

## Creatures in Hemingway's Short Stories: *Les Hommages to Human Grief*

Hiroshi TAKAHASHI

*The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, the Finca Vigía Edition published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1987, contains in its whole bulk of seventy stories the eight items in whose titles Hemingway had the same number of creatures included: "Cat in the Rain," "Hills Like White Elephants," "A Canary for One," "The Butterfly and the Tank," "The Good Lion," "The Faithful Bull," "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog," and "Black Ass at the Cross Roads" (gothics added). While it is admitted that the group of animals mentioned above show the author's innate penchant for animated nature such as often seen in his works, whether in novels, in short stories, or in essays, it may also be of some interest to some readers and critics of Hemingway's short stories to notice that these eight stories may be capable of a collective survey as one lot, in terms of his technical feats by exquisitely using living things as crucial props or measures to enhance dramatic effects with, although not like such significantly big elements in the development of stories as the bulls in *The Sun Also Rises* or the leopard and the hyena in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." The technique of introducing into the works something like simile, metaphor, implication, association, insinuation, reminder, or instigator by using animals could be regarded as of the topnotch quality. This paper will deal with Hemingway's uniquely subtle handling of living beings in his eight short stories. For a starter, it would be advisable to tentatively classify these eight items into three groups according to their motifs as follows:

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|-------------------------------|--|
| (1) Children's Fables:        | "The Good Lion"<br>"The Faithful Bull"   |
| (2) War Stories:              | "The Butterfly and the Tank"<br>"Black Ass at the Cross Roads"                                     |
| (3) Marital Conflict Stories: | "Cat in the Rain"<br>"Hills Like White Elephants"<br>"A Canary for One"<br>"Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog" |

### (1) Children's Fables: Alienated Noble Strangeness

At the request to the heming-l internet forum on September 22, 1998 from an AlphaJane to give her some feedback on Hemingway's "The Good Lion" and "The Faithful Bull," an Arthur Waldhorn promptly responded to the forum on the same day, suggesting that the two stories are

originally children's fables Ernest Hemingway wrote for Adriana Ivancich's nephew. (Adriana Ivancich was, as every Hemingway fan knows, one of the whizzers that had enchanted the author.) They appeared, he adds, in *Holiday* magazine in 1951 and Adriana did the illustrations ("Good Lion etc" from hawk22@juno.com[Arthur-Waldhorn] to heming-1@mtu.edu). The Waldhorn's suggestion provides a relevantly elucidatory clue to understand and appreciate these stories, supposedly disappointing and uninteresting at a glance, which have apparently been regarded as simply spoofs and not taken seriously. To be sure, a quick perusal of the two stories might lead the reader to a disastrous misunderstanding that these are mere nonsensical doodlings of little literary value. Jennifer Wheeler of the Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park followed Arthur Waldhorn on line on that same day, arguing that there has been essentially no critical work on them and that most scholars and critics dismiss them as light and uninteresting ("Re: Good Lion etc" from Jumpalagi@aol.com to heming-1@mtu.edu).

Yet, it would have to be admitted as too hasty a conclusion that there has been *no* critical work on these two stories. Actually, there have been some, stimulating as well as interesting. Kenneth Johnston regards these fables as a release for Hemingway's domestic and literary anxieties, thus interpreting "The Faithful Bull" as both a reaffirmation of Hemingway's love for his wife and an idealization of himself as a writer, and then reading "The Good Lion" as a "flattering self-portrait of a dedicated writer who faithfully adheres to his own distinctive style and subject matter, despite rejection by editors, hostile attacks by reviewers, and laughter and scorn from former friends ("The Bull and the Lion: Hemingway's Fables for Critics," *Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual*, 1977, pp. 149-56. See also Kelli A. Larson, *Ernest Hemingway: a reference guide, 1974-1989* [Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1990], pp. 49-50). Jayne A. Widmayer reads the two stories not only as "satiric attacks on pretensions and affectations" but also as self-parodies of the author. However, in comparing them with *Across the River and into the Trees* (written at the same time) Widmayer finds that Hemingway is also showing that his heroes are considerably more complex than the parodies would suggest ("Hemingway's Hemingway Parodies: The Hypocritical Griffon and the Dumb Ox," *Studies in Short Fiction* 18, no. 4 [Fall 1982], pp.433-438. See also Larson, p.130).

