

# Envisaging Aristotelian Tragedy, Impaired Bodies, and Human Truths: A Poetical Analysis of Ernest Hemingway's "In Another Country"

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## I. Introduction

In order to further appreciate Ernest Hemingway's short story "In Another Country," this paper attempts to comprehend the imaginative organic context of "In Another Country" by engaging the rhetorical and thematic gear of the text. Through such an attempt, this paper challenges to project an alternative interpretation. After illustrating in detail the history of discourses in the literature review section, the paper first illuminates its problematics and second discusses what might be necessary in order to grasp the holistic nature of this short story. After such discussion, next, this paper will develop its own argument.

The argument this paper delivers is important for the following reasons. As an original contribution, this paper will analyze the text through Aristotle's poetics for the sake of examining the signification of the style of this text. For the first time, this paper asserts that this narrative of Hemingway could be read as an Aristoteian tragedy through its rhetorical and grammatical structure: it will demonstrate the importance of stylization of the text. In other words, the paper will argue that the rhetorical stylization of this text has a message worth reading. Therefore by employing Aristotle's poetics in the reading, the paper will make clear that it is necessary to pay attention to style if we are to fully understand its holistic theme embedded in the rhetorical grid. Through the process, the paper persistently discusses how the structure and narrative grammar works to explain the story's thematic significance. In the end, the paper finally sets forth to unveil the hidden plot through a metaphorical comparison with the textual body and the physical body of the soldiers. Through these steps, this paper ultimately aims to present the signification of style in Hemingway's "In Another Country."

"In Another Country" is included in Ernest Hemingway's second short story collection *Men Without Women* published in 1927. This short story depicts an event of an American narrator "I" who served in the Italian Army during World War I. The narrator is in a hospital in Milan to ride a "tricycle" (CSS 206)<sup>1</sup> for machine rehabilitation therapy since he has lost his entire calf and is not able to bend one of his knees. While the doctor optimistically believes in such treatment, the Italian major, who was once a champion fencer, and who is now undergoing therapy with the narrator, has no confidence in curing his withered "little hand like a baby's" (CSS 207). The narrator makes friends with other Italian soldiers at the hospital who have also been injured; however, he learns that they have been awarded for their valor the same

medals the narrator received for his contingent injury. Finding alienation among injured soldiers, the narrator finds attachment to the major who suggests that he learn correct Italian grammar and that a man should not get married since a man "should not place himself in a position to lose" (CSS 209). After such peculiar guidance, the major is informed that his young wife, whom he had married after he had been invalided by the war, had died of pneumonia. After three days absence from the hospital, the major comes back at the usual hours with his uniform, and begins his rehabilitation looking out of the window.

"In Another Country" is one of the most highly acclaimed short stories in Hemingway's short fiction since its publication. Hemingway himself knew that this work was one of his best, and wrote to F. Scott Fitzgerald in November 23rd, 1926 that "I am sure [Scribner's] will buy a hell of a good story about Milan during the war" (SL 231). In reading "In Another Country," Fitzgerald, who had been a tough mentor<sup>2</sup> to Hemingway, wrote to him that the opening of this short story is "one of the most beautiful prose sentences I've ever read" (300), and praised its supremely stylized prose. Earl Rovit, one of the earliest scholars commenting on this story, mentions that this work "is surely one of Hemingway's masterpieces in short story form" (61). Furthermore, Kenneth Lyn, one of the most pervasive biographers of Hemingway, comments that "among Hemingway's short works of fiction, the opening paragraph of 'In Another Country' is matchless" (353), and explains that Hemingway's creations were then at the "pinnacle of his power" (353). Similarly, a prominent Hemingway biographer, Michael Reynolds writes, "[Hemingway] was changing forever the American short story" (78) through the art of this fiction.

Although it is more than clear that this work is one of the best of Hemingway's short stories and has been highly praised since its publication, perhaps we are not sure what exactly amounts to constituting such unanimous valorization when there is still a big discrepancy in the basic assumption of the narrative in the discursive arena. As shown above, most of the highest evaluation devoted to this work is mainly concerned with the rhetorical stylization of the text. However, the historical discourses indicate that only Sheldon Grebstein, David Lodge, and Robert Lamb have paid attention to its rhetorical stylization and its effect on the text. In contrast, many other discourses ranging from the 1960's to the present, represented by dominant Hemingway scholars such as Joseph Defalco, Arthur Waldhorn, and Joseph Flora have discussed the subject and its themes to ensure the significance of the work. However, since they did not emphasize the significance of its style, their thematic valorizations did not clearly and consistently correspond to the initial stylistic evaluation; there is a gap between two evaluations. Therefore, in the critical arena, there is still an unproportioned weight on thematic approaches in contrast to the evaluation in rhetorical stylization.

