An Annotated Bibliography:
Ernest Hemingway's "Now I Lay Me"

Contents

1. Introduction

2. Secondary Sources

3. Critic Index

4. Appendix: Critiques Mentioning Only the Title, "Now I Lay Me"

1. Introduction

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), one of the greatest “lost generation”

writers came to the fore with his anthology, In Our Time, published in 1925,
which included seven Nick Adams stories. “Now I Lay Me” is another Nick Adams story written for his third anthology, *Men without Women* (1927), in which the protagonist and narrator, Nick, narrates the story; after Nick has been blown up and has experienced clinical death at night in the war, he comes to have difficulty in sleeping in the dark, being afraid of his soul floating out of his body. He spends the sleepless nights fishing in his imaginary river or recollecting and praying for all the people he knows. One night, he is strongly encouraged to get married by his subordinate soldier who is lying next to him.

This is an annotated bibliography of the above-mentioned story, “Now I Lay Me.” It contains 47 materials: 31 articles and 16 books. 5 biographical books and a collection of letters referring to "Now I Lay Me" are included among them. Although "Now I Lay Me" is one of Hemingway's most interesting works, few critics has paid suitable attention to it. That is why, in spite of its significance, the number of critiques of this short story is relatively small considering Hemingway's high credit as an author, and we haven't had any bibliographies up to now which specializes in "Now I Lay Me." It is hoped that this bibliography will contribute to a reconsideration and deeper comprehension of it.

Most information in this bibliography has been collected through online databases, such as *Academic Search Premier, Book Review Digest Plus,*
Humanities Abstracts, JSTOR, and MLA International Bibliography, using keywords of "Hemingway" and "Now I Lay Me." In addition, Paul Smith's A Reader's Guide to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (1989) has also provided useful information for it. In order to guarantee the quality and the reliability of this bibliography, those critiques have been collected from academic journals and books issued by publishers with established reputations and has not included master's theses and doctoral dissertations.

This bibliography covers materials from 1952 to 2017, and they are arranged chronologically so that readers can follow the shifts in the interpretation of the work. "Now I Lay Me" has long been explicated as one of Hemingway's "biographical" stories by countless critics and biographers. "For thirty years after Philip Young's exploratory study in 1952, criticism of 'Now I Lay Me' has been dominated by a variety of psychoanalytic interpretations," Paul Smith remarks in A Reader's Guide to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway. After that, however, followed Joseph Flora's lead, other critics began to see Nick/Hemingway as a writer of the story rather than a psychiatrist's patient: some completely rejected the relevance of biography to literary study, and others focused on various topics, such as narrative technique and the structure found in "Now I Lay Me." It is interesting to know that whether biographical reading of
this short story is appropriate or not has still been debated hotly even in this century.

A critic index and an appendix are added to the end of this bibliography: the former would help to find specific critics. The latter is a list of critiques mentioning only the title, "Now I Lay Me."


Outlines the story of "Now I Lay Me," and identifies it with "Big Two-Hearted River" (57-58). Also notes the remarkable resemblance between a psychiatrist's description of how a man acts who has been badly hit and Nick's behavior in the stories after "Big Two-Hearted River" (20).

Analyzes the structure of the typical Hemingway story. Although Rovit recognizes the restrained terrors beneath Nick's memories, he does not find "Now I Lay Me" successfully dramatized within the texture of the prose, for the second section of the story, he insists, has too flatted a key to provide the necessary contrast between Nick and less sensitive John (79).


Follows Philip Young to find a unity in the story through an analysis that begins with psychoanalytic and ends in archetypal terms. In Chapter V, "The War and After," De Falco takes up some of Hemingway's short war stories, including "Now I Lay Me," and argues that Nick of "Now I Lay Me" cannot marry, for to do so would be to usurp "the power of the father, a circumstance which is precluded because of the trauma that had its origins in the nursery intrigue" (104-14).
Hovey, Richard B. "Hemingway's 'Now I Lay Me': A Psychological Interpretation."

*Literature and Psychology*, vol.15, 1965, pp. 70-78.

Offers the classical Freudian analysis of the story. Suggests that the structure of the story displays a striking analogy with the free association of psychiatric treatment and, as in other stories, wounding is linked with rejection of marriage. Points out an ambiguity in the allusive title, implying not only a fear for death and sleep but also a longing to return to the imagined security of early childhood.


