Short fictions are literary icebergs, and indeed, according to Hemingway's theory of literature, all good prose resembles an iceberg: one sees but 1/8 above water.¹ A deep structure, not visible at first sight or at the first reading but not less than 7/8 or 87.5% of a challenging literary text need interpretation.

I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven eigths of it underwater for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg.²

The iceberg metaphor holds true for the enigmatic meaning of literary texts, for one can conclude from the tip of an iceberg its total weight and under water mass, not, however, its exact shape.

The two Short Stories that I will interpret contain seven characteristics of the genre developed since Poe.

1) Narrative economy by the reduction and compression of the plot
2) Focussed, concentrated description instead of panoramic narrative
3) Shortening of long or expansion of short time frames
4) Less character development than sudden changes in consciousness
5) Disciplined structure of a detective story, concentration on a crisis
6) Reduction of multiple point-of-view
7) Stylistic conciseness, many implications, surprise ending.

In respect to these qualities, I shall put the texts into mythological and philosophical contexts, as the number of myths and philosophies in world literature is limited, defined and therefore they are relatively safe ways of opening deeper meanings in literary texts. Moreover, both
general knowledge and expertise, are necessary. Hunting is only the leitmotif and catalyst of crises in both stories.

HUNTING is a matter of life and death. It is appropriate as no other area of human experience, to feel and to reflect the ever present connection of existence and non-existence.

EROS is the principle of sensual attraction immanent in love. It is the longing for life. Does eros motivate the inexperienced young American hunters, Francis and Margaret, in “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” (28 pp.), to seek the miraculous renewal of their love on a big game hunt in Africa? The personified Eros is a beautiful boy with golden wings, armed with bow and arrows, which awaken love, son of Aries, the god of war, and Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty. Eros was born of the union of death and love. Has Mrs. Macomber been hit by one of Eros’ arrows, when she crawls into the tent of the British guide? Or does she want to punish her husband for his cowardice? Has Eros, the symbol of friendship and love between boys and men, inflamed Wilson’s heart for Francis Macomber in the end? Or has Anteros, the god of unrequited love and revenge, motivated Mrs. Macomber to commit the murder of her husband whom she believed lost to her? Perhaps she grasped the opportunity of the attacking bull to kill her husband under the pretence of giving him fire protection. The short happy life of Francis Macomber is full of multidimensional ironies, with which Hemmingway criticises his American compatriots, not least in the figure of the British gentleman-hunter Wilson.

THANATOS is the desire for death, the son of Night and the brother of Sleep in Greek mythology. After Sisyphus, later the symbol of 20th-century existentialism, had brought Thanatos under his power, no one could die until Aries liberated death.

Thanatos, the desire for death, is the leitmotif in “Master” (6 pp., 1974), by the British author Angela CARTER (1940 – 1992). In the marbles of the temple consecrated to Artemis, goddess of hunting, at Ephesus, Thanatos appears in the disguise of Eros. What happens, if Eros pulls an arrow of Artemis out of his quiver? Artemis’ – Diana’s arrows are messengers of death which never fail.

Carter's nimrod, Master, is passionately in love with death
Killing, for him, remains the last means to feel alive. Tired of hunting on the oldest continent in the world, Master persecutes the most murderous cat of the new world, the Jaguar, in the jungles of the Amazon river. He buys a virgin Amazon woman as his hunting companion and calls her 'Friday' in the manner of Robinson Crusoe. In light of the carelessness with which her Master kills the Jaguar, "...she soon realised he was death itself." The jaguar, however, is the tribal totem of Master's slave. While he leads his pitiless war of annihilation against the jungle cat and sadistically rapes Friday, a metamorphosis from girl to jaguar occurs. Finally, the prey attacks her master:

His prey had shot the hunter

"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is a striking formulation of the Hemingway-Code:

...that code of honor based on courage and contempt of death, self-discipline and endurance, taciturnity and competence, heroism and male dignity. Robert Wilson, the "White Hunter", stands for these values...


The hypothesis of insidious murder has been the decisive factor in the critical reception of Hemingway's "Francis Macomber" since its first publication in 1936. This interpretation is still found in an article of the 1990 edition of Kindlers Neues Literaturlexikon.