Human imagination, in general, is so quick to conjure up vivid reflections of the author's image from behind the protagonists in stories that it is never baffling to meet the "self-portraits" or "self-parodies" theories, which it seems all but difficult to refute. Emphasis, however, should rather be put on the point that the two stories are fundamentally the *fables for children*, which have been profusely adopting two essential motifs in a long history of kindergarten fables of worldwide fame, such as "Ugly Duckling" and "Cinderella," that is to say, "*strangeness*" and "*faithfulness*" alienating the heroes or heroines from their original spheres to lift them onto higher, nobler and/or happier levels of existence. Both "The Good Lion" and "The Faithful Bull" have a common penchant for instructing and entertaining children, not for giving pleasure to adults. When newly viewed as *children's fables*, as the author originally intended to present them, these two stories that have long been regarded as enigmatically uninteresting and, at best, treated as something like self-portraits verging on spoofs or parodies will come up onto the literary stage with a freshly

brilliant luminance.

### **"The Good Lion": Noble Homecoming of a Bullied Griffon**

In "The Good Lion," the "*strangeness*" comes from the fact that the good lion is so good and has wings on his back. This is why the other lions all make fun of him and think they will kill him. This seemingly deadly defect of his shows that he really is a *griffon*, which is a species of imaginary creature with eagle's head and wings and lion's body. His father, also a griffon, lives in a "city," not in "Africa," a savage land, standing under the clock tower and looking down on a thousand pigeons, all of whom are his subjects, the evidence that suggests the good lion belongs from the first to a far nobler level of society and to a far higher level of culture, not to such a savage land as "Africa." The good lion can speak both beautiful Spanish and exemplary French. He rises into the air on his wings, fleeing from the fangs and claws of the wicked lioness, sets his course for Venice, alights in the Piazza, and receives a warm welcome from everyone. He flies up for a moment and kisses his father on both the cheeks. His father asks, "How was Africa?" "Very savage, father," says he. Funny though it may appear, he, as well as his father, is a frequenter to "Harry's Bar," where he walks into "on his own four paws" and finds all of his friends. It must be remembered that this is a *children's fable*, in which it is no wonder that all sorts of funny things are likely to occur. Funny again though it may be, he is a little changed himself from being in Africa, and asks the bartender for "Hindu trader sandwiches," which, strangely enough, the bartender says he can get for him. The lion looks around him at the faces of all the nice "people," not "wicked lions," and knows that he is at home and very happy ( *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, The Finca Vigía Edition [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987], pp. 482-484. All references to Hemingway's short stories are to this edition and are designated Finca in the text ).

For children, the charms of the story may come from a strange animal named "*griffon*" bullied by other lions in Africa, who starts to fly high in the air to set course from Africa to Venice, see his father griffon again in the Piazza, walk into a bar "on his own four paws," and find himself happy among old friends. The lesson is that every living creature must belong to where he/she originally belongs to. Or, for that matter, a noble intelligent creature must not mix with ignorant savages.

### **"The Faithful Bull": Bull Killed Through Strange Faith**

In "The Faithful Bull," the "*peculiarity*" arises from the facts that the faithful bull loves to fight with all the other bulls of any age and that he always is a champion. He fights to kill with deadly seriousness exactly as some people eat or read or go to church. "Fighting was his obligation and his duty and his joy." His "*nobility*" lies on his fatal mental condition that he, though he cannot know or think why, is angry inside himself and loves to fight. The bull costs his owner so much money by fighting with other bulls that the owner decides to select him for breeding, not to send him to the ring to be killed. His "*strangeness*" comes out conspicuously in the pasture where he sees the breeding cows. He falls in love with the best muscled, shiniest, and loveliest

cow, and pays no attention to any of the others: he only wants to be with her, and the others mean nothing to him at all. The bull should learn more and be different than he is to be a good breeder. So the owner decides again to send the bull away with five other bulls to be killed in the ring. The bull fights in the ring wonderfully: everyone admires him and the man who kills him admires him the most. The sword handler says that the bull has to be killed because he is "faithful." The matador adds a somewhat didactic comment: "Perhaps we should all be faithful" (Finca, pp. 485-486).

The fact that the bull only wants to be with the loveliest cow in the pasture is interpreted by Kenneth Johnston as a reaffirmation of Hemingway's love for his wife (Larson, pp. 49-50). This analysis seems to this writer to be too simplistic to be convincing: there is no telling that the cow loved solely by the strange bull in the pasture was modeled after his *wife*, not after his wife-to-be or his other woman. A more likely possibility would be that the bull's hounding of the cow may have been based on one of the author's fatuous attempts to stalk a whizzer like Adriana Ivancich. The lessons for children are that every creature must stick to his own instinct faithfully, and that there is a nobility in life that the one who is killed can be admired the most by the other who kills him. Not so bad a *children's fable*, isn't it?

