

## Unsoldiered Soldier or Alternative War Narrative?: Modernist Epistemes in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*

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### Abstract

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This paper posits that the image of the desexualised and feminised soldier portrayed in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, traceable by some to the author's biographical experience, is, in effect, just part of the author's modernist discourse as a writer of the post-World-War I era. As such, the novel's subject matter, plot, themes, characters, structure, point of view, as well as the author's whole art and vision are shaped by the author's subscription to Modernism. The Psychoanalytical and Modernist theories are used to analyse Hemingway's novel in the paper. While the former sheds light on Hemingway's depiction of the disempowered soldier and shows how this portrayal emanates from the writer's childhood experiences, the latter places the emasculated representation of the soldier within a broad modernist framework by showing how, apart from this portrayal that bears on characterisation in the book, the other components of the novel (subject matter, plot, themes, structure, point of view, author's art and vision) fit in the mould of modernist discourse.

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### 0. Introduction

Ernest Hemingway's choice to present disempowered war veterans in his war narratives has attracted critical attention. Wyndham Lewis, an early critic and acquaintance of Hemingway's, remarks that Jake Barnes (in *The Sun Also Rises*) and Frederic Henry— in *A Farewell to Arms*— represent the passive voice “of those to whom things are done, in contrast to those who have executive will and intelligence” (qtd in Fantina). Lewis thus alludes to the glaring lack of active agency in these Hemingway's protagonists which, according to Alex Vernon, was the trait by which the Western world recognized manhood (75). To further buttress his argument, Lewis notes that Frederic Henry does nothing really decisive until he is faced with the prospect of a firing squad: it is only then that he dives into the Tagliamento River in order to escape. Such a portrayal of a war hero completely departs from the bravery, sense of initiative and heroism that should be typical of the soldier. Mark Spilka re-iterates this idea in his article titled “Three Wounded Warriors” when he mentions the relationship that Hemingway establishes between Frederic Henry (his protagonist) and Frederic's lover (Catherine Barker). Spilka notes that

[Frederic's] feminization takes still other interesting forms. He is tenderized by love, made to care like the caring Catherine, in whom his selfhood is immediately invested... More crucially, he is like a woman in the lovemaking that takes place in his hospital room at night. As no one has yet puzzled out, he would have to lie on his back to perform properly, given the nature of his leg wounds, and Catherine would have to lie on top of him... The interesting thing is that Hemingway—for whom the idea of female dominance was so threatening—could so plainly imply the female dominant without being understood or held to his oblique confession. (Goodheart 223)

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Apart from referring to the emasculation of the soldier, Spilka's observation above adds two other bits of information: the author's diametrical representation of the dominant female in the person of Catherine Barker and Hemingway's phobia for female dominance. Terms like "feminization," "tenderized" and Frederic's "subordinate" position in the love-making scene are all pointers to the writer's disempowerment of his war hero. On the other hand, he gives Catherine the dominant position in the love-making scene. Finally, the critic refers to the fact that this idea of "female dominance" was "so threatening" to Hemingway who, despite his aversion for it, successfully suggests it in this 1929 novel without provoking an outburst of protest. The threat of female dominance mentioned here is evocative of Hemingway's loathing for the domineering female as a result of the relationship he witnessed between his parents as a young man. In "Hemingway's Gender Training," Bernice Kert is quoted as having recorded Hemingway's words when the latter confided in Charles Scribner, his publisher. The writer is purported to have said (in allusion to his mother) that he would play the role of the devoted son if it pleased her, but he hated her guts because she had forced his father to commit suicide; he would not see her, and she knew she could never visit him (qtd in Wagner-Martin 126). In other words, Grace Hall-Hemingway's emasculation of her husband, Clarence Hemingway, incited the latter to take away his life at one point and her son begrudged her this fact. Susan F. Beegel re-iterates the idea of Grace Hall-Hemingway's propensity for emasculating men when she quotes Spilka as referring to Grace's "feminization of Ernest" (qtd in Wagner-Martin 62).

Like the sources above, this article is interested in Hemingway's desexualisation and feminisation of his war veteran in *A Farewell to Arms*. I however argue that Hemingway's effeminate representation of his war hero, that is ascribable to his biographical experience, is just part of modernist epistemes given the writer's subscription to the modernist tradition. This paper therefore probes into Hemingway's disempowerment of his protagonist in *A Farewell to Arms* and examines how the writer's choice to do so is ascribable to his biographical experience. The paper then proceeds to establish the fact that the novelist's choice to emasculate his war veteran is however part of the broad modernist aesthetics that matches the modernist framework within which he writes. In order to achieve these aims, the analysis of the text is guided by these two questions: how does Hemingway disempower his war hero in *A Farewell to Arms* and how is this depiction ascribable to his biographical experience? Why can this emasculation of his war veteran be read as part of modernist epistemes because of the novelist's adherence to Modernism? The Psychoanalytical and Modernist theories are used to analyse the selected text in this paper.

In *Jacque Lacan: Psychoanalysis and the Subject of Literature*, Jean-Michel Rabaté notes that "the project of psychobiography" is devoted to the examination— through biographical readings— of the links between the writer's creation and the neurotic/pathological features of the writer as creator (43). That is, psychobiography enables the critic to establish how a writer's life experiences influences the form and content of his work. The concern of the first sub-section of this paper probes into some major events in Hemingway's life that are suggestive of the emasculation of the male and can be linked to the novelist's representation of an effeminate and passive war hero. The tenets on which the analysis of this text hinges in Psychoanalysis according to Sigmund Freud are Freud's sub-division of the human mind into three psychical zones; his essays on the theory of sexuality (family romances), and his principles on mental functioning. From a Jungian perspective, Jung's identification of the "personal" and "collective" unconscious in his "analytical psychology" are also handy in shedding light on how the broad cultural context in which Hemingway grew influenced his representation of his war hero.

Nick Rennison examines Freud's tripartite structure of the mind in his *Freud and Psychoanalysis*. Freud called these psychical subdivisions the id, the ego and the superego (38). The oldest and the most primitive of these three parts is the id. It is derived from the Latin word for "it"—a term Freud borrowed from the maverick Viennese psychologist and philosopher, Georg Groddeck. An unconscious part of the human mind, the id is a seething mass of wholly selfish desire and "the impulses aimed at the immediate and complete gratification of those desires. It is the id which is the driving force behind what Freud called the pleasure principle" (ibid). That is, this psychical zone seeks satisfaction for a person's desires even to the person's detriment as is the case with children and neurotic adults. Since the id seeks to gratify a person's instinct for pleasure irrespective of whether it fosters the person's well-being, abides to social norms or moral laws or not, there is a need for repression. Hence, the id is equally where patients keep their dark and transgressive thoughts and desires.

