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HEMINGWAY ON MARRIAGE

WOMEN AND MARRIAGE
IN
HEMINGWAY'S MARRIAGE STORIES

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PREFACE

Before me floats an image, man or shade,
Shade more than man, more image than a shade.

Yeats, "Byzantium"

Hemingway's reputation, both as a man and as an artist, reaches extremes. Compared favorably to Shakespeare by John O'Hara,¹ he has also been called the "dumb ox" of literature,² the creator of simple-minded adventure stories for males in which success depends on the size and reliability of the penis.³ In an age proud of its sexual equality, Hemingway looks hopelessly out-of-date. Naively, he presents men as heroes; stupidly, he presents women as the servitors of these men; and obdurately, he presents love as the nugatory coupling of these men and women who barely pass muster as homo sapiens. So goes the popular and occasionally literary view of Hemingway. The Hemingway of The Old Man and the Sea will last for high school kids and respecters of the Nobel Prize,⁴ and the Hemingway of The Sun Also Rises and A Farewell to Arms will remain on university English courses, but the Hemingway to follow in the wake of Germaine Greer and Doris Lessing must be "trepanned" from a fifty-year old reputation as a male chauvinist. The best place to refine Hemingway's image as a writer sensitive to women and love is the short stories,

and particularly those stories commonly known as the Marriage Group.⁵

Hemingway talks explicitly about love in Death in the Afternoon. That he is consciously posing is certain; still, several attitudes which are covert in his fiction are vividly displayed in this book, which is as much about love as death. Concerning stories about unnatural sexuality, he says:

They lack drama as do all tales of abnormality since no one can predict what will happen in the abnormal while all tales of the abnormal end much the same.⁶

This suspicion of the abnormal throws a shadow on Hemingway's own sexuality. His unwillingness to acknowledge any sexual deviation within himself is evident in those belligerent moods provoked by such erstwhile friends as Max Eastman, Gertrude Stein, and Faulkner whenever they suggested the possibility of latent abnormality in his personality. The Hemingway of biography, the man born in Oak Park, Illinois, who married four times and fathered three sons, was an inveterate apologist:

Especially do all stories of monogamy end in death, and your man who is monogamous while he often lives most happily, dies in the most lonely fashion. . . . If two people love each other there can be no happy end to it.⁷

When Hemingway imagines the loneliest death, except for suicide, it is outliving the one you love. This dread, which

recalls the child's wish to die before his parents, hardly fits the Hemingway image from which we do expect something like this:

Even though a woman be a whore, yet if she be a good whore a man thinks well of her at the time and sometimes after.⁸

This is the poseur speaking, the familiar hero re-created so often by Hemingway as an image of himself. Shadow, man, image. There is not one real Hemingway, unless it be he who comprises these several created selves.

Hemingway desperately needed women: his four marriages attest to that need. The Hemingway hero, by contrast, talks hard and crusty, and uses women in a depersonalized fashion to satisfy his own cravings. Surliness toward the opposite sex is a seasonal occurrence with nearly every one. Hemingway is different from the enraged husband or the outraged wife in being able to develop a fiction from this sometime attitude. Hatred and fear of women there certainly is, but they are contained in the comprehensive category of feelings about women, which also contains love, dependency, suspicion, admiration, guilt, and allegiance. Dead before the radical re-thinking of sexual identities of the 60s, but alive during the earlier radical re-thinking of the 20s, he did depict "emancipated" women. To us these women are unsatisfactory because their adequacy as women is assessed in a system of values germinated, husbanded, and fenced round

by men. It's an old and boring and true argument that a man is no better than the times. Hemingway occasionally tried and sometimes succeeded in rendering a woman who was both independent and intelligent.

What I intend in this thesis, instead of an exaggerated claim about Hemingway's having been the secret champion of Women's Liberation all along, is an examination of his conscious, and not-so conscious, attitudes toward women and marriage. This topic has been commented on by all Hemingway critics, but no one to my knowledge has concentrated on those stories whose meaning is found within the metaphor of marriage.

Since it is Hemingway's feelings about sexual relations as they appear in his fiction that is the thesis topic, I cannot proceed without being certain that what he writes is sincere. My Introduction, therefore, is a review of recent critics who endorse the subjectivity of his writing. Chapter I is a discussion of the Hemingway men and women, especially those women who are cast as types. The composition of these men and women into marriages and affairs is the subject of Chapter II. Marriage, its significance and phenomenological appearance as disclosed in the Marriage Group, is the topic of the long Chapter III. The Conclusion is a brief look at Hemingway's alternative to women and marriage.

My critical approach is eclectic and doesn't warrant a label, but the source of my critical approach in this thesis can be designated: Leslie Fiedler's Freudian reading of American literature in Love and Death in the American Novel is both sound and rewarding,⁹ and has influenced the development of my thinking on Hemingway.

¹Carlos Baker, Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story (New York, 1969), p. 486.

²Wyndham Lewis, "The Dumb Ox in Love and War", in Twentieth Century Interpretations of "A Farewell to Arms" (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970), pp. 72-90.

³See critical receptions of Men Without Women and Across the River and Into the Trees in Baker, p. 187 and p. 486, respectively.

⁴See Carlos Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist (Princeton, New Jersey, 1972), p. 337, for Hemingway's reaction to "that Swedish thing". In subsequent footnotes this critical study by Baker will be referred to as Hemingway, the biography as Ernest Hemingway.

⁵For use of the rubric "marriage group" or "marriage stories" see Baker, Hemingway, pp. 135-39, and Joseph DeFalco, The Hero in Hemingway's Short Stories (Pittsburg, Pa., 1963), pp. 153-84.

⁶(New York, 1960), p. 180.

⁷p. 122.

⁸p. 103.

⁹(New York, 1966).

INTRODUCTION

He saw deeper; it was not that she hated men, . . . but that her maneuvers were simply a part of her armory, mere instruments to a greater end. He saw deeper still: that her supposed present happiness was another lie. In her central being she suffered still, in the same old way; and that was the mystery she was truly and finally afraid he might discover.

John Fowles, The French Lieutenant's Woman

Philip Young's book, issued in 1952 as Hemingway and re-issued in 1966 as Hemingway: A Reconsideration, inaugurated a new era in Hemingway criticism. Earlier, critics had gone to the writings expecting the wrong things. Robert Penn Warren wished for more dramatization:

The monotony and self-imitation, into which Hemingway's work sometimes falls, are again an effect of a failure in dramatization. Hemingway, apparently, can dramatize his "point" in only one basic situation and with only one set of characters. He has . . . only two key characters, with certain variations from them by way of contrast or counterpoint.¹

Edmund Wilson's better-known remarks about Frederick and Catherine describe the same weakness of dramatization:

We see that they are not in themselves convincing as human personalities. And we are confronted with the paradox that Hemingway, who possesses so remarkable a mimetic gift in getting the tone of social and national types and in making his people talk appropriately, has not shown any very solid sense of character, or, indeed, any real interest in it. The people in his short stories are satis-

factory because he has only to hit them off: the point of the story does not lie in personalities, but in the emotion to which a situation gives rise. This is true even in The Sun Also Rises, where the characters are sketched with wonderful cleverness. But in A Farewell to Arms, as soon as we are brought into real intimacy with the lovers, as soon as the author is obliged to see them through a searching personal experience, we find merely an idealized relationship, the abstractions of a lyric emotion.²

Wilson himself provides the clues to a more satisfactory reading of Hemingway: meager interest in character; the focus on a situation's emotional context; idealization as a result of the author's biased point-of-view; and vivid depiction of secondary characters. Both critics observe correctly the facts of the case, but they are judging by the wrong codex.

Realistic female characters who behave like the women we meet on the street are not present in Hemingway.³ He had little negative capability,⁴ and wasn't able to imaginatively create women who didn't appear as either the wish-fulfillment or else the scourge of their author. Hardly the disinterested artist paring his nails, he is more the team coach rooting to see his boys wallop the other side. Like that urbanely confident narrator of Tom Jones who knows that young Master Tom will end safely in the arms of Sophia, Hemingway plots that young Nick will end in the arms . . . well, the arms of a whore, and even that only temporarily.

While he markedly controls his characters, he does know, along with Henry James, that "relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so."⁵ Hemingway comes closest to attaining this aesthetic in his short stories, which are undoubtedly his finest achievements in fiction. Even the best of his longer works, The Sun Also Rises, is structured somewhat like In Our Time: a series of blocked scenes using repetitive characters, wherein action establishes character rather than interacts with it. This variant approach to character presentation is also remarked by Baker: "The inclination is to accept them for what they do more than for what they are. They are the men and women of action, the meaning of whose lives must be sought in the kind of actions in which they are involved."⁶

"Realism" in Hemingway has less to do with fidelity to an actuality that is publicly verifiable than with fidelity to his own inner experience. Once asked who his analyst was, he replied: "Portable Corona No. 3."⁷ His fictions are subjective records of pain and the resistance to that pain. From the setting down of this inner turmoil he derives a cathartic effect, as evidenced in the adult Nick's thoughts about his father's suicide:

If he wrote it he could get rid of it. He had gotten rid of many things by writing them. But it was still too early for that.⁸

Although Hemingway would heartily subscribe to Eliot's dictum that "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion," he rarely fulfilled the other half of that sentence, which reads: "[Poetry] is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality."⁹ Closer to Hemingway's raison d'être for writing is Earl Rovit's statement:

... that Hemingway's fiction is consistently concerned with the metaphors of his own consciousness; that his characters are intensely felt, partial projections of his own internal war: that their conflicts are less the actions of human beings in society contending with one another, than they are a delicate recording of the wracking ambiguities by which man is always on the verge of being rent asunder. Hemingway, in short, is a writer of romances; perhaps the most realistic writer of romances of all times, but a romancer nonetheless. And the value of his metaphors depends on his ability to make his poetic vision move his readers toward their own discovered truths about themselves. The point is worth retaining because it allows us to approach his fictions for what they are and not for what even he may have pretended them to be.¹⁰

Hemingway created one great fictional character, and that is the "Ernest Hemingway" who confronts us in everything he wrote. Why it is so important to establish the subjectivity of his writing is to quash two erroneous notions: (1) that he is a churlish male who enjoyed the rights of authorial creation by purposely demeaning his

female characters; and (2) that he occasionally submitted to critical pressure by creating a sensitive portrayal of a woman. When Hemingway did bend to public opinion it was disturbingly evident. The proletarian novel To Have and Have Not developed out of his toadying to the critics of the 30s who whined for a "committed" book. Received with huzzas from the Left Bank on its appearance, it is now generally regarded as a poorly realized smuggling yarn with some "occasional" (in the eighteenth-century sense of the term) bits about Brotherhood, although I believe Harry Morgan's dying words suggest something other than the Third International:

A man. . . . One man alone ain't got. No man
alone now. . . . No matter how a man alone
ain't got no bloody fucking chance.¹¹

Since he has a wife, several children, and a faithful shipmate, Harry Morgan is the least "alone" of any Hemingway hero.

Several critics, namely, Young, Rovit, and Benson,¹² have treated Hemingway's writings "for what they are," but their attention has been elsewhere than on the Marriage Group, and it is in these eight short stories that Hemingway most dramatically presents love, marriage, and women, what Zorba the Greek called "the full catastrophe."¹³

NOTES

¹"Ernest Hemingway," in Selected Essays (New York, 1951 [originally published in 1947]), p. 105.

²"Hemingway: The Gauge of Morale," in The Wound and the Bow (New York, 1965 [originally published in 1947]), p. 180.

³Hemingway's limited imagination, though certainly not the sole condition, did restrict the range of his work, and it remains true that "His best women characters . . . are those who most nearly approximate the men." Warren, p. 105.

⁴Though he created characters who had great savvy about other people, in his personal life Hemingway was anything but the shrewd judge of character his heroes are. As an article of faith he was suspicious of everybody, especially of younger males who might threaten his position as writer and sportsman. But if ever he waived suspicion, then he became the magnanimous "Papa." An illustration of this behavior pattern is Philip Young's Preface, which reads like a Miracle Play with Hemingway cast as the reluctant saint wooed to Godhead by the good angel, who is the benign critic Young.

⁵Preface to Roderick Hudson, in The Art of the Novel, ed. R. P. Blackmur (New York, 1962), p. 5.

⁶Hemingway, p. 114.

⁷Young, p. 165.

⁸"Fathers and Sons," in The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 491. Page references to the short stories, hereinafter included in the text, are to this edition.

⁹"Tradition and the Individual Talent," in Selected Essays: 1917-1932 (London, 1932), p. 21.

¹⁰Ernest Hemingway (New York, 1973), p. 77.

¹¹(New York, 1965), p. 225. See pp. 26-7 for discussion of "alone".

¹²In addition to the works by Young and Rovit already cited, see Jackson L. Benson, "Ernest Hemingway as a Short Story Writer," in The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, ed. Jackson L. Benson (Durham, North Carolina, 1975), pp. 272-310, and by this same author, Hemingway . . . The Writer's Art of Self-Defence (Minneapolis, Minn., 1969).

¹³The eight stories are listed on p. 50.

CHAPTER I

THE BITCH, THE GODDESS, AND THE WRITER

Love is an exalted obsession; his women obsessed him, yes -- like a desire of vengeance. . . .
Condemned to coquettes or to whores. . . . A woman, a human being! She is relaxation, a voyage, an enemy.

Andre Malraux, Man's Fate

For the man who stated the last word on situational ethics -- "So far, about morals, I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after"¹ -- Hemingway is surprisingly straightlaced about sexuality. In this case there is no confusion about which of the several Hemingways is opposed to "abnormal" sexuality: all of them are. Both his reputation for being insensitive to others and the jibes about his sexual virility are owing to the frequent squibs he directed against those whom he considered outside the mainstream of sexuality. For Hemingway, one's sexuality is the immediate expression of one's self: know how and why a person performs sexually and you know the person.