Wilson uncovers the psychological background of this so-called accident: With the sudden insight that Macomber would leave her, after his having achieved maturity and happiness by overcoming the essential fear of death, Margot killed him.

The turning point of this masterfully constructed short story is a typical Hemingway motif: Macomber's initiation into "manhood" by his confrontation with the primeval forces of the wilderness and with death.
We shall concentrate our analytical effort on the interpretation of the seemingly obvious hunting accident. The contrary supposition of murder is a thoroughly justified hypothesis which is dismissed by the American Literature critic Kurt Müller.

The hypothesis that Mrs. Macomber may be the tragic victim of Wilson's professional deformation from a fair hunter to a brutal killer, is unsoundly based. The self-deconstruction of the male myth, in “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” is supposed on a number of faulty assumptions.

1) The marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Macomber had already run aground before the hunting safari in Kenya.

... he did not know how his wife felt except that she was through with him. [...] she was not a great enough beauty any more [...] to better herself. [...] she had missed the chance to leave him and he knew it.18

2) There is no emotionally intimate relationship between Wilson and Mrs. Macomber. She tries to exploit both men but her attempts to deconstruct the male myth are useless because Wilson is disillusioned about women like Margot and because Francis Macomber, in the end, grows beyond himself.

'I've dropped the whole thing,' she said, sitting down at the table. 'What importance is there to whether Francis is any good at killing lions? That's not his trade. That's Mr. Wilson's trade. Mr. Wilson is really impressive killing anything. You kill anything, don't you?' 'Oh, anything,' said Wilson. 'Simply anything.' They are, he thought, the hardest in the world; the hardest, the cruellest, the most predatory and the most attractive and their men have softened or gone to pieces nervously as they have hardened.19

After the dangerous lion hunt where he fails as a novice, Macomber passes his initiation test on the even more dangerous bull hunt. With Francis Macomber's maturing process Mrs. Macomber's eros sinks, insidious as ever she tries to defend her status by accusing others.

'You killed the first bull. The biggest one. [...] You shot damn well.' 'Let's get the drink,' said Macomber. In his life he had never felt so good. In the car Macomber's wife sat very white-faced.20

After the bull hunt, on the next morning, Wilson is so fascinated by Macomber's bold hunting and marksmanship that he introduces him into his neo-stoic philosophy of life with an ominous Shakespeare quotation.
... a man can die but once; we owe God a death...

... he [Wilson] had seen men come of age before and it always moved him. It was not a matter of their twenty-first birthday. [...] The Great American boy-men. Damned strange people. But he liked this Macomber now. Damned strange fellow. Probably meant the end of cuckoldry too. [...] Be a damn fire-eater now. [...] More of a change than a loss of virginity. Fear gone like an operation. [...] Made him into a man. Women knew it, too. No bloody fear.

3) Non-hunters are tempted to accuse Wilson of disregarding ethical principles in his hunting, of making the professional hunter a professional killer, to present him as the brutal embodiment of Thanatos. It is clear only that Wilson uses the Jeep to cut off the bulls on their way to the water holes in order to give Macomber a chance to shoot which he flatly admits as being illegal. He should also have kept Macomber from shooting the second and third bull after the oldest bull had been wounded.

4) In vital situations, however, Wilson's professionalism guarantees safe and fair hunting. This is proved because Wilson tells Macomber on the lion hunt: ""You don't shoot them from cars. "" and on the bull hunt, Macomber also receives the order: ""Not from the car, you fool! "" A wounded lion would attack anyone and sitting in an open Jeep, the hunters would not be able to defend themselves. Shooting from a moving vehicle guarantees missed shots. As you do not shoot sitting birds, one does not shoot from a car, even if it is parked.

5) Wilson insists on delivering the coup de grâce to the heavily wounded lion, alone if necessary.

"'For one thing, he's certain to be suffering. For another, someone else might run onto him! [...]Don't worry about anything. I'll keep you backed up.""

6) Critics, who do not know the first thing about hunting, insinuate that "...

Wilson's rifle is not a normal hunting weapon but has the qualities of a sub-machine gun." They are deceived by Macomber's angst perspective since they do not know the effect of the various calibres.

