Connotations
Vol. 33 (2024)

And This Gives Life to Baby Shoes: Textual and Other Reasons for Canonicity*

DAVID FISHELOV

Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate, Vol. 33 (2024): 121-36.
DOI: 10.25623/conn033-fishelov-1

This article is the first entry in a debate on "And This Gives Life to Baby Shoes: Textual and Other Reasons for Canonicity" http://www.connotations.de/debate/and-this-gives-life-to-baby-shoes-textual-and-other-reasons-for-canonicity). If you feel inspired to write a response, please send it to editors@connotations.de.

Connotations - A Journal for Critical Debate (E-ISSN 2626-8183) by the Connotations Society is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Abstract

In this article, I first relate briefly to several important characteristics of the six-word story "For sale: baby shoes, never worn," erroneously attributed to Hemingway and the best known and canonical example of flash fiction. I then suggest that the canonicity of this story stems from these characterics and from certain oppositions within and between them that contributed to the important aesthetic value of complexity, unity, and intensity. Finally, I argue that these textual characteristics and their aesthetic values, which have indeed contributed to the story's canonicity, should be considered as necessary—but not in themselves sufficient—conditions for such canonicity. For the story to become canonical, it had to also meet a hospitable cultural environment and inspire other writers to relate to it as a model, producing many and varied echoes and dialogues.

Characteristics of the Canonical "For sale…" Story

A Google search (conducted in June 2023) for the exact string "For sale: baby shoes, never worn," produced over 80,000 results. This large number indicates the popularity and proliferation of this peculiar story, erroneously attributed to Hemingway,[1] that has become the prototypical example of a recently-born new narrative genre—that of the six-word story. The story is also referred to on almost every website devoted to publishing six-word stories and in every discussion of this particular narrative genre, and hence it has earned the title of a canonical text. This terse yet highly effective story succeeds in evoking, through the image of the unworn shoes, an entire tragic world associated with the loss of a baby (see Gilead). There are several important and conspicuous textual reasons that appear to have contributed to the story's attractiveness as a source of inspiration for many writers, and eventually to its canonicity. I shall first discuss some of these textual characteristics.

The story combines several formal, structural, and semantic characteristics (Fishelov, "The Poetics of Six-Word Stories" 36-41) that can (appropriately!) be presented in a list of six:

(1) The story is composed of exactly six words. This highly conspicuous formal characteristic has been adopted by thousands of followers. To comply with this strict formal rule, while at the same time wishing to introduce additional words, practitioners of the format sometimes use "tricks" in the form of abbreviations, such as "it's" rather than "it is," or even acronyms: for example, the story "T.H.C., L.S.D., D.U.I., C.P.R., D.O.A., R.I.P."[2]

(2) A narrative element, as opposed to a general statement or a developed metaphor. The text represents a chain of events and, in the "For sale…" story, these events are causally connected: because the baby died (cause), the parents published the ad of selling the shoes (effect). The story can even be understood as representing a complex narrative structure of problem and solution: the parents faced the problem of what to do with the no longer needed shoes and therefore decided to post the ad.[3]

(3) The "tip of the iceberg" principle. Not all of the story's events are explicitly present in the text. The untimely death of the baby is not stated but, rather, assumed by the story's readers.

(4) A punchline-like structure. The last part of the sequence ("never worn") motivates us to go back and reread the preceding part ("For sale: baby shoes") and interpret it differently (or at the very least with a different emphasis) to how we had initially read it.

(5) The text is organized in a rhythmic structure of three pairs of words (2-2-2), a kind of iambic trimeter, in which the metrical units consist of words rather than syllables.

(6) The story is anchored in a realistic, familiar situation. The publication of an ad in a newspaper in order to sell a domestic item is something we all know from our everyday lives, whether as publishers or as readers of such ads.

Embedded Oppositions in the Canonical Story

A closer examination of these characteristics and the relations between them reveals unexpected oppositions. The notion of telling a story composed of only six words (characteristics #1 and 2) is in itself striking. We expect stories to unfold according to the internal logic of their plot, characters, and other important narrative elements (for example, setting, themes), not by means of a specific and extremely small number of words. Furthermore, stories, both in everyday life and in literature, usually require a much longer text. Condensing a story into only six words is regarded as a challenge because it combines two contradictory characteristics: length and brevity, expansiveness and contraction. The "tip of the iceberg" principle (characteristic #3) points to the tension between the explicit and implicit elements: in our attempt to make sense of the extremely short text we realize that we are encountering only the story's "tip of an iceberg."