Hence methodologically, in order to bridge the gap between the two approaches mentioned above, this paper aims to confirm and reinforce the significance of the story's rhetorical stylization through inspecting how the themes are stylized. Such a rhetorical approach attaches

consistency to the relationship of rhetoric and themes because it will strengthen the relationship of each and make clear why this short story attains one of the highest evaluations. Since Hemingway's writing style is dependent on heavy omission and condensation, as represented in his *Principle of Iceberg*,<sup>3</sup> which hides seven eighths under the surface leaving only one eighth visible in the text, the principle not only omits large parts of the story, but also suspends what is necessary for readers to construct a plot. Hence, there is a deep rift among the critics in identifying who the narrator is: is it Nick Adams, the main protagonist of Hemingway's adolescent short stories who is speaking, or is it strictly the first person narrator "I" as literally scripted in the text? Moreover, there is also a big rift between identifying who the protagonist is in this story: is it the major or the narrator? While the principle of iceberg successfully alludes to rifts in its interpretation, it is necessary that we pay special attention not only to *what* is written but also to *how* it is written.

## II. Literature Review

Initially, many critics assumed the major to be the protagonist and hero of this story. This claim was due to the dominant biographical perspective which was also functioning to guarantee the phallic value of Hemingway's other novels. Carlos Baker, one of the earliest critics who discussed "In Another Country," related this piece of work to Hemingway's biographical history to explain Hemingway was under pain of divorce with his wife Hadley while writing this piece. Baker linked Hemingway's pain to the major's, and claimed, "the central figure was an Italian major" (177). Similarly, Phillip Young, one of the earliest critics of Hemingway also claimed, "[i]t is the major's pain that the story is about" (58-9), and related the pain of the major to that of the fictional character Catherine Barkley in *Farewell to Arms* and of "the lost generation" (59). Waldhorn also found the major's pain similar to that of Krebs', the protagonist of Hemingway's other famous short story "Soldier's Home" (68-69). Thus, many of the early foundational criticisms<sup>4</sup> had put the major as the protagonist of this piece and regarded the narrator's importance as secondary.

Besides, the major's dominance in the text seems to derive from the functional relationship between the narrator and the major. Although Rovit named the narrator "I" as a "tyro" (55)<sup>5</sup> who can stand as a hero, he was not intending the tyro to be a hero in regard with this story. Just as the general definition of tyro suggests a "beginner in learning something,"<sup>6</sup> his "tyro" meant one who plainly views, reports, and learns something from the deplorable anecdote of the tutor — the major. Despite a tyro usually denoting a hero in many of Hemingway's short stories, Rovit explains, "[t]he major of the story is Hemingway's most attractive tutor figure, and he is also the most intelligent and sensitive" (61-2), meaning, the major is the character

most worth discussing, since the tyro is simply observing and learning. In parallel, Waldhorn writes, “[w]hat the reader perceives is what Nick learns” (69),<sup>7</sup> suggesting that the major’s deplorable familial anecdote is the main text to be read for both the tyro and the readers. Rovit and Walhorn both exemplified that the narrator “I” in this short story is not a narrative hero but one who only observes and receives the major who is the tutor and hero.

This “major as hero” hypothesis was a necessary consequence since the major had been considered to bestow a moral value to the story. J. Bakker finds in the story a supreme value one can ever find in literary works, and writes, “he is the embodiment of moral courage” (7), and “[t]he bravery of the major reflects a vitalizing characteristic of all human beings” (7), to explain the value the major’s courage toward pain brings to the text. Although what the major teaches to the narrator is not about the beauty and value of life, he is a morally valued character as Defalco prescribes: he is an exemplar to the narrator who is “adjusting to his own personal wound” (136), and who shows “knowledge that a man is a victim of contingent forces” (136). As Defalco explains, since Hemingway is trying to picture “individuals in conflict with the overwhelming forces” (137), such as war and natural forces, it is clear that the major is an exemplar who teaches the narrator a lesson for how one should struggle to adjust to one’s individual damages, however improbable it may be.

On the other hand, while the school of “major as hero” seemed dominant in the early criticisms, there emerged a strong current that focused on the centrality of the narrator “I.” Julian Smith argued that “the young American narrator . . . is the secret center of the story” (137) and that he “has been frequently ignored or relegated to a minor position” (137). While Smith thought the narrator’s centrality was covered, Flora claimed in a bold manner that “Nick has learned . . . how hard someone’s dying can be for those who remain” (142),<sup>8</sup> meaning the story is not about the major but the narrator’s initiation towards loss from natural forces. James Steinke argued about the centrality of the narrator and writes, “the major’s tragedy . . . was later to teach the older narrator of the story another kind of grammar of which he was also ignorant when young” (36), suggesting that this story’s business is about a recollection of the narrator’s young and naive days in Italy. The critics who saw centrality in the narrator were those who did not put themselves in an identical position with the narrator, and aimed to grip a much more holistic picture of the text from distance.

