

“Her Screams Are Not Important”: The Politics of Pain in Hemingway’s “Indian Camp”

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“Indian Camp,” one of the earliest of Hemingway’s short stories, has been most frequently discussed, studied, and evaluated to be arguably the highest. The story shows the experience of three people — a little boy named Nick Adams, his father Dr. Adams, and Uncle George. They are camping in a forest for fishing, and, later in the night, summoned to an Indian camp to help a woman’s childbirth. Arriving at the camp, they find that the woman, unable to deliver the child, has been screaming for three days. Dr. Adams, after examining her condition, decides to perform a Caesarean section on her with a jackknife and gut leaders without anaesthetic. The operation is successful so that the doctor becomes highly elated by his own achievement. The doctor tries to tell her husband, who has been in the upper bunk of the wife’s bed because of his badly cut foot, that both the mother and the child have survived the operation; however, he is found dead with his throat cut from ear to ear. Feeling distressed about bringing Nick to the camp and allowing him to watch the bloody spectacle of suicide, the father rows a boat back to their place in the early morning with his son sitting in the stern. Nick then has a sudden conviction that he will never die.

The wide attention of critics to this story can be attributed in part to the presence of a few mysterious questions which elude any convincing explanation as

satisfying most readers of the story.¹ The most controversial and argued is Nick's confidence in his own immortality at the end of the story. Traditional criticism, which in general has regarded the story as that of Nick's initiation, can be divided into two schools of interpretation: one insists that the initiation is unsuccessful, and the other contends against this claim. According to the former, Nick's sudden conviction is too romantic a reaction to such a brutal incident in which a man's life is violently shuttered — "illusory and child-like" (DeFalco 32), "childlike illusion" (Griffin 68), "wishful and self-protective" (Spilka 194). In the contrary view, however, Nick's sense of his immortality is somewhat limited so that his rite of passage is accordingly fulfilled — "Partly a childish, illusory sense of immortality, this statement is also a resolution. . . . He resolves that he will not die, because, he is certain, he will never commit suicide. He will never die in the way the despondent father had died" (Monteiro 154). "... *only* in the early morning *and* on the lake *and* sitting in the stern of the boat *and* with his father rowing, could Nick 'feel *quite* sure that he would never die' " (Smith 39, emphases are original).

Another question that is no less significant was mainly introduced as a central topic to be discussed by a groundbreaking essay by Jeffrey Meyers. Puzzled as they were, most critics had hardly explained the strangeness that the suicide of the Indian husband is too extreme a reaction even to his wife's painful childbirth, certainly given the fact that both the mother and the child survived the horrible experience. Meyers, however, focused on this problem as crucial to the understanding of the story, and attempted to explain "why the husband remains in the bunk of the shanty during the two days his wife has been screaming, and why he does not leave the room if he cannot bear her agonizing pain and shrieks" (300).

His answer to this problem is the concept of *couvade* “in which a man ritualistically imitates the symptoms of pregnancy and the moans during delivery” (306), and concludes that “[t]he husband cannot bear this defilement of his wife’s purity [by white men’s intrusion into the ritual of *couvade*], which is far worse than her screams” (308). Based on anthropological knowledge, Meyers’ interpretation seems persuasive at a glance, but we have yet to consider whether the suicide is more plausible a reaction to the violation of the ritual than to the wife’s agony; in fact, while Meyers attacks the past criticism (300) as dutiful repetitions of the doctor’s words — “He couldn’t stand things, I guess” (CSS 69) — his interpretation is also a repetition of these words, modifying the referent of “things,” which is not specified in the story, from the wife’s agony to the violation of the ritual. Of the two mysteries presented above, we shall mainly deal in this paper with the latter, the consideration of which I believe necessarily entails the elucidation of the former.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the story, we shall briefly look at what surrounded practices of childbirth at the turn of the 20th century. As Wertz and Wertz maintains (109-77), in the United States, the field of obstetrics to date has undergone two great changes, one of which is doctors’ intrusion into childbirth. Until the end of the 19th century, women had been helped by midwives, who were mostly women specializing in the technique of delivery; hence, the whole process of childbearing had had no relation to medical institutions. At the end of the 19th century, however, doctors began to take the place of midwives, and consequently childbirth has since been incorporated into a branch of medicine. The second change is the shift of places of parturition from the houses of women in labor to hospitals, a change which took place in the 1920s and coincides with the com-

