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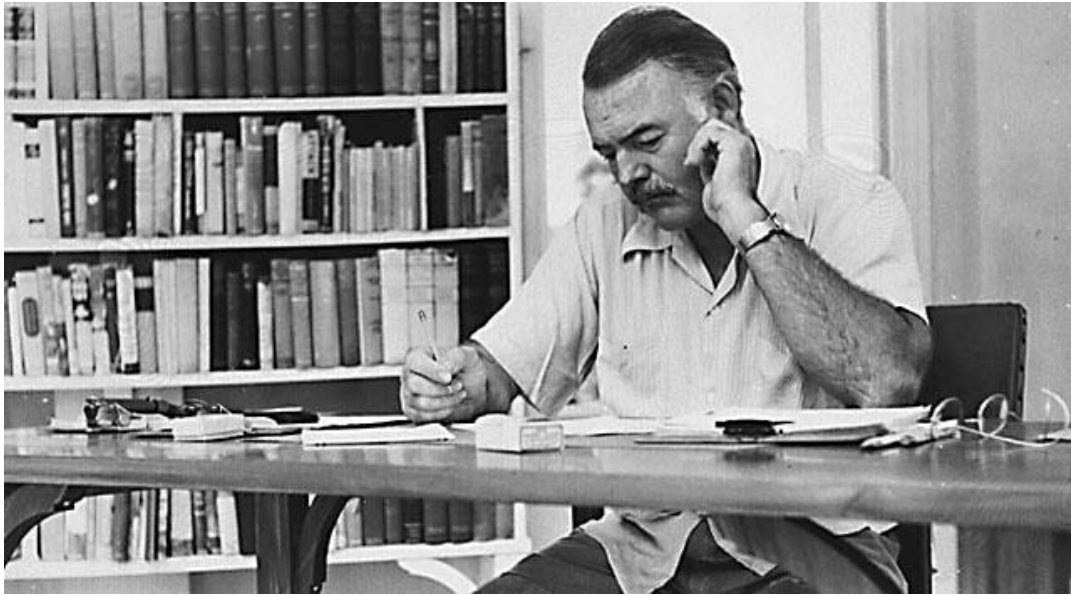
*The Snows of Kilimanjaro*

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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## Ernest Hemingway (1899 – 1961)



The world breaks everyone  
and afterward many are strong  
at the broken places.

- Ernest Hemingway,  
A Farewell to Arms

Medium: Novel, short story, newspaper articles

Movement: Lost Generation

Awards:

1. Pulitzer Prize for Literature (1953)
2. Nobel Prize for Literature (1954)

Major Works:

1. The Old Man and the Sea
2. A Farewell to Arms
3. For Whom the Bell Tolls

Genre: **Modernist** - Modernist fiction spoke of the inner self and consciousness. Modernist fiction was cast in first person. Whereas earlier, most literature had a clear beginning, middle, and end (or introduction, conflict, and resolution), the **Modernist story was often more of a stream of consciousness.** Irony, satire, and comparisons were often employed to point out society's ills.

# Lost Generation: Literary Context

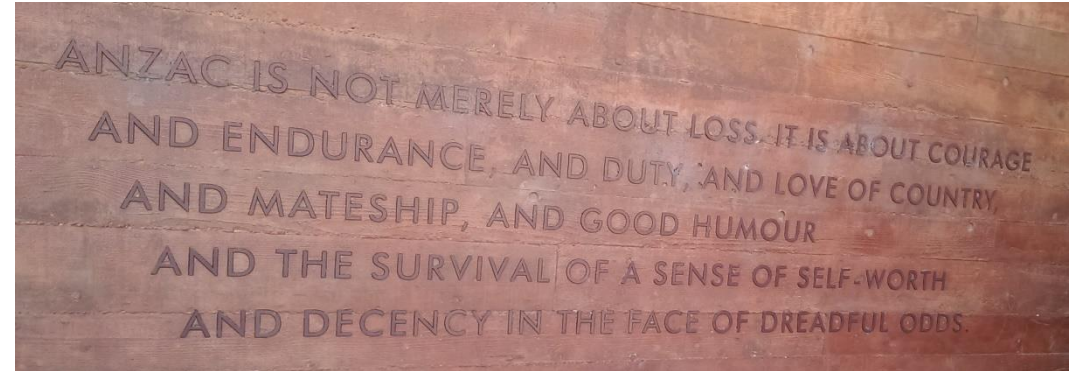
- The term “Lost Generation” is used to describe the generation of writers active immediately after World War I. Gertrude Stein used the phrase in conversation with Ernest Hemingway, supposedly quoting a garage mechanic saying to her, "You are all a lost generation." **The phrase signifies a disillusioned postwar generation characterized by lost values, lost belief in the idea of human progress, and a mood of futility and despair leading to hedonism.** The mood is described by F. Scott Fitzgerald in *This Side of Paradise* when he writes of a generation that found "all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken."
- "Lost generation" usually refers specifically to the American expatriate writers associated with 1920s Paris, especially Hemingway and Fitzgerald, and to a lesser extent T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Hemingway used the phrase "You are all a lost generation" as the epigraph to his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, and the influential critic Malcolm Cowley used "lost generation" in various studies of expatriate writers.