## (2) War Stories: *Les Hommages to Innocents Absurdly Killed*

"The Butterfly and the Tank" and "Black Ass at the Cross Roads" are both unforgettably painful stories of "cruelty," "meaninglessness," and "remorsefulness," in which some innocent citizens or youngsters, not bona fide soldiers, are so easily and unfeelingly killed under the abnormal conditions of "warfare." Both the "butterfly" and the "black ass" seem to be a sort of Hemingway's *hommages* to the lightly killed innocents, and, for that matter, to the despairs and sorrows of the bereaved or the survivors, including some of the murderers.

### "The Butterfly and the Tank": Citizen Easily Killed Through Too Much Gaiety

"The Butterfly and the Tank" depicts an accident during the second winter of shelling in the siege of Madrid in the Spanish civil war. On his way home from his office in the rain, the narrator stops into the bar for a quick one. The place is crowded, full of smoke, singing, men in uniform, and the smell of wet leather coats. A civilian in a brown suit, who has been clowning around from table to table, squirts one of the waiters with a flit gun. Everybody laughs except the waiter, who gets very mad and indignant. The flint gun man, delighted with his success, now squirts another waiter. This waiter, also, is indignant, his lips trembling, and says with dignity, "You have no right to do that," the strongest protest in Spain. The flint gun man squirts his flint gun at the back of another waiter's neck, not noticing how the singing has fallen off. Then three men in uniform grab the flint gun man and carry him out of the revolving door in a rush. Outside someone hits the flint gun man on the mouth. The three men come back in. Then in comes the flint gun man, with blood on his face, his necktie pulled to one side, and his shirt torn open. He has the flint gun again, and makes one general, unaimed, challenging squirt with it, holding it toward the whole company. One of the three men shoots the flint gun man to death, who

lies quietly on his back on the floor. The three men go right through the policemen who have just arrived. As they go out one of the policemen shouts, "No one can leave. Absolutely no one." Everybody there, including the narrator, is held for three hours. The next morning the narrator comes back to the bar to try a little gin and tonic before lunch, and is given more information of the flint gun and the killed man. In the flint gun the victim had eau de cologne, the manager says. He was a cabinet maker, the manager adds, and his wife came to drop down by him and say, "Pedro, what have they done to thee, Pedro?" The manager's, as well as the author's, apt comment on the accident: his gaiety comes in contact with the seriousness of the war like a butterfly (Finca, pp. 429-436)

In "The Killers," Nick Adams is so much stunned to know someone is just going to be killed with no efforts exerted to protect himself that he decides to go out of town. In "The Butterfly and the Tank," the despair seems to be much less traumatic than Nick Adams': the narrator is older than Nick and is now sipping the gin and tonic water in the bar, where the murder was committed, looking out at the bright cheerful morning sunlight. This brightness at the last scene of the story, however, does not necessarily show how bright the narrator's heart is. His heart sinks heavily into the infinite depth of despair, with compassion to Pedro's wife mustered and reproaches heaped on the slovenly conducted investigation by the police. Although the narrator says in the story that he does not like the title much, it seems safe to say that the author himself is sure to be fully attached to it: the naming is so straight and simple that there is nothing tawdry and disagreeable. No other titles suit the story more admirably than this one. The "butterfly" is a humble *hommage* of the author's to a civilian named Pedro who is so easily killed by a soldier through his too much gaiety and to Pedro's wife who cries, "Pedro, what have they done to thee, Pedro?"

