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## Ernest Hemingway by Shirley Jackson Introduction: Shirley Jackson on Ernest Hemingway: A Recovered Term Paper

John W. Crowley  
*Syracuse University*

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# Ernest Hemingway

BY SHIRLEY JACKSON

INTRODUCTION:

SHIRLEY JACKSON ON ERNEST HEMINGWAY:  
A RECOVERED TERM PAPER

*By John W. Crowley*

IF THE teacher hadn't kept the student's essay, it might have been lost forever. But Shirley Jackson's term paper, along with several others from the same 1940 course on Ernest Hemingway, was found in the Leonard Brown Papers recently acquired by Syracuse University Library. Maybe Professor Brown never had a chance to return the paper. After Jackson's graduation that spring from Syracuse University, she immediately moved to New York with Stanley Edgar Hyman, a classmate with whom she had been passionately involved for two years and to whom she would soon be married, despite objections from both their families.

Shirley Jackson's class-conscious parents had hoped she would unfold as a social butterfly, and they were constantly dismayed by their daughter's deviations from the upper-crust suburban norms of San Francisco and (later) Rochester, New York. To Leslie and Geraldine Jackson, Shirley was a disappointment: an ungainly girl who preferred reading and writing poems and stories to learning the social graces or practicing the womanly arts that might land her a socially proper husband; a troubled, rebellious adolescent who flunked out of the University of Rochester; an energetic young woman whose high intelligence had yet to find its focus. When Jackson enrolled at Syracuse in 1937, with enough transfer credits for sophomore standing, she was trying to get as far away from home as her parents would allow. She was also attracted to the University's program in journalism and by its reputation, no doubt exaggerated, as "a hotbed of communism and antisocial attitudes." This was the view of the "nice"

John W. Crowley is professor of English at Syracuse University, where he has taught since 1970. He has also served as department chair. A specialist in American literature, Crowley recently completed *The White Logic: Alcoholism and Gender in American Modernist Fiction* (1994).

Rochester boy with whom her parents had fixed her up.<sup>1</sup> But Shirley was set on scandalizing her family—by her choice of a man, if not her choice of a career.

In the egomaniacally brilliant and politically radical Stanley Hyman, an unpolished, working-class Jew from Brooklyn, Shirley Jackson found someone who would not only incarnate her parents' worst nightmares, but also fulfill her own romantic needs and validate her work as a writer. When Shirley met Stanley, as one friend remarked, "it was nuclear fission. . . . He had a catalytic effect on her life."<sup>2</sup> Hyman, who aspired to be nothing less than the critical arbiter of the rising generation, believed he had discovered a true genius in Jackson. From the moment of their first encounter, as a result of his reading one of her stories in a campus magazine, Hyman relentlessly encouraged Jackson to answer her literary calling.

The support she got from Leonard Brown was no less crucial to her ultimate success. Jackson later showed her gratitude by dedicating to him her best novel, *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959). Brown was an early advocate of bringing contemporary writing into the classroom, and his courses in American literature and criticism were among the first of their kind in the country. Taking his seminar on Hemingway, offered even before the publication of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, must have been an exciting prospect for students as literarily aware as Hyman and Jackson; for there was no writer in America who seemed more relevant in 1940 than Hemingway.

Brown's teaching notes from the seminar indicate that the students, most of whom were seniors, read through all of Hemingway's books, with an eye toward his political stance. Moved by the Marxist currents of the 1930s, Brown himself had drifted leftward; and Jackson, who followed Hyman into joining (at least temporarily) the Young Communist League, was no less concerned than they whether Hemingway was producing the "socially responsible" fiction urged upon him by "progressive" propagandists.

Among these was Malcolm Cowley, serving as a Communist Party stalwart at the *New Republic*. Cowley was invited by Brown to give some lectures at Syracuse during the summer of 1939, when Hyman stayed on campus while Jackson was swept off to California. (This enforced tour of Shirley's childhood environs was her parents' last-ditch attempt to distract her from Hyman.) Although Brown made a point of commending Stanley to Cowley, he spoke even more admiringly of the absent Shirley:

1. Quoted in Judy Oppenheimer, *Private Demons: The Life of Shirley Jackson* (New York: Putnam's, 1988), 46. Biographical details are taken from Oppenheimer's excellent book.

2. Quoted in Oppenheimer, *Private Demons*, 63.

“This was the one to keep his eye on.”<sup>3</sup> Hyman may have been stimulated by Cowley, but he was galvanized that summer by another of Brown’s visiting lecturers, Kenneth Burke.

The most original American critic of the twentieth century, Burke always defied categorization, in part because he kept branching out in new directions. When he came to Syracuse in 1939, Burke had already published three books of criticism, and he was assembling the pieces for his next major work, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941). The title monograph derived, in fact, from the lectures Burke delivered at Syracuse.

