

11-17-2004

From Wounded to Woman: The Demasculinization of Hemingway's Wounded Male Characters

Myla B. Morris
University of South Florida

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd>

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#)

Scholar Commons Citation

Morris, Myla B., "From Wounded to Woman: The Demasculinization of Hemingway's Wounded Male Characters" (2004). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*.
<https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/1169>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

From Wounded to Woman: The Demasculinization
of Hemingway's Wounded Male Characters

by

Myla B. Morris

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of English
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Philip Sipiora, Ph.D.
Lawrence Broer, Ph.D.
Michael Everton, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
November 17, 2004

Keywords: Short stories, Wound Terminology, Feminization, Masculine, Indian Camp

© Copyright 2004, Myla B. Morris

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Introduction	1
From Wounded to Woman: The Demasculinization of Hemingway's Wounded Male Characters	6
References	28
Bibliography	30

From Wounded to Woman: The Demasculinization
of Hemingway's Wounded Male Characters

Myla B. Morris

ABSTRACT

During his time of service to the Italian Army in World War I, Ernest Hemingway was injured. He received a non-life-threatening wound and was forever changed. In his article, "Ernest Hemingway: The Life as Fiction and the Fiction as Life," Jackson J. Benson proposes the idea of Hemingway's "wounding what if?" that follows this course of thought: "What if I were wounded and made crazy?, what would happen if I were sent back to the front? I was only wounded in an accident, what do the really brave ones think of me? (351)" Shortly following the war, Hemingway was wounded a second time, this of an emotional nature. A British nurse whom he had fallen in love with broke his heart by downplaying the relationship they had shared and his emotions for her. These two young experiences seem to have impacted Hemingway's writing a great deal, leading him to color his wounded male characters as feminized. "From Wounded to Woman" is an exploration of a variety of Hemingway's wounded male characters that attempts a connection between their having incurred these wounds and becoming feminized. There is a direct line of logic-of-assertion followed from Hemingway's most popular character, Jake Barnes, through to some of his lesser-known short story stars that traces a path of consistent wounding and subsequent feminization. In the more narrow literary world,

Ernest Hemingway has been known as a masculine author whose tales are of war and suffering. It is my goal to explore the feminine aspects of Hemingway's work through his self-critiques expressed through his leading male characters.

Introduction

The “wounded man” is a mysterious and confusing phenomenon in the writings of Ernest Hemingway. These characters appear frequently in his work, either having suffered some accident, war injury, or even having self-inflicted a wound out of despair. Hemingway uses the wound or the wounded individual to make points about the changes that take place when one realizes his/her frailty, in many instances focusing on man’s relationship to woman. But what does the wound represent? Perhaps it is a symbol of frailty, or rather of strength, or maybe the wound is something much more mysterious and complicated than that. Could it be that the wound is the embodiment of woman and the essential feminine? It may be thought of as contemporary slang to refer to that which makes a woman a woman as a “wound” of sorts; the physical similarity between the female genitals and a deep cut or gash is quite obvious. Like the wound, cut, or gash, the vagina bleeds, and more to the point of this issue, is a source of tremendous pain. This pain can come in many different forms, ranging from the physical pains of menstruation and childbirth to a deeper psychological pain related to feelings of inadequacy and uncleanliness culturally joined to the vagina for purposes of female subjugation¹. But as the phoenix rises out of the ashes, out of pain often comes a degree of strength. For some, going through difficult and painful experiences changes them in unanticipated ways that

¹ Virginia Braun and Celia Kitzinger, “‘Snatch,’ ‘Hole,’ or ‘Honey-pot?’”

evoke a sense of completion or wholeness based on the unity of weakness and pain.

Often, simply because we have heard a word used in a certain manner, we believe that use to be widely known by others. Such is the case of the “wound” terminologies applied in derogatory reference to the female genitalia. Not only is the frequency of their use indeterminable, but there is also no dictionary definition to prove their existence, nor an abundance of information indicating the depth and breadth of their use. There are, fortunately, a few excellent sources, the combination of which gives a broad scope of the uses of these particular colloquial terms. The information supporting the claim that the wound is thought to resemble female genitalia is not only reasonable, but applicable to literary analysis and beneficial on a large scale that extends beyond Hemingway studies.

In 1998, Virginia Braun and Celia Kitzinger (New Zealand and UK respectively) published an empirical study on the knowledge and use of slang words for both male and female genitalia with special emphasis on those pertaining to females. Some of the words listed in the study of 281 undergraduates (156 females and 125 males) follow suit with what could be referred to as colloquial language and come as no surprise. But among those were also words that would hardly be used or referenced in conversation, even among close friends. Included in that list were “gash,” and “black cat with a cut throat.” Terms such as these support the idea that a correlation does exist on a large scale between notions of gashes, wounds, other blood-related injuries and female genitalia (147 and 151). Braun and Kitzinger also noted that while their female subjects were forthcoming with words that negatively describe the female genitalia their male subjects were the primary source of derogatory terms. This is interesting to note because it highlights the idea that men may quite possibly be creating negative terms for that which

they are intimidated by or fail to understand. The implication here is that there is likely nothing wrong with the vagina, but instead a power in its existence strong enough to scare men into fearing that which they are intimidated by.

