Moments of Abjection in Ernest Hemingway's Short Stories

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Abstract

This dissertation engages the extensive discussion of gender in Hemingway's fiction in order to ascertain how the seemingly contradictory interpretations of gender in Hemingway's short stories can be correlated and related to a larger discourse. As the majority of approaches focus on either the male or female characters of the stories, with less concern for a holistic approach towards humans vis-à-vis the cultural governing system (Jacques Lacan's view of language), it seems promising to study the ways in which the concept of the "code hero" can contribute to identifying the interaction between society and the Lacanian "Symbolic." In this respect, the aim of the present work is to consider not only the characters and their relationships but also the other elements of the stories such as the settings as well as the atmosphere they create. The present work seeks to study the way the stories enter into dialogue with the Symbolic. Julia Kristeva's concept of "abjection" provides a framework for the investigation. The code hero's rejection of marriage and procreation is read as a defense mechanism against attack on the boundaries of their self by language. In other words, this study examines how abjection in Hemingway's stories acts as a protector of individuality as Kristeva explains in her seminal *Powers of Horror* (1980). The investigation concludes that the stories create a linguistic milieu in which individuals, paradoxically conforming to the language and social rules, cause deviations that agitate the autonomy of culture. Thus, abjection is viewed as a performance that helps individuals advance toward a subject position in relation to the master signifier. Ultimately, the research suggests that if the manifest content of the narratives is related more to men than to women, their latent content is more concerned with the matter of gender in general. Therefore, further work focusing on gender including the female characters and minorities needs to be undertaken to enhance Hemingway scholarship.

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Source
CSS	Ernest Hemingway. *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: The Finca Vigia Edition*. New York, NY: Scribner, 2003.
PH	Julia Kristeva. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1982.

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My endless gratitude goes to my mother for all her support during my long journey, for which I will owe her forever, as well as to my beloved father who taught me to dare to dream in spite of the brief time we were blessed with his presence. Finally, I would like to thank my supportive husband whose warm shining light brightens up the sky of my heart, and our daughter, Hana, whose presence defines hope for me.

Dedication

For all the women in MENA who fight with a smile on their face.

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1 Introduction

Throughout his travels and impressive writing career, Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) delved into many facets of life with clear-sighted insight.[1] He not only witnessed the tumultuous events of the two World Wars and the Spanish Civil War, but he also traveled extensively through Europe and Africa. Hemingway occupies such a significant position in American literature that Linda Wagner-Martin posits his name to be synonymous with "American writer," while Harold Bloom comments that Hemingway's style "fuses the King James Bible, *Huckleberry Finn*, and Walt Whitman into an extraordinary instrument: stoic, grave, eloquent, economical, very American," and that his short story is "a vision of reality-personal, national, universal."[2] Similarly, in *American Fiction Between the Wars*, Bloom writes that "Hemingway is the best short story writer in the English language from Joyce's *Dubliners* until the present."[3] Likewise, John O'Hara, in the *New York Times* (1950), calls him "the most important author living today, the outstanding author since the death of Shakespeare."[4] These remarks reveal that it is a general misconception to interpret Hemingway's stories as merely a realistic representation of early-twentieth-century society.

The stories, along with their "code heroes," are often regarded as the projection of the misogynist atmosphere of that time, and their male protagonists are considered simply impulsive for following their

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[1] Hemingway engaged in a diverse range of pursuits, such as deep-sea fishing, game hunting, skiing, and bullfighting. He was also a war correspondent, fought as a soldier, became a news reporter, and drove ambulances on battlefields.

[2] Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide*, 3; Bloom, *Ernest Hemingway*, 9.

[3] Bloom, *American Fiction between the Wars*, 16.

[4] Mazzeno, *The Critics and Hemingway*, 48.

sexual desires.[5] Yet, as explained further in the literature review, the perception of Hemingway as macho is diminishing in contemporary discourse. Indeed, gender discourses in the twenty-first century may shed light on—and help to reposition—his code heroes within Hemingway scholarship. However, a more thorough investigation of gender in the stories, and in particular a theoretical framework for accomplishing this task, are still lacking. This study does not accuse or excuse Hemingway of misogyny. Rather, it argues that, while not trivializing or disparaging women, he portrays them within the framework that the language of his day (Lacan's "Law- of-the-Father") predefined for sexuality.

Hemingway's brand of tough masculinity has led to his being called "Papa," a sobriquet critics give him to refer to his patriarchal attitude. As Peter Mascuch writes, "During the 1940s and 1950s, Hemingway, the father of three sons, adopted the public persona of 'Papa,' the macho authority figure."[6] Yet alternative interpretations of the nickname Papa have also been put forward. According to Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes:

> Papa was Papa because he had a Code, and the Code was the Code it was because it was the Code of a Papa. As Papa, Hemingway was an appropriately patriarchal figure, glorified by Malcolm Cowley in 'A Portrait of Mister Papa' in *Life* magazine (10 January 1949) and pilloried by Lillian Ross in her *New Yorker* profile (13 May 1950).[7]

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[5] Philip Young ascribed the term "code hero" to Hemingway's hero. He defines the code as "making the controls of honor and courage [. . .] in a life of tension and pain" (*Ernest Hemingway*, 63). The code hero is often understood by critics to represent stereotypically macho qualities in Hemingway's fiction; for example, Jopi Nyman takes the view that the term code hero "describes a man who controls his courage and masters his pain in situations where other people do not. The Hemingway code is very much at the heart of the representation of masculinity in hard-boiled fiction as well: the characters' degree of masculinity is gauged by their ability to control themselves. The code functions as a symptom of power: to fail to adhere to the code is to lose power" (*Men Alone*, 109).

[6] Mascuch, "Ernest Hemingway," 287.

[7] *Hemingway's Genders*, 4.

However, it would be helpful to investigate in what other ways the sobriquet Papa could be decoded within twenty-first-century literary criticism. In this respect, referring to "papa as sign of fecundity and earthy happiness," Comley and Scholes propose:

> To 'decode Papa' is to encode or engender many papas, to find papa written in many places and to write it ourselves, to tell more stories about the phoneme 'pa' and the figure textualized under that sign. In the case of Hemingway, of course, it must also be a matter of looking at the way fatherhood itself is encoded in his writing as well as in his life.[8]

As a father is also a husband or a partner to the mother of his children, contemporary issues of gender might expand beyond their focus on a specific sexuality. The "Papa" that this study decodes builds on a fuller interpretation of the men, women and children who denizen Hemingway's stories. A new perspective emerges from transcending traditional sexual discriminations: gender fluidity.

The initial intention of the present work involved demonstrating that the short stories highlight masculine vulnerabilities, an idea that seemed promising from earlier studies.[9] However, the texts at once revealed moments of vulnerability that are not limited to male characters, and thus produced a more complex analysis of vulnerability, fully reflective of Hemingway's own assertion of his writing as a metaphorical iceberg: "There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows."[10] In order to extract this iceberg, the focus shifted to the modernist aspects of his short stories.[11] While this literary-school-based investigation was informative, too many questions regarding gender in the stories remained

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[8] *Hemingway's Genders*, 8.

[9] For further discussion of masculine vulnerability, refer to chapter two, "Twenty-First Century Scholarship on Hemingway."

[10] Hemingway stresses in *The Paris Review*, "I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows" (quoted by Kowalewski, *Deadly Musings*, 139).

[11] The modernist features of the stories will be discussed in chapter six.

unresolved in this line of research. While the texts did not contradict the idea of masculine vulnerability, they brought forward the broader notion of vulnerability, so that not only the vulnerability of masculinity, femininity, and queer identities would come into consideration, but also that of the status quo. If men are supposed to be vulnerable, then the time has come to revisit the stories of this Lost Generation writer, taking the fragility of the language structure into account as well.[12] This broader interpretation of vulnerability and masculinity in the stories led, almost inadvertently, to a holistic view of gender in the stories, which this study aims to describe. By interpreting the stories apart from any specific gender approach—but rather much as David Carter explains Jean-François Lyotard's postmodernism, when he writes, "Ordering principles and rules are discovered in the process of analysis" —I could put my preliminary arguments about gender into dialogue with other scholars.[13]

The first deep study of the stories revealed that the protagonists do not merely act out manly activities and play spectacles of masculinity. On the contrary, their lives turn out to be a delicate smart performance towards the realization of gender in general for the good not only of femininity or masculinity but of all involved. Concerning gender, the strategy the stories shrewdly devise seems to be a type of transgression within the limitations of the language system. Moreover, this strategy of presenting vulnerability could be read via the concept of "abjection" as theorized by Julia Kristeva.[14] As Birgit Schippers puts it, "with the notion of abjection Kristeva highlights her concern with the vulnerability and precariousness of the subject [. . .]; abjection threatens the integrity of the subject's corporeal boundaries,

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[12] *Génération perdue* ("Lost Generation") is the name Gertrude Stein gave to the twentieth-century writers who wrote after surviving World War I (Rennie, *American Writers and World War I*, 1). Cynicism is a common trope in the work of these traumatized authors (Chaleila, *Racism and Xenophobia*, 9).

[13] *Literary Theory*, 123.

[14] What is meant by "language" is the Lacanian "Symbolic," which will be explained in chapter four, along with the other psychoanalytical terms used here.

which it is also constitutive of the subject."[15] Therefore, what formed the main concern of the present study came to be gender fluidity. The current investigation aims to explore if the short stories by manifesting abjection could reveal elements of gender fluidity.

As will be discussed in the current study, the code hero contributes to the actualization of gender liberation although he only has at his disposal the language which Jacques Lacan calls "the master signifier." Representing the absolute master and law, the master signifier is the signifier that dominates all other signifiers. In Hilary Neroni's words, "The Master Signifier is a signifier without a signified, a meaningless signifier, and yet it ensures the consistency of all the other signifiers."[16] Paradoxically, the protagonist is forced to use the signification formula of the master signifier, if he means to jumble the pre-engineered chain of signification.[17] In "Fathers and Sons," for example, Nick meditates about "blow[ing]" his father "to hell" with a gun in retribution for a punishment his father meted out—whipping—after Nick told him a lie. Opposing morality once, he would do it again. But in accordance with the Law-of-the-Father, he suddenly remembers that it is "the gun that his father had given him." (*CSS*, 375)[18] Deviating from the master signifier through his lifestyle, Hemingway's code hero makes a vibration in the system rather than in his own private life, though he seems unaware of such an achievement and the mechanism through which he has achieved it. It is less an act motivated by self-interest, and more one of rebellion through Kristeva's definition of abjection directed towards altering society.

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[15] *Julia Kristeva and Feminist Thought*, 50.

[16] "The Banality of Trauma," 41.

[17] The Saussurean system of signification will be discussed in chapter three, section 3 ("Ferdinand de Saussure").

[18] As each one of the code heroes performs an individual act of disobedience by means of showing self-reliance, the repeated nonconformity of the code heroes evokes parallels with both Judith Butler's theory of "gender performativity" and Hannah Arendt's "civil disobedience," both of which could lead to the agitation of the political discourse.

A major concern in recent studies on Hemingway and gender is how to reconcile the various interpretations of gender, justifiable on their own evidence, but contradictory in the aggregate.[19] For instance, while Leslie Fielder finds enough evidence to discuss Hemingway's male chauvinism, Linda Wagner-Martin, in "'Proud and Friendly and Gently': Women in Hemingway's Early Fiction," develops the idea of the superiority of Hemingway's mature women compared to his male characters.[20] However, Kenneth Lynn has cogently urged for the necessity of rereading Hemingway with an eye on the sexual ambiguity at the core of his art.[21]

This study tackles the reconciliation of alternative propositions through an approach developed in psychoanalysis, above all by Jacques Lacan. Yet it finds that the cognitive domain of the stories is most aptly evoked by Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982).[22] In particular, it seeks to determine a point of analogy between Kristeva's abjection and the ambiance evoked in Hemingway's short stories. I hope it will make a valuable contribution to the field of Hemingway studies, and in turn to more gender emancipation.

Interpretations of Hemingway began in his own day, and the emergence of psychoanalytical approaches in literary studies has made a significant contribution to the discussion of gender in his stories. Hence, giving a background account of major contributions to this approach in Hemingway scholarship is necessary to clarify the rationale behind the present study. However, a detailed account of criticism in Hemingway studies will be provided in the literature review chapter.

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[19] These proposals are discussed in the literature review chapter.

[20] To delve deeper into the views of Fielder and Wagner-Martin, see chapter two.

[21] See chapter seven, section 7, "Queer studies, minorities, and the sexual orientation of the code hero."

[22] Due to the vast range of concepts linked to Lacanian psychoanalysis and Kristeva's "abject," the terms that need clarification will be explained in chapter four ("Jacques Lacan as the root of Kristeva's theory of the abject") and in chapter five ("Julia Kristeva and the abject").

One of the earliest examples of a psychoanalytical perspective on Hemingway's fiction is that of Philip Young (1952), who relates the stories to the writer's personal life experiences and war traumas and posits that the preoccupations Hemingway's literary works and the events of his life "may be accounted for in psychoanalytic terms. They used to be called symptoms of 'shell shock'; now it is called 'traumatic neurosis.'"[23] Similarly, holding a Freudian perspective, Ronald Smith (1997), in his review of "A Way You'll Never Be," focuses on the psychological aftershocks of war in individuals. Though Smith rejects both Joseph Flora's idea that Nick's war experiences in that story impact his sanity and Kenneth Johnston's view that reads Nick's visit to the front line as a therapy for his wounds, he appreciates the attempt of these two thinkers to connect Nick's previous experiences to his present self. However, Smith criticizes both views for failing to diagnose Nick as "a victim of PTSD."[24] He emphasizes that his reading of the story is corroborated by the two studies of "Big Two-Hearted River" undertaken by Sheridan Baker and by Earl Rovit and Gerry Brenner who identify Nick's fishing trip as a quest to find mental peace after the trauma of war.[25]

In general, the matter of identity, of both the writer and his fictional characters, forms the major preoccupation of Hemingway scholars who adopt a psychoanalytical approach. These psychoanalytical reviews mostly adopt Freudian or Lacanian perspectives to the stories. For instance, Richard Drinnon (1965) makes a Freudian hypothesis regarding Colonel Richard Cantwell's dream in *Across the River and into the Trees*. Paying special attention to the strong relationship between the life drive and death drive,

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[23] *Ernest Hemingway*, 30.

[24] Smith, "Nick Adams and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," 40. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a condition in a person who has "experienced, witnessed, or been confronted with an event involving actual or threatened death, serious injury, and threat to safety" (Alexander, "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," 673).

[25] Smith, "Nick Adams and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," 41.

Drinnon suggests that while the river bears less significance in Hemingway's stories than in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, nevertheless,

> the symbolism of the dream seems almost transparent: the house represents a human body-in this context, a female body; the willows stand for pubic hair; the stable for female genitalia, or, more specifically here, the uterus; and the canal or river for the amniotic fluid of a mother's uterus. The dream takes the young officer back to the womb and expresses his urge to return to a state of inorganic matter. In these essentials and in its compulsive repetition, it is a classic instance of those war dreams which finally persuaded Freud that the goal of life is death.[26]

Despite the fact that Drinnon is mainly concerned with the sexual aspects of the Freudian approach, Kenneth G. Johnston in "Hemingway and Freud: The Tip of the Iceberg" (1984) seeks to forge an association between the artistic features of Ernest Hemingway's style and the tenets of Sigmund Freud's psychology. Thus, he relates Hemingway's iceberg principle to Freud's theory of the conscious (apparent part of the iceberg) within the context of the unconscious (hidden section of the mass). He specifically warns that the simplicity of the former might be deceptive since "Hemingway's is the art of indirection, suggestion, and implication, rather than that of outright omission".[27] He argues that Hemingway's fiction sometimes omits shocking events similar to dream censorship to moderate the feeling of insecurity.[28] Yet, applying Freudian theories to Hemingway's work is not confined to the life drive and the unconscious, since Freud's formulation of the psyche has even more to offer to the investigation of Hemingway's narratives, especially his substantially constructive theory of the Oedipus complex.

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[26] "In the American Heartland," 10.
[27] "Hemingway and Freud," 69.
[28] "Hemingway and Freud," 70.

Later on, with the advancement of feminist readings and gender studies, Nancy Comley and Robert Scholes, in *Hemingway's Genders: Rereading the Hemingway Text* (1994), provide an innovative perspective on Hemingway's stories, which illustrates, in contrast to the mother-father-son triangle of Freud's Oedipus complex, that Hemingway's work "needs no third party because the very birth of the son threatens the life of the father."[29] They closely correlate their Freudian reading with the writer's biography:

> When Papa's sons were born he divorced their mothers and looked for another woman. And when he tried to write about being a good father in *Islands in the Stream*, he ended by killing off the sons. Papa, it seems, was always in flight from fatherhood because fatherhood was death. That is, he was as much an anti-Papa as he was a Papa. Textually, this meant retreating from paternity into the son's subject position.[30]

They add, "many of Hemingway's stories—and especially the early ones—pose the problem of how to attain maturity without paternity. They ask how one can cease to be a boy and become a man without becoming a father like one's own father—and without losing iterative joys of life."[31] Thus, according to Comely and Scholes, "Beneath the patriarchal mask one can discern the features of man resisting the paternal: an anti-papa."[32]

Herbert N. Schneidau (1991) depends on Freud's seminal book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). Schneidau posits that, in accordance with Freud's "repetition compulsion", Hemingway's act of

[29] *Hemingway's Genders*, 17.
[30] *Hemingway's Genders*, 17.
[31] *Hemingway's Genders*, 18–19.
[32] *Hemingway's Genders*, 145.

writing and his characters represent their reliving of trauma.[33] As Schneidau explains, Hemingway's work seems to be an elaboration of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.[34] Similarly, highlighting that trauma is "a trifecta of an event, experience, and narrativization," Antolin Trinidad (2018) proposes that both Hemingway's stories and Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* fulfil the principle of repetition compulsion because they are infected by the trauma of the Great War.[35] In addition, he takes a Darwinian position on the two writers and, in a comparison between Hemingway and Freud, argues that they both regard "the nature of humans as mere flesh."[36] Therefore, he proposes that *The Sun Also Rises* "stares at death and symbolizes the encounter in the pessimism of bringing down humans to their basic organismal, organic origins, no more, no less than the salmon swimming to its death, pulsed by a self-destructive drive."[37]

Despite various Freudian readings of Hemingway's narratives, there is still controversy over the question of whether Hemingway was aware of Freud's psychoanalytical theory. Although Rena Sanderson (1996) states that "it is uncertain if Hemingway actually read Freud,"[38] Ben Stoltzfus (1996) contends:

> Hemingway, when writing *The Sun Also Rises*, had read *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Not only do the characters, verbal traces and linguistic connotations dramatize the pleasure principle and its beyond, it is as though Hemingway had taken to heart Freud's speculative admonition to his grandson (little Ernst) that he play with trains and not with spools. Indeed, Hemingway's taxis,

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[33] Being "a spontaneous and healthy effort to gain a sense of inner control," "repetition compulsion" is the unconscious tendency to reenact the traumas of early life over and over again in order to master them (Gitlin-Weiner, 358).

[34] *Waking Giants*, 185.

[35] "The Great War, Psychobiography and the Narrativization of Trauma," 108.

[36] "The Great War, Psychobiography and the Narrativization of Trauma," 119.

[37] "The Great War, Psychobiography and the Narrativization of Trauma," 119.

[38] "Hemingway and Gender History," 173.

> his trains to San Sebastian, and the Sud Express to Madrid ("the end of the line") are parts of the game that Freud wished his grandson would play.[39]

However, Stoltzfus points out that what matters more than the question of Hemingway's having read Freud is Roland Barthes' notion of the "death of the author," because "insofar as every text manifests desire, it is inevitable that all writing, in one form or another, stage the pleasure principle as a reenactment of Freud's *Fort!/Da*! episode. Writing manifests desire and deferral, simultaneously."[40] He suggests that the fictional elements of Hemingway's narratives build a bridge between the desire to live and the deferral of death. Ultimately adopting a reader-response approach, he concludes it is the reader that reproduces the pleasure principle via their response to the repressed feelings underlying the novel's manifest content.