# Lost Generation: Historical Context

World War I:

The **First World War** was a **traumatic experience for Europe** and America, for although it was fought largely in Europe, it involved almost every European nation and, at the time, the European nations controlled vast areas of Africa and Asia. The war was remarkable for the sheer mass of killing it entailed. New technologies of war, including motorized vehicles, airplanes, and poison gas, were used for the first time. Probably most traumatic and senseless was the **strategy of trench warfare**, utilized largely in France and Belgium, in which each army dug a trench in the ground and attempted to advance to overtake the opposing army's trench by waves of soldiers going "over the top." **Hundreds of thousands of soldiers died in these waves, but trench warfare only brought the war to a bloody standstill.**

Hemingway saw action in World War I as an ambulance driver and was wounded.



All of you young people who served in the war.  
You are a lost generation... You have no respect  
for anything. You drink yourselves to death.

(Gertrude Stein)

# The Lost Generation



Ernest Hemingway and F.  
Scott Fitzgerald

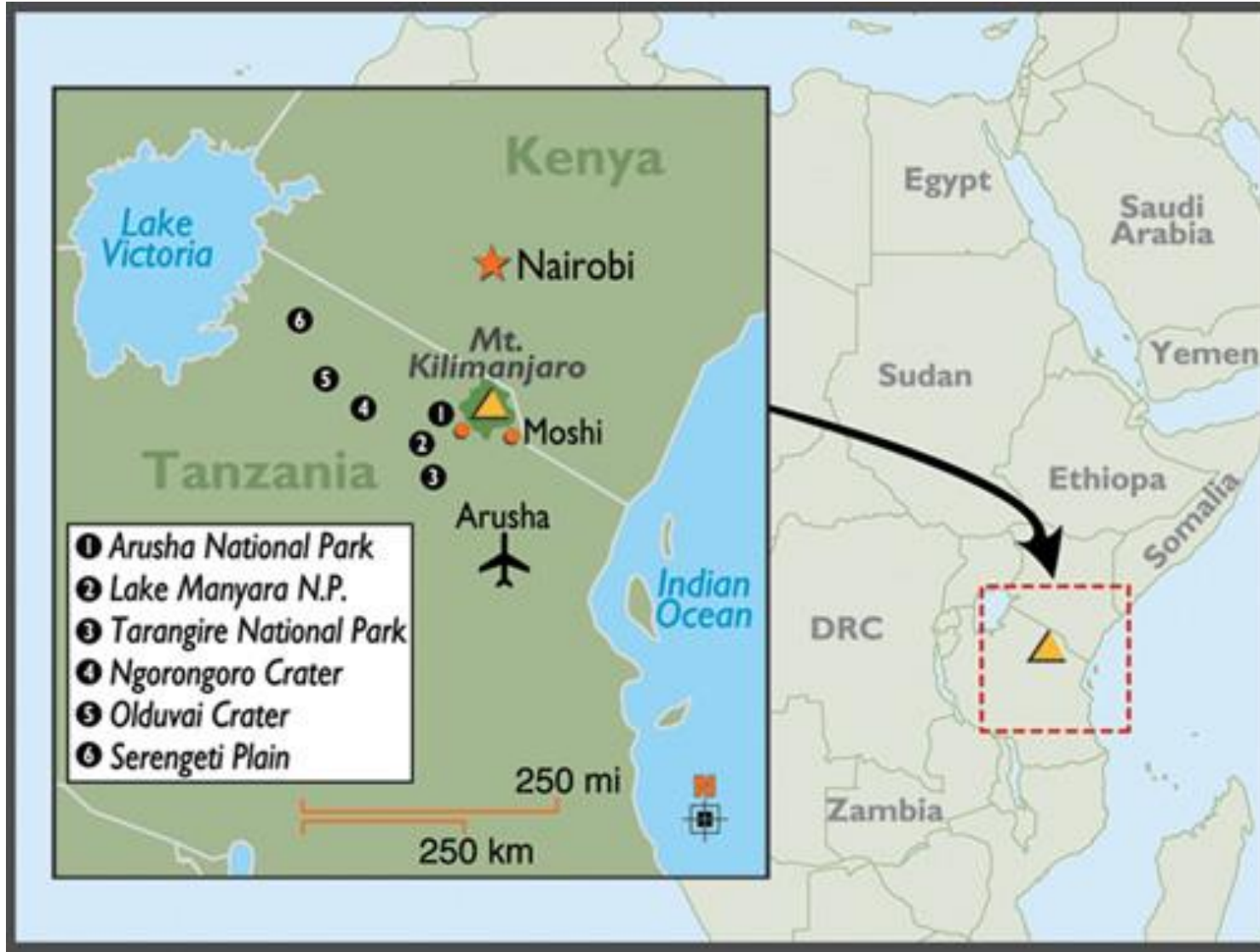
Hemingway  
on the  
Italian  
Front  
during  
WWI



