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ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S NOVELS

THROUGH FEMINIST LENSES

SUMMARY

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At his death, Hemingway left a legend of machismo, both in his private life and in his literary legacy. Contemporary considerations on his life and work are usually resumed to opinions that equate him with stereotypes of masculinity and chauvinism to both feminist and non-feminist readers. Since the posthumous publication of *The Garden of Eden*, however, scholars have become more interested in the writer's approach to sexual and gender identity. Thus, Gertrude Stein's prediction that a different Hemingway awaited readers of his work came true when readers have realised the divergence between Hemingway's public and private sides. The public display of masculinity is, in fact, counterbalanced by his true self exposed in his work. His writing is evidence that he was interested in the complexities of human gender and sexual identity and he thoroughly explored them in his longer fiction. Hemingway's novels are a place in which he fought the battles between his hidden desires and doubts and the expectations which others had of him.

He started examining gender identity in stories like Frederic and Catherine's, extending his interest in the constructions of masculinity and femininity through Jake's and Brett's attempts to understand themselves. Jordan and Maria's relationship is an attempt to find stability in a restrictive patriarchal society, while through the narrative of David and Catherine's troubled marriage, Hemingway showed how difficult is for a woman to find a voice. Thus, looking at these questions of identity, it becomes clear that he needed to bring together his own inner feelings, and gender roles that have been more or less accepted by the society. Moreover, towards the end of his literary career, he adopted an attitude towards the feminine that may be easily exploited by poststructuralist feminists. The aim of this research has been to apply a few of the major feminist concepts introduced by key figures in order to analyse Hemingway's portrayal of female characters, opposing the fresh reading provided by the feminist approach to the fixed interpretations of his female characters, tributary to the patriarchal thinking, in an attempt to demonstrate the writer challenged the patriarchal views on sex and gender and explored the feminine/masculine identity.

Even early criticism of Hemingway is no stranger to theories of self-definition, as his contemporary critics insisted that his work was a defence against the terror he felt after being wounded in Italy during World War I. Edmund Wilson, Malcom Cowley and Philip Young promoted this wound theory when arguing that writing was a defence mechanism for Hemingway and that for this reason all his heroes are men caught in threatening situations which

they try to block. In recent years, this has led to an understanding of Hemingway's doubts about the possibility of self-definition as the driving force behind his artistry, suggesting that it is this that made him create a solid identity for himself through his writing. As a result, a new generation of Hemingway critics has emerged, interpreting his work and his life in new ways, reconfiguring the view of Hemingway as a confident and secure man. This new wave of critics who investigated the writer's conflicted relationship with issues of sexuality and gender may be linked to the feminist project of the critics in the second half of the 20th century who challenged cultural prescriptions in the patriarchal society and proposed a reconsideration of traditional gender roles.

In order to avoid interpretations influenced by his biographical aspects, the selection of works for this paper will include only what I consider Hemingway's fictional novels, with the omission of the ones which have a strong biographical influence and of the short stories as well, which might be the subject of an entire different research due to the diversity of their themes. The selection of the eight novels which I have undertaken (*A Farewell to Arms*, *Across the River and Into the Trees*, *Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Islands in the Stream*, *The Garden of Eden*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, *To Have and Have Not*) is also representative for Hemingway's entire literary career, covering all the decades and the periods, the ups and downs that ultimately resulted in an impressive literary legacy.

This research will use a feminist critical approach focused on concepts like *médiatrix*, *écriture féminine*, binary oppositions, gender and homosocial bonds introduced by feminists like Simone de Beauvoir, Hélène Cixous and Eve Sedgwick, all tributary to the line of poststructuralist thinking. The concepts chosen as lenses to examine Hemingway's fictional novels have constituted a coherent critical framework due to their complexity and diversity. Probably one of the most important feminist concepts is *écriture féminine*, the first lens used in this research. The pluriovocity and the multiple meanings of the concept have provided a deep understanding of Hemingway's female characters, as it argues that women speak not only with their voices, but also with their bodies. This concept has been even more challenging if we consider that it refers to feminine writing in the context of Hemingway's legend of "macho" writing, making us question the stereotypical views which inscribed his style within the safe limits of masculinity. After the fresh reading provided by *écriture féminine* and its alternative means of expression, the next lens has been the concept of *binary oppositions*, meant to complete

the analysis started in the third chapter. With it, the traditional positioning of the woman in the patriarchal binary oppositions has been challenged, this time questioning more than just the silenced position. Since one of these pairs associates women with nature, it felt natural to explore this bond further by using the concept of *médiatrix*, the one which explains this connection and its complexity which goes beyond the simple dichotomies imposed by the patriarchal thinking. These three concepts offer a complex critical approach, as the aim has been to give a multi-dimensional perspective of Hemingway's female characters. Moreover, the multiple facets revealed have revolved the same theme: gender. Therefore, using this concept and the one of *homosocial bonds* in the last chapter led to a thorough exploration of the attitudes, actions and choices mentioned in the previous chapters, aiming at a more challenging (or disturbing) portrayal portrait of the characters.

