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Hemingway Hero

Karen Goodlett

A Brief Introduction

For decades, critics and scholars looked to Hemingway in an effort to visualize that brute, manly quality known as *machismo*, and they did so with (seemingly) good reason. After all, what author was better suited for the job than Hemingway, the fishing, hunting, boxing, and bullfighting aficionado, survivor of two plane crashes, writer of various macho-oriented books, and creator of the Hemingway Hero—the very embodiment of *machismo*. Hemingway cultivated this virile image: war, hunting, and espionage were some of his favorite topics to write about and he is well known for his love of hunting and other sports. Unfortunately for those seeking to endow Hemingway as an icon of *machismo*, however, such is not the case.

There is another set of behaviors connected with Hemingway, and they are in polar opposition to the *machismo* icon. Upon close scrutiny, the revered Hemingway Hero is revealed to be a feminized fetishist, full of doubt and ambivalence. These Hemingway Heroes, once the epitome of masculinity, are thrown out of the closet, so to speak, by the relatively recent publication of *The Garden of Eden*, one of Hemingway's unfinished works, and their subtle idiosyncrasies are exposed.

The Garden of Eden, with its blatant, unabashed homoeroticism, fetishism, and gender switching, helps to expose the same themes and tendencies that are present in Hemingway's other, traditionally "macho" works. The anti-machismo ideas found in the novel are, in fact, buried throughout the body of Hemingway's literature, veiled in the guise of war heroes, bullfighters, rumrunners, and the like. Re-reading the principal parts of the Hemingway canon with this new thought in mind reveals an entirely new way of regarding Hemingway's heroes and their *machismo* image. For example, Jake Barnes, the haunted narrator of *The Sun Also Rises*, becomes a pitiful, castrated male who relies on a masculine woman, Brett Ashley, to fulfill his status as a man. No longer is their relationship a tortured, unconsummated romance. In viewing Jake as an anti-hero, one who has failed in the realm of masculinity, the pair's relationship takes on an almost symbiotic stance. Jake draws upon Brett's inherent masculinity to fulfill the void within him, and ever so subtly, there is a sense that Jake and Brett switch their traditional gender identities.

Such confusion and gender switching recurs in many of Hemingway's works, ranging from the earliest short stories to the posthumously published novels. The presence of androgyny and fetishism in these works is not as obvious as in *The Garden of Eden*, but it is there nonetheless. Realizing and acknowledging the presence of these unusual and untraditional aspects of Hemingway's psychosexual orientation is vital in the study of his literature, because without them, the literature of one of America's greatest writers cannot be fully understood or appreciated.

Traditional Views of *Machismo* and the Hemingway Hero.

Characters such as Robert Jordan, Pedro Romero, Frederick Henry, and Harry Morgan exemplify the traditional view of the Hemingway Hero. They are brave, tough men who “get the job done” in spite of possibly negative consequences. Traditionally, they are the models of “grace under pressure,” a phrase often associated with the Hemingway Hero. These men do not fall to pieces when confronted with extreme adversities such as being critically wounded in action, as is the case for Robert Jordan, Frederick Henry, and Harry Morgan. Instead, they remain firm in their resolves to continue their fights, even if it death looms ahead as a possible consequence. Likewise, Pedro Romero exhibits grace and agility in the bullring, never flinching when a deadly bull races toward him. Romero is an example of *machismo*, the ultimate ideal of masculinity that the Hemingway Hero is supposed to embody. Even Hemingway’s writing style partakes of this *machismo* image. His signature terse sentences dispose with the feminized ornate and flowery descriptions of the Victorian-era authors, instead opting for a more masculine minimalism. These qualities are, in part, the reason why Hemingway is associated with the *machismo* ideal and is so popular among male readers. Debra Modellmog, in her book *Reading Desire*, describes Hemingway’s lure as a symbol of masculinity in the following terms: “The critical and cultural configuration of Hemingway as a model of white heterosexual masculinity has been one of

patriarchal capitalism's most successful agents for promoting white heteromascularity" (64). According to Modellmog's statement, not only does our culture consider Hemingway (and his works) to be masculinity's ideal, but he is also the agent for perpetuating masculinity in the culture. This is problematic, however, considering the numerous instances of gender inversion and other various alternative sexual orientations and practices that occur in Hemingway's life, as well as his works.

2

Childhood Roots of Androgyny

“He was quite fearful . . . as to whether or not Santa Claus would know if he was a boy, because he wore just the same kind of clothes as [his] sister.”

—Grace Hall Hemingway

In order to understand the fetishisms and gender conflicts of Hemingway's adult life and those reflected in his literature, it is necessary to first understand his background. Many factors that contributed to propagating Hemingway's gender ambivalence and fetishisms can be traced back to his childhood, when Hemingway's gender identity suffered greatly at the hands of his domineering mother, Grace Hall Hemingway. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw vast societal and industrial changes taking place, and many of these changes were in the realm of gender identifications. This society juxtaposed fanciful lads in feminized dress, as pictured in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, and rugged frontiersmen, where, according to Michael Kimmel's *Manhood in America*, in order “to be considered a real man, one had better make sure to always be walking around and acting ‘real masculine’ ” (100).

The Hemingway household reflected this bipolar view of masculinity. Dr. Clarence Hemingway, Ernest's father, was an avid hunter and fisherman in addition to being a family doctor. However, he also enjoyed doing traditionally feminine tasks such as cooking. Additionally, Grace, whom Ernest later described as being “androgynous,” was the actual breadwinner in the family,

bringing in more income from singing lessons than Clarence earned through his practice. Ernest viewed this as something that emasculated his father, since Grace had assumed control of the household. Thus, it is no surprise that Hemingway grew up to have conflicting notions about gender, considering that he was born and raised in a society that was itself ambivalent, expecting men to be both Christian gentlemen and very “manly” at the same time.

Aside from the societal schizophrenia concerning abstract gender perceptions, Hemingway also suffered from tangible gender conflicts. During this time, ideas concerning the dressing of young children also underwent radical changes. Kimmel writes, “Prior to the 1880s little boys and little girls were dressed identically. Both wore what looked like white christening gowns during infancy and short, loose-fitting dresses in early childhood—that is, boys and girls looked like little girls. But that changed in the late 1880s as parents dressed their toddler boys in gender-appropriate clothing, and knickerbockers and trousers made their first appearance for little boys” (160). The transition from dressing boys and girls alike to gender-appropriate clothing was one that Hemingway’s mother did not follow.

Grace Hemingway’s treatment of her eldest children during early childhood has led several critics to partly blame Grace for Ernest’s subsequent gender ambivalence. One of her more bizarre decisions was to “twin” her two eldest children, Marcelline and Ernest. This would not be terribly unusual if the two children were of the same sex, but Marcelline was a girl and Ernest a boy.

Errol Selkirk, in *Hemingway for Beginners*, puts forth interesting information concerning Hemingway's early childhood. He writes,

Ernest and his sister slept in the same room in twin white cribs. They had identical dolls and china sets, and later, both learned to sew. Grace even kept Marcelline out of school for a year, so that the two children could be in the same grade. Baby Hemingway wore frills, bonnets, lace dresses, and stockings. At two years old, Grace was calling her son 'Summer Girl.' At age three, he and his sister were still wearing identical dresses. . . . His acquiescence, however, became tinged with rebellion. And when Grace once called him her Dutch dolly because of his long hair, Ernest immediately took aim with his finger and shouted, 'I not a Dutch dolly. I Pawnee Bill. Bang! I shoot Fweety [Grace]' (14-15).