Yet, though the id's demands may be repressed, they still express themselves in different phenomena such as dreams, neurotic symptoms and Freudian slips (ibid). As will be later proven, literary creativity offers another avenue for this release.

Next to the id, is the ego. It is the rational part of the mind; the part that reacts to the outside world and allows the individual to adapt to reality, to acknowledge the “reality principle.” The ego (the word is the Latin word for “I”) develops from the id but comes to exercise control over it. The ego provides the individual with the sense of self and watches over the instinctual demands of the id, deciding whatever, when and how they can be gratified.

This part of the human mind makes sure that those impulses towards pleasure that are destructive to the individual are not gratified. The ego plays the role that the conscious plays in Freud’s model (39). The intellectual demands of the id occasionally elude the restraints of the ego, but mostly, the id is guided and controlled by the ego. The third psychical zone that Freud identifies is the super-ego. The superego monitors the ego in the same way that the ego supervises the id. In essence, the super-ego is the internal voice of parents, carers and society which provides the individual with the rules and regulations that guide him or her when he or she moves beyond primary narcissism. Rennison notes that the super-ego provides us with our sense of what is wrong and demands that we often behave in ways acceptable to society at large rather than to our individual urges (40). This critic adds that with a mature mentally poised individual, the id, the ego, and the super-ego interact in a balanced way. The three components can create anxiety and guilt in all individuals. The nagging conscience of the “super-ego” causes anxiety when we fall short of its demands (ibid).

It is clear from Freud’s model of the human mind that man’s mental processes are very largely unconscious and that the rational mind is just “a tip” of an iceberg, a small island of self-awareness in the great ocean of the unconscious (Rennison 30). Rennison adds that this unconscious is the result of repression— therein are the fantasies, daydreams, thoughts, feelings and desires that the conscious self finds unacceptable. Marie Bonaparte introduces the entire field of applied psychoanalysis in the field of art and literature when she mentions the function of unconscious fantasies and daydreams in literary creation and remarks that there is a link between dreams and works of art (qtd in Rabaté 43). As such, the logic of condensation and displacement that apply to dreams equally apply to the facts represented by the writer in his/her work. While condensation is the situation whereby an idea or image stands for a sequence of interconnected ideas or images, displacement refers to the act whereby a strong troubling emotion is detached from its real source and is attached to a trivial idea/image (Rennison 44).

In Freud’s two principles of mental functioning, the question of art as an outlet of repressed phantasies is further examined. Education, science and art are indeed identified as venues through which man attempts to overcome the pleasure principle, in effect, art brings about the reconciliation of the pleasure principle and the reality principle in peculiar ways (Gay 305). Through art (literature in this case) the artist— who finds it difficult to forfeit the instinctual satisfaction of his erotic and ambitious wishes to which he/she has given full expression in the life of phantasy— moulds his/her phantasies into truth of a new kind that are valued by men as prized reflections of reality. Gay notes that the artist thus becomes the hero, the king or the creator, or the favourite he desired to be without having to make alterations in the real, external world (ibid).

Gay also notes that a childhood scene can become a disguised phantasy (124). When later recalled in adulthood, what would attract our interest then would be different from ways in which the scene interested us in childhood as there is a difference between the two (Gay 117). Gay proceeds to observe that there is no guarantee of the data produced by our memory because the selection of a scene from innumerable others of a similar or different kind is well adapted to represent phantasies which were important enough to us (123). When these memories are formed at these later years, they show us our earliest years, not as they were, but as they appear to us when the memories are aroused (126). Hence, both the selection and the forming of the memories are conditioned by several motives that have no concern for historical accuracy.

It is worth noting that these childhood experiences that are later formed by memory are lived in the family. According to Freud’s “Family Romances,” parents are the first and only authority for a child in the early years and the child desires to be like the parent of his/her sex. It is also possible for a child to over evaluate one of his/her parents. But as the child grows, he/she discovers other parents and compares them with his/hers. Small events, like the feeling of being slighted, equally provokes criticism for parents (Gay 298). The natural outcome of this is the child’s liberation from the parent’s authority as he/she grows. Failure to do so results into a recognisable neurotic condition in the child. Also, quarrels between parents or unhappy marriages incline children for “the severest predisposition to a disturbance of sexual development or a neurosis” (Gay 292).

Meanwhile, according to Thomas A. Schmitz, Carl Gustave Jung and the interpreters influenced by his theories avoid the biographical reductionism of Freudian analysis because what they see at work in myths or in literary texts is not the psyche of the individual author, but the collective symbolism of humanity (200). In Jung's "analytical psychology," Jung distinguishes between a "personal" and a "collective" unconscious. While he found Freud's description of the former adequate, he thought the later represented a psychic level which was even deeper. The collective unconscious proceeds from the fact that people of various cultures respond to certain stimuli in similar ways. This is because of the "immemorial images" in their unconscious which Jung calls archetypes. These archetypes condense human experience in several powerful symbols such as mother earth or the divine infant (ibid). Unlike Freud, Jung and his followers do not see the psyche of the individual author at work in myths or literary texts, but the collective symbolism of humanity.

Before its translation into literary thought, Modernism first emerged as a philosophical movement that, along with cultural trends and rapid changes, arose from wide-scale and far-reaching transformation in Western societies in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. The development of modern industrial societies with sophisticated weapons subjected man to the horrors of the First World War. The catastrophe of the war had shaken faith in societal conventions, moral codes, religious creeds, institutions and every other assumption of Western civilization since the days of Plato. Scepticism for the tenability of these artefacts and paradigms also raised doubts on the appropriateness of using traditional literary modes to represent the harsh realities of the post-world-war era. Modernists question the certainty that supported the traditional modes of social organisation.