Although Shirley Jackson was not exposed directly to Burke, she was undoubtedly familiar with his ideas, if not from her own reading, then from Burke’s impact on her mentors, Brown and Hyman.<sup>4</sup> Her approach to Hemingway may be characterized as Burkean in its search, as Burke put it, for “the clusters of associations surrounding the important words of a poem or fiction.”<sup>5</sup> For Burke, these “associational clusters” led in turn to the formulation of what he called “implicit equations”: linkages that point to underlying thematic patterns. By examining an author’s work, one may “find ‘what goes with what’ in these clusters—what kinds of acts and images and personalities and situations go with his notions of heroism, villainy, consolation, despair, etc. And though he be perfectly conscious of the act of writing, conscious of selecting a certain kind of imagery to reinforce a certain kind of mood, etc., he cannot possibly be conscious of the interrelationships among all these equations.”<sup>6</sup>

As Burke later explained, “The method was somewhat phenomenological in aim, seeking to get at the psychological depth of a work through the sheer comparison of its surfaces.”<sup>7</sup> Both on the surface and at the depths, the clusters usually fell out into binary pairs, dialectical oppo-

3. Oppenheimer, *Private Demons*, 81.

4. Traces of Burke’s influence appear in Brown’s notes for the Hemingway seminar. Apparently, each student gave oral reports on the fiction and/or the criticism, and the professor took notes. The most extensive entry refers to Hyman’s presentation on *To Have and Have Not*, in which he evidently used the Burkean phrase (twice transcribed by Brown) “perspective by incongruity.” This term, taken from Burke’s second book, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* (1935), was later used by Hyman as the title for an anthology he compiled of Burke’s writings, *Perspectives by Incongruity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964).

5. Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement* (1931), 2d ed. (1953; rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 23–4.

6. Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage, 1957), 18.

7. Burke, *Counter-Statement*, 217.

sites that were, paradoxically, at one. That is, according to Coleridge's motto, which Burke loved to quote, "extremes meet." (One may see here an American anticipation of the deconstructive method imported from France during the 1970s.)

In Jackson's paper on Hemingway, the argumentative strategy is to identify "a basic duality" through analysis of Burkean clusters—in this case, of antithetical characters. "The opposition of these two sets of characters," Jackson writes, "is the personification of the conflict in Hemingway himself, and his attempt to solve it through his writing."<sup>8</sup> In 1940, the notion that Hemingway's work reflected his inner conflicts was becoming a critical commonplace, and in this respect Jackson's paper is not all that remarkable—although its intellectual command and stylistic ease make it superior to typical undergraduate work, then or now.

The originality of the paper lies in its attention to the ambiguity surrounding gender roles in Hemingway's fiction. Jackson shrewdly suggests that the "positive" and "negative" character types in Hemingway "may be identified as male and female," but she also recognizes that "extremes meet": some female characters occupy the "male" position. Such implicit equations did not receive much attention before the first wave of feminist criticism during the 1970s. Gender issues have since moved to the center of Hemingway scholarship, especially since the exploration of his vast but unfinished late novel, published in a drastically edited form as *The Garden of Eden* (1986).<sup>9</sup>

8. "Ernest Hemingway," Leonard Brown Papers, Syracuse University Archives. Although Shirley Jackson's name nowhere appears *in type* on the paper—perhaps a cover sheet was lost—"Jackson" is written, apparently in Brown's hand, at the top of the first page. Additional evidence that the paper is, in fact, hers may be found in Brown's notes from the semester. About Jackson's report on *A Farewell to Arms*, for instance, he remarked: "'world breaks everyone': doesn't agree with father/son (Nick) story" (i.e., "Fathers and Sons"). The paper refers to this same story. Another of Brown's notes suggests that Jackson was assigned to summarize Gertrude Stein's impressions of Hemingway; these are cited in the paper. The best proof of Jackson's authorship is Brown's note about her report on *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories*, in which she examined Hemingway's fusion of love and death: "Women: fear. -> Bullfighting & hunting = perfect sex act;—as in Macomber story." The paper makes a very similar point, citing "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber."

9. See, for example: Mark Spilka, *Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes, *Hemingway's Genders* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994). It is notable that one of the earliest discussions of gender coding in Hemingway was written by another of Leonard Brown's protégés, Ted Bardacke, who was a graduate student at Syracuse when Hyman and Jackson were seniors, and who married one of their friends, Frannie Woodward. See Theodore Bardacke,





Shirley Jackson, ca. 1940. Photograph courtesy of Laurence J. Hyman.

Although Shirley Jackson read through Hemingway early in her own writing career, there is no evidence that his work had any formative influence on hers or that she took any great interest in his later fiction. For

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“Hemingway’s Women,” in *Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Work*, ed. John K. M. McCaffery (Cleveland: World, 1950).

