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Hemingway's Portrayal of Women in *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber, Cat in the Rain* and A Farewell to Arms

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Hemingway's Portrayal of Women in ***The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber***, ***Cat in the Rain*** *and* **A Farewell to Arms**

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Date: October 8th, 2017

Signed: BENMEBAREK Wassila

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my family: my father, who set the example and who will forever be my role model and my reference; my mother, who is always showing us the way and striving for our well-being; and my brothers, who have always been loving and caring, despite my really indirect way to be loving and caring.

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Abstract

This dissertation deals with the representation of women in three of Ernest Hemingway's literary works: the two short stories *Cat in the Rain* and *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*, and the novel A Farewell to Arms. It seeks to address the common assumption, spread among readers and literary critics, according to which Hemingway's two-facetted portrayal of his women characters is overly-simplistic, dualistic and stereotyped. In doing so, the present work aims to investigate the extent to which this belief is accurate and applicable when analyzing Hemingway's female protagonists.

To achieve this purpose, the dissertation uses Simone de Beauvoir's and Mary Roberts Coolidge's theory of the social construction of gender, where the process and effects of women conditioning are looked upon. It also relies on the literary theory of the New Criticism, which goes perfectly along Hemingway's writing style, and where the text is the sole core element on which the analysis is to be based.

With the theoretical approach set, the present work is divided into four chapters: the first one starts with the image attributed to the woman, both in reality and in literature, from the most ancient times. This chapter explores the duality applied in the representation of women and its recurrence in literature, introducing, hence, Hemingway's dealing with the female characters. The second chapter delves more into these two extremes incarnated by the three female protagonists and seeks to see the extent to which they truly apply to them. The third chapter deals with the condition of women under the imposition of a predetermined identity, and addresses men-women

relationship within this same context. Lastly, the fourth and last chapter exposes the critics' tendency to systematically categorize Hemingway's female characters by highlighting the aspects of these women's personalities that contradicts the criticism made on them.

In the end, this work arrives at the conclusion that Hemingway's dealing with his female characters is the same as his dealing with his art: it is deep and complex, and must be addressed with sheer attention and objectivity. In addition, it is through this apparently simplistic description of women characters that Hemingway denounces and highlights women subjugation and its corollaries.

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Introduction

To read Hemingway has always produced strong reactions.[1]

The situation of women had been one of the major debates of the twentieth century as women rose to shake and refute the long-established beliefs in their inferiority, weakness and dependence on men; beliefs that oppressed and marginalized them, pushing them into the background. The purpose of women's movement was to gain the rights that were only granted to men, to change their status and to work towards improving their lives. In order to do so, women denounced the fallaciousness of such beliefs and strove to fight every means by which they could be propagated. As a matter of fact, women subjugation and oppression was widespread and touched every field and all aspects of life, from religious speeches to scientific studies, to arts and literature.

The contribution of literature to women's oppression happened through the way women were represented in literary works, which were predominantly male-made. In addition to being secondary characters with little or no impact on the stories, women were represented shallowly, with no in-depth or complex characterization; the female characters in male writings were plain, submissive, weak, and meaningless. Sometimes, they were portrayed strong-minded, but in such cases, they were always noxious, detestable, and/or immoral and dangerous. Such representations of women on the part of male writers gave more legitimacy to the belittlement of women, and strengthened the belief in their inferior nature and helplessness. Eminent American writers like Edgar Allan Poe, Washington Irving and Ernest Hemingway were no

[1] Hallengren, Anders. "A Case of Identity: Ernest Hemingway." *Nobelprize.org*. 28 August 2001. Web. 20 June 2017. "https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1954/hemingway-article.html".

exception to the rule, and Hemingway has been one of the mostly criticized writers precisely for his way of portraying women in his works.

Despite being a major literary figure of the twentieth century, "how pioneering and original a writer Ernest Hemingway was, that he was one of the very first, if not the first, working so diligently to give the reader the full experience of his characters,"[2] and despite his latter ability and skill to convey to the reader "the full experience of his characters", Ernest Hemingway's portrayal of women characters led to extensive negative criticism on the part of literary critics and feminists alike, given its apparent extreme polarization and simplicity. That is how, during the first forty years of criticism made on Hemingway's work, literary critics seemed to agree on the fact that Hemingway's female characters were too simply portrayed, to the point of becoming surreal, and also on the fact that his female figures represented one of the two extremes previously mentioned: the subservient or the harmful; "The most frequent adverse comment on Hemingway's fictional heroines is that they tend to embody two extremes, ignoring the middle ground."[3] This criticism earned Hemingway a reputation of a misogynist writer.

Among these literary critics are Philip Young, Arthur Waldhorn, Jackson Benson, and so many others cited by Roger Whitlow.[4] All of them presented works of criticism on Hemingway (respectively *Ernest Hemingway*, *A Reader's Guide to Ernest Hemingway*, *Hemingway: The Writer's Art of Self-Defense*)[5] where they denounced

[2] Qtd. in Dwomoh, Nana K. *Women as Other: Hemingway's Portrayal of Female Characters in To Have and Have Not*. Thesis. Södertörn University, 2013. Web. 20 June 2017. http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:729835/FULLTEXT01.pdf
[3] Baker, Carlos. *Hemingway the Writer as Artist*. London: Oxford University Press, 1956.
[4] Whitlow, Roger. *Cassandra's Daughters : The Women in Hemingway*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984. p.11.
[5] *id.*, pp. 115-116.

Hemingway's dichotomization of his female figures. Others, like Judith Fetterley,[6] went further in their criticism by inciting Hemingway's readers to be "resisting readers", meaning by that readers who read Hemingway (as well as other American male writers) with the aim of challenging the dominant views and beliefs his works convey. Roger Whitlow, however, challenged the conception of a dichotomized characterization on the part of Hemingway in his book Cassandra's Daughters[7], where he worked at showing the complexity of Hemingway's female characters and the subtleties having been left out or ignored by the abovementioned critics, and which shape deeper and more meaningful female characters. Same for critics like Linda Wagner-Martin, Linda Patterson Miller, Lisa Tyler, Gail D. Sinclair and Virgil Hutton, among others, who saw in Hemingway's works signs of sympathy with the condition of women and a denunciation of men's responsibility in their predicament rather than any kind of anti-women depiction.

Hemingway's treatment of women characters has also been a subject of numerous academic research, with some following the line of the "misogynist writer", like Nana Dwomoh[8] who saw in Hemingway's portrayal of To Have and Have Not's female characters patriarchal practices and notions, while other researchers like Adriana Luisa Stahmer Giesler[9] agreed more on the fact that Hemingway endowed his female figures with qualities of heroism and nobility that can only be identified through a proper approach to Hemingway's writing style called "The Iceberg Theory", that shall be further explained in the coming sections.

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[6] Fetterley, Judith. *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*. USA: Indiana University Press, 1978.
[7] Whitlow, *op. cit.*
[8] Dwomoh, Nana K. *op. cit.*
[9] Stahmer Giesler, Adriana Luisa. *The American Wife in the Rain: A Reading of Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain*". Thesis. Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, 2011. Web. 26 Nov 2012.

Among Hemingway's numerous works and their respective female characters, the concern of the present dissertation shall be one novel and two short stories, namely A Farewell to Arms, *Cat in the Rain*, and *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*, and will focus on the main female protagonist of each work, which are Catherine Barkley, the American Wife and Margaret Macomber, respectively. Each of these female figures represents one of the two categories previously mentioned in which Hemingway's female characters are classified: Catherine Barkley depicts many characteristics of the subservient woman who is at the disposal of her lover, as she is all giving and caring with Frederic Henry, only considering his desires and wishes; the American Wife can also fit the same category since she is depicted as a helpless, ineffective woman who whines over a cat she saw from the window of her hotel room and over other meaningless objects, causing her husband's irritation; lastly, Margaret Macomber has been assimilated to the second category, that of the devastating and immoral women, since she openly cuckolds her husband, ridicules him in front on others, and finally shoots the bullet that kills him.

Through these three female protagonists, the present work aims to study Hemingway's treatment of women characters in his *oeuvres* in full respect of his art and writing style, which is composed of subtleties and a lot of implications, suggestions and understatements. The purpose is, first, to see the extent to which Hemingway's representation of women in his fiction fits and justifies the accusations made against him about a stereotyped depiction, and to look for the factors that contribute to this view. Second, we will strive to understand better and in a more complete manner the three female protagonists by paying attention to the external

elements that affect these women's lives and link them to their behaviours; more precisely, to the aspects of their behaviour that could lead them to being labelled evil or bland. Lastly, and with the elements gathered, we will seek to address the appropriateness of the negative criticism made against Hemingway and to try to answer the question: is Hemingway's dealing with his female figures really misogynistic and reductive?

Ernest Hemingway's work offers a wide variety of topics and themes to be treated and studied, but not many dissertations focusing on his art have been undertaken so far by Algerian students and scholars. Through this unpretentious dissertation, I aim to contribute to the diversity of the topics addressed in academic research, and to arouse the interest of future students and researchers and incite them to delve more into Ernest Hemingway's captivating universe.

As the quotation mentioned atop of the present section declares, the work of Ernest Hemingway triggers different sorts of reactions and emotions, and the criticism made on his female figures serves to illustrate that perfectly. Despite the apparent simplicity of Hemingway's style, interpretations of his work differ and can go from one extreme to another, making the study of his art all the more challenging and interesting, as we can reach different conclusions and meanings, according to the approach one adopts in his study. Among these opposite reactions to Hemingway's work, we can cite American poet and writer Dorothy Parker, who praised Hemingway's art on several occasions, labelling him "the greatest living writer of

short stories"[10] and "a genius", claiming that most criticism misunderstood him, thus distancing "herself from critical approaches associated with female inadequacy."[11] English writer Virginia Woolf, however, did not see in Hemingway's work the same greatness expressed by Parker, and denounced the use of gender in book titles such as in Men Without Women:

> But, before we explore the new book, a word should be said which is generally left unsaid, about the implications of the title (...) But it is undoubtedly true, if we are going to persevere in our attempt to reveal the processes of the critic's mind, that any emphasis laid upon sex is dangerous (...) The greatest writers lay no stress upon sex one way or the other.[12]

For this reason, and to achieve the most accurate understanding and interpretations possible, two main theoretical approaches have been selected. The first one is New Criticism, a literary theory that dominated American literary criticism in the first half of the 20th century and which came as a reaction to the then prevalent trends in American criticism that were including elements of the authors' biographies, their intent, the works' historical context and other external elements of the sort to their criticism, which resulted in an abundance of interpretations and explications. New Criticism seeks to address literature solely through the texts in order to achieve accuracy. It is for this first major reason that I deemed the choice of this literary theory relevant, since so many critics included elements and certain periods of Ernest Hemingway's life in their interpretations, and saw his work as an extension or a

[10] Qtd. in Sanderson, Rena. "Hemingway's Literary Sisters: The Author through the Eyes of Women Writers." *Hemingway and Women: Female Critics and the Female Voice*. Ed. Broer, Lawrence R. and Holland, Gloria. Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2002. p. 278.
[11] Sanderson, *op. cit.*, p.280.
[12] Perez, Tony. "An Essay in Criticism: Virginia Woolf on Hemingway." TinHouse. 1 Oct 2009. Web. 30 July 2017. http://tinhouse.com/an-essay-in-criticism-virginia-woolf-on-hemingway/

representation of the author's personal life. In failing to separate the man from the work, these literary critics took the risk of deviating from the literary works and their real meaning. In addition, the study of Hemingway's work through a sheer focus on the text, as prescribed by New Criticism, is the best way to tackle Hemingway's art since, as previously mentioned, his style is that of implication and suggestion, and the fact that he called it "The Iceberg Theory" clearly means that the most important and major part of the story lies in the hidden parts of it that need to be discovered and identified through the close reading of his words and the seeking of what they imply. New Criticism, then, fits Hemingway's art both in terms of objectivity and relevance, by taking the work as an entity on its own and by excluding the man's life from the interpretations and analyses, as well as in terms of accuracy regarding his deceptively simple style and the little things he says, but that carry a heavier meaning with them.

The second theory to be applied is Feminism, more precisely the theory of gender construction as presented and explained by Simone de Beauvoir and Mary Roberts Coolidge. In the view of the two feminists, women are conditioned since their early years to become what society wants them to be. De Beauvoir and Roberts Coolidge explain in their valuable contributions, The Second Sex[13] and Why Women Are So[14], respectively, that women's individuality is suppressed from their childhood to fit the mold of the feminine woman who is sensitive, caring, obedient and endowed with such sort of qualities. Both feminist thinkers point at this suppression and conditioning as being the source of women's misplacement and predicament. Women feel alienated and lost, they don't know who they really are and what they really want,

[13] De Beauvoir, Simone. The Second Sex. New York: Vintage Books, 2010
[14] Roberts Coolidge, Mary. Why Women Are So. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1912

and this is expressed in the way they behave and in their speeches. This theory will help understand and explain the deeper malaise that the three female protagonists at the heart of this work seem to suffer from and that seems to account for their behaviours.

In order to meet the requirements of the present topic, this dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter will consist of a general overview of the status and place granted to women in real life, from the most ancient times, as well as in American literature, precisely in American male writings, through a review of the literature. My purpose in doing so is to demonstrate the distorted image imposed on women and the different means used to convey and justify such distortions. I also aim to underline the impact that such distortion had on women and to highlight the ensuing effect it had on them. The chapter will also be comprised of an overview of the theories applied during the analysis, as well as of the relationship between Hemingway, his female characters, and the literary critics.

The second chapter will focus on these female figures' presentation and description. The purpose is to find aspects of the bland woman or of the evil woman that apply to each of the female protagonists, and to answer the first question raised by this work: to what extent can Hemingway's reputation as a misogynist writer be justified?

Chapter three will, first, address women's predicament as oppressed and subjugated individuals, and explain the isolation and alienation that go along their situation as women. Then, the three female characters' stories will be used as case studies to illustrate women's predicament and show the different aspects and forms it

can take. In order to do that, we will take an interest in the two husbands and in the relationship occurring between the spouses, as they constitute the major component of Margaret and the American Wife's lives; we will also analyze Catherine's backstory and link it to her present. My endeavour in this chapter will be to demonstrate the elements that contribute to women's suffering and to highlight the responsibility of men and society as a whole in their malaise. My purpose will be to show that women, as they are thought to be weak, helpless, or malevolent are indeed "made" by society and by circumstances to fit these tags; in addition, I will seek to demonstrate that women's behaviour is nothing more than the result of their situation and the expression of their inner struggle and of their alienation, as well as being the expression of their desperate attempts to alleviate their burden and to seek a way out of their personal misery.

The last chapter will address the negative criticism made against Hemingway regarding his female characters. My effort will be to spot the important parts of Hemingway's work that have been left out by the critics and that are of great significance to the interpretation of his stories; I will also aim to present the elements that make of Hemingway's female characters much greater literary figures than they have been thought and said to be.

Lastly, the conclusion will restate the main topic of the dissertation as well as the findings of the four chapters. Such a division is set up in the effort to delve into Hemingway's stories in respect of his implicative writing style, going from the surface to the depth of the three literary works, in the hope to provide the most objective answers to the questions raised by this dissertation.

Chapter I

Women, Literature and Hemingway

Woman's status and rights had been one of the major concerns of the past century and a subject for various and innumerable debates and studies, because women needed to be liberated from the impositions made upon them through centuries of human history. Women treatment consisted in their subjugation and perpetual belittlement, though the attitude towards them was rather ambiguous, as is illustrated in literature and, more precisely, in Hemingway's works. Hemingway's literature, in its depiction of women, depicts and demonstrates this treatment and women's reaction to it, both in the stated words as well as in the implied and unstated facts, as Hemingway's art is one of deliberate and conscious omission. For this reason, New Criticism literary theory has been deemed, for this research, the most appropriate theoretical approach to study Hemingway's subtle art, as it focuses entirely on the text and its implications to reach a precise meaning of a literary work. In addition, and to serve better the purpose of this work, the main subject of which is the depiction of women in Hemingway, the use of Feminism will help identify and explain the different mechanisms involved in this treatment and, consequently, in the making of women's situation.

The present chapter shall address, first in a general manner, then in a literary context, this two-sided treatment of women. It will also present the different reactions and effects that this treatment caused in women. Lastly, the chapter will focus on Hemingway's art in relation to the depiction of women. The purpose of the chapter is to measure the damages undergone by women due to this two-sided treatment and misrepresentation in literature, and to see the reactions of literary critics to it.

I.1- Women's Place in the World and Theoretical Preliminaries:

Throughout the history of humanity, women have always been the recipient of particular treatments on the part of men, both in negative and positive aspects. They have been considered merely in terms of biology and their ability to procreate and give life.

The ancient civilisations – be they Celtic, Hindu, Roman, Sumerian, Egyptian, Inca, Greek or others - have had female goddesses: they were goddesses of love, fertility, beauty, protection of infants, marriage, nature, mother goddesses. Some examples[1] of these deities are Aphrodite, the beautiful Greek goddess of love and fertility; Juno, the Roman goddess of pregnancy, marriage and childbirth; and Parvati, the Hindu goddess of love and devotion. The powers attributed to these female deities were all linked to their being female. At the same time, there were other female deities who were goddesses of darkness, warfare, chaos, disorder, decay, and were linked to magic and witchcraft. Among them are Cailleach Bheur, the Scottish destroying goddess who ruled over disease, death, seasonal rites and weather magic; the Egyptian Nephthys, goddess of death, decay and the unseen, linked to the powers of darkness and magic; and the Greek Eris, goddess of strife, discord, contention and rivalry.

From the most ancient times, then, the qualities of fertility, love, devotion, purity, and protection of children were deemed to be feminine and were always associated to female, in general, and women, in particular. The case was the same for traits like destruction, chaos, temptation, evil, savagery and disorder; they were all believed to be women-related.

[1] All of the examples are taken from Jordan, Michael. *Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Second Edition*. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2004, 1993.

This two-sided view of goddesses, and, by extension, of women –the pure women and the destructive ones – has persisted throughout history. At certain times in history, women were considered as the source of all evil, seen as temptresses, immoral and evil, and accused of being too sexual and arousing men's desire. St. Jerome, a Latin father of the Christian church during the 4th century, said: "Woman is the gate of the devil, the path of wickedness, the sting of the serpent, in a word a perilous object;"[2] this belief came from the idea that it was Eve who caused Adam to eat the apple, and thus provoked their expulsion from the Garden of Eden to the hardships and temptations of the mortal world; just like Pandora who opened the box, despite Zeus's order not to, and, by doing so, caused the spread of envy, sickness, hate and disease in the world. However, at other times, women were considered as the source of comfort, warmth, love and care, and as pure, pious beings. This was mostly the case in the nineteenth century, during the Victorian Era.

In addition to how women have been seen, they have always been considered inferior to men, mainly because they are physically weaker, and also because they were always limited to their procreating function; they were confined at home, in their role of mother and housekeeper. St. Thomas Aquinas, a 13th-century Christian theologian and philosopher, said, "woman was created to be man's helpmate, but her unique role is in conception . . . since for other purposes men would be better assisted by other men."[3] The belief in women's inferiority has been so strong that women themselves ended up believing in it, and it became the norm to keep women indoors,

[2] Qtd. in "WIC -Women's History in America." *Wic.org*. Web. 4 April 2016. "http://www.wic.org/misc/history.htm"
[3] Qtd. in Mijares, Sharon G. *Modern Psychology and Ancient Wisdom*. New York and London: Routledge, 2016. p.59.

busy nurturing their children and keeping the house clean. These tasks, and all that is related to them, became then identified and recognized as exclusively feminine, while masculine tasks included thinking, working and earning money. Women's seclusion resulted in the absence of means for them to earn money or to enjoy any kind of social or economic independence; their status resembled that of a child or an adolescent, and this state of affairs prevailed through a major part of human history.

Some voices, however, rose to question this established truth and claimed that women were as capable as men of running their lives the way they wanted to. They denounced the fact that women's inferiority and femininity were constructed notions that aimed at keeping women under the control of men. These voices were later known as the "Feminists", who shaped the movement known as "Feminism"[4].

Feminism appeared in order to identify and combat the practices that oppressed women. These oppressing practices were later termed "Patriarchy," a social system that keeps women inferior to men by granting the latter the power and authority to dominate women; this system also gives men a high social status and far more rights than women, deepening women's inferiority and dependence on men. Stated simply, patriarchy is a gender-based system that assigns most power and higher value to men and to masculinity, at the expense of all that is considered feminine.

[4] Feminism is a social, political, economic and cultural movement that aims at establishing equality between men and women, by fighting the belief in and the norms set by the social construction of gender that preaches women's inferiority to men. Feminism is known to have truly appeared at the end of the nineteenth century and has since been divided into four waves, with each concerning a certain period of time and new fights and struggles. First-wave Feminism (late nineteenth - early twentieth century); the second wave happened during the second half of the twentieth century– it is during this period that the term "Feminism" gained popularity and widespread in the United States of America; third-wave Feminism (from the 1990s to 2000s). A fourth wave of Feminism has recently emerged, and is said to have started in 2008. Synthesized from Rampton, Martha. "Four Waves of Feminism." *Pacific.edu*. 25 Oct 2015. Web. 16 June 2017. "https://www.pacificu.edu/about-us/news-events/four-waves-feminism"

It is precisely these notions of "femininity" and "masculinity" that have been challenged by the feminists. Londa Schiebinger, in "Has Feminism Changed Science?" states that, "Gendered characteristics – typically masculine or feminine behaviors, interests, or values- are not innate, nor are they arbitrary. They are formed by historical circumstances. They can also change with historical circumstances."[5] Mary Roberts Coolidge tries also to answer the question by which she entitled her book Why Women Are So[6]; she ponders: "Is the characteristic behavior which is called feminine an inalienable quality or merely an attitude of mind produced by the coercive social habits of past times?"[7] After she compares between primitive societies, where women were as responsible as men, and the societies which developed gender differences and based their functioning on it, Coolidge concludes that "femininity" is indeed a fabrication of what woman should be, "the successful woman must be what men approved."[8] And to stress the purpose behind the imposition of "femininity", she says, "In short, civilized man molded woman into the chaste image of what he himself would rather not be, and required her to practise the difficult habits which insured his comfort, pleased his taste, and would not disturb his peace."[9]

Femininity, then, is a construction that has been imposed on women for centuries, and that has served patriarchal societies, with the perpetuation of women oppression and their constant marginalization, by depriving them from the freedom to choose for themselves, from their individuality and individual identity.

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[5] Schiebinger, Londa. "Has Feminism Changed Science?" *Signs* Vol. 25, N° 4, (2000): 1171-1175. "http://www.jstor.org/stable/3175507"
[6] Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*
[7] *id.*, p.v.
[8] *id.*, *op. cit.*, p.91.
[9] *id.*, pp 91-92.

This constructed image has been so widespread that it was not only present in everyday life, but it was also present in literature – a re-presentation of life – where the "good" women would be represented as being the perfect "feminine" woman – obedient, subservient and weak – whereas the "bad" women were the ones who did not abide by the rules set by Femininity. Many examples of this binary and categorical representation can be found in the different American literary works, and some of them are to be listed in the next section of the present chapter.

Following this notion of gender construction and its implications, the present research shall rely on Coolidge's analysis of gender construction in Why Are Women So, but also on Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex[10], a valuable treatise on women's conditioning and oppression, where the French feminist studies the condition of women, demonstrates what "makes" a woman, and describes the different effects that women's marginalization has on them.

Her most reprised sentence "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman"[11] sets the tone on de Beauvoir's view on "femininity", for, as she explains, "No biological, psychic, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine."[12]

She also declares that women have always been dependent on men, and that their whole identity lies in the fact that they can bear children, "They are women by their physiological structure; as far back as history can be traced, they have always

[10] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*
[11] *id.*, p.330.
[12] *Ibid.*

been subordinate to men; their dependence is not the consequence of an event or a becoming, it did not happen."[13]

The questions that her work tries to answer are on the same line as those this research seeks to address: "How, in the feminine condition, can a human being accomplish herself? What paths are open to her? Which ones lead to dead ends? How can she find independence within dependence? What circumstances limit women's freedom and can she overcome them?"[14] It becomes then even more interesting to use her writing, since she addresses the problems faced by women from their point of view, instead of the one that has dominated for so long, men's, and, by doing so, she provides many explanations and justifications to the behaviour that women adopt and for which they are often accused and further rejected and marginalized.

