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WOMEN CHARACTERS IN HEMINGWAY'S FICTION

by

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M.S.L.S., University of Illinois, 1972



A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1978

Approved by:

Kenneth H. Johnston
Major Professor

Document

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Ernest Hemingway's fiction typically portrays the largely male-oriented world he enjoyed, the world of fishing, hunting, skiing, bull-fighting--a world of direct contact, man-to-man and man-to-nature. But just as Hemingway himself was not able to exist in a world without female companionship, neither can the men in his fiction live without contact with women. (There are a few exceptions, such as Nick in "Big Two-Hearted River" and Santiago in The Old Man and the Sea, but the exceptions usually are depicted as men-without-women for only relatively brief periods of time.) Critical comment on Hemingway's female characters has typically not been favorable. Leslie Fiedler represents an extreme: "There are," he declares, ". . . no women in [Hemingway's] books!"¹ Other critics assert that Hemingway has not done a realistic job of creating his fictional women. Critics of the biographical school cite Hemingway's basic hostility toward women as the main reason for his inability to depict female characters realistically; Aaron Latham believes that Hemingway's life and writings suggest a fascination with fantasies of sexual role-reversal and attributes this fascination to Hemingway's mother and the fact that she often dressed Ernest in girl's clothing as a child, so that he and his sister Marcelline grew up together wearing similar outfits.² Other biographical critics, while not quite so extreme, typically portray Hemingway as a man who feared, envied, resented, and/or openly hated women in general.

The dominant critical view concerning Hemingway's women is that they can be readily assigned to one of two categories: the destructive, emasculating bitches; or the simple, stylized sex objects. According to this view, the relationship that a Hemingway woman has with the men in her

life (whether they be husbands, lovers, or friends) follows naturally and predictably from her category: the bitch will destroy the male, physically or psychologically; and the sex object, the woman who exhibits primarily what have been traditionally classed as totally feminine characteristics, will live only to serve her man in every possible way.

Although the over-all critical response to Hemingway's female characters per se is essentially negative, many critics who condemn the women as a whole have particular favorites who are, of course, defended. To justify these exceptions the critics, for example, Sharon Dean, Carlos Baker, and Delbert Wylder, dwell upon the symbolic functions of the character. Dean remarks that in For Whom the Bell Tolls Maria "represents universal love more than love between two people, and becomes Hemingway's emblem for a society where no man is an island."³ Similarly, in Baker's interpretation, Catherine in A Farewell to Arms need not be a fully developed character, a realistic portrait of a true woman, because she is to him "more of an abstraction of love than a down-to-earth portrait of an actual woman in love and in pain."⁴ Wylder's reaction to Maria is a little less conventional than Dean's. He sees Maria's purpose as providing the sexual experience necessary for Robert Jordan's transformation to mythic hero. Pilar's role, as Wylder interprets it, is somewhat similar, as she acts as a "shaman who initiates a youth into a spiritual or mystical relationship."⁵

Edmund Wilson was one of the first critics to classify Hemingway's fictional women by type. Wilson categorized Hemingway's female characters as typically being either "bitches of the most soul-destroying sort" or idealized women like Maria whose relationship with Jordan "has the all-too-perfect felicity of a youthful erotic dream."⁶ Carlos Baker basically

supports Wilson's view that there are two fundamental types of Hemingway females, but he concludes that this is the result of design, of Hemingway's need to fit character to plot and style, rather than a lack of ability to portray fully-rounded persons.

Wilson's classification, with slight variations, has remained the major critical view of Hemingway females for the past thirty years. Harry Levin and John Killinger, for example, writing in 1957 and 1960, echo Wilson's classification. Declares Levin: "Hemingway's heroines, when they aren't bitches, are fantasies."⁷ Similarly, Killinger maintains that Hemingway ". . . divides his women into the good and the bad, according to the extent to which they complicate a man's life. Those who are simple, who participate in relationships with the heroes and yet leave the heroes as free as possible, receive sympathetic treatment; those who are demanding, who constrict the liberty of the heroes, who attempt to possess them, are the women men can live without."⁸

One interesting variation upon the Wilson categories is offered by Tom Burnam, who views the good Hemingway women as essentially masculine. In his article "Primitivism and Masculinity in the Work of Ernest Hemingway," Burnam divides all of Hemingway's women into two categories: the "witches" (Brett Ashley, Margot Macomber, Mrs. Elliot, and so on) and the "'good' women [who] seem really to be Hemingway men only slightly changed."⁹ He sees this second category (in which he includes Pilar and, surprisingly, Catherine Barkley and Maria) as being "masculine," that is, possessing those characteristics which our culture equates with a man's role--great courage, loyalty, aggressiveness, etc. Maria's appearance and Pilar's personality place them in this group; no explanation is given for

Catherine's being classified with them. Nor does Burnam acknowledge that Margot and Brett share some of these masculine tendencies (specifically the aggressiveness), a fact which tends to blur the line dividing his two categories.

One purpose of this paper is to show that the female characters in Hemingway's fiction cannot be easily grouped into any two categories. It can not be denied that the "bitch" and the "sex object" do exist, but the bitch has more depth than the criticism often allows. This study will also show a third type of female character that has largely been ignored, a more masculine woman who has an easy, essentially co-equal relationship with men. Hemingway's fiction, then, as this study will give evidence, features three major types of female characters--the totally feminine woman, the "bitch" who combines masculine and feminine characteristics, and the essentially masculine woman--whose relationships with men vary according to type.

The first type of Hemingway's fictional female to be discussed is the thoroughly feminine woman who exists in order to serve the male partner. She tends to have minimal individual identity once a relationship has been established; instead she is totally absorbed by the male partner's personality and his desires. The male-female relationship, therefore, is centered around the male, with the female playing a dependent, submissive part. She typically looks to the male for leadership and guidance, giving up any self-sufficiency she may have had previous to her encounter with the Hemingway hero. Her main purpose in the relationship (and in life) is to satisfy the man's basic needs, so that

he may concentrate on the problems the world presents with a minimum of distraction.