The visual similarities, although they may at times take a degree of interpretational liberty, as well as the all-too-obvious injurious-bleeding and menstrual-bleeding are all evident points of comparison. The societal notions that have allowed these correlations to exist in a place of (sub)conscious reality and to transform our ideas on what it means to be a woman simply because women have vaginas, or that what it means to be a man and suffer any injury are disturbing. Braun and Kitzinger categorize negative-image word substitutions for female (and male) genitalia as “abjection[s]” or words that exclude the genitals from what would fit within societal norms. “Abjection,” Braun and Kitzinger write, “was invoked in various ways: though reference to [...] wounds (e.g., gash, gaping axe wound). Wound terms often made reference to a violent act.” By abjectifying the female genitalia collectively and removing its mention from any polite or acceptable conversation that which is misunderstood has been essentially eliminated (151). What remains is a shame that women must carry with them; it is this socially-imposed shame that Hemingway’s characters struggle with most extensively. Part of the difficulty these men face is the reconciliation of a negative societal view and an internal sense of empowerment. To be feminized not only carries a stigma, it also bears intense and complicated feelings of understanding just what it is to be both a man and a woman. We see this most clearly in the example of Jake Barnes in his relationship to Brett Ashley. Jake seems to handle her disregard for his emotions in a manner that

only one with infinite understanding would or could. Jake embodies the strength of emotional stability of a man while being able to offer feminine comfort to his friends.

The idea of the wound being vaginal, or conversely female genitalia resembling a wound is in fact, not entirely modern or Anglo-American. In Sri Lankan scholar Selvy Thiruchandran's "The Seductive Feminine Evil and the Creative Femininity", she discusses Hindu examples of poetry, focusing on an author by the name of Pattinatar. In Pattinatar's poetry, Thiruchandran cites lines of verse like, "The 'yoni' is a wound" (cited in Thiruchandran). The root of the word "yoni" allows for the reading of this poetic line to be better understood. "In Sanskrit, *yoni* means vulva and womb, and the *yoni* is the symbol through which the female divine, in the form of the goddess Shakti, is worshiped (her emphasis, Frueh 140). Thiruchandran herself writes, "In the section [of Pattinatar's poem] called Kacitiruhaval in nineteen lines [he] has condemned women in reproachful and extremely repugnant language. Naming the parts of the female anatomy, he calls them the 'snare,' the 'wound' and the entry point of lustful men who are led into the path of 'decay and destruction'" (Thiruchandran). For my purposes, the insights of Thiruchandran are quite poignant: the "yoni" can lead to both decay and destruction. These two words will later resound quite loudly when comparing them to the instances in which some of our pro/an-tagonists find themselves feminized by injury. Once these men inhabit the essentially feminine, they will indeed be led down these self-same paths of which Pattinatar warns. These negative paths, however, are not closed-ended. Further along, past difficult periods of self-reproach, can be an oasis of understanding.

Taking a contemporary feminist view of female genital slandering, Joanna Frueh sees all that happens in and around the vagina (particularly intercourse and medical

examination) as the source of its wounding, as opposed to the vagina being wounded as a part of its functional nature. Despite the source and motive of naming, the appellation remains as real in Frueh's words of reclamation as in those of Pattinatar, "vagina as a bleeding hole [...]; labia and clitoris as wound and mutilation" (138). What she attempts to do is recover that "wound" as valuable still in its possession of inherent beauty. "Beauty, say the dictionaries, is that which provides the greatest pleasure," Frueh writes. "[The vagina's] beauty is not in its appearance [...] but rather in what the vagina can do, in what it does, and in what it can set in motion" (139). What Frueh illustrates is the positive points to this argument: the wound (if like the vagina) is capable enacting great change for the better. If the potential present is recognized, then that beauty which is not aesthetic could be valued still.

Let us not confuse the adoption of womanhood or femininity with homosexuality, for the two, although seemingly related, are not in this instance comparable. For the most part the male characters under discussion are driven largely by heterosexual impulses which find resistance because of their assumed femininities. These femininities are of a sensory and emotional nature and not a physical embodiment acted out in changed language or mannerisms. The struggles within them lay in their inability to reconcile the conflict between urges and ability. What can be perceived as homosexual in nature is more likely a standard quality of humanity to be perceived as valuable to others; the wounded male character is on his own search for validation from not only himself, but also from those around him. The saddest state we will find him in is that of frustration over his own impending death, certain that he will never again be perceived in masculine wholeness.

From Wounded to Woman: The Demasculinization of Hemingway's Wounded Man

Ernest Hemingway is an ideal target author for making comparisons between his wounded male characters and the concept of the feminized male. His works of fiction have been widely discussed in regard to many subjects related to: the masculine vs. the feminine; the wounded hero; and gender-role reversal². What has not been explored, however, is the combination of wounding and feminization. In his article "Hemingway's Masochism, Sodomy, and the Defiant Woman," Richard Fantina does come close to the subject when he suggests that wounding may lead a male character toward a masochistic relationship which may quite possibly include heterosexual sodomy, but he falls short of suggesting a sexual role reversal based on the wounding (Fantina). It is where Fantina leaves off that I wish to continue, considering characters that are often not regarded in the Hemingway catalog of wounded men, applying a model that follows a direct course of logic from masculinity to wounding to feminization to domination by a female subject (which may be referred to as gender-role reversal). The idea is not to make any assertions of conscious decisions on behalf of Hemingway to connect the wounds of his male characters with feminization via a direct wound/vagina course of logic but rather, links are made within a combination of some definite authorial moves which connect the wounded man to a weakness associated with the feminine. It is my hope to draw a line of

² Richard Fantina, "Hemingway's Masochism, Sodomy, and the Dominant Woman"; Alex Vernon, "War, Gender, and Ernest Hemingway"; Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes, "Hemingway's Genders."

conscious recognition between the weaknesses that may be associated with injury and those associated with the feminine; likewise I will discuss a connection between the strength which may follow wounding and strengths related to notions of the eternal feminine and femininity aligned with nature as it concerns certain Hemingway characters. Through these connections it may become evident that the actions which define the sexes have become blurred. At times it will become evident that the author is actually privileging the feminine over the injured masculine (whether that injury is physical or psychological), possibly in an attempt to highlight ineffectiveness in the wounded male which mirrors an emotional and possibly sexual impotency that Hemingway himself experienced post-WWI.

