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"James Baldwin and Ernest Hemingway: The Expatriate Artist as Organic Intellectual"

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Abstract

Intellectuals are a class of educated and gifted people (writers, scholars, scientists, artists) produced by society to perform social functions and assume a historical responsibility. Their ethically-based competences and prophetic visions are vital to establishing a sustainable social order and promoting the society of justice. Edward Said wrote in Representations of the *Intellectual* that "the proliferation of intellectuals has expanded into the very large number of fields in which intellectuals—possibly following on Gramsci's pioneering suggestions in The Prison Notebooks which almost for the first time saw intellectuals, and not social classes, as pivotal to the workings of modern society—have become the object of study." To exemplify and understand the role of the intellectual vocation, this paper explores the question of organic intellectualism in famous American expatriate writers Ernest Hemingway and James Baldwin using distinguished public intellectuals such as Edward Said and Cornel West as a conceptual framework and theoretical reference. The discussion raises, among others, the following focus questions: what is an intellectual? What is the role and responsibility of this social class in the public domain? How do intellectuals relate to the marketplace, power, and the marginalized? How do intellectuals contribute to social change? The paper argues that both transatlantic authors Ernest Hemingway and James Baldwin were organic intellectuals whose engaged social critique, intellectual expertise, and activism were designed to counter social dysfunction, injustice, and modern alienation.

KEYWORDS: James Baldwin, Ernest Hemingway, the organic intellectual, expertise, justice

James Baldwin and Ernest Hemingway: The Expatriate Artist as Organic Intellectual

Rachid Toumi

"E. Hemingway to G. Plimpton: a writer without a sense of justice and injustice would be better off editing the yearbook of a school for exceptional children than writing novels."

-- George Plimpton, "An Interview with Ernest Hemingway"

"Exile is a model for the intellectual who is tempted, and even beset and overwhelmed, by the rewards of accommodation, yea-saying, settling in. Even if one is not an actual immigrant or expatriate, it is still possible to think as one, to imagine and investigate in spite of barriers, and always to move away from the centralizing authorities towards the margins, where you see things that are usually lost on minds that have never traveled beyond the conventional and the comfortable."

--Edward Said, Representations of the Intellectual

Introduction: What is an Intellectual?

Edward Said argues in *Representations of the Intellectual* that the scholarship done on the theme of the intellectual, overwhelmingly detailed and nuanced, runs the risk of losing sight of the intellectual vocation as a performance of an ethical intervention in the social or political environment (1996: 11). For the pillar of postcolonial criticism, exile as an "actual" situation offers

a crucial starting point for theorizing the ideal model for the 'true' intellectual. In such an approach, the condition of dislocation, involuntary or self-imposed, is also imagined as a "metaphorical condition" in which the intellectual is posited as an "outsider" (52-3). Inhabiting physicallydistanced exilic space offers the disoriented intellectual marginality access to "universal" styles of thinking that transcend the provincial and the parochial (59-60). James Baldwin expressed this condition of physical and metaphysical homelessness in his essay "The New Lost Generation," writing that "rare indeed is the American artist who achieved this without first becoming a wanderer, and then, upon his return to his own country, the loneliest and most blackly distrusted of men" (1998: 668). While "actual" exilic geography may enable the artist/intellectual to come up with broader representations within what Said calls in representations "double or exile perspective" (60), exiles who have never enjoyed that advantageous personal experience can still occupy that space metaphorically by defying hegemonic and official discourse and resisting forms of assimilation and domestication in mainstream culture, positioning themselves as oppositional "outsiders" rather than privileged "insiders" (52). In this intellectual realm of "permanent exile" (ibid. 56), the value of truth and the cause of justice must be kept in sight. This paradigm is interesting and important because it focuses on what matters in defining the role of the intellectual and entrenches intellectual activity in the intellectual's "disinterested" "laboratory." 1

It was this universal sense of justice and injustice, filtered through the artist's removed exilic laboratory, that inspired expatriate American writers Ernest Hemingway and James Baldwin to literary greatness. Both travelling artists presented themselves to their immediate audience as well as to subsequent generations as witnesses to an era of colossal violence and immeasurable injustice. "Injustice everywhere," Hemingway, the itinerant journalist turned fiction writer, wrote in The Sun Also Rises (61), his post-First World War novel of expatriation to Paris, in the narrative context of a heart-wrenching and companionate statement about the plight of a disenfranchised black pugilist in what would become fascist Italy. It was in expatriate space, too, where Baldwin, the 'fugitive' black would-be artist, discovered that the Algerians were "the niggers of France" (James Baldwin: The Price). Expatriation for Hemingway and Baldwin was an "internationalism in action" (Edwards 2005: 3) that broadened their perspective about how the world was connected in its ferment. While Baldwin's literary and activist engagement centered on the Civil Rights movement in America, Hemingway is best remembered for his powerful dramatization of the horrors of World War I, "one of the rigorous tests for intellectuals," as Said says in Representations (8). Papa is also celebrated for his legendary anti-Fascist efforts in Spain and is known for his non-conformist public support of the Cuban Revolution. To reductively associate Baldwin's name with homosexuality or Hemingway's with machismo mythology is to divorce the work of both first-rate expatriate writers from broader historical contexts and to fail to appreciate its 'organic' engagement with the socio-political issues of their times.