The personality traits attributable to these women are characteristically those which are now considered the traditionally womanly, the stereotyped feminine traits. These include passiveness in relationships with others, dependence upon stronger persons (mentally and physically), and emotional, rather than logical, decision-making. Indeed, emotions are quite an important factor for the feminine character. She will express emotions easily and frequently, often in the form of tears or other outbursts. She is easily disappointed, and just as easily elated, with great emotional fluctuations often taking place within a brief time period. Because of her reliance upon emotion rather than logic, and her resulting difficulty in separating feelings from ideas, such a woman is easily influenced by others. This openness to influence and its related desire for guidance (and in many cases domination) are generally considered signs of a feeling of intellectual, social and physical inferiority on the part of the woman herself, as well as in the attitudes of others about her. Thus the woman is often treated as a child, albeit a clever child, by others.

An important role for the feminine woman is the maintenance of the home, even though the "home" may be a hospital room or a cave in the Spanish mountains. This typically involves serving meals, keeping house, and rearing children, with little or no regard given to occurrences outside the home. She may be influenced directly or indirectly by events in the outer world, the man's domain. She is not knowledgeable in the ways of the world and does not desire to be so. Her own world consists

primarily of her and her mate, and she deals with individuals rather than philosophies. She also has a great psychological need for the security this home or relationship provides.

Many of Hemingway's female characters fit easily into this feminine classification, but Maria (For Whom the Bell Tolls) and Catherine Barkley (A Farewell to Arms) are used here as examples of this category.

Maria is Hemingway's female character most often categorized as the one existing for and through her man. Her life before the revolution was very bland--a young girl of fairly well-to-do parents in a small Spanish town. She obviously led a very sheltered, protected existence during her youth, as is indicated by her asking where the noses go when she and Jordan first kiss. (Maria's innocence and sheltered life are in sharp contrast to Pilar's worldly youth, which is revealed when Pilar describes her younger days of travel, excitement, and association with the bullfighters.) Even after Maria is discovered and adopted by the band, she is protected. When she can no longer walk, the gypsy and Pablo carry her on their backs to a place of safety; and Pilar, in the cave, protects her from the men in the band, surrendering her only to Robert Jordan, who also watches carefully over her. Maria is shown to be a very simple girl, incapable of taking care of herself.

Maria is associated with animal images, which underscore her simplicity and dependence. When Robert Jordan first sees her, serving the meal in the camp, she is described as moving "awkwardly as a colt moves, but with that same grace as of a young animal."¹⁰ Pablo also speaks of Maria as a "colt of a girl with cropped head and the movement of a foal still wet from its mother" (p. 64). Rafael tells Jordan of

finding Maria "shivering like a wet dog" (p. 28). The partizans bring her to their camp much as they would bring a captured animal, first with Pilar tying a rope to her at the start of the journey and then with the men carrying her slung over their shoulders, as the Spanish traditionally carry young goats. Robert Jordan calls her his "rabbit." (Several critics have disputed the authenticity of this usage, as the term has other meanings in Spanish slang, either as a term for a prostitute or for the female sex organ.) The animal imagery serves to make Maria a person who is diminished in comparison to the others, whose characteristics place her in the naturally subservient position of an animal that lives only for its master.

Maria's function in the novel is indeed to give complete service to other members of the band, and to Robert Jordan in particular. Her role in the camp life is a simple one, serving as Pilar's assistant in kitchen matters. (One of the men says that she "'can cook a little. I said she cooks well to please her. But mostly she helps the mujer of Pablo'" [p. 26].) She brings the food and clears the dirty dishes when the men eat. Maria's relationship to Robert Jordan is primarily one of service, in many senses of the word. She takes care of him as she does the other men in the band, but to a greater degree. As Sharon Dean points out, "Where a mature woman will serve a man she loves, Maria carries service to the point of slavery. She becomes Jordan's property, ready to care for his sleeping bag, his socks, his pistol, his cigarettes, ready to let him be what Pilar calls her 'Lord and Master.'"¹¹ But these are all little tasks, such as those a father would entrust to a child who wants to help him. Jordan refuses to let her take any role in the action

at the bridge, delegating her once again to her place as Pilar's assistant in preparing for the retreat. He frequently tells her that what he does, he must do alone, a minor echo of his telling the men earlier in the story that he has no time for women.

The relationship between Maria and Robert Jordan is a therapeutic one on both sides. By caring for her, Jordan gives her back her self-respect, which she lost in the assault on her in the village, and provides her with a measure of stability (if only temporarily) that the revolution had destroyed. He becomes her protector, almost like the father who was killed in the village--someone who loves her, watches over her, rescues her from the nightmare, and finally relinquishes her to the care of others, much as a father would give up a daughter in marriage.¹² For him, Maria is also good therapy, relieving his mind of the pressure of a difficult assignment, thus allowing him to prepare the assault plan clearly and coldly. But a more important function for Maria is to provide Jordan, the loner, the man separated from his own country, family, and friends, with a bond with humanity, a link to the rest of mankind, thus completing the "no man is an island" theme.

It is generally acknowledged among critics of the novel that, as Philip Young states, Maria "exists for her lover alone and has no other interest or function in all life or the world but to serve him."¹³ Comparisons can be made on this basis between Jordan's "dream girl" Maria, who exists only for him, and his "dream women," the great movie stars he would imagine coming to his bed at night, who exist only through his mental efforts. It is as difficult for the reader to project possible functions for Maria beyond the final pages of the novel as it would be

for the hero to awaken and find out what would have happened if Garbo had actually paid him a visit. Jordan himself tries making such projections about Maria in two cases, but he cannot fit her into his former life patterns (which he probably would have resumed had he escaped with the band), either as Mrs. Robert Jordan entertaining the college students with the story of her assault or as his date in the crowd at Gaylord's. Beyond fulfilling the psychological, physical, and philosophical needs of both characters for a brief eighty hours, the relationship has very little on which to stand or build, particularly for Jordan. For Maria, who has existed solely for the man in her life, not enough exists for her outside the relationship to suggest that she will be able to cope with the future on her own, despite Jordan's attempt at the farewell to convince Maria that "'if thou goest then I go with thee'" (p. 463).

Catherine Barkley, the thoroughly feminine woman of A Farewell to Arms, shares some basic characteristics and experiences with Maria. Catherine's youth, like Maria's, was apparently a time of innocence, but war has removed the protective shelter. After the death of her fiancé, she volunteers for nursing duty and sees firsthand the results of battle.

