

Style and Gender in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*

Research Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with research distinction in English in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University

by

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The Ohio State University April 2014

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Ernest Hemingway's first major novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), is often perceived as an example of his clear style and extreme masculinity. Early critics believed the novel was about a man trying to regain his masculinity after the war. Women in the novel were interpreted as a destructive force (Wilson 44). Readings following this line of logic saw the narrator as a man comfortable only with homosocial relationships with other men, a man uncomfortable with women (Davidson 63, Fiedler 91). The explanation followed that the narrator, Jake, was more comfortable interacting with men because masculine pursuits such as fishing and boxing made sense in a world of values broken by war. Thus the style was seen as a response to the war and an attempt to reclaim masculinity. Jake's heteronormativity was not questioned by earlier critics. His discomfort with heterosexual relationships was explained by his war wound or blamed on the female characters. His omniscient narration was then linked to the war and his assumed masculinity. For a long time, this influential argument prevented readers from noticing that *Sun* has a multiplicity of styles and sexualities.

There is a big problem, indeed, with old readings that conflate masculinity with simple prose. As Scott St. Pierre notes in "Bent Hemingway Straightness, Sexuality, and Style," "It is exactly ... this ideology-fueled illusion of clarity, interwoven as it is in our culture with a triumphant ideal of straight male virtue, that plays so significant a role in casting Hemingway's style itself as a paragon of heterosexuality" (364). Since the posthumous publication of *The Garden of Eden* in 1986, critics have been looking at new ways of understanding Hemingway's conceptions of gender and sexuality. The novel challenged many perceptions of

strict masculinity and heteronormative behavior. Many have now argued against viewing Hemingway's work according to the masculine stereotype that has long been associated with him. Criticism has also acknowledged a multiplicity of sexualities in his work. This more inclusive understanding of sexuality in Hemingway's work has happened alongside more inclusive understandings of his style. Scholarship such as Milton Cohen's "Styles" complicates simplistic understandings of Hemingway's work by explaining how Hemingway employed a multiplicity of styles. Despite new understandings of Hemingway's genders and sexualities, as well as of his styles, little work has been done linking the two. This thesis will argue that in *The Sun Also Rises*, the interaction between styles and content shows that Hemingway's male narrator, like Hemingway's styles, is not stereotypically masculine nor is the main female character stereotypically feminine. Examining the connection between styles and changing conceptions of gender and sexuality will show how new content requires new styles when old styles no longer suffice.

Sun, although supposedly representative of Hemingway's "classic" style and masculinity, displays a multiplicity of genders and styles connected by a modernist impulse to create new experimental literary forms to present new content. After a brief debunking of the argument regarding Hemingway's supposedly masculine style, this thesis will begin with an overview of his experimental styles, followed by an overview of the historical changes that occurred in the way American society both understood and enacted gender and sexuality in the early twentieth century. Finally, this thesis will show how the two are linked in Hemingway's novel,

providing several examples of the way different styles interact within *Sun* to articulate specific historical changes in gender and sexuality. Though there are many places to take this intersection, this thesis will focus on four examples that show Hemingway's engagement with creating new styles to represent historically changing conceptions of gender and sexuality.

I.

Misinterpretations of gender and sexuality in *The Sun Also Rises* reflect a misreading of his style. His simple sentences are sometimes read as inherently masculine, as though only a male writer might be hardboiled enough to omit flowery words. His longer sentences are then justified by being linked only to moments of male bonding. The argument follows: Hemingway's "code" heroes are sexist. Why? The sentences are short in scenes with women and "open up" in scenes with men. Hemingway's male characters are then read as men uncomfortable around women but not men. This argument is derived from both the style and the content. Evidence for such an argument from *The Sun Also Rises* might compare Jake's narration when he is with Lady Brett Ashley to his narration when he is with Bill Gorton. Here is an example of Jake using short sentences to describe a moment between him and Brett: "When the taxi stopped I got out and paid. Brett came out putting on her hat. She gave me her hand and stepped down. Her hand was shaky" (35). This passage might be compared to a passage where Jake and Bill are alone:

After a while we came out of the mountains, and there were trees along both sides of the road, and a stream and ripe fields of grain, and the road went on, very white and straight ahead, and then lifted to a little rise, and off on the left was a hill with an old castle, with buildings close around it and a field of grain going right up to the walls and shifting in the wind. (99)

This one sentence from the homosocial “fishing section” is noticeably longer than the four sentences from Jake’s interaction with Brett, suggesting that Jake is more relaxed and happy when he is in the country hanging out with Bill than when he is in the city courting Brett. The argument is faulty, however, because it ignores evidence to the contrary. Here is another excerpt from Jake and Bill’s fishing trip: “I disjointed my rod and Bill’s and packed them in the rod-case. I put the reels in the tackle-bag. Bill had packed the rucksack and we put one of the trout-bags in. I carried the other” (129). Here are four short sentences describing action, just as in the scene with Jake and Brett. The difference thus might show only that Hemingway uses different styles with different content, that his style is different when he describes scenery than when he describes action. Take Jake’s description of Paris from a window of a cab he shares with Brett:

The taxi went up the hill, passed the lighted square, then on into the dark, still climbing, then leveled out onto a dark street behind St. Etienne du Mont, went smoothly down the asphalt, passed the trees and the standing bus at the Place de la Contrescarpe, then turned onto the cobbles of the Rue Mouffetard. (33)

This sentence mirrors the longer sentence taken from the fishing section, both in length and style. The two long, flowing sentences appear when Jake is with Brett and when Jake is with Bill. The sentences are linked stylistically but not because they represent Jake “opening up” around men. The comma placement seeks to represent the reality of movement. Each comma marks a pause where the movement of taxi changes, either in direction or location, stylistically drawing attention to the taxi’s movement through the streets.

These longer sentences represent one of Hemingway's styles: writing like Cezanne painted. This style will be further explored within the following section focusing on Hemingway's styles. For the purpose of this example, it is important to know that the stylistic choices made were a result of Hemingway's experimentation with representing movement. Hemingway's desire to write like Cezanne painted might still be used to support old arguments that Jake's language is always "hardboiled" when he describes Brett. The argument might follow that when Jake is describing the scenery, he is not thinking of Brett, so the sentences are longer. Again, there is evidence to the contrary: Jake uses long sentences to describe Brett and his interactions with Brett. Hemingway simply does not use only short declarative sentences in scenes between men and women. After Jake describes the scenery from the window, his attention turns to Brett:

She was looking into my eyes with that way she had of looking that made you wonder whether she really saw out of her own eyes. They would look on and on after every one else's eyes in the world would have stopped looking. She looked as though there were nothing on earth she would not look at like that, and really she was afraid of so many things. (34)

Not only do these three sentences not fit the short "masculine" stereotype, but they also show Jake thinking about Brett's perspective. Jake not only finds Brett beautiful, but cares about her interiority. Jake's comfort with a situation depends on many complex factors, not simply whether he is in the country with Bill or the city with Brett. Debunking the idea of Hemingway's one masculine style is only the first step in understanding the importance of the intersections between style and content in *Sun*. The following two sections will outline Hemingway's styles as well as the historical changes his novel represents.