position and publication of “Indian Camp.” Both changes can be ascribed to the progressive development of medical science that rapidly took the primary position in serving the psychosomatic health of people, but has recently been exposed to severe criticisms by feminists saying that the process of achieving the sovereignty over the female body in pregnancy on the part of doctors, reflects the age-old male chauvinism which has been dominating the other sex throughout recorded history: despite the fact that reproduction is a natural process, female procreative capacity was considered to be abnormal on the grounds that it cannot be applied to the male body, which was the central norm of medical knowledge. Unnatural to the eyes of doctors, childbirth was the object of medical treatment as if it had been a certain manifestation of sickness. What is more, women in labor in the first decades of the 20th century were treated without any consideration to their privacy when they delivered, regarded as if they had been machines, and undergoing “repairs” as such.² Barbara Rothman states in her feminist’s criticism on the male-centered view of this hospitalized childbirth:

The source of the pathology orientation of medicine toward women’s health and reproduction is a body-as-machine model (the ideology of technology) in which the male body is taken as the norm (the ideology of patriarchy). From that viewpoint, reproductive processes are stresses on the system, and thus diseaselike. (37)

The age in which Hemingway was born and raised witnessed this unprecedented prevalence and dominance of these two medical ideologies.

Biographical evidence shows that Hemingway noticed these ideologies and perhaps the problematical aspects as discussed above. In his high school days,

he watched in a hospital a woman's childbirth operated by his father, who was an obstetrician. Marcelline Sanford, Hemingway's sister, records this incident as follows:

...Ernie watched an operation. Dressed in a white gown, he was permitted to stand at the top rear of the operating theater at the hospital where Daddy was on the staff as head of obstetrics. Ernie was interested, but he sat down when he felt faint and he did not go again. (134)

Given the fact that all of his brothers and sisters were delivered in their home with their mother being cared for and helped by family members, this obstetrical operation observed by strangers was for Hemingway somewhat too shocking an experience, too inhumane compared to the case of his mother. It thus seems reasonable to suppose that he associated medical assistance for childbirth with a technological intrusion into the natural process of delivery.

If so, the childbirth in "Indian Camp" might be heavily charged with this ideological conflict between the resurgent and emergent cultural modes. This thematic presumption is supported by the composition history of the story. The source for "Indian Camp" has been generally sought in the author's experience in the Greco-Turkish War: Nick Adams, the implied author and the semi-autobiographical protagonist of the series of short stories insists in a deleted part of "Big Two-Hearted River" that "[o]f course he'd never seen an Indian woman having a baby. That was what made it good. Nobody knew that. He'd seen a woman have a baby on the road to Karagatch and tried to help her" (*NAS* 238).³ Yet, given the similarity between the story and the incident in his high school days presented above — first, both concern with a boy's experience of watching childbirth; second, both

deliveries are operated by the boy's father; and third, both boys feel sick watching the operation — it is very likely that he borrowed a burgeoning insight of the story from his traumatic witnessing of childbirth in his youth. If this is the case, it is richly suggestive that the stage for "Indian Camp" is set not in a hospital but in a primitive, uncivilized heart of darkness, the place hardly accessible to scientific technology; since the clear contrast is highly accentuated between nature and Western medical technology. "Indian Camp" well captures the technological invasion of white civilization into the realm of nature.

Indeed the medical perception of patients' suffering is by no means described positively.

"Listen to me. What she is going through is called being in labor. The baby wants to be born and she wants it to be born. All her muscles are trying to get the baby born. That is what is happening when she screams."

Just then the woman cried out.

"Oh, Daddy, can't you give her something to make her stop screaming?" asked Nick.

"No. I haven't any anæsthetic," his father said. "But her screams are not important. I don't hear them because they are not important." (CSS 68)

The doctor's disregard for the woman's pain is typical of medical functionalism as represented in the doctor's explanation of childbirth: the screams of the Indian woman is a physiological manifestation of the process helping to make muscles more flexible to facilitate her delivery. "Her screams are not important," for they are caused not by pain and suffering but by an appropriate mechanism of the body.

