disunity captured and implemented in the structure of both Mailer's and Hemingway's WW II novels involve a point of view that differs from the prior structures of war fiction. In the aftermath of the Second World War, American fiction—illustrated in *ARIT*⁹ and *NAD*—engages a different narrative point of view involving abjection and drawing on the trauma of war to generate a different structure of narrative.

The titles of the two works preface influence of trauma on the structure of the narratives. Mailer's title calls attention to a shift in position in the structure of his narrative. "Naked" does not suggest the indicator of a physical objective state but, instead, projects an interior subjective state experienced abjectly during the trauma of war. Paul Seigel observes that the use of "naked" in Mailer's title connects to a sense that the appearance of the term throughout the novel intimates a feeling of openness and vulnerability (294). For Seigel, the term showcases a central theme of the novel, the theme of the

effects of drawing back into oneself after opening up to others. Seigel's perspective on the use of "naked" is furthered if coupled with the idea that this receding of openness, of nakedness, occurs in the acts that lead to death in the structure of the narrative (295). The coupling of the terms "naked" with "dead" produces a sense of unified disjuncture in conjunction to the work's subject and structure. The narrative structure of the work reflects a sense of unified disjuncture in the jostling occurring between point of view perspective and structure operating in the novel. The jostling between exteriority and interiority is illustrated by the "time machine" passages.

Hemingway's title selection also references a desire to explore the effects of war and trauma on the structure of the narrative.¹⁰ Hemingway's paraphrase of General Stonewall Jackson's last words, in the title of the *ARIT*, reflects on the question posed at the beginning of this piece: how does a body of literature deal with subjects who are speaking from an abject position of trauma? Civil War leader Stonewall Jackson, who upon death observes that, "Let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees" (Cooke 485).¹¹ Hemingway's paraphrase of Jackson's last words removes the communal "us" and the restorative "rest." As such, Hemingway's title highlights a different presentation of narrative subjectivity and objectivity from the intention suggested by Jackson on his deathbed: a representation of point of view that in Hemingway's application does not involve traditional first or third person narrative structures. Instead, Hemingway's narrative speaks not from the objective "you" or the subjective "I" but instead from a more abjective narrative perspective. Thus, Hemingway's title intimates a focus on the giving of voice to a previously silenced experience and point of view of war and trauma inherent in not only the subject but, more important, in the structure of the novel.

Hemingway's and Mailer's titles suggests another tangent to the previous question of *how* a body of literature speaks from a position of trauma: *why* does a body of literature desire to speak from this previously-silenced abject position. Twentieth century war narratives differ from those following the Civil War. For Craig Warren, the constraints of the Victorian narrative structure in correspondence with codes of social propriety limit the earlier narratives that choose war and trauma as their subjects. The limitations of previous era's narrative structures first appearing following the Civil War betray a silence—a narrative gap—that authors following the World Wars address as they attempt to generate stories of and from the dark tragedy and

trauma of war. The narrative gap created through the silences in the narratives following war corresponds to the experience of trauma. In traditionally structured war narratives, subjectivity is bound to the experience of war, yet the experience of the trauma of war is often silenced below the surface of the narrative structure. Ernest Hemingway and Norman Mailer's World War II novels appear to grant a point of view to the previously silenced abject experience of trauma in their narratives as a palliative to the hegemonic subjectivity of prior war stories and structures.

Giving voice to trauma in the structure of literary narratives following World War I and II addresses the excising of the interior life of war trauma in predominant narratives. Evolving narrative structures operating in the late war fiction of Hemingway and the early fiction of Mailer counter a hegemonic privileging of the objective valor and subjective honor of war that systematically attempts to avoid engaging the abject experience of trauma in the narratives. John M. Kinder suggests that Norman Mailer's goal in *NAD* is to

remind postwar readers of what was already being excised (both deliberately and inadvertently) from Americans' memory of World War II. Drawing upon his own experience as an infantryman, Mailer takes great care to highlight the brutality of combat and the physical and mental abuse suffered by "common soldiers" throughout the war. (191)

The narrative evolution occurring in Mailer and Hemingway emboldens a different type of narrative structure that takes the tragedy of trauma not only as subject matter for the fiction but, more important, takes the experience of the tragedy of trauma as structure. This evolved form of narrative is a tragedy not involving hegemonic, external *dei ex machina* and internal heroic flaws as the impetus for the structure of the fiction, but a narrative structure that instead uses the previously silenced experience of suffering¹² to generate and provide structure for the narrative.