II. Styles

This section will begin by defining style, explore the Modernist impulse to create new experimental forms of writing, and then move to the specific styles Hemingway developed and used in *The Sun Also Rises*. Katie Wales defines style in *A Dictionary of Stylistics* as, “at its simplest, style refers to the perceived distinctive manner of expression in writing” (397). For the purposes of this thesis, literary style will not refer primarily to the details of Hemingway’s diction and syntax but rather to the broader “manners of expression” that characterize his writing, particularly his penchant for understatement, which he shares with many other modernist writers. In Hemingway’s case, this attraction to understatement led to his development of the Iceberg Theory, the idea that the linguistic surface of a text should carry with it ideas, attitudes, and other implications that are all the more powerful for not being explicitly expressed.

Modernist experimentation resulted from a desire to create new styles to represent new content. As Pericles Lewis notes in *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*, “The modernist crisis of representation was two-fold: a crisis in what could be represented and a crisis in how it should be represented, or in other words a crisis in both the content and the form of artistic representation” (2). Modernists like Hemingway experimented with how to represent new content. “The modernists sought to make art that was radically different from the art of earlier periods” (Lewis 3). The emphasis on newness and experimentation led Hemingway, as a modernist, to invent his own set of styles. “Modernism differs from the earlier movement [Romanticism] in its emphasis on the need continually to reinvent the

means of representation” (Lewis 8). Hemingway, as modernist, continually reinvented his styles, even within an individual work like *Sun*. Multiple styles allowed him to represent complex themes like gender fluidity and shifting conceptions of sexuality. Reality, for modernists like Hemingway, was fragmented, and styles often attempted to represent this fragmentation. His styles shift and implement multiple literary devices to represent reality. “For them, the task of the artist was not to discover a preexistent meaning, but to create a new meaning out of the chaos and anarchy of actual modern life” (Lewis 8). Hemingway’s Iceberg Theory, his theory of omission, sometimes represented this fragmentation. The Iceberg Theory, however, often expresses more than fragmentation. It is Hemingway’s theory that a text may express ideas more powerfully through understatement:

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. (*On Writing* 77)

There are many reasons a writer, or in the case of *The Sun Also Rises*, a narrator might omit things. Things may be omitted because they are unspeakable, things a character is unwilling or unable to express. Things may be omitted because they are unknown, or will be revealed later. Omission may also be used to avoid diminishing the significance of a scene by explanation or sentimentality. Omission may occur in dialogue where both characters share knowledge of something their conversation only alludes to but neither character explicitly states. Omission can be

mimetic; what is omitted represents what would be omitted in reality, as in the example of dialogue. As Carl P. Eby explains in “Literary Movements”:

[Hemingway] broke new ground in a quintessentially modernist direction, compressing dialogue by removing or masking authorial guidance, forcing his readers to interpret for themselves shades of meaning resulting from indirection, repetition, omission, juxtaposition, objective correlatives, and referential ambiguity. (Eby 175)

As noted by Eby, the theory of omission is created with many devices, “indirection, repetition, omission, juxtaposition, objective correlatives, and referential ambiguity,” as well as symbols, foreshadowing, allusions and irony. Hemingway uses many literary devices to convey his messages and create his fluidity of styles. “These techniques of foreshadowing, imagistic symbol, and irony reveal literary skill far beyond the reportorial” (Cohen 111). The theory of omission is complex, and like all of *Sun*, uses multiple techniques. As Milton Cohen notes in *Styles*:

Hemingway’s style has often been stereotyped and lampooned as merely a sequence of simple sentences. While he did use more simple sentences than any other writer, it is important to recognize *how* he used not only simple, but compound, complex, and fragmented sentences in his early prose to achieve particular effects. (*On Writing* 111)

Hemingway also uses complex relationships between author and narrator to achieve particular effects. Jake, as a character narrator, is reporting. Jake himself is unaware of the consequences of his narration on his audience while Hemingway is aware. In these cases, Hemingway is intentionally making choices to reveal more than Jake may wish to. There are moments when Jake omits because Jake wants the reader to feel a certain way, but Hemingway uses Jake’s narration to make the reader feel a different way. There is an important distinction between Jake the

narrator and Hemingway the author. Hemingway reveals things Jake wishes to omit with multiple styles that work with multiple relationships between author and narrator. Sometimes what Jake and Hemingway want to reveal to the reader through omission is the same theme or content, while other times, the line between character narrator and author is very clear. During these times Jake may wish to impart one thing, and Hemingway might ironically impart the opposite. Hemingway has control of the entire world of the novel while Jake has only his own limited expression.

In some scenes, the complexity comes from details closer to the text. In his effort to write like Cezanne painted, Hemingway used a variety of compound, complex sentences meant to invoke an impressionist representation of movement. Hemingway created this new style to represent reality in a new way, like Cezanne created new styles in his impressionist paintings. Cezanne created movement by distorting lines and depths in his paintings, never allowing the eye of the viewer to rest logically in any one space on the painting. The dimensions were composed of broken lines to create an impression of the scene. Just as Cezanne's impressionist paintings created movement over his landscapes, thus evoking the impression of passing scenery, so Hemingway wrote to create movement. The impulse is mimetic, an attempt to represent reality, and experimental. In one of his *Nick Adams Stories*, Hemingway explains this style through his narrator Nick.

He [Cezanne] started with all the tricks. Then he broke the whole thing down and built the real thing. It was hell to do. He was the greatest. [...] You had to do it from inside yourself. There wasn't any trick. Nobody had ever written about the country like that. He [Nick] almost felt holy about it. It was deadly serious. You could do it if you could fight it out. If you'd lived it right with your eyes. (37)

Wanting to write like Cezanne painted shows Hemingway's desire to write truly without any tricks. As Hemingway said, "good writing is true writing" (*On Writing* 10). As a modernist, Hemingway believed in writing truthfully, even when this truth might be viewed as offensive. In *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway shows his characters' flaws as well as their strengths. Hemingway explained, "The chief criticism [of *Sun*] seems to be that the people are so unattractive [...] I wonder how these thoroughly attractive people [critics] hangout and how they behave when they're drunk and what do *they* think about at nights" (*On Writing* 137). Modernists, like Hemingway, often experimented with morally ambiguous characters. As Jeff Wallace notes in *Beginning Modernism*, "Those artists [modernists] who broke the conventions of traditional art were often also interested in breaking the conventions of traditional morality" (29). Hemingway shows moral ambiguity in his characters to better represent reality.

Hemingway wrote to create an experience of reality. Besides the Iceberg Theory and writing like Cezanne painted, Hemingway also wrote scenes and sentences specifically designed to capture an immediate experience. "Modernist writers, in particular, emphasized the attempt to capture immediate experience" (Lewis 7). Hemingway explains how to invoke an emotion by describing action, "Find what gave you the emotion; what the action was that gave you the excitement. Then write it down making it clear so the reader will see it too and have the same feeling that you had" (*On Writing* 30). This technique is another way Hemingway shows rather than tells. Hemingway makes crucial use of this technique in the bullfighting scenes at the end of *Sun*:

The dampened, mud-weighted cape swung open and full as a sail fills, and Romero pivoted with it just ahead of the bull. At the end of the pass they were facing each other again. Romero smiled. The bull wanted it again, and Romero's cape filled again, this time on the other side. Each time he let the bull pass so close that the man and the bull were all one sharply etched mass (221).