While de Beauvoir's and Coolidge's works provide valuable tools to analyse and comprehend the women characters about to be studied, this research will also apply the principles of the New Criticism[15] – of taking the text as a self-sufficient entity, speaking for itself. The findings taken from the texts will be then combined with de Beauvoir and Coolidge's views on "femininity" in order to grasp a fuller understanding and the most accurate analysis of these female characters.

Besides, this research shall apply the approach adopted by feminist thinkers and scholars, whenever they had to examine a literary text in order to debunk the elements that perpetuate women's oppression, which is the attentive reading of texts. As it turns

[13] *id.*, p.28.
[14] *id.*, p.37.
[15] "New Criticism emphasizes explication, or "close reading," of "the work itself." It rejects old historicism's attention to biographical and sociological matters. Instead, the objective determination as to "how a piece works" can be found through close focus and analysis." – Delahoyde, Michael. "New Criticism." *Public.wsu.edu.* Web. 16 June 2017.

out, the close reading of texts is the principal characteristic promoted by New Criticism.

The choice of the New Criticism's approach to literature is furthermore justified by its convergence with Hemingway's writing technique, known as the "Theory of Omission[16]" or "The Iceberg Theory", where both the stated and the unstated have their share of value. Both theories stress the high importance of the close reading of the text.

In "The Institutionalization of the New Criticism"[17], William E. Cain wrote that the text is "the point of departure and the instrument by which the accuracy of an interpretation is measured." The necessity for this close reading is further emphasized when the full information is conveyed through the written words combined with what lies between the lines. Jackson J. Benson, in his essay "Ernest Hemingway as Short Story Writer"[18] states, "The great thing in much of Hemingway's short fiction, as in James's [Henry], is not so much what happens, but what doesn't happen (…) the essence of what he is saying often lies in what is suggested or left unsaid."[19]

New Criticism and the Iceberg Theory also have in common the importance of the reader's implication. The New Critics define the literary experience as being the direct and plain confrontation between the text and the reader; this intimate contact

[16] The Theory of Omission is Hemingway's writing style, in which he willingly omits to mention important details concerning the story or the characters, in order to give the story more depth and meaning; it is up to the reader to find out what has been omitted in order to get the true meaning of the work. This theory is also called the "Iceberg Theory" because the essential point of the story is not evident from the start, but lies below the surface, just like the size of an iceberg cannot be gauged from the surface of the water. By applying this writing technique, the writer must be perfectly aware of the omitted elements, as Hemingway puts it: "A few things I have found to be true. If you leave out important things or events that you know about, the story is strengthened. If you leave or skip something because you do not know it, the story will be worthless. The test of any story is how very good the stuff that you, not your editors, omit."

[17] Cain, William E. "The Institutionalization of New Criticism." *MLN* Vol. 97, No 5, (1982): pp 1100-1120. "http://www.jstor.org/stable/2905979"

[18] Benson, Jackson J. "Ernest Hemingway as Short Story Writer." *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: Critical Essays*. Ed. Jackson J. Benson. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1975. pp. 272-310.

[19] *id.*, p.272.

between the two is "the essential truth to which the critic must remain loyal."[20] Moreover, they stress the importance of the reading between the lines, in addition to the close reading of the text. René Wellek, in "The New Criticism: Pro and Contra"[21] wrote, "The New Critics are overwhelmingly concerned with the meaning of a work of art, with the attitude, the tone, the feelings, and even with the ultimate implied world view conveyed."[22] With the Theory of Omission, the reading between the lines can only be achieved by the attentive reader; Hubert Zapf writes,

> The most conspicuous elements of this technique [Hemingway's literary technique] were the use of emotional understatement; the extreme reduction of language, style, and fictional world; and the deliberate strategy of leaving out relevant information, that is, of providing blanks in the textual surface that have an appellative function, calling upon the reader's activity to supply the missing context[23]

The construction of the text, and this relation between the text and the reader in the uncovering of what lies between the lines, has been described by Hemingway himself, in his novel Death in the Afternoon:

> If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water.[24]

[20] Cain, *op. cit.*, p.11.
[21] Wellek, René. "The New Criticism : Pro and Contra." *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 4 No. 4. 1978. pp. 611-624. "http://www.jstor.org/stable/1342947"
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Zapf, Hubert. "Reflection vs. Daydream: Two Types of the Implied Reader in Hemingway's Fiction." *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. Ed. Jackson J. Benson. U.S.A.: Duke University Press, 1990. pp. 96-111.
[24] Hemingway, Ernest. *Death in the Afternoon*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932. pp. 2-3.

Moreover, Linda Patterson Miller stresses the importance of separating "the man – or the idea of the man – from the work"[25] for, as she concluded, a misreading of Hemingway's women is inevitable when people – critics – fail to apply this separation, as the writer himself was much talked about along with his life, "because Hemingway made such prodigious efforts to entwine it [his life] in his work, and to elevate both on a celebrity level of visibility."[26]

Consequently, both New Criticism, which will address the stories in the best way in which they should be addressed, and the theory of gender construction as explained and illustrated by Simone de Beauvoir and Mary Roberts Coolidge, which will provide the appropriate commentaries on the observations and conclusions made from the close reading, will help reach the most objective and accurate analysis of the works and of the female characters concerned by the study.

I.2- The Representation of Women in American Literature: The Perpetuation of Alienation:

The imposition of Femininity has been widely spread and survived throughout the ages through different means; through tradition, religious beliefs, philosophers, thinkers, sociologists and, with the emergence of art, through writers and literature. The latter was yet another factor that contributed to women's estrangement and alienation.

[25] Patterson Miller, Linda. "In Love With Papa." Ed. Broer and Holland, *op. cit.*. p. 9.
[26] Whitlow,*op. cit.*, p.6.

Women have for a long time been absent from canonical literature, leaving, here again, the space for male writers to dominate and express themselves; it was men's voice that could be the most vividly heard and could thus have an impact on people. Yet, male writers wrote stories about their own concerns as male, and from their personal point of view; very often, the stories were about a male hero, who goes through a journey in which he grows, evolves and discovers himself fully. Women, on the other hand, were never central to the stories: they were rather peripheral, portrayed as the helper, the complement, but were rarely truly essential to the hero. The contribution of literature in the maintaining of "femininity" and the oppression of women was through the depiction of women in already-established patterns, better called stereotypes.

Stereotypes are a mechanism of oversimplification implemented in the mind about one thing or another; in this case, women. Women stereotypes, as was said in the first part of the chapter, are quite repetitive and, despite some exceptions here and there, can be split into two categories: the passive, pure woman, and the more obscure, destructive woman. Citing The Last of the Mohicans[27], a historical novel written by James Fenimore Cooper in the ninetieth century, Leslie A. Fiedler illustrates through the two female characters present in the story, Cora and Alice, the emergence of the bipolar treatment of women on the part of American writers; "Cora and Alice (the name themselves are almost mythical), the passionate brunette and the sinless blonde, make once and for all the pattern of female Dark and Light that is to become the standard form in which American writers project their ambivalence toward women."[28]

[27] Fenimore Cooper, James. The Last of the Mohicans. USA: H.C. Carey & I. Lea, 1826.
[28] Fiedler, Leslie A. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. U.S.A.: Dalkey Archive Press, 2008. pp 200-201.

It is worth noticing, however, that both the Dark and Light females are "two women with their protectors."[29] In other words, whatever her nature, a woman, as seen in reality and as portrayed in literature, remains in her role of the helpless child or the mere adolescent, of the assisted and defenceless creature. Many American writers, as Fiedler declares, followed the same guideline in their works, portraying women in either of the two ways, positive or negative, and keeping them below men.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birth-Mark"[30] is a nineteenth-century short story about a couple composed of Aylmer, "a man of science, an eminent proficient in every branch of natural philosophy", and Georgiana, "a beautiful woman". The two descriptions are quite telling on the treatment reserved to women in literature. Georgiana, who is "so nearly perfect" in her appearance, bears a small hand-like birthmark on her cheek. This birthmark gradually becomes her husband's obsession, for he finds it quite monstrous and dreams of removing it. Georgiana, who has not been bothered by it so far, is now looking for every means that would get her rid of this "hateful mark", not minding the risks, "let the attempt be made at whatever risk. Danger is nothing to me; for life, while this hateful mark makes me the object of your horror and disgust,—life is a burden which I would fling down with joy. Either remove this dreadful hand, or take my wretched life!" Ultimately, Georgiana accepts that her husband experiments on her, and drinks the risky potion that would help her remove the mark from her cheek. However, as she knew beforehand, the potion has side-effects, and Georgiana dies with the fading of her birthmark. Georgiana is then an

[29] *id.*, p.202
[30] Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "The Birth-Mark." *Feedbooks.com.* Web. 7 April 2016. "http://www.lem.seed.pr.gov.br/arquivos/File/livrosliteraturaingles/birthmark.pdf"

example of good, subservient, loving and caring wives, who would risk their lives to please their husbands, shedding multiple tears throughout the task.

Another short story having nearly the same plot is Edgar Allan Poe's "The Oval Portrait"[31], where another extremely beautiful young girl poses in front of her painter of a husband. Like Aylmer, the painter loves his work more than his wife, which causes her deep sadness and the loss of her "light and smiles". However, when her husband "told her" that he wanted to paint her portrait, it was "a terrible thing" for her. Yet there she was, smiling to her husband who was so absorbed by his work, that he did not notice the progressive weakening and ultimate death of his wife until he had finished the painting. His wife never stopped smiling "because she saw that her husband, who was now very famous, enjoyed his work so much."

Still, Poe has also created female characters who were endowed with intelligence, passion, great scholarly knowledge, curiosity and interest in sciences, like Morella and Ligeia, title characters of their respective short stories. However, both of these female characters die, the first in childbirth, and the second succumbs to illness.

Examples of negative female characters include Dame Van Winkle, from Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle"[32], also a nineteenth-century short story.
Rip Van Winkle is described as an easy-going, good-natured man, a nice neighbour, adored by children and favoured by the neighbouring wives, and "an obedient hen-pecked husband" whose "meekness of spirit" is the result of "the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation." His wife, Dame Van Winkle, is described as a "shrew" and a

[31] Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Oval Portrait*. Web. 7 April 2016. "http://www.ipepgranada.es/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/THE-OVAL-PORTRAIT_texto.pdf"
[32] Irving, Washington. "Rip Van Winkle." *The Online Books Page*. Web. 7 April 2016. "https://www.ibiblio.org/ebooks/Irving/Winkle/Irving_Winkle.pdf"

"termagant wife", many other negative qualifiers are attributed to her, while the "poor" Rip, who has a fierce aversion for labor and family duty, is constantly described in relation to his sweet nature. Dame Van Winkle seems to be getting after her husband precisely because of his idleness and his absence of the sense of responsibility; nonetheless, the wives of the village side with him in every family squabble.

The portrayal of Dame Van Winkle is extreme, without nuances. Just like Georgiana's or the young wife's depiction as completely devoted and selfless wives. Dame Van Winkle ultimately causes her husband to escape her tyranny in the mountains, where he falls asleep for at least twenty years.

Caroline Meeber, the heroine of the novel "Sister Carrie"[33], written by Theodore Dreiser, is yet another negative female character. Carrie is a girl who is always looking for opportunities and better situations in life. She does not hesitate to leave people behind, ungrateful for the help they provided her with. After leaving her sister's house, thanks to Charles Drouet who saves her from poverty, she betrays the latter with another man he introduces her to, George Hurstwood, with whom she leaves the country. Later on, Carrie leaves Hurstwood, now in a precarious situation, and moves in with a girl friend of hers, leaving Hurstwood in poverty, ultimately committing suicide. Carrie is greedy, immoral, inattentive to the suffering of others, ungrateful, superficial, callous and selfish, yet she is resourceful, talented and beautiful.

The way these writers have portrayed women seems to indicate that women who are endowed with qualities such as intelligence, talent, freedom of choice,

[33] Dreiser, Theodore. "Sister Carrie." *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 7 April 2016. "http://www.gutenberg.org/files/233/233-h/233-h.htm"

strength of character, responsibility and knowledge – qualities most often associated with men; “masculine traits”- are either immoral, aggressive, confusing, or they never really rest in peace. In short, these women are bad for themselves as well as for the men they live with.

However, when women portray submission, love, sacrifice, selflessness, devotion, submission, and passivity – traits most often associated with women; “feminine traits”- this is when they are mostly seen as pure beings who, in order to see happiness on their husbands’ faces, do not complain in front of death, and when the latter comes, the afterlife is not synonymous with restlessness.

This biased view on women and on what women should and should not be has been dominating the American literature for so long that women were unconsciously forcing themselves to identify with it. They first had to identify with the many male protagonists around whom a large number of literary works revolved, because it was through these heroes that readers, men or women, were to discover the realities portrayed and performed in literature. Then, if women wanted to identify with women characters, they had a very limited range of characters to choose from, as they had to identify with either the good or the bad woman, or with that other stereotyped one; however, they had to remain, for most of the time, peripheral to the story. American literature was then male-centered and male-dominated. No man could properly articulate a woman’s experience, only a woman could do that, and yet there were just a few of them to really be able to create a difference, to make an impact.

Judith Fetterley, on the effects the stereotypical depiction of women in literature has on them, quotes Lee Edwards, who writes,

> I said simply, and for the most part silently that, since neither those women nor any women whose acquaintances I had made in fiction had much to do with the life I led or wanted to lead, I was not female. Alien from the women I saw most frequently imagined, I mentally arranged them in rows labelled respectively insipid heroines, sexy survivors, and domestic destroyers. As organizer I stood somewhere else, alone perhaps, but hopefully above them.[34]

Edwards' words express the loneliness and alienation women go through when reading American literature, or any male literature of the time, for that matter. The feeling of loneliness arises from the fact that every woman is led to believe in the universal truth of this literary experience, and that none of these women readers is encouraged in any sort of way to question this truth. On this matter, Elaine Showalter explains,

> Women are estranged from their own experience and unable to perceive its shape and authenticity . . . they are expected to identify as readers with a masculine experience and perspective, which is presented as the human one . . . Since they have no faith in the validity of their own perceptions and experiences, rarely seeing them confirmed in literature, or accepted in criticism, can we wonder that women students are so often timid, cautious and insecure when we exhort them to 'think for themselves'?[35]

Literature is just one of the many means through which patriarchal ideology flourished and kept perpetuating itself. The alienation of women readers is the alienation of women at large, who saw their representation and premade identity articulated and professed in the mouths of their mothers, fathers, teachers, in the newspapers, magazines, on television, at work, in every detail of their daily lives, in

[34] Qtd. in Fetterley. *op. cit*., p. xxii.
[35] *Ibid.*

every corner of their homes. Leslie Fiedler uses the character of Clarissa Harlow, created by Samuel Richardson in his epistolary novel Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady[36], as the image of the perfect, idealized, virtuous, principled, pure and moral woman that was imposed on every little girl and on every woman for centuries; and on this imposition, he writes, in 1960:

> The imposition of the Clarissa-image on the young girl represents an insidious form of enslavement; all the idealizations of the female from the earliest days of courtly love had been in fact devices to prevent her of freedom and self-determination, but this last represents the final attempt to imprison woman within a myth of Woman. The demand that every woman act out the allegorical role of Womanhood is like the contemporary pressure on all Negroes to play The Negro; and the Clarissa-image, when degraded from archetype to stereotype, is analogous to the current image of Uncle Tom.[37]

Fiedler capitalizes "Woman" and "Womanhood" to present them as the constructed conceptions that are different from the woman, the female human being who can display traits that are not necessarily Clarissa's and remains nonetheless a woman and a complete, complex individual. He also makes clear the relation between "Womanhood", also known as Femininity, and women's enslavement, comparing the urge of seeing women act Womanly to the urge of seeing the black people be the Negro. Simone de Beauvoir makes the same analogy between women's enslavement and that of the black people, saying that women, like the black slaves "had to accept without argument the truths and laws that other men gave them. Woman's lot is

[36] Richardson, Samuel. Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady. Britain, 1748
[37] Fiedler, *op. cit.*, p.68.

obedience and respect. She has no grasp, even in thought, on this reality that involves her."[38]

In her preface, Judith Fetterley quotes the first two stanzas of Emily Dickison's poem "A loss of something ever felt I" in order to explain woman's condition in patriarchal culture. The beginning of the poem is quite interesting in the way that it gives, in few words, a summary of the great sentiment of estrangement undergone by women through the most ancient times.

> A loss of something ever felt I —
> The first that I could recollect
> Bereft I was — of what I knew not
> Too young that any should suspect
>
> A Mourner walked among the children
> I notwithstanding went about
> As one bemoaning a Dominion
> Itself the only Prince cast out — [39]

In these stanzas, Dickinson expresses a deep sentiment of alienation and deprivation. She starts by mentioning a loss, the first she has ever remembered feeling; she feels bereft, yet she does not know for what, for she was too young when it happened. She then compares herself to a mourner walking among children, looking for a dominion, then comparing herself to the only prince cast out.

Fetterley attributes this loss to that of "the possibilities of personhood", where Freud's "massive phallocentrism" saw an anxiety on the part of the girl when she realizes that she is deprived of "a specific bit of flesh." Consequently to this loss, the woman becomes disinherited; "Bereft, disinherited, cast out, woman is the Other, the

[38] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.725.
[39] Qtd. in Fetterley, *op. cit.*, p. ix.

Outsider, a mourner among children."[40] She goes on saying that women are neither children nor adults, since they are not permitted to be "fully self-indulgent" nor to be "fully responsible"; woman is doomed to remain "forever a "young mourner", a "little woman"; superhuman, subhuman but never simply human."[41]

The feminist critic identifies the "confusion of consciousness which obscures the nature of the loss and often the fact of loss itself" as being woman's most serious problem. This confusion is but the result of the many impositions and ideologies women are constantly burdened with, the "myths and images and dogmas and definitions and laws and strictures and God and Man, and *fear*, and *fear*, and *fear*."[42] Women were always pushed to believe in their inferiority, and in their need for protection, in their powerlessness, in their helplessness, in their vital need for a superior, embodied in a man, to insure their comfort and to assure their survival. They were also pushed to believe in their intrinsic weakness that threw humanity in the havoc of Earth, making it even more urgent to keep them enclosed in a safe place where no harm would attain them and no harm would be caused by them. And from all these forced beliefs, woman can only feel peculiar, schizophrenic – to borrow Lee Edwards' words – for what is said to her about her is not what she feels, recognizes or acknowledges about herself. "Her condition is isolation, conviction of being "itself the only Prince cast out"; and her self-image is monstrous because that is the consequence of isolation. And because that is the consequence of the patriarchal predication that to

[40] *Ibid.*
[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Ibid.*

be human is to be male."[43] Fetterley's conclusion on woman's condition is the expression of the "endless division of self against self"[44]:

> The condition of woman under patriarchy is precisely that of a prince cast out. Forced in every way to identify with men, yet incessantly reminded of being female, she undergoes a transformation into an "it", the dominion of personhood lost indeed.[45]

Women representation, both in life and in art, has been so biased and erroneous that it had two major effects, one external, and the other internal: enslavement is the external effect, or symptom, of patriarchal practices. Women are deprived of liberty, of freedom, of any participation of any kind in the matters of life, even those who mattered them. Their Femininity is the cell in which they are held captive for the entirety of their lives; if a woman tries to break free from it, she may have to face more severe consequences, as she would be doubly rejected. She would still not be considered woman – without capitalization – but even her Feminine label would be taken from her. What would she be left with? Then, the internal symptom is alienation, that no one, not even herself, can really identify, grasp or comprehend, since everything is made in that sense. Both of the external and internal effects of women representation constitute her condition.

To address the issue of the (mis)representation of women in literature, this research will focus on one American writer, namely Ernest Hemingway, whose work caused the wrath of so many feminists, like Judith Fetterly, due to the way he portrayed women.

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[43] *id.* p. ix
[44] *id.*, p. xiii.
[45] *id.*, ix.

I.3- Approaching Hemingway's Treatment of Women:

Hemingway, as a male American writer, made no exception with regard to his treatment of women characters. He has been one of the most vividly criticized male authors on the subject, and early feminist critics even argued that his writings should not be studied or taught[46], specifically because they saw his works as the epitome of the misogynist writing, where women were too simplistic and shallow, too unreal to be studied.

His novels and short stories took place during wars, or in the wilderness, or during African safaris, and they included hunting, fishing, bullfighting, manipulating guns and drinking – all places and activities considered to be more male than female-related. Most of Hemingway's male characters are soldiers, fishermen, fighters, drinkers, hunters, bullfighters, and sportsmen. His women characters, however, do not display such richness of the human capacity, and the previously discussed binary depiction of women applies to them quite well.

The major criticism made on Hemingway's treatment of women characters is, as mentioned, that they are too simplistic and embody one extreme or the other. In their effort to criticise Hemingway's female characters, literary critics used to dichotomize them: on the one part, there are the submissive women, seen as insipid; and on the other, the destructive others, those endowed with assertiveness and affirmation.

The most known examples of the first category include Catherine Barkley (A Farewell to Arms[47]), and Maria (For Whom the Bell Tolls[48]).

[46] Patterson Miller, Linda. "In Love with Papa." Ed. Broer and Holland, *op. cit.*, p.7.
[47] Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

These two submissive female characters have some common traits: they are in a relationship with a man, who they nearly worship and upon whom they deeply depend, and the two, through their strong submissiveness, seem mindless, too placid and passive. These Feminine characters have received the critics' wrath, considering them to be copycats, both in their language as well as in their devotion to the loved one, and accusing them of being too flat, too insignificant, and a caricature more than a character.

The second category features Margaret Macomber (*"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber"*[49]) and Brett Ashley (The Sun Also Rises[50]) at the top of the list. Both women are considered to be dangerous and corrupting for the men around them. Brett has been dismissed by many critics, considering her a woman failure, and Margaret is considered a murderess, as she fatally shot her husband. Both women do not content themselves with just one relationship: while Brett moves from one man to another, Margaret is only occasionally unfaithful to her husband, an attitude that made the critics promptly call these two women "bitches" and identify them with destruction.

Critics, and Feminist Critics, more precisely, have considered that "Hemingway's world of machismo both alienates and undermines women."[51]
Yet, whereas it is said that "no other American writer, except for Norman Mailer, generates such venom,"[52] many critics, though maybe not as numerous as the ones

[48] Hemingway, Ernest. *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.
[49] Hemingway, Ernest. " The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber ." *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. New York: Scribner, 1987.
[50] Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.
[51] Patterson Miller, *op. cit.*, p.4.

accusing Hemingway of a two-sided portrayal of women in his works, have voiced their opposite opinion, finding great qualities in these female figures, and stressing their importance, sometimes superior to that of the male character, or their superiority as characters.

In studying Hemingway's female characters, the application of the Theory of Omission serves its full purpose, because, as Gail D. Sinclair writes, "Hemingway's iceberg principle applies to them as profoundly as it does to any other character or novel in the canon,"[53] before adding, "One does find it easy to view Maria as Hemingway's typically submissive female if only looking at the tip of the iceberg."[54] As Linda Patterson Miller writes, on Hemingway's style and women characters,

> Failing to allow for Hemingway's whittled style, they interpret what seems to be a sketchy treatment of the women as a weakness of character. With Hemingway's women especially, he discovered them fully by giving them little to say. His women embody the 7/8 of the iceberg that is down under and carry much of the work's emotional weight accordingly.[55]

Stressing, yet another time, the importance of addressing Hemingway's art through the most appropriate approach, and not take the apparent simplicity of his style for granted. The deception that lies behind the simply-constructed short sentences of his stories is the same as the apparent part of the iceberg; if one does not look at what is hidden underwater, he or she would miss the greatest and most striking part of it.

It is also important to know that gender has been a main concern in Hemingway's fiction, where the intricacies of male/female relationships, combined

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[52] *Ibid.*
[53] Sinclair, Gail D. "Revisiting the Code: Female Foundations and "The Undiscovered Country" in *For Whom the Bell Tolls.*" Ed. Broer and Holland, *op. cit.*, p.94.
[54] *id.*, p.95.
[55] Patterson Miller, *op. cit.*, p.6.

with the complex circumstances of their lives, are displayed, and where "the feminine voice (...) resonates throughout his works in often surprising ways."[56]

Due to these different opinions on Hemingway's art and on his handling of women characters, it becomes significant and pertinent to seek to study and understand his works, what they carry with them, and the message and image they convey regarding women. To do so, the study will start by dealing with the apparent tip of the iceberg, before moving on to the depths of each of the three works chosen for this purpose, namely: A Farewell to Arms (*FTA*), *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber* (*SHLFM*), and *Cat in the Rain*[57](*CR*); with the focus being respectively on Catherine Barkley, Margaret Macomber and the female character named the American Wife.