Leonard Brown, however, Hemingway held an abiding fascination. A decade after the 1940 seminar, he prepared for Charles Scribner's Sons, Hemingway's publisher, an anthology of Hemingway's work: an in-house version of the omnibus Malcolm Cowley had edited in 1944 for the Viking Portable Library. Using a similar format, Brown wrote a general introduction as well as a brief critical preface for each selection.

When *The Hemingway Reader* appeared in 1953, however, the editor was Charles Poore. Brown had been kicked off the project by Hemingway himself. Late in 1952, an editor at Scribner's sent the complete draft of Brown's editorial commentary to Cuba for vetting by Hemingway. This was a period when Mr. Papa was feeling plagued by what he deemed a swarm of academic parasites. Hemingway was fending off Carlos Baker, Charles Fenton, and Philip Young, all budding scholars who were writing books about his work; he was determined to guard his personal life against scrutiny and speculation of the sort that had appalled him in Arthur Mizener's recent biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Far Side of Paradise* (1951).

"Criticism is getting all mixed up with a combination of the Junior F.B.I.-men, discards from Freud and Jung and a sort of Columnist peep-hole and missing laundry list school," Hemingway ranted to Wallace Meyer at Scribner's in February 1952, just months before he received Brown's typescript. "Mizener made money and did some pretty atrocious things . . . with his book on Scott," he continued in a paranoid vein, "and every young English professor sees gold in them dirty sheets now. Imagine what they can do with the soiled sheets of four legal beds by the same writer and you can see why their tongues are slavering (this may not be the correct word. If not you please supply it)."<sup>10</sup>

Although Brown certainly didn't slaver over any dirty laundry, something nonetheless irked the author, who marked up the typescript with iniquitous marginalia that called Brown's intelligence, writing skills, and manhood all into question! Perhaps Hemingway meant his more vicious vitriol for Meyer's eyes only, but the manhandled typescript was returned to Brown, who must have been mortified. In any case, he buried the offending pages in his files and spoke cryptically thereafter of a "lost" Hemingway book, which had somehow never seen the light of day.

Brown may have taken consolation from Stanley Hyman's stinging review of *The Hemingway Reader*, in which he lamented the decay of Hem-

10. *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917-1961*, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Scribner's, 1981), 751.

ingway's talent into self-indulgence and egocentrism, sentimentality and dogmatism: "Sinking into a self-parody in later years is a fate that has befallen many fine writers before Hemingway and no doubt awaits many after him."<sup>11</sup>

As for Shirley Jackson, in a diatribe she privately unleashed soon after her marriage, Hemingway was written off with the whole lot of self-importantly argumentative men whose political bickering and philosophical blathering left her bleary:

Song for all editors, writers, theorists, political economists, idealists, communists, liberals, reactionaries, bruce bliven, marxist critics, reasoners, and postulators, any and all splinter groups, my father, religious fanatics, political fanatics, men on the street, fascists, ernest hemingway, all army members and advocates of military training, not excepting those too old to fight, the r.o.t.c. and the boy scouts, walter winchell, the terror organizations, vigilantes, all senate committees and my husband:

*I would not drop dead from the lack of you—  
My cat has more brains than the pack of you.*<sup>12</sup>

11. Hyman's review appeared in the *New York Times Book Review* on 13 September 1953; it is reprinted in *Hemingway: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Jeffrey Meyers (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 424–5. Hyman later wrote an unsympathetic review of *A Moveable Feast* (1964), in which he deplored Hemingway's malicious treatment of former friends and colleagues. See "Ernest Hemingway with a Knife," *New Leader* 47 (11 May 1964): 8–9. It is unclear whether Hyman knew about Hemingway's cruel treatment of Leonard Brown, whom he loyally honored in the acknowledgments to his most important work: "To Leonard Brown, who is, as Ascham said of Sir John Cheke, 'teacher of all the little poore learning I have,' I am obliged, quite literally, for anything of value the book may contain." *The Armed Vision: A Study in the Methods of Modern Literary Criticism* (New York: Knopf, 1948), xiv.

12. Quoted in Oppenheimer, *Private Demons*, 90.

Editor's note: Some minor corrections in spelling and style have been made to improve the readability of Jackson's paper.

# Ernest Hemingway

BY SHIRLEY JACKSON

I AM attempting to prove that there exists in Hemingway a basic duality between what I shall call the "positive" and the "negative" sides of his own nature. This duality, very clear in Hemingway's writings, also comes out, I believe, in his personal life and his early experiences as recorded both by Hemingway and his biographers.

That both sides of this duality exist in Hemingway is evidenced plainly enough by his expression of himself in characters of both types, in his constant conflicts, and in the shifts in his writing from one side to the other. [Edmund] Wilson said that Hemingway was both a sadist and a masochist, that he could feel and inflict the same pain.<sup>1</sup> Following this idea through into other manifestations, we find that Hemingway will place himself in either or both of any two positions.