This neglect of pain on the part of the doctor is partly caused by what Rothman calls the ideology of technology, which regards the human body as a machine.⁴ Yet, considering the repeated depiction of the doctor's detached attitude ("That's one for the medical journal, George" (69)), the direct cause of his indifference toward the Indian woman lies more likely in the widespread prevalence of primitivism, which created "the myth of painless Indians." Primitivism at the turn of the century ostensibly praised the purity of primitive people who were believed to be immune from harmful influences of corrupt civilization; thus, the sense of pain originally being caused (in the primitivist theory) by the indulgent convenience of such civilization, the "savages" in the eyes of the Westerners are essentially pain-free.⁵ Yet, however enthusiastically they admired the state of primitive people, the very admiration in effect led to the confinement of those people as *others* outside of their civilization; projecting negative aspects of their own — the aspects that they did not want to accept in themselves, such as brutality, crudeness, or animal-like physical strength — into allegedly backward races who were regarded as a contrary concept of their own avowedly advanced state. Insisting by implication that civilized "we" paid a high price for achieving the present stage of the "civilizing process," the Westerners paradoxically advocated their cultural superiority over those who had stalled and stayed in the pre-civilized stage.

The epidemic spread of primitivism in the United States in those days is a product of the world-wide imperial ideology that drove every Western power to colonial invasions. To proceed to the expansionism leading finally to the two World Wars, Americans needed to shape their own identity impeccably as Americans by assuming Native Americans as a backward race and thus excluding them from the constituent of what non-Native Americans thought to be their country.

This way of shaping their own identity by negating cultural others is what Hayden White calls “the technique of ostensive self-definition by negation” (151-52).

In times of sociocultural stress, when the need for positive self-definition asserts itself but no compelling criterion of self-identification appears, it is always possible to say something like: “I may not know the precise content of my own felt humanity, but I am most certainly *not* like that,” and simply point to something in the landscape that is manifestly different from oneself. (151)

Under the dominance of this ethnocentric nationalism, not only political discourse but literature, medicine, anthropology, and every other discipline went hand in hand with each other to sustain the imperial drive, which were to acquire, occupy, and exploit the land of the “savages.”

Medical discourse indeed replicated this view in the form of scientific objectivity, and contributed to the repeated myth-making: Indians were thus deprived of their sense of pain. Of course, the medical view of the pain of women’s childbirth is no exception:

Another common illustration of painless birth was the proverbial Indian squaw, the unspoiled child of nature, whose pregnancy occasioned no special attention or worry and who performed her usual drudging chores up to the very hour of labor. . .

The Indian woman, however, was a double-edged symbol. All the manuals pointed to her as exemplifying childbirth in the primitive state of nature, before “civilization” caused women to feel the dreadful pains of birth. Yet the woman who did not feel pain was open to the accusation

of being less civilized than her neighbors who did, for pain was not only the price but also, unfortunately, the mark of progress, of escape from the drudgery of nonindustrialized society. (Wertz and Wertz 113-14)

Whichever “edge” a speaker of the proverb was making use, there always existed the edge implying the cultural superiority of the white race and the inferiority of Native Americans; thus, the former never “descending” on the state of the latter and vice versa.

Of great importance here is the fact that Indians themselves supported this view of their own accord and, at least in their intention, in their own favor. Following is a passage of self-admiration for their own culture written by an Indian.

And when the day of days in her life dawns — the day in which there is to be a new life, the miracle of whose making has been intrusted to her, she seeks no human aid. She has been trained and prepared in body and mind for this her holiest duty, ever since she can remember. The ordeal is best met alone, where no curious or pitying eyes embarrass her; where all nature says to her spirit: “’Tis love! ’tis love! the fulfilling of life!” When a sacred voice comes to her out of the silence, and a pair of eyes open upon her in the wilderness, she knows with joy that she has borne well her part in the great song of creation! (Eastman 29-30)

Far from advertising their own superiority over Western civilization, the very words of a Native American help justify the cultural dominance of the West, incorporated and reshaped by the overarching ideology; the grandiose style using white men’s language rapturously to advocate their supremacy irresistibly supports the opposite view that the archaic life of nature had no longer been effectual. Instead

of elevating the value of their life, the writer of the passage above on the contrary maintains, without knowing, the hegemonic structure of domination.