Although Freud's theories may not seem innovative in the twenty-first century, modern critics have often taken the Freudian approach in their investigation of Hemingway's fiction. In this respect, aligning Hemingway's "emphasis on biological drives as the primary forces behind human behavior" and Darwin's biological "cycle of killing, eating, and procreating," Deirdre Anne McVicker Pettipiece presents a Freudian reading of Hemingway's stories and argues:

> Because much of Freud's work revolves around the phallus, the fear associated with its loss, and the latent homosexuality associated with male bonding, Hemingway perhaps feared that an association with Freud's work would implicate him as a potential sufferer of latent desires. Ironically, by negating Freud's psychoanalytic theory yet subsequently implementing many of its

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[39] *Lacan and Literature*, 64. Later Stoltzfus writes, "there is no evidence that I can find to suggest that Hemingway had read him before 1932, when he was writing 'After the Storm'" ("Hemingway's 'After the Storm,'" 52).

[40] *Lacan and Literature*, 64.

> elements in his work, Hemingway inadvertently engaged in very "Freudian" behavior: he engaged in the reflex mechanism of denial integral to his homosocial acceptance.[41]

Hence the theories of Freud have been the concern of many psychoanalytical critics of Hemingway, as those of Lacan have been.

Of critics who read Hemingway through a Lacanian lens, Stoltzfus is often considered the most prominent. Attempting to present new readings of Hemingway's stories, Stoltzfus justifies his approach by explaining that if Hemingway consciously used Freud's theories and if Lacan depended in turn on Freud, then a Lacanian reading of *The Garden of Eden* would be fully reasonable.[42] Stoltzfus associates the invisible part of Hemingway's iceberg with Lacan's notion of the repressed which encompasses "castration, death, desire, and the Other."[43] He concludes, "[b]y using the Oedipal triangle and Freudian language in ways not originally intended, Hemingway, in effect, deconstructs desire, thereby affirming the presence of a new 'garden' within which happiness is possible."[44] Stoltzfus's studies on Hemingway mainly concentrate on Lacan's linguistic attitude to the unconscious (of both the characters and Hemingway as writer). In this way he attempts to uncover the latent content of the narratives by elaborating on the metaphoric and metonymic aspects of the stories to illuminate notions of life and death.

In "Hemingway's 'After the Storm': A Lacanian Reading," for instance, Stoltzfus regards the story as a speech, which, according to Lacan's analysis of language, is an attempt "to rediscover the 'discourse of the Other,'" since "[i]n the production of narrative (the sailor's story of his fight, the hiding

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[41] *Sex Theories and the Shaping of Two Moderns*, xxv.
[42] *Lacan and Literature*, 92.
[43] *Lacan and Literature*, 93.
[44] *Lacan and Literature*, 101.

out, and the salvage), unconscious content is condensed as metaphor and displaced as metonymy."[45] The article attempts to emphasize the significance of the discourse of the Other in both the manifest and latent content of the story. If Lacan hypothesizes that the unconscious is structured like a language,[46] then, Stoltzfus infers, "'After the Storm,' like every narrative, is the melding of language and the unconscious."[47] He continues by saying that the plot of the story relates to the manifest content of the story and that the individual elements and objects present in the narrative represent, via the displacement and condensation of Hemingway's unconscious, a latent content of "impotence, death, and desire."[48] Stoltzfus's reading of the story thus recapitulates Lacan's understanding of the Oedipus complex as based on repression, death, and desire.

Stoltzfus bases his Lacanian reading of Hemingway on the premise that because every story is the product of the unconscious its metaphorical discourse unveils the mechanism of desire. He explains:

> After the fight and "after the storm" are therefore synonymous. The storm is a metaphor of shipwreck, actual as well as psychological. Not only is the title a metaphor for tragedy and trauma, the story itself is a metaphor of repression, death, and desire: a death of the self, a death wish against the father (the Law), and desire for the mother.[49]

What makes Stoltzfus more than simply a Lacanian reader of Hemingway is his statement that "Writing, like psychoanalysis, repeats the discontent of what never took place during that 'time-event' referred to as the primal scene. The so-called fantasy of desire, incest, castration, death, and repression

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[45] "Hemingway's 'After the Storm,'" 50.
[46] Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, 179.
[47] "Hemingway's 'After the Storm,'" 51.
[48] "Hemingway's 'After the Storm,'" 51.
[49] "Hemingway's 'After the Storm,'" 53.

reenact not what took place, but what did not."[50] Stoltzfus' comments on Hemingway play such an important role in Hemingway scholarship that Laurence W. Mazzeno presumes that Stoltzfus's analysis of *The Sun Also Rises* in *Lacan and Literature* (1996), being heavily influenced by the work of Lacan, "made a compelling case for Hemingway's first major work of fiction as a postmodern novel."[51] Mazzeno's evaluation is also verified by Stoltzfus's *Lacan and Literature: Purloined Pretexts*, where Stoltzfus adopts a postmodern Lacanian reading of the novel by focusing on the narrative's "floating signifiers."[52] He takes the narrative as the main character and the story as the arena of the narrative's unconscious.

Stoltzfus relates the discourse of the Other to the incest taboo in *A Farewell to Arms* and views Frederic's love for Catherine as his repressed desire for the mother; thus, the fact that they merely pretend to be married hints at the prohibited essence of their relationship. When the Law-of-the-Father seeks to castrate Frederic's love for Catherine which is constituted by death and desire, Stoltzfus observes:

> For Lacan all discourse is always dual because of the repression of desire at the time of the primal scene when the Law cleaves the infant/mother relationship. During the mirror phase, before the separation and irrevocable exile of the self, the mother/infant unit is experienced as a oneness—a longing for the primal oneness that is subsequently incorporated into desire. This sense of exile manifests itself in terms of a paradise lost and as a form of death (castration). The combination of loss and repressed desire (for the mother) coexists throughout life influencing all behavior and all decisions. This loss is also perceived as an absence. Frederic's need to write his story, in the light

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[50] "Hemingway's 'After the Storm,'" 53.
[51] *The Critics and Hemingway*, 198.
[52] "Hemingway's 'After the Storm,'" 54.

of the *Fort!/Da!*, is a form of repetition triggered by the similarities between his recent experiences and the forces of the primal scene.[53]

The role of the parents and the repressive impact of the father are main concerns in Lacanian studies on Hemingway. For example, referring to the association between the psychological damage incurred by parents and the social repression used by culture inherent in Lacan's statement that "Law and repressed desire are one and the same thing," Peter Messent (1992) considers Nick Adams to be under the influence of such an association.[54] Messent holds that Nick's father "(the Law's representative) opposes his desires with the voice of cultural restraint. Nick himself then appears to re-create his father's role, to a degree at least, in his subsequent relations with his own child."[55] Likewise, Kenneth W. Harrow studies "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" according to Lacan's three phases of the Oedipal conflict and focuses on the processes Macomber undergoes before he achieves male speech.[56] At the beginning of the story, Harrow writes:

> Margaret would function as a substitute for his mother, and here she substitutes for a figure with whose desire Macomber identifies. In other words, Macomber subordinates his own desire to that of Margaret, and would seek to complete her desire through an accumulation of those objects that would function as fetishistic phalluses.[57]

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[53] *Lacan and Literature*, 74.
[54] *Ernest Hemingway*, 49.
[55] *Ernest Hemingway*, 49.
[56] Based on Lacan and Freud, the process of the individual's socialization takes place in three phases of the Oedipal complex. The first phase sees the child being attracted to the mother as the object of desire; the second stage is concerned with being disappointed by finding the father as their rival; and, in the third one the child starts to feel threatened by the menace of castration by the father in case of incest with the mother (Jirgens, "Lacan," 397).
[57] "Gordimer Contre Hemingway," 189.

However, after he manages to overcome his fear, he identifies with the figure of the father ("figure of repression") which is portrayed in his speaking with the voice of the father.[58] As a result, Margaret can no longer conquer or control him, and "the male authority is finally established over the woman."[59] Hence, the tendency to transgress the law and offend the Law-of-the-Father, as well as the importance of the Other, has particular significance in psychoanalytical investigations of Hemingway's narratives.

In this respect, Ljubica Matek breaks new ground in Hemingway scholarship by proposing that Hemingway's female characters serve as a Lacanian mirror to the male characters. To buttress this bold claim, she builds on a remark by Sean Homer: "To exist one has to be recognized by an-other. But this means that our image, which is equal to ourselves, is mediated by the gaze of the other. The other, then, becomes the guarantor of ourselves."[60] Matek explains her view as follows:

> In these texts, male characters use the institution of marriage or a relationship as a means of supporting their male supremacy and female subordination in which the reduction of a woman to a nurse, helper or even apprentice, helps the man to gain a feeling of power.[61]

In other words, women and marriage act like a mirror into which men see the image of a real man. Therefore, Matek concludes:

> Hemingway's male characters, both consciously and subconsciously, assign to their women the stereotypical role of a faithful supporter, usually with no life of their own, in order to sustain an

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[58] "Gordimer Contre Hemingway," 193.
[59] "Gordimer Contre Hemingway," 193.
[60] "Reading Hemingway's Genders Through Jacques Lacan," 50.
[61] "Reading Hemingway's Genders Through Jacques Lacan," 49–50.

> ideal image of themselves. These men use the institution of marriage or a relationship as a means of supporting their male supremacy, which leads to the female's subordination. Consequently, women are reduced to the role of a nurse or even an apprentice, while their subordinate position creates in men the feeling of power.[62]

Matek, for instance, elaborates on the example of Nick and Marjorie in "The End of Something" and argues that Nick loses interest in Marjorie at the end of the story exactly because she is no longer the woman she was at the beginning of the story. While Marjorie is an apprentice to Nick while they are fishing, she has, by the end of the story, acquired all the skills herself; hence, Nick "cannot look into her curious eyes reflecting an ideal image of a man who knows everything."[63] It means that as Marjorie loses the status of being a mirror to Nick, Nick loses his position as master, which is, though enjoyable to Marjorie, no longer fun for Nick, who leaves her with no explanation. Matek identifies similar patterns in Hemingway's other stories, such as "Cat in the Rain." In contrast to the patriarchy criticized in older Hemingway scholarship, Matek often assigns to female characters a master-like position.

Under the influence of new gender approaches, twenty-first-century scholarship has observed more progressive Lacanian approaches to Hemingway's male characters. For instance, in his study of masochism in the symbiotic process of individuation in Hemingway's characters, Richard Fantina analyzes fetishism, humiliation, suspense, pain, and violence as the elements of male masochism in the stories. For Fantina, heterosexual male masochism is defined as follows:

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[62] "Reading Hemingway's Genders Through Jacques Lacan," 347.
[63] "Reading Hemingway's Genders Through Jacques Lacan," 61.

> the specific sexual desire of a man to become the passive partner in a heterosexual relationship; to submit himself sexually to, and to suffer pain and/or humiliation administered by, a woman whom he has elevated into a position of superiority and dominance.[64]

Making use of Lacan's notion of the Other, he believes "Hemingway's characters dwell so excessively upon the idea of symbiosis that they resist individuation and seek defiantly to remain within the protective sphere of the Other."[65] Lacan's concept of the Other so profoundly informs a main tenet in the psychoanalytical analysis of Hemingway that, as Valerie Rohy notes, "Hemingway echoes Lacan's premise that subjectivity is always routed through the other, through the reflection in the glass."[66]

Yet, one of the most deconstructive psychoanalytical readings from gender criticism in Hemingway scholarship belongs to Debra Moddelmog, who in her *Reading Desire: In Pursuit of Ernest Hemingway* (1999) reveals that it is the desire of each critic that forms Hemingway's personality.[67] Their desire is in turn formed under the impact of culture, power, and gender. [68]

Despite the various psychological accounts of Hemingway's art, Jean-Michel Rabaté warns of misconceptions common in rudimentary concepts of Lacanian psychoanalysis:

> Rare theoretical asides, alas, reveal a profound misreading of Lacan's most basic concepts. For instance the couple S1 and S2: in a reading of Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*, a discussion of David's use of the French '*la mer*' produces a graph in which S1 is the first signifier: *la mer*, whose signified is 'the sea', and S2 is called the repressed 'referent': *la mère* (the mother) (pp. 97

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[64] *Ernest Hemingway*, 6.
[65] *Ernest Hemingway*, 48.
[66] *Anachronism and Its Others*, 100.
[67] *Reading Desire*, 41.
[68] *Reading Desire*, 31.

and 99) – whereas it is quite obvious that for Lacan there would be only one signifier in this case, namely something like *'lamer*,' whose fundamental polysemy would then create effects along the signifying chain.[69]

These misconceptions, along with the magnitude of the iceberg which Hemingway has produced, support the idea that there is still more to be unveiled in Hemingway's stories in spite of attempts up to the present. Though Lacanian perspectives to Hemingway's fiction, similar to Freudian ones, have advanced new readings of his stories, critical omissions remain.

Gender studies is maturing, and a wealth of novel approaches have been developed. These approaches include Jacques Derrida's criticism of phallocentrism and binarism, and the employment of *jouissance* by the "holy trinity" in French feminism (Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva).[70] It means that literary studies have the chance to look at texts through these new lenses. Nonetheless, this opportunity has not yet been wholly welcomed by Hemingway's scholars. Due to the stories' notoriety for machismo, it might seem at first that his stories ignore the repressed such as women and other marginalized groups, but there must be something more than the latent content to be investigated in the work of the writer.

As will be discussed in the literature review chapter, the contradictory views of critics on gender in Hemingway's stories highlight the need for more work on the issue. It seems that there is little intersectional research on queerness in his straight or sexually unconventional characters, and no study, to my knowledge, has considered gender subjectivity vis-à-vis Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection in

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[69] *Jacques Lacan*, 216.

[70] Toril Moi, in her *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (1985), calls Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva "the Holy Trinity" (Oliver and Walsh, *Contemporary French Feminism*, 10).

Hemingway's short stories. In the present study, this gap has been bridged by considering the stories as a locus in which characters, as in an organic unity, participate in a fictional world that accommodates—and offers—the possibility of courage ("grace under pressure").[71] Among the different interpretations of what Hemingway means by courage, Kerry S. Walters summarizes as follows:

> Ernest Hemingway coined an expression that seems to capture what lies at the heart of this conventional understanding of manly courage. Courage, or "guts," as he called it, is "grace under pressure." When confronted with danger or a threatening challenge, whether it's physical or otherwise, the person with guts doesn't panic or fall into hysteria or back down. Calmly, with cool deliberation and unshakable resolve, he deals with the situation, and does so without showy self-promotion. Someone who displays grace under pressure demonstrates that he possesses strong character and is independent, self-reliant, assertive, and confident. He's in charge of his own destiny. He lets the world know that he can handle himself in tight spots. He isn't someone to be messed with.[72]

Though Walters interprets this view of courage as "macho," it could also be argued that Hemingway's grace under pressure could be read as not being informed by sexual prejudice. The fact that Hemingway's courage relates to a threatening danger, on the one hand, and self-assertion against being

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[71] In 1926, Hemingway wrote to F. Scott Fitzgerald that courage is "grace under pressure" (Shuman, *Great American Writers*, 668).

[72] *Profiles in Christian Courage*, 4.

deceived or taken advantage of, on the other hand, bears close affinities with Kristeva's abjection as the act of casting off filth to protect the self.[73]

Although I could have dedicated the study to one side of the male-female dichotomy, such a view would have rendered it insufficient. First of all, recent theoretical developments have revealed that sexuality goes beyond categorizing individuals as either male or female, each being attached to a set of conventional attributes. Secondly, there are growing appeals for interdisciplinary studies of literature, gender, and psychoanalysis. One of the major topics to be investigated in this field is how the works of artists in the literary canon can be revised in terms of these new approaches. Further, the study could have concentrated on Hemingway's novels, but due to the large number of his short stories (seventy-one), I found it more challenging to figure out how so many different plots and themes could be coordinated in a more complex contribution to the study of gender in Hemingway.[74]

The research question that emerged from the above considerations is whether Kristeva's theory of abjection can account for the different gender approaches that critics have taken to Hemingway's short stories under a single thesis capable of uniting propositions that may seem, or that are, contradictory. By examining both male and female characters, the present study argues that the stories depict characters as individuals collaborating to write the story of sexual liberation anew. If, within language, "[t]hat other sex, the feminine, becomes synonymous with a radical evil that is to be suppressed" (*PH* 70), then why not narrate the feminine (and the repressed in general) through the masculine?

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[73] As Kristeva notes in an interview, abjection is "above all a revolt of the person against an external menace from which one wants to keep oneself at a distance, but of which one has the impression that it is not only an external menace but that it may menace us from the inside" (*The Portable Kristeva*, 374).

[74] "Hemingway experimented more with the short story genre than almost any other American writer" (Reynolds, "Hemingway's *In Our Time*," 37).

This idea is summed up in the interaction between Roger and Helena in "The Strange Country." It does not matter who is recognized as the writer, but that a story gets written. This view is also projected in the conversation of the two characters. In this excerpt, Roger begins speaking:

> "Why don't you write instead of making up the stories?"
>
> "I do write. But it's not as much fun as making up the stories and it's much harder. Then they're not nearly as good. The ones I make up are wonderful."
>
> "But you're always the heroine in the stories you write?"
>
> "No. It's not that simple."
>
> "Well let's not worry about it now." He took another sip of the absinthe and rolled it under his tongue.
>
> "I never worried about it at all," the girl said. "What I wanted, always, was you and now I'm with you. Now I want you to be a great writer." (*CSS* 643)

The story entails the happiness of the members of a community, as Roger says:

> "I don't know, daughter. I think the story business is dangerous. First you could make up stories about something innocuous, like me, and then there could be all sorts of other stories. There might be bad ones."
>
> "You're not so innocuous."
>
> "Oh yes I am. Or the stories are anyway. Saving me is fairly innocuous. But first you might be saving me and then next you might be saving the world. Then you might start saving yourself."
>
> "I'd like to save the world [. . .]." (*CSS* 642–643)

A possible solution to the vague references in this passage—"something innocuous" and "all sorts of other stories" —could be approached through Kristeva's concept of the semiotic. Beginning from Lacan's three registers of the Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic, Kristeva adds a fourth register designated the semiotic, located between Lacan's Real and Imaginary and associated with the maternal body as well as

the material aspects of language. The semiotic has such vigor in the production of meaning that, as Simon Malpas and Paul Wake contend, it "is feared and loathed as a threat to the subject, rather than celebrated for its radical possibilities."[75] Therefore, heuristically adopting Kristeva's notion of abjection, the present work attempts to ascertain how abjection can integrate scholarly approaches to gender in Hemingway.

Among the various theoretical viewpoints on Hemingway's stories, psychoanalysis seems to offer valuable insight because, like the narratives themselves, it believes in the principle of the truth lying beneath the surface. In this regard, Earl Rovit and Gerry Brenner posit, "As a tool for measuring the worth of a work of art, psychoanalytic criticism is of arguable value." However, they go on to emphasize:

> Regardless how one regards psychoanalytic criticism, its discovery of concealed meanings does not at all negate other equally valuable meanings in the interpretation of a fiction. Moreover, it can be useful as one among many tools in hypothesizing a direction or a focus of examination in which the concealed springs of the creative fountain may show themselves.[76]

Rovit and Brenner's idea about other interpretations provides a valuable framework to study whether Hemingway's characters, as Fantina puts it, "dwell so excessively upon the idea of symbiosis that they resist individuation and seek defiantly to remain within the protective sphere of the Other," or the stories project a fictional world with characters who defend their boundaries against the threatening forces of the Other.[77] In other words, it is time to figure out if abjection plays any role in this symbiosis and the individuation of Hemingway's characters. Thus, the present research intervenes with a relatively different perspective of his characters' identity.

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[75] *The Routledge Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory*, 254.
[76] *Ernest Hemingway*, 106.
[77] *Ernest Hemingway*, 48.

Moreover, in psychoanalytic criticism, as will be explained in chapter five, what distinguishes Kristeva's approach is her emphasis on the necessity of considering both the semiotic and the Symbolic. According to Kristeva, in the process of signification, we depend on both the semiotic and Symbolic, because meaning in general and subjectivity in particular emerge only through the dialectic relationship between the two. Hence, the benefit of deploying Kristeva's abjection is that it enables a bilateral investigation of both the individual and language. Her theory rarely encourages or validates infringement or revolution against the status quo. Juliana de Nooy observes that "Kristeva claims to identify a successful, non-transgressive revolt, it seems to be recuperated by the semiotic-symbolic dialectic."[78] Thus, "revolt" to Kristeva does not denote merely transgression, but instead, as Kelly Oliver states:

> Revolt, then, is not a transgression against law or order but a displacement of its authority within the psychic economy of the individual. The individual displaces the authority that it associated with the law and now sees that authority as its own; this is how the operation of displacement works in intimate revolt. This displacement of the authority of the law authorizes the individual. Paradoxically, social authority becomes individual authority through the individual's revolt against that very authority. Psychoanalysis and literature become the primary domains of this revolutionary displacement. This displacement gives the individual a sense of inclusion in meaning-making and belonging to the social that support creative activities and the sublimation of drives.[79]

[78] *Derrida, Kristeva, and the Dividing Line*, 127.
[79] "Revolt and Forgiveness," 79.