**"Black Ass at the Cross Roads": Nice Boy of Seventeen Meaninglessly Shot to Death**

"Black Ass at the Cross Roads" starts with a French civilian mistakenly shot down to death at the cross roads. "We" all thought he was a German who had stolen civilian clothes, but he turns out to be French. "We" set the traps well beyond the cross roads and wait for the Krauts to keep coming this way. It is a beautiful late summer day. The job is to kill the Krauts coming in vehicles and get them off the road and into the ditch. "We" are not splendid soldiers, but specialists in a dirty trade. The two Krauts approach on bicycles. "I" shoot one of them and miss. "I" try again and the German falls and lies in the road with the bicycle upside down and a wheel still spinning. The other cyclist sprints on, keeping on pedaling until he is out of sight. "We" go first to the German in the road to find him not dead but shot through both lungs. "We" take him as gently as "we" can and lay him down as comfortable as "we" can. Claude puts a field dressing on him. He has a nice face and does not look more than seventeen. He tries to talk but cannot. Claude makes a pillow for him, strokes his head, holds his hand, and feels his pulse. The boy is watching him all the time but he cannot talk. The boy never looks away from him and Claude bends over and kisses him on the forehead. The boy does not know that it is "me" who has done it to him. "I" should kiss him myself if "I" am any good. Claude

says that he will stay with him a little while. "I" walk back under the hot summer sky to the farmyard. "I" don't know how "I" can feel any worse. Claude comes back, and asks, "Is there any of the wine left?" Red says there is some more and some sausage. "Good," Claude says. He has *the black ass* bad too. "We" are splitting the wine and the sausage even between "us" and neither of "us" likes "our" share (Finca, pp. 579-589)

At this writer's request to provide elucidation of what is implied by "*the black ass*" at the finale, a Rose Marie Burwell kindly suggested on the heming-l internet forum that "*black ass*" is a term Hemingway had used since the late 1920s to convey his own feelings of serious depression ( "Re: What's 'Black Ass'?" from rmb39@interaccess.com to heming-l@mtu.edu on May 10, 1998 ) That reminds me of the term, "get the red ass," which means "get irritated." As Claude has *the black ass* bad, so "I" have *the black ass* bad, too. The image and implication of *the black ass* are absolutely indispensable for this war story, almost perfectly supporting and amplifying its crucial motif of despair and depression. Although it awkwardly squats down at the cross roads in the field of battle so sinisterly dark, the title image of *the black ass*, it seems, keeps on claiming the honorable appellation of "*dignity of man*," which is apparently daring enough to square up to the rank absurdity of war. The "*black ass*" is a bitter *hommage* of Hemingway's dedicated to the shock and despair of the dying innocent young man of seventeen, and, for that matter, to the unquenchable, serious feelings of depression of both Claude and the narrator who unwittingly had to conduct a cruelty to kill an angel of a boy in the midst of the warfare.

### ( 3 ) Marital Conflict Stories: *Les Hommages to Female Grief in Love*

"Cat in the Rain," "Hills Like White Elephants," "A Canary for One," and "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog" have to be included in this category. Here are depicted, as if drawn with a single stroke of the brush, such mental conflicts as potential love, compassion, sympathy, understanding, and devotion somewhat distorted or missed between male and female or parent and daughter. Hemingway seems to be more interested in the dramatic evolutions of conflict than in the causes of the events. "He will not tell us," says Paul Smith, "how the characters arrived at their present condition, or how they will resolve their conflict; we do not need to be told, for the answers are embedded in what we so briefly do see and hear" ( "Introduction: Hemingway and the Practical Reader," *New Essays on Hemingway's Short Fiction* [Cambridge University Press, 1998], p. 15 ) And the most important point is that if it were not for the imagery of creatures introduced in these short stories they would be so dull and insipid as to be likely to be dismissed as meaningless as well as uninteresting. To develop each motif, each animal plays an indispensable role vital to the affluent meaning contained in each story.

#### "Cat in the Rain": Wife's Sensual Desire Cruelly Ignored by Husband

"Cat in the Rain" is one of the best one-act tragi-comedies by Hemingway, played by a young couple of man and woman in a symbolically mythological cosmos, full of implied meaning. It is raining outside the hotel, as usual. The American wife finds out a cat crouched under one of the dripping green tables, and goes downstairs to try to get it in the rain, but the cat is gone.

Back in the room, the wife tries to draw her husband's attention to her sexuality by asking if it is a good idea if she lets her hair grow out and announcing her desire to have a kitty to sit on her lap and purr when she strokes her and have a meal in her own cozy dining room with her own silver and candles. Her husband pays little attention, urging her to shut up and get something to read. Then she puts forth something like an ultimatum: "Anyway I want a cat. I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can't have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat," when someone knocks at the door. It is the maid sent by the hotel owner, who holds a big tortoise-shell cat pressed tight against her and swung down against her body (Finca, pp. 129-131).