Critics from another current of discourse locate themselves much further from the themes than any other school of approach. It is those in the school of rhetoric who perform a differential analysis to Hemingway’s art of writing. The earliest critic who embarked on a poetic analysis was Sheldon Grebstein who had scrutinized the rhythmic arrangement of syllables of the opening sentences of the story. He exemplified in detail that the cadences from the incremental repetition of words and phrases were “dissonantly, polyrhythmically, somberly” (169) at work as a unified system that represents a sense of “alienness” (168) as a whole. David Lodge took a slightly broader perspective and compared how Hemingway’s literary prose is different from

that of late 19th century Romanticism. He explains how Hemingway's writing "reject[s] the traditional rhetoric" (90) since the traditional model of writing required "elegant variation" (90) in contrast to Hemingway's metric and repetitive mode of language. Elaborating Lodge's analysis, Robert Lamb went further to articulate a number of Hemingway's rhetorical effects configured in the text. He introduced the "Conradian Split" (104)<sup>9</sup> which explains the relationship of the narrator "Marlowe" and the subject "Kurtz" in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and how such split endows literary attraction to its text. Employing such a term, he speculated the semi-equal bipolar relationship of the narrator and the major, and found how "readers are equally drawn to the story of the subject character" (104).

To recapitulate, the initial discourses surrounding "In Another Country" focused on searching for who the protagonist is, by linking the major's pain with Hemingway's biographical background, and specified the major's dominance in the story. While a tyro is usually considered to be the hero in literary texts, critics named the narrator "I" as a tyro while at the same time stressing the dominance of the major in the story. Although such assignment may seem contradictory, many critics argued that the major is the hero since he is the exemplar who shows how a man struggles to adjust to one's personal loss and damages, however hopeless it may be. On the other side of the spectrum, there were critics who did not identify themselves much with the narrator "I," and claimed that the story is about the narrator "I" learning from the major-tutor. After this rift had been formed in the process of identifying the protagonist, the trend of identifying the narrator became stagnant. At the same time, there emerged a few critics from the school of rhetoric who distanced themselves from the textual themes than the previous schools. They explained its themes by inspecting the formalistic characteristics of the text and its effect at work, such as how the style of rhythm, sound, atmosphere, repetition, and textual configuration constitute textual themes. Although there are only a few critics, the latest rhetorical school is beginning to discover many new facts in the way this text is told.

### III Toward a New Problematic: The Effectiveness of Peter Halter's Perspective

As we have confirmed, the historical discourses have directed their target from the thematic to the rhetorical. This orientation was inevitable since "In Another Country" is in fact written so tightly, clearly, and smoothly that it is truly difficult for the reader to find an interpretive chasm to crack the underlying system of signification in the text. It is plausible why so many of the historical discourses have argued over specifying what the story is about or who the hero is, since these are the only questions the text poses overtly. However, because so much critical attention was paid to the discussion towards the identification of the protagonist, meticulous critics were able to come to understand that such plain bipolarity on the textual

surface itself is the phenomenal rhetorical device that aims for attaining a certain effect.

The bipolar gravity of the text is evident in that, as we have seen, the text is in fact deliberately written in a manner that one is unable to determine who is the protagonist or the hero. Although it is the narrator "I," up to the middle part of the story, who explains what is happening between the wounded soldiers and the people of the outer-world, and between him and the wounded soldiers, the narrator abruptly halts telling his interpretation of his own situation from the point after where the major's deplorable anecdote is presented. In the first half of the narrative, the narrator *tells* his story and its interpretation, but in the later half, he commits to *showing* the major's deplorable anecdote. Thus, it is necessarily indeterminable whether the story is about the narrator or the major, since the author is presenting them on different grounds. Such indeterminacy in specifying its protagonist from the rhetorical configuration simply tells us that the point of the story is somewhere else, unless it is the indeterminacy itself that Hemingway aims to present.

Perhaps the only critic who discussed the problem of such indeterminacy caused by its rhetorical setting is Peter Halter. He claims that the disagreement of historical discourses naturally occurred because critics had assumed "parts of the story under a homogeneous whole" (524). This statement is certainly true in that the discourses of the thematic approach actually had a semi-theological teleology that searches for a monistic center in their interpretation. Halter has contributed in clarifying two points. One is, it is not the author's incompetence but the careful and strategic rhetoric that is generating such vagueness. Secondly, the text has "more than one center" (524). By subsuming a deconstructive field in the text, Halter succeeds in presenting a new thematic embedded in the text in accordance with the school of rhetoric's formalistic observations: "aporia" (524), which is originally a Greek word for contradiction. However, can such aporia serve as the point of the story?