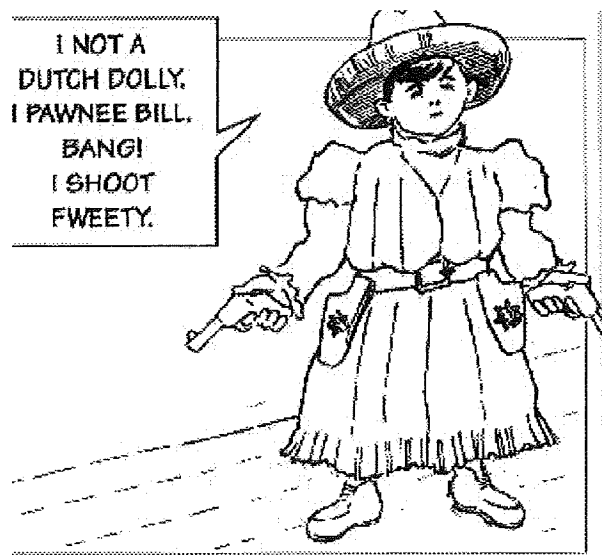


Figure 1

A humorous cartoon taken from *Hemingway for Beginners*, showing the disparity between Hemingway and Grace's gender ideals.

Carl Eby sheds even more light on the subject, also adding a few speculations concerning the twinning's long-term effects. In *Hemingway's Fetishisms*, Eby lists four "unusual aspects" of Hemingway's childhood that led to fetishism and androgynous preferences:

First, Grace continued to cross-dress her son far past the age of two and for much longer than was ever common in America. (Ernest wore alternating boyish and girlish costumes until he was four-and-a-half, and while there are no pictures of him in unmistakably feminine costumes later than this, he was still closely twinned with his sister, either in androgynous or boyish garb until he was seven.) Second, Grace changed her son's appearance and the outward signs of his gender with an unusual and disorienting frequency. Third, Ernest's mother actually *thought* of him—at least at times—as something other than a " 'real' boy," an attitude which Ernest, whatever his reluctance, could not help but absorb. Finally, Grace's insistence not only on twinning Ernest and Marcelline, but on pairing them always as *twins of the same sex*, was extraordinarily unusual and, I will argue, of pivotal importance in the etiology of Hemingway's fetishism (95).

Although the unusual practice of dressing Ernest as a girl during his early childhood cannot be entirely blamed for causing his gender insecurities, it must have affected the impressionable young Ernest in some way or another. Eby goes on to state, "Shifting between 'boyish' and 'girlish' costumes and continually playing with his appearance, Grace, in fact, sent profoundly ambiguous and conflicting signals to her young son" (97). In one of Ernest's childhood memory books, Grace even wrote about Ernest's fear that Santa Claus would mistake him for a girl (97). I would not go as far as to say that Marcelline and Ernest's twinning is the sole culprit behind Ernest's penchant for writing about androgynous couples with strange sexual inclinations.



Figure 2

Ernest (I.) and Marcelline, in matching frilly dresses, walking sister Ursula in Oak Park, Illinois.

However, Freudian theories place much of the blame on Grace's "experiments." Freud, in "Creative Writing and Dreaming," attempts to connect the unfulfilled fantasies of the author (which Freud connects with childhood experiences) with the writing the author produces. He says, "A strong experience in the present awakens in the creative writer a memory of an earlier experience (usually belonging to his childhood) from which there now proceeds a wish which finds its fulfillment in the creative work. The work itself exhibits elements of the recent provoking occasion as well as of the old memory" (Richter, 487). According to this theory, it could be inferred that the androgyny that occurs throughout Hemingway's literature is a vestige of his childhood "twinning."

Additionally, one theory concerning the origin of fetishistic behaviors, according to Gosselin and Wilson, points to childhood incidents as a root of such behavior: "Many theorists have supposed that sexual deviants have acquired their unusual interests because of difficulties in social interaction, particularly with adult members of the opposite sex. . . . Perhaps he has had some unfortunate

early experience with potential sex partners: hostility, rejection or humiliation” (99). In applying these ideas to Hemingway’s life, one could logically argue that the incidents of unusual sexuality in Hemingway’s literature are the psychic residue of his childhood experiences.



Figure 3

Ernest and Marcelline, in matching dresses and with a toy gun.

3

War, Gender Ambiguity, and the Fetishes of Androgyny and Hair

Fetish: (n.) A condition wherein certain parts of the body, fabrics, articles of clothing or other objects become in themselves a focus of sexual attraction.
—*Sexual Variations*

Androgynous: (adj.) Both male and female in one; the blending of male and female characteristics, etc.
—*Webster's New World Dictionary*

"Couldn't I be you?" . . . "I'm you now. And I just took the city of Paris"
—Renata to Colonel Cantwell, *Across the River and into the Trees*

"The usual view of Hemingway's interest in sexuality is that it is of the locker-room sort, kidding-with-the-guys but fiercely heterosexual in its focus, treating homosexuality as either a joke or a horror," write Comley and Scholes in their book *Hemingway's Genders* (110). This "locker-room" mentality is the basis for the *machismo* image propagated by both critics and Hemingway himself.

However, the recurring theme of androgynous men and women throughout the body of Hemingway's work seems to prove that mentality to be rather deceptive.

In most of Hemingway's novels and in several of his short stories, couples appear who sport androgynous hairstyles, pretend that they are of the opposite sex, or leave their partners for a homosexual lover. Although the leading men in Hemingway's novels and short stories are usually involved in various "manly"

occupations, they are often also literally or symbolically castrated and involved romantically with lesbians or fetishized phallic women—women who are endowed by men with “imaginary phalluses” and who exhibit masculine traits. According to Eby, this pairing of weakened men with phallic women is a direct psychological outgrowth of Hemingway’s childhood experiences: “Throughout Hemingway’s fiction—in a combined representation of his own feminization and his father’s symbolic emasculation at his mother’s hands—his male characters are fetishistically feminized by their female partners” (109). However, I disagree with Eby’s assertion that the female partners are responsible for feminizing Hemingway’s men.

For years, many critics have labeled Hemingway as misogynistic. Hemingway’s portrayal of women as domineering beings who control men seems to support and lend credence to this misogynistic label. Margot Macomber, in “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,” is one such poster-woman for female dominance: she is someone who shoots her husband as soon as she realizes that she will no longer be able to control him completely.

Although Eby’s stance fits in perfectly with the misogynistic ideas associated with Hemingway, I think this position is shortsighted because it does not really take into consideration all of the aspects of Hemingway’s characters, both male and female. I believe that most of Hemingway’s men are *already* feminized, emasculated by society and the aura of despair surrounding World War I, and they are attracted to phallic women in order to bring a sense of balance back into their lives. Ideas of societal disenchantment were ubiquitous during and after the

First World War, leading to a proliferation of expatriate authors, such as Henry Miller, Ezra Pound, and Hemingway, whose works often reflected this disenchantment. Therefore, perhaps it is no coincidence that many of Hemingway's "feminized" men are soldiers or military veterans. Rather than being emasculated by domineering women bent on eradicating masculinity, as Eby maintains, these soldiers have already been broken by war—an activity invented and carried out by men. Rinaldi's statement on war in *A Farewell to Arms* is an example of this: "This war is killing me. I am very depressed by it" (167).