The first chapter briefly presents and explains the concepts which are used in the analysis of the novels under scrutiny, starting with one aspect that feminism considers essential when demonstrating the inequalities and injustice suffered by women: the language used and imposed by the patriarchal society, full of asymmetry when referring to men and women. The poststructuralist feminism which deals with this aspect draws on the French existentialist feminist Simone de Beauvoir whose book *The Second Sex* (1949) is the foundation of modern feminism. Beauvoir argues that all through history woman has been denied full humanity and speaks about the ways in which science and the Western literary, social, political and religious traditions have created a world which preaches woman's inferiority to justify patriarchal domination. She introduces the vocabulary needed for the analysis of such social constructions of woman(hood) and femininity: the *Other* (illustrates the opposition masculine/feminine which is not symmetrical in Beauvoir's view), *transcendence* (man's continuous striving for freedom and authenticity), *immanence* (woman's passivity and stagnation, as opposed to man's state of becoming), the *Eternal Feminine* and *médiatrix* (express woman's relation with nature).

The French feminists who followed de Beauvoir used her theory as well as Derrida's and Lacan's deconstructive views in order to discuss the way language is constructed and the position or status of women and their representation in the oppositional pairs. Thus, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva belong to the generation of feminists who reconsidered and reversed the pre-ordained sexual hierarchy.

Hélène Cixous established a connection between the female body and feminine writing or *écriture féminine* and explored the possible solutions women had to escape from their culturally margin position. According to her, woman has a powerful voice which can be heard not only through language, but also when a woman uses her body or sexuality in order to deconstruct the binary oppositions which structure and circumscribe the relations between men and women. These oppositions place women on the inferior plane in relation to men, which brings about a negative connotation. Cixous's intention was to show how language structures and legitimates the existing patriarchal order. To Cixous, Western thought is constructed in an endless series of hierarchical binary oppositions that are essentially based on the couple male/female. Therefore, her goal was to unlock these hierarchical couples and to disclose the constant passivity of woman in all philosophical discourse.

Following Cixous, both Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva made use of the poststructuralist thought in order to deconstruct the solidity of Western philosophy examining its symbolic order and challenging the phallocentric system. Their texts, which have been extensively analysed in the first chapter, alongside Judith Butler's and Eve Kososfsky Sedgwick's, who discussed the problem of gender relationships in their works, subvert the typical patriarchal representations of women and question the relationship between body and language.

Before exploring the way the concepts mentioned above could be used in reading Hemingway's heroines, other critical readings of his work have been taken into consideration in the second chapter, in order to compare and contrast critical views in different decades. Due to his productive literary talent and the notoriety achieved during his lifetime, Hemingway's work has been reviewed and interpreted from the very beginning of his career in the 1920s, when Gertrude Stein, D. H. Lawrence, John Dos Passos, Ford Maddox Ford considered him an impeccable writer, while T. S. Matthews and Robert Warren Penn criticised Hemingway for being unable to render delicate and noble sentiments.

In the 1950s and the 1960s the interpretations revolved around the existing gender stereotypes of Western thought which divided women into two categories: angel and monster. These two roles are, in fact, projections of patriarchal male desire: wanting "madonna" for wife and mother of his children and the "whore" only for sex as she is not good enough to marry. Thus, Hemingway's heroines were perceived, on the one hand, as weak companions, submissive and male-centred wives or mistresses, nurturing mothers and, on the other hand, as threatening

women who subvert male patriarchy and dominance. Carlos Baker, Leo Gurko, Edmund Wilson, Joseph Warren Beach, Leslie Fiedler consider that Maria, Catherine Barkley or Renata are the perfect embodiment of the obedient woman, while Brett Ashely is a threat for man's masculinity.

The next decade of criticism is marked by the same line of thought, in spite of major works by Lacan, Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray who shake the foundations of feminist thinking. Hemingway's female characters are still divided into the two categories mentioned earlier and they are approached from the same perspective.