If anything, aporia is the fundamental cause for Hemingway's strategic rhetoric of ambiguity for this story. As Lamb's aforementioned "Conradian-split" (104) defines, the bipolarity in the narrative represented by the split between the narrator and the major is one of the essential rhetorical devices that draws attention to the *telling* of the narrator in the narrative. For example, the narrator Nick Carraway in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is a good case of how an observing narrator's act of telling can draw strong and equal attention towards the observed character Jay Gatsby. Hemingway seems to follow Lamb's model of "Conradian-split" identified in *The Great Gatsby*, and succeeds in rhetorically representing the politics between narrator "I" and the major on the textual surface. As Halter finds the two characters are "partly excluding each other" (524), the unresolved friction taking place between them is obvious. While the narrator always accommodates himself to easy self-therapeutic comfort, the major contrarily maintains a dignified code of behavior, however unpleasant. Consequently, such friction, which Halter calls aporia, is certainly the core of the text's formalistic character: it guarantees ambiguity of the thematic problem of the text.

Let us consider if this ambiguity can serve as the point of the narrative. Without the unsettling friction between the two characters based on the unstable tension caused by the "Conradian Split," the text is unable to generate its arresting textual gravity toward the reader. Such frictional instability not only guarantees the rhetorical bipolarity but also works to strengthen the unresolved ambiguity. It is indispensable since the absence of ambiguity weakens one of the most important representations of the text: alienation. Since Halter also finds "isolation" (528) as an essential property of this narrative, we may consider that the text in fact represents the sense of alienation both thematically and rhetorically. As the story shows, although the narrator "I" may be a war hero to the outsiders, he is alienated at the same time as an outsider to the group of wounded soldiers because they all know his war medal was awarded not for his valor but for his accidental injury under the status of a foreigner. In addition, the major is alienated not only from normative combat soldiers, but also from his family through his wife's death. Rhetorically, as the frictional bipolarity exemplifies, the text frames both of them in isolation, which is the consequence of alienation. Hence, since ambiguity in the text is the kernel that secures the sense of alienation, we should largely infer that the thematic point of the narrative is alienation.

Charles M. Oliver indicated in his *Critical Companion to Ernest Hemingway* that the biggest controversy is whether "the story might be interpreted more easily if it were an acknowledged Nick Adams story or a chapter in *A Farewell to Arms*" (211). This is to say that because the protagonist cannot be related to the adolescent alter ego of Hemingway, Nick Adams, this work has been entailing interpretive complications. However, even if the critics assumed the narrator "I" to be Nick Adams, we may not be able to explain why the author consistently used the anonymous "I" instead of Nick Adams for the narrator. In addition, superposing the anonymous "I" with Nick Adams only causes a number of hermeneutic problems since the story of "In Another Country" would be connected to the whole complex of Nick Adams stories that begin from Hemingway's first short story collection book *In Our Time*. Furthermore, by locating and connecting the narrator "I" to a chapter in *A Farewell to Arms*, another hermeneutic problem arises since the "I" will be connected to Frederic Henry the protagonist of the novel. The only common part is the geographical coincidence of both men being at therapy in a hospital in Milan. However, if they were identical, then one has to take into account the character Catherine Barkley, the girlfriend of Frederic Henry, whose existence is totally absent in "In Another Country." If the narrator "I" was Henry, then the last scene where the major loses his wife by her death signifies something totally different from what could be read through the plain text. Put simply, connecting the "I" to other characters only generates unnecessary hermeneutic complications. On the other hand, even if we do not connect the narrator "I" to both of the characters, we still have the kind of interpretive complications as shown in the problem of thematic approach.

Therefore, we can at least claim that the thematic approach of the historical discourses is

at its limit. It is confronting a tipping point beyond which nothing new can be found unless applying a totally different style of approach of literary analysis such as New Criticism, Psycho-Analysis, Sexuality, or, New Historicism. Therefore, in order to contribute to presenting a new discovery from the text, this paper attempts to practice a drastically different method of literary analysis that articulates how the themes are deliberately illuminated by its rhetorical stylization; an ancient but perhaps an essentially modern style of reading a text is necessary to fully understand the art of Hemingway's writing: poetics.