The idea that war is an emasculating force is neither new nor radical. In his study of the history of American masculinity, Michael Kimmel writes:

For men the new somatic illness of shell shock was defined as a[n] . . . inability to meet the demands of one's gender. During World War I a large number of men froze, could not return fire, or experienced psychic breaks with reality. . . . Most psychiatric treatments for shell shock involved treating the disease as the result of *insufficient manliness*. T. J. Calhoun, assistant surgeon with the Army of the Potomac, argued that if the soldier could not be 'laughed out of it by his comrades' or by '*appeals to his manhood*,' then a good dose of battle was the best 'curative.' Just as contemporary critics understood [female] hysteria to be a form of resistance to excessive standards of femininity, so too was shell shock a form of resistance to militarized manhood. (my italics, 133-134)

Here we see that in the days surrounding the Civil War and World War I, shell shocked and battle-weary soldiers were dealt with as inferior men. Literary critic Elaine Showalter also describes shell shock as a retaliation against societal pressures on men. She writes, "[Shell shock was] a disguised male protest *not only against war but against the concept of*

'manliness' itself. . . . The heightened code of masculinity that dominated in wartime was intolerable to surprisingly large numbers of men" (Kimmel, 133-134). Contemporary critics' description of the era's shell shock as a "resistance to militarized manhood" is a relatively new idea, however, and one that Hemingway would not have been familiar with. However, Hemingway deals with this subject time and again in his fiction when he writes about battle-scarred men. For example, Krebs in "Soldier's Home" is unable to assimilate himself back into the regular civilian society. Disenchanted with the unimaginable violence they saw on the battlefield, Hemingway's heroes seek masculinity in a less threatening form: the phallic woman.

The phallic woman is the primary example of androgyny in Hemingway's literature. Although their male counterparts often express androgynous tendencies as well, it is usually at the urging of the phallic woman. Thus, understanding the phallic woman's role in Hemingway's literature a key to understanding Hemingway's androgyny. In psychoanalysis, however, the phallic woman is a symbol of fetishism. Angela Moorjani describes the relationship between phallic women and fetishism in the following passage: "The infantile fantasy of the phallic mother is closely related to fetishism, which in psychoanalytic terms is commonly described as a male perversion in which the phallus, missing where it is imagined to be on the maternal body, is replaced in fantasy by a fetish-object" (22). Basically, in the words of Freud, "The fetish is a

substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and—for reasons familiar to us—does not want to give up” (Eby, 43).

This fetishistic androgyny is what lurks behind Hemingway's phallic women. Throughout his literature, he seems to be obsessed by haircuts and hair lengths, which is a fascination that presumably stems from his childhood twinning with Marcelline. Many visits are made to the barbershop in Hemingway's novels and stories, and hairstyles are often one of the first things mentioned in the description of characters (especially female characters). Generally, short, masculine hair distinguishes Hemingway's phallic women. Even if a phallic female character begins the novel or story with long hair, as is the case for Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms*, her hair is cut by the story's end. Regarding this matter, Eby states, “*Their hair is itself a symbolic 'female phallus,' and all of Hemingway's fetishized women are phallic women. Any additional phallic symbols in their possession are simply redundant and serve largely to underscore the original equation*” (43).

Hemingway's phallic women have received much criticism for being domineering. In *Hemingway's Genders*, Comley and Scholes write, “The women in this phase of Hemingway's writing [the 1930s] are for the most part more sexually aggressive than the men. They seem to exist solely for sex and the power that goes with it and to have few other interests” (40). Here, Hemingway's women are criticized for being, in effect, androgynous. True, many of these women *are* aggressive and assertive, but these qualities are not necessarily unfavorable. Comley and Scholes's behavioral description is that of the

stereotypical man, which society accepts and even admires as a sign of virility and manliness. However, when women exhibit these “masculine” gender traits, they are criticized as being promiscuous and power-hungry. In attributing these traits to his female characters, Hemingway was, in a sense, expressing what I think are “proto-feminist” ideas. He unknowingly endowed his phallic women with feminist ideals and masculine powers, long before the “feminist revolution” of the 1960s and 70s. The negativity that is expressed in Hemingway’s representation of these women, which is in turn picked up by critics, stems from his ambivalent portrayal of them. Hemingway was still caught up in the Victorian constraints with which he was raised, which did not look favorably upon women’s equality, and the resulting ideology is not completely supportive of strong, independent women.

In order to fully understand and appreciate Hemingway’s persistent references to hairstyles, phallic women, and gender inversion, it is helpful recall one of Jacques Lacan’s theories about repetition in literature. For Hemingway, in story after story and novel after novel, couples with confused ideas about their sexuality derive their sexual pleasure from pretending to be one another, the same person, or both. Lacan has an interesting comment on the repetition of ideas throughout a body of literature. Like Freud, Lacan attempts to connect the author’s unfulfilled fantasies or desires (the product of childhood) with the elements of his/her literature. He writes:

There is no other way of conceiving the indestructibility of unconscious desire—in the absence of a need which, when forbidden satisfaction, does not sicken and die, even if it means the destruction of the organism itself.

It is in a memory, comparable to what is called by that name in our modern thinking-machines (which are in turn based on an electronic realization of the composition of signification), it is in this sort of memory that is found in the chain that *insists* on reproducing itself in the transference, and which is the chain of desire. (167)

Here, Lacan takes Freud's theory that literature is a representation of the author's imagination to a deeper level by explaining constantly repeating images, themes, or ideas as not only unconscious attempts to fulfill fantasies and desires, but also as a "signifying chain" of desires.

So where do these Freudian and Lacanian theories fit into a discussion of gender ambiguity and fetishism in Hemingway? They help to establish these recurring themes as valid fragments of Hemingway's psyche rather than freak occurrences of his overactive imagination. If, for instance, a feminized hero is coupled with a very masculine woman who has short hair, a tan, and a variation of "cat" for a nickname only once in the complete body of Hemingway's literature, then it is easy to say that such a pairing is simply an unusual plot twist. When the same bizarre combinations appear again and again, however, there is obviously *something* afoot. Keeping these things in mind, we will now consider the roles gender ambiguity and fetishism play in dismantling the mythic Hemingway Hero.

Roy Schafer, in the essay "On Gendered Discourse and Discourse in Gender," describes the concept of gender in a way that is pertinent to the discussion of gender ambiguity in Hemingway. He writes, "Gender should not be approached as an immutable, irreducible fact of nature. Instead, it should be approached as a construction; more exactly, it is a never-ending process of

constructing ideas about male and female characteristics and differences” (1). In writing that gender is not a black and white, cut and dried fact of life, Schafer opens the way for the possibility that men and women can share each other’s gender traits without being homosexuals or lesbians. This is especially important, for even though I will argue that Hemingway’s heroes and their female counterparts are androgynous, fetishized beings, most are not homosexual in any way, as some critics are wont to argue. To simply dismiss these sexually ambiguous characters as “homosexual” or “deviant” ignores the implications of the grey space of androgyny.

War and Hair

As I mentioned before, hair plays an integral role in Hemingway’s life and literature. In this body of work, hair color and length has the power to transform gender and race, as well as to strengthen or dissolve relationships. In fact, so much emphasis is placed on haircuts and styles in the context of relationships that hair achieves a fetishistic quality. In the book *Sexual Variations*, Gosselin and Wilson define fetishism as, “A condition wherein certain parts of the body, fabrics, articles of clothing or other inanimate objects become in themselves a focus of sexual attraction” (11). Mark Spilka, in *Hemingway’s Quarrel with Androgyny*, also comments on the importance that hair held for Hemingway:

Hair was for Hemingway the public expression of his own private obsession with androgyny; his easy, imaginative access to a woman’s manipulative, talkative, stylistically inventive powers; his secret envy of her breasts and womb; his unconfessed desire to rest confident in her supine passivity; and his honest awareness of her oppression by men such as himself. (291)

In the following examples of hair in Hemingway's literature, its importance in gender transformations will become abundantly clear.

In *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *To Have and Have Not*, war, violent conflict, and their injuries foster romance, while hair lengths, colors, and styles signify androgyny. War provides the disillusionment and injuries that incite passion in these novels, and the shearing of the women's hair is the outward badge of their androgyny and phallic attributes. In these novels, injured or war-torn men fall in love with phallic women, who also exhibit androgynous tendencies. In *Across the River and into the Trees* and "Soldier's Home," however, these themes are present, but they are treated differently. Both the novel and short story focus on war's effect on men's ability to love and carry on functional romantic relationships, even though phallic women and androgyny are not as important as in the other novels.