At the tender age of nineteen Ernest Hemingway was working for the Red Cross, “handing out chocolate and cigarettes [...] in a forward observation post where he had no business to be,” when a trench mortar sent hundreds of pieces of shrapnel flying through the air, lodging themselves in his legs (Reynolds 18). Re-enactments of this scene occur in various forms in Hemingway’s fiction, none more famous than Frederick Henry’s war wounding in *A Farewell to Arms*, and its lasting effect on the man was felt in various aspects of his life including his interactions with the opposite sex. There are some more and some less obvious reasons for Hemingway’s war injuries affecting him in the manner they did. There is also reason to believe that the circumstances leading up to and following the wounding left a certain responsibility in his hands that, in needing periodic maintenance in story-telling, left the author with a sense of inadequacy that followed him throughout his life.

While recuperating in a hospital in Milan, Hemingway had plenty of time to contemplate his fate and compare it to the fates of those less fortunate than himself like the “Italian between Ernest and the shell. He was killed instantly, while another, standing a few feet away, had both his legs blown off” (qtd. in Reynolds 19). In the biography *Young Hemingway*, Michael Reynolds gives readers a mind’s-eye view of what the confusion, frustration and uncertainty of being wounded in “another country with surgeons who could not tell him in English if his leg was coming off or not,” might have been like for a boy who was not yet out of his teens (21). All the young man knew was that his leg was badly wounded and that others in similar positions had faced amputation. The prospect of amputation presents interesting parallels where castration is concerned. The legs and the male organs, sharing a general area of familiarity on the male body, run a comparable risk of injury. It is quite possible that upon realizing that his legs were so badly perforated Hemingway would have thought himself to be increasingly lucky for not having sustained any traumatic injury to his male organs. It is through Jake Barnes that readers are able to see Hemingway’s deepest fears related to this type of wounding being acted out in the manifestation of the awful possibility of having one’s penis severed. Jake’s fate is structured around the consequences of actually losing one’s masculinity. His story is brought to life with the frustration being sexually incompatible, physically speaking, as the character’s central dramatic conflict of the novel.

Hemingway was forced to deal with his war injuries in ways that extended beyond the physical, too. Beginning the day of the mortar shell explosion, the romantic tale of a soldier who was never soldier began. The Italian Army, in “need of American heroes to honor, for they needed American support in the war,” was quick to make that

hero out of Ernest Hemingway (Reynolds 21). From the circumstances which led to his being at the explosion site to the tale of unbelievable heroics in carrying other soldiers on his back after his knees were completely shot out, the true tale of Hemingway's experience that day became blurred into a web of equally believable, yet infinitely altering stories³.

Upon returning home to Oak Park, Illinois, Hemingway continued to embellish on his war experiences, but was never caught on the gross exaggerations. Hemingway needed something to make people remember him and "[n]o one from Oak Park would remember him for his athletic ability, but the effort was there; the need was there. To be an American man he had to excel," and as the world would soon discover, Hemingway excelled above almost all others in the art of creating fiction from real-life events (Reynolds 27). As Reynolds reveals:

Seven years later he would let his Nick Adams, wounded in Milan, live with his secret fears:

we all knew that being wounded, after all, was really an accident. I was never ashamed of the ribbons, though, and sometimes, after the cocktail hour, I would imagine having done all the things they had done to get their medals; but walking home at night through the empty streets with the cold wind and all the shops closed, trying to keep near the street lights, I know I would never have done such things, and I was very much afraid to die, and often lay in bed at night by myself, afraid to die and wondering how I would be when I went back to the front again. (34)

³ Michael Reynolds, *The Young Hemingway*.

The years of well kept up stories took their toll on Hemingway, causing him to question his own self-worth in not only accepting the false glory given to him, but also in continuing to perpetuate a series of falsities. What being wounded in the war had actually done was leave the man, then a boy, in constant question of his masculinity. This devastation, coupled with Hemingway's first experiences of rejected love seems to have intensified a brief, although traumatic, experience that would proliferate his writing for all of his life.

Some may choose to downplay the impact the Agnes Von Kurowsky, the love interest of a bed-ridden Hemingway had on his life, but his experience with her seems to have informed his decisions and actions for many years. According to Reynolds, "Agnes may not have thought theirs a serious affair, but Hemingway certainly did," which became evident after Agnes' rejection when Hemingway exhibited attributes of dependency on women. "Reacting almost like a father," Reynolds wrote, "he disapproved of his sisters' boyfriends and eventually of their husbands" (61). The control did not end with his sisters, but extended to his wives as well. The desire to control a female subject and frustration at the inability to do so was the central conflict of Hemingway's life. He quickly divorced the most independent of his wives, Martha, out of anger at her extreme independence and unwillingness to be dictated to. With the desire to control came a dependence on the support of that he wished to dominate. It was found that, "[h]e would always need the support of women, need their presence about him," (61). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that as with other aspects of his life, Hemingway imitated the concerns of an ineffective husband in his fiction.

Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry are Hemingway's two most popular wounded heroes, and although not the focus of this study, as major figures in his writings, they deserve at least a glance. Barnes, in fact, is a quintessential example of the wound theory at work in Hemingway's fiction. A great deal of the plot of *The Sun Also Rises* is based on Jake Barnes' irreparable war injury and while many characters engage Jake in light conversation on the topic he, too, seems to be preoccupied with it at times. In a self-description of his altered male form Jake lightheartedly says, "Of all the ways to be wounded. I suppose it was funny" (38). But his wound is actually the source of all of Jake's evils: obsessive love, alcoholism and even a negative self-image. Having presumably lost his penis, Jake likely finds his mirror image (that which elicited the above-mentioned response) to be ironically like that of a woman. In this instance the wounding has a double meaning: he has been emotionally transformed into a woman because of his wounding, though *despite* the emasculating nature of it, and he has physically been transformed into a woman-like figure *because* of the nature of it. The wound goes on to affect even the small aspects of Jake's life, leading to the self-perpetuating problems: unrequited love for Brett Ashley and constant and excessive alcohol consumption. Adding further irony to the feminization of the ever-masculine Jake Barnes (avid bullfighting fan and fisherman), he and his love interest seem to trade sexual roles with Brett often taking the lead of aggressor and "man-izer" to the jealous and introspective Jake.

Richard Fantina characterizes Jake's relationship to Brett as masochistic in nature. He asserts that this masochism is in fact sexual in nature, and leads to a reverse sexual relationship where the woman is the dominant partner. Fantina does not claim that the

wounding has caused any feminization but instead that, “[...] the wounded heroes exhibit non-genital sexuality and occasionally submit to passive sodomy. Their general physical and psychological submission to women who alternately punish, humiliate, and nurture these suffering men, sufficiently demonstrates masochism” (Fantina). The flipped sexual position of Brett and Jake enhances the idea that Jake has truly embodied the feminine and become the penetrated (Fantina). In example of this alleged sodomy, Fantina references the *SAR* scene in which Brett sends the Count away, after which follows a vague sexual transaction during which “Brett Ashley and Jake Barnes, despite his debilitating wound, apparently manage to consummate their relationship during ‘Then’ and ‘Then later’ gaps in the seventh chapter,”(Fantina).

Unlike Jake, Frederic Henry’s injury does not demasculinize him in a literal fashion, but it does create in him an emotional sensitivity not seen in the opening chapters of the *A Farewell to Arms*; the first-introduced Lt. Henry is casual in pursuit of a relationship with Nurse Barkley. It is not until Lt. Henry is in the hospital in Milan that he begins the Brett-and-Jake-like relationship with Catherine. Quoting Alex Vernon, “Frederic falls in love with her in Book II only after his wounding, after he has found himself in her care. After, that is, he finds himself in a passive position, which in Hemingway’s time was associated with the feminine.” Just as Brett Ashley is controlling nurse to the sick and injured post-wounding Jake, Catherine serves an identical role for Henry. While the seemingly natural nurse/patient interaction takes place, the dominance of Catherine’s character – that which was derived from her inspiration, Agnes von Kurowski – comes though more clearly. Lt. Henry is constantly desirous of her company and presence. Lt. Henry’s flight to Catherine after his near-capture re-enforces the

reversal of relationship dynamic that has transpired between Lt. Henry and Catherine; in a time of danger he is drawn to the strength and protection that he sees in her.

Among the ranks of wounded characters like Jake Barnes and Frederick Henry are some of Hemingway's less renowned characters found in his short stories. These are male characters who find themselves equally in conflict with a demasculinization that has taken place as a result of wounding. The men who I will examine fall shy of Hemingway's typical wounded male in that they have not been injured in the line of battle, so to speak. But what can be learned of them and their situations requires borrowing from scholarship on Hemingway's war victims. Much work has been done examining the effects of war on Hemingway's male characters, particularly the wounded veteran like Nick Adams in "A Way You'll Never Be." And so, as far as we can tell, Hemingway's war heroes to some degree echo "his wounding what-if?" (Benson 351). Jackson J. Benson sees the "wounding what-if?" as a series of questions that young Hemingway may have asked himself when injured in WWI. "What if I were wounded and made crazy," he may have asked. "[W]hat would happen if I were sent back to the front? I was only wounded in an accident, what do the really brave ones think of me?" (351). These proposed questions seem to have guided much of Hemingway's war wound writing and they follow the line of logic found in Nick's passages of self-questioning. But what about the characters who were not wounded at war but in other ways? Were they to suffer a different fate?

In order to make a clean break from the over-represented war hero, this study will examine "The Undefeated," whose main character is Manuel Garcia, a spent bullfighter who is reluctant to relinquish his dreams of bullfighting glory. In "The Undefeated" the

reader is torn away from Hemingway's cradle of familiarity (where good fiction is built upon the relationship between a man, a woman and a war) and treated to a transverse world wherein a bull occupies the place of woman-figure. Following Garcia's tale is that of the un-named Indian husband in "Indian Camp," who inflicts his own death wound in light of demasculinization. His case is particularly interesting in that there are several injurious moments that transpire both before and during the action of the story; some of the injuries are of a physical nature and others of an emotional. The final character to be analyzed is the complex, dying Harry from "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" whose accidental injury leads him into a place of self-loathing and unbearable dependence on a woman. Harry's situation most closely resembles those of Frederick Henry and Jake Barnes, although wisdom Hemingway gained from experience gathered between writing the novel and this particular short story, led to create a terribly embittered character that recognizes the dramatic change in the relationship between him and his wife subsequent to his wounding.

For Manuel Garcia the initial wounding took place a few months before the story begins, having lead to a hospitalization from which he has recently emerged. His injury seems to have been of such a deadly nature that Don Miguel Retana, the fighting agent whose desk he is positioned in front of during the opening lines says to him "I thought they'd killed you" (236). But no, as Manuel "knock[s] with his knuckles on the desk," we know that he has barely come out of it with his life. However, for the unfortunate Manuel, the beatings have not ceased with a prolonged stint in the hospital; they will continue until the end.