#### IV Poetical Analysis of "In Another Country"

As we have seen, the school of thematic approach developed their themes by analyzing who the protagonist is, yet such fruit was far from undermining the embedded signification of the text. Once the school of rhetoric began considering the text through rhetorical analysis, they discovered the sense of alienation through its formalistic signification of ambiguity. However, it is surprising that none of the formalistic discourses have yet identified Hemingway's "In Another Country" as tragic drama, although it could be read as tragedy in the usual sense through the depiction of tragic themes. Although this is not literally a theatrical drama, it at least qualifies for a dramaturgical analysis from a stylistic perspective. If we follow some of the important definitions from *The Poetics* of Aristotle, it will be clear that this narrative structure not only addresses itself towards the typology of Aristotelian tragedy but also holds properties that plausibly fit into the category of Greek Tragedy. It is highly effective to employ Aristotle's definition of tragic drama because if we can explain that this short story shares properties of Aristotelian tragedy, then we are entitled to acknowledge a new signification to this story's style, rhetoric, and structure. Through Aristotle's account of tragedy, we will learn how important it is to pay attention to the way the text is presented if we are to look for new signification: style is a message.

According to Aristotle, "[t]ragedy, then, is a representation of an action [which is serious, complete]" (Halliwell 37) and which arouses "pity and fear effecting *katharsis*" (Halliwell 37) through the events. In fact, the narrative of "In Another Country" does not explain the pitiful events that took place for the characters themselves during the war, but rather shows explicitly what kind of tragedy took place in the narrative time-frame. Although WWI is nothing but a tragic event, the narrative does not explain the misery of war itself but explicitly portrays the signs of war traced on the bodies of the wounded soldiers at the hospital, and its after-effects in their psyche. The narrator explains, they "sat in machines that were to make so much difference," (CSS 206) suggesting that they were all physically impaired. When bodies carrying such signs act in the literary theatre, pity and fear caused by war work to arouse tragedy, a



necessary condition for catharsis.

Strictly speaking, the backgrounds of the individual soldiers do not themselves seem to constitute tragedy; they are in fact depicted by the plain actions of the characters. For example, one of the characters for whom the narrator felt sympathy was the soldier who had made other soldiers want to wear "a black silk handkerchief" (CSS 207) when they all went out at night in Milan because "he had no nose then and his face was to be rebuilt" (CSS 207). Here, the narrator is not interested in explaining how pitiful it is to be wounded in the face, but rather, interested in showing how all the soldiers are acting and behaving towards sympathizing his loss of the nose. In that way, the narrative builds the soldier's pitiful tragedy through plain action. Furthermore, the way the narrator explains that this soldier "had been wounded within an hour after he had gone into the front line for the first time," (CSS 207) clearly exhibits the fact that the soldier's loss of the nose itself is not so much a matter of tragedy but of contingency of accidents in warfare. Therefore, background anecdotes of soldiers do not work to build tragedy. As according with Aristotle's definition, it is the actions of the soldiers that form tragedy.

In addition, the deplorable anecdotes of other soldiers are depicted not as tragedy but performed in action to further strengthen the sense of tragedy. For example, the narrator explains,

There were three boys who came each day who were about the same age I was. They were all three from Milan, and one of them was to be a lawyer, and one was to be a painter, and one had intended to be a soldier, and after we were finished with the machines . . . We walked through the short way through the communist quarter because we were four together. The people hated us because we were officers, and from the wine shop some one would call out, "*A basso gli ufficiali!*"<sup>10</sup> as we passed. (CSS 207)

Here, it is clear that the narrative does not stress tragedy through the loss of the young soldiers' future dreams. The tragedy is stressed when the characters actually walk through the midst of ideological others, and when they were collectively alienated by the people whom the soldiers had fought for. This scene certainly represents tragedy that is actually occurring in action against the soldiers' physical bodies.

Moreover, the narrative does not illustrate the young-wife-of-the-major's death as tragedy, but portrays it from dialogical actions between the major and the narrator. While the major is preaching angrily to the narrator that "one should find things he cannot lose" (CSS 209), the major is told that his young wife had died of pneumonia. Then he soon comes to apologize to the narrator, "I would not be rude. My wife has just died. You must forgive me" (CSS 209). Then the narrator begins to observe how tragedy is physically occurring to major's body: "'I am utterly unable to resign myself,' he said and choked. And then crying, his head up looking at nothing, carrying him straight and soldierly, with tears on both his cheeks and biting his lips, he walked past the machines and out the door" (CSS 209) Here, the major's tragedy is certainly pictured through his bodily movements and diction. Although the death of the wife is surely a

unanimously deplorable event, however, the narrative does not depict her death as a tragedy. If anything, it is illustrated superficially and very briefly in contrast to the tragedy exhibited by the major's action and diction. In short, tragedy is presented by the soldiers' bodies and their actions, as according with Aristotle's definition of tragedy.