“Indian Camp” was written when this overwhelming cultural force was sweeping across the United States. It is thus completely plausible that the ideology of technology and, more ominously, the ideology of imperialism hides behind Doctor Adams’ disregard for the Indian woman’s pain and suffering and its explicitly professional attitude of detachment. In addition, he goes further performing a Caesarean section without anaesthetic. As Jürgen C. Wolter notes, the word Caesarean “connotes authority, imperialism, assumption of power, and even tyrannical dictatorship” (92). According to this view, the power relationship that the Caesarean section implies is clearly similar to any colonial situation, in which the brutality of the dominant is conceptually imposed on the dominated and supposedly brutal savages are often victims of the brutality exerted under the name of civilization with its vast development of technology.

The Caesarean section done by the doctor is a clear symbol indicating both the imperial domination and the technology propelling such domination; however, if the story is to describe an invasion of Western technology into the realm of nature as we have pointed out, how do we explain the absence of anaesthesia, which is also a symbol of highly advanced medical technology? Indeed, medicine in the story is by no means fully equipped strongly to advocate its own efficacy. Yet this lack of preparation on the part of the doctor can be explained not only by the emergent abruptness of the summons but by the author’s unconsciously held assumption that anaesthesia had been from the very beginning of its “invention” considered to be *for civilized races*. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who coined the term anaesthesia, sent the following letter to the alleged inventor of the technique,

William T. G. Morton:

...Everybody wants to have a hand in the great discovery. All I will do is give you a hint or two as to names, or the name, to be applied to the state produced, and to the agent

The state should, I think, be called *anæsthesia*. This signifies insensibility, more particularly . . . to objects of touch

I would have a name pretty soon, and consult some accomplished scholar such as President Everett, or Dr. Bigelow, Sr., before fixing upon the terms which *will be repeated by the tongues of every civilized race of mankind*. (Warren 79, emphases are original)

The possibility that anaesthesia might be used by Indians was in the first place excluded from Holmes' mind. The blessings of "the great discovery" was to be received only by "every civilized race of mankind," and among "every civilized race of mankind," Native Americans were not included.

The contrast is too extreme to be overlooked between this Indian woman and Catherine in *A Farewell to Arms*, who also undergoes a Caesarean section yet heavily anaesthetized during her painful childbirth. The latter case, though taken place in a highly advanced hospital in Switzerland unlike in the former case, shows us that her pain is above all else what has to be suppressed, controlled, and finally removed. As Stephen Kern insists, after the invention of anaesthesia, the whites could no longer stand their own pain as they had done before once they knew the possibility of removing pain.⁶ Ironic as it is that it is not the Indian woman but Catherine, treated by fully equipped medical technology, who dies after the operation; however, what we observe when noticing the asymmetry be-

tween both operations is that the white race is too fragile and sensitive to pain to be left untreated while, as we can see from the detached attitude of Dr. Adams, Indian women can easily be considered as merely a system mechanically functioning to sustain life, and hence tough to physical pain. As thus considered, we can conclude that anaesthesia is a material manifestation of the imperial drive in that both anaesthesia and imperialism sharpen the sensitivity to one's own felt experience of pain while numbing the perception of another's.

This epistemology of anaesthesia in the mind of the white race at the turn of the century is well captured in Hemingway's "The Indians Moved Away," an abandoned passage posthumously published in *The Nick Adams Stories*.

...the Indian ... had gone into Petoskey to get drunk on the Fourth of July and, coming back, had lain down to go to sleep on the Pere Marquette railway tracks and been run over by the midnight train. He was a very tall Indian and had made Nick an ash canoe paddle. He had lived alone in the shack and drank pain killer and walked through the woods alone at night. Many Indians were that way. (NAS 35)

Pain killer, which means strong alcohol since it was employed as analgesic in early settlements in America, was originally brought to Indians by white people, and used as a means to make Indians drunk in favor of the whites.⁷ Given this historical context, the Indian who is heavily drunk with pain killer and run over by a train on the Independence Day of the United States is eloquently suggestive in that the episode epitomizes the history of the colonization and plundering of the land of Indians. Pain killer here, in its both literal and figurative sense, destroys Native Americans, used as a means to deprive them of their sensitivity to pain.