The machine which allows movement in the story's plot is a psychological state of denial which controls Manuel's (in)actions. As seen with other characters in similar situations, Manuel is in a constant battle with the feminine, here encapsulated in the form of a bull. Spanish bullfighting history, or *tauromachy*, posits that the bullfight is a "folk ritual" through which the traditional roles of man and woman are acted out (Mitchell 396). What Manuel must believe is that success in the bullring will equal accomplishment of the impossible feat of regaining of his masculinity.

The reader is aware of Manuel's state of altered masculinity and therefore changed potency as soon as he enters Retana's office and his family's fateful lineage is disclosed; the untimely death of his brother at the horns of a now-stuffed bull foreshadows the possibility of Manuel's own impalement. Manuel is barely successful in coercing Retana into allowing him into the *corrida*, which becomes yet another reason for the reader to suspect some sort of short-coming on his behalf although this is not confirmed until later in the story when Manuel meets with his friend Zurito, a picador. At this cafe meeting Manuel reveals the psychological roots of his self-deception, telling his friend, "But I was going great when I got hurt" (243). Manuel can not and will not come to accept that the wounding has somehow changed him, as it has instead blinded him to his ineffectiveness as a bull-fighter and as a man.

An old bullfighting proverb helps explain the link between Garcia's desire to return to the *corrida* and the return of his masculinity. In his article, "Bullfighting: The Ritual Origin of Scholarly Myths," Timothy Mitchell critically interprets previous work on taurine history and vocabulary by Carrie B. Douglass. Mitchell uses Douglass's title, "*toro muerto, vaca es*," which translates to "the dead bull is a cow," to illustrate certain

points about misreading bullfighting terminology (399). What Mitchell argues is that this particular term is used to describe a medium of exchange, but Douglass's article encourages readers to study the numerous points of comparison between the bullfight's importance to Spanish society and the relationship between men and women within that culture (Douglass). Both Douglass and Mitchell respectively support and oppose premises on the social implications of bullfighting published by Julian Pitt-Rivers (1984). What Pitt-Rivers discusses closely parallels Douglass's arguments on the comparative male/female bull/torero relationship that Mitchell challenges. In an assault on Pitt-Rivers' rape theory on bull killing Mitchell writes:

When the matador finally plunges his sword into the bull's withers, he completes the process of humiliation and feminization with a symbolic rape (1984:38). But that is not all: since the "vagina-wound" between the bull's shoulder blades is thoroughly bloodied (from the pic and *banderillas*), Pitt-Rivers concludes that the bullfighter heroically breaks the taboo against copulation during menstruation at the moment he perpetrates his 'rape' (1984:38-9). (his emphasis 401)

This passage (a combination of both Mitchell and Pitt-Rivers' philosophies) juxtaposes the act of rape with the finale of a bullfight, which while quite interesting in theory is somewhat irrelevant to my particular reading of "The Undefeated." What is relevant is correlation made between the wound inflicted by the sword of the torero and a sexual penetration of the bull's flesh; the wound becomes vagina. Douglass inserts an interesting table that translates Spanish words with meanings relevant to both sex and bullfighting. Among those words is *estoque* whose double meanings are "sword" and

“penis” (253). Understanding said relationship brings a deeper meaning to much of this argument: In Pitt-Rivers’ theory the rape occurs when the torero’s *estoque* penetrates the wound/vagina of the bull; thus, incurring the wound has feminized the bull.

The *corrida* itself is to become a stage set for a combination of not only tragedy and failure, but also revelation. We see Manuel, his faithful friend Zurito at his side as a token of reluctant support, an aging man thrown against the background of younger, quicker, and stronger matadors. He cannot see himself as we see him. Zurito slips into the maternal role of comforter and supporter to the younger men: “That’s a good name,” he says encouragingly to the young gypsy, and then, “You’ve got a good hand,” follows as compliment to equally young Hernandez. These other young fighters are the future in the arena and Manuel is the past, but not a disjointed past, instead, his wounding has made him a mother-like figure. Through his pain and loss others are born so that they too may enjoy the thrill that has been his.

The crowd too is lost to Garcia as the rousing applause heard in the first third of the fight, when the younger and more dazzling matadors captivated the arena, dies down and transforms to sounds of taunting. The crowd will not be satiated by simple boos or gestures, they elevate the electricity of their vocal displeasure, allowing it to converge with physical signs. Garcia is well aware of the escalating distaste of the audience when “[t]he first cushions thrown down out of the dark missed him,” which is followed by the key emasculating moment when, “something whished through the air and struck by him. Manuel leaned over and picked it up. It was his sword” (263). Here Hemingway confuses the reader a bit. Is the sword restoring his masculinity or throwing its loss back in his face? As we know from Douglass’s study, the sword and penis are one in the

capsule of *estoque*, and thus the sword serves as an anatomical metonymy, thrown into the arena perhaps as a reader's guide. Along with the rest of the garbage hurled at Manuel, his masculinity/his sword, represents yet another useless item to be added to the collection of cushions and the empty champagne bottle. Adding insult to injury, at the heart of the insulting action is none other than he whose opinion matters most, the newspaper critic and reporter who alone possessed the ability to tell the world of the triumphant re-emergence of Manuel Garcia. Sadly, the gender-role transfer has been completed. Traditionally in tauromachy it is understood that, "The bull-fighter is to the bull as man is to woman," but in this instance, Garcia having been feminized, the bull is now the man to the bullfighter's woman. If killing (dominating) a bull validates the masculinity of the torero, then Garcia's overwhelming desire to return to the *corrida*, against all odds, and slay his bull is an act of necessity. Without the death of the bull Garcia's gender-identity is forever changed.