One obvious conclusion to draw from Hemingway's strictness regarding the range of sexual experience and his self-advertized virility, and the one Gertrude Stein did draw, is that the real Hemingway is "yellow."² Stein's

psychological insight is reinforced by Leslie Fiedler's observation on the prevalence of impotence as a subject-matter in American literature since Hemingway's writing,³ and impotence in his fiction is the sexual manifestation of cowardice, that is, of being yellow. Discussing Jake's wound, which Hemingway attributes to "the War," Fiedler comments:

"The War" is merely a convenient tag for the failure of values and faith which converted a generation of young American writers to self-hatred, bravado, and expatriation. . . . From the time of Hemingway, impotence has been a central symbol in our fiction, a felt clue to the quality of American life, erotic and spiritual.⁴

In Hemingway, the sexual act makes audible the counterpoint of erotic and spiritual love. Never gratuitous, sexual intercourse between his protagonists becomes the referent for the quality of their relationship. Interaction between people is much easier to detect in sexual intercourse than in love. Love is an abstraction, and in addition to honor, glory, and sacrifice, it was exposed by the concrete reality of the War. A character may have either love without sex (Jake), or sex without love (Brett). If heterosexual intercourse should be the way of uniting two people, in Hemingway it usually signifies alienation. Not so much symbol as objective correlative, sex registers degree of harmony in much the same manner that the bullfight registers

degree of courage. ✓ It allows Hemingway to exploit a complex feeling without complicating the story. Whether it be remorse, futility, or bewilderment, the compositional style remains spare and uncluttered because the writer's attention is centered on one arena of activity.

In the Marriage Group sexuality has the critical importance I have just expounded. It renders visible those attitudes toward women and marriage that are the subject of this thesis. And yet in the Hemingway works that are most frequently read, different attitudes are prevalent. The significance of the Marriage Group attitudes is a function of these other attitudes; hence, woman and marriages as they appear in the bulk of Hemingway's fiction must first be examined.

Viewing the history of American fiction, Fiedler states:

Our great novelists, though experts on indignity and assault, on loneliness and terror, tend to avoid treating the passionate encounter of a man and woman, which we expect at the center of a novel. Indeed they rather shy away from permitting in their fictions the presence of any full-fledged, mature woman, giving us instead monsters of virtue or bitchery, symbols of the rejection or fear of sexuality.⁵

Hemingway is such a classic divisionist: it is the bitch, or it is the goddess.

Nick is a very young boy in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," but even this early he has made the crucial

decision to reject his mother and follow his father.

"Your mother wants you to come and see her,"
the doctor said.

"I want to go with you," Nick said (103).

His unhappiness with his mother, never articulated, does not seem to derive from her "naive refusal to face facts";⁶ rather it derives from Nick's recognition that the world is at war with the individual, and those fighting back are of the male "race." In the next story, "The End of Something," after having just disposed of the Mother, Nick now disposes of the Wife, who makes her first appearance as Marjorie.⁷ It is in the following story, a companion piece entitled "The Three-Day Blow," that Nick's friend Bill makes explicit Marjorie's role:

"If you'd have married her you would have had to marry the whole family. Remember her mother and that guy she married" (122).

Young notes that the two stories, "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" and "The End of Something," are "the beginning of a somewhat peculiar attitude toward women which the Hemingway hero is going to have when he is grown,"⁸ and two chapters later Young explains what that attitude is:

The hero's whole attitude toward women is curious. It is frequently either warlike or sentimental. He started out rejecting his mother in defense of his father, and since then the partners Hemingway drew for him, are either vicious, destructive wives like Macomber's or daydreams like Catherine, Maria, and Renata.⁹

✱

✓

A woman is never just a person. She is the ideal woman or she is the deadly woman, "the agent of completion" or "the agent of depletion."¹⁰ In her ideal state she is a reward for the hero. She does not marry the hero; rather, she is a war-bride, and as such her use is limited. The atmosphere which she inhabits is "premarital," but she "contrives to embody the image of home, the idea if not the actuality of the married state, and where [she is], whatever the outward thrusts, home is."¹¹ If her hold on the ✓ hero goes beyond the time of armistice, then Hemingway can either kill the woman, as in A Farewell to Arms, or the man, as in For Whom the Bell Tolls.

In her deadly state woman is a menace to the hero. The Mother-dreadful, just as much as an exploding mortar, threatens the hero's integrity of person. Woman and war become interchangeable. "A Way You'll Never Be" exemplifies this invagination: a physical wound of war merges with dread of the woman's power, thus eliciting fear in response to sexuality instead of to gunfire. After delineating the weapons of war -- stick bombs, helmets, rifles, intrenching tools, ammunition boxes, pistols and their shells, medical kits, gas masks and their cans, a machine and its belt of shells plus its water-cooling can -- , the hero observes the emblems of love and homelife: mass prayer books, group postcards of soldiers arranged to look like a football team,

arty drawings of rape, smutty postcards of young village girls, pictures of children, and numerous letters. These "typical papers" of sex and marriage surround the dead bodies.

Hemingway's arrest of the woman at either of these two stages -- as lovely and boyish girl or as domineering and masculine mother -- epitomizes that "profound division in the American awareness of women, arising from an impossible demand that they represent at once the ruined and redeeming virgin-bride . . . and the forgiving mother."¹² His men are only whole around the seraglio-type, a Maria or Renata; placed in the vicinity of the "bitch-heroine" or "wicked-mother,"¹³ the type most vigorously represented by Dr. Adams' wife, Brett Ashley, Margot Macomber, and Richard Gorton's wife, his men flounder.

The unequivocal success of the bitch-heroine over his hero elicits a new tactic on the part of the author: the heroines Maria and Renata are "purified mother-figures; at once completely satisfying and undemanding, they are handy oceanic reservoirs of temporary aggression and security."¹⁴ Robert Jordan contemplates Maria:

Maybe it is like a dream you have when someone you have seen in the cinema comes to your bed at night and is so kind and lovely.¹⁵

Jordan undercuts himself when he remembers that in real life "Such things don't happen."¹⁶ Being of the nature of a dream-goddess, an auto-erotic projection along the lines of Genet's Divine, Maria poses no threat. And while she is cleansed of even a whiff of intransigent corporeality during her love scenes with Jordan, her body is conveniently restored to her when it is necessary for Jordan to have an excuse for abstaining from sex before battle. Unexpectedly, Maria's earlier soreness from the Fascists' rape recurs:

"I am ashamed. . . . There is a great soreness and much pain. . . . It is that I am not good to receive thee as I wish. . . . I am ashamed."¹⁷

This declaration recalls the Biblical restrictions against sexual intercourse during menstruation; hence, their sexual restraint acquires the meaningfulness of an atavistic rite: namely, the hero's purification before battle which was meant to give him extra strength and control. Jordan's search for Old Testament parallels to himself substantiates the Biblical significance of this action. Not surprisingly, the parallel Jordan makes is to Onan, from which derives the word "onanist." Maria is the fulfillment of a masturbator's dream.

If Maria is the safely disarmed Mother, Renata is a freshly-rigged booby-trap. A young and splendidly subservient woman, free of the taint of Motherhood, Renata is taboo in an unwonted manner. The hero has missed incest

with the Mother only to find it with the "Daughter," the title Col. Cantwell so fondly bestows on Renata. Father-Daughter love provides maximum security for the mature male since he is free from having to establish his independence,¹⁸ and it has the bonus of eliminating, in a sense of "check-mating," the Mother by replacing a Queen with a Princess.¹⁹

The male is absolutely self-sufficient, for he breeds back into his own creation. Edmund Wilson's epithet for these women, "amoebic," is a direct hit.²⁰ Renata is conceived by Col. Cantwell, and Maria is split off from Jordan. This latter pair's derivative names -- he is the River Jordan, she is the Mediterranean Sea ("mare") -- emphasize their elemental unity. If earlier the threat of woman replaced the threat of war, the comfort of war now replaces the comfort of woman. Neither Maria nor Renata is self-existent, both being drawn off from the male principle of life, or in Biblical terms, created from Adam's ("Man's") rib. In the concrete terms of the related stories, they might be called spoils of war, and it is significant that both Jordan and Cantwell live as soldiers, and, finally, die as soldiers, leaving behind their female derivatives.

From Maria onwards Hemingway evaporates his women.²¹ Despite the remarkable discrepancy between the two types of women he settles down with in his fiction, the earliest and,

it may be argued, the most tenacious female type is the low-key married woman found in the short stories. As a version of the post-war "emancipated woman" she does perhaps resemble the Bitch,²² and her re-appearance might be traced in Hemingway's fiction: as Brett, she is the Bitch; as Margot Macomber, she is the Super-Bitch; and as Pilar, she is the Bitch-So-Far-Beyond-Bitch that she comes to resemble Man, and, naturally, as Man, she is a good comrade and a wonderful soldier.

Hemingway is one of the first writers to attempt to domesticate this new woman, and he might be judging his endeavor when he has the guide Robert Wilson size up the Macombers.

American women are, he thought, the hardest in the world; the hardest, the cruelest, the most predatory and the most attractive and their men have softened or gone to pieces nervously as they have hardened. Or is it that they pick men they can handle? They can't know that much at the age they marry, he thought. He was grateful he had gone through his education on American women before now because this was a very attractive one (6).

The presence of such women means that the men must radically adjust their traditional role. That is, unless the man is Nick Adams, for Nick is mythically unadjusted.²³ He is the Hemingway hero, and as such he never feels the normal commitments or accepts the current ethic. Unconcernedly ostracized, he indefatigably searches for a

code to live by, and thus emulates those figures who have achieved dignity in a world which seems designed to shame man:

The tyro is not a simple man; being in fact a very near projection of Hemingway himself, he is never able to attain the state of serene unselfconsciousness . . . that comes naturally to the tutor. What he can learn, however, is the appearance of that self-containment. He can train himself in the conventions of the appearance which is "the code."²⁴

Nick wants a restoration of the simple, traditional sex roles. His quest does not steer him into the hurly-burly of contemporary life because the roles he seeks are more mythic than real. His own parents do not harmonize with this vision of a native concord between man, woman, and their environment.

It is earlier in American fiction, in the Leatherstocking Tales, that the myth of man's oneness with the world is realized. Natty Bumppo remains on that line, which is progressively moving westward, between frontier and community where a simple "manly" ethic is appropriate. Although Nick does what "normal" males do, that is, marry, he can remain one of the men-without-women, like Natty Bumppo before him, by continuing to re-enact the ancient masculine rituals of hunting and fishing. Hemingway studiously avoids placing Nick in a domestic gestalt where his dignity, which is a product of his sexual aloofness, would appear supererogatory. Even Nick's father had a better

chance. At least he could have trounced the Indian Dick Boulton, who might be considered the descendant of Cooper's bad Indian Magua. But to see Nick employing "code" ethics while he performs the quotidian duties of homelife such as recounting the day's successes and failures to his wife -- plainly ridiculous! Culture has moved from the country to the city, and a coonskin cap is more conspicuous than a male with eye make-up.

In the novels, where the males are still heroes, and as such men-without-women, they never fail to attain some measure of dignity. They have a selfishness for personal action and individual freedom that propels them toward a worthy fate. But the men who live out their banal marriages in the short stories are ciphers who rarely act but are acted upon. They are men who are defeated but never mercifully destroyed. The dimension of mythic meaning manifest in the heroes' actions in the novels, what Baker calls "the controlling Dichtung, the symbolic underpainting which gives so remarkable a sense of depth and vitality,"²⁵ is absent from the velleities of these men. Their lives are chaste, humdrum, and unpleasantly predictable. They inhabit an alien world where there is nihil ad rem. Their willingness to keep life no matter what the cost in personal dignity is the symptom of a personal malaise, but one which has cultural overtones. Because personal dignity is held so cheaply,

they unabashedly admit its loss, much to the disgust of the code hero.

"No," said Wilson. "I'm a professional hunter. We never talk about our clients. You can be quite easy on that. It's supposed to be bad form to ask us not to talk though."

"I'm sorry," Macomber said. ". . . I didn't realize that. There are lots of things I don't know."

"Don't worry about me talking," Wilson said. "I have a living to make. You know in Africa no woman ever misses her lion and no man ever bolts."

"I bolted like a rabbit," Macomber said. Now what in hell were you going to do about a man who talked like that, Wilson wondered (7-8).

Macomber represents the modern breed of men. His loss of "ithyphallic authority" is etched into his name which suggests a heightened femininity:²⁶ "Ma-," which is self-explanatory, and "-comber," someone who combs wool, flax, or other fiber, i.e., performs a traditionally feminine job. His Christian name, Francis, might be either a man's or a woman's, unless it is seen written out.

And yet Macomber is not hopelessly unmanned. There is optimism in a story that relates how such a thorough coward can find his "cojones" simply by dropping a buffalo, but his assassination by his wife Margot gives a wrenching twist to what might otherwise be called a typical initiation story. If woman is the ultimate force of evil a man must finally overcome in order to regain his lost self-reliance, then each marriage becomes the ring for the battle of the

sexes, and in "deadly" earnest. So much depends on whether Margot intended to kill Francis. If yes, then the wife is a castrating bitch and the marriage will be fierce and aggressive. If no, then the wife is an over-protective mother and the marriage will be pathetic and impotent. Hemingway's fictionalized marriages are obviously of this second type, and the text of the story does provide evidence that Margot may be guilty of nothing more than excessive mothering: "Mrs. Macomber . . . had shot at the buffalo with the 6.5 Mannlicher as it seemed about to gore Macomber" (36).²⁷

Still, if a man is doomed either way, whether by womanly malignance or by motherly concern, then as Harry Morgan so eloquently stated: "No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody fucking chance." It's time to figure out what that "alone" means. The stock answer is that it means without comrades. Perhaps. But it also means without a woman -- even Nick Adams, the mythic bachelor, has a wife. Yet Harry has both wife and comrades. Neither of these readings can explain his lonely and bitter death. Harry Morgan dies alone because he dies without a sustaining myth. In the moment of death he has the last doubt that even Christ experienced; he dies without the assurance that, according to some code or creed, he has lived well. In war, on safari, death is real; within the hotel room and bars

where Hemingway's married men do their living and drinking the death encountered is metaphorical. That fact does not diminish the need for a code, although it may obscure that need. Since men no longer inherit a ready-made masculine code that fits all men alike, each man must find the code suitable to his individual circumstances. Defeated only so long as he ignores his contemporary plight, he may luck out like Francis Macomber and die happily in the perpetual moment of unrealized but certain victory.