In the chapter, "Suffering and Loss Without Tears," Benson argues that the beginning of the "Now I Lay Me" is a classic statement of the fear that a Hemingway protagonist may lose his identity, his completeness and his manness (129-30). He also insists that since "The Doctor and the Doctor's
Wife," "Now I Lay Me," "Ten Indians," and "Fathers and Sons" are not labeled autobiography, we cannot be assured of the accuracy of events, but we might be forgiven for assuming that the reactions of Nick are representative of Hemingway's own reactions (6).


A biography drawn primarily from manuscript sources such as Hemingway's diaries, letters, and unpublished works. In Chapter 26, "Men Without Women," Baker insists that "Now I Lay Me" is based on Hemingway's own experiences in Italy and includes a flashback about Dr. and Mrs. Hemingway in Oak Park during his boyhood (237).

Hauger, B. A. "First Person Perspective in Four Hemingway Stories."

*Rendezvous: Journal of Arts and Letters*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1971, pp. 29-38.

Focuses on narrative perspective in four Hemingway stories, "My Old Man," "Fifty Grand," "Now I Lay Me," and "An Alpine Idyll." Hauger argues that,
in order to attain an effect through the irony of the unsaid in "Now I Lay Me," Hemingway employs the dramatic, along with the narrative, method of presenting his material, and also uses an objective symbol to represent the main character's inner state of mind.


Focuses on Hemingway's omitting essential details from his stories and novels. Suggests that three stories, "In Another Country," "Now I Lay Me," and "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen," are built around something never clearly expressed. Smith reads "Now I Lay Me" as an extension of "In Another Country" and as an early effort by Hemingway to fictionalize and romanticize his unsuccessful courtship of an American nurse, Agnes von Kurowsky, in Italy. Also asserts that the narrator of "Now I Lay Me" is closer to Jake Barns, the sexually wounded narrator of The Sun Also Rises, than to
Encouraged by the image of the silkworm shown by Joseph Flora, Johnston uses the life-cycle of the silkworms as an analogy to Nick's experience: emerging "from the cocoon of adolescence with the threads of memories he attempts to weave a kind of protective shield": but the analogy, burdened with details "not unlike" those of the history of the silkworms, breaks down.


While Waldhorn regards "Now I Lay Me" as "a technically disappointing story," he points out that, for Nick, insomnia is not only a symptom of psychic illness but also a form of therapy. Explains that insomnia helps to deaden Nick's ache, so he is better prepared for reality better than John,
who firmly believes that marriage will "fix up everything." Also discusses that, by discriminating among his reveries, Nick has begun to learn how to choose in order to buttress his psychic defenses (62-63).

MacDonald, Scott. "Implications of Narrative Perspective in Hemingway's 'Now I Lay Me.'" *Studies in American Fiction*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1973, pp. 213-20. Argues that given the narrative perspective of the story, it becomes apparent that "Now I Lay Me" is not simply an interesting review of Nick's convalescence in Italy, as critics have assumed. MacDonald insists that it is largely concerned with Nick "now," still suffering from the shock of being blown up and still fighting through a difficult night long after his physical convalescence has ended.

Focuses on resemblance in the literary work of T.S. Eliot and Hemingway. Comparing Eliot's "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" with Hemingway's "Now I Lay Me," this essay argues that the themes of castration that those two authors dwell on in some of their exemplary work have particular relevance to the sexual traumas both men experienced in their lives (441-43). "Now I Lay Me" is used as one of the examples to support the claim.


A selection of Hemingway's nearly six hundred letters to a wide variety of people. In a letter written in 1923 to William D. Horne, with whom Hemingway had served in the American Red Cross, he described his 1922 return visit to Italy and he reported that the sight of the house where silkworms were raised during the war reminded him of the time when Bill
lay on a stretcher and listened to the chewing of the silkworms (85-86).

Baker adds a note that this is the incident used fictionally in "Now I Lay Me" (89).