The Sun Also Rises's Lady Brett Ashley is one of Hemingway's consummate phallic women. The hard-drinking Brett's relationships with the men around her, especially Jake Barnes, are a perfect example of the gender inversion that is present in the novel. Brett is first described, in the words of Jake, as such: "Brett was damned good-looking. She wore a slipover jersey sweater and a tweed skirt, and *her hair was brushed back like a boy's*. She started all that" (my italics, 22). Her actions and personality traits are those of men, not the "dainty" expectations of pre-feminism women. She chain smokes, routinely gets drunk ("tight") in public, and has no qualms about going off with various men for her own pleasure.

Add to this her affinity for wearing men's accessories (as seen in statements such as "She pulled her man's felt hat down and started in for the bar," and "Brett was wearing a Basque beret. So was Mike", pp. 28 and 134, respectively), calling herself "chap," and her magnetic attraction to Jake, who was rendered sexually incapable by an injury suffered in war, and Brett has all the markings of a phallic woman. She fills the void in Jake's life that alcohol, sport, and other male friends cannot. When Jake is alone at night, thinking of his injury, which is implied to be a sort of castration, his thoughts turn to Brett:

My head started to work. The old grievance. Well, it was a rotten way to be wounded. . . . Then I couldn't keep away from it, and I started to think about Brett and all the rest of it went away. I was thinking about Brett and my mind stopped jumping around and started to go in sort of smooth waves. Then all of a sudden I started to cry. (31)

Jake is reduced to tears by thoughts of Brett and his male inadequacy. Almost every time Jake mentions or thinks about his wound, Brett is present, either physically or mentally. Their relationship is almost symbiotic. Whenever Brett feels upset or needs advice, she takes a walk with Jake, and only Jake.

Likewise, Jake has a much more meaningful relationship with Brett than with any of his male friends. In this relationship, with Brett as a phallic woman and Jake as an impotent man, the gender lines are inverted. Brett is the man who relies upon Jake, the woman, for emotional support. In return, Jake gets to experience a sort of vicarious masculinity through Brett.

When Hemingway first describes Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms*, it is immediately clear that she is a phallic woman; she is tall and carrying a swagger stick. In the beginning of the novel, before his injury, Frederick Henry

does not express deep romantic inclinations toward Catherine. He says, "I knew I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game, like bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards" (30). Yet, when Frederick sees Catherine for the first time after he is severely wounded on the battlefield, his feelings are radically changed: "When I saw her [Catherine] I was in love with her. Everything turned over inside of me" (91). It is war-caused injuries that apparently spur Frederick's love for Catherine, who was just a game to him before he was wounded.

After the couple profess to love each other, Catherine begins to transform from a phallic into an androgynous woman. She begins to utter statements such as "We really are the same one" and "I wish I'd had it [gonorrhea] to be like you" (139; 299). Then, Catherine decides to experiment with full-fledged androgyny, asking Frederick to grow his hair long so that they will look similar:

"Darling, why don't you let your hair grow?"
 "How grow?"
 "Just grow a little longer."
 "It's long enough now."
 "No, let it grow a little longer and I could cut mine and we'd be just alike only one of us blonde and one of us dark."
 "I wouldn't let you cut yours."
 "It would be fun. I'm tired of it. It's an awful nuisance in the bed at night."
 "I like it."
 "Wouldn't you like it short?"
 "I might. I like it the way it is."
 "It might be nice short. *Then we'd both be alike.*
Oh, darling, I want you so much I want to be you too."
 "You are. *We're the same one.*"
 "I know it. At night we are."
 "The nights are grand." (my italics, 299)

Although not much is mentioned of the result of this exchange, the message is quite obvious. Here is a woman who is attempting to transform herself and her lover into an androgynous entity, and Frederick tacitly assents to the idea.

Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* also presents an example of a Hemingway Hero who is involved in an androgynous relationship as the result of his military service. His relationship with Maria transpires only because he is fighting against the fascists in Spain, and Robert is initially attracted to her because of her beautiful face and hair that “was cut short all over her head so that it was but little longer than the fur on a beaver pelt” (22). At first, the only indication that Maria is one of Hemingway’s phallic women is the length of her hair. She does not exhibit Lady Brett’s brusqueness or any other manly traits. In fact, the most phallic woman in the novel is Pilar, a character that who, some critics claim, was modeled after Gertrude Stein. However, when Robert and Maria become intimately involved later on in the novel, Maria suggests the same tonsorial experimentation as Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms*. As she dreamily plans their future together, Maria says, “I will borrow the scissors of Pilar and cut thy hair” (172). Although this is the opposite of Catherine’s wish for Frederick’s long hair, the androgynous element is still present because Maria has incredibly short hair herself. By cutting Robert’s hair, Maria would, in effect, make him look more like herself.

Later, Maria expresses her androgynous ideals to Robert in a much more direct way. As they lie together during an intimate moment, Maria tells Robert that their union has made them one being:

[Maria] "Afterwards we will be as one animal of the forest and be so close that neither one can tell that one of us is one and not the other. . . . But we are different. I would have us exactly the same."

[Robert] "I do not wish to change. It is better to be one and each one to be the one he is."

[Maria] "But we will be one now and there will never be a separate one." (262-63)

In this instance, Robert resists Maria's attempt to create an androgynous atmosphere, but when he is injured during a skirmish, his attitude quickly changes. After he is wounded and aware that he will most likely die in the battle, Robert entreats Maria to go on to safety with these words: "Thou wilt go now, rabbit. But I will go with thee. As long as there is one of us there is both of us. . . . Whichever one there is, is both" (463). As she leaves, he says, "Thou art me too now. Thou art all there will be of me" (464). Robert accepts Maria's offer of androgyny once he realizes his injured state. Spilka aptly describes Maria as "his [Jordan's] close-cropped twin in selfless androgynous love" (247). Although Robert differs from Jake Barnes and Frederick Henry in that he is not wounded *before* he meets his love interest and embarks upon androgynous ideals, he still shares some of their traits. In all three cases, the females involved either have short hair (Brett and Maria) or express a wish to cut their hair short (Catherine). All the men are war-torn, and they seek comfort in the arms of phallic women.

There are exceptions to this formula, naturally. Two such deviations from the pattern of short-haired phallic women and their war-ravaged lovers are the 1924 story "Soldier's Home" and the 1950 novel *Across the River and into the Trees*. In these works, combat still holds a prominent place in the lives of the

Hemingway Heroes, endowing them with disenchantment and injury. The phallic women, however, are absent, and the soldiers must look toward other things in order to make them whole. Harold Krebs, the recently returned soldier in "Soldier's Home," withdraws from society and into himself, and (as I will discuss later) shrugs off the traditional expectations of love and marriage. The dying Colonel Cantwell, in *Across the River and into the Trees*, seeks fulfillment in the youthful beauty of Renata, an Italian countess.

Renata, Colonel Cantwell's love interest in *Across the River and into the Trees*, does not really belong in the phallic woman category in the sense that Hemingway's other women belong. Renata neither exhibits overtly masculine character traits, nor does she cut her hair to look like a boy. In fact, special attention is paid throughout the novel to her "dark hair, of an alive texture, [that hangs] down over her shoulders" (79). Hers is a special case, where she pretends to be Cantwell's "daughter," even though they are involved in a sexual relationship. Along with an androgynous desire to "be" Cantwell, she also involves herself in an incestuous fantasy.