From mid-1980s, however, there has been a clear shift in the critical approach of Hemingway's novels, as critics became interested not only in the full variety of characters portrayed by Hemingway, including his female characters, but also in exploring Hemingway's representation of nature, identity, and sense of place from different perspectives, as well as in his handling of issues of race, gender, and sexual identity. From a feminist perspective, these decades mean a deeper exploration of sexuality, new interpretations appear, based mostly on discussing gender, sexual aggressiveness and sexual experimentation become a quality, and the analyses of language and miscommunication echo poststructuralist feminist ideas. In the 1990s it is already clear that stereotypical patterns are reversed: women become active, while men assume the passive role.

The third chapter, entitled "*Écriture féminine* or how the body speaks," has proposed an analysis of Hemingway's novels starting from the Cixousian concept of *écriture féminine*. Because of the subversive plurality of the meanings which the concepts encompassing writing, speech and body language have, a reading of the female characters through these lenses, which has been the aim of this research thesis, reveal refreshing perspectives and new dimensions in character portrayal. Thus, this chapter has focused on the way in which the characters write the text not with language, but with their bodies. Examples to support this view are cutting and bleaching their hair, sexual encounters, the way the characters speak and express themselves.

The first aspect analysed in the chapter is the way in which 'hair', a recurrent image in Hemingway's novels, is an alternative means of expressing desire, frustrations, needs, oppressed feelings, and at the same time, it is the women's outcry to the world, an instance of *écriture féminine.* The approach proposed by *écriture féminine* focuses neither on long nor on short hair in particular, but on hair as an expression of gender issues and sexual transgression, which, incidentally, are performed by the characters. Thus, the concept provides a reading in which the

haircut is a means of using the body in order to create a text and to rebel against the arbitrary, socially constructed gender roles to which woman is expected to conform.

The experiments with hair that characters like Catherine Barkley, Brett Ashley, Maria, Catherine Bourne propose emphasise their dissatisfaction with the conventional markers of gender identification specific of the early years of the 20th century. Catherine Barkley's desire to cut her long hair is a gesture of sacrifice in order to express her regret that she refused sexual intimacy with her lover who died in the war. In spite of her initial drive to cut her hair out of remorse, her desire to understand and experience personal identity prevails throughout the novel, as she wants Henry to explore with her the realm of gender by playing with the conventions that generally establish the differences between the sexes.

Unlike Catherine Barkley, who only fantasies about having her hair cut, other characters with short hair appear in the stories: Maria, Brett Ashley, Catherine Bourne compensate for their insecurities about expressing themselves with language by having a short haircut. Maria does not wish to have short hair, this was not her choice, and her short hair is a constant reminder of the physical and mental abuse she suffered. But she has the inner strength to overcome her trauma, using this physical mark into her healing process. By allowing Jordan to tenderly caress her she may no longer think of her tragedy, but incorporate everything in a new life when she begins to use her hair as a token of her sexual attractiveness.

Unlike Maria, who has no choice in deciding whether to have short hair or not, Brett Ashley's short and combed-back hair is an act of rebellion against the restrictive gender roles. Wearing her hair in a mannish style is one of her strategies to resist the definitions which the male society would have created about women and a sign showing her desire to hold on to life as she sees fit. This is most obvious when she rejects one of her suitors, the bullfighter Pedro Romero, because he wants her to let her hair grow, a demand which she finds unacceptable.

For Catherine Bourne, bleaching and cutting her hair is juxtaposed with engaging in transsexual and bisexual relations which are also a means of expressing herself. Her hairstyle is a creative act of self-expression which leads to a better understanding of her needs and desires. For Catherine, every new haircut means a step forward in becoming who she really is, in claiming her true identity. It seems that the shorter her hair gets, the more she discovers herself. Throughout the novel Catherine prefers physical to linguistic expression and she derives both self-respect and sexual satisfaction from communicating with her body.

Sexuality is another way in which *écriture féminine* functions in the text, as the female libido and not the written word best express reality. Thus, women create a text with their bodies when they have sexual relations with men. Cixous even urges women to write themselves, to let their bodies be heard, pointing that the repressed libidinal desires are the seats of great creative strength. She also explains that women have been indoctrinated to deny their eroticism, hence have been dispossessed of a major source of creativity. Hemingway's female characters are all willing to have sexual relations with men. Catherine Barkley, Maria, Brett, Catherine Bourne, Marie Morgan welcome their partners into their lives and into their beds, using them to their benefit.

The "weak" characters such as Catherine Barkley or Maria use the relationships with their partners to explore their own sexuality and to overcome their traumas, while Brett Ashley, Catherine Bourne and Countess Renata are self-confident when exercising their physical or libidinal needs in contrast with the insecurities they experience when trying to communicate with language.