NARRATIVE CALCULUS AND THE WW II FICTION OF HEMINGWAY AND MAILER

The trauma of war as a structural template reveals changes occurring in the narrative structuring of fiction following the World Wars. Narrative

structures prior to the World War periods often engage a linear and equational method for presenting the story. In the traditional linear narrative tradition of pre-World War I and II literature, fictions are presented and structured in a manner reminiscent of arithmetic and geometry. For instance, narratives like Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* utilize a structure that presents the experience of war chronologically. The focus in this war narrative is on the movement of the story through the traditional elements of time and space. The narratives following the Civil War, like Crane's work, appear to be focused on presenting elements of the narrative—character, plot, and point of view—in a traditionally straightforward manner and point to the idea that the solution to the narrative's content and structure can be understood *vis-à-vis* the computation of various elements of the story. In many ways, these post war narratives hold tenuously to the personal subjective and objective fictions surrounding war and trauma.

The experience of the first two wars offers a necessary counterbalance to the narrative arithmetic and geometry—which upholds traditional narrative and cultural fictions of war trauma—presented in the content and the structures of the earlier war narratives. The elements deployed in the narrative arithmetic and geometry from the prior narrative structures still retain a place of prominence in the work occurring during and following the wars. Increasingly the narratives following the Great War and World War II effect a changed narrative action in relation to the experience of war trauma on the author's narrative epistemology. Kali Tal suggests that “*re-telling the war in a memoir or describing it in a novel does not merely involve the development of alternative national myths through the manipulation of lot and literary technique, but the necessary rebuilding of shattered personal myths*” (117). As the structure of war and trauma evolves, the narrative structures reflect the changes experienced on the idea of the personal subjective point of view in the structures of narratives as a result of war and trauma. A necessary change in structure is needed to address the evolving impact of trauma on the population's evolving understanding of subjectivity and objectivity and, concomitantly on the fiction's presentation of point of view and self.

Hemingway's fiction progresses from a reliance on a narrative arithmetic and geometry into a different and changed narrative structure relative to his engagement with war trauma in his fiction. Following Hemingway's time spent as an embedded correspondent in the Spanish Civil War and in World

War II, his writing—in content and structure—no longer focuses only on presenting the arithmetic—the subjects and objects of his stories—or the geometry—shapes and senses evoked by his stories—or the algebra—equations and consequences apparent in the themes of his stories. Hemingway asserts, in a 1950 interview with Harvey Breit concerning the narrative construction of *ARIT*, that “I have moved through arithmetic, through plane geometry and algebra, and now I am in calculus” (Hemingway, “Talk” 14). Hemingway’s focus on crafting a text using a narrative calculus is not just about treating or representing an inner reconciliation to the outer experience of trauma in the fiction. Instead, the emphasis is on the play between the inner and the outer effects as a result of trauma on the structure of the narrative. As calculus is the study of change, of space, and of time, Hemingway draws attention to the manner in which change is represented in the structure of a narrative as a result of the experience of trauma in war. Hemingway seeks to capture the illusive element of change, space, and time in his narrative construction mirroring of the experience of trauma in the structure of the narrative.

Calculus, as the study of change and space, operates as a narrative method for structuring the presentation and representation of the trauma of war in fiction. The study of change, which Hemingway engages in the narrative structure of calculus in *ARIT* and Mailer appropriates in the structuring of *NAD*, is illustrated through the memory of war and trauma in the narratives. Samuel Hynes observes in *Soldier’s Tale* of the effect of war trauma on the construction and structuring of narratives involving the experience of war trauma. Hynes observes that

there are the inflicted sufferings of war—the wounds, the fears, the hardships . . . there is something else that is done to men by wars: no man goes through a war without being changed by it . . . and though that process will not be explicit in every narrative—not all men are self-conscious or reflective enough for that—it will be there. (3)

ARIT utilizes a narrative calculus as Hemingway shows how the experience of war and trauma affect the structure of the narrative as war similarly affects the participant. *NAD* engages a narrative calculus as Mailer, though the experience of war and trauma, engages and manipulates time, space, and

place. These evolved structural adaptations can be seen through the specific experiences and re-experiences of soldiers. Exploring Hemingway's widely-panned novel and Mailer's widely-lauded work focusing on the effects of trauma on the structure of the narrative represents an opportunity to examine how the narrative calculus contributes to understanding the evolution of the narrative structure.