Flora helps Nick Adams up from the psychiatrist's couch and places him at the writer's desk. Argues that we are reading a memory within a memory, and Nick has served as his own good psychiatrist, uncovering just the sorts of things he needs to uncover, at least until he faces the prospect of the "black swamp" of the war and of the "Big Two-Hearted River." Flora's reading of "Now I Lay Me" shows its relationship to all the other Nick Adams stories, establishing it as a crucial one in Nick's development as a writer (113-25).

Scafella reads the Nick Adams stories as a whole dramatize Nick Adams's quest for an achievement of an "area of poise" (in A. R. Ammon's "Terrain") in the volatile and boundless region of inner space. The silk worms are symbolic of the soul poised in creative action, for they transform mulberry leaves into silk as Nick Adams, an author of the narrative, transforms his life into fiction. This essay discusses not only "Now I Lay Me" but also a sketch of Chapter VI of *In Our Time*, "In Another Country," "A Way You'll Never Be," and "Big Two-Hearted River."


Confirms aspects of Hovey's psychoanalytic reading but argues that he overlooked "a more crucial issue, Nock's shock at his father's response to Mrs. Adams' deed." Brenner agrees that the shelling at Fossalta remobilizes repressed castration anxieties but he holds that those anxieties originates first in the boy's fears of his father (241, n. 29; 242, n. 38). Also briefly discusses Clarence Hemingway's submissiveness (17), Hemingway's
homosexual wish (22), the narration of Nick in "Now I Lay Me" and of Frederic in *The Sun Also Rises* (33-34), and the opposite personality of Hemingway's parents (99).


Mainly discusses *A Farewell to Arms*. Mentions that it is in "Now I Lay Me" that Hemingway first used soul in connection with his wound. In Hemingway's early story soul is not a separate entity apart from the body, as it is in the prayer; rather, it is only a synonym for life of the body, while *A Farewell to Arms* makes this separateness of body and soul more graphic. Eby suggests that this shows that, in the decade, Hemingway moved from a journalistic transcript of what happened to a re-creation of the event as it happened.

Mayers, Jeffrey. "Kipling and Hemingway: The Lesson of the Master." *American*
Discusses Kipling's *English* influence on Hemingway's technique, tone, themes and code of honor. Mayers shows thematic parallels found in stories of the symptoms and healing of war neurosis and shell-shock. "Now I Lay Me" is taken up as one of those war stories.


Argues that Hemingway's artistic theory has many features in common with Emerson's. By way of "Now I Lay Me" and "Big Two Hearted River" (including "On Writing"), Scafella characterizes the "I" of this essay's title and establishes the horizon on the Abyss as that of seeing soul. Insists that the Hemingway of the Nick Adams stories thus emerges as other than the man we suppose to have lived in terror of dying.
Another Hemingway biography which is based on dozens of interviews and research in materials made available by Hemingway's fourth wife. Meyers insists that Hemingway's recollection of his youth were usually unreliable and the event which Nick's mother burns her husband's precious collection never took place in Hemingway's boyhood and his father retained his treasures until the end of his life (20-21).


Makes a comparison of details in early two stories, "In Another Country" and "Now I Lay Me," which have been seen as closely linked to each other, and addresses the mistake of reading Hemingway's works as fictionalized personal history. Mainly discusses "In Another Country."

Another Hemingway biography. Lynn criticizes the war-trauma argument which has been supported by a host of critics such as Malcolm Cowley, Philip Young and others. This biography argues that the most emotional moment in "Now I Lay Me" is not in the northern Italian frame but in the hero's childhood and involves a confrontation between his parents (105-06).


Although the center of this essay is not about "Now I Lay Me" but about "The Strange Country," Flora analyzes Hemingway's works in *The Complete*
Short Stories (1987) and points out the principles of Hemingway's practice in ordering his collections: Hemingway puts the "active stories" at the beginning and ends with meditative material like "Now I Lay Me."

Moddelmog, Debra A. "The Unifying Consciousness of a Divided Conscience: Nick Adams as Author of In Our Time." American Literature, vol. 60, no. 4, 1988, 591-610.

In this essay, "Now I Lay Me" is shortly mentioned to show the patterns of the view on marriage within In Our Time. Argues that there are some good reasons for seeing Nick as the implied author of In Our Time, and doing so resolves many confusions about the book's unity, structure, vision, and significance.