This paper deals with organic intellectualism in two American expatriate authors: Ernest Hemingway, the post-First World War Lost Generation influential writer, and James Baldwin, the post-Second World War distinguished New Lost Generation essayist, activist and novelist, both of whom renowned public intellectuals Cornel West ("As Blues a Moment") and Edward Said (1996: xvii) claimed as a major influence. This discussion raises, among others, the following questions: what is an intellectual? What is the role and responsibility of this social class in the public domain? How do intellectuals relate to the marketplace, power, and the marginalized? What is the relationship between art and politics? How do intellectuals contribute to social change? Using Said and West as key theoretical references to bear on the lives and works of Hemingway and Baldwin, this paper outlines a model for the ideal intellectual as a driving societal force and counter-

narrative, an active social actor that mobilizes *talent* in the *service* of humanity. The article argues that Baldwin and his forebear, Hemingway, conceived of themselves as linked to the destinies of their times and intervened with tremendous agency in the social world as organic artists/intellectuals by giving voice to the unrepresented and marginalized, empowering them with the expertise to combat social injustice and existential malaise. Both self-exiled literati figures believed that the world is "contingent" (*ibid.* 60), man-made (Said 2004: 10), thus subject to degrees of 'correction' or transformation, and engaged in the *effort* to change it through social critique as well as through political activism. This discussion has great resonance today, as the need for social participants and cosmopolitan actors like Baldwin and Hemingway becomes urgent in a world characterized by social crisis and intellectual paralysis. These are artists and intellectuals who spoke to their times with integrity and an international agency, and whose social commentary, an excavation of the roots of identity-formation and modern alienation, has proved inspiring and prophetic.

In *Representations of the Intellectual*, Edward Said outlines two of the major definitions of the intellectual in the twentieth-century. On the one hand, there is Antonio Gramsci's distinction between "traditional intellectuals" and "organic intellectuals," linked in his conception of the intellectual as a function in the social world. The difference between the two subcategories is that while the former, exemplified by priests and teachers, does humdrum and routine work and seems not to develop, the latter, mostly composed of capitalist specialists connected to the marketplace and class interests, is continually evolving and reforming. On the other hand is Julien Benda's elitist conception of the intellectual as belonging to a small coterie of unusually exceptional gurus of knowledge and wisdom, who watch over human morality from a secluded "ivory tower" (4-7). Said argues that Gramsci's social analysis of the intellectual's career has proved prophetic in a modern era characterized by the emergence of numerous areas of expertise (8-9).

Said also makes reference in Representations Michel Foucault's distinction between the emergent "specific intellectual" (American scientist Robert Oppenheimer) and the retreating father-figure of "the universal intellectual" (French Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre) (9-10). In the context of this debate about the definition and the role of the intellectual, Pierre Bourdieu (2000) calls for the need in contemporary society to reconstruct the field of intellectual work and political action through what he calls a "collective intellectual." This is an intelligentsia network comprised of "specific intellectuals" (in the Foucauldian sense of the descriptor), an independent front-line alliance of committed scholars, artists, and scientists that would operate as enhanced counter-force to the "reactionary think tanks" of "neoliberal ideology" (42). Similarly, in the context of his support of the candidacy of politician Bernie Sanders in the American 2020 presidential election Cornel West talked about the urgent need for intellectual passion and political solidarity, the "energy to counter the escalating neo-fascist energy and enthusiasm of a Donald Trump" ("Cornel West Explains"). This vision of mobile and strategic intellectual activity resonates with Gramsci's notion of "organic intellectuals" as social forces "always on the move, on the make" (Said 1996: 4). For such serious intellectuals as Said, Bourdieu, and West, organic intellectuals, as counternarrative and counter-force, must resiliently and relentlessly engage in reconstructing their field of action and amass and focus 'collective' "energy" in an accumulative, subversive political program.

It seems that Julien Benda's imagination of the wisdom-loving, ivory tower-dwelling philosopher would be perfect for Edward Said if that noble but secluded intellectual marginality 'descends' his golden tower and into the troublesome realm of activism very much like a "Robin Hood," the legendary able and cherished figure (1996: 22-3) who engages singlehandedly in the

struggle for the just redistribution of wealth in the actual social world. But Said also understood that such an idealistic intellectual praxis necessitates the negotiation of a space between realism and utopia in which the intellectual, adhering strictly to academic standards and ethical norms, engages in a permanent struggle against the backdrop and the pressures of external reality (the audience, the marketplace, big corporations, state institutions). When James Baldwin said that "his audience were the 'publicans and tax-collectors' as well as the righteous" (Leeming 2007: 145), or when Cornel West spoke of Bernie Sanders as a "a sign of hope" ("As Blues a Moment") rather than the perfect man and politician ("Why I'm with Bernie"), they were both referring to that strategic negotiation of the space between intellectual utopianism and its political actualization in a cumulative countercultural project.

Hemingway, Baldwin, and the Intellectual Effort: The 'Technical' and the Ethical

The lives and works of Ernest Hemingway and James Baldwin have the ingredients that go into the making of the intellectual vocation as described by Edward Said and Cornel West. Quoting Hemingway in his memoir of expatriation to Paris, *Notes of a Native Son*, Baldwin writes, "I consider that I have many responsibilities, but none greater than this: to last, as Hemingway says, and get my work done." (1998: 9). The model for this intellectual practice is not the "faceless professional," but somebody with a unique voice engaged in an ever-lasting, ethically-credible and intellectually-vibrant performance in public (Said 1996: 11-3). For Hemingway and Baldwin, great art involves both talent and integrity. Intellectuals like Baldwin, as West puts it, are not "reducible to a brain:" they use their competence and talent not to promote their careers and maximize their personal gains but "to empower others for a cause" ("As Blues a Moment"). Referring to the social role and historical responsibility of the writer in a passionate statement addressed to the Second Congress of American Writers in 1937 in the context of his anti-fascist efforts and affiliations with "Popular Front" politics (Holcomb 2013: 309), Hemingway talked about "the mission of the writer in our time" (Fuentes 1984: 144). The dues that must be paid for such organic intellectualism is unpopularity (Said 1996: 23).³

What is interesting about Hemingway and Baldwin is the *effort* they made to come to terms with questions of *integrity*, a critical sensibility shared by Said and West. In "Diary: My Encounter with Sartre", Said argues that the French intellectual "seemed neither infallible nor prophetic... one admired Sartre for the *efforts* he made to understand situations and, when necessary, to offer solidarity to political causes" (2000, emphasis mine). Like Sartre, while Hemingway and Baldwin had their limitations, they were self-conscious authors constantly anxious about their artistic and intellectual integrity. "A writer must have "*talent*... and absolute *conscience* as unchanging as the standard meter in Paris, to prevent faking," says Hemingway in *Green Hills* of *Africa* (18, emphasis mine), explaining in "Fascism is a Lie" that the writer's vocation is defined by his relentless effort to craft "true, lasting writing" and not "the garbled hearsay that we pass as history" (1937: 4). The fallible Hemingway was also the Hemingway who articulated the Indian's and the Negro's blues, fought fascism in Spain, rethought his attitudes toward the African alterity, and publicly supported the Fidel Castro-led Cuban Revolution outside a horrified mainstream American empire. As Said explains in *representations*, "these complications give texture and tension" to the intellectual's performance, and must not be viewed as "disqualifying" paradoxes (14).⁴