In literary criticism, Modernism can be broadly defined as the deliberate departure from tradition and the use of innovative forms of expression that distinguish many styles in the arts and literature in the 20th century. Thus, Modernism is a break from traditional writing conventions or patterns of writing. The need to break free from the shackles of past literary norms caused writers like Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, and James Joyce to write works that did not have the traditional prescribed form. In *The Common Reader*, Woolf deplores the compulsion under which the traditional novelist wrote and questions the accuracy with which these traditional novels captured reality. She avers that

The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccably that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour. The tyrant is obeyed; the novel is done to a turn. But sometimes, more and more often as time goes by, we suspect a momentary doubt, a spasm of rebellion, as the pages fill themselves in the customary way. Is life like this? Must novels be like this? (84-85)

Stated otherwise, traditional writing conventions compelled writers before the World Wars to write their works (poems, plays and novels) to give their works a certain form and content. In a bid to get poets to break from these shackles, for instance, Ezra Pound (a proponent of modernist poetry) called on poets to make it new using the maxim "Make it New" (Abrams, 168). According to Pound, modernism necessitated "presenting an image or enough images of concrete things arranged to stir the reader" (Perkins, 50). As such, rather than attempting to endow poems with a subject matter that gives them a certain meaning; get them to respect metrical patterns, rhyming schemes and rhythm; or to absolutely be littered with certain figures of speech, Pound was convinced that poems could communicate reality better simply by conjuring an image in the mind of the reader. This resulted into what became known as imagist poetry.

In drama, Martin Esslin coined the term "Theatre of the Absurd" in 1961 to refer to the new dramatic tradition that enabled playwrights to break free of the constraints of traditional drama in his *The Theatre of the Absurd*. Unlike traditional drama, the canons of this new dramatic form made no provision for cleverly constructed stories, recognizable characters, fully explained themes or logically constructed dialogues. Rather, in order to capture the post-World War disillusionment, dramatists of this new dramatic type set mechanical puppets on stage; the plays they wrote had no story or plot to speak of, but rather were reflections of the playwright's dreams and nightmares. And, because of modernist scepticism for the meaningfulness of language, the dialogue in these plays are incoherent babblings (Esslin 21-22).

It is thus this need for new literary modes that will better reflect the reality of the post-World War era that Woolf clamours for in *The Common Reader*. As noted above, she oppugns that the writer's subscription to traditional prescriptions such as making sure that the novel he/she writes has a plot; is either a tragedy or a comedy, or that love is one of its thematic preoccupations does not reflect reality. Contending that life is not "like this," she observes that the mind receives a myriad of impressions on an ordinary day and these impressions could be "trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel" (85). Hence, it is the writer that records these impressions as they fall on the mind who captures reality better, irrespective of how incoherent and puzzling this might be to the reader. As far as she is concerned, the novelist's mission is to trace the pattern as each sight or incident scores upon his/her consciousness. It is in the quest to achieve this that modernist writers generally use the stream of consciousness technique. As such, Modernism was born of this break from traditional literary conventions and this entailed the birth of new epistemes that characterised this Modernist discourse.

According to *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, epistemes derive from the Greek word "epistēmē" that means 'knowledge' or 'science.' Hence, epistemology is the science or study of knowledge. "Episteme" was used by Plato and Aristotle to denote the universally valid knowledge gained through reason or logic, as opposed to mere opinion or belief (indicated by the word "doxa") (Cuddon et al. 245). In modern thought, the term is most commonly associated with Michel Foucault for whom it refers to the apparatus of enabling conditions, tacit assumptions and rules that structure the discourses of knowledge in a given epoch (and we add in a given discipline). In this paper, the term is synonymous to the term discourse: a learned discussion, written (in this case) on a literary topic. It is the particular type of language and problematic that defines and delimits Modernism as a literary mode of expression in the post-World War epoch.

Within the context of traditional war epistemes, the soldier referred to the war veteran who left home (given the twentieth-century American aspect of war that was fought on foreign soil) to fight for the noble cause of defending the nation. While war propaganda by political leaders and the media urged these soldiers to self-sacrifice, the soldiers also felt sent by 'home' as their wives and children expected them to fight to protect them. These soldiers were thus expected to be brave, selfless, valiant and daring. The "unsoldiered" soldier is therefore the soldier stripped of these qualities that denote masculinity and heroism. According to Alex Vernon, World War I rendered soldiers passive to an unprecedented degree because of the new technology of machine guns, indirect fire artillery, and mustard gas. Deprived of the opportunity to fight the enemy in the classic sense in which one's own agency and skill might affect the battle's outcome, these soldiers were victims of bullets sprayed on them from a great distance, bombs dropped on them, and gas that invaded their lungs, and that they were powerless to prevent. Stanley Cooperman would refer to this as "psychic emasculation" (qtd in Vernon 74).

In *Soldiers Once and Still: Ernest Hemingway, James Salter, and Tim O'Brien*, Alex Vernon notes that "For male soldiers and frontline volunteers like Hemingway, who passively suffered the new technology, the war paradoxically made men of them and unmanned them" (77). The unmanning of the soldier, experienced firsthand by Hemingway who was a frontline volunteer during World War I, entailed the emasculation of the soldier who was incapacitated by the new technology used during the war. The passivity the war reduced men to, and the greater agency gained by women back home who became more involved in the public sphere in the absence of the men, resulted into the deconstruction of stereotypes of the man as active, brave, invincible and potent. That is probably why Vernon observes that the war— that had made men of soldiers given their enlistment into the army as those fit to defend the nation's cause— had paradoxically "unmanned" them. Hemingway opts for the representation of such an emasculated combatant in his depiction of Frederick Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*.

Meanwhile, Vernon cites Peter Aichinger's *The American Soldier in Fiction, 1880–1963* whose study of American war fiction begins in 1890 and quotes the latter as noting that "the great tide of war novels began" after that period (qtd in Vernon 43). According to Aichinger, three things accounted for the emergence of the war novel at this time: the disappearance of the frontier "as a locus of violence;" making warfare "the new avatar of the American spirit of violence" whereby the soldier "came to replace the cowboy;" the nation's increasing involvement in military operations outside its own borders, and the emergence of the "military establishment" as a "recognizable entity" (ibid). To these, Vernon adds the rising popularity of novels in general, the increasing literacy rate of the nation, and the enormous level of participation in the Civil War. These factors engendered the appetite to daily read about the war and "led to a budding expectation for realism in war novels" (ibid).