The illustration of Hemingway's calculus in *ARIT* encourages an understanding of his earlier narrative structures—arithmetic, geometry, and algebra. The experience of trauma in the culture-at-large also privileges a sense of awareness of the past mythic narrative structures of war. Hemingway's narrative structure of calculus that captures the experience of war trauma in *ARIT* embodies yet transcends previous narrative structures. Hemingway¹³ offers in the narrative calculus of *ARIT* a study of change in relation to the experience of trauma as the focus of his fiction, instead of the exploration of the effects of trauma or the spatial experience of trauma. Hemingway writes that Richard Cantwell observes that “[h]e [Gran Maestro] and the Colonel both remembered the men who decided that they did not wish to die; not thinking that he who dies on Thursday does not have to die on Friday” (61). In this passage, the external observations of the men are characterized as coalescing with the internal impressions of the narrator. The narrative calculus unfolds as Hemingway appears to examine the alterations of the narrative presence via the figure of Cantwell and his experiences of trauma. The presentation and representation of trauma, as an abject awareness and state, represents a variable that enables a narrative evolution in the structure of *ARIT*. The narrative's treatment of trauma, which gives voice to an experience that is abject, alters the presentation of person, space, and time in the narrative structure of the novel.

Mailer's novel adopts narrative strata that also illustrate a questioning of the previous representation of objectivity and subjectivity in war narratives. John Limon observes that *NAD* displays four levels of narrative influence in the work's content and structure. For Limon, Mailer's work reflects the influence of World War I—in its modernist meanderings, World War II—in its witnessing, interrogation, and visioning of totalitarianism, Cold War—in the book's ideology, and World War III—in its prediction and inchoate eschatology (134). These four elements of influence on Mailer's text contribute to an understanding of how the “Time Machine” sections operate in the structuring of the narrative.¹⁴ Similar to Hemingway's treatment involving

narrative calculus in his *ARIT* Mailer, too, plays with a variety of narrative positions in his novel in relation to trauma in war. The shifts in person, place, and even in thought contribute to providing a narrative voice to a previously silenced voicing of the experience of trauma during war. Mailer's novel opens with, "Nobody could sleep" and continues in the second paragraph with "[a] soldier lies flat on his bunk, closes his eyes, and remains wide awake" (*Naked* 3). In this passage, the narrative voice assumes a point-of-view situation that operates without a traditional deployment of narrative subjectivity or objectivity. This altered point of view is illustrated in the focus presented through the experience of "nobody," and then it is further engaged by the assumption of a narrative position relegated to war trauma—"a soldier" (3). The opening passages of the novel illustrate a shifting point of view in the structure of the novel that moves beyond traditional subjective and objective narrative presentations of war trauma.

TRAUMATIC POINTS OF VIEW: NARRATIVE STRUCTURES AND WAR IN HEMINGWAY AND MAILER

Hemingway's and Mailer's focus on capturing the traumas of modern war and experience engages and deploys a testimony of questioning and confusion related to the trauma of war. The experience of trauma, in war, often is illustrated in the fictional narratives of war as not simply the threatening of one's life but the recognition of the threat by the mind as occurring "one moment too late" (Caruth 62). The necessity and impossibility of truly grasping the threat to one's life is repeatedly confronted by both the act of survival and the traumatic experience itself. Thus in the fictional retellings of traumas in narratives, the attempt is made to capture both the timeliness and timelessness of the experience of trauma. However, conventional narrative structures often do not allow the space or place for the representation of these abject understandings or experiences. The inability of traditional narrative structures to embody and reflect the experience of trauma in a narrative relates to the structuring of these conventional narratives which follow the lines of narrative arithmetic, geometry, and algebra.

Hemingway and Mailer adopt a different structuring of their narratives involving the trauma of war. Instead of trying to use the traditional elements of narrative to engage the experience in a narrative, these authors use trauma to engage the structuring of the narrative. James Dawes asserts in *The Language of War* that "war thus initiates a semantic crisis, a crisis of meaning

premised upon disbelief in language's ability effectively to refer to and intervene in the material world" (131). Dawes' assertion opens the exploratory vista regarding the relationship between trauma and narrative, for the experience of war not only illustrates a disbelief in language—as unit—in capturing the experience of trauma, but it also engages a disenchantment with the ability of narrative or story to refer to or intervene. Hemingway and Mailer adapt narrative and elements of the experience of trauma in a narrative calculus that both reflects and creates from trauma and the experience of trauma in order to address the effect of trauma on narrative presentations of the war.