Likewise, Kristeva emphasizes the impossibility of eradicating the Symbolic so much that there is little discrepancy among thinkers. For instance, similar to Oliver, Anthony Elliott and Bryan S. Turner affirm:

> Kristeva does not think that the semiotic or affective realm can simply replace symbolic or rational law; but she does hold that rationality in itself is insufficient for genuine social creation [. . .]. In *Crisis of the European Subject*, Kristeva argues that contemporary multicultural societies are typically mixtures of normative structures and rationalized identities on the one hand, and affective and unconscious significations on the other.[80]

On the one hand, what matters to Kristeva is that the semiotic must be expressed without yielding the entire privilege of expression to the Symbolic; on the other hand, Kristeva argues that what could intensify the vigor of the semiotic is the material (poetic) aspect of language, which she relates to the term she calls "semanalysis."[81] Semanalysis suggests that "the *semiotic* is the material representation in language of our bodily origins and unconscious drives and desires that the *symbolic* attempts to mask or efface with the illusion of mastery and univocal semantics."[82] Kristeva finds specifically modernist literature, such as Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed* (1872), James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), successful in revitalizing the semiotic. Frances Restuccia writes, "Kristeva attributes [the semiotic] especially to modernist literature and of course the thought specular the power to incite such a psychoanalytic experience for the reader and viewer."[83] Douglas Tallack, likewise, notes, "The *chora* [semiotic] remains

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[80] *On Society*, 124.
[81] For more elucidation of "semanalysis," refer to chapter five.
[82] Joy, O'Grady, and Poxon, *French Feminists on Religion*, 85.
[83] *The Blue Box*, 15.

a 'live' source of negativity or heterogeneity, recognisable, for instance, in the apparent disorder of modernist literature."[84]

Hence, to examine how this displacement of authority takes place within Hemingway's stories, the narratives must be reread. To this end, unveiling the way the semiotic and Symbolic interact in the short stories of Hemingway (as a prominent figure of modernist fiction), the present research examines the way the characters exploit the semiotic to create tensions in the Symbolic. In other words, the present work intends to investigate whether the short stories can be categorized within the framework of the avant-garde literature that Kristeva associates with the semiotic. Concerning this bilateral interaction, the notion of the abject plays a crucial role, since in any revolt there is a repressed side, an unspeaking female other that Kristeva calls the abject. Similar to any revolt, the attempt to bring the unspeaking (or unspeakable) into words corresponds with simultaneous loss and gain, a concept reflected in Deirdre Anne McVicker Pettipiece's comment on androgyny in Hemingway: "[F]or Hemingway, androgyny or at least, the possession of androgynous characteristics, was a positive attribute. It was also a negative one, however, for as we shall see, Hemingway would forever view androgyny as both an asset and a threat."[85] Thus, Hemingway's view of androgyny and Kristeva's theory of the abject share the simultaneous qualities of menace and potentiality. It is the aim of this research to correlate these elements.

The overall goal of this work is to delve deeper into the lower parts of the metaphoric iceberg and discover deeper facets in the depiction of gender in Hemingway's art. Scrutinizing abjection in Hemingway's narratives in the context of gender can modify how thinkers perceive the fictional milieu of the stories regarding style and the stories' themes in relation to the individuals' self and identity. The

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[84] *Critical Theory*, 22.
[85] *Sex Theories and the Shaping of Two Moderns*, 59.

current study investigates the way the stories depict a fictional world that is averse to settling down or being linguistically defined in terms of gender, and one that is saliently projected in the code heroes' relationship with women. Abjecting the linguistically pre-defined gender roles, the code heroes effect a gap (or absence) in the structure of language. Declining to eradicate the power structure, the protagonists are studied as cells that are both parts of society and a threat to it, existing on the borderline between maturity and annihilation.

Hemingway maintains such a balance in the coexistence of cultural forces and the desire of the individuals that scholars usually associate the stories with the realm of either culture (Symbolic) or nature (semiotic). As Susan F. Beegel writes, "In 1835 Ralph Waldo Emerson defined 'Nature' as 'all that is separate from us,' and, with few exceptions, criticism and biography of Ernest Hemingway to date exemplifies our separation of nature and culture."[86] Yet, it could also be argued that this dialectical relationship between the Symbolic and semiotic is comparable to the interpretation of war settings in the stories by scholars such as Harry Levin, who believes that Hemingway's "fiction came to represent life as being all about the fight to capture a state of plenitude or authenticity, something that for his narrators remains always elusive."[87] In the present work, this elusiveness will be read in terms of the indecisiveness accompanying Kristeva's notion of abjection.

In the context of the code heroes and abjection, the characters will be examined as individuals on the verge of life or death, as Paul Giles writes:

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[86] "Eye and Heart," 53.

[87] Giles, "The Novel after the Great War," 444. Nonetheless, there is another line of thought that considers the protagonists as victims of war; for example, James H. Justus notes, "Man as victim in a world at war is, arguably, the fundamental twentieth-century vision, and its most compelling spokesman is Hemingway. If he was not the first American writer to appreciate this permanent condition—it is already a settled conviction in Dreiser, Crane, and London at the turn of the century—he was the first to articulate it without the pretension of intellectual theorizing, instinctively aware even in the early 1920s that to fit the disturbing truth into a framework of theoretical structures was itself a kind of softening of the truth" ("The Later Fiction: Hemingway and the Aesthetics of Failure," 53).

> Hemingway's notorious violence, in other words, is incorporated into a psychological and philosophical world of self-immolation; for all of the author's stylistic innovations, his texts are haunted by specters of absence, by the wounds not only of wartime but also of ontological duality and a categorical loss of innocence.[88]

If Hemingway depicted transgressive or criminal characters, society would readily ban them and label them as "perverts," and the stories would not lead to any act of performance. On the contrary, the stories feature many elements of ambiguity and legitimate acts of deviation. It is as if the reader has stepped into a world that resists stability. Therefore, the atmosphere that Hemingway creates will be studied as a world of delirium and instability. Different elements contribute to this atmosphere: sexual deviation and minorities, sickness, pain, pregnancy, death, war, blood, and darkness, as well as the settings of the stories.[89]

Exploring abjection, the present work intends to link various justifiable readings of the stories, similar to urban electrical wiring that gives light to the various buildings of a city while the people in each building are busy with their own business in a network called a community. Unlike Kelli A. Larson who believes, as cited by Josep M. Armengol-Carrera, "most of the existing studies on both gender and race in Hemingway's fiction may be and have been described as repetitive or 'dead-end,'" the present

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[88] *American World Literature*, 136.

[89] Homosexuality has often been identified as one of the common concerns of Hemingway's fiction, as Charles J. Nolan in the article on "The Mother of a Queen" comments: "Rather the story is perhaps best read as an exploration of subject matter—homosexuality—that held Hemingway's interest throughout his life as he continued to record in a handful of stories, in a posthumously published novel, and in passages here and there throughout his work the diversity and complexity of sexual experience he saw all about him" ("Essential Questions: Keys to Meaning in Hemingway's 'The Mother of a Queen,'" 90).

investigation does not attempt to oppose prior scholarship as much as it proposes to build on it.[90] Therefore, I end this part with the words of the translator of Derrida's *Dissemination*, Barbara Johnson:

> The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or generalized skepticism, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification *within the text itself*. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not meaning but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. This, of course, implies that a text signifies in more than one way, and to varying degrees of explicitness.[91]

Likewise, the present research would suggest just one other way of signification in Hemingway's short stories without claiming to be superior to other critical views.

[90] "Race-ing Hemingway: Revisions of Masculinity," 44.
[91] Derrida, Dissemination, xiv.

2 Literature review

The many drafts of Ernest Hemingway's stories reveal how obsessively he edited his work and how seriously he took his craft.[92] Moreover, his art is of such great significance to literary studies that it has become the subject of intense debate in academia. As a result, for a thorough understanding of his fiction, it is essential to provide a brief overview of the main critical studies of his stories. However, the sheer volume of criticism on Hemingway's art of fiction makes it challenging to determine where to start a review. Already at the time of Hemingway's death, Charles Poore forecasted, as book reviewer for *The Times*, "A hatful of pedants will find new allegories, new symbols, in Hemingway, year after year after year."[93] Poore's prediction holds true. As Rédouane Abouddahab reports, "[f]ollowing his suicide in 1961, the 1960s decade saw the publication of almost four hundred serious studies on him, while in the 1970s the number increased to more than seven hundred; and the critical works, far from decreasing, have gained strength throughout the next decades (Beegel, 1996; Wagner, 1998)."[94] In a similar vein, Susan F. Beegel documents in a graph entitled the "Number of scholarly articles and books about Hemingway produced annually from 1961 until 1991" that the number changed from forty to more than one hundred each year.[95] Perhaps one of the chief reasons for the interest lies in the richness of Hemingway's life with respect to both his adventures and his literary craftsmanship. Furthermore, the broad range of subject matter endows his narratives with many layers and brings diverse issues to depiction: war, love, politics, courage, adventure, horror, landscape, and sexuality. Therefore, to contextualize the present intervention,

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[92] In an interview for the *Paris Review* in 1958 Hemingway told George Plimpton that he wrote the ending of *A Farewell to Arms* thirty-nine times with the aim of "getting the words right" (Bloom, *Ernest Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms,"* 27).
[93] Mazzeno, "*The Critics and Hemingway, 1924-2014*," 69.
[94] "Introduction: Fiction, Criticism, and the Ideological Mirror," 14.
[95] "Conclusion: The Critical Reputation of Ernest Hemingway," 278.

a general overview of Hemingway scholarship will be provided followed by a discussion of relevant research in the area of gender.

Though Hemingway's first collection of stories, *In Our Time* (1924), was generally welcomed by his contemporaries, there were also some critics who disparaged his art of storytelling. Literary recognition and journalistic endorsement of Hemingway's narratives have usually run parallel with negative criticism of his work since his early writings, as can be seen in the comments of William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald (Hemingway's confidant).

Though the three writers are contemporaries, the relationship between Hemingway and Faulkner, as rivals, lacks the intimacy between Hemingway and Fitzgerald, the representative novelist of the Jazz Age. Although Faulkner admired Hemingway's art of storytelling, he sometimes felt compelled to scold him as a competitor.[96] In this respect, likening their writing to bullfighting, Joseph Fruscione writes, "As rival modernists and artistic foils, Hemingway and Faulkner regularly referred to each other when discussing writing as a craft, as in Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* or their Nobel Prize addresses."[97] Fruscione also states that while Hemingway rebukes Faulkner for lacking disciplined "stylistic control," what Faulkner commonly reproaches Hemingway for is the lack of "sentence length, narrative opacity, stream of consciousness, and nonlinearity."[98]

Some other contemporary thinkers also made disparaging remarks about Hemingway's art. For instance, though praising Hemingway for "dramatic decorum," Robert Penn Warren rebukes his work for

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[96] *The Jazz Age* was the term coined by F. Scott Fitzgerald to describe the ostentatious, prosperous, and liberal society of the 1920s. The term stands for the spirit of the decade that is personified by Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda, who Kathleen Drowne and Patrick Huber describe as "a fun-loving, irreverent, adventuresome pair who loved to party and to spend money recklessly" (Piott, *Daily Life in Jazz Age America*, 83).

[97] *Faulkner and Hemingway*, 5.

[98] *Faulkner and Hemingway*, 5.

its "monotony and self-imitation,"[99] or, William Troy, commenting on *Winner Take Nothing*, identifies repetition as a shortcoming of Hemingway's stories and comments: "'Unless Mr. Hemingway realizes within the next few years that fiction based on action as catharsis is becoming less and less potent,' he will lose his reputation."[100] Nevertheless, it could also be argued that repetition is not in itself a literary weakness as long as it fulfills an artistic function and serves to communicate the general theme of the text. In Hemingway's short stories, repetition often functions like a Butlerian reiteration that leads to an act of gender performance.[101] Not limited to Hemingway's contemporaries, these derogatory voices continued into the next decades as well, although Troy's prediction has failed to materialize since Hemingway's texts continue to be relevant for the twenty-first-century thinkers.

In spite of the disapproving and sometimes derogatory remarks on Hemingway's art, critics have scarcely doubted the merit of his short stories. For instance, admitting that "the boundaries of Ernest Hemingway's literary reputation have contracted" by the passage of time and that as a writer he "gets smaller as you grow older," Maxwell Geismar (1962), in the essay "Was 'Papa' a Truly Great Writer?," regards the short stories as an exception, saying that they are "immune to criticism as they will be impervious to time."[102] Similarly, Edmund Wilson considers Hemingway's short stories "one of the most considerable achievements of the American writing of our time."[103]

Nonetheless, the dominance of men and masculinity in Hemingway's art combined with the apparently trivial presence of women has provoked torrents of denunciation from his critics. Although

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[99] "Ernest Hemingway," 44.

[100] Meyers, *Ernest Hemingway*, 15–16.

[101] The contemporary feminist Judith Butler proposes the idea of gender "performativity" which hypothesizes that gender subjectivity is constructed by repeated individual acts, and that thus femininity, similar to masculinity, "is the effect, rather than the cause, of behaviors held by essentialists to be natural and intrinsic to women" (Allan, "Essentialism," 74).

[102] Mazzeno, *The Critics and Hemingway,* 70.

[103] Meyers, *Ernest Hemingway*, 20.

this issue has been interpreted in diverse manners, the dominant line of critique holds it up as the suppression of women and, at its worst, a manifestation of misogyny. For instance, discussing the absence of war and love from Nick Adams's consciousness in "Big Two-Hearted River," Alex Vernon emphasizes the suppression of women by writing, "No women in Nick's life appear in the story, as if to suppress thoughts of one—war or women—he necessarily must suppress the other. Even the two trout he catches are both male."[104]

Despite Hemingway being regarded as a paragon of machismo in the 1930s, there has been considerable advancement in the study of his work since then. The early unsophisticated critical readings mostly fall into the category of either admiration from critics such as Lionel Trilling, Dos Passos, V. S. Pritchett, C. P. Snow, and John O'Hara, or censuring comments from contemporaries such as J. B. Priestley and Oliver La Farge.[105]

In spite of the negative and sometimes pejorative judgments about Hemingway's fiction, there has been considerable progress made in the study of Hemingway since the basic critical views of the 1930s that vary from that of Lionel Trilling to Delmore Schwartz. While the former, in "Hemingway and His Critics" (1961), proposes to "distinguish between Hemingway the man and Hemingway the artist,"[106] the latter emphasizes the moral code of Hemingway's hero as "the toughness and reticence that 'derives from the American masculine ideal.'"[107] However, taking the view that Hemingway's art has more to do with sensation, Schwartz regards *To Have and Have Not* as "a 'stupid and foolish book' that never should

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[104] *Soldiers Once and Still*, 64.
[105] Mazzeno, *The Critics and Hemingway*, 69.
[106] Strychacz, *Hemingway's Theaters of Masculinity*, 4.
[107] Ross, *The Spell Cast by Remains*, 27.

have been published."[108] In fact, this wide variety of perspectives on his fiction could be a clue to the depth of these narratives despite their modest journalistic style of writing. In light to the iceberg principle, diversity and disparity among Hemingway's interpreters have become more apparent with the passage of time. That is to say, the many layers of his writing have given rise to different readings of his texts in every decade. Hence, scholars in certain periods seem to have understood the stories in ways that are often antithetical to the previous or following period. Paradoxically, these divergent views can remain valid.

The serious study of Hemingway's art starts with the work of his two contemporaries, Carlos Baker's *Life Story* (1969) and Philip Young's *Hemingway* (1952). While the former presents an aesthetic outlook, the latter provides a psycho-historical perspective.[109] Young's work stands out for introducing the term "code hero" for Hemingway's hero, the man who "offers up and exemplifies certain principles of honor, courage, and endurance which in a life of tension and pain make a man a man, as we say, and enable him to conduct himself well in the losing battle that is life. He shows, in the author's famous phrase for it, 'grace under pressure.'"[110] Not only did Hemingway's works arouse the interest of contemporary scholars, but his personal life was also of great interest to his critics. As a journalist Hemingway formed a subject for his fellow journalists, an early example being Charles Fenton's *The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway* (1975). Hence, reviews of his work and life frequently feature in popular magazines and newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

Yet the bulk of studies on Hemingway has been concerned with the biographical study of his writings. Although biographical accounts of writers do not commonly offer much space for interpretation,

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[108] Muller, *Hemingway and the Spanish Civil War*, 141.
[109] Schorer, "Criticism of Hemingway," 515.
[110] Young, *Ernest Hemingway*, 11.

Hemingway's life is an exception. Debra Moddelmog acknowledges, "Even if one counts nothing else, the rash of biographies published in the 1980s and 1990s suggests that Hemingway's reputation and life—and, consequently, his fiction—are under extensive reevaluation, perhaps the most extensive ever undertaken in the world of literary scholarship."[111] Hemingway's life is so rich in adventure that the biographical accounts of his life have never lost their attractiveness for scholars; they range from Carlos Baker's *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (1969), Scott Donaldson's *By Force of Will: The Life and Art of Ernest Hemingway* (1977), Michael Reynolds' *The Young Hemingway* (1998), and Jeffrey Meyers' *Hemingway: A Biography* (1999), to more modern ones including Paul Brody's *Hemingway In Paris: A Biography of Ernest Hemingway's Formative Paris Years* (2014), Verna Kale's *Ernest Hemingway* (2016), James M. Hutchisson's *Ernest Hemingway: A New Life* (2016), Mary V. Dearborn's *Ernest Hemingway: A Biography* (2017), and Richard Bradford's *The Man Who Wasn't There: A Life of Ernest Hemingway* (2020).[112] Addressing diverse aspects of Hemingway's life, these biographical studies have substantially contributed to the advancement of Hemingway scholarship. Nonetheless, as they focus on the facts of his life, they frequently fail to consider how these accounts relate to his fiction, emphasizing Hemingway's character as a man of experience rather than Hemingway's intervention as a writer whose life contributed to his writings. Therefore, though these highly informative studies have much to offer academic studies, they sometimes fail to consider Hemingway's art. Fortunately, studies on Hemingway's work are not confined to biographical accounts of his works, and later approaches have also attempted to unveil unseen parts of the iceberg.

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[111] "Reconstructing Hemingway's Identity," 187.
[112] Carlos Baker is Hemingway's official biographer (Valerie Hemingway, *Running with the Bulls*, 175).

Hemingway's hero, which Philip Young calls the "code-hero," plays such an important role in the criticism of Hemingway that it has long been taken as the major distinguishing characteristic of his fiction. The code-hero is supposed to embody the Lost Generation's depression and disappointment, insofar as the male protagonist, having undergone the trauma of war, is afflicted with hysteria and thus lives the life of a person experiencing a breakdown.[113] Taking the view that Hemingway's fiction mainly examines the code-hero's character by creating a dialogue between his inner self and his social conditions, Rovit and Brenner note:

> Hemingway's aesthetic concerns are not with the depiction of objective reality, but with the fantasy projections of his inner consciousness. The mirror of his art is held up to his own nature, not Nature; and, if he succeeded in casting a definition of the human condition that has been useful to twentieth-century readers, it is because his own human condition, painfully and honestly transmuted into evocative prose in a lifetime of disciplined writing, was in some way deeply representative of the condition of humanity.[114]

Thus, the code hero forms a major concept in the present study of the abject in Hemingway's short stories.

Even though one of the main strengths which the code hero is said to embody is his ability to overcome nature, this optimistic perspective is opposed by a contrasting picture of the narrative world

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[113] The term "Lost Generation" has been introduced by Gertrude Stein, who tells Hemingway about a mechanic that has called her and her fellow American writers, *génération perdue.* However, it is Hemingway who draws more attention to the term in the epigraph of his novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) (Gandal, *War Isn't the Only Hell*, 9).

