This study builds a postcolonial theoretical framework to establish a complex, historicized intertextuality wherein American writers of color strategically confront, appropriate, and repurpose Ernest Hemingway’s fiction. I spotlight these confrontations to dramatize my conviction that black writers of the Harlem Renaissance and post-Renaissance decades were actively reading and resisting Modernism’s central texts in ways that can be seen to anticipate deconstruction. Thus performing what Edward Said would term “talking back” to the cultural “center,” the African-American texts in my study become avenues that offer new access to the problematic politics of representation in Hemingway’s prose. My first chapter, “Aggravatin’ Papa: Race, Omission, and Discursive Liminality in Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*,” focuses on the representation of African-American jazz in the author’s 1926 novel. In the scene that I study, the text implies that the female protagonist, Brett Ashley, may have had a sexual encounter with an unnamed African-American drummer who appears at the end of Book One. Subsequently, interracial sex becomes both a subject of interest and intense fear as the narrative suppresses much of the musician’s speech by depicting his utterances in ellipses, as blanks within the dialogue (i.e. “‘. . .’ the drummer chanted”). I draw from Gayatri Spivak’s postcolonial inquiries in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” and exhume the drummer’s lyrics, which come from the 1923 jazz song titled “Aggravatin’ Papa.” By restoring this subtextual content to the surface, this first chapter stages the complex polyvocality within Hemingway’s treatment of race, and allows the black voice to signify anew within and against the constraints of the mainstream modernist narrative.

Chapter Two, “‘When the boy came back’: Nation, *Nostos*, and the Politics of Style in Hemingway’s ‘Soldier’s Home’ and Langston Hughes’s ‘Home,’” reconsiders Hemingway’s response to the Great War by placing his 1925 short story about a disaffected veteran in conversation with war-homecoming narratives by black writers. More specifically, I explore the manner in which Langston Hughes’s short story, “Home” (1934), reconstructs Hemingway’s text. In my analysis, I illustrate that Hemingway’s “Soldier’s Home” develops a familial metaphor through which the Krebs household represents nationalist interests and authority. The development of this figure in the text initiates a potential confrontation with the discursive forces that fueled the war. However, the story ultimately pulls back and hides behind its own aesthetic form in order to dodge this potentially volatile critique. Art in Hemingway’s text thus functions as an escape valve. In its rearticulation of “Soldier’s Home,” “Home” appropriates rhetorical strategies from the earlier text – including framing devices and narrative interiority – in order to launch a more engaged critique of power structures, a critique that “Home” recontextualizes to focus on racial conflict. Despite the story’s grim conclusion, “Home” gives new life to the long-established theme of modernist “alienation”; its strategic appropriations cut across the oppressive and superficial discourse of color politics, and stylistically perform the psychosocial processes of racial identification later articulated by Frantz Fanon. Hughes’s story is thus woven from seemingly disparate cultural threads: the radicalism of postwar African-American political rhetoric, and the preoccupation with aesthetic form most famously exemplified by white modernist experimentation.

“Home” thus constitutes what Homi Bhabha describes as a “hybrid moment” in modernist American fiction, wherein “the transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are *neither the One. . . nor the Other . . . but something else besides,* which contests the terms and territories of both.” Chapter Three pushes the intertextual connections revealed in Chapter Two even further, and examines the broader literary-historical possibilities within the stories’ unique kinship. Indeed, Hughes was an active participant in critical debates during the Harlem Renaissance, debates that centered on the function of art as
both a conveyor of African-American identity and tool for political activism. Because the protagonist of “Home” is an artist, it is possible to view his character as a complex embodiment of these political and aesthetic debates. Furthermore, because Hughes’s politically forward story relies upon Hemingway’s politically inert narrative, the fascinating intertextuality can be seen to contest, in Bhabha’s words, “the terms and territories” of Harlem Renaissance aesthetic criteria and Hemingway’s abiding critical legacy. In 1987, Hemingway critic and biographer Kenneth Lynn generated a great deal of interest and opposition when he questioned the widespread assumption that the author was profoundly influenced by the war. Consequent to Lynn’s revisionist reading, critics have continued this significant discussion. However, instead of weighing in on the extent to which the war per se impacted Hemingway’s life and artistic maturation, I reorient the question by reading the author’s aesthetic treatment of sociopolitical conflict through another artist who read and re-formed his fictions.

Chapter Four builds from the critical methodology of Chapters Two and Three, but goes beyond the temporal parameters of the Lost Generation and Harlem Renaissance eras. “Something Rich and Strange: Hemingway’s ‘The Sea Change’ and Reflections of Racial and Sexual Difference in James Baldwin’s Giovanni’s Room” speculates that Baldwin’s 1956 novel appropriates specific figures from Hemingway’s 1931 short story. I begin by showing that these figures in “The Sea Change,” which include mirror images and characters’ interpersonal gazes, ironically conceal its central content – male homosexuality. I then argue that Baldwin may have recognized that the power relations in Hemingway’s text could be destabilized, and that the story’s confounding treatment of homosexuality contains the potential for new resistance. Writing from the margins, Baldwin actively repurposes Hemingway’s narrative figures; thus, Hemingway’s homophobic story sets the stage for Baldwin’s homosexual novel. This anticipates Bhabha’s theoretical formulation of resistant “mimicry,” a form of radical and creative destruction that enables new discoveries about the politics of representation in core modernist works, and pushes toward new horizons within the study of queer and African-American literature at mid-century and beyond.