The styles used during the bullfighting scenes will be examined later as an example of the interaction between style and shifting sexualities. Momentarily disregarding its intersection with sexuality, however, the passage shows Hemingway's engagement with creating immediate experience and a spectrum of styles that go beyond omission. Like the scenery descriptions, the description of the action creates the feeling of movement, the motion of the bullfight. By describing each step of the movement, separated by commas to make each action flow, and by using very specific and imagistic verbs, such as "swung open and full as a sail fills" and "pivoted," Hemingway creates movement. Hemingway also juxtaposes short and long sentences to create movement. Placing "Romero smiled" between the two long sentences, Hemingway creates a mimetic pause in the movement. Romero stops between the bull's passes and the pace of the language pauses with him.

The scene, however, not only shows motion but other complex techniques. At one point, the scene seems to stop completely. The motion builds to an image. "Each time he let the bull pass so close that the man and the bull were all one sharply etched mass" (221). The action slows down so completely, that man and bull are frozen into one image, the sharply etched mass. The sentence, "The bull wanted it again," connects the metaphor. The passage even opens with the simile, "swung open and full as a sail fills." The uses of pronouns also work in interesting ways. Romero goes from "Romero," to "he," to "the man," emphasizing the abstract nature

of the final image. Romero and the bull become “they” in the second sentence, break apart again into Romero and the bull and then become the conjoined image. There is a lot going on in this passage, more than simple omission, but rather a spectrum of techniques. The action is described in a way that creates an intended emotional response. As Hemingway explained:

I was trying to write, then I found the greatest difficulty, aside from knowing truly what you really felt, rather than what you were supposed to feel, and had been taught to feel, was to put down what really happened in action; what the actual things were which produced the emotion that you experienced. (*On Writing* 29)

Hemingway’s styles are thus mimetic, and also fluid to express different ideas.

Different styles portray different content, but Hemingway uses all of his styles to try to truly capture life:

I’m trying in all my stories to get the feeling of the actual life across—not to just depict life—or criticize it—but to actually make it alive. So that when you have read something by me you actually experience the thing. You can’t do this without putting in the bad and the ugly as well as what is beautiful. Because if it is all beautiful you can’t believe in it. Things aren’t that way. (*On Writing* 33)

Hemingway never could have represented reality, at least not as truthfully as he endeavored to, with one singular style. He also never would have invented new styles and forms to express new content if he were not interested in expressing the new content truly. When representing something as complex as historically changing conceptions of gender and sexuality, a project Hemingway takes on in *Sun*, writing truly means showing all sides of the issues. Hemingway includes lingering contradictions and insecurities during this time of change. In *Sun*, Hemingway is not interested in stereotypical male and female characters, but characters realistically struggling with major social changes.

Hemingway's represented complex themes like major social changes with his theory of omission more strongly by not explicitly expressing them. Omission is often meant to evoke more emotion, not less. As Eby notes, "Hemingway painted the *thing* that produced the emotion, not to represent the thing, but to produce that *emotion*" (177). Even when Hemingway has Jake express himself in terse, supposedly simple, sentences, the sentences actually show complex emotion. When Jake is in the city with Brett, his short sentences sometimes hide deeper emotion than when he explicitly states things in longer sentences. For example, when Jake and Brett are alone in his room and she has rejected his offer to go away together, he simply describes his actions, "I sat up, leaned over, found my shoes beside the bed and put them on. I stood up" (63). Hemingway then reveals Jake's emotions by including what Brett says in response, "Don't look like that, darling" (63). In this scene, Jake's short detached sentences are an attempt to create distance from the deep emotion he is feeling and yet they actually convey the depth of that emotion.

III. History

This section will outline the important historical shifts in gender roles and perceptions of sexuality that occurred in the early twentieth century. As Gail Bederman notes in *Manliness and Civilization*, "gender— whether manhood or womanhood— is a historical, ideological process. Through that process, individuals are positioned and position themselves as men or women" (7). These historical shifts Hemingway experienced himself as well, as recorded in his fiction. In 1925, Hemingway began writing *Sun*, a novel influenced by the changing gender roles and sexualities he witnessed especially in 1920s Paris. The early twentieth century was

a time of great social change in Western society, perhaps even more so in Paris.

Hemingway's experimentation with styles seeks to represent the diverse sexualities he encountered there. In "Hemingway, Gender Identity, and the 'Paris 1922' Apprenticeship," Patrick Blair Bonds describes the connection between Hemingway's writing and changing gender roles in 1920s Paris, "In France, some of the most visible post-war change was in the sex/gender system. For French men, the horrors of trench warfare damaged the masculine ideal of the autonomous, heroic warrior, while the performance of "male" civilian jobs by women challenged traditional ideas of femininity" (3).

In American and English society, Women's roles and men's roles were changing, and changes in each gender classification affected the other. The social, political, and economic gains made by women during the first wave of feminism (1859-1920s) threatened male privilege. So, women engaging in the workforce challenged not just traditional ideas of femininity, but traditional ideas of masculinity. Upper- and middle-class white women were no longer confined to the domestic sphere. This threatened men's role as the sole "breadwinner," and the power created by this role. Women also participated in WWI as field nurses on the front lines. As Beth Linker notes in *War's Waste*, "Such an interaction between the sexes would have been virtually unthinkable in the century leading up to the First World War" (62). In England all women over twenty-one years old were given the right to vote in 1928. The federal amendment giving U.S. women the right to vote passed in 1920; and the feminist, educated, independent career woman, also known as "the New Woman," was a prominent figure in early twentieth-century America

and Europe. As Wendy Martin notes in “Brett Ashley as New Woman in *The Sun Also Rises*”:

No longer did she [the New Woman] define herself as a domestic being; openly rebelling against nineteenth-century bourgeois priorities, the new woman rejected traditional feminine ideals of purity, piety, and submission. Instead she insisted on reproductive freedom, self-expression, and a voice in public life. In short, the new woman rebelled against patriarchal marriage and, protesting against a social order that was rooted in female biology, she refused to play the role of the ethereal other. Since her demand for personal fulfillment suggested a need for new emotional arrangements, they were seen as threatening the social order. (50)

Men sometimes responded to the threat of the “New Woman” with hyper-masculinity. As Bederman notes, “between 1890 and 1917... white middle-class men actively worked to reinforce male power” (5). Fraternal clubs, outdoor sports, boxing, and other conceptions of extreme “masculinity” became popular. Jake, as an American, has a deep interest in such masculine pursuits, as seen in his fascination with bullfights, boxing, and fishing. As Bederman also notes, however, “Facing a variety of challenges to traditional ways of understanding male bodies, male identities, and male authority, middle-class men adopted a variety of strategies in order to remake manhood” (16). Men also became more involved in the domestic sphere, believing only fathers raised “masculine” sons. As Michael Kimmel notes in *Manhood in America*:

Freudian ideas had made parental participation in child rearing a requirement of healthy gender development and appropriate sexual development. If a boy’s behavior was feminine or a young girl’s behavior was masculine, it was a sure sign that something had gone wrong in the child’s psycho-sexual development, and it was feared homosexuality might be the result. (201-202)

Men’s roles also changed as a result of WWI. Rehabilitation programs and propaganda emphasized recovery. Unlike previous U.S. wars, men were given no

pension, but expected to prove their masculinity by returning to the workforce, or even the war. The idea of total recovery was further emphasized by propaganda featuring prosthetic limbs. "Artificial limbs allowed caregivers and society as a whole to engage in the illusion that the human ravages of war could be erased with a technological fix" (Linker 7). For men like Jake, men who were permanently wounded, rehabilitation propaganda further damaged their masculinity. Even as a permanently wounded veteran, however, Jake is still able to participate in attempting to regain masculinity through other rehabilitation propaganda, propaganda that associated masculinity with earning wages. "Rehabilitation was thus a way to restore social order after the chaos of war by remaking men into producers of capital" (Linker 4). Jake's focus on his wage-earning job can be read as a way for him to compensate for the loss of masculinity that his genital injury symbolized.