Hemingway's "binary" representation of women and the three works' tip of the iceberg will be the subject and the focus of the following chapter, which will address the apparent and direct portrayal of women, by observing them only through their behaviour and language.

[56] *id.*, p. xi.
[57] Hemingway, Ernest. "Cat in the Rain." *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, op. cit.*

Chapter II

Women in Hemingway: The Two Opposite Stereotypes

The present chapter is about the two kinds of women stereotypes present in Hemingway's fiction, and the different aspects they take through the three female protagonists. This chapter aims at reaching two points: first, it will determine and explain what each stereotype of woman is made of, based on the works of feminist thinkers like Simone de Beauvoir and Mary Roberts Coolidge. Second, this chapter will try to show how the apparent portrayal of the three women characters – the "apparent portrayal" meaning what is clearly stated and directly mentioned in the texts – fits one or the other stereotypes already mentioned, by identifying the aspects related to the submissive or to the deadly woman that apply to and are displayed by the three female figures, leading them to be labelled as they have been by the literary critics. The purpose in doing so is to find out what, exactly, led the critics to see Hemingway's female characters as mere caricatures rather than developed and complex characters. The chapter tries to answer the question: To what extent can the reputation of Ernest Hemingway as a misogynist writer be justified?

II.1 – The "Feminine" Women:

Starting with the first stereotype, that of the bland and the futile women, this section concerns both A Farewell to Arms' Catherine Barkley and *Cat in the Rain*'s the American Wife. It seeks to show how Hemingway's portrayal of these two characters fits the image of the Feminine woman and ends up causing their rejection as believable characters, hence shaping the reputation of a misogynist writer.

II.1.1 – Catherine Barkley: The Personified Dream Girl:

The submissive or passive "dream girl" is a label created by the literary critics who used to dichotomize Hemingway's female characters[1] and where Catherine has for long been categorized. Catherine is considered a "dream girl" because she depicts qualities commonly attributed to the unbesmirched image of the Feminine woman – the idealised woman. Catherine is an incarnation of the ideal Feminine woman whose purpose is her partner's satisfaction. But before pinpointing the elements that make of Catherine an idealized woman and a "dream girl", it is important to define what this Feminine woman is, and identify the qualities shared between this ideal image and the character of Catherine Barkley.

The notion of the "Feminine woman" has been given different names throughout time. Simone de Beauvoir termed it the "Eternal Feminine"[2], Betty Friedan named it the "Feminine Mystique"[3], and Ellen Glasgow went on with the "womanly woman"[4]. In the nineteenth century, there was also what is known as "The Cult of True Womanhood"[5], a value system that women of the time had to follow in order to become the ideal woman, the "true" woman, and thus be accepted by society.

Despite the different names given to the Feminine woman, the basics remained the same: "the womanly woman had been created by the hand of god wholly passive and perfect, without the faults or even the ordinary impulses of human nature."[6]

[1] Whitlow, *op. cit.*, p.12; and Sinclair, *op. cit.*, p.93.
[2] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*
[3] Friedan, Betty. The Feminine Mystique. London: Penguin Classics, 2010.
[4] Glasgow, Ellen. "Feminism". *The New York Times*. November 30, 1913.
[5] Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood : 1820-1860." *American Quarterly*, Vol 18, N° 2, Part 1 (1966), 151-74. Web. 22 December 2015. "http://www.jstor.org/stable/2711179"
[6] Glasgow, *op. cit.*

Femininity portrayed women as idealized creatures, endowed with high moral values and held responsible for the well-being of humanity, which prompted women to act in the specific way expected from them in order to feel and be recognized as true women. Femininity also persuaded women of their inherent inferiority to men, conveying the message that they needed them in their lives, as the latter are stronger and more fit to face the different challenges of the world. This notion of "Femininity" that has prevailed in the past centuries encompassed a certain set of qualities that a woman had to display if she was to be considered feminine and a true woman. As shall be seen, a lot of these traits are displayed by the character of Catherine Barkley.

First, a "womanly woman" had to be obedient and docile, and her personality should be malleable and compliant. Simone de Beauvoir writes that, "Woman's lot is obedience and respect"[7] and Mary Roberts Coolidge thoroughly explains in her book, Why Women Are So[8], how a girl is brought up so as to make of her the perfect future woman and wife in terms of docility. From their childhood, girls learn that, in order to be validated by their entourage and by society at large, they had to be obedient. Girls and, by extension, women, have to follow the rules that have been set up for them without questioning. This blind compliance, then, becomes a second nature, even if it may cause their unhappiness, because women are persuaded that compliancy and obedience are a great part of their duties as women. This is also how they are taught that their happiness is secondary to the happiness of their homes, which starts with that

[7] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.725.
[8] Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*

of the man of the house. In fact, in order to make her husband happy, a woman must also be able to prioritize his happiness over hers, and that, too, is her duty.

In the case of Catherine, there is no husband, but a lover. There was first the fiancé to whom she had been engaged for so long and who died at the battle of the Somme, and then there was Frederic Henry. With each lover, Catherine seeks to achieve his satisfaction and only looks at his well-being, as Judith Fetterley writes, "Catherine defines herself in terms of men."[9] This is why she refused to marry her former fiancé before he joined the front, thinking that their union would not have benefitted him, "I thought it would be worse for him. I thought perhaps he couldn't stand it." (*FTA* 11) She also became a nurse for him, to heal him and care for him whenever he would come to the hospital, "I started when he did. I remember having a silly idea he might come to the hospital where I was. With a sabre cut, I suppose, and a bandage around his head. Or shot through the shoulder. Something picturesque." (*FTA* 12) Catherine's thinking is always focused on her lover, as she later on illustrates with Henry, as, from the first encounters between the two lovers, Catherine demonstrates her desire to satisfy Henry by all means, even if, at times, she was at first unwilling to do so.

And this is what is expected of a "true woman". She has to be careful in maintaining the serenity of her husband or partner, and must keep their relationship peaceful. To do so, a "true woman" must satisfy all of her husband's desires, even the smallest ones, and if he ever comes to feel upset of frustrated by anything, it is up to her to make him feel better, as this is her responsibility. When Henry attempts to kiss Catherine, she first refuses and slaps him when he insists, before quickly abdicating,

[9] Fetterley, *op. cit.*, p.67.

"I'd be glad to kiss you if you don't mind." (*FTA* 16) A "true woman" must always please her partner, and if she ever becomes the source of his discontentment, she must then suppress her own feelings and shift her focus and efforts on him being happy and satisfied again; because it has been ingrained in her mind that her husband is the most important person in her life, and that she cannot survive without him. She has acquired the belief that, without him, she has no reason to be and cannot be: "Neither was the man created for the woman ; but the woman for the man."[10]

Consequently, Catherine keeps the attitude of pleasing Henry despite her own feelings throughout A Farewell to Arms, and examples to illustrate this are numerous. When the two stop at a hotel for a couple of hours, Catherine feels uncomfortable, she feels like a whore. But as her discomfort bothers Henry, she immediately changes the tone of her voice and invites him to join her, "Come over, please. I'm a good girl again." (*FTA* 100) Catherine is always looking for Henry's satisfaction, and hers seems to be only made of that. She is always the one adjusting herself to him, to his life and to his needs. That is how she left her work to run with him from Italy to Switzerland when he deserted from the army, or how she tried several times, though unsuccessfully, to terminate her pregnancy in order not to upset or worry him.

Catherine is so focused on Henry that she cannot even enjoy the company of others, preferring to spend time with him and considering the presence of outsiders an intrusion; even the coming baby is considered an intruder by Catherine. Her focus on her lover is so strong that she only considers herself in terms of his desires, "I want what you want. There isn't any me any more. Just what you want;" (*FTA* 68) "You're my religion," (*FTA* 74) she tells him. This extreme devotion is explained by Simone de

[10] Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p.20.

Beauvoir when she writes about woman, “she tries to understand the other in his uniqueness and re-create him in herself; regarding her husband, her lover, she is capable of true identification: she makes his projects and his cares her own in a way he could not imitate.”[11] Indeed, Catherine is so devoted to Henry’s well-being that she goes further than suppressing her feelings, as is required by Femininity, as she suppresses her entire self, allowing herself to be nothing more than a means for Henry to feel happy. Because a woman is taught that she owes her husband everything; “it was for woman's sake [that] Eden was forfeited, because Adam loved his wife more than his Creator;”[12] and what she must do in return is maintain his satisfaction at its highest level, unstained; if a woman must sacrifice herself in the process, that is her duty as well. The success of a woman can be measured by her husband’s serenity. Discretion and servitude are also expected of her, as she must not upset her husband, with whom she has to be patient and comprehensive as well. In this regard, Catherine succeeds once again to meet the expectations of Femininity, as she displays an immense sense of self-sacrifice, she is all giving, caring, loving and nurturing; even her job serves her purpose of looking after her lover. She is entirely devoted to him and gives meaning to her life though him “You’re all I’ve got.” (*FTA* 74)

The fact that Catherine considers Henry her religion means that her devotion is in fact worship. If Henry is her religion, it is, then, through him that she considers her life, her actions, and herself. He is her landmark, her guiding belief, and constitutes the basis upon which her current life is built. Her self-suppression goes so deeply that, now, Catherine wants to be a replica of Frederic Henry. She blends herself into him

[11] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.751 .
[12] Qtd. in Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p.20.

and wishes she had the very painful gonorrhea he suffers from in order to be like him; and she wants him to let his hair grow so that she could cut hers and, that way, they would look alike.

In short, Ernest Hemingway presents in A Farewell to Arms a female protagonist that corresponds a lot to the perfect woman described and promoted by Femininity. Hemingway endows Catherine Barkley with a personality that somehow surpasses the expectations of Femininity in the loyalty and dedication she gives to her love, consequently becoming a "dream girl", with the double connotation this term encompasses.

II.1.1.1 – The Rejection of the Critics:

A "dream girl" is, by essence, an image, a fantasy. The fact that the character of Catherine embodies this fantasy, by being so beautiful – in Henry's words: "I thought she was very beautiful" (*FTA* 11) – so devoted and in love, so into self-sacrifice and self-suppression caused her inevitable rejection by literary critics and many Hemingway readers; they argued that such personality could not exist or be real, because prioritizing another person over oneself as extremely as Catherine does cannot be considered sane. And this is exactly what the critics thought of the character of Catherine Barkley; Roger Whitlow provides a quick summary of this criticism:

> But unquestionably the severest criticism is reserved for Catherine Barkley, who is described variously as shallow, weak, even silly. Arthur Waldhorn is gentlest with his observation that "Catherine is *almost* realistic"; on the other hand, we find Otto Friedrich, Philip Young, and Dwight Macdonald going vigorously for Hemingway's throat. Friedrich calls Catherine "one of Hemingway's most unreal creations." Young charges that

> Catherine is "idealized past the fondest belief of most people" and Macdonald claims that Catherine is "not a person but an adolescent daydream."[13]

Consequently, the criticism, first directed at Catherine Barkley, ended up being directly made against Hemingway, who they accused of perpetuating the alienating image of the ideal woman, portrayed as weak and wholly dependent on man, fitting the doctrine of Femininity which, it is important to recall, has been a tool for women oppression and alienation. Hemingway, hence, with the characterization of Catherine Barkley, confirmed, in the eyes of critics such as the ones mentioned above, his reputation as a misogynist and his dealing with women characters that ridiculed them, made them too unrealistic, portraying them too plainly and one-dimensionally.

This is all the more relevant when observing Catherine's behaviour and even more her speech. Hemingway did not only portray Catherine as Feminine in her love, he also portrayed her as such in the weakness, dependence and ignorance Femininity promotes, as the "womanly woman" is a frail and weak creature who needs the protection and help of man. The combination of the dedicated lover with the helpless creature is the Feminine equation that Hemingway applied on the character of Catherine Barkley, making her the target of severe criticism, and exposing himself to the wrath of feminists and critics alike. The observation of Catherine's behaviour in the light of what Femininity preaches is the best tool to illustrate Hemingway's creation of a Feminine character and to better understand the critics' reaction; but, first, what constitutes Feminine behaviour, apart from devotion and submissiveness?

[13] Whitlow, *op. cit.*, pp 17-18.

Mary Roberts Coolidge writes, “The cultivation of abnormal delicacy of feeling, of excessive dependence upon men, and of hyperweakness, or, to use the current mocking phrase of the past time, "the clinging vine," became the pose of the woman who aspired to be a perfect lady.”[14] Coolidge gives the essential characteristics of a “womanly woman’s” behaviour: delicacy, great weakness, and, most importantly, “excessive dependence upon men”. She uses the expression of “the clinging vine”, which means, “a person who is submissively dependent on another,”[15] to stress how much the dependence on the part of women upon men is a major “quality” ascribed to Femininity. Grace Greenwood adds: “True feminine genius is ever timid, doubtful, and clingingly dependent; a perpetual childhood...”[16] Interestingly enough, Greenwood uses the same words as Coolidge when she says “clingingly dependent”, but goes a bit further when she speaks of the “perpetual childhood” of Feminine women, summarizing the actual status of a Feminine woman, which is that of a child who depends on adults for protection and survival, and who is fragile, weak, unable to cope with life on his or her own. The “child/Feminine woman” dichotomy is also confirmed by Nel Noddings, who views the Angel in the House[17], meaning the perfect wife, “as infantile, weak and mindless.”[18] In short, a Feminine woman is devoted, loyal, submissive and obedient, but she is also overly dependent, greatly weak, excessively

[14] Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p.92.
[15] *Oxford Dictionaries*. Madrid, (etc.): Oxford UP, 2016.
[16] Qtd. in Welter, *op. cit.*, p.160.
[17] « The Angel in the House » is a 1854 poem written by Coventry Patmore which recounts the early stages of the poet’s love story with his first wife, who he believed was the perfect woman. In this poem, Patmore attributes to his wife the qualities of ideal femininity such as domesticity and submissiveness. The designation “The Angel in the House” was later on used by feminist critics and writers, such as Virginia Wolf and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, to talk about, denounce and criticize the fabricated perfect woman - the Feminine woman.
[18] Noddings, Nel. Women and Evil. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. p.59.

delicate, timid, doubtful, mindless and childlike. As it turns out, Catherine Barkley displays most of these traits, and she can, indeed, be compared to a child.

Just like a child who lacks the depth and knowledge that the experience of life brings, Catherine expresses ignorance in certain matters of life and her questions remind those of a child growing up, learning about things and asking about them: "When a man stays with a girl when does she say how much it costs? (...) Does she say she loves him? Tell me that. I want to know that" (*FTA* 67-68); and, just like this growing child would always be looking for her or his parents' approval and positive evaluation, Catherine seeks Henry's, and her requests demonstrate a need and "a massive craving for reassurance;"[19] "I'll do what you want and say what you want and then I'll be a great success, won't I? (…) I'm good. Aren't I good? (…) You see? I'm good. I do what you want." (*FTA* 68) In the same conversation, Catherine expresses her dependence on and clinginess to Henry when she asks him, "You don't want any other girls, do you?" (*FTA* 68) as well as her puerile lack of confidence and need for reassurance.

Her speech, too, is childish in the fact that it is quite shallow, repetitive and irregular, without real meaning. Her speeches are also glib, "But now we're happy and we love each other. Do let's please just be happy. You are happy, aren't you? Is there anything I do you don't like? Can I do anything to please you? Would you like me to take down my hair? Do you want to play?" (*FTA* 75) A speech that contrasts with that of Henry, who answers this batch of questions by simply saying "Yes and come to bed." (*FTA* 75) A contrast that shows, once more, that men are portrayed mature, confident and poised, contrary to women. F. Scott Fitzgerald expressed the same

[19] Fetterley, *op. cit.*, p.68.

thought on Catherine as, after reading the typescript of A Farewell to Arms, he advised Hemingway: "Catherine is too glib, talks too much physically. In cutting their conversations, cut some of her speeches rather than his. She is too glib."[20]

Through Catherine's speeches, Hemingway demonstrates the aspects of Femininity that depict women as eternal children. Her speeches show that she cannot fulfil herself without a man; she needs his approval and guidance and is submitted to him. She is dependent and clingy and, like a child, her words lack depth and understanding. Catherine's speeches are a good combination of both her Femininity and her glibness; they illustrate her grand veneration for Henry while demonstrating her different weaknesses.

In addition to portraying her as a completely submissive woman who shapes her life after a man's needs and wants, Hemingway associated with Catherine's actions and global behaviour the image of an erratic and contradictory female character, difficult and quite unpleasant to understand. Catherine's contradictions and absurdities can be illustrated, first, with the way she conducted both of her love stories. Whereas she remained engaged for eight years to her first lover, she never accepted to marry him or to give him "anything he wanted" (*FTA* 11); however, with Henry, she got very rapidly involved in a serious, intimate relationship, despite the fact that she knew almost nothing of him. She also strongly refused to kiss him, the first time, but changed her mind right away and submitted herself to him. Lastly, Catherine is incomprehensible when, for example, she asks Henry to repeat what she says while she has her eyes closed, causing him to suspect some craziness in her, "I thought she

[20] Qtd. in Hily-Mane, Geneviève. Le Style de Ernest Hemingway: la Plume et le Masque. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1983. p.232.

was probably a little crazy." (*FTA 19*) Even she qualifies herself as such, as well as stupid and boring; she asks Henry not to mind her and suggests him to go outside and meet other people, so that he will not remain in the boredom of her company, despite his desire to stay with her.

With all these particularities that Hemingway endowed Catherine Barkley with, it becomes possible to say that Hemingway presented a female character that fits the stereotype of the futile, weak, passive, submissive and stupid woman. By depicting Catherine the way he did, Hemingway has been accused by the critics, like Judith Fetterley, to perpetuate the image of the Feminine woman and to ridicule women in a much larger sense. She writes, "Catherine has always made the critics uneasy. Their need to explain her suggests that to accept and confront her contradictions might be to discover something rather unpleasant in Hemingway's handling of women."[21] Fetterley goes even further in her analysis; she states, by quoting Carlos Baker, that Hemingway's heroines achieve their meaning "in the service of the artist and the service of man."[22] She also explains, through her analysis of Catherine's death in childbirth, that this was "planned from the start"[23], contrasting Henry's experience before his operation with Catherine's Caesarean experience, "And while Francis was quick to suspect incompetence when it comes to his leg, no doubts are raised about the doctor who performs the Caesarean on Catherine, though usually the need for such an operation is noticed before the child has strangled;"[24] for her, it is Catherine's absence of control and lack of assertiveness that is the reason of her death, meaning that Henry

[21] Fetterley, *op. cit.*, p.66.
[22] *id.*, p.67.
[23] *id.*, p.70.
[24] *Ibid.*

has the lucidity and self-assertion to perceive incompetence and to ask for another doctor, while Catherine has not. Through this example, Fetterley highlights the differences between male and female characters in Hemingway's writing. She finally concludes, "In the world of A Farewell to Arms, male life is what counts. And the message to women reading this classic love story and experiencing its image of the female ideal is clear and simple: the only good woman is a dead one, and even then there are questions."[25]

II.1.1.2 – Catherine's Incomplete Femininity:

Whereas the critics who rejected Catherine Barkley's portrayal have all been guided by their conviction that this fictional character was nothing but a stereotype and a grotesque cliché, they all seemed to overlook, or, at best, to misinterpret a major side of Catherine Barkley that Ernest Hemingway put in front of everyone willing to see it. As shall be demonstrated, Catherine Barkley is not, in fact, the exact Feminine woman the literary critics have so vehemently denounced; and the element used by Hemingway to help the reader achieve this conclusion is Catherine's nurse friend, Helen Ferguson.

Ferguson reminds Catherine and the readers, more broadly, of the Feminine obligations a woman has and that Catherine is apparently missing to fulfil. Indeed, Femininity calls on women to preserve their chastity and purity, and to remain pious in any circumstance. The four cardinal virtues concerned by "The Cult of True Womanhood"[26] are: piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Out of the four

[25] *id.*, p.71.
[26] Welter, *op. cit.*

virtues, Catherine only displays one, which is submissiveness, and regarding domesticity, it would be hard to judge her on that, considering the chaos during which A Farewell to Arms takes place and the fact that neither she nor Henry actually have a home; moreover, Catherine has shown that she considers her home whenever she and Henry are. Piety and purity, on the other hand, have not been performed by Catherine the way "The Cult of True Womanhood" and Femininity, in general, advocates. Catherine also misses to display other very important aspects of Femininity, like virtue[27] and the respect of traditions.

In Book Four, when Helen and Catherine are having dinner in their hotel and Henry joins them, Ferguson expresses her anger at Henry for putting her friend in the situation of being pregnant out of wedlock, for "ruining" her. She had already warned him, back in Milan, when he was hospitalized for his leg, not to get Catherine in trouble. Her anger increases into rage and despair when she sees that even Catherine does not seem to be bothered by the situation; she does not consider herself in trouble and kindly laughs at her friend's distress. Even worse for Ferguson, when she sees that Catherine is delighted by Henry's return and that she will join him right away; she tells her, "You have no shame and no honor (…) If you had any shame it would be different." (*FTA* 159) Ferguson's reaction demonstrates how "dreadful", to use her words, it is for a woman to be pregnant without being married, and yet Catherine does not want to be married. Even when Henry proposes to her, she declines and says that she considers herself married to him. But for Ferguson, Catherine "should want to be married." (*FTA* 160)

[27] Here, "virtue" is used in the sense of the moral conduct that is conform to the strictures of morality. In this context, it means the abstinence of physical contact and intimacy with other than the spouse.

Ferguson serves as an indicator and reminder, as already said, as to what is expected of women in their love life, and whereas Catherine embodies greatly Femininity in her worship for Henry, she does not abide by all the rules; she loses her purity and virtue to Henry, and refuses to follow the traditional pattern which includes getting married before having kids. She is conscious of doing so and perseveres on that path. Yet, in her mind, she considers herself pious and virtuous, as she sees herself married to Henry and is faithful to him. He is also her religion; she does whatever he wants her to do, resulting in her feeling completely adequate. Other than Henry, Catherine has no religion, as the Saint Anthony she gives Henry was given to her by another person, and she only considers it for luck.

The fact that Catherine does not follow all the socially-established rules is quite interesting in the sense that it highlights a certain paradox and an ambiguity regarding her character. She is not as obedient as Femininity would like her to be. On the contrary, Catherine displays a free will that is missing in other “womanly women”, along with a semi-independent mind; she is Feminine on her own terms. She is not entirely independent because, like true “womanly women”, she lives for and through her lover, and completely forgets herself in the process, as previously explained. However, while thoroughly dedicated to Henry, Catherine is the one who decides for herself how she would live her relationship with the American soldier. Even during her former relationship, Catherine did not want to get married to her long-time fiancé. What reason could have prevented her from doing that, when her lover really wanted to get married to her, and when it is expected of young ladies and especially the engaged ones to get married, at some point? The reason she gives for that is his

departure to war and the effect that marriage could have had on him, again bringing a man at the center of her decisions. But here lies the paradox and the ambiguity previously stated: she is the one who decided that the marriage would not take place, for the benefit of the man; she is still in the process of prioritizing the man, but goes against the norms on her own accord. She did not yield to conventions when every other complete "womanly woman" would have. The same happens with Henry: he wants them to be married, but she keeps refusing. Again, the reason is that they would be separated if they had to get married under Italian law; yet, Catherine does not succumb to the pressure of being a single, pregnant woman, and faces Ferguson's outrage – which illustrates the view of society in general – with patience and compassion. Another example of Catherine's decisiveness is her several attempts to terminate her pregnancy without consulting Henry or Helen Ferguson or anyone else. She decided, on her own, to get rid of the baby and worked towards that. Here again, the reason behind this attempt is completely related to Henry; she did not want to upset, bother, nor trap him. She did not think of the consequences she would face, nor of her future. The reason has also to do with her unhealthy reliance on Henry and her desire to keep the fusion between them intact; in her point of view, a baby will only shatter this union. But the ambiguity happens once more when this decision highlights Catherine's distance from religion and from any sort of decisionism[28]. She only accepts what suits her from the societal and religious rules. She is the master of her own life, and decides to have Frederic Henry at its center.