If what marks the whites' perception of pain is its unshareability with another,⁸ — both individually and racially — it was widely believed at the beginning of the 20th century that in the Indian's world view the boundary between the self and others is highly ambiguous.

[Natural piety] is a mode of feeling and thought that is profoundly at one with the natural world, that accepts human life as part of that world, and therefore does not question the moral propriety of the cosmic order. It does not, or cannot, adopt that kind of philosophic detachment. (Bell 11)

Here explained is "natural piety," a characteristic believed to be generally shared by Native Americans. Not distinguishing themselves from the environment surrounding them, they share various perceptions and sensibilities with each other, for they all belong to the same natural environment and thus are part of nature; hence, the difference between the pain of the self and that of another is far less distinctive than in the case of the whites.

Given this peculiarity of the "primitive" races, the mysterious death of the Indian husband in "Indian Camp" appears to assume a different tinge. As noted earlier, Meyers, who introduced this topic to Hemingway critics, is dissatisfied by the explanation that the Indian killed himself because he could not bear his wife's screams. Meyers insists that "[d]espite his badly cut foot, he could have limped or been carried out of range of the screams, if he had wished to, and joined the other men" (300). However, given the then commonly held assumption that Indians were highly capable of sympathizing with another's pain and thus susceptible to the sufferings of their neighbors,⁹ we should conclude that he completely misses the point. When looking in front of his eyes at his wife's agonizing predicament

of the brutal operation — in which she is cut in the abdomen with a jackknife, the uterus removed, and the gash sutured by gut leaders — and perceiving her felt experience of pain *as his own*, how could the Indian husband wish to escape from the shanty to “out of range of the screams”? The pain of his wife should be too inconceivable a brutality to share as his own, so that it is rather natural that the husband attempts to stop the extraordinary pain by shutting down his own life — a means to which the wife cannot recourse under the circumstances.

Considering his insistence that the white men’s intrusion into the ritual of couvade is “far worse than her screams,” Meyers’ understanding of the anthropological concept is too mechanically systematic. The ritual is not just a taboo which members of the society blindly have to observe regardless of every day practices of life, but rather born from the daily course of living in order to enrich the life. Whether or not he actually performs the ritual, it is much more probable to consider that the husband must stay in the shanty because her screams are “worse” than his own convenience, than everything in his life.

For the eyes of those who cannot accept the sharing of pain, the death of the Indian is definitely mysterious, so Meyers accordingly wanted an appropriate reason to die in such situations, a reason which should be sufficiently mysterious: the incomprehensible ritual of “the primitive.” The ritual is, for him, not to be understood (and thus shared), but merely to be discovered, labeled, and classified by scholars — the representation of illogicality in cultural others. He celebrates anthropological studies on the ground that they “have developed and refined (instead of merely repeating, as literary critics tend to do) the ideas of [former researchers],” (306) yet unfortunately, he ends his essay by merely repeating a theory of an anthropologist without understanding the true significance

under the surface.

Meyers and his follower, who consider the death of the Indian husband as too extreme a reaction to the wife's suffering, fall into Eurocentric primitivism: they have perceived the pain of this Indian woman not as their own but merely as another's like Dr. Adams did in the story. The inability to share the sensation of pain is seen at another level, which should be called the unshareability with racial others. Because of the very reason that the Indian husband is *an Indian*, Meyers failed to sympathize with the husband's painful agony in watching the bloody spectacle of the slashing of his wife's abdomen and the displacement of her uterus out of the body, as well as with her terrifying screams during her endurance of the unendurable. If the role of the Indian husband had been played by a "sensitive" white youth, and that of the "squaw" going through the operation without anaesthesia by a fragile blonde beauty, would a number of arguments have arisen, to begin with, to discuss the "mystery" of the husband's suicide?