As we know, the *corrida* is a losing battle for Garcia, and the references to his demasculinization continue nearly until the last page when in a Delilah-like gesture his friend Zurito mocks an attempt at cutting off his *coleta*, his pigtail and sign of occupation. This is not necessary, however, because Garcia's injuries are grave and it is likely that he will not live to fight another day. In a final notion drawing upon the earliest suggestions that Garcia lives in world of self-deceptions, he makes false assumptions about the non-presence of a priest signifying that he will not die. As "[t]he doctor's assistant put[s] the cone over Manuel's face and he inhale[s] deeply," Garcia will go off in an uncertain slumber (266).

As usual, Hemingway's endings do not give any clear answers as to the fates of his characters, but there are certain assumptions that can be made. The title alone of "The Undefeated" can be taken as irony even from the beginning of the story. In a literal sense, Manuel Garcia does, in fact, kill his bull, but what is so ironic is that he is grossly unable to accept his own defeat in having been wounded by that same bull. In his mind, things are always "going good" and so the possibility of true loss does not exist. Perhaps as Zurito attempts to shed him of his locks of imagined strength, he is attempting to open Garcia's eyes to the all-encompassing changes in his life.

The un-named husband in "Indian Camp" wrestles with a peculiar demasculinization which occupies two faces: both the emotional and the physical. Similarly to Garcia he is wounded before the opening scene, however, this tragic figure self-inflicts his second wound outside the narration and just in time for the closing act. Hemingway immediately creates a parallel between the laboring wife of the story whose natural wound is causing her much pain and distress, and her husband who has accidentally (we presume) "cut his foot very badly with an ax three days before," creating an open wound that causes him a pain and discomfort of his own (92). The husband and wife are further aligned in an image of duality by the presentation of their prone positions, one on top and one on the bottom of twin bunks. The husband's ineffectiveness as both a husband and father is established both through the statement of his injury, his unusual presence in the delivery room and actions taken upon hearing his wife's screams, following which he "roll[s] over against the wall"(92) in avoidance and fear (Meyers).

As Hemingway studies have broadened connections have been made between and about certain characters, pulling evidence in unanticipated directions. In particular, the determination has been made that the information surrounding the Indian husband is not as clear as it would seem from the reference point of a basic initial reading. In 1988 Jeffrey Meyers published an article titled “Hemingway’s Primitivism and ‘Indian Camp’” which delivers a short chronicle and critique of scholarship on this controversial short story. Meyers travels back to 1962 and some of the earliest studies on the story performed by Thomas Tanselle, tracing the theoretical evolution of “Indian Camp” though a span of twenty years to Joseph Flora’s 1982 *Hemingway’s Nick Adams* and what Meyers calls, “the longest elucidation of the story,” (213). The points of others, which Meyers systematically shoots down, reflect ideas relevant to my specific reading of the Indian husband’s wound(s). Specifically, I would like to focus on a theme of duality in the text as it affects a duality of wounding; in each example of duality there is a convincing tie in to the wound which resolves the story’s tension. Certainly, readers of this particular story could find tremendous fault with labeling the tragedy of the climax a resolution of tensions, but it is worth discussing the conflicts which exist between the characters (amongst themselves and with themselves) and how this simple act changes the dynamics of the text. Before continuing on with the examples of duality, it is necessary to clarify some points central to my argument. In particular, no reading of “Indian Camp” would be valid without thoughtful consideration of the Indian child’s paternity. With careful consideration, and upon applying my own wound theory to the story, I was better able to approach certain pieces of information in the text as substantiation supporting non-relation to the Indian father.

Evidence in the text quite apparently lends to a reading in which Uncle George is implicated as a potential father to the Indian woman's child (Tanselle qtd. in Meyers 212). I would like to explore the circumstances, both inter-textual and character-based that would lead to this possibility beginning with the nature of the Indian husband. As I stated earlier, the husband's presence in the room as well as his axe wound suggest a level of ineffectiveness as a husband that Meyers refers to as "passivity" (219). The benefits of receiving this suggestion of passivity are reading his ineffectiveness as a cause for, first, the wife's impregnation by another man and, second, his decision to commit suicide rather than continue to engage himself in the lives of his wife and her child. Meyers even makes reference to specific examples of disengagement in the narration as evidence, pointing out that even "[t]he passive tense of 'His throat had been cut' suggests the passivity of the Indian" (219).

Additional pieces of textual evidence only support the suggestion of the paternity of Uncle George. The first bit is found upon Nick, his father, and Uncle George's arrival at the camp and reads as such: "Uncle George gave both the Indians cigars," as they disembarked the boat (91). Other suggestions of Uncle George's paternity follow, however this first example alone however provides much stronger evidence than subsequent ones; who other than the expectant father hands out cigars at the birth of a child? Once the men arrive at the cabin, the non-paternal status of the ill-fated non-father (whose relationship has already been put into question simply by his counter-cultural presence in the birthing room) is accentuated by his pipe smoking – the smoking of that *other* than a cigar. In considering the duality of smoking devices, the cigar is unquestionably the more phallic of the two and Uncle George being the bearer of that

phallus has asserted his paternal dominance in the room. The husband's smoking device is the objective correlative of "Indian Camp": the pipe is a vaginal representation; a hollowed out receptacle at the end of long tube or channel. This is the first link between the wounded Indian husband and his newly incurred femininity.