[114] "Of Tyros and Tutors," 97.

whereby "God is dead, religion has failed, and man seeks a reason to live."[115] Though the gloom and pain depicted in the works implicitly supports the view that Hemingway's art features some realism, it has been taken at different times to suggest naturalistic qualities in his works as well.[116]

Various justifications are presented to support the thesis that his fiction is pieces of realistic literature. For example, due to Hemingway's journalistic style of reporting his narratives, his critics have often tended to label him a realist. In this respect, accepting Hemingway as a "writer of realist fiction,"[117] Elizabeth Dewberry maintains that his art aims "to challenge traditional journalists' and literary realists' assumptions about the relationship among language, history, fact, and fiction."[118] Arthur Bethea also holds a similar perspective and posits that Hemingway's works belong to the school of realism that represents "the subgenre of impressionistic realism."[119]

In contrast, Linda Wagner-Martin contrasts realism's salient interest in visualizing details with Hemingway's own theory of omission and finds it "somewhat ironic that Hemingway's early work is often placed in the 'realist' category."[120] Similarly, Richard Peterson comments that though E. M. Halliday in the article "Hemingway's Narrative Perspective" praises Hemingway as a Jamesian realist, he reproaches him for his failure "to maintain the realistic conventions,"[121] such as the first-person narrator

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[115] Hays, *Fifty Years of Hemingway Criticism*, 148.

[116] Rooted in nineteenth-century France, "realism" is a school of art that tries to show life as it is with little judgment. David Lodge defines realism as "the representation of experience in a manner which approximates closely to descriptions of similar experience in nonliterary texts of the same culture" (Levine, "*From* The Realistic Imagination," 617). Proponents of this style of writing in France are Honoré de Balzac and Gustave Flaubert (Ledger, "Naturalism: 'Dirt and Horror Pure and Simple,'" 69). In the last decades of the century, it develops into a new artistic school called "naturalism." Under the influence of Darwin's theory of natural selection, naturalist literature attempts to depict determinism and the dark aspects of existence. The most prominent naturalist writers include Jack London, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, and Edith Wharton (Frye, *Unguessed Kinships*, 6).

[117] "Hemingway's Journalism," 16.

[118] "Hemingway's Journalism," 17.

[119] *Technique and Sensibility*, 268.

[120] *Ernest Hemingway: A Literary Life*, 34.

[121] *Hemingway: Direct and Oblique*, 168.

in *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* or for the lack of consistency in *To Have and Have Not*.[122] In the end, Peterson strongly rejects the notion of Jamesian realism in Hemingway due to the frequent "philosophizing" passages in his early works.[123]

Another group of scholars show more concern for the naturalistic aspects of Hemingway's fiction and stress the dark determinism in the atmosphere of the stories. This perspective has dominated some studies to the extent that the presence of elements in nature and the wilderness has also been interpreted in light of the Darwinian theory of natural selection. For example, taking animals as representative of environmental forces, Philip Armstrong observes, "For Hemingway, on the other hand, animal agency is innately antagonistic, and it must be challenged, harnessed and overcome in order for authentic experience and real emotion to be realized, whether by art, ritual or blood sports."[124] In highlighting the despair Hemingway's texts convey, some critics who take historical biographical approaches view the stories as having to do with a Darwinian, or even Freudian and Marxian, determinism, as Joseph Wood Krutch in "Love-or the Life and Death of a Value" (1928) underlines: "Hemingway's work (along with that of many other writers of the 1920s) was rooted in 'many facts supposed facts in biology, psychology and anthropology'; from these, especially 'the tenets of Freudianism' and 'the hypotheses of the Darwinian theory.'"[125]

In a similar way, considering Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, James Frazer, and William James as the fathers of 1920s literature, Narayanprasad Meshram suggests that Nick Adams

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[122] Proposing a complete analogy between the art of a painter and that of a novelist, Henry James in *The Art of Fiction* recognizes, "The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life", and a novel should "insist on the fact that as the picture is reality, so the novel is history" (Daley, *Great Writers on the Art of Fiction*, 17).
[123] *Hemingway: Direct and Oblique*, 168.
[124] *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*, 157.
[125] Bender, *The Descent of Love*, 341.

belongs to "an atmosphere, which is violent and hostile. He ends up as a spiritually broken adult finding it difficult to face the outer realities."[126] Regarding the determinism of nineteenth-century European writers as parallel with that of American writers at that time, Meshram concludes:

> The 20th century American novel discards Naturalism as a literary device and tends to be more realistic. However, determinism and the pessimism associated with it remained as parts of the artistic vision of the 20th century American novelist.
>
> Hemingway demonstrates the pessimism with the deterministic view of life. His concept of tragedy is formulated by several factors, which were responsible for modernism as a literary concept.[127]

Hence, the rudimentary features of realism and naturalism seem so interwoven in Hemingway's work that his fiction looks like a coalition of both. In this respect, after referring to Edmund Wilson's idea that Hemingway's modernism is a mingling of American realism and French naturalism as well as a fusion of symbolism and decadence, Carl P. Eby concludes that although realism often stands in opposition to modernism for its obsession with content and mimesis rather than form, "Hemingway certainly thought of himself as both a realist and a modernist."[128] Other readings of Hemingway's stories also allude to the challenge of categorizing Hemingway's stories into one specific school. For instance, discussing the perspective of Civello, who describes in *American Literary Naturalism and its Twentieth Century Transformation* (1994) "how the naturalism of Frank Norris was transformed by Ernest Hemingway,"[129] Richard Lehan remarks that Hemingway "depicted his naturalistic world

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[126] *The Fiction of Ernest Hemingway*, 4.
[127] *The Fiction of Ernest Hemingway*, 68.
[128] "Literary Movements," 174. *Mimesis* is the Greek word for "imitation," which was first used by Plato in *Republic* to mean "re-presentation" of reality (Melberg, *Theories of Mimesis*, 10).
[129] "Literary Movements," 248.

impressionistically [. . .]. Hemingway's is a naturalistic world seen through a Paterian prism in which the emphasis is on a recording consciousness rather than biology, heredity, or environment."[130]

Like Peterson who proposes a link between Hemingway and Henry James, Stephen G. Brown highlights the profound impact of James on American literary Naturalism in general and the works of Stephan Crane and Jack London in particular as two substantial influences on Hemingway's fiction. Brown argues:

> James' theories of Social Darwinism deeply informed the narratives of American Literary Naturalism, in which a 'code hero' is plunged into a realm of deterministic brute forces that mandates his downward adaption (retrenchment, primitivism), in a plot of decline that ends in catastrophic closure—albeit in Hemingway's narratives with a sense of tragic grace.[131]

Though Brown studies the code hero in the context of Darwinism, this concept has been examined from other perspectives, including gender theories, as well.

Because the concept of virility shapes the dominant image of the code hero, gender and sexuality have become a significant aspect of many investigations, not only in relation to Hemingway's personal life but also with regard to his fictional characters. The matter of gender has become such a key issue in Hemingway studies that "Rose Marie Burwell, Gioia Diliberto, Bernice Kert, Michael Reynolds, Carl Rollyson, and Mark Spilka, for example [. . .] find correspondences among Hemingway, his family, and

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[130] *Realism and Naturalism*, 217.
[131] *Hemingway, Trauma and Masculinity*, 202.

the gendered social conditions and examine those conditions to some extent."[132] Debra Moddelmog, in this respect, observes:

> Considerations of gender and sexuality have been central to understanding Ernest Hemingway's life and work from the start of his career in the 1920s to today. One reason for this focus is that Hemingway's special brand of masculinity created both a fascination with and a suspicion about the author's identity and the politics of gender representation in his work.[133]

Though scholarly work on Hemingway has examined diverse themes, sexuality and gender have contributed to much controversy vis-à-vis the discourse on his work. Thus, the contemporary study of gender in his writings is the result of long years of investigation and a great deal of discussion between the two main opposing sides, his admiring critics and the more critical thinkers.

Much like the stories about his adventurous personal life, the studies carried out on Hemingway's fiction (especially from the 1950s on) have led to multilateral controversial investigations with diverse philosophical orientations. For instance, moving a step further from his predecessors, John Killinger, in his *Hemingway and the Dead Gods: A Study in Existentialism* (1960), links the nothingness of existentialism and Hemingway's notion of nada, on the one hand, and gender, on the other.[134] Under the light of existentialism, Killinger understands the efforts of the code hero as an attempt to live the moments of life fully, not only on battlefields but also in his "sexual" affairs; however, rejecting the

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[132] Barlowe, "Hemingway's Gender Training," 148.

[133] Moddelmog, *State of the Field*, 7.

[134] *Nada* is one of the well-known philosophies attributed to Hemingway's stories. Mary Mohanty describes, "This sense of despair and the recognition of this futile effort of man is called by Hemingway Nada, a Spanish word which means 'nothing' or 'nothingness'" (Mohanty, "Theory of *Nada* in Ernest Hemingway's Major Novels," 100).

notion of Hemingway as a clear-cut existential writer, he takes "existentialism as individualism and individual goal setting, in revolt against religious and bourgeois conventions."[135]

The historical events of the 1960s and 1970s play a significant role in the examination of gender in Hemingway's stories. The emergence of French feminism in the 1970s and the growth of Second Wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s in America led to a change in the ideology of Hemingway scholars, placing fresh emphasis on sexuality. The new approaches attempt to highlight women's vibrant role in Hemingway's work so dramatically that Peter Messent (1992) maintains that the efforts by the feminist critics of the early 1970s "led to a fresh examination of his fiction and to the discovery in some of it of a heretofore neglected strain, one which was unusually alert to female sensibilities."[136] Influenced by what Naomi Wolf (1993) calls "victim feminism," the critics of Hemingway under the influence of Second Wave feminism take the side of his women characters in order to take revenge on earlier pro-masculinity critics.[137]

Nonetheless, interpreting Hemingway's women as weakly conceived persists in the last decades of the twentieth century. For instance, placing the blame on the writer, Brian Harding (1989) maintains that because Hemingway "did not succeed in making his females human, the sexual encounters described in his writings are either ridiculous or horrible."[138] Further, misogyny and macho bigotry still form the dominant image of Hemingway in the mind of many readers and even literary scholars, which justifies the present reinterpretation of his work.

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[135] Hays, *The Critical Reception*, 44.

[136] *Ernest Hemingway*, 84.

[137] In her book *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the Twenty-first Century* (1993), Wolf regards the Second Wave feminism of the sixties and seventies outmoded and labels it "victim feminism." By victim feminism, she means that women are not only victims of men who are all evil, and that they also have agency (Detore-Nakamura, "When Our Feminism Is Not Feminist Enough," 60).

[138] *American Declarations of Love*, 104.

Vis-à-vis Hemingway's women, Leslie Fielder comments on Hemingway's work in his book of critical essays *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960), "There are, however, no women in his books."[139] According to Fiedler, Hemingway's women exist just for the sake of fulfilling men's desire, for the writer feels "only really comfortable in dealing with 'men without women.'"[140] Fiedler believes, moreover, that "Hemingway's men prefer each other's company and the dangers of the manly world to the responsibilities associated with women and civilization."[141] Fiedler's perspective is still justifiable to some feminist scholars. As quoted in Ken M. Newton's *In Defence of Literary Interpretation*, Judith Fetterley (1978) takes a more radical feminist approach to the stories and, in her comment on the death of Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms*, concludes that the reader cries at the end not for Catherine's death, but for Frederic Henry, because "all our tears are ultimately for men, because in the world of *A Farewell to Arms* male life is what counts. And the message to women reading this classic love story and experiencing its image of the female ideal is clear and simple: the only good woman is a dead one."[142]

While Fiedler and Fetterley describe Hemingway's women as neglected, some thinkers take a different approach and argue that the female characters are positioned at the center of Hemingway's

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[139] Comley and Scholes, *Hemingway's Genders,* 50.
[140] Hays, *The Critical Reception of Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises,"* 43.
[141] Sanderson, "Hemingway and Gender History," 181.
[142] *In Defence of Literary Interpretation*, 31.

fictional arena.[143] For instance, reinterpreting the female character as the code hero, Jennifer Haytock (2003) highlights the strength of the female protagonist in *A Farewell to Arms* and states that Catherine "acts with a true soldier's ability to live in the moment, Catherine who is the Real 'Hemingway hero,' showing Frederic how to die with little fuss."[144] Similarly, Linda Wagner-Martin, in "'Proud and Friendly and Gently': Women in Hemingway's Early Fiction" (1980), tries to make amends for the hostile view toward Hemingway's women by viewing them from a different perspective. She regards the female character as superior to the code hero in that "[o]ne of the most striking characteristics of Hemingway's women in his early fiction is their resemblance to the later, mature Hemingway hero," though "the women have already reached that plateau of semi-stoic self awareness which Hemingway's men have, usually, yet to attain."[145]

It is not only Wagner-Martin who considers the woman character to be the hero; similarly, Gail D. Sinclair (2002) views Maria and Pilar as the code heroes in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Here, Sinclair rejects previous readings, such as Philip Young's categorization of women as either destructive or daydreaming, Arthur Waldhorn's view of Hemingway's women who either "caress or castrate," John Killinger's classification of women into good or bad effects in men's life, and finally, Leo Gurko's view

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[143] Though both of these trends of analysis are faulty for their absolutist tones, these seemingly contradictory lines of scholarship are relevant and have been considered in the present work in order to maintain a level of objectivity. They make some characters in specific textual contexts seem respectable, and the generalizations they make based on specific clues cannot be applied to many of Hemingway's works. Interestingly, the conflict between these two perspectives corresponds to the dichotomy of nature and culture, as well as that of individual and the law, which lie deep in the background of abjection, one of this study's core concepts. The economy of Hemingway's short stories can be seen as the combination of these two different aspects of American society: the machismo America and America striving to become more cultured. The war settings of the stories can be read more as a representation of inner conflicts rather than as conflicts among warring countries, as Aaron Latham in "A Farewell to Machismo" in the *New York Times* (1977) stresses: "beneath the he-man image Hemingway projected lay a complex, even tormented figure who worked all his life to understand gender issues" (Mazzeno, *The Critics and Hemingway*, 115). This struggle (similar to Kristeva's abjection) involves not only that which is without (between people of different sexes) but also that which is within (in regard to one's inner self).

[144] Haytock, *At Home, at War*, 91.

[145] "Proud and Friendly and Gently," 239.

of Maria as a selfless "female whose idealized selflessness fulfills male sexual fantasy."[146] Instead, Sinclair concludes that Hemingway's "women exhibit greater inner fortitude while participating in the same essentially male-dominated world waged in a brutal war and rugged survival."[147] In a similar way, Linda Patterson Miller (2002) highlights the necessity of reading between the lines in regard to Hemingway's fiction and its women, and suggests that:

> many of Hemingway's women reach that third or fourth dimension where true art lives, even though Hemingway's macho label continues to prohibit a totally unbiased reading of his art [. . .]. With Hemingway's women especially, he discovered them more fully by giving them little to say. His women embody the 7/8 of the iceberg that is down under and carry much of the work's emotional weight accordingly.[148]

Some readers do not assume that Hemingway's depiction of women is intrinsically misogynistic. The narratives could imply that the worlds they depict have given women less opportunity to make their presence felt. That is to say, the short stories, by allotting women inferior roles, may accurately represent the voice of the suppressed female part of the society. Hence another line of thought sees Hemingway's sexual presentation of characters as representative of the spirit of early-twentieth-century society. For example, according to Thomas Strychacz's report in "Masculinity," critics such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar regard modernist writings as the portrayal of the writers' worries about the increasing economic power that capitalism granted women in the first decades of the twentieth century; thus, in Hemingway's stories, this anxiety is portrayed by means of the injuries and trauma of the male characters

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[146] "Revisiting the Code," 95.
[147] "Revisiting the Code," 96.
[148] "In Love with Papa," 6.

(e.g., Nick Adams and Henry) who are wounded in the war.[149] Similarly, Greg Forter notes that Hemingway's machismo reveals "how the author experienced and interpreted the larger, historical meanings of gender in which he found himself enmeshed."[150] In terms of the milieu of Hemingway's contemporary society, the first years of the twentieth century witnessed struggles for women's rights to vote and be educated. In Jamie Barlowe's words (2000), "Whether practiced by masculinists or feminists, the zeal for social reform and good works permeated life in Oak Park during Ernest Hemingway's childhood."[151] It could thus be inferred that Hemingway grew up in a society that was highly concerned with gender issues and sexual discrimination.

Yet, these examinations of Hemingway's construction of gender seem affected more by advancements in critical approaches rather than by the sexual partiality of earlier Hemingway criticism. For example, building on Judith Butler's view of gender as a construction, Diane Price Herndl (2001) interprets Frederic's silences in *A Farewell to Arms* as reflecting a specific notion of masculinity:

> If we take seriously Butler's claim that "gender is [. . .] an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*" rather than 'a stable locus of agency' (402, author's emphasis), then we can see Frederic's repeated silences as constituting a notion of masculinity as numbness, as lack of feeling, as a kind of dissociation from self.[152]

While Second Wave feminism has succeeded in producing a dialectic between theory and Hemingway's stories, Third Wave feminism has given rise to more queer perspectives. Gender and the individual's sexual identity become particularly important in the 1990s due to the focus within Third Wave feminism

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[149] "Masculinity," 278–79.
[150] *Gender, Race, and Mourning in American Modernism*, 55.
[151] Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide*, 124.
[152] "Invalid Masculinity," 45.

on diversity and individualism. Thus, in the first year of the decade, the publication of Mark Spilka's groundbreaking Hemingway's *Quarrel with Androgyny* (1990) paves the way for further developments in studies on gender in Hemingway's fiction. The study of gender forms a major concern in Peter Messent's *Ernest Hemingway* (1992), Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes's *Hemingway's Genders: Rereading the Hemingway Text* (1994), Kenneth Schuyler Lynn's *Hemingway* (1995), Rose Marie Burwell's *Hemingway: The Postwar Years and the Posthumous Novels* (1996), Debra A. Moddelmog's *Reading Desire: In Pursuit of Ernest Hemingway* (1999), Carl P. Eby's *Hemingway's Fetishism: Psychoanalysis and the Mirror of Manhood* (1999), and Debra A. Moddelmog and Suzanne del Gizzo's *Ernest Hemingway in Context* (2012). In general, these studies thematize the different forms of transgression and acts of defiance depicted by the narratives in terms of gender.

This new line of critique adopts a more androgynous perspective on the stories by concentrating on varying notions of masculinity and femininity rather than on the concepts of male or female. What plays an important role in this modification of attitude is the rejection, represented predominantly by French-language feminism, of any form of gender inferiority or superiority. In this context, Marc Hewson, recurring to Cixous's idea that masculinity and femininity coexist in each individual, writes:

> Unfortunately western culture has historically privileged masculinity at the expense of the feminine, creating a hierarchy of gender in which the masculine value is positive and the feminine negative. This has had the dual effect of silencing women and of forcing men to repress their femininity.[153]

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[153] "The Real Story of Ernest Hemingway," 52.

Critical objectivity has, moreover, been called into question in some gender scholarship. For instance, Mary Holmes asserts that feminist critics "do not transparently tell the 'Truth' about feminism or feminists' lives. Those who wrote them were representatives striving to give a better picture, not just of themselves, but of women as a group and their needs."[154] Yet it could also be argued that, in light of the undeniable exercise of political forces on academic research and truth-telling, what matters more than telling the truth is facilitating the realization of diversity. In this sense, Caroline Ramazanoglu and Jane Holland's view seems credible when they write, "In any social research it is extremely problematic to claim a relationship between socially produced knowledge and the realities of people's lives. It is questionable whether telling the truth is an issue at all."[155] If the "truth" implies something applicable to anyone and anything at any time and any place, it entails a generalization. For this reason, obsession with the truth brings about a totalitarian system of definition that functions like a master signifier. In addition, finding out the truth is a mirage which Lacan sees as the "impossibility of ever saying 'the truth about truth.'"[156] Similarly, Arnold E. Davidson and Cathy N. Davidson (1987) insist that:

> The deconstructive critic fully acknowledges the subjective aspect of reading a text (or writing one, for that matter), and, instead of attempting to make a particular reading seem somehow universal, emphasizes the value of individuality, plurality, subjectivity, and particularity in all responses to texts and in texts themselves. Instead of trying to resolve differences (of responses, perspectives, parts, whatever), the deconstructive critic attempts to exploit them. The aim is not to

[154] "Second-Wave Feminism and the Politics of Relationships," 236–37.
[155] *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices*, 58.
[156] Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 168.