This realization is associated with an ambiguity that allows for different interpretations, i.e. different assumptions about the hidden part of the "iceberg."[4] While the "Hemingway" story in its usual, canonical, reading is interpreted as a tragic story about the selling of the shoes of a dead baby, the selling of the shoes could also be the result of the parents having received two pairs of the same shoes or because the size or color of the shoes as a gift was wrong. Although such alternative interpretations are perhaps more plausible than the tragic, canonical, interpretation, most readers nonetheless favour the latter reading (that they have construed by themselves or after they were introduced to it), because it offers a more interesting and meaningful literary experience. Thus, the "tip of the iceberg" principle is linked to the tension between ambiguity (or polyvalence) and clarity (or unequivocal reading): while the story enables construing different explanations or "gap-filling" (see Perry and Sternberg) for the publication of the ad, hence different ways of solving the narrative ambiguity, most readers opt for its canonical, tragic interpretation, and hence a specific clarity.[5] We can describe this tension also as combining a sense of puzzlement when we first encounter the story with relief from puzzlement when we construe the missing part, namely the death of a baby that led to publishing the ad.

The punchline-like structure (characteristic #4) embodies a tension between two kinds of movement in the reading process. On the one hand, we have the usual, mostly accumulative, mode of reading in which we construe, add, and slightly modify meanings as we move along the text continuum, progressing from one word to the next. On the other hand, the last segment of the text (its two final words), which forces us to reread, re-understand, and reevaluate the preceding parts, works in the opposite direction—moving backwards. When we reach the concluding pair of words ("never worn"), we are invited to reconsider the preceding first four words ("For sale: baby shoes") and discover in the seemingly mundane newspaper ad possibly heartbreaking meanings related to the untimely death of a baby and the coping of the parents with the tragic event.

When we focus on the story's rhythmic structure (characteristic #5), we encounter another intriguing tension or coexistent opposition: the story combines typical narrative interest with poetic interest. While making sense of the story we raise questions such as "What exactly happened?" "How did it happen?" and "Why did it happen?" Such questions are strongly related to elements like narrative events, characters, and their motivation—all typically an important part of our experience of reading stories: How and why did the baby die? Why have the parents decided to sell the shoes rather than, for example, donate them? Is it because they are poor, or because keeping the small pair of shoes and looking at them was too painful for them? Concomitantly, the readers are invited to focus on aspects typically associated with poetry: compactness, rhythm, connotations, attention to the particular choice and order of the words, the text's specific organization and texture—the kind of attention related to what the Russian formalist Roman Jakobson called "the poetic function" of language: "The set (*Einstellung*) toward the MESSAGE as such" (Jakobson 356).

The realism of the story (characteristic #6), namely the fact that it is anchored in the mundane phenomenon of a newspaper ad (the ad appears every day, in the same place, using the same formula), stands in sharp contrast to its specific implied content, namely the loss of a baby, which is, at least in the modern world, thankfully an unusual event. This opposition is also related to an even more important opposition—between the cold, emotionally detached form of a sales ad and the deep, intense emotions associated with the untimely, tragic death of a baby.

To better appreciate the unique combination of textual characteristics of the "Hemingway" story, we can compare it with a similar story published in 1921 that, theoretically, could have become an alternative canonical text of flash fiction: "For sale: a baby carriage, never used" (O'Toole 187). Such a comparative analysis reveals that this specific "carriage" story lacks, first, the elegant rhythmic structure of 2-2-2. Second, and even more importantly, unlike the mechanical image of a carriage, the image of the tiny shoes has a strong emotional impact because shoes are intimately connected to the body of the person who wears them.[6] While the differences between these two stories are small, they probably played a role in the "Hemingway" story being favoured over other theoretical "competitors" for the canonical status of flash fiction. Side by side with these small but significant textual reasons we should also note the fact that the "Hemingway" story was presented in Peter Miller's popular book *Get Published! Get Produced!: A Literary Agent's Tips on How to Sell Your Writing* as the epitome of the possibility of telling a powerful story with "a clear beginning, middle, and end" in only six words (Miller 27).