The "New Woman" also faced challenges in response to the association between masculinity and wage earning, challenges like the need to achieve financial independence. As Wendy Martin notes, "If Brett has gained a measure of freedom in leaving the traditional household, she is still very much dependent on men, who provide an arena in which she can be attractive and socially active as well as financially secure" (52). Yes, Brett is free to smoke in cafés, wear her hair short, and have various affairs, but she is still confined by gender roles. Brett must be dependent on her various husbands and lovers for money. Brett seems to have no "career" after the war besides drinking in Paris cafes and having multiple affairs.

Backlash against sexual liberation also hurt the progress of women as well. A rise of venereal disease among soldiers created chastity campaigns. “[T]he War Department.... mounted a widespread antivenereal disease campaign, a large component of which was to socialize soldiers to associate masculinity with sexual purity and abstinence” (Linker 69). Women like Brett, who worked as a field nurse during the war, were sometimes stigmatized as threats to male purity: “To administer a light touch, ‘feel good’ massage would have endangered their professional reputation (they might have been mistaken for prostitutes) while also undermining the process of remasculinization” (Linker 6). English, and other European or American, women like Brett gained sexual freedom during this period of transition, but still faced persecution for their open sexuality. “Wartime culture shock... and its crackdown on women thought to be involved in sexual vice” created challenges to changing gender roles (Linker 32).

World War I was a time of great change in both male and female gender roles. “The blending of polarized spheres that traditionally separated the lives of women and men was, in part, the result of the centrifugal swirl of events following World War I” (Martin 47). The 1920s, in some ways, were a major turning point, as Lynn Dumenil explains in *Modern Temper*:

The war’s timing encouraged contemporaries and historians to see a sharp break between prewar and postwar America. Moreover, it contributed to a sense that the war had been causal in transforming American culture and intellectual life by bringing about the alienated, lost generation of intellectuals, creating the new woman, and pushing Americans into hedonism. Recent scholarship has challenged this vision; social historians in particular made it increasingly clear that many of the changes so evident in the 1920s predated the war. (3)

Thus, although World War I was a turning point, it is important to note that changes in traditional gender and sexuality predated the war. Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and Havelock Ellis challenged traditional conceptions of gender and sexuality before the war. Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* on 24 November 1859. His scientific theories of evolution challenged traditional ideas of creationism. This challenged the Bible and some popular beliefs. As a result, conceptions of gender binaries and strict sexualities supported by some religions were also called into question. Around the turn of the 20th century, Freud and Ellis published works studying human sexuality. They both discussed homosexuality and what we would now call “transgender” psychology, and introduced sexual concepts such as autoeroticism. Ellis and other sexologists posited that women’s sexual drive was as strong as men’s, a big change from how women were seen previously. Male and female roles were thus already changing during the turn of the century, and continued to change after World War I.

IV.

The Bal Musette, Omission and Sexuality

This section will demonstrate how Hemingway’s theory of omission shows anxieties around gender and sexuality during the transitional 1920s. An early scene, often cited by critics for its engagement with homosexuality, shows how this style functions in service of the content. The scene begins, at Chapter III, with Jake picking up a prostitute named Georgette “because of the vague sentimental idea that it would be nice to eat with some one” (*Sun* 24). Through their dialogue, Hemingway’s application of his theory of omission expresses Jake and Georgette’s anxieties with changing sexualities after the war. Georgette tries to touch Jake, and the gesture

leads to a conversation about his genital wound and the idea of “sickness” in post World War I Paris:

She cuddled against me and I put my arm around her. She looked up to be kissed. She touched me with one hand and I put her hand away.
 “Nevermind.”
 “What’s the matter? You sick?”
 “Yes.”
 “Everybody’s sick. I’m sick too.” (23)

Later in the scene, Georgette shows her yellow card, proving she has no venereal diseases. The characters’ allusion to “sickness” is an example of the Iceberg Theory. The sickness the characters are really discussing, anxieties about post-WWI society and its social changes, is not stated directly. Georgette believes Jake is talking about existential wounding when he says he is sick, but Jake is also talking about his sexual injury.

Jake is struggling to cope not only with the war, but also with his own place in this more sexualized world. His insecurities become apparent in the “bal musette” scene. Once he and Georgette arrive at the café, Brett arrives with a group of homosexual men and Jake has a strong negative reaction. “I was very angry. Somehow they always made me very angry. I know they were supposed to be amusing, and you should be tolerant, but I wanted to swing on one, any one, anything to shatter that superior, simpering composure” (28). His anger might be due to his inability to navigate sexually liberated Paris, unlike the homosexual men. The men seem to be comfortable with their sexuality while Jake is uncomfortable with his own.

Jake describes the homosexual men in detail, but he says very little about himself. Jake tries to omit his real reaction, but Hemingway reveals Jake’s emotions

through employing his theory of omission. When Jake describes his reaction, his language is repetitive and lacks description. He is “very angry.” Jake, however, uses a long sentence with modifiers, “superior” and “simpling,” to describe the men. The language draws attention to Jake’s assumptions about the men. He gives his opinion of the men but omits details about his own character. Hemingway, not Jake, uses this style to reveal Jake’s insecurities with both sexually liberated Paris and the homosexual men.

Jake’s reactions to shifting sexualities are further explored in the *bal musette scene* by the introduction of Lady Brett Ashley. Jake and Brett’s relationship is essential to understanding the ways Hemingway creates new styles in *Sun* to express both male and female reactions to post-WWI social changes. When Brett arrives, Jake describes the arrival of the homosexual men and then says, “With them was Brett. She looked very lovely and she was very much with them” (28). A few lines later, he repeats himself, “And with them was Brett” (28). This repetition reveals Jake’s strong, though omitted, emotional response to Brett’s arrival.

By having Jake repeat that Brett arrives specifically with the group of homosexual men, Hemingway further reveals Jake’s insecurities. Jake is possibly envious of the homosexual men because they have the physical ability to have sex with Brett, but not the desire. Jake sees irony in this pairing, because he sees irony in his own relationship with Brett. He is in love with her, but because his war wound has rendered him impotent, he is unable to traditionally consummate their relationship. Irony is another style used in the scene; Brett and the group of homosexual men are juxtaposed to Jake and the prostitute. When Jake and Brett

leave the bar together, Georgette stays with the homosexual men. Jake and Brett are compared to the female prostitute with the homosexual men. The irony is clear; neither relationship will be consummated that night.