> make the text speak with one paramount voice but to hear the different voices at play in the field of the text.[157]

One of the examples of hearing different voices at play appears in Rena Sanderson's 1966 position that correlates the behavior of Hemingway's women with the inner qualities of his men. She comments:

> Although Hemingway has been condemned for depicting women as "bitches," very few such women actually appear in his writings, and almost exclusively during the 1930s. The few times that Hemingway embodies his fears of powerful women in a fictive "bitch," he is attacking not only or primarily the woman but rather male passivity.[158]

In the late twentieth century, fresh investigations by gender studies scholars introduced new approaches and opened up new vistas for future studies. For instance, employing a Cixousian approach, Kathy Willingham (1993) proposes a feminist reading of Catherine in *The Garden of Eden*. She explains:

> Throughout the novel Catherine struggles heroically to legitimate her creativity, and she does so by using her physical body. Repeatedly the novel demonstrates her sense of inadequacy regarding the employment of language. Having no confidence in, nor because of her gender, full access to the traditionally male-controlled tool of literature, she turns to an alternative medium of expression—her own body. She literally embraces the avenue of artistic expression which *l'écriture féminine* advocates. Catherine creates a text, not with language, but with her body, as signified by such actions as cutting and bleaching her hair and insisting, first, on a transsexual

[157] Arnold Davidson and Cathy Davidson, "Decoding the Hemingway Hero," 83–84.
[158] "Hemingway and Gender History," 185.

> relationship with her husband and, later, on a *ménage à trois* involving Marita. Moreover, all these actions signify what French feminist theorists call *jouissance*.
>
> Catherine expects David to act as a scribe. In other words, she wants him to transfer to paper or to translate into language the story that she physically creates, and she provides the plot by living it moment to moment. Catherine's refusal to write the text herself can be explained not only by Cixous's belief that the phallocentric control of letters produces insecurity in the female writer, but also by two other interrelated Cixousian positions—the idea that the female libido and not the written word best expresses reality, and the aversion to text reification.[159]

Willingham concludes that Hemingway in *The Garden of Eden* "provides a sympathetic portrait of a creative woman who, contrary to critical assumptions, does not victimize the male protagonist; rather, she enables him to see beyond restrictive binaries: male/female, homosexuality/heterosexuality, passive/active."[160] These more balanced approaches towards gender in Hemingway scholarship paved the way for more flexible views in the next century.

Twenty-first century Hemingway scholarship also places more emphasis on men's vulnerability and feebleness in his works, as Greg Forter (2001) acknowledges in a study on *For Whom the Bell Tolls*:

> The recent turn toward gender issues in Hemingway studies has made the author exciting and pressingly urgent once more. This work has freed us from the myth of Hemingway as "He-Man of American literature"; it has made it possible to see in his writing more than the stylistic and representational embodiment of invulnerable manhood—a masculinity courageously asserting itself in the face of unmanning and life-threatening dangers. Instead, we have become attuned to

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[159] Willingham, "Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*," 47.
[160] Willingham, "Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*," 60.

> the cracks in Hemingway's masculine armor. We have learned that manhood was for him a fraught and always fragile aspiration rather than an accomplished fact.[161]

The problem of the code hero's vulnerability has produced various interpretations. For example, Michael Reynolds adopts a more positive view of the code hero's fragility and contrasts it with the vigor he achieves at the end of the narrative. He says that Hemingway "traces the changes in the Hemingway hero, who moves from vulnerable, wounded warrior to a tougher, more active participant in his world."[162] The weakness and insecurity of men which is depicted in Hemingway's work is, in Roger Horrocks's words, the result of broader attempts in the last years of the twentieth century "to develop a new spirituality" and "to resurrect the notion of the Goddess":

> There are signs that both men and women are attempting to deconstruct conventional spirituality and develop a new kind of spirituality. This is a difficult process since our culture is still saturated with the images of patriarchal religion, organized by male priests and bishops as part of the patriarchal state.[163]

Hence "men come together in a new way, not as macho upholders of male supremacy, but in an attempt to get beneath the stereotypes to a more vulnerable and more primitive male identity."[164]

In contrast, from Richard Fantina's perspective, elaborated upon in *Ernest Hemingway: Machismo and Masochism*, the vulnerability of masculinity in Hemingway's male characters relates to masochistic tendencies that stand in conflict with macho desires, engendering a masculinity in crisis. In

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[161] "Melancholy Modernism," 22.
[162] Mazzeno, *The Critics and Hemingway*, 139.
[163] *Masculinity in Crisis*, 15.
[164] *Masculinity in Crisis*, 16.

short, the matter of sexual fragility in the narratives is so complex and fraught that scholars in the twenty-first century are still trying to understand it.

Yet, although a plurality of views can lead to a better democracy, it may also be the case that the present lines of scholarly thinking are susceptible to a postmodern relativism that does not clearly state the criteria for evaluating an interpretation. Any reading of a text can be valid if it is supported by the textual context. Further, though deconstructive readings favor chaos, they do not necessarily promote disorder. Although the difference between chaos and disorder might seem self-contradictory at first glance, the stakes are considerable. For there is an order lying beneath the chaos that deconstruction advocates. Therefore, if we accept Jonathan Arac's view that, in Hemingway's society, "modern literature was a rebellious activity," the present study must ask how Hemingway's stories lend themselves to a mode of reading that tackles the insubordinate aspects of the stories and investigates what they reveal in relation to gender.[165]

If Hemingway praised Mark Twain for being the national voice of America, he likewise seems to have been so influenced by the national spirit of his age that even text-oriented readings of his fiction are rarely indifferent to the historical space in which he lived. Jamie Barlowe believes in order to understand the works of Hemingway as a "socially constructed person," "we have to examine the complex web of forces and conditions into which Ernest Hemingway was born and in which he existed."[166] Barlowe concludes, "Hemingway offers us a valuable site for studying the contested, fraught, and interesting late nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of gender in the United States, as well as in the other countries

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[165] Arac, "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," 57.
[166] "Hemingway's Gender Training," 147.

where he lived, fought, reported, and wrote."[167] Likewise, emphasizing that Hemingway's vision "is a cultural expression of current milieu" and "the melancholy of the two world wars and their woes," S. Prakash Rao in his discussion of *The Sun Also Rises* hypothesizes that the novel "reveals the total wreckage of life experienced in twentieth century life."[168] He briefly summarizes:

> the current issues anticipated by Hemingway and Faulkner are: (1) Break-up of established institutions, (2) Sense of despair, (3) Nihilism, (4) Crisis of belief and disbelief, (5) Search for identity, (6) Apocalyptic inner conflict: chaos of principles, Moral confusion, (7) Demythologization, (8) Intentionally prophetic allegories of reality, nightmare. (9) Confrontation with the alien within.[169]

Hence, as the present study concerns itself with gender issues in Hemingway's stories, it is essential to examine sexuality in his America. After all, it is this American milieu that his stories often depict and censure, as John Hellmann recognizes: "The text of *The Old Man and the Sea* implicitly called upon the 1950's reader to reject the tendencies of his or her contemporary society and choose the values deemed traditionally American."[170] For example, taking "the fallenness and corruption of modern society, which tries to hide its crass commercialism and blimpish nationalism under a thin veneer of pollyannish liberal propaganda" as the main theme in Hemingway's work, William Curtis suggests, "For Hemingway, modern politics, in all of its forms, has resulted in hypocrisy, oppression, and war. Moreover, as in Rousseau's writings, Hemingway's work contrasts modern civilization with the essential goodness of

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[167] "Hemingway's Gender Training," 148.
[168] *Current Perspectives on American Literature*, 106.
[169] *Current Perspectives on American Literature*, 106.
[170] *The Kennedy Obsession*, 67.

apolitical Nature."[171] Thus, one could argue that if twentieth-century conventions form the visible part of Hemingway's iceberg, the hidden part is made up of transgressive forces and particles that vibrate with new frequencies. Hence, the study of the iceberg as a whole necessitates an understanding of both parts, and insight into Hemingway's society would benefit the investigation of both layers of his work. This matter has caused a considerable amount of Hemingway criticism to concentrate on the social-cultural standards of his era, either directly or indirectly.

The early-twentieth-century America in which Hemingway grew up was a patriarchal society where the role of women was inferior to that of men. The feminist wave, having started in the last decades of the nineteenth century, had gained traction through the efforts of feminists and women writers who appealed to American society for equal gender rights and more agency for (white) women in general; however, the attitude of the nation still appeared macho and virile. In this regard, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in her utopian novel *Herland* (1915), describes how the gender notions of her society were well reflected in the American use of language:

> When we say *men*, *man*, *manly*, *manhood*, and all the other masculine derivatives, we have in the background of our minds a huge vague crowded picture of the world and all its activities. To grow up and "be a man," to "act like a man"—the meaning and connotation is wide indeed. That vast background is full of marching columns of men, of changing lines of men, of long processions of men; of men steering their ships into new seas, exploring unknown mountains, breaking horses, herding cattle, ploughing and sowing and reaping, toiling at the forge and furnace, digging in the mine, building roads and bridges and high cathedrals, managing great

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[171] "Hemingway, Hopelessness, and Liberalism," 59.

> businesses, teaching in all the colleges, preaching in all the churches; of men everywhere, doing everything—"the world."[172]

Therefore, while the dominance of men and their affairs in Hemingway's narratives aligns with the mindset of his fellow Americans, he also inserts anarchists, women, as well as their concerns (such as abortion) into the fictional world he creates. It is also important to emphasize this aspect of his literary craft.

Along with many factors, the outbreak of World War I played an important role in the formation of twentieth-century gender concepts and models. Joining social shifts already under way through the suffrage movement, World War I caused such profound changes for (white) American women that "[c]ontemporaries during the late teens and 1920s widely believed that the war created the 'new woman' of the 1920s, one who embraced expanded public and economic roles as well as enhanced personal and sexual freedom."[173] Notwithstanding the constant efforts made to integrate (white) women into social and national affairs during the war years and pre-war years, the nations involved in World War I still witnessed resistance to women's liberation. As Doris Weatherford reports:

> the worst of the war's many cases of underutilization of women's abilities was the War Department's failure to use female physicians. [. . .] a few female physicians were hired on temporary contracts during World War I, but not until 1943 would a female physician be

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[172] Strand, *Language, Gender, and Citizenship in American Literature, 1789–1919*, 186. Charlotte Perkins Gilman is the writer of *Women and Economics* (1898).

[173] Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 6. The American women's right to vote, known as women's suffrage, was passed by Congress on June 4, 1919, and ratified on August 18, 1920 (Paul D. Buchanan, 129).

> commissioned into the military. [. . .] Harvard finally opened its medical school to women in the last year of the war.[174]

Despite the efforts of some groups of women to establish more social agency for themselves, what generally characterizes the twentieth-century American woman both in pre-war years and afterward is passiveness, which originated in their wartime situation. By making women mourn for their dead family members, battlefields forced women to practice patience and tolerance. Even after the war, the situation did not ameliorate, for, as Weatherford states:

> Unrealistic dreams of what it would be like to be home met up with the irritations of daily life, and tempers flew and tears flowed. Experts advised only endless patience and acceptance, especially with men whose physical wounds never would heal.[175]

Furthermore, due to the widespread unemployment that America encountered in the early years of the century, the father of the family as the breadwinner faced difficulty finding a job, let alone women who had little to no opportunity of maintaining any active social presence and thereby lacked any subjectivity or agency. All these issues caused American women to suffer from a social and political numbness for at least fifty years until they could rehabilitate and began to pursue their fulfillment and achieve more agency over the course of the second half of the century.

Thus, as in their social lives, twentieth-century American women were occasionally entitled to make decisions in their private concerns. During the years in which Hemingway was writing, for instance, divorce and abortion were not considered rights for women. It is only after World War II that

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[174] *American Women During World War II*, 346–47.
[175] *American Women During World War II*, 493.

society started to steer away from the rules of the Catholic Church. This issue demonstrates how subversively Hemingway's stories function when he allows female characters to express marital dissatisfaction or to consider having an abortion, which was illegal in the first half of the twentieth century America. In this regard, the fact that the couple in "Hills Like White Elephants" dare not say the word "abortion" underlines the taboo and illegality surrounding the act. The discrete silence of the text echoes similar cases in Hemingway's short story oeuvre: the lesbianism to which "The Sea Change" alludes without naming it, Prudie's sexual infidelity in "Ten Indians" which is suggested in the words of Nick's father, or Margot's adultery in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" to which her husband does not seem to object.

It is not until the 1950s and 60s that (white) American women begin to feel some social security, though not as independent individuals but as housewives and mothers. This security, nevertheless, triggered a further crisis in the gender identity of women, as discussed by diverse scholars. Despite the difficulties that women underwent from the beginning of the century, their arduous activities of childbearing, child-raising, cooking, and keeping house failed to win respect. Therefore, scholars that accuse Hemingway of misogyny because he does not dignify women as protagonists or main characters in his stories might better contextualize the historical facts of the twentieth-century American environment in which Hemingway grew up and became a writer. June Sochen in her essay on twentieth-century women, "Women," writes, for example, "Since men were the writers of history for most of recorded time, and women's lives were seen as unworthy of documentation, women were invisible to historians."[176] It is, therefore, not surprising that Hemingway, as a writer of fiction, who spent most of his youth in war-time America and Europe, did not feature

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[176] "Women," 283.

women or their concerns in his stories as such. Nonetheless, as discussed later in the present study, Hemingway's art is not apathetic towards women's issues and femininity in spite of the seemingly masculine mask that his stories wear.

Another angle in the debate on American society points out that in the early decades of the century the American nation, sensing its position in relation to what it perceived as a civilized Europe, began to make efforts to emulate Europe's cultural heritage. Recalling James Fenimore Cooper's assertion that "American manners were too simple and dull to nourish the novelist," Lionel Trilling praises the cultural improvement (or "thickening," to use his term) in American culture and states:

> [L]ife in America has increasingly thickened since [Henry James's time]. It has not, to be sure, thickened so much as to permit our undergraduates to understand the characters of Balzac, to understand, that is, life in a crowded country where the competitive pressures are great, forcing intense passions to express themselves fiercely and yet within the limitations set by a strong and complicated tradition of manner.[177]

It was a time when the nation felt a need to modify society in different aspects, including the national spirit promoting machismo and patriarchy.

This widespread confusion vis-à-vis gender in general and women in particular, which continues up until the 1950s, is discussed by Betty Friedan who, in *The Feminine Mystique*, writes that:

> "Feminist," like "career woman," became a dirty word. The feminists had destroyed the old image of women, but they could not erase the hostility, the prejudice, the discrimination that still

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[177] Trilling and Menand, *The Liberal Imagination*, 213.

> remained. Nor could they paint the new image of what women might become when they grow up under conditions that no longer made them inferior to men, dependent, passive, incapable of thought or decision.[178]

As literary texts usually reflect the social atmosphere of their historical context, twentieth-century turmoil in the United States, not least matters of feminism and women in society, also feature in Hemingway's fiction.

Peter Messent regards the sexual chaos in Hemingway's narratives as his "obsessive concern with androgyny in his fiction." He defines this androgyny as:

> an awareness both of the damaging constrictions of traditional male and female roles, and the attractions of other ways of practicing gender (and of sexual interaction). All this makes him sound rather less old-fashioned and more interesting than he is generally considered to be, and has certainly prompted new approaches to, and readings of, his work.[179]

Messent's employment of the word "androgyny" carries considerable thematic implications for the stories. Since the word "androgynous" denotes being both male and female, the term bears affinities with the American discourse over gender identity in the twentieth century insofar as they both convey paradoxical attributes. The examination of androgyny in Hemingway's fiction has become a controversial issue just as conventional misogynistic and later feminist perspectives on his work have begun to fade away. In other words, the matter of androgyny has been the dominant focus of most of the gender

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[178] *The Feminine Mystique*, 163.
[179] "Ernest Hemingway," 242.

discourse on Hemingway's narratives because it offers a positive, even promising, approach vis-à-vis questions in contemporary sexual equality.

The serious study of androgyny in Hemingway's work can be traced back to the 1980s when "Hemingway studies underwent a fundamental revision, as new scholarship revealed unimagined complexities in the gendered life of the ironically masculine author."[180] The majority of scholars have investigated either androgyny in the characters and the way the stories treat them according to their gender, or the androgynous life of the author represented by "the cross-gendering of Ernest's identity that began in infancy, when his biological identity was subsumed by an androgynous identity imposed by Grace [Hemingway's mother]—and reinforced not only throughout his early childhood, but into his late teens."[181] Nonetheless, there is also a third group that focuses on the inter-relatedness of his life and art; for instance, examining androgyny in Hemingway's posthumous memoir (*A Moveable Feast*) and his posthumous novel (*The Garden of Eden*), as well as in his personal life, J. Gerald Kennedy's "Hemingway's Gender Trouble" (1991) concurs in discovering that there is an "ineluctable influence of androgyny upon Hemingway's gendered identity as well as his literary imagination."[182]

The growing number of gender and queer approaches in the last years of the twentieth century that promote androgyny in Hemingway's fiction has paved the way for the flourishing of a new movement in scholarship. Kelli Larson, in her biography *Ernest Hemingway: A Reference Guide 1974-1989* (1991), simply states, "we are now in the midst of a Hemingway renaissance."[183] Nonetheless, among the studies of androgyny on Hemingway, the most groundbreaking seems to be Mark Spilka's

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[180] Rohy, "Hemingway, Literalism, and Transgender Reading," 148.
[181] Brown, *Hemingway, Trauma and Masculinity*, 35.
[182] "Hemingway's Gender Trouble," 200.
[183] Hays, *The Critical Reception of Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises*,*"* 215.

Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny (1990). Examining the matter of androgyny in *The Garden of Eden*, Spilka reveals the psychic gender crisis which Hemingway was personally coping with, since "he was raised by a blend of feminine and masculine versions of manhood which later became submerged and dominant strains." [184] Thus, by introducing the notion of androgyny into the wound theory in Hemingway's fiction, Spilka explains androgyny as "a wounding condition, that is to say, against which Hemingway's artistic bow has always been manfully strung."[185] Hence, Spilka's perspective, by relating physical and psychic wounds to androgyny, contributes to the theory of wound already proposed by Hemingway's scholars and opened up novel perspectives on Hemingway's narratives. As Matthew C. Stewart writes, though Malcolm Cowley and Edmund Wilson discuss Hemingway's wound and war experience in the middle of the twentieth century, it is Philip Young's *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration* (1966) that expands the theory of wound in Hemingway's fiction. It was continued and developed into the last decades of the century by Robert W. Lewis, Michael Reynolds, and Jeffrey Meyers.[186]

The notion of wound forms such a major aspect of the stories that it continues to be the focus of research. For instance, appealing to the modern theory of androgyny in Hemingway, Stephen Gilbert Brown (2019) asserts, "these two wounds (war and androgyny) are in reality the same wound: a wound of emasculation—suffered in infancy, sustained through childhood, boyhood, and adulthood, and compounded by the wounds not only of war, but love."[187] Brown's idea seems deeply grounded in Spilka's perspective: "one could define androgyny in his life and work as a mixture or exchange of

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[184] *Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny*, 5.