However, Vernon quotes Malcolm Cowley as observing that “war novelists are not sociologists or historians, and neither are they average soldiers” (qtd in Vernon 29). Adding that these novelists are not psychologists either, this critic observes that both military fiction writers and their critics want to understand war from these different perspectives and want to capture war accurately. But then, war fiction might not always be about war— even when written by a war veteran. War might just serve as a metaphor by dint of which the writer expresses something deeper about human nature and human institution. This use of war as a metaphor obstructs “a faithful, authentic portrait of war and the military” (ibid).

In view of the foregoing that has shed light on the context in which war fiction was born and on the different realities that have shaped it, the war narrative can be defined as an account of war (fictional or real) by a writer who was part of the war or who has some claim of having related to it. Hence, this suggested proximity with war lends credence to his/her writings because of what Joseph J. Waldmeir refers to as the objective recording of the details of soldiering and the battlefield terrain (qtd in Vernon 46). It is for this “being there quality” of the soldier’s narrative (to borrow from Samuel Hynes) that Hemingway is most commended. It is equally this verisimilitude of his works that has prompted many to consider his works as being autobiographical. The first part of this paper examines the author’s biographical experiences that are perceptible in his depiction of Frederic Henry and the effeminacy with which the writer endows his protagonist in *A Farewell to Arms*, while the second part delves into the novelist’s art as a modernist writer.

### 1. Hemingway, Feminised Childhood and Desexualised War Hero

This section of the paper looks at Hemingway’s biographical experience with specific attention to childhood experiences that emasculated/could emasculate the author. It then proceeds to examine how the writer’s consciousness is influenced by these experiences to the extent that he depicts a disempowered war veteran in *A Farewell to Arms*. Finally, it sheds light on Frederic Henri’s emasculation.

Ernest Hemingway was born in a Chicago suburb, at the village of Oak Parks, in Illinois, on July 21, 1899. His father, Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, was a Physician. Meanwhile, his mother— Grace Hall-Hemingway— was a singer and a music teacher. Oak Parks being a bastion of progressive Republicans, Oak Parkers went in for the newest and the best. Yet, in their conservatism, they theoretically protected their sons and daughters (as is said about Ernest Hemingway here) from “uncensored movies, boxing matches, any information on venereal diseases or birth control, all forms of gambling and prostitution, and all consumption of alcohol” (qtd in Wagner-Martin 16). It would therefore be expected that, as a family, the Hemingways would conform to the prototype of a traditional family with the conventional hierarchical family order respected and clearly defined roles for all family members.

In effect, Michael Reynolds’ observation about the Hemingways is suggestive of the respectability the family enjoyed in the neighbourhood. Reynolds states that

Ernest Hemingway grew up in the bosom of a well-known, extended, and respected family... a family whose sense of civic responsibility was strong and whose interests were divided among medicine, the Congregational Church, and real estate. (qtd in Wagner-Martin 17)

Reynolds’ remark does not just connote respectability but is also indicative of the fact that the Hemingways were a popular, stable, and law-abiding family. They were a breed that had contributed to the development of their community and were thus recognised as being an integral part of its existence. And given the traditional conventionality typical of this milieu, it can be presumed that the Hemingway family fitted the mould because they were just as conventional as any family.

Yet, that was not the case. Grace Hall-Hemingway dwarfed her husband, Clarence, in the home thus upsetting the family’s traditional hierarchical order. Reynolds avers that she was the energy source in the Hemingway household, a woman always on stage, a personality that could not be ignored (qtd in Wagner-Martin 17). In other words, she supplanted her husband in his position as family head. She was a woman of strong personality who eclipsed her husband and he played second fiddle to her. In fact, as earlier mentioned, Hemingway is quoted as telling Charles Scribner about his mother to whom he would be devoted as a son if it pleased her, but whose guts he hated; she had forced his father to commit suicide and she could consequently not come to his house (qtd in Kert 462). It is clear from this that, from his memories of childhood scenes, Hemingway recalled the emasculating treatment his mother gave his father to the extent that he blamed his mother for his father’s suicide.

According to Jamie Barlowe, Grace Hall-Hemingway was an income earner and one out of the twenty women who exercised the right to vote for university trustees in Illinois. In fact, her mother-in-law (Adelaïde Hemingway) and her were among the suffragists of Oak Parks. Also, worth noting is the fact that Barlowe quotes Rose Marie Burwell as noting that Grace always identified herself as “Grace Hall-Hemingway at a time when most married women dropped their maiden names” (qtd in Wagner-Martin 125). Instead of dropping her maiden name, “Hall,” after her marriage to Clarence, Grace chose to keep it and simply added her husband’s name to it. Grace equally subscribed to Edward F. Bigelow’s recommendation in his *The Spirit of Nature Study*. In this book, Bigelow advocated a world of “manly little men and womanly little women...all climbing the same fences, listening to the same bird songs, watching the same squirrels, picking and examining the same flowers” (24). He argued that Nature Study would not only endow girls with “hardiness and strength” (20), but would also endow boys with “gentleness, refinement, and purity” (22).

Bigelow’s model for children’s upbringing above proposes the subjection of children to the same learning experiences in nature by getting them to indulge in the same activities, irrespective of their sexes. Bigelow was convinced that this would endow the girls with masculine qualities (hardiness and strength), and the boys with feminine qualities (gentleness, refinement and purity). He was so persuaded of the necessity for this combination that he advised parents to strive to bring boys to be 100% boys and girls to be 100% girls then, for full measure, to add 25% of girlishness to boys and 25% of boyishness to girls (25-26). In adhesion to this, Grace dressed Ernest and his sisters in the same outfits and encouraged both her sons and daughters to play the same games like going fishing and hiking together or playing with dolls and tea sets.

Ernest Hemingway did not therefore only grow in an environment where the woman’s presence was intimidatingly imposing, at the expense of the man’s, but in one where practices could also cause a blurring of gender boundaries. This probably accounts for the way he depicts some of his characters, feminising his heroes and masculinising the women in their lives. At certain points, the novelist portrays a proclivity for androgyny. The section that follows reads Hemingway’s depiction of desexualised characters in *A Farewell to Arms* as evidence of pathological features in his literary creation because of his childhood experiences.