Catherine and Frederic's love story exposes the battle between female and male will, the desire to overcome social barriers and stereotypes. Set against the First World War, it shows the differences between the absurd and rigid roles imposed by war which is ruled by phallocentric laws and the fluid emotional and sexual boundaries that might be erased in a relation with a woman. At first, there are clear examples of the masculine sexual practice during the war, when physical satisfaction is all that Frederic and the other man look for. To them, sex is just a distraction, some fun in the midst of the war. The prostitutes that are mentioned at the beginning are obviously perceived by objects as men and they extend this perception to the nurses they like to visit for a change. This is clear from Henry and Catherine's first date, when he attempts to manipulate her to give in order for him to achieve sexual satisfaction. He considers her nothing more than a distraction in a game that he thinks he masters. However, Catherine is fully aware of the game they play and even rejects him when she considers that it has gone too far. By using her body, she teaches Henry what it means to love and to sacrifice yourself for the other. The tragic ending of the novel might reflect the fact that the world rejects new orders and punishes those who dare to question pre-established rules. In spite of Catherine's death, the message conveyed is about the importance of love in a world dominated by oppressive rules.

Maria's behaviour during her sexual encounters with Robert Jordan has been established by recent criticism as an act of self-healing, as according to Gail D. Sinclair she uses her body to overcome her mental and physical trauma. In spite of the rape, the purity and the innocence of the body and her spirit make the men respect her.

Brett's sexual forwardness and movement from one man to another is the result of her desire to find a partner who does not treat her as a sexual object and social accessory. One solution to this objectification she is subjected to and the quest for discovering her real self are to find the opportunity to define herself other way than sexually. Thus, she needs to have non-sexual relationships with gay male friends and with Jake in particular, whom she trusts and offers her a sanctuary away from the others like Robert Cohn, Mike Campbell or Pedro Romero who are only interested in her body. Thus, she is more focused on herself, her needs, her search for identity. Her affair with Romero makes her realise that the result of her numerous relationships is her suffering due to her need to feel accepted. In conclusion, her decision to give up Romero is a final act of her complete escape from male domination. Although she is often seen as a predatory woman, especially by Cohen who compares her with Circe, her decisions prove her refusal to give in to male desire and expectations. Brett's interest in male activities such as bullfighting and heavy drinking disturbs the male world and its hierarchy, which is unforgivable in a patriarchal society, therefore she is punished to be truly loved by the only man who cannot give her full satisfaction.

Catherine Bourne insists, first, on a transsexual relationship with her husband and, later, on a lesbian and then a *ménage à trois* involving Marita. Catherine's body communicates ideas while simultaneously manifesting sexual pleasure. She feels self-confident when exercising her physical or libidinal form of artistic expression in contrast with the insecurities she experiences when trying to communicate verbally with language. Throughout the novel Catherine has repeated attempts to write with her body and her libidinal creativity. She struggles with logocentric discourse and gradually realizes that the libido not only provides an effective measure of self-expression, creativity, and art, but also serves as the locus of her psychic, spiritual, and sexual liberation. As a result, her husband calls her "Devil", a name she shares with another character, Renata.

Although Hemingway's women from his fictional novels prefer physical to linguistic expression, there are a few which sabotage patriarchal order by using speech power. Pilar, in

particular, is envied by Robert Jordan for her narrative talent. Brett, Catherine Bourne and Renata show the same preference for speech over writing, as this is another means of expressing their feelings, frustrations and desires. But feminine language triggers social and political changes and undermines phallocentric expectations and demands concerning syntax, grammar, linear thoughts. Catherine Bourne's revolutionary use of language reflects these aspects because she employs a language which clearly opposes phallogocentric discourse. In addition to communicating with her libido, she uses nonlinear patterns of speech which include contradictions, fragmented sentences, irregular syntax and punctuation. Even more, throughout the novel Catherine demonstrates her frustration with or alienation from language.

The way in which women create their own unwritten narratives in real life, becoming the manipulators in their love relationships is another expression of *écriture féminine*. By using words or without them, they try to maintain their relationship and the honeymoon atmosphere as long as possible so that their own narrative should not come to an end. Having the ability to adapt the environment to their needs and desires is a quality they develop by using their minds and their bodies. Their stories unfold according to their wishes, words being used only to reinforce want they have already done. Catherine Barkley, for example, tries to create the image of home wherever she and Henry are, be it in a hospital room, a hotel room or the chalet in Switzerland. Maria is decided never to go through the same pain again, so she asks Robert Jordan to teach her how to shoot, in order to be prepared to decide her own fate if necessary.