[28] "A system of legal philosophy based on the belief that right is what the legislature has determined it to be." *MERRIAM-WEBSTER*. Web. 16 June 2017. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/decisionism

This ambiguity in Catherine – the strength to sidestep social norms, and the total surrender to a man – reveals a certain strength of character and an assertion, along with a less plain and, on the contrary, a more complex personality that have been completely ignored by the critics who dismissed her as a believable character. On the contrary, this ambiguity has been used against her as yet another factor that dismisses her. But Catherine reveals herself as an independent woman who decides, by herself, how she is going to lead her life, and who she will accept to embark with her on her journey.

To conclude this section about Catherine, and to answer the question raised by this chapter, in relation to her, Hemingway's portrayal of Catherine has given numerous reasons and elements to build the image of a misogynist writer. Yes, Catherine displays so many aspects of the Feminine woman, but she is also far more than just that. Hemingway did not only present a futile woman in the character of Catherine, but he disseminated other elements and many other subtleties here and there, Helen Ferguson being one of them, to shape a more complex female character, and a far more interesting one. Many critics, like Roger Whitlow, share the same view on Catherine and find more strength to her than it has ever been recognized by the other critics. He writes,

> Catherine, I hasten to reply, is none of these things – not unreal, not idealized, and not to be written off as a daydream (…) Here is the principal problem with most of the interpretations of Catherine's character: most critics have chosen to overlook her deeply troubled psychological state and have judged her actions and speeches against "normal" human behavior. Of

> course, in such a context, Catherine seems unreal indeed, particularly in the opening scenes with Frederick.[29]

This brings us back to Linda Patterson Miller's words when she says that Hemingway's "women embody the 7/8 of the iceberg that is down under and carry much of the work's emotional weight accordingly," [30] and to Gail D. Sinclair when she writes, "Hemingway's iceberg principle applies to them [female characters] as profoundly as it does to any other character or novel in the canon."[31] Both critics highlight the utter importance of studying Hemingway's work with precision and clarity, by gathering all the details and hints he leaves to the reader to pick up in order to interpret correctly his message. Whitlow mentions Catherine's deeply troubled psychological state, which is indeed an ineluctable aspect of her character that will be further explored in the next chapters.

II.1.2 – "The American Wife" and the Negative Aspects of "Femininity"

Femininity "glorifies" the woman by representing her as a pure and altruistic individual while it diminishes her mental and physical abilities as well as her entire worth as a complete individual, and gives her the same status and characteristics as those of a child. Whereas Femininity as a whole is considered negative, due to the fallacy and erroneousness it has propagated for so many centuries, the side where it represents women as eternally and intrinsically childish creatures is what is considered the most negative aspects of it in this chapter, as it is the way in which *Cat in the Rain*'s the American Wife is mostly portrayed.

[29] Whitlow, *op. cit.*, p.18.
[30] Patterson Miller, *op. cit.*, p.6.
[31] Sinclair, *op. cit.*, p.94.

With the American Wife, Hemingway portrays a character that represents the Feminine woman in all of the weakness, helplessness, superficiality, capriciousness, impatience and childishness that characterize her. The American Wife is a character that achieves nothing in the short story "*Cat in the Rain*", though she spends her time expressing her trivial and very numerous desires to her husband, and even tries, unsuccessfully, to fetch the cat she saw from the window and wanted so much. At first glance, the American Wife seems to be more of a burden than a positive partner to her husband, George. More than that, the American Wife appears to be completely futile and shallow. Yet, before delving into her behaviour and how it demonstrates the negative aspects of Femininity, there is one major detail that can be held against Hemingway and that is inevitable, and it is the fact that the American Wife has no name.

Whereas George, her husband, is given a name, the American Wife is only known to the reader in terms such as "the American Wife", "the wife", "the girl", "the American girl" or "his wife". She has no identity of her own, she is only referred to in relation to her husband, to her nationality (as they are two Americans in a hotel in Italy), or to her sex. As it turns out, the fact that the American Wife is denied an identity, and that she can only be recognized in relation to someone or something else, and mostly it is to her man that she is linked and identified, is a requirement of Femininity on the "womanly woman", called "the feminine mystique" by Betty Friedan, who writes, "The feminine mystique permits, even encourages, women to ignore the question of their identity. The mystique says they can answer the question

'Who am I?' by saying 'Tom's wife. . . Mary's mother';"[32] as is the case with the American Wife, who is not even required to answer any question related to her identity; she is in fact given no choice and the reader can only know her in the way Hemingway presents her, that is, as an American wife or girl.

By granting the American Wife no personal identity, Ernest Hemingway seems to validate the belief in the absence of need for a proper identity for women, while men's position and superiority remain unquestionable. As Simone de Beauvoir explains, man is essential, absolute, and the Subject of his life and destiny; woman, however, is the total opposite. She writes, "She is determined and differentiated in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other."[33] The position of Other held by women is the result of their long-time subordination and the fact that men have always been the ones to decide for women,

> History has shown that men have always held all the concrete powers; from patriarchy's earliest times they have deemed it useful to keep woman in a state of dependence; their codes were set up against her; she was thus concretely established as the Other.[34]

As a result, men posited themselves as Self and Subject, and opposed to them women as the Other and the Object, "the Other, posited as object in the subject's eyes," [35] following the principal of alterity which, in de Beauvoir's words, "is the fundamental category of human thought. No group ever defines itself as One without immediately setting up the Other opposite itself."[36] Consequently, the American Wife's absence of

[32] Friedan, *op. cit.* p.53.
[33] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.26.
[34] *id.*, p.193.
[35] *id.*, p.195
[36] *id.*, p.26.

name and, by extension, of identity highlights her positions as an object, a possession, identified mostly in relation to George.

As an object, the American Wife cannot do things for herself; things are rather done for her, while she remains in her powerless position. The change in her designation from "wife" to "girl" is also interesting to look at. She is often called "wife" throughout the story, but the term "girl" appears when the woman cannot find the cat, and persists when she passes by the hotel-keeper. The disappointment of not finding the cat shifts the woman from semi-adulthood to childhood, and her reaction, once back to her room, underpins that. She reacts like a child who fancied a toy, but something prevented him from having the toy. Also, when she passes by the hotel-keeper as "the girl", the text says that she felt of supreme importance when the padrone bowed to her, "Something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important;" (*CR* 120) still in that puerile disappointment, the fact that she felt important and very small at the same time, when the padrone showed respect and consideration towards her, could be explained by the fact that the padrone is very tall, so that even when he bows, he remains taller than her; or because he is old and his thoughtfulness towards her resembles that of a father towards his daughter. A view shared by John V. Hagopian, who considers the padrone as a father figure; a man who gives the American wife "the feelings of comfort and protection that her father did,"[37] which could also explain the use of the term "girl" to talk about her. Another reason to her feeling could be that she likes people being at her service and enjoys being treated nobly, which can be combined with her need for "comfortable bourgeois domesticity" – as mentioned by

[37] Hagopian, John V. "Symmetry in "Cat in the Rain"." Ed. Jackson J. Benson, *op. cit.*, p.231.

Carlos Baker when he says that the kitty the woman wants so badly "somehow stands in her mind for comfortable bourgeois domesticity;"[38] and her wishes for candle-lighted diner tables with her own silver. A scenery best found in castles and mansions, yet she is in a hotel room during the rainy season, again igniting and sharpening her frustration.

The wife expresses her frustration through a succession of wishes of different sorts and a series of "I want". The list comprises a kitty, long hair, a table with her own silver, candles, spring, a kitty again, and new clothes. The woman's wishes are rather simple, attainable, and not really substantial or vital; they are even rather superficial and superfluous. She wants to have long hair and new clothes in order to beautify her appearance, to be Feminine, to look like a woman, "I get so tired of looking like a boy." (*CR* 121) She also wants candles and silver at the table, objects relating to domesticity, a trait exclusively associated with Feminine women, "she is feminine and domestic."[39] The American Woman wants a home with fancy objects.

However, her deep longing for those objects implies that she is unable to have them; she "can't" have long hair, and she "can't" have fun; she seems to be highly dependent on her husband, as if her happiness depended on him and the decisions he makes. Her wish to have long hair serves as an illustration to this: the woman should be able to grow her hair as she wishes; yet George's preference to see her like she is now, with short hair, seems to represent an impediment to her, although George gives no feeling that he is forcing her to keep her hair the way it is. The woman, then, needs her husband's approval to make decisions in her life, as small as they can be, which is

[38] Baker, Carlos.*op. cit.*, p.136.
[39] Burhans, Jr., Clinton S. "The Complex Unity of *In Our Time.*" Ed. Jackson J. Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

explained by Mary Roberts Coolidge when she writes that, "Womenkind have generally had to please the Head of the Family if they wished to be comfortable and happy,"[40] and which is also assimilated to unassertiveness and deference. The American Wife cannot decide for herself. She simply does what her husband wants her or decides to do, and when she takes a decision on her own, like that of bringing the cat inside, she fails and ends up frustrated and irritating, acting childishly.

It also seems like the American wife cannot help nor act for herself, every attempt she has made in the story has proven unsuccessful. When she goes out to fetch the cat, the maid, sent by the hotel keeper, offers her protection from the rain – the wife missed to take an umbrella with her – and she assists her in her quest for the stray animal. When, ultimately, she obtains a cat, it is again the maid, another time sent by the padrone, who realises her wish to have a kitty. The American wife is helpless and unable to do things for herself. She keeps complaining and whining and irritating her husband, but no action is successfully intended.

To summarize, just like he did with Catherine Barkley, Hemingway gathered a great amount of Feminine characteristics in the character of the American Wife. Whereas he endowed Catherine with devotion and self-sacrifice for the lover, Hemingway depicts the American Wife more in terms of domesticity, powerlessness, childishness, immaturity, shallowness and superficiality; she has not fully grown into a mature woman; rather, her immaturity expresses itself through her many wishes, which go from one thing to another, and through her constant dissatisfaction. Nothing seems to content her, and while her husband spends his time reading a book, an

[40] Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p.172.

uplifting activity that helps pass the time on a rainy day, she confines herself in her whims and complains. This last point also contributes to highlight yet another time the difference between Hemingway's portrayal of men and that of women that has been decried for so long by literary critics: the man is calm, confident and mature; he knows how to manage his time and what he wants, whereas the woman is restless, agitated, superfluous and dithered.

Yet, this calmness and immobility with which Hemingway described George is also interesting to look at, since it has prevailed during the entirety of *Cat in the Rain*; and it is interesting to look at in relation to the American Wife. Burhans writes about the American Wife,

> In short, she is feminine and domestic and wants a family to love and be loved by, but she has only a husband who takes her for granted. Nothing is at it should be for her: a stray cat becomes her home and family, and the attention and affection she yearns for come from a stranger, the hotel-keeper.[41]

Burhans is pointing at George as having a part in the American Wife's state and behaviour; his thought is supported by Coolidge, who recognizes that negligent men, and George is arguably one of them, cause women to act in the way the American Wife does, "Wheedling and cunning, the whole battery of feminine weapons from caresses to tears and temper, were inevitably employed upon negligent and selfish men by their dependents."[42] George, hence, could represent the hidden part of the iceberg, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

[41] Burhans, *op. cit.*, p.26.
[42] Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p.26.

Whereas Hemingway, with his two characters Catherine and the American Wife, seems to portray two really weak and futile women characters, he, in fact, added many details to the two that could completely turn the tables and give a totally different meaning to both stories, along a completely different understanding of the characters. There is, hence, a real need, even an obligation, for a more precise study of his works; as Hagopian writes, "As Hemingway is preeminently the artist of implications, we must try to discover what is implied here."[43]

II.2 – The Destructive Woman: Margaret Macomber:

The second category in which Hemingway's female literary creations are put is the one assembling his less plain, less futile and less submissive women; it is the "bad women" category. In total opposition to the first category, this one is about women who assert themselves, who do not abide by the rules, and who, on the contrary, create their own rules despite the others. These others, most of the time, are the men surrounding them. At the top of the list of this type of female characters stands Margarot Macomber, of the short story "*The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*". Despite the title of the short story, there is nothing happy about it, nor about Francis, who happens to be Margaret's husband. The short story's events last less than two days; they include horrendous killings of animals, adultery, whipping of African natives, and a tragic death at the end. Out of these four, two are of Margaret's doing: adultery, and the tragic death of Francis, whom she hit with a 6.5 Mannlicher at the closing of the story. These two actions combined made of Margaret the critics' target for numerous decades. They did not content themselves with labelling her a "bad

[43] Hagopian, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

woman", they went on to call her a murderess, considering her to be "the prime example"[44] of Hemingway's "bitch" type – a term commonly used to qualify these "bad" women. This section will seek to find out what exactly made her to be so severely criticized; first, regardless of the murderous act, then linking it to the rest.

Each one of Robert B. Holland[45] and Roger Whitlow[46] provides a good list that, overall, summarizes the critics' assessment of Margaret; the outcome of this list is that Margaret is a dominating, manipulative, unfaithful and unscrupulous woman and wife. Ultimately, she is also a cold-blooded murderess. Besides that, Margaret is "an extremely handsome and well-kept woman" (*SHLFM* 1) who has been married to rich Francis for eleven years. Their marriage has been subjected to adultery on Margaret's part, but survived it all, for it is said in the text that neither Margaret nor Francis would leave the other, as each one of them enjoys the comfort and security of this marriage. Overall, Margaret displays the following traits: disrespect, superficiality, smartness, beauty, plus the abovementioned – dominance, manipulation, unfaithfulness and unscrupulousness.

Margaret is dominant in her marriage because she knows she has power over Francis, "Margot Macomber covets her husband's money but values even more her power over him,"[47] Carlos Baker writes; and Margaret knows that no matter what she does, Francis would stick around, "They had a sound basis of union. Margot was too beautiful for Macomber to divorce her and Macomber had too much money for Margot ever to leave him." (*SHLFM* 15) Francis knows for his wife's past numerous

[44] Fiedler, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-319.
[45] Holland, Robert B. "Macomber and the Critics." *Hemingway's African Stories: The Stories, Their Sources, Their Critics.* Howell, John M. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969.
[46] Whitlow, *op. cit.*
[47] Baker, Carlos. "The Two African Stories." Ed. Jackson J. Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

adulteries, yet here he is, by her side, in a trip undertaken so that "there would be none of that," (*SHLFM* 16) a promise that she has made, as the trip to Africa was made so that Margaret would stop cheating on Francis, and it seems like Francis is trying to please his wife through this safari; however, and as it turned out, Margaret cheated once more on her husband during this same African safari, breaking her promise, which underlines another negative trait, in addition to her unfaithfulness: dishonesty.

By being unfaithful, Margaret is disrespectful to her husband and to their sacred union; she is also disrespectful towards him on several occasions during the safari: kissing Wilson in front of him, infantilising him, minimizing the gravity of her behaviour, refusing dialogue, half-insulting him after the incident with the lion etc. Margaret lacks the morality and maturity to deal with her marriage's issues.

She is also cold-hearted and even cruel to her husband in making him go through her adultery in this safari, proving her egoism and lack of compassion for her husband who has been ashamed in public after his runaway from the lion. She has been ashamed of that, too, but instead of supporting her husband who, after all, never had to kill a lion before nor has been trained to do so, she chooses to "punish" him by turning her back on him. Frank O'Connor puts it ironically,

> Francis runs away from a lion, which is what most sensible men would do if faced by a lion, and his wife promptly cuckolds him with the English manager of their big-game hunting expedition. As we all know, good wives admire nothing in a husband except his capacity to deal with lions, so we can sympathize with the poor woman in her trouble.[48]

In short, Margaret Macomber remains married to Francis for materialistic reasons, not out of love or respect, and cheats on him whenever he makes a mistake,

[48] O'Connor, Frank. The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story. New York: Melville House, 2011. pp. 168-169.

taunting him all the way. The portrait of a negative woman is well set, yet there remains another element that is going to complete this portrait, and it is Francis's death.

Francis's last moments are made of joy; the joy of being able to shoot at buffaloes without stepping back and the joy of feeling different, more courageous and less coward. The lion incident left Francis in a spot where everyone was silently lynching him, everyone but Margaret, who callously and sadistically returned the situation in her favour. And now that Francis is finally able to assemble his courage and face charging impressive, wild animals, Margaret's face starts to turn white at this observation,

> From the far corner of the seat Margaret Macomber looked at the two of them. There was no change in Wilson. She saw Wilson as she had seen him the day before when she had first realized what his great talent was. But she saw the change in Francis Macomber now. (*SHLFM* 24)

Baker relates this, "His wife at once senses and hates this change because it undermines her power;"[49] indeed, Francis keeps on repeating that he feels different and fearless, and his attitude towards his wife changes at the same time, which might indicate an uncertain future for the Memsahib; for as long as she has been married to Francis, he has always been the same "sinisterly tolerant" man to whom she could do anything she liked, and that was their situation, a comfortable one for Margaret.

However, the change occurring in Francis is displeasing Margaret; ""Isn't it sort of late?" said Margot bitterly. Because she had done the best she could for many years back and the way they were together now was no one person's fault."(*SHLFM* 24) Yet, it does not seem to be late for Francis, and with him becoming more confident and

[49] Baker, Carlos. "The Two African Stories," *op. cit.* p. 47.

assertive, things could go differently between the two. Now, Margaret would have to be different to her husband; otherwise, she could be replaced and become a forgotten *faux pas*, like the lion, and she seems to realise that.

However, in his ultimate face-off with the coming buffalo, Macomber is mortally hit in the back by a bullet shot by his wife. The common assumption is that Margaret aimed at her husband, following Wilson's words, "That was a pretty thing to do" (…) He would have left you too." (*SHLFM 26*) And, regarding the previous events and elements gathered, this assumption fits the woman's description, as she has proven, throughout the story, that her prime concern is herself.

The various and numerous critics did not leave Wilson's words unnoticed and immediately agreed with him, saying that "when Macomber redeems himself (…) she cold-bloodedly shoots him;"[50] "Margot, when her husband belatedly asserts his identity, shoots him."[51] And lastly, a quotation that sums it all, from Sharon Dean,

> Representative of the full-fledged bitch is Margot Macomber, though to give Hemingway credit, she becomes a bitch only after trying to make a successful marriage with a cowardly husband. Margot finally so needs to dominate the husband she despises that she kills him when he becomes a man she might have loved.[52]

The majority agrees on the fact that Margaret has not been a good wife to her husband, nor a good woman either; her flaws have caused great damage, both to her marriage and to her husband, who had to pay with his life. Margaret is one of the two

[50] Qtd. in Whitlow, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
[51] *Ibid*.
[52] *Ibid*.

"outstanding examples of Hemingway's "bitch women "."[53] And Hemingway's "bitch women" can be defined in Wilson's terms as follows,

> They are, he thought, the hardest in the world; the hardest, the cruelest, the most predatory and the most attractive and their men have softened or gone to pieces nervously as they have hardened. Or is it that they pick men they can handle? They can't know that much at the age they marry, he thought. He was grateful that he had gone through his education on American women before now because this was a very attractive one. (*SHLFM* 5)

Though Wilson is not to be mistaken for Hemingway's voice, his description fits the one made by the critics on Hemingway's evil women, and Margaret is a "prime example", an "outstanding" one of the sort. But Francis's failures are not to be neglected either, as they seem to trigger Margot's somehow revengeful behaviour. Like the American Wife, Margaret is tied to a man who does not provide her with what she needs and who represents an important reason for her behaviour.

To go back to the question raised by this chapter, it is now possible to say that, indeed, Hemingway's depiction of his female figures corresponds to a certain extent to the stereotypes they have been associated with; however, and as noticed in this chapter, elements surrounding these women do have an impact on their behaviour, and their limiting situation as women strengthens their predicament. Consequently, Hemingway's misogynistic labelled cannot be justified or discarded without a more enlarged study and analysis of the several details he left here and there. The next chapter will deal with women's situation within Femininity and their efforts to cope with the restrictions it carries with it.

[53] Baym, Nina. "Actually, I Felt Sorry for the Lion." New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

Chapter III

Women at the Periphery: Isolation and Escape

Women's confinement within the limits imposed by Femininity had major consequences on their lives, as it caused and maintained their ignorance on the different matters of the outside world and the real life taking place there, and underpinned their dependence on men, resulting in their seclusion at the periphery of the world ruled by men. This situation endured by women shaped, to a great extent, their personality and behaviour, as it caused them to feel inadequate and estranged, while it removed from them any possibility of improvement and change.

This chapter seeks to demonstrate that, instead of depicting his female characters in a shallow and stereotypical way, Hemingway is rather using them as a probe to illustrate the effects of Femininity and its different impositions on women. Through this illustration, it becomes clear that the behaviour displayed by women, the same one they have been criticized for, is rather the manifestation of their efforts to cope with or to find a way out of their situation, along with their inner struggle with this ordeal, than it is the direct expression of their personality. As shall be seen, the behaviour of Catherine, Margaret and the American Wife is directly influenced by their position and situation as women; it is the result of their subordination as women, of their confinement inside that tiny room at the periphery of the world ruled by men – a tiny room which is already crowded with the ghosts of Femininity and subordination.

Starting with the general understanding of this predicament – women's dependence and subordination, their isolation, the entrapment and alienation they endure and the impact it has on them – then linking it directly to women's behaviour, as will be illustrated through the three female protagonists, as each one of them depicts different aspects of this suffering, the purpose of the present chapter is to demonstrate

that women's behaviour, illustrated by the three female protagonists, is the consequence of their predicament as women rather than an established fact; in a word, the chapter aims to show that women's predicament is the source where their behaviour takes its roots. In doing so, the chapter also aims to prove that Hemingway's portrayal of his women characters is more of a denunciation of women oppression and the consequences it has on them than it is a perpetuation of this same oppression.

III.1 Women's Predicament and the Ensuing Malaise:

Women are perpetually maintained in a subordinate position by all the exigencies and limitations imposed on them by Femininity. Like a subordinate, they depend on their superior, they do what is expected of them, and they execute orders; most importantly, women have to remain in that same position for the entirety of their lives, as there is no possibility for them to improve their position or to change it, and this is what represents the factors that constitute their predicament. Women remain secluded in the role assigned to them, whether they are content with it or not, because they cannot and are not allowed to do otherwise; they are "denied transcendence"[1]. There are several factors to this predicament, as women cannot better themselves or break free from the chains of Femininity's limitations because, on the one hand, they have always been convinced that the only way to be, for them, was by being a Woman[2]. On the other hand, and this represents a major factor to their predicament, there is their deep-rooted and intense dependence on men.

[1] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.749.
[2] A Woman as prescribed by Femininity, as seen in Chapters I and II.

III.1.1 Dependence and Seclusion as Principal Elements to Women's Predicament

Women's dependence is the first and most important factor that hinders women from seeking and finding elevation. Women's dependence on men starts, of course, with the previously discussed notion of Femininity with which they have been inculcated since their earliest years. The notion is then part of their subconscious and constantly present throughout their lives, "But what can a woman— for whom the man is both the only means and the only reason for living—do without masculine help?"[3] Indeed, all of Catherine, Margaret and the American Wife's lives are related to a man, who is the focal point of their lives; they always go back to him and their actions are related to him as well. The striking example of this is the American Wife, who relies on her husband, George, in the tiniest details of her life and fails whenever she tries to do something for herself, by herself. Catherine, too, is a good example of this dependence, as she has always focused her life on a man, and loses her bearings when the latter is gone. Women can no longer perceive life without men, who they see as their saviours, and to whom they must always be thankful, since men are the breadwinners and the ones ensuring the welfare of the household.