Bearing in mind the above mentioned, we should reconsider the problematical last sentence, in which Nick has a conviction of his immortality: in the course of his night time experience in the Indian camp, he has witnessed a scene in which life and death were brutally tied together.¹⁰ He happened to be in the place in which both the birth of a new life and the death of the father of the newborn life simultaneously occurred. Given this violent linkage between life and death, Nick's conviction gives us a much deeper significance than what has hitherto been recognized by critics. A little earlier than the conviction, Nick feels a sense of unity with the surrounding nature:

They were seated in the boat, Nick in the stern, his father rowing.

The sun was coming up over the hills. A bass jumped, making a circle in the water. Nick trailed his hand in the water. It felt warm in the sharp chill of the morning.

In the early morning on the lake sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, he felt quite sure that he would never die. (70)

“[I]n the sharp chill of the morning” the water of the lake feels warmer than the morning air. The idea most effectively expressed in this description is the natural piety associated with “primitive” people.¹¹ In short, for Nick the boundary between the self and the surrounding environment has somehow vanished, and in the environment — that is, in nature — is contained the everlasting cycle of life and death. Thus we should regard his conviction of his immortality not as a statement about Nick’s one-time life but as enlightenment attained through the wider scope of human reproduction, the sense of the ever-repeating renewal of life which will eternally continue, and which Nick understands not through logical speculation but through the bodily perception of the natural environment.¹²

Meyers could not penetrate into the core essence of the ritual of Native Americans, looking only at the surface; while Hemingway did not fall into such superficial idealization owing to his first hand knowledge about the race. I am not intending to say that Hemingway was beyond the then dominant ideology concerning the prejudice against Indians¹³; rather I think he was unavoidably under the limitation of the age — the age of imperial drive. Some scholars actually do insist Hemingway’s innocence in racial prejudice. Commenting on “Indian Camp,” Robert W. Lewis insists that Hemingway’s representations of Indians break down conventional stereotypes: “[f]ar from being noble exemplars of courage and en-

duration living in pristine nature, real Indians are men and women much like all others, and individuals among them can scream and laugh and die desperately” (202-203). However, as Amy Lovell Strong notices, Indians in “Indian Camp” are rather far from “individuals.” Compared to Dick Boulton, who is cunningly shrewd and finally baffles Dr. Adams in “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” Indians in “Indian Camp” are too nameless, too faceless, and too voiceless, except for non-verbal screams and laughs. Hemingway’s Indian stories after all contain anomalies which cannot be explained either from the purely positive view of his attitude toward racial discrimination or from the purely negative view of it.

As Lewis meticulously investigates, Hemingway indeed in some of his fictions represents Indians who are far from stereotypical images of the race. And in “Indian Camp” also he sympathetically conveys the Indian culture invaded and taken over by the whites, by highly developed technology under the name of civilization, progress, and a humanitarian medical mission. Yet, however sympathetic Hemingway really was in writing stories, he did not retrieve the value of such dominated culture. Hemingway in this story portrayed the actual situation, in which Indians were cornered by the whites, by means of representing them as speechless; for, actually, they were the creatures always represented by Western culture; they were passive objects of the Western gaze; in short, they were deprived of their agency. However, representing the situation as struggles between white individuals and faceless others or those between corrupt civilization and a pre-civilized nature humanely preserved irresistibly leads to an essentialist conception of others; hence, the boundary between “we” and “they” being sustained; the basic structure of the colonial domination surviving no matter what the author intends to achieve by writing the story. Indians, who are sensitive to another’s

pain, who share sensibility with each other, who live in nature in its pristine purity, are also a stereotype, leading to what Tzvetan Todorov calls “the prejudice of equality.”

If it is incontestable that the prejudice of superiority is an obstacle in the road to knowledge, we must also admit that the prejudice of equality is a still greater one, for it consists in identifying the other purely and simply with one’s own ‘ego ideal’ (or with oneself). (165)

Describing their impressive laughter and screams without any meaningful voice, and conveying their objectified state, Hemingway shows that there exists something beyond their non-individuated figures. Yet, he could not depict what the “something” is. The cultural barrier that has existed between these two races — the barrier usually not recognized by the allegedly superior race — is certainly exposed, but things out there beyond the barrier are never represented in the story owing to the limitation of the age initiating imperial projects. The momentum for the world-wide expansionism provides no possibility to raise a doubt, merely, if possible, allowing few exceptional minds to modify, at the most, its imperial impetus to a slightly more lenient mode. Living in the age between the two World Wars, in the age of the great turbulence in which more than one value co-existed — values of the residuum and those of the emergent — writers of the Lost Generation must have necessarily held in themselves some struggles in which more than two mutually exclusive values collided without ever being resolved, though most probably not noticed by themselves. I think it is very important to notice, among a number of values that compete with each other in a chaotic confusion, a small possibility of resisting the dominant ideology, no matter how moderate the

resistance was.