What Aristotle defined to be the most important element of tragedy is "the structure of events, because tragedy is a representation not of people . . . but of actions and life" (Halliwell 37). In fact, as we have confirmed in the previous paragraphs, the narrator constructs a tragic drama of the soldiers not by the illustrating the loss of their dreams, but by the "arrangement of the incidents of plot."<sup>11</sup> Indeed, personal problems that surround the soldiers are usually presented first, but they are not themselves illustrated as tragedy. Rather, they are presented to the readers as personal, social, and familial conflicts that strengthen the cathartic gravity of the narrative. In this tragic drama, tragedy always arrives after such conflicts, accompanied by the action of the characters. For example, the narrator illustrates the background of the tall soldier who was to become a lawyer, and then begins, "[w]e were all detached, and there was nothing that held us together except that we met every afternoon at the hospital" (CSS 207). In another case, when the narrator explains a scene where he told the major that "Italian is such an easy language" (CSS 208), the major responds actively, "[w]hy, then, do you not take up the use of grammar?" (CSS 208). It is clear that there is a strict sense of order in the telling of narrative which is an essential property of Aristotelian tragedy.

Such order of telling is also applied to show the tragedy of other soldiers. The wounded Italian soldiers are pictured as being in deep conflict with themselves since they are no longer good soldiers for combat, and are also in conflict with other Italians who hold other ideologies. After presenting such conflicts, the narrative begins to show pitiful alienation toward them through reflective action of others. The narrator explains, "we felt held together by there being something that had happened that they, the people who disliked us, did not understand" (CSS 208). However, in another case, the conflict and action are both made invisible for both the soldiers and the readers. Ironically, the only place in the narrative where the soldiers felt warm was "Café Cova" (CSS 208) where girls were always waiting at the tables. Although the narrator feels that "the girls at the Cova were very patriotic, and I found that the most patriotic people in Italy were the café girls" (CSS 208), such is not true since the girls are not there waiting for patriotic people including the soldiers, but waiting for any men who would compensate them for their service. After presenting such an anecdote, the narrator begins to talk about how "the boys at first were very polite" (CSS 208) about his medal, however, as soon as he realizes "I was never really one of them," (CSS 208) he begins to confess he received the medal because he was an American and that "[he] had been wounded . . . [because it] was really an accident" (CSS 208). Here, the act of confession hints the previous invisible conflict backwardly, just to let the reader know that the narrator is in alienation not only from his patriotic colleagues but also from the pseudo-patriotic girls. Through the order of telling and

its accompanying action necessary for it, it is evident that these incidents qualify as Aristotelian tragedy.

However, once we attempt to include the latter half of the story where the major's anecdote begins into the criterion of Aristotelian tragedy, we come to realize that this whole narrative will not simply fit into Aristotle's paradigm of tragic drama, in contrary to the first half. This is because Aristotle further conditioned that "[f]or every tragedy there is a complication and a dénouement" (Halliwell 51). As for the first half, many of the complications—conflicts—raised in the previous paragraph were in fact relieved, since the narrator always found a place for a refuge. For example in the first half of the story, the narrator is avidly in search of a warmer, easier, and more comfortable place: he walks towards "electric lights," (CSS 206); "looking in the windows" (CSS 206) of the shops from the outside; he will become friends with other wounded "three boys" (CSS 207); he finds a much more intimate relationship with the soldier who "had no nose" (CSS 207); he passionately sticks to the major who would "not believe in bravery" (CSS 208).<sup>12</sup> Thus, observing the narrator's behavior, we can easily confirm the existence of dénouement in the first half of the narrative.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, when the narrator abruptly stops explaining his interpretation in the latter half, he can no longer achieve salvation by heading for a warmer, easier, and comfortable place. In the first half, he had been giving the plots of the stories by submitting his own interpretation of them. He was introducing how the wounded soldiers "felt held together" (CSS 208) and why they felt so. Moreover in the first half, he would tell a story and its plot for his war medal anecdote: "I was a friend, but I was never really one of them after they had read the citations, because it had been different with them and they had done very different things to get their medals" (CSS 208). However in the latter half of the narrative, he abruptly halts presenting his interpretation—plots—to the stories he experiences. This is to say that, in the latter half, there is no "dénouement" that qualifies for Aristotle's paradigm of tragedy, since he would not find any refuge there.