Oppositions Exemplifying Complexity

So far, I have emphasized the oppositions in the "Hemingway" story: (a) between telling a whole story and only six words; (b) between the explicit and implicit elements of the story; (c) between opaqueness and clarity, puzzlement and its relief; (d) between narrative interest and poetic interest; (e) between the mundane and the uncommon; and (f) between a detached form and a tragic, highly emotional content. I have emphasized these oppositions because they can be described as manifesting an aesthetic value that favours opposing elements, and hence complexity, which is an important aesthetic value (as opposed to simplicity). In discussing certain aesthetic values that are quite often assigned by critics to artistic works, Monroe C. Beardsley, in his *Aesthetics: Problems in Philosophy of Criticism*, refers to complexity, along with two other values—unity and intensity. According to Beardsley, when critics want to praise artistic works by calling attention to their complexity, they use formulations such as "it is rich in contrasts" (Beardsley 462)—a phrase that aptly reflects the above-described oppositions in the "Hemingway" story.

It is reasonable to assume that complexity is indeed an important aesthetic value, and one that can be found in canonical literary works, past and present. While complexity seems to be an aesthetic quality of canonical literary works, we should also note that when textual complexity becomes extreme, it may also become a liability rather than an asset, by making the text unintelligible.

It is problematic, if not impossible, to precisely formulate a text's desirable or optimal complexity. Part of the difficulty in finding a specific formula for complexity is related to the fact that a literary text is a multilayered phenomenon; and, while one of its dimensions can be quite complex, another can be relatively simple: for example, a sonnet can express complex emotions but be written in a relatively simple rhyme scheme; and a novel can have a complex plot structure but present relatively flat characters, or vice versa. Perhaps the only general formula for complexity that can be offered is that it should be developed as much as possible, but not on all levels and layers—lest the text becomes too dense to comprehend, let alone enjoy. Despite the difficulty in positing a specific formula for the specific degree of complexity or the specific textual layer(s) in which the complexity can or should be found, we can assume that complexity is an indisputable aesthetic value that can be regarded as a sine qua non of canonicity.

Side by side with complexity, Beardsley refers to the aesthetic value of unity, which features in statements describing artistic works as "well organized" or as having "an inner logic of structure and style" (Beardsley 462). This aesthetic value seems to be also applicable to the "Hemingway" story: its elegant, poetic structure of 2-2-2 words clearly makes it well organized. The story also manifests an inner logic of structure and style: when readers reach its end, and after processing its (possible) meanings, the text is grasped as a complete and unified story, despite its extreme brevity. While the aesthetic value of unity can be easily applied to many canonical artistic and literary works, it is important to acknowledge, first, that unity can be manifested, just like complexity, on certain levels of the literary text but not necessarily on all of them: a sonnet can offer a perfect rhyme scheme (hence unity) but at the same time can express a chaotic emotional state or even a disintegrated psyche; and a novel can represent unity of characters but not of plot, etc. Second, unity as an aesthetic value seems to be less universal than complexity. Whereas certain historical periods and poetic schools favour unity (for example, classical and neo-classical), others may advocate open-ended or even fragmentary literary texts (for example, some modernist and post-modernist texts). Still, even open-ended texts may show unity on at least one important narrative level (e.g. plot or character).

The third aesthetic value that Beardsley notes is that of intensity, which can be found in certain formulations that describe works of art as "ironic, tragic" (Beardsley 462). Such adjectives can easily apply to the "Hemingway" story: its tragic content is evident to almost every reader, especially after being introduced to its canonical reading (in case this was missed in the first reading). The story's ironic element is closely associated with the tension between its intense (though implied) emotional content and the detached, cold formula of a newspaper ad.

Indeed, one important component of the story's strength stems precisely from the fact that such a short, seemingly practical, text carries such immense emotional weight.

As noted above, it is difficult to formulate the exact degree of aesthetic complexity in advance. It is even more difficult to offer a formula that describes the specific relations between the three aesthetic values, let alone a formula for producing an aesthetically valuable text. Usually, it is only in retrospect that we can detect and describe a successful text that presents those aesthetic values which make it a good candidate for canonization.