Another theme related to *écriture féminine* is Catherine Bourne's creativity which evolves from psychic or libidinal origins to practical manifestations. She desires to be an artist, like David, therefore she struggles with feelings of inadequacy, manifesting the suffering and insecurities expressed by Cixous in her concept. Such feelings are common to women who face the patriarchal dominance of the arts, but because of the traditional male control of arts, her gender restricts her to alternative means of expression.

The fourth chapter, named "Binary oppositions and Hemingway's female characters," has used the theory of binary oppositions in an attempt to demonstrate that in spite of the traditional view which positions Hemingway's heroines on the unfavourable right side of the slash, they, in fact, possess the "male" traits from the left side of the binary oppositions as well. The dichotomous thinking organises not only the human culture in terms of opposites such as black/white, sun/moon, reason/passion, good/evil, right/wrong, male/female, but also sets the

ideals people aspire to. As a result, we inherently create these oppositions in mind with everything we are presented with because we have the tendency to create hierarchies which structure our society. Starting from these ideas, Hélène Cixous argued that behind all the oppositional pairs lies the gender differentiation: male/female. According to her, binary thinking almost always builds in dominance or privilege because it always favours the first term of the pair which is placed on a higher position in the hierarchy of our society. But reversing the poles is not the solution, as this would still mean that thinking is dominated by hierarchy as one side is privileged. Thus, Cixous proposes a deconstructionist approach which undoes all oppositions, arguing that the hierarchy operating in these oppositions reflects the position of women within the couple, family and society in general in contrast with man's. Consequently, the aim of this chapter is use this theory and previous critical interpretations of Hemingway's heroines and demonstrate that in spite of the traditional view which positions them on the right side of the slash, they have the so-called "male" traits from the left side of the binary oppositions.

Experiencing both insecurity and destruction is the first example that has been brought in order to support this theory. Brett Ashley and Catherine Borne are two of the most powerful women created by Hemingway in his novels, famous for undermining patriarchal ideology. However, their conflicting ideas about sexuality and gender which are, in fact, the outcome of their inner battle for identity which reveals their constant insecurity in this male-dominated world.

Brett's search for identity, free of inhibitions and social constraints, places her in the position of the threatening woman because she does not accept her "womanly" condition and explores the opposite sex in a manly way. This has a two-fold paradoxical consequence: on the one hand, she is perceived as an object of male sexual fantasy and, on the other hand, she is feared by the men she meets. As Cixous argues, male desire erases femininity by making women objects of their own lust in order to consolidate their subjugation and to avoid any redefinition of gender differences which might lead to egalitarian status. Thus, in the world created by the novel Brett is unable to change the way men see her. Yet, she tries to negotiate a position between the two worlds in an attempt to evade this system of sexual subjugation in which the masculine attitude to femininity places her.

Unlike Brett, who enters the novel as a strong character, Catherine Bourne evolves from the patriarchally desired model of submissiveness to fluctuations between boy and girl during

lovemaking and her sexual explorations. These are expressions of her need to understand herself in a phallogocentric society with pre-established norms of acceptable behaviour. Thus, in spite of Catherine's general perception as destructive, she, too, is oscillating between the opposing poles of social and sexual behaviour. If at the beginning of the novels she sexually inexperienced in comparison with David and she displays the same willingness and interest to please him, she soon becomes the dominant person in their relationship by starting her experiments meant to explore her sexuality and discover her true identity, even if it means defying the strict rules concerning sexuality established by patriarchal society. And, in spite of her fears and frustrations, her personal concerns and strong will outweigh David's needs, whom sh intends to destroy.

In fact, what Catherine does is deconstruct, not destroy. Because she believes that identity is not a cultural construct, but one's invention, she seeks to discover hers, even if it means questioning pre-established patriarchal rules. Catherine is trapped between the traditional "normal" definitions of womanhood and her own identity which cannot conform to these rules. She shows that being a woman is not something stable, fixed, which can be performed every time the same, and that it means individual, subjective, fluctuating experiences which differ from moment to moment and from woman to woman.

An interesting duality discussed in this chapter is the masculine/feminine opposition which characters like Brett Ashley and Countess Renata feel towards sex, love, life and death. Brett, for example, has a masculine attitude towards sex, considering that sexual experience and multiple partners are as normal for a woman as they are for a man. However, she is in a constant chase of the myth of true love. In addition, she spends her time in the company of men, drinking with them and assuming all their prerogatives, yet she is financially supported by them. On the other hand, Countess Renata, possesses a feminine beauty which is contrasted by her masculine attitude towards life and death, as exemplified by the lessons about dignity and acceptance of the inevitable which she teaches Cantwell. Yet, in spite of her cold blood, her feminine beauty and youth balance the equation of her personality. Both characters are complex and controversial because they question the traditional values instilled in women.