The duality is between strength and weakness, between active and passive—between, in fact, any two diametrically opposed situations when one equals the controller and the other the controlled.

Consider first what I have called the "positive" side of Hemingway's nature. It is that of the sadist, the active man, the virile man. In the bullfight, it is the bullfighter<sup>2</sup> who is dignified, honorable (through technique and skill: "The technique that Marcial Lalanda, the most scientific of living bullfighters, has, and which alone makes that position honorable . . ."), graceful, strong (through wisdom and skill: "The matador must dominate the bulls by knowledge and science. In the measure in which this domination is accomplished with grace will it be beautiful to watch. Strength is of little use to him except at the actual moment of killing."), simple, sincere, dominant, exciting. The bullfighter loves danger, glories in killing (has, moreover, a spiritual enjoyment of killing), detests cowardice, par-

1. In *The Wound and the Bow* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941), Wilson writes (in discussing Hemingway's overindulgence in describing scenes of killing in *The Fifth Column*): "Hitherto the act of destruction has given rise for him to complex emotions: he has identified himself not merely with the injurer but also with the injured; there has been a masochistic complement to the sadism," 24. *Ed.*

2. Since I am dwelling with a condition which is fundamental in Hemingway's reactions, I have chosen as my standard the one situation in which examples of these two types are put into direct opposition, particularly in Hemingway's own description of them, and I am taking his description of them as basis for a standard.



ticularly in the bull or in other bullfighters, and he must possess a certain abnegation and humility, which is based on pride and arrogance and sureness of himself. All of this description is taken directly from *Death in the Afternoon* and these are Hemingway's words, not mine.

If we take the bullfighter, then, as the standard or embodiment of this positive type, we find that his position in the bullfight is that of the controller, who has the ability to inflict pain, frequently deliberately, who stimulates, rather than responds to other stimuli from other people, who is more or less dominant over weaker creatures (as personified by the bull), who possesses skill, who can control sex, drinking, and, to a large extent, most emotional troubles. Take, as another extreme example of this type, Hemingway's final representation of the bullfighter in fiction: Philip, of *The Fifth Column*.

Philip is in a powerful position, where he can give orders, where he can control all the people he meets (notice his attitude toward Antonio in Act 2 Scene 1, where, as Antonio is his superior, he is extremely insolent, and, at any rate, never loses the dominant position), where he is in a position to inflict pain (certainly on the prisoners, on the guard who fell asleep, on Bridges and Anita, and on his comrades), where he is the leader and the one from whom comes all initial activity, and where he does not in any case succumb to the solaces of drinking or sex, and his few outbursts are quickly and capably controlled. This is a complete affirmation of the qualities which Hemingway finds admirable in the bullfighter, and a complete representation of the qualities which he has been attributing to various characters throughout all his writing.

The "negative" side, while possessing some positive characteristics of its own, nevertheless follows the part of the bull in the bullfight, and contains the opposites or distortions of all the positive qualities. Thus the negative is the passive, the acted-upon, the hurt, the dominated, the unskilled (because inadequate and unpracticed), and also those who find solace and refuge in drink, or who have no emotional control, or who are sexually impotent, perverted, or in some way completely inadequate sexually. (There is an interesting contrast here between those who can control sex and those who "make love badly." The opposite of control is not excess; it is lack of skill—sexual excess belongs to the strong, who indulge, to excess, *from choice*.)

An example of this type is of course the bull, who is certainly dominated by the fighter, who does not take the initiative until he is prodded into motion, who is killed by skill (not by strength: the bull has the physical strength in this case) and who is, as a steer, says Mr. Hemingway, cow-

ardly.<sup>3</sup> Cowardice is a frequent characteristic of the people in this type, although sometimes, as Hemingway says of the bull, they possess a peculiar dogged courage, which is of very little help against those who dominate them, and only makes for a better fight. The bull is noble, has a certain beauty and honor, but he is at a disadvantage. He has none of the discipline of the fighter, and most of his sincerity comes from sheer desperation and knowledge that he is in no position to direct the fight. An extreme example of this type is Richard Gordon of *To Have and Have Not*, who fulfills all the requirements of being dominated, cowardice (which sometimes, as in the final scene with Helen, gives way to a courage born of desperation and knowledge that he has everything to lose), finding refuge in drinking, being hurt, and, finally, to make the picture complete, Hemingway points out that Richard makes love very badly.

These two classifications may be applied to all of Hemingway's characters, and they fit roughly into the two groups. Usually the two are opposed, with the strong constantly winning (unless, as sometimes in the bullfight, an unexpected lack of one of the characteristics defeats the strong at the last moment). The opposition of these two sets of characters is the personification of the conflict in Hemingway himself, and his attempt to solve it through his writing.