NOTES

¹Death in the Afternoon, p. 4.

²Young, pp. 157-8.

³p. 346.

⁴Ibid. Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World (Greenwich, Conn., 1966), p. 281, corroborates Fiedler's thesis about the prevalence of post-war impotence:

In war, despite efforts in official quarters and on the part of certain popular writers and photographers to spread a high-flown sentimentality, a soldier's coming on leave was now simply the onrush of a male obsessed by an enforced continence that had lasted too long. Countless doctors and soldiers testified to the way in which a war of material was accompanied by a "sex disaster." A widespread impotence -- or at least its premonitory symptoms, chronic onanism and homosexuality -- was the result vouched by the statistics of a sojourn of four years in the trenches. That is how it came about that presently for the first time there was a general revolt of soldiers against war, because war, far from being an outlet for the passions, had become a kind of vast castration of Europe.

⁵p. 24. Fiedler, p. 297, is at a loss to explain this pattern: "If there is any literary antecedent for the special American use of the split heroine, any motive for it beyond the split psyche of American writers, it is probably to be found in the sonnet sequence of Shakespeare."

⁶Young, p. 33.

⁷Marjorie gets her revenge when she re-appears as the wife Margot Macomber.

⁸Pp. 33-34. For what Young means by "the Hemingway hero" see his Chapter 2, The Hero and the Code; also see Rovit, Chapter 3, Of Tyros and Tutors. Both critics

distinguish between "the Hemingway hero" or "tyro" and "the code hero" or "tutor."

⁹P. 109.

¹⁰Baker, Hemingway, p. 114.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Fiedler, p. 337.

¹³The terms are Rovit's, p. 73.

¹⁴Rovit, p. 65.

¹⁵For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York, 1958), p. 107.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷P. 341.

¹⁸Rovit, p. 77, names "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" as the story in which "the true villain, the mother has been exposed; and the separation between tyro and mother is heathily effected."

¹⁹De Rougemont, p. 118, remarks the twelfth-century shift in the game of chess, in which the newly-created Queen takes precedence over all the other pieces except the last remaining member of an original quartet of Kings; and even his suzerainty is in name only since the Queen performs all essential services, including that of protecting him. This aside is not a matter of incidental metaphor. Chess is the game Frederick insists on playing with Catherine when Catherine insists on playing with him. Two things are noteworthy. Chess is commonly regarded as a game involving an intensely antagonistic spirit, and Frederick makes his demand in what seems his peak of boredom and claustrophobia.

²⁰P. 194, n. 6.

²¹ Islands in the Stream (New York, 1972) is an exception to this generalization. It is unabashedly autobiographical, concerning a man living in the Caribbean who is the father of three sons and scouts Germans during the second World War. As the story of his own life there is less call to distort the solid reality of the women he has been involved with.

²² Hemingway is not unique in treating the newly liberated woman as a freak of nature. Fitzgerald, Anderson, and Lewis did likewise. For a general discussion of this topic from the feminine viewpoint, see Dolores Barracano Schmidt, "The Great American Bitch," College English, XXXII (May 1971), 900-905.

²³ Nick Adams fits nicely the pattern of cellular division developed from the Robert Jordan-Maria and Col. Cantwell-Renata relationships. Besides being the first man, "Adam," and thus undefiled, he is also ab-originally corrupt since Old Nick, the Devil, is part of his very nature.

²⁴ Rovit, p. 56.

²⁵ Hemingway, p. 114.

²⁶ Young, p. 70, credits the phrase "ithyphallic authority" to D. H. Lawrence.

²⁷ Margot Macomber has always been given the devil's own flogging by critics. No final solution to the question of her guilt can be reached in a story Hemingway left purposefully vague. Many minor details pointing to her innocence seem to have been ignored; these I won't list. What interests me in regards to the marriage stories is that Margot takes a browbeating from Wilson that closely parallels that received by the woman in "Hills like White Elephants" where there is no question of who is guilty and who is innocent. This narrative correspondence seems prima facie evidence that Margot is only accidentally a murderess. Lewis, pp. 88-93, also defends Margot, building his case on an analogy to the Tristan myth.

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGES LIKE WHITE ELEPHANTS

If the world of the twentieth century . . . cannot succeed in . . . married love, then it has committed suicide.

Sinclair Lewis, Cass Timberlane

In Hemingway's fiction romantic love is not an exalted obsession.¹ It is repeatedly exposed to the bright light of post-war reality.

Romantic love could no longer obtain the ingredients necessary to sustaining its myth, could no longer select means of resistance in the midst of an atmosphere charged with tempestuous and secret devotion. A pathological fear of falling in love in a simple, straightforward manner and of suffering "deceptions of the heart," formed the "climate" of the chief novels in vogue.²

"Romantic" love may be discarded, but not love. Love, in fact, is Hemingway's most persistent subject-matter.³ Marriage, sentimental or domestic love, heterosexual relations, normative or normal love -- whatever rubric assigned, Hemingway time and again placed his characters in *its context* against which they attempt to define themselves.

The Hemingway hero's search for a personal code begins with the recognition that love is an anachronism; and not just love but every traditional source of assurance has crumbled into a heap, into a "neutral monism" as

William James anticipatorily called it.⁴ The general breakdown of authority revealed in In Our Time drives Nick Adams to the recreational sanatorium of "The Big Two-Hearted River." Henry Miller could make a way of life out of insecurity; Hemingway, like T. S. Eliot, needed to shore fragments against his ruins.

God is silent. Politicians are self-serving. Women are possessive . . . but they are also sexually desirable. How do you reconcile pleasure and complication? To his credit, Hemingway tried many times. The scenario of Hemingway's fictional marriage runs like this. A woman is both a good sport and a good lay until the inevitable complication of boredom and possessiveness begins. Then the affair must terminate, as in Nick's complaints to Marjorie in "The End of Something":

"You know everything. That's the trouble. You know you do. . . . What don't you know anyway?" (110)

Marjorie knows all that Nick knows, and this familiarity means that love, too, becomes a commonplace:

"Isn't love any fun?" Marjorie said.
"No," Nick said (110-11).

Nick refuses to be domesticated, but his own marriage is just a matter of time. After that, the biological trap springs: his wife becomes pregnant. From then on in, it's

a steady downhill run as in "Cross-Country Snow." One pleasure after another is stripped away. No more fishing, hunting, or skiing. No more drinking bouts, bull sessions, or days at the races. In spite of so much loss, Nick doesn't despair. When his friend George says, "It's hell, isn't it," Nick responds, "No. Not exactly" (187).

Nick doesn't know why it isn't hell. Something within marriage, besides some obscure chance of achieving isopolity with another person, makes Nick accept it on no other grounds than the vague "That's the way it is everywhere I've ever been" (188). The hidden motive is that so bluntly stated in "The Waste Land": "What you get married for if you don't want children?"⁵ Children, who will preserve the lineal descent of the male, make marriage worthwhile. Yet though children make marriage necessary, Nick still feels ambivalent about the relation that will automatically hamper his freedom.

"Indian Camp" is the first story of In Our Time, and it concerns the reaction of Nick Adams as a young child to a great emotional shock, that type of shock to which Nick is subjected many times in In Our Time. Allan Holder criticizes Fiedler for his comment that "there is no writer to whom childbirth more customarily presents itself as the essential catastrophe."⁶ Holder contends that in this story there is "only an empathy with women's plight, a horror at

the ultimate outrage of childbirth."⁷ Both writers claim that childbirth is decidedly significant. Fiedler is more nearly correct, because he remembers to keep his eye on Nick, around whose emotional reaction to the birth the story is organized. Birth appears to Nick compacted with death. While the mother loudly gives birth on the bottom bunk, the father quietly kills himself on the top bunk. This recognition of life and death's polar unity is the archetypal trauma ("the essential catastrophe").⁸ Holder neglects Nick's witnessing of the delivery and concentrates on the mother's physical pain. This pain, plus the doctor's extravagant and cruel obstetric technique, give Holder a case for calling childbirth "the ultimate outrage," but at the expense of reading "Indian Camp" as the woman's story rather than Nick's.

Holder is searching Hemingway for a latent humanism, and will even defend the Indian husband's suicide on the grounds that "The sensibility that this act indicates is one extremely responsive to the woman's pain."⁹ The correct sensibility, according to In Our Time, is the one Nick Adams gradually and painfully achieves: the seasoned acceptance of death as a part of life. The Indian is morbidly sensitive, and to save himself from pain, and a vicarious pain at that, he sacrifices the happiness of his family. His ultimate selfishness is underscored by

Nick's desperate need for paternal comfort as a result of this father-to-be's weakness.

"Do ladies always have such a hard time having babies?" Nick asked.

"No, that was very, very exceptional."

"Why did he kill himself, Daddy?"

"I don't know, Nick. He couldn't stand things, I guess."

"Do many men kill themselves, Daddy?"

"Not very many, Nick."

"Do many women?"

"Hardly ever."

.....
 "Is dying hard, Daddy?"

"No, I think it's pretty easy, Nick. It all depends."

.....
 In the early morning on the lake sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, he felt quite sure that he would never die (94).

The manner of suicide is itself further evidence of the Indian's failure, for the incision across his throat may be taken as a perverted analogue to the doctor's delivery, its function being to destroy instead of deliver life.

In the last story of the First Forty-Nine, "Fathers and Sons," Nick Adams, now Nicholas Adam[s], is himself a father. Hemingway presents a genealogy of four Adams men, and all four are representations of one original Adams, whose mythical history is that he lived in the pine-needle woods, hunted squirrel and deer with the Indians, made love with guileless Ojibway girls, enjoyed handling a gun, had over-developed senses which gave him the instincts of an animal, and, one supposes, although it is never mentioned,

must have been married to a woman of his own race (racial purity is imperative) in order to continue the line of Adams.

The continuation of the Adams stock is marriage as high myth; but what of the more mundane myth of romantic love? In A Farewell to Arms, which he humorously dubbed Romeo and Juliet,¹⁰ Hemingway portrayed two lovers who make "a separate peace" with the War and flee to Switzerland after conceiving a child. In a painful childbirth the mother dies, never knowing that the child had been dead through strangulation by its own umbilical cord for at least a week. Why did Hemingway kill off mother and child in what is an obviously indulgent ending?¹¹ Catherine may have nursed Frederick whole after war disintegrated him, but he is not going to return the office.

Catherine is plainly of the goddess-type, but compared to Maria or Renata there are many angles to her character. Much of the lovers' dialogue suggests that things aren't as rosy as they seem, that Catherine who appears as one of the Sisters of Charity may actually be a Daughter of Darkness. Or perhaps like Nicole Warren of Tender Is the Night she is both?

"Oh, you're so sweet. And maybe I'd look lovely, darling, and be so thin and exciting to you and you'll fall in love with me all over again."

"Hell," I said, "I love you enough now. What do you want to do? Ruin me?"

"Yes. I want to ruin you."

"Good," I said, "that's what I want too."¹²

As an expectant mother, Catherine is splendidly happy in the cosy cabin in the Swiss Alps, except that she notices Frederick's growing discontent:

"I thought maybe you were restless."

"No. Sometimes I wonder about the front and about people I knew but I don't worry. I don't think about anything much."¹³

Not only is Frederick giving up his past life, which didn't include Catherine, but even his present life must be sanctioned by her:

"I won't ever go away. . . . I'm no good when you're not here. I haven't any life at all anymore."¹⁴

Because of the possessiveness in Catherine's nature, which threatens to engulf Frederick, and yet appears in the disarming guise of the marriage of souls, her demise has been cheered as Frederick's escape from bondage:

Her death carries the hope with it of the destruction of her destructive love that excludes the world, that in its very denial of self possesses selfishly, that leads nowhere beyond the bed and the dream of a mystical transport of ordinary men and women to a divine state of love through foolish suffering. Indeed, the doctor and both of them say that it is foolish and silly to die. But die Catherine does. . . .¹⁵

That romantic passion might by virtue of its intensity become obsessional and devouring, even to the point of death, is not new with Hemingway. The source of the romantic

myth, The Romance of Tristan and Iseult, teaches that the ultimate moment in love is death, the "liebestod." Interpreting Novalis' statement "The lover is alone with all that he loves," de Rougemont expounds:

[The] maxim states a purely psychological piece of observation -- that passion is by no means the fuller life which it seems to be in the dreams of adolescence, but it is on the contrary a kind of naked and denuding intensity; verily, a bitter destitution, the impoverishment of a mind being emptied of all diversity, an obsession of the imagination by a single image. In the face of the assertion of its power, the world dissolves; "the others" cease to be present; and there are no longer either neighbors or duties, or binding ties, or earth or sky; one is alone with all that one loves.¹⁶

The alternative to the suffocation of romantic love is the free woodsy eroticism of Nick and the Ojibway Trudy. Even in middle-age when his own boy is beginning to ask questions about love, Nick Adams fondly recalls this first and thereafter simplest love.

Could you say she did what no one has ever done better and mention plump brown legs, flat belly, hard little breasts, well holding arms, quick searching tongue, the flat eyes, the good taste of mouth, then uncomfortable, tightly, sweetly, moistly, lovely, tightly, achingly, fully, finally, unendingly, never-endingly, never-to-endingly, suddenly ended, the great bird flown like an owl in the twilight (497).

Trudy is so safe and satisfying that she is Nick's erotic dream-girl. Even her "having quite a time of it" with another man in "Ten Indians" is quickly forgotten by Nick

after a night's rest.

As an erotic ideal Trudy doesn't excite jealousy. But Marjorie, who is the wife candidate, inspires both fear and confusion. Nick is much safer with a male companion, and after rejecting Marjorie, the uneasy Nick convenes with his friend Bill in the story "The Three-Day Blow." The perfect concordance of these two men suggests an alternative to romantic love. They share a comfy cabin lit by a warming fire, get wonderfully drunk on Irish whiskey, chatter about professional sports, discuss books and writers, admit reservations about their fathers, and scorn marriage and domestic life.