Hemingway uses this juxtaposition to reveal both Jake's and Brett's insecurities with their relationship, insecurities lingering under the surface of their conversation when they leave the bar and get into a taxi. As they enter the cab, the idea of "sickness" is already present without being mentioned, because of the similarity of the scene to the earlier taxi scene with Jake and Georgette. Jake and Brett get in a cab and Brett says, "Oh, darling, I've been so miserable" (32). The theory of omission expresses that Brett is miserable because of this "sickness." She is wounded by the war and her own inability to cope with Jake's wound. Jake tries to touch Brett and she moves away:

The street was dark again and I kissed her. Our lips were tight together and then she turned away and pressed against the corner of the seat, as far away as she could get. Her head was down.
 "Don't touch me," she said. "Please don't touch me."
 "What's the matter?"
 "I can't stand it." (*Sun* 33)

Brett moves away from Jake because of her own anxieties with his wound. Brett, as a "New Woman," has sexual freedom, but is unable to give up this sexual freedom to be with Jake. Their relationship threatens her sexual freedom because Jake wants a more traditional relationship, a committed relationship and Brett is unable to make a commitment to him. Jake and Brett also seem to be unable to successfully engage in sexual alternatives to Jake's wound. The following conversation makes clear Jake and Brett have tried sexual alternatives and they have failed:

Brett: "I simply turn all to jelly when you touch me."

Jake: "Isn't there anything we can do about it?"

Jake: "And there's not a damn thing we could do."

Brett: "I don't know. I don't want to go through that hell again." (*Sun* 34)

When Brett says a few lines earlier that she "can't stand it," the "it" has many meanings. It not only refers to Jake's wound and the post World War I existential "sickness," but also to Brett and Jake's failed sexual relationship. Whether these attempts were a physical or emotional failure is unclear; however, it is clear both characters were left unhappy. The use of the pronoun "it" is another important technique of the theory of omission: Hemingway chooses every single word very carefully. As explained in his own words: "I never use a word without first considering if it is replaceable" (*On Writing* 83). "It" is chosen because "it" is vague and able to articulate a great deal while keeping the dialogue believable as a natural conversation.

The intersection of style and content in their dialogue expresses each character's anxieties with 1920s transitioning sexuality. Both characters evade directly talking about Jake's impotence. Here, Hemingway has Jake sometimes speak in short sentences not because he is extremely masculine, but because he is uncomfortable speaking at length about his wound. Brett too is unable to directly address his wound. Thus, Hemingway also explores Brett's perspective of shifting sexualities. Brett is a "New Woman" with sexual freedom who navigates the public sphere, but is unwilling to give up her sexual freedom to engage in a sexless, domestic relationship with Jake.

Hemingway uses the theory of omission to show that Brett's desire for freedom is sometimes unattainable for a woman in the 1920s. Her desire for

freedom is omitted directly, but revealed in the *bal musette* scene by repeated looks. In the novel, men often look at Brett while Brett looks at nothing or into the darkness, desiring freedom she is not yet able to see. Brett wants freedom from traditional gender expectations and binaries. She looks at nothing because she is unable to imagine what a world might look like free from these gender expectations. Though she may be looking for utopia, Brett continues to search for what she wants. Hemingway sometimes shows her desire through Jake's narration with concrete details. Brett desires, in part, freedom from the repeated objectifying looks of the male characters. When Brett arrives, Jake notes she, "looks very lovely," and then explains the way other men look at her. Jake describes the way Robert Cohn looks at Brett, for example, as "eager" and "deserving." The repetition of looks reveals Brett is highly sexually desired among the group of men at the *bal musette*.

In scenes where Jake and Brett are alone, Hemingway repeats their exchange of looks to show each character's tensions with the transitional challenges to their relationship. As Jake and Brett leave the *bal musette* and search for the taxi, both characters look at one another. "We stood against the tall zinc bar and did not talk and looked at each other" (*Sun* 32). This early scene reveals both characters' desire for one another. When Jake and Brett get into the cab, they continue to look at one another. "She had been looking into my eyes all that time. Her eyes had different depths, sometimes they seemed perfectly flat. Now you could see all the way into them" (*Sun* 34). Hemingway uses descriptions of Brett's eyes to allow Jake to report a physical detail while still revealing her interiority. Brett's eyes often appear flat after moments of disillusionment because of her position in society as a woman or

her feelings about Jake's war wound. For example, when Jake tries to make a joke about his wound her eyes appear flat:

"It's funny," I said. "It's very funny. And it's a lot of fun, too, to be in love."
 "Do you think so?" her eyes looked flat again.
 "I don't mean it that way. In a way it's an enjoyable feeling."
 "No," she said. "I think it's hell on earth." (*Sun* 35)

Jake repeatedly looks at Brett, showing his desire for her, while Brett looks away, showing her desire for freedom. An important example occurs later in the novel, after Brett's fiancé Mike Campbell, and Robert Cohn, with whom she had an affair, get into a nasty argument over her. Brett leaves to be alone with Jake. Once alone, she repeats a similar sentiment to Jake as earlier in the novel, "You're the only person I've got, and I feel rather awful to-night" (185). Once alone with Brett, Jake makes an important observation: "Brett was nervous as I had never seen her before. She kept looking away from me and looking ahead at the wall" (185). He then repeats this observation, "We sat and looked out. Brett stared straight ahead. Suddenly she shivered" (187). Brett looks ahead into the darkness because she desires a future not yet attainable for her, a future where she is not a sexual object and is able to pursue what she wants without the backlash of the double standard.

Brett has escaped traditional marriage and domesticity but still faces other limitations. "Related to the unequal status of marriage was the sexual double standard which treated lack of chastity in a woman as a serious offense whereas in men it attracted far less censure" (Lewis 30). Jake seems to have a more traditional desire than Brett, wanting to live with Brett or to go away with Brett to the country. Brett wants to progress away from confining gender roles and damaging images of female sexuality. Hemingway expresses Brett's desire for freedom and her position

as a woman with his theory of omission. Brett is sometimes unable to express exactly what she wants because the options are not yet there for her. This scene shows how the Iceberg Theory is able to express complex themes like changes in perceptions of sexuality more strongly through careful use of omission.

V.

Jake's Nightmares, Gender Roles and Stream of Consciousness

This section will show how stream of consciousness and Jake's thoughts express both his anxieties with his "sickness" and his consideration of Brett's female perspective. Though Jake is a limited first-person narrator, his thoughts reveal insight into both his and Brett's position in society. Stream of consciousness, another important experimental Modernist device, is a mimetic representation of a character's thoughts. Hemingway uses this device to delve into the thoughts Jake tries to repress or omit during the day. Hemingway thus expresses Jake's insecurities with his place in a more sexualized society. Jake's stream of consciousness happens at night when insomnia causes him to think about his wound, "There is no reason why because it is dark you should look at things differently from when it is light. The hell there isn't!" (*Sun* 151). Jake still omits some emotions, often coming to the edge of a strong emotion and then veering off. In these cases, Hemingway still uses what is omitted to betray Jake's stronger emotions. Stream of consciousness expresses the thoughts Jake usually tries to omit and, in this way, sometimes even acts as an opposite to the impulse of omission.