The method I am describing here is not an aberrant approach nor is my personal and critical attitude a desperate attempt at defending the indefensible, doing things with words to let

Hemingway and Baldwin off the hook. As a cultural entity, a writer is produced by the circumstances of their times, and what makes the difference is their commitment to credible work and their relentless wrestling with those social forces which limit the possibilities of achieving the construction of personal identity. Such a reading strategy is favored by both Edward Said's and Toni Morrison's manner of doing *critique*:

For the humanist, the act of reading is the act therefore of first putting oneself in the position of the author, for whom writing is a series of decisions and choices expressed in words. It need hardly be said that no author is completely sovereign or above the time, place, and circumstances of his or her life, so that these, too, must be understood if one is to put oneself in the author's position sympathetically. Thus to read an author like Conrad, for example, is first of all to read his work as if with the eye of Conrad himself, which is to try to understand each word, each metaphor, each sentence as something consciously chosen by Conrad in preference to any number of other possibilities. We know of course from looking at the manuscripts of his works how laborious and how time-consuming that process of composition and choice was for him: it therefore behooves us as his readers to make a comparable effort by getting inside his language so to speak, inside it so as to understand why he put it that way in particular, to understand it as it was made. (Said 2004: 62)

For both black and white American writers, in a wholly racialized society, there is no escape from racially inflected language, and the works writers do to unhobble the imagination from the demands of that language is complicated, interesting, and definitive. (Morrison 1993: 12-13)

The scholarly choice outlined above falls within the range of what Edward Said calls "democratic criticism" (2004). In such a critical framework, the writer is not imagined as an absolute function of discourse, as Michel Foucault argues in his essay titled "What is an Author" (1977); rather, they are viewed as an entity endowed with a degree of critical consciousness, existential will and human agency, a major theoretical and methodological difference between Said's and Foucault's manner of doing critical analysis and evaluation, (Said 2003: 23). Such a distinction and critical nuancing is exemplified by Said's reading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994):

What makes Conrad different from the other colonial writers who were his contemporaries is that, for reasons having partly to do with the colonialism that turned him, a polish expatriate, into an employee of the imperial system, he was so self-conscious about what he did...Although the almost oppressive force of Marlow's narrative leaves us with a quite accurate sense that there is no way out of the sovereign historical force of imperialism, and that it has the power of a system representing as well as speaking for everything within its dominion, Conrad shows us that what Marlow does is contingent, acted out for a set of likeminded British hearers, and limited to that situation. (25-6)

In his exploration of the novella's "two visions" (the tension between the imperialist and the antiimperialist trends in the narrative), Said appreciates the *effort* Conrad makes to keep his "ironic distance" as an artist with an "outsider" perspective (27).

In the general sense, as Said notes, writers are often viewed as first-order creators compared to the "parasitic" second-hand undertakings of critics (2004: 127). This is Hemingway's attitude towards criticism, which he does not view as a real thing immediately got from "innocence of contact," as he put it (Said 1985). He wrote to Sherwood Anderson that "All criticism is shit anyway. Nobody knows about it except yourself...professional critics make me sick; camp following eunuchs of literature" (qtd. Lamb 2013: 153). Such complaints must not be interpreted as a lack of intellectual humility or a rejection of critical authority on the part of the writer. Rather, it is the failure to produce a constructive and democratic type of criticism⁵ that appreciates the effort a fallible human being and a limited human agency embarks on to make sense of the world and to try to make it better for oneself and for others that is being objected to here. In speaking of a writer's integrity, the focus must be shifted from 'dismissive' monolithic criticism to a multidimensional critical assessment that does not fail to appreciate the effort and courage made by a human agency to battle the determinisms of social upbringing and the assumptions of power. Given the vulnerability and the fallibility of human beings and knowing that the individual is a subjectivity-formation produced by the social environment, "the quality of effort" to break free from the shackles of such an 'oppressive' existential situation is "the best we can do," as West concludes ("Race Matters"). For these reasons, among others, Baldwin "stopped hating Shakespeare," still "respect[ed] Faulkner," talked about Hemingway's "effort to become a great novelist" (2010: 65-69 and 35, emphasis mine), and, unlike many black writers, refused to accuse William Styron of racism ("James Baldwin Speaks"). This critical sensibility has vast implications for society at large. For criticism and literature it means nourishment, and not "lobotomizing" (Morrison 1993: 12). For culture, to recognize *effort* is to create good culture by encouraging individuals to develop and grow as responsible co-citizens who can relate to one another in a pluralistic social order. This is good education, too, for the younger generation must be brought up to appreciate effort in others and in themselves, a strategic pedagogy that would contribute to producing the society of perseverance and the culture of intellectual humility. In political terms, recognizing and encouraging imperfect but honest and humane effort is to spot political potentiality and attract alliance in the struggle for justice.