One of the books discussed by Nick and Bill is Forest Lovers. Nick identifies it as "the one where they go to bed every night with the naked sword between them" (118). The sword is, of course, that same sword Tristan and Iseult unexplainedly lodge between themselves in the forest chapel. De Rougemont deciphers the mystery:

They invent obstructions as if on purpose, notwithstanding that such barriers are their bane . . . ; for the demon of courtly love which prompts the lovers in their inmost selves to the devices that are the cause of their pain is the very demon of the novel as we in the West like it to be.¹⁷

Hemingway can bury the sword, but the myth which so elegantly demonstrates the desirability plus the danger of love is indispensable. The sword has two cutting edges, so

to speak. It tantalizes the lovers' passion by prolonging the climax, and it protects their lives by deferring that climax which is also the swoon to death: the longer they are apart, the greater is their ecstasy and the longer their lives. In the modern world which is bereft of swords, the obstruction to consummation is merely the delay that enhances desire but which no longer entails death. It may be trivialized into the ill-timed knock on the door or the mood-shattering cacaphony of the telephone. The obstruction may be so enlarged that it appears as a social problem, as in the crossing of racial barriers, or even a national emergency, as in Edward VIII's abdication.

Hemingway is not at all interested in postponing erotic satisfaction, and so on that count has no use for the myth. He does, however, see a connection between love and death; this also is expressed by the myth. In the older myth, where feelings are concretized into objects, there is the sword as erotic object. In the modern myth, the sword is replaced by its direct bodily equivalent, namely, the penis. The penis, like the sword, may entice the lovers, but more importantly it is the weapon that brings on death. For, unless a man is in sufficient control of himself to abstain voluntarily from having sex and thereby guard himself against dependence on the female, then he will become sexually enslaved, that is, married, which

is to say, destroyed. As such, marriage is the manifestation of the woman's control over the man. Thus, the code hero is not married. Nick Adams, the Hemingway hero, never achieves the code hero's absolute self-control: he is married. The other men, the ones remembered as being married, are irremediably married. And in Hemingway's fiction, they are metaphorically castrated -- their wives have their swords, and their balls.

Yet the man's situation is not hopeless. He has two options. He can avoid the complication of marriage either by destroying the sword -- Jake's penis blown away by the war -- or by using the sword to destroy the woman. The first results in impotence and sterility, the second in brutality and onanism. Both methods are at work in the short stories. The sordid and meaningless self-mutilation by a razor in "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" is offset by the propitiatory death by a knife-wound in "The Capital of the World," which sees Paco dying, "as the Spanish phrase has it, full of illusions" (57). "Up in Michigan" is an example of the opposite method. The man conquers the woman through a brutalized sexuality:

Jim was heavy on her and he had hurt her.
. . . She was cold and miserable and every-
thing felt gone (35).

Jake has no fear of women or marriage. He is exempt

from the deterioration that results from engagement in the sexual conflict. Other men, facing an interminable choice between surrender and attack, must be in a constant state of red alert. Either defeat now, or defeat later, but defeat certainly. Hemingway, the master tactician, understood that there was another solution, and one less drastic than Jake's: to go where there was already power, and where a balance of power might be established. Evening up the odds by facing another swordsman means that any victory will be pyrrhic, and hence that no battle will ensue.

Homosexuality is a constant theme in Hemingway, occurring in five stories and all but one of the novels. It is a variation on the self-mutilation motif since it neutralizes the sword, in this case harmlessly, by laying it to rest. Hemingway's men do not consider bugging each other; for them, it is the joinery of soul to soul: no glue, nails, or screws; no sighs, sweat, or aftermath;¹⁸ no protestations, complaints, or questions. Homosexuality may appear as "a kind of ultimate in evil,"¹⁹ for example, in "The Battler" -- although there are complicating factors in this story: difference in races, incest, insanity, the threat of savage beating and possible death -- , but more frequently it appears as "the holy marriage of males" who enjoy a "bluff, immaculate honeymoon,"²⁰ as do Jake and Bill in their trek to Burguete.

As an undercurrent homosexuality is present. But Hemingway, unlike Santiago, is not going to get caught "going out too far." He will stay with normal heterosexual love, though in this case "normality" becomes the decision to reduce action and response to a simple formula, the formula of permanent mobilization, since for Hemingway "there was always the war":²¹

Hemingway's world is ultimately a world at war -- war either in the literal sense of armed and calculated conflict, or figuratively as marked everywhere with violence, potential or present, and a general hostility.

· · · Hemingway's world is one in which things do not grow and bear fruit, but explode, break, decompose, or are eaten away. It is saved from total misery by visions of endurance, by what happiness the body can give when it does not hurt, by interludes of love which cannot outlast the furlough. . . . It has neither light nor love that lasts nor certitude nor peace nor much help for pain.²²

In such a world everything is a threat to love: the war, careers, other people, old friends, children, even other pleasures. Hemingway is committed to the belief that life itself is in armed conflict against the individual. Man can devise games to superimpose on life and thus give it the semblance of structure and meaning, but ultimately "There is no remedy for anything in life. Death is a sovereign remedy for all misfortunes."²³ Life crowds man and will inevitably disintegrate any and all measures a man may resort to.

Such a bleak outlook, if it is to be maintained, and maintained despite the occasional joy that makes it look one-sided, requires some cultivation in order to seem both pandemic and irrevocable. In the short stories, this weltanschauung does seem indivisible from meaning, and what gives verve to the meaning is that Hemingway doubts at the same time that he asserts: Is life really waged against man, or does it only appear so? In this great debate the "messy" are those who can't be trusted since their first commitment is to themselves: they don't recognize a larger problem. Perhaps too conveniently, especially if one is a realist, the women and men in Hemingway split into rival factions, the men insisting that man's life is a battle, the women prodding for a more enlightened attitude. The debate cannot be concluded. Western thought itself is polarized on these two attitudes which often divide, as they do in Hemingway, into the masculine and the feminine. The later Hemingway, the author of long internal monologues, concerned politics, and certified values, has made his mind up: there is a context, and it is between man and life. To prove the point and squelch rebuttal the mise en scene must be a battle zone where the individual has no alternative but to fight or die.

The short stories are not ironbound in the manner of the later works. The meaning is precise, yet there is

NOTES

¹For the distinction between romance, eros, and agape see Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World, and for the application of these several categories to Hemingway's novels see R. W. Lewis, Hemingway on Love (New York, 1973).

²De Rougemont, p. 287.

³Fiedler, p. 107, says: "Only by bypassing normal heterosexual love as a subject could they [American writers of the twentieth century] preserve themselves from sentimentality and falsehood." Fiedler's statement is compatible with mine. He is remarking the dearth of novels in which the central action concerns the mutual enjoyment of love by a man and woman. Hemingway's men and women may be married or having love affairs, but they have reached that stage described by Bassanio in The Merchant of Venice as "that ugly treason of mistrust / Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love."

⁴Essays in Radical Empiricism (New York, 1912).

⁵The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950 (New York, 1971), p. 71.

⁶Love and Death, p. 317, cited in "The Other Hemingway," in Ernest Hemingway: Five Decades of Criticism, ed. Linda Welshimer Wagner (Michigan, 1974), pp. 104-5.

⁷p. 105.

⁸Hemingway repeats this idea symbolically in the baby's strangulation by its own umbilical cord in A Farewell to Arms.

⁹p. 104.

¹⁰Baker, Hemingway, p. 98, text and note.

¹¹Benson, The Writer's Art of Self-Defense, p. 101, vindicates the conclusion on the ground that the novel is a tragedy, and thus "the more sizable and necessary is the disaster which will eventually overtake him." Most critics have excoriated the ending, John Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods (Kentucky, 1960), p. 91, referring to it as a deus ex machina, Wynham Lewis, p. 74, as an absurd escape "on a Hollywood pattern."

¹²(New York, 1969), p. 305.

¹³p. 298.

¹⁴p. 300.

¹⁵Lewis, p. 54.

¹⁶pp. 153-4.

¹⁷p. 38. The self-imposed barrier to love is still a vital motif with a popular audience, evidenced in the way the Wall of Jericho in the Hollywood film It Happened One Night -- and the less sophisticated barriers of present-day television -- caught on with the public. The "It" is naturally love without sex. In the Tristan myth sexual intercourse is the grand finale to great passion; in the modern version of the myth sexual intercourse is the waster of great passion, what those without passion fill up their time with. Romantic love is itself being replaced by a newer model, "true love," which is desexed, denatured, and demented. As a bow to the sexual revolution true love does sometimes include intercourse, but as something to be gotten out of the way so the real business of love can begin, which, as far as I can make out, means applauding your lover's views on the sexual revolution, the Communist Revolution, and the ideological revolution. The ultimate reductio is found in the words of every man's pin-up idol, Marilyn Monroe: "I've never liked sex. I don't think I ever will. It seems just the opposite of love." Ben Hecht, "The Myth about Marilyn Monroe's Death," Family Weekly, September 30, 1962, p. 4, quoted by Lewis, p. 8.

¹⁸Melville, cited in Fiedler, p. 390, calls coitus "that climax which is so fatal to ordinary love."

¹⁹Young, p. 39.

²⁰Fiedler, p. 357.

²¹"In Another Country," p. 269. De Rougemont, p. 253, again provides an interesting sidelight on a theme that might be said to summarize my thesis, the conflation of arms of love and arms of war:

The last surviving formalities of love were swept away by the war of 1914, and I would emphasize the symbolic fact that we have stopped making formal declarations of love at the very time we have allowed wars to begin without any declaration either. . . . The gradual profanation of the myth, its conversion into rhetoric, and in turn the dissolving of the rhetoric together with the thorough popularization of its content, can be traced . . . in the gradual transformation of European warfare and its methods.

²²Young, p. 243, p. 245.

²³Death in the Afternoon, p. 104.

CHAPTER III

AN UNNATURAL HISTORY OF THE WED

I have the feeling now that there is no place left for me to go.

Joseph Heller, Something Happened

Aranjuez would be a fine place to see your first bullfight. It would be a good place if you were only going to see one bullfight, much better than Madrid, since it has all the colorful picturesqueness that you want when you are still in the spectacle stage of appreciation. Later on what you will want at a bullfight, good bulls and good matadors being given, is a good public, and a good public is not the public of a one bullfight fiesta where every one drinks and has a fine time, and the women come in costume, nor is it the drunken, dancing, bull-running public of Pamplona, nor the local, patriotic bullfighter worshippers of Valencia. A good public is Madrid, not days of the benefit fights with elaborate decorations, much spectacle and high prices, but the serious public of the abonos who know bullfighting, bulls, and bullfighters, who know the good from the bad, the faked from the sincere and for whom the bullfighter must give his absolute maximum. The picturesque is for when you are young, or if you are a little drunk so that it will all seem real, or if you never grow up, or if you have a girl with you who has never seen it, or for once in a season, or for those who like it. But if you really want to learn about bullfighting, or if you ever get to feel strongly about it, sooner or later you will have to go to Madrid.]

If Hemingway sees Madrid as the highest achievement of bullfighting, he also envisages a "Madrid" of love, that is, a fruitful and mature love relationship which is as rare as it is elevated above the usual "picturesque" relation-

ship. Just as most bullfighting is conducted in the provincial novillados where the risk is greater and the code of behavior less refined than in a formal corrida, so most marriages proceed in a mannerless style and with little purpose. Aranjuez, Valencia, even the beloved Pamplona, are only practice rings to prepare for the important ring of Madrid. The men and women of the marriage stories never proceed beyond the preliminary stage of love ("the spectacle stage"). Like Ixion, they turn endlessly but they never advance.

The short stories treating the estrangement and alienation of married couples are "A Very Short Story," "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot," "Cat in the Rain," "Out of Season," "Hills like White Elephants," "A Canary for One," "The Sea Change," and "Homage to Switzerland."² By focusing on a single event which objectifies the emotional complex binding together two characters, Hemingway is able to present emotion elliptically, and in that way he avoids that sentimentality he is so suspicious of.

"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" have married couples, but the marriages are of no greater significance than any of the other circumstances evoking response and producing action in the central character. The marriage stories lack the centripetal force of an evolving action such as Macomber's

hunt, which must have a narrative climax and resolution; instead, they depend on other means for their effects, these means being commensurate with the stories' resemblance to several other literary sub-genres: a terse character sketch; a travelogue with incidental conversation; an agon using stichomythia; a diary entry.

Irony, almost a Hemingway insignia, pervades the stories' dialogues and situations, and in "A Very Short Story" is perhaps too obtrusive. Similarly, the ironic twist that concludes "A Canary for One," one of those "wow" endings that recalls Hemingway's adolescent passion for O. Henry and is later deprecated in Death in the Afternoon,⁴ is a bit of high jinks. The single most important narrative device is the build-up of tension between characters wanting different things. It is largely accomplished by tit-for-tat dialogue exchanges. "Hills like White Elephants" and "The Sea Change" are almost completely dramatized, and an argument might be improvised to prove that even those cursory descriptions are in effect an interlocutor along the lines of Browning's silent but responsive listener. The significance of the two literary allusions in "The Sea Change" is questionable, and I will discuss it later when interpreting the story.⁵ Hemingway's symbolic use of scenic description in the opening paragraphs

of A Farewell to Arms is common knowledge; the descriptions in "A Canary for One" are of this familiar type. But new is the directly responsive nature presented in "Hills like White Elephants," which seems as alert to the woman's desires as the man ideally should be. This "preternatural" nature occurs again in the love scenes between Robert Jordan and Maria in which "the earth moves."⁶ "Out of Season" contains two new narrative devices. Hemingway attached great importance to his "new theory that you could omit anything if you knew that you omitted, and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood."⁷ Judged by this story, his experiment is only partially successful. The part omitted is that Peduzzi's prototype committed suicide.⁸ That tragedy doesn't come across in the story: Peduzzi is a drunk with a drunk's blunt and repulsive servility. The second new device, praised by Baker as "the foremost esthetic discovery of Ernest's early career,"⁹ is the simultaneous development of two connate truths by a single comprehensive metaphor. Fish are officially out of season, the wife is sexually out of season.