Jake's thoughts reveal his interiority even when he tries to omit. Early in the novel, Jake leaves Brett, returns home alone and looks at his mail. He describes his mail, a bank statement and the wedding announcement of a couple he has never

met. Jake's simple descriptions begin to reveal his hidden thoughts. He begins by numerically listing his bank balance, inadvertently alluding to the value he places in capital as a way of reclaiming masculinity. He then tries to make fun of the last name of the couple from the wedding announcement, but his thoughts spiral and reveal his tensions with masculinity and traditional gender roles. He thinks very emotionally about Brett, "To hell with Brett. To hell with you, Lady Ashley," then returns to simple description of action (36). Thoughts of his wound, however, become impossible to repress until he finds himself looking at his wound in his mirror:

Outside a night train, running on the street-car tracks, went by carrying vegetables to the markets. They were noisy at night when you could not sleep. Undressing, I looked at myself in the mirror of the big armoire beside the bed. That was a typically French way to furnish a room. Practical, too, I suppose. Of all the ways to be wounded. I suppose it was funny. (*Sun* 38)

The pattern of his thoughts shows how Jake tries to repress thoughts of his wound by simple description, the French armoire, and dismiss it as a joke. He fails in both attempts to dismiss his insecurities, however, thinking of his wound again a few lines later, "My head started to work. The old grievance. Well, it was a rotten way to be wounded and flying a joke front like the Italian" (*Sun* 38). Jake tries to dismiss his wound again, and the war that caused it, by calling his wound "rotten" and the Italian front a "joke." Jake continues to think about his wound, however, and his thoughts lead him to Brett:

I never used to realize it, I guess. I try and play it along and just not make trouble for people. Probably I never would have had any trouble if I hadn't run into Brett when they shipped me to England. I suppose she only wanted what she couldn't have. Well, people were that way. To hell with people. (39)

Hemingway uses stream of consciousness to show Jake is not really always hardboiled or a masculine stereotype. Jake tries but fails to remain unemotional. The theory of omission, however, still expresses omitted notions. Jake's idea that Brett is somehow to blame for his trouble with his wound reveals his insecurities, not Brett's culpability. Unlike some older critics, however, Jake's thoughts lead him to realize Brett is not to blame for his "sickness." His feelings for Brett sometimes, though only momentarily, put his mind at ease. "I lay awake thinking and my mind jumping around. Then I couldn't keep away from it, and I started to think about Brett and all the rest went away. I was thinking of Brett and my mind stopped jumping around and started to go in sort of smooth waves. Then all of a sudden I started to cry" (*Sun* 39).

For at least a moment, thinking about Brett seems to ease Jake's mind before he breaks down and cries. Jake thinks about more, however, than his own problems with gender roles and sexuality. He also considers how gender roles affect Brett. Jake thinks not only about his feelings for Brett, but also about her side of their romance. In doing so, he considers her position in society as a woman. The style of his narration, and his thoughts, are not stereotypically masculine. The sentences are sometimes long and flow together to represent his thoughts.

Later in the novel, Jake again goes to his room alone and is unable to sleep. His thoughts begin to race, and he thinks about his insomnia and Brett. "I figured that all out once, and for six months I never slept with the electric light off. That was another bright idea. To hell with women, anyway. To hell with you, Brett Ashley" (152). The anger he directs at Brett, and women, might seem to support hyper-

masculine readings of Jake. Hemingway uses this negative outburst, however, to show a man struggling with traditional gender expectations and masculinity. He tries to dismiss Brett, but reveals his emotions. He is a man with a desire that a woman, in this case Brett, will not fulfill. He is vulnerable but pushing Brett away at the same time. Jake, unlike some early critics of the novel, understands Brett is more than a destructive force. Jake considers her female perspective:

I had been having Brett for a friend. I had not been thinking of her side of it. I had been getting something for nothing. That only delayed the presentation of the bill. The bill always came. That was one of the swell things you could count on. I thought I had paid for everything. Not like the woman pays and pays. No idea of retribution or punishment. (152)

Hemingway uses stream of consciousness to show both Jake's and Brett's problems with male and female gender roles. Hemingway uses this device to allow Jake to express more progressive ideas. Hemingway includes moments like this, as well as moments like Jake's stilted narration of the homosexual men, to show a character in transition. Though Jake sometimes demonstrates lingering prejudices, he also tries to understand and accept progress. Jake is starting to see the problematic nature of gender roles. The style of his narration is not, in these moments, stereotypically masculine, as old readings have argued, for example, Michael Kimmel's claim that in *Sun*, "In a hard-boiled, lean, and muscular prose Hemingway searches among the shards of European culture for a lost American manhood" (Kimmel 214). The prose, like Jake, is not stereotypically masculine, but fluid to express the transitory nature of the content. Stream of consciousness here is a new Modernist technique used to express new content.

VI. Ritual, Mythical Allusion and Woman as Symbol

This section will show how Hemingway uses the devices of allusion and symbols to express the importance of not seeing female characters as a stereotype. Older readings of women in Hemingway's work have placed female characters into one of two archetypes: "bitch-goddesses" and "Fair Lady" (Fiedler 92-93). Brett Ashley, in these readings, is an archetype of the "bitch-goddess" stereotype. This reading, critical of Hemingway's supposedly sexist portrayal of Brett, ignores evidence to the contrary. Hemingway does allude to Brett as a destructive goddess in *Sun*, but he uses the allusions to problematize the act of reducing women to a stereotype.

Hemingway makes Brett a symbol in a scene at the San Fermin Festival to symbolically represent her limited place in society and her desire for further autonomy. Brett is reduced to a symbol of female beauty by male dancers within a traditional dance:

Some dancers formed a circle around Brett and started to dance. They wore big wreaths of white garlic around their necks. They took Bill and me by the arms and put us in the circle. Bill started to dance, too. They were all chanting. Brett wanted to dance but they did not want her to. They wanted her as an image to dance around. (159)

Hemingway has Jake report this scene to show the problem with reducing women to a fixed symbol. Brett tries to actively participate in the dance, but the men force her to stand still and stay a symbol. The scene shows Brett's desire for more autonomy and freedom to navigate the public sphere. Hemingway draws attention to Brett's limited place in society to acknowledge that confining female gender roles are a problem.

Hemingway also expresses the problematic nature of reducing women to a symbol with his character, Robert Cohn. Hemingway reveals Cohn's outdated perceptions of femininity by having Cohn misuse a mythical allusion in a way that labels Brett as a destructive woman. Cohn's relationship with Brett further shows the problems with limiting women's progress and shows insight into men struggling to cope with changes in masculinity. Cohn desires traditional codes of romance. His romantic desire to be a chivalric knight, however, is outdated and sexist.

Hemingway uses Cohn's brief affair with Brett to further reveal important changes in conceptions of sex and gender. Cohn refuses to believe his weekend with Brett was no more than a fling to her. His outdated perceptions of gender roles and romance lead him to see Brett as an object in need of saving, a damsel in distress.