Hemingway's and Baldwin's artistic/intellectual *effort* consists in attempting to produce "expertise" to empower the modern alienated subject. This is in many ways the story of the disenfranchised Ralph Ellison learning Hemingway's blues—grace under pressure—being instructed by the expatriate 'expert' and accomplished artist on the art of daily living in such a manner that empowered the black man's subalternity:

Do you still ask why Hemingway is more important to me than Wright? Not because he was white, or more "accepted"... Because he wrote with such precision about the processes and *techniques* of daily living that I could keep myself and my brother alive during the 1937 Recession... Because all he wrote—and this is very important—was imbued with a spirit beyond the tragic with which I could feel at home, for it was very close to the feeling of the blues. (Ellison 1972: 140, emphasis mine)

Similarly, Fidel Castro said that he learnt a great deal about guerrilla warfare from Hemingway:

I met him after the triumph of the Revolution...But I knew his work long before the Revolution. For instance, I read *For Whom the Bell Tolls* when I was a student. It was all about a group of guerrillas and I found it very interesting, because Hemingway told about a rear guard that fought against a conventional army. I can tell you now that that Hemingway novel was one of the books that helped me plan the tactics with which to fight Batista's army...The *methods* the men of that other time used to solve their problem helped us considerably to find a way to do it. The elements were in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. (qtd. Fuentes 1984: 174-5, emphasis mine)⁶

Hemingway and Baldwin believed that the artist/intellectual must always be on the side of the weak⁷ and that expertise must be used in the cause of freedom and justice. "Franco is a good general but a son of a bitch of the first magnitude," Hemingway wrote (qtd. Kinnamon 1996: 154), revealing in rhetoric his personal belief in the inseparability of the 'technical' and the ethical in human activity and human achievement. In a similar vein, both authors refused to compromise moral standards in their position on segregation and were very critical of William Faulkner's 'settlement plan' on the status of the Negro in segregationist America:

He has the most *talent* of anybody and he just needs a sort of *conscience* that isn't there. Certainly if no nation can exist half free and half slave no man can write half whore and half straight. But he will write absolutely perfectly straight and then go on and on and not be able to end it. (Hemingway, *SL* 1981: 604, emphasis mine)

Faulkner—among so many others!—is so plaintive concerning this "middle of the road" from which "extremists" of both races are driving him that it does not seem unfair to ask just what he has been doing there until now. Where is the evidence of the struggle he has been carrying on there on behalf of the Negro? Why, if he and his enlightened confreres in the South have been boring from within to destroy segregation, do they react with such panic when the walls show any signs of falling? Why—and how—does one move from the middle of the road where one was aiding Negroes into the streets—to shoot them? (Baldwin, "Faulkner" 1998: 211)

While both Hemingway and Baldwin faulted Faulkner for his ambivalent representation of the racial question in America and thought that the famous Southern novelist at moments almost wasted his tremendous "talent" by compromising rigorous intellectual standards and side-stepping ethical issues, they still appreciated his artistic effort. For example, Baldwin wrote in *Notes of a Native Son* that Faulkner's work, more like Robert Penn Warren's but less than Ralph Ellison's, dramatizes "the beginnings—at least—of a more genuinely penetrating search" (9).

In Baldwin's and Hemingway's Expatriate Space: "Tapping the Source"

The artistic/intellectual intervention by the Lost Generation white forebear and the New Lost Generation black successor subscribed neither to party-line nor theory. For Baldwin,

All theories are suspect, that the finest principles may have to be modified, or may even be pulverized by the demands of life, and that one must find, therefore, one's own moral center and move through the world hoping that this center will guide one aright. (NNS 9)

Baldwin's approach to the question of identity, its structuring and restructuring to meet the challenges of lived experience, resonates with Hemingway's imagination of a personal identity put constantly under review. Hemingway says towards the end of *A Moveable Feast*, his memoir of expatriation to Paris, that "every day is more dangerous, but you live day today as in a war" (181), and in the dramatic version of that memoir, *The Sun Also Rises*, the protagonist Jake Barnes ruminates about the 'innocence' of theory in a vaster, complicated, changing world: "The world was a good place to buy in. It seemed like a fine philosophy. In five years, I thought, it will seem as silly as all the other fine philosophies I've had." (123)

Both Hemingway's and Baldwin's identity as writers was framed by the existential belief that "safety" is a delusion, and that "art," as the black artist argues in "The Artist's Struggle for Integrity,"

is here to prove, and to help one bear, the fact that all safety is an illusion. In this sense, all artists are divorced from and even necessarily opposed to any system whatever. (2010: 51)

While not subsumable under any monolithic system of representation that claims authoritativeness, both Hemingway and Baldwin, like Said and West, are rooted in an intellectual tradition which holds that the higher truths of freedom, justice and human rights are self-evident 'foundations' without which human society is doomed, a frame of reference that constitutes their *raison d'être* as writers. Said finds certain superficial forms of "radical antifoundationalism" bizarre when, for instance, they reduce "real events" to "linguistic effects" (2004: 10). Indeed, the talk about human rights in terms of "linguistic effects" or the dismissal of over-vigorous human rights activists as feverish, naïve, or priggish would surely be "detected as shit" in Baldwin's and Hemingway's intellectual/moral "radar," as Papa's words have it in the Plimpton interview (2002: 32).

Starting almost from 'scratch' in removed expatriate space, trying to "write one true sentence" (*AMF* 12), one that is "as clean as a bone," as Baldwin's version of Hemingway's statement has it in an interview (Elgrably 1984), both Hemingway's and Baldwin's critique of personal and collective identity begin the search by probing the origins of an American culture self-defined by the exclusion of otherness. In an instance of "intellectual excavation" ("Intellectual Vocation") of the roots of American identity, Hemingway writes in a letter to a friend:

One of my grandfathers [Ernest Hall] always told me that patriotism is the last refuge of thieves and scoundrels...he was a very fine man and had been badly wounded in our civil war and never allowed the war to be mentioned in his presence. My other grandfather [Anson Hemingway] was a hero and when I was a little boy I went with him to see Annette Kellerman and *The Birth of a Nation* and to bury all members of the Grand Army of The Republic. He always made the speech at the funeral and coming home we would stop at some saloon and he

would say, "Ern, don't believe a damned word of what I said about that son of a bitch today. A son of a bitch alive is a son of a bitch dead. But I have to have toujours le fucking politesse." (1981: 811)