So far, I have argued that the "Hemingway" story complies with certain aesthetic principles presented by Beardsley. There are, of course, other literary theorists and philosophers of art who have suggested different aesthetic properties that can be found in artistic works. Frank Sibley, for example, has presented a long list of aesthetic adjectives (as opposed to descriptive ones) that are commonly used in discussing artworks. The list includes positive terms such as "unified, balanced, integrated […] dynamic, powerful, vivid, delicate, moving […] tragic" (Sibley 421); and he then adds: "The list of course is not limited to adjectives; expressions in artistic contexts like 'telling contrast,' 'sets up a tension,' […] or 'holds it together' are equally good illustrations" (Sibley 421-22). I will not elaborate here on the aesthetic terms noted by Sibley, nor on the rich trail of discussions that followed Sibley's seminal essay. Suffice it to say that I have chosen to present Beardsley's concise tripartite aesthetic principles because they seem to integrate in an elegant manner many of the concepts mentioned by Sibley and other philosophers of art and literary critics: Sibley's "unified" is of course echoed in Beardsley's "unity," and the former's "sets up tension" and "hold it together" are echoed in the latter's "complexity" and "unity" (respectively). Whereas there are different conceptual and terminological frameworks to describe the canonical "Hemingway" story, Beardsley's seems to offer an elegant and convenient one. Furthermore, Beardsley's three general aesthetic values are applicable to a great number and variety of canonical artistic works; and, since the "Hemingway" story seems to qualify as such, it can also be accepted into this prestigious and heterogeneous club, even if it is much shorter and more recent than the club's senior members.

Textual and Other Reasons for Canonicity

After describing several conspicuous characteristics of the "Hemingway" story and emphasizing that the various oppositions of its characteristics are directly related to the aesthetic value of complexity; and after pointing out that the "Hemingway" story can also illustrate Beardsley's two other important aesthetic values—those of unity and intensity—we can argue that there are indeed textual reasons which may account for its canonical status. This story has not only acquired canonicity but has in fact become the prototypical example of the new genre of the six-word story.[7] It would appear that the canonicity of the "Hemingway" story is thus accounted for by its textual characteristics. Such a conclusion, however, offers only a partial answer to the question: What makes a text canonical?

While there are many other texts in which we can find textual characteristics that illustrate important aesthetic values—such as Beardsley's complexity, unity, and intensity—these texts have not become canonized. We should remember in this context that only a very small fraction of published literary works ever acquire canonical status. This point becomes clearer when we examine the vast number of hypothetical "candidates" for entering the prestigious club of canonical texts, especially in modern times, in which the publication of literary works has grown exponentially. The Worldometers website (https://www.worldometers.info/books), for example, presents more than two million new book titles published in one year alone (!). Even if we accept that only a quarter of this number constitute "belles-lettres" (and three-quarters are reference books, cook books, etc.), we are still left with an ocean of texts from which only a few hundred can cross the threshold of canonicity, and the rest will unfortunately enter oblivion (see Moretti). Thus, certain textual characteristics that, theoretically, can be found in a very great number of texts, and compelling as they may be, cannot explain in and of themselves a text's acquired canonical status.

The complex process by which a literary text acquires canonicity indeed includes textual characteristics with aesthetic value. However, there must be other, equally important, factors that contribute to it becoming a canonical text. Thus, rather than being satisfied with the textual reasons for the "Hemingway" story's canonical status, we need to consider a broader perspective. In order for the story to have become canonized, in addition to its unique textual characteristics with their aesthetic value, there must have been other factors that came into play in paving its way to canonization. While textual reasons play a vital role in the complex process of canonization, they should be treated as necessary—but not in themselves sufficient—conditions for canonicity. Following are several other factors that have participated in the complex process of the canonization of the "Hemingway" story.

First, the fact that the "Hemingway" story is closely associated with certain popular cultural modes of short communication (e.g. headlines, breaking news, advertisement slogans, text messages, tweeting). These short forms of communication are in turn intimately connected to the expectations of contemporary audiences, notably of youth, characterized (correctly or not) by their relatively short attention span.[8] When certain prevailing cultural sensitivities and expectations are hospitable to certain texts, these texts have a promising starting point in the complex process of canonization. In other words, in order to be canonized the right text needs to be published at the right time and in the right place, thus creating a fortunate match between text and readers. Part of the reason why the flash story "For sale: a baby carriage, never used" became neither canonized nor the "founding father" of a new genre, is that—in addition to the textual reasons pointed out earlier (for instance, it lacks poetic rhythm)—it was published in 1921, when the literary and cultural atmosphere was not yet ready for flash fiction. By contrast, during the 1990s, the *Zeitgeist* was ripe to embrace and appreciate an extremely short text like the "Hemingway" six-word story.