Hemingway implements the theory of omission to hint at Cohn's misinterpretation of Brett when Cohn first sees her. "She stood holding a glass and I saw Robert Cohn looking at her. He looked a great deal as his compatriot must have looked when he saw the promised land. Cohn, of course, was much younger. But he had that look of eager, deserving expectation" (29). Jake calls Cohn's look both "eager" and "deserving." The Biblical allusion also hints at Cohn's impulse toward over romanticizing Brett. Jake compares Cohn's look to Moses seeing the Promised Land, a look dramatically loaded with significance. Here, Jake's language is not stripped down, but rather adds flourish while being critical of Cohn for this very reason. Jake's language, in this case, reveals the deep association with Cohn. Jake later admits to being insanely jealous of Cohn after Cohn's brief affair with Brett. Cohn's affair with Brett shows Jake that he is like Cohn and his idealized love of

Brett is an antiquated idea. Cohn wants to save her without understanding that Brett has no desire be “saved,” outwardly rejecting her sexual freedom. He sees Brett only once, but he tells Jake, “I shouldn’t wonder if I wasn’t in love with her” (46). Hemingway uses the conversation that follows to allude to Cohn’s outdated perceptions:

Jake: “She’s in love with Mike Campbell, and she’s going to marry him. He’s going to be rich as hell some day”

Cohn: “I don’t believe she’ll ever marry him.”

Jake: “Why not?”

Cohn: “I don’t know. I just don’t believe it.” (46)

Cohn is unable to believe “it,” that Brett will marry Mike. Cohn ignores her sexual freedom and assumes she should love him in return. As the conversation continues, he repeatedly denies the possibility she would marry Mike, whom Cohn claims she does not love.

Cohn: “I don’t believe she would marry anybody she didn’t love.”

Jake: “Well, I said, “She’s done it twice.”

Cohn: “I don’t believe it.”

Jake: “Well,” I said, “don’t ask me a lot of fool questions if you don’t like the answers.” (47)

Cohn again ignores Brett’s sexual freedom. He sees her as a symbol, a beautiful woman who requires love for marriage. Hemingway expresses the failure of Cohn’s outdated conceptions of gender roles by having Cohn’s affair with Brett fail for this reason.

Later in the novel, after his affair with Brett is over, Cohn calls her Circe, alluding to the goddess who turns men to swine (*Sun* 148). The other characters in the book openly mock his use of the allusion, understanding the sexist failure of comparing Brett to Circe. Hemingway uses this device to point to the problematic

nature of reading Brett as a destructive force. Critics who see Brett as a destructive force miss the irony of this allusion within the book. These moments of mythical allusion are tied directly to Brett's position in society and are used with the theory of omission to add depth to the expression of these themes.

VII.

Bullfights, Homosexuality and Style

This section will explore how Hemingway uses new forms to show how the character Pedro Romero challenges both Jake's and Brett's conceptions of gender and sexuality. Pedro Romero, the young bullfighter, causes Jake and Brett to reconsider their own performances of gender in various ways. Jake looks at Romero like he looks at Brett in the beginning of the novel, signifying his attraction to Romero. When Jake first sees Romero, he thinks, "He was the best-looking boy I have ever seen" (167). Jake continues to look at Romero, emphasizing his attractive appearance, as Romero leaves the room:

He was standing, straight and handsome and altogether by himself, alone in the room with the hangers-on as we shut the door.
 "He's a fine boy, don't you think so?" Montoya asked.
 "He's a good looking kid," I said. (*Sun* 167)

There are homosexual undertones in Jake's admiration of Romero. As Arnold E. Davidson and Cathy N. Davidson note in "Hemingway Challenges the Heroic 'Code' in *The Sun Also Rises*," "But there is finally something suspect in the aficionados vesting so much of their own manhood in a boylike matador who, through girlish flirtation and enticement, woos a bull to its death" (64). Hemingway is able to express homosexual undertones with the theory of omission.

Hemingway also uses the theory of omission to show Brett's desire for Romero. She also instantly finds Romero attractive. Hemingway shows Brett's attraction to Romero through Jake's narration by repeatedly mentioning how Brett looks at Romero. Brett's dialogue also directly reveals that she too is admiring Romero's appearance:

Brett: "Oh, isn't he lovely," Brett said. "And those green trousers."

Mike Campbell: "Brett never took her eyes off of them."

Brett: "I say, I must borrow your glasses to-morrow." (169)

Hemingway makes clear that both Jake and Brett admire Romero's appearance and are attracted to him to some degree. Each character seems to desire something with Romero that is either unknown or unspeakable. Though they are drawn to him, the exact nature of either's desire is not explicitly clear. For Jake, Romero reclaims masculinity through his bullfighting but is also a "good looking kid" who Jake seems attracted to. For Brett, Romero is sexually desirable, perhaps because unlike Jake, Romero is not impotent. Both Brett and Jake, perhaps, are unsure of their desire for him.

Hemingway further complicates reactions to Romero with the style Jake uses to narrate Romero's bullfighting. Jake describes Romero as the "real thing," a bullfighter that follows the line of the bull and uses no tricks or gimmicks. Jake, as an aficionado of the bullfights, understands Romero's "pure" bullfighting. He admires this purity, something he too strives for in his profession, his writing. In many ways, Jake desires to emulate Romero by writing the way Romero performs bullfights, without tricks. Brett, too, with Jake's instruction, begins to understand and appreciate the style of Romero's bullfighting. The second time Romero performs at

Pamplona, Jake notes, “Romero was the whole show. I do not think Brett saw any other bull-fighter” (171). It is Jake’s description of Romero’s fighting technique, however, that Hemingway importantly uses to further express Jake’s attraction to Romero:

Out in the centre of the ring, all alone, Romero was going on with the same thing, getting so close that the bull could see him plainly, offering the body, offering it again a little closer, the bull watching dully, then so close that the bull thought he had him, offering again and finally drawing the charge and then, just before the horns came, giving the bull the red cloth to follow with that little, almost imperceptible, jerk that so offended the critical judgment of the Biarritz bull-fight experts. (222)

The style, the long sentences meant to evoke the movement of the bullfight, also reveals a perceived flirtation between Romero and the bull on Jake’s part. Jake describes the encounter with sexual language, as mentioned previously, “Romero smiled. The bull wanted it again” (221). Jake is attracted to Romero, at least to his bullfighting style, if not sexually. This may partially explain Jake’s earlier anger toward the group of homosexuals. Jake may have been jealous of their open homosexuality and their confidence in their own sexuality, something Jake seems to have with neither Romero nor Brett. The style of Romero’s bullfighting also evokes a feeling inside Jake that is similar to his experience thinking of Brett at night, “And each pass as it reached the summit gave you a sudden ache” (223).

In the end of the novel, and perhaps also the end of Jake and Brett’s relationship, Hemingway’s fluid styles function in service of the content where old styles would have no longer sufficed. Brett ends her affair with Romero because she refuses to comply with traditional female gender roles. Romero wanted her to grow

her hair out to appear more feminine. Brett tries to joke about this to Jake, but Hemingway uses the theory of omission to show she is clearly upset:

“It was rather a knock his being ashamed of me. He was ashamed of me for a while, you know.”