Robert Wilson came up then carrying his short, ugly, shockingly big-bored .505 Gibbs and grinning.
The phallic impression aside, Hemingway always informs the reader about the different calibres of rifles used by his characters. Interpretation, therefore, has to consider this information. A rifle fit for bush tracking wounded big game does not have to be ugly but must be short, handy and have the killing power of a large calibre.

... the unbelievable smash of the .505 with a muzzle velocity of two tons.\(^{28}\)

7) Mrs. Macomber's insidiousness is morally destructive because she uses the existential fear of her husband when he has to face the attack of the wounded lion to ridicule Francis as a total failure. The professional hunter, however, understands the cowardice of his customer as natural panic and pardons him.

To be fair to the fictional character of Mrs. Macomber, it must be said that we know very little about her. The narrator communicates with the reader in the story by commenting on discourse in the form of indirect free style, by rendering the thoughts of the persons who speak. The story is largely told from Mr. Wilson's point of view. Macomber's perspective is also given and even that of the wounded lion. Margot Macomber is only acted upon or described subjectively. Any view of her inner life is neglected. Nevertheless, her own discourse and actions show her to be the vicious character in this challenging piece of short fiction.

8) The destructive insidiousness of Mrs. Macomber also has a criminological aspect, because she literally shoots her husband in the back. Even if one excludes all, undoubtedly present, base motives, she commits the most serious criminal offence after murder, manslaughter or accidental homicide. She should not have shot.

A) because her husband was standing right in the line of fire between her and the attacking bull,

B) because the 6.5 mm bullet from the Mannlicher rifle has absolutely insufficient killing power against a capital bull, as it is admitted exclusively on small game such as gazelles,

C) because the professional hunter had rushed ahead and delivered the coup de grâce.
Wilson had ducked to one side to get in a shoulder shot. Macomber had stood solid and shot for the nose, shooting a touch high each time and hitting the heavy horns, [...], and Mrs. Macomber, in the car, had shot at the buffalo with the 6.5 Mannlicher as it seemed about to gore Macomber and had hit her husband about two inches up and a little to one side of the base of his skull. 29

Uncannily, this is the exact spot chosen for an execution.

9) Mrs. Macomber should have left the shooting exclusively to the hunting guide. The bull seemed to be goring her husband but, in fact, it was still approximately four yards, almost four meters, away. Indeed, a frontally attacking bull is the greatest risk for the hunter because he can only kill the animal with a shot between the eyes. Wilson's recommendation to aim at the bull's nose is not barbaric advice 30 but practical experience because the African buffalo's brain is protected by the bulge of its horns.

... he [Wilson] delays the search, possibly calculating to weaken the resistance of the bleeding animal and hereby offends against the basic law of hunting ethics, [...] he ducks to the side when the bull attacks [...] He, thus, is made essentially responsible for Macomber's death. 31

Delaying the search is not wrong. An immediate chase would be dangerous, induce the game to flee and make a successful search impossible. Mr. Wilson had ducked away to kill the bull with a shoulder shot, not in order to desert Macomber.

10) Francis Macomber, happy – ironically only shortly before his violent death - according to my judgement of the case, does not end as "a pathetic victim of fake, false male myth but as the victim of accidental homicide or murder." 32

Why should Mrs. Macomber not have taken the opportunity to kill her un-loved husband in a hunting accident situation? Her weapon, in this situation, was only fit for killing a human being - only her precise marksmanship is improbable. A lucky shot? It would have been more elegant for Margot, if the bull had killed Macomber but she shot too early, a second before Wilson could fire the coup de grâce.

Mrs. Macomber has used the professional hunter against her husband. She sees her hopes dashed once the men get along despite her and develop an eros of camaraderie with a contempt for death. Moreover, she had tried to blackmail Wilson by reporting him for chasing animals with a vehicle. Yet, the "White Hunter" in the end cruelly lashes back.
"That was a pretty thing to do,' he said in a toneless voice. 'He would have left you too.'

'Stop it,' she said.

'Of course it's an accident,' he said. 'I know that.'

'Stop it,' she said.

... 'Why didn't you poison him? That's what they do in England.'