Brett represents the inner struggle of the controversial New Woman of the 1920s and everything she does reveals this battle with herself and the others. Her nature is dual from almost every perspective, her contradictions are obvious and her conflicting behaviour shows she cannot

always decide what she really wants. One such contradiction is her masculine attitude towards feelings and life in general, yet her feminine beauty counterparts her choices and reactions. She is definitely the embodiment of the New Woman, as she is self-possessed, spends her time in the company of men, drinks heavily and she generally refuses to be bound by convention. But her physical beauty is tributary to that of the sensitive, unthreatening woman. Just like the New Woman, Brett is a mixture of feminine and masculine traits. But it is rather difficult to place these traits in an oppositional pair and decide which is attributed the positive left side and which the negative right side of the pair, as in Cixous's theory. This happens because Cixous openly delimitates the terms of the pair as masculine/feminine, saying that Western thinking clearly favours the former, associating it with a positive connotation, as opposed to the latter. However, in this case, the boundary between masculine and feminine is blurred, as Brett's masculine behaviour is threatening for men, while her feminine beauty is appealing.

Similar to all Hemingway heroines, Renata has been approached by critics from an undermining point of view, being considered an idealised attractive young girl with no mind of her own who exists only for her lover. But she is not inferior to the man she has a relationship with and her deep insight into things demonstrates her mental and emotional capacity which surpasses Cantwell's. Not only does she teach him valuable lessons about love, courage and life in general, but she also brings him comfort.

Two characters torn between opposing roles are Catherine Barkley and Maria, as they alternate between moments of empowerment and the confinement of the obedient woman. Catherine reveals the strong side of her personality when she rejects Henry and during labour, but she also embodies the submissive woman eager to please her man. Similarly, Maria is young, innocent and compliant, being dismissed by criticism for her lack of independence. Nonetheless, her strength to overcome the trauma in her life and her experiments with sexuality after being raped are evidence of her strong will to regain the control of her life.

Catherine's determination is not as obvious as the one Brett or Catherine Bourne display, but this does not mean that that the labels such as "a divine lollipop" (Hatchett in Beniwal 70) or "a leaf of lettuce" (Cooperman 85) give a full account of her personality. Her individuality and independent thinking are, in fact, part of her personality, even if there are moments when she shows signs of weakness.

Just like Brett Ashley, Catherine enters the story after having lost her fiancé and she feels guilty for not having consumed their relationship . From the beginning of the novel it is clear that Frederic Henry tries to take advantage of this and that he treats Catherine as a means to satisfy his needs during their first encounters. The only thing he has in mind when he meets her is achieving sexual satisfaction. One of the first things the reader notices is that the first meetings between Catherine and Henry take place at night. It is common knowledge that night and all the elements included (the mad moon, the treacherous darkness) have been traditionally associated with the idea and representation of woman in patriarchal thought. Thus the moon meant darkness, changing identity in different phases and enigma. Yet, her strong opinions about the "manly" topics of the war expressed during their first conversations, as well as her refusal to be lectured by him and her polite assertiveness counterpart this interpretation of mental liability. In addition, when he kisses her after having been denied twice, she slaps him "I leaned forward in the dark to kiss her and there was a sharp stinging flash. She had slapped my face hard." (24)
By having such a quick and powerful reaction Catherine reveals her strong personality which does not submit easily to anyone. Just like Brett Ashley, Catherine seems totally aware of men's commodification of femininity and it is clear that she dislikes being degraded.

However, she gradually gives in to Henry's needs and desires, turning herself into a submissive companion, eager to please him. Like any ideal woman in patriarchal thinking, she looks out for the man's best interest at the expense of hers. Not only does she refuse to privilege her own wishes over Henry's, but also she refrains from any action or word that might upset him which leads to constant apologising.

Just like Catherine, Maria has a more powerful personality and identity than she was previously given credit. Apart from the traits which place her in the patriarchal category of the "good girl", she is endowed with a strong personality revealed by the courage and strength she has when facing life. At the beginning it is obvious that Jordan views her in sexually objectified ways. He is instantly drawn to her, lusting for the prettiest female body available around without the desire to form a relationship with her. Furthermore, her willingness to please Robert Jordan is similar to the one Catherine Barkley shows in her relationship. On the other hand, Maria's experiments with her sexuality as a way to heal from the brutality of rape, the way she finds humour as a way to heal from her traumatic event, and her desire to use her androgynous appearance as a way to relate to Robert Jordan and establish herself as his equal in their

relationship may lead to the conclusion that casting Maria aside completely as a shallow, patriarchal creation means underestimating her true potential and power.