“No.”

“Oh, yes. They ragged him about me at the café, I guess. He wanted me to grow my hair out. Me, with long hair. I’d look so like hell.”

“It’s funny.”

“He said it would make me womanly. I’d look a fright.” (246)

Hemingway has Brett make a joke about her hair to show she is unable to articulate what she really wants. Her desire to escape traditional gender roles is directly omitted, the seven-eighths of the iceberg underlying the scene. Brett wants progress as a woman but is sometimes unable to escape gender roles. As Wendy Martin notes, “Brett’s freedom of choice leads to what I would call an anxiety of opportunity, and her response is regressive” (58). Brett’s sexual freedom sometimes leads her to be too dependent upon men for things like financial security.

Hemingway uses the Iceberg Theory to express Brett’s problems with gender roles by showing her try to dismiss her anxieties with jokes.

Brett attempts to mock her situation, like Jake tries to dismiss his wound, but the omitted larger theme is nonetheless expressed. Brett, like Jake, tries not to betray her cool exterior. Like Jake, she is perhaps unwilling to appear weak because of the expectations of gender binaries. If Brett appeared weak, she might fit a stereotypical perception of women as the so-called “weaker sex.” As Jake notes earlier, Brett’s confidence comes, in part, from her ability to express traditionally male conceptions of gender, “Brett was damned good looking. She wore a slipover

jersey sweater and a tweed skirt, and her hair was brushed back like a boy's. She started all that" (30).

When Romero asks Brett to grow her hair out to appear more feminine, he threatens her progress as a "New Woman." Hemingway uses this device, the symbol of Brett's short hair, to allude to her desire for autonomy. Hemingway uses Jake's narration to draw attention to this detail, "Brett was in bed. She had just been brushing her hair and held the brush in her hand" (245). Hemingway uses this symbol to represent, though not directly state, Brett's struggle with confining gender roles. He then uses Jake and Brett's dialogue to further explore Brett's role in society as a woman:

Brett: "He [Romero] wanted to marry me, finally."

Jake: "Really?"

Brett: "Of course. I can't even marry Mike."

Jake: "Maybe he thought that would make him Lord Ashley."

Brett: "No. It wasn't that. He really wanted to marry me. So I couldn't go away from him. After I'd gotten more womanly, of course." (246)

Brett jokes about marriage and appearing more "womanly," omitting how serious these problems really are for her. She is unable to marry, at least in a traditional sense of marrying her "one true love," because she would lose one of the only freedoms she has. Through her sexual freedom, Brett is able to navigate the public sphere of the café, and is not limited to the traditional Victorian domestic sphere. Marriage, at least a certain kind of marriage, is too much of a threat to the freedom she has. Because Brett is unable to directly express these desires, the theory of omission functions to represent her desire while other styles could not.

Hemingway further acknowledges Brett's lack of freedom when Jake tries to pay for her and Romero's hotel bill and Romero has already paid. "The woman who

ran the hotel would not let me pay the bill. The bill had been paid" (*Sun* 247).

Romero's paying for the bill symbolizes both his masculinity as a producer of capital and Brett's dependence on men. Romero paid, in a way, for his affair with Brett while, like the early scene where Brett is juxtaposed with the prostitute Georgette, Brett is left comparable to a prostitute. Thus, her freedom as "New Woman" is again called into question. Hemingway expresses this larger theme with details like the hotel bill and the hairbrush. After the affair, she is left in the somewhat domestic sphere of the hotel, brushing her hair and sitting in bed. Her short hair, in a way, is similar to Jake's wound because it represents a deviation from traditional gender expectations. Like Jake, this physical representation of a more emotional theme is something she fixates on when alone.

Brett and Romero's affair is an important example of changing gender roles and sexualities putting tension on a relationship, but Jake and Brett's relationship explores this theme throughout the entire novel. It is the Iceberg Theory, along with other styles, that allows Hemingway to develop this theme over the course of the novel. What is hidden under the surface builds so that the themes are able to become more complex with the same level of omission. So, the theory of omission actually more powerfully reveals insight than a supposedly more expressive style. It is not an attempt at so-called "masculine" lean prose, but a way to evoke deeper emotions. In the beginning, Jake and Brett have a conversation about traditional gender roles that begins to reveal the deeper problems in their relationship:

"Couldn't we live together, Brett? Couldn't we just live together?"

"I don't think so. I'd just *tromper* you with everybody. You couldn't stand it."

"I stand it now."

"That would be different. It's my fault, Jake. It's the way I'm made."

“Couldn’t we go off in the country for awhile?”

“It wouldn’t be any good. I’ll go if you like. But I couldn’t live quietly. Not with my one true love.” (62)

Brett’s resistance to going away with Jake is a resistance to regressing to old gender roles. Going away to the country with her ‘own true love’ is too close to traditional Victorian marriage and domesticity. Hemingway repeats the conversation a few pages later for emphasis, having a friend ask Jake and Brett why they are not married:

“Why don’t you get married, you two?”

“We want to lead our own lives,” I said.

“We have our careers,” Brett said. (68)

Hemingway uses irony to express how both characters struggle with gender roles in the early 20th century. Jake and Brett both lie in response to why they are not married. Jake does want a life with Brett; he just asked her to live with him. Brett, a “New Woman,” has no career and, despite some freedoms, is still dependent on men for money. Both characters omit the truth because they are unwilling or unable to articulate the complex reasons why they are unable to marry one another. Both characters lie because they are unable to make their relationship work amidst changing conceptions of gender roles and sexualities. They struggle with their relationship because of desires for progress and lingering anxieties. Hemingway builds these themes under the surface of *Sun*. At the end of the novel, their inability to navigate around Jake’s wound and Brett’s desire for sexual freedom, underlie the final lines of the novel:

“Oh, Jake,” Brett said, “we could have had such a damned good time together.”

Ahead was a mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me.

“Yes,” I said. “Isn’t it pretty to think so?” (251)

In the final lines, Hemingway articulates complex themes with his application of his theory of omission. He uses details, the policeman in khaki and the raised baton, as symbolic reminders of the war and Jake’s wound. The policeman’s khaki uniform symbolizes the war while the raised baton ironically symbolizes Jake’s impotence. The repetition of the setting, the taxi, recalls the earlier discussions of “sickness.” The repetition of Jake and Brett making physical contact in a taxi recalls his wound and their inability to make their relationship work. Neither Jake nor Brett directly expresses their struggle to navigate the sexual revolution happening in 1920s post-war Paris, but, because of the styles of the novel, their engagement with changing gender roles and sexualities underlies the final lines of *The Sun Also Rises*.

Hemingway implements a variety of styles by using multiple devices to build each character’s complex relationship with these changes, revealing each character to be a complex individual in the process. He invented new fluid styles to avoid making stereotypical male and female characters and to acknowledge the problems with stereotypical gender roles. The novel shows that the early twentieth century was a transitional time, a time of progress but also a time of lingering social problems. Nowhere is this made clearer than in Hemingway’s representation of the changes in conceptions of gender and sexuality. Hemingway developed new styles to truly and powerfully express these changes. In doing so, Hemingway considers both the male, as well as the female, perspective.

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