'Stop it. Stop it. Stop it,' the woman cried.

Wilson looked at her with his flat blue eyes.

'I'm through now,' he said. 'I was a little angry. I'd begun to like your husband.'

According to his understanding of himself as a gentleman, Wilson is more pleased with humiliating the beautiful egomaniac instead of bringing her to court. Hemingway's cultural criticism induces his figure, Wilson, to coolly criticise Americans by the sheer demonstration of his superior competence.

Angela Carter's "Master" is an eros-thanatos story in the surrealist tradition of magic realism. The English writer re- and newly writes myths and subjects of world literature and probes into them psychoanalytically.

"Master" deals with the fatal intensification of a deformed hunting passion into a grotesquely macabre orgy of sex and death.

Degenerating from a tyrannical schoolboy to a sadist in his native country of England, the naturally violent Master searches for colonies to give his thanatos instinct free reign.

After he discovered that his vocation was to kill animals [...] the insatiable suns of Africa eroded the pupils of his eyes, bleached his hair and tanned his skin until he no longer looked the thing he had been but its systematic negative; he became that white hunter, [...] He did not kill for money but for love.

The introductory paragraph of Carter's short story establishes the intertextually with Hemingway's myth of the White Hunter, of which Master is the systematic negative.

Dehumanised from subject to object, Master is exposed to a hostile environment. His hunting is neither of an ideal nor of a merely material nature but based on tyrannical motives. He suffers from his need to kill and causes others sadistic pain.
Soon the peaceful herbivores of the African savannah no longer satisfy him. He then specialises in exterminating the "printed beasts"36, the large spotted cats, until nothing can keep him in the Old World any longer. He exploits the New World as a type of Columbus and Terminator, as an 'English Explorer', a kind of Robinson Crusoe,

... intending to kill the painted beast, the jaguar, [...] where time runs back [...], the world whose fructifying river is herself a savage woman, the Amazon.37

The myths of femininity and the jungle are one. Evolution moves backward towards primitivism38, the further Master moves away from civilisation.

Master and Friday burn their boats and bridges on their way into the green hell.

An unearthly and atavistic metamorphosis, which will eventually destroy Master, occurs when he teaches the girl to shoot and eat meat.

... since he had taught her to eat meat, now she thought she must be death's apprentice.
The spectacle of her massacres moved him and he mounted her in a frenzy, ...

Master's sadism turns eros into thanatos.

As she grew more like him, so she began to resent him.40

Friday's development, though, in contrast to hierarchical Western thought and to the Darwinism of the Englishman,41 is egalitarian and regressive.

... her cosmogony admitted no essential difference between herself and the beasts and the spirits, it was so sophisticated. ...

Angela Carter carries her critique of civilisation to the extreme because nature in "Master" reconquers civilisation.

While he slept, she flexed her fingers in the darkness that concealed nothing from her and, without surprise, she discovered her fingernails were growing long, curved, hard and sharp.
... the touch of water aroused such an unpleasant sensation on her pelt. ...
She could no longer tolerate cooked meat but must tear it raw between her fingers off the bone before Master saw.
... when she tried to speak, only a diffuse and rumbling purr shivered the muscles of her throat and she dug neat holes in the earth to bury her excrement, she had become so fastidious since she grew whiskers.
... one day, she found she was not able to cry anymore.
... the shoulder to which she raised the rifle now had the texture of plush.\textsuperscript{43}

Just after the moment when Friday shoots Master, her torturer, her metamorphosis into a Jaguar is complete.

Angela Carter's short story, on only six pages, develops the hunting motive into a fury of the thanatos instinct, casting back the evolution of mankind several million years into a world of the jungle, yet, also into the innocence of the virgin forest. It is a world without people and therefore Aidan Day's interpretation in \textit{Angela Carter: The Rational Glass} (1998)\textsuperscript{44} cannot be supported.

... the point of the tale is that such egocentric compulsions may engender only similar compulsions in their victims, so that a world defined only in these terms [...] endlessly repeats destruction, ...

On the contrary, a world cast back into a natural state knows neither good nor evil. The Jaguar's hunting is completely innocent, for, together with the last humans, all their anthropocentric moral principles would have left this world.