Both Maria and Catherine are basically the same sort of protected female, forced into a degree of independence by war. Both are left "a little crazy" by their grief, but Maria has withdrawn into a cold, animal-like state, which is changed by the warmth of her relationship with Jordan and the others. Catherine, on the other hand, escapes into her hospital work, only to turn with an almost hysterical attachment to Frederic Henry as a convenient substitute for her lost lover. Catherine, more emotional than Maria, is also a more fully developed character, having a more

distinct past and, at the beginning, more of a life of her own.

But, once established, Catherine's relationship with Henry is quite similar to that of Maria and Jordan. Both women dedicate themselves totally to the care of their men, although Maria must still assist Pilar and the band, and Catherine must still care for the other hospital patients. However, both devote as much time as possible to the sexual relationship, Maria by slipping into Jordan's sleeping bag and Catherine by joining Henry in his hospital bed. Both women also need the relationship to exorcise their pain, Maria to erase the memory of the assault by fascist soldiers and Catherine to give Henry what she denied her now-dead fiancé.

The female helpmate often shows little of her own identity, relying heavily on the male partner to assume a life-style and create one identity for both persons. This desire is very evident in both Catherine and Maria, even in respect to certain physical characteristics. Maria's cropped hair gives her an appearance similar to Jordan's, enough so that Pilar remarks that they look like brother and sister. Similarly, Catherine tries to persuade Henry to let his hair grow so that then she could cut hers "'and we'd be just alike only one of us blonde and one of us dark.'" She adds, "'Oh, darling, I want you so much I want to be you too,'" to which Henry replies, "'You are. We're the same one'" (p. 299). Jordan makes much of this unity of identities in bidding Maria farewell, telling her, "'As long as there is one of us there is both of us,'" and "'Thou are me now too'" (pp. 463-464). But each of the men emerges from the relationship with a still-separate identity. Frederic Henry leaves the hospital where Catherine lies dead, to pick up the pieces of his shattered life, and Robert Jordan focuses his last thoughts, not on Maria, but on his

preparations to ambush the on-coming horsemen.

Catherine and Maria represent Hemingway's thoroughly feminine woman, whose purpose is to live for and serve the male partner. Apart from her mate, she displays minimal individual identity. She exhibits submissive, passive traits, which result in a dependent relationship with the male partner.

The Hemingway "bitches" are probably the most familiar and the most discussed category in his fiction. These women traditionally are classified as destructive emasculators, women who dominate the men around them and never cease their quest for domination.

The bitch exhibits many of the traits usually considered masculine. She is aggressive, dominant, direct, unemotional, self-confident, ambitious, and independent, and she tends to act as a leader in a group situation. But Hemingway's female characters of this classification have a decidedly feminine side too. A typical Hemingway bitch is regarded as a sex object, although her reaction to this role is definitely not the same as that of the completely feminine woman of the first category. The bitch is usually feminine in appearance, having superior beauty and female charm, although her femininity may be covered up to an extent by her attire. And usually she has a very emotional side, although this too may be masked by actions, words, and outward appearances.

A bitch's relationship with the man (or, frequently, men) in her life is typified as destructive. Certainly few men with whom she comes in contact walk away untouched. However, there are phases of the relationship which are beneficial for the men involved.

Lady Brett Ashley of The Sun Also Rises, the female character with the widest critical coverage in Hemingway's fiction, is readily classified by most critics, without hesitation, as the classic bitch. Brett is probably very deserving of this bitch categorization, as few men with whom she has contact emerge from the relationship unharmed. Brett has been psychically wounded by the war. Her "own true love," the man she was to marry, died during the war of dysentery--not, according to romantic standards, the way brave young soldiers who give their lives for the cause should die. Jake's war wound, which has left him impotent, is ignoble, too. He remarks to Brett, "'What happened to me is supposed to be funny,'"¹⁴ but he quickly wearies of the subject and the joke. "At one time or another," he thinks to himself, "I had probably considered [the subject] from most of its various angles, including the one that certain injuries or imperfections are a subject of merriment while remaining quite serious for the person possessing them" (p. 27). Brett's psychic wound is not as obvious as Jake's physical one, but it is just as damaging. What is perhaps more serious about her wound is that it is not fully recognized by herself or by others, many of whom have been damaged in similar ways. Jake's wound may be a "subject of merriment," but Brett's provokes in the reader a feeling of "irony and pity," the qualities that Jake and Bill find so amusing on their fishing trip.

Although quite an attractive person--Jake calls her "damned good looking" (p. 22) and Robert Cohn finds her "'a remarkably attractive woman'" (p. 38)--Brett displays many masculine characteristics in her appearance and behavior. She is first seen wearing a man's felt hat, and her hair is short, "brushed back like a boy's" (p. 22). Brett behaves

like one of the boys, too. Brett is frequently the only female in a group of males. In the bars in Paris, Brett is the independent female in the scene, on her own rather than accompanied by a male escort, as are Frances Cline and Mrs. Braddocks. Brett first enters the novel in a crowd of men, a group of homosexuals who seem to carry her along as if on a wave. Her own lack of a strong sexual identity is emphasized by her homosexual friends, who are themselves lost in a state between the male and the female. At the fiesta in Pamplona, she is again the lone female in a circle of males until Bill's friend Edna appears. Brett enjoys the events of the fiesta which traditionally entertain the male but upset or repel the female--especially the bullfights, including the goring of the horses. In contrast, some of the men (especially Cohn) are bothered or unimpressed by these events in the bullring. Her heavy drinking and general revelry also set Brett apart from other females. At the fiesta she is physically set apart by the male riau-riau dancers who circle her but will not allow her to take a part in the dance itself; when the dance ends they rush into a wine-shop where they seat Brett on a high wine cask.

Although displaying masculine characteristics, Brett definitely is not unattractive to men. Indeed, the spectrum of males drawn to her is a wide one. Robert Cohn, for one, is strongly attracted to Brett, who spends a casual week with him at San Sebastian and finds him boring. It is Cohn, not Brett, who is secretive about the brief affair. Cohn, interestingly, exhibits many traits traditionally ascribed to women. He has been left miserable by his brief affair with Brett, and he publicly displays his emotions to the point that Jake and Bill are embarrassed by him and for him. As previously mentioned, he is appalled by the bullfights. Brett,

on the other hand, is untouched by the brief physical encounter and tells Jake that she consented to the affair with Cohn only because she "'thought it would be good for him'" (p. 83).