The biased writer who in A Farewell to Arms killed off his own heroine to save his hero from a complicated life is not present in these stories. Neither side comes

off better than the other, and "Characters are not so much victims as conspirators."¹⁰ Recognizing this increased objectivity, Holder makes a case for "the other Hemingway":

Hemingway has been able to widen his focus to include women among those "whom things are done to." The same writer who has displayed a deep hostility toward the female has at times been able to perceive that she can sometimes be more sinned against than sinning, that she has legitimate demands which his males either ignore or refuse to meet, that she can rightfully lay claim to an existence that does not begin and end with coition in a hotel bedroom or a sleeping bag.¹¹

Holder initiates a necessary re-appraisal of critical views that have become calcified, but is it critically discerning to say "We need to recognize and acknowledge the other Hemingway" when only the terms are changed.¹³ Before, Hemingway divided women into castrators and masturbators; now, into victimizers and victims.

Whether he is sympathetic to the man, as in "A Very Short Story," or the woman, as in "Hills like White Elephants," is hardly the point. What is remarkable is that the customary division according to gender is absent. Hemingway doesn't set about to give equal time to the minority feminine viewpoint. What he does intend is to write stories in which two people who are bound to each other in marriage move this way or that way, never conscious that every move they execute is a pull or yank on the other

person. It is his writing the story of couples rather than individuals that prevents the usual separation of characters into camps of good guys and bad guys. Referring to A Moveable Feast, Young says: "As in the novels, . . . anyone can divide the good guys from the bad."¹³ And if there is any question about the generic term "guys," Young's subsequent catalogue, which includes women only amongst the good,¹⁴ should dispel it.

Invariably, a critic wishing to explain away Hemingway's male chauvinism points out the moral superiority of his women, as though the one made up for the other.¹⁵ If moral superiority means accumulated emotional pain, then the women are morally superior; however, if it means some intrinsic faculty of consciousness that is exclusively feminine, then moral superiority is spurious. If anything, Hemingway seems worried that his women are insensitive to some higher call of destiny that is exclusively masculine.¹⁶

What is Hemingway after in these stories? Baker claims that he's looking for "insights into the normal married state."¹⁷ But there is little sense of discovery in the reader, much less in the characters themselves. Instead, there is the feeling of adjustment: the author's correlating external events to what he feels inside, the characters' learning to expect unhappiness and to accept

the loss of the romantic illusion. It's the emotional reaction to the circumstances accompanying this new settlement that is recorded, the original conflict or loss having preceded in time the stories' events. These men and women live in a period of armistice, and love is their peacetime war-game. Although a story unfolds in calm and rest, it is the tremulous calm of Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front: always the rumble of distant guns can be heard in the background. Pre-war ideas are useless. What was normal is now abnormal, as Krebs, the returning soldier in "Soldier's Home," learns. His mother recommends marriage as a purge for his war-weariness. With a less demanding righteousness the orderly conversing with the American lieutenant in "Now I Lay Me" also recommends marriage as a universal cure:

"You got to get all right. . . . Do you worry about anything? You got anything on your mind? . . . You ought to get married. . . . Then you wouldn't worry. . . . Don't think about it. . . . Do it. . . . A man ought to be married. You'll never regret it. Every man ought to be married (370).

Marriage is the gestalt in which the returning soldiers and the wounded soldiers, the lost women and the maladjusted civilian men attempt to overcome their feelings of isolation and abnormality. The ready-made security of blood-tie family relationships is inoperative in the post-war era. These men and women are wanderers who have no

rooted connections. Their common ground is marriage, wherein the action of re-alignment, and perhaps re-alliance, can be carried out.

Although all are dealing with sexual abnormality and marital dissolution, there is no clear-cut pattern to these stories. There is, however, a discernable growth in the various characters' worldliness. Their problems and the solutions to their problems become increasingly extreme, and also increasingly simple. Rather than trying to have a baby a couple decides to abort a pregnancy; rather than adopting a consciously anti-romantic attitude a man decides that women are unnecessary; rather than accepting a perverse version of marriage a couple divorces; rather than repressing homosexuality a woman embraces it.

As the title indicates, "A Very Short Story" is short indeed; less than two pages in length, it is the germ from which the other stories sprout. Almost the literal transcription of Hemingway's own war-time affair,¹⁸ this story recounts a soldier's bitter disillusionment. Despite the obvious effort to be toughly sentimental, the story's tone is mawkish, as though the writer were attempting to explain his character's present condition by hitting on one single past event which, by giving the direction to his future course, would take responsibility from his shoulders. The attempt is desperate and in part

confirms Wyndham Lewis' comment that Hemingway "is in the multitudinous ranks of those to whom things happen."¹⁹

The narrator associates physical elevation with purity of love. While other soldiers and nurses leave the hospital roof to get drunk and carouse on the balcony below, the wounded soldier and his nurse, Luz, remain on the roof where they "can look out over the top of the town" (141). In contrast to the heat of the war -- exploding bombs, festering wounds, and scanning search lights -- Luz is wonderfully cool: "She was cool and fresh in the hot night" (141).

The soldier and Luz expect love to sustain them. Even though they have neither birth nor marriage certificates and thus no official approval, they still feel a part of their country and their church: "They felt as though they were married, but they wanted everyone to know about it" (141). They pray in the Duomo. They care that others sanction their relation. They even make long-term plans for domestic life: he will precede her to New York in order to establish himself in a steady job, thereby ensuring the financial security of her arrival. Their only tiff -- occurring on the train from Padua to Milan during his departure for America -- concerns her unwillingness to follow him to America immediately. They patch it up, but they "were not finished with the quarrel" (142). After he

goes, Luz has an affair with a more mature Italian major who promises to marry her just as she had promised to marry the soldier, but "The major did not marry her in the spring, or in any other time" (142). On the rebound she writes to the young soldier, who by now has hardened himself against what he formerly believed was love and so does not acknowledge her letter.

This is a love story, except that the getting and losing of love is the vehicle for another theme: the soldier's coming of age, his initiation into the rites of love. What the young soldier doesn't understand is that it is the War that created their love and it is the War that destroyed their love. He is still operating according to the traditional beliefs about love and marriage: that there is one girl for every boy (Browning's "elective affinity"), that these two get married, that the boy gets a good job with advancement and the girl meanwhile spawns a good family and a happy homelife. The war took him to Italy, wounded him, introduced the nurse to him, interrupted their promising love affair by returning him to the front, sent him back home after armistice, and finally introduced the nurse to another soldier. The unresolved quarrel on the train between him and Luz typifies the soldier's unending quarrel against what the War has done to him, and this no armistice can pacify. The soldier

does all the normal things, but nothing will ever be normal again. It is the abnormal, the surreal, that is now the norm.

The soldier's attitude toward love is revealed by several phenomena. He has the romanticist's belief in the sacred intimacy of his love; he shares private jokes with Luz; he worries that under anaesthetic during "the silly, talky time" he will "blab" about their affair; he has the lover's egotism that is satisfied by boasting about his love to everyone; he has the lover's shyness, and so uses circumlocutions to announce his sleeping with Luz: "After he got on crutches he used to take the temperatures so Luz would not have to get up from the bed" (141).²¹ When he receives a packet of fifteen love letters that had been delayed until the signing of the armistice, he arranges them according to their date of composition and "read[s] them all straight through" (141). As such, they resemble an epistolary novel, whose generic theme was the superiority of sentimental love above other types.²¹ He enjoys love's suffocating closeness, being "in-thrall" to love, which leads to his desire for marriage as a hermetic seal against loss of love, his neglect of former friends back home, and his vow to remain sober. This is an acute case of what Novalis meant by "The lover is alone with all that he loves."

When all his young lover's hopes are dashed by Luz's letter in which she refers to their love as "only a boy and girl affair" (142), he learns that love is a hoax. The memorable finale to the story, his contracting gonorrhoea from a loop department store salesgirl while riding in a taxicab through Lincoln Park, is easily misinterpreted. He doesn't do this in retaliation against Luz's new affair or even to cauterize his lover's grief. He does it after receiving a second letter from Luz in which she wants to make up with him now that the major has dropped her; thus, he does it consciously as a sacrament to the only kind of love he now believes in -- a debased sexual love so affectionless that the backseat of a cab will make do for love's bower. Venereal disease becomes a demonic baptism: the discharge of gonorrhoea is the holy water. This equation is not far-fetched: throughout the stories there is continual play on the idea of baptism or transformation by water. The Elliots travel by water to their new home, and in the new land they remain alien residents; the girl of "Cat in the Rain" discovers the emptiness of her life during a rain storm; the drizzly weather of "Out of Season" is optimal for fishing and, metaphorically, for establishing self-identity; the title "The Sea Change" implies a supernatural quality to the girl's sexual transformation. Finally, accenting this

inversion of love's values, and recalling the former bliss of love, is the de-elevation from the rooftop overlooking Padua to the ground level in Chicago, above which the elevated rail cars make a loop.

"Out of Season" is a peculiar story. Something about it doesn't ring true. Perhaps it's that "part omitted," Peduzzi's upcoming suicide, that distracts Hemingway from what he is putting down on paper. The phrase "out of season" has dual signification, referring both to the prohibited fishing and to the falling out between the husband and wife. In addition to this foreground story, there is a "secret" background story and that is, of course, the presentation of Hemingway's own responsibility for the real-life Peduzzi's suicide, since it was Hemingway's complaint to the hotel manager that led to the guide's dismissal and, consequently, to his suicide. With this in mind, the phrase "out of season" becomes descriptive of the narrator's state of mind: he is out of season with himself. That eerie quality to the story, as though a cinematic dream sequence were being shot using an atmosphere damp with suppressed psychological overtones, plays against the ostensibly objective tone that befits the description of a fishing expedition. The concealed guilt spoils the smooth exposition of the fishing story, and does not, as Hemingway predicted, "strengthen the story."

It is a second and separate inner story to the young gentleman's failure to establish his sexual identity. Because it explains the story's several divagations, the suicide story will be explicated first.

In a six-page story numbers are mentioned more than forty times, with particular attention being given to monetary denominations, the number of people composing groups, and times of the day. Hemingway's concern for numerical symbolism in The Old Man and the Sea is evident, but the collection of numbers in "Out of Season" cannot be systematized meaningfully. The numbers may function like the numerous details in "Big Two-Hearted River": as pellucid and solid facts upon which the narrator can concentrate while attempting to withstand great emotional pain. Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe explains it this way:

Why do I go into such detail? Because the charged atmosphere made every little thing stand out as a performance, a movement distinct and vastly important. It was one of the hypersensitive moments when all your automatic movements, however long established, however habitual, become separate acts of will. You are like a man learning to walk after polio. You take nothing for granted.²²

The narrator has Marlowe's hypersensitivity, and numbers, besides distracting him from what is really grievous, give him that superstitious comfort some children experience in chanting some word, number, or name a set number of times. The numbers in the story are odd more often than not, suggesting that the narrator cannot equilibrate his ex-

perience or, to continue the idiom of the story, that he is at sixes and sevens.

The flurry of numbers is not the only puzzle. Peduzzi's right to exist is in some way under the young man's influence. The wife, Tiny, does not respond to Peduzzi's poking her in the ribs -- he might not even be there for all her notice. The husband, on the other hand, is anxiously concerned that Peduzzi gets his drink of marsala.²³ When Peduzzi boisterously hails the wife to join the young gentleman and himself, she makes no reaction. Yet when the husband unintelligibly shouts at her, she immediately joins them. As she says to her husband, "I can't understand a word he [Peduzzi] says" (174). Her insensibility to Peduzzi occurs in another incident, where again the husband acts on Peduzzi's behalf.

"There," said Peduzzi, pointing to a girl in the doorway of a house they passed. "My daughter."

"His doctor," the wife said, "has he got to show us his doctor?"

"He said his daughter," said the young gentleman (176).

The wife is not insensitive to her husband; on the contrary, he seems insensitive to her, which makes her negligence all the more surprising. Like the wife, the counter girl also ignores Peduzzi's presence, and when the young man asks her to pour out three drinks, she corrects him: "Two, you mean?" (175).

Whatever biographical facts about Hemingway and the real guide may be adduced, the extraordinary relation between the young man and Peduzzi will remain a mystery. Hemingway intended this, as the story's first paragraph demonstrates. Peduzzi approaches the young gentleman and speaks to him "mysteriously." Just a few lines further on he is in the cantina acting "confident and mysterious." However, even though the relationship between these two is indefinite, because the young man will shortly precipitate the suicide, he must be shown already exercising the power of life and death over the guide. It is the young man who will decide how his time will be spent, how his presence will be evaluated, how much he will drink, and how much money he will receive. He is chipping away at Peduzzi's life, and this is shown by the young man's stinting every request Peduzzi makes. Peduzzi says, Let's fish; he says, Wait an hour. Peduzzi says, Give me five lire for supplies; he doles out four lire. Peduzzi says, Let's fish again tomorrow; he says, check with the hotel padrone for my answer.

Peduzzi's material existence is actualized by the young man. His provisional existence might be compared to the third murderer's in Macbeth, only in this case the subject is the murdered, not the murderer. The wife says

to her husband: "If you go to jail we might as well both go" (176). Jail seems an extraordinarily harsh penalty for fishing out of season. The wife sounds somewhat like Lady Macbeth egging her husband on to murder. The idea of the guide's murder by latter-day Macbeths summons up a passage from modern literature. There is a notable coincidence of description and significance between this story and those lines in The Waste Land which I believe refer to Macbeth:

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
 When I count, there are only you and I together
 But when I look ahead up the white road
 There is always another one walking beside you
 Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
 I do not know whether a man or a woman
 -- But who is that on the other side of you?²⁴

In addition to the third murderer in Macbeth, this passage suggests another mysterious person. Although Eliot's annotation mentions an account of an Antarctic expedition as the inspiration of this passage, its meaning is generally recognized as an allusion to Luke, XXIV: 13-34, the description of the risen Christ's anonymous journey to Emmaus with two disciples who do not know him as the Messiah. If Peduzzi is a Christ figure, then the young man's failure is not that he is incompetent with his wife or at the masculine ritual of fishing. It is that, like Ethan Brand, "He had lost hold of the magnetic chain of

humanity."²⁵ That is the secret story: a religious mystery that mingles with the immediate story about fishing and marital dissolution.

Of the immediate story about fishing and marriage DeFalco makes the following summary:

The husband becomes involved in a childish rebellion against authority, but his failure to step beyond the line clearly marks an inner immaturity and inability to face reality directly.²⁶

Certainly, it is true that the husband is incapable of a genuine act of rebellion. His central problem, however, does not concern rebellion against authority, but sexual self-worth. The equation between sexual wholeness and value is evident in the pun on "geld," which refers to both castration and money.