However, we may be able to fit the latter half of the narrative into the criterion of Aristotelian tragedy, only if we change our point of view. We will need to focus on explicating it as anomalous formal structure of the narrative. First of all, the narrative is divided into two blocks. In the first half of the narrative, it possesses both a story and a plot thanks to the narrator, which is similar to the style of a Romantic novel such as Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*. However in the latter half of the narrative, there is only the story while the plot is absent—again, thanks to the narrator—, which is a modern style of realism, a style that does not in general explain but only shows the objects itself. Therefore, the narrative possesses a hybrid structure of Romanticism and Realism. The discontinuity of the two blocks will naturally cause tension between them. Through such tension, the narrative structure as a whole becomes unstable. However, with the latter half of the narrative, the text becomes much more appealing to readers because, while the first half of the narrative is closed—a readerly text—as in

Romantic novels, the latter half is opened—a writerly text—since modernist prose usually does not prescribe a plot. This hybrid structure including different effects is appealing because the telling of the narrator changes from the first half to the latter half: the nature of the narrative changes dramatically in the middle of the narrative. Moreover, this means that in the first half of the narrative, readers are expected to simply observe and make sense from the narrator's telling of the story and his reasoning—plot—, whereas in the latter half, readers are invited to make the plot themselves from the narrator's observational story—plain telling.

Now that we have made clear the hybrid characteristic of the text, we will come back to verifying whether this narrative would qualify for an Aristotelian tragedy. Aristotle emphasized that “events and plot-structure are the goal of tragedy,” (Halliwell 37) meaning, tragedy is made from a tragic plot, and not from simply adding tragic anecdotes. The tragic plot—an outcome of some cause and effect—constitutes tragedy. Therefore, as long as we can explain that this narrative involves a tragic plot, this narrative would qualify for tragedy.

However, such observation is perhaps not enough. We will need to speculate what the structure of the organic body of the text signifies at a metaphorical level since the imagery of the whole text itself is the most important fruit of Hemingway's art of writing. If we can assume the first half of the narrative to be a complete body because it has both the story and the plot, we are also entitled to assume that the latter half of the narrative has an impaired body of text because of the lack of plot. Let us now imagine what kind of organic body it would make when we joint the two different bodies together, vertically. The lower part would have a complete body of text, whereas the upper part would be an impaired body of text; or vice versa, depending on which one comes first at the bottom or upper part. Now, we have a whole body of text that is identical to the impaired body of the major. We know as readers that, the major has no problem walking, meaning that he has a complete body at the bottom. However, we also know that one of his hands is withered “like a baby's” (CSS 207), meaning his upper body is impaired. This tells us that the structure of the whole narrative is conceptually identical with the major's body. In the same manner, if we rotate the whole body of the text upside down, that would make an equivalent metaphor for the narrator's impaired body. Therefore, we can infer that the narrative structure of “In Another Country” itself represents the impaired body of the characters. If this metaphorical comparison between them holds, then, we can also say that the absent plot of the latter half of the narrative is equivalent to the impaired parts of the body, meaning the major's impaired hand and the narrator's impaired leg can be designated as plots. In fact, both of them are entitled as the plot of the latter half of the narrative. This is because, without the the major's impaired hand, and the narrator's impaired leg, the latter half of the narrative would not function since the major's impaired hand is what heightens the major's existential problem at the hospital after his wife's death. If he did not have such a hand, there is no point or plot for the latter half of the story. In addition, without the major's impaired hand, the narrator would have had to end the narrative in the first half. Further, without the

narrator's impaired leg, the major would have no point in getting involved with the narrator in the later half of the story. This tells us that the plot of the whole body of text is the missing plot itself, since without it, there would be no development in the narrative of the latter half. We may conclude that the missing plot in the latter half of the narrative, which is metaphorically both the major's impaired hand and the narrator's impaired leg, is the plot of the whole body of text. Therefore, even in a metaphorical field, such tragic plot guarantees the Aristotelian tragedy of "In Another Country."

## V. Conclusion

Accordingly, "In Another Country" by Ernest Hemingway is exquisite craftsmanship that surely demands a will to misread. Historical discourses succeeded in their thematic approach for decades and mainly focused on arguing who the protagonist is. However, a rhetorical analysis employing Aristotle's poetics illuminates the importance of the text's formalistic signification that has been ignored for a long time. Speculating on the formalistic nature of the text effectively articulates its hidden theme and underlying art of writing. In fact, through its stylistic examination, this paper clarified the hidden plot of the whole narrative. Reflexively, it has also reassured the importance to recognize the structural characteristics of the text in understanding the organic body of the text—however anomalous the structure is—, since any type of structure is also a thematic message. Aristotelian tragedy is a good lesson that tells us not to forget the formalistic message of the text: style is a message.

The attraction of "In Another Country" is obvious. The writerly text of the latter half strategically heightens the textual gravity toward the readers. In a writerly text, reading is equivalent to interpreting a story, which is the equivalent act of building a plot. In that way, when a text involves the readers' bodily senses, literature becomes a communicative device that connects us to human truths. Such literature tells us that it is the human body that matters most in the end in our understanding because the body will always sense the truth, just as the major. Furthermore, without such bodily senses, this paper would not have sensed the plot from the structural metaphor between the textual body and the physical body of soldiers. Hence, the value of this narrative is heavily dependent on the bodily senses of the reader.