Hemingway’s hero falls short of the standard of a traditional war veteran because he is not a soldier per se. Ideals of masculinity required that the war hero should not only be a soldier, but one in frontline position. He equally ought to be one who carried out acts of heroism and who, in the process, could get wounded because of his selfless sacrifice and unflinching allegiance to the cause of his nation or army. But Hemingway’s protagonist is an American student of architecture who enlists as a lieutenant in the Italian army’s ambulance corps. This means that the chances of finding him in circumstances that would require the much-acclaimed heroic war acts are quite slim. Rather than these, Frederic is presented in the ridiculous posture of being wounded in the war while eating. In the scene that precedes this one, when Frederic goes for food for the four drivers and himself above Plava, the major is concerned about the impending bombardments they are dreading from the Austrians. But Frederic is rather preoccupied with food. The exchange between the major and he goes thus:

"About the soup, major," I said. He did not hear me. I repeated it. "It hasn't come up."  
 A big shell came in and burst outside in the brickyard. Another  
 burst and in the noise you could hear the smaller noise of the  
 brick and dirt raining down.  
 "What is there to eat?"  
 "We have a little pasta asciutta," the major said.  
 "I'll take what you can give me."  
 The major spoke to an orderly who went out of sight in the back and came back with a metal  
 basin of cold cooked macaroni. I handed it to Gordini.  
 "Have you any cheese?"  
 The major spoke grudgingly to the orderly who ducked back into the hole again and came out  
 with a quarter of a white cheese.  
 "Thank you very much," I said. ...  
 "You better wait until the shelling is over," the major said over his shoulder.  
 "They want to eat," I said. (Hemingway 23)

It is clear from the excerpt above that the reality of war or, better still, that of achieving acts of heroism during a period of action in war is the last thing on the protagonist's mind. And although it can be argued that, as the leader of the team of drivers and mechanics he is leading he wants to make sure that his men have something to eat, Frederic's action is discrediting to the war hero for two reasons. For one thing, Frederic is right in the midst of action in this scene, yet no soldierly instinct triggers him to take the right action, not even as the lieutenant of the ambulance driving unit. While the major is asking the stretcher-bearers to bring in a hurt man, Frederic is calling on Gordini—his team member who came along with him—so that they can take the food back to the others in the dug-out. He even refuses to heed the major's advice that they should not go out while the shelling is on.

Secondly, Frederic's concern for food here also feminises him. Gender role distribution in a typically patriarchal society assigns house-keeping (which involves making sure that all family members are fed) to the woman. Hemingway's hero pays attention even to the specifics about the food he is given. His action is not the perfunctory action of a man stuck with the role of catering to the feeding of his men because they are at war. He seems to like the task enough to pay attention to the details. He is not just content with the "cold cooked macaroni" that is brought to him, but he asks for cheese to go with it. He even notices the fact that the major grudgingly sends the orderly to bring them a piece of white cheese. To crown it all, his heedless response to the heat of action on the battlefield results in the death of one of men, Passini, and to his being wounded in the leg. Even his attempt to save the bleeding driver by making a tourniquet for the latter's legs is futile. Passini dies before he can act. Hemingway thoroughly strips his war hero of any act of heroism.

In keeping with the way masculinity was presented to the World War I soldier, Diane Price Hemdl reads "the wounded as a performance of masculinity" (Goodheart 240-241). That is probably why Frederic is proposed for the award of the silver medal of valour after he gets wounded. As Rinaldi says, he will be awarded a silver medal if he can prove that he did any heroic act but will receive a bronze medal if he cannot prove it (Hemingway 28). In other words, he will be given the medal just for being gravely wounded during the war. When Rinaldi asks him whether he did any heroic act, Frederic retorts "I was blown up while we were eating cheese" (ibid). Attempts are made to ascribe tenuous acts of heroism to him (such as his having carried several people on his back and having refused to be medically aided before others) in vain.

Jackson J. Benson's claim in *Hemingway: The Writer's Art of Self-Defense* summarily captures Frederic's characteristic passivity during the war in these terms: "Frederic's experience during the war consists of waiting—waiting out bad weather, waiting for shelling to begin so that he can drive his ambulance, or waiting in the hospital to get well" (3). Stated otherwise, Frederic does not take any initiative. Instead of being master of circumstances by triggering what will happen next, he is the helpless prey of circumstances. He can only react to events that occur around him. This is contrary to the masculine qualities of adventurousness, boldness and intrepidity. It is therefore not surprising that his absence is not very much felt at the head of the ambulance unit when he goes on leave. He notes that "Everything seemed in good condition: it evidently made no difference whether I was there to look after things or not" (Hemingway 7).

The feminisation of Hemingway's hero is even more glaring because the author chooses to depict him side-by-side with Catherine Barkley, his masculinised lover. From when she is first mentioned in the novel to the last scene in which she ails to death, Catherine displays masculine tendencies that Frederic lacks. Richard Fantina observes that Catherine is in an "almost dominatrix outfit" when Frederic and she first meet. He cites her hotnailed boots, cape, thin rattan stick (like a toy riding crop) as articles and accessories of male attire (55). Her suggestion that Frederic should let his hair grow while she cuts hers so that their hair will have the same length can be considered as an attempt to depersonalise him. She expresses her wish for Frederic and her to be one when she avers that she wants them to be all mixed up (Hemingway 128). According to her, they do not need to marry, at least not right then, because they are one already. The statement "I am you" can be read as a glaring attempt to totally engulf Frederic.

Catherine equally shows masculine fortitude when she is prey to the pains of childbirth and when she is at the brink of death. She smiles at Frederic through her pain while travailing and expresses her fearlessness in the face of death. Even when she breaks down, she still has enough fortitude to console herself. She worries about Frederic's well-being and makes sure he goes for his meals both before and after the surgery. Meanwhile, Frederic is afraid to go into the theatre room when Catherine is wheeled in to be operated upon. And even after the surgery, he prefers to watch from a distance while she is being sewn up.

Finally, he breaks down and sobs when she has a hemorrhage and is about to die. Rather than join him to cry, Catherine states that she is not afraid of death, but simply hates the fact that she is going to die. She achieves what Charles Hatten would refer to as “stoic masculinity” (qtd in Benson 251).