In examining Hemingway's life, we find some very significant things. It has been an active, exciting life, starting with his boyhood summers, hunting and fishing with his father, making friends with the Indians; then later these same tastes are carried into big-game hunting and deep-sea fishing; Hemingway drove an ambulance on the Italian front in the World War; he went to Spain as a correspondent; he quarreled with Max Eastman over his own virility,<sup>4</sup> and married twice to prove it; he saw bullfights and met Gertrude Stein; he lived in post-war Paris and in Cuba. But, added to these are such things as Stein's comment that Hemingway was a delicate person and was always breaking a leg or an arm when he went skiing or riding; his excessive anger at Eastman's comment and the very interesting facts that when he was about to divorce his first wife he

3. Note the reference in this respect to the steer in *The Sun Also Rises*, in sharp juxtaposition to Jake, who is a very weak person, and decidedly on the negative side of the ledger.

4. In "Bull in the Afternoon," a 1933 *New Republic* review of *Death in the Afternoon*, Eastman pointed out Hemingway's need to prove his masculinity. Hemingway was furious. Four years later, when he encountered Eastman in the office of Scribner editor Maxwell Perkins, Hemingway bared his hairy chest and hit Eastman on the head with a book, after which both men were on the floor fighting. For a fuller account, see Jeffrey Meyers, *Hemingway: A Biography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 232-3. *Ed.*

wrote "The End of Something," when he was contemplating divorcing his second wife he wrote "The Short Happy Live of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," and that now when he is planning to marry Martha Gellhorn he writes *The Fifth Column*.

One cannot help believing that there is in this an indication of a definite second side to Hemingway's nature, and that it is a side opposed to his hunting, fishing, virile, exciting life, and, moreover, a side which Hemingway does not like, and which stands opposed to all that he wants and intends to be. Remember that Hemingway, as Nick in "Father and Sons," considering his idolized father, who had taught him all he knew about fishing and shooting, and "was as sound on those two things as he was unsound on sex," and while excusing his father for this unsoundness—Hemingway, as Nick, violently rejects the two identifications with his father that are offered him—once, when they tried to make him wear his father's clothes, and, again, when, at the end of the story, he finds himself with his own son, standing in the position of his father talking to Nick himself, and Nick avoids the identification by refusing to allow the boy or himself contact with any part or recollection of his father.

I think that this sexual weakness, which seems to play so important a part in Hemingway's interpretation of the negative character, can be translated into lack of virility, which is the closest he can come, physically, to any manifestation of his positive or negative sides; thus, the positive side is interpreted, concretely and in the character, as virility, and the negative side into lack of virility. Either virility or the lack of it in a character indicates the presence or absence of the characteristics which Hemingway finds so admirable.

Up to *To Have and Have Not*, all of Hemingway's important works are autobiographical. This excludes *To Have and Have Not*, *The Fifth Column*, and the later short stories. I do not mean by autobiographical that this writing is a word for word account of Hemingway's life, but an account largely based on his own experience. Thus, *A Farewell to Arms* is autobiographical because Hemingway, like Frederic Henry, drove an ambulance on the Italian front in the World War, although it is hardly likely that Hemingway participated in the love affair of the book. Hemingway, starting his writing from his own experience, projected his own emotions and convictions into the books, and translated his vague emotional troubles into a physical reality,<sup>5</sup> and then ended his translated troubles satisfactorily. Jake's castration becomes a reality from a thought or a fear in Heming-

5. Troubles or fears or doubts, or whatever created the need he wrote to satisfy.

way's mind, but it did not need to be a fear of castration in Hemingway to produce an actual castration in Jake. Thus Jake, Frederic Henry, and of course Nick, are Hemingway, actually autobiographical to a certain (approximately determinable) extent, and from that point on they are Hemingway's emotions translated into physical reality. Nick is, I believe, almost completely the reality that Hemingway knew, with little added in most of the stories.

However, from Harry Morgan on, the autobiography has shrunk to such small proportion that it is practically nonexistent. Hemingway knew Cuba, and he knew Spain, but he was never a rum-runner or an intelligence worker. His two latest important works, both of which may be said to have a definite social content, are the non-autobiographical ones. It is foolish to suppose that Hemingway has run out of autobiography for them: there should be a reason.

To find this reason let me go back to the positive-negative categories and examine some of Hemingway's characters in the light which they might shed. In *A Farewell to Arms* we meet Frederic and Catherine, both negative characters by our classifications, for both are completely dominated by a force which they cannot control or even name. ("There's only us two and in the world there's all the rest of them. If anything comes between us we're gone and then they have us.") Both are weak, and find relief in their love from intolerable outside situations. ("You always feel trapped biologically.") Both are hurt, but Frederic, the autobiographical character, is hurt more, for Catherine finds complete escape in death. Although Frederic shows none of the lack of virility which characterizes the weak character, I think that the fact that Hemingway made Catherine die in childbirth is an indication of some sexual falsity in the interpretation of Frederic. His love condemns Catherine to death and destroys her even though she was the most important thing in the world to him.