Of all the interpretive problems of the story, the three seem to be of vital importance to this writer: (1) what kind of relationship exists between the American wife and the hotel owner, (2) what the wife is really meaning to assert by the ultimatum, "I want a cat now," and (3) what feelings and doings of the American wife are expected toward the big tortoise-shell cat at the end of the story.

(1) It is needless to say that the American wife "likes" the hotel-keeper. The question is how much and in what way. The repetition of the word, "liked," in the description of her feelings toward the hotel-keeper when he bows to her as she passes the office seven times, plus one "Liking" reminds the reader of the repeated use of the same word in "Up in Michigan." In "Up in Michigan," Liz's feelings to Jim are quite sensual: "She held herself stiff because she was so frightened and did not know anything else to do and then Jim held her tight against the chair and kissed her. It was such a sharp, aching, hurting feeling that she thought she couldn't stand it. She felt Jim right through the back of the chair and she couldn't stand it and then *something clicked inside of her and the feeling was warmer and softer*. Jim held her tight hard against the chair and she wanted it now and Jim whispered, "Come on for a walk" (Finca, p. 61; italics added). In "Cat in the Rain," too, the wife's feelings toward the hotel owner might be the same kind of Liz's, quite sensual and sexual, though not so passionate as Liz's. Although the hotel-keeper is too old and obsequious to act as such a forcibly amorous seducer as Jim, he is, for her, the imaginary lover who would be nice enough to hug her with his "big hands" she likes. When she passes the office again on her way back to her room after failing to find and get the wet cat, the padrone bows from his desk again. Then, *something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance* (Finca, p. 130; italics added). The wife's sensual response to the hotel-keeper, quite similar to Liz's though it may be, has something different and more significant. The description above shows that the sexual sense of something *small and tight* inside her body leads to the strange feeling of herself *being of supreme importance*. First, upon seeing the padrone, the wife feels something conceived inside the body: her hidden desire for conception has been achieved in illusion like the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary. Like some other critics such as John V. Hagopian and John D. Magee, J. Gerald Kennedy argues that like Hadley, the wife is also pregnant ("What Hemingway Omitted from 'Cat in the Rain,'" *Les Cahiers de la Nouvelle: Journal of the Short Story in English* 1: 75-81; see also Larson, p.156). Although the pregnancy theory seems very charming as well as convincing, technically the wife

is not pregnant, but she only imagines herself just impregnated by something like telepathy from the hotel owner. Second, she, though momentarily, feels herself changed into something "of *supreme* importance," the momentarily preposterous reverie of herself having become the Son of God conceived inside the Holy Mother. Unlike Jim, the hotel owner never approaches her, but rather plays the role of something of a guardian angel from afar who helps Virgin Mary conceive: more instrumental than really sexual. At the denouement of the story, the padrone surprises her by sending a big cat, one of the helping hands he usually gives to all the visitors. Her liking for him is instantly inflated into a deep and strong sense of gratitude and compassion toward him, but, sure enough, not into a passion so vehement as to urge her to plunge into his "big hands" she likes. Most importantly, she knows he knows nothing about her liking him. "It may further be argued," as Oddvar Holmesland points out, "that the hotel-keeper's deference to his client has little to do with interest in her as a woman. The fact that he always sends the maid to execute his services indicates the professional attitude behind his attentiveness" ("Structuralism and Interpretation: Ernest Hemingway's 'Cat in the Rain,'" *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* [ed. Jackson J. Benson, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1990], p. 68 )

( 2 ) What is implicitly meant in context by "a cat" in her ultimatum put forth to the husband? The question seems to be so complex as to reject flawless answers or interpretations. It may rather be that only somewhat arbitrary speculation could be taken up as charming: every reader is entitled to enjoy his own speculated theory. Oddvar Holmesland argues that "the meaning of the cat cannot be defined more explicitly than as a metaphor for the wife's instinctual desire for a vital openness to life. Hagopian's precise identification of it as 'an obvious symbol for a child' is consequently not reliable. All that can be said is that it reflects her need to experience emotional fertility and is not attached to a definable object" (*New Critical Approaches*, pp. 70-71 ) To this writer, the former half of the above argument seems very convincing: the part of his rejection of Hagopian's theory especially appears interesting. However, the issue should not be taken lightly: something more vital should be revealed. By claiming "a cat" above all other things at the last phase of the mental conflict drama between the American couple in a small hotel room, it should be stressed, the wife apparently demands *something different from a real cat*. Of course, it is not "an obvious symbol for a child," as Hagopian insists. Then, what is implied by "a cat"? It must be regarded not as a *symbol* for a definable object such as "a child," nor as a *metaphor* for the woman's instinctual desire for a vital openness to life, as Holmesland suggests, but as "*a reminder of her strong sexual desire for the husband*": she insists that she wants to be hugged by her husband, a quite natural desire of a wife. Until now she has been trying, with no success, to have her husband understand her female sexuality and longing for bodily closeness. As a last-spurt effort, she puts an implicit suggestion forward that she wants someone to hug her: she implicitly confesses that all that she wants now is nothing but her husband himself. Again, it should be emphasized that although she wants her husband to know that she wants him now when she says, "I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can't have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat" ( *Finca*, p. 131 ) it does not follow that "a cat" here represents the husband himself as