Hemingway's choice to juxtapose his emasculated hero with such a dominant female can be perceived as an expression of his fixation on his mother whose domineering nature both impressed and repelled him. In “Hemingway's Gender Training,” Jamie Barlowe opines that

Hemingway viewed his mother's independence, activism, and successes as evidence of her desire to dominate and emasculate, and he spent his lifetime not working out his conflict between his intense desire for her approval and his often-articulated hatred of her. (Wagner-Martin 124)

Hemingway was thus awed by his mother's imposing personality to the extent that it scarred him the whole of his life span: the quotation notes that he was torn between seeking her approbation and loathing her because of her domineering nature as earlier mentioned. In effect, it affected him enough to influence his consciousness as a writer: Fantina mentions the abdication of the will of Hemingway's passive heroes before the dominant woman (22). Like Frederic Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*, Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* and David Bourne in *The Garden of Eden* are both depicted as passive men.

In his phantasy expressed through art, therefore, Hemingway totally disregards historical accuracy. Rather, it can be argued that he is influenced by the fixation made on another lady whom he endows with the character traits that intrigue him in his mother. According to Frederic J. Svoboda, Agnes Von Kurowsky (a nurse with whom Hemingway had an affair in 1918) is the real-life prototype of Catherine Barkley (Wagner-Martin 155). Hemingway fell in love with her while he was recovering from an injury incurred when he was blown up by an Austrian trench mortar. And although she was eight years older than him, Hemingway thought they were engaged to be married. She however broke up the relationship.

The memory of Agnes and this relationship were so alive in Hemingway that it surfaced in his art. Facts such as his assignment on the Piave River front; the injury he sustains following the shelling of an Austrian mortar, and his love for a nurse while at the hospital are real-life experiences that he transposes into his fiction. And in line with the fact that memories do not emerge as they were, but as they appear at the later periods when they are aroused, Hemingway's remembrance of these experiences are not exact replicas of the past. For instance, nothing is said about Catherine's age and it is obvious from her representation that she is a young lady and is not eight years older than Frederic, Hemingway's pseudo self. Also, unlike the case with Agnes whom Hemingway meets and falls in love with in the hospital, Miss Barkley and Frederic meet before and even start dating before the hospital episode in *A Farewell to Arms*. But it is at the hospital that Frederic realises that he is in love with her. Another interesting detail is that, according to Wagner-Martin, Agnes ended her relationship with Hemingway because she considered him a kid (85).

Hemingway's fixation on Agnes is further evident in the fact that he also transposes her to Luz in “A Very Short Story.” Commenting on Hemingway's bitterness over Agnes's rejection, Clancy Sigal observes that he alchemises it into Frederic's passionate love of Catherine (68). As such, through his artistic creation (*A Farewell to Arms*), Hemingway—like the hero, the king, the creator, the favourite he desired to be—“moulds his phantasy into truth of a new kind without making any alterations in the external world” to borrow from Gay. In other words, he lives out his phantasy by getting Agnes to reciprocate his love through the love affair between Catherine and Frederic, the pseudo selves of Catherine and him.

Likewise, Hemingway's disempowerment of Frederic and his other war heroes is ascribable to the memories of his father's effeminacy. Sigal remarks that Hemingway blamed his father for not being man enough and adds that he does so probably because Clarence submitted too easily to Grace's domination and because he killed himself, an act Ernest considered as being cowardly (113-114). It can be construed that this image of the emasculated male, imbibed by Hemingway's consciousness, trickles into his art. Meanwhile, Hemdl alludes to the fact that his parents had almost entirely exchanged traditional parental roles (Goodheart 4). On the basis of these observations, the reversal of gender roles depicted in Frederic's relationship with Catherine is an expression of what Hemingway witnessed between his parents.

It was earlier noted that the logic of condensation and displacement that apply to dreams equally apply to the facts represented by the writer in his/her work. Through the logic of displacement, therefore, the strong troubling emotions to which Hemingway was prey as a child and, later, as a young adult, have been detached from their real sources (the deviant relationship between his parents). Through his art, the writer has created pseudo representations of his father, his mother, Agnes and himself in the characters of Frederic and Catherine. While Frederic stands for his father (whose emasculation he represents), he also stands for Ernest Hemingway as he gives the latter the opportunity to live out his phantasy of a love relationship with Agnes. Likewise, Catherine epitomises both Grace Hall-Hemingway and Agnes. As regards the logic of condensation, Frederic and Catherine pose as Hemingway and his parents who are interconnected “ideas” or “images.” And all the characters in the writer’s other works who express this fixation like Jack Barnes, David Bourne, Nick’s father, Luz and Maria do likewise. Having examined Frederic as a product of Hemingway’s pathology, the paper presently looks at his disempowerment as part of modernist epistemes.

## 2. Hemingway, the Modernist Writer

This sub-section seeks to establish the fact that Hemingway’s representation of a disempowered war hero is just part of his modernist epistemes as a modernist writer. The section posits that the way the writer handles subject matter, plot, characterization, themes, style and his whole art inclines him for the depiction of war heroes like Frederic.

In *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway writes about war and love. But his approach to both realities deconstructs past humanist constructions of both. War is no longer seen as a solemn State venture that seeks the redress of an unjust action, at the least, or the defence of a threatened ideology. War is no longer a forum through which patriotic citizens defend the cause of their nation through noble acts of heroism. Rather, as Jackson Benson remarks,

The novel depicts the war as anything but heroic; medals are awarded for nothing, wounds are sustained while eating spaghetti in a dug-out, and death comes randomly, without any respect for one’s manliness or bravery. (3)

In effect, the very fact that Hemingway’s protagonist is an American student of architecture who volunteers to enlist in a foreign army, the Italian army, is suggestive of the author’s opinion of war. Frederic is neither quite sure of the reason why the war is being fought, nor does he believe in the cause he is fighting for. He considers words like “sacred,” “glorious” and “sacrifice” that are used in war propaganda to be vain words. Likewise, words like “glory” “honor” “courage” and “hallow” are obscene in their abstraction besides the concrete realities like the names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers or the number of regiments. His decision to desert the army when Italian soldiers mistake him for a German in Italian uniform is not surprising. In fact, all the men Hemingway represents (soldiers, ambulance drivers, priest, military surgeon etc) do not believe in the war. Yet these are the men who are expected to nobly fight for the causes of the armies into which they have been enlisted. Benson concludes by averring that the passivity, randomness, irrationality and meaninglessness characteristic of the war depicted here makes it difficult to maintain faith in the old models of manhood (ibid).