Summary and Conclusions

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), stoic and existentialist\textsuperscript{45} of the 'Lost Generation' after the Great War, volunteer medical orderly and ambulance driver, heavily wounded at the Piave-Front, fisherman, hunter, admirer of Spain, war correspondent on the side of the Republic in the Civil War and in Germany during the invasion in the Second World War, defamed as a macho and killer, Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 1954, suicide after his total 'burn-out' in 1961, still is a more positive artist than a fashionable deconstructivist approach may want to see him.

"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is and will remain an initiation story, the cynicism in which is directed against Mrs. Macomber because Francis finally overcomes the deadly challenge of big game hunting in Kenya, even if with the help of the White Hunter and the irony of the sacrifice of his own life.

Angela Carter's (1940-1992) "Master" is not essentially a story about hunting but a dystopia about the future of mankind which is oriented toward the central motive of self-destructive thanatos instincts.
Carter deconstructs her models, with her magic realism she probes into the demonic recesses of the human soul. "Master" is a shocking perversion of eros turned into thanatos by instincts which our civilisation prefers to suppress or conceal.

"Master" symbolises not only the dehumanisation back to an innocent kind of bestiality, that would only be the tip of the iceberg. The story's deep structure is anti-utopian. "Master" is a warning of our end which will be dead-sure if mankind cannot solve the most important tasks of the future: to stop global violence and to preserve nature. If this cannot be achieved, global wars, hurricanes, floods, desertification, biological, chemical and radioactive contamination will cause the destruction of our species 'Homo' which we call 'sapiens sapiens', as "Master" symbolically shows.

Short stories are metaphorical, or more precisely, metonymical icebergs. Cool, deep-structured giants of which one sees only a fraction, hovering processes of which one not easily knows where precisely they travel and to which destination.

1NOTES

9. ibid.

The hypothesis of murder in „The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber“ was established by Hemingway himself in an interview which he gave in 1953: „Francis’ wife hates him because he is a coward […]. But when he gets his guts back, she fears him so much she has to kill him – shoots him in the back of his head.“, quoted after Kenneth S. Lynn, Hemingway (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1987), 432.

Other critics supporting the „murder hypothesis“ are:
Kurt Müller’s „hunting accident hypothesis“ and that Margaret Macomber may be the real victim was anticipated by Virgil Hutton, „The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber“, in: Jackson J. Benson (ed.), The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: Critical Essays (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1975), 239 – 250, 244.

Angelpunkt dieser meisterhaft konstruierten Kurzgeschichte ist ein für Hemingway typisches Moment: Macombers „Mannwerdung“ in der Konfrontation mit den Urkräften der Wildnis und mit dem Tod.“

Müller, 119-20.
Hemingway, 428.
Hemingway, 417.
Hemingway, 434-5.
Shakespeare, King Henry IV: 2, III, 2, 251. - "Francis Macomber", 437.
Hemingway, 438.
Hemingway, 423.
Hemingway, 433.
Hemingway, 425.
Müller, 115. "[...] daß Wilsons Gewehr keine normale Jagdwaffe sei, sondern die Eigenschaften einer Maschinenpistole hat."
Hemingway, 422.
Hemingway, 428.
Hemingway, 440.
Müller, 116. [...] zögert er [Wilson] die Suche hinaus, mutmaßlich aus dem Kalkül heraus, daß die Widerstandskräfte des verblutenden Tieres weiter geschwächt werden, und verstößt damit gegen das elementare Gesetz der Jagdethik, [...]während er sich selbst beim Angriff des Büffels zur Seite duckt [...]. Er wird damit zum eigentlich Verantwortlichen für den Tod Macomers.
c.f. Kurt Müller, Hemingway, 120, "als pathetisches Opfer eines unechten, verlogenen Männlichkeitsmythos."
Hemingway, 441.
Carter, 75-80.
Carter, 75.
Carter, 75.
Carter, 75-6.
Kristina Beckenbach, Angela Carter, Diss. (Kassel 2002)
Angela Carter, 79.
Angela Carter, 79.
Kristina Beckenbach, Angela Carter, Diss (Kassel 2002)
Carter, 79.
Carter, 79-80.