The notion underlying a narrative evolution to a more calculean movement occurring as a result of war trauma focuses on the effects of war trauma on narrative point of view—specifically on the objectivity and subjectivity—operating in their World War II narratives. Lyndsey Stonebridge suggests that the trauma of war affects the understanding of narrative point of view profoundly in the structuring of war fiction. Stonebridge asserts that

the only thing accidental about the experience of fighting in the trenches in the first war was that one managed to survive at all; nonetheless it was shell-shock that confirmed that the trauma of war, similarly, could obliterate the time of the mind . . . What could be described as a traumatic temporality set the terms for much literary and cultural modernism for the first part of the 20th century—as well as what was to follow. Freud's originality was to insist that trauma not only had an effect on the mind, but that it constituted what we think of as human subjectivity itself. (196)

In this movement, the traumas of war do not simply ravage the participants physically, but the individuals who experience war trauma are traumatized more deeply by the idea, echoing Stonebridge that "the trauma of the war" undoes their "deepest fantasies of themselves as peacetime masculine subjects" (197). Stonebridge's argument focuses on the notion—introduced and engaged in the burgeoning psychoanalytic community surrounding the world wars—that the traumas of war do not only affect the bodies of the

soldiers and individuals who experience the trauma of war, but that the traumas of war profoundly alter the epistemology and ontology of individuals.

The undoing of the fantasy of subjectivity in relation to the experience of war trauma also relates to the evolution of (prior) narrative structures. The awareness that the trauma of war alters the understanding of subjectivity and objectivity, and thus engages the necessary shifts that appear in the construction of narratives following the experience of trauma and war. Mailer's narrative structure intimates this narrative shifting in both content and in construction in *NAD*. In one of the many "Time Machine" sections focusing on General Cummings, the narrative content and structure of the chapter reflects and creates from a narrative space of the undoing of subjectivity and objectivity as a result of the traumas of war. Mailer notes of Cummings that

He is always learning things, understanding already that his mind must work on many levels. There is the thing he thinks of as the truth, the objective situation which his mind must unravel; there is the "deep layer," as he calls it, the mattress resting on the cloud, and he does not care to plumb for the legs; there is, and it is very important, the level where he must do and say things for their effect upon the men with whom he lives and works. (*Naked* 411)

In this passage, the content of the narrative reflects the experience of the trauma of war—following traditional narrative paradigms of arithmetic and geometry. However, the structure of the narrative creates from the experience of trauma—engaging the narrative exploration illustrated by the changed understanding of space, time, and place occurring in reaction to trauma experienced. In this calculean movement in the novel, Mailer's narrative focuses on representing the many aspects of the experience of trauma—not only the limited subjective or objective presentations but also the abjective experience of trauma.

In *ARIT*, the narrative perspective illustrated focuses on Richard Cantwell expressing his displeasure at the attempt to re-make the traumatic abject actions of war trauma emblematic of subjective patriotic glory and objective nationalistic sacredness. Cantwell remembers his experience of war and battle stating that, "that was the first time I ever saw a German dog eating a roasted German Kraut . . . how many could you tell like that? Plenty, and

what good would they do? You could tell a thousand and they would not prevent war“ (255). In this passage, Cantwell’s recollection centers on engaging the abject inconceivability of war and trauma represented by the animals eating the soldier’s corpse. Further, the passage also reveals a tension with subsequent attempt to normalize the unbearable condition of witnessing this atrocious act of war. The passage from *ARIT* illustrates the narrative shifts constructed in relation to tension appearing when attempting to engage the abject experience of the traumatic events of modernity in the structure of a narrative. In this passage, as in the passage from *NAD*, Hemingway represents the experience of trauma in war in the content of the narrative and, also, attempts to embody the abject experience of war trauma in the structuring of the narrative—a structure that gives voice to the abjective more than the subjective or the objective.

Mailer’s focus on the traumas of war and experience reflects and creates in the narrative the testimony of questioning and confusion of the trauma of war. For Mailer, the narrative presentation of the traumas of war embodies knowledge of the incomprehensibility of the traumatic experience. Thus, as he constructs his structures of fiction, Mailer oscillates between reflecting a testimony based on experience of trauma and creating a fiction drawn from the impossibility of understanding the experience of trauma.