a *symbol*. The word, "cat," is uttered by her only to instigate her husband's true sympathy as a *reminder of something important which he tries to ignore*. The image of "a cat" in this implication has to be acknowledged as one of Hemingway's triumphant technical subtleties and ambiguities.

(3) Another fascinating question is how each of the American couple would respond to the new arrival brought to the door by the maid. Every reader is entitled to feel free to imagine what his and her responses would be to the big tortoise-shell cat. Although her gratitude for the padrone would be enormous, the wife would be anything but satisfied by the presented cat. The big cat is so much different from what she wished to have on her lap to purr when she strokes her. What is more, an implicitly uttered ultimatum has already been issued that she wants to get her own "cat," that is to say, her husband lying on the bed in front of her eyes, reading a book and ignoring her serious wish to approach him. The timing of the big cat's entry is unfortunately wrong. Her feelings toward the big cat would have to be bittersweet: although she would give a joyful utterance, "Oh, great!," welcoming it with her arms extended, it is certain that a tear would trickle down her cheek, showing her disappointment in the back of her mind. Her husband would be pleased to say, "Congratulations! You've got exactly what you wished to have," certainly showing a cynical smile hovering around his lips. In the seeming Garden of Eden, there is no sign that the rain will stop ( see also Hiroshi Takahashi, "Cats in Hemingway's 'Cat in the Rain,'" *Journal of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Shinshu University*, Cultural Science 22, 1988, p. 100 ).

#### **"Hills Like White Elephants": Trifles Potentially Changed into Something Rich**

"Hills Like White Elephants" deals with the emotional discrepancy between an American and his girl waiting for the express from Barcelona for Madrid at some junction in Spain. It is very hot outside. The man says it will really be an awfully simple operation, urging the girl to have an abortion done, because "it" is the only thing that has made them unhappy. The girl says that once they take it away, you never get it back. A discrepancy comes up to the surface when, looking off at the line of the hills beyond, the girl says that they look like *white elephants*, and the man says he has never seen one. The imagery of *white elephants* reflected on the hills is, to him, a stale simile, a wet blanket, worth nothing to talk about. To her, however, it could be something rare and important that would get them really happy if their hearts could leap together with compassion, however trifling it might be. He tells her to get away from trifles; she believes trifles could be changed into something rich and strange. The "*white elephants*" are effectively used as the imagery to suggest the possibility that trifles could be raised up to the respected height of value. Of this point Lewis E. Weeks, Jr., has rightfully pointed out the paradoxical nature of something that is both valuable and rare while also worthless and burdensome ( "Hemingway's Hills: Symbolism in 'Hills Like White Elephants,'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 17, no. 1 [Winter]: 75-77; see also Larson, p. 108 ). Another important function of the imagery of *white elephants* is that they are mirroring the man's mean egoism upon their white purity, thus making the girl's seemingly stupid insistence on rejecting the abortion appear more convincingly

glorious and righteous. The whiteness of elephants in the story should be regarded as another memorable *hommage* presented by the author to the woman's disappointment and grief: so sympathetic a treatment has the author given to the heroine. It occasions no surprise, therefore, to find such a manuscript study as has revealed that the original opening was a biographical account of Hemingway's train trip through the Ebro valley with wife Hadley, who pointed out the white hills that later became the story's title image ( Robert E. Fleming, "An Early Manuscript of Hemingway's 'Hills Like White Elephants,'" *Notes on Modern American Literature* 7, no. 1 [Spring-Summer]: item 3; see also Larson, p. 153 ).