As is the case with the other Hemingway Heroes, Colonel Cantwell suffers various injuries as a result of war. He has been shot through the hand twice, suffered "at least" ten concussions, and has a bad heart. Renata's exuberant youth and beauty seem to wear off on Cantwell, making him feel better and providing him with a reason to live. His age and injuries, on the other hand, fascinate Renata. Cantwell's mutilated hand is a sexual turn-on for her, evidenced by the following passage. " 'Please put your hand here.' 'My good or

my bad?' 'Your bad,' the girl said. 'The one I love and must think about all week' ”
 (208). Another example of this is seen as they are sharing an intimate moment, when Cantwell is playing with Renata's hair:

“ 'I'm going to run my hand through it [her hair] and make it unkempt still.'
 'Your hurt hand?'
 'Yes.'
 'We're sitting on the wrong sides for that. Change over.'
 'Good. That is a sensible order couched in simple language and easily understood.'
 . . . Then he ran his bad hand through her hair once, twice, and three times and then he kissed her, and it was worse than desperation.” (142-43)

Renata is excited by Cantwell's injuries, and Cantwell capitalizes on these wounds in his sexual relations with her. The touch of Cantwell's mutilated hand seems to stimulate and intensify Renata's sexual desires. Here, then, war (in the form of injuries) brings the couple closer, as it does similarly in *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Although Renata is not an obviously phallic woman, she still desires an androgynous union of herself with her lover, and like other Heroes, Cantwell doesn't really object. Just as Catherine Barkley and Maria suggest androgynous experiments in bed, Renata decides to do the same. However, her plans are more like Maria's, in that the androgynous transformation involves a fantastical merger with her lover rather than an actual physical change, such as Catherine's haircutting plan:

“Please hold me very tightly so we can be a part of each other for a little while.”
 “We can try,” the Colonel said.
 “*Couldn't I be you?*”
 “That's awfully complicated. We could try of course.”

“I’m you now,’ she said. ‘And I just took the city of Paris.”
 “Jesus, *Daughter*,” he said. “You’ve got an awful lot of problems on your hands. The next thing, they will parade the twenty-eighth division through.” (my italics, 146)

Here, Renata expresses her phallic-woman attributes by pretending to be Cantwell as well as an invading soldier. The militaristic aspect of Renata’s fantasy increases her identity as a phallic woman since the fantasy mainly consists of masculine, military actions. When Cantwell agrees to participate in Renata’s androgynous role-playing, he, in effect, allows himself to be feminized, just as Jake Barnes, Frederick Henry, and Robert Jordan are feminized.

However, the feminization is not the product of domineering females bent on the eradication of masculinity. This point is more than obvious when considering the relatively submissive characters of Maria and Renata. These women do not wish to castrate their lovers symbolically; they want to *be* them in order to *experience* masculinity first hand. These female characters were created in the first half of the twentieth century, before the feminist revolution gave the sexes more equality. This is why Catherine Barkley wishes that she had gonorrhea and Renata pretends to take over Paris. The reason why these “manly” men allow themselves to undergo gender inversion, yielding to their lovers’ androgynous wishes, I propose, is because they have had enough of their own brand of masculinity—war and conflict—and are ready to experience the female version of masculinity. These men are no longer the raw, unbridled vessels of *machismo* that many people assume when they think of Hemingway’s Heroes. Rather, they are hurt men, seeking reassurance in the arms of phallic women—a gentler, kinder form of masculinity.

Harry Morgan, in *To Have and Have Not*, exhibits another variation of Hemingway's battle-injured member of an androgynous couple. Rather than suffering his arm-amputating injury on a traditional battlefield, Harry sustains his injuries during a different kind of war: the proverbial "war on drugs." Harry's illegal past time of running contraband between Key West and Cuba causes his dismemberment when federal authorities open fire upon his boat, shooting him in the arm. For various reasons, Harry loses the arm, but it doesn't really seem to faze him as much as one would think. Hemingway writes,

"The hell with my arm. You lose an arm you lose an arm. There's worse things than lose (*sic*) an arm. You've got two arms and you've got *two of something else*. And a man's still a man with one arm or one of those. The hell with it," he [Harry] says. "I don't want to think about it." Then after a minute he says, "I got those other two still." (97)

Here, Harry is displaying a healthy dose of *machismo*, acting as if the loss of an arm or testicle is nothing about which to be upset. He lets his insecurities slip, however, when he reiterates the fact that he still has both testicles, even if one of his arms is missing.

As nonchalant as Harry tries to act about his handicap, his true feelings of insecurity reveal themselves when he is in the presence of his cropped, bleached-blond hair wife, Marie. Marie is a classic phallic woman, being described as "a big woman, long-legged, big handed, big hipped, still handsome, [with] an old man's felt hat pulled down over her bleached blond hair," à la Brett Ashley (Spilka, 243). At the beginning of chapter twelve, Marie is the initiator of

the couple's sexual play. Harry, however, expresses concern about his arm (or lack of one), but Marie reassures him of its erotic value:

"Listen, you don't mind the arm? Don't it make you feel funny?"

"You're silly. I like it. Any that's you I like. Go on. I like it, true."

"It's like a flipper on a loggerhead. . . . Listen, be quiet, we'll wake the girls. "

"They don't know what I've got. They won't never know what I've got. Ah, Harry. That's it. Ah, you honey. . . . Go ahead. Go ahead now. Put the stump there. Hold it there. Hold it. Hold it now. Hold it."

"We're making too much noise."

"We're whispering." (113-14)

During this exchange, Harry does not seem to be the tough-talking macho man, nonchalant about his missing arm. In fact, he behaves rather like a shy virgin, nervous and anxious about the sexual exchange. Marie, on the other hand, knows what she wants and is determined to get it. She is much like Renata in *Across the River and into the Trees* in the sense that her lover's mangled arm excites her and she demands that he use his it to touch her as they make love.

According to Spilka, Harry and Marie succeed where Hemingway's other couples fail. He writes, "Harry and Marie are the only successfully androgynous lovers in Hemingway's fiction. She admires and emulates his masculine toughness; he admires and almost covets her bleached blonde hair. In the novel's closing soliloquy, she describes that bleaching and their common excited response to it as the defining episode in their marriage" (244). In the manner of a true hair fetishist, Hemingway's "only successful androgynous lovers" have a marriage in which its strength is based on fetishized hair.

The most stunning portrayal of androgyny and gender inversion in Hemingway's fiction is seen, however, in *The Garden of Eden*, in which a seemingly normal couple undergoes a life changing and ultimately devastating transformation. In this particular novel wartime injuries do not play a substantial part in the dynamics of the couple's relationship, as they do in Hemingway's other novels, but it nevertheless alludes to the male protagonist's military service, making it subject to the same criticism that I apply to other novels where war occupies a central role, like in *A Farewell to Arms*.

One should note at the outset that the edition of *The Garden of Eden* that Scribner's posthumously published differs radically from Hemingway's original manuscript, and the resulting novel is a bowdlerized version of the original. The original ending is the opposite of Scribner's ending, and many events that would be pertinent to this discussion are omitted.¹ This being said, the text to which I will refer is the heavily edited Scribner's version, as the original manuscript of *The Garden of Eden* is unavailable to the public.

The Garden of Eden centers around a newlywed couple, David and Catherine Bourne, who fall in love with the same woman and undergo Hemingway's most explicit androgynous transformations. As is the case with Hemingway's other androgynous couples where the woman has androgynous fantasies, Catherine initiates the gender inversion and later introduces a third party, Marita, into the relationship. According to Comley and Scholes, "Catherine Bourne is a girl who transcends submissive girlhood through her desire for a metamorphosis of gender that will enable her to play a male role both in bed and in her aggressive

pursuit of Marita, who enters the text as an interesting lesbian only to metamorphose into a submissive daughter-lover, like Renata of *Across the River and into the Trees*" (57). Unlike the other novels that feature androgynous couples, however, *The Garden of Eden* only briefly mentions David's military career, he is not noticeably injured or maimed, and the gender inversion that ensues is much more graphic. There are only three places in the novel where David's military service is mentioned. The first is in the mysterious figure of Colonel Boyle, who somehow knows David and urges Catherine on in her androgynous quest. The other references concern the second book that David wrote, which is about his military duty of piloting aircraft, and David's statement elsewhere that whiskey "is good for me. We drank it at the mess like wine in the war" (167). These brief references contrast with Hemingway's other novels where the heroes' service on the battlefield forms a substantial portion of the plot.