But it is not only the old models of manhood that lost credibility in the post-World-War I era. The general disillusionment that obtained during the epoch resulted into the questioning of human institutions, religious creeds and codes of morality as earlier mentioned. That may explain why Frederic and Catherine’s love idyll ends in woe. Contrary to Victorian ideals according to which love would end in marriage, Frederic and Catherine cannot marry because the latter dies. And, as if the author wants to make sure that Frederic does not found a family, he ensures that the baby is stillborn. It is obvious that the author has lost faith in the family institution. Fantina captures this in these terms, “Hemingway appears distinctly uncomfortable in the family setting... his hatred of his mother and estrangement from his father, then his sister, and finally one of his own children, indicate this discomfort” (25).

Hence, Hemingway’s disillusionment with family life because of his personal experience have prompted him to interrogate the traditional family prototype of hierarchised families that comprise a father, a mother and children. This family prototype is a past model in which post-World-War I man no longer believes. While Miss Van Campen (who represents the conservatism of the past) approves of Catherine because she is from a good and respectable family, the latter does not mind being pregnant for Frederic to whom she is not married. In fact, when Frederic even suggests that they should get married before the baby comes along, she rejects the idea. She does not think that he needs to do that to make an honest woman of her. According to her, she is married to him already and they could not be “more married” than they are. Clandestine relationships therefore replace couples bound by the legal ties and sacred vows of marriage while hotel rooms replace the home.

Catherine however envisages marrying Frederic properly after the child's birth. Her death and the child's stillbirth herald the demise of the family in the traditional sense. They also signify the end of her love relationship with Frederic. Numb with pain and disappointment, Hemingway's protagonist stands alone having lost every prospect of living a happy family life. The poignant loss he feels concurs with Svoboda's remark that, in all of Hemingway's works, it is the loss of love—and often the memory of its loss—that is a core element (Wagner-Martin 159). Viewed from this perspective, war becomes subordinate to love in these works as it simply “provides a resonance to these tales of the loss of love” (ibid).

This experience of love that causes the hero to mature accounts for many critics' claim that the novel is about the psychological journey of a young man who grows from immaturity to maturity. Sigal describes Frederic Henry as a “not-yet-grown man.” He adds that Catherine teaches Frederic to be a fully conscious and responsible man through the simple act of honestly loving him (70). That might explain why his Italian friend, Rinaldi, calls him “baby.” He remains uninvolved both in the war he is fighting and in his relationship with Catherine before he falls in love with her. In fact, he thinks of their relationship as a game of chess. Both the threat of death (when Italian soldiers want to kill him for treason) and the power of his love for Catherine jerk him out of his puerile lack of consciousness. To crown it all, the loss of Catherine and their baby follow. The loner that forcefully enters the hospital room in which Catherine's corpse is and who orders the two nurses out is a mature man born of the travail of loss (Hemingway 142). As such, like the Bildungsroman, the plot of Hemingway's work has this psychical dimension encrusted in the interest shown in Freud's psychoanalytical claims of the 1920s.

Like Frederic and Catherine, the characters portrayed fall short of the standard of men and women of noble ideals who are living fulfilled lives. These characters are either soldiers or are otherwise involved in the war. At the mess, the men indulge in obscene conversations and drinking. Visiting the whorehouse in the evenings is a cherished activity for most of them. There is the glaring absence of the soberliness and discipline required of men at the war front. Characters like Miss Van Campen and Miss Helen Ferguson, who portray moral scruples, seem to be deformed by the values they uphold. Miss Van Campen hates Frederic because she disapproves of his lifestyle to the extent that she acts unjustly towards him. She gets him to be sent back to the war front before he has totally recovered. Meanwhile, Miss Ferguson severally expresses exaggerated and unjustified dismay at the fact that Frederic has an affair with her friend, Catherine. She even bursts into tears at one point. That is a queer reaction given that she is neither in love with Frederic, nor is she jealous of Catherine.

Even more disquieting is the fact that none of these men believes in the cause for which they are fighting. At the mess, as at the war front, the characters express their disgust with the war. They variously label the war “goddamned,” “rotten” and “bad.” According to the ambulance drivers in Frederic's team, most soldiers go to the front to attack because they are afraid of what will happen to their families if they do not. Passini avers that they are at war because the country's ruling class is stupid, does not realize anything and never can (Hemingway 21-22). In other words, even the cream of the society represented leaves much to be desired: their stupidity plunges the nation into war. By extension, the world is at war because stupid leaders have led the nations they lead into the World War. Consequently, the butchery of human life and the massive destruction of property that result from the war are all in vain. All the political propaganda made by the then world leaders who were instrumental in the outburst of the war, such as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, were nothing other than vain words. Hence, old models have failed. In the face of this state of affairs, Robert Warren opines that “...in a world without supernatural sanctions, in the God-abandoned world of modernity, man can realize an ideal meaning only in so far as he can define and maintain the code” (Bloom 25).

Having realised that the world has been abandoned by God, modern man seeks new ways of giving life meaning. The men at the mess do not believe in God. They scorn the priest and the faith he professes. The Victorian belief in the existence of a good God is no longer tenable, the debris of this “old” religion (Judeo Christianity) is evident in Catherine's belief that the Saint Anthony medal she gives Frederic can preserve him. Yet, she confesses to Frederic that she is neither a Catholic nor does she have any religion. Frederic is her religion. In other words, he is the new code she has defined and endeavours to maintain right to the end of her life, even on her deathbed. In her lifetime, she seeks to do everything he requires of her and her sole concern in the throes of death is to have their baby the right way so that he will be proud of her.

Viewed from this perspective, the protagonist's disempowerment can be read as Hemingway's definition of a new form of masculinity that replaces the old model. Hemdl reads Hemingway's emasculation of Frederic "as a success of modern medicine, a success at constructing a modern, colonized masculinity that can perform in war" (qtd in Benson 247). That is, in keeping with the emasculating effect of modern weapons on the soldier that rendered him passive during World War I, Hemingway presents a feminised war hero who is more inclined to fit the new model of war. It can be argued that Frederic's masculinity is colonised, not only by the more sophisticated war weapon, but also by the whole system as well as Catherine's masculinity. He remarks, on coming back from leave, that the whole ambulance unit has functioned very well in his absence as earlier noted. In other words, everything is organised in such a way that he can be easily dispensed with, although he is at the head of the unit.