### "A Canary for One": Daisy Miller Trapped in a Cage

"A Canary for One" begins with the vacuous chatter of an American lady to an American couple in a *lit salon* compartment during an overnight train journey on a *rapide* from the Riviera to Paris. The lady, who is really quite deaf, talks about a *canary* she bought in Palermo. She is taking it home to her little girl in New York. In Vevey the girl, she says, fell madly in love with a Swiss from a very good family who was going to be an engineer. That was why they left the Continent, she adds, for she couldn't have her daughter marrying a foreigner: no foreigner can make an American girl a good husband; *American* men are the only men in the world to marry. She admires the couple's being *Americans*. At the Gare de Lyons the three walk out in the three different directions: the *American* husband and wife are returning to Paris to set up separate residences ( Finca, pp. 258-261 ).

The title image should be given credit for being fully exquisite to convey rich meaning. First, a *canary* would be anything but a welcome present for the daughter, in that it was bought only because her mother liked it regardless of her daughter's inclination and intention, and in that a single *canary*, not a pair of canaries, would be regarded by the daughter only as a cruel reminder of herself forcibly and miserably trapped in a cage. Second, the canary has somewhat exquisite effects to show not only the mother's insensitiveness, high-handedness, and foolishness, which will lead only to a journey to nowhere, but also each of the three passengers in the *lit salon* compartment being really desperately lonely, contained in each own cage, despite the seemingly happy *American* couple regarded by the lady as the typical American husband and wife. Julian Smith rightly argues that this story is a story of traps and cages: the *canary*, of course, is trapped in its cage, the American lady's daughter is trapped by her own weakness and her mother's prejudices; the American lady is trapped in a cage of deafness, pettiness, self-interest, parsimony, intolerance, ignorance, and fear of foreigners and of train wrecks. Each of the American couple, Julian Smith continues, is also trapped in his/her own egocentrism: oddly enough, not once do the narrator and his wife speak to each other in the story, and they even say good-by to the American lady separately: "My wife said good-by and I said good-by to the American lady." Strangers, Smith adds, cannot talk with each other, only to or at each other, Hemingway implies ( "'A Canary for One': Hemingway in the Wasteland," *Studies in Short Fiction* [Summer 1968], pp. 358-361 ).

The surprise ending of this story is likely to lead the reader to a hasty conclusion that this

is the story of disintegration of the married life of the American couple like the first separation and divorce between Hemingway and Hadley. It may have to be stressed, however, that the motif of love and marriage in disrepair is nothing but a minor one, and that the irreconcilable discrepancy between the American lady and her daughter in New York should be accepted as the major one. Again, although the surprise ending, sure enough, has the effect to suggest the coming cleft between the American couple, emphasis should be put on its vital main function to ascertain the American lady's fallibility that she has been easily deceived by appearances. One of the American lady's tragic defects is stunningly emphasized by the revelation that the couple are coming back to separate.

The most important point regarding motifs is that both the two characters, the selfishly opinionated mother and the narrator, and the background of the shattered love in Europe were borrowed from Henry James, especially from his *Daisy Miller*, as Lois P. Rudnick points out ( "Daisy Miller Revisited: Ernest Hemingway's 'A Canary for One,'" *Massachusetts Studies in English* [1, 1978], pp. 12-19 ) According to Rudnick, the Trois Couronnes Hotel talked about in "A Canary for One" is also the place where Daisy first meets Winterbourne and begins her journey toward death, and Vevey is a travel agent's hype for the fool's gold of romance ( Rudnick, pp. 13-14 ) Unlike Daisy Miller, who is easily crushed under the contamination of Europe, the canary girl in Hemingway's story apparently succeeds in protecting her innocence from foreign contamination. Yet, actually, the girl is forcibly taken away from the Swiss lover to live up-town in New York. She wouldn't eat anything and wouldn't sleep at all, taking an interest in nothing and caring about nothing, the plight suggesting she is none other than "a canary" as well as she is none other than "one," not man and wife, to whom, foolishly enough, the canary is going to be presented. The title image of "a canary for one" is completely indispensable for the motif and evolution of this story.