The novel wastes no time establishing Catherine as a phallic woman and the couple as androgynous. Three pages into Chapter One, the couple is described as such:

They sat there in their striped fishermen's shirts and the shorts they had bought in the store that sold marine supplies, and they were very tan and their hair was streaked and faded by the sun and the sea. Most people thought they were brother and sister until they said they were married. Some did not believe that they were married and that pleased the girl very much. (6)

This description is one of androgyny, in the sense that both husband and wife are clothed the same, wearing fishermen's shirts, and they look so much alike that

people automatically assume they are siblings rather than spouses. Catherine's pleasure in being mistaken for David's sister prefigures her dive into total androgyny. Later on in Chapter One, the experiment in androgyny begins in earnest.

As they lie in bed, Catherine asks David for reassurance of his love, since she is "going to be changed." The next day, she arrives at their hotel sporting a new look: "Her hair was cropped as short as a boy's. It was a cut with no compromises." Then Catherine informs David that this was the surprise she was alluding to the previous night. She says, "You see, that's the surprise. I'm a girl. But now I'm a boy too and I can do anything and anything and anything." David then replies, "Sit here by me. What do you want, brother" (15). These passages are reminiscent of *The Sun Also Rises* and *Across the River and into the Trees*, in that Hemingway describes Catherine's hairstyle as being boy-like, which is the same way that he describes Brett Ashley's hair. There is also a bit of an incestuous fantasy at work, with Catherine being a "brother" instead of a "sister," as is the case with Renata and her fantasy of being Cantwell's daughter-lover.

However, these similarities end here, because from this point on, the novel progresses to a level unattained by Hemingway's previous novels. Catherine informs David that her hair was cut by the same person who cut David's hair, and that she specifically asked for the exact same hair cut as David's. That night, Catherine ardently begins her transformation, assuming a male persona in bed:

He had shut his eyes and he could feel the long light weight of her on him and her breasts pressing against him and her lips on his. He lay there and felt something lower and he helped with his hands and then lay back in the dark and did not think at

all and only felt the weight and strangeness inside and she said, "Now you can't tell who is who can you?" "No." "You are changing," she said. "Oh you are. You are. Yes you are and you're my girl Catherine. . . ." "You're Catherine." "No. I'm Peter. You're my wonderful Catherine. . . . You were so good to change." (17)

In this passage, Catherine decides to become "Peter," and she "transforms" David into a woman, possibly herself since she calls him "Catherine," thus symbolically castrating and feminizing David. A form of homoeroticism is also present, when, mechanics aside, Catherine penetrates David. With this act, sexual and gender roles are reversed, with Catherine acting as a man and David assuming the conventional female role.

After this exchange, David accepts Catherine's change and acquiesces to her odd tastes in sexual play, allowing her to continue her fantasy when she begs to play the part of a boy and make David a girl:

"All right." He kissed her and held her to him.
 "Nobody can tell which way I am but us. I'll only be a boy at night and won't embarrass you. Don't worry about it please."
 "All right, boy."
 "Now you change. Please. Don't make me change you. Must I?
 All right I will. You're changed now. . . . You're my sweet my lovely Catherine. You're my girl my dearest only girl. . . . I have a wonderful surprise for myself for tomorrow. I'm going to the Prado in the morning and see all the pictures as a boy."
 "I give up," David said. (56)

After this, it becomes Catherine's mission to bleach her hair until it is white and cut it in increasingly masculine styles, while achieving an androgynous look by doing the *exact* thing to David. First, she cuts her hair and bleaches it as fair as "the bark of a young birch tree." Then she turns to the hairdresser, who is about to begin cutting David's hair, and says, "Please make it the same as mine."

Then, after his hair is cut, the hairdresser and Catherine team up to complete

David's transformation:

"Aren't you going to let him lighten it?"

"No. We've had enough miracles for one day."

"Just a little?"

"No."

David looked at Catherine and then at his own face in the mirror.

His was as brown as hers and it was her haircut.

"You really want it that much?"

"Yes I do, David. Truly. Just try it a little bit. Please."

He looked once more in the mirror and walked over then and sat down. The coiffeur looked at Catherine.

"Go ahead and do it," she said. (81-82)

Thus, David somewhat willingly allows himself to become the androgynous double of his wife.

Not content with mere androgyny and gender inversion, however, Hemingway further complicates things by combining traditional and untraditional sexual practices. As if Catherine and David's relationship were not complicated enough, a girl named Marita introduces an entirely new dimension by becoming a lover to both Catherine *and* David. David, who assumes a female position when he is with Catherine, who is desperately trying to be a man, is also having a sexual relationship with the woman who is his wife's lesbian lover. Once he regains his masculine identity by having "normal" sex with Marita, David then begins to renounce his acceptance of Catherine's androgynous plan. During a scene where Catherine is pleading with David to get his hair cut with her, David flatly rejects the idea and realizes the ramifications of their gender-bending experiment:

"Wouldn't you please come? You did it before and it wasn't bad for anybody."

"No, Devil. I did once but that was just once. Like getting tattooed or something. Don't ask me to."

"It doesn't mean anything except to me. I want us to be just the same."

"We can't be the same."

"Yes we could if you'd let us."

"I really don't want to do it."

"I wish you could see yourself," Catherine said.

"I'm glad I can't. . . ."

"Just look at me. That's how you are and I did it and there's nothing you can do now. That's how you look. . . . And we're damned now. I was and now you are. Look at me and see how much you like it."

David looked at her eyes that he loved and at her dark face and the incredibly flat ivory color of her hair and at how happy she looked and he began to realize what a completely stupid thing he had permitted. (178)

The androgynous world that Catherine constructed along with David's help first begins to crumble here, when David realizes the implications of their experiment. He recognizes social taboos, equating his androgynous look with being tattooed (which is often looked down upon), and he says he will no longer participate in Catherine's desires. From here on, the relationship disintegrates, culminating in Catherine's insanity and in various misfortunes for David. In the Scribner's version of *The Garden of Eden*, Marita and David continue on in a happy and loving relationship, untroubled by Catherine's androgynous impulses.

In the original *The Garden of Eden* manuscript, however, such a neat and clean ending is not present, because Hemingway endows his characters with even more gender confusion. Marita eventually decides to try out an androgynous look just as Catherine did, leading David to openly exhibit

homosexual desires. According to Debra Moddlemog's reading of the manuscript,

Marita cuts her short without David's knowledge, hoping to make herself look like an African girl but looking like instead like an African boy. David is openly pleased with the outcome. . . . At their hotel, David finally states his desire, claiming that he wants to make the change and telling Marita, after they make love, that she didn't have to turn back into a girl so soon. (81-82)

Such discrepancies between the novel and the original manuscript help to explain why *The Garden of Eden* does not fit the androgynous-fetishist mold as well as Hemingway's other novels.

The Short Stories

Although the most profound examples of Hemingway's characters with non-traditional gender identities exist in his novels, such characters also populate several of the short stories. Among these stories are "Soldier's Home," in which a soldier finds it hard to readjust to civilian society, "Mr. And Mrs. Elliot," a story about a rather dysfunctional marriage, "The Sea Change," where a woman's bisexuality changes her boyfriend's sense of his own masculinity, and "A Simple Enquiry," wherein an Army major tests the waters of a possible homosexual encounter. In these four stories, Hemingway continues the themes of gender transformations and inverted masculinity.