Brett is desperately in love with Jake, and Jake with Brett. But their relationship is all mental and emotional for they cannot be lovers physically. Jake also exhibits some of the qualities traditionally considered feminine, although not to the extent that Cohn does. Jake, like Cohn, is emotional, but he returns to his room before crying over Brett rather than making a public display. He attempts to rekindle his religious feelings (a trait usually considered feminine by psychologists) by visiting the church in Spain, but his mind refuses to focus on the "proper" things. Jake also assumes an unusual nurturer/protector role towards Brett. It is in this role that he threatens one of the most sacred masculine principles within himself, that of the aficionado (passionate admirer and defender of the purity of the bullfights) when he loses the good will of Montoya, the hotel owner, by introducing Brett to Pedro Romero, the young, promising bullfighter. Of course, Jake's traditionally feminine characteristics might never have appeared had it not been for his emasculating accident.

Mike Campbell, the fiancé of Brett, may be viewed in many ways as her male counterpart in the novel. Both have been in the moneyed classes but are financial (as well as moral) bankrupts by the time of the fiesta. Both of them depend on credit or on their friends, Jake and Bill, to cover their expenses when they can no longer do so. Mike condones Brett's past affairs during their engagement, and Brett herself does not seem to be bothered by her various alliances. Both Mike and Brett are drunk or

drinking almost every time they appear, and in this alcoholic state Mike is more than willing to do everything he can to insult Cohn, to complete the destruction Brett has begun. And both Brett and Mike seem to be slowly coming to the realization that this sort of life can not go on forever. Brett especially realizes it after her stay with Pedro Romero, who is embarrassed to be seen with her and who suggests she let her hair grow long, to be more "womanly." She also realizes that she is destined to be with Mike, that he is her kind. "'I'm going back to Mike . . .,'" she tells Jake at the novel's end. "'He's so damned nice and he's so awful. He's my sort of thing'" (p. 243). Brett's awareness that Mike, the irresponsible drunk, the moral and financial bankrupt, is her sort of companion, brings into sharp focus the "nada at the center of things"¹⁵ in both their lives, the emptiness of their sort of "lost generation" existence.

Brett has romantic alliances with two men outside Jake's circle of friends. These two, Count Mippipopulous and Pedro Romero, are quite opposite in many ways, although both are portrayed as very masculine. The Count, older and obviously wealthy, takes a passive role in his relationship with Brett. He takes her to Jake, asks why they don't marry, and derives pleasure from watching them dance while refusing to dance with Brett himself. He has proven his manhood by his actions in the wars and carries visible proof of his courage, the scars of arrow wounds. Although Brett declares that the Count is "'one of us'" (p. 60), she avoids a sexual relationship with him by telling him that she is in love with Jake, and by making feeble excuses not to accompany him to the various resorts he suggests they visit. Their unconsummated relationship bears a

resemblance to that of Brett and Jake. In contrast, Brett seeks out the relationship with Romero, a very masculine young man who is definitely not "one of us," a youth who would be corrupted, perhaps ruined, by the dissipation, irresponsibility, and aimlessness of this lost generation band. Brett's relationship with Romero is brief, for Brett can not, will not, change into the woman he wants her to be. Brett's relationship with Cohn is also of short duration, and Cohn, like Romero, wants her to be something she was not, a woman emotionally involved with him and him alone. Neither Romero nor Cohn, the most thoroughly masculine and the most nearly feminine of her male associates, can accept Brett for what she is as the others can, and neither relationship can be sustained by Brett.

A relationship with Brett, for the most part, is destructive, but only to those men in the group who have already experienced some degree of personal, internal destruction. The two who seem to be relatively undamaged by her, Count Mippipopolous and Pedro Romero, are men who have faced or are facing danger but who have come away with physical, rather than psychic, scars. At the end of the novel, Brett begins showing some of the more traditionally feminine characteristics, especially in her compassion for Romero and in her own somewhat subdued state, which suggests that, at least for a short while, she was emotionally dependent on the young man. Even her decision not to be "a bitch" by breaking off with him, may be taken as an indication that she has, to some degree, become "more womanly," as Romero desired her to be.

Margaret Macomber ("Margot") in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is the most clearly destructive of Hemingway's women, as well as being his most obvious bitch. Hemingway noted that he had "'invented

her complete with handles from the worst bitch I knew (then) and when I first knew her she'd been lovely."¹⁶ Margot, too, is lovely; she is first described by the narrator as "an extremely handsome and well-kept woman of the beauty and social position which had, five years before, commanded five thousand dollars as the price of endorsing, with photographs, a beauty product which she had never used."¹⁷ But the picture beneath the surface of this character is not at all pretty.

Wilson, the white hunter whom Hemingway uses as the objective judge, gives the reader clear views of Margot early in the story. He notes that she is "simply enamelled in that American female cruelty" (p. 9), the protective shell which makes this type of American woman "the hardest in the world; the hardest, the cruelest, the most predatory and the most attractive and their men have softened or gone to pieces nervously as they have hardened" (p. 8).

Wilson's description calls to our attention the masculine side of Margot Macomber. These male traits, however, are not as readily recognizable in Margot as in Brett; there is no short-cut hair, no man's hat here. But her masculinity is revealed primarily through her relationship with Francis. She, not he, is the dominant one, the aggressive one, the self-confident one, the blunt, direct, outspoken one. It is she who goes outside of their marriage to seek sex; Francis is not very good with women. And she refuses to be put "in her place," to allow the men to tell her what to do, and she insists on accompanying them on the buffalo hunt although both object to her going along.

Francis, in comparison to both Margot and Wilson, is very child-like, although he is thirty-five years old. He talks of things that should

not be mentioned, asking Wilson not to tell anyone about his cowardice in running from the charging lion. When Wilson responds with an intended insult, Francis is not really insulted but apologetic. He does not realize he is not supposed to ask Wilson not to tell. "'There are a lot of things I don't know,'" he candidly confesses (p. 7). Wilson is continually perplexed by Francis, who continues to react as a child when Wilson expects him to react as a man. When Margot returns to their tent after her night with Wilson, Francis reminds her, "'There wasn't going to be any of that. You promised there wouldn't be,'" and then repeats, "'You promised'" (p. 23). The repetition of "'you promised'" and the fact that he had made her promise in the first place bring to mind a common childhood tragedy-- that grown-ups do not always keep their promises to their children. And as every child learns, sooner or later, the shrill reminder "You promised!" will not change conditions.