#### **"Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog": Two-Way Self-Repression**

"Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog" begins with the protagonist, who is suffering from blindness and circumscribed amnesia, trying to recall to mind the scenes impressed during the African safari in the past with the help of his companion, maybe his wife, who is so affectionately self-sacrificing. He can remember some parts, but not other parts, of the African experiences, and he prefers talking with her about the good old days to being read the old *New Yorkers* by her. He is going to write better than he ever could. He wants her to get the words right when she takes her time with the tape recorder. "Honey, in lots of ways we couldn't have it better," he says. Yet, at the same time, he thinks he must figure out ways not to destroy her life and ruin her with it: he advises her to go to Paris and then to London, see people, have some fun, come back, and tell him all about everything. To which suggestion, she says no: she just doesn't want to be sent away. When he holds her close and kisses the top of her head, he feels her tremble and cry. He says, "Nobody is ever going to send you away." But walking down the stairs feeling each stair carefully and holding to the banister, he thinks he must get her away as soon as he can without hurting her ( Finca, pp. 487-491 )

Contrary to the preceding stories based on the similar situations, this is in essence a story of true love and devotion and mutual concessions. Surely, the story is packed with scenes in which the man and wife clash in opinion. Yet, the quarrels arise not from sheer differences between the couple supposedly leading to disintegration, but from mutual compassions for each other. The reason why he wants her to go on a trip is not that he dislikes or hates her so much as to really want to dispel her away, but that he doesn't want to destroy her life: he really thinks he must figure out something practical to maintain his own life without her help. He figures out that he has to say good-bye to her for the benefit of each other. He reasons, therefore, that he will have to think up some way to convince her to go to Paris and then to London. The crucial point is that, in the back of his mind, he wishes that she would never come back to him to continue to help him for the rest of her life: he confesses to himself, "I've got this now for the rest of my life and I must figure out ways not to destroy her life and ruin her with it"(Finca, p.488 ). He has secretly decided that he will have to live alone without her: he seems to believe that would be the best choice for each of them. So, it would be safe to say that although he advises her that after having some fun in Paris and then in London she should come back and tell him all about everything she has experienced, his hidden desire would be never to see her come back to keep on sacrificing her life to his own good. At the end of the story, he says to himself, "I must get her away and get her away as soon as I can without hurting her" (Finca, p.491 ). Not to hurt her, he has to deceive her under false pretenses. The title, "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog," would point to the protagonist's secret will to get good at his own plight as he goes along by rejecting to throw himself under her compassionate wings. He tries to convince himself to *get a seeing-eyed dog* instead of getting her to come back and make a good helper for him for the rest of her life. The title image exquisitely represents the protagonist's seemingly prideful, indomitable will for independence. And it should have to be added in a rush that there is no telling whether this will of his would be strong enough to keep on supporting his ways of life for the rest of his life without any help from her. It would be doubtful whether he could keep on rejecting her helping hand forever: his will would someday be collapsed, and she would be anyway coming back to him whether he wishes it or not. This is in essence a story of compassion and devotion, not a story of marriage in disrepair. One more thing to add: is there no possibility that he would eventually commit suicide despite his proudly decided will to live along in the dark alone only with *a seeing-eyed dog* beside him?

As for her, she constantly insists that she will continue to help him go along in the dark as much as she can. She knows that she has not been trained for being a good nurse and that she has not any talent. But she insists that although she is not good at looking after him, she can do things other people can't do. They do love each other, she says. She has decided to carry out "a long sort of stupid business," as the protagonist suggests. The discrepancy between the couple comes up onto the surface as the conversation goes along. "Anyway I don't want you just to be *a seeing-eyed dog*," he says. "I'm not and you know it," she retorts. "Anyway it's *seeing-eye* not *seeing-eyed*" (Finca, p. 490; italics added ). The services she will offer to him for the rest of his life, she means to say, are not going to be enforced on her but voluntarily

conducted. "Get a seeing-eyed dog" is an implicit message intended from her to him that he should "get her as something better than a seeing-eyed dog," as she is going to be rather a *seeing-eye* than a *seeing-eyed dog*: that he should know she would be much better than a faithful dog is her urgent message to him. She wishes him to know something about her pride in her will and capability to be a good nurse. Yet, here again is some doubt that she could succeed in making herself a faithful nurse for the rest of her life without any glitches. Only God knows.

The title, "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog," therefore, could be said to contain a subtly implied double meaning: one is something of his self-motivation to urge himself to get "a *seeing-eyed dog*" for the purpose of not relying on her goodness to help him; the other is something of an implicit suggestion from her that he should not get "a *seeing-eyed dog*" but take her as "a *seeing-eye*" for the rest of life. The subtlety lies on the fact that the title reflects the protagonist's ambiguous feelings oscillating between acceptance and refusal of the woman's allegedly affectionate and compassionate feelings for him, although his penchant seems likely to be inclined to refusal. (1998.10.28.)

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