Critics having solely focused on the initiation and the mental development of a boy in his formative years, little has been discussed about the racial aspects of the story¹⁴; yet, without an insight into the crooked patriotism that drove the country into the disastrous imperialism and racial exclusionism, we can never capture the full range of the story's significance. Regardless of the author's intention, "Indian Camp" epitomizes the whole history of racial discrimination and reflects the collective memory of racial struggles that started as early as the first step by Europeans on the New World and culminated in the imperial enthusiasm at the beginning of the 20th century.

Notes

¹ Stewart states that "'Indian Camp' is one of the volume's best stories, in great part because the mysteries at its heart can never be solved" (38).

² As accurately depicted in *A Farewell to Arms*, surgical operating rooms were generally constructed like amphitheaters and attached to by a place for observation: "There were benches behind a rail that looked down on the white table and the lights" (324).

³ There are some other opinions about the origin for the story. Kenneth Lynn states that "'Indian Camp' came from a less obvious cluster of emotions, all of which had been generated by the circumstances surrounding the birth of John Hadley Nicanor [Hemingway's first son]" (229). Or more recently, according to William Adair, Hemingway's injury in the First World War is another source for the story. See "A Source for Hemingway's 'Indian Camp.'" "

⁴ Doctors are generally known to disregard patients' complains about pain: "physicians do not trust (hence, hear) the human voice, that they in effect perceive the voice of the patient as an "unreliable narrator" of bodily events, a voice which must be bypassed as quickly as possible so that they can get around and behind it to the physical events themselves" (Scarry 6). Morse and Mitcham states that medical workers have to learn the attitude of neglecting patients' pain: "they have to deliberately detach themselves from the reality of another's pain" (653).

⁵ See Morris' *The Culture of Pain*. "The prevailing Enlightenment thinkers on primitivism celebrated the *pain-free state of the natural savage*, who supposedly did not suffer the debilitating illnesses and nervous disorders of the '*hypersensitive*' European races. Thus the widely pub-

lished observations of sophisticated travelers and amateur anthropologists lent credence to the white man's belief that his own pain was somehow special. 'In our process of being civilized,' wrote S. Weir Mitchell, the famous nineteenth-century American neurologist, 'we have won, I suspect, intensified capacity to suffer. The savage does not feel pain as we do' (39, emphases are mine).

⁶ "[T]he possibility of alleviating physical pain profoundly altered the going view of the 'value' of pain and lowered the estimation of asceticism. Christian asceticism has often maintained that suffering ennobles life. . . . In an essay on pain, Jules Rochard concluded that following the introduction of anesthesia to reduce pain, Europeans had grown to fear pain more than death and had become less able to endure suffering" (Kern 78).

⁷ The so-called "fire water myths" contributed to create a harmful image of Indians. See Joy Leland's *Firewater Myths: North American Indian Drinking and Alcohol Addiction* for further information.

⁸ According to Scary, "[w]hatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language" (4).

⁹ Morse and Mitcham proposes the new concept of "compathy" by which they mean "an involuntary distress response in the caregiver that mirrors patient distress" (649). "Compathy . . . refers to the sharing not so much of an emotional as a physiological state. While theories of sympathy and empathy aim to account for the sharing of emotional responses (i.e. feelings), the experiences of shared physical distress responses are seldom included. Here the argument is for recognition of a new physiological dimension of empathy, that is, for the communication or 'contagion' of physical responses from one individual to another" (650). And according to them, "[c]ouvade is not restricted to exotic cultures; males in western cultures are sometimes affected by symptoms similar to the physical discomforts of pregnancy and labour. Despite the chronological coordination of pregnancy with the occurrence of symptoms which are 'mimicked in a manner that is quite remarkable,' the relationship between these events may nevertheless not be perceived by expectant fathers" (652). Of the importance here is that the symptoms of couvade is perceived not in the West but only in "exotic cultures." That the somatic phenomena of "compathy" are exclusively recognized in primitive societies is a clear evidence of Eurocentric primitivism.

