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Red plush and brass: Prostitution as a mirror of self in the fiction of Ernest Hemingway

Claude Caswell

University of New Hampshire, Durham

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Abstract
This dissertation examines the iconography and psychology of prostitution as a motif in the fiction of Ernest Hemingway. After identifying the prostitutional dynamics that form a recurring pattern throughout Hemingway’s work and personal life, the discussion focuses primarily on exploring the implications of those dynamics in Hemingway’s three major novels: The Sun Also Rises (1926), A Farewell to Arms (1929), and For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940).

What this study contends is that the literal and figurative presence of prostitution as a theme in Hemingway’s narratives operates on two basic levels. On one level, the prostitution elements represent the pathology of gender relationships in modern culture. By structuring the sexual encounters between male and female protagonists in terms of a prostitutional exchange, Hemingway portrays his characters as trapped in a cycle of masked pretense and emotional extortion antithetical to genuine, freely shared love and intimacy. On the other level, the prostitute imagery represents archetypal female sexual power and creative force, submerged but surviving in modern culture despite the oppression of male gender politics. In Hemingway’s fictional worlds, however, this creative power is conceived as non-gendered psychic energy emanating from the unconscious.

These two conflicting dimensions of the prostitution motif become the driving force of the model of self that structures the consciousness of all Hemingway’s major characters--male and female. It is a model based on the prostitute as an emotionally wounded victim who survives psychologically by maintaining a fragile sense of self through “dissociating” from the sexual acts performed during the prostitute/john exchange. To heal this psychic fragmentation and reclaim a more holistic sense of self, the “prostitute consciousness” must go on a transformative, regenerative psychic journey in order to break free of the inner paralysis of protective detachment inherent in the emotional strategy enforced by the oppressive prostitution contract. This process of renegotiating one’s emotional survival mechanisms in order to redefine or recast the self--a process symbolized by the psychological dynamics of prostitution--constitutes the paradigmatic struggle for self-realization facing all characters in Hemingway’s texts.

Keywords
Literature, American

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Caswell, Claude, Ph.D.

University of New Hampshire, 1993
RED PLUSH AND BRASS:
PROSTITUTION AS A MIRROR OF SELF
IN THE FICTION OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

BY

CLAUDE CASWELL
B. A. Bowdoin College, 1969
M. A. University of Southern Illinois, 1971

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
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the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
English

September, 1993
This dissertation has been examined and approved.

[Signature]
Dissertation director, Sarah Way Sherman
Professor of English

[Signature]
Lester Fisher
Professor of English

[Signature]
Lisa MacFarlane
Associate Professor of English

[Signature]
Sally Ward
Professor of Sociology

[Signature]
Barbara White
Professor and Coordinator of Women's Studies

July 23, 1993

Date
Dedicated
to my wise and wonderful
children

Molly and Nik
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ABSTRACT

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Claude Caswell
University of New Hampshire, September, 1993

This dissertation examines the iconography and psychology of prostitution as a motif in the fiction of Ernest Hemingway. After identifying the prostitional dynamics that form a recurring pattern throughout Hemingway's work and personal life, the discussion focuses primarily on exploring the implications of those dynamics in Hemingway's three major novels: The Sun Also Rises (1926), A Farewell to Arms (1929), and For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940).

What this study contends is that the literal and figurative presence of prostitution as a theme in Hemingway's narratives operates on two basic levels. On one level, the prostitution elements represent the pathology of gender relationships in modern culture. By structuring the sexual encounters between male and female protagonists in terms of a prostitional exchange, Hemingway portrays his characters as trapped in a cycle of masked pretense and emotional extortion antithetical to genuine, freely shared love and intimacy. On the other level, the prostitute imagery represents archetypal female sexual power and creative force, submerged but surviving in modern culture despite the oppression of male gender politics. In Hemingway's fictional worlds, however, this creative power is conceived as non-gendered psychic energy emanating from the unconscious.

These two conflicting dimensions of the prostitution motif become the driving force of the model of self that structures the consciousness of all Hemingway's major characters—male and female. It is a model based on the prostitute as an emotionally

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wounded victim who survives psychologically by maintaining a fragile sense of self through “dissociating” from the sexual acts performed during the prostitute/john exchange. To heal this psychic fragmentation and reclaim a more holistic sense of self, the “prostitute consciousness” must go on a transformative, regenerative psychic journey in order to break free of the inner paralysis of protective detachment inherent in the emotional strategy enforced by the oppressive prostitution contract. This process of renegotiating one’s emotional survival mechanisms in order to redefine or recast the self—a process symbolized by the psychological dynamics of prostitution—constitutes the paradigmatic struggle for self-realization facing all characters in Hemingway’s texts.
Introduction

Encountering Prostitutes on the Way to Ideal Women
In Ernest Hemingway's short story, "Fathers and Sons," Nick Adams, as an adult with a son of his own, remembers "the sum total of direct sexual knowledge bequeathed to him by his father" (589). Nick remembers that his father "summed up the whole matter by stating that masturbation produced blindness, insanity, and death, while a man who went with prostitutes would contract hideous venereal diseases and that the thing to do was keep your hands off of people" (589). Even though Nick remembers that his boyish "imagination was both stirred and horrified" by this advice, he is now embarrassed for his father and immediately apologizes to himself for this "not good remembering": "On the other hand his father had the finest pair of eyes he had ever seen and Nick had loved him very much for a long time" (589).

Nick then remembers his "own education in those earlier matters...acquired in the hemlock woods behind the Indian camp" (594). There, in the "virgin forest...on the brown, clean, springy-needled ground" (594), Nick and the Ojibway girl, Trudy, made love while her brother Billy sat close by. In his memory, Nick idealizes this summer relationship: "...she did first what no one has ever done better...unendingly, never-endingly, never-to-endingly, suddenly ended, the great bird flown like an owl in the twilight" (595).

This ordering of memory by the story's narrator juxtaposes certain clear images. First there is the image of the diseased prostitute, then the clean, natural setting, followed by a sexual encounter between the male protagonist and an idealized woman presented in a transformed but unmistakable scenario of prostitution. In this case, the dynamics of the sexual encounter have prostitution overtones not merely because Billy looks on and "shares" the experience, as might happen in a brothel, but also because Billy plays the role
of pimp, offering his sister to Nick—"You want Trudy again?" (594)—for the implied payment of the use of Nick's shotgun.

This pattern of images involving prostitution is not isolated to one story of Hemingway's. It occurs with intriguing frequency in many of his other stories and particularly in his major novels. The voice in these narratives consistently presents a structure in which a male protagonist fantasizes about or remembers or meets a prostitute, then goes through a kind of cleansing process, and finally encounters the woman he loves and idealizes, and yet whom he recasts in the role or terminology of a prostitute.

In *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake Barnes meets a Paris streetwalker named Georgette and takes her dining and dancing. At the dancehall he sees the woman he loves, Lady Brett Ashley, and leaves with her to get some fresh air. Almost immediately, in Jake's mind, Brett begins subtly to take on the salient characteristics of Georgette's role as prostitute: her drunkeness, her facade of seeming to care for Jake but really using him for her own ends, her constant search for better prospects. Later that night, Jake mistakes Brett for Georgette in his mind: "Then I heard Brett's voice. Half asleep I had been sure it was Georgette. I don't know why" (32).

In *A Farewell to Arms* we first meet Lt. Frederic Henry "looking out the window of the bawdy house" (6), just before he goes on an extended leave during which he has sex with prostitutes in the major cities of Italy. Upon his return to the front he is still thinking about these prostitutes—"the smoke of cafes and nights...in bed, drunk...and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you" (13)—just before he meets Catherine Barkley at the end of a day that had dawned "clean and cold" (16). Soon Frederic is fantasizing about himself and Catherine in the same hotel setting where he slept with prostitutes, where they "would not wear any clothes" and "both love each other all night in the hot night in Milan. That was how it ought to be" (38). Catherine even joins in the fantasy during Frederic's stay in the hospital in Milan, vowing to outdo Frederic's
prostitutes in prostitute behavior: "I'll say just what you wish and I'll do what you wish and then you'll never want any other girls, will you? (105)" When Frederic and Catherine actually do go to a hotel, however, and the room is furnished in "red plush and brass" (151) and "many mirrors" (152), like a brothel, Catherine says it "isn't nice to feel like a whore" (152).

Hemingway does not allow this pattern to become formulaic, but it does appear, with slight variations, as a deep structure in a remarkable number of his major works. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan does not appear to have any thoughts about prostitutes before he and Maria make love. Later in the narrative, however, Jordan remembers: "The last time I slept with a girl...was in the Escorial and, except that I woke in the night and thought it was some one else and was excited until I realized who it really was, it was just dragging the ashes" (166). Jordan does not specifically identify the woman as a prostitute, but his memory of the experience is almost identical to Frederic Henry's recollection of his nights with Italian whores—waking up and not knowing who was with him. The phrase, "dragging the ashes," is also the same phrase that Lt. Henry's friend, Rinaldi, uses to refer to his concept of purgative, venal sex with prostitutes: "We'll both get drunk and be cheerful. Then we'll go get the ashes dragged. Then we'll feel fine" (168).

After sexual union with Maria, does Robert fashion her into a kind of prostitute? In an oblique but powerful sense he does: he recasts her in the role of Mary Magdalene. Maria was not literally a prostitute like Mary Magdalene, but she feels the same sense of humiliation because she was gang-raped by the Fascists. Jordan assures her that love will cleanse, redeem, and transfigure her—that she is still a "virgin" in essence because she resisted the rapists with all her inner will, and so the sanctity of her mind has not been violated: "And no one has ever done anything to thee. Thee, they cannot touch. No one has touched thee" (71). Much later, Jordan playfully but clearly articulates the underlying implications of Maria's new role by evoking the scene of Mary Magdalene wiping Christ's
feet with her hair:

"Sit down and put them on and rub thy feet well," she said.
Robert Jordan grinned at her.
"Thou canst not dry them with thy hair?" he said for
Pilar to hear. (203)

Written in the first two decades of Hemingway's career, these three novels, published
respectively in 1926, 1929, and 1940, comprise for most readers Hemingway's best work.
However, even in his later, less critically successful novels—Islands in the Stream (written
in the late 1940s but not published until 1970) and Across the River and Into the Trees
(1950)—the pattern involving prostitution remains resiliently present, sometimes in farcical,
bizarre forms.

In the "Cuba" section of Islands in the Stream, Thomas Hudson, the
painter-protagonist of the novel, mourns the death of his son by drinking in the "La
Floridita" bar with his long-time prostitute friend, "Honest Lil." As she plays priest to the
confessing, grieving Hudson, she asks him to tell her "the happiest time [he] remember[s]"
(286). He recalls that his best days were when he was a boy before he knew women
sexually, before responsibilities, when he could go into the forest alone and "hear the wind
in the high branches of the hemlock trees...": "The happiest day I ever had was any day
when I woke in the morning when I was a boy and I did not have to go to school or to
work....I was happier than I have ever been" (286-87). "Even than with women?" (287),
Lil asks. "I've been happy with women" (287), Hudson answers, "but never as happy
as...the way I was early in the morning" (287).

Perhaps to provide the ugly evidence to justify Hudson's yearning for pre-sexual
innocence, this revelation is preceded in the narrative by a scene in the bar with two of
Hudson's drunken, whoring American servicemen friends, Willie and Henry. They have
rented rooms nearby with two prostitutes as part of the deal, an arrangement known in
Havana as a "Sin House," but they are unhappy with their bargain:
"Two tramps. Two tomatoes. Two broken-down waterfront broads. Two cunts with but a single thought: the rent. We lay them. We trade cunts and relay them. It's strictly from wet decks." (268)

They want Honest Lil to find them fresh meat: "We want whores. Nice, clean, attractive, interesting, inexpensive whores. That can fuck" (269). Despite this spirit-lifting repartee, Hudson is disgusted and depressed; he sits wondering: "Isn't there anything else you could do that would produce the same effect rather than sit with beat-up Honest Lil in La Floridita at the old tarts' end of the bar and get drunk" (296)?

Into this scene walks Hudson's ex-wife (curiously unnamed in the novel), his dead son's mother and a famous actress now in the USO entertaining "the troops." After asking about Hudson's "bitch" (307) of a present wife, from whom he is estranged, and admitting she herself is "in love with someone" (307), the actress tells Hudson: "I'm yours in this town" (311). They declare their undying love for each other and drive out of the "dirty" and "smoky" (311) city to Hudson's country house. There they make love with Hudson's cat Boise (nicknamed "Boy") looking on: "We might as well both love her, Boy. Take a good look at her. You'll never see any more women [sic] like that" (316). They then comfort each other over the loss of their son, Tom, the news of whose death Hudson reveals after they make love.

How does the narrative, from Hudson's perspective, recast this idealized woman—who is virtually resurrected or reassembled from Hudson's memory for this interlude—into a prostitute? In a number of ways: First, there is her association with erotic fantasy in Hudson's mind. Just prior to her appearance in the bar, he reminisces with Honest Lil about his early sexual life, when a rich friend sent him "three absolutely beautiful Chinese" prostitutes. They were "shy and shameless and not emancipated at all" and "so beautiful you couldn't stand it and none of them spoke English" (292). At this point the beautiful, idealized, glamorous-film-actress first wife enters on cue.
Second, there is the fact that Hudson's first wife is a fantasy figure for literally millions of men, a projected image, a film sex symbol. It is generally acknowledged that Marlene Dietrich, a greatly admired personal friend of Hemingway's, and who ironically described her career as “I played whores,” was the real-life model for this character. In addition, this implication of cinematic prostitution is made even stronger if we recall Robert Jordan's reverie about film actresses who visit him at night in his fantasies:

Maybe you dreamed it or made it up and it never did happen. Maybe it is like the dreams you have when some one you have seen in the cinema comes to your bed at night and is so kind and lovely. He'd slept with them all that way when he was asleep in bed. He could remember Garbo still, and Harlow. Yes, Harlow many times. (137)

Then there is the language of prostitution that Hudson and his ex-wife use. He tells his idealized lover that he has a “big bed” but “not as big as the army” (312). She understands the implication about her promiscuity and tells him not to talk “rough” (312); then she continues the actress/hooker trope: “Let the troops entertain themselves for once....I'm going to entertain you. Have you been entertained properly lately” (314)? Later when Hudson declares he is “not bitter and [has] learned how to handle the bad,” she replies, “What? With whores?” “I guess so,” he says, “But I wouldn't need them if we were together” (321).

Finally, there is Boise, or “Boy,” the cat. Boise adds the garish and in this case farcical element of “buddies” sharing brothel sex, shipmates on “wet decks.” The male protagonists in Hemingway's scenarios almost always have to share their idealized women with watching friends or previous lovers—Billy in the woods with Nick and Trudy; Robert Cohn and Count Mippipopolous and Michael Campbell in Paris and Pamplona with Jake and Brett; Rinaldi at the front with Frederic and Catherine. Even Robert Jordan, who manages to exorcize the fascist rapists from his and Maria's minds, has Pilar to watch over them as both mother hen and vicarious envious lover. This figure of the
witness/sharer/fellow possessor of the ideal seems to be an important element in the
prostitution pattern and finds its way in even through the eyes of an alter ego cat: "...the cat
isn't you," says Hudson's ex-wife, "even though he thinks he is" (319).

In *Across the River and Into the Trees*, Hemingway's World War II novel set in Italy,
the prostitution pattern is also clearly discernible. Ironically, General C. T. "Buck"
Lanham, Hemingway's close friend and commanding officer during Hemingway's years as
a WWII battlefront correspondent, called the novel "that dreadful book, *Across the River
and into the Cathouse"* (*The True Gen*, 220). Lanham detested the book, as did most of
the critics. Nevertheless, the book is fascinating for the prostitution elements imbedded in
its structure.

Early in the novel, the 50-year-old protagonist, Colonel Cantwell, sees a rich Italian
civilian man with his "extremely desirable mistress" (38). Cantwell wonders in disgust
how much war profit the Italian spent "to buy that sleek girl in her long mink coat" (38).
At the same time he admires the woman as "a beautiful, hard piece of work" and muses:
"I wonder what it would have been like if I had ever had the money to buy me that kind and
put them into the mink? I'll settle for what I have..." (39).

"What" Col. Cantwell has is Renata, a nineteen-year-old Italian countess, "shining in
her youth and tall striding beauty" (80), who is his lover. When Renata and Cantwell get
together at Harry's Bar in Venice, the Colonel is so captivated by her beauty that he asks her
if she would "ever like to run for Queen of Heaven" (83), clearly comparing her to the
Madonna, the Blessed Virgin and Mother of Christ. Renata calls the remark "sacrilegious"
(83), but then tells Cantwell about a dream she had the night before in which she saw "the
hand of Our Lord" (84). The Colonel holds up his battle-scarred, "misshapen" hand and
asks, "Like this one?" "Not like," says Renata, "It was that one. May I touch it
carefully...if it does not hurt" (84-85)? Thus Renata turns Colonel Cantwell into Jesus, and
in so doing casts herself in the role of Mary Magdalene, since it was she who saw the risen
Christ and touched his wounded hands, not the Virgin Mary. Through this linguistic transformation by allusion, the Madonna becomes the "whore"—even though a redeemed one—and vice versa.

This merging of the image of the two Marys was prefigured in the narrative when, in an earlier scene, the Colonel was talking to his military chauffeur about the great number of madonna paintings in Italy. The driver is an enlisted man named Jackson (from Wyoming), a combination Billy/Boise character playing the fool to Cantwell's Lear. Jackson is a simple American G. I. Joe who doesn't know much about art, but he has a theory about why so many Italians painted so many madonnas. He believes they were simply sublimating their sexual desires—what he calls "bambini business": "But it looks to me like these straight ordinary madonna painters were sort of a manifest, say, of this whole bambini business, if you understand what I mean" (15). Jackson then says he is not going to buy one of these paintings because if he brought home a picture of "some woman," his own "old woman would run" (16) him out of town. Cantwell responds by suggesting that the process of creating madonnas was "a little more complicated" than Jackson's theory, and points out that, after all, the painters were "restricted to religious subjects" (15).

As though mirroring this "complication," the Colonel turns his own flesh and blood lover into a madonna image and even has her portrait painted—a portrait that becomes a kind of substitute for her, and with which he has long, enigmatic conversations, as though he is talking to himself. "Portrait," he says, "Boy or daughter or my one true love or whatever it is; you know what it is, portrait....Well, portrait....You are two years younger than the girl you portray, and she is younger and older than hell..." (172-76). Apparently, out of his love interest and sexual longing, Cantwell has conjured a god/devil image, invested it with great power, and then interacted with it as a protean mirror of himself.

Perhaps the process of creating madonna images which mutate into magdalene images which in turn become mirrors of their creator/projector is, as Colonel Cantwell suggests, a
complicated process after all; and it is the exploration of this process which offers some promise of reading Ernest Hemingway's work in a new way. The scaffolding, or deep structure, of the pattern involving prostitution is clearly present as both a formal and a thematic element—a recurring, persistent motif—in Hemingway's fiction. Once we focus on it, like all figure/ground phenomena, it is not difficult to see. What, however, does it mean? Is the existence of this motif simply a further confirmation of the characteristic modern critical view of Hemingway as an artist and a human being severely limited by his patriarchal consciousness and stereotypical, denigrating views of women? Did Hemingway receive uncritically and even enthusiastically the negative messages about women that his culture sent him, enshrining these messages in artistic molds that transform all women into prostitutes? Was Hemingway an unconscious literary conduit of the mask of prostitution culturally and historically imposed on the face of women; or did he, in the interest of “truth” or artistic verisimilitude, accurately present the prostitute as intertwined in the female character as imagined by the male mind? How much of Hemingway's portrayal of female characters in terms of prostitution was due to his inner conflicts with his own sexuality, and how much should these personal issues affect—if at all—our reading of his work? Will analysis of this motif of prostitution help to “deconstruct” Hemingway, his work, and the culture that “constructed” him, or, on the contrary, will such an analysis chiefly deconstruct certain modern readings of Hemingway?

These are all fundamental questions for Hemingway readers—or any readers of any literature. This study will attempt to shed light on these important issues, but my primary focus will be on a more basic and more accessible question: How does this motif work and what does it mean in the literature? I will attempt to answer this question through critical analyses of Hemingway's three major novels: The Sun Also Rises (1926), in Chapter Two; A Farewell to Arms (1929), in Chapter Five; and For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940), in Chapter Six.
Besides looking directly at Hemingway's work, however, it will be beneficial even for a structural analysis of the motif to establish at the outset some cultural and personal parameters in Hemingway's life which give the motif energy, form, and direction. If a person keeps having the same dream over and over, it seems reasonable to suppose the dream has significance in the person's psychic life. If a scenario framed in terms of prostitution keeps being replayed by the various narrators of Hemingway's texts, we may reasonably ask whether we are dealing with an individual's obsession or an artist's vision of a universal archetype. Is the prostitution motif a cultural paradigm or a private fetish, and how should the answer to that question inform our reading of Hemingway's work? I will attempt to answer this question by examining biographical and theoretical considerations, relevant to the prostitution elements in Hemingway's work, in Chapters One, Three, and Four.

The general answer to all these questions, however, for the purposes of this study, is that whatever we may speculate about Hemingway's relationship to prostitution in his private life or emotional development, what we see in his work is prostitution consistently functioning as a psychological framework for his characters. I will argue in this dissertation that the image of the prostitute in Hemingway's texts does represent a cultural stereotype of women, but it is a stereotype that is undercut and resisted by Hemingway's fictional treatment of it. In Hemingway's fictional world prostitution is not a condition confined to women nor is it a subtextual statement about the "nature" of women.² Prostitution in Hemingway's narratives signifies a psychological syndrome, or a process of psychological reaction, resulting from the psyche's need to survive the experience of physical and emotional exploitation inherent in the sale of one's sexual acts. In this approach to prostitution Hemingway reflects Barbara Meil Hobson's view that "the selling of sex forces a dissociation between body and self" (Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition, x). This dissociative condition afflicts virtually all Hemingway

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characters, regardless of gender. The struggle of these characters to heal this inner fragmentation, in an attempt to live or “be” a more integrated, whole person in the world, constitutes the central dialectic of Hemingway’s work.

It is clear from the recurring prostitution motif in Hemingway’s texts that he is deeply invested in prostitution as a model of pathology in sexual relationships and in human relationships in general. Prostitution as psychological experience represents for Hemingway a retreat from sexuality, a disowning of one’s sexual acts because they are too troubling, too hurtful, too oppressive—because they are “bought,” with money or some other medium of power exchange. In order to maintain the crucial distinction between being a bought person and a bought body, the prostitute’s mind disowns the actions of the body and is “present” in those actions only through the agency of a projected image of the self. The prostitute may feel a limited sense of power in projecting and manipulating this image—and in manipulating johns by means of the image—but it is ultimately a purchased image, or role, owned by the john and therefore disowned by the “inner” or “real” self of the prostitute. It is a process that causes the prostitute—and to an extent, the john—tremendous psychic stress and emotional damage.

In the prostitute/john exchange Hemingway as artist sees an exaggerated but accurate model of his conception of the universal modern experience of the retreated, dissociated self, driven inward by a sense of powerlessness. The fact that Hemingway’s male protagonists often cast themselves in the role of john—and equally as often in the role of prostitute—does not constitute a sense of empowerment but rather its opposite. The prostitute/john scenario represents for Hemingway a culturally imposed tableau in which the self is only a removed observer, a passive voyeur, very much like Boise the cat. The entire prostitute/john scene is, in fact, in Hemingway’s portrayal of it, a projection of internalized, socially preordained roles which mask and suffocate the life of the “independent” or “autonomous” self. It is a scene presented by Hemingway not as a celebration of gender
stereotypes but as a claustrophobic horror afflicting men and women alike.

The insights of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick are very helpful here in helping us to understand Hemingway’s attraction to the psychology of prostitution as emblematic of a universal psychic dilemma. In discussing one of the twentieth-century’s most famous “scarlet” women, Scarlett O’Hara of Gone With the Wind, Sedgwick focuses on issues that are particularly resonant in terms of Hemingway:

...in the life of Scarlett O’Hara, it is expressly clear that to be born female is to be defined entirely in relation to the role of “lady,” a role that does take its shape and meaning from a sexuality of which she is not the subject but the object. For Scarlett, to survive as a woman does mean learning to see sexuality, male power domination, and her traditional gender role as all meaning the same dangerous thing. To absent herself silently from each of them alike, and learn to manipulate them from behind this screen as objects or pure signifiers, as men do, is the numbing but effective lesson of her life. (Between Men, 8)

Scarlett’s “numbing but effective” strategy of survival is exactly what consumes much of Hemingway's attention in the creation of his principal fictional players. Hemingway's characters learn to “absent” themselves “silently” in their relationships; they “learn to manipulate” from “behind this screen”—and it is from this suffocating trap that Hemingway characters struggle to escape.

Sedgwick’s analysis of Scarlett O’Hara’s sexuality as a learned power strategy forced on her by the dominant male world also highlights the other basic dimension of Hemingway’s narrative use of prostitution dynamics. Besides being a model of pathology in Hemingway’s fiction—a kind of self-limiting strategy of psychic survival—prostitution also represents sexuality as power. I acknowledge that the issue of whether the prostitute’s sale of sexuality is an empowering or enslaving experience for women is a matter of intense, ongoing political debate.² I do not mean to exempt Hemingway from this debate. His work has long been the justifiable focus of feminist criticism that has skillfully and
accurately revealed the patriarchal values assumed by many of his characters.³ My study is
not meant to deny the validity of these or any other of the valuable critical approaches to
Hemingway’s art. On the contrary, partially by building on past critical insights, I intend
to demonstrate that in the prostitution motif other intriguing elements exist besides the
promotion of male hegemony.

One of these elements concerns Hemingway’s complex approach to female sexual
power. My study contends that, while Hemingway’s texts do not expressly engage in a
dialectic in the area of sexual politics, his narratives do make repeated reference to mythical
or “archetypal” female sexual power in conjunction with prostitution imagery. What these
references appear to signify, however, is not a delineation of male and female sexual
identity but rather a non-gendered creative quality of the human psyche. As a key
component in Hemingway’s paradigm of the mind, the prostitute’s archetypal sexual force
is a channel for a transformative, regenerative power arising from the unconscious—a
power that gives the dissociated self the strength to heal itself. In this sense, Hemingway’s
texts present female sexuality as a kind of pan-gender, “universal” healing power of the
psyche.

In suggesting the presence of this dynamic in Hemingway’s work, I do not mean to
claim that Hemingway imagined himself to be a woman, or that he imagined what it felt like
to be a female prostitute. I do suggest that in what he observed or imagined was a
“prostitute experience” Hemingway saw a reflection of his own emotional experience in the
world, and that he extrapolated from this mirror image to a kind of universality of human
experience.⁴ This kind of assumption of “universal” experience that crosses gender
boundaries might be interpreted as a “masculinist appropriation” of female experience—a
charge made persuasively by feminist critics such as Sedgwick.⁵ It is my contention,
however, that the overall direction of Hemingway’s work does not suggest an attempt to
subsume or appropriate female experience but instead is an attempt to imagine what
experience might be like if the rules of gender were set aside.\textsuperscript{6}

It would be absurd to suggest that Hemingway's desire to transcend gender psychologically translates into a desire for social reform of gender power inequalities. On the other hand, the prostitution motif in Hemingway's work, as a model for both the oppression and the healing potential of the psyche, is a paradigm intimately connected to female experience. If it can be demonstrated, as I hope to do in this critical exploration, that the characteristically female experience of prostitution significantly informs the fundamental structure and thematic aspects of Hemingway's work, we may be able to read Hemingway's texts in a new, less gender divisive way than past readings have allowed. The irony is that prostitution, one of the quintessential symbols of female oppression, is the complex and intriguing key to this new reading.
Reference Notes for Introduction

1. In Hemingway's work there is no implication that it is "natural" for any woman to be a prostitute, as we find suggested, for instance, in the work of Henry Miller. Compare Miller's description of the Parisian prostitute, "Germaine," in Tropic of Cancer, to Hemingway's portrayal of Georgette Hobin in The Sun Also Rises. Georgette is a prostitute by necessity, whereas Germaine "was a whore from the cradle...a whore all the way through, even down to her good heart, her whore's heart which is not really a good heart but a lazy one, an indifferent, flaccid heart that can be touched for a moment, a heart without reference to any fixed point, a big, flaccid whore's heart that can detach itself for a moment from its true center."

   This assumption concerning the "natural" or "born" prostitute was prevalent in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European and American culture (see, for instance, Alain Corbin's Women for Hire) and is an attitude that persists today. In a comment intended to be sympathetic to young Filipino women procured by the Japanese "sex industry," Mizuho Matsuda, director of Tokyo's Asian Women's Shelter, said recently: "These women are not naturally prostitutes" (The Boston Globe, October 29, 1991).

   In Hemingway's fiction the condition of prostitution is always contingent on economic factors and social oppression and is a painful psychological experience for anyone who lives it, regardless of gender. Hemingway, in general, is philosophically aligned far more with modern theorists, who assert that gender and gender roles are socially constructed and not innate, than he is with writers like Miller. For valuable insights on gender theory, see particularly the work of Gayle Rubin ("The Traffic in Women"), Jonathan Dollimore (Sexual Dissidence), and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (Between Men).

2. Even among contemporary feminist historians, critics, and social reformers, there is little agreement about the power issue in prostitution. One view argues that prostitution empowers women by providing them with economic, physical, and psychological control over their minds and bodies, because prostitutes engage in a far more lucrative and honest sexual arrangement than marriage or "love" relationships with men. The opposite view argues that prostitution represents the quintessential expression of male enslavement of women. This view is based on the fact that men continue to hold the overwhelming majority of political and economic power in modern society, and a woman gains nothing but a lower social position by selling her sexuality for a tiny share of that economic power.

   Barbara Meil Hobson acknowledges that this debate is legitimate, but she pleads with these opposed ideological camps to "agree to disagree" for the purpose of understanding and protecting the human beings caught in the crossfire: prostitutes themselves. Hobson encourages the exploration of sexual identity issues raised by the idea of prostitution, but she cautions that philosophizing about gender issues should not prevent us from pragmatic political protection and empathy for the prostitute: "The constructions of sexual identities and the social meanings of sexual liberation can act as levers increasing or decreasing the supply and demand for prostitution, but little agreement exists over the extent to which sexual ideologies shape the prostitution economy and in what ways...Never before has there been so little consensus among feminists around prostitution politics...A feminist politics fragmented is a body paralyzed without voice or reach" (Uneasy Virtue, xiv).
Hemingway does not take a clear political stand on prostitution, but his treatment of the psychological effects of prostitution ironically reflects Hobson's words: "fragmented...a body paralyzed without voice or reach."

3. I have found particularly rewarding the work of Judith Fetterley (The Resisting Reader), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (No Man's Land), Rosalind Miles (The Female Form), and David Wyatt (Prodigal Sons), and I refer to them directly in this study.

4. I want to make clear that I am not suggesting that Hemingway is a kind of "transvestite" or "transsexual" male author who puts on figurative "female" clothing and takes on a "woman's point of view" only in order ultimately to enhance or accentuate his "maleness." In Marjorie Garber's essay, "Spare Parts: The Surgical Construction of Gender" (printed in differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, 1989), she effectively exposes what she calls the "re recuperative cultural fantasy" of males (from authors to literal transvestites) putting on the cultural clothing of females. Men acting like what they imagine a woman to be are only promoting "a man's idea of what 'a woman' is; it is male subjectivity in drag"—only another way, Garber says, to "essentialize their [male] genitalia." Garber rightly calls this male "subjectivity" a "phallic redundancy" because "to be a subject is to have a phallus, to be a male literally or empowered 'as' male in culture and society."

Even though Hemingway's work features a great deal of "cross-dressing"—mostly women, like Brett Ashley, wearing culturally designated "male clothing"—and sexual role-switching, as in The Garden of Eden, my contention is that Hemingway is not promoting the kind of "male subjectivity" that Garber dismisses so justifiably. Hemingway is not saying that a "man" is the only worthwhile thing to be or that a male is always "subject" while a woman is always "object" or "other."

Garber points out that modern male sexologists such as psychoanalyst Robert Stoller, author of Sex and Gender, characteristically see female cross-dressing as a somewhat "natural" neurosis (a sort of "doesn't everyone truly wish to be male?") while they see male cross-dressing as a psychosis because the male is in "danger" of being "destroyed by his feminine desires" (Stoller). I do not believe that Hemingway, in his fiction, is philosophically or emotionally aligned with Stoller. The dynamic at work in Hemingway's texts does suggest that everyone is "castrated" (a psychological condition he equates with a kind of "prostitution consciousness"), in the Lacanian sense that no one has power, but this implication of the phallus as symbolic of power in a male-dominated culture is not part of an overall Hemingway ethos of enshrining the penis, literally or figuratively.

The direction of Hemingway's narratives is toward the deconstruction of gender, not the rigid ossification of traditional gender roles. Contrary to the way he has often been read, Hemingway, as author, does not "make men"—or women—he unmakes them. Hemingway portrays a sexual world that has failed its inhabitants—a world that has rigidified sexual roles and, even worse, rigidified the necessity of sexual roles, to the detriment of psychic growth. Role-switching brings no relief in Hemingway's fictional worlds (as it does, for instance, in texts such as Dorothy Canfield Fisher's The Homemaker) not because it is heretical or "unnatural" for women to become men or men to become women, but because the roles themselves are oppressive. Switching roles only perpetuates their oppressiveness.

My contention is that in his fiction Hemingway is reaching, imperfectly we may agree, for a transcendence of gender roles, for a kind of sexless consciousness.

5. Sedgwick points out the danger of inherent denial of the reality and legitimacy of female
experience—particularly the experience of oppression as female—in male concepts of "universality": "Feminist critics have long understood that when the male-centered critical tradition has bestowed the tribute of 'universality' on a woman's writing, it is often not an affirmation but rather a denial of the sources of her writing in her own, female specificity" (Between Men, 115). By claiming that Hemingway was aiming at "universality," I do not mean to suggest that "male" experience is universal experience; but I do mean to contend that I see in Hemingway's work a search for a way for men and women to have common experience beyond the limitations of gender.

6. The fictional positioning of a non-sexual or non-gendered world might be interpreted as another "masculinist" strategy for males to "have their cake and eat it too"—in other words, a way of retaining traditional male power while posing as "feminized" and "sensitive" at the same time. There are undeniable ambiguities in Hemingway's texts (if there were not, I doubt that we would bother to read them) concerning this issue, but I would like to point out that imagining a genderless world appeals to many women writers as well, seemingly for the same reason it appealed to Hemingway—so that people could experience a kind of "humanity" together that sexual difference makes difficult.

Gilbert and Gubar, for instance, quote from a novel by nineteenth-century author Olive Schreiner: "I asked God whether it was a man or woman. God said, 'In the least Heaven sex reigns supreme, in the higher it is not noticed; but in the highest it does not exist!'" (No Man's Land, 347).

Even more pertinent to Hemingway, perhaps, is Ursula LeGuin's modern science fiction novel, The Left Hand of Darkness, about a planet called Winter where there is only one, androgynous sex. On Winter sexual differences do not exist: "One is respected and judged only as a human being. It is an appalling experience." LeGuin's narrator eventually finds it a joyous experience. Even more telling are LeGuin's own comments in the introduction: "Yes, indeed the people in it [the book] are androgynous, but that doesn't mean that I'm predicting that in a millennium or so we will all be androgynous, or announcing that I think we damned well ought to be androgynous. I'm merely observing, in the peculiar, devious, and thought-experimental manner proper to science fiction, that if you look at us at certain odd times of day in certain weathers, we already are. I am not predicting, or prescribing, I am describing. I am describing certain aspects of psychological reality in the novelist's way, which is inventing elaborate circumstantial lies."

In his incorporation of prostitution imagery into so much of his work, Hemingway, like LeGuin, attempts to describe "certain aspects of psychological reality in the novelist's way."
Chapter One

The Mask Behind the Face

The Image of the Prostitute in Hemingway’s Life and Work
§ § §

To begin to answer questions about what influences might have made the image of the prostitute a powerful one to Ernest Hemingway, we must first consider that the Victorian world he entered when he was born in 1899, in Oak Park, Illinois, was in many ways a prostitution culture. It was a culture dominated and defined morally and sexually by the public image and the private practice of the prostitute.

Industrial poverty and moralistic middle-class propriety concerning sexual values in late nineteenth-century England helped to create an underclass of prostitutes unequalled in sheer numbers before or since, with estimates between 80,000 and 120,000 in London alone (a city of less than a million inhabitants). In May 1859 the Edinburgh Medical Journal reported: “Let anyone walk certain streets of London, Glasgow, or Edinburgh, of a night, and...his eyes and ears will tell him at once what a multitudinous amazonian army the devil keeps in constant field service, for advancing his own ends. The stones seem alive with lust, and the very atmosphere is tainted” (Madonnas and Magdalen, 107). In 1858 The Times reported that in no other capital of Europe was there “daily and nightly such a shameless display of Prostitution as in London” (107). Despite extensive reform efforts, this situation prevailed until the 1920s.

Nor was America any different. In City of Eros, a book about prostitution in New York City from 1790-1920, Timothy Gilfoyle writes that “so commonplace was prostitution to metropolitan life” (5) that it was a dramatic factor in the moral and social climate of American cities. In reviewing Gilfoyle’s book, David Nashaw also writes: “From 1820 to World War I, prostitutes lived and worked in almost every neighborhood in the city” and “were visited by men of every ethnic group, social class and occupation” (NYTBR, April 1992).
Even in relatively provincial, sheltered Oak Park, a suburb on the border of Chicago, the threat of prostitution was felt. Although the "genteel, strait-laced, rigidly Protestant" residents of Oak Park felt relatively safe from the "poison of the great city" (4), according to Jeffrey Meyers in his biography of Hemingway, they feared that any unsanctioned sexual activity, overt or implied, was the symbolic menace of prostitution. In his book, *The Young Hemingway*, Michael Reynolds cites an October 1913 article in the Oak Park newspaper, *Oak Leaves*, decrying the growing popularity of the Tango and the Fox Trot: "...the germs of disease are not the only evil that reaches the suburban family...now the dance has come from the brothel to take its place beside the disease germ..." (7). This same article rails against the influence of "writers of rot" and the popularity of "sex gowns" designed in the "demimonde of Paris" (8).

The primary influence of prostitution in the young Hemingway's life, however, came from the intellectual and emotional osmosis of reading Victorian literature. Hemingway's biographers all agree that it was primarily British and not American literature that Hemingway, like most of his literate contemporaries, read as a youth. In discussing the "Victorian Keys to the Early Hemingway" in his book, *Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny*, Mark Spilka looks at Victorian writers Rudyard Kipling, Emily Bronte, and Captain Marryat in particular "as Hemingway must have read them and responded to them, and as they must have reinforced or reminded him of aspects of his own upbringing, and so helped to shape his attitudes and assumptions as a future novelist" (8). Spilka cites the adventure writer Marryat as influencing Hemingway in a number of ways, one of which was in conveying the Madonna/whore polarity so imbedded in the Victorian ethos:

*In Frank Mildmay...he [Marryat] created opposing types of heroines like those that intrigued young Hemingway. Thus, the hero falls in love in the same night with genteel Emily Somerville, the 'perfect beauty' and font of virtue he eventually marries, and with the 'fascinating actress' Eugenia, who meanwhile becomes his mistress....She... withdraws from Frank's life when their illicit union*
threatens his professional prospects, returns at his convenience, and just as conveniently dies (as does her child) when the hero finally seems ready to marry virtuous Emily. Hence, Mildmay is able to lead a richly adventurous seaman's life, one which includes liaisons with Spanish prostitutes...before giving in to marital piety. (78)

Spilka claims that Marryat's hero "fulfills most of Ernest's boyhood dreams about adoring and forbidden sweethearts" (78). In Hemingway's early reading, at least, those "sweethearts" included prostitutes.

The romance of the "forbidden," powered particularly by the madonna/magdalen twin image, may have been dramatized for Hemingway by Marryat, but this element was inherent in almost all Victorian literature as both cause and effect of Victorian culture. Eric Trudgill, in his book about Victorian sexual attitudes, *Madonnas and Magdalens*, writes about the phenomenal rise of the prostitute as a heroine in Victorian literature, making her equal in iconographic status to the Madonna as a cultural representative of women in fiction:

In 1850 the fallen woman in fiction was a wretched wanderer of the night, a figure of squalor and pathos. By 1853 she was establishing herself as a feminine archetype almost equal to the Madonna, almost equally motherly, pure and inspirational. From representing the antithesis of the Victorians' purity ideal the magdalen was fast becoming an essential constituent of it: after years as taboo she was quickly becoming totem. (289)

A number of philanthropic and humanitarian individuals and groups, sensitive to the suffering of prostitutes, contributed to this change in public perception. Charles Dickens—along with many others—wrote sentimental but basically accurate portrayals of prostitutes as victims of abuse and economic slavery (Nancy in *Oliver Twist*, Martha Endell and Little Em'ly in *David Copperfield*). The Church of England sponsored the "Anglican Sisterhood's magdalen homes" (288) (for the rescue and reformation of prostitutes). Reformers, propagandists, evangelists, artists (most notably the pre-Raphaelites),
and religious politicians (e.g., William Gladstone) encouraged the public to see the prostitute as a social problem and an ethical responsibility rather than as a plague of ‘bad women.’ Reformer W. R. Greg told the public that the prostitute did not “wallow in mire because she liked it” and did not take up selling her body because of “lust or greed” but because of “economic necessity.” He also claimed that the average prostitute did not live “amidst the luxuries of sin but in remorse, despair, privation, brutality and disease,” destined for “an early death” (287).

No matter how much public sympathy for the prostitute as victim the reform movement might gain, however, the public still demanded that a promiscuous female be punished for her deviance—at least in literature. Victorian society accepted that, although sex for anyone was sinful, men were lustful by nature whereas a woman was guilty of unnatural acts when she fell into carnal ways. Until mid-nineteenth century, therefore, despite the reform movement’s appeal for pity, there was pressure on novelist to present prostitutes as redeemed only by a penitent and often horrible death, transfigured in heaven but not on earth. In the 1850s, however, this trend began to shift and gave rise to an outpouring of novels actually using “Magdalene” or “Magdalen” as names of prostitute-heroines who became as exemplary of virtue as they formerly had been of vice—some of whom actually managed to stay alive while being transfigured: Mrs. Oliphant’s *Magdalen Hepburn* (1854), Caroline Mary Smith’s *Magdalen Havering* (1861), Wilkie Collins’s Magdalen Vanstone in *No Name* (1862), Shirley Brooks’s Magdalen Conway in *Sooner or Later* (1868), and Averil Beaumont’s *Magdalen Wynyard* (1872).

Although Ernest Hemingway probably did not read these books, they illustrate the powerful element of duality inherent in Victorian literature regarding revulsion for and idealization of the prostitute. The late nineteenth-century literary practice of first showing the degraded woman and then idealizing her reformed state “arose partly,” according to Trudgill, “especially amongst men, from a species of romantic projection,” but “above all...
from the Victorian idealist's need to believe in the perfect purity of womanhood, to believe that ultimately, whatever sinful man might do to stain her, woman's natural character was that of the Madonna" (291).

An odd corollary of this phenomenon of Victorian idealizing of reformed prostitutes, considering the fact that the female protagonists of Hemingway's first two novels were nurses, was the Victorian literary vogue of portraying reformed prostitutes as nurses or 'angels of mercy.' In Wilkie Collins's *The New Magdalen* (1873), the reformed prostitute-heroine Mercy Merrick evokes grateful worship from the sick: "They kissed the hem of her black dress; they called her their guardian angel, as the beautiful creature moved among them, and bent over their hard pillows her gentle compassionate face" (51). Dr. Acton, one of the first nineteenth-century researchers of sexuality, also writes not merely of idealized prostitutes but of his observation that "the real-life magdalen sometimes conformed to her literary image" (Trudgill, 291): "The sick man is safe in their hands, and the fool's money also. There is many a tale well known of this nursing and watching, and more than will do so could tell of the harlot's guardianship in his hour of drunkenness" (*Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs*, 328). Brett Ashley, with her brassy manner and frequent changes of sex partners, seems to be a parody of this sentimental image, while Catherine Barkley seems to be a non-ironic embodiment it; but each character in her own way reflects the madonna/magdalen dynamic. Brett has her motherly, Madonna side. Her fiance, Mike Campbell, tells Jake that Brett "loves looking after people. That's how we came to go off together. She was looking after me" (205). Catherine, in many ways the quintessentially nurturing, monogamous Madonna image, has her Magdalen side; she wants Frederic to teach her how prostitutes act, so she can perfect the prostitute's role as well as the motherly one: "When a man stays with a girl when does she say how much it costs?" (105).

Given the presence of the madonna/magdalen duality in Hemingway's work, and the
biographical confirmation of Victorian influences in Hemingway's early life, should we conclude that Hemingway's sensibility was a channel for revamped Victorian sexual values? A number of factors indicate that this conclusion would be simplistic. It is true, however, that Victorian influences—in their middle-class, American manifestations in Oak Park—were strong and deep in Hemingway's formative years. As late as the mid-1920s, when Gertrude Stein says she told him that he was "ninety-percent Rotarian" (Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, 207), Hemingway himself told a friend he was still "lousy with Christian precepts and inhibitions" (Ernest Hemingway Selected Letters, 579). Jeffrey Meyers claims that Hemingway "always retained his...anxious and guilt-ridden Protestant heritage" (5). On the other hand, Meyers also says that "as an adult he [Hemingway] attempted to eradicate in himself every vestige of Oak Park" (5). Michael Reynolds writes that Oak Park was "a world about which Hemingway never wrote a single story" (5), but that in "Hemingway's fiction, Oak Park remains beneath the surface, invisible and inviolate" (5). Reynolds goes on to say: "After the war [WWI], young Hemingway entered the new age, taking with him the values formed in his first world, the one he had lost, the one he never wrote about" (15).

The Anti-Victorian

Like many other young Modernists, who were defined in part by what they defined themselves against, Hemingway appears to have been a Victorian who was determined not to be a Victorian; and his interest in prostitutes seems to have been a function of both impulses. Even more important, perhaps, Hemingway might have resisted the sentimentality of Victorian images of prostitutes because he was a person who wanted to see and to hear and to feel, through direct experience, what happened in the world. He had a lifelong suspicion of images portrayed in books written by people who had not actually experienced what they were writing about, or, worse, who rendered their real experiences

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as distanced, sanitized literary abstractions promoting moral pap and false feeling. Consequently, the more powerful the literary and social images of prostitutes might have been for Hemingway as a boy, the greater his desire would have been to test those images against experiential reality.