Second, the "Hemingway" story became so highly visible and a memorable reference point to many readers and prospective followers, and ultimately acquired canonicity, due to the very fact that it was (erroneously) attributed to Hemingway.[9] In the late twentieth century, Ernest Hemingway enjoyed both popularity and respectability and already possessed a canonical aura. Similarly to how a witty aphorism gains prominence when it is attributed to an author such as Oscar Wilde, so too does a flash fiction attributed to Hemingway gain visibility and an increased chance of canonicity. The "Hemingway" story's first appearance was actually in the relatively marginal play *Papa*, which premiered at the Colony Theatre in 1987 in southern Florida and was later published in book format in 1989 (see De Groot). The story first gained popularity, however, following its publication in Miller's book in 1991, which attracted the attention of many novice writers.

Last but not least, in addition to the story's intrinsic valuable textual characteristics, as well as to the external hospitable cultural conditions that favoured short forms, and the attribution of the story to Hemingway (in De Groot's play and Miller's book), there is another, crucial, factor that contributed to the canonization of the "Hemingway" story: the fact that it has inspired a great number of followers who have adopted the form and produced many and varied six-word stories.[10] To better understand the important role played by followers in the general dynamics of canonization, we can recall the followers and imitators of Petrarch who contributed to building his reputation and canonical status.[11] Furthermore, to better appreciate the crucial role of followers in canonization, it is especially useful to consider those works that have "forced" their way into the literary canon despite the fact that when they were first published it was hard to foresee their bright future. This is, for example, the case of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719): Defoe did not belong to the literary elite of his time, and the genre of a travelogue was not part of the respected literary repertoire of his time. *Robinson Crusoe* gradually gained its canonical status first and foremost thanks to the numerous followers who witnessed the success of the book among readers and then adopted the format of a travelogue, creating what later became known as "Robinsonade."[12]

Perhaps an even more telling case of the important role played by followers in establishing the canonical status of a literary text is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818, 1831). The novel undoubtedly contains certain textual features that contributed to its becoming part of the English literary canon, such as its captivating plot, complex characters, and thought-provoking and universal themes (for instance, the desire to overcome death). There were nevertheless other reasons, too, that contributed to the canonization of Shelley's novel: first and foremost, the fact that it has inspired many adaptations—first for the stage during the nineteenth century and then in cinema during the twentieth century, notably James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931). Indeed, it is difficult to understand the survival, the visibility, and the canonization of Shelley's novel without this rich trail of adaptations. This becomes clearer when we note that the novel had almost no new editions throughout the entire nineteenth century; being perceived primarily as a sensational, marginal literary work, part of the inferior genre of horror stories that did not "deserve" serious critical attention.[13] The cases of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Shelley's *Frankenstein*, as well as the "Hemingway" six-word story, clearly support the argument that, in order to become canonized, in addition to its valuable textual characteristics a text needs to inspire many and varied echoes, imitations, and adaptations.

Concluding Remarks

In principle, the "Hemingway" story is not that different from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* or Shelley's *Frankenstein* or, for that matter, from any other literary text that has undergone the complex process of canonization. We should note, however, that, while it took about a century for Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* to acquire the status of a respected, canonical, literary work (as opposed to merely an adventure story for adolescent readers), and for Shelley's *Frankenstein* it took about a century and a half to become part of the esteemed literary canon, in the case of the "Hemingway" six-word story the canonization process took place in less than three decades; it was a canonization process on steroids. From the mid-1990s to the present day, tens of thousands of followers have written "in imitation of the manner of" the "Hemingway" story, thus making it *the* canonical text of flash fiction.[14]

The fact that this specific text has inspired many followers to adopt the new format of a six-word story is not only an indication of its canonicity but also an important reason for creating its canonical status. While the relation between a text's canonical status and its echoes and adaptations can be presented as a classic case of the chicken-and-egg problem, we should not dismiss the important role played by the dialoguing texts (the egg) in creating the canonical status of a text (the chicken). In other words, echoes, imitations, and adaptations have a vital role in creating, and definitely in maintaining, the canonical status of a literary work in the ongoing, dynamic, and dialectical relations between the canonical status of a literary text and its followers.