At this time, when *A Farewell to Arms* was written, Hemingway was still insecure in his own mind, with little or no possibility of security in the future. In the book, Frederic is beaten and defeated by everything upon which he bases his life (Catherine, the code of honor upon which a gentleman acts, and which led Rinaldi to syphilis and Frederic himself to desert from the army) and all the blame is placed upon a mythical "They." Just as the world held no place for Hemingway, it held no place for Frederic, and "They" are responsible. Thus it might be assumed that Frederic is a projection of certain unpleasant factors in Hemingway's life at the time, and that with the destruction of Frederic the unpleasant factors were symbolically destroyed.



In *Death in the Afternoon* we find a peculiar system, with Hemingway's introduction of an old lady into a purely descriptive book, and, with this, an abrupt change in style from the early novels. Where *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* are in the familiar, hard-hitting, Hemingway style, with carefully chosen words, short sentences,<sup>6</sup> and seemingly objective first-person writing, *Death in the Afternoon* turns into a rambling and involved creation, with the Old Lady doing a great deal of the talking, and much of the first-person writing subordinate to her. The Old Lady, who "would like to know more" about the love life of the bulls, who, considering the matadors, "would like to know them better," who contrasts herself with the dead in that "I speak my wishes," is opposed to Hemingway, who tells her that "Death is a sovereign remedy for all misfortunes," who believes that "there seems to be much luck in all these things and no man can avoid death by honest effort nor say what use any part of his body will bear until he tries it," who is preoccupied with stories of death and sexual abnormality while the Old Lady is thinking about the bull-fights, and who, as when they speak of Villalta, constantly makes such comments as "Villalta's voice is a shade high sometimes. . . ." In this book, or, rather in passages of this book, it is Hemingway, in person, who is the negative character, and the Old Lady who is the positive character, but the two of them play such a small part in the book that few conclusions can be drawn. From what little there is, it would seem from the style and from the fact that neither Hemingway nor the Old Lady are definite enough to be classified completely, that *Death in the Afternoon* is a transitional book, coming between the completely different periods represented by *A Farewell to Arms* and *To Have and Have Not*.

With success for Hemingway, with the understanding of the war in Spain (and I am not sure whether these are all the causes; that there was a definite change in Hemingway's life just before he went to Spain, or while he was in Spain, I am quite certain, but I am unable to find out what it could have been, lacking a complete biography of him. Perhaps it was at this time that he joined the Catholic Church.), there came a change in his writing. Where before his identification had been with negative Frederic Henry (and just a little bit with Catherine) or with Jake in *The Sun Also Rises*, or with himself in *Death in the Afternoon*, divided up into the Old Lady and Hemingway, now he begins to shift and turn to projection of the strong character. The negative people are being killed off—witness Francis Macomber, whose repentance comes too late, and

6. The style from which Gertrude Stein says she removed all the adjectives!

whose wife would not have considered leaving him if, among other things, “he had been better with women. . . .”

In *To Have and Have Not* the change is nearly complete (it is about half-way with *Macomber*, and it was also at about this time that Hemingway was beginning to leave his second wife and was perhaps beginning to feel a little freer!), for Harry Morgan, not autobiographical, is in a particularly advantageous situation for displaying a man’s strength: he is not an expatriate in Paris, living on enough money to take him around Europe, nor is he divided between fighting an unseen enemy with mechanized tactics and hiding away in a mountain retreat with his wife. Harry Morgan is facing the necessity for earning enough money to feed his wife and children, and he is not thrown around by a mythical “They” but by a very definite economic situation. Morgan makes his living by actual physical labor, by fighting (hand to hand, not with shells), and by various legal or illegal strenuous methods. Harry is the complete positive character (he checks in almost all points with the positive qualities) but he unfortunately gets himself killed. That is why the change in Hemingway was not complete with Harry, but was carried on into Philip. The social aspects of *To Have and Have Not* are so vague as to be restricted almost to caustic descriptions of the frustrated rich, and “one man alone ain’t got,” but Hemingway’s “They” has become definite, has been narrowed down to a real thing and not an unknown, unplaced force. He has found a secure place to stand, and no matter how much his idea of an economic pressure resembles his unidentified “They,” and no matter how invalid his conclusions and interpretations seem to be when they are seriously considered in the light of social comment, Hemingway has nevertheless succeeded in finding somewhere to base his ideas.