Life in Oak Park, however, offered Hemingway little opportunity for direct knowledge of prostitution. As entrenched as prostitution was as an element of the moral and literary atmosphere of Oak Park, it was still a remote physical reality until Hemingway graduated from high school and went to work in Kansas City as a cub reporter. Hemingway does remember, looking back at the age of forty-six, learning about the world of prostitution—closely associated with learning about art, which he calls “pictures”—while living in Oak Park:

I remember always how exciting it was when I was a kid and the Art Institute where I first saw pictures and made [me] feel truly what they tried to make you feel falsely with religion and the old South State Street whore-house district where we used to go.... (Letters, 597)

It is unwise to take Hemingway's memories as fact, of course, particularly his epistolary ones, because he spent his life imagining and re-imagining himself and his experiences—like most writers. What is most revealing, perhaps, about these memories is the fact that prostitution played such a key role in Hemingway's imagining of who he was and what he felt it was important to know.

Nevertheless, there is some documentation that Hemingway had direct knowledge of prostitutes as a young man, at least as an observer. Peter Griffin, in his biography of the young Hemingway, Along With Youth, writes that as an 18-year-old reporter for the Kansas City Star, Hemingway learned about prostitution firsthand, not as a customer but as a fellow worker of the night:
Like most western boomtowns (the city had grown from the
town of Kansas, population twenty-five hundred in 1850),
Kansas City had its share of crooked politicians, prostitutes
(12th Street was known as Woodrow Wilson Avenue--where
one could get "a piece at any price")...he [Hemingway]
covered pool halls, dance halls, and roller-skating rinks,
where prostitutes did business....Ernest developed a special
sympathy for the prostitutes...(37-41).

This “sympathy” actually took tangible form in what Hemingway considered his best Star
story, “Mix War, Art and Dancing,” which was “very sad, about a whore” (Cub Reporter,
56-58) (remarkably similar to the Oak Leaves article in terms of associating prostitution and
dancing, and showing Hemingway’s own early associations of prostitution with war and
art). Jeffrey Meyers writes that this story, “which never explains why the woman was
excluded from a fashionable dance, does not actually state she was a whore” (25).

This pattern of writing about prostitutes, but not actually stating that they were
prostitutes, is a pattern that Hemingway would continue throughout his writing life. He
also wrote about prostitutes overtly, however, even at the beginning of his career. In an
early, unpublished story, “Crime and Punishment” (an interesting allusion to Dostoyevsky,
in whose work prostitutes played a key role), Hemingway wrote about a prostitute he
supposedly saw in New York’s Battery district just before he shipped out to Italy as an
18-year-old ambulance driver. She was “just as clean looking as a Madonna,” he writes,
and there were "thirty-seven dollars in one dollar bills in her stocking from that many sailors
and she was the most beautiful girl I ever saw” (Griffin, 60).

As a young writer with a reportorial mind, Hemingway seems to have conducted his
own study of prostitution at an early age. Besides Hemingway's acquaintance with
prostitutes in Kansas City, Michael Reynolds speaks of the 19-year-old Hemingway's
knowledge of prostitutes in Italy during WWI. Reynolds writes that in 1920, although
Hemingway had “little hands-on experience” with sex, “he had detailed knowledge of
sexual anatomy and techniques” which he had “learned in the army brothels in Italy and

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listening to soldiers talk..." (120).

Hemingway also followed with keen interest the scientific attitudes of his era towards women’s sexuality and prostitution. We know, for instance, that he read Havelock Ellis. Michael Reynolds documents this fact:

During his Toronto winter, he bought and read the Havelock Ellis book, *Erotic Symbolism*. In 1920, Ellis' frank discussion of sex shocked the conventional middle class reader, but not the young Hemingway. Ellis confirmed what Ernest suspected: women enjoyed sex as much as he did. In *Erotic Symbolism* he found detailed explanations of the female orgasm....He found the book so fascinating that he sent his copy to Bill Smith as evidence to support Hemingway's theory of sexual appetite in women (120).

The importance of understanding the influence of Havelock Ellis on the sexual attitudes of this era is emphasized by Barbara Meil Hobson in her book, *Uneasy Virtue, The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition*. Hobson’s work is an analysis of the “social meanings and constructions of prostitution,” in addition to an exploration of prostitution’s “essentially contested nature” (vii). One of the aspects of this “contested nature” in early 20th-century America was the issue of whether prostitutes were “deviants” who experienced sexual desire inappropriate for “normal” women. Hobson cites the influence of psychoanalytic theory in this debate, particularly the views of Havelock Ellis:

Psychoanalytic theory and psychology were instrumental in shaping views of female sexual identity during this period [1920s]. ...More than any other sex theorist of that era, Havelock Ellis was influential .... *According to Ellis, women were innately passive in the sexual drama*....Ellis...and nearly all the sex manuals of the day reaffirmed the *Victorian sexual dichotomies between male-active (or propulsive) and female-passive (or receptive) sexualities... and that women’s sexuality was essentially monogamous.*

The dominant scientific versions of healthy female sexuality *set apart prostitutes* and other *sexually indiscriminate women as deviant*. The woman who sold, bartered, or gave away sex to men in a casual way was acting *against her nature* and was maladjusted or dysfunctional. The analysts concluded that prostitution, for both men and women, represented a lower
form of sexual response...but they perceived promiscuity in women to be deviant (185-86) (emphasis mine).

Reynolds indicates that Hemingway got a far different message from Ellis than what Barbara Meil Hobson says the general public did. We really only have Reynolds's assurance about Hemingway's interpretation of Ellis, but we do know that Hemingway sent the book to his friend Bill Smith, because Smith sent it back with a letter saying he, unlike Hemingway, didn't care to read about a "bunch of degenerates" (121) and he "couldn't find any confirmation of the theory [Hemingway's] in Hav[elock]" (121).

In any case, Reynolds and Hobson give us a sense of the complexity of sexual issues—issues directly related to prostitution—confronting Hemingway at the beginning of his writing career. Specifically, if the scientific community and the general public viewed women who liked sex as deviant—i.e., as prostitutes—then might not a writer who wrote about sexually active women gravitate towards prostitution terminology to make them more believable? Then again, Hemingway was intelligent, rebellious, and worldly enough to know that the Victorian public perception of female sexuality was absurd. It is with a possible sense of iconoclastic double irony, therefore, that Hemingway portrayed his "heroines" as prostitutes and his literal prostitute characters as sympathetic human beings who carried no moralizing message.

Moreover, besides Hemingway's lifelong inclination to undermine social myths with literary realism, his respect for the integrity of working people and his affinity for the underclasses perhaps would not allow him to portray prostitutes with the exploitative, pitying distance or "cardboard" symbology which many Victorian writers did. In Helena Michie's book, The Flesh Made Word, she refers to the portrayals of prostitutes in Victorian literature and art which take away her body and her humanity in favor of her function as moral symbol: "The language in which...Victorian observers and sexologists describe prostitutes underscores her sexual neutrality, her physical invisibility and—
related concept—her function as a symbol or figure rather than human being” (71). The fact that Hemingway’s fiction acknowledges the individual bodies and personalities of literal prostitute characters, as well as the complex sexuality of female protagonists who are not literally prostitutes but are often rendered in the language of prostitution, suggests that Hemingway’s artistic inclination was towards undermining or playing against Victorian stereotypes even as he worked them into his texts.

No matter what the specific messages Hemingway internalized from Victorian culture, what is certain is that Hemingway had a special interest in prostitutes even before he lived in Paris in the 1920s. Much of that interest was explored artistically within the psychological context of his Victorian upbringing. With these Victorian influences in mind, and given Hemingway’s personal knowledge of and feeling for prostitutes, how should we then interpret the pattern of prostitution in his work? Was he perpetuating patriarchal, Victorian myths about women or exploding them?

Both of these elements seem to be factors in the way the prostitution motif functions in Hemingway’s texts. There is a clear tendency for Hemingway’s narrators to meld the madonna/magdalen images into one character: the female protagonist—the idealized love interest of the male protagonist. This process, however, is only superficially suggestive of Victorian dehumanization of women in terms of that culture’s denial of any kind of legitimate female sexuality as an expression of an authentic sense of self. “The Victorian commentary,” writes Barbara Meil Hobson, “categorized the female personality as either thoroughly depraved or thoroughly virtuous” (111). Neither extreme allowed for the existence of a female human being. Victorian literature’s characteristic method of manipulating these images only emphasized their abstract polarity. In order for a Magdalen to become a Madonna she had to be de-sexualized by a repellant celibacy or death—preferably both. Hemingway’s narratives, on the contrary, satirize, undercut, and supplant—deconstruct—this Victorian disembodiment by sexualizing “respectable” women
and humanizing “fallen” women.

The prostitutes in Hemingway's texts are neither depraved nor repentant, and definitely not Victorian. Georgette and Honest Lil are strong characters who don't need anyone to make them into “honest women”—they already are. Georgette may be uneducated and mercenary, but she stands up to Jake's pretentious friends, Frances Clyne in particular, with the wit, street wisdom, and integrity of the working person. Jake also learns later that after he left the dancehall Georgette refused to be insulted by the dancehall owner's daughter and demanded to see her “yellow card” (28) (the I.D. of a state-registered prostitute). Honest Lil, on the other hand, is a sensitive and sincere friend of Thomas Hudson's. Although not quite a “heart of gold” stereotype, she does not care for “wicked” or “vile” (271) language or behavior; and she finds Willie and Henry extremely distasteful. In To Have and Have Not, Harry Morgan's resilient, honorable wife is a former prostitute who left the “sporting life” to have children with Harry. The obese prostitute, Alice, in “The Light of the World,” has the integrity to refuse to embellish or idealize her memories of her relationship with the dead boxer, Steve Ketchel—a point Hemingway seems to be making about the Christ myth. “I never lie and you know it” (488), says Alice. Nick likes her: “...she was nice all right and really friendly” with “a pretty face and a nice smooth skin and a lovely voice...” (489). These characters are all human beings who happen to be working in prostitution, not caricatures of pathetic depravity representing a “species” of woman.

On the other hand, the Victorian pejorative conceptual link between disease and prostitution appears in Hemingway's scenarios as well. Not necessarily representative of the moral and physical “uncleanness” that Christian culture has traditionally associated with women, Hemingway's prostitutes and “prostitutionalized” characters are nevertheless often sick or “dirty” or somehow impaired. Brett Ashley flicks her cigarette ashes (evocative of “getting the ashes dragged”) everywhere, and repeatedly says she “must bathe.” Georgette
has bad teeth and says she's sick, like everyone else (16). Honest Lil has a "lovely dark face" (267) but is ashamed of the "grossness that [has] come over her body" (267) as she has grown older. Soon after Frederic meets Catherine, she can't come down to see him because she is "not awfully well" (41). She is also, by her own admission, "crazy" (116) from grief over the death of her fiancé. Maria is recovering from the psychic devastation of being raped, and Anselmo tells Robert Jordan that she was "very strange" when Pilar and the others in the guerilla band first found her: "She would not speak and she cried all the time and if any one touched her she would shiver like a wet dog. Only lately has she been better" (78). Emphasizing the danger of venereal disease associated with prostitutes, Maria feels it necessary to follow Pilar's advice and tell Robert Jordan that she is "not sick" (73). When Alice's fellow prostitute, "Peroxide," calls her a "big mountain of pus" (488), Alice counters with: "I'm clean and you know it and men like me, even though I'm big..." (488).

The difference between Hemingway's portrayal of disease as a concomitant of prostitution and the Victorian tendency to use the prostitute as a symbol of disease is that Hemingway's narratives do not blame the prostitute for being sick nor indicate that disease is an inherent quality of the prostitute instead of simply being a hazard of occupation. To the Victorians, even when the prostitute repented of her sins, she was assumed to have been the source and instigator of her own pain. According to Fraser Hamilton, in *The Dark Angel: Aspects of Victorian Sexuality*, the prostitute was for the Victorians "an object of lust...instrument of vice...the supreme type of vice" (244). Helena Michie claims that Victorian artists made the prostitute and her disease one and the same abstract concept: "The features of many London prostitutes, erased and razed by syphilis, become an apt emblem of the prostitute's invisibility, a synecdoche for her strangely fleshless fleshiness" (71).

**The Prostitute as Omni-Sexual Symbol**

Hemingway's portrayals of prostitute characters acknowledge the threat of disease
with which prostitutes had to contend. Far more than physical or even moral disease, however, it is the spiritual or psychological disease of the falseness of character for which Hemingway makes prostitution—but not the prostitute—a metaphor. In his texts, selling out or faking one's integrity, particularly in the performance of one's skill or profession, is a far worse form of corruption than mere sexual impropriety. Betraying and merchandising one's gifts through fakery and indolence is the real prostitution, the real moral decay, in Hemingway's fictional worlds, and this disease infects all sexes and classes equally. By means of this metaphor we can see narrator as whore, bullfighter as whore, writer as whore. In "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," for instance, Harry is suffering for "betrayals of himself" and his writing talent "by laziness, by sloth" (158), and by love of the comfort provided by his rich lover. Harry calls himself her "possession" and says "it was strange that when he did not love her at all and was lying, that he should be able to give her more for her money than when he had really loved" (158-59). Harry's gangrenous leg is fittingly symbolic of the disease of false character that is eating him to death, the way a hyena will eat itself in a feeding frenzy. Harry has become a "filthy animal" (161) like the hyena, eating carrion on the plain, instead of a snow leopard climbing toward the heights. Only in death does he regain his ascent—a Magdalen transfigured.

Harry's view of himself places him in the prostitute's role, which is primarily a female role in terms of cultural norms defining the prostitution transaction—although there is no intrinsic gender identity attached to any of the roles in Hemingway's prostitution scenarios, as the situation between Harry and his lover suggests. However, several other elements of the prostitution motif in Hemingway's work focus on implications of the role of the "john," which is traditionally a male role. One of these elements is the bonding or vicarious intimacy between men that the dynamics of prostitution suggests. Krebs, for instance, in "A Soldier's Home," learned in the army that sex—venal sex—like war, was a medium for men to be closer to each other. Now that Krebs is home he is only comfortable with other
men who have shared his experiences. When he meets “another man who had really been a soldier,” he falls into “the easy pose of the old soldier among other soldiers” (244). Krebs would like to “have a girl” now, but he does “not want to have to spend a long time getting her,” does not want the “intrigue and politics,” the “courting,” or the “lies,” or the “consequences” (245). Ironically, Krebs seems to feel that prostitutional sex is more honest than romantic sex because the medium of exchange is more clear and the fakery more overt. Besides, men are “war brothers” (Rinaldi’s phrase in A Farewell to Arms) in a brothel in a way they can never be, from Krebs’s perspective, when either man is involved in a sanctioned, bourgeois relationship with a woman. Because Krebs feels he has come home to a world of false, hypocritical sentiment, he remembers that in the army he was more comfortable with sex reduced to a function that kept his head clear for the male world of war:

It was all a lie both ways. You did not need a girl unless you thought about them. He learned that in the army. Then sooner or later you always got one. When you were really ripe for a girl you always got one. You did not have to think about it. Sooner or later it would come. He had learned that in the army. (246)

The idea of males bonding, with the prostitute figure as a conduit between them, is also a factor in “The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber.” Here the issue is the havoc that is caused between men when “ownership” of a woman’s sexuality is disputed by men who are not operating by the same code of war or “action” ethics (the same issue that plays a crucial role in The Sun Also Rises). In this case, Wilson, the professional hunter, follows a code of stoic life-risking, while Macomber, the professional money inheritor, follows a more modest code of risk avoidance. The woman in question is the “professionally beautiful” (126) Margot Macomber, who believes, along with Wilson and Francis himself, that Francis is a “coward.” Francis thinks of his marriage to Margot as prostitutional relationship: “Margot was too beautiful for Macomber to divorce her and
Macomber had too much money for Margot ever to leave him" (121). Yet he cannot lay exclusive claim to her sexual activity, and he is humiliated and impotently enraged when she sleeps with the "white hunter" Wilson. When Francis the cowardly lion finds the courage to face death with a bit of enthusiasm, however, he immediately bonds with Wilson, and Margot becomes just another experience they have come through together, so to speak.

Wilson is quite emotional about his newfound intimate:

...he had seen men come of age before and it always moved him....He'd seen it in the war work the same way. More of a change than any loss of virginity. Fear gone like an operation. Something else grew in its place. Main thing a man had. Made him into a man. Women knew it too. (132)

It does not take much imagination to see the phallic implication here of men joined together by an appendage even more significant and defining than the penis: their courage—while women look on, excluded and envious.

It is this kind of "bonding" in Hemingway's fiction that led Leslie Fiedler to focus on what he interpreted as a subtext of homosexuality: "Through the Dark anti-virgin...a new lover enters into a blameless communion with the other uncommitted males who have possessed her and departed, as well as with those yet to come. It is a kind of homosexuality once-removed, the appeal of the whorehouse...embodied in a single figure" (Love and Death in the American Novel, 318). Homosexuality and lesbianism are indeed implied dimensions of the prostitution motif in Hemingway's work. The flamboyant, demonstrative Rinaldi, for example, has feelings for Frederic, his "blood brother and roommate" (65), whom he kisses and calls "baby" repeatedly—feelings that are clearly expressed in sexual terms. Jokingly referring to his skills as a doctor, Rinaldi tells Frederic: "I would take you and never hurt you....Take off your pants, baby. We're all friends here" (166). He is happy when he and Frederic are going to the brothel together. Prostitutes are no threat because prostitutes are not friends, to Rinaldi. According to him, when prostitutes

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stay too long at the front and become friends, they are no longer good sex partners: "They aren't girls; they are old war comrades....It is a disgrace that they should stay so long that they become friends" (65). Rinaldi is resentful, however, when Frederic falls in love with Catherine and loses interest in prostitutes. "You act married," he says to Frederic, "what's the matter with you?" (167). Rinaldi acts jilted: "I won't kiss you if you don't want. I'll send your English girl" (67). Rinaldi is joking, but his remarks have the tone of the male lover who is envious of the real bonding between his "war brother" and a woman.

On her side Catherine has the devoted, protective Ferguson who seems equally in love with her. In the hospital, Ferguson tells Frederic, "You get her in trouble and I'll kill you" (108). In Stresa she, too, acts jilted when Frederic unexpectedly intrudes on the holiday she and Catherine are sharing. She calls Frederic a "snake" and a "dirty sneaking American Italian," but she is equally angry with Catherine for the "awful thing [she's] gotten into" and because "you [Catherine] think it's a joke and are all smiles because your seducer's come back" (246). "I'm sick of seeing both of you" (246), says the crying, red-faced Fergy.

Lesbianism was strongly associated with prostitution in Victorian culture, as well as in Continental concepts of prostitution psychology, and Hemingway was clearly exposed to both sources of thinking. Alain Corbin, in his excellent study of prostitution in late nineteenth-century France, Women For Hire, crystallizes the French attitude of the time: "...above all...the prostitute runs the risk of one day becoming a lesbian; she therefore represents a terrible threat to sexual order, of which she is otherwise the best safeguard" (7). This connection between the lesbian and the prostitute finds its way into Hemingway's prostitution motif in many ways, from Pilar (the "whore of whores") confessing to Robert and Maria that she, too, desires Maria (155), to Bill Gorton's parody of Kipling's poem about a prostitute, Judy O'Grady, which he shares with Jake in The Sun Also Rises: "The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are Lesbians under the skin" (116) (an allusion that is relevant, perhaps, to both Lady Brett and Colonel Cantwell).
It is possible that these allusions to same sex bonding, which coalesce around the image of the prostitute, weave into the text a thread of homophobia or paranoia over a perceived threat to male sexual identity—as a number of Hemingway critics have suggested. The cross-dressing, androgynous nature of the prostitute-heroine—and the equally androgynous sexuality of the males who bond with her and become “the same person”—in Hemingway's work have intrigued Hemingway readers for years. Based on new works such as Kenneth Lynn's biography, which focuses on Hemingway's being dressed as a girl by his mother in order that he look like the “twin” of his sister Marcelline when they were children, contemporary views interpret the handling of the issue of androgyyny in Hemingway's work as a sign of personal conflict bordering on pathology. Mark Spilka expresses this perspective persuasively, giving new life to Philip Young's thesis that the force driving all of Hemingway's work was his personal sense of physical and psychological “wounding” as a young man:

...the wounds of war and peace had crystallized as the wound of androgyyny, the wound that is of identification with women and with the female within oneself, felt now as an almost intolerable vulnerability, a hidden emasculation, a secret loss of male identity, a self-betrayal.... (222)

No matter how we interpret Hemingway's life, however, his texts do not support this dire view that androgyyny is encoiled there as a vision of the masculine—or feminine—apocalypse. With the prostitute functioning as a kind of proscenium in the theatre of sexuality, Hemingway's scenarios explore the mutability of sexual roles as an existential strategy of the self—whether “male” or “female”—much more often than they denigrate one role or another. In any case, it is always a fictional character who denigrates or “valorizes,” not necessarily his or her creator. One can confound one's reading of Hemingway fundamentally if one believes he is a writer-politician with a rigid platform or a writer-neurotic with a transparent psychosis. One value of focusing on the prostitution
motif in his work is that it does not lend itself to an interpretive schematic that discounts Hemingway's relentless sense of irony, pervasive self-parody, and thematic complexity.

The Prostitute as Archetypal Symbol of Feminine Power

A major aspect of this complexity regarding prostitution in Hemingway's texts is that at the same time his textual allusions to prostitution sometimes suggest cultural devaluation of women, they often simultaneously suggest the archetypal power of women. It may at first seem inconsistent to associate the debased figure of the prostitute of modern history with the images of ancient deities of feminine power, but the allusions in Hemingway's texts suggest precisely such connections to classical myth. Catherine is, in Rinaldi's words, a "lovely, cool goddess" (65) associated with the moon in Frederic's mind; in Switzerland, Frederic watches her sleep with "the moonlight on her face" (301). She is both a mother figure and a pagan, erotic, Aphrodite figure whose only religion is love. "My God what would a man do with a woman like that except worship her?" (66) asks Rinaldi. Pilar is the "whore of whores" (311), the "Mother of Whores" (393), and "Daughter of the great whore of whores" (93). She, too, is a mother figure, particularly to Maria and Robert, and her name is also associated in the text with the "Blessed Virgin of Pilar" (303). The connections between the Christian Virgin symbol and the pagan Goddess/Whore symbol in Spanish culture are a conscious issue for Robert Jordan: "...Spain has never been a Christian country. It has always had its own special idol worship within the Church. Otra Virgen mas. I suppose that was why they had to destroy the virgins of their enemies" (355). This pre-Christian influence in Spain is also a factor in the portrayal of Brett Ashley as pagan goddess, when the "riau-riau dancers" at the Pamplona festival "wanted her as a image to dance around" (155).

Hemingway's allusions to mythic connections between the erotic and the sacred add a compelling dimension to his prostitution motif because they tend to invest his female figures
with a great deal of power. In her book, *The Moon and the Virgin*, Eleanor Hall writes about the implications of this power: “The prostitute and the virgin are both archetypes or archaic images of the free woman” (11-12). These images were joined in the Assyro-Babylonian goddess Ishtar, later adopted by the Greeks as Aphrodite and the Romans as Venus, and even later, according to Hall, by the Christians in the form of the split images of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. “This being,” says Hall, “under whose aegis the passions erupt and dreams turn in on themselves, is the mighty Moon Mother, virgin mother...once known as Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess Mother of All...Queen of Heaven, like our recent (Virgin) Mother Mary full of grace, who is also called in Italy Mother Mary Moon of the Church” (11). The reason that Ishtar could symbolize both virginity and motherhood, claims Hall, is because “the word virgin means ‘belonging to no man’...one-in-herself; not maiden inviolate, but maiden alone, in-herself...true to nature and instinct” (11). Ishtar is also “the protectress of prostitutes,” like Mary Magdalene in Christian tradition, and is often depicted “seated in a window frame” as the one “who leans out—the typical pose of the prostitute, the all-accepting one” (11)—an image that evokes the scene in Pamplona when several young women lean out of a window and give Brett a knowing look of recognition (137).

Rather than representing a debased or passive image of woman, writes Hall, Ishtar "symbolizes the creative submission to the demands of instinct, to the chaos of nature" (11). It is in this context that Pilar is called “Daughter of the great whore of whores” by Augustin when she gives her blessing to the sexual relationship between Robert and Maria by invoking the sacred prerogatives of nature: “We are, after all, in the spring, animal” (93).

Although Eleanor Hall puts a Jungian cast on her portrayal of the Ishtar image, many other researchers suggest the validity of her perspective in a more strictly historical, anthropological sense. Merlin Stone, in *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood*, supports Hall's presentation of Ishtar, saying Ishtar was “Queen of Heaven, said to have descended from
the planet Venus,” and was “revered as Mother by Semitic peoples” (105). Her temples were devoted to “expressing the sacredness of sexuality as the gift of Ishtar” (105). Stone, however, emphasizes that Ishtar was also the goddess of war and combat. In addition to being the “Mother of Deities” and “Source of the Oracles of Prophecy,” Ishtar is the “Lady of Battle and Victory...brandishing sword or scimitar” (106). The New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology also focuses on Ishtar’s dual images of war and sensual love, calling her both a “war-goddess” and “the goddess of love and voluptuousness,” and adding that “sacred prostitution formed part of her cult” (58).

The muscular, strong-willed, earthy Pilar closely resembles the archetypal Ishtar image. She is the true leader of the guerrilla band, brave and fierce in battle. She is lusty in her appetites, yet tender and nurturing in guiding Maria and Robert in their sexual union. As a part-gypsy in touch with “mysteries,” Pilar also has the gift of prophecy, seeing Robert Jordan’s death in his palm. Catherine Barkley is another prostitute figure who has the Ishtar quality of prophetic power—also focused on foreseeing death. She sees herself, and sometimes Frederic, dead in the rain (106).

The connection of prostitution and war—sexuality and death—in the Ishtar image is a key aspect of the pattern of prostitution in Hemingway’s work. Death itself is a “whore” in the ethos operating in Hemingway’s fictional worlds. He makes this connection explicit in one of his poems:

Now sleeps he with that old whore death
Who yesterday denied her thrice
Now repeat after me...
Did you deny her? Yes. Thrice? Yes.
Repeat after me.
Do you take this old whore death
for thy lawful wedded wife?
I do. I do. I do.
(from material tape recorded in
Harry’s Bar, Venice, circa late 1950s)

In this poem death is a lethal sex partner—both a whore and a wife. The reference to

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denying her three times is also an ironic allusion to Peter's three denials of Christ, who supposedly conquered death. Colonel Cantwell, too, conceives of death as a sex partner: "It comes in bed to most people, I know, like love's opposite number. I have lived with it nearly all my life and the dispensing of it has been my trade" (220). By implication, the dealers of death—professional soldiers—are also prostitute figures. Renata makes that connection explicit when she tells Cantwell that his "sale metier" (dirty work) is "not a dirty trade. It is the oldest and the best" (114)—a clear conflation of soldiering and prostitution, which is traditionally the "world's oldest profession."

The Ishtar/prostitute figure invoking both death and love is an image of great power and at the same time great danger. It is a mixing of negative and positive forces, death and life, dark and light, in a constantly volatile state. It can be a Destroyer manifestation and at the same time an image of the Erotic. Brett Ashley is an example of this dual image in Hemingway's work. She appears to represent the obsessive aspect of human sexuality, which can turn the human being into a "steer," a literal and spiritual eunuch.

The ancient rites of Ishtar worship are instructive in understanding this dimension of Hemingway's use of the prostitution motif. Merlin Stone points out that men who wished to worship Ishtar and live in the temple castrated themselves to demonstrate their devotion:

Men who joined in reverence of the Holy Mother offered their organs of maleness joyfully, in the midst of highest festive celebration, using razor, sword, or knife of stone, later... [serving] as eunuch attendants at the temples of Ishtar. (109)

This ritual was based on the myth that Ishtar had taken her son, Tammuz, as her lover and consort, "after he had proven himself on Her couch" (109), for a year, after which he mysteriously died. Ishtar grieved but continued to rule, taking a new lover each year and then sacrificing him at year's end.

Particularly relevant to Hemingway, however, is the story of the changing of these
rites. When Ishtar took a new lover, Gilgamish, he sought "immortality" and "permanence in the earthly throne," instead of accepting his death as part of the natural rhythm of the seasons. Gilgamish killed Ishtar's "bull of heaven," her agent of power—an image evocative of the matador's role in *The Sun Also Rises*—and thereby escaped death. Thereafter, Gilgamish placed Ishtar on a "pedestal of worship," continued to ask her "oracular priestesses" for "advice and counsel," and each year, instead of literal castration, engaged in a ritual "mourning for three days" to appease her and to gain her blessing by pretending humility (Stone, 109-111).

For Merlin Stone and many other scholars of mythology, the clash between the desire for permanence/immortality ("sky gods") and the acceptance of the rhythm of natural change ("earth gods"), which includes death, is symbolic of the tension between the "masculine" and "feminine" principles of the human psyche, as well as indicative of the historical struggle between matriarchal and patriarchal societies. This tension is expressed in Hemingway's work in part through the motif of prostitution, but contrary to many critical readings of Hemingway, the conflict is rarely resolved simply in terms of male power asserting itself over female power, or men fleeing women whom they fear are destructive or deadly. One of the values of looking at the pattern of prostitution in Hemingway's narratives is that it serves as a textual indicator that the dynamics of the fiction are much more interesting and complex than scenarios that pit men against women. Women and men are sometimes identified by what they do in Hemingway's texts, but rarely by their "nature" or even by their "sphere." Hemingway's female and male characters "cross-dress," literally and figuratively, so extensively that they are presented as portraying pan-sexual or meta-sexual psychic states rather than qualities inherent in either sex. Virtually all of Hemingway's major characters, male and female, are presented as prostitute figures in terms of their destructive and erotic powers, their role-playing mutability, and their androgyney. Curiously enough, there is evidence that the mythical qualities of the
Ishtar/Aphrodite figure also included this quality of androgynous costuming. Merlin Stone writes: “To those who entered the holy places of Aphrodite, love was love. Thus at Her...rites, young boys dressed as girls. And...men put on the robes of women, while women donned the clothes of men” (184).

The Prostitute as Mother Symbol

Many Hemingway scholars have believed, however, like Mark Spilka, that Hemingway the writer was attracted to the issue of androgyny because Hemingway the man feared it—feared losing his masculine identity. One of the key signs of this fear has generally been assumed to be the role of the mother in Hemingway's narratives, which has appeared to be to many readers representative of male vs. female issues in his texts. Giving credence to this view is the fact that the Ishtar image is indeed a mother image—a mother who has sex with her son and then kills him. Hemingway's heroines are also clearly portrayed as prostitute/mother figures who nurture the male protagonist but engender in him a feeling of entrapment in the vulnerability of emotion, the risk of caring, the danger of loss, the limitation of commitment. Many critics have agreed with Judith Fetterley's contention, in her essay, “A Farewell to Arms, Hemingway's 'Resentful Cryptogram'” (The Resisting Reader), that this sense of entrapment causes a level of subliminal or subtextual resentment, even hatred, of the female protagonist on the part of the male narrator.

What compounds this issue for many Hemingway readers and critics is the evidence of Hemingway's conflicted relationship with his own mother, Grace Hall Hemingway. She was a strong-willed person, powerful intellectually and emotionally, who was physically large like Pilar, Honest Lil, and Alice, the 250-lb. prostitute in “The Light of the World.” The prostitutionalizing of the mother figure, particularly in the image of an obese woman who would therefore approximate for the adult man the relative size of his own mother when he was a child, could be interpreted as a sign of male psychosis inherent in
Hemingway's prostitution scenarios. Erich Neumann's seminal analysis of the mother archetype provides some support for that conclusion:

It is possible and even probable that the original physical type of the Great Mother and of the priestesses who represented her was secularized and sexualized in later patriarchal times; that this "taste" is therefore not original, but a phenomenon of decadence. The "fat woman" as desired sexual object, harem inmate, prostitute, for example, is an archaic remnant of the mother complex in the male...extending down to modern times. These archaic images of the Great Mother recur also in the psychoses of modern men. (*The Great Mother*, 96)

The complexity of Hemingway's pattern of prostitution dynamics, however, offers equally compelling reasons to interpret the "mother principle" in his work not as a manifestation of sexual warfare but as a psychic force that must be understood and integrated within all human beings. Even Nancy Chodorow, whose book, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, is a brilliant deconstruction of patriarchy and traditional psychoanalytic theory, suggests that, although "girls and boys develop different relational capacities and senses of self as a result of growing up in a family in which women mother" (173), for "children of both genders, mothers represent regression and lack of autonomy" (181). Chodorow also says that a girl feels the psychic need "to liberate herself from her mother" (123), just as a boy does, and that "both sexes learn to feel negatively toward their mother during the oedipal period" (182). Despite the necessity of breaking away, however, Chodorow says that "as a result of being parented by a woman, both sexes look for a return to this emotional and physical union" (199)—often represented culturally by romantic love. Men fear this return as a loss of self in the "other," while women fear this return because it makes them take on the role of the "other" without a self. As a result, in Chodorow's terms, "men both look for and fear exclusivity...demanding from women what men are at the same time afraid of receiving," while "women have different and more complex relational needs in which an exclusive relationship to a man is not enough" (199). In either

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case, the mother principle, as symbolic of the self's struggle for both autonomy from and union with other selves, is a psychic force with which all individuals must struggle to obtain inner balance. In Eleanor Hall's Jungian terms: “As the amorous mother she pulls the man too much toward her; he needs to know how to stand up to her, how to reject the pull of instinct which renders him incapable of loving later. The virgin goddess asks then to be recognized as a sister and lover...” 16). Hemingway's prostitute/lover figures do tend to play the role of “amorous” mother—nurturing, caregiving, managing, seducing, controlling; yet they also play the role of “virgin goddess” who is “sister and lover” to the male protagonist—attempting to co-discover sexuality and love, attempting to share equally in private discoveries of self.

Hemingway's texts do not “solve” the oedipal conflicts inherent in the mothering element in his scenarios, however. The mother principle is simply one of the forces helping to drive Hemingway's narratives in their fundamental direction: towards the crisis of self at the psychological moment or “scene” of romantic love, i.e., the union of self with other. It is at this point that the Hemingway protagonists, male and female, declare their co-identity, like Catherine to Frederic: “There isn't any me any more....We really are the same one” (106, 139); or Robert to Maria: “As long as there is one of us there is both of us....I am thee also now” (463). And it is in this process of merging and reflecting selves that the prostitution motif plays its most intriguing and complex psychological role, because it is here that the narrator becomes absorbed in the self's strategies of presentation and invention. The narrator's fixation on the pitfalls of this labyrinthine process enters the text in the form of references to acting, pretense, lying, misdirection, optical and figurative illusions, masks, and mirrors, all figuring prominently and intimately in the Hemingway narrator's attempt to maintain and share an authentic sense of self even as the possibility of an authentic self is being called into question by the strategies it uses to invent its own image.
Hemingway's Bad Dreams of Sex: Fantasized Johns and Brothel Bullies

Since the image of the prostitute was so prominent in so many varied ways in Ernest Hemingway's life and work, the inevitable question arises: Did Hemingway have sex with prostitutes? No one really knows. Oddly enough, with all the controversy and conflicting information about Hemingway's sexuality, there is no historical evidence—and very few innuendos—that Hemingway's knowledge or attitudes concerning prostitution came from actual sexual experience with prostitutes. His many biographers—from Carlos Baker to Jeffrey Meyers to Michael Reynolds to Kenneth Lynn to James Mellow—don't know because they weren't there. They couldn't rely on Hemingway to tell them because he liked to make up stories. Sometimes the stories were good ones, but they were rarely completely true, as far as anyone knows. The biographers couldn't rely on other people to tell them either. Not only did almost everyone who talked about Hemingway say something different about him, but of all the nasty or nice things they did say, no one ever said they knew for sure that he had sex with a prostitute.

None of the major biographies even list prostitution or prostitutes in their indices, and if they mention prostitution in the text, it is only in passing—never in detail. There is no detail to mention. Unlike Stephen Crane or Gustave Flaubert, who spent a great deal of well-documented time in brothels, Hemingway cannot ever be placed for certain in a house of prostitution. Meyers, for instance, compares Hemingway to Crane by saying that “both were personally and professionally interested in the lives of prostitutes and criminals” (135)—but he provides no details. Baker and Reynolds do document by means of supporting evidence from Mary Welsh Hemingway that Hemingway invited Havana prostitutes to dinner. Baker writes about these encounters as social occasions; there is no mention of sex:

While Mary was away, he did his best to keep his bad-boy reputation. A new whore whom he nicknamed Xenophobia had recently appeared in Havana and he sent his retainer,
Roberto Herrara, to bring her out to the Finca for dinner. Some days later he paid a nonprofessional call on Leopoldina, who was just his age. They exchanged local gossip and told each other what Ernest described as “sad stories of the death of kings.” (475)

More typical of the biographies is to place Hemingway near a brothel and let the reader’s imagination do the rest. James McLendon, for instance, in *Papa: Hemingway in Key West*, writes about the notorious, ornate brothels operating in Key West during the time that Hemingway lived there. McLendon calls them the “finest houses of prostitution in America” (68). After going into some detail about these establishments, McLendon admits that while “it is tempting to report that Hemingway...visited this local attraction...there is no evidence to substantiate the fact” (72). Also typical are the apocryphal remarks—ultimately traceable back to Hemingway himself—made by obscure Hemingway acquaintances. For instance, Denis Brian, in *The True Gen*, quotes a person named John Rybovich, Jr., as saying: “Ernest said he liked Cuba because they had both fishing and fucking there. I believe they had him try out all the houses of prostitution” (84).

The one thing that everyone who writes about Hemingway’s private life does seem to agree on is that Hemingway made himself up. James Mellow, in writing about the gay man who successfully and illegally impersonated Hemingway for several years in the 1930s—referred to by Mellow as “Ernest’s doppelganger”—says that “the irony—superb, in a way—was that Hemingway was himself creating a sometime imposter, a public persona whose reputation preceded him in his travels” (399). Carlos Baker writes about the “facets of the public image that Ernest wished to project” and says that “it was a kind of tribute to his powers of self-dramatization that almost everybody...took him at his word. There were probably times when he believed it himself” (207). Lillian Ross, in her *Portrait of Hemingway*, implied that he invented an image to fulfill the desires of other people, very much in the manner of the prostitute mentalities he wrote about: “They didn’t like Hemingway to be Hemingway. They wanted him to be somebody else—probably

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themselves" (21).

What is particularly interesting, in relation to the connection between Hemingway and prostitution, is that as he got older, what he invented was the image of a swaggering sexual dynamo, a super john who had swashbuckled through brothels all his life. In the 1950s Hemingway made a tape recording in Harry's Bar in Venice, the text of which is as follows:

When I was a young boy, it was not necessary to pay any money to women. Later, I paid money to a few women to whom I wish all good things well. The principal woman of these was one named Alice, who weighed approximately 258 lbs. Her fee for love was two dollars, but she did not collect this fee if love was made satisfactory, and she often loaned me money to get a can of beans or something else in order that I might fight or box or attempt to fight or attempt to box in Northern Michigan. She was a very beautiful girl in spite of her weight, and I love her dearly still.

I never had the good fortune to know Miss Matahari, since at the time that she was of such importance I was a simple second-lieutenant, and she was consorting with generals, officers, and cabinet ministers. However, one night I fucked her very well. Although I found her to be rather heavy around the hips and to have more desire for what was done to her than what she was giving to the man who gave her.

After the war I worked in three whorehouses which were located in Billings, Montana, Red Lodge, Montana, and Cody, Wyoming. I was young at the time and trying to write, and it was difficult to preserve the balance between trying to write and working in a whorehouse where every Saturday night you broke your hand. In Billings, Montana, I broke my hand every Saturday night due to the influx of local citizenry who lived on the outskirts and came in to have fun, and at the end of it, wished to fight, and I was forced to fight with them and take them outside. This is not a profitable trade.

After my hands were broken and I did not think that I could continue in Billings and continue my writing, I moved to Red Lodge, where we only had to throw people out of the whorehouse on Saturday night because they were mostly thin and were usually armed with knives, although they were very good people and I liked them very much. In Red Lodge where I had to fight only on Saturday night, my hands cured quite well and became strong again or as strong as they could be in a small way and I then proceeded to Cody, where I had been offered a profitable position, much as my friend, Roberto ** ** ** (laughter). The hands were still broken when I left Red Lodge, but by taping them I could get by in Cody, which is not a very difficult town to bounce in because the people who come there are well known and you know their faults and can hit them as you wish.
In Cody I was quite successful and met many interesting whores, professional whores, and since I did not believe that there were any good girls, and I cared nothing about the idea of them, I had already abandoned any hope or fear of them. In Cody we had many interesting fights for those who watched them, but they were not of anything to be broadcasted nor television [sic] nor put on any form of radio activity. In Cuba, an island where I live, though I am not a citizen thereof, and do not subscribe to their politics, I have known as whores various citizens—we will mention none of their names. As regards amateur whores, I have known a vast group of them. They are much dumber than the professional whores because they are not truly conscious of their metier. Metier is a French phrase which means in Spanish officio and in American means their trade. I could describe these women for a long time and it would probably, or possibly, interest you, my radio audience, but I do not propose to describe them nor to say anything about them, until a previous broadcast which we will hold at another date. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

Several things stand out in this John's fantasy. Perhaps the most obvious feature is the sexual prowess that Hemingway assigns to himself. He is so adept that prostitutes pay him for sex—a curious role reversal. Another intriguing aspect of the "tall tale" concerns where Hemingway places himself in the picture. He is neither in the brothel as a john nor outside as a respectable "Oak Parker." He is instead a bouncer, a fellow professional of the prostitutes and, in his role as their protector, a sort of pimp. The third important feature is that Hemingway mentions his emotions of "hope and fear" concerning "good girls" and then implies that all women are "whores"—only some are professionals and some are amateurs. It is the transparent fantasy of the aging bully and braggart, possessing none of the nuances Hemingway pursued in his serious work.

The most important aspect of the tape recording, however, in terms of Hemingway's sexuality and his fixation on prostitutes, is the character of Alice. Alice also appears in Hemingway's short story, "The Light of the World," and in that story she also weighs 250 lbs. and is beautiful and kind. What is intriguing is that Alice physically resembles Hemingway's mother, Grace, a similarity we might pass over as coincidental if it were not for another piece of writing that Hemingway did not make public but which is among his
many other unpublished manuscripts in the Kennedy Library. It is a short dialogue entitled
"The Classics":

For who would be a bellows to cool a harlot's lust—
Bloody bellows to fan their lust, you mean.
For who would be a bellows—
Stop it—go get your bloody bellows blown. Take him
out and get it blown.
For who would be a bellows to cool—
Listen, Bridgie, did you ever know a lustful harlot?
My mother, said Bridgie.
That's not funny.
Both was my mother funny, said Bridgie. There was
nothing funny about my mother. She was known as the
finest bit of ass west of the Mississippi. That was when she
crossed the river. Before that she was—
For Christ's sake, shut up about your mother. It's not
funny to talk that way about your mother.
Is it Mother's Day? asked Bridgie—Because if it's Mother's
Day, we're all done for. There isn't any Western Union office.

This dialogue may represent literary doodling for Hemingway, but it is one of many
indications that sexuality, prostitution, and Hemingway's mother seem to be connected in a
strange cycle of love, hate, frustration, and a resentful sense of powerlessness. In a letter to
Lillian Ross in the late 1940s, paraphrased by Carlos Baker, Hemingway "boasted that he
had bedded every woman he had ever wanted and some that he hadn't. He said that his
hatred of his mother was non-Freudian, that she was an all-time, All-American bitch, and
that the first big psychic wound of his life had come when he discovered that his father was
a coward" (465). Hemingway's first "big psychic wound," however, as Kenneth Lynn
suggests, does not seem to have come from experience associated with Hemingway's father
but with his mother, and Hemingway's fear of "cowardice" seems to have much more to do
with his early sense of being manipulated by his mother's cross-dressing or "twinning" him
with his sister Marcelline than it does with his father's suicide.

No matter how we analyze Hemingway's childhood experiences—and we must
remember that our view of them is purely speculative—what we see fairly tangibly in
Hemingway's fantasies is an attempt to project an image of super control and super sexuality. In actuality, according to the testimony of the women who were married to him, Hemingway had a rather modest sex drive. When asked if Hemingway had been a great lover, his last wife Mary sighed, "If it were only true" (How It Was, 250). Gioia Diliberto writes that Hadley admitted that "overall, her sex life was better with her second husband" (Hadley, 110). Martha Gellhorn, Hemingway's talented third wife who was a published author herself, described Hemingway simply as the "biggest liar since Munchhausen" (quoted by Crews, 92). The flamboyant and highly sexual Kiki, for whose memoirs Hemingway wrote an introduction, said of Hemingway's Paris days that she remembered him "looking more like a first-communion lad and friendlier than ever; I wondered if he was still a virgin" (quoted by Mellow, 399). Zelda Fitzgerald, admittedly not an unbiased observer, dismissed Hemingway's masculinity as "phony as a rubber check" (Crews, 98).

No matter what veracity we ascribe to individual sources, the pattern we see here seems to indicate clearly that what drove Hemingway to construct an elaborate sexual myth involved complex ego needs that had little to do with sexual desire. Sexuality was less a pleasure than a problem he escaped through fantasy and facade. In the prostitute's experience Hemingway seems to have seen a reflection of his own: the removed and powerless observer behind the pretense of sexual performance. What also seems clear is that this sense of sexual powerlessness started in childhood. As Frederic Crews suggests in his essay, "Pressure Under Grace":

In all likelihood what Grace wanted, beyond an enactment of some private cross-gender scheme, was a boy whose sexual identity would remain forever dependent upon her dictates and whims. If so, she gruesomely got her wish. The apparent effect of all that dolling and doting was not so much to lend Ernest a female identity as to implant in his mind a permanently debilitating confusion, anxiety, and anger. (The Critics Bear It Away, 106)

This anger and anxiety seems to have created in Hemingway a desire in his personal
life to assert a super "masculine" identity, but in his fiction it seems to have expressed itself as a desire to escape or transcend sexuality altogether. Hemingway characters tend to want to start over in a pre-sexual childhood; they want to fix what went wrong. "We're all bitched from the start," Hemingway wrote to F. Scott Fitzgerald (Letters, 285). In The Garden of Eden, David Bourne expresses the desire to heal this botched beginning—not coincidentally, perhaps, after Catherine calls Maria "your whore" (209):

Now, he told himself, you must try to grow up again and face what you have to face without being irritable or hurt that someone did not understand and appreciate what you wrote. (211)

Grace Hemingway, in fact, never approved of Ernest's work. She called The Sun Also Rises "one of the filthiest books of the year" (Baker, 180). The roots of Hemingway's hurt, withdrawn "prostitute consciousness" go very deep.