"Soldier's Home" treats the theme of war's effect on sexuality in a different way than is seen in the novels, although Hemingway still pays special attention the short hair of phallic women. Instead of sending Harold Krebs, the story's

protagonist, running into the arms of a phallic woman, his wartime experience renders him incapable of normally interacting with the girls back home or in typical social settings. He describes his experience as a soldier as being “badly, sickeningly frightened all the time” and says that he just “wanted his life to go smoothly” (146; 153). Girls do not fit into this equation, however:

There were so many good-looking young girls. *Most of them had their hair cut short.* When he went away only little girls wore their hair like that or girls who were fast. . . . He liked to look at them from the front porch as they walked on the other side of the street. . . . *He liked their bobbed hair and the way they walked.* When he was in town their appeal to him was not very strong. . . . They were too complicated. . . . Besides, he did not really need a girl. The army had taught him that. It was all right to pose as though you had to have a girl. Nearly everybody did that. But it wasn't true. You did not need a girl. (147)

In Krebs' case, war has emasculated him to such an extent that not even the phallic girls can tempt him. Instead, he only looks at them from afar, because “the world they were in was not the world he was in” (148).

Whereas Hemingway's other war-torn heroes find comfort in the arms of women, even if they are phallic women, Krebs withdraws from the world. When his mother pressures him about finding gainful employment, saying, “God has some work for everyone to do. There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom,” Krebs indicates his withdrawal from society by replying, “I'm not in His Kingdom” (151). He says that his experience of being so badly frightened all the time during the war was the “way he lost everything,” with “everything” here implying his ability to interact with society and with females in particular (146). Krebs is much worse off than those actually injured during the war. Instead of physically

losing part of his masculine ability, such as the castrating wound Jake Barnes suffers, Krebs loses the full control of his mental faculty, now seeing himself as withdrawn from the normal world and without the passion to remedy his situation.

In “Mr. and Mrs. Elliot,” Mr. Elliot is completely acquiescent in his wife’s lesbian affair with her best friend. Himself a fetishist (he is sexually excited by the very *sight* of other people’s shoes while on his honeymoon), Elliot is content to carry on in his sexless marriage, writing poetry while being cuckolded by another woman. The ending lines of the story sum up the marital situation as thus:

Mr. Elliot had taken to drinking white wine and lived apart in his own room. . . . Mrs. Elliot and the girl friend now slept together in the big medieval bed. They had many a good cry together. In the evening they all sat at dinner together in the garden . . . and Elliot drank white wine and Mrs. Elliot and the girl friend made conversation and they were all quite happy. (164)

According to this passage, Mr. Elliot does not care that his wife’s decision to sleep with her girlfriend instead of her husband compromises his masculine identity. In fact, he is happy with the situation. Like Krebs, he withdraws from his societal roles—his roles as a man and a husband.

“The Sea Change” is another short story where a woman leaves her male lover for woman. Here, the fluidity of sexual orientation is exposed when a woman takes temporary leave of her boyfriend or husband in order to pursue a lesbian relationship. Although the boyfriend does resist his girlfriend’s lesbian desires, he eventually decides to give her his permission. “Go on,” he tells her, and then he says, “And when you come back tell me all about it” (400). His

acceptance of his girlfriend's bisexuality and his desire to vicariously experience lesbianism change him, emotionally and physically. The story describes this transformation as being distinctly physical, as when the narrator notes that, "His voice sounded very strange. He did not recognize it," and "He was not the same-looking man as he had been before he told her to go" (400-01). These statements imply that the man is transformed somehow merely by the act of allowing a lesbian relationship to take place, and perhaps that transformation is the result of his lost masculine identity.

The next story explores a variation of the masculine identity theme.

"A Simple Enquiry" juxtaposes masculinity and repressed homosexuality in a military setting. Here, an army major quizzes his servant, Pinin, about his sexual orientation, asking Pinin if he is "corrupt" and whether or not he has homosexual desires. When the major tells Pinin, "Don't be afraid. I won't touch you," it becomes apparent that the purpose of the major's enquiry was to attempt to begin a homosexual romance with Pinin (329).

These four stories have two common features. Male relationships with women have become problematic and heterosexual desires has been thwarted, rechanneled, or replaced by homosexual desire.

In these stories, Hemingway makes the point that war is not necessarily the only precipitator of gender inversion or alternative sexuality. However, half of these stories *do* involve military men, which further serves to underscore the role war plays in the psyches of men.

4

A Case of Art Imitating Life, or the Reverse?

"A more weird combination of quivering sensitiveness and preoccupation with violence surely never walked the earth."

— Hemingway's editor at the *Toronto Star*

For Hemingway, fetishism and androgyny do not solely exist in his imagination and fiction. Ever since his childhood twinning with Marcelline, Hemingway actually lived what he wrote. In fact, his fiction was based on his life experiences. The love affairs presented in *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* hearken back to Hemingway's wartime love affair with a Red Cross nurse named Agnes von Kurowsky. Also, just as Hemingway's soldiers are wounded and maimed, Hemingway himself sustained relatively serious injuries during World War I. Selkirk writes,

Hemingway clearly suffered from the delayed effects of combat stress. He could only sleep with a night light on in the room [cf. Jake Barnes, who must sleep with a night light] and then only if he had plenty of alcohol in his system. Much later, he confessed to how he felt during and after the war: 'I was hurt bad all the way through and I was really spooked at the end.' (44)

In addition to incorporating his wartime experiences into his fiction, Hemingway also included bits and pieces from his personal life. Hemingway loved safaris, fishing, boxing, bullfighting, espionage, and other assorted "manly" pastimes, which he chronicled in his stories and novels. At least a few people were suspicious of Hemingway's overt displays of masculinity, however. Scott

Fitzgerald's wife, Zelda, was one of these people who voiced her thoughts on the subject:

"[Scott] Fitzgerald admired Hemingway's athletic physique, his interest in sports, and the way he could swill whiskey without losing control. Yet Scott's wife failed to share her husband's growing hero worship. Zelda called Hemingway 'bogus, as phony as a rubber check, a materialistic mystic,' and 'a pansy with hair on his chest.' No one, she insisted, could be as male as all that. Even Hemingway's writing about Spain she denounced as nothing more than 'Bullfighting, bullslinging, and bullshit.' " (86)

Gertrude Stein, a onetime friend and mentor of Hemingway, also had her doubts about Hemingway's masculine projections. In *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Stein addresses the differences between Hemingway's life and image. She writes,

But what a book, they both agreed, would be the real story of Hemingway, not those he writes but the confessions of the real Ernest Hemingway. *It would be for another audience than the audience Hemingway now has but it would be very wonderful. . . .* But what a story that of the real Hem, and one he should tell himself but alas he never will. *After all, as he himself once murmured, there is the career, the career.* (my italics, 204)

In this passage, Stein says that Hemingway's real life would be a fabulous story not fit for popular mass consumption, with the possible implication that Hemingway's own androgynous tendencies would make for interesting reading material.

Hemingway also incorporated aspects of his romantic life into his literature. As I mentioned before, Hemingway's first love, Agnes von Kurowsky, found her way into several of his novels, and the androgyny present in his fiction has its apparent root in Hemingway's life. Pauline Pfeiffer, Hemingway's second wife,

sported a short, masculine haircut that was quite similar to Ernest's. Two of Hemingway's other wives, Hadley and Mary Hemingway, also decided to sport a masculine hairstyle at one time or another.



Figure 4

In this picture, the similarity between Pauline and Ernest's hairstyles is quite apparent. Although Hemingway began writing about androgynous couples before marrying Pauline, his propensity toward androgynous women in "real life" is evident.

In addition to having a penchant for androgynous-looking wives, Hemingway also displayed rather unusual ideas concerning sexuality. Mary Welsh Hemingway chronicled some of these escapades in her memoir of her relationship with Ernest, *How It Was*. According to this work, Hemingway often joked about his own sexual games, which largely consisted of gender inversion and role-playing. In the following passage, Welsh-Hemingway details an imaginary exchange that gives insight into Hemingway's thoughts:

Papa clowning an interview before lunch with an imaginary reporter from an imaginary magazine, "Recondite."