When the possible father, Uncle George, is assisting with the delivery the expectant mother bites him. This infliction of pain can be seen as her attempt at transposing upon him the pain that he has placed upon her. In keeping with that line of thinking, perhaps it was an emotional pain which accompanied recognition of the man who had cuckolded him, joined with the impending birth of a child that was not his, that led to the husband's first accident. In anticipation of the true demasculinization that would occur with the birth of the child, he figuratively castrates himself with the axe. When the husband decides to end his suffering, tortured by the presence of the potential father of his wife's child, he creates a wound that attempts head severing – castration reference included. The image is furthered as the man's blood runs from his wound, pooling in his bunk. As the man's suffering comes to an end, his wife is similarly being tortured, bleeding, we must imagine, from her the inability of her inherent organs of femininity to control and release the male presence within her body.

Meyers posits, and others have speculated, that the husband's suicide is an act of protection for the mother and newborn child, distracting any evil spirits that may linger in the room (217). The man's suicide can also be seen as his creating a large enough wound for the child to pass into this world through. What Meyers suggest is that "[t]he husband's second mutilation intensifies his first, the gash on throat repeats the one on her belly" (218). By his death another is given life, and so the cycle is complete as the

husband becomes woman and mother, birthing his/her child and releasing him/herself to eternity as the feminine presence he has become, in one fell swoop. In this instance we are presented with an image of the wound similar to that which Joanne Frueh speaks where the vagina is beautiful because of what it represents. If the husband's wound is his replication of the female, and its purpose is to aide his wife and unborn child, then the action is certainly instilled with an inherent beauty.

It is possible to discuss other images of duality in the text and the role that each existence plays in the Indian husband's feminization. Most obvious of all dualities is the duality of fathers and sons; for the unborn child there are two potential fathers, but when his birth is complete there remain two fathers and two sons: Nick's father and Uncle George as fathers and Nick and new Indian child as sons. This masculine presence is an important sign because it signals the subjugation and destruction of the feminine: the mother who has been incised and stitched, and the husband whose wounding had feminized him. In return to the husband, his wounds provide an additional duality in their existence and purpose. Because there are two it is easy to apply dual meanings to them; certainly Hemingway was not so straight forward an author as to leave out all symbolism; we must infer too that two wounds could not be simply that – two wounds. Rather, it is obvious from the husband's actions that at least one of the physical wounds he exhibits is representative of an emotional one.

As they row off into the early morning, Nick questions his father about the source of the man's pain and necessity of escaping his life. "He couldn't stand things, I guess," Nick's father responds, leaving the reader to surmise what exactly he could not stand (95). Was it the pain of a wife who could not be satisfied or the knowledge that her child

was not his own? Was it the inability to live the life of an ineffective and feminized male? I assert that it was rather a combination of the final two, joined with a prohibition from living life from a feminine perspective.

The probable fate of Garcia, and the certain fate of the Indian husband, is similarly the fate of Harry of “The Snows of Kilimanjaro.” Harry, too, has incurred his injury prior to the opening of the story, and here we must pause to consider Hemingway’s intent in leaving the incident in which the characters incur their injuries out of his texts. Because Hemingway did not specifically remember the exact instance of his own wounding, perhaps it became too difficult to re-enact a scene that one was not entirely certain of. After an extended stay in a hospital, the aspect of being wounded he was most comfortable with would necessarily have been the post-trauma.

A majority of the men are left sexually impotent following their wounding. Solely Lt. Henry is able to function as a sexually active male following his run-in with a jagged piece of shrapnel, and likely, that is a result of the autobiographical nature of that particular novel. The rest of the characters, however, are largely separated from the author himself on any overly obvious level. Harry does in some respects represent the author, though, but unlike Lt. Henry his resemblance is to a much older and disillusioned Hemingway who had seen and experienced enough in life to be confident in the words he wished to promote to his readers. In many ways Harry is the Hemingway of the safari, the narrator of *The Green Hills of Africa*, and also David Bourne of *The Garden of Eden*. Harry is angry at his injury, and instead of enduring a swift and largely painful demise, he suffers through the long introspection that accompanies the death of one who has not written all that he has to say. Reflecting on Hemingway’s own untimely end, it in some

ways parallels the death of Harry; Hemingway was also on his fourth marriage and full of bitterness about writing that he could no longer perform. The words he uses sound all too familiar and haunting upon speculation of Hemingway's own reflections at the time before his death.

Now he would never write the things he had saved to write until he knew enough to write them well. Well, he would not have to fail at trying to write them either. Maybe you could never write them, and that was why you put them off and delayed starting. Well he would never know, now. (54)

The line which discusses the (assumed) 'good' fortune of not having to fail at trying to write resonates particularly loudly against the backdrop of Hemingway's own fear of failure. This revelation gives more credibility to the proposition that Harry was possibly a character that foreshadowed what was to become of Hemingway's own life. It may not have been the writer that shaped his art, but quite the reverse. Was Hemingway, too, not wounded at many points in his life, slowly seeing the change that had occurred within him, the change which finally led to revelations of sexual identity so shockingly revealed in the posthumous publication *The Garden of Eden*? Yet thirty years into the past he had already been chronicling David's - wasn't he too a writer, married to a "rich bitch" who supported and loved his writing and took him to the lovely hotels of Paris on her family trust - as well as his own thoughts at the time of death through Harry (58).