[185] *Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny*, 5.
[186] "Ernest Hemingway and World War I," 199.
[187] *Hemingway, Trauma and Masculinity*, 3.

traditionally male and female traits, roles, activities, and sexual positions."[188] Posing the question of what "if the 'wound' is androgyny and not, as Philip Young so early established, the actual physical wounds that Hemingway himself sustained at Fossalta?," Spilka answers, "To be wounded, then, is both the badge of manhood and the secret entry into womanhood."[189] Despite widespread consensus with Spilka, some thinkers have challenged his approach. For instance, Donald Junkins in his "Mythmaking, Androgyny, and the Creative Process, Answering Mark Spilka" (1994) criticizes Spilka for being too biographical, which in turn results in his failure to distinguish between the artist's life and his work. In addition, Junkins denounces the "lack of precision in Spilka's use of the term androgyny,"[190] and "calls for a more comprehensive definition of androgyny based on Jungian analysis that implies more an 'interplay' of masculine and feminine anima and animus rather than the binary oppositions that Spilka and others find in Hemingway's work."[191]

Three years after Spilka's claim, Arnold L. Weinstein (1993) proposed to ground female attractiveness in the androgynous characteristics of female characters. In Weinstein's reading, women come "into focus [. . .] as most erotic when most boylike."[192] This androgyneity is not only a mark of attraction to the code hero, Weinstein continues, but also a point of identity: "[an] ongoing albeit sublimated interest in these matters constitutes an envy of female breasts and genitalia, even to the point, as Robert Gajdusek has shown, of 'feminizing' the male body, of metaphorically assuming its attributes."[193] Similarly, Carl P. Eby notes, the feminization of Hemingway's characters "can be exciting, as it is when Catherine Barkley proposes that Frederic grow his hair out to match her own, and it can be

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[188] *Hemingway, Trauma and Masculinity*, 4.
[189] *Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny*, 219.
[190] Rosen, *Hemingway Repossessed*, 60.
[191] Fantina, *Ernest Hemingway*, 11.
[192] *Nobody's Home*, 193.
[193] *Nobody's Home*, 193.

profoundly erotic, as it is when Catherine Bourne transforms David by cutting and bleaching his hair."[194] Though Eby proposes that the male characters get feminized by the female partners, the present study relates it to the act of abjection in relation to the Law-of-the-Father.

Although Weinstein's gender approach seems rather pioneering, what is arguably ground-breaking and seminal in the study of gender in Hemingway is the book published one year later by Nancy Comley and Robert Scholes. Comley and Scholes' *Hemingway's Gender* (1994) proposes minorities and perversions rather than the conventional heterosexual as the center of Hemingway's attention. They comment that "[h]e was especially interested in the alternatives to 'normal' sexual patterns. Contrary to his statement about the sameness of abnormality, his stories show that there are so many varieties of normal and abnormal that the whole distinction is threatened by them."[195]

Though this innovative outlook opens up a new horizon to gender in the narratives, it was not enthusiastically received. For instance, despite appreciating Comley and Scholes' views, Eby finds them "strangely untheorized and untheorizable," because they "neglect the fact that gender is also a personal construct." [196] Eby emphatically asserts that this serious flaw could be resolved by employing psychoanalysis, which he claims to have done in his book, since:

> It has grown increasingly apparent in the last few years that an appreciation for Hemingway's psychosexual concerns is not only essential for understanding his own or his characters'

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[194] *Hemingway's Fetishism*, 109.
[195] *Hemingway's Gender*, 137.
[196] *Hemingway's Fetishism*, 6.

unconscious motivations; it is also essential for understanding his subject matter insofar as human sexuality and gender identity remained major concerns throughout his career.[197]

While agreeing with Eby that psychoanalysis could be of great help in reading the stories, as it is in the present study, Comley and Scholes' further point that variety threatens "the whole distinction" will be assessed in the present reading of the stories in terms of abjection and its favoring gender anarchy and fluidity. Interestingly, this hypothesis recalls Richard Gray's report about Hemingway's written words to Dos Passos in 1932: "I suppose I am an anarchist."[198] Thus, the heroism that the short stories narrate lies in the entire structure of the narratives with the aim of disturbing gender structures and absolutism. Further, the sexual identities of individuals, male or female, are so interrelated that instability in every character's gender role destabilizes the gender roles of other characters, and thus, androgyny in Hemingway's work has more to do with the author's fluid perception of the characters' gender and their sexual tendencies regardless of their biological nature. Ultimately, his narratives specifically portray the discontent and disappointment of individuals with their gender identity.

It is not just Comley and Scholes' standpoint that can be considered innovative, but also that of David Wyatt. Comparing Philip Young's (1952) "Wound of War hypothesis"[199] with Debra Moddelmog's redefinition of masculinity as a wound, Wyatt pays specific attention to "remembering back" memories in Hemingway's fiction and argues: "The complex of feelings described by Freud as 'uncanny' or by Hemingway as 'mysterious and homelike' is an expression of the wound of having a beginning."[200] Wyatt continues, "Why not, then speak of Hemingway's wound as an aliveness to the

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[197] *Hemingway's Fetishism*, 2.
[198] *A History of American Literature*, 412.
[199] *Hemingway, Style, and the Art of Emotion*, 88.
[200] *Hemingway, Style, and the Art of Emotion*, 89.

pathos of gender? That we have bodies and come out of bodies is scandal enough, one to which Nick is made privy in 'Indian Camp.'"[201] What makes Wyatt's reading stand out is how he specifically relates the stories to psychoanalysis by examining gender in light of the Freudian "uncanny". In other words, his investigation of physical wounds as psychic ones and his further proposal to link them via the notion of uncanny make his approach not only distinct, but also revolutionary.

Nonetheless, although proposing the idea of the uncanny in the stories makes a fundamental shift in the psychological reading of the stories, the usage does not fully accord with all the defining features of the Freudian uncanny, because the uncanny (unlike the abject) has more to do with pleasure, while the memories of either Hemingway or his code heroes seem more torturous.[202] The view of the uncanny in the stories is irrelevant, unless we accept Spilka's view that:

> Frederic can enjoy being weak, frail, 'female,' without being ashamed of his condition: the inevitable fear of being cowardly, unmanly, exposed to pain and death, is now transposed into a pleasurable condition since he has survived his wounds and can enjoy his obvious vulnerability.[203]

However, it could be argued that Kristeva's abjection could help to unravel the matter of wound ("the wound" or "wounding") in the stories, not only more effectively but also more practically, as Suzanne Clark (2000) comments:

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[201] *Hemingway, Style, and the Art of Emotion*, 89.

[202] The uncanny also refers to "pleasure that is attributed to a hitherto unknown source: the repetition compulsion" (Masschelein, *The Unconcept*, 118).

[203] *Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny*, 219.

> The true/real that is the effect of Hemingway's sustained attention is not death itself, but the unspeakable that is not yet an object (or a corpse). Soliciting the approach of the unspeakable by the closest of turns risks death, and most of all that dying into the arena of language that appears as the known, the object, an abject, or the abject of critical language, the cliché.[204]

Accordingly, a more comprehensive and less sexually-prejudiced perspective modifying Fetterley's conventional comment ("male life is what counts") —one appealing to "human" life—would be more promising in the study of Hemingway's work. Therefore, the present study will attempt to open up a new window in the reading of Hemingway's short stories in a literary world that is severely injured and critically scarred by sexual suppression.

If the emergence of feminism in the 1960s led to a new direction in Hemingway scholarship, current advancements in various fields of academia could lead to new readings of his fiction too. Furthermore, the innovative approaches to Hemingway have expanded to the extent that they vary from Laura Godfrey's "Digital Hemingway" (2020) to the study of food in David Wyatt's "Hemingway and Pleasure" (2020). While Godfrey explains the presence of Hemingway in the virtual world and the way it has facilitated research on his texts, Wyatt writes, "The pleasures of food and drink are so integral to the Hemingway persona that over the past two decades Hemingway-style eating and quaffing has become a booming industry."[205]

Although post-modern and post-feminist readings of Hemingway seem to have attempted to consider his female characters in a way that has opened up new horizons, there still seems to be space for more investigation into gender. In spite of the advancements made particularly during the past three

[204] *Cold Warriors*, 94.
[205] "Hemingway and Pleasure," 120.

decades, few studies have focused on reading his code heroes in the light of the governing system of gender.

3 Background to Jacques Lacan

As Kristeva's notion of abjection is mainly founded on Lacanian psychoanalysis, I will begin by reviewing the principal ideas contributed by Lacan and their own roots in theory.[206] To read Lacan requires, after all, a consideration of the thinkers who played a crucial role in the development of Lacanian psychoanalytical theory, including Sigmund Freud in the first place, and then the linguists Roman Osipovich Jakobson and Ferdinand de Saussure.

Lacan has been both lauded and praised by contemporary and subsequent intellectuals. Some regard him as nothing more than a reformulation of Freud, while others emphasize his originality. According to Jean-Michel Rabaté, Lacan's ingenuity lies in his neither relying on the conventional modes of therapy nor on his modernizing psychoanalysis that kept up-to-date with medical advancements.[207] Nevertheless, referring to Lacan's statement, "what I have just said has so little originality, even in its verve, that there appears in it not a single metaphor that Freud's works do not repeat with the frequency of a leitmotif," Shoshana Felman states that "Lacan's originality is, paradoxically enough, nothing other than the originality of repetition: the originality of a return [. . .] to Freud."[208] However, Fredric Jameson takes a different view by recognizing the Symbolic stage as "the moment to suggest the originality of Lacan's conception of the function of language in psychoanalysis."[209] While Jameson's assertions are accurate, the isolation of the Symbolic among the three pillars of Lacanian theory is perhaps telling. It could be argued that what justifies his ingenuity is the trilogy he creates from the physical nature of the human body (the body image in the mirror), the abstract domain of language (the Symbolic), and the shadowy structure of

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[206] Relating the semiotic to the mirror stage, Kristeva is interested in the pre-language stage of the child development, when there is only material language with little consideration for language rules of Lacanian Symbolic order. Moreover, for Kristeva, what matters most is the relationship to one's self, rather than to the Other.

[207] *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan*, xi.

[208] *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight*, 53.

[209] "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan," 358.

the human psyche (*objet petit a*). His theory of the language-like structure of the unconscious bridges these three different domains of the human being in a way hardly ever anticipated by previous scientists or philosophers.

Furthermore, the Lacanian conceptualization of the human psyche seems not only extensive but also chronologically self-critical.[210] Therefore, his ideas may sometimes seem complicated. However, as Slavoj Žižek suggests in "How to Read Lacan," "in reading Lacan, one should pass from a Seminar to the corresponding *écrit*" in order to overcome the intricacy a reader might face.[211] Yet Malcolm Bowie in the preface to *Écrits: A Selection* writes that the book is "a labyrinth of quotations, allusions and cross-references, and presents the new reader with the dizzying sensation that – from one sentence to the next – meaning is being lost, and found, and lost again."[212] Žižek's observation that the style of *Écrits* is more scholarly compared to the style of seminar talks hardly stands in opposition to the complexity that Bowie notices. After all, when a scholar steps toward reading the psyche, they should take obscurity and perplexity for granted. Since the human psyche and the unconscious are the subject issue of Lacan's discussions, Lacanian psychoanalysis cannot be expected to be plain and unsophisticated. Therefore, intellectual confusion seems to be normal in the journey towards the psyche in any approach in general and in Lacan (and subsequently Kristeva) in particular. Keeping this matter in mind should help Lacan's readers to cope with the recurrent feeling of being lost and to overcome the constant feeling of disappointment. For Kristeva's abjection, it will be crucial to have a picture of the Lacanian stages of human development.

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[210] Emphasizing the significance of the unconscious, Lacan modifies his theory of subjectivity in the mid-1950s, when he gives a lecture in Vienna, entitled "The Freudian Thing, or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis" (1955). Here, he describes his return to Freud as "a new covenant, something that, in ecclesiastical parlance, would be termed a New Testament, following upon an Old Testament" (Julien, 6-7).

[211] *How to Read Lacan*, 123.

[212] Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, vii.

As a structuralist psychoanalyst, Lacan formulates a theory of subject formation via language structure; that is to say, he reads the human psyche in terms of language. He goes further by introducing treatment through speech.[213] Lacan, in his 1957 essay "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud," connects Saussure's notion of a sign and Freud's definition of psychoanalysis by proposing that the unconscious is structured like a language.[214] Applying the structuralism of Saussure and Jakobson, Lacan, through presenting his Symbolic structure of language, surpasses both the structuralists' system of thought and Freud's psychoanalysis. He maintains that Freud had failed to discover the "constitutive role of the signifier" in the unconscious, as Saussure had failed to consider the "multidimensional and polyvocal (rather than linear and univocal)" nature of the signifying process.[215] Therefore, Lacan concludes not only that the signifier takes precedence over the signified, but that the sliding nature of language makes it nearly impossible to arrive at the signified.[216] This conclusion opposes Saussure's unity of the signifier and signified as two sides of one piece of paper, and leads to the deconstructive power of Lacan's doctrine.

According to Lacan, a signifier comes into being in relation to a series of other signifiers rather than to a signified. As a result, reaching the signified is doomed to be forever postponed and deferred.[217]

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[213] Freud considers the removal of pathological symptoms as curing the patient, since symptoms are repressed and the patient is able to enjoy an active life in spite of existing symptoms, though Lacan has little trust in treatment as such. Accordingly, what Lacan means by the term "treatment" bears little affinities with what the term denotes in medicine. The end of analysis to Lacan is nothing more than helping the analysand articulate "the truth" about their desire, which means to overcome the desire of the Other to hinder the analysand's own desire, or the aim (*fin d'analyse*) is, in the words of Bruce Fink, "the development of a 'decided desire' or 'determined desire': a desire that does not allow itself to be put off by obstacles or swayed by the Other" (*A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 206). In sum, the treatment intends to make an analyst out of the analysand.

[214] Rivkin and Ryan, *Literary Theory*, 530. By "language," Lacan means a signifying sequence or a world of signifiers. In Joseph C. Smith and Carla J. Ferstman's words, "Lacan conceives of language as a simultaneous system of chains of signifiers that are structured in terms of groups of opposition (S III, 54)" (*The Castration of Oedipus*, 71).

[215] Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory*, 139.

[216] Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory*, 139.

[217] *Différance* is a term by Derrida meaning "the operation of language by means of difference and deferral" (Haines and Littler, *Contemporary Women's Writing in German*, 141).

Thus, Lacan, usually taken to be one of the major figures of post-structuralism, studies the psyche as a land of slipping significations, where "the 'truth' is always being purloined by the various strategies of the unconscious."[218] The signifier is called a signifier not because it represents the truth but conversely because it misrepresents it. Hence, what we get is nothing more than the illusion of certainty.

As discussed before, Lacan had a wide range of friendships and intellectual contacts with thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean Genet, who made an impression on his insight. Although it would be useful to profile Lacan through this extensive intellectual network, only a few of these influences—Sigmund Freud, Roman Osipovich Jakobson, and Ferdinand de Saussure—can be considered in the following. The first of these three influences that will be discussed is Sigmund Freud.

What inspired the first germination of Lacanian psychoanalysis was Lacan's familiarity with Freudian psychology. Freud's impact on Lacan runs so deep that Lacan, as Shiva Kumar Srinivasan writes, "tells his followers: 'It is up to you to be Lacanians. As far as I am concerned, I am a Freudian.'"[219] Although Lacan and many scholars of his thought take it for granted that he belongs to the Freudian school of thought, some scholars challenge this view. For instance, André Green, although he appreciates Lacan's attempts to oppose the popular interest in "the ego, and adaptation" among his contemporary American psychoanalysts, adamantly refuses to support Lacan's claim that he returned to Freud and points out that Lacan puts forward his own theories and not Freud's.[220] He goes on to argue that Freud is the psychologist of his penned papers, of metapsychology, and of the unconscious, and thus ignoring any of these issues would create a distorted picture of Lacan. Hence, Lacan's statement about a

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[218] Measor and Sikes, *Visiting Lives*, 224. A. F. Uduigwomen writes in the foreword to *Critical Essays on Postmodernism*, "The leading postmodern thinkers include Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, Jean Francois Lyotard, Richard Rorty, Roland Barthes, and a host of others" (Ozumba et al., *Critical Essays on Postmodernism*, v).

[219] "Lacan, Jacques (1901–1981)," 129.

[220] Kohon, "The Dead Mother," 23.

return to Freud is simply "interesting because there was the feeling that he had been misunderstood. But the return to Freud was an excuse, it just meant going to Lacan. This return to Freud was in fact a trick."[221]

In stark contrast, John Forrester holds the view that Lacan refrained from quoting Freud and accentuates the likelihood that the debt to Freud, as viewed by Lacanian scholars, derives primarily from Lacan's claim of returning to Freud. Forrester therefore maintains that:

> the famous return to Freud is not a return to the letter, if only because what is commonly regarded as the letter of Freud, the text itself, is missing from Lacan's work. It thus can only have been, and palpably was, a return to the spirit of Freud. And, perhaps, Lacan's own practice implied that those who return to the letter of the text are imbeciles, if that is where they think they will discover its spirit.[222]

Although André Green accuses Lacan of not having paid enough attention to Freud's notion of the unconscious, Peter Barry argues that Lacan, in contrast, has attempted to put "rather a new emphasis on the unconscious itself, as 'the nucleus of our being.'"[223] Similarly, Richard Boothby describes the main difference between Freud and Lacan by stating that while the former is concerned with psychological force (energies), the latter focuses on form (of the signifier). Boothby also describes Lacan's attempt as a return to Freud because Lacan endeavors to tackle the points Freud had failed to "fully articulate."[224]

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[221] Kohon, "The Dead Mother," 23.
[222] "Lacan's Debt to Freud," 68.
[223] Noel-Smith, *Freud on Time and Timelessness*, 5; Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 109.
[224] *Freud as Philosopher*, 15.

Yet, it could also be argued that Freud's discussion of "parapraxes" (*Fehlleistungen*) had already introduced the theory of reading the unconscious through language, which Lacan later developed.[225] Furthermore, Lacan's discussion of the mother and father figures, of self-identification in the mirror image, along with his treatment of the phallus and castration as conveying incorporeal significations of power all justify the self-proclaimed return to Freud. Not only did Freud, who admired Lacan's doctoral thesis, make a great impact on Lacan's psychoanalytical approach and form the base of the psychoanalysis called by Lacan "a return to Freud," but he also effected a shift in the course of philosophical thinking and intellectual speculations from, in his terms, "metaphysics" to "metapsychology."

According to Richard Sembera, Freud coined the neologism metapsychology under the influence of the ancient term metaphysics. Aristotle in *Metaphysics* examines the principles of mathematics, grammar, and other disciplines designated as "first philosophy," but he ultimately comes to find out that the term metaphysics refers to the basic "atemporal, non-spatial, and unperceivable" principles that all things have in common.[226] As Sembera reports, Freud in an 1896 letter to Wilhelm Fliess calls his mode of psychology metapsychology, for as the psychology of the unconscious, it moves from the consciousness to the depth of the unconscious. Later on, in *The Psychology of Everyday Life* (1901), he says that mythology and religion are just "psychology projected into the external world."[227] Furthermore, according to Sembera, Freud holds that this psychology of the unconscious would help to take mythology and religion, regarded as culturally neurotic symptoms, back to their origins, and in doing so would turn

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[225] By "parapraxes," Freud generally means slips and faults in any element of discourse, including mispronunciation, misunderstanding, or miswriting, of which all suggest that the unconscious is at work and in conflict with the conscious train of thought. Parapraxes or Freudian slips are "Our moments of forgetting, coming out with a wrong name, embarrassing mispronunciations or substitutions of words" (Thurschwell, *Sigmund Freud*, 34).

[226] Sembera, *Metapsychology for Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 10.

[227] *Metapsychology for Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 11.

metaphysics into metapsychology. He predicted that religion and mythology would vanish and transform into metapsychology.

While metaphysics could imply the description of the unconscious, metapsychology is concerned with the distinction between the *soma* (the Greek word for "body") and the psyche (the internal sphere).[228] In the early days of his career, Freud takes the view that the inner world and the outer world work independently and that drives, mainly originating in the body and distinct from desire, have nothing to do with culture or language.[229] However, later on, he moves away from a "one-person" psychology toward a "two-person" one; in the former mode, the domain of psychology is restricted to a single person, whereas the domain in the latter mode takes place between people.[230] If in Freud's theory preeminence belongs to the somatic drives, in Lacanian perspective it has to do with the Other with whose authoritarian power and control an individual is at constant struggle from within. Therefore, one main difference between the Freudian and Lacanian psyche is that according to Freud the constant source of psychical forces comes from within, while to Lacan it is rooted in society and culture.

What also underlies Lacan's idea of the unconscious as a language structure is Freud's notion that psychoanalysis is therapy that takes place through speech. Seeing the aim of the analyst as unveiling the hidden unconscious, Freud believes that "the psychoanalyst must uncover the unconscious factors hidden beneath the behaviors and communications of the patient."[231] Lacan expands on this matter in the following way: "The subject begins the analysis by talking about himself without talking to you, or by talking to you without talking about himself. When he can talk to you about

[228] Trezise, *Into the Breach*, 93.

[229] This controversial idea leads to multiple psychologists' discussions of the "drive theory" and the "object relations." While the former theory is skeptical about the relationship between drives and objects in the environment, the latter takes it for granted.