The writer's depiction of Frederic is also ascribable to the new sexual definitions that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. Categories such as gays, lesbians and transgender— wherein one's physiology does not necessarily determine one's gender— became new forms of sexual identity. This gender fluidity can account for the fact that, though Frederic is a man, the author chooses to feminise him and to masculinise Catherine who is a woman. In line with these new perceptions of sexual identity, Hemingway's proclivity for androgyny has attracted critical attention. Spilka observes that Frederic and Catherine are fused together in mystic selflessness (Goodheart 225). Catherine's desire that they should look alike and fuse into one person thus bespeaks of Hemingway's androgynous tendency. Likewise, the attribution of female traits to a man and male traits to a woman results into the blurring of gender definitions.

This content of Hemingway's work thus affects its form. Vernon notes that "an overlapping of the purely homosexual and the purely heterosexual is encoded in the language and the scenes of [the book]" (71). Apart from the love scenes between Frederic and Catherine that are recurrent in the work and account for the numerous love scenes and the amorous overtones of the author's language, the inter-actions between Frederic and his Italian friend, the lieutenant and surgeon, Rinaldi, do same. For instance, when he visits Frederic at the hospital, he does not only call him "baby" (a term of endearment used by lovers), but he also bends over the bed and kisses him. Moreover, Rinaldi insinuates that there is a love relationship between Frederic and the priest when the former declares he likes the priest. He somehow manifests jealousy for both Catherine and the priest and alludes to the love Frederic and he have for each other (Hemingway 31). Meanwhile, as earlier mentioned, the language used at the mess is mostly obscene. In brief, Hemingway uses a highly sexualised language in the novel.

Besides this, many critics have referred to Hemingway's economical use of language. Thus, Wagner-Martin mentions the writer's "laconic 'tip-of-the-iceberg' style" in the Introduction to *A Historical Guide to Ernest Hemingway* (4). Likewise, the writer has a factual, journalistic approach to language that totally departs from the flourish Victorian use of language of the previous age. It is clear that the author cautiously chooses his words such that he communicates as much as possible with as few words as possible:

It was dusk when the priest came. They had brought the soup and afterward taken a way the bowls and I was lying looking at the rows of beds and out the window at the tree-top that moved a little in the evening breeze. (Hemingway 30)

In the sentences above, the narrator provides information on the event that takes place, the characters involved in the scene described, the time when it takes place and the place where it occurs, as well as provides other details such as what the protagonist was doing when the event takes place. In a few words, he therefore informs the reader of the priest's visit to Frederic; the temporal and spatial settings of the visit and the activity in which the protagonist indulges before his visitor arrives. But then, the writer's use of language here suggests many things that are left unsaid. After Rinaldi's earlier suggestion, the priest's visit to Frederic at dusk is reminiscent of a lover's visit to his loved one. More still, he gets Frederic to adopt the traditional posture in a lovemaking scene— he is lying down like a woman awaiting her lover. The association of his straying eyes with nature (rows of beds, tree-top, breeze) is just as telling since nature has always been associated with romance.

There is no attempt at making a flowery use of language. Rather, the writer uses picture words. Carlos Barker refers to the author's "sense of scenographic sentences which combine verbs, adverbs and adverbial phrases to set diverse facts of place and thing in motion" (Bloom 59). Clear examples are the adverbs of time "dusk" and "afterward" that respectively "set in motion" the priest's action of coming and the taking away of the bowls. The reader can visualise the actions being effected within a specific time.

And it is for having successfully used such information-packed language that Hemingway is commended for having “contributed his taut language to cartoons, greeting card legends and borrowings in serious contemporary fiction” (Wagner-Martin 7).

The serious overtones of *A Farewell to Arms* is attributable to the war story that Hemingway narrates side-by-side with his love story. Svoboda observes that, in *A Farewell to Arms*, the many losses of the war become nearly equal in dramatic force to the loss of love (Martin-Wagner 159). For instance, Catherine’s death scene earlier referred to in this paper and the loss Frederic feels echoes the loss felt by the Italian army at their defeat. The result of this is that the two stories are interwoven and unfold side-by-side. When Frederic deserts the army and dives into the Tagliamento River, he only dreams of living out his love story with Catherine. But right in the hotel room where they are living in bliss, his action at the war front haunts him: the hotel’s barman informs him of his impending arrest. Their subsequent escape to Switzerland aboard the latter’s boat to continue their love idyll is successful and the love story seems to outlive the war story, but this is short-lived. Their bliss abruptly ends when both the baby and Catherine pass away. The two stories the author interweaves progress at the same pace indeed and are simultaneous.

Despite this artful combination of more than one narrative, the writer does not use the multiple person point of view that is typical of modernist novelists. He consolidates the “being there” quality of his work, by using the first-person point of view. This point of view, according to Walker Gibson, implies an assumed “intimacy and common knowledge” between narrator and reader. This intimacy in turn makes it easy for the reader to believe in the narrator’s account and this invests the novel with verisimilitude. This may partly explain why many readers consider the work as being a biological account of Hemingway’s life. And though Hemingway is not modernist in his approach to all the elements of prose, his subscription to modernism is unmistakable as proven in the analysis above. This is not surprising given his close association with modernists in Paris. According to Michael Reynolds, the writer moved to Paris with letters of recommendation to modernist icons like Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound and Sylvia Beach (Wagner-Martin 24). Reynolds adds that he ended up having Stein as surrogate mother and godmother to his son, Pound as mentor and Sylvia as friend (Wagner-Martin 28).

The modernist period implied the overturning of traditional models. Hemingway achieves this in more than one way. As established in the last part of this paper, neither the war story nor the love story he recounts conform to traditional models of war/the war story or love/the love story. The war he depicts is fought for no justifiable reason and the men who are called upon to defend the causes of their nations do not believe in the cause for which they are risking their lives. It is a war that emasculates the soldier and one in which the combatant is not worthily appreciated for his bravery and efforts at war. Rather, medals are awarded for nothing and innocent officials are executed for treason of which they are not guilty. It is not surprising that the protagonist chooses to say farewell to arms. Unfortunately, it turns out to equally be a farewell to love, for in the overturned model of love the novelist presents, the tragic end of the idyll between Frederic and Catherine is inevitable. It is a love story in which the characters in love do not believe in traditional perceptions of marriage, the home and even of gender distinction. In view of these, Hemingway’s choice to desexualise his war hero is understandable. Although some of his biographical experiences predispose him for such a representation, the effeminate war hero he presents is in keeping with the literary tradition he subscribes to.

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