Truman Capote once called Hemingway "a closet everything" (The True Gen, 187). That seems to sum up Hemingway's over-exposed, under-revealed theatrical persona. It was a persona remarkably consistent with the kind of "prostitutional mind" he created in his fiction.

Prostitution as a Model of Self

Regardless of how we interpret Hemingway's intense personal struggle with self-definition, what we see clearly in his work is prostitution as an essential trope or model of the structure and expression of human identity. The characteristic Hemingway narrator's struggle with "self" and the prostitute's cycle of accommodation and pretense are framed in the same terms in Hemingway's texts; they serve as reflections of each other. Jake Barnes says to himself: "I try to play it along and just not make trouble for people" (31). When Brett says to him, "Don't look like that, darling," Jake answers, "How do you want me to look?" (56). Frederic Henry is equally malleable: "I knew I did not love Catherine Barkley
nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game like bridge, in which you said things
instead of playing cards. Like bridge you had to pretend you were playing for money or
playing for some stakes" (30-31). Robert Jordan has spent so much of his life fantasizing
that he is afraid to believe his experience with Maria is real:

Maybe it never did happen, he thought. Maybe you dreamed it
or made it up and it never did happen....Maybe it was like that.
Maybe you would be afraid to touch her to see if it was true.
Maybe you would, and probably it is something that you made
up or that you dreamed. (137-38)

What I will attempt to prove in this exploration of the prostitution pattern in
Hemingway's work is that the difficulty Hemingway's narrators have in distinguishing
between what is real and what is pretended, in themselves and in others, is characteristically
framed in terms of his texts' prostitution dynamics. In other words, Hemingway's concept
of the prostitute's psychological experience became in his fiction the paradigm for the
dynamics of the human self as it attempts intimacy with others, enabling Hemingway to
portray what Michael Foucault calls "techniques of the self" or "the games of truth by which
man proposes to think his own nature" (The Use of Pleasure, 7). By focusing on the
prostitution element in Hemingway's work, we can more fully understand how this realm
of human experience became for Hemingway a fictional model of the paradox of the self's
existence through performance—a paradox that was for his characters an "existential" crisis
of identity.

The dilemma that absorbs Hemingway's narrators lies in the question of how a human
being can ever distinguish between his performance and himself, between his deception or
mask and his substance or "true self." On the one hand, Hemingway's characters seem to
agree with philosopher George Santayana that "Masks are...admirable echoes...of feeling,"
and "Words and images are like shells, no less integral parts of nature than are the
substances they cover..." (Soliloquies in England, 131-34). On the other hand, his
characters seem to have a fundamental doubt about whether they exist at all beyond their reflection in other people's selves, which are performances like their own. In The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Erving Goffman suggests that each person engages in a process of constructing an identity and orchestrating its presentation to others. Each human being "presents himself and his activity to others," as an actor on a stage before an audience, and "guides and controls the impression they form of him" (xi). If that is true, Hemingway's narrators seem to ask, then how can we ever be anything but hidden voyeurs of our own staged drama? Is there a substance of self at all, or only a replicating repertoire of masks?

To see how these questions relate to the prostitute's experience, and why Hemingway's narrators may have closely identified with the prostitute's emotional and psychological responses, we need only turn—as Hemingway himself did throughout his life—to the testimony of prostitutes themselves. The voices of real-life prostitutes offer dramatic evidence of what enabled Hemingway to see in their experience a universal dilemma of human identity. Although Hemingway had to rely on personal conversations with women working in prostitution, contemporary readers have the benefit of many published prostitution narratives. The insights of these women regarding their own psychological agonies—as well as their defiant dignity and searching self-analysis—show uncanny alignment with Hemingway's fictional presentations not only of prostitute characters but also of his male and female protagonists.

In Studs Terkel's book, Working, one of the many professionals he interviews is Roberta Victor, a woman who has spent most of her life working in prostitution. She did not use her own name when working as a prostitute: "The role one plays when hustling has nothing to do with who you are. It's only fitting and proper that you take another name" (490). Ms. Victor goes on to speak very pointedly about the psychological cost of playing this role: "...in order to continue I had to turn myself off. I had to disassociate who I was
from what I was doing" (494). In her book, *Women, Sex, and Addiction*, Charlotte Davis Kasl writes that the prostitutes she interviewed all experienced the same sense of psychological removal from the acts of prostutional sex. Kasl says that they felt “disconnected from their sexuality” and “would detach emotionally, disconnect from their bodies, and think about other things” (110-11). In Kate Millet's interview/essay, “Prostitution: A Quartet for Female Voices,” the former prostitute “J” also echoes Roberta Victor's feelings of dissociation: “The scary thing about it is the way I put myself out, asleep inside” (*Women in a Sexist Society*, 122). “When you're doing prostitution,” “J” also says, “if only in order to cope—you've got to have tremendous defenses. You've just gotta turn off, somehow. Drugs or will power, you've got to cut yourself off” (108).

Many Hemingway critics, including Judith Fetterley, have noted the curious passivity of Hemingway's male protagonists. “J” speaks about this kind of passivity as an emotional defense against the kind of abuse a prostitute endures, not just abuse of her body but the assault against her sense of worth—her sense of self: “Even being passive is a way of resisting. It says, yes, you can have my body, but you won't get me excited. Neither angry nor sexually excited” (122). The “vast majority” of prostitutes, Kasl confirms, “were sexually abused or emotionally neglected as children” (108), a condition that would further explain their use of dissociation and passivity as emotional defenses. This perspective helps explain why the connection in Hemingway's texts between the soldier and the prostitute is an intimate one, the experience of each reflecting the other's. The soldier, like the prostitute, offers up his body for sacrifice, for abuse, for mutilation, even as he tries to grasp an inner, “separate peace” while outwardly playing his required role.

The playing of roles, even to the extent of creating alternate personalities, is a common theme in prostitute narratives. In the letters of New York immigrant prostitute Maimie Pinzer, written from 1910-1922 to the “prominent and socially concerned Bostonian” Fanny Quincy Howe and collected by editor Ruth Rosen in *The Maimie Papers* (pub. 1977),

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Maimie speaks of creating an alter ego to carry the shame of her life as a prostitute. Rosen writes that Maimie reproached herself for refusing “to take full responsibility for her own actions” in her younger days, “even assuming an alternate personality, the childishly amoral ‘Mimi,’ on whom she blamed her ‘sporting life’ ” (xxxix). In Maimie’s words, “Mimi” was “supposed to be another personality of mine and I got so, that I found it convenient to heap on Mimi all the dirty contemptible things that Maimie did…(Letter 126A, 372). “J” expresses nearly the same idea to Kate Millet: “When I was a prostitute it wasn’t me somehow” (119).

The prostitute's need to displace the weight of feeling worthless appears to arise from what she sees as the true nature of her transaction. In “J’s” words, prostitution assaults a prostitute's sense of self because what she sells is not a physical commodity but a spiritual one:

The worst part about prostitution is that you’re obliged not to sell sex only, but your humanity. That’s the worst part of it: that what you’re selling is your human dignity. Not really so much in bed, but in accepting the agreement—in becoming a bought person. (104)

“J” feels more profoundly compromised, for instance, when she must pretend to agree with a john’s opinions than when she must simply accede to his sexual demands: “That’s when I really felt that I was a whore. That’s the most humiliating thing—having to agree with them all the time because you’re bought” (106).

The self-reproach prostitutes feel clearly comes not only from their own sense of lost dignity but also from their vivid perception of their worth in the eyes of others. These “others” are not just the johns but society at large. Charlotte Kasl claims that the “difference between women in prostitution and other women is chiefly in safety and society’s reaction to them. We treat women who have engaged in ‘official’ prostitution as another species” (109)—reminiscent of Jake's concierge calling Brett a “species of a woman” when she
mistakes her for a prostitute in *The Sun Also Rises*. Experiencing the same public scorn, Polly Adler, the notorious mid-twentieth-century New York madam, writes in her book, *A House is not a Home*, of the reluctance of society to accept her in any other role than prostitute when she tries to leave "the life":

Maybe I'd be doing people a favor if I went around like the madams in the movies—complete with dirty feather boa, hypodermic syringe and a pimp. I ran into some of my 'public' on the island, and they seemed to resent it that I was disguised as a human being. (357)

According to Ruth Rosen, Maimie felt this same sense of isolation as she fought a lonely battle for personhood:

[Maimie's] search for understanding reveals a sensitive and spirited intelligence assaulted by the traumas of twentieth-century urban life. "I felt so alone and useless in this big world," she wrote in a moment of existential despair. (xxxix)

The eloquent testimony of these remarkable women leave little doubt about why Hemingway might find in their experience a model for his own characters' struggles against "existential despair"—and why it is not a "male" struggle but a human one. The words of these women also help us understand how Hemingway could use the terminology of prostitution as a critique of social hypocrisy without implicitly denigrating prostitutes or women in general. Like Hemingway, the women speaking in these prostitute narratives reverse the power of the "naming" process and accuse society of prostituting itself in more virulent ways than the women it calls prostitutes. "In business people sell their souls too," "J" says, "and that's why business destroys people..." (106). "J" feels, like Hemingway, that it is lying about who you are that's "really being a whore, being so dishonest" (109).

"J" also believes that many marriages are basically unlabeled prostitution. She says she "felt freer of men as a prostitute than [she] would as a wife or a mistress or a beloved" (98) because at least as a prostitute she wasn't economically or emotionally dependent on
any one man. Charlotte Kasl, in writing about the prostitutes she interviewed, supports “J’s” views, claiming that we are hypocritical to label certain women prostitutes:

I believe the institution of prostitution provides a way to hide from our internal conflicts about sex. As long as we can point a finger at someone else and say “prostitute,” we can avoid looking at the ways we prostitute ourselves sexually, both individually and as a culture. (110)

Perhaps the most telling remarks in these narratives, however, particularly for those of us writing in the academy, come from the irrepressible and articulate “J” when she speaks of her experience after prostitution as a college teaching assistant. “J” sought a way out of prostitution through education, as did Maimie and Polly Adler, but she has some challenging things to say about the power relationships inherent in academic hierarchy:

I didn't feel I was taking nearly so much shit when I was in the life as I do now that I am a teaching assistant. As a teaching assistant I am really put down and I don't make nearly as much money. True, it carries a certain social status that's a lot higher than that of a prostitute, but you pay for it. I worked long hours for little money and I took shit. I was in tears so much more in graduate school, infuriated and sick. (118)

The insights offered by these special voices should help explain why Hemingway was drawn to their compelling perspective on the nature of their relationship to the human family. Their comments should also help us to see why Hemingway's fictional portrayals of the pain of human self-awareness are not as male-oriented as many modern readings have surmised. One of the major contemporary critiques of Hemingway has been that any human crisis (existential or otherwise) dramatized in his work is conceived as a male crisis. Women in Hemingway's texts, from this theoretical perspective, serve only as backdrops for male action; women are the scene, the stage, the arena for male drama, the screen upon which the male narrator projects his angst, his pain, his image. What a careful analysis of the prostitution dynamics in Hemingway's work can offer is the possibility of interpreting
this process in less gender divisive terms, yet without denying the basic validity of feminist readings. The male narrator does project his version of himself, his act, onto the psychological space created by his interaction with a woman—a woman who in many ways he is “imagining” or idealizing. The text, however, largely because of the prostitution framework, signals that the female protagonist is engaged in an identical process, projecting her own fabricated image of herself onto the scene created by her encounter with the male protagonist. Both are engaged, in a sense, in a struggle to play their parts correctly, to determine what performance of self the other requires. The fact that the sincerity or integrity of this performance appears to constitute “love” and “honor” in Hemingway's fictional worlds may strike us as limited or pessimistic, but it is not necessarily sexist. I do not propose to rescue Hemingway from his detractors by claiming that he is a “feminist” in chauvinist’s clothing—that would be ludicrous. What I do suggest is that attention to the prostitution elements in his work can release us from the claustrophobic readings to which both idolizing and debunking critics have consigned his texts.

The fact that Hemingway as an artist gravitated toward the prostitute's psychological experience—perceived primarily as female experience in his culture—as a paradigm for the human struggle for intimacy suggests that in his work he was reaching for far more than the dogmas of patriarchy. Hemingway appears to have been interested in the elusive realities of human consciousness not as a sexual entity but as a complex convergence of emotional and intellectual forces which take on nuances of “identity”—sexual or political or philosophical—depending on the needs of the moment, the requirements of the scene. For Hemingway the author there is not simply a private face behind a public mask, but a series of psychological masks behind every face, masks that shift and transform depending on the masks encountered behind other faces. That is why Hemingway's male narrators do not reflect the “John's” experience as a primary model for their psychological experience; they reflect the prostitute's experience. These male characters are not power figures—they
respond to events but do not direct them. They deceive, misdirect, lie, pretend, avoid. They rarely do things to others, but many things are done to them. Yet they are presented as sympathetic characters who struggle to endure pain and maintain their dignity. They are victims who survive through memory, fantasy, pretense, and dissociation. They are not "men" or "women." They are beings in the human condition.

In projecting the image of the prostitute onto the women they love, Hemingway's male protagonists are reflecting their own inner state. They are, in a significant sense, prostitutes themselves—victims of a corrupt, manipulative, dehumanizing world, yet resiliently and resolutely trying to discover and maintain their sense of worth in that world. Often they find themselves lying and cheating their way through what they see as false social relationships—and experiencing self-disgust because of it—negotiating their own psychic survival by creating version after version of themselves until they are not sure which, if any, version is real. In their existential confusion, performance or skill or work well done often becomes the talisman of identity for Hemingway characters—often misread, in my opinion, as the Hemingway "masculine" code, a code curiously presented in terms of traditionally female psychological experience: the experience of the prostitute. Hemingway's metaphorical "good place" is that place in the prostitute's mind to which she withdraws for protection and dignity. It is a psychic land of imagination and dreams and memory. It is that symbolic perfect trout stream that is fished with perfect skill in "Now I Lay Me" and "Big Two-Hearted River," as the protagonist tries to escape trauma and reclaim the source of his own being.

By arguing that the prostitute's characteristic emotional experience, as described by prostitutes themselves, is a key to understanding the psychological dynamics of Hemingway's male and female characters, I am not claiming to have found what critic Frederic Crews calls "a single purpose for the text" or "the one global meaning that...the whole work was devised to exemplify" (*The Critics Bear It Away*, 77). Crews doubts the
likelihood of such a single, "unified" meaning for any text, and so do I. Crews believes that the "empirically minded critic can accept the flawed text as found" (85), while finding much fascination and delight (and sometimes, perhaps, dismay) even in those contradictions. I agree, particularly in the case of Ernest Hemingway. I do not claim that the pattern of prostitution in Hemingway's work "explains" his texts or reveals any great "intentional" master plan by the author. I do not even claim that Hemingway's textual prostitution elements all lead in the same direction or present a uniform representation of social or psychological realities. In Hemingway's fiction images of pollution, corruption, mutilation, and death often compete with images of fertility, nature, integrity, and erotica—all connected to the figure of the prostitute—in ways that leave them intertwined and unclear. Hemingway's prostitute figures, both male and female, are at once victims of power and sources of power, wrapped in the swirling multiple personae of goddess-healer, mother-destroyer, selfless and passive lover, remote voyeur manipulator, sexual celebrant of nature, and abused emotional cripple, to name only a few.

I see all these elements as powerfully present in Hemingway's pattern of prostitution, but I do not believe they can be subsumed or tamed under one schema or "global meaning," no matter how "universal." What I do suggest, however, is that the evidence of Hemingway's texts, together with relevant biographical information, clearly shows us that the experience of the prostitute informed both Hemingway's understanding of the world and his creation of fictional characters. Hemingway was also influenced, like many other writers of his time, by a Victorian cultural inheritance in which the dual images of Madonna and Magdalen shaped fictional portrayals of prostitutes and often of women in general. In Hemingway's case, however, that inheritance was filtered through powerful personal experience and a sensibility that was Hemingway's alone.

In terms of the dynamics of the prostitution scenarios in his work, what seems to lay the greatest claim on Hemingway the writer is the issue of identity at the essential moment or
event of psychological transaction: the masked performance in the mental theater of sexuality.
Chapter Two

Georgette's Mirror Images

The Prostitution Motif
in *The Sun Also Rises*

*And I find more bitter than death
the woman,
whose heart is snares and nets,
and her hands as bands.*

—Chapter 7: Verse 26
*Ecclesiastes*
To see in detail how the threads of prostitution form a pattern in Hemingway's work we need only look at his first major novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, published in 1926 during the years he lived in Paris. Hemingway arrived in Paris in 1921 as a reporter for the *Toronto Star*. He was newly married to Hadley, his first wife, and was only one of many young, unknown American expatriates in Paris trying to create new, "modern" art out of the pieces of the post-armageddon world surviving the "Great War," World War I. By the time Hemingway left Paris for good in the late twenties, he and Hadley were divorced and Ernest was a relatively famous international author.

Hemingway's early artistic reputation derived in large part from his first book of short stories, *In Our Time*, published in 1925, but his popularity and sudden fame were due to *The Sun Also Rises*. Although the short stories contained occasional oblique allusions to venal sexuality, it was in Hemingway's longer narrative of the "lost generation" that he began his career-long artistic relationship with the psychology and semiology of prostitution.

Prostitution is like a pebble dropped into the novel's center, rippling out in concentric circles that only grow larger in implication and significance. *The Sun Also Rises* is not literally about prostitution, but it is about a world in which people buy and sell each other with a desperation and ruthlessness associated with the *demi-monde*. In this world of tough, hard surfaces covering the wounds underneath, the prostitute is a dominant symbolic figure through which all social and personal values are articulated and measured. Professional, vulnerable, passionate, alone, jaded, fragile, resilient—the sick heart behind the performer's mask—at once the user and the used—Georgette Hobin enters the novel not merely as a minor, "atmosphere" character representing the Parisian underworld known to
cognoscenti like Jake Barnes, but as the key to the prostitution motif which permeates Hemingway's first major novel.

One of the most dramatic effects of this motif is the way Georgette foreshadows the character of Lady Brett Ashley. It is no caprice on Hemingway's part that a Paris streetwalker is the vehicle that provides our introduction to Brett Ashley; it is essential to the structure of the novel. Georgette functions as a shadowy mirror image, a dissonant echo, of Brett, playing out in miniature the role in Jake's life that Brett does on a larger scale. When Jake sees Georgette on the sidewalk in front of his café, he is trying to forget Brett and go on with his life. Revealing both his worldliness and his intense loneliness, Jake picks Georgette up, not for sex but "because of a vague sentimental idea that it would be nice to eat with someone" (16).

His idea proves to be much nicer in theory than in practice. It has been a long time, Jake tells us, since he has "dined with a poule," and he "had forgotten how dull it could be" (16). Georgette, the poule (French for both prostitute and chicken), although a "good-looking girl" (14), has bad teeth and speaks in practiced cliches. When she speaks of "that dirty war" (17), Jake's protective cynicism wells up inside him: "We probably would have gone on and discussed the war and agreed that it was in reality a calamity for civilization, and perhaps would have been better avoided. I was bored enough" (15).

In the taxi on the way to the restaurant Georgette tries to do what she assumes she is being paid for. She tries to touch Jake's genitals "with one hand," but Jake pushes "her hand away." "What's the matter? You sick?" Georgette asks. "Yes," replies Jake. "Everybody's sick," Georgette says, "I'm sick, too" (15).

A short time later, when Jake and Brett meet at the dancehall and decide to get away by themselves by taking a taxi ride around Paris, the taxi scene with Georgette is virtually reenacted. When Jake kisses Brett, she says, "Don't touch me...Please don't touch me." "What's the matter?" asks Jake. "I can't stand it," Brett replies (25-26).
This interaction is a clear repetition of the first taxi scene because in both cases Jake is seeking emotional and social companionship, and in both cases he is unsuccessful because neither he nor his companion is able to “touch.” The novel ends with a reprise of the same scene, with Brett and Jake in a taxi in Madrid. Brett says, “Oh, Jake, we could have had such a damned good time together.” At this point Jake sees a “mounted” policeman who “raise[s] his baton”—an image which ridicules Jake’s physical condition and calls forth Jake’s bitter, sad, final comment: “Yes. Isn’t it pretty to think so?” (247).

*The Sun Also Rises* is framed literally and figuratively by these scenes in a taxi, a framing that equates Brett with Georgette. For one thing, the taxi represents the transience and impersonality of venal love for Hemingway; it is literally the modern vehicle of prostitution, as the ending of one of the stories from *In Our Time* implies:

The major did not marry her in the spring, or any other time. Luz never got an answer to the letter to Chicago about it. A short time after he [Nick Adams] contracted gonorrhea from a sales girl in a loop department store while riding in a taxicab through Lincoln Park. (260) (from “A Very Short Story,” which was based on Hemingway’s brief romance with Agnes von Kurowsky, and which later became the much longer story of Catherine and Frederic in *A Farewell to Arms*)

What makes Brett’s connection to Georgette an association with prostitution in general, however, is the number and nature of other textual references throughout the novel which surround Brett with an aura of prostitutionality. The thematic and linguistic connections between Georgette and Brett are immediately evident—starting with the sound of their names. Not only do the names end in the same sound and carry an androgynous connotation, but the “ette” ending was common among the *noms de guerre* (aliases, but literally “names of war”) of French prostitutes. Alain Corbin, in his recent book on prostitution in France after 1850, *Women for Hire*, writes about “the large number of
diminutives ending in ‘-ette’ (Violette, Yvette, Paulette...Georgette...). In all, these account for 65 percent of the pseudonyms” (77). Corbin guesses that the purpose of these names “was probably to emphasize youth” (77), thereby contributing to the client’s fantasy that he was winning the affections of an innocent young girl.

The two women are also both expatriates—Georgette is from Brussels and Brett is from England—who find Paris a place of “sickness.” Georgette calls Paris “dirty” (19), while Brett calls it a “pestilential city” (74). They are also similar in their circumstances or “role” when they appear in the novel for the first and only time together. Brett arrives at the nightclub as the lone woman with a group of young gay men who seem to enjoy her as a kind of token, “straight” mascot. When these men see Georgette, an “actual harlot” (20), they rush to dance with her, at the same time that Brett detaches herself from them to talk to Jake. Jake watches Georgette’s desertion of him wryly, prefiguring his view of Brett’s behavior in Pamplona: “She had been taken up by them. I knew then that they would all dance with her. They are like that” (20). Brett jokes with Jake about bringing a prostitute into the company of his respectable friends. “Where did you get it?” she asks, referring to Georgette as a thing. She adds, “It’s wrong of you, Jake. It’s an insult to all of us” (22). Is Brett making a serious moral judgment? Not at all. She follows these comments immediately with, “It’s in restraint of trade” (22), and laughs—implying that bringing in a professional is unfair to the amateurs.

At this point Robert Cohn sees Brett and looks longingly at her “as his compatriot [Moses] must have looked when he saw the promised land” (22), a reference by Jake to Cohn’s view of Brett as a piece of property—a thing or “it” like Georgette—and also a reference to Jake’s intuitive perception of Cohn’s instantly possessive attitude towards Brett. In this way Cohn becomes the first of Jake’s friends who “take up” Brett. Observing that Brett has made a new conquest in Cohn, Jake comments sarcastically: “I suppose you like to add them up” (23). Brett tells him not to talk “like a fool” (23).
A few minutes earlier, Georgette had called Jake “a fool” (18) for introducing her as his “fiancée, Mademoiselle Georgette Leblanc” (18) (the white, the pure). Brett, too, is a “false” fiancée, whose promiscuous behavior—and the fact that she is still married to Lord Ashley—makes a mockery of her engagement to Mike Campbell. Georgette and Brett are clearly counterparts here. Each is “engaged” in a temporary contract which she quickly abandons for better prospects.

Besides these circumstantial connections between Georgette and Brett, there is little doubt about the subconscious melding of the two women in Jake’s mind later in the same evening when Brett comes to Jake’s apartment, drunk and loud and disheveled from carousing with Count Mippipopolous. The concierge tells Jake there is a “species of woman” (32) (like an “it”) to see him on some obviously “dirty business” (32). The concierge thinks Brett is a prostitute. Then Jake hears Brett’s voice on the stairs below: “Half asleep I had been sure it was Georgette. I don’t know why. She could not have known my address” (32).

Costumed in these textual allusions Brett is presented to us, through Jake’s narrative consciousness, in terms unmistakably aligning her with Georgette’s social, sexual role: prostitution. If Brett’s textual connections to prostitution ended with these opening incidents, they might only be of minor importance to the novel’s overall narrative direction. They do not end here, however, and instead only grow larger in suggestiveness and meaning as the novel develops.

Like a prostitute, Brett is surrounded by men who want to pay her—in money or marriage—for her companionship. Count Mippipopolous, the titled Greek “sugar daddy” (he owns a “chain of sweetshops in the States” (32)) who briefly becomes enamored of Brett in Paris and offers Brett “ten thousand dollars to go to Biarritz with him” (32). She declines because she knows “too many people in Biarritz” (33) and because she’s “in love” (33) with Jake. Jake is skeptical about Brett’s sense of love, and he is particularly
jaundiced not only about her motivations for sexual encounters but also about her motivations for marriage. He tells Robert Cohn that Brett married the British aristocrat, Lord Ashley—from whom she got her title of “Lady”—shortly after her “own true love had... kicked off with the dysentery” (39). Cohn, ever the sentimentalist, refuses to believe she “would marry anybody she didn’t love.” “Well,” Jake replies, “she’s done it twice” (39). Jake’s implication here is quite clear that Brett, like a prostitute, enters contracts with men for material, not emotional, reasons: money, security, a “title” (she says a title is good for “hell’s own amount of credit” (57)).

Brett is about to enter a marriage contract a third time for reasons apparently other than love. She plans to marry Mike Campbell, a Scotsman who is bankrupt but whose “people have loads of money” (63) (Brett says). Brett also tells Jake that Mike is “the best dancer” (62) she knows, that he has “his points” (62), that she’s going to marry him as “soon as we can get the divorce” (63) (from Ashley), but that she hasn’t “thought about him for a week” (63). To accent her ability “not to think” of Mike (and supposedly to forget Jake, whom she does think about), Brett goes to San Sebastian, Spain, for an affair with Robert Cohn, just before Mike is due to arrive in Paris from Scotland. She gets back to Paris barely a few hours before Mike. She sees Jake and his friend Bill Gorton by coincidence and tells them repeatedly that she “must bathe...must clean myself” (74)—like a prostitute preparing for the next client—before Mike arrives.

When Campbell does arrive, we find out immediately that he is an alcoholic and a deadbeat, and that Brett sees him as exactly that. She introduces him to Bill as a “drunkard” and an “undischarged bankrupt” (79). Brett obviously does not respect Mike. He is an embarrassment to her, yet she feels she deserves no better. Near the novel’s end Brett says to Jake: “I’m going back to Mike....He’s so damned nice and he’s so damned awful. He’s my sort of thing” (243). Her comments reflect Charlotte Davis Kasl’s profile of the prostitute with the characteristically abusive history, blaming herself for her own

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victimization. With her low self-esteem becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy, Brett sees herself as a “bitch” (184, 243) who deserves the vulgar treatment she receives from Mike. Ironically it is Mike who has some insight into the abusive background that makes Brett so vulnerable and self-destructive. He tells Jake that Brett “hasn’t had an absolutely happy life” (203), having been terrorized by Lord Ashley—another war victim made paranoid by combat—who made her “sleep on the floor” and “used to tell her he’d kill her” with the “loaded service revolver” he kept by his side (203).

Despite Mike’s knowledge of Brett’s past emotional wounds, however, he treats her disrespectfully, alternating between sloppy possessiveness and insecurity about his claim of ownership. He slurs “endearments” to Brett, calling her “a piece,” “a lovely piece” (79-80) (five times), and “this thing” (79), echoing Jake’s description of Cohn’s view of Brett as a piece of land. Also treating Brett like his “poule,” Mike’s sole desire for the evening is to “turn in early” (79). The next morning we learn that Mike thinks their hotel is “a brothel!” (83). It seems that they had left their bags at a nearby bar, so the desk clerk—mistaking Brett for a prostitute—asked if they “wanted a room for the afternoon only” (83). Brett laughs at the misunderstanding, but Mike insists: “I believe it’s a brothel...And I should know” (83). Mike clearly implies that, possibly from wartime experience, he knows his way around a brothel; but his comments here are also part of a pattern of his troubled, insecure needling of Brett about her promiscuous behavior, which he repeatedly casts in the language of prostitution. Later at Pamplona, the perpetually and boorishly drunken Mike calls Brett “an extraordinary wench” (165) (another word for prostitute) and “just a lovely, healthy wench” (166) who has “had a Jew” and now has “got a bull-fighter” (206).

Mike is also the one who informs the group that Robert Cohn “calls [Brett] Circe” (144) because he (Cohn) “claims she turns men into swine” (144). Campbell clearly means this comment as bitter ridicule of Cohn, but Campbell’s jealousy and antisemitism only express his own barely repressed fear and resentment of Brett. At the same time, he
introduces another facet of the prostitution motif at work in the novel: the prostitute as sorceress or priestess of “love” and fertility—a symbol of Dionysian, primal sexual vitality—an incarnation of a mythological love goddess in the tradition of Ishtar or Aphrodite, whose acolytes were holy “prostitutes.” This “witch” aspect of the prostitute as a figure of magical or archetypal power adds both a mythological and a psychological dimension to the motif, pointing to the prostitute not as a woman but as a kind of androgynous sexual image, symbol of the psychological “dark,” the channel of the chaotic forces of the unconscious.

Soon after Campbell makes his “Circe” comment, this dimension of Brett’s character appears in the text again, in connection with the pagan aspect of the fiesta. Jake reminds us that the fiesta of San Fermin, although highlighted by the bull-fights, is “also a religious festival” (153). It is a Roman Catholic holy festival or carnival, and as such it is a strange hybrid of the pagan and the Christian, the profane and the sacred. Dramatizing the juxtaposition of these two elements, and Brett’s role in them, is a scene at the church followed by a scene in the streets of Pamplona. After Brett is “stopped just inside the door” (155) of the church and turned away because she is not wearing a hat, she is surrounded by the riau-riau dancers in the street. The revelers, “peasants” from the outlying villages who have ties to “Moorish” (155), Roman, and even more ancient cultural values as much as they do to Christian mores, seem to see Brett as a natural symbol of the pagan, sexual energy that pulses at the heart of the festival. She wants to dance, too, but they will not let her because, Jake tells us, “they wanted her as an image to dance around” (155). Then they rush her and Jake into a wine-shop where it is “dark” (155), put a wreath of white garlies around Brett’s neck, and seat her on a “high wine-cask” (155).

With this image of Brett as a pagan sexual icon clearly suggested, the pattern of her connection to prostitution becomes even more layered. Robert Cohn and Jake fight when Cohn calls him a “damned pimp” (190) for acting as go-between for Brett and Pedro.
Romero. When Cohn also brutally beats Romero, injuring him badly, Brett once again goes to church with Jake, successfully entering this time, to pray for Romero's recovery and safety in the bullring. Again she has to leave, however, this time because she gets "nervy" (208). She tells Jake that churches make her "damned nervous" (208) and that she is "damned bad for a religious atmosphere" (208) because she has the "wrong type of face" (208). The suggestion seems to be that her face or "image" is too beautiful, but also too carnal, too flagrantly earthy and sexual, for the ascetic, patriarchal confines of the Christian church.

In the strictly ritualized, Catholic culture of Spain, Brett has the image of a prostitute, albeit an exalted one. It causes people to stare. When Brett and Jake pass a wine-shop in Pamplona, the woman proprietor and "three girls" come to the window, "staring at Brett" (137). Later Brett asks Jake to avoid a park full of "fashionably dressed people" (207) because she does not "want staring at just now" (207). In Madrid, after she has sent Romero away, Brett tells Jake that Romero was "ashamed" (242) of her in public and wanted her to grow her hair out to be "more womanly" (242)—that is, more traditionally respectable in the Spanish culture and less like a prostitute.

Romero, of course, does not literally see Brett as a prostitute. In fact, he wants to marry her, so that she "could never go away from him" (242). He must recreate her first, however, in the right image, the same way Robert Cohn wants to marry her to "make an honest woman of her" (201) (in Campbell's words). Romero is, in this sense of wanting to possess and control Brett, a man of classic Latin "machismo" in his relationship to her. On the one hand, he is a patriarchal power figure who wants to subsume her into his "system of authority" (185), and on the other hand he is an adoring worshipper, a "child" whom Brett decides not to "ruin" (243). Yet even Romero, at the last, plays the "john" and tries to give her "a lot of money" (242).

Brett will not allow Romero to give her money, of course, just as she would not accept

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money from Count Mippipopolous. She has her own private system of exchange. She will only allow men to pay her expenses: the Count in Paris, Robert Cohn in San Sebastian, Michael in Pamplona, and Jake everywhere. Romero, too, picks up the tab. When Jake tries to pay Brett's bill at the Hotel Montana in Madrid, he learns "the bill had been paid" (243) by Romero. Jake then joins Brett in the bar where she asks him the typical "poule" question: "Would you buy a lady a drink?" (244, emphasis in the text). Thus, by textual transformation, the Lady with a capital "L" has become a lady with a lower case "l." Soon Jake and Brett are riding around Madrid, and what began in a taxi cab ends in a taxi cab, with the connotations of transience, isolation, and prostitution.

Prostitution as Metaphor

With these persistently intertwined references to prostitution clearly in view, a fundamental question emerges about the role of the prostitution motif in The Sun Also Rises. Given Brett's centrality in the novel's dynamics, what is the effect of sexually fashioning her into a prostitute? One reasonable answer might be that by presenting Brett as a kind of enlarged version of Georgette, the text has degraded and confined Brett's image in a cramped frame, trivializing and shrinking her like one of Zizi's miniatures. After all, if Brett is truly an "ideal" for Jake, she is an ideal which the action of the novel reduces to a superficially "pretty" (247) thought, like one of Robert Cohn's notions from "The Purple Land." On the other hand, the prostitution "aura" surrounding Brett might not be integral to the novel at all, functioning only as a kind of cosmetic—bright red lipstick on the lips of a "bitch/goddess" (in Leslie Fiedler's terms). From either perspective, the novel's prostitution elements seem to denigrate the female protagonist's integrity and female sexuality in general. The major limitation to these speculations, however, is that they focus on what is being seen rather than who is looking. Since it is through Jake's eyes that we see Brett as a prostitute, perhaps our inquiry should not center on Brett but on Jake, in an
attempt to discover why prostitution is important to him as a frame of reference.

Even with a concentration on Jake as narrator, however, we might be tempted to interpret Brett's reflection of Georgette primarily as part of the process of Jake's loss of faith in Brett and the illusions of "love," were it not for the fact that Georgette is also a mirror for virtually every other character in the novel, including Jake himself. In this same mirror, Jake is reflected as a prostitute figure by his own narration fully as much as Brett is. When Georgette first meets Jake and he calls her a "little girl" (14), she retorts "little girl yourself" (14). Before Georgette goes to meet Jake's friends at the restaurant, she looks "in a little mirror" and "re-define[s] her lips" (18) with lipstick. Later, alone at home, Jake looks at himself naked in front of his mirror and contemplates the private "face" he does not show in public. He does not show the reader either; he only says enigmatically: "Of all the ways to be wounded. I suppose it was funny" (30). Jake is attempting here to "face" himself, but he does so with a mask of false, protective humor that he cannot sustain. In bed, "all of a sudden," he starts "to cry" (31).

Georgette and Jake are also alike in many other ways. Both are "sick"; both are casualties of the "dirty war"—the war in a larger sense being life, not only World War I. Georgette finds Paris expensive and "dirty," like the war, and is doing her best to survive in it on what little resources she has, just as Jake is.

Georgette and Jake are also outsiders, both possessing the hard-shelled knowledge and wry honesty of wounded survivors who are living with an inner pain that they mask in humor and affected gaiety. When Jake introduces her as his fiancee to a party of his "respectable" Canadian and American friends at the nightclub—insulated in their superior, affluent, tourist mentality—and Georgette smiles "that wonderful smile" (18), his casual joke separates him from them and subtly aligns him with Georgette. She knows he is making fun of her, using her, but she also senses that he's making fun of his friends' inflated ideas of their social worth. She calls Jake "a fool" (18), but it is clear from the
ensuing interaction that, for better or worse, Georgette at least has no pretensions about who she is. She suddenly seems, by contrast to this group, more perceptive and real than when she was putting on her professionally "seductive" persona for Jake earlier.

Georgette sizes up Frances, Robert Cohn's fiancee, as a phony immediately. When Frances gushes sentimentally about Paris, Georgette turns to Jake and says, "Who's she? Do I have to talk to her?" (18). Without waiting for Jake to give her permission to be herself, she turns back to Frances and says frankly that she does not like Paris and finds it "dirty" (19). Frances, on the contrary, finds Paris "extraordinarily clean" (19) and suggests that Georgette must not have been in Paris "very long" (19). Georgette replies simply, "I've been here long enough" (19).

Frances and Georgette are speaking, of course, out of different class experiences, one "upper" and one "lower," but Hemingway leaves little doubt which one is more valued by Jake. Georgette may be there to bargain coarsely for whatever food, drinks, and cash she can get out of Jake, but Frances is there—in Jake's eyes—with Robert Cohn for essentially the same reason. Georgette is simply more honest, or at least unable at the moment to afford illusions; and in Jake's value system, Georgette therefore has more integrity. He also respects the rules of her metier enough to leave an envelope containing 50 francs at the bar for her when he leaves without her. She has gone off dancing with another group of men who seem to offer more financial promise—the joke presumably being on her, since the men are gay. Jake's instructions to the bartender are that if Georgette returns to look for him to honor her "contract" to be his social companion for the evening, then the bartender is to give her the money. If not, Jake is not obligated to pay her. He respects the code, and he pays his bills.

This concept of "payment" for one's personal involvements (romantic and otherwise) makes the professional contract, whether represented by Georgette's metier or by Jake's "exchange of values" (148), the vernacular of all the relationships in The Sun Also Rises.
Almost all the characters in the novel, male or female, are portrayed both as prostitutes and as johns—as both sellers and buyers—as both victims and victimizers. Frances tries to buy marriage to Robert Cohn by using guilt as emotional blackmail. Cohn gives her two hundred pounds to go away. Jake sells his self-respect to keep Brett’s “love.” Brett sells her “ladyship” image to almost anyone, except to the concierge at Jake’s apartment building—there she has to buy the concierge’s admiration with a hundred francs, borrowed from the Count, of course.

Even the bullfighters are depicted in terms of the prostitution contract. Belmonte’s integrity has been “sold in advance” (216) because he has chosen mediocre bulls to give the crowd the illusion—the image—of his “greatness” (216). And at first the crowd prefers Belmonte’s “imitation of himself” (218) to Pedro Romero’s authentic greatness, which they do not understand. Romero is the only one who has not sold out, however, because even though he has jeopardized his career by his affair with Brett and subsequent beating by Cohn, “his spirit” is not touched (219). Nevertheless, even Romero is couched in prostitution terms. Not only is his bullfight narrated in sexual terms—he makes the “bull consent with his body...the sword went in...became one with the bull” (218-20)—but the crowd also acts like a collective “john.” They want Romero to risk his life with a bad bull because: “They’ve paid for him. They don’t want to lose their money” (217). Then they act the same way the riau-riau dancers did with Brett: “...the crowd wanted him...made him go on...making a little circle around him...held him and lifted him...” (220-21).

In this way prostitution is integral to the novel’s dialectic. Jake thinks to himself in Pamplona that relationships are: “Just exchange of values. You give up something and get something else. Or you worked for something. You paid some way for everything that was good” (148). Thus, for Jake it’s not the buying and selling that makes a thing bad; it’s rather the paying with your work or the integrity of your performance that makes a thing good. Mike and Brett don’t work, and they expect everyone else to pay their bills. Mike
says, “I always pay everything back” (192), and Brett says, “Don’t we all pay for the things we do, though?” (26)—but they don’t pay. They live on credit until someone else pays. In this sense Georgette becomes by implication a touchstone of integrity for Jake, while Brett is a poor reflection of her. By casting his inner dialogue about “how to live” (148) in prostitution terms, Jake seems to embrace the most cynical common denominator of human involvement, ironically in order to protect himself from disillusionment and to keep alive, like Romero, his conception of the most precious part of himself: his spirit, his integrity, the truth of himself.

The novel’s dialectic about buying and selling, however, which even Jake dismisses as a philosophy “just as silly as all the other fine philosophies” (148), is only one of the key issues illuminated by the prostitution motif. Another is androgyny. The theme of androgyny in Hemingway’s work has fascinated Hemingway critics and readers for years. Mark Spilka’s richly documented book on the subject, *Hemingway’s Quarrel with Androgyny*, argues that because Hemingway engaged in a lifelong struggle to understand and define his own sexuality, he created androgynous fictional characters who then pose a threat to order and traditional masculinity. It is true that his major female characters often have short hair (“like boys”), wear traditionally male clothing, and affect behavior that in Hemingway’s time was reserved for men: assertive sexuality, verbal frankness, social and intellectual autonomy, and so on. Brett is the epitome of these characteristics. She has short, “bobbed” hair, wears men’s hats, and consistently refers to herself as a “chap.” She says what she thinks and goes where she likes with whomever she likes. She is also sexually uninhibited and openly promiscuous.

In contrast, Jake has many traditionally Victorian female traits. He is by necessity and seemingly by nature sexually passive, and he seems far more interested in a monogamous, emotionally oriented relationship than Brett is. As if in acknowledgement of these qualities, Count Mippipopolous brings Jake flowers and wines and dines him with as much solicitude.
as he does Brett. Jake also seems attracted to Pedro Romero in nearly the same way Brett is. He says Romero is a “damned good-looking boy” (167) whose bullfighting movements are both spiritual and sensual: “...straight and pure and natural in line” (167). Later Jake says: “I noticed his skin. It was clear and smooth and brown” (185). Jake describes his feelings following the bullfight in post-coital terms, saying he takes a “bull-fight very hard” (221) and feels tired afterwards. Similarly, Brett finds Romero “a lovely boy” (177) wonders if he uses “a shoe-horn” (177) to get into his clothes, and feels “limp as a rag” (169) after she sees him perform.

With these and other implications of the blurring of traditional sexual roles, the element of androgyny plays a strong part in the novel. Given Jake's overt homophobia in Paris when he expressed disgust at the “simpering” (20) gay men at the dancehall, one could make a case for the issue of androgyny as an aspect of Jake's struggle with latent homosexual feelings or simply, as Spiika and others have suggested, a sign of Hemingway's personal confusion over his own sexual identity. While these are interesting speculations, I think the frequent and intricate allusions to androgyny in the descriptions of both male and female characters in the novel point in another direction: towards a connection between androgyny and prostitution, and consequently towards a connection with the issue of identity that prostitution represents in Hemingway's texts.

The prostitute figure, both in life and in literature, is an androgynous figure—neither female nor male—essentially both a sexless as well as an omni-sexual role player who takes on sexual traits, like putting on a costume, as the audience (or “john”) requires. A prostitute, then, in terms of symbolic role, is not a woman, or a man, but a performer who wears sexual masks, images designed and adapted to reflect the projected fantasy of the customer. This view of prostitution is based on the assumption that a man does not go to prostitutes for a relationship or an encounter with a real, individual woman, but instead to act out a personal sexual drama that involves a complex panorama of emotions and fantasies
which have become associated with “woman” in his private, inner world.

Supporting this perspective is the fact that artistic depictions of prostitutes in realistic terms of the matter-of-fact, mercenary androgyny behind the mask of male fantasy have been met with anger—somewhat like Cohn’s anger in hearing Jake imply that Brett might not be the ideal heroine of his “Purple Land” dreams. Alain Corbin, in explaining the public outrage in 1863 over Edouard Manet’s Olympia, his famous portrait of a Parisian prostitute, writes that “Manet exposes the intolerable: not the naked, offered, desirable, even exciting body, for all this is accepted readily enough, but the image of an unsubmitting woman, whom the spectator cannot imagine as available; the body of an androgynous creature, slyly aggressive...whose cut hair and nonchalant hygiene suggest the insidious threat that they conceal” (p. xiv). Corbin’s comments here, as equally applicable to Brett as they are to Olympia, suggest that the “quarrel” with androgyny may not have been Hemingway’s or Manet’s, but instead originated in the culture they attempted to portray.

Viewing the prostitute not as a “fallen” or “immoral” or “degraded” woman (a “species of woman,” as the Paris concierge says), but instead as an androgynous persona, one which acts as a barrier or mask between the human beings involved in the contractual exchange, gives a clearer interpretive focus to our view of the prostitution motif in The Sun Also Rises. From this perspective, the recurrent images of prostitution in Hemingway’s text do not constitute a device for degrading and subduing women by casting them in a socially distasteful and powerless role. Instead these images become powerful reflections of sexual roles which both male and female characters put on, cast off, project on others, attempt to see behind, and in general experiment with, in an attempt to learn how to live as sexual beings in a complicated world. In this sense Hemingway’s text suggests that there may be no such thing as innate “women” and “men,” only a constantly changing collage of traits which the sexes paste together in culturally created “sexual identities.” These identities are by nature mutable and shifting, which accounts for the socially rigid pretense that they
are fixed and unchanging and "natural." The prostitution motif in Hemingway's fiction pierces that pretense and gives the issue of androgyny even greater resonance.

The androgynous mask of the prostitute is far from the only mask reference in *The Sun Also Rises*. Robert Cohn's face has been altered by a broken nose (3); Mike Campbell first appears in the story with a bloody nose, smashed by a lady's suitcase (79), and later in Pamplona appears to Jake "like a death mask of himself" (210); Brett has a "wrong type of face" and doesn't like her nose (79); Belmonte, the old bullfighter, has a face that is "wan and yellow" with a "long wolf jaw" (212); Romero's face is "discolored and swollen" (213) after his beating by Cohn; and Jake is an undescribed, faceless narrator, and therefore, perhaps, wears the most impenetrable mask of all. These mask references do, of course, serve as apt visual cues to the characters they depict, but they also function as textual reflections of Georgette "re-defining" her professional face in a mirror; and it is the symbolic mask of the prostitute that is the key, I believe, to understanding the mask as a thematic element in the novel.