[230] Koffmann and Walters, *Introduction to Psychological Theories and Psychotherapy*, 11.

[231] Adams and Sydie, *Classical Sociological Theory*, 330.

himself, the analysis will be over."[232] To put it concisely, the process of analysis to Lacan has no specific destination in the literal sense of the word, and the goal entails merely entering the path of self-expression. What a Lacanian analysand strives to do is nothing but to be perceived. Although Freud sets a goal for therapeutic analysis, he does not formulate a plan as a technique to be employed by the analyst. In this sense, Lacan could be understood as taking a different or even the opposite approach to that of Freud.[233] Accordingly, Daniel Bougnoux in the essay "Lacan, sure—and then what?," notes, "Freud was always unclear about the relationship between the analysand's speech and the (repressed) truth, since he never devised a theory of language. As mentioned by Bougnoux, Lacan could solve this problem by theorizing a 'speech divested of its referential element.'"[234] Nonetheless, the case would be different for Kristeva, for she holds that the analyst is supposed to heal the patient by providing them with a subjectivity that can empower them to continue life, despite the possibility that this subjectivity might be a false one. Whatever the case may be, having this kind of false subject structure is preferable to living without any. Although it might seem like taming the patient by making them submissive, possessing "some kind of 'identity'" enables them to take "meaningful, subversive or creative action."[235] Therefore, Kristeva, bearing traces of Lacan, seems to be highly practical and quite provocative, features which surface prominently again in her notion of the abject, as discussed later.

To come back to the Freudian backbone of Lacan, the crucial role of the ego does much to illuminate Freud's insistence on self-interest as the main stimulus of human acts. Yet it could also be

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[232] Wilden, *System and Structure*, 21.

[233] Jonathan Lear laconically describes the analysis session when he writes, "The analyst's role in this new 'division of labor' is basically as a facilitator. He notices blocks and inhibitions in the analysand's speech – Freud calls them 'resistances' – and he brings them to the attention of the analysand with the aim of understanding and thereby overcoming them" (*Freud*, 4).

[234] Bougnoux, "Lacan, Sure—and Then What?," 91.

[235] Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, 12.

argued that self-interest does not denote pure insensitivity to others, a fallacy that has aroused diverse readings and dissenting arguments on both sides. Thus, Todd McGowan warns readers not to be misguided by critics such as John Farrell who regards Freud as "the prophet of selfishness," since, in McGowan's view "[r]ather than uncovering narcissistic self-interest behind a benevolent act, Freud uncovers the abandonment of self-interest that is at stake behind a seemingly self-interested act."[236] He justifies this perspective by referencing Freud's concept of "death drive" (*Todestrieb*) which was developed in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920).[237] In this case, what Freud's ego-theory might propose in the contemporary academic world is the dynamic nature of the psychic space, and the drives as produced not only by the transitory quality of the drive energy between the mind and the body but also by the constant fluctuating and shifting essence of the drives in the psychic space. In this regard, Stefano Carta has offered the following summary:

> Freud's psychoanalysis can be seen as the main trunk from which all the branches of dynamic psychology grew. Dynamic psychology is essentially phenomenological and holistic. Its central tenet is the issue of the often conflicting relationship between some central aspects of psychological life, especially the dynamics between; first, conscious and unconscious processes;

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[236] *The End of Dissatisfaction?*, 4.

[237] Although Sigmund Freud is considered to be the first to discuss the death drive, he borrows this notion from Sabina Spielrein in her "Destruction as the Cause of Coming into Being" (1912). As Oscar Zentner writes, "It was, however, on 19 November, 1911, at the meeting of the Viennese Society of Psychoanalysis that for the first time the opposition of the drives of life and death (or destruction, in this case) was introduced by Sabina Spielrein," and the mistake, commonly made by English speaking scholars of psychoanalysis, of taking the two terms "drive" and "instinct" as equivalent roots in the translation of Freud's *Gesammelte Werke* by James Strachey who takes both words *Trieb* (drive) and *Instinkt* (instinct) synonymously, although Freud clearly makes a distinction between these two words ("Freud, Jung, Spielrein and the Death Drive," 78-79). Thes essay by Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," is usually taken as a landmark in his career, for although he previously emphasized the "libido" (sexual instinct) as the "pleasure principle" governing human acts, in this essay by introducing his drive theory he puts forward the concepts of "drive" (*Eros*) and the "death drive" (*Thanatos*).

second, the mind and the body; third, nature (phylogenesis) and culture (ontogenesis), and fourth, the self and others.[238]

Hence, the dynamic space of the psyche that Lacan pictures (particularly in his concept of "desire") could be read in light of the unsteady fluidity that governs Freud's "drive theory." In this respect, Freud is mainly concerned with what drives seek and how they act. Indeed, the term "drive" is so fundamentally rooted at the heart of psychoanalysis in general and Freudian theory in particular that, in Anna Freud's words, "Psychoanalysis is above all a drive psychology."[239]

Apart from the four constitutive elements of drives, drives, in the Freudian view, differ considerably from instincts (such as hunger or thirst). For the former are capable of being transformed and just temporarily satisfied, while the latter are constant, static, unmodifiable pressures that can be gratified.[240] The drive aims to come back to its starting point, which guarantees its constant survival. Constituting an "inner-directed scheme," drives put some stress on the nervous system and thereby force the body to purge it; thus, they "make inner demands on the organism [not in relation with the environment], which has to reduce the tension they cause."[241] Put simply, whatever an individual does is an attempt to cope with the tension triggered by a need.

Freud's drive theory, as Jon Mills points out, undergoes crucial modifications throughout his research. At first, he reads drive as libido, but later on, he expands it to include both "conscious and

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[238] *Psychology*, 32.

[239] Chessick, *The Future of Psychoanalysis*, 5. As a crucial issue in order to understand Lacan's concept of *jouissance*, drive is also of great importance to Lacan and his theories on the psyche.

[240] Freud, in "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes" (1915a), characterizes drives using the aspects of pressure (*Drang*), source (*Quelle*), aim (*Ziel*), and object (*Objekt*). By pressure, he means how much the demand is; the source means the somatic reactions in the biological organ of the individual; he takes seeking satisfaction as the aim of the drive, and finally the object is meant to be what the drive employs to accomplish its aim (Macmillan, *Freud Evaluated*, 352).

[241] Horrocks, *Freud Revisited*, 88.

unconscious processes."[242] Some years afterward, he comes to understand drive through the two contradictory concepts of sex drive and the death drive, since "it is not the sex drive alone that dominates human behaviour but also its antagonist, the death drive, that exerts just as much of an influence."[243] Therefore, those who consider Freud's drive to be just a base sexual drive hardly seem to have taken these transformations into account.

Joel Weinberger and Jeffrey Stein accurately discuss various developments and modifications of the term drive that occurred during Freud's career. They note that in 1895 Freud sets forth the idea that drives are the past "traumatic memories"[244] tending "to be kept out of consciousness because they clash with the moral standards of society."[245] Weinberger and Stein explain that, because these memories are not allowed to be expressed, they form pressure on the nerves and produce excitation. Therefore, these repressed memories project themselves either onto an "environmental object" or as "somatic complaints, or a combination of the two"; in this way, the pressure of the drives go away, resulting in relief.[246] In 1900 Freud revises this notion by defining drives as fantasies, rather than memories, which express the patients' unconscious and repressed wishes. In 1915, he presents his theory of drives in three papers: "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," "The Unconscious," and "Repression," the first of which examines the four features of drive most completely. As these essays explain, many drives exist in the chaotic world of the unconscious and lead to our physical acts. What our mind does to these drives is to carry them to the orderly world of our consciousness.

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[242] "The I and the It," 132.
[243] Strutzmann, "Freud and the Twenty-First Century," 61.
[244] "Drive Theory," 161.
[245] "Drive Theory," 163.
[246] "Drive Theory," 162.

His 1920 essay "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" presents a definition of the drives as "the representatives of all the forces originating in the interior of the body and transmitted to the mental apparatus."[247] This concept of drive seems so broad that Stella Sandford, writing on this definition, goes on to state that although drives are the most fundamental features of psychoanalysis, they are nevertheless the most obscure ones.[248]

Although Freud discusses different drives, scholars have tended to categorize all of them under the two umbrella terms of life drive and death drive. The life drive would include whatever drive that guarantees procreation, while the death drive tries to hinder breeding. If *Eros* (the life or sex drive) tends to support unity, *Thanatos* (the aggression or death drive) has a propensity to shatter. However, due to Freud's emphasis on the libidinal drive, many of his readers have inferred that in Freud's opinion all drives are libidinal drives, while it could also be argued that he means only to highlight the importance of the libidinal drive rather than to deny the existence of other drives. The lines that justify this interpretation are his view on drives in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" when he talks about the necessity of stressing the libidinal quality of the self-preservative instinct and then explicitly warns readers about the mistake of explaining everything by means of sexuality and about the confusion that Jung's "libido theory" might cause: "we shall after all be driven to agree with the critics who suspected from the first that psycho-analysis explains *everything* by sexuality, or with innovators like Jung who, making a hasty judgment, have used the word 'libido' to mean instinctual force in general."[249] He continues:

> Jung's libido theory is on the contrary *monistic*; the fact that has called his one instinctual force 'libido' is bound to cause confusion, but need not affect us otherwise. We suspect that instincts

[247] Abel, *Freud on Instinct and Morality*, 11.
[248] "The Origins and Ends of 'Sex,'" 166.
[249] Akhtar and O'Neil, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920g)," 58 (italics in the original text).

> other than those of self-preservation operate in the ego, and it ought to be possible for us to point to them. Unfortunately, however, the analysis of the ego has made so little headway that it is very difficult for us to do so. It is possible that the libidinal instincts in the ego may be linked in a peculiar manner with these other ego-instincts which are still strange to us.[250]

As quoted above, Freud reminds the reader that psychoanalysis has just made its début, and thus there might be other instincts apart from the libido that are waiting to be unveiled in the course of psychoanalysis advancements. Thereby, he also asserts that there "is no reason for our falling in with that conclusion that no others [i.e., instincts] in fact exist."[251]

Underlying Lacan's revolutionary remark of the unconscious being structured like a language, Freud's notions of "condensation" and "displacement" have a great impact on the Lacanian art of reading the psyche. Reading dreams in terms of the ego, Freud is often concerned with the process of dreaming which he mostly discusses in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. He identifies condensation, displacement, and "representation" as the three main aspects for the dream-work (*Traumarbeit*). Regarding dreaming as a process of coding, on the one hand, and interpreting dreams as decoding, on the other, Freud holds, in the words of Harvie Ferguson, that "the dream-content seems like a transcript of the dream-thoughts into another mode of expression, whose characters and syntactic laws it is our business to discover by comparing the original and the translation."[252] In this procedure, the unconscious processes the "latent content" and renders it into images that form the "manifest content."[253] Therefore, in order to decode the dream, one needs to do the reverse act of moving from pictures to words and ideas. Freud identifies

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[250] "Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920g)," 59 (italics in the original text).
[251] "Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920g)," 59.
[252] *The Lure of Dreams*, 65.
[253] The manifest content signifies what one consciously remembers about their dream, while the latent content indicates the dream thoughts. If we take a dream as a literary piece, the former stands for the words of the author and the latter for the text deep meaning (Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 76).

displacement, condensation, and representation as the three mechanisms of dreaming, all operating at the dreamer's unconscious level to replace the dream's latent content with a manifest content.

For Freud, displacement (*Verschiebung*) signifies movement from one idea to another and endows a dream element with more than one signification. Through displacement, for instance, a strong unpleasant feeling is separated from its true source and expelled, or displaced, onto a trivial one.[254] Through displacement,

> we use a 'safe' person, event, or object as a 'stand-in' to represent a more threatening person, event, or object. For example, I may dream that an elementary school teacher is sexually molesting me in order to express (and at the same time avoid) my unconscious knowledge that one of my parents sexually molested me.[255]

Thus, displacement is usually referred to as a distorting process. Through displacement, an emotion is separated from its associated image and becomes linked to another image. In other words, a colorless image in a person's mind may become a color image by means of displacement. "Projection" (*Projektion*) is also a form of displacement in which individuals attribute a characteristic they hate in themselves to another person. Therefore, the significance of latent content can be intensified or diminished by

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[254] Rennison 44.
[255] Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 18.

displacement into manifest content. Like "secondary revision" (*sekundäre Bearbeitung*), displacement is enabled through a censorship process.[256]

While condensation is more of an "adaptive mechanism," displacement is a "purely defensive operation," and both are, according to Freud, mechanisms of censorship in a dream.[257] Ahmed Fayek has argued that metaphor and metonymy as the linguistic equivalences of condensation and displacement are mistakenly perceived by Freud as agents of censorship, pointing out that in waking life and in literature metaphor and metonymy are intentionally used to "enrich our thoughts and enhance our expressions."[258] Nonetheless, critics like Palombo mainly relate these two processes to censorship in the dream-work. Condensation, an equivalent of the German *Verdichtung*, refers to an element in a dream that represents one or more things. Lois Tyson elaborates on displacement with the description of condensation as the use of "a single dream image or event to represent more than one unconscious wound or conflict. For example, my dream that I'm battling a ferocious bear might represent psychological 'battles' or conflicts both at home and at work."[259] Condensation makes the dream sphere similar to a literary one. Similarly, Barry draws attention to the fact that "[d]reams, just like literature, do not usually make explicit statements. Both tend to communicate obliquely or indirectly, avoiding direct or open statement, and representing meanings through concrete embodiments of time, place, or person."[260] Condensation is the dream element through which the unconscious expresses a desire via the metaphoric act of substituting

[256] Secondary revision is one of the aspects of dream-work, along with displacement, condensation, and figurability (or pictorial representation) (Simms, *Ricoeur and Lacan*, 46). Condensation, displacement and figurability as the "primary revision" tell the story of the dream and code the latent content, while the secondary revision remembers the dream and recites it. By secondary revision, Freud means the ego's attempt to give the dream material coherence in order to be able to make sense of it, which can result in some omission or addition. In other words, when we remember a dream, we remove the unpleasant parts and elements by either forgetting them or altering them in the dream (Cassorla, "Dreaming the Analytical Session," 88).

[257] Palombo, "Theory of Dreams," 159.

[258] Fayek, *Freud's Other Theory of Psychoanalysis*, 76–77.

[259] *Critical Theory Today*, 18.

[260] *Beginning Theory*, 98.

one signifier for another. For example, a child's blond hair could stand for the dreaming subject's aunt, the child's dark complexion for the dreaming subject's nephew, while the whole figure for his grandfather. Similarly, a woman in a dream may simultaneously represent a male dreamer's mother, sister, aunt, and daughter, or even the feminine part of his psyche. One image can represent contradictory entities. When latent elements share specific qualities, they can be amalgamated into one image or element and find expression in the dream's manifest content. As a result of the complex processes of condensation, Freud warns analysts not to focus on the symbolic content of dreams but rather asks them to make the process of dreaming the main target, which can then unveil the symbolic content as a by-product. He concludes that while the unconscious codes the latent content into manifest content, the analyst's job is to do the reverse.

Freud considers "considerations of representation" or "figurability" (*Rücksicht auf Darstellbarkeit*) to be responsible for the distinction between displacement and condensation. As the third process of representation, consideration of representation converts "thoughts into imagery."[261] They are the attempts of the unconscious to make abstract dream materials concrete and pictorial. Freud discovers in this aspect of dream-work a similarity between pictures, puzzles, and dreams. It is similar to what a person, after waking up, might do when they remember their dreams and want to narrate them by means of turning the images into words. Some have also translated this aspect as "figurative expression," but Alan Sheridan warns the reader of the inappropriateness of this rendering in English as being "too approximative."[262] In addition, dream-work, when it is conceived as a picture-making or puzzle-making process, reveals language's intrinsic inability to create pictures.

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[261] Wollheim, *Sigmund Freud*, 65.
[262] Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, 122.

If we accept Lacan's self-identification as the "herald" of the "return to Freud,"[263] then his theory secures his reputation not through a simple rereading of Freudian theory, but through a more fundamental intellectual contribution. This contribution is generally perceived to be his emphasis on linguistic structuralism. As Bert Olivier remarks, "Freudian psychoanalysis [. . .], together with Saussure's structural linguistics, provided the impetus for Lacan's rethinking of Freud's cardinal discoveries."[264]

Although Freud is not usually named among the canonical thinkers of structuralism, his theory of the psyche bears some traits of structuralism. Accordingly, Gerald L. Bruns illustrates in "Freud, Structuralism, and 'the Moses of Michelangelo'" how, in Freudian psychology, the meaning becomes more fabricated and produced rather than understood as an entity already present or out there.[265] On this basis, it may be inferred that Freud would have regarded his theory as belonging to the school of structuralism if the term structuralism as a school had existed.[266] John Lechte, considering language as a structure rather than content, also observes structuralist features in Freud's theory and observes:

> [T]he unconscious is the key to the kind of logic that emerges once one listens in a different kind of way to the apparent 'incoherencies' of unconscious phenomena. The unconscious, then, borrows the content of existing speech in order to give it different syntax and grammar. Particular weight here is attached to the relations between elements rather than to the nature of the elements themselves.

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[263] Johnston, *Irrepressible Truth*, 4.

[264] "Lacan's Subject," 1.

[265] "Freud, Structuralism, and 'The Moses of Michelangelo,'" 18.

[266] Structuralism "is the belief that things cannot be understood in isolation — they have to be seen in the context of the larger structures they are part of (hence the term 'structuralism'). Structuralism was imported into Britain mainly in the 1970s and attained widespread influence, and even notoriety, throughout the 1980s" (Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 39).

> Such a view of the unconscious is close to Freud's view when he said that his approach to dreams was different to what had gone before because he did not interpret dreams according to a pre-existing code*. For the dream itself, Freud proposed, constitutes its own code. The dream – the royal road to the unconscious – is thus 'structured like a language'.[267]

In spite of not finding anything that would contradict Bruns and Lechte, it could also be argued that the Freudian formulation of the psyche preserves only traces of structuralism, which do not in themselves suffice to justify designating Freud a structuralist. The most structuralist feature in Freud's theory seems to be the recurrence of binary oppositions. For instance, his fundamental distinction between sex drives and ego drives (which he later on preferred to call life drives and death drives) could be considered a structuralist tendency towards binaries. However, since structuralism, strongly influenced by Saussure, only achieved these characteristics from the time of its flourishing in the 1950s, it hardly seems convincing, and on the contrary perhaps anachronistic, to give the label of a structuralist to a thinker simply because they exhibit a small number of these features.

Lacan's view of human subjectivity (as being "an effect of language")[268] has roots not only in Freud and Saussure but also in the ideas of Roman Jakobson. In his discussion of "shifters" (empty signifiers), Jakobson makes a profound impact on Lacan's discussion of subjectivity as the mere production of language. For Jakobson, when someone says 'I,' they mean not 'she,' 'he' or any other subjective pronouns: 'I' stands for the speaker and does not indicate that the 'I' is a physical entity, but

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[267] *Key Contemporary Concepts*, 212. "Structure" differs from "form" in that form, which is supposed to lead to meaning, has to do with a message, while structure stands for the tools in our hands used to make meaning. Johannes Willem Bertens explains as follows: "Form is inevitably bound up with meaning; structure, however, is what makes meaning possible. It is that which enables meaning to emerge. This is an enigmatic claim that clearly needs some explanation. After all, we are not even aware of the structures that supposedly play a role in the creation of meaning. It seems to us that we ourselves create meaning [. . .]. Meaning would seem to be produced by you and me, and not by an invisible structure" (*Literary Theory*, 55).

[268] Elliott, *Social Theory and Psychoanalysis in Transition,* 237.

rather indicates that 'I' is an empty signifier. Accordingly, he makes a distinction between "the subject of the utterance" and "the subject of the enunciation," the former indicating the one who is talking and the latter the grammatical position of the 'I' in the sentence structure. The subject of the utterance thus proves to be nothing more than a space waiting to be occupied by someone and, likewise, could be taken as an empty signifier. Thus, "[f]or Lacan, the speaking subject becomes a constitutive blind spot, the empty place from which signification issues."[269]

Furthermore, in 1957, Lacan proposed a correlation between Freud's condensation and displacement as the two mechanisms of the unconscious and Jakobson's linguistic concepts of metaphor and metonymy in order to present his structural reading of the human psyche. He proposes that the fluctuation of meaning has roots in the two linguistic rules of metaphor and metonymy developed by Jakobson. Jakobson's explanation evidently seemed to him very similar to the way the unconscious bears a latent content beneath the manifest appearance. Roman Jakobson, as a Russian-American linguist, is among the most prominent figures in the structuralist theory of language. Along with Saussure, Jakobson writes about metaphor as selection and metonymy as combination. In his essay, "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles" (1956), he takes metaphor as the tenet of poetry and metonymy as that of fictional prose. When we use the word "rose" for our beloved, we make a metaphor by replacing one word for another, while when we use the word "crown" instead of "king," we produce metonymy by using a signifier that is an element (crown) belonging to a larger, associated signifier (king).