Harry was not satisfactory to Hemingway as a tower of strength and a solution to his problems by wish-fulfillment. Harry was still tied down and bound by the conventional real world of domesticity, economics, the law. In order for Hemingway to project his character adequately, his hero must be removed from such ties, hardly located in space. Philip, then, is put into such a situation. With Philip, Hemingway rejects Bridges and her prospects of a happy home life, fox capes, the need for money and the worries of being tied down. Philip is completely free with a job to do, and he is strong enough to do it. Thus the satisfactory conclusion of the play put Hemingway’s ideals far beyond achievement and let him glory in his complete representation of the positive character. He has become completely the bullfighter he idolizes so much; the bullfighters who “are ruined

if they marry if they love their wives truly.”<sup>7</sup> The Communist in Spain has taken the place of the bullfighter in Spain, and the mock conflict has become enlarged into a real conflict. In *To Have and Have Not* Hemingway says: “It takes abnegation and self-discipline to be a communist,” and he uses just those words to describe the bullfighter in *Death in the Afternoon*.

The reasons for Hemingway’s change from identification with the negative character to identification with the positive character are, as I say, buried in the facts of his life which I do not know. However, something made him leave his own solid experience, identify his “They,” abandon his “Gentleman’s Code” idea, and find the need from which he was writing satisfied with Philip. I suspect that either the church helped him to devise this new stand, or that his joining the church was part of the same thing.

Hemingway’s description of the bullfight takes us into another confirmation of the positive-negative category. The words which he uses to describe the bullfight are in part: it is a thing of “action,” by which he means a “feeling of life and death”; it is “complicated,” both in itself and “to write about”; it is neither moral nor immoral per se, except in misrepresentation, interpretation, or attitude of the participants (thus, lack of courage in either the fighter or the bull, or unfair practices by the fighter, or unnecessary cruelty or danger or pain inflicted on either principal, all make the bullfight immoral) but the bullfight is essentially “unmoral”: it is largely and traditionally a thing of “tragedy” and “ritual,” a thing of “art” (when correctly and capably handled); it is of necessity “impermanent” and an “unequal” contest; and, most importantly, it is a performance of “honest and true emotion,” with “no trickery” involved. Then, in many places in the different books, Hemingway uses, sometimes with the same words, these same ideas to describe the sex act. In Hemingway’s categories, the idea of strength is so often concentrated in sexual dominance, and the idea of weakness is concentrated into inefficiency in sexual relationships: the power of the bullfighter lies in his skill: the bull is weak and helpless before the bullfighter’s skill. We have seen how the bull may become the personification of the “negative” category and the bullfighter a personification of the “positive” category. If the bullfight and the sex act are identified, somehow,<sup>8</sup> in Hemingway, then the positive-negative cate-

7. *Death in the Afternoon*.

8. I believe that, traditionally, the bullfight is a symbolic representation of the sex act, and Hemingway knows it perfectly well, but I include all this elaborate explanation to show how in Hemingway the idea of the bullfight’s being a symbolic sex act has gained importance, and the positions of the bull and the fighter have become identified, for him, with the qualities he finds in them.

ories should show the effects of this. In the bullfight, Hemingway definitely favors the dominance of the bull by the fighter, and, traditionally, the bull is the female in the represented sex act, as he certainly is in Hemingway's mind—remember that the bull is “dominated,” is “noble,” has a certain “beauty and honor,” but he is “at a disadvantage.” Remember Bridges, whose “charm” and “beauty” are not enough to get her what she wants: she cannot control Philip, but she has her good qualities, as Philip points out.

From this the positive-negative divisions may be identified as male and female. This does not mean that Hemingway is a woman-hater and wants to see men dominant over women. It does mean, however, that frequently his negative and weak side is invested in the woman, and she is made to represent all this weakness, and whenever he shows fear of the woman dominating the man he is really afraid of the weakness in himself overcoming the strength.<sup>9</sup> What he does with this idea leads to some very peculiar women. Take, for instance, Margot Macomber. Francis had to die, because it was necessary for the weakness he represented to be symbolically destroyed, but it was not inevitable that Margot should kill him (however unintentionally) unless Hemingway was feeling that the destruction came from the woman, who was, of course, “a nuisance on safari,” who “hated” Francis’ killing the buffalo so excellently.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the actual firing of the bullet was done by Margot is important only in this light, since it is not really essential to the story, but very essential to Hemingway.

Bridges more clearly represents woman-and-weakness, but her destructive capacities (in the form of domesticity, etc., which would completely destroy Philip and all the good he could do either in Spain or in the same kind of work somewhere else, besides destroying Philip's good to Hemingway as a personification of strength) are rejected by Philip and Hemingway, and she, as woman, as weak, destructive force, is completely destroyed so that the ideal of strength may go on.

Marge is rejected by Nick because she knows as much as he does, because “it isn't fun anymore,” because she can do everything as well as he

9. All those stories in *Death in the Afternoon* about homosexual bullfighters fit in very interestingly here as an attempt in Hemingway to justify the weakness in himself by vesting some of it in his hero.