This book takes as its domain the fifty-five works of fiction Hemingway offered to his readers as short stories in his lifetime. Chapter 24 takes up "Now I Lay Me" and gives some information about its composition history, publication history, sources and influences, and critical studies.


An essay which insists that Hemingway transformed his own experiences into fiction in many of the early manuscripts, not because he was writing about himself but as a way of evoking the daydream imagination. Although the center of this essay is not about "Now I Lay Me," Benson takes Nick in "Now I Lay Me" as one of the examples to support his discussion.

Reynolds, Michael. *Hemingway: The Homecoming*. W. W. Norton & Company,
The third book in Reynolds' five volume Hemingway biography. In Chapter 7, Reynolds shows some changes found in 3 drafts of "Now I Lay Me" and argues that Nick is a part of Hemingway himself (88-90).


Another biography of Hemingway. Mellow shows some differences between the episodes described in "Now I Lay Me" and Hemingway's real boyhood experiences (19-20). He also assigns a few pages to an analysis of a connection between "Now I Lay Me" and "In Another Country."


Insists that Hemingway had "Out of Body Experience" (OBE), in which a
person's consciousness detaches completely from the physical body, on the July night in 1918, and it affected him profoundly enough to become a repeated event in his fiction and to influence his eschatology, and particularly his focus on the subject of death.


Presents an analysis of Hemingway's unpublished story, "A Room on the Garden Side" and shows similarity of the story with "Now I Lay Me" and "Big Two-Hearted River" with healing and therapeutic wilderness escape.


A journal article about "The New England Primer," which was published for children at the end of the 17th century and sold 5 million copies. This article
shows some literary works such as Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Thoreau's *Walden*, and Twain's "The Story of the Bad Little Boy," which refer to this book. Points out that "Now I Lay Me," the title of Hemingway's short story, is the first phrase of a nursery rhyme which became famous through this book.

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Examines the popular novelists and literary figures suffering from insomnia. Briefly mentions "Now I Lay Me" as one of those examples. More like a light essay than an academic critique.

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**Buckham, David.** "Insomnia and the Psychoanalytical Reading of Hemingway's 'Now I Lay Me.'" *Inter Action, vol. 4, 1996, pp. 104-09.*

Points out the problem of Richard Hovey's psychoanalytical reading, asserting that when looking at the memories that surface in Nick's
consciousness in "Now I Lay Me" it is useful to consider the concept of "screen memory," first coined by Freud in 1899.


Analyzes the whole story from the standpoint of narrative technique.


Explains the meanings of Nick's memories, prayer, and the conversation with an Italian orderly in "Now I Lay Me." Especially analyzes Nick's parents' relationship and argues that it makes Nick's marriage as remedy for his neurosis impossible. Written in Japanese.

Robin, Forrest. "Thoreau's Miracle and Hemingway's Overlooked Heroism."


Insists that the readers should pay more attention to the Nick who is narrating than to the Nick of the past because the protagonist portrayed in a past-tense action by a present self might not know what is troubling him. Seeing thorough the storytellers' eyes, readers will experience Henry Thoreau's miracle mentioned in *Walden* ("Could there be a greater miracle than for us to see through each other's eyes for an instant?") and Hemingway's achievement.

Stewart, Matthew C. "Ernest Hemingway and World War I: Combatting Recent

Mainly discusses "Big Two-Hearted River." Although the influential critics Kenneth S. Lynn and Frederic Crews have sought to dismiss the importance of World War I from Hemingway's life and fiction, this essay refutes those revisionists' interpretation, using "Big Two-Hearted River" as a case in point. Stewart discusses that the existence of the early war stories, "In Another Country," "Now I Lay Me," and "A Way You'll Never Be," and their degree of interconnectedness with "Big Two-Hearted River" argues strongly against the idea of Lynn and Crews.


Presents the lecture delivered by author, Robert Morgan, at the United States Air Force Academy for the "Hemingway and War" Conference held on
October 9, 1999. Argues Hemingway's style and design found in his war stories. Although he takes up not only "Now I Lay Me" but also other stories, Morgan points out that the sound which silkworms make in "Now I Lay Me" is the noise of entropy, of the universe being chewed up and broken down to waste.