¹⁰ In the discarded beginning of the story, published posthumously titled "Three Shots," Nick is described as confused about life and death: he misunderstands the lyrics of a hymn "[s]ome day the silver cord will break" to mean that "some day he must die" (NAS 14). Actually, the silver cord means the umbilical cord so that the hymn expresses not death but the birth of a life.

¹¹ Compare this passage with lines of D. H. Lawrence which are cited as typical examples of natural piety in Bell's book:

Very strange was the constant glitter of the sea unsheathed in heaven, very warm and sweet the graveyard, in a nook of the hill catching the sunshine and holding it as one holds a bee between the palms of the hands, when it is benumbed. Grey grass and lichens and a little church, and snowdrops among coarse grass, and a cupful of incredibly warm sunshine.

She was troubled in spirit. Hearing the rushing of the beck away down under the trees, she was startled, and wondered what it was. Walking down, she found the bluebells around her glowing like a presence among the trees. (qtd. in Bell 13)

¹² In this sense, Waldhorn is ahead of his times, though he did not recognize the primitivist aspect of the story. He states that “[Nick] plucks from nature a sense of renewal and reassurance” (54-55).

¹³ Peter L. Hays states as follows: “[i]t would be nice to believe that Hemingway was ahead of his time in anticipating the present ecological movement . . . I don’t think the evidence of the stories supports such a reading” (45-46).

¹⁴ Valuable exceptions are Strong and Strychacz. The former says that “[h]is stories may have been spurred by an autobiographical ‘family experience,’ but we cannot ignore their relation to a larger ‘forgotten racial experience’ in American history” (41). The latter insists that “[t]he first scene of the story opens on what we soon know to be a doctor’s humanitarian mission. . . . Yet immediately it presents an archetypal moment of a different sort. Boats beached, Indians waiting, whites debarking: The scene of whites arriving in the New World or encountering tribes within the New World is strong in racial memories, pictured over the centuries in scores of illustrations and books. The similarities continue, for the narrative reenacts a subsequent history of dispossession, annexation, betrayal, and death” (61).

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He says, "Her screams are not important. I don't hear them because they are not important" Indian husband may interpret this to be derogatory - that white men don't care about Indians. In truth, Nick's father is a doctor and he must ignore the screams in order to deliver the baby and save the mother's life. Parallels between Indian Camp and Hemingway's life. 1) Nick's father is a DOCTOR in the story; Hemingway's father was a doctor in real life 2) Nick is on a CAMPING/FISHING trip with his father in story; Hemingway camped and fished with his father 3) Indian man commits SUICIDE in story; Hemingway's father committed suicide in real life 4) Nick loses innocence through this traumatic experience; Hemingway. "Her Screams Are Not Important": The Politics of Pain in Hemingway's "Indian Camp. Takano Yasushi. "Indian Camp," one of the earliest of Hemingway's short stories, has been most frequently discussed, studied, and evaluated to be arguably the highest. The story shows the experience of three people - a little boy named Nick Adams, his father Dr. Adams, and Uncle George. They are camping in a forest for fishing, and, later in the night, summoned to an Indian camp to help a woman's childbirth. [Show full abstract] Arriving at the camp, they find that the Read this essay on Analysis of 'Indian Camp' by Ernest Hemingway. Come browse our large digital warehouse of free sample essays. Get the knowledge you need in order to pass your classes and more. Only at TermPaperWarehouse.com". He can overhear the screams of the Indian woman, because "they are not important" (page 14, line 11-12). After the successful operation he's very proud and exalted. The pregnant Indian is in a great deal of pain and her husband offers no words of comfort as he feels a sense of self pity knowing that he can't help his wife. Eventually Nick's father delivers the baby and stitches up the exhausted mother, then he turns to the husband of the Indian woman only to find that he had committed suicide while lying in bed.