The "Hemingway" story, as we have seen, exhibits certain aesthetically valuable textual characteristics. In order for it to become canonical, however, it first had to acquire many and diverse followers who related to it as a model and a point of reference, producing numerous echoes and dialogues. In fact, every canonical text seems to manifest both certain valuable textual characteristics and an impressive trail of echoes and dialogues that it has inspired with other writers and artists. Thus, it is this combination of intrinsic textual reasons, external factors in the form of a hospitable cultural environment, and a sizable number of echoes and dialogues, that has established the canonicity of the "Hemingway" story. In conclusion, while each and every one of the above arguments deserves a longer discussion, in the spirit of the "Hemingway" story I have decided to keep my article (relatively) short.

The Hebrew University
Jerusalem

NOTES

[*] I would like to thank the participants at the 17th *Connotations* Symposium for their helpful and perceptive comments. I am also grateful to the readers of the article and to the editors of *Connotations* for offering very useful suggestions. This research was supported by THE ISRAEL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (grant No. 1479/19).

[1] Two studies of the origin of this six-word story persuasively demonstrate that its attribution to Hemingway is erroneous: O'Toole (183-91) introduces valuable information on proto-versions of the "Hemingway" story found in literary magazines and newspapers during the first decades of the twentieth century; and Wright offers a well-documented hypothesis regarding the actual source of the "Hemingway" story, showing that before it was attributed to Hemingway by Miller (Miller 27), a source on which commentators often rely, the story's specific formulation was introduced by De Groot in a play titled *Papa* (De Groot 25), based on the legends surrounding Hemingway's life. To indicate that the story was and still is erroneously attributed to Hemingway, it is referred to hereafter as the "Hemingway" story.

[2] theporkfold; http://www.sixwordstories.net/2014/02/t-h-c-l-s-d-d-u-i-c-p-r-d-o-a-r-i-p/

[3] For a discussion of the minimal narrative element required in six-word stories and the possibility of interpreting some of them as representing, despite their brevity, a complex narrative structure, see Fishelov, "Six-Word Stories as Autonomous Literary Works."

[4] The hidden part of the "iceberg" quite often contains the explanation of the explicit part of the story, notably so in many six-word stories that suggest a causal chain of events such as the "Hemingway" story. When both the cause and effect are described in a story, the cause is usually omitted when people are asked to present a summary of the story (see Shen). Thus, the "Hemingway" story can be described as a summary of an (imagined), longer story.

[5] Every story has "gaps," or parts of the story that are not explicitly told but comprise an important part of the constructed storyline and of our understanding of what happened and why it happened. In six-word stories, however, this general principle, applicable to all stories, plays a more central and conspicuous role: the extreme shortness of the form seems to dictate that vital parts of the story are not explicitly stated.

[6] Part of the emotional power of Van Gogh's "Shoes" painting (1866) is precisely related to this aspect (see https://www.vincentvangogh.org/a-pair-of-shoes.jsp).

[7] On the linguistic-cognitive concept of a prototypical member, see Rosch and Mervis, and Rosch. On the role of prototypical members in literary genres (e.g. *Oedipus Rex* with regard to tragedy), see Fishelov, "Genre Theory and Family Resemblance," *Metaphors of Genre* 62-68, and "The Structure of Generic Categories."

[8] On the predilection of readers in contemporary culture for short texts, see Johnson.

[9] This attribution made sense due to Hemingway's own use of "the tip of the iceberg" principle; he even used the expression in discussing the writing of stories (Hemingway 227).

[10] I have elaborated on this argument in Fishelov, *Dialogues with/and Great Books: The Dynamics of Canon Formation*, especially with regard to "the hardcore" of the Western canon.

[11] On the widespread phenomenon of followers and imitators of Petrarch in the Renaissance see, for example, Guss.

[12] For a detailed discussion of the important role played by followers of *Robinson Crusoe* in its canonization, see Fishelov, "Dialogues with/and Great Books: With Some Serious Reflections," and *Dialogues with/and Great Books: The Dynamics* 172-82.

[13] For additional details on the role of the novel's adaptations for stage and cinema on its way to the literary canon, see Fishelov, "The Indirect Path to The Literary Canon."