Since women's place was at home, the only jobs considered appropriate for them were teaching or being a nurse, because both jobs present the qualities promoted by Femininity of self-sacrifice and self-devotion for the benefit of others. As it turns out, Catherine became a nurse to take care of her fiancé, and the two American women are not said to have any particular function within society, except that of being a model for beauty products in the past, in the case of Margaret. This represents the second aspect of women's dependence on men: their total economic dependence, which came

[3] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.730.

as a highlighter and reinforcement to the first facet of dependence. Indeed, as women were never encouraged nor expected to work, they had no means to subsist. They relied entirely on their husbands for that. This economic dependence is a very significant element to women's predicament, because it made them the prisoners of their fate; Coolidge writes, "With economic independence there has come a higher degree of selfrespect."[4] The fact that they had no income allowed them no possibility to look out for other horizons nor to feel at peace with themselves, as it is the case for Margaret who is clearly dissatisfied by her marriage with Francis. Yet, she has to remain Mrs. Macomber because Francis offers her a material life that she could not set up for herself, "His wife had been through with him before but it never lasted. He was very wealthy, and would be much wealthier, and he knew she would not leave him ever now;" (*SHLFM* 15) "but she was not a great enough beauty any more at home to be able to leave him and better herself and she knew it and he knew it." (*SHLFM* 15) This significant detail adds up to Margaret's disadvantageous situation, just like it does to the American Wife who cannot even get herself the silver and new clothes she so desperately yearns for.

The second factor to women's predicament is their seclusion within their homes, which eventually comes as an underpinning element to their dependence. As women's field of activity was the home, they did not take part in the external affairs happening beyond the walls of their houses. Women were kept aside, at the periphery of the advancement of the world, where things were decided for them without their consent, as it has always been the case for them. Women were at the periphery while men were at the center of everything: they were the politicians, the

[4] Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p.332.

doctors, the scientists, the professors, the researchers, the explorers who, all, contributed to change and impacted on the life of humanity. Thus, whereas the world was evolving, outside, women remained at the back, fulfilling their Feminine duties. Their role in society was greatly diminished and restricted to housewifery and the enjoyment of the domestic life. They were not much present on the work field. On the contrary, working, independent women were badly seen and were said to be neurotic and depressive[5]. This served the purpose of stressing the belief that happy women were the ones prioritizing their husbands and homes.

Women's domesticity prevented them from actively participating in the evolvement of their society or in the development of their country. It also prevented them from having actual knowledge of the world and its complexity. Women, then, cultivated a certain degree of ignorance regarding the outside world. They had no experience of real life, as they were kept in a bubble; they did not have the ability to face the outside world, since they were never taught anything about it. As Mary Roberts Coolidge[6] explains, women's education and upbringing had been following a specific direction that would make of them proper ladies –proper Women – in the future, and this direction was at the opposite side of anything related to the outside world. To illustrate this, Margaret is a mere spectator in the African safari and doesn't participate in the real activities of the safari, and the American Wife's failure to be self-reliant, as she proves unsuccessful in her quest for the cat, and did not even think of bringing an umbrella with her to protect herself from the falling rain. It is through Catherine, however, that Hemingway depicts the intensity of women's ignorance, due

[5] Friedan, *op. cit.*
[6] Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*

to their imposed reclusion, and the jeopardized situation in which they find themselves because of that, especially in time of war.

Catherine's case is a strong one because this female character has to face the outside world in one of its most horrendous times, that is, during the Second World War. Her case is interesting because it shows the extent of women's ignorance and its terrible effects. With the case of Catherine, Hemingway depicts and denounces the consequences involved in the subjugation of women and in their demotion to the status of a child. He highlights the ensuing defencelessness and the danger this can put women in. Catherine's deep ignorance is expressed and clearly depicted when she talks of her "picturesque" fantasy of healing her fiancé at the hospital from a simple wound, and the contrast between her thoughts and the gruesome reality she is faced with is flagrant when she says, "He didn't have a saber cut. They blew him all to bits." (*FTA* 12) This distance from and lack of acclimatization to the world underpinned even more women's dependence on men. De Beauvoir writes;

> This masculine universe that she respects from afar without daring to venture into it involves her; and because she is unable to grasp it through technology, sound logic, or coherent knowledge, she feels like a child and a primitive surrounded with dangerous mysteries.[7]

These very dangerous mysteries left Catherine in a state of deep shock and even trauma. Michael Reynolds writes that, "Catherine exhibits many of the traits associated with war stress on the home-bound women who each day scanned the military casualty lists for the names of their husbands, sons, and lovers."[8] That is how,

[7] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.732.
[8] Reynolds, Michael. "*A Farewell to Arms:* Doctors in the House of Love." Donaldson, Scott (ed.).The Cambridge Companion to Ernest Hemingway. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. p.120.

at the beginning of A Farewell to Arms, Catherine is in a state of "near psychological destruction"[9] . Indeed, when Henry meets Catherine, she is still going through that trauma; this is what explains her erratic behaviour.

Hemingway also highlights the eternal dependence of women on men that results from the imposition of constructed identities on individuals like the one conveyed by Femininity. Catherine's malaise started with the disappearance of a man, and it is yet another man who helps her overcome this. Catherine's dependence is transferred from her fiancé to her present lover, underlining her inability to live by herself and her constant, deep-rooted dependence, even though she is economically independent. Her dependence is more related to her powerlessness and inability to cope with the world and all the pain and uncertainties it bears than to any material comfort she could be seeking out or desiring to preserve. Her survival, then, is more psychological than materialistic.

The case of Catherine also serves to pinpoint another factor that results from Femininity, women dependence and seclusion, and that builds up women's malaise, which is women's identity. As women were kept at home, they had no idea who they really were, what they could truly do, or who they could be. The only identity that was presented to them since their childhood was always linked to their gender and shaped by Femininity. They were told that their destiny was to be somebody's wife or a mother, their scope was limited to just that, and they had no projection in the future other than this. Friedan writes, "nobody ever looked us in the eye and said you have to decide what you want to do with your life, besides being your husband's wife and

[9] Whitlow, *op. cit.*, p.23.

children's mother."[10] This is perfectly displayed by Catherine, who can only survive through a man and who identifies with him, as she organizes her life around him, then is shattered and broken when he dies, "[the woman] exists only for and through her husband and children."[11]

Hemingway uses also the American Wife to convey the same notion of absence of identity undergone by women; however, he pushed it a bit further with this female character. It has already been pointed out that the American Wife has no name; she is called the wife, the girl, the American wife or the American girl, but is never given a name. George, however, is the only character with a name, which grants him "an identity and a social legitimacy that are never granted to the female character."[12] The other two nameless characters of the short story are referred to by their occupation: the hotel-keeper and the maid, but George's wife is simply that and nothing more. Whereas the American Wife's namelessness has been seen as an attempt on the part of Hemingway to ridicule the character, there actually seems to be more to it: her namelessness is a strong indicator of her absence of identity, due to her condition as a woman under the effect of Femininity, but also due to her husband denying her a legitimate position and the only "social legitimacy" she is allowed to have. The following section will focus on the part played by George in his wife's estrangement, as well as the impact that Margaret's marriage to Francis has on her.

[10] Friedan, *op. cit.*, p.53.
[11] *id.*, p.32.
[12] Tyler, Lisa. ""I'd Rather Not Hear": Women and Men in Conversation in "Cat in the Rain" and "The Sea Change"." Ed. Broer and Holland, *op. cit.*. p.74.

III.1.2 Dissatisfying Marriages and Women's Relationship with Men: The Road Towards Isolation

Before delving into the role held by George and Francis in the American Wife and Margaret's predicament, and into the overall impact that the triad of marriage, society and Femininity has on these two female protagonists, it is important to address the situation of women in their direct relationship with men.

III.1.2.1 The Critical Need for Approval

It has become clear by now that, under the yoke of Femininity, women cannot accomplish themselves on their own; they need men's approval to be regarded as "true women" in the way fostered by Femininity. Women need men to exist and be recognized by society. As Simone de Beauvoir explains,

> In one sense, her whole existence is a waiting since she is enclosed in the limbo of immanence and contingency and her justification is always in someone else's hands: she is waiting for a tribute, men's approval, she is waiting for love, she is waiting for gratitude and her husband's or lover's praise; she expects to gain from them her reasons to exist, her worth, and her very being.[13]

This waiting for matters such as approval, justification, and reason to exist from her husband is a great constituent to the American Wife's deep misplacement and predicament, since she fails to get any of them from George, who is so self-centered and careless that he has no consideration for his wife – he uses the two pillows of the

[13] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.736.

bed, he does not care that she goes out in the rain, neither is he attentive to her restlessness. He "only looks at his wife once – when he praises her boyish haircut."[14]

On that matter, George's preference to see his wife with short hair indicates that he does not consider her difference or her individuality; he "insists on [the American Wife's] sameness, while she insists on her difference."[15]

> "George hears what she is saying, and he doesn't like it. He prefers her as a "boy", and he responds with both intolerance, "Oh, shut up" (94), and a self-centered prescription, "get something to read" (94), that is, like me."[16]

The American Wife is rejected by her husband who does not grant her the only "job" and identity she is permitted to have and perform, and that is why she has no name. Her namelessness hints at her identity being rejected by her husband and at the fact that she is left with nothing that could truly define her, or give her a meaning, or a purpose. George is imprisoning his wife even further than she already is within and by her Femininity. He is also oblivious to her malaise, as he is "always reading but seems unable to "read" his wife."[17]

The husband's rejection of his wife's identity and individuality is, in fact, what prompts her to express her numerous superficial yearnings, which are nothing more than the expression of her misplacement. She looks for anything that could give her all what her husband is failing to do. Her insistence upon having the kitty proves that the wife lacks something that would give her a meaning and a purpose: "his wife complains, 'I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles' – which is a

[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Tyler, *op. cit.*, p.71.
[16] Bennett, Warren. "The Poor Kitty and the Padrone and the Tortoise-shell Cat in "Cat in the Rain"." New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, *op. cit.* p. 254.
[17] Justice, Hilary K. "Alias Grace: Music and the Feminine Aesthetic in Hemingway's Early Style." Ed. Broer and Holland, *op. cit.*, p.229.

cry for recognition, a place, and a purpose;"[18] the three of which are not granted to her by her husband. She wants to have that kitty and to stroke it on her lap, offering it the affection and protection she, herself, is lacking. In fact, it is interesting enough to notice that the wife talks of the animal as if she was sure that the cat was female. There was no way for her to be certain of that, as she only saw it from the window, but this specific point seems to indicate that the wife identifies herself with the cat, "she immediately makes a subconscious transference of her own sense of homelessness to the cat."[19] She says, "It isn't any fun to be a poor kitty out in the rain," (*CR* 120) transferring her own feelings on the cat, because it is not fun, either, to be an unrecognized human being, woman and wife, "she wants to do for the cat what George will not do for her, provide a place of acceptance and comfort."[20] The fact that she does not know the reason of her desire for the cat, "I don't know why I wanted it so much," (*CR* 120) underlines her inability to understand her own predicament and is coincident with women's incapability of assessing and diagnosing their situation, which Betty Friedan labelled "The Problem that Has no Name".

III.1.2.2. "The Problem that Has No Name":

Betty Friedan noticed that more and more housewives suffered from anxiety, depression, and neuro-related troubles that were previously assigned to the working women. She led a study in which she interviewed several housewives, and noticed that a great majority was unhappy, though their life seemed quite fine and there was no apparent reason for their malaise; still, they felt depressed and lonely. In *Cat in the*

[18] Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
[19] Bennett, *op. cit.*, p.252
[20] *Ibid*.

Rain, the American Wife displays the same symptoms, and there is no apparent reason for her unhappiness.

Friedan named this "The Problem that Has No Name"[21]. In short, women's unhappiness was the result of the purposelessness of their lives. Each member of the family was busy outside – the children with their education, and the husband with his job and other occupations- but women were nothing more than the lovers, the nurturers, the nurses, the cooks and the cleaners. Their whole existence was related to the service of others or to the service of man; however, they felt empty with themselves.

As it turns out, the American Wife matches perfectly the description of the depressed women made by Friedan, as she enjoys no external activity and has no personal goal that would provide meaning to her life. Even during their vacation, she and George are tourists who do not make any touristic activity; they are also stuck in their hotel room because it is clearly not the right season for tourism as the "*brutto tempo*"[22] seems to dominate. This puts the American Wife in a misplaced position once more; "Seen against the background of marital triteness and the quest for a cat to compensate needs, [the animal] looms as a metaphor of the wife's deeper, unfulfilled desires."[23]

Thus, the American Wife's ignorance on why she wanted the kitty is a telling sign of her predicament. Her lack of fulfilment as an individual results in her

[21] *id.*, p.5.
[22] "Awful weather"
[23] Holmesland, Oddvar. "Structuralism and Interpretation: Ernest Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain"." New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

entrapment; she is paralysed, muted, unable to move or to express herself, yet she remains awake, a witness of her powerlessness - she wants, but she can't.

George is, then, an active element in the American Wife's estrangement. He gives her no opportunity to be or feel at peace, nor does he allow her to find a way out of the morosity of their marriage. He maintains her purposeless in the purposelessness of their marriage and of that rainy day in Italy. His wife cannot accomplish herself on her own except with his approval and validation, but she gets none of it. What reinforces the husband's responsibility in the Wife's malaise is the contrast presented in the story between him and the other male in the story, the hotel-keeper, who offers great insight into George's failures as the American Woman's husband.

The passage that mentions what the American Wife likes in the hotel-keeper is the most telling part of the short story on what she needs to find in her husband: "The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints. She liked his dignity. She liked the way he wanted to serve her. She liked the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. She liked his old, heavy face and big hands." (*CR* 119)

The two individuals represent two contrasting men: one is of a certain age, and demonstrates qualities such as consideration, respect, thoughtfulness and responsibility; the other, younger, is filled with ego-centrism, disdain, intolerance, individualism and neglect. The hotel-keeper is attentive to the woman's needs and acts accordingly, sending the maid after her with an umbrella so that she will not get wet, whereas George did not move from his bed; "It is the padrone who actually causes the woman to be sheltered and the cat to be found."[24] The padrone treats his clients way differently than George treats his wife, and the American Wife's feelings concerning

[24] Strychacz, Thomas. "In Our Time, Out of Season"in (ed) Donaldson, *op. cit.*, p.78.

this hotel keeper demonstrate the lacks she goes through with her husband; "the padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance." This implies the feelings her husband arouses in her: unimportance and insignificance.

All the traits that the American wife likes in the padrone are traits she does not find in her husband. Consequently, had George displayed the qualities his wife likes in the hotel-keeper, the American Wife would have felt and acted differently and certainly in a better way. The woman's behaviour in this short story stems from all of her husband's shortcomings. They are the source of her severe discomfort, which is manifested in her despair to find something to hold onto, or something to live for. The American Woman's superficial behaviour, then, is directly influenced and shaped by her negative situation, caused by how her husband treats her and where he places her.

Her husband's deafness to her dissatisfaction and constant denial of her individuality and desires, combined with his total lack of attention, care and interest in her, all contribute to cause her alienation as a woman, as a wife, and as an individual as a whole. She has no real purpose, no specific place among society nor in her own marriage; she is like a shadow wandering here and there, barely noticeable, not very meaningful. She is never given the chance to accomplish anything, and her attempt at freeing herself from the chains holding her in that sad position proves unsuccessful, since the cat is brought to her by an outsider, ensuring "that her experience will remain vicarious,"[25] and thus worsens her situation, as "she loses the means for expressing metaphorically the true extent of her predicament."[26]

[25] Strychacz, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[26] *Ibid*.

To sum up, in *Cat in the Rain*, Hemingway points at the effects that the socialized gender roles have on individuals. He uses the American Wife's restlessness as an indicator of the inadequacy of the roles assigned to women. The American Wife's malaise lies in the fact that she has been brought up in the influence of the traditional distribution of roles that are no longer adequate; she tries to go by them despite their inadequacy, and the padrone, who represents the traditional man in his assistance and protection, intensifies this sense of dissatisfaction with the roles, as he thwarts the American Wife's attempt to be a doer instead of a passive, awaiting spectator. Thomas Strychacz points at the importance of the American Wife's attempt to fetch the cat by herself, as she refuses her husband's help, saying that "she wants to be rescued, but also to be the rescuer,"[27] trying, thus, to transcend her situation and to "experience the traditionally masculine role of self-liberation."[28] Yet, her attempt to liberate herself and to do something for herself and by herself is "tamed by domestication"[29] and is, thus, destined to fail. This action, however, proves that, despite her limiting situation, the American Wife is an entire individual, not so much different from men with regard to the needs, emotions and attitudes felt and displayed by the latter. It reveals that, "women, like men, harbor urges toward heroic action."[30]

> From her subjugation, her impoverishment, and the depths of her refusal, the girl can extract the most daring courage. She finds poetry; she finds heroism too. One of the ways of assuming the fact that she is poorly integrated into society is to go beyond its restricting horizons.[31]

[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] Holmesland, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.434.

Cat in the Rain, hence, which "may be one of Hemingway's best stories, subtly executed and powerfully suggestive in its characterization and imagery,"[32] is a testimony against the cultural construction of identity and the social oppression it bears with it. It is also a declaration that women's comportment must "be seen within a matrix of social repression rather than as [their] biological destiny."[33]

The same kind of pattern, where the man causes his wife's behaviour and another man serves as a contrast, can be observed in Margaret, the other married woman of the selected stories, whose husband constitutes a source of disappointment and frustration.

III.1.2.3- Margaret's Marriage to a "Coward":

Francis's part in his wife's situation is undeniable, and his cowardice has been greatly detailed in the short story, which finds fault "with the man rather than with the woman,"[34] Sanderson writes, before concluding that, "Although Margot Macomber is one of the best known examples of a Hemingway bitch, the story implies that the woman's behavior is inseparable from the failure of her husband."[35] This is proven by the fact that Margaret had been supportive of her husband until he panicked and ran away from the lion. Her ensuing disappointment in him leads her to adultery.

Whereas Femininity indulges women to bear the different aspects of weakness mentioned earlier, in the case of the Macombers, it is the man, Francis, who shows signs of immaturity, childishness and an absence of assertiveness, and it is Margaret

[32] Bennett, *op. cit.*, p.245.
[33] Strychacz, *op. cit.*, p.79.
[34] Sanderson, Rena. "Hemingway and Gender History." Ed. Broer and Holland, *op. cit.*, p.185.
[35] *Ibid.*

who seems to have the upper hand and power over her husband. On this, Rena Sanderson writes that, "the husband perceives the woman to be in charge and resents her for it."[36] Margaret is in the dislikeable position of the superior wife, in a world where women were supposed to be their husband's servants rather than their superior. Francis is an "ineffectual husband"[37], who thrusts his wife to be at the helm of the prosperity of their marriage and condemns her for it at the same time.

Margaret's predicament, then, resides in the complexity of her situation as the wife of a boyish man, who brings her shame and disappointment. She cannot leave him, yet she seems unable to accept his failures as an openly "coward" man. She then finds herself the villain of her own misfortune, and remains locked and isolated in this state of things.

The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber, just like *Cat in the Rain*, presents a contrast between two men, the husband and a stranger, that highlights the husband's shortcomings that result in the woman's behaviour. On the one hand, there is the sinisterly "very tolerant" Francis who accepts his wife's multiple infidelities, and has an upscale lifestyle. Francis is also an immature and puerile person who keeps looking for reassurance, as he lacks confidence, and who reacts grumpily and childishly when his wife blatantly cheats on him, without taking any action. On the other hand, however, there is Wilson, the "man free of woman and of fear,"[38] "the yardstick figure (…) the standard of manhood towards which Macomber rises."[39] Wilson is presented as a good professional hunter, confident, cold-blooded and sometimes cruel to the

[36] *id.*, p.184.
[37] *id.*, p.185.
[38] Baker, Carlos. "Dangerous Game." in Howell, *op. cit.*, p.115.
[39] *Ibid.*

natives, who also happens to sleep with his clients' wives. Wilson is a man who does not abide by the rules in his hunting, as he uses illegal means to chase the animals and whips the African boys who work for him. Francis and Wilson, who are often together in the short story, are in total opposition; while the first is sophisticated in his lifestyle and demonstrates quite easily his weaknesses, the other earns his living in and from the wilderness and shows very few emotions.

It is said that Margaret had tried for so many years to make things work between her and Francis, yet she always goes back to adultery; and what the short story shows is that Margaret cheats on her husband when the latter fails to meet her expectations and discloses his weaknesses. In the short story, Francis exposes his weakness publicly, by including many witnesses in the process, which adds more fuel to Margaret's fire of disappointment and despair. Consequently, she directs herself towards her husband's antithesis: Wilson. Margaret fills the void created by her husband's eternal puerility with the confident, assertive Wilson, who is able to finish any charging beast, whatever the circumstances, shedding a brighter light on her husband's shortcomings. Margaret's infidelity is, hence, only a reaction to Francis's "cowardice"[40].

Margaret's isolation lies in her disillusioning marriage and in the absence of solutions for her: she cannot escape nor suppress her husband's weaknesses, nor can she live with them. The only means she gives herself to cope with her situation engenders her husband's resentment and society's scorn, represented in the story

[40] The word is put between brackets because, as shall be seen in the following chapter, Francis is not as coward as he is thought to be.

through Wilson's inner thoughts, pushing her even deeper in her predicament and isolation.

Hemingway, instead of depicting an evil or a bland woman character, depicts women incapable of voicing their malaise, which always turns against them. Both women are trapped in the sphere left for them, in which they feel inadequate, and from which they cannot get away; trapped in it and criticized about it, as De Beauvoir analyses:

> The same foolishness is seen when, closed up in the limits of her self or her home, she is criticized for her narcissism and egotism with their corollaries: vanity, touchiness, meanness, and so forth. All possibility of concrete communication with others is removed from her.[41]

With Margaret Macomber and the American Woman, Hemingway portrayed two women who cannot separate from their husbands for evident material and social reasons, whereas they do not enjoy their union, for it gives them less happiness than a profound sense of dissatisfaction and frustration and for whom "marriage seems merely insurance against loneliness."[42] Hemingway shows through the two female protagonists how none of them succeeds in realising her wishes and how none of them is given the means to do so. He stresses the fact that women's struggle is really internal as, from the outside, both marriages look successful and stainless, but women's struggle and crisis cannot be perceived nor understood by anyone, even they find difficulty in having a thorough assessment of their situation.

[41] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.731.
[42] Sanderson, *op. cit.*, p.177.

III.1.3 The Ultimate Feelings of Alienation and Estrangement

The examples of Catherine Barkley, the American Wife and Margaret Macomber are here to demonstrate that, with all the limits and obstacles set on the path of women, the latter felt estranged from everyone, starting with themselves, since the only knowledge they could gather about life and about them did not grant them serenity nor peace. They could simply not be what they were told to be and remain wholesomely happy with it. Women's inner struggle and suffering is the "endless division of self against self" that Judith Fetterley talks about (Chapter I). Women feel schizophrenic, alienated from their own selves. They must be Women, but they are not Women. Each woman is a different individual with a different personality than the other women, who, on their turn, are different individuals as well, but they are all asked to be the same. They must repress their particularities and individuality so that they can fit in the mold of Femininity and be socially accepted:

> It is only by some such analogy as this that we can realize the effect of housewifery in stunting women of exceptional ability who, conscientiously pinching themselves to fit their sphere, were unhappy or ill-tempered; or, if they had the courage to break through that domestic inclosure, found themselves pariahs, doomed to isolation, if not to failure, in the unfriendly metier for which they had no preparation.[43]

Women were in isolation: they were alone with their own existential problem. They could neither identify nor understand it, and, hence, failed to fix it. Even though several women suffered from the same symptoms, they could not share their inner state with other fellow women because none of them was really able to articulate what her problem was. They were not only isolated from the world, but from themselves as

[43] Roberts Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p.80.

well. They were in a remote place where everybody was deaf and blind to their suffering, and where they themselves were mute and confused.

Thus, women became trapped in their lives. They became the hostages who, nonetheless, had to remain loving, caring, and grateful for their male superior. Simone de Beauvoir even considers man to be a jailer, since he is the agent through whom society oppresses women and keeps this oppression going, and holds him responsible for woman's behaviour: "But it is more than simply individualistic will that makes him a jailer: society itself, in the form of father, brother, and husband, makes him responsible for the woman's behavior."[44] Women were in the alienating position where they had to be grateful for their own imprisonment and take care of their jailer. Moreover, they could not break free and restore their liberty since they deeply depended on their jailers.