10. If hunting, like bullfighting, does, as Hemingway indicates in several passages in *Death in the Afternoon* and elsewhere, equal a symbolic sex act, this means an infidelity in Francis. Since one of the main reasons Francis was forced to stay with Margot was the fact that he was not good with women, doesn't this infidelity in Francis show a very definite threat to Margot's cherished security? Particularly since she has just been unfaithful to him with the guide?



can, and because through these things she offers a danger to him, since "once a man's married he's absolutely bitched." Through equality the woman can match evenly with the man, and thus there is a chance of the women's winning out, and weakness overcoming strength. In such symbols as Marge it would seem that the idea of the woman has progressed far beyond its original basis in the weakness idea and stands by itself, without explanation, as the symbol. In other words, there is, after a while, no need for Hemingway to explain to himself all that the woman stands for—she has developed beyond her basis and retains all the ideas implicit in her.

In Brett we find an interesting variation on this idea. Brett becomes, by comparison with Jake (who, sexually impotent, weak, negative, is definitely the female character), the masculine and strong character. Hemingway further enforces this idea by presenting her, first, among a group of homosexuals in which she stands out as the strongest and most important figure, and by giving her the man's attitudes all through the book on sex, on life, on "Them," and, often, placing the important words of the book in her mouth. Although Hemingway is identified with Jake, Brett is the main figure in the book, and her eventual defeat by Romero is defeat by the only thing strong enough to conquer her: the bullfighter. All the other characters in the book are subordinate to Brett—the men, all but Romero, are weaklings. Thus we have a peculiar conflict between Brett as the woman and Brett as the strong character filling the masculine position, and the conflict is finally solved by having Brett defeated by the only character Hemingway could find who was more positive than she was.

Hemingway's style follows, generally, the lines of his growth and development and the confusion which developed in his own mind. The original books were written in the first person, simply, and divided up into unnamed books and chapters. With *Death in the Afternoon* Hemingway leaves the first person partly and writes some of his book in that style, some in dialogue with the Old Lady, and some in straight expository style. Then, with *To Have and Have Not*, he abandons his simple style and his writing becomes confused and irregular, so that sometimes the reader is not sure who is speaking, and where the speaker stands in the book. Some of the least important characters are allowed to speak and carry the narrative. The book is divided into sections named after the seasons, and this naming is almost the whole unity the book has. The story follows interpretation of the seasons quite regularly, and it seems sometimes that from the seasons comes the story. After the death of his protagonist the story is carried on for a couple of chapters in a description of the reactions of some of the other characters, and whatever unity there was is lost.

Finally Hemingway turned to the dramatic form in *The Fifth Column*. He had used the dramatic form only once before, in "Today Is Friday," a four-page play showing the reactions of a group of Roman soldiers to the crucifixion. [Thomas?] Mann says that the very nature of what he had to say drove him into the dramatic form; both these times, when Hemingway was very sure of what he was saying—and it was in each case a sharply divided conflict between the two definite and very clear ideas—he fell naturally into the dramatic form. At no other time does he use the dramatic form, and, also, at no other time does his material present such a clear-cut division, with each side completely defined and easily understood.

As for Hemingway's social ideas, which have so confused both *To Have and Have Not* and *The Fifth Column*, they seem to follow his typical reaction very well. Obviously it is impossible to Hemingway to adopt suddenly an attitude of brotherhood and comradeship and join a number of people all working with hope and faith for a common cause. Hemingway is neither mature enough mentally nor unselfconscious enough to change his whole individualistic, settle-your-own-problems, bread-is-the-opiate-of-the-people attitudes after a year in Spain during the war. His "nada" ideas and his complete rejection of the idea that "They" can be placated or changed, whoever "They" are, whether vague forces or definite social evils, would prevent him from adopting any ideas which so absolutely denied these beliefs as communism does. Moreover, the admitted weakness in Hemingway which is the negative side to his nature would prevent his being his own idea of a communist, since the communist is the completely strong man, like the bullfighter, and Hemingway has accepted the impossibility of his ever becoming a communist, but his Philip represents his own interpretation of communism, in that Philip is free of all responsibility except the ones to his duty, and Philip works alone and is apparently subordinate to no one, or recognizes no subordination. Hemingway has a private social movement all his own: he seems to feel, somehow, that maybe nothing can be done, but *I* (as represented by Philip) can do something; it is work fitting for a man of strength, and it is the only fight permissible under the rules of the game, for it provides an honorable and virile activity for a man, and does not in any sense contradict the idea that "They" are all-powerful and you can fight against them but of course you will not win. Hemingway's antipathy toward Dos Passos and other social writers evidences this idea that it is something for Hemingway to do, and that it is personal and not social ideals that Hemingway is following.