The fifth chapter, entitled "Woman as *Médiatrix*. Metaphors of Woman.", focuses on the concept of *médiatrix*, in an attempt to demonstrate that the relationship that exists between woman and nature has many forms. Among the first critics to address this matter was Simone de Beauvoir who considered woman to be a means, the mediator between man and Nature without being part of his universe. She believes that the role of being a woman is acquired by the girl as she grows up in society and internalises patriarchal rules and codes of behaviour, accepting thus her subordinated status as naturally given. According to her theory, the man is the Essential One, the subject, who forces woman into the position of the Inessential Other, the object (a position were she is denied the status of self-determining individual choice, viewed only as man's support and property, a médiatrix for his needs). However, at the same time, woman is omnipresent in culture in her construction in myths of femininity, because man needs her to define himself against her. According to the critic, these myths of femininity are created by collective and patriarchal male imaginative constructions of woman which are, in fact, a strategy of oppressing woman because she is positioned as mirror. At the core of these myths lies the merging of woman and Nature because due to the reproductive quality of the female body, woman is thought to be fundamentally bound to nature. In her study Beauvoir shows how these myths of femininity serve to position man in the superior status of the rational, transcendent subject by assigning woman the position of object.

The aim of the chapter is to explore the representations of nature and gender roles assigned in Hemingway's novels. The main example is the sea, explicitly gendered as feminine in some of his works: *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Islands in the Stream* and *To Have and Have Not*. The sea and woman are connected as both have same biological cycles: fecundity, copulation, birth, nurture. Santiago sees the sea as a goddess, a possible mother for Manolin, a vengeful woman, while Thomas Hudson views the sea as a seductress siren.

An obvious connection that exists between women and nature is the ability to (pro)create. Woman becomes thus a *médiatrix* due to her capacity to bear and give life and to nurture the baby once it is born. In this case she is expected to perform the domestic rituals meant to continue the natural cycle of life. Interestingly, in Hemingway's novels there is only one

character who conforms to this position: Catherine Barkley. Not only does she give birth, but she also engages in domestic activities, as any woman in a patriarchal society should do.

In the novel *The Garden of Eden* both Catherine and Marita are connected to the primordial idea of nature not only because of the allusions to the Biblical Edenic Garden, but also because nature reflects the changes the characters undergo both inside and outside. While, at first, everything is bright and clear, a sign of inner peace and bliss, the more Catherine starts to feel misunderstood and Marita becomes involved in their relationship, the darker everything gets.

The last chapter, named "Gender Identity, Love Triangles and Homosocial Bonds" is focused on the themes of androgyny and homosexuality in the light of Eve Sedgwick's theory about homosocial bonds existing mainly between men. The critics argues that that gender and desire are social constructs and that men and women are simply the products of patriarchal power relations over which they have no control, and persons of the same sex form social bonds. But these bonds differ between men and women, as the idea of sex and gender is represented differently to men and women because of the power relationships between each sex. The aim of this chapter is to analyse how Sedgwick's theory may be applied into the relationships between some of Hemingway's characters, especially to whose which tackle the topics of homosexuality and androgyny.

The androgyny theme has been applied in particular to three of Hemingway's novels: *The Garden of Eden*, *The Sun also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*. In *The Garden of Eden*, the love triangle between Catherine, David and Marita represents the most powerful and dynamic gender fusion in all of Hemingway's novels. At first, Catherine and David Bourne are the normal newlywed couple who spend their honeymoon on an earthly Eden. But, when they start to really discover each other and to search for their identity individually and within the couple, things start to fall apart. Thus, Catherine is the first to explore her sexuality with her fluctuations between boy and girl during her and David's lovemaking. David, however, has ambivalent feelings towards Catherine's experiments with opposite gender roles, as there are times when he seems to like it and be attracted to Catherine's appearance as a boy.

Catherine's overt experimentalism meant to help her find her true identity affects the lives of the others as well. Her tendency towards androgyny is manifested first by her appearance and then by her challenging the heteronormative role of woman when engaging in sexual acts outside of the traditional roles within the heterosexual couple. Catherine's

experiments have been a topic of heated debate, whether or not they are pushed as far as being considered a rape, a violation of David's sexual rights. In addition, by including Marita in their relationship, she experiments with lesbianism as well. In the end, Catherine is punished for her actions: she becomes mad and is replaced by Marita. In spite of her destructive game, she is also a victim, as Marita is more manipulative than herself and a home wrecker.