Reporter: "Mr. Hemingway, is it true that your wife is a lesbian?"

Papa: "Of course not. Mrs. Hemingway is a boy."

Reporter: "What are your favorite sports, sir?"

Papa: "Shooting, fishing, reading, and sodomy."

Reporter: "Does Mrs. Hemingway participate in these sports?"

Papa: "She participates in all of them."

Reporter: "Sir, can you compare fishing, shooting and cricket, perhaps with the other sports you practice?"

Papa: "Young man, you must distinguish between the diurnal and the nocturnal sports. In this latter category sodomy is definitely superior to fishing." (368-69)

Although this "interview" is completely fictitious, Hemingway vocalizes ideas that eventually resurface in *The Garden of Eden*. Hemingway calls his wife a "boy" and jokes that they enjoy participating in the "sport" of sodomy. This is obviously the same sort of homoerotic gender inversion that fuels the plot of *The Garden of Eden* and is present, to a lesser extent, in the other novels.

In another passage from *How It Was*, Hemingway writes a section of Mary's diary for her, expressing the same ideas as in the "interview," but this time the similarities between the "real-life" Hemingway and *The Garden of Eden* are undeniable:

On Sunday, December 20, Ernest wrote the diary entry for me, a far departure from my recordings: ". . . Mary is an espece (sort of) prince of devils. . . . She has always wanted to be a boy without ever losing any femininity. If you should become confused on this you should retire. She loves me to be her girls, which I love to be, not being absolutely stupid. . . . In return she makes me awards and at night we do every sort of thing which pleases her and which pleases me. . . . Mary has never had one lesbian impulse but has always wanted to be a boy. Since I have never cared for any man and dislike any tactile contact with men except the normal Spanish abrazo or embrace which precedes a departure or welcomes a return from a voyage or a more or less dangerous mission or attack, I loved that feeling of the embrace of Mary which came to me as something quite new and outside all tribal law. On the night of December 19th we worked out these things and I have never been happier. EH 20/12/53." (369-70)

First, Hemingway calls Mary a "prince of devils," which is important in two ways.

Here, Mary is called a *prince*, not a princess, thus endowing her with a masculine

identity. Furthermore, "devil" is the nickname that David Bourne calls Catherine once she has begun her gender-altering program. Second, Hemingway says that Mary wants to be a boy without losing her femininity, which establishes her as a phallic woman. However, this goes further when Hemingway writes that Mary wants to be a boy and that he pretends to be her "girls," implying that Hemingway played multiple female roles when with Mary. This is the same sort of homoerotic gender inversion seen in *The Garden of Eden*, but without the presence of a bisexual third party.

Then, Hemingway writes that he has "never cared for any man and dislike[s] any tactile contact with men." However, in his sexual play, he makes love to a boy/man in the form of his wife. Unable, for whatever reason, to express his feelings toward men, Hemingway transfers a masculine persona onto Mary, who is very willing to play a masculine part, and works out his various personal issues in this manner. This can be construed as a similar kind of buffered masculinity that the Heroes crave in their phallic women, further indicating a parallel between Hemingway's life and literature.

5

The *Machismo* Façade: Why is it Necessary?

Various defined as courage, “grace under pressure,” and other valorous qualities associated with paramount masculinity, *machismo* is the term critics applied to Hemingway’s heroes. On the surface of things, this seems to be an apt description of the male characters that populate Hemingway’s fiction: bullfighters, soldiers, and sportsmen abound. Although it has been established that Hemingway and his heroes tend to gravitate toward phallic women and androgyny as a result of war, this does not explain the emergence of this ultra-masculine *machismo* façade. After all, I contend that these men are not battle-hardened warriors. Rather, they are traumatized by their experiences and seek refuge in the arms of phallic women, which is hardly a picture of preeminent masculinity.

This view of Hemingway is a product of modern thought. Looking back on Hemingway’s fiction with knowledge of modern critical theory, I am able to make assertions that Hemingway and the early critics could not. When Hemingway was writing these novels, he was still somewhat caught up in the Victorian constraints with which he was raised. Therefore, although Hemingway wrote about weakened soldiers and strong phallic women, he was still invested with the Victorian mindset that men are to be strong and the heads of their households. This is where the masculine posturing of *machismo* enters the picture.

It is safe to assume that the general public of the 1920s and 30s were not ready for mainstream androgynous and fetishistic behavior, especially coming from one of “America’s greatest authors.” Perhaps, then, people were willing to overlook the examples of fetishistic androgyny in Hemingway’s works, focusing instead on the brave soldiers like Robert Jordan and bullfighters like Pedro Romero in *The Sun Also Rises* and Hemingway’s macho, boxing-and-safari-filled life. Moreover, the *machismo* image made sense financially, with readers buying more books to follow the exploits of Hemingway’s macho characters. The depth to which gender inversion and androgyny runs in Hemingway’s works was basically ignored, then, until cultural awareness of gender as a construction made it possible to reexamine these “manly” narratives. *The Garden of Eden*’s explicit descriptions of gender switching and androgyny are just too explicit to be ignored. This forces readers and critics to consider the repercussions, and thus the *machismo* image is coming to be seen more as a myth than a reality.

What exactly is the point, then, of this discussion? To sum it all up, the androgyny and gender inversion in Hemingway’s fiction changes the way he is seen in the world of literature. A goodly part of Hemingway’s fame lies in the *machismo* myth—his legendary exploits as an avid sportsman and the writer of preeminently masculine literature. But the *machismo* myth is just that—a myth. Instead of winner-take-all masculinity, Hemingway’s fiction is filled with winners who take nothing (to recall his third volume of stories), who rely on *women* to guide them through their troubles. In this view of Hemingway’s works, as far as

gender is concerned, men tend to exhibit the qualities of women, women men, and there is no such thing as a definite sexual orientation.

However, due to the time period in which Hemingway wrote these works, these gender inconsistencies are masked by Victorian restraints, and the *machismo* myth is born. Gruff masculinity and a seemingly misogynistic attitude toward women attempt to disguise the sexual idiosyncrasies of Hemingway's characters, rendering them palatable to the audience of the day. More importantly, Hemingway's literature is a reflection of his own life. Hemingway did not simply write about the unusual ways in which war can change a person. He lived them and was a living, breathing example of troubled manhood.

The earlier mentioned Freudian and Lacanian theories of repression and fulfillment can easily explain the appearance of gender ambiguity and fetishism in Hemingway's literature: he was simply a man, perverted in childhood by his strange parents and further traumatized in war, who expressed his idiosyncrasies through his literature and, occasionally, his private life.

The Hemingway Hero is, then, a myth, a façade Hemingway erected to conceal his deep-seated gender ambivalence and fetishistic tendencies that likely resulted from early-childhood traumas and post-war discord. As much as he tried, however, Hemingway failed to conceal these less-than-manly traits. The anti-heroic aspects of the Hemingway Hero peek through the façade of masculine posturing time and again, each revealing a tortured soul who is battling to come to grips with his/her secret and forbidden desires.

Pictures

Figure 1

Selkirk, Errol. *Hemingway for Beginners*. p.15.

Figure 2

Spilka, Mark. *Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny*. p. 292.

Figure 3

Eby, Carl. *Hemingway's Fetishism*. p. 91.

Figure 4

Eby, Carl. *Hemingway's Fetishism*. p. 163.

Endnotes

¹ According to sources such as Eby and Modellmog, the original manuscript was heavily edited for publication, with several of the ending chapters omitted altogether. In these chapters, Marita follows Catherine's descent into androgyny and madness.

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