The feminine side of Margot's character is clearly revealed when Macomber passes into adulthood on the buffalo hunt. For a short while she drops into the role of the soft pitying female. She refers to the buffalo as "'big helpless things'" (p. 30), ignoring the fact that they are every bit as dangerous as the lion. She says she hates, even loathes, the hunt, and asks to "'please go into the shade'" (p. 31) rather than stand in the sun with the men to admire the dead bull. Once in the car, she retreats to the far corner, away from the excited men she had earlier insisted upon joining. As Francis assumes a more dominant, self-confident stance, Margot retreats into a more passive one. Her "bitchhood," however, is just below the surface even now, as she questions Wilson on the legality of chasing the bulls with the car. Her paleness and illness, however, are not

feminine responses of disgust at the shooting, but outward signs of fear of her husband with his new-found courage, a fear which soon brings about her action that ends his short happy life.

A few slight traces of Margot's femininity are revealed, however, even before the conversion of the Maccombers. After the disgrace of the lion, she breaks into tears, going to the tent to hide her emotions. This reaction to her husband's public disgrace convinces Wilson that she is "a hell of a fine woman. She seemed to understand, to realize, to be hurt for him and for herself and to know how things really stood" (p. 9). Wilson's estimate, of course, is quickly negated when she returns to the men under the canvas and resumes her "bitchery." Even the ruin of the Maccombers' marriage can not be pinned to a lack of her feminine understanding, "because she had done the best she could for many years back and the way they were together now was no one person's fault" (p. 34). Wilson excuses her hardness and cruelty to some extent because of her dominant role in the marriage, noting that "to govern one has to be cruel sometimes" (p. 10). Margot's femininity is faintly discernible before the climactic scene at the buffalo hunt, but for the most part it is buried, repressed, or replaced by a cold hardness.

Brett and Margot, who combine both masculine and feminine traits, are portrayed as bitches, women capable of both destructive and good relationships with the men in their lives. Few men with whom the bitches have contact emerge unharmed, while some may actually benefit from the relationship. Each woman exhibits many masculine traits in interpersonal relationships, while masking a more feminine side by her actions, words, and outward appearances. Although she has some positive qualities, a

bitch frequently provokes a primarily negative response in the reader and the critic.

The third category of women in Hemingway's fiction displays many masculine characteristics. Typically these women have strong positive relationships with the men in their lives. These relationships are frequently characterized by the women serving as partners, almost equal in status with the men. This type of woman has no fear of expressing opinions or even on occasion assuming independent, almost leader-like, stances. She can be seen working with, rather than for, the man or men with whom she associates. Apart from males, she can stand as a full character in her own right, rather than drawing heavily on the male's personality for her own identity.

Three women who fit easily into this category are Madame Marie Fontan from "Wine of Wyoming," Pilar from For Whom the Bell Tolls, and Marie Morgan from To Have and Have Not. These three women are much alike in many ways. The first indication of their striking similarity is in their size. Marie is described as a "big woman, long-legged, big handed, big hipped, still handsome, a hat pulled down over her bleached blonde hair."¹⁸ Madame Fontan is a "plump old woman with a lovely ruddy complexion and white hair."¹⁹ Robert Jordan first sees Pilar as a big woman, "almost as wide as she was tall, in black peasant skirt and waist, with heavy wool socks on heavy legs, black rope-soled shoes and a brown face like a model for a granite monument. She had big but nice looking hands and her thick curly black hair was twisted into a knot on her neck" (p. 30). (The mentioning of hands and legs, particularly the big hands

of Marie and Pilar, is unusual for Hemingway in introducing a female character. Elsewhere in To Have and Have Not, when women are introduced into the narrative, Hemingway comments on their hair, their attire, their build, their complexions, but not on their hands or legs. In For Whom the Bell Tolls, Robert Jordan similarly details Maria first by her hair, her teeth, her skin, and her eyes, and only later mentions her legs and her breasts.)

The women of this third category are middle-aged or older. They are older than most of Hemingway's other women, at least older than the norm for those he treats favorably in the fiction. Madame Fontan is an "old woman"; Marie tells us in her early morning thoughts that she is forty-five; and Pilar, on the way to El Sordo's camp, reveals that she is forty-eight.

In each of the three works, the physical unattractiveness of the woman is called to the reader's attention. In To Have and Have Not, Richard Gordon is struck by the ugliness of Marie Morgan:

Riding his bicycle, he passed a heavy-set, big, blue-eyed woman, with bleached-blond hair showing under her old man's felt hat, hurrying across the road, her eyes red from crying. Look at that big ox, he thought. What do you suppose a woman like that thinks about? What do you suppose she does in bed? How does her husband feel about her when she gets that size? Who do you suppose he runs around with in this town? Wasn't she an appalling looking woman? Like a battleship. Terrific (p. 176).

By that point in the novel, however, Hemingway has told the reader enough about Marie and about Richard Gordon to know that Gordon's impression is not entirely correct. The omniscient narrator refers to her as "still handsome," but Marie, after her husband's death, thinks, "And I'm big now and ugly and old and he ain't here to tell me that I ain't" (p. 260).

Beauty, of course, is a subjective judgment, but Gordon's conclusion that Marie's husband is unresponding and uncaring toward her is totally false. In For Whom the Bell Tolls, it is Rafael, the gypsy, who gives us a brief, unflattering description of Pilar before she appears. Rafael tells Robert Jordan that Pilar is "'something barbarous. Something very barbarous. If you think Pablo is ugly you should see his woman'" (p. 26). Pilar well knows that her beauty lies within. "'Do you know how an ugly woman feels?'" she once asks. "'Do you know what it is to be ugly all your life and to feel that you are beautiful?'" (p. 97). Pilar is ugly but not barbaric in appearance. The unreliable, lazy gypsy apparently confuses Pilar's sharp tongue with her looks. In contrast, Madame Fontan's description is pleasant, although not particularly attractive. She is a fat woman, and the narrator describes her as looking "like Mrs. Santa Claus, clean and rosy-faced and white-haired, and waddling when she walked" (p. 458).