Conversely, the love triangle in *The Sun also Rises* is different because there is no fixed couple and potential lovers revolving around it. Brett is the only woman and the focus of interest of all the other is more or less emotionally involved with her and with each other. Similar to Catherine, Brett experiments with gender and uses the men around her to reach her purpose. The only person who genuinely loves her is Jake Barnes, a man incapable to satisfy her physically because of a genital wound. The result is a relation between a tormented man, who seeks confirmation of his masculinity in a prostitute while denigrating homosexuality. However, he shares a bond with an impotent man, Count Mippipopolus, who does not have the same need like Jake's to assert his sexuality, and feels excluded from the group of Brett's suitors. He realises that he cannot compete with them in their world of ritualised sporting activities and male bonding. Jake admires Pedro Romero for his bullfighting, and despises Robert Cohn for his weeping over being rejected by Brett. The only man he shares a bond with is Bill Gordon with whom he goes on a fishing trip in San Sebastian. It is the only moment when Brett is not present and when Jake and Bill's behaviour and language have sexual connotations that have been interpreted both as homosexual tendencies and as a "continuum of male homosocial bonds", a celebration of male friendship, according to Sedgwick's view.

A similar friendship is manifested by Frederic Henry and Rinaldi in *A Farewell to Arms*. This particular friendship may be described as homosocial bond between two men whose interests and lives go separate ways. At first, they share the same room and seem to be best friends, yet Rinaldi repeatedly tries to convince Henry to agree to give him a kiss. In addition, he uses Catherine Barkley as "traffic woman" in order to eroticise and strengthen his relationship with Henry. But in spite of Henry's apparently indifferent, even annoyed reaction to Rinaldi's advances, he too seems to feel an attraction towards his roommate demonstrated by the way he looks at him and the fact that he sleeps in Rinaldi's bed.

Although the theory of homosocial bonds applies mostly to men, because according to Eve Sedgwick there are no relations of power between women, Catherine Barkley and Helen

Ferguson also have a relationship that can be interpreted in terms of sexual politics. Their bond is reflected by the jealousy and anger Ferguson feels towards Henry and by the affection with which Catherine protects Ferguson's secret from Henry.

After reading and analysing Hemingway's novels through the lenses offered by the feminist concepts mentioned in the first chapter, it may be concluded that inscribing Hemingway himself and his work in one definite category, be it that of a misogynist or a macho, is an impossible task. The complexity of his novels and of his characters goes beyond simple dichotomies which organise and establish hierarchies in our society. Fortunately, there are critics who have resisted the "machismo" reading and helped strengthen the argument that Hemingway's characters transgress the boundaries of patriarchal dichotomies in general and gender binaries in particular.

In spite of his "masculine" life, famous for his heavy drinking, womanising and hunting, the themes of his novels reveal a man interested in exploring a world in which not only men and women interact, but they also explore and combine masculinity and femininity. Although the setting of his novels is war or the sea, the themes revolve around issues of sexual preferences, mediated gender and constructions of identity.

Hemingway's female characters and the feminist concepts analysed in this thesis are meant to challenge the superficial or misguided readings of Hemingway's treatment of women and gender. Our reading is based on the view that the female characters require the same attention as the male characters, as they are more subtle and more complex than generally assumed. This conclusion may be drawn from the fact that Hemingway related gender both to manhood and womanhood, questioning the patriarchal constructions of "being a man" and "being a woman" by juxtaposing and mirroring the two. Thus, with Hemingway, traditional gender roles, heterosexuality and homosexuality become categories meant to oppress and repress identity expression.

The approach proposed in this thesis has attempted to demonstrate that Hemingway portrayed his female characters with equal complexity and individuality as his male characters and that gender seems to have been one of his constant concerns. After reading his novels through the lens of *écriture féminine* it may even be argued that he had a feminine voice which resonates throughout his characters in a surprising way. Thus love, seen mostly as erotic desire, is not one-sided anymore, as his female characters explore it as intensely as the male characters.

Furthermore, women in his fiction enjoy a greater freedom and range of expression than once supposed, and the questions of gender identity and sexual ambivalence are equally important to the understanding of Hemingway's heroes and heroines.

This feminist reading reveals how Hemingway's female characters have been underestimated, and demands further investigation of Hemingway's entire literary work and a reconstruction of his narrative personality. According to Hadley Hemingway, he was "so complicated; so many sides to him, you could hardly sketch him in a geometry book" (qtd. in Diliberto 115). Since over the last few decades the landscape of feminist studies has changed drastically, especially those dealing with gender, an analysis incorporating the works of scholars specialised in queer studies could be the subject of further study concerning Hemingway's depiction of sexuality in his work.

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