This is Hemingway "returning to the source" once again to reexamine personal and collective identity in terms of "what has gone into the shaping and moulding of who we are, what Antonio Gramsci calls an historical, critical self-inventory ("Intellectual Vocation"). Assuming the role here of an iconoclastic historian and educator, Papa presents the official discourse of mainstream America about such lofty ideals as the union, democracy, and nationhood as little more than rhetoric, a constructed false self-image transferred to future generations via cultural "upbringing" (1981: 810). By interrogating the silences of U.S. hegemonic discourse and its "epistemic violence" (Spivak 1988: 280), the famous influential American author, whose statements were widely circulated, fulfills the role of an organic intellectual bent on demystifying constructed historical truth by retelling it from the point of view of the margin and the marginalized. Like Said, Hemingway believed that "the role of the intellectual is to present alternative narratives and other perspectives on history than those provided by combatants on behalf of official memory and national identity and mission," a conception of intellectual reconstruction of history as "counter-memory" (Said 2004: 141 and 142). Like Baldwin, Hemingway refused to subscribe to "the whole process of Americanization, while burying its particular racial ingredients" (Morrison 1993: 47). In addressing the roots of American domestic social and political situation, Hemingway, like Baldwin and West, construes the racial question in America not basically as "a democratic deficit" but as an "original sin, which means that America began as empire rather than democratic experiment" ("Race Matters"). Both Hemingway and Baldwin despised Americans for their "lack of personality," (as the black writer describes his countrymen in an interview) (Leeming 1986: 49), and subjected their culture to rigorous examination in their expatriate laboratory to construct personal authority. Hemingway and Baldwin, who never went to college and who were self-taught, entrenched themselves deeply within a type of humanism associated with what the Greeks called *paideia*, that is, "deep education" versus "cheap schooling" ("Intellectual Vocation").

Hemingway and Baldwin believed that the function of the artist/intellectual is "to tap the source" (NNS 7) in a thoroughgoing examination of self and others in order to construct a true self-image as well as to deal with loss and alienation. In such an approach, expertise is greatly valued and posited as a problem-solving intellectualization. In his review of Hemingway's *The Dangerous Summer*, ironically titled "How not to Get Gored," Edward Said discusses the implications of what he sees as the prevalent obsession of American writing with "instruction" and "expertise," a factor, Said argues, which causes it to ultimately degenerate into a market commodity and increasingly gears it towards the demands of mass politics. Said suggests that

a useful way of understanding this peculiar structure of perception is to see it as a substitute for the feeling of historical depth and continuity. To foreground information and expertise is in many ways to say that what matters can be pushed up to the surface, and that history, in so far as it is out of easy reach, is better forgotten or, if it can't be forgotten, ignored. Experience of the here-and-now—the relevant—is therefore given priority... As a result, in no other literature is the writer so much a performing self, as Richard Poirier has observed, and in no other literature is such a premium placed on raw data and its virtuoso delivery. (1985)

Said's criticism of American canonical writing in his review of Hemingway's posthumously published book may be applied to a Baldwin viewed as "a performing self" concerned with an expertise produced by a methodological reconstruction of lived experience. The "peculiar sense of perception" of "American expertise" which Said critiques in his review of Hemingway is in fact at the heart of Baldwin's strategic reconstruction of the black man's identity as American. Because of the present situation introduced by the historically irrevocable displacement of the enslaved black man, he is forced, Baldwin argues in his Parisian memoir quoting E. Franklin Frazier, "to find 'a motive for living under American culture or die" (125). Such an intellectualization of experience is posited by Baldwin as the only hope for the deracinated American Negro to survive his situation, the price to pay for his endurance being the painful acceptance of loss—loss of origin—with grace under pressure. Baldwin felt that his argument was legitimate 'technically,' morally and politically: positing the black man's identity as a hybrid native son is claiming entitlement to the American soil. This is a subversive political ambivalence deployed as a fully conscious and calculated strategic 'move' to explode the system of discrimination and exclusion from the inside. "The evolution of this identity was a source of the most intolerable anxiety in the minds and lives of his masters" (ibid.), he goes on to explain. And Baldwin, who lived the racial nightmare in the flesh and who expatriated to Paris to rediscover his identity, presented himself as a survivor of loss and as a witness to experience, in many ways the horse's mouth instructing the audience with his "expertise." One might draw the analogy here and say that to a certain extent Baldwin looks like the Sartre of Orphée Noir, in that his theorization becomes, as Frantz Fanon describes the French philosopher's essay in *Black* Skin, White Masks, "a date in the intellectualization of the experience of being black," and "a methodical construction based on experience" (Fanon 1967: 133-4). In the context of modern alienation, both Hemingway's and Baldwin's effort, or rather 'dream,' consists of squeezing out of personal experience "the last drop...to recreate out of the disorder of life that order which is art" (NNS 8). In this sense, literature is neither 'bricolage' nor market merchandise, for the expertise and the intellectualization it offers are less geared towards the demands of the marketplace and politics than designed to empower subalternity and marginality.

Conclusion: The Relevance of Hemingway and Baldwin Today

The realities of America and the world both Ernest Hemingway and James Baldwin were describing and engaging with during their careers as writers are largely still the case today. The deadly racial violence of the "Red Summer," which erupted a century ago in various parts of the U.S., including Hemingway's hometown, Chicago (Dudley 2012: 94 and 96), resurfaces again at the present time following the brutal murder of the black man George Floyd by a white police officer. This recent violent racial encounter has been described by Cornel West as a reenactment of the historical practice of "public lynching" in racist America ("Cornel West CNN"). Indeed, this explosive racial situation, which was described in various ways by both Hemingway and Baldwin in terms of a dormant rather than an extinct volcano, has been erupting throughout American history since the days of slavery. In contrast to the discourse of a white supremacist Donald Trump on the occasion of the American Independence Day commemoration, Baldwin's and Hemingway's Fourth of July¹o connects to the tradition of the slave-narrative, especially Frederick Douglass's famous Fourth of July 1852 speech titled, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (*The Black Scholar* 1976). Both artists say that race is the U.S. existential 'wound,'

and pulverize in their work America's self-image as "democratic experiment" by excavating American history to recover its marginalized Other and by exposing the monstrosity of an oligarchic system in which the American dream becomes nightmare. Until America is able to confront its urgent questions of race and class radically and honestly in a way that is "profoundly Socratic in terms of self-examination," and "Gramsci-like in terms of a historically informed critical self-inventory" (West, "The Trump Era," 2017: 23-4), Hemingway and Baldwin say, the dream of American nationhood will never be born. Today's America connects to Hemingway's and Baldwin's in that the so-called democratic republic is still in fact a police state and an empire held together precariously only by surveillance and coercion. Indeed it is a time of "reckoning" ("Moment of Reckoning") for this "failed social experiment" ("Cornel West CNN"), as West puts it.