But the unattractiveness of these masculine women is not shown as a detriment, as it might have been to the women of more feminine attributes. The narrator in "Wine of Wyoming" converses at length with Madame Fontan on many subjects, including her "'too fat'" two hundred and twenty-five pound Indian daughter-in-law, and appears thoroughly to enjoy her company. Robert Jordan seems to enjoy watching Pilar as she works, calling her "pleasantly ugly" (p. 88) and seeming to find her comfortably familiar. Harry Morgan considers Marie attractive in her way; "'You look better than any of them,'" he tells her. Obviously, the beauty here is indeed in the eye of the beholder.

There are many parallels in the relationships between the three women and their mates. Both Harry and Pablo have changed a great deal

since their women first took up with them. Harry has fallen from the more prosperous times Marie later remembers, the times when they could afford to travel to Cuba. He continues his decline throughout the book, as he goes from charter-fishing to rum-running to progressively more illegal and degrading activities. The loss of his arm is an outward sign of his deterioration. Pablo, too, is not the man he used to be. Pilar tells Maria and Robert Jordan how it was when Pablo and his followers captured his native town and executed the fascists. Then Pablo was clearly the leader, bold and fearless. His deterioration is noted by his chronic use of alcohol. Once the ruthless leader of the early days, he has become a man who is distrusted, whom his own followers wish to kill, to be rid of. Yet each man, Harry and Pablo, tries to his utmost toward the end to regain a bit of his younger self and style of life. Harry Morgan tries unsuccessfully to kill the Cubans and escape with the money from the bank robbery, although this may not have been his original intention. Pablo steals the detonating device from Robert Jordan's pack and runs away, but later he returns with four men on horses to help at the bridge, although his original intent was to prevent the blowing of the bridge so that he could continue to live in relative peace and safety in those mountains. In his participation at the bridge and his shooting of the recruited horsemen, Pablo returns to his former bloody, ruthless self. With the wounding of Jordan, Pablo becomes the undisputed leader of the guerrilla band during their hazardous retreat. By returning to the group, Pablo seems to indicate that he has learned Harry Morgan's hard-earned lesson: a man alone doesn't have a chance. Madame Fontan and her husband, on the other hand, have suffered no great misfortunes, but they have seen some bad

times and, no doubt, there are more to come. Fontan has had his problems in America because of his beer- and wine-making activities. Twice he has been arrested and jailed, and the fines imposed have wiped out all the family's savings. The necessity of hiding his newly-made wine results in personal disgrace when he can not serve it to his departing friends, as a host should according to his social standards. It is ironic that his art with wine, which would have brought him some degree of fame in his native France, is enjoyed mostly by rowdy folks out to have a good time in prohibition America. The narrator comments as he and his wife leave that the Fontans will not have good luck in the future.

With their men, the three women have similar relationships, easy and essentially co-equal. Marie is shown working side by side with Harry Morgan, filling and loading the jugs, bringing his rifle, cutting his meat. Madame Fontan brings the bottles up from the cellar and in general participates in the drinking and camaraderie, traditionally a masculine prerogative. Pilar has always worked with Pablo since the early days. In the end, she and Pablo are working together again, riding side by side close against Maria's horse to prevent Maria from returning to the wounded Jordan. The three masculine women are seriously attached to their men. Marie is more emotional, centering her whole life on Harry. Her grief at his death, however, is an inward, almost stoic grief. Although deeply bereaved, she does not attend the funeral. At the story's end she is quietly starting to feel her way toward the future, to reconcile herself to her bleak situation. (This is brought out in contrast to the response of Mrs. Albert Tracy to her husband's death; Albert's widow, comic in her tragedy, makes a public spectacle of her grief and loses her false teeth

when she is shoved from the dock into the cold water by the morbid, curious crowd.) Pilar is a much colder, more serious person than the other two women. She has spent much of her life with men of death and violence. She has been hardened by her situation to the point where she can publicly humiliate Pablo, challenge his leadership, and coldly set the stage for his assassination. But Pilar is definitely emotionally attached to Pablo, as she shows when he returns with his new recruits in time to aid in the attack on the bridge. Her eyes softening, she greets him, "'Thou art welcome'" (p. 390), and although she insists that "'so much theatre tires me'" (p. 390), she is deeply moved by his return. This is the old Pablo with whom she first took up, not the drunkard and coward we have seen in the last few days. She alone can remember all his good qualities, although his bad ones are obvious to her too. Madame Fontan, too, is obviously very fond of her husband, and when he is "ruined" by not being able to serve the new wine to his friends, sympathetic tears come to her eyes. Their relationship is a very close one, filled with many years of good memories, such as the Labor Day trip to Clear Creek. But she is her own person, as is suggested by her preference for beer, although her husband is a lover of wine. All three women, in fact, stand as individuals, with distinct personal characteristics of their own. Their personalities do not depend on those of the male partners to make them complete.

The three women reminisce about their pasts, especially in connection with other, more exotic places. Madame Fontan relates an anecdote of her youth in France. Marie fondly recalls in great detail the trip that she and Harry made to Cuba, where she bleached her hair to her husband's great delight. She also mentions trips to New Orleans and Miami.

Pilar's reminiscences are more frequent and much more detailed. She often tells of past events, whether she has a willing audience or not. She speaks of the various matadors whom she has intimately known; she tells of the taking of her and Pablo's town in great detail. She recalls for the group a marvelous memory of a stay in sea-side Valencia. Pilar also mentions ocean trips to Mexico and Venezuela. Each of the three women can recall a richer, happier past, often full of celebration. But each is fully content to live in the present. The past is recalled fondly but not wistfully: it is neither abandoned nor submerged, as it is by Catherine and Maria.

Pilar and Marie, it is interesting to note, have in common a somewhat shady past. As Harry is dying, he wonders what Marie will do for money and thinks that "she's too old to peddle her hips now" (p. 175), implying that at one time she had been a prostitute. Pilar in her youth lived nine years with three different bullfighters, to whom she "never was unfaithful . . . , that is almost never . . ." (p. 190). She is openly called a whore by many of the men in the guerrilla band. Each woman now, at middle age, is still sexually active, but each is now faithful to one man only.