Agreeing with the readings of Kenneth Lynn, Carl Eby and James Phelan, this essay considers as a possible source of the young soldier/fisherman's anxiety two traumatic childhood incidents described by Nick in "Now I Lay Me." Argues that the portrayals of Nick Adams in three stories, "Big Two-Hearted River," "Now I Lay Me," and "A Way You'll Never Be," point us to a man, at the center of whose work is not a war trauma, but a parental battle.

Argues that, in Hemingway's stories about love and marriage, his characters look away, look down, look out the window, look anything but the persons they are with. Donaldson takes up "Now I Lay Me" as one of the examples and insists that Hemingway uses the device of avoiding eye contact to imply troubled relationships.


Argues that to read Nick's wunderness as the central feature of *In Our Time* and *Men Without Women* is to enable a reading of these stories as "illness narratives." Also discusses that theory of Levinas, a French philosopher, has a great influence on the lyric in "Now I Lay Me" and that Nick's injuries provide a metaphor for sufferings of the world.

A book which includes glossary and commentary for all the 14 stories, one of which is "Now I Lay Me," in *Men Without Women*. Each story is analyzed paragraph by paragraph. "Now I Lay Me" takes up 15 pages of this book (163-77).


In this essay, Grimes catalogues and analyzes Hemingway's presence in five stories from Robert Morgan's 1999 collection, *The Balm of Gilead Tree* as testimony to the influence Hemingway had and has on Morgan's fiction. Although the center of this essay is not about "Now I Lay Me," Grimes points out that one of Morgan's stories, "A Brightness New and Welcoming,"
not only has points of tangency with Hemingway's "In Another Country" it
also shares much with "Now I Lay Me."

225-36.

Discusses the limitations and difficulties of literary biography. Rovit points
out that there is no external evidence that Hemingway endured Nick's bouts
of near-hysteria and recurrent of pain, although the traumatic aftershock of
wounds at the war, partially seen in "Now I Lay Me," has been attributed to
Hemingway's own medical history.


In this book, Wyatt shows that the work of Ernest Hemingway is marked
more by vulnerability and deep feeling than by the stoic composure and
ironic remove for which it is widely known. This reassessment of the shape
of Hemingway's career reveals him as a multifaceted writer rather than a cold, static icon. Chapter 5 mainly refutes the validity of the traditional hypothesis that Hemingway bravely saved another injured man at Fossalta in 1918. It also claims that Hemingway's achievement in "Now I Lay Me" has to do with his uncovering of how a mind works (81-95).


Focuses especially on "Now I Lay Me" and the role of Hemingway's editor, Maxwell Perkins, in encouraging Hemingway not only to publish the story, but also to place it as the capstone of his first collection, *Men Without Women*. Based on an examination of manuscripts and the correspondence, this essay traces the selection and ordering of the stories of *Men Without Women*.

Though this is not an essay about "Now I Lay Me" but about "The Killers," it shows the similarity between those two stories: Harris insists that, in a way, not only Nick Adams in "Now I Lay Me" but also Ole Anderson in "The Killers" can be said to be a traumatized soldier lying down.

3. Critic Index

[B]
Baker, Carlos, 6, 13
Beall, John, 46
Beegel, Susan F., 30
Benson, Jackson J., 5, 26
Brenner, Gerry, 16
Buckham, David, 33

[C]
Clark, Miriam Marty, 41

[D]
DeFalco, Joseph, 3
Donaldson, Scotto, 40
[E]
Eby, Cecil D., 17
Epstein, Joseph, 32

[L]
Lynn, Kenneth S., 22

[M]
MacDonald, Scott, 11

[F]
Flora, Joseph M., 14, 23, 42

[Mayers, Jeffrey, 18, 20
Mellow, James R., 28

[G]
Grimes, Larry, 43

[Moddelmog, Debra A., 24
Morgan, Robert, 38
Muto, Shuji, 35

[H]
Harris, Oliver, 47
Hauger, B. A., 7
Hovey, Richard B., 4

[P]
Phelan, James, 34

[R]
Reynolds, Michael, 27
Robin, Forrest, 36

[J]
Joost, Nicholas, and Alan Brown, 12

[Rovit, Earl, 2, 44

Josephs, Allen, 29
4. Appendix:

Critiques Mentioning Only the Title, "Now I Lay Me"