They had to endure isolation and estrangement, while remaining grateful; because if a woman challenged male authority and expressed her desire to break the chains that restricted her life, she would not only be rejected by society, but she would also be risking her entire life if her husband came also to reject her; "no part of her existence under her own control, a woman could only exist by pleasing man. She was wholly dependent on his protection in a world she had no share in making: man's world."[45] De Beauvoir also writes, "she also needs to respect the male universe; if she contested it entirely, she would feel in danger, and without a roof over her head."[46]

As a consequence, women were left in their predicament, and the only way out for them was to learn to cope with their situation or find a solution for themselves,

[44] De Beauvoir, *op. cit*,. p.243
[45] Friedan, *op. cit.*, p.61.
[46] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.733.

within the limits of this same situation. And it is exactly this attempt at alleviating their burden that manifests itself in the form of peculiar behaviours and reprehensible actions, which are nothing more than the consequence of women's condition. They serve to highlight women's predicament and express the extent of their enchainment, as women end up being pushed to act as strangely as they feel with themselves. Their actions are the manifestation of their inner, rather than their innate, state, "the types of behaviors denounced are not dictated to woman by her hormones or predestined in her brain's compartments: they are suggested in negative form by her situation."[47]

This can serve as an explanation for Margaret's or the American Wife's behaviours. Both are clearly unhappy, but they clumsily try to find a solution for themselves, ending up worsening their situation, because their struggle in changing their situation is fruitless and vain from the start – since they cannot really change it; worse, it results in disappointment, disillusionment, frustration and, ultimately, in being rejected. It's a vicious circle where women try to get out of a situation that undermines them, only to find themselves in a situation that is even less desirable; because, between the two, is the expression of their inner suffering, in the form of an unreasonable behaviour, that fails to be understood by anyone.

Women's predicament, then, is their entrapment in a situation of oppression, where the oppressor is at the same time their only means for survival. Their predicament resides also in the fact that their attempts to overcome their condition are doomed from the start and, most often, these attempts end up worsening women's malaise.

[47] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.724.

Each one of these three women demonstrates just how far women have been subjected to dependence and reliance on others. An interesting point is that all of these female figures are in a foreign country during the events of the stories: the American Margaret is in the wilderness of Africa attending shooting scenes, surrounded by men; the British Catherine is in Italy during the high-times of one of the most devastating wars of all times; and the American Wife is also in Italy, in a hotel during the rainy season, where there were no other Americans than her and her husband. The three are confronted to rootlessness – which increases their isolation and their clinging to their "safety chains" – and to the confrontation of the injustices of life, which add up to their predicament, isolating them even more. Each woman's story also demonstrates and identifies the outcome of women's subjugation and dependence and how they, nonetheless, keep on fighting in order to alleviate their burden, making of them finer characters than they have been thought to be. "Hemingway's sensitive portrayal of women in his short stories"[48] and in his novels, like A Farewell to Arms, depicts brave and courageous women, who try to go against the odds in order to seek a better situation for themselves. They depict heroism despite their restricted limits in their attempt to find solutions and in their endless effort of coping with their situation. The coming section is about this effort on their part to cope with the difficulties imposed on them and the way each one of these three takes in order to escape, or to lighten, her malaise.

[48] Patterson Miller, *op. cit.*, p.9.

III.2- The Escape from Isolation and Disillusionment:

De Beauvoir writes,

> It is clear that woman's whole "character"—her convictions, values, wisdom, morality, tastes, and behavior—is explained by her situation. The fact that she is denied transcendence usually prohibits her from having access to the loftiest human attitudes—heroism, revolt, detachment, invention, and creation.[49]

If woman can't revolt, as de Beauvoir mentions, she is then obliged to adjust to her situation in the limitations that it comprises. And if she is incapable of completing this task with the passing of time, she has, then, to find her own solutions and the means to delude herself by transferring her focus on something other than her real problem; that is how Margaret chooses the temporary company of men to forget about her disappointing husband; the American Wife keeps looking for something that could give more substance to her life; and Catherine devotes herself to Henry. Each woman finds solace in the getaway she manages for herself. However, as previously seen, women worsen their situation even more through these ways out, and this is more accurate in the case of the American Wife and Margaret Macomber. Simone de Beauvoir gives good explanations to behaviours similar to those of the two women.

Margaret Macomber's choice of adultery places her in a spot where she is directly identified as the "bad woman", and the critics have used several negative qualifiers to describe her character and behaviour in relation to this. Her infidelity had been seen as an act of vengeance against Francis, who brought shame upon them two, or as a punishment for his failures; yet, where the majority sees vengeance, Simone de Beauvoir sees disappointment and a non-desired act of infidelity; "very often, it is less

[49] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.750.

resentment than disappointment that drives her into the arms of a lover."[50] As previously said, Margaret had been, for over a decade, disappointed by her husband's lack of ardour in his life, and it seems that even in his marriage, Francis remains disappointing to his wife, for he knows "about sex in books, many books, too many books" (*SHLFM* 15); the sentence suggests Francis's passivity, in general, through his reading of so many books, as well as his passivity with his wife. He lives his life mostly in books than in reality, and Margaret, who seems to be a vivacious woman, a woman who prefers action over passivity, endures this. Francis's general passivity has been displayed in his dealing with Margaret and Wilson's nocturnal meeting, and his knowledge of "sex in books" could explain Margaret's choice of infidelity as a means to get away of her entrapment, and the extent of her dissatisfaction in her marriage.

About women who look for sexual intercourse with other than their husbands, de Beauvoir writes, "if she avidly pursues sexual pleasure, it is often because she is frustrated."[51] It is true that Margaret is frustrated and does not find satisfaction with Francis, but frustration is not the sole reason for her to be adulterous; she chooses infidelity as a way to liberation, and liberation is to be understood as a liberation within the limits of women's predicament. "Woman became free only in becoming captive; she renounces this human privilege to recover her power as natural object;"[52] because Margaret perceives the limitations imposed on her, and because she knows that she can never overcome her predicament, she finds a compromise in which she gains her freedom as an individual while remaining a hostage, hence fortifying the

[50] *id.*, p.627.
[51] *id.*, p.729.
[52] *id.*, p.243.

paradox of her situation, because Margaret is an active agent in what will constitute a condemnation for her. To be able to gain freedom, "she chooses strangers as her prey; they have no rights over her;"[53] her lovers become then an evasion, to which she can come and go as she wants; there is no sense of obligation or entitlement, she is not trapped in any unfulfilling engagement: she stays as long as it pleases her, and when it no longer does, she can simply change the set of her fantasy whenever she needs to. In Margaret's case, as well as in Catherine's, the solution she finds for herself resides in a man. Margaret has "an illusion of power which she exercises in occasional infidelities to her husband, but such exercises rather than freeing her deliver her from the power of one man to the power of another."[54]

To lighten her load, Margaret acts against her deeper will. She does not want to be unfaithful, she just wishes she had a successful marriage on the emotional level. Her tears on their return from the lion shooting proved that she was still hoping for and expecting her marriage to go the way she had hoped for during the precedent years, and the purpose of the African safari was for the couple to toe the line; but as her hope was shattered on that early morning for another sad time, she had been pushed by all the frustrations that are a daily part of her life to find a way to free her mind from all the restrictions and disappointments, and she was only left with what she knew could prevent her from falling into despair.

Margaret's infidelity is, hence, an escape from the disillusionment of her marriage as well as a protest against her whole situation and all that has led her to be

[53] *Ibid.*
[54] Baym, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

an eternal captive, "she takes it out on the whole world because it was put together without her, and against her; since adolescence, since childhood."[55]

In the case of Margaret Macomber, the periphery where she is confined constitutes a "locus of resistance"[56] and protest against her confinement and forced subjection; it is the place where women lead their own battle and struggle to find a place of their own in a world that has already decided how things were going to be for them and that has been built without them. The same combat for pertinence is led by the American Woman.

The American Woman's "ill-defined and chaotic yearnings"[57] are a telltale sign of her malaise and inability to articulate her exact, deep needs: she does not know why she wants the cat, but she still wants it "so much". When she looks for seemingly unimportant, materialistic things like silver and clothes, she is simply demonstrating the extent of her limitations, that grant random objects a great significance. In the eyes of the American Wife, these objects *are* important:

> Because her sphere is limited, the objects she touches are precious to her: by not binding them in concepts or projects, she displays their splendor; her desire for escape is expressed in her taste for festiveness: she enjoys the gratuitousness of a bouquet of flowers, a cake, a well-laid table.[58]

The American Woman's "desire for escape" can also be linked to her desire for meaning, represented in the story by the cat.

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[55] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.750.
[56] Palacios Gonzàlez, Manuela. "Periphery as Resistance: Modernist Women Writers and the Possibilities of Transgression." Feminism, Aesthetics and Subjectivity. Essays on Women and Culture in Early Twentieth Century British Literature. Ed. Manuel Barbeito. Santiago de Compostela: Servicio de Publicatións e Intercambio Científico, 2001. p.202.
[57] Strychacz, *op. cit.*, p.78.
[58] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.751.

George and his wife are the "only two Americans stopping at the hotel;" and, according to the weather, they are "unreasonably early for the tourist season,"[59] as Thomas Strychacz notices, which confines them in their hotel room, where the American Wife struggles to communicate with her book-absorbed husband and to keep herself busy. Woman's life is a constant waiting, as de Beauvoir says, and the American Wife's life seems to offer her nothing to wait for: she is rootless, a "tourist without tourism", as Strychacz points out, and on her own in the boredom that has overwhelmed her; consequently, she looks for something that could fill up her time, "she has to kill time somehow; inasmuch as the woman is stifling in a dismal gynaeceum —brothel or bourgeois home— she will also take refuge in comfort and well-being."[60] Yet, despite the comfort of her Italian hotel room, the Wife's agitated conduct proves her ill-being; so when she finds the cat, "crouched under one of the dripping green tables" (*CR* 119), she immediately wants to get it.

The cat's situation, as previously mentioned, might be comparable to that of the American Wife: the cat is under a table out in the rain; the table protects the animal from the rain, but it does not give it enough comfort to remain under it –it disappears to seek refuge elsewhere. The American Woman is in the same situation: her marriage gives her a certain social stability but is not enough in providing her with "comfort and well-being", as de Beauvoir mentions; the only difference with the cat is that the Wife lacks the freedom and the means to seek refuge elsewhere. Hagopian writes, "it may have had to do in finding consolation in her self-pity."[61] Tyler shares the same thought,

[59] Strychacz, *op. cit.*, p.76.
[60] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p.729.
[61] Hagopian, *op. cit.*, p.69.

"she identifies with the kitty she sees in the rain presumably because like her, it feels abandoned and alone, its suffering unrecognized."[62]

Several critics went further in their interpretation, like John V. Hagopian and David Lodge[63], claiming that the wife's desire for the cat is symbolic of her desire to have a child, or symbolic of the wife's pregnancy. Hagopian sees the lack of fertility as "precisely what is lacking in the American wife's marriage."[64] He also uses the wife's feelings when the padrone bows to her "very small and tight inside … really important … of supreme importance" as a description of "a woman who is pregnant."[65] Furthermore, he argues that the American wife's desire to have a knot at the back of her head is representative of her desire to be like her mother, "since the close-cropped hair styles of the twenties were preceded by matronly buns;"[66] and that this symbol of "maternal femininity" is "interwoven (…) with her wish for a kitty, now an obvious symbol for a child."[67] Whereas Hagopian perceives a desire for a child, Lodge asserts that the wife is already pregnant; "Indeed, if we must have a gynaecological reading of the story it is much more plausible to suppose that the wife's whimsical craving for the cat, and for other things like new clothes and long hair, is the result of her *being* pregnant."[68] But to give support to his theory, he uses "extratextual support"[69]: Hemingway's biography and Hadley's pregnancy.

There is no textual evidence that would allow the establishing of a link between the wife's desires and a baby; moreover, Lisa Tyler writes that when the critics join the

[62] Tyler, *op. cit.*, p.72.
[63] Lodge, David. Working with Structuralism. Boston: Routeledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.
[64] Hagopian, *op. cit.*, p.231.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] *id.*, p.232.
[67] *id.*, p.231.
[68] Lodge, *op. cit.* p.30.
[69] *Ibid.*

need for a child to the American Wife's want to have a cat, they "implicitly assume George's inability to respond to his wife's need for attention" [70]. Indeed, the wife's desire for the cat is her attempt to compensate for what is lacking in her marital life and for the lack of marital fulfilment. "The cat serves obviously in the story as symbol for the wife and her feeling of being shut out of her husband's life – of being dripped on."[71]

The cat is for the Wife the reflection of her own situation and of what misses in her life: a reason for her to be meaningful by being useful and having a goal, by having something to care for and to love. So when she fails to find the animal under the table, it is a great disappointment and a devastation for her, "a little setback is enough for the woman to rediscover the universe's hostility and the injustice of her lot; so she throws herself into her safest refuge: herself."[72] Even then, when she retreats into studying her actual reflection in the mirror, it results in denial and negativity with George's preference to see her with short hair, ultimately giving more depth to her malaise and frustration.

> What happens to the woman comes from others, it is others who are responsible for her misfortune. Her furious despair rejects all remedies; suggesting solutions to a woman determined to complain does not help: no solution seems acceptable. She wants to live her situation exactly as she lives it: in impotent anger. (...) She knows that her malaise is deeper than the pretexts she gives for it, and that one expedient is not enough to get rid of it.[73]

To sum up all what the present chapter sought to demonstrate, these women's behaviour is not intrinsically linked to their personalities, nor is it the plain display of

[70] Tyler, *op. cit.*, p.74.
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] De Beauvoir, *op. cit.* p.750.
[73] *Ibid.*

who they are; it is rather shaped by the world that surrounds them and that gives them little to say about their destiny, "Many of the faults for which they are reproached— mediocrity, meanness, shyness, pettiness, laziness, frivolity, and servility— simply express the fact that the horizon is blocked for them."[74]

The greatest part of their lives has already been chosen for them, all that is left is the way in which they will go through it, accept it, and deal with it. They are deemed to passivity and obedience, and then they are criticized about it; as for those who do not accept to be passive, they become damned creatures. No matter what a woman tries to do, it is destined to fail, because she has not been prepared to face the world nor to live in it,

> How could one find daring, ardor, detachment, and grandeur in her? These qualities appear only where a freedom throws itself across an open future, emerging beyond any given. A woman is shut up in a kitchen or a boudoir, and one is surprised her horizon is limited; her wings are cut, and then she is blamed for not knowing how to fly. Let a future be open to her and she will no longer be obliged to settle in the present.[75]

In these Hemingway stories, women are presented more as victims than as vein characters who serve or fatally challenge the man being at the apparent center of the story. In fact, it seems to be more accusative towards men and the way society has shaped man-woman relationship than towards women. Each story presents a different woman in a different context, but in each, things don't turn out right for the female protagonists: one dies, the other is accused of murder, and the last one is bogged down with her mute paralysis.

[74] *id.*, p.729.
[75] *id.*, p.731.

Hemingway's subtle art in each story works on shedding light on women's malaise and the injustice that they have for long been the victims. It also strives to denounce the constraints imposed on women and to invite the whole society to try to understand the reasons behind women's behaviours rather than resort to criticize them. In his stories, Hemingway depicts women who are often "the victims of callous indifferent men,"[76] or the victims of the callousness of the society that put them in this situation. He also depicts women who are superior to the male characters around them in the sense that "the male will eventually learn from them,"[77] as these women characters have more insight, experience and moral strength than the male ones. This subject will be further developed in the following chapter, which will highlight the noble aspects to be found in Hemingway's female characters, and even their heroic nature, that the literary critics who deemed Hemingway female characters two-sided missed to notice or misinterpreted.

This is where the irony lies: even though Hemingway was known for his use of subtlety through implication and suggestion, the majority of the critics missed his message and failed to duly understand it. They accused him of being a misogynist whereas they, themselves, held onto some of the stereotypes they accused him of depicting and could not identify nor realize the undermining situations in which women were constantly put. The following chapter will also focus on these critics and the clues left by Hemingway that they have been missing out, like the irony surrounding the character of Wilson, whose words have been taken for granted in the

[76] Santangelo, Gennaro. "The Dark Snows of Kilimanjaro." The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: Critical Essays, *op. cit.*, p.259.
[77] Wagner-Martin, Linda. "The Romance of Desire in Hemingway's Fiction." Ed. Broer and Holland, *op. cit.*, p.57.

interpretation of the story, or the very crucial sentence which stipulates that Margot shot at the buffalo.

Chapter IV

Heroism in Hemingway's Women: Failure of the Critics

Whereas critics like Edmund Wilson and Carlos Baker saw stereotypes and simplistic representations in Hemingway's women, other critics – Warren Beck, Virgil Hutton and Robert B. Holland – found in these same characters more profound and noble aspects of personality. The difference between the two trends of criticism lies in the fact that the second group strove to find meaning in Hemingway's work beyond what is openly stated in the text; they dug deeper than that and aimed to decipher the unstated through the stated. They started from the surface then moved on reading between the lines, hence applying the principle of the Theory of the Iceberg proper to Hemingway. While the previous chapter demonstrated that these three women characters are not masters of their lives, due to their condition as a woman, the present chapter shall go further by showing that, despite their condition and in contradiction with all what has been written about them, these women do display a certain nobility and a certain integrity. Moreover, it will show what the critics who categorized Hemingway's heroines and who labelled him a misogynist missed out and why their interpretations should be reconsidered. The focus will be on Margaret Macomber and Catherine Barkley.

IV.1- Is Margaret a Murderess?

The fact that Margaret has been very severely criticized, and that she has been atop of the list of Hemingway's evil women characters, has already been presented and well illustrated in the previous chapters, but what is of interest in this section is to go at the very origin of such accusation and judgment. The question is not to know what caused Margaret to be seen as a murderess, as her shooting a bullet that mortally hit her

husband is an easy answer, but to know what made this mortal shooting appear like an obvious and intended murder, since at no moment has Margaret's intention of killing Francis been mentioned or implied. This brings us to the second inquiry of this section, where the actual text will play its major role: what did the text say about this shooting? And what did it say about all what led to the murder conclusion?

In order to answer these interrogations, there is a key element that has not yet been studied, but that has not been overlooked by the critics either, that needs to be assessed; this major element is Wilson. The white hunter is the character through whom the events of the short story are reported to the reader, he is also the first to accuse Margaret of the murder of her husband. Although his words have been taken for granted by so many readers and critics, and this is why we say that he has not been overlooked, his character and personality have been the subject of very few analyses; and yet, Wilson, as will be discussed, is far from being a commentator whose opinions and judgments could be considered reliable. His morality and view on life and on people are so restricted and narrow that they only allow him to reach superficial judgments and evaluations. Wilson, in fact, is the tool used by Hemingway to denounce society's treatment of individuals according to their gender, and to ridicule such beliefs in gender-related characteristics. Additionally, the critics who took Wilson's word for granted, Edmund Wilson being the first[1] , are indirectly ridiculed and denounced for accusing Hemingway of what they, themselves, accept when coming from Wilson.

[1] Whitlow, *op.cit.*, p.59.

IV.1.1- Assessing the Commentator, Wilson:

> It is time for Robert Wilson to be exposed and for Hemingway's unrelenting satire of Wilson to be recognized. Throughout the story, Wilson represents an unwitting hypocrite who harshly judges others on the basis of various strict and false codes that he himself does not follow[2]

Wilson is an important character in the short story, as well as the one on which most of the critics have focused. Wilson's importance lies in the fact that most of the narration is based on his thoughts and commentaries; he is the one through whom the reader perceives the actions and the "true" nature of the other characters. He has an opinion on Margaret, on Francis, on both at the same time, and on the actions of each one of them. Ultimately, he is the one who conveys the understanding that Francis is a coward and that Margaret, being a "five-letter woman", kills her husband.

Roger Whitlow notes:

> "1. that Margot is a bitch; and 2. that Francis is on a safari quest for his "manhood," and that, having "found" it, he must be destroyed. All three of these assumptions are, interestingly enough, merely echoes of the perception of the guide Robert Wilson."[3]

Not much is said about Wilson's past or background, but the elements given in the text are enough to make an assessment of this professional hunter.

Wilson, with his "very red face and extremely cold blue eyes" (*SHLFM* 2), is said to be very good at killing "simply anything" and is described as being talented for his job. He has no fear when facing wild beasts and always displays calmness and phlegm, which are valuable assets for any professional hunter, and this attitude is

[2] Hutton, Virgil. "The Short Happy Life of Macomber." The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: Critical Essays, *op.cit.*, p.239.
[3] Whitlow, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

expressed in his "flat, blue, machine-gunner's eyes." (*SHLFM 4*) These professional-killer eyes are constantly observing the Macombers, judging their actions along with their whole personalities. And whereas Wilson is a lot into observation, he does not speak much – at least in comparison with all the thoughts that go by in his head – and the first thing that strikes any reader is that Wilson never expresses what he thinks (except when he shares the belief he has lived by, after which he feels immediately embarrassed.); or, to put it differently, Wilson always expresses the opposite of what he thinks. This opposition between what he thinks and what he says can be assimilated to a certain kind of hypocrisy that is also found in Wilson on different aspects, as shall be explained.

The double size cot he carries with him on safari also express his hypocrisy; this cot is used, as witnessed with Margaret, to welcome the women who "did not feel they were getting their money's worth unless they had shared that cot with the white hunter." (*SHLFM* 19) And although it is said in the text that he despised the clientele for whom he had hunted, they were the ones giving money and granting him a living, and for this, "their standards were his standards as long as they were hiring him." (*SHLFM* 19) This is partly why Roger Whitlow, in *Cassandra's Daughters*, qualifies Wilson of a "moral whore"[4]. He sleeps with married women whom he does not always like and accommodates to his clientele's standards because they give the money.

But then we read, "They were his standards in all except the shooting. He had his own standards about the killing and they could live up to them or get some one else to hunt them. He knew, too, that they all respected him for this." (*SHLFM* 19) As it turns out, Wilson does not really impose his standards, but rather accommodates once

[4] Whitlow, *op. cit.*, p.61.

more to his clients, as was the case during the buffalo hunt, where Wilson planned the killing in accordance with the standards that Francis could meet, and not with his. The reason for him to do that has nothing to do with common sense or with any kind of respect towards his client's abilities and limits, but if Wilson decides to shoot at the buffalo in the open rather than in thick cover, it is only because he "did not want to hunt buff with Macomber in thick cover." (*SHLFM* 18) Virgil Hutton writes, "Wilson abandons his mythical shooting standards for a simple and selfish reason."[5] For Hutton, too, Wilson is a hypocrite, as he states that this accommodation to the clients' standards despite his arrogance in preaching for his own standards "reveals the hypocrisy of his pride in his shooting standards."[6]

His shooting standards are, moreover, not always legal, as is seen with the same buffalo hunt. At one moment, Wilson decides to chase the buffalo from the car to increase their chance of getting it, then he decides to stop the car at one point and the shooting starts. When Francis and Wilson come back to the vehicle, Margaret questions Wilson about the method he had used to hunt the buffalo, reminding him that it was not the standard procedure:

"- I didn't know you were allowed to shoot them from cars though.

- "No one shot from cars," said Wilson coldly.

- "I mean chase them from cars."

- "Wouldn't ordinarily," Wilson said. "Seemed sporting enough to me though while we were doing it (…) Wouldn't mention it to any one though. It's illegal if that's what you mean."" (*SHLFM* 21)

[5] Hutton, *op. cit*., p.243.
[6] *id.*, pp. 242-243.

At first, Wilson did not want to admit the illegality of the procedure he adopted, but on Margaret's insistence, he ended up mentioning it.

Consequently, Wilson's shooting standards seem to be flexible. More than that, he seems to have no real, well-established shooting standards; the only standard he religiously goes by is his own comfort and ease. He breaks the law whenever it suits him, in arbitrary decisions such as "seemed sporting enough to me while we were doing it." He claims he has solid shooting standards for which he is respected, but as shown now, if he ever does have shooting standards, we see that they are not always legal.