At the end of *NAD*, General Cummings is presented as reflecting and creating his views on the ending of the offensive. Cummings is observed in the structure of the narrative as feeling that

[f]or a moment he almost admitted that he had had very little or perhaps nothing at all to do with this victory, or indeed any victory—it had been accomplished by a random play of vulgar good luck larded into a causal net of factors too large, too vague, for him to comprehend. He allowed himself this thought, brought it almost to the point of words and then forced it back. But it caused him a deep depression. (716)

Mailer’s focus on the observations illuminate a parallel between Hemingway’s Cantwell and Mailer’s General Cummings, two military men whose war service is not punctuated with the glory of victories but defined more by the experience of defeat. The narrative parallel illustrates the connection between fiction and tragedy. The fictive tragedies written following the

World Wars seek to address a cultural amnesia concerning the trauma of the war. The structuring of these tragic narratives seeks not to operate as tragedies of the subjective flawed hero or objective doomed *polis*. Instead, the structure of these modern tragedies operates in narratives that speak from and to the abject nature of *tragedy*: the suffering, the destruction, and the distress experienced in the darkness of war—the dark knowledge too heavy too bear yet too important to silence.

NOTES

1. See Cathy Caruth's exploration of Freud's treatment of trauma appearing in *Unclaimed Experience* (4–5).
2. Ernest Hemingway, like many of his fellow young men, seeks to become involved in the war; however, due to his myopic vision, he is deemed unsuitable for military service.
3. The rapid and decisive destruction of villages, homes, peoples, and ways of life in the modern warfare of World War I, according to Meredith, illustrates a rapid acceleration of time. This acceleration operates as the spiritual enemy of mankind, and accordingly, for Meredith, places time as a major preoccupation of the modern literary and artistic sensibility. See James H. Meredith's "Fitzgerald and War" in Kirk Curnett's *A Historical Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald*.
4. This question differs from Fredric Jameson's view of narratives as socially symbolic acts in his *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act* in that the question of narrative subjectivity is focused on the manner in which trauma impinges on the narrative of the text. However, the question still reflects Jameson's desire to link narrative evolution with social change in the culture.
5. The placement occurs in American war fiction beginning with Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Private Fleming.
6. Notions of traumatic war remembrance in Ernest Hemingway's *Across the River and into the Trees* and Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* offer a component and link to the influence of the trauma of war on modern fiction. Elaine Scarry notes that "without memory, our awareness would be confined to an eternal present and our lives would be virtually devoid of meaning" (1). In this context, Mailer's early characters appearing in his first novel and Hemingway's later characters like Cantwell experience remembrance in a different fashion than the earlier characters in American fiction. The act of remembrance operates as a method for attempting to understand the interior self in reference to the exterior world. The memory of World War I operates similarly as it lies like a palimpsest beneath the surface of modern American fiction. The desire to locate meaning through an attempted recollection of past traumas echoes from the first international trauma, World War I. The post-World War I literature seeks to explore understanding through the remembrance of an exterior world fraught with trauma.
7. Hemingway's title selection for the work references his desire to explore the effects of war and trauma. The title of the work is a paraphrase of the last words of Civil War Leader Stonewall

Jackson, "Let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees" (Cooke 485). Hemingway's paraphrase removes the communal "us" and the restorative "rest." As such, the title highlights a different subjectivity from Jackson: a subjectivity that in Hemingway does not involve a "you" or an "I." Instead, this narrative speaks not from the objective you or the subjective I but instead from the space of the abjective.