Prostitution is a behavioral mask behind which exists a human being, usually a female, who is creating a sexual role much as a puppeteer brings life to a puppet caricature from behind the scenes. If we look through the mask of prostitution from the perspective of the person behind it, we see that she is not only an actress in a scene but is even more importantly an audience, a voyeur, looking at her customer playing out his private fantasy on a stage of his own projection. She is not involved emotionally and, for the most part, not even physically. She is dissociated from her body, a removed observer. This perspective is both one of power and powerlessness. In one sense, like the slave in relationship to the slave owner, she sees her client unmasked, dehumanized by his manipulation of another human being and by his total moral ignorance of it—thus giving her the possibility of an ethical, psychological vision that he does not have. That is a kind of power. On the other hand, she is confined and silent behind her mask. She has vision but

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not a voice. She may have knowledge gained by sight, but she cannot act. Her mask may not define her as a human being, but it nevertheless defines the parameters, the “ring,” of her life.

Jake, too, wears this mask, the mask of the impotent, silent voyeur. He is the novel’s featureless narrator who sees but is not seen. He bitterly regrets but cannot help what he calls his “rotten habit of picturing the bedroom scenes of...friends” (13). He hardly needs to use his imagination, however, since his friends volunteer the information. They use Jake as a combination confessor, witness, and pimp. Brett’s key request of Jake during her affair with Romero is: “Please stay with me and see me through this” (184, emphasis mine). Jake is the eunuch in the brothel of the world, the voyeur who makes us voyeurs along with him by telling the story.

Jake is disgusted with himself in these roles—pimp, eunuch, voyeur. When Brett wires him to rescue her from the Hotel Montana in Madrid, because she has no money and has sent Romero away, he returns the simple message: “ARRIVE SUD EXPRESS TOMORROW LOVE JAKE” (239). What he thinks, however, is a private, cynical, self-deprecating thought:

That was it. Send a girl off with one man. Introduce her to another to go off with him. Now go and bring her back. And sign the wire with love. That was it all right. (239)

Jake knows that in exchange for the undependable, self-serving affection and occasional company of Brett, he has let her use him again and again; and he has betrayed the one thing that represented some kind of integrity for him: Pedro Romero and the ideals of bullfighting aficionado which he shared with his friend Montoya. The dubious reward for this “selling out” is that Jake ends up in another taxi, silently “sightseeing,” never having really spoken his mind, with a companion he has purchased at too high a cost, having sold himself to do it.
Brett, too, is caught in the voyeuristic trap of the prostitute's psychological perspective. In Brett's case she is sexually active but emotionally impotent. She, like Jake, avoids expressing her real feelings and distrusts talking: "Let's not talk. Talking's all bilge" (55). She also feels she has no control over her sexuality. She tells Jake she can't live with him because she would just "tromper" (deceive, cheat on) him "with everybody....It's the way I'm made" (55). Yet her affairs mean nothing to her, until she meets Romero. She sees him as her chance to break out of the mask, the role of impotent observer of her own life, and do something with her whole heart. She tells Jake: "I've got to do something. I've got to do something I really want to do. I've lost my self-respect" (183).

Even with Romero, however, Brett becomes a voyeur like Jake, watching Romero in the bull-ring as he performs not only for her but also for the other paying customers. Romero, however, as the consummate professional, in Jake's eyes, keeps his own inner sense of integrity inviolate and performs according to his own sense of esthetic value: "...he did it all for himself inside, and it strengthened him, and yet he did it for her, too. But he did not do it for her at any loss to himself" (216). The double entendre of bull-fighting and sexuality is quite clear here, and Brett's appreciation for either is held up to question by the fact that she leaves the bull's ear, which Romero gives her as a trophy, in a hotel drawer with her cigarette butts. She also refers to her affair with Romero as "the show in general" (245), implying that is was a staged production, like the rest of her romantic life. After this show has ended, Brett is still very much behind her mask, her "wrong kind of face." When she kisses Jake at the Hotel Montana, he "could feel she was thinking of something else" (241); and in the novel's final scene Brett, too, is in the taxi with a companion she cannot touch—sightseeing.

The Encircling Net

With prostitution as a symbolic net of ethical values and psychological processes,
Hemingway encircles his narrative in layers of intricately related issues: sexual identity as performance, androgyny, psychological masking, self as dissociated voyeur, psychological strategies of the victim, and the individual's search for integrity in a commercialized, brutalized world. Prostitution does not equal or stand for any of these issues, but in each case the values and emotional responses inherent in the prostitional contract creates a context for understanding the issues themselves and their interrelatedness. Erich Neumann's comments on the meaning of mythological symbols can perhaps help us to appreciate the fluidity of Hemingway's use of prostitution as a kind of representative structure or "archetype" of human behavior. Neumann speaks of "the tendency of the symbol to combine contradictory elements, to bring the most diverse provinces of life into contact with one another, by crossing, blending, and weaving them together" (The Great Mother, 17).

Although we must never suppose we have exhausted a powerful symbol's meaning, or found its literal referents in some exact fashion, I think we may interpret the direction of Hemingway's prostitution motif as leading us toward a paradigmatic process of self-discovery, self-disintegration or self-unmasking, and finally self-regeneration. This struggle or search to find a healing process for the wounded self is focused, of course, on the consciousness of the protagonist in Hemingway's novels—usually the male narrator, as in the case of Jake Barnes. The other characters, female and male, are involved in this process as well, both as separate "others" and as projections of the protagonist's psyche. All characters, however, reflect the fundamental dynamics of the consciousness of the prostitute as a psychological and existential posture in the world. Hemingway seems to have been struck, as are so many writers and researchers who allow themselves an unshielded look at prostitution, by the profound paradox of the mind afflicted by immersion in the prostitional exchange. As Timothy Gilfoyle expresses so simply in City of Eros:

...prostitutes were divided beings. At this critical juncture

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in their lives, sexuality was an act of commerce, a form of personal finance. Yet, at other points...sex was something else. It could be personal and romantic, potentially loving. Then [19th-century New York] as later, most observers viewed sexuality as a unity—it was wholly one kind of activity or wholly another. When the boundaries of a singular act of sexual intercourse overlapped, intersected, or merged, confusion and fear often resulted. (75)

It is this psychological division made incarnate by the prostitute that allows us to follow the psychological journeys of Hemingway’s narrators and to see why coming to terms with this inner fragmentation is essential to the struggle for psychic wholeness in Hemingway’s fiction. It is this aim toward wholeness we should keep in mind as we now explore some of the complex ways Hemingway shaped his prostitution elements and was in turn shaped by them.
Chapter Three

Concentric Circles
The Self within the Sell

_Everything the Power of the Earth does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round, like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirs... The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves._

—Black Elk,
from _Black Elk Speaks_
Hemingway prefaces *The Sun Also Rises* with a quotation from *Ecclesiastes*, the source of the novel's title. "The sun also ariseth," says the passage, and then the sun "goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose." The wind also "whirleth about continually" and "returneth according to his circuits." The rivers, too, "run into the sea" and then "return again" to "the place from whence the rivers come." Most importantly, perhaps, the quotation tells us that generations of people may come and go, but the earth "abideth forever": the round, nurturing earth and its natural cycles.

This opening quotation is more than an invocation of the theme of the "lost generation," mentioned in the famous Gertrude Stein comment included in the novel's preface just above the *Ecclesiastes* quotation: "You are all a lost generation." The biblical reference is also a key to the novel's form and to Hemingway's direction as an artist. Hemingway's narratives are stories of minds in the midst of ephemera, the passing show, the cycles of life, which take us away and bring us back ultimately to organic sources within ourselves that "abideth forever." Hemingway wrote novels of memory, the quintessential process of circling back, and his works are built on the circular image—reflections, repetitions, visual echoes, like a ring of mirrors in which the narrator, and perhaps the reader, sees paradigmatic images of the self. The image of the prostitute lies curled deep within those circles, because in the prostitute's image is the reflection of the narrator's sense of self.

The shape of Jake Barnes's story is circular, and the shapes within it are circular. The sun is round, the bullring is round, the *riau-riau* dancers surround Brett in a circle, and the narrative itself circles around to the place it basically began: a taxi, the most transient and impersonal of public spaces, in which Jake and Brett are going nowhere—that is, around in circles. Jake, in fact, envisioned it happening that way early in the novel. He had a feeling
of deja-vu as well as of premonition soon after he was reunited with Brett in Paris: "I had the feeling as in a nightmare of it all being something repeated, something I had been through and that now I must go through again" (64).

Jake's Projected Selves—A Circle of Friends and Lovers

One of the other ways the circle functions in the structure of the novel is in the reflected images of Jake's identity that he sees in the people surrounding him. These characters are separate "others" whom he observes, but at the same time they are projections of his fragmented self reflecting back at him like a ring of mirrors. Robert Cohn and Brett Ashley in particular reflect essential aspects of Jake's character.

Jake has a love/hate relationship with Cohn—a conflict which basically reflects the way Jake feels about himself. He dislikes Cohn because he sees Cohn as an undeservedly successful, dilettantish writer who is weak-willed and manipulative in his romantic behavior as well as in his relationships with his friends. Jake thinks Cohn has a prep-school, privileged, "Purple Land" view of life, patterned after images from sentimental novels. He sees Cohn as someone who has always had his own way and has been spoiled by it; someone without a sense of irony or a sense of failure; someone without character. Jake particularly resents Cohn's sexual relationship with Brett, which Cohn seems smugly to believe is a true love affair instead of the forgettable diversion of a desperately unhappy woman. When he refuses to accept with good grace its ephemeral nature, Cohn turns into what Jake sees as a bully masquerading as a wounded lover, an "earnest" boor beating the face of art by pulverizing the delicate Pedro Romero with his fists. Jake even dislikes Cohn for his honesty—because it's a "prep-school," self-promoting honesty:

I mistrust all frank and simple people, especially when their stories hold together, and I always had a suspicion that perhaps Robert Cohn had never been middleweight boxing champion, and that perhaps a horse had stepped on his face...but I finally had somebody verify the story
from Spider Kelly. (4)

Most noticeable and disturbing, however, is Jake's sneering dislike of Cohn because Cohn is Jewish. Jake hits the reader with his anti-Semitism on the novel's first page, starting with the slur that Cohn's "permanently flattened" (3) nose from a boxing blow "certainly improved" (3) it. Taking a typical, unimaginative approach to prejudice, Jake blames Cohn for being too "race-conscious" (4) and having a "hard, Jewish, stubborn streak" (10) caused in part by the bigotry he experienced at Princeton. To make matters worse, Jake isn't even honest with Cohn about his feelings. He lets Cohn believe he's Cohn's best friend:

"I'm sorry. I've got a nasty tongue. I never mean it when I say nasty things."
"I know it," Cohn said. "You're really about the best friend I have, Jake."

In his pettiness and his dishonesty, Jake virtually invites the reader to dislike him. It is only as the narrative develops, however, that we realize that Jake's cynical intolerance of Cohn is really a reflection of the disgust he feels for himself. Jake actually identifies with Cohn, partly because he projects his self-disgust onto Cohn and partly because Cohn has everything Jake would like to have but doesn't: sexual potency, physical skill, literary success, and an idealized memory of intimacy with Brett. In an important sense, Robert Cohn is the boyish, athletic, sexualized, pre-wounded Jake, and Jake loathes the image even as he desires it. He is at least honest with Brett about his conflicted identification with Cohn:

"Everybody behaves badly," I said. "Give them the proper chance."
"You wouldn't behave badly." Brett looked at me.
"I'd be as big an ass as Cohn," I said. (181)

The structure of the narrative also mirrors Cohn and Jake in other subtle ways. In
Paris, Jake lay on his bed thinking of Brett, when “all of a sudden [he] started to cry” (31). In Pamplona, after Brett has thoroughly rejected Cohn, Jake stops in to see Cohn in his hotel room: “There he was, face down on the bed, crying” (193). Jake ridicules Cohn for being a sightseeing tourist of life and reading “The Purple Land,” a novel about the “splendid imaginary amorous adventures of a perfect English gentleman in an intensely romantic land” (9), as a “guide-book to what life holds” (9); yet it is Jake who is the real voyeur, spending his time “picturing the bedroom scenes of [his] friends” (13), or adoring bullfighters as the only ones who live “their life all the way up” (10). And it is Jake who finally realizes bitterly that his fantasy about Brett is nothing more than a purple, “pretty thought” (247).

In addition to these similarities, what essentially leads Jake to identify with Cohn is Cohn’s status as an outsider. As much as Cohn wants to be a member of the inner circle, he is not allowed in “the club.” What wakes Jake up to this fact emotionally, besides his own covert elitism, is the openly antisemitic language of Mike Campbell and Brett’s revelation that she hates victims: “I hate his damned suffering” (182). Jake knows he could just as easily be the target of her resentment, even though he is supposedly a charter member of the “one of us” club to which Brett granted Count Mippipopolous entry in Paris: “He’s one of us, though. Oh, quite. No doubt. One can always tell” (32)—the self-appointed club of the wounded, the “brave,” the surviving...the prosthetically masked.

Jake knows that his status as an insider isn’t real, though, that it’s just another fake “title” like “Lady” or “Count” or “fiancée” or “lover.” Instead of an insider, Jake feels like a neutered mascot to a group of friends he doesn’t really respect. The only group to which he truly wants to belong are the “aficionados” of the bullfight, but he even betrays this exclusive fraternity by “procuring” Romero for Brett. After that, Montoya will not “touch” Jake. Forced to realize he is the complete outsider, Jake feels more alone inside than anyone, like a bull with poor eyesight dying in a ring of distant faces. “Are you blind?”
(224), asks Mike, meaning “are you drunk?” “Yes,” says Jake, “I’m blind” (224).

The very idea of a club of insiders is a joke to Jake, like the club of eunuchs Jake’s fellow castrati were going to form: “In the Italian hospital we were going to form a society. It had a funny name in Italian” (31). The irony is that this is the real club, the real “society,” to which Jake and everyone else in The Sun Also Rises belongs. Only Jake is literally impotent, but all the expatriate characters are in one way or another spiritually and emotionally impotent.

Brett Ashley, Jake’s “other” alter ego, is no exception. Jake “loves” Brett, but he hates himself for loving her. She’s the “nightmare” he must live through again and again, a confusing riot of sensations very much like the fiesta in Pamplona. When Jake’s friend Bill says about the fiesta: “You wouldn’t believe it. It’s like a wonderful nightmare” (222), Jake replies, “I’d believe anything. Including nightmares” (222).

If Jake were a figure in contemporary fiction, we might call his relationship with Brett “co-dependent,” in the sense that they “enable” each other’s weaknesses. In fact, they seem attracted to each other precisely because they are bad for each other. Jake likes his work, fresh early mornings, exercise, the outdoors, and the peace he feels in church: “I’m pretty religious” (209), he tells Brett. Brett does no work, never gets up before noon, loathes exercise—“wouldn’t walk across the street” (24)—and declares she is “damned bad for a religious atmosphere” (208). She also never pays her bills because men always pay them for her. Brett flicks her ashes on Jake’s rug and on his life; yet he is convinced he loves her. He lies for her, pimps for her, and pays for her, but he cannot think of her without self-deprecat ing irony: “This was Brett, that I had felt like crying about” (34). Jake sees Brett as the “dark” to his “light,” the night to his day. Jake is like a modern Pentheus who both fears and yearns for the Dionysian darkness: “It is awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the day, but at night it is another thing” (34).

What Jake sees in Brett, however, is only a reflection of a part of himself. Just as he
does with Robert Cohn, Jake projects his inner demons onto Brett. If Cohn is Jake's pre-war, "prep-school," naive-boy sexualized self, then Brett is Jake's older, jaded, voracious, desperately hurt and reckless sexualized self. Cohn and Brett are the sexual actors on Jake's mental stage; he is the sexless voyeur behind the curtain—stage manager and audience at the same time. In Hemingway's version of the human psyche's cosmos, Jake's character represents the non-sexed self seeking identity, attempting to journey inward through ring after ring of layered personae or masks to find the pure inner origins of the mind's life force. In the circle imagery of this novel, the process is like a river emptying into the sea of being and then returning to its source.

It is this underlying process of "return" that makes Hemingway's novels seem to be narratives of regression or disintegration instead of integration or progress. It is a process of peeling or washing away. Consistent with this imagery, what links Jake to Brett most strongly is the water image. When Brett feels the pressure of the men she has gathered around her—Robert Cohn, Mike Campbell, the Count, Jake himself—she tells Jake: "...must bathe...must clean myself" (74). Again, after a night with Mike in a hotel he calls a "brothel," Brett tells Jake once more that she "must bathe" (83). She is not trying to wash off the "shame" of sex; she's expressing the need to scrape off the layers of male personae—projections of herself—in which she has encircled herself, personae who now require endless performances from her.

Brett needs to escape the claustrophobia of her own reflected image, just as Jake does. We learn early in the novel that Jake associates this escape process of the mind with the water image. When he meditates to calm himself after seeing Brett, his "mind stopped jumping around [like a fish?] and started to go in sort of smooth waves" (31). Later when Jake invites Brett into his apartment with the comment: "I was just bathing" (53), she replies: "Aren't you the fortunate man. Bathing" (53). Jake admits it's only "a shower" (53), not the real immersion they both seek. In Pamplona, after the fiesta has exploded in
Jake's face, with Cohn punching him and calling him a pimp and Brett obsessed with Pedro Romero, Jake returns to the bath image: "Now it was a hot bath that I needed. A deep, hot bath, to lie back in...a hot bath in deep water" (193-194). He cannot have his bath in Pamplona, however, because when he turns on the taps, "the water would not run" (195).

Jake has to wait until he is alone in Sab Sebastian after the fiesta to immerse himself in the waters of his deeper self. In the ocean there, he tells us he "dove deep,...swam with my eyes open and it was green and dark" (235). The water is "buoyant and cold" (237), and he feels he will "never sink" (237). When Jake feels safe to dive "cleanly and deeply, to come up through the lightening water" (238), he seems at last on the threshold of integrating the light and the dark into a psychic wholeness. That process is shattered, however, by Brett's telegram asking for help—which, to Jake, "meant San Sebastian all shot to hell" (239). So Jake turns away from an inner direction that might have taken him to a more authentic, organic version of himself, and instead turns back to a counterfeit version with no real life in it—a performing, prostituted self—reflected by Brett, who is caught in the same circle of futility.

The Prostitute and the Identity Process

One of the challenges of reading Hemingway's texts consists of coming to terms with where these apparent references to a psychic process lead. Is the process a destructive or a regenerative one? I believe its direction or intent is towards regeneration, but its mechanics are on the surface dismantling or destructive. I also believe that sexuality is not the issue for Hemingway, despite the staggering amount of biographical data and textual suggestion to the contrary. Sexuality, or "sexual identity," is primarily symbolic in Hemingway's approach to characterization. In Hemingway's fictional worlds sexuality is only one of the layers or performance strategies of the self which must be negotiated, understood, and finally released if the self is to swim in the oceanic waters of wholeness.

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In my view, because of the process of psychic disintegration as an implied prelude to psychic regeneration in Hemingway's work, the prostitute's enforced psychological strategies for psychic survival represent a model of the dilemma of the entrapped and divided mind trying to reconnect it fragmented pieces—to become whole. The prostitute is the sexless self behind the sexual mask, the self gasping for a breath of authentic life within the choking "sexual sell." The prostitute is the relentlessly sexualized person made sexless by a necessary psychological withdrawal from the scene of sex, like any victim of abuse—having sex only in proxy by means of projected "personae," a word that originally meant "masks." To reclaim a real sense of self, the prostitute needs to break out of the concentric circles of masks, or wash them off, to bathe once again in the life-giving waters of the deeper self: the unconscious. It is this process that is the driving force of Hemingway's texts, with the psychological processes of the prostitute representing its structure or mechanics.

We can find support for this way of seeing Hemingway in several sources, suggesting that his approach to human identity, at least in his art, is neither as idiosyncratic nor as sexually strangled as it might at first appear. One of the richest and most poignant of these sources is the testimony of women who have worked in prostitution. I have already cited the evidence of prostitution narratives suggesting that human beings in this situation dissociate themselves emotionally, or "turn off," and develop complex strategies of psychic survival that sometimes evolve into multiple identities. These same narratives also tell us that prostitutes characteristically feel emotionally and sexually impotent or "castrated."

Roberta Victor, the ex-prostitute interviewed by Studs Terkel, articulates this feeling of emotional and sexual deadness: "I found I couldn't turn myself back on when I finished working. When I turned myself off, I was numb—emotionally, sexually numb" (Terkel, 494). Victor exacerbated this loss of feeling by using drugs to anesthetize her emotional pain—much as Jake and the other characters in The Sun Also Rises use
alcohol—succeeding only in shutting herself down completely inside:

I loved dope more than anything else around. After a while I couldn’t differentiate between working and not working. All men were tricks, all relationships were acting. I was completely turned off. (498)

Journalist Steve Erlanger, in an article about the AIDS epidemic among prostitutes in Thailand, reports the same psychological process reflected in the comments of an ex-prostitute he interviewed there:

How does a young Thai woman, normally very shy, dance naked in front of strangers or sleep with them? “You make yourself very empty,” says Noi, a former prostitute who now sells cosmetics [ironically, another way of selling “faces”]. (New York Times Magazine, July 1991)

Kate Millet’s “J” offers powerful confirmation of this state of emotional impotence and separation from one’s sexuality. Looking back on her life in prostitution, she can see the psychological devastation it caused her to experience by cutting her off from her own feelings. What is even worse, she thinks, are the lingering effects of the prostiutional process that left her with an aversion to being touched: “At the time I was so numb that I felt nothing. I hate it now because now I feel. I just can’t stand it now when people touch me” (120-121). This ravaged condition of detachment from one’s own feelings is the result, in “J’s” view, of the prostitute’s survival technique of willfully reducing one’s responses to:

...nothing, a lack of feeling in sex. Except with special people. And with special people there was this terrible emotional dependency which is really the way a prostitute is.... (121)

“J’s” words describe Brett’s emotions accurately, and they also describe Jake’s. Jake tries “not to think about it” (31)—the “it” being his sexual impotence and his emotional dependence on Brett. Jake also finds himself in a psychological position where he cannot touch anyone, physically or emotionally. He tells Georgette not to touch him; Brett tells
Jake not to touch her. In Pamplona, Jake at first allows himself to be touched by Montoya, because he knows Montoya feels he has a true passion for bullfighting—“aficion”:

It was simply the pleasure of discovering what we each felt. When they saw that I had aficion...there was this same embarrassed putting the hand on the shoulder...nearly always was the actual touching. It seemed as though they wanted to touch you to make it certain. (132)

After Jake introduces Brett to Romero, however, thereby jeopardizing, in Montoya’s eyes, Romero’s priestlike, virginal purity of devotion to bullfighting, Montoya will “not even nod” (177) to Jake.

In light of the testimony of prostitute narratives, it is not surprising that Georgette is the person who comes closest to declaring herself in the same impotent condition as Jake. When he tells her not to touch him because he is “sick,” she replies: “Everybody’s sick. I’m sick, too” (16). Georgette is simply expressing the fact that everyone in Jake’s world is castrated, in one way or another.

Everybody’s Castrated—Jacques Lacan and the Projections of the Self

_I am the worm who never turned, the eunuch without a harem._

—George Orwell

Because of its focus on a male character’s impotence, one might easily read _The Sun Also Rises_ as a “phallocentric” or “androcentric” novel. We might with good reason see Jake’s narrative as the epitome of patriarchal self-absorption, particularly because Freud made the “castration complex” part of the Oedipal crisis that was central to his psychoanalytic theory—a theory which focused on the fear of castration in males and “penis envy” in females. In this aspect of his theory, Freud inherently relegated women to a status

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lower than men, thereby dividing humanity into men and "not-men." This limitation in
Freud, and by implication in Hemingway, is succinctly expressed by Juliet Mitchell in her
introduction to *Feminine Sexuality*: "To Freud the castration complex divided the sexes and
thus made the human being, human" (269). In this context to be "human" is to be male,
and the "castration complex" is an intensely "masculinist" criterion for humanness.
Contemporary applications of the language of castration in a more metaphorical way,
however, help us to see possibilities of a different, more universal nature in Hemingway's
text. In *The Female Eunuch*, for instance, Germaine Greer reverses the "polarity" of this
language:

> The castration of women has been carried out in terms
of a masculine-feminine polarity, in which men have
commandeered all the energy and streamlined it into an
aggressive conquistatorial power, reducing all heterosexual
contact to a sadomasochistic pattern. This has meant the
distortion of our concepts of *Love*. (6)

Another even more recent book employing the castration metaphor is Catholic theologian
Ute Ranke-Heinemann's *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven*, in which she calls attention
to the impotence of women figuratively castrated by the Catholic patriarchy. These
contemporary uses of castration imagery lend credence, I think, to the suggestion that
Hemingway used castration as a non-gendered symbol of endemically modern psychic
trauma.

In terms of theories of the mind, the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan is perhaps
the most intriguing modern thinker to expand the concept of what "castration" means as it
relates to human psychology. Lacan suggests that everyone—man and woman equally—is
castrated, in the sense that all human beings experience deprivation of fulfilled desires, from
food to freedom to love, which leads to the frustration of "missing something"—hence:
castration. According to Lacanian critic Francois Roustang, the "phallus," inasmuch as it is
a metaphor for power (traditionally possessed by males but not intrinsic to them), in
Lacan's view "represents all possible objects of desire and all signifiers" (The Lacanian Delusion, 124). Lacan's extraordinary and challenging conclusion is that everyone is missing the symbolic phallus, and no one can attain it. Mental health, in Lacanian terms, lies in recognizing and accepting the fact that a human being "will never attain the object of his desire" (124) in the ultimate way that the psyche encourages a person to think he or she can or should. The idea that the possession of the power to reach ultimate fulfillment is an illusion of the imagination, which the mind must recognize and manage in order to be "mature" and "sane," appears basically to be Lacan's version of Freud's goal for the psychoanalyst: To turn neurotic despair into common unhappiness.

What is intriguing in connection to Hemingway is that Lacan bases his theory on what he sees as the three primary realms of human experience: the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary. The Real is the natural world, the "immutable laws underlying phenomenal reality," the wordless sensations "impossible to symbolize...about which nothing can be said...the void, the impossible, an impasse" (Roustang, 130). The Symbolic is the realm of language and symbols—the interconnected system of "signifiers" that are the building blocks of human consciousness. We may think, says Lacan, that the Real is what is signified or evoked by the Symbolic, and it may actually be the case, but since we cannot know the Real without signifiers, then the circular system of signifiers is all we really know. That system is what we must accept as "real," knowing its limitation as a symbolic system once removed from the Real. The realm of the Imaginary is the part of the mind that treats the Symbolic as the Real. It is in the Imaginary aspect of the psyche that the delusion of believing that one can actually possess power arises. Psychotics, for instance, from Lacan's perspective, live in the Imaginary and treat the Symbolic as the Real. Thus, for Lacan:

Castration is said to be imaginary when the subject thinks he can make up for his inadequacy by appropriating phallic power. It is said to be symbolic when the subject
abandons his illusions of omnipotence. Symbolic castration is thus the aim of analysis. (Roustang, 124)

Hemingway and Lacan are subtly alike and yet fundamentally different in their conception of the psychic journey of the mind towards wholeness or organic growth. One way that they are similar is their attraction to the same imagery, particularly in terms of projections of the self and psychological mirror images. In the following passage, for instance, Lacan speaks of the self as a “marionette” and the “other” as a mirror image:

Once introduced into the play of symbols, your behavior is always rule-governed. In other words, when a marionette speaks, it is not the actual marionette that speaks, but someone behind the scenes. [The subject's] own words are in the other she herself is, the little other, her mirror image, her counterpart. (The Psychoses, 63)

One of the basic anxieties of the human condition for Lacan is, in fact, the paradoxical tension of “the necessity, and impossibility, of recapturing for oneself one’s own image, an image forever captivated by the other” (Roustang, 114). Hemingway, too, is attracted as an artist to portraying projections of the self as “others”; Robert Cohn and Brett Ashley are clearly projections of Jake. Hemingway also seems to accept the overall structure of the mind as Symbolic in the Lacanian sense—that is, an entity constructed of language symbols comprising a series of masks, poses, personae—an “abstract” identity detached from the “Real” or the organic referents of its inner nature.

However, although Hemingway dramatizes the symbolic castration of the modern human being and is powerfully invested in “recapturing” or recreating an authentic sense of self, he does not seem to have the Lacanian notion that the process is impossible, despite the apparently symbiotic circular entrapment of Jake and Brett. The major reason for Hemingway’s underlying faith in the regenerative vitality of the self appears to be that he embraces, as Lacan does not, a concept of the unconscious as a potentially accessible,
mysterious "beyond," a deep connection or bridge to the "Real" that has tremendously re-creative, healing power. Lacan relegates the idea of the unconscious to his concept of the Real, and as such he feels it is inaccessible to the mind via language. If we encounter the unconscious in symbols, such as dreams, Lacan feels we are simply experiencing an extension of the Symbolic. Thus nature (the Real) and culture (the Symbolic) are split and incommunicado. For Hemingway the unconscious is our vital link to nature, whereby we may find new psychic life.

Jane Gallop, in an article about Lacan and feminism, lends authority to Hemingway's intuition about the mind's deeper resources by supporting what she sees as Freud's positive view of the unconscious: "There are certain moments in Freud...when he sees the unconscious as a wondrous ally, as one of our great resources" (from "Juliet Mitchell and the Human Sciences," included in *Lacan and the Human Sciences*, 139). Gallop believes that the seductive attraction Lacan has for feminists such as Mitchell lies in Lacan's split of culture (the Symbolic) from biology (the Real). This split is superficially good for women in one sense, says Gallop, because men have used women's biology to oppress them. On the other hand, the concept of this split buys into Western man's alienation from and domination of nature and ultimately is a continuation of power illusions that can only do women—and all of humanity—further harm:

...recurring across the range of feminist studies and theory is an understanding that what Europeans call "Western culture" is based on this kind of violent split from biology, on a certain heavily policed border with nature, which has everything to do with the domination and exploitation of women. I thus find myself, of late, questioning the Lacanian insistence on the split. (Gallop, 138)

Gallop feels that the "split, the divisional model, is always...an adversarial position" and that "there are models in Freud of other relations to the unconscious that are less adversarial" (139). She thinks the "antagonistic model" comes from seeing only "a certain
masculinist ideology in which Freud and Lacan are thinking" (139).

Gallop reflects my feelings about Hemingway's model of the mind. There are unquestionably "masculinist ideologies" at work in Hemingway's texts, but there are also "less adversarial" processes with which he is trying to connect. Hemingway's protagonists are trying to reconnect to nature for a kind of rebirth of self, but that does not mean that for him culture (as language, intellect, order, authority) is male and nature (as nonlanguage, instinct, sensation, biology) is female. Hemingway's model of the mind is essentially sexless—or perhaps more accurately "metasexual" or simply not defined by sexual characteristics—and the primary journey on which Hemingway attempts to take this mind lies through the symbolic encirclement of its masks to an underlying vitality. That vitality is where nature and "ego" or identity meet in a kind of birth-death-timeless continuum or union.

Lacan calls this experience "Jouissance": "the link between eroticism and mysticism" that is the "state of fullest self-abandon" and "appears as a diffuse, permanent form of the orgasm, an orgasm achieved outside the sexual relation" (Roustang, 125-126). For Freud this state is "beyond the pleasure principle, where Eros and Thanatos [death] meet up" (126). This suggestion of the mystic connection between sex and death, so prevalent in Hemingway's fiction not as a morbid fear but as a metaphor for the rebirth of the self, helps explain why the dual symbolic nature of the prostitute as castrated victim and as archetypal sexual force is at the center of Hemingway's work. The prostitute represents both the mind in impotent stasis and the mind in protean potential—love and death and rebirth meeting "outside the sexual relation" yet at the same time evoking the great energy that drives sexuality: the unconscious.

The Great Round—the Circular Image and the Unconscious

Carl Jung's approach to the unconscious can give us a different but equally fruitful
way of looking at Hemingway’s imagery and ideas of the mind’s multi-leveled resources, particularly as those resources relate to the prostitute and the “Feminine” as archetypal aspects of human identity. In Erich Neumann’s classic work, *The Great Mother*, he explores in great detail the images of ancient myth and religion which he feels represent the archetypal “Feminine” elements of the psyche inherent in Jung’s theories of depth psychology. Neumann’s elucidation of the image of the “Great Round” gives us a language to discuss what Hemingway is intuitively reaching for in terms of his characters’ fears and hopes for returning to the resources of the unconscious.

We have already seen that the circular image holds great power for Hemingway as an artist, and Neumann helps explain why. The “Great Round” is “the uroboros, the circular snake biting its tail, ... the symbol of the psychic state of the beginning” (18). More importantly, in terms of Hemingway, this image is the symbol of the psyche’s “origin and of the opposites contained in it...in which positive and negative, male and female, elements of consciousness, elements hostile to consciousness, and unconscious elements are intermingled...a state in which chaos, the unconscious, and the psyche as a whole were undifferentiated” (18). Neumann says the Great Round “also appears as a symbol of the united primordial parents from whom the figures of the Great Father and Great Mother later crystallized out” (18). It is a place of great danger and great possibility, a place representing both the death and birth of the self or “ego,” a place where sexuality is powerful as a lifeforce but is amorphous and undefined.

In terms of the “Feminine” aspects of the Great Round, Neumann identifies two aspects: the elementary and the transformative. The elementary, he says, although containing the pre-conscious “eternal substance” (25) of the individual or differentiated ego, poses a threat to the ego if the ego sinks back into it. Neumann calls this process “psychic gravitation” (26), which is “the tendency of the ego to return to its original unconscious state” (26). In Neumann’s view, this is the path of least resistance for a “primitive” or
"weak" ego: "...the weaker the consciousness and the ego, the stronger becomes the psychic gravitation tending to restore the unconscious state" (26).

The symptoms outlined by Neumann for this disintegrative process, which he calls "psychic depression" (27), are remarkably similar to those experienced by many Hemingway protagonists—male and female—and evoke the castration imagery: "...loss of libido in the consciousness...weakness of will, fatigue, incapacity for concentration or work,...thoughts of death and failure, weariness of life, suicidal leanings" (27). Even more significantly in terms of Hemingway's scenarios, this psychic process "appears in the familiar symbolism of the light, the sun, the moon, or the hero being swallowed up by darkness in the form of night, the abyss, hell, monsters" (27). Neumann says fear of disintegration in the unconscious takes shape in the archetypal symbol of the "Terrible Devouring Mother" (27), such as the Medusa figure, who must be killed or conquered before the ego can "rise to consciousness" (27).

There is little doubt that in many ways Brett Ashley, particularly in her prostitute associations, plays this Terrible Mother/monster role for Jake Barnes—yet another reason to read The Sun Also Rises as a "masculinist" text. Neumann adds fuel to this reading by stating that the battle between the conscious and the unconscious is rendered archetypally in male/female terms:

It is no accident that in the symbols we have cited as examples consciousness is identified with the figure of the male hero, while the devouring unconscious is identified with the figure of the female monster. As we have elsewhere shown at length, this coordination is general; that is, in both sexes the active ego consciousness is characterized by a male symbolism, the unconscious as a whole by a female symbolism. (28, emphasis mine)

What rescues us somewhat from this rigid designation of "male" for the "higher" functions of the psyche and "female" for the "lower" is Neumann's further assertion that these elements are merely symbolic projections from within the psyche and not actual role
assignments in life. Hemingway's text strongly reflects this concept; Brett's qualities, after all, are very much a projection of Jake's. As Neumann says: "Here the projection phenomenon plays a special role because the elements of the opposite sex in the speaker's own psyche, the anima in the man and the animus in the woman, are experienced as the reality of the opposite sex" (24).

This "opposite" sex language is constricting, nonetheless, and too easily rigidified into a hierarchy that places the male or "animus" in the privileged position. I don't believe Hemingway thought of the forces of the mind as masculine or feminine, or that he thought such concepts were "inherent" even as convenient labels for psychic characteristics. The evidence of his fiction suggests that he didn't believe in the archetypal feminine or archetypal masculine. His texts consistently work against that division. Hemingway recognized the sexual roles the psyche assumes, but his work is primarily focused on subverting or disintegrating those roles. He achieves this subversion by filtering experience through the essentially "hermaphroditic" mind of his narrator. What we see in this mind is a desire for fluidity, a desire for movement beyond roles, a desire for union with other minds in a psychic place beyond sexuality. In this sense Hemingway is like Lacan and at the same time unlike him. Lacan speaks of the "impossibility of the sexual relation seeking to fuse two entities into one" (Roustang, 90). Hemingway seemed to believe it was impossible to achieve union with sexual "others" or sexual role players, but that one could achieve union with minds "beyond" sexuality. His relationship with Hadley provides evidence of his belief in this concept of the "beyond," as we will see in the next chapter. Hemingway's affinity for images of roundness and water and his fictional references to birth and death as transformative experiences of the mind also suggest that his idea of the "beyond" coincided with his idea of the unconscious as a psychic place of joining.

It is in this area of Hemingway's concept of the psyche's dynamics that Neumann's language is most useful. Neumann speaks of the "presence...in all structures of essential
contrasexual components, this hermaphroditic quality” of the psyche that “makes possible an inner ‘independent’ experience of the opposite sex” (24). Although I don’t think Hemingway believed in an “opposite” sex, Neumann’s terminology here does describe the “ambi-sexual” quality of mind that Hemingway’s narrators exhibit. What is also extremely relevant to Hemingway is Neumann’s allowance that the “spirit aspect” of the Great Round:

...seems to embrace the first depths and ultimate heights of man’s conscious development, since it uses the same signs in the beginning as symbols for a still inarticulate multiplicity preceding form, and in the end for an abstract conceptuality succeeding form. (19)

It is precisely this idea of the beginning and the end, the “first depths” and “ultimate heights,” of the psyche that Hemingway associates with the unconscious in a positive, not a negative way—and certainly not in a sexual way. The “signs” Neumann mentions here are what he claims are the “earliest symbols to emerge” in Western culture: the circle and the cross, symbolizing birth and death. We have already seen that the image of the circle is intricately entwined in Hemingway’s fiction, and we will explore in later chapters the prevalence of the image of the cross and crucifixion in his work. These images suggest Hemingway’s focus on birth and death, but it is birth and death of the mind, not of the body, as a process of becoming. It is in these transformative processes of the mind that the energy of Hemingway’s work expresses itself most intensely.

From the Outside Looking In—Modern Structures of the Self

Men are estranged from one another as each secretly tries to make an instrument of the other, and in time a full circle is made; one makes an instrument of himself, and is estranged from it also.

—C. Wright Mills

Because the prostitute represented for Hemingway the outer, commercial self—the
public self merchandised for financial or ego profit—surrounding what he saw as the organic, "natural" self within, the prostitute's psychological strategies and processes became for him an irresistible paradigm of the dilemma of modern identity. In a sense, Hemingway was like an environmentalist of the psyche, determined to combat the pollution of modernity. As we attempt to understand this struggle with modernity, Jacques Lacan and archetypal theorists such as Erich Neumann give us some insight into what Hemingway might have been attempting to express concerning the mind's "inner" dynamics. To understand better what he was grappling with in terms of the mind's social performance, however, we need to look at contemporary sociological theories of the structure of the self.

We find in these theories remarkable echoes of Hemingway's thinking. Charles Horton Cooley was a sociologist who was developing his theories of the "looking-glass self" and teaching at the University of Michigan while Hemingway was growing up in Oak Park. Cooley's idea was that the "self" discovers what it is and in a sense exists in the images reflected back to it from the world. The self, therefore, is a social and collaborative creation rather than a private one. "Cooley realized," says Talcott Parsons, "that the boundary between one's own self and others becomes problematical. Indeed, in many respects what one is, in his own conception, cannot be understood without reference to his interpretation of how others see him" ("Cooley and the Problem of Internalization," 61).

This view conflicts sharply with the Romantic tradition of the unique, inviolate self espoused in America by Emerson and Thoreau and Whitman. It also seems to conflict with Hemingway's ideas about the integrity of the individual, expressed through characters such as Pedro Romero, who practices his art "for himself inside" as much as he does for his audience. Hemingway does recognize the role of the audience or viewer in relationship to the self, however, and the difficulty in determining when the self is acting or performing and when the self is genuine or "real." The tension of this paradox is integral to Hemingway's work. If the self is a performing entity, can the self ever be separate from its
audience—and is that audience merely a reflection of the self's projections and the self's performance? If one "sees" oneself as one "is," then who is the "one" who is looking? And who is watching the performance of the watcher? This concept of self becomes a reflection of a mirror in a mirror blurring into a meaningless infinity of "looking-glass" selves. Hemingway's protagonists are profoundly concerned with this issue of authentic identity, and they are often deeply invested in the careful performance of some skill or duty as an expression of that identity.

Hemingway's fictional explorations of performance as self are reflected in the work of sociologist Erving Goffman. Building on Cooley's ideas of the self as a social construct, Goffman published *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* in 1959. Goffman's basic thesis in this influential work is that the self, particularly in the commercially transactional modern world, exists on the basis of its performance in the scene around it. There is, in fact, no separate, private, "inner" self in his theoretical view at all. The self is always relational, always contingent to the scene, the setting, the other characters, and the audience creating the social situation in which it is performing. Even when one is alone, one is responding to internalized social scenarios in which one performs in fantasy. "The self," says Goffman, "as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented..." (253).

Hemingway's fiction suggests that he strongly believed in the self as an "organic thing," but he was an honest enough observer of life to know that the self's performance in the world greatly determined its survival. The highest integrity for Hemingway's characters, in fact, seems to occur not when they stop performing but when they perform for themselves; that is, they perform according to a standard or code that has value to them, regardless of who is watching. That way they will always remain true to themselves inside. Thus Pedro Romero can perform in front of ignorant audiences who have no "aficion" and
still respect himself, and Maria can feel she has not been "touched" even after being savagely assaulted by the Fascist soldiers.

Other nuances in Goffman's theory relate directly to the prostitute and to Hemingway's ideas about the relationship of self to performance. One of the essential ethical and existential dilemmas of modern life is that people are often forced not merely to sell their bodies but their feelings, their facial expressions, their moods. One is required to pretend to like people one does not like, to laugh at jokes that one does not find funny, to agree with ideas one does not agree with. The testimony of Roberta Victor and Noi and "J" reveals how devastating that can be. Goffman suggests that this kind of prostititional performance can destroy one's sense of self, one's belief in oneself: "...to the degree that the individual maintains a show before others that he himself does not believe, he can come to experience a special kind of alienation from self and a special kind of wariness of others" (236).

Economic survival, however, pressures most people in modern life to pretend to feel what they do not, and even to try to convince themselves that their performance is genuinely intended if not actually felt—as one might feel if one praised a child or a loved one whose performance was not as spectacular as one pretended it was. The prostitute, in this case, is representative of many of us, as Goffman points out: "...successful women of the street...are ones who are willing to enact a lively approval of their clients' performance...” (232). Goffman quotes “Mary Lee” in this regard, who reflects many of Hemingway's ideas about reciprocal sexual performance:

I do what I know they want, make believe I'm ga-ga over them. Sometimes they act like little boys playing games. Mr. Blakesee always does. He plays cave man. He comes to my apartment and sweeps me in his arms and holds me till he thinks he's taken my breath away. It's a howl. After he's finished making love to me, I have to tell him, "Darling, you made me so happy I could just cry." You wouldn't believe a
grown-up man would want to play such games. But he does. Not only him. Most of the rich ones. (233)

The irony here that is very relevant to Hemingway is that the prostitute’s psychological posture is double-edged. On the one hand, she has to pretend to feel what she does not. She has to live a life of lying, and she is forced to compromise her dignity and her integrity constantly in order to survive economically. It is a kind of slavery. The discourse of prostitution, in fact, often resembles the discourse of slavery. Slaves dare not speak the truth, as Frederick Douglass points out: “They suppress the truth rather than take the consequences of telling it, and in so doing prove themselves a part of the human family” (*Narrative*, 20). On the other hand, there is a certain empowerment Mary Lee feels in her performance, because she controls it and she is detached from it. She sees what Mr. Blakesee does not see, and she’s laughing at him behind his back…to his face. Again she is like the slave who also wears a psychological mask of subservient loyalty and laughs at his “master” for being blind to his slave’s contempt for him. Along these same lines, the prostitutes in Charlotte Kasl’s book express in unison, “What fools the johns are to pay for sex” (111), because the prostitutes know they are giving nothing.

“J” supports this view completely: “…I really couldn’t understand the customer, couldn’t understand what he got out of this, because I really felt I was giving nothing. What he got was nothing” (96). “You’re putting something over on him,” says Roberta Victor, ”and he’s paying for something he didn’t really get. That’s the only way you can keep any sense of self-respect” (492).

Goffman also speaks about this level of performance in terms of its measure of empowerment:

> When the individual has no belief in his own act and no ultimate concern with the beliefs of his audience, we may call him cynical.... It should be understood that the cynic, with all his professional disinvolveement, may obtain unprofessional pleasures from his masquerade, experiencing a kind of gleeful spiritual aggression from

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the fact that he can toy at will with something his audience must take seriously. (18)

Hemingway's protagonists, like the former prostitutes quoted above and like Goffman's "cynic," take a certain grim satisfaction in "fooling" naive or arrogant fools who refuse to hear the truth anyway. "God help you," Jake thinks to Robert Cohn as he's lying to Cohn's face. However, like Count Mippipopolous, Jake tries to be straight with his friends and not "joke" (58) them—except that he does "joke" them very much; he ends up lying to every one of them for all the reasons one lies to people one doesn't want to hurt and doesn't want to be hurt by. This kind of performance does not give Jake a sense of empowerment but instead a sickened feeling that he does not know who he is.