The powerful resurgence of white supremacy at the top of the U.S. political system led by Donald Trump, and the fight back of the black marginalized Other in the form of "Black Lives Matter" movement is yet another instance of the race-fuelled social ferment that has plagued the country for hundreds of years and whose labor endlessly seeks denouement, only to be stifled in an anticlimactic abortion. The consequence is the disruption of the birth of a 'normal' society, which is supposed to be founded on the principles of democracy and common good and not governed by the divisions of race, class and sexuality. Until this very moment, America has not resolved the urgent question of identity—which threatens to blow the country apart—because it has not yet addressed it earnestly. As both Hemingway and Baldwin told us, the so called "Negro problem" has been used dishonestly in the white man's egotistic struggle for dominance.¹¹ But alas! The white man's crooked strategies and cowardice "only delayed the presentation of the bill. The bill always came," Hemingway explains in *Sun* (123).

Baldwin noted that America's long-standing domestic racial divide is partly the root of its polarized view of the globe (*NNS* 128). This Manichean division of the world, which still dominates American foreign policy today, is what Hemingway refused to subscribe to when he supported Fidel Castro, *la bête noire* of white supremacy. He wrote, "I believe completely in the historical necessity of the Cuban Revolution" (qtd. Fuentes 1984: 270).¹² Hemingway, an artist who achieved insiderness in foreign soil through his expatriate strategy of "transplanting yourself" (*AMF* 4), and who knew well that acceptance by the marginalized or colonized Other may entail various forms of acculturation and political support, considered Cuba his home and the Cubans his 'equal' brothers. Hemingway, who fought fascism, believed in "global racial time" (Edwards 2005: 9), historical becoming and change, was, like Baldwin, confronting in America a white supremacist attitude adamant on maintaining the innocence of its lost Eden.

Ernest Hemingway and James Baldwin recognized the fact that their individual lives were inextricably linked to the destiny of their society. "No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody fucking chance" (155), says Harry Morgan, the protagonist of *To Have and Have Not*, a novel in which Hemingway's social consciousness was dramatically increased, coming finally to a recognition of that truth in his death throes in a revisionist moment of his culture's notions of machismo, individualism and invincibility. In Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues," sudden death and the social "trap" (839) eventually forced the teacher-narrator to reconsider his middle-class politics of "play it safe," as the black artist's phrase has it in his novel of expatriation to Paris, *Giovanni's Room* (267). Both expatriate American authors felt part of their social fabric and laid bare the social ferment of their times and the levels of suffering it engendered, being fully aware that "the condition of truth is always to allow suffering to speak" ("Intellectual Vocation"). By producing committed literature, by using expertise to empower subalternity, and by lending

support to social movements and political causes whenever possible, Hemingway and Baldwin were organic artists/intellectuals determined to contribute to bringing about desirable social change.

Hemingway and Baldwin did not present themselves as political figures, spokesmen, or pamphleteers; they conceived of themselves primarily as artists committed to the integrity of their work. But neither of these travelling writers inhabited an "ivory tower" where they developed their style and in which they sought refuge in writing and its pleasures in seclusion from the pressing social and political issues of their times. There is no such thing as an apolitical intellectual or artist, and as Edward Said (1996) notes quoting C. Wright Mills (1963), if the intellectual fails to dedicate himself to a quest for truth in politics, "he cannot responsibly cope with the whole of live experience" (21). As artists, "in the new division of political labor... the new manner of doing politics," they "give symbolic force, by way of artistic form, to critical ideas and analyses" (Bourdieu 2000: 45). This is a conception of an organic intellectualism governed by "a division of labor," a shared space of intellectual "plurality" and multifunctionality (West 1999). Both Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin claimed Hemingway as forbear partly because, unlike a Richard Wright of "protest" fiction (*NNS* 11-8), Papa "knew the difference between politics and art and something of their true relationship to the writer" (Ellison 1972: 140).¹³

Henry Louis Gates argued that James Baldwin somehow failed to qualify as an "organic intellectual" and was rather an "alienated artist" because, Gates explains, the black artist could not communicate a clear political "message" to an audience "which he would not only analyze but also uplift" (2007: 15-6). In fact, such type of arguments overlook, or ignore, the fact that, given its vulnerability in the face of overwhelming structures of power and domination, a marginalized intellectual may not always be able to "uplift" the people or affect a change in their situation, and might indeed be reduced to the status of a witness-bearing lonely figure trapped in a paradoxical situation. Indeed Baldwin's intellectual vocation may be seen as a "condition of being a 'witness' in all its pathos and ambiguous eloquence" (Said 1996: xvii). What always matters more than anything else for the intellectual, however, is to stay rooted in one's search for integrity, a position far better than intellectual inertia, laziness, or defeat. Similarly, as Said writes paraphrasing Theodor Adorno, "the hope of the intellectual is not that he will have an effect on the world, but that someday, somewhere, someone will read what he wrote exactly as he wrote it" (*ibid.* 57). In this sense, the prophecy and the legacy of the artists/intellectuals become an experience and an expertise, or a forum for public debate that society will always have the opportunity to use to "uplift" itself.14

The intellectual model exemplified by Hemingway and Baldwin is still relevant today since, as Said notes in *Representations*, social oppression and intellectual betrayal are still the case in modern/postmodern society. In such a context, Said argues, to reduce *all* intellectual intervention to "local situations and language games" and define the role of the intellectual only in terms of professionalism according to the dictates of postmodernism while claiming the demise of the "grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment" is a sign of intellectual bankruptcy (17-8). Such a tendency to reduce intellectual activity to the 'technical' in contemporary society and to dismiss morally-based intellectualism as "outdated" means also succumbing to commodity culture, and being "well-adjusted to indifference, well-adjusted to injustice" ("Intellectual Vocation"). This deceptively 'safe,' 'comfortable,' and 'fashionable' type of careerism, elitism, and intellectual disengagement is what Baldwin and Hemingway, the outsiders, always saw as a threat to their integrity and endurance as authentic and organic artists/intellectuals.