The  
Italian  
Front

Where is Mt. Kilimanjaro located?





Mt. Kilimanjaro is located in East Africa, in the Country of Tanzania, right on the border of Kenya.

**Setting** – Time and Place  
of the action of a story

Time – Afternoon until night of  
the same day; between WWI and  
WWII (1920's – 1930's)

Place – Safari camp on the plains  
of Tanganyika ( Modern Day  
Tanzania)

Mood – Attempted **detachment**

Tone – **Reminiscent**; futility;  
**regretful.**



Mt. Kilimanjaro



# Characters – Individuals who participate in the action of a literary work

Compton:

Compton flies the plane that is meant to take Harry back to the city to save his life. He is confident and tries to make Harry feel better about his predicament. However, he exists only in Harry's dream.

Harry:

Harry is the protagonist of the story. He is a writer and has had many experiences in Europe. He also very much enjoys big-game hunting. When the story begins, Harry is suffering from gangrene in his leg and he is dying in the African bush while waiting for a plane to take him to the city.

Helen:

Helen, a major character, is Harry's wife. Also known as The Wife, she remains unnamed until the end of the story when a delirious Harry refers to her by her name as he dies. He does not seem to love her, but he does respect her to a certain degree for her skill with a gun. She comes from a wealthy family, and Harry has contempt for that. However, Helen cares for him greatly and tries to ease his suffering.

Molo:

Molo, a minor character, is the African servant who serves Harry and Helen. He does little more in the story than bring Harry whiskey and sodas.

## Conflict – A struggle between opposing forces

### External Conflict:

Man vs. Man (Woman) – Harry believes that the women in his life have kept him from achieving artistic success as a writer.

Man vs. Nature – Harry's gangrene was brought about by an accident in the African Bush. Without any medical assistance, Harry will die.

### Internal Conflict:

Man vs. Himself – Harry struggles to come to terms with his own death.

Style: **Flashbacks** – An account of an event that happened before the beginning of the story

The story is divided between **six present-time sections (set in regular type) and flashbacks (set in italics)**.

In **the present-time sections, the protagonist is facing his death stoically, quietly, and with a great deal of machismo**. All he needs is whiskey and soda to accept his imminent death.

However, in the flashback sections, Harry faces his life. His flashbacks show the reader that he has had an exciting and well-travelled life but that he is also haunted by his memories of World War I. He served in the U.S. Army in that war and saw combat on the Eastern front, in the Balkans, and Austria. **The violence and death that he saw there comes back to him as his rotting leg tells him that he is about to die.**

- ❑ The flashbacks center around concerns about the **erosion** of values: lost love, drinking, revenge, and war. They are a mix of **hedonism**, **sentimentality** toward the human condition, and leaving unfinished business.

## Style: Flashbacks Cont'd

- Harry's past is not all negative. He is a writer, and in his flashbacks he thinks about his vocation and about all of the stories he wanted to write that he never took the time to begin.
- He has spent time in Paris with the artists and writers who lived there in the 1920s (one name he mentions, Tristan Tzara, is a real poet of the time and another, "Julian," is a thinly-disguised portrait of the American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald).
- His flashbacks also show that he is an experienced outdoorsman – necessary background to this character so that readers do not think of him as a greenhorn who is dying out of pure inexperience.