There is a connection between the young man and the old guide, one that in several ways recalls the relation of Nick Adams to his father. The young man and Peduzzi are both war veterans, for the young man is carrying a musette, a small canvas travelling bag used by the military, and Peduzzi is still wearing his old tattered military coat. This drooping old man is a forecast of what the young man may become: he too may end in feculence, "breaking up frozen manure with a dung fork" (179). Unconsciously, the young man senses this strange alliance,

and his solicitude toward the guide betokens this recognition. The guide will direct him to a good fishing spot, and to a good relation to life by embodying the opposite relation.

The young man is having sexual problems. His wife's mannish dress suggests she may be assuming his role. She wears mountain boots and a beret, and carries "unjointed" fishing rods.²⁷ The unjointed fishing rods may mean that the husband is impotent. This surmise seems confirmed by the problem encountered in fishing. The young man has forgotten the lead sinkers, and so his hook merely floats on the water, just as his penis may lie flaccidly on his wife's vagina. The fault is not the wife's, as Peduzzi's admonishment proves:

"Your stuff is all clean and new but you have no lead. I would have brought some. You said you had everything" (178).

But Peduzzi is himself empty and decrepit, and a hunt through "the cloth dirt in the linings of his inside military overcoat" doesn't uncover any lead.

The association between achievement in fishing and sexual vigor explains the wife's comment: "Of course you haven't got the guts to just go back. . . . Of course you have to go on" (176). The wife understands that her husband has made a bogus equation between fishing and sexuality, and

that what he truly must have "guts" for is the acceptance of his own personal failure, which, considering the many suggestions of castration and weakened sexuality -- the unjointed fishing rods, the marsala-drinking, the pun on "geld," the young man's femininity (he carries a "purse"), the absence of lead, and the fear of being caught in the act of fishing -- seems to be that of sexual impotence. Knowing that he won't have to fish makes him feel relieved. By corollary, he is probably most contented when he doesn't have to perform sexually. Relations with his wife are frigid, and she must wear three sweaters to keep warm. When she wants to accompany him on the fishing expedition, he dissuades her:

"Go on back, Tiny. You're cold in the wind anyway. It's a rotten day and we aren't going to have any fun anyway" (177).

The husband prefers personal isolation to a shared experience which might make a demand on a strength he fears he doesn't have. Fishing is for him an ersatz for sexual intercourse. Even at that he fails. His sexual impotence is the manifestation of a vaster impotence that pervades his entire being, and the decrepit guide Peduzzi stands as a warning to his future.

"Cat in the Rain" is another story about an estranged couple. The opening paragraph presents a setting that re-

calls the drizzly weather of "Out of Season," but instead of the vaporous and immaterial atmosphere that expressed the narrator's guilt, the atmosphere of this story is cold, depersonalized, and unremitting.

There were two Americans stopping at the hotel. They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and fro from their room. Their room was on the second floor facing the sea. . . . It was raining. The rain dripped from the palm trees. Water stood in pools on the gravel paths. The sea broke in a long line in the rain. The motor cars were gone from the square. . . . Across the square in the doorway of the café a waiter stood looking out at the empty square (167).

The mood evoked is one of lingering futility, a sense of things regressively falling back on themselves. There is no vitality or strength. Even the padrone, the character most eligible for drawing on some inner reserve of strength, is hopelessly mistaken about what should be done.

The wife of "Cat in the Rain" is neurotically anxious that her life is as empty as that square. Her husband's name is George. She is simply "the American wife." A role she has, but no identity. Her need to overcome the vagueness of her life is evident in her using the intimate diminutive "kitty" to designate the cat in the rain seen from her hotel room window. Her imputation of fatherly characteristics to the padrone springs from the same need. She wants to live in a world she recognizes as her own; all she presently has is a hotel room in an unnamed

Italian town with a husband who won't talk to her.²⁸ A world in which she did feel familiar was her world as a child. If the "kitty" seems homeless, the woman can restore its security simply by taking it indoors out of the rain, but who will do the same for her?

Her husband has never done so. He lies at the foot of the bed reading a book, facing neither her nor the window, thus suggesting his unconcern for the world and his preoccupation with himself. His only interest in her is to know how to keep her away from him. The failure of adult love is complete, and it results in the woman's desire to become a child again. Unless her behavior is understood as regressive, her idealization of the padrone as the benign father-figure does not make sense. It is his absurdly mistaken response, his giving her any stray cat when she wanted that specific "kitty" she had seen from the window, that renders the ending so ironically tragic.

The things she desires are relics of her lost home life: a purring kitty in her lap; a table fitted with silverware and candles; new clothes; and, to replace her boyish cut, long hair, along with a brush and mirror. John V. Hagopian believes these items refer to a "maternal femininity." His mistake is patently obvious in the inapposite details he uses as supportive evidence:

The padrone rises to bow to her, a gesture which makes her feel "very small and tight inside . . . really important , , , of supreme importance," all phrases that might appropriately be used to describe a woman who is pregnant. The conscious thought of pregnancy never enters her mind, but the feelings associated with it sweep through her.²⁹

The solution to this married couple's problems is not in having children. Their estrangement is unmitigated; they are even past the point of talking about it:

George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked out the window where the light had come on in the square (170).

Both the husband and wife have found substitutes for marriage. The husband uses the bed for reading his book rather than for making love, and his using both bed-pillows as a prop intimates a selfishness in sexual relations with the wife. The wife no longer wants a husband; she wants a father, for the relation with her father was a positive relation with a male. These two people are, as Edward Albee described one of his characters in Zoo Story, "permanent transients." It is in the next story that Hemingway depicts a couple who believe that having a child is the right thing for married couples.

"Mr. and Mrs. Elliot" is an apparently innocent story about an eccentrically matched couple who "tried very hard to have a baby" (161).³⁰ Below the glib surface there is a host of sexual deviations: fetishism, lesbianism,

homosexuality, misogyny, hatred of sexuality, over-protective mothers, and an oedipus complex. The Elliots are blithely unaware of their real motivations, and though this ignorance gives the impression of innocence, the tone of mockery with which the story is told clearly shows Hemingway's feelings. To him, such weakness of character is inexcusable. In Green Hills of Africa he summarily dismissed the type of premature senility pervading this story with this comment: "Every damned thing is your own fault if you're any good at all."³¹ This sentiment leaves no margin of excuse for the Elliots and gives weight to Benson's designation of the story's last line, the description of the couple's marital adjustment, as "the triumph of perversion."³²

When the Elliots marry -- he at twenty-five, she at forty-two -- she is ripe for menopause, not for child-bearing. In spite of this aberration from the norm of marriage, the couple strain for normalcy by trying to have a family: "They tried as often as Mrs. Elliot could stand it" (161). Like the couple of "Cat in the Rain," the Elliots cannot be imagined in the role of parents because their own emotional problems seem insurmountable.

Mrs. Elliot cannot become a mother -- she is Mother incarnate: "Many of the people on the boat took her for

Elliot's mother" (161). Even her first name, Cornelia, earmarks her for this special position. It recalls the ancient Cornelia who was known to the Roman populace by the inscription on her statue as "Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi."³³ Marriage becomes an option for Cornelia only upon discovering the chaste Mr. Elliot, whom she calls "you dear sweet boy."

And boy Elliot is. He meets Cornelia's standards because he is virginal in both mind and body:

He was twenty-five years old and had never gone to bed with a woman until he married Mrs. Elliot. He wanted to keep himself pure so that he could bring to his wife the same purity of mind and body that he expected of her. He called it to himself living straight (161).

He is morally shocked at the behavior of men and women in his own age group, and thus needs comfort and consolation more than sex and marriage.

Their marrying is not spurred by the usual reasons for marriage:

At first Hubert had never thought of marrying Cornelia. He had never thought of her that way. She had been a good friend of his. . . . He could never remember just when it was decided that they were to be married. But they were married (162).

The marriage arises as a convenience for his acquiring a mother and her acquiring a son.³⁴ A marriage created out of abnormal needs does not produce the symbiosis of complementary perversions promised in that old drollery about the sadist and the masochist who found their perfect

mate in each other. The husband, whose Christian name Hubert suggests a stumblebum, is ignorant of sexual love. Kissing is for him an "experiment." The honeymoon night is a dismal failure. The fact that Hubert is sexually aroused by the sight of shoes and may possibly masturbate to satisfy his fetish ("Soon everything was quite all right and he slept peacefully" [163]) suggests the future course of their lovemaking. It becomes increasingly less frequent, and its episodes can be enumerated according to the stops on the couple's itinerary, those places where "they tried to have a baby" (163). Eventually, even these feeble attempts dry up. When they reach Dijon, "They found there was nothing to do" (163).

Despite their sexual incompatibility, Mr. and Mrs. Elliot do not break up their marriage. The marriage remains inviolable, but what occurs within that marriage is extraordinary. The Elliots accept a sexual stalemate and find substitutes for each other. Cornelia imports from Boston her girlfriend. These two women "make conversation" (a play on the archaic meaning "to have sexual intercourse"), and sleep together in a medieval bed where they share enormous cries. Mr. Elliot also seeks out homosexual contact. He surrounds himself with a band of fawning young men who nickname him "Hubie." But Mr. Elliot is somewhat

of a misanthrope, and his final solution is to take a separate room from his wife, where he indulges in poetic lucubrations that leave him exhausted. He takes up drinking white wine, whose associations via Mr. Elliot are, like those of marsala, preciousness, femininity, and immaturity. The acceptance of this "perverse" living arrangement as normal is trenchantly stated in the story's last phrase: "They were all quite happy" (164).

"A Canary for One" is about another married couple. This couple, however, is treated sympathetically. Hemingway returns to the first-person narrator he used so effectively in his early work, including the first two novels. The wry tone of "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot," which gives it the feeling of caricature, vividly contrasts to the somber tone of "A Canary for One." The narrator-husband is one more of those Hemingway males who thinks too much about himself. A good example of the type, the narrator of "Now I Lay Me," is said by Holder to have "a perverted self-sufficiency."³⁵ The narrator of "A Canary for One" is similarly "perverted," suffering from what I call, in a variation on Ruskin's phrase, "the bathetic fallacy." His personal agony is overpowering and conditions his view of the world, making it appear intolerably benighted: smoke from factory chimneys, stony hills, the fading sun on the water, negro soldiers in brown uniforms accompanied by one short white

sergeant, razed land without vegetation, a burning barn, wrecked boxcars, the long cement platform of the train station, the lone ticket collector at the gate. He eats breakfast but doesn't notice; he hears conversation but doesn't listen.

This introverted man who selects gloomy details to match his own feeling of despair is set off against the American lady who rides on the same train as he and his wife. While his situation is not truly desperate since he is both intelligent and young, hers is stark, and thus highlights the disproportion of his pessimism. She is nearly senile and has no one who cares for her. Her utter loneliness is disclosed in her purchase of the canary for a travelling companion. She is physically unsound, taking Evian water for either rheumatism or dyspepsia. She is innately suspicious of any kind of change. This prudence may result in the harmless cultural chauvinism of reading The Daily Mail, or it may result in the extremely injurious decision to prevent her daughter's marriage to a foreigner, whom the daughter loves deeply.

The American lady's life is so meaningless that she is constantly on the look-out for ways to enhance her value, either by seeming indispensable or by seeming worldly. She is, of course, neither. She worries that her

life is endangered by the train, but the train runs smoothly. She buys the canary so that she may have absolute control over another's life, even if only a bird's, but the bird takes no notice of her. She prates about herself to the man's wife, but the wife is anxious to talk about herself. She offers the declaration "American men make the best husbands" (339) as justification for breaking her daughter's marriage to a Swiss, but this American couple, as the man reveals in the story's last sentence, "were returning to Paris to set up separate residences" (342). She is a negative authority. No matter what appraisal she makes she is wrong. Her physical deafness is an analogue to an inner deafness: she hears nothing except herself. Killinger, after Kierkegaard, calls her a "cipher."³⁶ Nameless throughout the story, the American lady's name is finally discovered "by the man from Cook's on a typewritten page in a sheaf of typewritten pages which he placed in his pocket" (341).

The American lady feels she is at the mercy of circumstances; accordingly, she worries that the train will depart without her. The estranged husband's feeling, though equally unsound, is of an opposite nature. He feels that his circumstances are a part of himself, that the external world registers his inner feelings, that a burning barn or a wrecked boxcar by a pre-established harmony mirror his

own destruction and conflagration. DeFalco notes this solipsism, but I believe he misplaces the emphasis by stressing the metaphorical rather than the ideational value of the objects recorded by the husband: "Marital estrangement means a literal wrecking or burning of a relationship and a consequent ruin of the normal course of life."³⁷ The husband doesn't see metaphors for his feelings in the world; he projects his feelings onto the world.

Immediately following the above statement, DeFalco observes: "Love-relationships must be cared for in much the same fashion as a canary."³⁸ This observation exhibits a gross misunderstanding of the story. The routine that is established in feeding and caring for a bird is only a part of what is needed for creating interpersonal relations. By her own admission the American lady is damned. Her daughter is "simply madly in love," but after her break-up:

"She wouldn't eat anything and she wouldn't sleep at all. I've tried so very hard, but she doesn't seem to take an interest in anything. She doesn't care about things" (339).

The unhappy husband who tells the story is in a similar way. He, too, has lost interest in everything, doesn't care to eat, and lies awake all night brooding. His marriage seems the center of the world. Its collapse betokens the collapse of all.

Compared to the Elliots this couple has made a decisive effort to solve their problems. The man feels the apocalypse has begun, but his last statement ("We were returning to Paris to set up separate residences" [342]) is positive in that the world's continuance is implied. Though the man presently sees everything as though in crepuscle, what the American lady says of the canary, who never does sing, might be applied to the deranged husband: "He loves the sun. . . . He'll sing now in a little while" (339).

"Homage to Switzerland" concerns several men who seem resigned to never singing again. The sun is absent, and the night seems interminable. In three discrete incidents, which are allied by tonal synonymy, the same background and situation is used for the stories of three different men: the Simplon-Orient Express is an hour late, and an American male waits in a Swiss train-station.