Therefore, it could be said that Hemingway is showing the value of human senses in the act of reading through this text: the human body always knows the truth. When the major lost his young wife, the major was at a loss for three days. However when he came back, he came at the "usual hours, wearing a black band on his sleeve of his uniform" (CSS 210), and got back on the machine for therapy and "looked out of the window" (CSS 210). This scene tells the readers how the major was psychologically numb, but how the body knew the necessary truth prior to our reason: how human senses would resist to existential problems. Although the major

lost his wife and he is not a good soldier anymore, the body knows exactly what he must do to live at this very moment, and how he has to become a part of something. Perhaps the ironic understatement is that the real tragedy is the struggle of human body that resists to live even when the subjective mind is virtually dead by the loss of hope in life.

Lodge once explained that Hemingway thought "'fine writing' falsified experience" (90). Hemingway in fact thought a good readerly text can falsify experience since it can easily assign plausible plots. He wrote in *The Moveable Feast* late in his life that "I had lived in a world as it was and there were all kinds of people in it and I tried to understand them, although some of them I could not like and some I still hated" (*MF* 19; Italics mine). This means, Hemingway's primal object of writing was to show the "world as it was" regardless of his personal preference in the world. This thought of trying to find and tell the ontological truth accords with the message of the short story. Through "In Another Country," Hemingway is telling its readers not only to trust one's body for truth, but also to return to the bodily ritual, just as the major, in order to sense and tell the truth. In summary, the tragic drama that plainly shows human truths through the medium of the human body proposes an idea toward how human beings combat existential problems caused by life.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> All Italicized acronyms in the parentheses indicate Ernest Hemingway's writing. "CSS" indicates Ernest Hemingway's *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: The Finca Vigia Edition*. New York: Scribner's, 1987. Similarly, "SL" stands for *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters 1917-1961*. Ed. Carlos Baker. New York: Scribner's, 1981. Likewise, "Interview" is the acronym for "An Interview with Ernest Hemingway." 1958. By George Plimpton. *Hemingway and His Critics*. Ed., Carlos Baker. New York: Hill and Wang, 1961.

<sup>2</sup> Fitzgerald had great influence over Hemingway's writing. When Hemingway was writing his second novel *The Sun Also Rises*, he would give Hemingway a ruthless comment such as to cut the first section of the book, with which Hemingway in fact accorded. Confer Frederic J. Svoboda's *Hemingway & The Sun Also Rises: The Crafting of Style* (1982): 37-40 for Fitzgerald's critical comment on the editing of *The Sun Also Rises*.

<sup>3</sup> Hemingway explains his theory of omission in an interview by George Plimpton that "I always try to write on the principle of iceberg. There is seven eighths of it underwater for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn't show. If a writer omits something because he does not know it then there is a hole in the story." (*Hemingway Interview* 34). This term is usually referred to as *Iceberg Theory*.

<sup>4</sup> See J. Bakker 7; Colin Cass 310-12; Defalco p.133-35; Waldhorn 68-69; Wirt Williams 94.

<sup>5</sup> In contrast, Rovit calls the major "tutor" and "code-hero" (55).

<sup>6</sup> Cf., "tyro" *American Heritage Dictionary*.

<sup>7</sup> Waldhorn understands the narrator "I" of this text to be Nick Adams, the protagonist of Hemingway's adolescent short stories, although there is no indication in the text that the "I" is Nick

Adams.

<sup>8</sup> Julian Smith assumes the narrator "I" to be Nick Adams. Strictly speaking, however, there is no indication that the narrator is Nick. We will need to substitute "Nick" for the narrator "I" in this sentence to maintain neutrality.

<sup>9</sup> Lamb defines "Conradian Split" that "the subject is one character (Kurtz), the first-person narrator is another character (Marlowe), but both the subject and the narrator are of equal interest in the text" (104).

<sup>10</sup> "A basso gli ufficili" in Italian means low ranking or retarded officers.

<sup>11</sup> While Halliwell translated the expression as "structure of events," (Halliwell 37) Preston H. Epps translates it differently. In his *The Poetics of Aristotle*, he simply puts it as "arrangement of the incidents of plot" (Epps 13).

<sup>12</sup> Since the major does not believe in courage or glory in war, the narrator felt at ease to become friends with the major, in contrast with his colleagues who still believed in the ideologies of courage and glory in war. They have found that the narrator's medal was awarded not for his valor but only for his injury.

<sup>13</sup> In the short stories of Hemingway, a plot or "dénouement" is usually absent; therefore, most meticulous Hemingway readers would sense that they are not the plot or "dénouement" of the whole narrative.

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