Notes

- 1. American author and activist James Baldwin argued in his essay titled "The Creative Process" that "The artist is distinguished from all other possible actors in society—the politicians, legislators, educators, and scientists—by the fact that he is his own test tube, his own laboratory, working according to very rigorous standards, however unstated these may be" (670). Like his black countryman, Ernest Hemingway believed that the intellectual must be "disinterested" in representing reality (GHOA 19). For Edward Said, the paradigm for such intellectual choice is dramatized in the fiction of such artists as Joyce, Flaubert, and Turgenev "in which the representation of social reality is profoundly influenced, even decisively changed by the sudden appearance of a new actor, the modern young intellectual" (Representations 14). For both Baldwin and Hemingway, the artist's "laboratory" is imagined as an iconoclastic individualistic enterprise in which personal experience, experimentation, and rigorous representation provide the material and set the standards for intellectual investigation and artistic imagination. In such an intellectual conception, what matters in defining the intellectual/artist, viewed as a subversive "marginal" and as an "amateur" rather than a privileged professional (ibid. xvi), is integrity, integrity being defined in academic and social terms as a disinterested effort to uncover the truth and to represent the marginalized in the name of the lofty ideals of liberty and equality.
- 2. For Edward Said, the intellectual is a tragic figure. Because the intellectual does not belong to circles of executive power or dominant groups, his endeavors to contribute to bringing about social change are often frustrated, and may indeed be at times "relegated to the role of a witness who testifies to a horror otherwise unrecorded" (*Representations* xvi-xvii).
- 3. Cornel West argues that Baldwin was a "best-seller" rather than a "popular" author. Tracing Baldwin's career, West explains how "Baldwin is one of the few black intellectuals who was the darling of a slice of liberal elite for a while, and then becomes demonized by them later on" for his uncompromising intellectual and moral standards ("As Blues a Moment"). Hemingway, too, was once "infiltrated" by "the rich", and assimilated for a time to a bourgeois elitist taste and lifestyle. But Hemingway, like Baldwin, refused to be reduced to that status, injurious as it was to his integrity and the endurance of his art. "If these bastards like it what is wrong with it? That was what I would think if I had been functioning as a professional," he says towards the end of A Moveable Feast (181). The point here is that both Hemingway's and Baldwin's art consists not only of the 'technical' but is basically concerned with the ethical as well. In Hemingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," Harry, the dying protagonist of the story, remembers how his countryman "poor Julien" (Scott Fitzgerald) was done as a writer by being trapped and ravaged by the self-indulgent lifestyle of "the rich." "You did not have to like it because you understood it," Harry says in his cathartic and soul-searching meditations (68), insisting that one must take a moral position towards lived experience.

As for Baldwin, for Hemingway writing was neither business, nor politics, nor fame; indeed it was a vocation, not a profession. As he made clear to Max Perkins in a letter dated 7 September 1935:

You can't be popular all the time unless you make a career of it like Galsworthy etc. I will survive this unpopularity...I don't give a damn whether I am popular or not. You know I never went for it when I was. The only thing bothers me is that your business office will not have the faith in me that I have and will not see that I am working on a long plan instead of trying to be popular every day like Mr. Roosevelt. (*SL* 423)

- 4. In a similar context, Cornel West argues that intellectuals are not concerned with "the correct analysis," but with being entrenched in the tenacity of the determination to tell the truth; they are "love warriors, not polished professionals," he explains. In such a conception of intellectual life, "integrity" is defined as "a thoroughgoing self-investment and self-involvement, and a willingness to understand a particular situation in light of its genealogy, in light of its diagnosis, and the projection of a prognosis in a fallible mode." The history of science, West reminds us, is a history of fallibility ("Intellectual Vocation").
 - 5. Some of Hemingway's correspondences reveal that the writer has been most of the times frustrated by his reading of criticism, but that he always aspired to interact with constructive, creative, and inspiring scholarship. The only critics that Hemingway respected greatly were none other than the American Edmund Wilson and the Russian Ivan Kashkin. As he explained to Wilson in a letter dated 8 November, 1952:

I have always hoped for sound, intelligent criticism all my life as writing is the loneliest of all trades. But I have little of it except from Kashkin and from you. Some of yours I disagreed with very much and others were illuminating and helpful. (*SL* 793)

Similarly, James Baldwin's experience with critics and criticism taught him, as he put it in a conversation with Nikki Giovanni, that "a real critic is very rare" (A Dialogue 83).

6. Fidel Castro's comrade, renowned Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, argues in an essay titled, "Hemingway—Our Own," that Castro's favourable view of the North American writer could not be seen as a compliment:

Fidel Castro declared before a group of American Newspapermen that Hemingway was his favorite author. You have to know Fidel Castro to realize that he would never say such a thing as a simple courtesy, since he would have to go beyond some important political considerations to say it with such conviction.

The truth is that Fidel Castro has been for many years a constant reader of Hemingway, that he knows his work in depth, that he likes to talk about him, and knows how to defend him convincingly. On his long and frequent trips to the interior of the country, he always takes a confusing pile of government documents to study in his car. Among them one can often see the two volumes of the selected works of Ernest Hemingway. (14)

The revolutionary Gabriel Garcia Marquez explains that hidden behind Hemingway's macho image in the popular imagination is the life of the poet, "the insomniac artisan whom nobody really knew, overcome by the insatiable servitude of his vocation" (15). Marquez concludes his article by saying that Hemingway "was able to decipher, as few have done in human history, the practical mysteries of the most solitary occupation in the world" (16). Both Hemingway and Baldwin crafted a language and a literature designed as weaponry in a "practical" 'fight' to counter social oppression and modern alienation.