The dangerously corrosive effect that this kind of false performance can have on one's sense of self can be seen in prostitution and also in another kind of experience with which Hemingway was very familiar: forced pretense of citizen loyalty to fascist dictatorships, or any forced or pressured behavior of citizens in a repressive society. In "Remarks on the Psychological Appeal of Totalitarianism," Charlotte Beradt discusses the grave psychic penalties paid by individuals who had to live in Hitler's Third Reich but who did not believe in Nazi ideology. To avoid being arrested or killed by the gestapo, one had to give an outward show of loyalty to Hitler. Focusing on acts as relatively trivial as the required Hitler salute, Beradt points out the steady erosion of self-esteem that this pretense cost the pretenders: "It is possible once in a while to act openly against one's convictions, when forced to do so by necessity, and still maintain some semblance of integration through mental reservations about doing it. But this deception becomes extremely difficult when it has to be repeated all the time" (American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 1952, p. 92). Most people cracked under this pressure. They found they either had to escape the country (impossible for many) or slowly conform their inner feelings to their outer actions—true brainwashing. Beradt shows that the inner defeat was often complete:
...in totalitarian societies opponents live in the continuous anxiety that they may make a slip, that they may reveal their inner feelings and risk total destruction, of themselves and maybe their families. Therefore, opponents have to become perfect actors. But in order to be a perfect actor one not only has to act, but to feel, to live the role....There is much truth in the remark that the peace which reigns in a totalitarian society is bought at the price of the death of the soul. (96)

Hemingway wrote a great deal about physical death, but his characters fight very hard against the “death of the soul.” Hemingway believed very much in the value of the “soul” or the essential, organic self, and he knew that the constant necessity to lie about who you are can bring on the true death of inner nothingness. Looking back on the time when he was unfaithful to Hadley during the Paris years, Hemingway wrote: “You lie and hate it and it destroys you and every day is more dangerous, but you live day to day as in a war” (A Moveable Feast, 208). Hemingway was keenly aware of the moral and existential danger of what Thomas Paine called “mental lying.” He believed as Paine did that “when a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind so as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime” (Paine, The Age of Reason).

Hemingway also knew, as Paine did not, that in the twentieth century, it was business and politics and not the church that threatened most insidiously to “prostitute” the mind. Sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild knew of this danger in modern life, too, and wrote about it powerfully in her book, The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling. Extending the work of Goffman and applying it to the corporate world of big business, Hochschild focuses on corporate America’s increasing demand that its employees make their feelings and their personalities part of the company’s product. Hochschild chooses the modern airline stewardess as the epitome of this trend. In Hochschild’s view, the merchandising of the stewardess as a key selling point of an airline amounts to a form of
prostitution. Since “the flight attendant became a main subject of airline advertising,” Hochschild says, “she must try to feel and act as if flirting and propositioning are ‘a sign of my attractiveness and your sexiness,’ and she must work to suppress her feelings that such behavior is intrusive or demeaning” (94). In order to succeed at her job the flight attendant must accept that this “extra psychological task” of “managing her feelings” for the company and the customer is part of why she is paid. The cost to the individual, however, may be incredibly high. As Hochschild suggests, this invasion of the private self by the public sell drives the spontaneous heart deeper and deeper to a potentially inaccessible place.

All of these issues of performance and packaged feeling interested Hemingway, and they all relate to prostitution in one way or another as he understood it. Most of all, he was interested in the spiritual or emotional survival strategies of the self constricted within the masks and the personae it invents or is forced to adopt in order to “sell” itself to the world. It is the resuscitation of this deeper self that I believe is the animating spirit of Hemingway’s fiction; and the psychological dynamics of the prostitute, particularly as a model of the Hemingway protagonist’s emotional structure, play an essential role in that protagonist’s journey towards psychic regeneration.

Having looked at extremely diverse analytical structures in this theoretical overview—from Lacan to Jung to Goffman to Beradt to Hochschild—it is perhaps fitting to come back full circle to a kind of connection to Hemingway’s Paris years. The lines quoted below are from Hilda Doolittle’s “The Walls Do Not Fall.” “H. D.”—one of the prominent poets of the imagist school—was coincidentally a former fiancée of Ezra Pound, Hemingway’s friend and mentor in Paris; she was also a close friend of Sigmund Freud. While Hemingway did not know her, he knew of her; and her modernist sensibility is a resonant echo of his own. Her poem resounds with many of the themes explored in this chapter: water as a symbol of the unconscious, immortality as a circle of birth and death, the ephemera of “outer circumstance.” Most of all, however, H. D.’s words reflect
Hemingway's belief in the sacredness of the self.

* * *

I sense my own limit,
my shell-jaws snap shut

at invasion of the limitless,
ocean-weight; infinite water
can not crack me, egg in egg-shell;
closed in, complete, immortal

full-circle, I know the pull
of the tide, the lull

as well as the moon;
the octopus-darkness

is powerless against
her cold immortality;

so I in my own way know
that the whale

can not digest me:
be firm in your own small, static, limited

orbit and the shark-jaws
of outer circumstance

will spit you forth:
be indigestible, hard, ungiving.

so that, living within,
yet beget, self-out-of-self,

selfless,
that pearl-of-great-price.

—H. D.
Chapter Four

Paris
City of Brothelly Love

*Paris has never had a red-light district per se, where the girls, seated in windows overlooking the street, could display their wares to passers-by. But there have always been quartiers chauds—“hot spots”—in Paris. It would be boring to name them all.*

—Brassai, *The Secret Paris of the 30's*

*Everything is on such a clear financial basis in France. It is the simplest country to live in. No one makes things complicated by becoming your friend for any obscure reason. If you want people to like you you only have to spend a little money.*

—Jake Barnes, *The Sun Also Rises*
Theoretical considerations may guide us to an intellectual grasp of the role of the prostitute in Hemingway's texts, but to understand the visceral nature of the prostitute's image in Hemingway's artistic consciousness we must understand the only city he ever lived in for any length of time: Paris. The Victorian culture of Hemingway's childhood may have introduced the prostitute as a forbidding and fascinating figure in his life, but it was in Paris where that figure became a dominant icon.

Paris and Ernest Hemingway were a perfect match. They lived their early twenties together in this century as "modems," and their mutual fascination with prostitution was entwined deeply in their natures, taking form again and again in artistic expression. In fact, to say that prostitution was literally embedded in the stones of Paris would be no exaggeration. Brassai (real name Gyula Halasz), the celebrated photographer who began documenting Paris nightlife in 1929, but who had been observing it since 1924 when he arrived in Paris from his native Transylvania in order to paint, wrote that in certain sections of Paris "one could smell the fumes of venal love: the stones, the pavements, the very walls had been impregnated with it for eight or nine centuries" (The Secret Paris of the 30's;
Brassai, who took his pseudonym in honor of his native city of Brasso, employed neither a first name nor page numbers).

Many years later, in images similar to Brassai's, Hemingway wrote about what he inhaled from the air of Paris, particularly in the words of Pilar as she speaks of "this odor of love's labor lost" (256) in For Whom the Bell Tolls. As part of her evocation of the smell of death for Robert Jordan's benefit, Pilar tells him to go

...to the Jardin Botanico where at night those girls who can no longer work in the houses do their work against the iron gates of the park and the iron picketed fences

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and upon the sidewalks. It is there in the shadow of the trees against the iron railings that they will perform all that a man wishes; from the simplest requests at a remuneration of ten centimos up to a peseta for *that great act that we are all born to* and there, on a dead flower bed that has not yet been plucked out and replanted, and so serves to soften the earth that is so much softer than the sidewalk, thou wilt find an abandoned gunny sack with the odor of the wet earth, the dead flowers, and the doings of that night. In this sack will be contained the essence of it all, both the dead earth and the dead stalks of the flowers and their rotted blooms and *the smell that is both the death and the birth of man.* Thou wilt wrap this sack around thy head and try to breathe through it. (236, emphasis mine)

This connection between sex and death and birth may have been a function of Hemingway's unconscious, but it was also part of the vernacular of Parisian prostitution. Alain Corbin, for instance, writes in his history of French prostitution that there was a certain marginal group of prostitutes from the middle and upper classes called *femmes gallante* who sought only "to pick up a lover who might subsidize their expenses" (136). Many of these temporary or part-time prostitutes were educated or otherwise respectable women who had simply fallen on hard financial times and did not wish to be identified as prostitutes. These were "courtesans who concealed their identity" (136) by claiming to be wives of husbands who were out of town or by posing as "unconsolable widows, who haunted the cemeteries like Les Tombales, described by Maupassant, and whom Mace calls *pierreuses de la mort* ('streetwalkers of death')" (136). In a sense, Hemingway depicts Brett Ashley as a *femme gallante:* an upper class "courtesan" who conceals her "identity," who plays on the fact that she has lost one husband to death and that her second husband (and fiancé) is out of town, and who looks for a lover to "subsidize" her expenses. Catherine Barkley is also introduced in *A Farewell to Arms* as kind of widow who is grieving over the death of her fiancé.

Brassai, too, refers to the language of death in connection with prostitution when he writes that the "most flourishing whorehouses in Paris were the ones known in slang as the
"slaughterhouses." These were the "dimestores of sex" for the lower class working men with little money, staffed by women who could sell themselves nowhere else. Brassai describes a scene he witnessed in one of these brothels, which he aptly calls a "descent into hell":

In a suffocating haze of smoke so dense that the end of the room was invisible, there appeared gradually out of the crowded darkness a long line of men along one wall... and along the other wall a line of naked girls, some of whom wore half-open red satin kimonos to conceal a scarred breast or an appendectomy. And these two lines advanced together, giving off a smell of sweat, tobacco, jasmine, hair oil, garlic, soap, mint, anise, antiseptic... to meet at the counter behind which the madam sat enthroned. The men were not allowed to pick and choose; their partner was theirs by chance...they paid the fixed price—five francs for room, trick, and tip, plus twenty-five centimes for the towel. The cash register never stopped ringing...There was no time to catch one's breath, to take a minute's rest. In these 'slaughterhouses,' it was not unusual for a diligent girl...to pick up a clean towel forty or even fifty times in twenty-four hours—she was aptly called a 'hustler.'"

If Hemingway ever saw such a scene, it is easy to understand why he would never forget it, and also why "hot and smoky" became an image consistently associated with brothel overtones in Hemingway's texts. In words remarkably parallel to Brassai's, for instance, Hemingway wrote of another "underground," a cave of fetid air from which Robert Jordan escapes a scene of near death into the cool, fresh night air. Jordan has just come very close to killing Pablo, and he goes outside to breathe:

...outside now of the warm air of the cave, heavy with smoke of both tobacco and charcoal, with the odor of cooked rice and meat, saffron, pimentos, and oil, the tarry, wine-spilled smell of...red wine and garlic [and the anise that Jordan has been drinking], horse sweat and man sweat dried in the clothing...of the men at the table, Robert Jordan breathed deeply of the clear night air of the mountains that smelled of the pines and of the dew on the grass in the meadow by the stream. (39)
Out of the choking, dangerous atmosphere of the cave—the surrogate “slaughterhouse”—Maria soon joins Jordan in his sleeping bag, where they make love for the first time, under the watchful eye of Pilar.

The “slaughterhouses” may have represented the sub-bargain basement of the edifice of prostitution in Paris, but there were many other floors, each more ornate, exotic, and expensive. Brassai describes these places in a chapter entitled “Houses of Illusion.” They had many generic names—maison close, maison de tolerance, maison publique, maison d'illusion, or simply maison (“house”)—but house of illusion seems most accurate, given their penchant for theatricality, elaborate costuming, and fantasy settings. Many were “located in the heart of Paris” and served the most powerful and prominent men of Europe. Edward VII, for instance, had a special “Hindu Room” set up in the Chabanais brothel, in “homage to his mother [Queen Victoria], the Empress of India.”

 Owned by “respectable families and institutions, as well as by the underworld,” all these exclusive bordellos had a “luxury unparalleled at the time,” decorated with a “wealth of chandeliers, tapestries, Venetian mirrors, rooms with ‘themes’—very much in vogue—of such elegance: Moorish rooms, Pompeian rooms, the Chinese pagoda, all with appropriate music and costumes.” The women in these fantasy settings were almost never completely naked, but instead wore “sumptuous negligees...transparent evening dresses, with silk trains, decorated with bows, covered with lace.” Each maison d'illusion also customarily had a “Chamber of Mirrors...making the entwined bodies visible from all sides, reflected a thousand times,” and “the inevitable torture chamber, with all its accessories: handcuffs, whips, hunting crops, flails.” In one such fake “torture chamber of a medieval castle” at the Acropolis brothel, Brassai saw “fake flames” licking “fake logs” in an immense fireplace, and a “wooden crucifix” upon which “a woman or man depending on whether the customer was a sadist or a masochist” could be fastened with handcuffs. The Acropolis also had a “Virgin's Room—all in white, lace, and immaculate muslins,”

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decorated with a “garland of orange blossoms, and next to it a bridal veil.”

The increasingly bizarre, theatrical nature of these brothels is best illustrated, perhaps, by “The Sphinx,” which opened in Montparnasse (where Hemingway lived and worked) and catered primarily to artists. Adorned only by a “glittering statue of a golden sphinx,” this brothel broke with the tradition of “red velvet” sumptuousness and instead featured the decor of the modern bathroom: “…enameled, waxed, white, clean, functional, hygienic.” Another innovation of the Sphinx was that “men could bring their wives and children...Going to the Sphinx was like a family outing.” Soon the Sphinx had imitators, “bordellos that welcomed couples, who came out of curiosity and didn’t go upstairs.”

Whether Hemingway set foot in any of these places, we do not know for certain. In a sense, it does not matter; one only had to be in Paris to see the glitter and the grotesqueness of its prostitution culture. The sale of sex and sexual fantasy was a public event, and Hemingway, like Brassai, was a keen observer. Hemingway’s reportorial eye functioned with the precision and clarity of a camera, and it is perhaps not merely coincidental to his writing style that Hemingway’s life chronologically paralleled the development of the movie camera, invented by the Lumiere brothers in France in 1895. Considering the avant-garde film experiments of Man Ray and Luis Bunuel in Paris in the 1920’s, taking conventional ways of seeing apart the way Joyce and Stein were taking apart and rearranging language visually on the page, Paris in the twenties could be called the Age of the Eye.

As much as any of his experimental contemporaries, Hemingway helped define this era of the eye. As a writer he was a seer, a watcher, a wandering camera—a voyeur. Vision is overwhelmingly the dominant sense in his fiction, and the eye is his primary metaphor of perception. Hemingway’s “descriptions,” said Janet Flanner (the “Genet” who wrote “Letter from Paris” for The New Yorker for fifty years), “were like reports from the pupils of his eyes transferred by his pen onto his paper” (Paris Was Yesterday, vii). The primacy of vision in Hemingway’s experience and work is clear in his first serious Paris
writing, a series of unpublished, one-sentence sketches entitled Paris 1922, which Carlos Baker calls "the most concentrated distillation that he could make of what he had seen in Paris during five months' of residence in the Latin Quarter" (Ernest Hemingway, A Life Story, 90):

I have seen the favourite crash into the Bulfinch and come down in a heap kicking, while the rest of the field swooped over the jump...and the crowd raced across the pelouze to see the horses come into the home stretch.

I have seen Peggy Joyce at 2 A.M. ...in the Rue Camartin quarreling with the shellac haired young Chilean who had manicured finger nails, blew a puff of cigarette smoke into her face, wrote something in a notebook, and shot himself at 3:30 the same morning.

I have watched the police charge the crowd with swords as they milled back into Paris through the Porte Maillot on the first of May and seen the frightened proud look on the white beaten-up face of the sixteen year old kid who looked like a prep school quarterback and had just shot two policemen.

I have stood [and presumably seen ] on the crowded back platform of a seven o'clock Batignolles bus at it lurched along the wet lamp lit street while men who were going home to supper never looked up from their newspapers as we passed Notre Dame grey and dripping in the rain.

I have watched two Senegalese soldiers in the dim light of the snake house of the Jardin des Plantes teasing the King Cobra who swayed and tightened in tense erect rage as one of the little brown men crouched and feinted at him with his red fez.

I have seen the one legged street walker who works the Boulevard Madelaine between the Rue Cambon and Bernheim Jeune's limping along the pavement through the crowd on a rainy night with the beefy red-faced Episcopal clergyman holding an umbrella over her.

(90-91)

These six sentences, so close in linguistic form to Brassai's photographs, not only mark the beginnings of Hemingway's distinctive literary style, but they also reveal something about the nature of his approach to experience, particularly his experience of
prostitution and perhaps of sexuality itself. He watches from a distance, uninvolved except in his imagination. He draws back, whether literally or in his mind, to a place where he can shape what he sees into what he desires or into themes or scenes that have dramatic power in his psyche. Each sentence is like a spotlight on a tableau or a scene in a play, and each scene represents an area of experience that Hemingway continued to explore in fiction throughout his career: sport as tragic drama; the intertwining of unrequited love and death, particularly death by suicide; the brutality of official violence and the shock of youth caught up in armed conflict; the claustrophobia of the city and the indifference of the bourgeoisie to art; the exotica of other cultures and the primal power of animal spirits in the human mind; and finally the tragi-comedy of venal sexuality shuffling lamely towards what Pilar calls the “great act that we are all born to”—or at least born from.

It is interesting that in the case of the streetwalker what Hemingway chooses to remember seeing is not the image of a glamorous, sexually provocative poule, but a glimpse of a grimly working, physically impaired woman escorted ambiguously (who knows whether out of kindness or for sex?) by another person in the costume of his trade: a clergyman. Thirty-five years later, in Hemingway’s reminiscences of Paris collected in A Moveable Feast, he writes of his memory of another Parisian woman from what appears at first to be a far different, romanticized perspective, but the function of his distanced way of seeing is the same—serving perhaps as a metaphor for his art, his life, and even his concept of the dynamics of sexuality.

In this scene Hemingway remembers that he used to write in cafes when “all the sadness of the city came suddenly with the first rains of winter” (4). On this particular day, as he was writing a story about “up in Michigan,” a young woman came into the cafe and “sat by herself at a table near the window” (5). Hemingway watched her as he wrote:

I looked at her and she disturbed me and made me very excited. I wished I could put her in the story, or anywhere, but she had placed herself so she could watch the street and

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the entry and I knew she was waiting for someone. So I went on writing. (5)

The story "was writing itself" (6), and Hemingway "having a hard time keeping up with it" (6), while drinking several "rum St. James" (6) and sharpening his pencil frequently.

He "watched the girl whenever [he] looked up" (6) and thought to himself:

I've seen you, beauty, and you belong to me now, whoever you are waiting for and if I never see you again, I thought. You belong to me and all Paris belongs to me and I belong to this notebook and this pencil. (6)

At this point he "entered far into the story and was lost in it" (6). He becomes so absorbed in the story that he does not know where he is or how much time has passed. When he is finished and "very tired," he looks up and notices that his muse has left him, for another man, he assumes:

I read the last paragraph and then I looked up and looked for the girl and she had gone. I hope she's gone with a good man, I thought. But I felt sad. (6)

Hemingway concludes the scene with the thought that "after writing a story I was always empty and both sad and happy, as though I had made love...." (6).

The framing of the scene in sexual language is clear. Hemingway sees a woman who is a stranger to him, and she "excites" and "disturbs" him. He imagines she is waiting for another man. Hemingway wishes to possess her somehow, wants her to "belong" to him, but he realizes he only has voyeur status in her life. So he focuses his passion on his imagination, his writing, a process he calls "transplanting yourself" (5). He makes love to his art; he has "a hard time keeping up with it" and "enter[s] far into" it. In this way, because he has "seen" the woman, she "belongs" to him and he in turn "belongs" to his "pencil" and his "notebook." Then after the frenzy of creation has spent itself, he feels bittersweet sadness and loss, as though he had "made love"—expressed in the language Hemingway characteristically uses to describe the post-coital emotions of his protagonists.
throughout his fiction: "always empty and both sad and happy."

The prostitutional nature of this scene is less overt than the image of the one-legged streetwalker perhaps, but it is nonetheless strongly present. A woman in public is observed by Hemingway; she is looking out a window (an archetypal brothel image) waiting, Hemingway imagines, for a man; Hemingway wistfully wishes to be with her, perhaps in a sexual way, but he becomes lost in his art; when he looks again, she is gone, an anonymous woman gone with an anonymous man. Collectively these elements have the overtones of a prostitutional encounter for Hemingway, or perhaps an unrequited sexual encounter rendered in ambiguously prostitutional terms.

Hemingway is not merely "projecting" here; there were many Parisian prostitutes who worked characteristically out of restaurants, so many in fact that they constituted a class of prostitutes called femmes de restaurant. Alain Corbin writes that "unlike the street prostitute," what the femme de restaurant "was really looking for, with the help of the cafe waiter, was a coucher—someone to spend the night with "in a furnished room she could rent" (136).

What is even more interesting, however, is Hemingway's identification with the woman (who "places herself" so he cannot see her face) and her perceived, ambiguously dual role as desiring lover and desired object. In other words, Hemingway sees himself possessed by his work in the same sexual way that he wishes to possess her. He does not say, of course, she is a prostitute, but Hemingway knew only too well that the ambiguity of a woman in public was integral to the cultural texture of Paris. If for no other reason, Hemingway was aware of the ambiguity of the sexual role of the Parisian woman in public because of his knowledge of another powerful visual medium: French painting.
The Painted Face of Paris

*The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.*
—Claudius, *Hamlet*,
Act III, Scene I

It might be an exaggeration to claim that prostitution was the heart and soul of Paris in the twenties, but it was at least its painted face. When Hemingway arrived in 1921, he encountered a world of art in which the prostitute had been the principal visual focus for many years. Manet, Cezanne, Degas, and Renoir—as well as a host of other Impressionist and post-Impressionist painters—made their work synonymous with scenes of literal and implied prostitution. In Hollis Clayson's powerful critique of these painters and their depictions of prostitutes, *Painted Love: Prostitution and French Art of the Impressionist Era*, she documents the "durability and malleability of the theme of prostitution in French art" (5).

Charging that "the attraction to prostitution was pervasive in these years [of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century]—appealing especially to avant-garde painters of modern life but to many men in the larger culture as well" (9), Clayson claims that these artists "took up 'the prostitute' as a standard emblem of modernity" (152) because the repressive French system of prostitute regulation had driven so many prostitutes underground to become "clandestine prostitutes" (152). Behind the false front of professions for working women such as flower girl, laundress, seamstress, hairdresser, chamber maid, shop girl, linen maid, designer, journal sales-woman—and particularly milleners and barmaids—prostitutes assumed a double identity of "respectability" and "availability." It was this ambiguity of "Was she or wasn't she?" that Clayson says became a symbol of modernity for avant-garde painters.

In late nineteenth-century France, many avant-garde painters had gone into the brothel
or the boudoir of the courtesan for their subjects. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec produced over fifty depictions of brothel prostitutes between 1892 and 1894 alone. Paul Cezanne, Edgar Degas, and Edouard Manet also went to the brothels to paint. As brothel prostitution declined in the early twentieth century, however, and clandestine prostitution grew, painters turned to the new working woman who was often earning extra money covertly as a prostitute. “No longer conceived as a social or public issue,” Clayson points out, “the theme became associated instead with privatized experience and libertine fantasy” (5).

It is this blurring of the public and private nature of sexual roles into “privatized experience” and “fantasy” that appears most relevant to our study of Hemingway’s sensibility. In painting after painting of women in these “suspicious professions” (113), as Clayton terms them, Impressionist painters heightened the erotic implications of their female subjects by playing on their dual role as independent working woman and as clandestinely available, vulnerable sexual servant. Renoir, Degas, and Manet each produced a painting entitled, At the Millener. James Tissot painted The Young Lady of the Shop; Degas, The Millener Shop; Eva Gonzales, The Millener; Henri Somm, The Waitress. Manet also painted several works called The Waitress, as well as Cafe-Concert and A Bar at the Folies-Bergere. Each painting features a young woman performing the duties of her bourgeois profession, her respectable “front,” but the sexual tension of the painting, according to Clayson, relies on the “Was she or wasn’t she?” ambiguity of the woman’s role. She might have been a “legitimate,” hard-working, chaste young woman, or she might have been a woman forced by poverty or driven by materialistic desire to offer herself sexually to her male customers.

Clayson calls this dramatized ambiguity the primarily male “modernist indeterminacy” (155) regarding the sexual portrayal of women—a kind of double entendre in which every woman is both a “whore” and a “lady”—constituting a way of stigmatizing every woman and at the same time making her sexually available in a subservient role, dependent on the

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economic and definitional power of men. Clayson claims that the “familiar history of modernism emphasizes and admires ambiguity” (153), particularly in the work of Impressionist painters, as though the “savoir faire” and empathetic sensibility of the painters released lower class, working women from condemnatory bourgeois moral categories and portrayed them as human beings laboring behind rigid roles. This favorable view interprets Impressionist depictions of women as sympathetic portrayals of victims caught in a growing capitalist system that conspired to dehumanize them by forcing them to merchandize what was most personal and genuine about their humanity: their smile, their gaiety, their innocent trust, their capacity to love. By showing these women in their private, unobserved moments (but, of course, observed by the painter and his eventual audience), sometimes appearing vulnerable and sometimes appearing hardened or drained by a life of debilitating pretense, always being “on” or “up” for the customer’s pleasure, these painters might have intended to celebrate the wistful, yet ennobling pathos of their subjects. The larger culture may have viewed these women as cheap commodities or sexual predators, but at least the avant-garde painters presented them as human beings.

Nonsense, says Clayson. The ambiguity of these paintings constituted a “male sexual politics” that worked as a way “to master and contain certain male anxieties about women who were found ungovernable, especially sexually open, lower-class women” (153). Clayson claims that the “open-endedness” (153) and “vagueness of avant-garde imagery” (153) only served as another subtle devaluation of women. She says that “these canny, masculinist achievements of the Impressionist avant-garde” (153) falsely appeared to have been rendered by artistic sensibilities at “some distance from the triteness of questioning every woman’s sexual morality” (153), but in reality amounted only to “a means to limit the threat of female sexual force” (153). Alain Corbin supports Clayson’s analysis here, not specifically in terms of avant-garde artists but at least in terms of the male cultural attitude towards prostitutes of this era:

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Men were still torn between two contradictory forces. Tortured by the fear of seeing female sexuality liberated, with all the earthly forces that men believed it contained, they were nevertheless fascinated by the animality, the popular vitality, the unrestrained spontaneity, the dark side of prostitution. Hence the force of the image of female sexuality, unbridled but submissive, of a woman at once available, clean, sensual, accessible, and passionate, *if only in counterfeit*. (xiv) (emphasis mine)

Looking at the work of the Impressionists, particularly from Hollis Clayson's perspective, enriches our study of Hemingway in a number of ways. First of all, we know that Hemingway became immersed in the iconography of these powerful masterpieces while he lived in Paris, and perhaps even earlier in Chicago. He tells us so himself in *A Moveable Feast*:

> I went there [the Louvre] nearly every day for the Cezannes and to see the Manets and the Monets and the other Impressionists that I had first come to know about in the Art Institute at Chicago. I was learning something from Cezanne that made writing simple true sentences far from enough to make the stories have the dimensions that I was trying to put in them. (13)

Emily Stipes Watts, in her book *Ernest Hemingway and the arts*, also affirms Hemingway's close relationship to the visual arts. Although no specific references to art appear in Hemingway's fiction of the 1920s, Watts writes that Hemingway nevertheless was “studying art” during that time “at the Prado, at the Luxembourg, at the Louvre, at Gertrude Stein's, at Ezra Pound's, and elsewhere” (170). Watts then points out “the increasing reference to art” as an “interesting progression” in Hemingway's work, “until, in *Across the River and Into the Trees*, Colonel Cantwell is allowed to assert, ‘We are devotees of the pictorial arts' ” (170). Hemingway's next protagonist, Watts notes, is a painter who studied in Paris as a young man: Thomas Hudson in *Islands in the Stream*.

Hemingway's exposure to Impressionist art seems to have been another powerful dimension to an inner artistic and psychological landscape he was already shaping in which
the dynamics of prostitution played a prominent role in his understanding of how the human mind functioned in modern life. Hollis Clayson’s detailed analysis of Manet’s last major painting, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere*, for instance, is particularly resonant with connotations regarding Hemingway’s thematic treatment of prostitution in his work. This “widely admired icon of modernist uncertainty” (151), exhibited originally in 1882, features an almost expressionless barmaid waiting to serve customers behind a bar. In back of her is what seems to be her reflection in the large mirror lining the wall, except that in the reflection she seems to be a different person, leaning forward eagerly toward a man in a top hat and evening dress whose face is visible to us. Oddly, the man whose reflection we see does not appear in the painting, as the woman does. In this way viewers of the painting are cast in the role of the male customer, and thus we are caught in a possible double role ourselves as observers: in one sense we may be ogling the female server as a sexual object for sale and in another sense we may be simply and politely buying a drink. In either case, Clayson maintains that “the possible double profession of the barmaid—serving and prostitution—was clear to observers in 1882” (151). The male critics of the time, according to T. J. Clark in *The Painting of Modern Life*, “as men of the world” appeared “to delight in” this “possibility—the presence yet again of prostitution, thinly disguised” (243). The critics’ knowing questions about the server’s morality were more than justified, charges Clayson, by Manet’s use of the reflected image, the “famous conundrum of the double woman” (151):

The frontal barmaid stands upright and appears cool, detached, and aloof, whereas the reflected woman leans forward slightly and acts subservient to the adjacent, looming male customer. The plot of the commercial transaction at the bar is eroticized by being provided with two possible outcomes. In one, “she does”; in the other, “she doesn’t.” (151)

Clayson goes on to explain what she feels is “modern” about the painting and why that
modernist aspect has a “gendered character” (151). She credits contemporary art critic Robert Herbert with zeroing in “with precision” (152) on what makes this depiction typically avant-garde: “...the whole world of the Folies-Bergere is reduced to this young woman and to our thoughts as we confront her....His disembodied image [of the customer in top hat reflected in the mirror] seems to stand for a male client's hidden thoughts....'” (152). Clayson adds that these split image perspectives are “the key elements of [the painting's] programmatic, almost manifestolike rehearsal of an essential article of avant-garde faith” (152). Since “what the barmaid might be selling is herself,” Clayson reasons, then the painting of “this double-bodied woman is a veritable summa of modernity” and a “crystallization of modern life” because it asks the “quintessentially modern question—will she or won’t she?”—a question “only of interest to a libidinous, heterosexual male interlocutor” (152).

Hemingway certainly was such an “interlocutor,” and he clearly was invested as a writer in putting this kind of prostitutional ambiguity into his portrayals of female characters. We can also see in his texts Hemingway’s attraction to mirrors and reflected images as both literal and figurative representations of character. What makes Hemingway’s approach different, however, from the purely “masculinist” perspective outlined by Clayson, and so perhaps less “gendered” in a reductive sense, is his deeper interest in the pan-sexual or supra-sexual psychological aspects of performance in these sexual exchanges. Hemingway did seem interested, for instance, in the “hidden thoughts” of the male “customer” who pruriently embraces the possible ambiguity of a modern woman's role; but Hemingway is more interested in the emotional and ego mechanics of deception whereby that male convinces himself that what is counterfeit is real—that is, that the barmaid is truly attracted to him and not just trying to make a sale—and so in essence conducts a performance for himself in his own mind. Even more compelling for Hemingway, however, is the strategy of dissembling or the layers of masking that the
modern woman had to learn in order to survive. It was this latter process of acting that Hemingway gravitated towards as his model of self in fiction, guiding not only his female characters but his male protagonists as well. It was in the dynamic of sexual performance in the emotional or psychological sense that Hemingway saw the self striving to be pleasing and yet predatory, seeking to maintain incorruptible inner authenticity while assuming disguise after disguise, and selling what is physically most precious in order to preserve what is psychically most essential.

In this sense of self, the barmaid at the Folies-Bergere or the waitress at any Parisian “brasserie,” like Hochschild’s stewardess, is an excellent representation of the psychological dilemma that Hemingway obviously found compelling and emblematic of the modern human condition. Like anyone of his time, Hemingway would have known that since their introduction into the economy in the late nineteenth century, barmails and waitresses had, in Clayson’s words, “acquired a reputation as tramps” (133). The origin of this reputation was the brasseries a femme, a novel kind of beerhall introduced at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where women servers replaced the traditional garcon. Soon the brasseries a femme were in vogue, and the owners immediately began “merchandizing sex in tandem with alcohol in highly organized fronts for clandestine prostitution” (Clayson, 133).

The female server’s job, prostitute or not, was to encourage the male customer to drink, by whatever means possible—sitting down with him, flirting with him, urging him to buy drinks for her. When the server was a prostitute, she would also try to entice the customer to have sex with her for money, with a percentage often going to the beerhall owner. What this new form of prostitution did was create a more demanding style of prostitutional behavior. It was not enough any longer to sell her body or a rehearsed fantasy from which she could distance herself emotionally, as she might have in the brothel. In the beerhall the serveuse had to develop “a new prostitutional style based upon the
simulation of 'real feelings' " (Clayson, 134). Alain Corbin writes that these "new outlets of prostitution" required that the prostitute give "her customer the impression that she [was] letting him seduce her, and that she [was] no longer a simple animal deprived of the liberty to refuse him" (249, emphasis is Corbin's).

This new kind of sale of self raised the emotional stakes of prostitution to an even more devastating level. "Of all the forms of clandestine prostitution," writes Clayson, "the brasserie waitress's job must have been the most psychologically demanding because so much acting was required" (150). Whether the waitress was a prostitute or not, she was seen as one, and in any case she was selling more than the product. She was expected, like the modern waitress or stewardess, to sell her smile, her friendliness, and her flirtatiousness, whether genuinely felt or not. Her demeanor was part of the product, not separate from it. Even when she was a prostitute, the pressure on her was just as great, if not greater, to assume multiple roles. The "waitress of sexualized legend," claims Clayson, "worked under conditions that forced her to assume various disguises" (147). She was "obliged to dissemble her possible venality in the presence of the police...obliged to act emotionally involved in her flirtations with customers, all the while energetically serving drinks" (Clayson, 147, emphasis mine). Clayson argues convincingly that the waitress's "obligatory daily involvement in the commodification of self was even more extreme than that of the brothel or street-walking prostitute...." (147), because she "could not risk detachment from the people around her," since "remaining aloof could slow sales" (150).

Hemingway shows in his fiction that he understood very well the commodification of self demanded of female servers in bars and restaurants. Even though Georgette Hobin is a street prostitute in The Sun Also Rises, Hemingway's characterization of her stresses that emotional pretense is part of her perception of herself as "product." Georgette makes a point of asking Jake if talking with the pretentious Francis Clyne is part of the deal. Since it apparently is, she makes an effort to be nice to someone she would rather ignore. This kind
of insincere social performance in order to keep up appearances is eventually required of almost every character in the novel, as they all "prostitute" themselves in one way or another. In terms of waitresses, however, Jake refers to the barmaid in these early scenes at the dancehall in somewhat ambiguous terms as the "daughter of the house" (21), and later learns that Georgette had a "corking row" with this same "patronne's daughter" and demanded to see her "yellow card" of prostitute registration (28). We are left not knowing whether the barmaid is a prostitute or not, but as in the case of Impressionist paintings, it is the ambiguity of her role which helps create tension in the novel's atmosphere of disguises and uncertainty.

A more overt depiction of waitresses as prostitutes appears in Hemingway's short story, "Che Ti Dice La Patria?"—written after Hemingway interviewed Mussolini in Italy in the 1930s. In this story the narrator and his companion, Guy, are traveling by car in Italy during the time of Mussolini's Fascist dictatorship. They stop at a restaurant in a small town and quickly realize that the waitresses are prostitutes:

A girl came and took our order and another girl stood in the doorway. We noticed that she wore nothing under her house dress. The girl who took our order put her arm around Guy's neck while we were looking at the menu. There were three girls in all, and they all took turns going and standing in the doorway. (The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, 391)

Also in the restaurant is a "smartly dressed" young man with "pomaded and shiny" hair who is obviously their pimp (391). Guy is portrayed as a somewhat naive good sport who can't speak Italian, while the narrator is fluent and worldly—a fairly standard Hemingway scenario. When Guy asks whether he has to "let her put her arm around his neck," the narrator wryly replies: "Certainly. Mussolini has abolished the brothels. This is a restaurant" (392).

The thrust of the story is the ironic exposure of the pretentious hypocrisy of Fascist
efforts to control venal sexuality—much like French regulationism of decades before—succeeding only in driving it underground. The scenario is nonetheless revealing of Hemingway's keen understanding of the dynamics of the *serveuse* who was a clandestine prostitute. In this case, however, the prostitutes are not portrayed as sympathetic characters. They are more like carnival predators trying to fleece a rube, in the person of Guy, but their efforts at pretended seduction are nearly identical to the "simulated flirtations of the *serveuse*" (134) described by Hollis Clayton. Quoting a nineteenth-century French researcher, Dr. Martineau, who demonstrates the male-oriented nature of the era's official discourse on prostitution, Clayson presents this perspective of the waitress-prostitute: "Sometimes she acts in ways to appear particularly young and overtaken by the madness of being in love which really puts the naive guy on the wrong scent and makes him think he's being seduced, when in fact everything's been calculated" (134).

Almost as if following Dr. Martineau's formula, one of the women in Hemingway's story—who in an oddly typical Hemingway fashion has a defective nose, which "had been enhanced by some event" (392) on one side but not the other—tells the thirty-eight-year-old Guy that he is "a beautiful boy" and that she "love[s] him" (392). When Guy emphatically is not interested in the woman, she assumes he must be interested in men and offers him "Fruit" in the form of "bananas" (393). The narrator tells her solemnly that the "Signor does not take bananas" but instead "takes a cold bath every morning" (393). After this pun-ridden exchange, the two men decide to leave. The woman tries to change their minds, but the pimp has decided they are "worth nothing" (393)—i.e., they will not do business—and to let them go. When they drive away, the woman watches them from the doorway, but like the barmaid in Manet's painting she has stopped acting for men who no longer represent economic value—and so faces them expressionlessly:

When we were seated in the car and ready to start, the girl came out and stood in the door. We started

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and I waved to her. She did not wave, but stood
there looking after us. (394)

This story, simple though it appears, demonstrates the difficulty of interpreting
Hemingway's fictional treatment of prostitution from any fixed or categorical perspective.
In his presentation of these Italian waitress-prostitutes, Hemingway seems to reflect the
modernist exploitation of the prostitute as socio-political symbol rather than as fully
dimensional human being—a process which Hollis Clayson deplores as "masculinist" in her
compelling critique of Impressionist painters. In this sense, for Hemingway as well as for
the Impressionists, the female prostitute appears to be Woman As Symbol: abstract signifier
of commodification of the body and of sexuality—an emblem of the dehumanizing force of
capitalism. As such, she represents a kind of restructuring of the soul into a business model
where nothing is not for sale. This configuration is also partly Woman As Victim, but it is
primarily woman as symbol of the manipulating falseness of the business
contract—distilling all human sentiment into an exchange of commodities ("exchange of
values," in Jake's words): deceitful, calculating, corrupting. In this portrayal, very much in
evidence in "Che Ti Dice La Patria?," women are on the one hand presented as pitiable for
being forced to pretend sincere feelings to assuage their clients' ego requirements, and on
the other hand presented as blamable for the insincerity assumed to be behind their
performance.

Money, Time, and the Prostitute

Given Hemingway's immersion from an early age in the prostitution culture of his era
and his own sensitivities about the corrupting influence and vagaries of money, it should
not surprise us to find the prostitute in his work representing capitalism's dehumanizing
power to commodify human feeling. He was, however, far from being the only artist or
social theoretician to make the prostitute the central image of modern, urban alienation.
Charles Baudelaire published an essay in 1863 entitled "A Painter of Modern Life—Modernity," in which he defines modern art as a response to the urban experience, i.e., the transience and fragmentation of a money culture: "By 'modernity' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable" (Clayson, 9). Baudelaire saw the prostitute's predatory yet victimized approach to human contact as a paradigm for the modern city dweller's desperate isolation in the jungle of commercialism: "Her eyes, like those of a wild animal, are fixed on the distant horizon; they have the restlessness of a wild animal...but sometimes also an animal's tense vigilance" (Clayson, 9).

Hemingway's fascination for eyes and for the sad aloofness of the voyeur reflects Baudelaire's imagery as well as his ideas. Jake wonders whether Brett "really saw out of her own eyes" (26) and believes her bold stare masks an inner, furtive pain: "She looked as though there were nothing on earth she would not look at like that, and really she was afraid of so many things" (26). Frederic Henry, too, in *A Farewell to Arms*, looks away in moments of intimacy, often out a window. When Catherine tells him she loves him as she role-plays a prostitute, he looks away to the "points of the cathedral with the sun shining on them" (105).

Hollis Clayson writes that in the "characteristically guarded yet actively scrutinizing glance of the prostitute, many turn-of-the-century social philosophers found evidence to conclude that "such prehensile visuality is distinctly modern" (9). According to this view, because modern life constantly pressures one to commodify or package oneself for sale and at the same time bombards the eye with products to buy, the modern person is always on the defensive. As Georg Simmel, a French social theoretician, wrote in the early 1900s, "the eye of the city dweller is overburdened with protective functions" to the extent that "interpersonal relationships of people in big cities are characterized by a markedly greater emphasis on the use of the eye than on the ears" (Clayson, 9).
Simmel based his thinking about the primacy of the visual in modern life on the idea that money transactions inherently demand more speed and less personal involvement than any other human exchange. The object with money is always to make more in less time with as few entanglements as possible. For Simmel, as for many others, the prostitution contract was the epitome of this dynamic. "Only transactions for money," Simmel writes, "have that character of a purely momentary relationship which leaves no ties, as is the case with prostitution. With the giving of money, one completely withdraws from the relationship...." (8). Simmel's theory is that "of all human relationships, [prostitution] is perhaps the most significant case of the mutual reduction of two persons to the status of mere means" (8, emphasis mine).

Hollis Clayson writes that for observers such as Baudelaire and Simmel, the prostitute is the "matchless signifier of alienated relations under capitalism" who "emblemizes the gulf between subjective and objective culture" as the defining "characteristic of modern life" (8). Contemporary critic Walter Benjamin says that for Baudelaire the prostitute is a "dream image" of the ultimate commodity who "conjures up prehistory" and represents all that is lost in modern culture precisely because she represents all that money, for all its vaunted power, can actually buy: a transitory, unconnected, empty experience. This "fetish" or "image," says Benjamin, is provided for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernists "by the whore, who is seller and commodity in one" (Benjamin, 171).

"Prehistory" seems to mean here a kind of cultural dream or yearning for pre-language, pre-symbol communal consciousness—a psychic, holistic, timeless immediacy which predates or underlies the separating, distinguishing power of language and symbols. It may be what Baudelaire means by the "eternal and immutable." The artist's task in this view of art is to take us around and through symbols back to their inchoate origins, perhaps to the "collective unconscious." Hemingway articulated this desire clearly in Death in the Afternoon, when he offered his iceburg theory of fiction in
which the overwhelming majority of reality is submerged below the words. At the same
time he also expressed the desire to write so “truly” that, even though his medium was the
shifting ephemera of language, his work would last and never go “bad.” Frederic Henry
makes the same effort to outflank words in one of his most powerful inner monologues
when he resists the malignant tendency of abstractions to alienate human beings from one
another by afflicting them with false, seductive words, masking the madness of war:
“Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete
names of villages...” (185).

This artistic reach for “prehistory” or the “eternal” helped to characterize the work of
Romantic moderns such as Baudelaire and Hemingway. Baudelaire exhorted his reader to
“Be always drunken...if ye would not be the martyred slaves of Time.” Drunkenness is
also a constant theme of Hemingway’s, as is escape from time. Frederic Henry, for
instance, quotes Andrew Marvell to Catherine, telling her that he fears time will separate
them: “But at my back I always hear/Time’s winged chariot hurrying near” (154). In their
absorption with the mutability of modern life and the fragmenting power of abstractions, the
ideas of artists such as Baudelaire and Hemingway about prostitution, money, power, and
transience coalesced into an image of modern pain and loss. From this essentially male
view, claims Clayson, the prostitute is “the living embodiment of the cold cash nexus but is
ambiguous, evanescent, and transient as well” (8). The prostitute assumed this “double
symbolic role,” Clayson says, because “like no other merchant, like no other good or
service for sale, she [was] all of these at once” (8).

This peculiar, powerful philosophical and artistic onus which devolved onto the
prostitute was, in a fundamental sense, just another way to hold women responsible for the
destructive effects of male power and male desire, while at the same time exploiting women
sexually. With moving simplicity and accuracy, Clayson points out that “in the modern
period men have relentlessly sexualized women” (9), particularly in the person of the

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prostitute. The “scapegoating,” she says, “of the prostitute—that quintessentially sexualized and objectified woman—is emblematic of the place of women in the dominant regime” of “the modern period” (9).

The Prostitute Equation

There is little question that Ernest Hemingway was part of this “dominant regime,” especially in his symbiotic artistic relationship with the prostitute as woman. If, in fact, his fictional representations amounted to that bare equation, his work would not have to wait to go “bad”; it would be bad from the start. I believe the evidence of Hemingway's texts, however, indicate that they cannot be reduced to the formula of: Prostitute + Corrupt = Woman x Scapegoat. I do not claim, on the other hand, that Hemingway was an ideologue, enlightened or not, whose work rests on a more realistic formula: Male Power Structure + Capitalistic Commodification = Prostitutional Exploitation of Women. I do not believe that Hemingway’s work can be processed into any formula. Ideologically, in his texts, prostitution for Hemingway seemed to represent the corrupting and exploitative tendency of money and power to enslave any person. A female prostitute might represent that force—might carry that dialectic inherently in her metier—but she could still be, and usually was in the text, separate from it as a human being waging an inner battle for existential identity. Hemingway's texts suggest that he believed that we all struggle with the prostitutional influence in modern culture and respond by developing strategies of performance in order to give ourselves value as well as to protect ourselves from exploitation. “Professionalism” for Hemingway seemed to involve this double-edged concept. It was a way of protecting oneself from the assault of commercialism on the heart, while at the same time giving oneself an inner integrity that was not for sale. When Pedro Romero performed the acts of his profession for the bullfight crowd and specifically for Brett, “he did it all for himself inside, and it strengthened him, and yet he did it for her, too.
But he did not do it for her at any loss to himself. He gained by it all through the afternoon" (216).