Concerning the way he performs his job, it is said in the story that his "great talent" is killing, and Margaret, at the beginning of the story, says that Wilson is really impressive at killing things. Yet, even here, when examining the way he kills the animals, it becomes clear that his killings are never clean. Both the lion and the buffalo suffered from severe injuries before being finally killed off. Both animals had to remain hidden for quite a while with several bullets having hit them. The text gives a detailed description of the lion case, as it describes the beast's state when it had been hiding in the tall grass as follows:

> …he was sick with the wound through his full belly, and weakening with the wound through his lungs that brought a thin foamy red to his mouth each time he breathed. His flanks were wet and hot and flies were on the little openings the solid bullets had made in his tawny hide, and his big yellow eyes, narrowed with hate, looked straight ahead, only blinking when the pain came as he breathed, and his claws dug in the soft baked earth. All of him, pain, sickness, hatred and all of his remaining strength, was tightening into an absolute concentration for a rush. (*SHLFM* 13)

This description of the lion's mental and physical state shows both its suffering from the several wounds the shootings caused, as well as its determination in getting retaliation for what has been done to it. It shows the bravery of a beast that has been greatly weakened. The text goes on with the lion getting out of the grass, "horrible-looking now, with half his head seeming to be gone;" (*SHLFM* 14) a horrid image of an unfinished killing. Then, when the professional hunter finally manages to finish off the animal, "the crawling, heavy, yellow bulk of the lion stiffened and the huge, mutilated head slid forward and Macomber (...) knew the lion was dead." (*SHLFM* 14)

The violence conveyed by the words used in the lion hunt is nothing but the illustration of the actual violence by which the killing has been performed. The detailed description depicts the ugliness of the killing, which should no longer be called so, as the violence of the terms used, and the hideous details lead more to a description of a butchery than to a killing made by a professional hunter. If Wilson's great talent is killing simply anything, and when his killings are a total massacre, then one must admit that there is a great irony in here. It is as though the hunter is being ridiculed without anyone noticing.

Some critics, like Virgil Hutton and Nina Baym, had more sympathy for the lion than for Francis. In her essay entitled "Actually, I Felt Sorry For the Lion"[7], Nina Baym gives the example of the lion to show that Wilson's way of killing animals, especially this lion, is nothing but a slaughter. She goes even further as to present the lion as the "standard of true bravery in the story"[8], while depicting Wilson as "not

[7] Baym, *op. cit.*
[8] *id.*, p.118.

nearly so skilful a hunter as he makes himself out to be."[9] She also stresses the fact that Wilson leaves the beasts in agony for a while before finishing them off. The beasts would have lost a lot of blood, they would have weakened and, hence, would make the white hunter's task easier. Wilson's method of killing animals from cars and through multiple attempts is ruthless and cruel, and one can hardly see true bravery in it. In fact, there is nothing impressive about it. Even the gun he uses, as Baym points out, is a monstrous weapon, a "cannon", that is so powerful that Francis is unable to hear his own shootings with the *carawongs!* it produces.

The irony concerning Wilson is at its fullest when Wilson reveals his life philosophy; a "crushing blow"[10] in Hutton's words. When Francis, euphoric at his success during the buffalo hunt, expresses his desire to try another lion, since, "After all, what can they do to you?" Wilson is taken by his own impetus and replies, "Worst one can do to you is kill you." (*SHLFM* 23) Then he carries on with the quotation taken from Shakespeare, the one he has lived by and the one he used to quote to himself at times, "By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death and let it go which way it will, he that dies this year is quit for the next." (*SHLFM* 23)

This answer shows how little importance death has in the cold, blue eyes of Wilson. He has no respect for it, though he faces and causes it daily with his job. It is generally acknowledged that death is a finality feared by everyone, as well as a drive for a great number of people to do their best and make the most of their life. If one does not fear death and considers it only as a one-time event, then this person lacks the consciousness as well as the morality that comes when one thinks of his own death and

[9] *Ibid.*
[10] Hutton, *op. cit.*, p.243.

fears it. In this case, Wilson's philosophy may be the basis for his immoral behaviour and lack of concern in all what surrounds him.

Moreover, and as Virgil Hutton rightly points out, this quotation from Shakespeare has been taken from Henry IV, Part II, Act III, Scene ii, 250-55[11] and "is spoken by one of Shakespeare's clowns, Francis Feeble, a woman's tailor, who belongs to the ragged band of recruits that Falstaff helpfully rounds up for the King's army."[12] Wilson lives by a quotation having been said by a clown, a fool; he takes it as a general truth when, in fact, this quotation should not be taken as such, since it stems from an unwise character. This is yet another reason to see Wilson as a ridiculed character rather than an incarnation of bravery and virility that so many critics assimilated him to. Virgil Hutton says that Wilson is the one who should be "very embarrassed"[13] as he accepts this quotation as a guide for his own life, and, by doing so, makes a fool of himself. Virgil Hutton adds that this may also be a warning in order not to take Wilson's words for the truth, and thus to see him as "the butt rather than the spokesman of Hemingway."[14] An observation further strengthened by other traits displayed by Wilson, that depict his lack of wisdom and knowledge of the broadness of human experience.

It was said before that Wilson expresses the opposite of his thinking; however, and as Virgil Hutton explains, Wilson says the truth, without knowing it, when he tells what he does not think. For instance, when Wilson says, "I wouldn't think about that any more. Any one could be upset by his first lion. That's all over." (*SHLFM* 7) It is

[11] *Ibid.*
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *id.*, p.244.

true that anyone could be upset by his first lion, even the Somali proverb present in the text illustrates the same thought, as it says that "a brave man is always frightened three times by a lion; when he first sees his track, when he first hears him roar and when he first confronts him." (*SHLFM* 7) And indeed, Francis spends the hours before the lion hunt hearing the animal roar, a "frightful" roar which caused him to be stressed and nervous. Then when he confronts the animal, he runs away from it, but not without trying, despite Wilson's late offer to kill him himself. The Somali proverb considers fear normal, and he who is afraid is considered a brave man. Macomber *is* afraid of this lion, but he manages to keep his fear to himself and decides to go and try to kill it without the hunter's help, though it is the reason for what he is hired. Is Francis's behaviour an illustration of bravery? Or is it shredding animals with a megagun and a motor car, as Wilson "marvellously" does? But the fact that Wilson is incapable of acknowledging and understanding the legitimacy of Francis' fear, which is absolutely normal, given that he has no experience in killing animals in the wilderness of Africa, manifests his narrow-mindedness. He is filled with preconceived images and stereotypes, and sees Francis's reaction as cowardice and weakness.

Wilson is fast in making judgments; if he is not slaughtering or sleeping with another man's wife, he is making silent judgments. He first judges Francis, as discussed before, and when the latter asks him not to talk about the lion incident. After that, it is Margaret's turn to be harshly judged as cruel, "She's damn cruel but they're all cruel. They govern, of course, and to govern one has to be cruel sometimes." (*SHLFM* 6) And, again making a fool of himself, Wilson accuses others for what he himself does. When Macomber's personal boy curiously looks at him in the tent, after

his flight from the lion, Wilson threatens him with "fifteen of the best" lashes. Then he explains to Francis that, "It's quite illegal," Wilson said. "You're supposed to fine them." And when Francis asks if Wilson whips his workers, he naturally replies, "Oh, yes. They could raise a row if they chose to complain. But they don't. They prefer it to the fine." (*SHLFM* 3) Again, his vacillating morality is being displayed, but so is the cruelty he exercises on the native boys, the same one he labels Margot with, if not worse, as "he threatens a native boy with fifteen lashes for the universal crime of curiosity,"[15] in Hutton's words. His cruelty is even more terrible when, at the end of the story, "he verbally pounds Margot into submission – right after her husband's death- then gloats to her "Please is much better.""[16] His cruelty at this moment overpowers the one he accuses Margot with, for the moment is tragic and sinister; however, he has absolutely no empathy and still considers the appearance of things rather than what lies behind. In addition, he suggests having killed Francis through poisoning; as said before, he is morally wicked, as, again, he shows how he would handle difficult matters.

This leads us to his lack of comprehension, well illustrated by Warren Beck In his essay "The Shorter Happy Life of Francis Macomber"[17]. He writes, "All through the story he seems off to one side or another in a tangential rather than a comprehensive way of looking at things."[18] For Warren Beck, "Wilson's credibility as a witness," and "his comprehension of Mrs. Macomber and of the Macombers' human situation"[19] may be questioned. He considers Wilson "an uncertain spectator, given to

[15] *id.*, p.241.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] Beck, Warren. "The Shorter Happy Life of Francis Macomber" in Howell, *op. cit.*
[18] *id.*, p.119.
[19] *Ibid.*

over-simplification."[20] And Wilson's lack of comprehension is also due to his lack of experience. He is a man free of woman and of fear, who has never shared his life with another individual, having never been married. He does not understand Francis's shame and embarrassment when his wife saw his reaction with the lion, "I should think it would be even more unpleasant to do it, Wilson thought, wife or no wife, or to talk about it having done it." (*SHLFM* 7) How can he understand what he has never experienced? As Warren Beck clarifies, "His stereotyped view of his employers cannot be modified by what he does not notice or has no intimation of."[21]

To add more to Wilson's list of flaws, his irresponsibility, as a hunter, as a guide, and as an individual is observed when he takes no responsibility in whatever happens: he is not responsible for Margaret's adultery, "Well, why doesn't he keep his wife where she belongs? What does he think I am, a bloody plaster saint? Let him keep her where she belongs. It's his own fault." (*SHLFM* 7) It is Macomber's fault; he is not responsible for Francis's escape from the lion, he did nothing to reassure him, he helped increasing the pressure resting on Francis's shoulders, gave careless details that nourished Francis's fear, yet this "four-letter man" is a "bloody coward" (*SHLFM* 4); finally, he is not responsible for Francis's death, despite the literally deadly instructions he gives him (the impossible shot for the nose, while he, a professional hunter, was aiming at the shoulder) and his failure to see that the buffalo was still alive.

There is also the fact that Wilson is filled with stereotypes, as said before, on what bravery is, what weakness is, what a man should be, or on the supposed cruelty

[20] *id.* p.125.
[21] *Ibid.*

of women. This character is the embodiment of all the wrongs perpetuated by patriarchy. His experience of the human life is so restricted and poor, and his scope of understanding matters such as relationships and complex personalities is so limited that he sees things in an oversimplified and often exaggerated manner. Worse, the judgments he has on people keep constantly changing, as showed with Francis. He first despises him for his flight from the lion hunt, then he likes him when the latter starts to act like a man – in Wilson's view, that is. Same with Margaret, who, at first, appears to be a fine woman to Wilson, but is then immediately labelled cruel and a "five-letter woman" when she tries to get over Francis's failure with the lion in her own way. Virgil Hutton writes, "Wilson cannot integrate the seemingly contradictory facts of Margaret, and finally accepts the ostentatious display of bitchery as her whole character. The reader should not make the same mistake."[22] Despite how he saw Margaret, Wilson had no problem nor difficulty in welcoming her in his cot for a part of the night.

Warren Beck's opinion on Wilson gives a good summary of this character:

> In either case, who is Wilson, that so many readers have strung along with him – this hunter with a first and great commandment and no other, who will welcome an employer's wife to his cot but not if it seems inexpedient, who would illegally order the natives lashed because they may prefer it to having their wages docked, who will illegally chase buffalo in a car as long as the shooting is done on foot to take the chance of the animal's charging, this steely-eyed professional with the muddy boots, this red-faced Mr. Wilson with the white forehead, whose speculations about the Macombers reiterate a yes and then again no.[23]

Wilson's subjectivity and ignorance cannot make of him a reliable commentator. He sees things in his own way and understands them in the way that

[22] Hutton, *op. cit.*, p.249.
[23] Beck, *op. cit.*, p.123.

suits him best. His biased and erroneous thoughts and conclusions are the only ones presented in the text and are the result of his own limitations. It takes then a careful reader to go beyond his stated words and to recognize in this character a corrupt, irresponsible, careless individual, full of misconceptions of different kinds. Only by realizing Wilson's faults can one detach his judgment from Wilson's and reach a totally different conclusion regarding the final act performed by Margaret.

Whether Margaret truly aimed at her husband or not will be discussed later on, but what can already be said, now, is that, with Wilson as the principal reporter and interpreter of the events of the story, she and Francis hold the position of victims. The Macombers are both victims of patriarchal beliefs and impositions, personified by Wilson.

IV.1.2 – The Impact of Patriarchy on Francis and Margaret:

Patriarchy sees the man as a strong and reliable individual, who practises sports, shoots at animals, earns a living, enjoys freedom, has no fear, never cries, and never complains. This description matches the one Hemingway's male characters have been labelled with, as mentioned in Chapter I, but is quite opposite to Francis's character when it comes to the absence of fear and complaints.

Francis is considered a coward by Wilson, and, by extension, by patriarchal beliefs, because he flew in front of danger. But before flying from the "blood-choked coughing grunt" and the "swishing rush in the grass", Francis had made all the necessary efforts to really go after the lion, despite his deep fear. In fact, Francis has been isolated with his fear all the time preceding the encounter with the beast. He kept

listening to its frightening roar throughout the night, but everyone dismissed his feelings; Margaret found the roar very impressive, and Wilson realized his client's anxiety quite late. There was no one to tell him that it was all right to be afraid, and that, truly, it was really dangerous indeed. Moreover, there was no one to tell him, or to tell any of Wilson or Margaret, that bravery was also facing one's fear and doing one's best to overcome it, which is exactly what Francis did. One has to be really heedless to go after his very first lion – with no previous experience of the sort – with confidence and tranquillity, and to manage killing it when it comes out of the grass with force and determination. Francis's reaction is totally human and could be the reaction of the strongest of men. But in Wilson's and Margaret's mind, tainted with patriarchal notions of virility and manhood, Francis's reaction is that of a coward, as Wilson repeated many times, anchoring this view in the readers' minds.

To understand even more Francis's panic in front of the lion, one must first realize that the universe in which Francis usually evolves has absolutely nothing to do with this African wilderness:

> He knew about that, about motor cycles--that was earliest--about motor cars, about duck-shooting, about fishing, trout, salmon and big-sea, about sex in books, many books, too many books, about all court games, about dogs, not much about horses, about hanging on to his money, about most of the other things his world dealt in, and about his wife not leaving him. (*SHLFM* 15)

How, then, could a man who has always had this kind of fancy, sophisticated life, feel adequate in front of a wounded lion charging at him? Francis's efforts to go after the lion, despite all the fear and anxiety he felt, should be better appreciated with regard to his absence of experience in the hunting business. His bravery lies more in his effort to

face his fear and to try to confront the lion than in his absence of fear following Wilson's principle. Whitlow writes,

> How ridiculous, then, to put a near-middle-age businessman from the milieu which he understands and in which he has proven himself a substantial success, transplant him in a milieu 7,000 miles away which is utterly alien to him, expect a level of performance from him which is nearly equal to that of the professional whose life has been spent there, and, when his performance falls short, blithely claim that he has flunked his test of "manhood."[24]

Francis, a victim of society, who sees man the way Wilson does, falls in the trap set by patriarchy by adopting Wilson's views and acting according to them. Francis's "needless courting of death"[25] can thus not be seen as bravery, for it is only "rash foolhardiness"[26]; and it is his weakness that causes his death. In the case of Francis, the norms set by patriarchy lead him to betray himself in trying to be somebody else who society approves of, and this ultimately leads to his fall. Contrary to Margaret, who is more true to herself and more respectful of her own personality, Francis is ignorant and weak, and his weakness causes his death. "Hemingway's satire," Hutton writes, "strikes not at [Francis's] cowardice but at his ignorance;"[27] his ignorance of life, at large, and of the complexity of individuals. But that is not entirely his fault; it is society that makes people believe that Men are one, just like Women are one.

Women like Margaret, on the other hand – and as already explained in Chapter II – are despised by patriarchy, who sees them as detrimental predators only good to be

[24] Whitlow, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.
[25] Hutton, *op. cit.*, p.248.
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] *Ibid.*

mere sexual objects. This is exactly how Wilson sees Margaret, and how he treats her. His dealing with Margaret follows the same pattern promoted by patriarchy, he sees her in the same way patriarchal societies see powerful, assertive women: a threat. Wilson's voice is that of society in general, and the fact that his voice has been so easily accepted by the critics means that these critics themselves hold and share the same preconceived ideas, since they did not question Wilson's views and even worked with them in their interpretation of the whole story. The fact that Wilson's stereotyped view and tendency to oversimplification has been accepted without questioning by the critics previously mentioned is really interesting in the fact that they have accused Hemingway of perpetuating stereotypes and false images in his stories, whereas they worked with Wilson's incomplete and biased opinions and approved of his codes, considering him an example of bravery and a representative of Hemingway's heroic protagonists who display physical courage and bravery. This very same point is at the disadvantage of these critics; Hemingway is depicting an apparently strong man while he is leaving at the reader's disposal numerous hints of his failures that discredit him as strong, skilful or even reliable, and the critics are all about this same character, adopting his views and approving his thoughts. On this point, critics like Edmund Wilson and Carlos Baker have failed to perceive the subtleties and the real message that Hemingway is conveying in *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*, just like Wilson is failing to perceive what lies behind his clients' comportment and to understand the psychology and the complex dynamic taking place between the Macombers.

The ending of the story, then, is a representation of patriarchal oppression's impact on the lives of women, mostly, but of men as well. Francis goes after something for which he is not fit, which leads him to death, and Margaret is simply and instantaneously accused of murdering her husband, without the hint of doubt, because it resembles the image that patriarchal societies have shaped of strong women. Hemingway uses Wilson to illustrate the damages caused to individuals when a preconceived identity is imposed on them. Ultimately, *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber* and its critical reception serve to highlight literary critics' failure in dealing with Hemingway's art of subtlety and in reading his work properly; it is, in Whitlow's words, "the single most misread of all Hemingway's woks"[28]. In fact, the coming section shall look at this widespread misreading that had its share in Hemingway being labelled a misogynist.

IV.1.3 – "Mrs. Macomber . . . had shot at the buffalo":

That Wilson's thoughts, opinion and words have been taken for an established truth by Edmund Wilson and the likes is already a great mistake, as has been proven, but an even greater mistake has been made by the very same critics for several decades on end, and it consists in their misreading or their omitting of a highly significant sentence about the shooting that hit Francis Macomber. During the very moment where Wilson was aiming for the shoulder and Francis "stood solid", trying to hit the nose but getting the horns instead, the text presents Margaret's action as follows, "Mrs. Macomber, in the car, had shot at the buffalo with the 6.5 Mannlicher as it seemed about to gore Macomber and had hit her husband about two inches up and a little to

[28] Whitlow, *op. cit.*, p.14.

one side of the base of his skull." (*SHLFM* 26) It is very clear that the text gives as a motive for Margaret's shooting her attempt to shoot "at the buffalo" and not at her husband. There is absolutely no textual evidence of the latter theory, nor any indication as to Margaret's intention or plan. The only thing made clear and apparent to the reader is that Margaret Macomber tried to shoot at the animal "about to gore Macomber". Not only does the text plainly stipulate Margaret's target when she took the 6.5 Mannlicher, but this patent declaration is furthermore important when looking at the importance of the word to the writer, Hemingway.

Hemingway's writing style has always been known for its deceptive simplicity, but more than that, it has also been admitted that the writer gave massive importance to the words he put on the pages of his work. Whereas his words are easy to understand and his sentences are, for the majority, simple and short, each word has its own importance and weight in the understanding of his work. Literary critics, like Robert B. Holland, speak of the integrity of the word as a religion to Hemingway:

> "To an author like Hemingway, to whom the integrity of the word was a religion, the critical fate of "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" must have been, if he knew of it, a sad example of scholarly ineptitude at best and of irresponsible thesis-hunting at worst."[29]

He also adds, "We should remember Hemingway's scorn of the loose word, the inexact expression."[30] The importance of the words is, hence, vital in the correct understanding of the stories; and whereas Hemingway's style implies also the Theory of Omission, by keeping a part of the meaning of the story unrevealed and leaving it up to the reader to discover the greatest, hidden meaning of the work, this does not really apply to clearly stated facts like "Mrs. Macomber, in the car, had shot at the

[29] Holland, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
[30] *id.*, p.138.

buffalo;" as Beck puts it, "Hemingway is, of course, a highly implicative artist, but he is not notably given to double-talk or passing the buck."[31] Reading this sentence otherwise is simply a "plain failure to read literally what is, literally, on the page."[32] No ambiguity is introduced by such a sentence, and the critics' haste in interpreting it differently may stem from the "critical commonplace"[33] that is to find in Hemingway's female characters like Margaret Macomber aspects of "bitchery". Influenced by Wilson's view on Margaret, thought to be at the origin of such misreading, the critics have been carried away and misled in their understanding of the final act of this short story.

Though these critics' analyses and argumentation are highly sustainable and well-presented, the fact that they are in great part underpinned by Wilson's comments and conclusions render them irrelevant. If there was someone or something to be trusted, it should be the text alone; and as the text says that Margaret aimed at the charging animal, it must then become granted that Margaret did not try to kill her husband. In the light of this evidence presented by the text, Margaret's behavior can hence be studied and partly explained from a totally different angle.

The exact reason for Margaret's shot at the buffalo is neither stated nor implied in the text; did she try to save her husband, seeing that the animal was "not two yards" away from him? Was she trying to kill the animal so that she could maintain a certain superiority over her husband, in order not to be rejected by him, now that he has gained confidence? Did she want to help Francis and even save him in order to repair the damages caused to their marriage? Or was it simply a human reaction, seeing that

[31] Beck, *op. cit.*, 125.
[32] Holland, *op. cit.*, p.137.
[33] *id.*, p.139.

her husband was being charged at by a wild, large beast, to prevent the worst from happening? There is no definite answer given or to be found anywhere. The only things we know about Margaret are that she, indeed, has had, on different occasions, condemnable behaviour, and that her attitude kept swinging between her desire to see things going better between her and Francis, and her blameworthy behaviour whenever disappointment hit her. It would be unjust and incorrect to label her as wholly bad since, as previously seen, her behaviour originated from the context she found herself in. Jackson J. Benson writes about that, "She is a monster created by circumstances at least partly beyond her own control."[34] Moreover, Margaret displayed positive behaviour towards her husband that proved her real emotional engagement in her marriage. Even Wilson, at first, found her to be "a hell of a fine woman. She seemed to understand, to realize, to be hurt for him and for herself and to know how things really stood." (*SHLFM* 5)

The African safari has been undertaken in order to fortify the bond between Margaret and Francis and start anew. Francis took on a circuit that involved hunting down different massive animals, starting with a lion, then a buffalo, and finishing with a rhinoceros. Margaret was very excited about this trip and showed her encouragement to her husband. Before the lion incident, her attitude was very positive. She tried to cheer up Francis when the lion's roaring frightened him, though she did not really measure the extent of her husband's anxiety. She also regretted that he did not wake her up at night, when he kept listening to the animal's cry. She wanted to hear it, too, and maybe to share that moment with her husband. When Francis expressed his

[34] Benson, Jackson J. Hemingway… The Writer's Art of Self-Defense. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969. p.147.

reluctance and anxiety to go after the lion, as he thought the roar to be “frightful”, she reminded him that killing the beast was the exact reason for them being there, and simply proposed that he kills it and gets rid of its roaring. She did not fail to encourage him with words like, “You’ll kill him marvellously (...) I know you will. I’m awfully anxious to see it;” proving her confidence in him and expressing her high expectations.

It is true that Margaret failed to perceive her husband’s growing fear and totally underestimated the affair of the killing. This could be explained by the fact that, enamelled in her pompous mundane life, she never had to witness anything of the sort: “like the American society columnist, Margaret regards the hunt as an adventurous game.”[35] Consequently, she could not truly estimate the danger of the enterprise; the whole thing was all “exciting” to her, and the “kill him and stop his roaring” seemed really simple. Francis “exposes the fatuousness of his wife’s comments by answering, "It sounds easy, doesn’t it?""[36]

But, as previously seen, Margaret’s positive behaviour rapidly shifted to display all the “bitchery” she was capable of after that Francis panicked and ran away from the charging lion. Margaret’s embarrassment and crying in her tent prove the extent of her regret and disappointment. From here, her disrespectful behaviour starts taking place. Such a display of faults and disgrace has of course been the prime reason for the critics’ opinion on her, and the fact that her attitude during the buffalo hunt was not that of joy and satisfaction, since Macomber finally seemed to find a kind of ardor and confidence that he never displayed before and for which Margaret has long been yearning, but one of resentment and bitterness helped, along with Wilson’s belief,

[35] Hutton, *op. cit.*, p.249.
[36] *Ibid.*

convince critics and readers of her culpability in Macomber's death. However, as the text states that Margaret shot at the buffalo and not at her husband, and as Wilson's credibility has been seriously put into question, what could explain her peculiar attitude during the buff hunt? Why was Margaret feeling so bad and why was she snapping at her husband? The following part strives to provide answers.

IV.1.4 – Margaret as a Tragic Figure :

The buffalo hunt would have permitted, if that had not been done before, to shed light on the complex psychology that surrounds the character of Margaret. It would have also demonstrated the woman's insight and shrewdness that very few saw or even suspected in her.