Style: Point of View –  
Method of Narration, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Person Omniscient

- In *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* the matters that trouble Harry are made clear to the reader; the narrator, who is inside Harry's head, speaks of them explicitly.
- However, Hemingway sets these instances of introspection apart, dividing them into sections printed in italics. In all but one of the sections that are in regular type, the narration is typical Hemingway: blunt, unadorned, almost devoid of adjectives, and quite uninformative as to what Harry is feeling. The sentences are short and declarative.



- Nevertheless, when the narration drifts into the italic sections, the tone changes. The sentences grow longer and almost stream-of-consciousness, with one clause tacked on after another recording the protagonist's impression of a scene. The narrator describes scenes fondly and vividly, and uses metaphors and figurative language: "the snow as smooth to see as cake frosting," for instance.

# Style: Allusion – An indirect reference to a famous person, place, even, or literary work

“The Snows of Kilimanjaro” alludes subtly to two well-known short stories: one by its structure and technique, the other by its subject matter. The first story is *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (1891) by the American writer Ambrose Bierce. This story, set during the Civil War, an Alabama man is being hanged on Owl Creek Bridge for espionage.

As the story opens, the reader see him on the bridge, having the noose put over his head. When the boards under his feet are snatched away, the rope breaks. He is able to use his bound hands to take the rope off his neck and swim away down the river as the Union soldiers’ bullets hit the water by him. After swimming down the river a long way, he gets out and finds his way back home.

As he arrives at his house and as his wife stretches her arms to greet him, the noose jerks at his neck and he dies instantly. **The whole story has been an imaginary scene that the protagonist has lived through from the time he begins falling to the time that the rope’s slack runs out.** Just like in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” the seeming salvation for the hero existed only in the hero’s mind.



Style: Foreshadowing – Writer’s use of hints or clues to suggest events that will occur later in a story

The animals mentioned in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* foreshadow what will happen to Harry.

The hyena – Hyena’s are scavengers that eat the remains of what other animals have left behind. The Hyenas move closer to the camp as Harry moves closer to death, foreshadowing the death of the protagonist.

Vultures - Just like the Hyena the Vultures are scavengers. Their presence foreshadow the death of the protagonist.



For Hyenas think The Lion King

# Symbolism – the use of symbols (person, place, an object, etc.) to represent ideas or qualities

- **The leopard – A symbol of immortality, a reward for taking the difficult road. Harry himself was a "leopard" at certain times in his life.** Specifically, Harry can be seen as a leopard during:
  - His youth, when he lived in a poor neighborhood of Paris as a writer
  - In the war, when he gave his last morphine pills for himself to the horribly suffering Williamson
  - On his deathbed, when he mentally composes flashbacks and uses his intention to write
  - When he stays loyal to his wife and does not confess to her that he never really loved her
- **The hyena – It is a symbol of the rotting death that Harry fears.**
  - Approaching death
  - The emptiness with which Harry associates the sign of death
  - On his deathbed, when he mentally composes flashbacks and uses his intention to write
  - Death is about to reach Harry



# Symbolism Cont'd

- **Mount Kilimanjaro** – Western Summit is called the *Masai "Ngaje Ngai," the House of God*.
  - **Immortality** – In most civilizations, God's promise of immortality resides on the highest mountain top: Mount Olympus for the Greeks and Mount Fuji for the Japanese.
  - **Truth, idealism, purity**
- **The plains** – They symbolize evil and confusion. Harry is dying in the plains from gangrene, a stinking, putrid, and deadly infection, causing his body to rot and turn greenish black.
- **The poetry Harry never wrote** – This symbolizes Harry's belief that he has not accomplished what he set out to do as a young man. ("I'm full of poetry now. Rot and poetry. Rotten poetry.")
- **Alcohol** – It symbolizes two things:
  - **Goodwill, friendship, accomplishment (flashbacks)**
  - **Self-destruction for Harry**

**Themes** – An underlying message about life or human nature that the writer wants the reader to understand

- **Death** – Man's spirit can triumph despite death. (Three deeds during Harry's life make this possible:
  - Giving away his last morphine pills that he saved for himself to his friend Williamson, who is in horrendous pain
  - Harry's intention to write (the mental writing of the flashbacks) in his painful stupor
  - Sacrificing himself to his wife as opposed to absolving himself
- **Artistic creation** – Harry's failure to achieve the artistic success as a writer that he sought in life is one of the major themes. He became what he despised. (Harry comes close to representing Hemingway himself.)