- 7. To Harry Sylvester, Hemingway wrote, "my sympathies are always for exploited working people against absentee landlords even if I drink around with the landlords and shoot pigeons with them. I would as soon shoot them as the pigeons" (*SL* 456). Said expresses the same sensibility in *Representations* when he says, "there is no question in my mind that the intellectual belongs on the same side with the weak and unrepresented" (22).
- 8. For Hemingway, "for a true writer each book should be a new beginning where he tries again for something that is beyond attainment" ("The Nobel Prize Speech" 14). Baldwin seems to reproduce and explain Hemingway's statement in his essay on major Lost Generation novelists, titled "As Much Truth as One Can Bear," an "essay more about Hemingway than about Dos Passos, Fitzgerald or Faulkner" (Scruggs 64), where he writes that

the effort to become a great novelist simply involves attempting to tell as much of the truth as one can bear, and then a little more. It is an effort which, by its very nature—remembering that men write the books, that time passes and energy flags, and safety beckons—is obviously doomed to failure. "Success" is an American word which cannot conceivably, unless it is defined in an extremely severe, ironical, and painful way, have any place in the vocabulary of an artist. (35)

Both American writers acted on the belief that "writing is something you can never do as well as it can be done; it's a perpetual challenge, as Hemingway puts it (*Ernest Hemingway*). So the real issue at stake here for a writer, Hemingway says, is to "survive and get his work done" (*GHOA* 19). In the final analysis, what matters in a just critical assessment of the work of serious artists/intellectuals is the appreciation of their *effort*. After all, as Pearl G. Berg notes in her defense of Hemingway against the charge of anti-Semitism, "If theory...has done anything for us, it has sanctioned our going beyond the reductive readings fostered by a purely activist or thematic response" (1990: 926). In a word, the application of a "strictly activist approach" (*ibid*. 924) to the work of literary figures like Baldwin and Hemingway—artists who strived to produce out of personal experience, the power of the intellect, the spaciousness of the imagination, and an unaffected language, multi-dimensional, yet self-consciously 'incomplete' representations—is at best inadequate, if not irrelevant.

- 9. In his remarks on the occasion, President Donald Trump demonizes the counter-narrative and subversive practice of the anti-white-supremacy "cancel culture" movement. Because of his function in white supremacist discourse, Trump wants to reverse an anti-racist situation, describing the contesting dissident culture in terms of "totalitarianism" and "fascism" ("Remarks by President Trump").
- 10. In her analysis of Hemingway's "Ten Indians," Amy Strong argues that "Hemingway originally named this story 'After the Fourth,' a title that subtly references a historical period of national racial violence against the British and against the Native American.

Evidence of the Indians' degraded status surrounds Nick, the Garners, and Dr. Adams, forming an important backdrop for the story's seemingly childish romance plot. While the title 'After the Fourth' subtly calls forth the presence of Indians, Hemingway's new title, 'Ten Indians' places them even more front and center" (*Race and Identity* 41). In Baldwin's "Going to Meet the Man," Jesse, the 'law man,' recalls his initiation as a boy into the culture of racism and brutality, confronting it for the first time in the actual and symbolic act of lynching. The celebratory mood of the lynching mob makes the occasion for Jesse looks "like a Fourth of July picnic" (944), a scene reverberating with the ironical situation Hemingway produces in "Ten Indians."

11. Baldwin notes in *Notes of a Native Son* how the racial question has always been maliciously manipulated in the U. S. to consolidate power relations:

For the history of the American Negro is unique also in this: that the question of his humanity, and of his rights therefore as a human being, became a burning one for several generations of Americans, so burning a question that it ultimately became one of those used to divide the nation. (125)

For Baldwin, the talk about "progress" with regard to the racial problem in America is in reality a series of empty gestures of "tokenism" (*FNT* 336). As has been observed, the election of Barack Obama for the U. S. presidency could itself be seen as an act of tokenism strategically deployed by a racialized and oligarchic regime bent continually on reproducing itself in times of crisis. This is reminiscent of Baldwin's piercing analytical thought and prophetic voice when he explained in *The Fire Next Time* in 1963 that the explosive racial situation in the country "[has] been dealt with...out of necessity—and in political terms, anyway, necessity means concessions made in order to stay on top" (*ibid.*). West described Obama as "a niggerized president" ("Cornel West reacts to Obama") and "a blackface of an American empire" ("What is Cornel West's Issue"). In contemporary America, scapegoating a white officer for the killing of a black man or the use of 'race' by antagonistic whites and their media for electoral purposes is indicative of America's lack of a firm moral standing and political will to radically reform its institutions.

- 12. Hemingway told his friend and biographer A. E. Hotchner that "the Castro climate is something else...I just hope to Christ that the United States doesn't cut the sugar quota. That would really tear it...After Batista any change would almost *have* to be an improvement. But the anti-United States is building (*Papa Hemingway* 235-6, emphasis in original).
- 13. See *Hemingway and the Harlem Renaissance*. This is a ground-breaking volume edited by Gary Edward Holcomb and Charles Scruggs (2012) which offers a critical counterpoint to Toni Morrison's mapping of American literature as the influential black novelist describes it in her 1992 *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. For the scholars of this innovative study, Morrison's "indictment" [of American canonical literature] is based on "the sharp delineation of literary history along racial, rather than aesthetic, lines" (28). The objective of this speculative anthology is to "provide a forum for scholars of various critical interests and intersections...to engage in a dialogue about the intertextual relations between Hemingway's writings and black cultures" (21).
- 14. Speaking about the turbulent life that he managed to survive and what he has made of it as an artist, Baldwin told his brother David, as the latter recounts, that he could be found

"somewhere in that wreckage," a 'heritage' that he would leave behind after his death for others to 'use' to empower themselves and illuminate their path in the darkness (*James Baldwin: The Price*).

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