The attitudes of the three women toward profanity provide an amusing comparison. Pilar, who, according to Rafael, "'has a tongue that scalds and that bites like a bull whip'" (p. 28), seems to have developed cursing to quite an art. Indeed her first speech in the novel takes the hide off Rafael: "'What are you doing now, you lazy drunken obscene unsayable son of an unnameable unmarried gypsy obscenity?'" (p. 30). Pilar shows a wide range of profane vocabulary, hidden under the "obscenities"

and similar terms which Hemingway substitutes for more vulgar expressions. Yet Pilar once reprimands Agustín for his language, saying that she is tired of his cursing. Marie repeats the phrases "goddamned rummy" and "goddamned face" but reprimands Harry for saying "shit" at the table. Harry reminds her that she says many worse things in bed sometimes. Madame Fontan, too, is appalled by her daughter-in-law's language: "'All the time she says sonofabitsh goddam'" (p. 452). Yet Fontan uses similar phrases with no reprimand, and her own speech is peppered with "My God!"

The three women share a similar outspoken attitude toward abusers of alcohol. When we first see Marie, she and Harry are listening to the radio. Eddy, in his cups, and a drunken friend come to the door but are sent away, on Harry's orders, by Marie. As she returns to her chair, Marie expresses compassion for rummies in general.

"Poor goddamned rummies," Marie said. "I pity a rummy."
 "He's a lucky rummy" [Harry replied].
 "There ain't any lucky rummies," Marie said. "You know that, Harry."
 "No," [Harry said]. "I guess there aren't" (p. 64).

Later, she drives past Richard Gordon, staggering home, and assumes that he too is "some poor rummy" (p. 255). Her frank but pitying response provides an ironic, perhaps overly strong, contrast to Gordon's cruel and distorted view of her, which appeared earlier in the book. Pablo, of course, is the rummy in Pilar's life.

"Borracho!" she called to him. "Drunkard. Rotten drunkard!" She turned back to Robert Jordan cheerfully. "He's taken a leather wine bottle to drink alone in the woods," she said. "He's drinking all the time. This life is ruining him" (p. 31).

As a no-good rummy, Pablo is almost murdered in the cave as Pilar silently and knowingly watches. But later when he returns sober to participate in

the destruction of the bridge, Pilar accepts him back gladly. Robert Jordan even mentions that Pablo's return signified a change of luck. Pablo couldn't bring luck as a rummy ("wino" is probably more appropriate here), but he brings hope to the little band as a sober man. In "Wine of Wyoming," the immigrant Fontans enjoy their beer and wine, but neither can understand or tolerate American drunks who put whiskey in their beer. Madame Fontan is especially shocked by, and outspoken about, the American girls who drink themselves sick at the table. She tells the narrator about one such girl who came with a party of beer-whiskey drinking Americans to the Fontan home. "'Elle a vomis sur la table. Et après elle a vomis dans ses shoes. And afterward they come back and say they want to come again and have another party the next Saturday, and I say no, my God, no! When they came I locked the door'" (p. 460). Shaking his head sadly and apologizing for his strong language, Fontan refers to the American drunks as "'cochons'" (pigs).

Pilar, Marie, and Madame Fontan react to the role of motherhood with varying degrees of intensity and affection. The tough-skinned Pilar, quite surprisingly, is hurt by a casual remark by the gypsy during a period of bantering. "'Hast thou ever seen a gitana,'" she asks Rafael, "'who was not about to have, or just to have had, a child?'" "'Thou,'" the gypsy replies. "'Leave it,' Pilar said. 'There is no one who cannot be hurt'" (p. 255). Clearly, Pilar is very sensitive to her childless condition. In To Have and Have Not, Harry brings up the subject of offspring. "'Those girls aren't much, are they?'" he remarks. "'No, Hon,'" agrees Marie (p. 126). Twice he mentions not having any boys. He seems to blame Marie somewhat in the matter. "Do you suppose the boys in her went before I knew

her?" (p. 127) he wonders. Although Marie and Harry have three daughters, they seem to be as disappointed as Pilar in what they have and have not produced. Madame Fontan, on the other hand, seems to be proud of her two sons, especially the married one. "'He's such a good boy and works hard all the time and never run around or make any trouble'" (p. 452). But she cannot conceal her disappointment in her daughter-in-law, a fat, lazy Indian who "'tout le temps elle stay in the bed and read books.'" "'She don't work. She don't cook. She gives him beans en can'" (p. 451). Madame Fontan plays the role of mother in traditional fashion, praising her sons and complaining about her daughter-in-law. But Pilar, by her childlessness, and Marie, by her apparent lack of love for her offspring, represent an abdication of the traditionally female role of childbearing and loving motherhood.

Pilar, Marie, and Madame Fontan are representative of a type of female generally ignored in Hemingway criticism. These masculine women are as important in Hemingway's fiction as the bitches and the dream girls, and often are far more interesting as personalities. If necessary, they can stand alone as strong self-sufficient individuals, although they prefer not to do so. In their relationship with men, their individuality strengthens, rather than weakens, the bond. As Pilar says, and she could be speaking for Marie and Madame Fontan as well, "'Life is very curious I would have made a good man . . .'" (p. 97).

The three categories of fictional females established by this study account rather well for the real women in Hemingway's life. According to his fictional and non-fictional accounts, the completely feminine woman is

represented by Hadley Richardson, his first wife; the destructive bitch, by Lady Duff Twysden (the real-life model for Brett who, according to Carlos Baker, was "'wild about Ernest'"),²⁰ Hemingway's mother, and Martha Gellhorn, his third wife; and the masculine woman, the partner who is ready to accompany him on safari, through bars, on fishing trips, by Mary Welsh, his fourth and last wife. But Hemingway's second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, is not easily classified. According to Hemingway's account in A Moveable Feast, she destroyed his first marriage, but her portrait in Green Hills of Africa shows her to be a fellow hunter and partner.