When Margaret first came to this safari, as said before, she had no acute idea on what hunting animals in the African wilderness involved. Her first confrontation with a hunt was with the lion one, where she stayed in the motor car and witnessed the entire affair from a distance. Her first, real confrontation with the hunting, however, happened during the buffalo hunt, where she had to truly appreciate the ordeal from very near. She was as close to the buffaloes as Wilson and Macomber, and the text stresses their closeness to one of the buffaloes galloping behind the other two by describing what Macomber was able to see: "they drew up close and he could see the plunging hugeness of the bull, and the dust in his sparsely haired hide, the wide boss of horn and his outstretched, wide-nostrilled muzzle." (*SHLFM* 20) Margaret had access to the same display, and when the shootings occurred, she could watch the whole process of finishing off the two first buffs. It then got more intense when the third

buffalo required that they got nearer, as it had galloped to be out of reach, to be finally able to put it down. The entire action left Margaret in a mixture of awe, “"You were marvellous, darling," she said to Macomber. "What a ride,"” and fright “It was frightful. I’ve never been more frightened in my life.” (*SHLFM* 21) She was “very white-faced” and thought of the whole thing to be “frightfully exciting”, “It’s given me a dreadful headache.”

In spite of her excitement and the emotional intensity that the hunt made her feel, Margaret noticed the use of the car in the chase after the buffaloes and thought it to be unfair. She also expressed sympathy for the hunted animals, “It seemed very unfair to me (…) chasing those big helpless things in a motor car.” (*SHLFM* 21) She is proven right when she learns from Wilson that such a practice is in fact illegal. Her malaise is deepened when the three of them go to take a look at the second bull, and Margaret finds him to be “hateful looking”. It is from this moment that the whiteness of her face persists, “Her face was white and she looked ill.” (*SHLFM* 22) Surprisingly, right after this horrid sight, when Francis asks her if the chase was marvellous, she expresses her hate and loathe for it, using the same words Francis had used the night before the lion hunt, “frightful” and “hate”, while he used the “marvellous” Margaret had repeated before the exact hunt.

Whereas Margaret did indeed say that the buffalo chase was marvellous at first, it appears that seeing the dead animal from close impacted on her and made her think totally differently on the whole thing. It is also interesting enough to notice that Margaret did express sarcasm regarding the hunting activity beforehand, when she told Wilson, “You were lovely this morning. That is if blowing things’ heads off is lovely.”

(*SHLFM* 5) With the use of the car to chase the wild animals and the sight of the dead buffalo, Margaret realises the absurdity of animal hunting. She disapproves of it entirely, and while she comes to this conclusion, she realises that her husband is all for it and thinks to have become brave because he could kill these animals through illegal means. Her contempt, then, is more due to this than to any "coming of age" of her husband, as critics kept saying, which would have meant the end of their marriage and the loss of all of her privileges as being Mrs. Macomber. Margaret, in fact, realizes "the ugliness and the potential deadliness of the hunt. And upon seeing the change in her husband, she becomes "very afraid" not that Macomber will leave her, as Wilson, who realizes nothing of her change, thinks, but that her husband may be killed."[37]

Margaret realizes that her husband is now following the path of the corrupt professional hunter, whom she has been able to see through. First, with the fact that he carries a double-size cot in which he welcomed her during her nocturnal, adulterous wandering, implying that she might very well not be the first one he welcomed at night. Then, with his using illegal means to hunt and finish off the beasts; and the final blow came when she realises the true nature of this man's job. Her realization is further confirmed when Francis and Wilson share the same view on death: that it must not be feared, for it happens just once:

> From the far corner of the seat Margaret Macomber looked at the two of them. There was no change in Wilson. She saw Wilson as she had seen him the day before when she had first realized what his great talent was. But she saw the change in Francis Macomber now. (*SHLFM 24)*

Margaret is completely disillusioned to see that Francis is only making efforts now, by taking the wrong path of this red-faced hunter, whose main belief implicates

[37] *id.*, p.250.

that risks such as facing deadly animals are worth the take, since, at worst, they can only kill you. She is thrown off balance and is further isolated by the two men, who now get along, and with whom she is in total opposition. She is the only one to see things as they really are, and is revolted to see her husband's weakness and immaturity once again displayed, when he seeks Wilson's approval by blindly following his doctrine and distorted guidance. Francis is incapable of discernment and is rather carried away by his newly-found audacity. However, his audacity will ultimately lead to his death and prove Margaret right. Benson writes,

> When Macomber chooses to hold his ground against the charging buffalo rather than run, as he did from the lion, Macomber indicates that he has accepted the value system of Wilson. Macomber at the end of his life chooses to "play the game" and by doing so indicates that Wilson's approval is more important to him than his wife's.[38]

It then may be Margaret's perceptiveness on the danger awaiting Francis and the latter's blindness to it, and on Wilson's irresponsibility due to him giving little importance to life, that prompts her to get hold of the Mannlicher and try to aim at the buffalo, in order to save her husband's life. The fact that she was "very afraid of something" when she realises her husband's sudden "awful" bravery can also be explained by this same perceptiveness – that her husband is taking useless risks without realising the danger. From his words, backed by Wilson's, it seems like Francis's illusion of change transcends the fear of death. Margaret is also resentful towards her husband for all the years where she put up with his flaws and for taking this false sense of bravery for granted. It seems quite unfair that, now that he thinks he has gained courage and assertion, Francis would stop working on his marriage.

[38] Benson, *op. cit.*, pp.146-147.

This belief in Francis leaving his wife or getting his revenge from her numerous infidelities has been presented as the motive for which Margaret supposedly killed him. The argument was that Margaret did not want to lose her dominance over her husband. But if Margaret truly wanted dominance, why would she be so upset that her husband fails to assert himself? Why would she sleep with other men every time Francis displays his weaknesses? Why would she even bother try to work on their marriage, since she perfectly knows that she can be infidel without risking to lose Francis? In addition, her tears after the lion hunt and deep hurt, and her attitude afterwards, simply demonstrate her desire for things to be different, for her husband to be brave as she wants him to be, and for her to be simply emotionally satisfied with her marriage. Her way of dealing with disappointment is certainly reproachable and reprehensible, but it is still not enough to explain an act of murder.

Furthermore, if Margaret truly wanted her husband dead, she could very easily have let the buffalo take care of the task, since the beast was on the right way to do that. Her reaction after the fatal shot, also, proves once again that killing her husband was not her plan altogether. She started to cry “hysterically”, had a “contorted” face, and was incapable of speaking due to her shock. She kept repeating the word “please” to a toneless, apathetic Wilson who was accusing her of murder. If she had intended to kill Francis, she would certainly have displayed a less intense reaction; she would have even expressed satisfaction, since she knows Wilson would not denounce her, for she, too, could have him lose his licence by informing authorities of his illegal chase from the car. Instead, Margaret was at loss for words.

There is a great irony in the fact that a woman like Margaret, presented as an evil character, would accidentally, during her efforts to make things right, commit a crime she was originally associated with. In a Golem effect[39] fashion, it is as if she was condemned from the start, and everything around her trapped her into proving the rightfulness of her condemnation, despite her good will. The greatest irony, however, lies in the fact that the text presents a complex character, whose psychology is far from plain, whose background has a lot to do with the present events of the story, who evolves in a context that largely delimits her field of action, and who, despite all of this, is simply labelled evil, deadly, and "the prime example" of "Hemingway's bitches"[40]. Margaret, "the most elusive and most subtly drawn character in the story"[41] is "the only character who achieves any insight concerning both herself and the tragic action that destroys her husband,"[42] thus becoming "the central tragic figure in this tragedy of ignorance and misunderstandings."[43]

Despite all the depth that Margaret has been endowed with, the critics saw only what they wanted to see, in order to perpetuate the "critical commonplace"[44] or the "conventional wisdom"[45] of the "Hemingway bitches". By doing so, they did Hemingway the great injustice of misreading what is clearly written. Holland writes,

[39] According to A Dictionary of Psychology, the Golem effect is "any negative Pygmalion effect, when expectations function as self-fulfilling prophecies having negative consequences." These expectations can be set by the individual or by others upon this same individual, which leads him/her to poor performance.
[40] Fiedler, *op. cit.*, p.319.
[41] Hutton, *op. cit.*, p.248.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] Holland, *op. cit.*, p.139.
[45] Whitlow, *op. cit.*, p.11.

"Is the modern critical mind so self-centered that it finds no depravity in substituting what it wants for what it sees?"[46]

The greatest irony lies also in the fact that the critics, in their attempt to fight the supposed stereotypes Hemingway put in his female characters, were only able to prove that the ones displaying a stereotypical view on women are precisely them, as they saw that and only that, failing to see beyond, and presumed it a valid interpretation of the character, in particular, and of the whole work, in general.

> Hemingway's work, because of its apparent simplicity, seems destined to attract simplistic labels. The root cause for much of the confusion and misjudgment is Hemingway's use of irony, which has been much more extensive and complex than most readers at first recognized—and more than some, filled with personal antagonism, were willing to recognize.[47]

The fact that this part of the chapter closes with the mention of irony is not accidental, for irony is recognized to be a great part of Hemingway's style. It has to do with him omitting specific aspects in a story, such as emotion, only to bring them up through irony.

> We may come to the conclusion, as most readers of Hemingway's work do sooner or later, that Hemingway is an extremely emotional writer simply because he takes such pains to avoid explicit mention of emotion. That is to say, his entire approach to emotion is related to a consistently practiced verbal irony. Feeling very deeply about man's injustices, stupidities, and brutalities, Hemingway finds it more effective to whisper rather than to shout. There is something in Hemingway's storytelling posture very similar to the posture of the satirist who recounts absurdities with a straight face.[48]

Benson's words could not be more accurate with regard to "*The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*". The short story highlights, like the other two stories, societal flaws that condemn women and shape their misfortune; it denounces them in

[46] Holland, *op. cit.*, p.140.
[47] Benson, *op. cit.*, p.187.
[48] *id.*, p.114.

all the subtlety that Hemingway's art is known for. The mention of these flaws is subtle, but their denunciation is nonetheless sharp and empathetic.

Whereas Margaret's form is that of an evil woman, her substance is far from being easily labelled. And whereas Margaret is presented as the reason for Francis's unhappiness and tragic death, she is in fact another victim of society, as well as a victim of literary criticism.

IV.2 – Catherine Barkley as Hemingway's Code "Heroine":

The Code Hero is a notion that has for long been identified with Hemingway, as all of his novels present a hero that corresponds to the "code", that is a set of characteristics more or less common to these Hemingway heroes. Although each hero is different, and the characteristics that make him incarnate the Code Hero differ from one "hero" to another, there still is a general pattern that make of one Hemingway character a Code Hero.

The Code Hero is a character capable of facing the hardships of life with nobility and grace, meaning courage. Most often, the Code Hero lives in a chaotic world, filled with absurdities and meaninglessness, but manages to find his own path and a meaning to his life amidst this chaos. The chaos of the world brings to the Code Hero the idea of the fatality of death, thus the Code Hero takes as much pleasures out of life as he can. He realizes the immanence of death and thus devotes his life to what really matters, that is to the people he really cares about. Though a Hero Code does not believe in abstract matters such as religions or life after death, he nonetheless displays

qualities like bravery, honor, strength, endurance, adventuresomeness, loyalty and adaptability.

Death is a very important notion in the life of the Code Hero, because he already had to face it. Though not dead, the Hero Code fully grasps his mortality and this idea of death is at the root of his choices and of his attitude. The Code Hero will also ultimately die, but what matters is his way of facing death.

Generally, when the Code Hero is mentioned, it is mainly to talk about a male character. Even the definitions given about this hero talk about a man from one the Hemingway stories. In this part, however, the Code Hero will be a Code Heroine, namely Catherine Barkley, who shares and displays many of the Code Hero's characteristics.

As death is at the origin of the Code Hero's conduct, death is also at the origin of Catherine Barkley's behaviour. The death of her fiancé, as previously discussed, has triggered her full awareness of the inherent ephemerality of life, and while she allowed herself the luxury of arbitrarily postponing her marriage to her fiancé, his death made her realize that life does not wait to be lived, but is like a train moving, and one has the choice to either get on it or watch it pass by. Catherine made the latter choice and was only left with regret with the sudden death of her lover, resulting in her going through a period of trauma. However, instead of drowning in depression and defeatism, Catherine decided that she would not make the same mistake and that she would take advantage of the life she has been given. Thus, Catherine succeeded in getting over her loss, shock and grief that resulted from her indirect experience with death. In the face of such difficulty, Catherine managed to get through gracefully. The death of her

fiancé can be considered as the beginning of her life as a Code Heroine, as it made her the strong Catherine Barkley presented in the novel.

Catherine's strength appears on several occasions throughout the story, but her main strength is undoubtedly her ability to truly love someone after what she endured. Catherine attains the level of sacrificing one's self for another that the priest mentioned to Henry when talking about true love. She becomes very rapidly completely devoted to him and puts his desires first. In fact, as previously mentioned, Catherine stopped considering herself as a separate individual from Henry, but considered herself in terms of Henry's desires and Henry's needs only. She gave herself entirely to him, and, ultimately, what resulted from their love was her death, thus giving the sacrifice of the self for another its fullest meaning.

Catherine's strength is also illustrated in her bravery to follow Henry in every situation. She puts herself in danger at work when she spends her nights with him at the Milan hospital. But the danger is not only professional, it is also personal, as she risks to tarnish the Victorian image of the pure woman that every woman of her time had to keep, through virtue and chastity. Catherine also goes beyond these obligations by keeping the relationship with Henry as it is, non-official, despite his proposal to get married. She is also unashamed of her growing belly while still officially single. Concerning her pregnancy, Catherine did not want to upset Henry and tried to get rid of the foetus.

Her strength is mixed with bravery when, for example, she travels from Italy to Switzerland by night, during a storm, in a small boat, where they had to row all night long in order to avoid being caught. She offered her assistance and replaced Henry for

a moment with the paddles, despite her pregnancy and the coldness of the night. A more compelling example of her moral toughness is her ability to laugh at Henry when he pitifully tries to use the umbrella as a sail.

Catherine's reaction to suffering also depicts her as a Code Heroine, as she does not complain and keeps her focus on Henry not being worried by her. During her painful labor, Catherine was only satisfied when the contractions were very painful, and even with her worsening case, she was reassuring Henry by repeating that she was not going to die and that it was all "a dirty trick". Benson writes about Catherine that "She certainly is much too brave"[49], citing the same situations where she displayed her bravery. And, as he justly mentioned, the novel does provide a foreshadowing of Catherine's death with Henry's thought:

> If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry. (*FTA* 161)

Catherine did bring courage to the world; she brought courage to Henry who became disillusioned with the war when he was hit by the fragment of a mortar shell. Just like her, he did not think that death could strike at any moment; he thought of the war as something having nothing to do with him and from which he was not supposed to suffer. But the incident he was part of and the death he had to witness made him realise, just like Catherine, that life was not to be spent at war. Rather, it was to be fully appreciated and devoted to what really matters. Catherine brought meaning into

[49] Benson, *op. cit.*, p.320.

the abyss of the meaninglessness she and Henry were surrounded by. Their world was in a complete havoc, but Catherine's ability to unconditionally love and give herself resulted in Henry's equal involvement in their relationship. Rena Sanderson writes, "The priest and Catherine realize that dissipation equals defeat and that the only choice is to snatch "a fine life" out of the jaws of death, to carve meaning out of meaninglessness, spirituality out of worldliness."[50] Catherine taught Henry the value of life and led him to a fuller understanding of love.

The world has already broken Catherine once, when it harshly took her future from her, but Catherine built her strength on this break. Accordingly, as she became strong, the world has to kill her, and that is what happened. As Catherine is very good and very gentle and very brave, she dies during childbirth. Her death is the confirmation that she is the Code Heroine of A Farewell to Arms. She even faced death with grace and courage.

That Catherine depicts all these Code Hero-related qualities should not be overlooked. It is here, on the pages. What has for long been taken as submissiveness and self-effacement is in fact a voluntary devotion to one single man that means the world to her. In the middle of death and war, Catherine, as well as Henry, find in each other the comfort and warmth that is cruelly lacking around them. As a proper Code Heroine, Catherine is not religious; her religion, however, is Henry. She never failed to follow him or to make of him her main concern. She found the courage to go through devastation and to be able to give more than she ever did, because she realised that death was only one step behind, and that it would, at any moment, catch up with her. She does not burden herself with social conceptions of proper behaviours, but remains

[50] Sanderson, Rena. "Hemingway and Gender History." in (ed) Donaldson, *op. cit.,* p.181.

nevertheless principled and wholly faithful to her own code of integrity. Having lived by her principles, she dies, after much pain, but bravely at the hospital, leaving Henry who, having learned to love through her, and having gained something to lose, has now lost it and is left alone in the middle of meaninglessness.

Hemingway, instead of plainly depicting a submissive, glib woman character, developed a much more profound one, who transcends the labels she has had for so long. "Increasingly in recent criticism, Catherine has been vindicated as one of Hemingway's strong, heroic individuals," says Sanderson[51], mentioning the heroic side of Catherine.

> Catherine should be read as a woman with agency, someone attempting to find meaning and achieve a sense of psychological equilibrium against the background of war. The moments of willful submissiveness and self-erasure that so anger some critics come only after Hemingway gives the reader clues about Catherine's strategy for survivng in a world where conventional ideas once accepted as true have become shaky ground for creating a sense of self. The death of her fiancé has pushed Catherine into a modernist suspicion of the belief systems and abstract notions disseminated by those seeking to control the meaning of war.[52]

By presenting a female character that fits the large definition of the Hero Code, and by showing a real psychological complexity surrounding all of the three female characters concerned by the study, it becomes quite hard to keep on maintaining the belief that Hemingway is an author who uses shortcuts in his depiction of women and who prefers to develop his male characters more than his female ones.

[51] Sanderson, *op. cit.*, p.180.
[52] Traber, Daniel S. "Performing the Feminine in A Farewell to Arms." *The Hemingway Review* 24.2 (2005): pp. 28-40. Web. 19 December 2012.

Conclusion

This dissertation has dealt with the depiction of women characters in these three Hemingway's fictional works: A Farewell to Arms, *Cat in the Rain* and *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*; a depiction that has attracted all sorts of reactions, from rejection to acclamation. The dissertation aimed to see the extent to which Hemingway's women characters deserved such rejection. It is important to recall that we first strove to demonstrate the effect of alienation and isolation women subjugation and oppression had on them. We then used this conclusion in our dealing with Hemingway's female characters, in order to be able to understand them better.

This dissertation demonstrated that the depiction Hemingway has been accused of is in fact the writer's way of highlighting women's predicament and its danger. The behaviour that each woman character is depicted with is in fact the expression of her inner sufferings and of her inability to properly determine what her real problem is. This dissertation came to the conclusion that what Hemingway is showing through the depiction of his female protagonists is in fact the result of women subjugation, as their behaviour is the result of their situation, and not an innate state. It is a consequence, not a nature. Women are what they are because society makes them who they are.

We also reached the conclusion that, due to their inability to understand their problem, women desperately seek to find a way out of their predicament and to alleviate the burden of their situation through the only means that are at their disposal, even if it causes society's disapproval and rejection, as was the case with Margaret Macomber and, to a much lesser extent, the American Wife. Hemingway also puts the blame on society and on the husbands, and holds them responsible for women's predicament.

One major point that we were also able to achieve concerned the critics and their missing out of the clues left by Hemingway as well as their ignoring of phrases such as "Margot shot at the buffalo", which hold an important part in the proper interpretation of Hemingway's work, due to his intrinsic attachment to the "true word". We explained that this could have to do with the already-established belief that Hemingway portrays women too simplistically, which could lead the critics to hastily interpret his works. We underlined the irony behind such criticism, as the critics fell into the trap of stereotyping an author who they accused of perpetuating stereotypes. Furthermore, we explained how the fact that the critics took Wilson's words for granted – a character that, as we demonstrated, has been ridiculed by Hemingway – was at their disadvantage and led them even further in their misinterpretation of the work. From this, we were able to explain, at least partly, the extremely negative criticism Hemingway's female characters received and the failure of the critics in grasping the subtleties of Hemingway's stories.

To conclude this dissertation, the importance of Hemingway's subtle art of "emotional understatement; [of] the extreme reduction of language, style, and fictional world; and [of] the deliberate strategy of leaving out relevant information"[1] is undeniable and unavoidable in the proper interpretation and analysis of his work. It is only by taking his technique into consideration that we can acknowledge Hemingway's ability to sensibly depict women's predicament and sufferings, and to present strong women characters, endowed with nobility, compassion, and strength. As

[1] Zapf, Hubert. "Reflection vs. Daydream : Two Types of the Implied Reader in Hemingway's Fiction." New Critical Approaches to Ernest Hemingway, *op. cit.* p.96.

Sinclair writes about the women characters of For Whom the Bell Tolls, and making a parallel with other Hemingway female characters like Catherine Barkley:

> These women are not easily reducible, nor should they be, to the traditional polemic extremes critically assigned to Hemingway's fictional women . . . To view the women of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in a more powerful and important role, even to read them as code heroes, of a sort, does not reduce Hemingway's males but broadens our understanding of the writer's more complex vision and its ability to reach beyond the formulaic, restrictive code/ This revisionist perspective only enhances Hemingway's significance as one of this country's preeminent artists.[2]

Shortcuts, then, no longer apply in the interpretation of Hemingway's works, nor can they be associated with him. Depth and complexity, however, should prevail.

[2] Sinclair, *op. cit.*, p.108.

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تصوير همنغواي للمرأة في "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" ، " Cat in the Rain " و "A Farewell to Arms"

ملخص

تتناول هذه الأطروحة تمثيل المرأة في ثلاثة من أعمال إرنست همنغواي الأدبية المتمثلة في: القصتين القصيرتين *Cat in the Rain*و *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber* ، ورواية A Farewell to Arms. وهي تسعى إلى معالجة الافتراض الشائع الذي ينتشر بين القراء والنقاد الأدبيين، والذي يقول أن تصوير همنغواي ذو الوجهين لشخصياته المؤنثة مفرط التبسيط ،ازدواجي ومبتذل. و بذلك ، يهدف هذا العمل إلى التحقيق في مدى دقة هذا الاعتقاد وقابليته للتطبيق عند تحليل الشخصيات الرئيسية المؤنثة في أعمال همنغواي.

لتحقيق هذا الهدف، تستخدم الأطروحة نظرية سيمون دي بوفوار وماري روبرتس كوليدج حول البناء الاجتماعي للجنس، أين يتم النظر في عملية تكييف النساء وآثارها. كما تعتمد على النظرية الأدبية لمدرسة النقد الجديد، والتي توافق تماما أسلوب كتابة همنغواي، حيث يعتبر النص العنصر الأساسي الوحيد الذي يستند عليه التحليل.

بعد وضع النهج النظري ، ينقسم العمل الآتي إلى أربعة فصول: يبدأ أولها بالصورة المنسوبة إلى المرأة في الواقع وفي الأعمال الأدبية منذ العُصور القَديمة. يستكشف هذا الفصل الازدواجية المطبقة في تمثيل المرأة وتكرارها في الأعمال الأدبية ، ما يقدّم تعامل همنغواي مع الشخصيات المؤنثة. يتعمق الفصل الثاني أكثر في هذين النقيضين المجسدين في البطلات الثلاث ويسعى لمعرفة مدى انطباقها عليهن حقا. يتناول الفصل الثالث وضع النساء في إطار فرض هوية محددة سلفا، ويتطرق إلى العلاقة بين الرجل والمرأة في السياق نفسه. وأخيرا، يعرض الفصل الرابع والأخير ميل النقاد إلى التصنيف المنهجي للشخصيات المؤنثة في أعمال همنغواي من خلال إبراز جوانب شخصيات هذه النساء التي تتناقض مع الانتقادات الموجهة إليها.

في النهاية، يصل هذا العمل إلى استنتاج مفاده أن تعامل همنغواي مع شخصياته المؤنثة هو نفس تعامله مع فنه: فهو عميق ومعقد، ويجب معالجته باهتمام وموضوعية مطلقين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإنه من خلال هذا الوصف الذي يبدو مبسطاً للشخصيات المؤنثة يقوم همنغواي بالاستنكار وتسليط الضوء على قهر النساء ونتائجه المباشرة.