I do not believe Hemingway equated prostitution with women, even though he saw female prostitutes all around him all his life, nor do I mean to suggest that he gave much thought to reforming the male structure of modern life which made its prostitutional character a virulent force against women. What I do think is that Hemingway was particularly empathetic to the psychological processes of prostitution. These processes comprise a significant aspect of what commanded his skill and attention in his attempt to represent modern life truthfully in his fiction. His work is not filled with explicit sex or erotica. There are, in fact, no brothel scenes. What we do find "relentless" in Hemingway's art is the examination and dramatization of the mind under the stress of performance. That mind, male or female, is, in its deeper recesses, non-sexed.

Clearly Ernest Hemingway shaped what he saw in Paris into art featuring prostitutional themes. From the decaying but still highly visible brothel structure he observed sexuality as costumed spectacle and ornately staged fantasy. From avant-garde painters he seems to have learned even more. Hemingway shared with the Impressionists, as well as with the social analysts of the era, a conviction concerning the primacy of the visual in art, a fascination with the "role" as an element in sexuality, and a philosophical unease regarding the commodification of human flesh and spirit—all of these elements refracting through the prostitute as a kind of cultural prism.
Chapter Five

The Mourning After

Prostitutes of Love and War
in *A Farewell to Arms*

_He had been trying for years to make fictional use of his war experiences of 1918. He wanted to tell a story of love and war, using as an epigraph the cynical lines from Marlowe: "...but that was in another country, /and besides the wench is dead."_

— Carlos Baker,
*Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story*

"You're not a whore."
"I know it, darling. But it isn't nice to feel like one."

— *A Farewell to Arms*
The success of Hemingway's first novel in 1926 brought him a certain amount of fame, but it also put pressure on him. "Whatever happened," writes Carlos Baker, "the successor to *The Sun Also Rises* [had to be] a first-rate novel" (Baker, 190). The first "whatever" to happen was Hemingway's affair with Pauline Pfeiffer and his subsequent divorce from Hadley in early 1927. Later in the year Hemingway converted to Catholicism, claiming that he had actually been baptized by a priest in Italy when he was wounded in 1918, and married Pauline. In 1928 Hemingway's father shot himself. It was in this atmosphere of traumatic change that Hemingway wrote *A Farewell to Arms*, a novel of memory and loss, published in 1929 during his last year in Paris.

Hemingway had been trying for almost ten years to write a novel about his experiences as an ambulance driver in Italy during World War I. While recuperating in an Italian hospital in 1918 from a mortar shell wound in his leg, Hemingway had become infatuated with an American Red Cross nurse, Agnes Von Kurowsky. The 26-year-old Agnes did not take the relationship as seriously as her 19-year-old admirer, and when he returned to the States, she broke it off. Hemingway was very hurt and bitter about this rejection. He wrote about it sardonically in "A Very Short Story," included in the *In Our Time* collection, as an experience of the Nick Adams character. In this story the nurse ends her "Dear John" letter by treating Nick like a boy experiencing puppy love: "She loved him as always, but she realized now it was only a boy and girl love" (240). Nick's response is to contract "gonorrhea from a sales girl...while riding in a taxicab" (240) in Chicago.

Through Nick's narrative consciousness we can see that the connection between the pain of lost love and the self-destructive or self-anesthetizing postponing experience was present even in this early shaping of Hemingway's wartime memories. The role of the
ambiguous "sales girl" prostitute is melded with the role of the ideal lost lover in the narrator's mind. The narrator turns to the prostitute experience as a surrogate love, a "grown-up" love, a bitter and escapist love—protecting the participant from the risk of real feelings. This process of masking or "costuming" the narrator's self in the emotional strategies of prostitution also permeates the novel that grew out of these experiences.

In the "interchapter" that precedes "A Very Short Story," Hemingway included another element that would appear in *A Farewell to Arms*: two wounded comrades who escape the war together. In this one-paragraph battle scene, Nick is paralyzed from the waist down, having been shot in the spine. His critically wounded friend Rinaldi is lying face down in the dirt trying to breathe. Nick tells Rinaldi that for them the war is over: "You and me we've made a separate peace" (237). When Rinaldi can only reply, "Not patriots" (237), Nick smiles and wryly thinks to himself that Rinaldi is a "disappointing audience" (237). The Rinaldi character later appears prominently in *A Farewell to Arms* as a friend and "audience" to Frederic Henry, but it is with Catherine Barkley that Lt. Henry makes his "separate peace." Ironically, this lyrical phrase also has sexual connotations, which may have been why Hemingway did not use it as a title for the novel, according to Michael Reynolds in *Hemingway's First War*:

Perhaps Hemingway did not use the title because of its ambiguity. If "A Farewell to Arms" implies the arms of war and the arms of love to many readers, "A Separate Peace" would surely suggest the alternate spelling, "Piece," which would have been a sardonic statement about the love affair. (64)

The fact that Hemingway's brief wartime love affair was an experience to which he returned in memory again and again as a source for his fiction has keen relevance to the structure of *A Farewell to Arms* as well as to the psychic journey of the novel's narrator. "Hemingway the artist was always chasing yesterdays," says Reynolds (281), and he chased his experience with Agnes for years before he caught it in the form of a novel. At
first it was going to be a Nick Adams narrative. As early as 1919 Hemingway told the idea of the story to a friend in Michigan (Reynolds, 277). In 1921, Hemingway began a novel based on the same story, which Reynolds calls the “Ur-Farewell” (277), but it was lost along with almost all of Hemingway’s other manuscripts in 1922 when a thief stole Hadley’s suitcase in a Paris train station.

Hemingway had to begin again. “As late as the summer of 1925,” writes Reynolds, “Hemingway was still trying to write A Farewell to Arms with a 1918 setting” (280). By the time he started again in 1928, Hemingway’s life had changed and his concept of the novel had changed. The setting was now 1915, the nurse was British, the narrator was older, and the story was no longer about jilted youth but about a man and woman finding love but facing the inevitability of loss. “The bitterness towards Agnes had disappeared, for it does not touch the characterization of Catherine Barkley,” claims Reynolds, and “Frederick Henry bears little or no resemblance to Nick Adams” (280).

The greatest change in Hemingway’s life, in terms of his approach to fiction, was the fact that his divorce from Hadley intensified his tendency to retrieve an imagined past that made the present bearable. As soon as he was separated from Hadley, he wrote to her saying she was “the best and truest and loveliest person” (quoted in Hadley, xiv). Near the end of his life, Hemingway wrote about Hadley in nostalgic, reverential terms: “I loved her and I loved no one else and we had a lovely magic time while we were alone” (A Moveable Feast, 208). He also felt deeply guilty and remorseful almost immediately after leaving her. Gioia Diliberto, author of Hadley, writes that Hemingway “felt guilty about leaving her all his life” (xii). Betraying her “seemed to damage his sense of himself as essentially strong and decent, and it sparked his creative and physical decline....He came to regard the death of love as inevitable” (xii-xiv). In A Moveable Feast, in fact, he writes that he would have preferred to have literally died, like Romeo perhaps, before he had been untrue to his love for Hadley: “I wished I had died before I had loved anyone but her” (208).

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What the divorce also intensified was his focus on the special nature of his relationship with Hadley. Their involvement from the beginning had been a kind of androgynous, genderless exchanging or merging of sexual roles into a oneness of identity. According to Diliberto:

...they took turns being the passive sexual partner, "the little, small petted one," as Hadley put it. She told Ernest she felt so close to him it was as if they were one person—and idea that appealed powerfully to him in his life and his art. Ernest began playing with the idea of transcending sexual roles as a way of merging with a woman in perfect fulfillment. He and Hadley believed their love existed in a realm beyond the physical, where they were spiritual equals. In that world, there were no classifications by gender. (79, emphasis mine)

Androgynous forms of address also characterized their correspondence. "You're a very dear much to be loved guy," Ernest wrote to Hadley during their courtship, and she replied, "Anything goes doesn't it between [us] honest men?" (Hadley, 79).

Either by coincidence or self-fulfilling projection, this same quality of androgyny defined his new relationship with Pauline. Mark Spiitka writes that Pauline repeatedly told Hemingway in letters that "we're the same guy" (Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny, 9), and that she told him she thought of "me being Ernest, and how lovely you are, and how we're the same guy" (9). During Pauline and Ernest's enforced 100-day separation before their marriage, requested by Hadley as final proof of Hemingway's seriousness about divorce, Pauline also wrote that marriage to her would "perhaps be a little like being your own wife" (9). Spiitka sees Pauline's attitude as representing a sexual "appropriation" (9) for Hemingway, contributing to his "quarrel" with androgyny. Given her intimate knowledge of Ernest's relationship with Hadley, however, and her desire to replace Hadley, it seems more likely that Pauline was simply trying to reflect what Hemingway was already strongly projecting: a desire, perhaps only partially conscious but nevertheless identifiable, to break out of gender roles.

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It was in this psychological and sexual atmosphere that A Farewell to Arms was created—an atmosphere clouded enough to make it difficult to be certain of its exact origins in Hemingway's emotional history. Bernice Kert, in her influential work, The Hemingway Women, assumes that Agnes von Kurowsky was the model for Catherine Barkley: “Ten years later, when he immortalized her [Agnes] as Catherine Barkley in A Farewell to Arms, she became his ideal heroine, submissive and fulfilled in love” (58). Diliberto, however, argues persuasively that it is the spirit of Hadley, not Agnes, that inhabits Nurse Barkley. She says the “image of Hadley—or, certainly Ernest's idealized vision of her—appears throughout” (xiii) A Farewell to Arms, as well as many of his other novels. Diliberto says that Hadley was “a scared, quiet woman living in a state of nervous collapse” when Ernest met her, and that by “seeing deeply into her true nature...helped her find a sense of self, a strong identity that she carried with her for the rest of her life” (xv). The connection between this dynamic, reciprocal emotional bond between Hadley and Ernest, its subsequent loss, and the eventual writing of A Farewell to Arms is direct, according to Diliberto: “...soon after their divorce, Ernest wrote a novel in which another young couple is saved by the cleansing power of love” (xv).

The evidence of the interest in androgynous language and sexual role experimentation shown by both Hadley and Pauline is compelling, but we should consider strongly that they may primarily have been reflecting what they knew intuitively that Hemingway was seeking. Like his interest in the psychology of prostitution, and in fact intimately connected to it, Hemingway's fixation on sexual mutability and metamorphosis permeates his personal and artistic consciousness from an early age. At the very least we may reasonably speculate that the women Hemingway loved were individuals who possessed the qualities his deeper needs urged him to find. In either case, Catherine Barkley seems to have been as much a function of Hemingway's own psyche as she was an idealization or reincarnation of the real human beings Hemingway knew.
False Starts and True Endings

This historical genesis of false starts, loss, and repeated attempts to shape an idealized past from the perspective of a troubled present is reflected in the form of *A Farewell to Arms*. Like Hemingway's first major novel, his second follows the structure of the cycle, the process of the return. Frederic Henry, the narrator, is returning to a place in his mind to relive a memory and to reorder that memory dramatically for an audience that includes his readers and his present self. Perhaps because he has seen the experience whole, since he has lived it, the end is contained in the beginning, just as it was in *The Sun Also Rises*.

The novel's first chapter opens with images of summer warmth and fertility threatened by images of chilling rain and death. The plain is “rich with crops” (3), but the distant mountains, where the armies are fighting, are “brown and bare” (3). Soon the autumn rains make all the trees “bare and the trunks black with rain” (4); and the whole countryside is “wet and brown and dead” (4). The once-dusty troops of summer now march along the muddy road covered with soaked capes, underneath which rifles and ammunition clips bulge “as though they were six months gone with child” (4). It is a false image of pregnancy, concealing the reality of death. Even the soldiers are deluded in their presumed role as dispensers of death. Nature has the greatest army, and the final word: “At the start of winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera” (4).

The entire novel is prefigured in these opening five paragraphs, and they numerically as well as thematically reflect the novel's division into its structure of five “Books.” The images of warmth, fruitfulness, pregnancy, and hope in the opening chapter correspond to Frederic and Catherine falling in love, conceiving a child, and leaving the war in search of a personal peace. They cannot escape the “permanent rain,” however. Catherine dies, literally “gone with child,” and the final image of the novel mirrors the dominant opening image of death, as the grieving Frederic walks “back to the hotel in the rain” (332).

There are many plausible ways to interpret or “read” the cycles of birth and death in
A Farewell to Arms, but the one I suggest we consider has the benefit of making sense of a number of the novel's troubling aspects, including its prostitution elements. If we suspend the need to identify the novel as a "love" story or "war" story or any other category of narrative, and instead see the movement of the story and its characters as the journey of one organic narrative consciousness, we can begin to see the psychic level on which Hemingway was attempting to operate. What we witness in the novel's action is the birth/death cycle of the narrator as representative human psyche. Frederic Henry, however, is not a representative "male" or "female" consciousness, just as Jake Barnes is not. He is instead a metasexual self at the center of a panorama of projected sexual personae. If we were to try to diagram this structure, it might look something like this:

**Father figure**

**Priest**—repressed-sexual, ascetic, alter ego

**Brother figure/"John figure**

**Rinaldi**—"masculine" alter ego

(death-oriented, affectionate, selfish, worldly, sexually voracious, cynical/sentimental; embodies "profane")

**Mother figure/prostitute figure**

**Frederic**

*prostitute consciousness*

(asexual, passive, distanced, voyeuristic, role-playing, dissociated)

**Catherine**—"feminine" alter ego

(life-oriented, competent, nurturing, self-sacrificing, resilient; embodies "sacred" in "profane"; *also* role-playing, dissociated, "crazy")

**Grandfather figure**

**Count Greffi**—depleted-sexual, ancient-wisdom alter ego

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At the center of this circle of selves is a psyche attempting a journey to the unconscious in order to be “reborn.” This journey necessitates the “death” of the projected selves, or a stripping away of the costumes of sexual identity, so that a new, whole, unfragmented identity might emerge. Viewed in this way, the dynamic movement of *A Farewell to Arms* is toward rendering the essential self naked and free to begin life again.

Frederic and Catherine are two “uniformed” human beings, quite clearly alter egos in their own eyes and in the language of the text, who attempt to undergo a process of shedding their psychic disguises. These two comrades of war desert their “front,” discard their uniforms, submerge in rivers, leave their friends, and row across a great body of water in the dark to a new life. They attempt to complete the process that Hadley had suggested to Ernest during their courtship: “The world's a jail, and we're going to break it together” (Baker, 79). Catherine and Frederic are trying to break out of the jail of separate, false identities, leaving their prison uniforms behind. By divesting themselves of their social identities, they attempt to become “one”—a single, whole identity. Whether this process succeeds or fails depends on how one reads the ending of the novel. Catherine dies but says she will visit Frederic always in the “nights” (331)—that is, in his dreams, his unconscious. If this is not a completely satisfactory ending, perhaps it is because there is no way to resolve the unresolvable and represent symbolically the most mysterious and elusive of psychic states: immersion in the unconscious. Hemingway did try, though; he wrote the ending over thirty different ways. Perhaps death, after all, is the only way to make psychic birth understandable in artistic terms.

What is troubling for many Hemingway readers is that in this case, the “feminine” self dies. Judith Fetterley argues powerfully that Catherine's death means that “in the world of *A Farewell to Arms* male life is what counts,” and “the only good woman is a dead one” (*The Resisting Reader*, 71). In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, however, it is the “masculine” self that dies in the person of Robert Jordan, leaving Maria to carry on their sense of
oneness. Perhaps in Hemingway’s fictional worlds, it is not the gender of the dying self that matters but the nature of the journey it has undertaken; and it is in charting the progress of this journey that the prostitution elements in Hemingway’s narrations become so essential. The psychological strategies of prostitution—the roles, the poses, the costumes of self—constitute the social mind’s structure or machinery, through which the deeper self must find a way to function and survive. In this sense, the prostitutional strategies reflect the images on the first page of A Farewell to Arms: the skeletonlike “pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun,” around which the water of self flows “clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels” (3). This image is appropriate when the prostitutional processes are pared down to the bedrock structure of the consciousness they spring from, allowing a fluidity of the self’s deeper resources. In their stifling, suffocating form, however, they are more like the soldiers’ capes, covering death with false, costumed signs of life. In either case, in terms of Hemingway’s artistic vision, they must be negotiated skillfully as both obstacles and oracles in the odyssey of the self’s journey to its psychic home.

Critical Crossed Eyes—Different Looks Through the Prism of Prostitution

One of the many things that the focus on prostitution as a paradigm of self helps us to appreciate is the merit of different critical perspectives on Hemingway’s texts, while at the same time extending the implications of those perspectives. Michael Reynolds, for instance, acknowledges the cyclical structure of A Farewell to Arms and its symbiosis of birth and death:

...the seasonal cycle of the earth is the controlling pattern and the pattern ends each year with the winter death. The natural love cycle of fertility may produce life, but it also must end with death. It is in this sense that A Farewell to Arms is neither a war story or a love story, for love and war are but two sides of the same coin and the coin has a death-head on either side. (265)
What Reynolds deduces from this cyclical pattern of love and death is that instead of "being a study in war, love or initiation, A Farewell to Arms is more properly a study in isolation" (271). He says that the "central action" of the novel is "Frederic's progress...from group participation to total isolation" (271), a process which takes Frederic to a place where he "has no person, no beliefs, no institutions upon which to rely" (274). In the end Frederic finds himself in "another country," where "he is truly the isolated man," and we find that "the novel's central concern has been tracing out his journey into isolation" (274). Reynolds might have added that since Catherine and Frederic seem to represent aspects of the same person struggling to become "one," the novel has traced Catherine's journey into isolation as well.

The only difficulty, from my perspective, in Reynolds's approach here, besides his treatment of Catherine as a sort of nonentity or as a satellite of Frederic, is that while he recognizes the heart of the novel as a kind of psychic journey, he feels it is based on a socio-political "concept of defeat" (282), a failure of "national goals that had failed to sustain the individual" (282). Reynolds acknowledges that "Frederic Henry retreats further and further into isolation in order to survive," but Reynolds feels it is a "Pyrrhic victory, for he has lost all that he values in this world" (282). My contention is that it is precisely in order to shed the "values in this world" that the Frederic/Catherine self undertakes the journey toward the psychic center. Brett Ashley says that she cheats and lies because it's the way she's "made." Frederic and Catherine seek to unmake the way they have been made by the world. A close look at the novel's prostitution undercurrents will provide clear evidence of the direction if not the success of this unmaking process.

Judith Fetterley offers a different but no less challenging approach to A Farewell to Arms. Fetterley, like Reynolds, sees Frederic seeking an "escape route" (47), a route that "involves the strategy of projection" (47). She also observes Frederic's search for "an asexual world" (47), his "essential passivity" (59), and the fact that he "sees himself in the
dead fetus which emerges from Catherine's womb" (53)—all character traits that resonate with the victim psychology of prostitution, although Fetterley does not make that connection. Rather than seeing Frederic's status of prostituted victim as a reason to ally him with Catherine symbolically and psychologically, Fetterley's thesis is that Frederic is the quintessentially hostile male covertly wishing the female harm because she threatens his life with "responsibility and commitment" (59). Catherine's death, Fetterley argues, is "in fact the fulfillment of his own [and by implication, Hemingway's] unconscious wish, his need to kill her lest she kill him" (53).

While Fetterley's approach here is intriguing and serves her valuable goal of critiquing the hegemony of Western literary and social patriarchy, she underplays some essential aspects of Frederic's character. The chief of these qualities is his prostitutional psychology. In his tendency to deceive, role-play, evade, dissociate, and mask his feelings, he reflects the prostitute's psychological survival mechanisms; and in doing so, he is a clear mirror image of his alter ego, Catherine, whom Fetterley does identify as a prostitutional mentality. Fetterley says that Catherine's "character is determined by forces outside her; it is a reflection of male psychology and male fantasy life" (66). Catherine "defines herself in terms of men....does not determine her own identity....views herself through the lens of her sexual relation to men" (67-69). Catherine's "negative self-image" (66), says Fetterley, "is a result of internalizing male attitudes" (67), causing her to have feelings of "self-hatred...guilt...and a talent for punishing herself" (68). The irony is that Fetterley could just as easily be speaking of Frederic. He is as malleable as Catherine, if not more so—a role-player, a liar, a psychic shape shifter.

More importantly, Fetterley acknowledges the "obvious contradictions of Catherine's character" (65), her "aggressiveness" (59) and her physical and emotional strength under crisis conditions. However, not only does Fetterley see these contradictions as "not resolvable" (66, emphasis Fetterley's), she also declines to see the same contradictions in
Frederic. Actually, these contradictions do exist in Frederic, and one way to see them is to look at Frederic in terms of his prostitute psychology. The internal conflicts of both these characters, in fact, derive directly from their prostitutional psychology, and it is in addressing this issue that an analysis of the prostitution dynamics in *A Farewell to Arms* can be most revealing.

**Catherine and Frederic as Reflections of One Prostitutional Mind**

Focusing first on Catherine Barkley, we might see her, as many critics have, as Hemingway’s “ideal” woman. Judith Fetterley refers to Catherine ruefully as the “image of the female ideal” (71). Michael Reynolds speaks of Frederic’s “natural love relationship with Catherine, who is the counterpart to the brothels” (264). Frederic’s friend Rinaldi calls Catherine the “lovely cool goddess” (66). From an archetypal perspective, Catherine can perhaps be described, in Neumann’s words, as the “Good Mother,” the goddess who serves and nurtures mankind selflessly, such as the “Hellenic-Jewish-Christian Sophia, or Wisdom” (22).

In contrast, Brett Ashley might be characterized as the archetypal “Terrible Mother,” the “Gorgon with the snakes writhing around her head—the sight of whom turns men to stone” (Neumann, 22). The image of the Terrible Mother, according to Neumann, is often “projected into a woman who...transfixes one with terror in an anxiety neurosis” (23). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar speak of Brett exactly this way: “Lady Brett was a sort of monstrous antifertility goddess to whose powers the impotent bodies of men had ceaselessly to be offered up” (*No Man’s Land*, 317). Leslie Fiedler calls Brett “the bitch-goddess with a boyish bob” (*Love and Death in the American Novel*, 319), and Malcolm Cowley refers to her as the “revered witch” (introduction to *The Sun Also Rises*, xxvii).

According to these views, Catherine and Brett are complete opposites. Catherine is the
“ideal,” passive, nurturing Sophia, while Brett is the man-enslaving Circe. A closer look at the texts, however, shows the inaccuracy of this contrast. Catherine and Brett are alike in far more ways than they are different—ways that reveal their struggle to survive as individual human beings in a world that conspires in many ways to prostitute them.

Their most striking similarity is their tendency to play roles, to operate from behind a kind of mask or “front”—a function of character that is literally and figuratively connected to prostitution in both novels. One of those roles is that of nurse. Both women served in the “V.A.D.”—the British nursing unit called the Voluntary Aid Detachment—during World War I. Brett falls in love with the wounded Jake when she is a nurse in a military hospital, and Catherine does the same with Frederic Henry. Catherine makes clear to Frederic, however, that she is not a real nurse. “Oh, no,” she says in answer to his question about her proper title, “I’m something called a V.A.D. We work very hard but no one trusts us.... A nurse is like a doctor. It takes a long time to be. A V.A.D. is a short cut” (25).

Catherine and Brett play many other roles besides that of nurse, each for their own reasons. Brett’s chief role is “Lady,” a title borrowed from her estranged husband, “Lord Ashley.” She has also been a wife to two husbands she apparently married without loving, a circumstance that Jake implies to Cohn makes her an imposter. During the action of the novel she is a false fiancée—that is, in name only—to Mike Campbell. The traditional structures and titles which define a woman’s social relationship with men clearly do not define Brett. She adopts the formal structure, the role, of marriage or engagement because of the social and personal liberty the role makes possible. With a “respectable” title as a front, Brett can act as she wishes; and what she wishes, it seems, is to be free to search for an authenticity of being, a self. Even “love” is a preconceived romantic role which constricts Brett. Love is a “hell” which makes her “sick.” Her real desire is for freedom, a chance to define herself on her own terms. Pedro Romero seems to represent that chance for her. Yet he, too, like Robert Cohn and every other man in her life, wants to marry her.
eventually, to “make an honest woman of her,” to make her into something other than who she is, something controlled.

In one sense her infidelities represent acts of freedom or defiance, ethically or existentially defensible steps toward self-affirmation in a patriarchal world, but she blames herself for her inability to submit to the trap that monogomy often represented for women—perhaps because she has internalized her culture’s ideas about the “nature” of women and so considers herself flawed at birth, defective in her manufacture. “It’s the way I’m made” (55), she tells Jake, speaking of her apparently capricious or compulsive changes of sex partners. The double meaning is equally obvious, however, that it is the world of men that has “made” her mirror its values. She is only reflecting her society’s prevailing view of prostitutes and other “fallen women,” i.e., that they are “sick,” defective, imperfectly created. Brett sees her sexual choices as a process of deception fueled by her own sick, false nature. She even tells Jake, the man she supposedly “loves,” that she would only “tromper [which is French for “cheat” and also “deceive”] him with everybody” (55) if they lived together.

Catherine, on the contrary, is so completely loyal that she tells Frederic: “You’ll be sick of me I’ll be so faithful” (116). Yet Catherine, too, has a penchant for role-playing, and the implication is strong that her loyalty, at least at first, is motivated more by her need for self-validation than by any appreciation for Frederic as a person. When she first meets Frederic, she is “nearly crazy” (300)—as she admits later in Switzerland—from grief over the death of her British fiance. She asks Frederic to play the role of her dead lover, even giving him his lines to say:

“Say, I've come back to Catherine in the night.’ ”
“I've come back to Catherine in the night.”
“Oh, darling, you have come back, haven't you?”
“Yes.”
“I love you so and it's been awful. You won't go away?”
“No. I'll always come back.”
"Oh, I love you so. Please put your hand there again." (30)

Frederic is eager to comply, even though he thinks she is "probably a little crazy" (30). He thinks of the exchange as "a game, like bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards" (30). Catherine stops the fantasy quickly, however, coming "back from wherever she had been" (31). She calls it a "rotten game" (31) and tells Frederic not to "pretend you love me" (31). He instead pretends it's not a game, but Catherine asks him not to "lie when we don't have to" (emphasis mine) (31). Then she herself lies by denying what she later admits: "I'm not mad and I'm not gone off" (31).

When Frederic is in the hospital with his leg wound, and he and Catherine have become sexually involved, Catherine again shows her attachment to role-playing and fantasy—only this time the scene is played out in the literal terms of prostitute and john. Catherine begins by asking Frederic how many prostitutes he has slept with, while at the same time letting him know how much she needs him to play his role in her fantasy:

"How many have you--how do you say it?--stayed with?"
"None."
"You're lying to me."
"Yes."
"It's all right. Keep right on lying to me. That's what I want you to do." (105)

Then, like an actress doing research for her part, Catherine presses Frederic for details of the prostitution exchange:

"When a man stays with a girl when does she say how much it costs?"
"I don't know."
"Of course not. Does she say she loves him? Tell me that. I want to know."
"Yes. If he wants her to."
"Does he say he loves her? Tell me please. It's important."
"He does if he wants to."
"But you never did? Really?"

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“No.”
“Not really. Tell me the truth.”
“No,” I lied. (105)

One of the intriguing aspects of this exchange between Catherine and Frederic is that the test of love for both of them appears to be in the quality—the genuineness—of the pretense which one will perform because the other requires it. Frederic lies about his past because he knows Catherine wants him to lie, and at the same time he understands that she knows he's lying and that she sees it as a sign of his love. On her part, Catherine throws herself wholeheartedly into her role of prostitute/fantasy lover:

“And that's it?” Catherine said. “She says just what he wants her to?”
“Not always.”
“But I will. I'll say just what you wish and I'll do what you wish and then you will never want any other girls, will you?” She looked at me very happily. “I'll do what you want and say what you want and then I'll be a great success, won't I?” (105)

Another provocative aspect of this scene is that it is immediately preceded by Catherine giving Frederic a bath and an enema to prepare him for surgery the next morning. In Hemingway's “A Very Short Story,” the nurse and Nick had a standing “joke about friend or enema” (239). Given the juxtaposition of this procedure with Catherine and Frederic's subsequent conversation about love, sex, prostitutes, and lying, there appears to be a clear connection. Catherine says: “There, darling. Now you're all clean inside and out. Tell me. How many people have you ever loved?” (104). It is as though Catherine has ritually prepared and cleansed Frederic for a ceremony, an intimacy. It is not a ceremony of truth or undissembled disclosure, however, but a ritual to better prepare the lover to become what the beloved wishes—to lie sweetly and with complete surrender of self. Yet the implication is that the self is somehow different from the role and must remain apart, detached, controlled, in order to effect the performance. This particular relationship of the “I” to the
“thou” is one of the essential ironic tensions of Hemingway’s presentation of the dynamics of romantic love, so clearly reflective as it is of the dynamics of the prostitution exchange.

It seems to be inherent in Catherine and Frederic’s attitude that it is when people lose control that they sink into “talk,” exposure, dangerous truth. Catherine warns Frederic to be careful not to talk about their relationship when he’s drugged during the operation. She tells him that “people get very blabby under an anaesthetic” (103). She suggests that he talk about “any other girl” (104) or maybe “create a splendid impression” (104) by saying (false) prayers. Frederic vows not to “talk a word” while anesthetized, yet he participates eagerly in the false talk that Catherine’s questioning requires. He is as anxious to please as she is, and he is as removed from the scene in his own way as she is. When Catherine responds with “Oh, I love you, darling” to his blatant lie about never having told a prostitute he loved her, Frederic looks away, upward, out the window, as though looking for a more removed perspective from which to see clearly:

Outside the sun was up over the roofs and I could see the points of the cathedral with the sunlight on them. I was clean inside and outside and waiting for the doctor. (105)

In a sentimental, “romantic” reading of this scene, Frederic has been purified, transfigured, by his ministering angel of love, in preparation for the ritual healing of sexual and emotional union which immediately follows—during which Catherine expresses the attitude which she reiterates throughout the narrative: “There isn’t any me any more” (106). There is much more, however, than an uncritical or rhapsodic presentation of “romantic love” going on in this scene psychologically, signalled primarily by the terminology, roles, and emotional dynamics of prostitution which structure the interaction. Frederic and Catherine are not exploring how to merge the self with the other, nor even how to annihilate the self for the other’s benefit. Instead they negotiate how to remove the self from the scene, leaving a costume, a puppet, a statue, a role to take its place. The fact that this role is
cast in terms of prostitution suggests that Hemingway is presenting us with an emotional and psychological process which involves more than euphoria over sexual sharing or even sexual submission. He has structured the scene on the basis of an implicit critique of the idea that romantic love is possible, at least as it has been popularly conceived in literature, within the confines of rigid gender roles. Hemingway appears to be challenging any facile notion of the existence and/or function of gendered “self,” particularly in relationship to the psychological dynamics of sexual love.

What makes the scene even more complex is that it is also a birth scene, with Frederic as both baby and mother, mirroring and prefiguring Catherine’s role as mother. He is the one who has been cleansed and prepared “for the doctor.” Frederic’s physical and mental condition reflects what Catherine is attempting to do to herself psychologically: make the stage bare for the arrival of the new actor within her, the new role, the new self. The fact that this dynamic for the birth of a new self is fundamentally dishonest and manipulative seems to predetermine that the birth will not and cannot result in a living, growing love relationship with another self.

This is perhaps the ultimate tragedy at the heart of the novel, and consequently this scene appears to have all the metaphorical elements of Catherine’s eventual literal death as well as the death of her child. The scene’s implication of the failure of “performed” love also helps explain why shortly afterward Catherine envisions not only her own death but Frederic’s as well: “I’m afraid of the rain because sometimes I see me dead in it….And sometimes I see you dead in it” (126). Like Jake, Catherine sees her future in a present that has already been her past.

Catherine plays many other roles in the novel, assumes many disguises. Besides being the “scotch and crazy” (126) grieving lover, she pretends to be an “old-fashioned wife” (141) while nursing Frederic in the hospital in Milan. Frederic shares in this pretense: “We said to each other that we were married the first day she had come to the hospital and
we counted the months from our wedding day” (114). She is also a disciple: “You’re my religion” (116), she tells Frederic—and an atheist: “I haven’t any religion” (116), whose religion is love. She is an “honest woman” (116), a “good girl” (138), and a “whore” (152). She pretends to be Frederic’s “cousin” (280) in order to placate the authorities in Switzerland, and thereafter she is his “wife” again until she dies, after which she is a “statue” (332) wearing the mask of death. Catherine puts on and takes off costumes and masks as she needs to, all the while claiming “there is no me” anymore. She changes roles so many times that she closely resembles Jake’s view of Brett’s psychological outlook, a perspective identical to the dissociated, voyeur psychology of the prostitute: “She was looking into my eyes with that way she had of looking that made you wonder whether she really saw out of her own eyes” (26). Similarly, Frederic notices that Catherine often removes herself emotionally from their interactions, just as he does, and then comes “back from wherever she had been” (31 and 139).

Catherine also plays the role of mother, just as Brett does. Brett “loves looking after people” (203), according to her fiancé, the alcoholic Mike Campbell. He tells Jake: “That’s how we came to go off together. She was looking after me” (203). Brett fell in love with Jake the same way, nursing him in a hospital. She plays the nursing, teaching, mother role with her other lovers as well. She takes the “boyish” (45) Robert Cohn away from another mother figure in his life—his “very forceful” (5) fiancée, Frances Clyne, the “lady who had him” (5) prior to Brett—because she thinks it will “be good for him” (102). She seduces the nineteen-year-old Pedro Romero, who is “just a child” (107) in her eyes (she is thirty-four), and is “radiant” (207) when she can nurse him after his beating by Cohn. Later she leaves Romero because she refuses, she says, to be “one of these bitches that ruins children” (243). Jake consoles her by suggesting that she was “probably damn good for him” (241).

The roles of mother-seducer/nurse-prostitute merge in Brett, and a similar pattern of
merging, multiple roles appears in the character of Catherine Barkley as well. Her mother role is clear from Frederic's first meeting with her. Not only is she a nurse whose role as caregiver functions as a traditional kind of mothering, but she speaks of her deceased lover as a mother would speak of her son. She refers to him as a "very nice boy" (18), and she carries his swagger stick, which seems to Frederic "like a toy riding crop" (18). The young man's mother sent Catherine the "little stick" (19) when the War Department returned his personal effects. This phallic suggestion is a reprise of the implications of one of Brett's roles in the *The Sun Also Rises*, i.e., the mothering woman who takes a young man "in hand" (5) (as Frances, and then Brett, does to Robert Cohn) from his biological mother or from another mothering woman and gives him a sexual, emotional education—a culturally familiar scenario of older prostitute and virgin boy.

Catherine missed her chance to give this experience to her English fiance because she "thought it would be worse for him" (19) later in battle (perhaps because he would lose her as a virginal ideal image), but she is determined not to make the same mistake with Frederic. He becomes her new "nice boy" (31), her "very good boy" (31), her "silly boy" (102). She tells Frederic that he sleeps "like a little boy with your arms around the pillow and thinks it's me" (104). As his motherly nurse, Catherine babies Frederic, becoming "furious" (103) in a kind of parental possessiveness if the other nurses touch him. In his convalescing condition, Frederic is like a child, and Catherine's concern that he's "not well enough" or "not strong enough" (92) to have sex with her is a solicitude as much like a mother's as a lover's. In her pregnancy, Catherine becomes focused on her literal role as mother to a growing child inside her, but she never quite gives up her perspective of Frederic as her child whom she feels she must pet and entertain to keep happy: "I know I'm no fun for you, darling. I'm like a big flour-barrel" (309).

Catherine's role as the nurturing, accommodating mother-nurse merges, like Brett's, with her role as lover-whore. Before Frederic even meets her, his friend Rinaldi associates

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Catherine and the other nurses with the prostitutes at the front. All women at the front are either whores or nurses, and the distinction is too fine for Rinaldi and most of his fellow soldiers to make. War reduces all people to their essential function of service, and it is clear what Rinaldi, a constant visitor to the brothels, thinks that service is with regard to women: sexual service to men. In the same breath that Rinaldi tells Frederic that there are "new girls [prostitutes] never been to the front before," he mentions that there has also been an arrival of "beautiful English girls" (12). He jokes that he is already "in love with Miss Barkley" and will "probably marry" her "after the war of course" (12). Then he asks for a loan of fifty lire from Frederic so he can play his own false role and "make on Miss Barkley the impression of a man of sufficient wealth" (12).

Rinaldi brings together several associations here, early in the novel, which only grow in resonance as the narrative progresses: the textual association of Catherine with prostitution, which is emphasized by the fact that Catherine is first noticed and desired by Frederic's "war brother" (67), the obsessive "whorehound" (168) Rinaldi; the collusion of sex and money; and the idea of false marriage. All these associations are jumbled in Frederic's mind, a mind fixated on prostitutes. For instance, Frederic's thoughts shortly after Rinaldi's comments, the night before he is to meet Catherine, give us another clear premonition of Catherine's complex role as the generic prostitute whose identity is hidden and unknown—at least in Frederic's mind:

I had gone ...to the smoke of cafes and nights when the room whirled...and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you, and the world all unreal in the dark and...you must resume again unknowing and not caring in the night...to wake with it sometimes in the morning and all that had been there gone... and sometimes a dispute about the cost. (13, emphases mine)

Frederic's narrative at this point suggests that he is about to wake up from the false love of brothel nights to the true, pure light of day and the true love of Catherine. We are

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led to believe by Frederic's narrative that Frederic is about to learn, in his words: "the difference between the night and the day and how the night was better unless the day was very clean and cold..." (13). Instead we learn that the morning after is in reality the mourning after. The surface suggestion that Catherine is the "clean and cold" day of real love, while prostitutes are the dirty, hot night of illusion, is subverted by the fact that Catherine—like Brett—is associated with images of night throughout the novel. From the time Frederic meets Catherine, as "the sun was starting to go down" (18)—to his sexual fantasy, soon after meeting her, in which they go to a hotel where "maybe she would pretend that I was her boy that was killed...and we would both love each other all night in the hot night in Milan" (37)—to the actual Milan hospital where she becomes his night-nurse lover—to the nights in Stresa—to the night escape across Lake Maggiore—to the nights in Switzerland—to her promise to Frederic to "come and stay with [him] nights" (331) after she dies—to her death in the night...Catherine is, in terms of the text, a woman of the night. She is a prostitute figure and a nightmare, just as Brett is. As a projection of a different, deeper part of Frederic's mind, however, Catherine is also a figure of great power, the power of the unconscious.

In the sense that Frederic's conscious mind is "day" and Catherine is his unconscious "night," they can be viewed as fragmented aspects of a single mind trying to connect—yin and yang principles attempting to merge. As representative of the forces of night, Catherine evokes the power of sexuality, dreams, creativity, and chaos. Archetypally, images that Frederic associates with her correspond closely with Eric Neumann's description of the "Great Round" of the unconscious, the "Feminine" principle of the mind:

The Great Round is the universe, the primeval darkness, and the generative night sky, but above all it is water and earth, the life-bearing chthonic powers of the world.... (240)

Frederic's "lonely" (249), dissociated mind seeks integration with this power, immersion in
it, but he is as afraid as he is attracted. The line between dissolution of identity and regeneration of self tends to disappear on the boundaries of the unconscious; it is dangerous territory, truly "another country."

Frederic's attempt to chart this territory outlines the central dialectic of the novel. Can the Frederic/Catherine psyche become whole and live as an integrated entity in the conscious world, or must it always retreat to the world of unknowing and unmaking? Frederic's narrative consciousness returns to this question again and again, almost always with a sense of dread. In the Milan hospital he "woke sweating and scared and then went back to sleep trying to stay outside of [his] dream" (88). Frederic's dream projection is Catherine, as he is hers, but he is unsure whether to surrender to it. After they make love during the day in the hospital, he says to her: "That was just madness. We can't do that" (92). "We can at night" (92), Catherine replies. Should he believe in Catherine—and love—as his new religion? When Count Greffi asks Frederic if he is "Croyant" (261); Frederic answers simply, "At night" (261).

Frederic's psychological difficulty is the same one that prostitutes face. He is locked in a mind that has relied on fantasy projection and dissociation so much that he cannot trust whether he is touching isolating powers or creative ones. In order to protect himself from hurt, he has become fixated on inner control and outer deception. Critic David Wyatt calls this phenomenon the Hemingway narrator's "obsessive concern with controlling his every step" (Prodigal Sons, 55). Claiming that "Hemingway approaches the terror of the sublime through the uncanny, the unheimlich [the unknowable]" (53), Wyatt says that in Hemingway's texts:

The darkness which shuts off sight does more than disorient. It presents departure as risky. Origins are murky here, just as ends will prove too certainly known.

(53)

Reluctant to relinquish control and join in real creative union with the "other," Frederic
instead tends to fix her as a static fantasy image on his inner mental stage where he can see her. During the Caporetto retreat Frederic finds that he has made a dream figure of Catherine that is comforting but disturbingly unreal:

Are you really there?
Of course I'm here. I wouldn't go away. This doesn't make any difference between us.
You're so lovely and sweet. You wouldn't go away in the night, would you?
Of course I wouldn't go away. I'm always here.
I come whenever you want me. (197-198)

This dialogue, which takes place entirely in Frederic's mind as he dozes in his ambulance during the retreat, is a premonition of Catherine's death—an end "too certainly known," as Wyatt says. It appears that Frederic finds greater safety in his controlled fantasy than in the risk of Catherine's reality. Wyatt argues that this anxious control is reflected stylistically by the "deceptive quality of the prose...that...seems to flow while actually freezing" (55).

Frederic's uncertainty about letting go is also inherent in his thoughts just before escaping to Switzerland: "...the things of the night cannot be explained in the day, because they do not then exist..." (249). The harder Catherine and Frederic try to become one person and join their day and night, the more apprehensive Frederic seems to become. Once they reach Switzerland, and Catherine suggests that they cut their hair the same length so they can be "just alike only one of us blonde and one of us dark" (299), Frederic resists. His reluctance, however, seems to be a skeptical response to Catherine's own investment in role-playing and appearances more than it is a fear of surrender to "love." Because of their nearly identical prostitotional mentalities, Catherine and Frederic have distanced and "frozen" each other in too rigidly prescribed roles, wishing to please and control when they should seek to trust and grow. Their conversation immediately following Catherine's suggestion about the haircut reveals the essentially anti-life failure of their attempt at oneness:

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“Oh, darling, I want you so much I want to be you too.”
“You are. We’re the same one.”
“I know it. At night we are.”
“The nights are grand.”
“I want us to be all mixed up....I don’t live at all when I’m not with you.”
“I won’t ever go away,” I said. “I’m no good when you’re not there. I haven’t any life at all any more.” (299-300, emphases mine)

Because they have remained actors too much in possession of their parts, Catherine and Frederic have also remained costumed, hidden, apart. They have shed their social identities but not their psychological strategies. They have not bathed in the life-giving waters of the psyche. Instead they have projected performances onto a sterile stage where death will make an inevitable appearance.

Frederic is even more of a prostituted actor on this stage than Catherine is. In his own way he is as impotent as Jake Barnes. Frederic begins his narrative the same way Jake does, not by telling about himself but by observing the world around him, specifically the men in his world and the roles they play. Jake focuses on Robert Cohn. Frederic focuses on the priest and his fellow officers. When Frederic and Jake do enter their narratives as participants, it is essentially the same way: in the company of prostitutes. Jake sits at an outdoor cafe, watching prostitutes on the sidewalk, and eventually picks up Georgette. Frederic sits “looking out of the window of the bawdy house” (6).

The Frederic we meet in these opening chapters does not seem to be living his own life. There is always a sense of his living by proxy, removed, without will. He is essentially “one of the boys,” carousing in the “mess” and going to the “whorehouse” with the other officers. When he goes on leave, they tell him he must have “fine girls....Beautiful young girls—accompanied by their mothers. Ha! Ha! Ha!” (8). Dutifully, he spends his tour of Italy in hotel rooms with prostitutes, instead of visiting the priest’s mountain home in the Abruzzi as he half wished to do. He later apologizes to the
priest, explaining “winefully, how we did not do the things we wanted to do; we never did such things” (13).

Consistently we learn from Frederic’s narrative that his identity is elusive, operating behind a series of masks which he repeatedly tells us are false. When he comes back from his leave, he finds to his mild surprise that his ambulance unit “seemed to run better while I was away” (17) and that “it did not matter whether I was there or not” (16). He decides that being in the ambulance corps gives him “a false feeling of soldiering” (17) anyway; and when he meets Catherine Barkley, he tells her that the Italian army, and the ambulance corps in particular, is “not really the army” (18). When she asks him why he joined, Frederic says, “I don’t know” (18)—something he says a lot. Even the words that Frederic and Catherine use to refer to the war imply that it is an image, an illusion, not quite real. They call it “the front” and “the show.” Catherine calls it a “silly front” (20), and Frederic calls it “the picturesque front” (20).