8. Hemingway, in "Battle for Paris," observes, "during this epoch I was addressed as 'Captain.' This is a very low rank to have at the age of forty-five years, and so, in the presence of strangers, they would address me, usually, as 'Colonel.' But they were a little upset and worried by my low rank . . . The main highlights of this period that I remember, outside of being scared a number of times, are not publishable at this time. Sometime I would like to be able to write an account of the actions of the colonel both by day and by night. But you cannot write it yet" (*By-line* 370–371).
9. In *ARIT*, Hemingway opens the novel by presenting Colonel Richard Cantwell's memories that occur in the past. These moments appear early in the narrative as an interior representation of an objective self. Cantwell remembers, "That was the day before yesterday. Yesterday, he had driven down from Trieste to Venice along the old road . . . he relaxed [and] looked out all this country he had known when he was a boy" (21). Hemingway's use of a frame device in the novel, according to John Paul Russo, is one that provokes an unsettling, uncanny response (155). The placement of the majority of the novel as focused on Cantwell's memories give subjective voice to his interior landscape. Thus, Hemingway's representations of memory and remembering in *ARIT* imbricate creating a protagonist who differs from Hemingway's prior heroes. In the novel, Cantwell does not operate objectively nor does he operate subjectively; instead, he encompasses another space that seeks to find understanding through his memories of a lifetime of war trauma.
10. Cantwell is not simply concerned with the *experience* (i.e. being in *it*) nor is he merely concerned with thinking about the *experience*. This protagonist oscillates between the two representations creating the idea, as E.M. Halliday expresses, that external action is inadequate to internal meaning. In the narrative, Cantwell's memories and understanding of the effects of war are more privileged than his actual experiences. A Cantwell figure relies on the importance of memory to make sense of his world. This character type is a post-war protagonist who has no choice but to assume a different level of narrative subjectivity when constructing meaning.
11. On Saturday, May 2nd, 1863 Jackson was wounded at the battle of Chancellorsville. He was shot through the left upper arm just beneath the shoulder. The humerus was fractured—the radial artery was injured. He bled profusely. A second bullet entered the lateral left upper forearm and exited diagonally from the medial lower third of the forearm. A third bullet struck his right hand fracturing the second and third metacarpal bones and lodged beneath the skin on the back of his hand. These wounds would lead to his left arm being amputated, and his living for eight days. On the following Sunday, at 1:30 PM, Dr. McGuire noted momentary consciousness and told him he had but two hours to live. Jackson whispered, "Very good. It's all right." He declined brandy and water and said, "It will only delay my departure and do no good. I want to preserve

my mind to the last.” Dr. McGuire states his mind began to fail and wander. He talked as if giving commands on the battlefield—then he was at the mess table talking to his staff—now with his wife and child—now at prayers with his military family. A few moments before he died he ordered A.P. Hill to prepare for action. “Pass the infantry to the front rapidly. Tell Major Hawks”—then stopped. Presently he smiled and said with apparent relief, “Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees” and then seemingly in peace he died (“Ernest”).

12. Cathy Caruth asserts that “[l]iterature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience meet” (3). In *Across the River*, Hemingway echoes Caruth’s point as Cantwell asks himself, “How can I remember if I am not bitter?” (230). Cantwell’s question illustrates the complex relation between the knowing and not knowing which arises in trauma. More importantly, his question focuses on the very nature of attempting to *remember* from the abject position of trauma.
13. Hemingway, in a (1959) introduction unpublished until 1981, examines the progression of his writing career. In this essay written two years before his suicide, he hits on the importance of trauma in relation to his evolution as a writer. Towards the end of the passage meant for a collection of Hemingway’s short fiction, Hemingway writes,

It is very bad for writers to be hit on the head too much. Sometimes you lose months when you should have and perhaps would have worked well but sometimes a long time after the memory of the sensory distortions of these woundings will produce a story which, while not justifying the temporary cerebral damage, will palliate it. “A Way You’ll Never Be” was written at Key West, Florida, some fifteen years after the damage it depicts, both to a man, a village, and a countryside, had occurred. No questions? I understand. I understand completely. However, do not be alarmed. We are not going to call for a moment of silence. Nor for the man in the white suit. Nor for the net. Now gentlemen, and I notice a sprinkling of ladies who have drifted in attracted I hope by the sprinkling of applause. Thank you. Just *what* stories do you yourselves care for? I must not impose on you exclusively those that find favor with their author. Do *you* too care for any of them? (“Art” 10–1)

Hemingway captures in this section the progression of his work in relation to the trauma he experienced. The various “woundings” Hemingway experiences contribute “after the damage” depicted is long gone to the creation of narratives, including the oft-dismissed *ARIT*. These narratives capture a sense of the trauma experienced and remembered by Hemingway. Ernest Hemingway in *Across the River and into the Trees* reflects the unhinging and play of certain thought-to-be-stable notions of subjectivity and objectivity in his fiction. The evolution of Hemingway as a writer is a result of the trauma experienced and remembered. He observes, “but sometimes a long time after the memory of the sensory distortions of these woundings will produce a story which, while not justifying the temporary cerebral damage, will palliate it” (10).

Hemingway's *Across the River and Into the Trees* correlates his experiences and memories of trauma to his fiction.

14. The time machine sections notably display the influence of John Dos Passos on Mailer's writing and textual construction.

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