"The wait" is an interesting device. Because the late train occasions a segment of time that is not ordained for any anticipated task, the hour is "free" time, time in which any whimsy that in the normal course of planned events is precluded may be satisfied, and this without squinting at the work ethic. Beckett's Waiting for Godot is structured according to such "free" time: Vladimir and Estrogen have nothing to do except to fill in time.

"Cat in the Rain" and "A Canary for One" are similarly structured. The characters in both these stories are exempt from making something of their time. The forty-minute episode in "Hills like White Elephants" is different. The man and woman's time is committed: before the train arrives on schedule, a momentous decision must be made.

The first part of "Homage to Switzerland," subtitled Portrait of Mr. Wheeler in Montreux, depicts a man who has become soured on life. He fills his hour by trying to out-manuever the waitress in a game that can have no consequence, for though he makes sexual advances to her, later it is revealed that he "did not care for women" (242-5). The object of his game is to degrade the waitress by affixing a price to her sexual love. She has contempt for his abusiveness:

He's ugly, she thought, ugly and hateful. Three hundred francs for a thing that is nothing to do. How many times have I done that for nothing (424).

Mr. Wheeler is apprized of the exchange value of the various European currencies, because he judges everything against a monetary standard. The waitress, by contrast, understands several European languages, because she is interested in conversing with different types of people. Mr. Wheeler's crudity as a human being is made even clearer in his figuring out if he got correct value for the tip he left

her and by his referring to the game as an "inexpensive sport." He wants no more contact with the opposite sex than this sport in which he hopes to humiliate the woman. For that object he will put out a little money and a lot of time.

Part II, Mr. Johnson Talks about It at Vevey, concerns an American who faces divorce. From a waitress and a cabal of three porters he hopes to find assurance that divorce does not mean personal failure. The narrator summarizes Mr. Johnson's findings:

Inside the café he had thought that talking about it would blunt it; but it had not blunted it; it had only made him feel nasty (430).

More than likely Mr. Johnson feels nasty because the porters have in some way confirmed either his own self-contempt of else his wife's alleged reasons for leaving him. Although he puts on a humble air with the waitress, asking her for coffee "if it's not too much trouble" (425), the air is affected and masks a childish petulance which is revealed in his dealings with the three porters. He approaches these lower-class men with a gesture of largesse that is supposed to throw them off their feet. These porters are unsophisticated folk who remain unimpressed by the self-aggrandizing gesture. They, in fact, have the edge on him, for they have marriage. About marriage, one porter

says, "C'est normale" (429), and Mr. Johnson agrees. This, of course, means that he is abnormal.

Mr. Johnson's abnormality is not strictly conjugal. Something shameful in himself makes him feel "nasty." He is obviously disturbed that his wife does sports and that his own amusement (also his job) is writing.³⁹ His feelings about writing are a mixture of boredom and determination, but then his feelings about everything are ambivalent. And, by tallying up the cost of each porter's company, he divulges the same standard of value used by Mr. Wheeler. Mr. Johnson, however, is in a state of flux, and his unhappiness with himself as a result of the upcoming divorce indicates that his value system is under scrutiny.

Part III takes off on a different tack. The Son of a Fellow Member at Territet concerns father-son relations instead of male-female relations. The opening description of Part II includes slightly more information than that of Part I. In the final part, besides the addition of a few novel scenic details, such as the cardboard pads and beer glasses, the prose style is denser, and the increased sophistication of syntax is apposite to an increase in complexity of causal relations.

Harris is touchy, being at once amenable and

volatile. He begins conversation with the waitress in a less stylized manner than his two predecessors but finishes by becoming offensively aggressive. Harris is like those other Hemingway men who are recovering from some shameful memory or moral shock, and all his energy must be husbanded in order to combat the disturbance.

After the waitress' departure, an old man joins him, and these two swap memories of the National Geographic magazine. In discussing Colonel Lawrence of Arabia the two men achieve sufficient concordance for Harris to brave discussion of personal matters. His earlier antipathy to George Shiras' father is explained by his relating his own father's suicide. His restrained description, "Shot himself, oddly enough" (434), demonstrates his own bewilderment in the face of the manner of death.

That Harris derives some solace from conversing with the old man seems unmistakable, yet what grounds there are for that solace are dubious. These two men share only an enthusiasm for a magazine, and even that is for different reasons. DeFalco plainly doesn't accept there being any communion between the two. He sees irony:

The reference to the incident [the suicide] as "odd" compresses and disguises the hurt in the mask of understatement. Coupled with the pitiable, misguided faith of the old man in the Society, a vivid irony is evident. Both individuals have misplaced their faith.⁴⁰

DeFalco is focusing on the despair that is so conspicuous at the story's beginning but which I feel is notably abated by the story's conclusion. The old man has only a "magazine" knowledge of the world; nevertheless, the offer of his membership card to the National Geographic Society profoundly affects Harris, who responds: "I will keep it very carefully" (435). DeFalco's interpretation ignores the meaningfulness of this gift and its marked effect on Harris' attitude. The cutting-edge of his conversation is blunted; his attitude has become respectful and, would it be too much to say? pious.

The old man is a type of the Father. His gift to Harris of his most precious belief is a redemptive act. The old man's faith is in a secular institution that has no religious significance, but for him, just as for the Deists of the eighteenth century who were regarded as secularists, it is a living faith. Even the terminology sounds vaguely religious: member, membership, nominate, elect. Unlike Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Johnson, Harris did not set out to appropriate comfort. He did find it, and in a most unexpected place.

Hemingway frequently indicates character by the kind of liquor a man drinks. Sion is the wine Mr. Wheeler orders. The O.E.D. lists its use in Charles Reade's

Cloister and the Hearth, XCIV: "His remedies were 'womanish and weak.' Sage and wormwood, sion, hyssop, . . . and Faith." Mr. Wheeler is another of the feminized males, along with the marsala-drinking young gentleman of "Out of Season" and the white wine-bibber Mr. Elliot of "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot." There is a secondary significance in the choice of Sion. Sion is an alternate spelling for Zion. Hemingway intends the pun. Mr. Wheeler has the Jew's reputed money greed, and Hemingway was a known anti-Semite.⁴¹ Mr. Johnson orders Sportsman champagne on the recommendation by one of the porters that it is the best champagne. The sportsman in Mr. Johnson's marriage is the wife: hence, the choice of liquor serves as a reminder of the divorce and what he will lose by it. Champagne's sweetness and effervescence is also a comment on Mr. Johnson's behavior, which is, considering the three laconic porters he is drinking with, too frothy. Harris' beverages, sugared coffee and the cherry-liqueur kirsch, are appropriate to the childish nature he reveals in his quick temper and sincerity.

In "Hills like White Elephants" liquor is again indicative of emotional condition. The man loves licorice drinks, but the girl complains: "Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you've waited to long for" (274). Licorice has almost a bitter taste. Bitter is

how the girl feels about their affair, and bitter is the man's attitude toward life. What Hemingway is doing with liquors is reminiscent of "the humours" psychology of the seventeenth century. The melancholy man drinks bitter anise. The phlegmatic man drinks listless white wine. The choleric man drinks saccharine kirsch. And the sanguine man, although not seen in these stories, presumably drinks those wonderful wines Hemingway describes in A Moveable Feast.

The dim, snowy night suits the despair of "Homage to Switzerland" the torrid, unyielding sun suits the futility of "Hills like White Elephants." Located somewhere between Barcelona and Madrid, the unmarried couple have forty minutes before the express train arrives in which to decide upon the woman's pregnancy, whether to abort it as the man urges or to carry it as the woman wants.

These two people so bandy about the word "happy" that it comes to mean something like freedom from the trial of becoming happy. The sterility and constriction of their lives -- "That's all we do, isn't it -- look at things and try new drinks?" (274) -- is contrasted to a nature that is fertile and expansive:

Across on the other side, were fields of grain and trees along the banks of the Ebro. Far away, beyond the river, were mountains. The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees (276).

The woman feels an affinity between herself and this beneficent nature. On all levels she attempts to produce something more from whatever little is given to her. The man responds only when he has to, and only so much as to protect his interest:

"[The hills] look like white elephants," she said. "I've never seen one," the man drank his beer (273).

He wants to keep the status quo. That means he must refuse to admit her need for a child, and consequently that he cannot understand her language which originates within the context of this need.

The image of hills like white elephants is a poetic metaphor that functions on several levels. It is descriptive in the simple pictorial sense which the man favors limiting it to: the hills look like white elephants. But as the woman remarks, They do too much looking. Her referring to the hills' texture as "skin" suggests by synecdoche her own white belly and, in turn, her pregnancy, which has the gentle curve of the hills' contour and the elephant's full belly. On an emotive level the metaphor presents both his and her appreciation of the upcoming child.

The white elephant is a gift which contributes little profit or use, and probably depletes the owner's resources; but it is also a rare and sacred animal that is irreplaceable. To her, the pregnancy is a palpable and enriching experience; to him, it is a noxious abstraction that must be suppressed before it reaches an unmanageable level of existence.

His language reflects his aloofness from this event that is so personal to her. Where she is a poetess who metaphorically expresses her nature, he is a politician who minimizes the horror of a situation by using propaganda:

"It's really an awfully simple operation, Jig,"⁴² the man said. "It's not really an operation at all."

"I know you wouldn't mind it, Jig. It's really not anything. It's just to let the air in" (275).

His only criterion for deciding whether to have a child is the technological ease of the operation. What he neglects is why the operation is a possibility at all. Never once does he mention the child: there is only the mechanics of surgery. The woman, also, never names the child. But she never stops talking about it either my metaphor or implication. Her appreciation of the abortion is directly physical; whereas, his is verbal. To abort this child which is of her own body is to kill a part of herself. She must, therefore, approve of her own destruction: "Then I'll do

it. Because I don't care about me" (275). The man pipes in, "Well, I care about you" (276), as though he is defending her best interest while she has temporarily lost her head.

What gives force to their exchange of dialogue, which often seems to be about nothing specific, is the man's tacit ultimatum: me or the child. These two people have in the course of their relationship established the house rule that consequential subjects are taboo, and now when the forbidden has sprung up spontaneously they don't know how to talk about it: "All of the dialogue exchanges between the two have an almost classic cast in the pathos of the divergence between them."⁴³

Even after the man has won the dispute, he doesn't understand the significance of what has happened. The woman must cry out: "Would you please please please please please please please stop talking?" (277). The man repeatedly uses freedom and simplicity to describe the abortion and its outcome, but for him these terms are not positive. They merely indicate exemption from the concern and trouble that are ingredient in life, but that are for him all that there is to life. When he steps in the bar-room and takes a quick Anis, he observes that the people "were all waiting reasonably for the train" (277-8).

"Reasonable" is what he styles himself. A man who is not carried away by life but always maintains a calm which permits him to make decisions from clear and distinct premises. This man is not reasonable in the English sense of the term that derives from John Locke and means full of common sense; he is reasonable in the French sense of "raisonable," meaning moved by a rationalist's principles.

Male-female relations have come to an absolute standstill. No remedy exists for this pair. They are not willing to commit themselves to marriage, much less to a child whose demands would in the long run exceed those of a spouse. The woman is shown wanting to have the child, but it is too late to change the tenor of their relationship and she doesn't have the strength to choose the child over the man. If heterosexual relations mean the slow war of attrition depicted in this story, then Hemingway turns to the same solution that in effect he offers in The Sun Also Rises in the relation between Jake and Bill -- homosexuality.

The action of "The Sea Change" takes place in a Parisian bar, and yet the man and woman do not seem to be drinking. A real change is occurring instead of the usual rotation of various liqueur-types. The interpretation of this change depends to a large extent on what a reader does with the two allusions: one to The Tempest song

"Full Fathom Five" and the other to Pope's Essay on Man.⁴⁴

This man who is being replaced by his girlfriend's lesbian lover feigns at being the injured and jealous lover; however, the pose is ridiculous considering the nature of the break. Like the major of "In Another Country," the man is prepared for certain contingencies: lesbianism is not one of them. He is hunting for what he really feels. Frequently he adopts an inappropriate attitude which the girl helps him to revise.

"I'll kill her," he said.

"Please don't," the girl said.

· · · · ·
 "I will. I swear to God I will."
 "It won't make you happy. . . . What are
 you going to do about it?"
 "I told you."
 "No; I mean really."
 "I don't know," he said (397).

Throughout their conversation the girl's tone remains matter-of-fact. She has thoughtfully reached her present position and is unshakeably certain of where she stands. She is compassionate, caring, intelligent, and brave. She refuses, moreover, to remain any longer under the man's hegemony:

"All right," said the man. "What about
 it?"
 "No," said the girl, "I can't."
 "You mean you won't."
 "I can't," said the girl. "That's all that
 I mean."
 "You mean that you won't."
 "All right," said the girl. "You have it
 your own way."
 "I don't have it my own way. I wish to God

I did."

"You did for a long time," the girl said (397).

It is important that her action is not desperate or hysterical. No victim is required, however much the man would like to pretend that it's him.

He tells her that he understands and she agrees that he does: "When we do understand each other there's no use to pretend we don't" (398). But understand or not, he cannot yet accept what he knows, and demeans himself while trying. He asks for pity in the disguise of a challenge to her honesty. So you love me, well then, prove it. He makes her feelings and sexual activities look smutty by classifying them as "vice" and "perversion" in the hope of riding a moral high horse. Fortunately, his body is less inhibited than his mind and makes the adjustment to the new circumstances. His voice alters, he gathers composure, and he "settle[s] into something" (400).

The girl is careful to have the man send her away so that he becomes an active participant in what she is doing and also so that he admits what he knows but has been obstinately denying -- that she does love him and that she does not turn to a woman in order to spoil him. Yet to others the man still represents her sexual change as vice. It gives him the edge of public approbation, and this is still important to him. Their entire dialogue might be viewed as a debate between public and private moralities.

DeFalco believes that Pope's two couplets accurately depict what occurs in the story:

His acquiescence at the end signals his own capitulation and acceptance of vice.