Living in the world of this front, with its many languages and colliding cultures and cross-purposes, Frederic has learned to be both accommodating and manipulative. He has a habit of lying. When his friend Rinaldi confides that “Miss Barkley prefers you to me...But the little Scotch [Nurse Furguson] is very nice,” Frederic replies, “Very”; but he thinks to himself, “I had not noticed her” (21). Frederic’s approach is similar to Jake’s habit of keeping his thoughts to himself and regretting it when he doesn’t. The same discrepancy between what he thinks and what he says characterizes Frederic’s relationship with Catherine, particularly at the start. When Catherine slaps him for trying to kiss her, he uses her pity to manipulate her. He is angry, but he pretends to be hurt:

She was looking at me in the dark. I was angry and yet certain, seeing it all ahead like the moves in a chess game.
“You did exactly right,” I said. “I don’t mind at all.”
“Poor man.” (26)

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Frederic goes on to press his advantage: “You see I’ve been leading a sort of funny life. And I never even talk English. And then you are so very beautiful” (26). Catherine dismisses these words as “a lot of nonsense” (26), but she gives him the kiss he wants. The irony of the exchange is that Frederic believes he is in control, but it immediately begins to dawn on him that it is not his will but Catherine’s that is directing events, present and future:

“Oh, darling,” she said. “You will be good to me, won’t you?”
What the hell, I thought. I stroked her hair and patted her shoulder. She was crying.
“You will, won’t you?” She looked up at me. “Because we’re going to have a strange life.” (27)

Frederic’s problems with his own identity and with the fakery around him increase as the novel progresses. He doesn’t wear his helmet in town because it is “too bloody theatrical” (28), and he has to replace his Italian gas mask with an English one because it’s “a real mask” (29). Officers are supposed to carry pistols, but Rinaldi wears “a holster stuffed with toilet paper” (29). Frederic wears the gun he is issued, but it is so badly made that he can’t hit anything with it; and he feels “the ridiculousness of carrying a pistol at all” (29). This connection between the pistol and the penis—war and sex, particularly venal sexuality—is not the last Frederic will make. The entire war, in fact, begins to seem like an absurd drama to Frederic, full of deception, corruption, and hidden purposes, in which he is a lost, bit player looking for higher ground from which to see better. Frederic’s commanding officer, the atheistic major, says that the Pope wants the Austrians to win because he will get more money from them. Frederic’s ambulance drivers tell him that everybody “hates this war” except the class of people who cause war because “they make money out of it” and because they are “stupid” (51). When his men tell him that “nothing is worse than war,” Frederic clings to his idea that “defeat is worse” (50). He believes that when you join a side, you fight for that side honorably no matter what. Later, after he
shoots his own man for deserting, and then is almost shot himself by the Italians for deserting when he has really done his duty, Frederic changes his mind and changes his role. The posturing ambiguities of war and Frederic's simultaneously naive, passive, and crafty role in those ambiguities are subtly but clearly evident in the following scene in the officers' mess, which occurs early in the novel, well before Frederic's wounding:

They talked too much at the mess and I drank wine because tonight we were not all brothers unless I drank a little and talked with the priest about Archbishop Ireland who was, it seemed, a noble man and with whose injustice, the injustices he had received and in which I participated as an American, and of which I had never heard, I feigned acquaintance. It would have been impolite not to....Yes, father. That is true, father. Perhaps, father. No, father. Well, maybe yes, father. You know more about it than I do, father. The priest was good but dull. The officers were not good but dull. The King was good but dull. The wine was bad but not dull. It took the enamel off your teeth and left it on the roof of your mouth. (38-39, emphasis mine)

Frederic's interest in causes is "feigned" in order to be "polite." Frederic is a "good boy," as the priest calls him, who wants to be liked, who goes along, who does and says what is expected, and who isn't quite sure who or what he is. He is an American in the Italian army fighting a war whose causes and objectives are cloudy to him. He carries a gun but is never in combat, and in fact never sees the Austrian "enemy" up close; the only man he shoots is a soldier on his own side. Frederic is an officer whose men alternately mock or treat as a comrade. He is "blown up while...eating cheese" (63) , but will be "decorated" (63) for his "heroic act" (63).

Along with the cheese, whatever dubious identity Frederic possessed is blown to pieces by the mortar shell that hits his bunker. The English officer who helps Frederic immediately after he is wounded tells the Italian field surgeon that Frederic is "the legitimate son of President Wilson" (58) and the "only son of the American Ambassador" (59) in order to speed Frederic's first aid treatment. This deception has little effect, because the
Italian captain who dresses his wound thinks Frederic is a Frenchman because he once heard Frederic speaking French. Later in the hospital in Milan the barber thinks Frederic is an Austrian officer. In the field hospital Rinaldi tells Frederic: “You are really an Italian. All fire and smoke and nothing inside. You only pretend to be an American...Underneath we are the same. We are war brothers” (67). The priest, who claims that Frederic “does not see” (70) the war, tells Frederic the opposite of what Rinaldi says. The priest says Frederic is an outsider and sees from too distant and too passive a perspective: “You are not even an Italian. You are a foreigner. But you are nearer the [detached and jaded] officers than you are to the men” (70).

Frederic begins to see that the reality of war changes depending on where you stand to look at it. He remembers that he has always been “embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain” (184) and realizes that he has “seen nothing sacred” (185) in war. What he now sees is that the “abstract words” in the war “proclamations” are “obscene” and do not “mean anything” (185)—illusions exploiting the mind; and he is reluctantly beginning to acknowledge that the world around him is a mirror of his own inner, deceptive constructs. During the pull-back from the front, Frederic learns what his service and loyalty mean to the Italians in the rear: “I was obviously a German in an Italian uniform. I saw how their minds worked....The questioners had that beautiful detachment and devotion to stern justice of men dealing in death without ever being in any danger of it” (223-224). So Frederic dives in the river and escapes. His anger is “washed away in the river along with any obligation” (232). He cuts “the cloth stars” (227) off his uniform and tries to lose whatever war identity he might still have in the mud and confusion of a country in retreat.

Frederic now thinks that the war is not his “show any more,” and “no longer care[s] much about the outward forms” (232). He also feels dissociated from his own body when his reconstructed knee starts to pain him: “Doctors did things to you and then it was not
your body any more" (231). "The head" (231) of this body still belongs to him, he feels, and he is grimly determined to control his own life from now on. To Frederic this means casting off his war identity and embracing his peace identity with Catherine. One might expect that this change might lessen Frederic's penchant for disguises or mitigate his voyeur passivity. Instead, these qualities seem even more pronounced. As a fugitive in Milan, Frederic borrows civilian clothes from his friend Simmons and feels like a "masquerader," missing "the feeling of being held by your [own] clothes" (243). When he arrives in Stresa and sees Catherine and Furguson in their hotel, Furguson says he is "no cheerful sight...in mufti" with his "sneaking Italian tricks" (246). He is now a trickster who must masquerade and lie his way into Switzerland as a "sportsman" (279) and a "student of architecture" (280) with his "cousin" (280).

Losing his war identity is not liberating to Frederic because his psychological strategy of masking remains unchanged. Like Catherine, he adopts the "forms" of love as his new identity, but they prove as deadly as the forms of war. He basically admits this fact to Catherine, disguising it as an endearment: "My life used to be full of everything. Now, if you aren't with me I haven't a thing in the world" (257). He and Catherine also routinely lie to each other, to convince each other that their lives are exactly how they wish them to be. It's a kind of game they play:

"Wouldn't you like to go on a trip somewhere by yourself, darling, and be with men and ski?"
"No. Why should I?"
"I should think sometimes you would want to see other people besides me."
"No."
"Neither do I." (297)

Frederic is trying to reassure Catherine that her pregnancy is not a bother to him, and she is trying to reassure him that she doesn't mind if he doesn't always want to be with her; but their oversolicitude and constant need for mutual reassurance implies that he is bothered
and she does mind. The major vehicle of love in their everyday life together seems to consist of pretending to feel what they do not feel. The process might appear as a kind of deep affection except that reassuring each other how happy they are to do nothing becomes their most characteristic form of interaction and seems suspiciously like denial. “Are you worried because you don’t have anything to do?” Catherine asks. “No,” replies Frederic, “I have a fine life. Don’t you?” (298). Later Catherine says again: “We live in a country where nothing makes any difference. Isn’t it grand how we never see any one? You don’t want to see people do you, darling?” “No,” replies Frederic (303). They keep playing this game till the end. Catherine asks finally: “Darling, I won’t die, will I?” “No,” says Frederic, “I promise you won’t” (323).

Frederic’s last disguise is a beard, which makes him look like a “fake doctor” (319). In his final performance for Catherine, ironically, he becomes a doctor-nurse, giving her the anesthetic to ease her pain while her life slips away. As she was his nurse in Milan, he is now hers; but all he can do is sedate her. His inability to do anything to really help her or his stillborn son makes him think of his lifelong feeling of helplessness:

Poor little kid. I wished I had been choked like that. No I didn’t. Still there would not be all this dying to go through. Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. (327)

Even in the intensity of his grief the game metaphor comes readily to Frederic’s mind. He feels a victim of a game whose rules he did not make and cannot change, and he is sickened by his own passivity in the face of this condition. He recalls a boyhood experience of watching ants trapped on a log in a campfire. He remembers thinking of them as symbolic of humanity and that:

…it was the end of the world and a splendid chance to be a messiah and lift the log off the fire and throw it
out where the ants could get off onto the ground. But I did not do anything but throw a tin cup of water on the log, so that I would have the cup empty to put whiskey in before I added water to it. I think the cup of water on the burning log only steamed the ants. (329)

This kind of self-loathing, passivity, and sense of futility characterizes the psychology of prostitutes, as the testimony of prostitutes demonstrates. Looking at both Catherine and Frederic in terms of these prostitute qualities helps us to see why they behave the way they do and why prostitution iconography is so integral to A Farewell to Arms. Prostitution is a pervasive metaphor in the novel, representing the structure and strategies of the modern self as it seeks to embrace the regenerating powers of love. Unfortunately, in this instance, the Frederic/Catherine self never breaks free from the “jail” of its prostitute structure, and its journey ends in a very lonely place.

War and Prostitution: Pollution of the Body and Soul

One of the reasons Frederic and Catherine fail in their attempt to escape war and reach the healing power of love is that they bring the war with them in their habits of mind. The prostitution mentality and the war mentality are intertwined so closely in A Farewell to Arms that they link sex and death in a literal as well as figurative sense. War is “dirty” and “rotten”—that “dirty war,” as Georgette said in The Sun Also Rises. War makes the land bare and turns it into a swamp of mud and confusion. The buyers and sellers of sexuality also represent the concept of physical and spiritual filth in Hemingway’s fictional world, just as war does.

Rinaldi, for instance, contracts syphilis from prostitutes—in other words, from his fellow soldiers—a condition he calls an “industrial accident” (175). As a doctor and obsessive frequenter of brothels, he associates prostitutes and their clients with disease. Rinaldi tells Frederic, “You’re dirty....You ought to wash” (11), when Frederic returns
from his brothel tour. To Rinaldi, however, the disease is inside and cannot be washed off. He ridicules Frederic for “trying to clean [his] conscience with a toothbrush...the Anglo-Saxon brushing away harlotry with a toothbrush” (168).

Hemingway was not the only writer of his time to make the connection between sex, death, war, and pollution. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, document in their book, *No Man’s Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*, how prevalent this connection was in the poetry and prose written during and immediately after World War I. In referring to the poetry of English poet Wilfred Owen, they suggest that he writes in his poem “Love” as “if to suggest that in fighting for ‘Love’ the fallen English soldiers have been killed by ‘Love,’ skewed in a death that looks like sex...” (261). In another of Owen’s poems, “The Last Laugh,” Gilbert and Gubar point out that he “makes this odd parallel between sexual ‘dying’ and death-in-war even clearer, depicting a mortally wounded man whose ‘mood’ seems ‘love-languid’ while his whole face kisses the mud” (261).

The connection here between sex and death is not a reference to the erotic but the evocation of nightmarish horror and putrefaction, not only in the imaginations of writers but in the historical accounts of soldiers. In writing of “the polluted realm of the trenches” (267) Gilbert and Gubar cite the observations of historian Eric Leed, author of *No Man’s Land: Combat & Identity in World War I*. Leed observes that “all the traditional categories of experience through which the rational cultured mind achieves its hegemony over the irrationality of nature were grotesquely mingled, polluting each other...” (265). As a real-life example of this “grotesque” union of culture and “nature,” Leed quotes a macabre first-person account of a soldier who lost consciousness and fell on the “distended abdomen of a German several days dead” (265). When the soldier woke up, his mouth was filled with the “decomposed entrails” (265) of his dead enemy. This graphic account invites comparison to Hemingway’s own observations of war corpses, included in his short story,
“A Natural History of the Dead.” In that story the narrator speaks of observing dead bodies on the battlefield “in the hot weather with a half-pint of maggots working where their mouths have been” (543).

We can see evidence of this “mingling” of rationality and irrationality, or the conscious and the unconscious, in Frederic’s attraction/repulsion attitude toward the night images he associates with prostitutes and with Catherine. These night images are both threatening and inviting to Frederic. In their frightening version, they are connected with images of pollution and disintegration in Frederic’s mind—images equated with the dual, inseparable forces of war and prostitution throughout A Farewell to Arms. In Frederic’s world, a war front without prostitutes is unthinkable, and any and all women at the front are considered prostitutes or treated like prostitutes, including nurses, nuns, and virgins—as is the case when Frederic’s men pick up two young girls during the retreat. “A retreat is no place for two virgins” (197), Frederic thinks to himself, because he knows they will be raped if he doesn’t watch his men carefully. In a soldier’s mind all women are prostitutes, and all wars are fought with prostitutes as standard issue.

The irony is that in Frederic’s mind all men are prostitutes, too, particularly the soldiers. They are whores for their country or their “cause,” forced to offer up their bodies for exploitation and death. Frederic’s fellow officers and the enlisted men under his command express the view that the makers of war, a country’s leaders, “sell out” (71) their followers. Frederic speaks of “the war disgust” (70) which overtakes men when they are “sick” of war. War is confusion, disorder, destruction, betrayal, fraud. War wounds men, ruptures them, castrates them. Jake is rendered sexually impotent by war; Frederic is wounded and then betrayed—falsely accused of being a traitor and then forced to act like one.

In Hemingway’s war narratives prostitution also takes the vitality and potency from men and women, just as war does. Soldiers and prostitutes alike are both victims and
victimizers, caught in an irrational, inhumane cycle of destruction. Rinaldi, for instance, is a healer who transmits sickness. He victimizes prostitutes and feels victimized by them; he is driven “crazy” (174) and physically ill because of the war and alcohol and sex with prostitutes. Lady Brett is another figure of sexual appetite and sexual power who is at the same time a war victim like Catherine. She lost her first husband to war-related sickness (dysentery), and was terrorized by her second husband, a British officer insane from battle fatigue.

These reflecting images and mutually allusive associations of war and prostitution and sex and death are encoded in Hemingway’s war narratives as a microcosm of the universe, representing “fate” or “mala fortuna” (31), as Jake Barnes calls it— a high stakes game of mortality which is rigged and which the individual is destined to lose. In this metaphysical landscape, it seems to be no coincidence that, with the exception of Pedro Romero’s performance, every sports contest mentioned in *The Sun Also Rises* is crooked, fixed, “sold out” by unscrupulous promoters or participants: the boxing match in Vienna which Bill Smith tells Jake about; Belmont’s bullfights; and the race of the professional bicycle riders whom Jake meets in San Sebastian. In *A Farewell to Arms* the horse races outside Milan are “crooked” (129), and the horses are dyed to fool the unwary. Catherine feels “so much cleaner” (131) when she convinces Frederic to bet on the horses honestly and to stop taking inside tips from the crooked Mr. Myers. Even Frederic’s brief mention of baseball news from the States about the Chicago White Sox “winning the American League pennant” (136) is a reference to a team Hemingway’s readers would have been sure to have associated with the “Black Sox” betting scandal of 1919.

Catherine’s death is only the last of a series of “cheats” in the novel. Her final words to Frederic tell him not to worry because death is “just a dirty trick” (331). The real dirty trick, however, is the psychological power of the values of war and prostitution that make Catherine and Frederic’s attempt at a separate peace only a kind of defeated separateness.
Their idealistic intention to become the same person and "go to sleep at exactly the same moment" (301) ends in a hospital with Catherine speaking Brett's line—the prostitute's line—"Don't touch me" (330), while Frederic is a voyeur as impotent as Jake. As Catherine becomes "unconscious," the doctor tells Frederic there is "nothing to do" and "nothing to say" (331).

The Genderless Prostitute

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue persuasively that portrayals of the war-wounded, "emasculated" male, tricked by fate, in post-World War I modernist fiction by male writers like Hemingway highlight the scapegoating of women prevalent in the culture at large. These two critics claim that male protagonists such as Jake Banes and Frederic Henry are symptomatic of the "gloomily bruised modernist antiheroes churned out by the war"—men that "have become not just no-men, nobodies, but not men, un men... publicly powerless... privately impotent" (260). Furthermore, Gilbert and Gubar assert that "such effects of the Great War were gender-specific problems that only men could have" (260). Women in general, they say, were liberated socially and sexually by the war, and men were angry and fearful about that. "Catherine Barkley and... Brett Ashley are set sexually free by the war" (290), but the "unmanning terrors of combat" (260) led men like Jake and Frederic to not just "a general sexual anxiety but also to an anger directed specifically against the female, as if the Great War itself were primarily a climactic episode in the battle of the sexes that had already been raging for years" (260). They conclude that "Hemingway must have felt [he] had painfully to extract the truth of [his] gender's ancient dominance from an overwhelming chaos" (343).

Many other feminist critics have long shared this view of Hemingway, a view that has powerfully shaped contemporary reading of his work. Critic Rosalind Miles writes that: "Through [Hemingway's] nightmares stalked a totally ruthless and destructive female, and
much of his writing may be construed as an effort to exorcize her" (The Female Form: Women Writers and the Conquest of the Novel, 69). Miles speaks of the generic “he-man Hem-hero” and “macho role-model” who is the “fictional projection” of the “wished self” (68). Judith Fetterley calls Frederic Henry’s “surface investment” (49) in “romantic love” (47) a process of “idealization which serve[s] to disguise hostility” (47) towards women in general and Catherine Barkley in particular.

As valuable and accurate in many ways as these perspectives are, the complexity and pervasiveness of the prostitution dynamics in Hemingway’s work, particularly as a model of self, suggest at least another dimension to the gender question. In Hemingway’s narratives, regardless of sex, everyone is in some way “castrated,” everyone is a prostitute, and everyone is struggling to find a way through the maze of identity “performances” to a sense of authentic self. It is true that the women in Hemingway’s books are often bolder, sharper, more decisive, and generally more vibrant and assertive than the men; and it is true that the women appear to be “punished” for their assertiveness through experiences of loss or death. However, since by means of the prostitution motif Hemingway’s male and female characters become mirror images of each other—androgynous personae in many respects—the evidence is equally compelling that Hemingway is less interested in restoring a culturally disenfranchised male to his “rightful” ascendency than he is in exploring aspects of the omnisexual or ambisexual human mind negotiating psychic survival in a duplicitous, mercenary world.

In this sense the prostitution motif does not represent a quality of femaleness which infects males; it is instead a kind of cultural lens through which Hemingway’s characters, male and female, are forced to try to see each other and themselves. So often in Hemingway’s first two major novels, the narrator focuses on how the characters see and what they see through: tricks of the eye, mirror reflections, looking through windows—vision altered by the disguise, the costume, the deception, the trompe-l’oeil.
Georgette puts on her face in a little mirror. Jake examines himself in a mirror to see what and who he is. He wonders if Brett sees out of her own eyes. Frances Clyne tells Jake that Robert Cohn is leaving her because she doesn’t “film well” (50), and she warns Jake not to have “scenes with your young ladies” (50). Jake later watches Frances and Robert through “two thicknesses of glass” (51). To the characters in The Sun Also Rises being drunk is being “blind” (54, 136, 224). The bullfights are a “spectacle” (165); Brett can’t “help looking,” can’t “take her eyes off,” can’t “look away” (165). Brett becomes an “image to dance around” (155) for the festival revelers. Jake likes to “see [Mike] hurt Cohn”; Count Mippipopolous “enjoy[s] to watch [Brett] dance” (63). Jake turns his “face away” from Brett because he does “not want to see her” (55); Brett tells Jake: “I won’t see you again” (65).

Catherine Barkley looks in a mirror and sees herself as a whore. At the same moment Frederic watches her “in three other mirrors” (152), seeing her prostitute image as a reflection of himself. Later in Switzerland he “see[s] Catherine in three mirrors” (292) as she gets her hair done. Frederic also sees other unexpected, unfamiliar images of himself in mirrors: “...looking in the glass I looked strange to myself in the civilian clothes” (258); and “I looked in the glass and saw myself looking like a fake doctor with a beard” (319). Rinaldi keeps Frederic’s “old tooth-brushing glass” (168) to remind him of all the times he saw Frederic looking into it pretending he could wash away “harlotry.” The first image we have of Frederic in the novel is looking through a brothel window, and in almost every scene thereafter he opens a window and looks through it. Even the book Frederic reads in the hospital (as he later tells Count Greffi) is “Mr. Britling Sees Through It”; and Frederic, of course, informs the Count that Mr. Britling “doesn’t see through it” (261) at all.

Prostitution, for Hemingway, functioned metaphorically in a far different way than as a definition of female experience, or as a way of defining or placing or naming women. Prostitution is a metaphor for the one of the fundamental ways Hemingway saw
"civilization" or human society: mercenary, corrupt, materialistic, deadly—a process of being bought and selling out. Just as Sherwood Anderson wrote in *Winesburg, Ohio* that “We are all Christ and we are all crucified,” Hemingway's texts seem to say that we are all Mary Magdalene and the world conspires to buy and sell all of us.

Even more importantly, prostitution psychological dynamics became in his work a paradigm for the workings of the modern self. Hemingway's books are chronicles of individuals, female as well as male, trying to "clean themselves" of the uses and abuses of the world, trying to liberate themselves from smoky, crowded rooms and breathe the fresh, mountain air of integrity. The fact that this striving, this reaching, which often involves romantic love, usually ends in a kind of failure, with the individual alone, empty, defeated, or dead, should not deflect us from understanding the nature of what has been attempted: a journey towards an understanding of what it means to be a human being of worth, regardless of sexual role, in a world somewhat hostile to the existence of human beings.

**Stripping the Costumed Self**

*In fact, the book employs a technique that has, historically, been used by many female writers, a number of whom have always wished either to identify "selves" with costumes or to strip away all costumes (and selves) to reveal the pure, sexless... being behind gender and myth.*

—*No Man's Land*

In the above quotation, Gilbert and Gubar are speaking of Virginia Woolf's novel about transvestism, *Orlando*, but their suggestion that Woolf wished to reveal the "pure, sexless being" behind gender could apply equally to *A Farewell to Arms*. In declaring that "costume, not anatomy, is destiny" (344), Gilbert and Gubar articulate one of Hemingway's central techniques of characterization. Hemingway's sense of costume is

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often an inner, psychological one, but it is nonetheless powerfully present in his work.

Much of the force of *A Farewell to Arms*, in fact, springs from the attempt to strip the self “clean” or naked of these suffocating, costumed roles.

If we are diverted from seeing the direction of this process by its ending in death, we might draw inspiration and insight from another novel that ends in the death of a protagonist who also sought the nakedness of self beyond sexual roles. Published in the year of Hemingway’s birth, Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* features a heroine who, like Frederic and Catherine, wished to escape “a stifling atmosphere...and reach the open air.” In a manner similar to Hemingway’s lovers, Chopin’s Edna Pontellier fails in her quest to find liberation from sexual roles in her world, and Chopin ends the novel with Edna swimming out to sea—a “suicide” that is often read as a symbolic rebirth. Ironically, at a sumptuous “Last Supper” that Edna hosts for herself, she tells a story about “a woman who paddled away with her lover one night...and never came back.” The day after this farewell dinner, Edna strips naked and swims out into the “seductive, never ceasing, whispering” sea that invites “the soul to wander in abysses of solitude.” Frederic’s walk in the rain at the end of *A Farewell to Arms* may seem gloomier than Edna’s symbolic embrace of her unconscious, archetypal self, but we should remember that Frederic once prayed that “my sweet Catherine down might rain” (197). Death is defeat, an ending, a mourning, but in the cyclical world of Hemingway’s fiction, it can also signal a beginning.
Chapter Six

Pilar of Strength

The Prostitute Triumphant
in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

...a woman of about fifty almost as big as Pablo, almost as wide as she was tall, in black peasant skirt and waist, with heavy wool socks on heavy legs, black rope-soled shoes and a brown face like a model for a granite monument. She had big but nice looking hands and her thick curly black hair was twisted in a knot on her neck....Her face was lit by the fire and it was flushed as it shone warm and dark and handsome now in the firelight as it was meant to be.

* * *

"Who is the whore of whores is Pilar," the man with his chin in the dirt said. "That whore knows we are dying here."

—*For Whom the Bell Tolls*
As the story begins, the snow is falling on the hidden mountain encampment of a small band of “exiles.” One of the members of this scruffy group is a man who is a thief and a “confirmed drunkard.” Another is a heavyset woman who is a kind of mother figure protectively watching over a younger woman who has been violated sexually. The younger man in the group stands apart, a “coolly desperate” individual accustomed to the “loneliness” of his solitary profession. This fatalistic young man knows they are all facing death but “settle[s] himself coolly to the losing game before him” before dying at the end of the story.

This vignette might seem at first to describe *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway’s third major novel, published in 1940. In actuality it is the plot outline of Bret Harte’s “The Outcasts of Poker Flat,” a short story published in 1870. The similarities between the two fictional works are intriguing for a number of reasons. First of all, we know Hemingway read Bret Harte’s work because copies of Harte’s books were on Hemingway’s bookshelves in Key West (Hemingway’s Reading, 63). Harte’s first name, in fact, may have been the source for Brett Ashley’s. Hemingway was fond of naming his characters after writers. Rumors were strong in Paris in 1926, for instance, that Jake Barnes was named after Djuna Barnes, one of the prominent writers—and a lesbian—in Paris at that time. Hemingway also planned to give the name “Henry Walden” to the protagonist of “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” but later changed the name to “Harry” to avoid too many “Thoreauvian overtones” (Baker, 289).

More importantly, Harte’s story featured the theme of prostitution in the classic Victorian tradition, combined with a peculiarly American blend of Romantic Naturalism set in the Old West. The vituperative but good-hearted “Mother Shipton” is a brothel madam.
who redeems herself by secretly giving her food to the others and then dying of starvation. The young prostitute, known only as “The Duchess,” dies in the arms of the other young woman in the story, the virginal “Piney Woods,” in the classic, transfigured-in-death, Magdalen tradition: “And so reclining, the younger and purer pillowing the head of her soiled sister upon her virgin breast, they fell asleep...And when pitying fingers brushed the snow from their wan faces, you could scarcely have told from the equal peace that dwelt upon them, which was she that had sinned.” In Hemingway fashion, the purity of the mountain snow has brought the prostitute back to a virginal Eden.

Played against these prostitute figures is the stoic gambler, John Oakhurst. This controlled man of “studiously neat habits” and “black clothes,” treats Mother Shipton, the Duchess, and Piney Woods with kindness and taciturn gallantry. After doing his best to help them survive, however, he decides that he's hit a “streak of bad luck.” He shoots himself in the heart rather than let fate freeze him to death, an act that makes him “at once the strongest and the weakest of the outcasts of Poker Flat.”

Hemingway tells a remarkably similar tale about a band of outcasts in the mountains of Spain fighting against Franco's Loyalist-fascist forces in the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s. They are a motley group of gypsies and peasants operating as guerrillas only marginally connected to the Communist-supported Republican Army. Their hard-drinking leader Pablo would rather steal than fight. Much like the shifty Uncle Billy character in Harte's story, Pablo sneaks away because he doesn't want to share the group's fate. The real leader of the band is “Pablo's woman,” the swearing, “barbarous,” robust Pilar. Although not a literal prostitute, she has been the lover of a number of bullfighters, a lifestyle that assigns her the status of near-prostitute or “loose woman,” as we know from Death in the Afternoon—a status Pilar boldly and unrepentantly proclaims. Maternal even in her lustiness, however, Pilar is also ready, like Mother Shipton, to sacrifice for the group.
The qualities of the Duchess and Piney Woods are united in the character of Maria in Hemingway's story. She is not a prostitute, but she feels like one, having been gang-raped by the Fascist soldiers. Through Pilar's nurturing and Robert Jordan's love, Maria reclaims her symbolic virginity and is no longer a "soiled sister." Her lover Robert has much in common with John O'Khurst. Jordan has been a "john" to many prostitutes, and he is even from the American West: Montana. He, too, leads a solitary life, as a kind of special agent for the Republican Army. As a demolition expert, Jordan is also a high stakes gambler—with life and death.

Throughout his fiction, Hemingway is very partial to the gambler figure, the man who contends with "strumpet Fortune," as Hamlet's would say. Hemingway was himself a notorious cheater at all kinds of contests, several times making large sums of money on illegal inside tips, but, like O'Khurst, Hemingway characters such as Frederic Henry or the Mexican in "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," play a losing game. Jordan, too, is on a streak of bad luck, as Pilar's accurate prediction of his impending death indicates.

I am not suggesting that Hemingway rewrote "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" in homage to Bret Harte, only that the parameters and dynamics of this very American story may have intuitively appealed to Hemingway as an archetypal setting for a war narrative. The prostitute characters and the solitary, frontier figure of the "black knight" playing a losing game are familiar "outcasts" in Hemingway's fiction. The implication of family issues common to both stories is also particularly interesting. Both groups are thrown together from the outside world by chance and are somewhat naturally distrustful, unconnected people. Both groups, however, achieve a type of familial bond that helps them transcend their previous roles as outcasts and unite in a common effort not only to survive but to be true to principles of justice and dignity even in the face of oncoming death. Both stories are in this sense allegories of a fragmented humanity reunited as a family.

In Harte's story, O'Khurst is a somber, chivalrous father figure who watches over the
others and refuses to desert “his weaker and more pitiable companions,” as Uncle Billy does. When Oakhurst feels death is inevitable, however, he does make a “separate peace”: he shoots himself—thereby abandoning the others rather than watch them suffer. The initially “malevolent” Mother Shipton becomes the traditional Victorian, self-sacrificing mother figure, calling the Duchess and Piney “the kids” and starving herself for them. The Duchess and Piney are united as sisters by comforting each other in their hour of need.

In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Pablo is the drunken father figure who abandons the family, although he returns when they really need him because he is loyal at heart to Pilar and to his “clan” if not to the “cause.” Robert Jordan and Maria are lovers, but they are also portrayed as siblings: “You could be brother and sister by the look” (67), says Pilar. All the *partizans* are part of the family. When Pilar, Robert, and Maria meet the frightened young boy Joaquin on the way to see El Sordo, they comfort him by telling him, “We are all thy family” (139). Robert also feels that this microcosmic world is the family he never quite had: “I have been all my life in these hills since I have been here. Anselmo is my oldest friend....Agustin...is my brother....Maria is my true love and my wife....also my sister....and my daughter” (381).

Towering over this family like a mythic colossus is the archetypal mother figure of Pilar. Just as Mother Shipton’s name suggests size and weight, everything about Pilar is massive and powerful. Her hands are “big” (30), her grip is “strong” (31), her voice is “husky” (387). She is the force that moves everything in the novel toward unity. By taking over leadership from the “very flaccid” (26) Pablo, Pilar keeps the disorganized guerrilla band focused on the ideals of the Republic and helps them to accept the mission of the “foreigner” (215), Robert Jordan. Through the potency of her healing love and wisdom, Pilar brings Maria back from emotional death after her brutalization by the Fascist soldiers—literally carrying her to safety and protecting her vigilantly from molestation by the men in Pablo’s band. When Robert Jordan arrives, Pilar encourages Maria to become

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his lover. She sees Jordan as an honorable, educated man, and she wants Maria to have a chance to experience some of life's goodness after so much pain. As a force for life, Pilar is the strongly beating heart of the novel.

Pilar the Life Force

Pilar is Hemingway's greatest female character. She is the Warrior Goddess, fierce in battle, leading and exhorting her followers to their best efforts. She is the master psychologist, alternately vilifying and praising the men to keep them honed to just the right edge of resolve. She is the maker of food as well as maker of strategy and morale, feeding the stomach at the same time she feeds the esprit de corps. She is the storyteller, the weaver of history, the interpreter of the Revolution's values, the guardian of the Republic's ideals. She is the visionary, the seer who is a shaman of the future as well as the past. She is the omnipresent force of nature, desiring all and giving life to all. Pilar is Spain, and the earth itself, giving birth to the eternal future from her cave in the mountains.

Robert Jordan sees Pilar as the mother of Spain: "She is like a mountain and the boy [Joaquin] and girl [Maria] are like young trees. The old trees are all cut down and the young trees are growing clean" (136). She is also a capable, respected war leader. In speaking of her battle skills, Agustin tells Jordan that Pilar "is much, much more than thou canst imagine" (292). The gypsy Rafael says she is a "hundred times braver than Pablo" (26). When Pablo falters, Pilar asserts herself as leader, as she tells him plainly: "Here I command" (55). Jordan learns quickly that Pilar is his best hope to help him complete his strategic mission of blowing up the bridge: "Without the woman [Pilar] there is no organization nor any discipline here and with the woman it can be very good" (63).

Pilar is the knower and teacher of mysteries. She is both the spiritual and sexual guide for Robert and Maria in their attempt to reach "La Gloria" (380), Maria's term for their sexual union. The two lovers are her symbolic children who must receive instruction, as
from a priest. Pilar calls Robert a “little boy” (387) and “little English” (175) who “know[s] nothing about women” (97) and is “too young for me to speak to” (175). Maria tells Robert she “must go to Pilar” because “she is giving me instruction” (324). When Robert asks playfully if it is “religious instruction” (324), Maria blushes and says it is “something like that....But different” (324).

Even more importantly for Robert, Pilar is the teller and interpreter of cultural history. Jordan is an “instructor” (335) of Spanish back home at the University of Montana, but in the mountains of Spain it is Pilar who teaches. Telling him that “thou hast seen nothing” (99), Pilar “address[es] herself to Robert Jordan as though she were speaking to a classroom” (98). What she tells him are stories—about the smell of death, the origin of the Revolution, the meaning of politics, the cycles of love. He is eager to learn. When she asks if he would like to know about the “start of the movement” (98), he says “Tell me about it” and “Tell it’ and “Tell it” (99) again. She finally agrees: “I will tell it truly as it was” (99). How different her confidence is from Frederic Henry’s statement: “I could not tell it; as I cannot tell it now” (A Farewell to Arms, 13). Pilar can tell it because she is the knower and the seer who weaves words as the binding cloth of humanity: “I like to talk. It is the only civilized thing we have” (98).

With her stories Pilar teaches Jordan the meaning of politics and the causes of war. She tells him that killing and the “drunkenness” of mob behavior sickens her but that the rights of the human family are worth fighting for. This “cause” for Pilar amounts simply to bringing equal justice to “a country where the bourgeoisie over-eat so that their stomachs are all ruined and they cannot live without bicarbonate of soda and the poor are hungry from their birth till the day they die” (184).

Pilar also possesses clairvoyant powers from the “gypsy” part of her. Her most dramatic vision is seeing death in Robert Jordan's palm. Some of her other predictions are more mundane but equally revealing of her status as archetypal figure whose powers, as in
the case of most goddesses, are associated with the moon. When Jordan says it can't snow in late May, Pilar uses her knowledge of the moon rather than the "names of the months" (177) to assure him that it will snow. Jordan looks at the sky again and admits: "I guess you are right" (177). Pilar is not infallible, however. She tells Maria that they will "all die tomorrow" (345) when Jordan blows up the bridge. This prediction causes Jordan to tell Maria angrily that Pilar is "a manure-mouthed superstitious bitch" (345). Together with Agustin's remark that "war is a bitchery" (465), Jordan's outburst indicates that Pilar's occult powers are associated in their minds in some sense with the chaotic, daemonic forces of war—chthonic powers that carry threat as well as hope. Jordan tells Pilar not to be "so mysterious" (176), because he does "not believe in ogres, soothsayers, fortune tellers, or chicken crut gypsy witchcraft" (176).

Jordan does believe in Pilar, however. She is a healer and a knower, a kind of doctor of the body and soul. Jordan is aware that Pilar brought Maria back to life mentally. He admits that he is "no psychiatrist. Pilar [is] the psychiatrist" (137). Pilar has helped Maria realize that she is "not sick" (73) from the rape, either in terms of venereal disease or "craziness" (73). Maria allows Pilar to help her because she believes that Pilar "knows about such things" (73). Jordan agrees: "What she said is true" (73). Jordan later admits to himself that Pilar "is a damned sight more civilized" (168) than he is. He then accords her his highest compliment, in terms of knowledge: "...she knows what time is all about" (168).

Pilar is the definitive, lasting power of For Whom the Bell Tolls. She tells all the important stories and animates the best scenes. Her voice is the most distinct, complex, alive element in the narrative. With her "brown face like a model for a granite monument," she is like dark, fine-grained, weathered wood. Long after the pale image of Robert and Maria's comparatively adolescent romantic words have faded, Pilar's magnificent humanity is what lasts. In her own words: "...neither bull force nor bull courage lasted, she knew
now, and what did last? I have lasted, she thought. Yes, I have lasted" (190).

**Pilar the Prostitute Figure**

Pilar is also a prostitute figure, Hemingway's first and only truly positive and triumphant one. Ironically, the prostitute images that surround her and help to identify her are integral to her greatness. The most obvious of these identity markers is the fact that she is literally named a “whore” in the narrative. As part of the obligatory profanity that characterizes their dialect, Pilar’s fellow guerrillas call her the “daughter of the great whore” (93) and the “whore of whores” (311). All men, of course, are simply “sons of the great whore” (384). Pablo says Pilar has the “heart of a whore” (53). After the scene in the cave where Robert Jordan comes close to shooting Pablo, Rafael tells Jordan that he observed Pilar “waiting as a whore waits for the flight of the big bird” (61)—echoing the connection between the images of sex and killing so prevalent in Hemingway’s fiction.

Pilar’s physical characteristics also identify her in terms of recognized cultural stereotypes associated with prostitutes in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe and America. Her stockiness and muscularity, along with her “harsh” (387) and “husky” (391) voice, were assumed prostitute qualities of her era, according to Alain Corbin’s study of prostitution in France. Referring to the influential work of the nineteenth-century French researcher, Parent-Duchatelet, Corbin points out that “only two physical stereotypes are mentioned, and they are to be repeated endlessly: plumpness of figure...and the raucousness of her voice” (9). Pilar’s pride in her cursing ability only adds to this image. Like most other skills in the partisan world, hers are the best, as her flailing of the gypsy Rafael indicates: “...you lazy drunken obscene unsayable son of an unnamable unmarried gypsy obscenity” (30).

Naming Pilar as whore in the text adds to the negative cultural stereotype of her physical characteristics, but this naming also serves to highlight her role as mythical
prostitute archetype. Hemingway alluded to this archetype in earlier novels. Brett Ashley, for instance, has some mythic characteristics, most of them negative. As Leslie Fiedler points out, the “Spaniards knew her immediately as a terrible goddess, the avatar of an ancient archetype” (319). Catherine Barkley is also named as a “goddess” several times in *A Farewell to Arms* and identified with both prostitution and the moon—the central symbol of the “Feminine” in mythology. In Pilar, however, the implications of archetypal status reach fruition in terms of Hemingway’s focus on them. Pilar is the Ishtar figure fully realized, terrible in war, gifted with both healing and prophetic powers, and at the same time an “avatar” of sexuality.

“Sovereign of the world by virtue of love’s omnipotence,” the figure of Ishtar, who became Aphrodite in Greek mythology, was “the most popular goddess in Assyria and Babylonia” (Larousse, 60). Ishtar was also the “mighty Moon Mother” and “virgin mother,” according to Nor Hall, in the sense that “virgin means ‘belonging to no man’” (Hall, 11, emphasis hers). “The prostitute and the virgin,” Hall claims, are both archetypes of “the free woman” (11). “Sacred prostitution formed part of [Ishtar’s] cult,” says Larousse, and in her manifestation on earth she was accompanied by “cortesans, harlots, and strumpets” (58). At the same time, Ishtar was “Lady of Battles, valiant among goddesses” (58).

Pilar is virtually an identical recreation of this mythical image: powerful, brave, independent, and highly sexual. Instead of the debased image of the prostitute as a symbol of corruption and despair, Pilar is the triumphant image of a reclaimed archetype of power and vitality. The title of “whore of whores” is aimed at her by her comrades as a mock insult, but in its mythic connotation it is a title of respect. Nancy Qualls-Corbett quotes the following poem describing the Ishtar image in her book, *The Sacred Prostitute*—it applies equally to Pilar:

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For I am the first and the last.
I am the honored one and the scorned one.
I am the whore and the holy one.
I am the wife and the virgin.
I am the mother and the daughter.
I am the members of my mother....
I am the silence that is incomprehensible
and the idea whose remembrance is frequent.
I am the voice whose sound is manifold
and the word whose appearance is multiple.
I am the utterance of my name. (11)

Reflecting the multiplicity of this poem’s images in her sexual manifestation, Pilar is an androgynous, “hermaphroditic” figure, representing male and female, and also what Gilbert and Gubar call a “third sex” (345) as well. She contains sexual “opposites” within her and at the same time represents their unification as a kind of supra-sexual being. In telling Robert and Maria that she is “jealous” of their sexual relationship and desires both of them, Pilar says she is “so simple and...very complicated” (156). “I am gross,” she declares, but “also very delicate” (156). If she were younger, Pilar says to Jordan, “I could take the rabbit [Maria] from thee and thee from the rabbit” (156). She does not “make perversions” (155)—a reference to lesbianism—however, but she does want them to know the nature of her androgynous desires. “I would have made a good man,” says Pilar another time, “but I am all woman and all ugly. Yet many men have loved me and I have loved many men” (97).

Pilar the Scarlet Whore and Virgin

Another implication of Pilar’s archetypal status as the “great whore” or “whore of whores” is the complex union of Christian and “pagan” or classical symbolism in her image. In Christian mythology, the Great Whore is the “Scarlet Whore of Babylon,” mentioned by John in Revelations:

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness,
and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full

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of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in...scarlet color, having a golden cup in her hand full of abomination and filthiness of her fornications: and upon her forehead, was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (Revelation 17.3-5)

This passage, so integral to the misogyny inherent in Christian history, gives some indication of the many-leveled nuances of the epithets directed against Pilar. The names she is called are a sign of the fear and perverse awe traditionally attached to women by Christian men. Oddly enough, this attachment also helps to explain Pilar's powerful dual role as Great Whore and Virgin.

In Marina Warner's fascinating study of the historic development of the Virgin Mary, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*, she explains the early Christian need to "exempt the mother of Christ from tainted sexuality" (59). "For the Fathers of the Church after Augustine," says Warner, "woman is the cause of the Fall, the wicked temptress, the accomplice of Satan, and the destroyer of mankind" (58). Because Eve tempted Adam to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, so the theory went, she was, in Tertullian's words, "the devil's gateway" (58) and so brought on the "curse God pronounced on all your sex" (58). Eve was "cursed to bear children rather than blessed with motherhood" and was "identified with nature, a form of low matter that drags man's soul down" (58). The views of these early "Church Fathers" help to explain the neurotic connection between "dirt" and female sexuality in Christian culture, as the following graphic remarks by St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom amply demonstrate:

In faeces and urine—Augustine's phrase—of childbirth, the closeness of woman to all that is vile, lowly, corruptible, and material was epitomized; in the "curse" of menstruation, she lay closer to the beasts; the lure of *her beauty was nothing but an aspect of the death* brought about by her seduction of Adam in the garden. St. John Chrysostom warned: "The whole of her bodily beauty is nothing less than phlegm, blood, bile, rheum, and the fluid of digested food....

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behind those lovely eyes...the well-proportioned body
is merely a whitened sepulchre. (58, emphasis mine)

The comments of these early Christian prelates also help to explain how female
sexuality and the female body came to be seen as a vessel of death in Christian thinking. St.
Augustine's statement that "prostitution is the sewer" in the City of God—representing a
foul but necessary function in human society—is usually credited as the philosophical
source of Victorian thinking about prostitution and women's bodily functions in general as a
source of "sickness." Taken together with Chrysostom's comment that Eve's sin led her
and Adam from Paradise to "earth and ashes" (Warner, 51), Augustine's language and
imagery clarifies how Rinaldi's expression "dragging the ashes" came to mean sexual
intercourse, particularly with prostitutes. Because of the morbidity of these historical
associations representing the "misogyny of patristic thought" (58), Warner points out that
the "idea of women's subjection was bound up in Christian thought with her role as mother
and as temptress" (58). As a temptress threatening not only the body but the soul with
death, women were seen as inherently linked with Evil. Even in Christian art as late as the
Renaissance, "Satan is often female" (58). These are the cultural reverberations echoed in
Robert Jordan's association of Pilar with "witchcraft" (176), or Agustin saying that Pilar
"speaks like a black cat" (388).

Although references to Pilar's connection to the "black arts" are few and intended by
their speakers to be ironic, they suggest the complexity of Pilar's symbolic role. As the
quintessential mother figure (although there is no mention of her actually having had
children—her children are figurative), Pilar is in her Christian manifestation connoted with a
de-sexualized Virgin image, while in her mythological manifestation she is a highly
sexualized Virgin image. At the same time, because of the Christian dual images of the
Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene, both Christian and mythic allusions evoke her prostitute
image. What makes these intermingling roles particularly powerful in the context of For
Whom the Bell Tolls is the fact that Pilar and her fellow Republicans are supposedly atheists, for political reasons, fighting against the Church because of its role in perpetuating fascist oppression. Therefore, Pilar can't be a Christian symbol of either the Madonna or the Scarlet Whore—but she is. By a strange alchemy of mixed historical metaphors, Pilar continues in the minds of her followers to be associated with the Church in connection with both the “great whore” of Babylon and the Virgin Mary. In terms of the Great Whore, the Church of Rome was identified by Protestants after the Reformation as the Scarlet Whore of Babylon—that is, as a false and corrupt religion. Since Pilar is fighting on the side of the Republic, which has repudiated religion and made the Catholic Church its enemy, to identify Pilar with the Church is a linguistic anachronism. Yet old habits die hard, and Hemingway may in part be emphasizing the difficulty in pretending to believe, or disbelieve, what you do not. Certainly Anselmo has this difficulty; he finds it very difficult not to pray, although he knows he should not. Hemingway, particularly as a converted Roman Catholic, may have been emphasizing the complexity and ambiguity of the Church's place in the Spanish mind.

Pilar embodies this ambiguity. Not only is she named as the Great Whore in the text, but she is also named as representative of the Blessed Virgin. When Robert Jordan kills a young soldier of the Loyalists—who have remained faithful to the Church—he finds a letter from the boy's sister telling her brother that she prayed “to the Blessed Virgin of Pilar, and to the other Virgins to protect him” (303). This reference evokes the role of the Virgin Mary in Church ideology and attaches Pilar's name to Mary's image. Marina Warner claims this image is a de-sexualized one because the dilemma of early Christian theology required it. Since Eve and all her sex had been portrayed as evil incarnate, and since Christ was “born of woman” (Warner, 59), that woman had to be “pristine and unspotted” (59). Thus “the new era of Christ found in virginity a most satisfying image,” and Mary became “the Second Eve, mother of all the living in a new, spiritual sense” (59). Mary thus became the

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transcendent, sexless, comforting Mother of God, “Our Lady of Sorrows,” interceding on behalf of all mortals in distress. Lieutenant Berrando, the leader of the Loyalist platoon that kills El Sordo, and the man who is riding towards Robert Jordan to be killed at the end of the novel, prays to this “queen mother of mercy”: “To thee do we send up our sighs, mournings and weepings in this valley of tears” (326). Immediately afterward, the old man Anselmo, whose Republican politics prohibit him from praying, also appeals to the Blessed Lady for strength: “Most kind, most sweet, most clement Virgin” (327).