[14] The expression "in imitation of the manner of" is taken from the title page of Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*: "The History of The Adventures of Joseph Andrews […] Written in Imitation of The Manner of Cervantes, Author of *Don Quixote*" (Fielding). In marking Cervantes's *Don Quixote* as his model, Fielding retroactively created the "founding father" of the new, nascent genre of the novel, and this marking also played an important role in assigning canonicity to *Don Quixote*. On the process of retroactively creating the"lineage" of a new genre, see Fishelov, "The Birth of a Genre."

WORKS CITED

Beardsley, Monroe C. *Aesthetics: Problems in Philosophy of Criticism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958.

Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. London: W. Taylor, 1719.

De Groot, John. *Papa: A Play Based on the Legendary Lives of Ernest Hemingway*. Boise: Hemingway Western Studies Center, 1989.

Fielding, Henry. *Joseph Andrews*. Ed. R. F. Brissenden. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977.

Fishelov, David. *Dialogues with/and Great Books: The Dynamics of Canon Formation*. Brighton: Sussex Academic P, 2010.

Fishelov, David. "Dialogues with/and Great Books: With Some Serious Reflections on Robinson Crusoe." *New Literary History* 39.2 (2008): 335-53.

Fishelov, David. "Genre Theory and Family Resemblance—Revisited." *Poetics* 20 (1991): 123-38.

Fishelov, David. *Metaphors of Genre: The Role of Analogies in Genre Theory*. University Park: Penn State UP, 1993.

Fishelov, David. "Six-Word Stories as Autonomous Literary Works in Digital Contexts: A Response to Paola Trimarco." *Connotations* 32 (2023): 68-79. https://www.connotations.de/article/six-word-stories-as-autonomous-literary-works-in-digital-contexts-an-answer-to-paola-trimarco/

Fishelov, David. "The Birth of a Genre." *European Journal of English Studies* 3.1 (1999): 51-63.

Fishelov, David. "The Indirect Path to the Literary Canon Exemplified by Shelley's *Frankenstein*." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 18.2 (2016). https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2847

Fishelov, David. "The Poetics of Six-Word Stories." *Narrative* 27.1 (2019): 30-46.

Fishelov, David. "The Structure of Generic Categories: Some Cognitive Aspects." *Journal of Literary Semantics* 24.2 (1995): 117-26.

Gilead, Amihud. "How Few Words Can the Shortest Story Have?" *Philosophy and Literature* 32.1 (2008): 119-29.

Guss, Donald, L. *John Donne, Petrarchist: Italianate Conceits and Love Theory in "Songs and Sonets."* Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1966.

Hemingway, Ernest. *Death in the Afternoon*. New York: Scribner's Son, 1960.

Jakobson, Roman. "Linguistics and Poetics." *Style in Language*. Ed. Thomas Sebeok. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology P, 1960. 350-77.

Johnson, Tom. "Less Text, Please: Contemporary Reading Behaviors and Short Formats." Created January 21, 2011. https://idratherbewriting.com/2011/01/21/contemporary-reading-behaviors-favor-short-formats/

Miller, Peter. *Get Published! Get Produced!: A Literary Agent's Tips on How to Sell Your Writing*. New York: Shapolsky, 1991.

Moretti, Franco. "The Slaughterhouse of Literature." *Modern Language Quarterly* 61.1 (2000): 207-27.

O'Toole, Garson. "Concoction." *Hemingway Didn't Say That: The Truth Behind Familiar Quotations*. New York: Little A, 2017. 183-91.

Perry, Menahem, and Meir Sternberg. "The King through Ironic Eyes: Biblical Narrative and the Literary Reading Process." *Poetics Today* 7.2 (1986): 275-322.

Rosch, Eleanor, and Carolyn B. Mervis. "Family Resemblance: Studies in the Internal Structure of Categories." *Cognitive Psychology* 7 (1975): 573-605.

Rosch, Eleanor. "Principles of Categorization." *Cognition and Categorization*. Ed. Eleanor Rosch and Barbara B. Lloyd. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1978. 27-48.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus.* London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor & Jones, 1818.

Shen, Yeshayahu. "Centrality and Causal Relations in Narrative Texts." *Journal of Literary Semantics* 19.1 (1990): 1-29.

Sibley, Frank. "Aesthetic Concepts." *The Philosophical Review* 68.4 (1959): 421-50.

Wright, Frederick, A. "The Short Story Just Got Shorter: Hemingway, Narrative, and the Six-Word Urban Legend." *Journal of Popular Culture* 47.2 (2014): 327-40.