In Harry's case, the author deals with his wounding in a manner that shows resistance to, and anger at, the feminine that has crept into him, and he feels is the subsequent stealing of his manhood. His pent up frustration is manifested in negative

comments directed at all that and whom he has grown to dislike; this arises dually from situational misfortune (incurring the scratch and its subsequent infection) and the result of that misfortune being his transformation into one who is like his wife (Memsahib). As death quickens, Harry begins to lament the passing of his maleness, fantasizing and recalling the women in his life. These women are, as a whole, representative of that which he can no longer have and no longer be. In speaking of the subject he is quite calm, telling Memsahib, “The only thing I ever really liked to do with you I can’t do now” (58). Harry’s self confession of his wound’s having consumed his sexuality is important here. It establishes a direct connection between being wounded and losing one’s maleness. Harry is so consumed by identification with the masculine that he cannot appreciate the changes that have already taken place and those which continue to occur until the end of the story. Through his feminization, Harry has gained the trait of intuition, and accepts the knowledge that his salvation is will not be terrestrial, with a tremendous amount of dignity, despite compliant with the life he once lived.

In death, Harry has his own maternal experience. He is carried over the plains populated with zebra and wildebeeste, in a final journey toward the eternal feminine that lies within and around them (76). And as he is made aware of his final destination, Kilimanjaro, he knows that he is returning to the feminine. The giant volcano, giver and taker of life, is a symbol of the ever-opening wounds of the earth. Like the cut, the volcano bleeds red, its fluids rushing from somewhere deep within its core. Like the gash, the volcano can kill. The volcano, the home of Harry’s final return is one of Earth’s mothers, and in returning to her, he is to become a part of the eternal feminine.

The number of Hemingway's male characters that experience some degree of physical wounding and go on, live or die, as emasculated and sexually ineffective persons is great enough for these links to be considered more than a mere coincidence. That Hemingway thoroughly contemplated and experimented with sexual identity is well known. Other layers of this are the results to the questions which ask: what can change a man and/or what traumatic incidents play a role in sexual ineffectiveness? The idea that to incur a cut or gash of some sort would be relayed into inheriting the feminine burden is natural; it is only women who must endure pain out of the natural processes of their bodies. Additionally, it is the female form which allows life to pass into and out of it – either through birth or menstruation. For the wounded male, the experiences of pain and bleeding are unfamiliar and unnatural, derived from that which is naturally feminine. Upon encountering these experiences they exhibit a degree of confusion and anger at their life situations. But many of these wounded male characters are able to experience at a beauty beyond life that encompasses their hopes and dreams: Romero may be a champion bullfighter again; the Indian husband has safely seen his wife and child through a dangerous and painful birthing process; and Harry has escaped the endless situations of attempting to find satisfaction in the company of another. For each, his world does become complete, and the only requisite is surrender to that which is natural and vulnerable while still remaining in control. Surrender to the feminine with which the wounded man becomes impregnated at the height of his vulnerability proves for each man to be the most difficult task to accomplish at the end of his life.

References

- Benson, Jackson J. "Ernest Hemingway: The Life as Fiction and the Fiction as Life"
American Literature 61.3 (1989): 345-358.
- Braun, Virginia; Kitzinger, Celia. "'Snatch,' 'Hole,' or 'Honey-Pot'? Semantic
Categories and the Problem of Nonspecificity in Female Genital Slang." *The
Journal of Sex Research* 38.2 (2001): 146-158.
- Douglass, Carrie B. "'toro muerto, vaca es': An Interpretation of the Spanish Bullfight."
American Ethnologist 11.2 (1984): 242- 258.
- Fantina, Richard. "Hemingway's Masochism, Sodomy, and the Dominant Woman."
Hemingway Review 23.1 (2003): 84 – 105. 1 October 2004
<[http://lion.chadwyk.com.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/searchFulltext.do?id=R01698603&
divLevel...>](http://lion.chadwyk.com.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/searchFulltext.do?id=R01698603&divLevel...)
- Frueh, Joanna. "Vaginal Aesthetics." *Hypatia* 18.4 (2003): 137 – 158.
- Hemingway, Ernest. "Indian Camp." *Ernest Hemingway: The Short Stories*. New
York : Scribner, 1960.
- . "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." *Ernest Hemingway: The Short Stories*. New York :
Scribner, 1964.
- . *The Sun Also Rises*. New York: Scribner, 1954.
- . "The Undefeated." *Ernest Hemingway: The Short Stories*. New York : Scribner,

1960.

Meyers, Jeffrey. "Hemingway's Primitivism and 'Indian Camp.'" *Twentieth Century*

Literature 34.2 (1988): 211-222.

Mitchell, Timothy J. "Bullfighting: The Ritual Origin of Scholarly Myths." *The Journal*

of American Folklore 99.394 (1986): 394-414.

Reynolds, Michael. *The Young Hemingway*. New York : Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1987.

Thiruchandran, Selvy. "The Seductive Feminine Evil and the Creative Femininity."

Ideology, Caste, Class and Gender (1997) 56-64. 1 October 2004

<<http://rdsweb2.rdsinc.com/taxis/rds/suite/+VoDe5WV3wwwwwFqz6W9mkW88XxFqzB...>>.

Vernon, Alex. "War, Gender, and Ernest Hemingway." *The Hemingway Review* 22.1

(2002) : 34(22). 2 February 2004

<http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/945/562/46240973w2/purl=rc1_ITO_F_0_A9477...>.

Bibliography

Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*. New York : Scribner, 1957.

Kimbel, Bobby Ellen, ed. *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 102: American Short-Story Writers, 1910 – 1945, Second Series*. The Gale Group (1991): 127-165.

Quick, Paul S. “Hemingway’s ‘A Way You’ll Never Be’ and Nick Adams’s search for identity.” *Hemingway Review* 22.2 (2003): 30(16).

Raabe, David M. “Hemingway’s anatomical metonymies.” *Journal of Modern Literature* 23.1 (1999): 159 – 163.

Semproera, Margot. “Nick at night: nocturnal metafiction in three Hemingway short stories.” *Hemingway Review* 22.1 (2002): 19-33.