**Pilar the Great Mother**

Although the image of the Virgin devolves on Pilar linguistically and thematically, she is the antithesis of a literal virgin. However, like her historical namesake, the Blessed Virgin of Pilar, she represents in her Christian overtones the tendency of men to project their illusions and fantasies onto a woman, if only to divert themselves from debilitating delusions about sexuality that they themselves created. Ironically, in her Whore image, Pilar represents basically the same process: the reflection of projected fantasy. More powerful than these Christian aspects of her image, however, whether as Scarlet Whore or Blessed Virgin, is her evocation of ancient archetypes of the “Feminine.” If Brett Ashley is the Terrible Mother, and Catherine Barkley is the Good Mother, then surely Pilar is the Great Mother of myth.

In one of her aspects as Great Mother figure, Pilar is the “Lady of the Plants.” In the Great Mother’s appearance as Lady of the Plants, according to Erich Neumann, she is the “Feminine that nourishes, generates, and transforms” (243), often symbolized by a tree in ancient religions. She is the tree goddess that gives birth to the sun, or soul. Tree images are also “symbols of time” and the “unity of day and night in the unity of the year” (245). Most importantly, in terms of Hemingway’s focus on the unconscious and its relationship to psychic rebirth through psychic death, Neumann claims the “heavenly tree that shines by
night...is the soul tree of rebirth, in which every creature who dies becomes a celestial light and returns as a star to the eternity of the Great Round” (245). Thus the Lady of the Plants, as the “Great Goddess of the night sky...nourishes...the weary soul of the living creature in the somnolent darkness of the unconscious, the land of the dead, so that in the morning it is born fresh and strengthened into the eastern sky, like the sun” (246). In other words, the sun also rises.

Pilar has strong associations with the Lady of the Plants. As the symbolic mountain on which young trees grow, she is the nourisher of her people. She also has clear connections to the process of sleep and dreams—the “somnolent darkness”—suggested when she hesitates to tell Robert and Maria a story for fear it will “make thee bad dreams” (99). With her clairvoyant ability, Pilar manifests another power of the Lady of the Plants: Fate. Fate is, in Neumann's terms, “the sacred center of life...an eternal becoming...a weaving and creating” (250). In her roles as mother, seer, and weaver of history, Pilar represents all of these forces.

Perhaps Pilar's strongest connection to the Lady of the Plants image, however, is her implied relationship to Robert Jordan's death. In a manner similar to his first two major novels, Hemingway opens and closes For Whom the Bell Tolls with reflecting images. In literally the first sentence and the last, Robert Jordan is lying on the forest floor beneath the pine trees—in the first sentence waiting to live, in the last sentence waiting to die:

He lay on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees. (1)

He was waiting until the officer reached the sunlit place where the first trees of the pine forest joined the green slope of the meadow. He could feel his heart beating against the pine needle floor of the forest. (471)

Since Pilar is symbolically the mountain, it is from her Jordan comes into life and history, and it is back to her he is returning: a psychic process of cyclical birth and death. Jordan is
being symbolically born from the earth and the trees, and Neumann says that a symbolic “birth from tree or flowers...arises from psychic strata in which—as in the plant—the elements are synthesized and achieve a new unity and form through a transformation governed by the unconscious” (248). In her role as Lady of the Plants, Pilar is the central symbolic force in that transformation.

Consistent with her many-sided nature, Pilar’s transformative powers also find expression in the Great Mother’s manifestation as “Lady of the Beasts.” Often this aspect of the Feminine is seen as negative and destructive. Neumann points out that the “Aphroditelike Circe of the Odyssey is also a Lady of the Beasts” (273), turning men into “swine” by making them act wholly according to the “animal” qualities in them. Many readers have seen Brett Ashley as representative of this archetype. Seen in terms of psychic development, however, the Lady of the Beasts is the guide who helps the mind negotiate its instinctive, animal side in order to become unified with its rational or spiritual side. This process involves suffering and death—literally and figuratively. Through the powers of this archetype, “cruelty, death, and caprice stand side by side with supreme planning, perfect purposiveness, and immortal life” (Neumann, 278). Inherent in “the mysteries of the Great Goddess in her spiritual character,” says Neumann, “she grants life only through death, and development toward new birth only through suffering” (279). The “Lady of Beasts and Men” confers “no birth and no life without pain” (279).

Pilar is a powerful image of the Lady of the Beasts. The cave where she commands is described as “a bear’s den” (18), and as Anselmo says, “gypsies believe the bear to be a brother of man” (40). Her “man,” Pablo, is described by Anselmo as a “brute” (11) and a “beast” (11). Pablo has sunk into “flaccid” (26) drunkenness and inaction because he is “very much afraid to die” (26)—that is, afraid to transform. Pilar tries to awaken him from his animal sleep. As tamer of the beast in men, her tongue “bites like a bull whip” (28). Pilar recognizes sexuality as form of this beast, as it exists in Pablo’s desire for Maria.
Although the exuberantly sexual Pilar defends Robert and Maria's sexual relationship on the basis that "we are, after all, in the spring, animal" (93), she calls Pablo's lust for Maria a "sickness...another thing that destroys him" (32). By protecting Maria, as daughter, from the sexual desire of Pablo and the rest of the men, Pilar invokes the incest taboo, and by so doing clearly functions as the mythic Lady of the Beasts who "domesticated the male through taboos that she imposed on him, and so created the first human culture" (280).

The force of Pilar's moral influence also opposes the lust for killing that war releases in men. She fights against this animal "drunkenness" of the psyche and tries to keep her followers focused on fighting solely out of necessity to preserve the Republic as a vehicle for the principles of culture and civilization. The story she tells Robert and Maria about her village's murder of their fascist neighbors expresses her disgust for the insane blood lust behind the mask of politics. In her opposition to the "lust" or "desire" to kill, Pilar promotes transformative development from primitive killing to disciplined fighting for a cause. In this role, she stands for the more positive function of the Lady of the Beasts, a power that doesn't "castrate" men but "compels the male to sacrifice his aggressiveness" (280). It is in relationship to this issue of domination or "emasculating" of men, in fact, that Pilar's connection to bullfighters is so intriguing and consistent with allusions to her archetypal status. Erich Neumann makes this connection clear as he explains that castration, in psychic terms, can represent a symbolic sacrifice of destructive aggressiveness. In terms of the civilizing, educating, transformative powers of the Lady of the Beasts:

...castration, one of the essential symbols of the Terrible Mother, appears in a new light. As a symbol of man's domination over the animal world, bullfighting and games with bulls are among the great rituals of the Feminine. This ritual, rooted in the magical domination of animals, in the fertility and hunting magic of the primordial age, runs through the Cretan culture, Mithraism, the Roman gladiatorial fights, down to the bullfights of Spain. (280)

Many of the images of Pilar in the text associate her with the Great Mother in terms of
the archetypal Feminine mysteries of preservation, formation, nourishment, and transformation. The cave, as “sacral precinct and temple” (Neumann, 282), is a place of preservation. Robert Jordan’s “bed,” into which Pilar “pushes” Maria, is a central symbol in fertility rituals. Pilar’s connection to food-giving, food-transforming, healing, and the intoxication of wine or “spirits” all relate to archetypal powers of the Great Mother. Yet another aspect of the archetype is the image of Pilar over the steaming iron cooking pot in the cave and the relationship of this image to her celebration of sexuality and the body. According to Neumann, the “vessel” is the ancient symbol of magical transformation. Through Pilar the body and the caldron become reflective images of archetypal power:

...transformation, which is viewed as magical, can only be effected by the woman because she herself, in her body that corresponds to the Great Goddess, is the caldron of incarnation, birth, and rebirth. And that is why the magical caldron or pot is always in the hand of the female mana figure.... (287-288)

Like A Midsummer Night’s Dream, animals and magic appear throughout For Whom the Bell Tolls. Reflecting the values he is learning from Pilar, Robert Jordan says: “In a fine body there is magic” (160). He is speaking to Maria about her body, and it is no coincidence that it is Maria whom Pilar has transformed the most. When Pilar found her “hidden in the rocks” (23) and “shivering like a wet dog” (28), Maria had been destroyed emotionally by rape. She had sunk to an “animal” state of unknowing and unfeeling. She is, in fact, described over and over in animal images by Robert Jordan. Her hair is like “the fur on a beaver pelt” (22), and she “moves awkwardly as a colt moves” (25). His nickname for her is “little rabbit.” Not surprisingly, the “ritual animal of the goddess is the rabbit, associated with fertility,” according to Nancy Qualls-Corbett (The Sacred Prostitute, 156). By teaching Maria to integrate her magic animality with her whole self, Pilar guides Maria to regain her spirit and find “La Gloria” in love and sexual union.

The most intriguing aspect of this unifying, educational process, in terms of Pilar's
role as Great Mother, is that by bonding with Robert Jordan, Maria enters an even greater bond with Pilar. Neumann writes that "abduction, rape, marriage of death, and separation are the great motifs underlying the Eleusian mysteries" (308) of transformation. These happen to be the identical motifs of For Whom the Bell Tolls. Symbolically, however, the rape motif is not limited to Maria's rape by the fascists but also includes her "marriage" union with Robert Jordan as a stage in her eventual "mother-daughter unity" (Neumann, 307). In Neumann's view, "the restoration after marriage of the matriarchal unity of mother and daughter" is a psychological "finding again" that "signifies the annulment of the male rape and incursion" (308). Neumann calls this the "essential element" in the Eleusian mysteries, represented by the reunion of Persephone and Demeter and symbolizing the annual cycle of death and rebirth in nature, as well as the immortality of the soul. If we see this myth at work in For Whom the Bell Tolls, the fact that Robert Jordan entrusts Maria to Pilar's care again as he is dying has great archetypal resonance: "Pilar will take care of her as well as any one can. You know that" (466). Since Jordan has just told Maria that "as long as there is one of us there is both of us" (463), he is in a very real sense entrusting himself to Pilar's care as well. In terms of psychic symbolism, Robert, Maria, and Pilar are joined in a powerful cycle of transformative death and rebirth:

The dual Great Goddess as mother and daughter can so far transform her original bond with the elementary character as to become a pure feminine spirit, a kind of Sophia, a spiritual whole in which all heaviness and materiality are transcended. Then she not only forms the earth and heaven of the retort that we call life, and is not only the whirling wheel revolving within it, but is also the supreme essence and distillation to which life in this world can be transformed. (325, emphasis mine)

Robert Jordan as Prostitute Figure

While Pilar dominates For Whom the Bell Tolls as a personality and an archetypal
force in all her images of Whore, Virgin, and Mother, she also functions as an essential element in Hemingway's prostitution paradigm of the human mind. Her relationship to Robert Jordan reflects his own role as prostitute consciousness. Just as the Brett-Jake and Catherine-Frederic dualities are projections and reflections of each other's psychological processes, so is the Pilar-Robert configuration.

From the moment Robert Jordan meets Pilar and "return[s] her strong hand grip" (31), they are mirror images. She feels the muscle of his shoulder and says, "Good. I am very content that you have come" (31). "And I equally" (31), he replies. She predicts they "will understand each other" (31) and offers him wine. She says she speaks to him "as though I knew you for a long time" (32). "It is like that," he echoes, "when people understand one another" (32).

Pilar and Jordan are alike in fundamental ways, and they play remarkably similar roles in the novel. They are "allies" in a deeply emotional, intimate, and prescient way. They both predict the future. They both desire Maria sexually; both would sacrifice themselves for her well-being; and yet both play the role of "john," as we shall see, in naming her as a whore. They are both dedicated to the ideals of the Republic and feel they are "instruments to do your duty" (43) to the cause. They are both highly sexual, and yet both have the detached, masked, deceptive prostitute mentality. They are both emotional victims of war and killing, which in Hemingway's texts stand as metaphors for prostitution and sex. They are alter egos, aspects of one mind in an even more powerful way than Robert and Maria are. If Pilar is the Great Whore, then Robert Jordan is her high priest.

Pilar and Jordan each have a prescient knowledge of the future, and each hides that knowledge for the sake of group morale. When Anselmo and Robert are discussing the merits of the maquina (the machine gun), Jordan speaks cynically of its high possibility of malfunction. He speaks in English to hide his negative thoughts from Anselmo, whom he likes and does not wish to discourage as an effective soldier. When Anselmo asks him
what he said, Jordan jokingly replies that he is "only looking into the future in English" (27). At the end of the novel, Jordan is awaiting death with this same maquina in his hands. In the earlier scene with Anselmo, therefore, he inadvertently foresees his own death. Shortly afterward, Pilar reads his palm and also foresees his death. She, too, lies about what she sees in order to protect Jordan's feelings and his morale, just as he did with Anselmo.

Pilar and Jordan are both "readers" who speak many languages. They are interpreters, seers, knowers. Jordan claims he does not believe her "gypsy nonsense," but later he acknowledges the validity of her intuitive grasp of fate as he is about to die: "You were bitched when they gave Golz those orders. That was what you knew and it was probably that which Pilar felt" (469).

Pilar and "Roberto" or "Ingles," as she affectionately misnames him, understand each other because their minds work the same way. Their responsibilities as war leaders have made them good liars—distanced from their feelings. They must constantly put on a good show for the benefit of others. This lying, Jordan feels, is necessary in "a revolution" (229) to protect privileged information from "outsiders" (229), but it becomes a habit and a very "corrupting business":

If a thing was right fundamentally the lying was not supposed to matter. There was a lot of lying though. He did not care for the lying at first. He hated it. Then later he had come to like it. It was part of being an insider but it was a very corrupting business. (229)

Pilar lies with a sense of purpose and loss equal to Jordan's. As she tells Primitivo, one of the guerrillas who accuses her of having a "vile tongue" (300), "Listen, flat face. In war one cannot say what one feels" (301). War, even war for justice, is like venal sexuality in that it demands constant acting and dissociation from one's feelings. In suppressing her anger at Pablo's obstinate refusal to support Robert Jordan's mission to blow up the bridge,
Pilar frames her response in terms of her lifelong inner manipulation of her feelings due to constant exposure to abuse and oppression. Her comments reveal the prostitute's psychological dynamics within her:

The woman of Pablo could feel her rage changing to sorrow and to a feeling of the thwarting of all hope and promise. She knew this feeling from when she was a girl and she knew the things that caused it all through her life. It came now suddenly and she put it away from her and would not let it touch her, neither her nor the Republic, and she said, “Now we will eat. Serve the bowls from the pot, Maria.” (58, emphasis mine)

Instead of expressing the rage she feels, Pilar feeds the family. She does her duty, her professional task, and dissociates from her feelings. She will not let her hurt “touch” her—just as Jake, Brett, and Catherine will not—just as prostitutes will not. This inner monologue is reflected with uncanny similarity in Robert’s head after the bridge has been dynamited and his friend Anselmo is dead. He feels “anger and emptiness and hate” (447) in the “let-down after the bridge” (447). It is then that he feels deeply how soldiers must prostitute themselves to function as soldiers:

In him...was despair from the sorrow that soldiers turn to hatred in order that they may continue to be soldiers. Now it was over he was lonely, detached and unrelated and he hated everyone he saw. (447)

Jordan despairs of “the always ridding of self that you had to do in war. Where there could be no self. Where yourself is only to be lost” (447). On the verge of giving in to this feeling, he is reminded by Pilar that there are still important war tasks to perform and that he must “think of things in their place” (448). She is only telling him what he knows, and he has already begun putting on his war mask: “...a cracked, stiff, too-tightened-facial-tendonied grin” (447)—another reflection in “Georgette’s mirror.”

These excursions into the emotional processes of Pilar and Robert dramatize the
intimate connection between them and the close correlation in Hemingway’s fictional world
between the psychology of professional killing required by war and the psychology of
professional sex required by prostitution. The need to empty the mind of feeling, or to put
feelings “in their place,” applies to both processes. That connection is made even more
explicit before the climactic battle scene, when Jordan is trying to will himself into the
necessary dissociated mental attitude for war:

He hated injustice as he hated cruelty and he lay in
his rage that blinded his mind until gradually the anger
died down and the red, black, blinding, killing anger
was all gone and his mind now as quiet, empty-calm
and sharp, cold-seeing as a man is after he has had
sexual intercourse with a woman that he does not love.
(370)

The profound ambivalence that Pilar and Robert feel about war is an extension of
their sexuality on a psychological level, and vice versa. War and sexuality are mutually
reflective images encircling their minds in patterns of dissociation, masking, role-playing,
and crises of identity. These are all psychological issues connected to prostitution in
Hemingway’s fictional inner landscape, and the text of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* presents
strong images that dramatize Robert and Pilar as alternate, reflecting versions of each other
explicitly in terms of their relationship to prostutional themes. Both find themselves in the
prostitute/john loop psychologically, appearing again and again on this continuum.

**Maria as Prostitute Figure**

In certain textual configurations, Robert and Pilar play the role of john. Both love
Maria, for instance, and yet both project prostitute images onto her. When Pilar thinks
Robert will take Maria away and turn his back on his new “family” after the war—becoming
a “foreigner” again—she responds angrily and calls Maria “your piece” (150) and “thy little
cropped-headed whore” (150). Pilar is joking in her gruff way, hiding her affection in

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rough language as is her habit, yet she keeps insisting, "I said whore and I meant it" (150). Maria, responding very much like Catherine Barkley, says, "I'm a whore if thee wishes, Pilar" (150).

Robert Jordan also makes Maria the target of the whore image. When she gives him dry socks for his wet feet, he responds, "'Thou canst not dry them with thy hair?' he said for Pilar to hear" (203). Jordan is echoing the scene from Luke in which Mary Magdalene washes Christ's feet and dries them with her hair. The watching Pilar calls Jordan a "swine" (203) for arrogantly taking on the role of "our ex-Lord Himself" (203). Jordan claims he is only "joking" (203), just as Pilar claims when she calls Maria a whore.

This passage demonstrates how intricately connected and suggestive the relationship between Pilar, Maria, and Robert is. Their interaction forms a kind of trinity or triangle in the novel. Pilar and Maria represent the Mother-Daughter force that guides Jordan through his process of regeneration, just as in Christian ideology the Madonna-Magdalene duality marks the female points of a triad with the risen Christ. Through the sparse images of this scene in the cave, Hemingway satirizes and evokes the complex Christian sexual ethos regarding women at the same time he provides the framework for the emotional, psychic dynamics between the three characters.

In the Christian aspect of this framework, Mary Magdalene is "The Penitent Whore," as Marina Warner calls her (224), forgiven and raised to sainthood by Christ. Warner points out that Christian ideology needed the image of a penitent whore because the Virgin Mary's "unspotted goodness prevents the sinner from identifying with her" (235). Mary Magdalene, on the other hand, "holds up a comforting mirror to those who sin again and again" (226). Warner observes that the Gospels do not identify Mary Magdalene as a "whore," only as a woman who "loved much" (226), and who could actually have been another kind of "sinner entirely and not a prostitute or adulteress at all. There are, in fact, several different versions of the Mary Magdalene story in the Scriptures, and it appears that
the final, official Church version was an apocryphal conflation of several different women. The Church apparently needed their version of Mary Magdalene as reformed prostitute because they had de-sexed the Madonna and so needed a sexualized but repentant female image as a conduit for "forgiving" the sexuality inherent in human life. Thus "the Virgin and the Magdalene form a diptych of Christian patriarchy's idea of woman" (235), asserts Warner, leaving "no place in the conceptual architecture of Christian society for a single woman who is neither a virgin nor a whore" (235).

Just as images of Pilar as Virgin in the Christian sense do not limit her, however, it is not the Christian image of the penitent Mary Magdalene that characterizes Maria but the image of a priestess of Aphrodite. She celebrates sexuality as a healing force rather than apologizing for it as a corrupting influence. Although Hemingway includes a long scene to "re-virginalize" Maria before she and Robert make love—"And if we do everything together, the other maybe never will have been" (72)—the intent seems much more to free Maria from the crippling brutality of sexual violation than to transform her into an "untouched" virgin for Robert's sake. Maria is trying to reclaim her feelings and her life from the dissociation process forced on her by the rapists. In a later scene Maria describes the rape in the removed, voyeuristic terms of the prostitute's and the slave's psychological experience: "I saw my face in the mirror of the barbershop and the faces of those who were holding me...and I knew none of their faces but in the glass I saw myself and them, but they saw only me" (351). She tells Robert that after the rape she "was dead in my head with a numbness" (353) and literally "wished to die" (73). Since meeting Robert she is glad she did not die, because she has learned the truth of Pilar's teaching: "...that if I loved someone it would take it all away" (73).

Maria's embrace of sexuality as part of the healing power of love frees Robert Jordan emotionally as well. He believes that his sexual relationship with Maria has made him more tolerant, more flexible, less "bigoted and hide-bound about his politics" (164). He feels that
"sleeping with Maria" has made "his mind...much clearer and cleaner" and purged it of "cliches both revolutionary and patriotic" (164). Dogma and denial of sexuality go hand in hand, Jordan feels, and he sees the mind prostituting itself with politics and bigotry far more than with sex: "To be bigoted you have to be absolutely sure that you are right and nothing makes that surety and righteousness like continence. Continence is the foe of heresy" (164). Jordan gratefully acknowledges Maria for teaching him the abandoned in continence of love: "I have learned much from thee" (380).

The Prostitute Paradigm of Self

Even though Maria counteracts the Mary Magdalene stereotype through her holistic embrace of sexuality, the concepts of "virgin" and "whore" still remain as roles to be played in For Whom the Bell Tolls, just as they were in any brothel of Hemingway's time. In relationship to these roles, Pilar and Jordan behave both as john and as prostitute, as watcher and watched, as audience and performer. There is a great emphasis on sex as theatre in the novel, articulated equally by each character. As in the Magdalene scene in the cave, Pilar is always hovering, always the voyeur. "And me," she says when Robert and Maria caress each other in front of her, "I am expected to watch all this? I am expected not to be moved? One cannot" (67). She does watch and she is "moved," by which she means emotionally and sexually excited. Pilar is nearby physically or present in their conversation in every one of Robert and Maria's love scenes. In their famous encounter with "La Gloria" in the mountain meadow, during which "the earth moves," Pilar is sitting not far away on a tree stump. She is the mountain, the earth, and she is moved—as a voyeur. When Pilar insists that Maria tell her the exact feeling of her sexual experience with Robert, he feels the intrusion of her watching eye, the eye of a snake hypnotizing a bird: "There was a spreading...as a cobra's hood spreads. He could feel the menace of the spreading. But the spreading was a domination, not of evil, but of searching" (173). Pilar's age and her

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“ugliness” have made her a watcher instead of a participant, although she still has a strong sexual relationship with Pablo. Even with Pablo, however, she says “so much theatre tires me” (348). She is the john who watches from without and the prostitute who watches from within.

Pilar’s roles tire her even as they allow her to be who she is and to participate in “love.” This factor is one of the essential ambiguities of Hemingway’s exploration of character through the prostitution motif. The role liberates even as the role constricts, and vice versa, in a cycle. As Pilar tells Robert Jordan, “one has a feeling within one that blinds a man while he loves you. You, with that feeling, blind him, and blind yourself” (98). If you ever lose the “blindness” of that role or mask, Pilar says, then “he sees you ugly as you really are and he is not blind any more and then you see yourself as ugly as he sees you” (98). It is the prostitute model for relationships, the one followed by Catherine and Frederic: a series of performances and reflections for the benefit of the beloved—liberating and limited at the same time.

As liberated and whole as Maria’s love makes him feel, Robert Jordan is also caught in habits of mind that reflect Pilar’s prostitutional model of love as a mutually reflected “blindness”—an illusion performed for oneself and one’s beloved. Robert thinks of Maria in terms of the fantasies he has had about actresses in the “cinema” who come to his “bed at night” (137). Movie stars are the quintessential projected image and voyeuristic experience, and Robert has “slept with them all that way when he was asleep in bed” (137). Now he simply transfers this fantasy process to Maria. Sensing his tastes, as Catherine does with Frederic, Maria asks Robert if he would like her to wear her hair like “Garbo in the cinema” (346). He says yes “thickly” (346), indicating his sexual excitement. His association of fantasy projection and sex are so strong that he feels “the making believe...coming back in a great rush,” and he decides to “take it all to him” (346). He cannot even think of their future together without projecting it into a prostitution scenario, much like Frederic and

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Catherine's "red plush and velvet" hotel room:

"We will be in the big clean bed in thy famous room in our famous hotel and we will sit in the famous bed together and look into the mirror of the armoire and there will be thee and there will be me in the glass...." (346)

Robert Jordan not only plays the john-voyeur as Pilar does, he is also identified in the text as the observed prostitute by means of the same double-entendre linguistic process of naming that identifies Pilar as a whore. General Golz addresses Robert as "Comrade Hordown" (7), which is the "funny" (7) way his name sounds in Spanish. It sounds like "whore-down." Then Golz tells Jordan that his hair is too long, implying that he looks too much like a woman. Golz, in fact, seems to question Jordan's sexual orientation altogether, chiding him for leading an "irregular" (8) life and not having "many girls on the other side of the lines" (7). Much later, after Robert's "earth moving" scene with Maria, Pilar asks him if he has been doing "manly tricks again" (173). "Tricks" is the slang term for prostitute sex. Playful or not, Hemingway is leaving clues to the ambiguity of Robert Jordan's sexual roles.

The primary vehicle for identifying Pilar and Robert as prostitute mentalities is not in naming or double-entendre, however. What aligns them with prostitute psychological processes is the fact that lying is the defining characteristic of their thought patterns. Both use the benevolent and self-masking lie as their primary expression of love and caring, and both understand each other perfectly in this matter. When Jordan first arrives at the guerrilla camp, he suggests to Pilar that the two of them practice some deception about his mission. She readily agrees:

"Many will oppose this of the bridge."
"Clearly."
"In this way it is better not to speak of it unnecessarily."
"I am in accord." (34)
honest about whether she saw death in his hand:

"I like very much your way of speaking."
"I try to speak frankly."
"Then tell me what you saw in the hand."
"No," she said and shook her head. "I saw nothing."

Pilar lies, and Jordan knows she is lying, and he knows she knows he knows she is lying—and they both know it is a sign of their love for one another. Before the final battle, Pilar lies to Jordan again, and again he knows and accepts that she is giving a performance out of love—and she knows he is accepting that performance as a performance motivated by love. In effect, they engage in an exchange of lies about how she did not foresee his death, how he is not worried anyway, and how well things are going to go in the battle.

Meanwhile they are both convinced he is going to die, and both lie about the fact that they are lying:

"In regard to that thing of the hand. That is all gypsy nonsense that I give to make myself an importance. There is no such thing."
"Leave it alone," he said coldly.
"Nay," she said harshly and lovingly. "It is a lying nonsense that I make. I would not have thee worry in the day of battle."
"I am not worried," Robert Jordan said.
"Yes, Ingles," she said. "Thou art worried, for good cause. But all will be well, Ingles. It is for this that we are born."
"I don't need a political commissar," Robert Jordan told her.

She smiled at him again, smiling fairly and truly with the harsh lips and the wide mouth, and said, "I care for thee very much, Ingles."
"I don't want that now," he said. *Ni tu, ni Dios* [neither you nor God]."
"Yes," Pilar said in that husky whisper. "I know, I only wished to tell thee. And do not worry. We will do all very well."
"Why not?" Robert Jordan said and the very thinnest edge of the skin in front of his face smiled. "Of course we will. All will be well." (387)

It is a scene reminiscent of many of Catherine and Frederic's scenes—tender and caring
lies, performances of the heart complete with smiling masks. Pilar's final act for Robert's benefit is, in fact, a performance to deceive Maria. Pilar does not dare say goodbye to Robert when he is dying because she knows, as Robert does, that if Maria were to see Pilar acting truly as if she would never see Jordan again, then she would not leave him: "She wouldn't say good-by, he thought, because she knew if she did Maria would never go. That Pilar" (467). In Hemingway's fictional world there is a definite double meaning to the phrase "act of love."

Although Robert Jordan and Pilar are "opposite" in terms of sexual identity, they strongly reflect and highlight each other's reality as human beings. Their mutual role as "whore" in the text has a great deal to do with that reflective process. Pilar and Robert are each a kind of whore of war, and each has developed a strategy of illusion and deception in order to negotiate a way through the world of politics and love. War, and sometimes love, requires them to do things they do not wish to do—killing, lying, prostituting their feelings. They try to survive by detaching themselves, but as Amselmo says, "...any one doing it will be brutalized in time" (196). He is speaking of killing, but his words apply equally to the mind's reliance on deception as a way of relating to the world. Still, all Pilar and Robert have are their inner rituals of roles and masks. This strategy restricts them in its form, its processes, but at the same time it allows them to function with some kind of emotional "faith." As Pilar says, "I put great illusion in the Republic....I believe in it with fervor as those who have religious faith believe in the mysteries" (90). When Pilar asks Jordan if he has the same faith, he answers that he does, but inside he is only "hoping it was true" (91).

The Magic Circle

In an essay entitled "The Magic Circle," critic Thomas Whisson writes that Isak Dinesen believed that "opposite" characters in fiction "form a mystical and inviolable union, a 'magic circle'...within which they thrive and acquire meaning" (The Image of the
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Conclusion

The Un-Bildungsroman

For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have within which passeth show—

—Hamlet
Early in *The Scarlet Letter* Hester Prynne is taken from her prison cell and put on display in the town square. She has to stand alone on a special platform, a “scaffold,” so the citizens can observe her as a “spectacle of guilt and shame” for her sin of adultery. As an object of public scorn, Hester “sustain[s] herself as best a woman might, under the heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened upon her, and concentrated on her bosom.” She is America’s first “Scarlet Whore.” The precursor of thousands of literary prostitute figures, and a bizarre prototype of every *Playboy* centerfold, Hester Prynne is a symbol of male fantasy projected onto the feared and desired body of a woman.

True to the duality of the image of Woman in Christian iconography, Hester is also both the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. She is, Hawthorne’s narrator says, the “image of Divine Maternity” and yet carries “the taint of deepest sin in the most sacred quality of human life, working such effect, that the world was only the darker for this woman’s beauty.”

Hawthorne’s famous heroine is a dramatic example of the American male literary tradition of portraying female characters in images of prostitution. Ernest Hemingway is part of that tradition. What connects Hemingway even more closely to Hawthorne, however, is Hemingway’s interest in the psychological dynamics of the mind at the center of this “spectacle”: the prostitute’s mind. As Hester stands on the scaffold, not knowing whether to “shriek out with the full power of her lungs” or “cast herself from the scaffold down upon the ground” or “else go mad all at once,” she escapes in another way—into her mind:

Yet there were intervals when the whole scene, in which she was the most conspicuous object, seemed to vanish from her eyes, or, at least, glimmered indistinctly before them,
like a mass of imperfectly shaped and spectral images. Her mind, and especially her memory, was preternaturally active, and kept bringing up other scenes.... Reminiscences...of her maiden years...intermingled with recollections...all alike a play. Possibly, it was an instinctive device of her spirit, to relieve itself, by the exhibition of these phantasmagoric forms, from the cruel weight and hardness of reality. (The Scarlet Letter, emphasis mine)

It is this "instinctive device" of the "spirit" that became for Hemingway a model for the human mind struggling to reclaim a sense of organic identity in a world that imposes rigid, sterile roles upon it. In what was expressed in his fiction as a kind of "prostitute mentality," Hemingway portrayed consciousness in terms of theater, as a kind of public stage or spectacle, on which the "spirit" or "self" performed in roles or costumes, and from which the self withdrew to hidden resources of memory, or to the "unconscious," for regeneration when the roles became oppressive and deadly. This view of the mind represents the psychological processes of the victimized, the abused, the prostituted mind forced to wear costumes that smother the life out of it. Its instinctive strategy is to withdraw, to become the voyeur of its own performance, from a perspective far away inside in a place of safety where there may be a chance for a new beginning of life for the self.

The situation in which Hester finds herself reflects Hemingway's prostitutional scenarios in other ways as well. She is a crucified figure, wounded and stripped of public power by the bigoted falsity of abstract and hypocritical moral beliefs. She lives a life of enforced chastity, a kind of "castration" of her sexuality. Hester is an isolated figure in a hostile world, an outcast who must turn inward to find integrity, or any sense of individuality at all. She is defined and oppressed by a costume, a symbol—masked not even by a whole word but by a single letter. Yet Hester uses that mask to enact a different performance from the one expected of her, and so takes power over the role by redefining it. She becomes Salem's most dedicated and tireless nurse—a familiar figure in Hemingway's fiction—a Magdalen transfigured into an angel of mercy caring for the sick
and dying, particularly among the poor and friendless:

Her breast, with its badge of shame, was but the softer pillow for the head that needed one. She was self-ordained a Sister of Mercy; or, we may rather say, the world's heavy hand had so ordained her, when neither the world nor she looked forward to this result. The letter was the symbol of her calling. Such helpfulness was found in her,—so much power to do, and power to sympathize,—that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification. They said it meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength.

Ironically, Hester's mask releases her even as it imprisons her. Because she lives alone on the physical and moral edge of civilization, she suffers from loneliness, but she also becomes the most free thinker in Salem: "The world's law was no law for her mind." Yet she cannot live the life she would like, a life of creative freedom and open expression of feeling. She can own herself inside, but her public self is owned by a vigilant, spiteful society. She must play her role, and her role is costly. For the protection of her child and the man she loves, she must endure the secret torments of her abusive husband and the assault on her integrity by an equally abusive community. She is the victim who is forced to live by means of an inner control that allows her a limited psychic survival even as it constricts the potential within her to the narrow world of an outcast's life.

The life of Hester Prynne reflects poignantly the psychological dilemma characteristic of the prostitute—a dilemma that Ernest Hemingway found paradigmatic of the human mind seeking psychic regeneration and a sense of healing from the ravages of exploitation: a mind hemmed in by its own strategies of survival. What is equally relevant in terms of Hemingway's fictional dynamics, or the form of his narratives, is the direction of the psychological movement of *The Scarlet Letter*. It is a dismantling movement, a breaking down, an uncovering or unmasking of the players on the stage. Hester's personality, so vibrant and defiant and passionate in the beginning—natural and "wild" like Pearl—is compressed to a brilliant but hardened sheen as the novel progresses, as though she is
baked in a kiln fired by sacrifice and suffering. The heart of her lover, Authur Dimmesdale, is worn away to an open wound by the constant gnawing of the rodentlike Chillingworth. Chillingworth himself degenerates from an ascetic but competent, learned doctor to a deformed and devilish parasite living on Dimmesdale's guilt. By this distillation process of the narrative, essentials of character are revealed and fateful death encountered. Only then can spiritual journies begin.

This same process of whittling away of ego structure and social identity characterizes Hemingway's narratives. Instead of being Bildungsromans—novels of development in which a protagonist steadily acquires ego and social power through mastery of the economic, political, or even the spiritual/artistic environment—Hemingway's novels are un-Bildungsromans. Instead of novels of development, they are novels of disintegration—not of learning but of unlearning—not of knitting together but of unraveling. In a passage he wrote for "Big Two-Hearted River" but edited out for publication, Hemingway provides some insight into the nature of this breaking down process as an artistic strategy:

He wanted to write like Cezanne painted.
Cezanne started with all the tricks. *Then he broke the whole thing down and built the real thing. It was hell to do.* He was the greatest. The greatest for always. It wasn't a cult. He, Nick, wanted to write about country so it would be there like Cezanne had done it in painting. *You had to do it from inside yourself.* There wasn't any trick. Nobody had ever written about country like that. He felt almost holy about it. It was deadly serious. *You could do it if you would fight it out. If you'd lived right with your eyes.* (quoted by Raymond S. Nelson in *Hemingway: Expressionist Artist*, emphasis mine)

Putting into practice what Nick proposes, Hemingway attempts to break "the whole thing down" and build "the real thing" in each of the major novels we have examined. In each novel we meet Hemingway's characters in various states of patched-together identities. They have known life, and life has hurt them. Because they have been prostituted in one
way or another—forced to trade sacred parts of themselves in order to survive—they have responded defensively by developing protective strategies of pretense, lies, roles, costumes. They have been "broken" and have become "strong in the broken places"—in a sense—but in another sense their maintaining, protective strategy has left them isolated and trapped within a calcified psychological prosthesis covering their wound. The wound is still there, only hidden by elaborate masquerade.

If true healing is to begin, the costumes must be shed and the roles rewritten. The prostituted mind must come to terms with the reality that it cannot dissociate completely from the roles it enacts, even though enacted against its will, because to do so risks permanent fragmentation. The prostitute, the abused child, the exploited soldier—all are present in the acts they are forced to commit, and the instinctive strategy of dissociation ultimately costs them the chance to reclaim a sense of identity and empowerment even as that same strategy may keep an inner spark or seed of integrity alive by disowning what they do in their prostituted role.

To be healed of this paralyzing stasis, according to the cues in Hemingway's fictional world, the mind must go in two directions at once. It must go deeper inward to the regenerative resources of the unconscious, where the mind can let go of the crippling ways the world has defined it and where it can start fresh and "clean" and newly created—as in a metaphorical Eden. At the same time the mind must attempt to come back from the "far away" of its dissociative paralysis of will and try to recast or reclaim its public, social roles through creative shaping of its own life "texts"—in integrative harmony with other creative selves engaged in the same process.

The psychological process of dismantling in preparation for rebuilding is reflected in Hemingway's fictional texts. In *The Sun Also Rises* the characters attend a dreamlike fiesta where their pretenses dissolve, and jagged fragments of their characters emerge in a jumble of confusion, as though pieces of themselves had been pasted together and are now
peeling away. That process is present in almost every nuance of the narrative, even in a waiter's mundane duties:

A waiter wearing a blue apron came out with a bucket of water and a cloth, and commenced to tear down the notices, pulling the paper off in strips and washing and rubbing away the paper that stuck to the stone. The fiesta was over. (227)

Once faced with the broken pieces, the characters must figure out how to rebuild. Brett Ashley, for instance, struggles to decide who she is and who she wants to be. She wants to take possession of her own life: “I've got to do something. I've got to do something I really want to do. I've lost my self-respect” (183). Jake is also trying desperately to learn “how to live.” He dives deep to wash off his “pretty thoughts.” Neither Jake nor Brett are particularly successful because they cannot break their cycle of mutually reflected roles of exploitation and victimage. They are stuck in the limbo of dissociation, unwilling or unable to break free of the prostitute/john roles they have accepted as their only alternative.

In A Farewell to Arms, Frederic and Catherine try to break the cycle of social exploitation imposed on them by war. They shed their “uniformed” selves and try to escape to an inner land of “oneness” far away from the “others.” Endless mutual reflection of projected selves, however, no matter how well intended, becomes a sterile, stifling atmosphere for each of them—not fundamentally different from the dissociated isolation they had lived separately. The “I'll be whatever you want me to be” strategy endemic to prostitution proves a poor approach to nurturing a living, growing love. Catherine's physical death, and the death of the relationship, seem inevitable, and we are left with only the faint hope that Frederic may start a process of genuine rebirth and growth.

For Whom the Bell Tolls offers a more affirmative scenario than its predecessors, but the psychological process at the heart of this novel is very similar to the other two. The fact that Robert Jordan's primary goal is to blow up a bridge and drop it “like a birdcage into the
gorge" is highly reflective of the psychic process he undergoes. He must confront and abandon his former strategies of cool detachment if he is to know not only love but true relationship to others. His real discovery in the novel is not romantic love with Maria—a relationship with too many overtones of the psychological sterility that Frederic and Catherine experienced—but instead a sense of family, a sense of connectedness.

Robert Jordan is led, just as Maria is, in this direction of wholeness by his model for health—his model for recovery from the dissociative malady of the voyeuristic, castrated soul—his model for creative, enduring life: Pilar. Pilar has seen her society disintegrate into civil war. She has seen her country's children raped. She has known betrayal and barbarism and the stolid ignorance of fellow revolutionaries who only wish to use the revolution to satisfy their lust for profit and power. Yet Pilar has not only "lasted," she has learned to own her experiences by shaping them into art and culture through her stories. She is not afraid to remember her life and to place herself through memory in the most hurtful and dangerous of psychic events of her past. Through the weaving of her stories Pilar reclaims those experiences and gains strength from them to share with others. She does more than Pedro Romero does for his culture. Romero recapitulates the rituals of his culture and helps to keep the cultural fabric intact by performing his art "for himself inside" as well as for the public, but Pilar takes the fragments of a broken, war-ravaged culture and puts them back together through the text of her own body, voice, and words into a new, creative, living whole.

Pilar acknowledges at times that she must rely on "illusion" and "blindness" to keep her faith and her love, and she acknowledges that great "causes" like the Republic necessitate a strict inner control—prohibiting one from always acting as one feels. But the overall force of Pilar's way of being is towards fertility of the mind and heart, an organic growth guided by a shaping, visionary consciousness. When Robert Jordan sinks back into the pine-needled floor at the end of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, it is with the confidence...
and knowledge that the principle of Pilar exists and will sustain not only Spain but the regenerative cycles of the human mind.

Pilar is Hemingway’s model of health and his vision of recovery for the prostituted consciousness. It is in a very powerful sense an artistic model, and since Hemingway was the artist creating it, it is in part the model or ideal of his writing self. From this perspective, Pilar is much closer to Hemingway’s “wished self” than any of his male protagonists. She is the storyteller who lasts, the seer who interprets for her culture’s past and by so doing creates its future. In a sense Hemingway’s work is a psychic model of his own mind, and even though the artist may speak for a culture, the journey of the artist into his or her mind is a lonely and difficult one. In *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway speaks of the writer’s desire to know “truly what you really felt, rather than what you were supposed to feel, and had been taught to feel” (2). He says in *Green Hills of Africa* that a writer may reach a “fourth or fifth dimension” if the writer is “serious enough and has luck” (26-27). In his Nobel Prize speech he talks about a writer going “far out past where he can go, out to where no one can help him” (quoted in Baker, 529). I believe that Hemingway is speaking here of a journey into the limitless, oceanic “Great Round” of the mind’s deeper connections not only to its own resources but to all other minds as well. It is what Nick was fishing for in the Big Two-Hearted River. It is what Santiago was seeking in the Gulf Stream. It is a journey of transformation involving symbolic death and birth and the endless return. It is the journey of the artist as representative mind.

Naturally these terms are only metaphors for mysteries too mysterious to speak of in any other way. As Ursula Leguin expresses it: “The artist deals with what cannot be said in words. The artist whose medium is fiction does this in words. The novelist says in words what cannot be said in words” (introduction to *The Left Hand of Darkness*). The “unconscious,” “identity,” “soul,” the “self” itself—these are only common tin cups we dip into the ocean of reality. Our only hope of understanding them in relationship to a writer is
to see them always in movement in the world of his or her narratives. In Hemingway's world the prostitute moves as a human being and symbol with incredible variety and resonance and suggestiveness, leading us always to a greater sense of what the mind and its mysteries meant for Hemingway. Clearly the iconography and the psychology of prostitution as Hemingway understood them held great potency for him as a writer, perhaps representing for him the essence of the human emotional "contract," perhaps representing the essence of himself. We can never hope to exhaust the meaning of any symbol organic to a created work. It may be enough to say it is there, it has tremendous power, and it is a fascinating element in the great body of the writer's art.

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Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars.

—Henry David Thoreau, Walden
Afterword

The Importance of Ernest's Being

He wanted his writing to be judged on its merits rather than on anything he said or did as a man. Many who had met Gertrude Stein, for example, were so impressed by her intelligence that they read the same qualities into her writing. On the other hand, some of the people who had met him personally were convinced by the experience that his books "must be, shall we say, shit." He took pride in his esthetic and financial integrity. In all other respects he felt that he had managed to make an ass of himself.

—Carlos Baker,  
*Hemingway, A Life Story*

Old Lady: You know I like you less and less the more I know you.  
Madame, it is always a mistake to know an author.

—*Death in the Afternoon*
Ernest Hemingway was a tremendously flawed person. It has been more difficult than I have often admitted to myself spending so much time with him these past three years. In so many ways Hemingway violated everything I cherish. He was an insecure man—too often a braggart, a cheat, and a bully. He enjoyed shooting animals and punching people to prove he was “manly.” He was extremely conflicted about women, desiring their approval and admiration for his exploits and dubious sexual performance, and yet resenting them for the insecurity his own sense of inadequacy made him feel. He was a loud-mouthed drunk, alternately abusive and maudlin.

Hemingway was a Reader's Guide to everything wrong with the modern male. He was a scared little boy who had the adult power to hurt what he was afraid of. He was anti-semitic in the typically ignorant way, rattling off self-serving slurs every time he suspected somebody Jewish of having an advantage he didn't have, confusing Jewishness with the rich privilege and intellectualism he feared and desired so much—all the while being self-righteously certain that he had acquired his money and his knowledge in a noble and honest manner.

Hemingway was a sexist in the most banal and destructive of ways. He was obsessed with sex, mostly his own, primarily because he was ashamed and frightened of it—and he blamed women for that fear. In his better nature, he saw women as human beings, but far too often his bullying ego and sexual delusions dominated him into treating women as scolding mothers to be escaped or sexualized maids to be used.

Hemingway was a homophobe of such a familiar kind that nothing really intelligent is left to say about it. He ridiculed what he didn't understand perhaps because he understood it too well.
And yet...there is something fine in Hemingway that won't go away. But I'm not going to bother listing his "good points," because in essence it doesn't matter. He was often generous and kind, but that doesn't make up for the wreckage he left in his wake, like garbage in the Gulf Stream he loved so much. It doesn't matter because his life is not the point. And yet...his life is exceptionally difficult to ignore.

Ernest Hemingway is like the father you wish wasn't yours. So pathetic in his flaws, so embarrassing in his habits, so oppressive in his power. You wish he was noble and self-sacrificing—a shining model of everything good and true. But he's not, and he's your father, and try as you might, you cannot escape seeing yourself in him. That's why you hate him so much. And yet...you cannot hate him without hating yourself, because he gave you life and he is part of you—and so in his own flawed way he brings you face to face with the human part of you that you don't want to see but must accept if you are to be anything at all, especially anything worthwhile.

Ernest Hemingway was not my father, but in a way he was. Because I have spent so much time with him, and because his work has in a sense given birth to my own, I must grudgingly admit that he is a sort of father in my life. Hemingway the person was almost everything I do not want to be. And yet...in Hemingway the writer I see great things. I see the great mysteries and unresolvable passions of the human mind. I see a yearning that took shape in language that now has a life of its own. It is that life that has helped to give me life. In the spirit of this realization, I hope that my dissertation is a fair and truthful response to the life that Hemingway and I have lived together.
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...and so to bed.

— Samuel Pepys