In Hemingway's fiction, too, there are women characters who can not be easily classified. For example, Helen Gordon in To Have and Have Not is a difficult case. Because she can walk away from her husband, she obviously is not the totally feminine, totally dependent type. Yet to place her in the masculine-woman category with Marie would also be an error. In A Farewell to Arms, Catherine's fellow nurse and companion Helen Ferguson also defies easy classification. She appears self-sufficient, yet at one point in an emotional scene she reveals her envy of Catherine's happiness and dependence. Helen Gordon and Helen Ferguson quite clearly do not neatly fit into any of the categories of this study.

Yet it is my opinion that my three categories of Hemingway's female characters and their corresponding types of relationships are valid for the majority of the women in his fiction. I basically agree with Carlos Baker, who holds that, while Hemingway was capable of creating and did in fact create many very realistic characters (who, like their real-life counterparts, are neither black nor white but instead are varying shades of gray), he also employed types of characters, almost stereotypes, in order to

create a desired effect of plot or style.

Hemingway's chief talent is his ability to present his fiction in a pared-down style, giving the reader only such details as are necessary to activate the imagination and the mind, which then flesh out the narrative. In light of this, it is somewhat of an injustice to separate parts from the whole, as this study has done. However, it is this writer's hope that an examination of one part of Hemingway's fiction, in this case, the types of female characters and their relationships to the male characters, will allow for a better understanding and appreciation of his work as a whole. Studies such as this one are intended not to detract from Hemingway's artistic ability but rather to clarify and examine in more detail his writing talents.

NOTES

¹Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Stein and Day, 1966), p. 316.

²Aaron Latham, "A Farewell to Machismo," New York Times Magazine, 16 October 1977, pp. 90-99.

³Sharon Welch Dean, "Lost Ladies: The Isolated Heroine in the Fiction of Hawthorne, James, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner," Diss. University of New Hampshire 1973, p. 129.

⁴Carlos Baker, Hemingway: The Writer As Artist (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 116.

⁵Delbert E. Wylder, Hemingway's Heroes (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), p. 148.

⁶Edmund Wilson, The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 239.

⁷Harry Levin, "Observations on the Style of Ernest Hemingway," Contexts in Criticism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), rpt. in Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Robert P. Weeks (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 81.

⁸John Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods: A Study in Existentialism (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1960), p. 89.

⁹Tom Burnam, "Primitivism and Masculinity in the Work of Ernest Hemingway," Modern Fiction Studies, 1, no. 3 (Aug. 1955), p. 21.

¹⁰Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York: Scribners, 1940), p. 25. Hereafter all page references are to this edition, cited parenthetically in the text.

¹¹Dean, "Lost Ladies," p. 128.

¹²This sort of father-daughter relationship becomes very important for Hemingway in his own life, as "Papa" finds many younger women to take the place of the daughter he never had. In Across the River and Into the Trees, Colonel Cantwell and Renata illustrate this relationship.

¹³Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), p. 109.

¹⁴Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (New York: Scribners, 1926), p. 26. Hereafter all page references are to this edition, cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁵See Robert Penn Warren's discussion of this in the "Introduction to The Sun Also Rises," Three Novels of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Scribners, 1961), p. xviii.

¹⁶Carlos Baker, Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story (New York: Scribners, 1969), p. 284.

¹⁷Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," in The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Scribners, 1953), p. 4. Hereafter all page references are to this work, cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁸Hemingway, To Have and Have Not (New York: Scribners, 1937), p. 116. Hereafter all page references are to this edition, cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁹Hemingway, "Wine of Wyoming," in The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 451. Hereafter all page references are to this work, cited parenthetically in the text.

²⁰Baker, Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story, p. 150.

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WOMEN CHARACTERS IN HEMINGWAY'S FICTION

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1978

Hemingway's fiction features three major types of female characters--the totally feminine woman, the "bitch" who combines masculine and feminine characteristics, and the essentially masculine woman--whose relationships with men vary according to the type.

Catherine Barkley (A Farewell to Arms) and Maria (For Whom the Bell Tolls) are depicted as thoroughly feminine characters who exist primarily as adjuncts, women whose purpose is to live for and serve the male partner. Brett Ashley (The Sun Also Rises) and Margot Macomber ("The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber"), who combine both masculine and feminine traits, are portrayed as "bitches," women capable of both destructive and good relationships with the men in their lives. Pilar (For Whom the Bell Tolls), Marie Morgan (To Have and Have Not), and Madame Marie Fontan ("Wine of Wyoming") are portrayed with distinctly masculine characteristics and have easy, essentially co-equal relationships with men.

The first type of Hemingway's fictional female is the thoroughly feminine woman who exists in order to serve the male partner. The woman character of this classification tends to have minimal individual identity apart from her mate once a relationship has been established; instead she is totally absorbed by the male partner's personality and his desires. The male-female relationship, therefore, is centered around the male, with the female playing a dependent, submissive part. She typically looks to the male for leadership and guidance, giving up any self-sufficiency she may have had previous to her encounter with the Hemingway hero. Her main purpose in the relationship (and in life) is to satisfy the man's basic

needs, so that he may concentrate on the problems the world presents with a minimum of distraction.

The Hemingway "bitches" are probably the most familiar and the most discussed category in his fiction. These women traditionally are classified as destructive emasculators, women who dominate the men around them and who never cease their quest for domination. The bitch exhibits many of the traits usually considered masculine. She is aggressive, dominant, direct, unemotional, self-confident, ambitious, and independent, and she tends to act as a leader in a group situation. But Hemingway's female characters of this classification have a decidedly feminine side too. The bitch is usually feminine in appearance, having superior beauty and female charm, although her femininity may be covered up to an extent by her attire. And usually she has a very emotional side, although this too may be masked by actions, words, and outward appearances. A bitch's relationship with the man (or, frequently, men) in her life is typified as destructive. Certainly few men with whom she comes in contact walk away untouched. However, there are phases of the relationship which are beneficial for the men involved.

The third category of women in Hemingway's fiction displays many masculine characteristics. Typically these women have strong positive relationships with the men in their lives. These relationships are frequently characterized by the women serving as partners, almost equal in status with the men. This type of woman has no fear of expressing opinions or even on occasion assuming independent, almost leader-like, stances. She can be seen working with, rather than for, the man or men with whom she associates. Apart from males, she can stand as a full character in her own right, rather than drawing heavily on the male's personality for her own identity.