.....
 What persuades him is not magnanimity or some spiritual impulse, as much as the appeal to the abnormal within him. In fine, he has embraced vice, not the woman.⁴⁵

In other words, she has emotionally blackmailed him! The enlightened and honest tenor of her dialogue should thwart the notion that she threatens him in any way, much less in the insidious manner DeFalco posits. As for the idea that the man embraces vice, the reason for the quotation's being botched is that Pope doesn't speak for the modern age.⁴⁶

The word itself, "vice," is archaic. Nothing could less represent twentieth-century ideas than Pope's Essay on Man which supports hierarchical authority, both in church and state, and includes that moral abomination "Whatever is, is right." What is relevant to the modern times is what the man does remember of this forgotten passage (other than the title-line), namely, "then embrace." The girl goes to embrace a new lover, the man learns to embrace a new idea.

After the girl departs, the man seems vaguely pleased with himself and asks the bartender Old James if he sees any change in him. The bartender notices nothing. The change is internal and thus visible only to those with a new

vision.⁴⁷ Old James has no such new vision, and in fact has an aura of the past about him. What may be the new morality to the man and woman is vice to Old James or Pope. Old James' cloistered ethic is mirrored in his white face; the man and woman have faces browned by the sun.

Finally, vice does not become familiar. If Pope's lines are strictly adhered to as DeFalco advises, then what is the vice that has become so familiar as to be embraced? Pope is not speaking about a substance. He is personifying an abstract quality that is assigned to certain patterns of behavior. To embrace vice is a metaphoric way of describing the emotional and moral acceptance of these forms of behavior: they are internalized as part of the person. Just the opposite is occurring in the story. The man looks in the mirror and sees the unfamiliar:

"I said I was a different man, James," he said. Looking into the mirror he saw that this was true (401).

Being different does not mar his looks, as it did Dorian Gray's. He looks better than ever as James attests. There is an emphasis throughout the story on seeing the familiar as the new, rather than the reverse. Several times the man gazes at the girl's hands as though seeing them for the first time, as though a miraculous transformation had occurred, "a sea-change / Into something rich and strange."

In these eight stories, stretching from the "boy and girl affair" of "A Very Short Story" to the lesbian affair of "The Sea Change," love and marriage are shown as waste, futility, and selfishness. Where a hero's courage is the central issue, then reliability of the self is paramount. Where a couple's ability to love each other is the problem, then flexibility and growth of the self are crucial. But both courage and love mean taking a stand. The characters of the marriage stories are permanently unsettled, both emotionally and physically. They are in various stages of migration and transit: the boat to the States and the train ride and the taxi ride in "A Very Short Story"; the desultory ambling of "Out of Season"; the temporary lodging in the tourist hotel of "Cat in the Rain"; the boat to Europe and constant flitting of "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot"; the express train of "A Canary for One"; the expected but late train of "Homage to Switzerland"; the train expected on schedule of "Hills like White Elephants"; the sexual transmigration and metaphoric voyage of "The Sea Change." These various couples share a love as vagrant as their habitations. Perhaps because they are all relatively young, Hemingway envisions a better stage for the person matured by the collapse of love.

NOTES

¹Death in the Afternoon, p. 42.

²Three of these stories are about couples who aren't legally married; nonetheless, the problems encountered by the couples in "A Very Short Story," "Hills like White Elephants," and "The Sea Change" are married people's problems. "Homage to Switzerland" is a case by itself. Of its three parts one is about divorce, another about sexuality, and a third about family relations.

³In "Fathers and Sons," pp. 489-90, Nick Adams attributes his father's suicide to sentimentality and bad luck.

⁴Hemingway and the Old Lady discuss "wow" endings:

Old Lady: And is that all of the story?
Is there not to be what we called in my youth
a wow at the end?

Ah, Madame, it is years since I added the
wow to the end of a story.

In that he does explain to the Old Lady that the wow is a function of meaning, and that he does suavely provide her with "a very feeble wow" to the story about the two homosexuals, Hemingway might be apologizing for the wow endings of his earlier stories, or he might be cautiously leaving open the possibility of more wows to come.

⁵DeFalco, pp. 176-79, in his interpretation of the story considers little other than Pope's two couplets. Young, p. 178 n., comments on both allusions and offers some general hints for reading allusion in Hemingway instead of prescribing a particular reading of this story. See also p. 184, both text and note, for Young's comment on Hemingway's own statement in Death in the Afternoon, p. 139, regarding the origin of this technique: "I learned how to do that by reading T. S. Eliot."

⁶The woman of "Hills like White Elephants" and Maria both have a heightened instinctual sense which might be attributable to the presence of an atavistic matriarchal principle. As Jordan says, Maria has "magic" in her body, and for her "the earth moves"; for Jordan, it is merely an "Almost." The woman of the short story, because she is pregnant, has a type of magic in her body. Anthropologists have discovered many societies where a woman's power is enhanced by her pregnant condition. The title itself, "Hills like White Elephants," suggests the magic of far-away places like Burma and Siam.

⁷A Moveable Feast (London, 1964), p. 75.

⁸Hemingway reported in a letter to Fitzgerald, ca. December 20, 1925, that the actual drunken guide hung himself as a direct result of Hemingway's getting him sacked. Ernest Hemingway, p. 581, col. 1.

⁹Ernest Hemingway, p. 109.

¹⁰Benson, The Writer's Art of Self-Defense, p. 154.

¹¹p. 103.

¹²Ibid.

¹³p. 287.

¹⁴Gertrude Stein is an exception. She, like Fitzgerald, transcends simple categorization.

¹⁵See Gennaro Santangelo's defense of Harry Street's wife in "The Dark Snows of Kilimanjaro," in Ernest Hemingway, ed. John K. M. McCaffery (New York, 1950), pp. 251-61.

¹⁶"[Hemingway] seems to feel, as Berdyaev wrote of Dostoievski's women, that 'woman is a stumbling-block in the way of male destiny.'" Killinger, p. 43.

¹⁷Hemingway, p. 141.

¹⁸See Ernest Hemingway, the index, s.v. "Kurowsky, Agnes von," and particularly pp. 49-51. The expansion of

this story concerning a wounded soldier and the nurse whom he loves results in A Farewell to Arms.

¹⁹p. 73.

²⁰The soldier is not the narrator, and the circumlocutions are, naturally, not his. But the narrator has access to the feelings of Luz and the soldier, so there is some rationale for accepting him as the soldier's "mouth-piece." Besides, the fact that the soldier's reticence about revealing private details under anaesthetic is matched by his contradictory need to tell the whole world about the affair makes it credible that the circumlocutions are his.

²¹"Sentimental" and "romantic" are not interchangeable terms, but they have much in common. Both glorify marriage, monogamy, family, and "the power of love." See Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World, Bk. II and Bk. VI, and Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel, Chap. 2.

²²The Long Good-Bye (Middlesex, 1959), p. 25.

²³Marsala is made with egg yolks, and egg yolks readily suggest a man's balls. Peduzzi and the young gentleman (Max Beerbohm, too) drink marsala in order to invigorate themselves. Peduzzi says he orders the marsala for the wife, but she does not understand him, and the husband must pressure her into swallowing this drink in which she has no interest. The wife's correction to the husband about the amount might be considered inconsistent with what I am proposing, but, significantly, the husband does not get the correct amount. The wife's comment indicates to the reader what the husband is doing.

²⁴The Complete Poems and Plays, p. 48.

²⁵Hawthorne's Short Stories (New York, 1959), p. 326.

²⁶p. 168.

²⁷The indefiniteness of sexual roles is matched by a blurring in nature. There are no clear lines: the sun

is hidden by rain clouds; the day is drizzly; the river is discolored by mud; and the cold wind whips up the grass.

²⁸The town is Rapallo. Hemingway, p. 135.

²⁹"Symmetry in 'Cat in the Rain,'" in The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, ed. Jackson L. Benson, pp. 231-32.

³⁰The story's title blatantly suggests a parody of T. S. Eliot. And for the Southern woman, Mrs. Elliot, Gertrude Stein is the likely candidate. See Benson, The Writer's Art of Self-Defense, p. 65.

³¹(New York, 1965), p. 108.

³²The Writer's Art of Self-Defense, p. 107.

³³The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature, ed. Sir Paul Harvey (London, 1974), s.v. "Gracchi."

³⁴Immediately following the disastrous wedding night, the couple pay a visit to Mr. Elliot's mother. That is their last act before setting sail for Europe. Much can be made of this fact. Mythically, the mother might be a deity who gives her final blessing before her charge sets out for a new land. On this next stage of the quest he has a different attendant. Psychoanalytically, Mr. Elliot proves himself dependent on his mother.

³⁵p. 105.

³⁶p. 38.

³⁷p. 176.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Fiedler, p. 115, offers one explanation for this embarrassment about writing:

The self-conscious artist of the new age feels himself at once of the middle class and estranged from it, the son of a bourgeois committed to oppose every-

thing in which the bourgeoisie believes. By the very act of becoming a writer, he has (he cannot help feeling) betrayed his father, abandoned the male world of consciousness and action for a dark flirtation with the unconscious, out of which he has emerged as from the womb of his mother.

Hemingway seems to feel this way, for with the exceptions of Harry Street and Jake Barnes (Jake is actually a journalist) all of Hemingway's fictive writers are weak and confused.

⁴⁰p. 182.

⁴¹See Ernest Hemingway, p. 237, where Baker discusses Hemingway's native suspicion of Jews and his later toleration of them.

⁴²The name "Jig" might be a kinesthetic image suggesting the abortion. The "jigging" of the minerals from their ore is like the jolting loose of the embryo from the uterus.

⁴³DeFalco, p. 171.

⁴⁴The relevant lines from The Tempest are:

No thing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

From Essay on Man:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

⁴⁵p. 176, p. 178.

⁴⁶When a quotation is relevant, then Hemingway does not have a character forget it. Frederick Henry remembers the pertinent line from Marvell, and Hemingway himself in Death in the Afternoon makes a showy allusion to

Marvell. In addition, there is the simple matter of Hemingway's aversion to certain writers. Pope has all the essential qualities to invite Hemingway's opprobrium. He also has two redeeming qualities: his craftsmanship as a writer and his Catholic faith.

⁴⁷ Hallucination and change of costume are the stuff The Tempest is made of. Both are important in this story, although rendered in an appropriately realistic fashion.

CONCLUSION

The weaker sex are acknowledged to be serious impedimenta in cases of flight.

George Eliot, The Mill on the Floss

In reading Hemingway there is the feeling that one thing, and a thing that can be learned, will solve the problem of existence:

He had known that I did not know, and which, when I learned it I was always able to forget. But I did not know what then, although I learned it later.¹

The thing known may be what Oedipus knew when he answered the Sphinx's riddle: that man advances toward death. Knowing the answer did not prevent Oedipus' tragic climax, just as Hemingway's repeated fictional presentations of man facing death did not prevent his own tragic finale.

The focus of the Marriage Group is on ethical matters, that is, on how to live from day to day. From living correctly some greater knowledge may follow, as Jake Barnes suspects:

Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about.²

Jake does learn how to live in it but at great cost. The

object of the contest with life is to learn how to live in it before you lose as much in it as Jake has. *

Another solution, and one which doesn't involve the high risk that Jake ran, is retreat. At an apprentice stage, the Hemingway hero will reluctantly pass into marriage for the sake of having children, but he is devoted to a more important type of experience such as:

[The] passions for hunting and fishing, passions that expressed themselves in the opportunities that such sports gave to escape the civilized-feminized environment and to offer a release from tension in the techniques, rules, and rituals required by these sports. The importance of these rules of behavior, however, was that they were self-imposed and had the authority of male tradition.³

The men of the marriage stories have forgotten that there is this type of experience to offset marriage.

Woman has no place in this masculine paradise, but Mother certainly has. Her place is guaranteed by the fact that for the American writer "childhood is his essential bliss":⁴ "We were happy the way children are who have been separated and are together again."⁵ In the mythic woods he inhabits the Hemingway hero is a boy. Resolving the dilemma of wanting the Mother but abhorring the Woman, Hemingway ascribes maternal qualities to nature. Nature teaches Nick Adams the things that are still important to him as a grown man: how to fish, hunt, make love, and live in harmony with his environment. Nature also heals his

emotional wounds, as in "Ten Indians" when he goes to bed heartsore over his Indian girl-friend Prudence but awakens refreshed:

He heard a wind come up in the trees outside and felt it come in cool through the screen. He lay for a long time with his face in the pillow, and after a while he forgot to think about Prudence and finally he went to sleep. When he awoke in the night he heard the wind in the hemlock trees outside the cottage and the waves of the lake coming in on the shore, and he went back to sleep. In the morning there was a big wind blowing and waves were running high up on the beach and he was awake a long time before he remembered that his heart was broken (336).

If for Mark Twain love is "'the dusting off' of marriage to a good woman" after he has had enough time roaming in the world,⁶ for Hemingway it is a state to be succeeded so that he can go back into the woods for a re-dusting. He traces a course, what might be called "primitivation,"⁷ that runs contrary to the nineteenth-century notion of civilization:

The theory of social stages . . . places the West below the East in a sequence to which both belong. The West has no meaning in itself because the only value recognized by the theory of civilization is the refinement which is believed to increase steadily as one moves from primitive simplicity and coarseness toward the complexity and polish of urban life.⁸

Like Cooper before him, Hemingway strikes out for the frontier with civilization close at his heels. Nature is the place to be trusted; it is the Great Good Place:

He was settled. Nothing could touch him. It was a good place to camp. He was there, in the good place.⁹

For what Hemingway envisions through his heroes' lives the appropriate term is "natural," not "normal." The natural is that which bypasses the confusions of sexuality, war, modern life, and tortured consciousness. The natural is the erotic merger of nature and man that gives man a feeling of peace; the natural is the dignified and welcome death that is the transition to something else. Robert Jordan's tranquil passing is such a natural death:

He could feel his heart beating against the pine needle floor of the forest.¹⁰ ✓

NOTES

¹A Farewell to Arms, p. 14.

²p. 148.

³Benson, The Writer's Art of Self-Defense, p. 9.

⁴Fiedler, p. 338.

⁵A Moveable Feast, pp. 188-89.

⁶Fiedler, p. 271.

⁷Young, p. 17, cites Fenichel's use of this term.

⁸Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (New York, 1950), p. 267.

⁹"The Big Two-Hearted River," p. 215.

¹⁰p. 471.

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