Critics commonly take the view that in Lacan's theory, displacement (like metonymy) produces a combination of different meanings, while condensation (like metaphor) is a substitution of meaning. That is to say, displacement is a metonymic act while condensation is a metaphoric one. In this vein, Narcisa

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[269] Grossman, *The Story of All Things*, 39.

Paredes-Canilao states, “The bipolarity of the unconscious is exhibited through its functions of condensation (metaphor) and displacement (metonymy).”[270] Though Lacan scholars mostly agree on this understanding of the terms, a few readers seem to believe the opposite and instead associate metaphor with displacement and metonymy with condensation.

However, Christian Metz regards it to be erroneous to reject the interpretation of this minority of scholars as the notions of condensation and displacement fuse in various ways with the forms that Lacan has introduced.[271] Here, it could be argued that although these modes of reading the Freudian terms of condensation and displacement may seem to contradict themselves at first glance, they prove to be justifiable if *Interpretation of Dreams*, where Freud assigns three forms to condensation and two forms to displacement, serves as the criterion. Freud presents three manners of condensation: by deleting some latent content elements completely, by inserting just one fragment of latent content into the manifest content, and finally by composing a single whole in the manifest content by combining the latent elements which share some features. Similarly, he designates two modes of producing displacement: replacing an item with another distant item to refer to the former item and emphasizing a trivial element instead of a significant one.[272]

In sum, by mixing the linguistic terms of metaphor and metonymy with the psychological notions of condensation and displacement, Lacan introduces a revolutionary link between these two fields of science, which leads to the reading of the unconscious in terms of language. As Trevor Pateman notes, “Our contemporary ability to see Freud’s characterization of the dream-work mechanisms of condensation and displacement as characterizations of metaphor and metonymy is largely due to a remark

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[270] “Sa Loob Ang Kulo,” 88.
[271] Rice and Schofer, *Rhetorical Poetics*, 90.
[272] Mollon, *The Unconscious*, 29–31.

of the linguist Roman Jakobson."[273] He further states that what Jakobson asserts about Freud in his essay "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbance" (1956) is reworked by Lacan in his 1957 paper "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud" which associates the metaphoric procedure and symbolism with condensation and the metonymic one with displacement. Lacan's association between condensation and displacement and the linguistic terms of metaphor and metonymy ultimately emerges from his reading of the unconscious as a language-like structure.

Although Lacan's doctoral dissertation from 1931 already shows traces of linguistic concerns, it is in the late 1950s that he starts to immerse himself in this field of study and consequently introduces Saussure's linguistics into psychoanalysis. Lacan formulates his theory in a neat structural mode which is grounded in his interest in the linguistic structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure.

Structuralism is a critical methodology that looks on culture as having a pattern. It aims at uncovering the underlying pattern of culture in multiple fields such as linguistics, psychology, and anthropology. As structuralism conveys an organized method of analysis, it is perhaps unsurprising that a medical doctor such as Lacan, who is supposed to be concerned with fact and data, would spend fifty years of his life reformulating the human psyche along these lines.

Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) made a distinction between *langue* (the underlying rules of a language system) and *parole* (speech as the product of langue or, put simply, the use of language), and focused his studies on langue rather than parole. While the former has to do with legislation, the latter is associated with execution. In other words, langue represents the system of rules

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[273] "How to Do Things in Dreams," 75.

governing enunciation, and parole indicates the externalization of these rules by the individual's act of speaking. While langue connotes language (an abstract concept), parole means speech (a concrete entity).

In this respect, Saussure held that the perception of an idea is created by means of language; therefore, language precedes ideas. This latter notion exercised considerable influence on Lacan's view of the psyche. If language creates concepts in the mind, logically language could be read as a collective system in a society already existing so that the individual would then be able to make an assertion by means of this pre-existing system. Accordingly, Saussure writes in "Linguistic Value" (1916), "Linguistics then works in the borderland where the elements of sound and thought combine; their combination produces a form, not a substance."[274] It implies that the way human beings see and recognize reality is transferred to their minds via language. Hence as long as humans depend on language, they cannot make claims of disinterestedness. For, in practice, it is language that dictates what they see and how they perceive it. Robert de Beaugrande quotes Saussure's emphasis on the idea that thoughts, which are inherently chaotic, need to be ordered by means of material sounds, and what thoughts and sounds have in common is that they have no material shapes; therefore, de Beaugrande suggests, language hovers between "shapeless masses."[275] As a result, language can hardly claim to possess constancy, an idea identical to Lacan's view of signification as a slippery process. Since the sign lies at the center of Lacan's linguistic discussion of the psyche—a concept, moreover, that he takes from Saussure—it is crucial to provide an overview of what the Saussurian sign conveys.

According to Saussure, the principal unit of language is nothing but the sign. Moreover, it is the sign that constructs language, and each sign is made up of the two elements of the "signifier" and the

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[274] Burke, Crowley and Girvin, *The Routledge Language and Cultural Theory Reader*, 106.
[275] de Beaugrande, "The 'Conscious and Unconscious Mind,'" 14.

"signified." Studying language as a system of signs, Saussure considers each sign (*signe*) to comprise two components, that is, the signifier (*signifiant*) and the signified (*signifié*). The former refers to the acoustic sound or the visual form of the word in a language, while the latter is the concept (rather than the referent) or the meaning to which the signifier refers.[276] However, later, Saussure remarkably revises this theory by putting forward the idea of "value," which will be discussed later in this chapter.[277]

Saussure's theory of duality in language (the sign comprising the signifier and the signified) profoundly affects Lacan. Notably, Lacan attributes supremacy to the signifier.[278] While for Saussure there is a direct one-to-one relationship between the signifier and the signified, Lacan contends that the signifier never successfully reaches the signified. Instead, each signifier refers to another signifier, which in turn brings the subject not to the signified but rather merely to another intermediate signifier. Thus, the subject never reaches the signified, and the linguistic structure offers no stability. Furthermore, the only stability that exists in a language structure is the continuity and persistence of this chain of signification.

In this regard, Saussure posits that each item in the language system is in contact with other items in a network "either syntagmatically (the units that can come before or after in an utterance) or associatively (the units with which it has something in common in form or meaning)."[279] What these two ways of distinguishing between linguistic units accomplish is to assign value to any given sign. It does not mean that the system is made up of these units. It is the relationship between a sign with other signs

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[276] The reader should avoid the misconception of taking a word or name as the signifier and meaning as the signified.

[277] Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, 13.

[278] Arrivé, *Linguistics and Psychoanalysis*, 125.

[279] Joseph, "The Linguistic Sign," 60.

that shows the value of that sign within the system. In consequence, the examination of the whole structure leads us to the understanding of the parts.[280]

Moreover, Saussure proposes that there is a relationship not only between the signifier and the signified but also between each signifier and other signifiers. He adds that these two relationships are arbitrary, for there is not a specific logic for making a given acoustic word represent a specific signified (except for the case of "onomatopoeia").[281] It is simply an agreement within a temporally specific and culturally bound group to use, for instance, "flower" in English as the equivalent of the French *fleur* or the German *Blume*.[282] Similarly, there might be more than one signified for a word. For instance, "fair" embraces a wide spectrum of meanings ranging from "beautiful" or "blond" to "exhibition" or "just." In addition to the context's role in determining meaning at a specific moment, Saussure asserts that language is a differential system, which means that a signifier receives its identity from not being another signifier; for example, a table is a table because it is neither an apple nor a dictionary. He writes, "in a language there are only differences without positive terms. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, the language contains neither ideas nor sounds that pre-exist the linguistic system, but only conceptual differences and phonic differences issuing from this system."[283]

Saussure regards signifier as a linguistic element that has no value in itself. Instead, it gains its meaning (signified) by means of its relation to other signifiers, a characteristic called "negative (meaning differential) value."[284] Therefore, the negativity in the concept of value is related to the arbitrary nature of

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[280] Joseph, "The Linguistic Sign," 61.

[281] Onomatopoeia is "[t]he formation and use of words to imitate sounds. For example: *dong*, *oaclele*, *moo*, *pop*, *atbizz*, *uboosb*, *zoorn*. It is a figure of speech in which the sound reflects the sense" (Cuddon et al., *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 493).

[282] The meaning of words might also differ from one temporal context to another over the course of time.

[283] Joseph, "The Linguistic Sign," 60.

[284] Leupin, *Lacan Today*, 42.

a sign. By the value of a sign, Saussure means the particular link between the signifier and the signified or, as Hugh Bredin explains, "the set of its relations to other signs—always, of course, within the same sign system, the same language,"[285] Bredin goes on to highlight the necessity of making a distinction between Saussure's notions of "signification" and "value" in that "signification is that property of a sign by virtue of which it expresses a concept, whereas value accrues to a sign by virtue of its relations to other signs."[286] In other words, a sign achieves its value, not from what it refers to (the signified), but from its relation to other signs within a linguistic system, because a sound image has no inherent value unless it is regarded as a part of a language.

Among the various commentaries on the concept of sign that Saussure puts forward, Anika Lemaire's seems justifiable. She maintains, "Only the entire system of language gives it (sign) its specificity as opposed to the other signs" and continues that not only are the signifier and the signified, as the constituent elements of the sign, interdependent but also the sign itself.[287] She emphasizes that although value is linked with signification, it is just one of the different dimensions that signification holds. She explains that "[v]alue results from the fact that language is a system whose terms are interdependent. The value of a word is the signification conferred upon it by the presence of all the words in the code, but also by the presence of all the elements of the sentence."[288] She clarifies this explanation by invoking Saussure's comparison of the sign value with the money system, namely, that in order to know the value of a five-franc piece, one needs to be aware of both the difference between its value and that of a one-franc or ten-franc piece in a particular monetary system and of items that are different from money pieces, bread, for instance, which one can buy with five francs. Therefore, if one wants to know

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[285] "Sign and Value in Saussure," 69.
[286] "Sign and Value in Saussure," 69.
[287] Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, 13.
[288] Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, 13.

the value of a word, they need to "know that it can be exchanged for an idea, as value always makes reference to the dissimilar, but one should also take into account its relationships with other words in the code and in the sentence."[289]

The other influence on Lacan's theory of subjectivity is Saussure's description of the two axes of a signifier: the syntagmatic and paradigmatic.[290] By correlating Saussure's two axes with Jakobson's distinction between metaphor and metonymy, Lacan can expand Freud's notions of condensation and displacement in terms of metaphor and metonymy. Saussure proposes the syntagmatic axis, meaning the position of a word in a sentence, as an account for a word's function in a sentence. If it comes before the verb, for instance, it becomes the subject, or if after the verb, the object, and so on. The paradigmatic axis focuses, in contrast, on the word's part of speech. For example, in the sentence, "The lion killed the hunter," we can use "the tiger" or "the disease" instead of "the lion"; the sentence still makes semantic sense if these words are substituted for "lion." Barker notes, "Meaning is accumulated along the syntagmatic axis, while selection from the paradigmatic field alters meaning at any given point in the sentence."[291] In general, a crucial point in Saussure's description of the sign is the fact that the context of the signs is what matters in making meaning.

Saussure's emphasis on the arbitrariness and differential nature of language deeply affects the foundations of Lacan's psychoanalysis. If we assume that language is constituted by people in a society, we infer that it is nothing more than a man-made system. Not satisfied with semiotics, Saussure develops his sign study in the field of semiology that involves the study of signs in all systems, language being

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[289] Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, 13.

[290] The syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations exist not only among words, but also among the other elements of language.

[291] *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, 141.

only one of the many. What Saussure's notion of linguistic arbitrariness provides for Lacan is the concept of conventionality and consequently the concept of an everlasting deficiency in the language (or, to use Lacan's preferred term, in "the Symbolic order").

From Saussure, Lacan introduces the idea that concepts and their formation surpass words and that the signification process is connected to human cognition. He adds that signifiers are not only the features of language but also those of the unconscious. As a structuralist, Lacan views the unconscious as a multilayered structure created through various interrelated and hierarchically disposed elements. In this way, "[t]he unconscious is the second structure masked by an appearance of a conscious and lucid self-disposition."[292] Although Lacan seems fascinated by the Saussurian sign, he formulates his theory of structural psychoanalysis on the view that the signifier rather than the sign, as in Saussure's formulation, matters most as the fundamental element of language. If Saussure looks at language as a structure of signs, Lacan views it more as one of signifiers. Thus, he coins the term *linguistérie* from the words *linguistique* and *hystérie* to summarize the way that he applies linguistic structuralism to the field of psychoanalysis. He has sometimes been criticized for having perverted Saussure's structuralism. He merely answered that he is a psychoanalyst, not a linguist.

In one key development, Lacan modifies the Saussurean algorithm by highlighting the signifier's importance with a capital letter S and abbreviating the signified with an italicized lowercase *s*.[293] He separates the two with a bar (S/*s*), which, rather than uniting the signifier and the signified (as in Saussure), represents the signified's resistance to being pinned down by the signifier.[294] In other words, it stands for the irreconcilability of the two in the Lacanian *mise-en-scène* of the unconscious. What the

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[292] Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, 3.
[293] Nobus, "Lacan's Science of the Subject," 53.
[294] Campbell, *Jacques Lacan and Feminist Epistemology*, 34.

resistance of the bar guarantees is the signifier's survival. While Saussure compares the binary unit of signifier and signified to the two sides of a sheet of paper which can only exist as a unit, Lacan defends their independence from one another. Lacan puts forward the view that the signifier might visit the signified temporarily for a short period of time and refers to this point of time as the *point de capiton*. In fact, the point de capiton designates a point when the signifier visits the signified for a moment. The French term denotes the upholstery button in the mattress which fixes the fabric in place and prevents it from moving. According to Lacan, it is the existence of the point de capiton that distinguishes the normal subject from others.[295]

Scholars such as Bruce Fink accept Lacan's proposition that the signifier and signified are independent in a linguistic algorithm assigning the signifier a superior position and the signified a subordinate one.[296] However, it could also be argued that by independence Lacan does not mean that there is no form of interaction between the signifier and the signified, but that there are two levels of power within the linguistic order and language system. Furthermore, in *Encore* (*Seminar XX*), Lacan asserts that "the signifier is posited only insofar as it has no relation to the signified."[297] Elaborating on these ideas, Lacan describes the bar as "a barrier resisting signification"[298] and seems to refer thereby to the signifier's unwillingness to lose its dominant position by allowing the signified to approach, even to the slightest extent, this dominant position. In other words, the signifier resists coming into any form of dialogue with the signified to avoid the risk of entering into a hazardous master-slave play with the signified.

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[295] For Lacan, there are three types of subjectivity (the neurotic, the psychotic, and the pervert) among which the neurotic is taken to be the normal (Dunlap, *Lacan and Religion*, 52).
[296] *Lacan to the Letter*, 79.
[297] Quoted in Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, *Desiring Whiteness*, 139.
[298] Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition*, 415.

Modifying Lacan's understanding of the sign, Ed Pluth, after defining value as a sign's relation to other signs instead of the sign's referent, remarks that Lacan rejects Saussure's distinction between value and meaning and takes Saussure's value to denote "meaning." Therefore, "Saussurean meaning, as a unity of signifier and signified, has no real place in Lacan's theory."[299] Yet, it could also be argued that Evans' words (the "impossibility of ever saying 'the truth about truth'"), quoted in chapter two, are also appropriate for the idea that Lacan's definition of the Symbolic is based on the notion of "absence." He also posits that the negativity (difference) of signs in Saussure's theory of language is the root of Lacan's proposition that "everything that exists in the symbolic order only exists by virtue of its difference to everything else."[300] Therefore, when we take "absence" to denote "difference," there remains little room to claim that Lacan misunderstood Saussure's description of the sign.

In sum, Saussure founds his theory of language on three main tenets all contributing to the Lacanian mode of reading the language structure: the synchronicity of language, the two notions of langue and parole as the formative parts of language, and finally the term langue (an artificial sign system based on differences between both the signifiers and the signified). Thus, having explained the Saussurian background of Lacan's theory of the psyche, I will now focus on Lacan's original contribution, which in turn formed the foundation of Kristeva's notion of the abject.

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[299] *Signifiers and Acts*, 28.
[300] *An Introductory Dictionary*, 58.

4 Jacques Lacan as the root of Kristeva's theory of the abject

An overview of Lacanian psychoanalysis is crucial for clarifying how his theories influence Kristeva's notion of the abject. This overview adumbrates key ideas in Kristeva's thought, which are treated in the next chapter and in the ensuing discussion of Hemingway's stories.

In Lacan's system of thought, it is not only the restraints and dominance of the Other over the individual that are significant, but also, and more importantly, the potential this mode of thought has for examining the subjectivity of each individual. This view is relevant for and will be discussed in relation to Hemingway's short stories in the present work. In this regard, Ian Parker rightly points out, "Lacanian psychoanalysis breaks from psychiatry and provides a space in which the subject speaks and reconstructs anew a different place in conditions of life under capitalism (or in another world that is fabricated as if completely outside it)."[301]

On the one hand, Lacan's theory has invited a myriad of perspectives. On the other hand, the components of his theory are so integrated with one another that it is challenging to select a specific point of departure.[302] Undeniably, however, his three psychoanalytical registers make a profound contribution to the concept of the abject. Lacan's notions are so deeply based on the conception of the three orders of the psyche, that, as Malcolm Bowie suggests, "the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary are the whole of what is, and figuring their connections is a cosmological exercise."[303]

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[301] *Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 93.

[302] Although Lacan features in most works on psychoanalysis, some intellectuals have failed to include Lacan in their discourse. Further, at times he seems so notoriously difficult for some thinkers that they deny his credibility. For instance, Martin Heidegger believes that Lacan is a psychiatrist in need of a psychiatrist, and Noam Chomsky takes the view that Lacan is a "charlatan" who attempts to humiliate Parisian thinkers with his nonsense words (Aoki, "Letters from Lacan," 15). It could serve to underline the complexity of his theories and the perseverance of Lacanian scholars.

[303] *Lacan*, 195.

In discussing and advancing the study of the self and subjectivity, the French psychiatrist Lacan complements contemporary approaches, in particular those of Freud, with a Saussurean structural framework. He dissects the human psyche in relation to three perceptions of the self: the ideal image of one's self which the individual strives to imitate (*Ich-Ideal*/ego-ideal); one's image seen in the mirror (*Ideal-Ich*/ideal-ego) in the Imaginary order; and the self (subjectivity) that language defines for each individual in the Symbolic order. According to this theory, the Borromean knot of the RSI (Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary) can be taken as the basis of each individual's psychoanalytical development, which Lacan conceptualizes in his 1950s seminars. The association of each register with a specific age in childhood may lead to the common misconception that each designates a successive mental stage, while it is the constant interaction between these three registers that form every individual's subjectivity. Furthermore, many of Lacan's further theories take shape in light of these three orders. As a result, I will begin with these three pillars of the Borromean knot.

In many seminars on psychoanalysis Lacan presents to formulate the genesis of subjectivity through Saussure's distinction of the signifier and signified. Built on Sigmund Freud, his theory of the developmental stages of each individual precipitated a revolution in the world of psychoanalysis. Lacan formulates RSI based on Freudian terms of *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. *Id* is the Latin word for the English 'it' and German *Es*, *ego* for the English 'I' and German *Ich*, and *superego* for the English 'Above-I' or German *Über-Ich*.[304] Expanding on these three concepts, Lacan formulates his discussion of the individual's development through the interrelated concepts of the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic.

[304] Representing all the bodily drives in every individual, like the pleasure of food and sex, id is associated with physical needs. Freud introduces the term superego to mean culture and the values existing in every community culture. It is the superego that forces the individual to adhere to morals; otherwise, there would be no distinction between humans and animals. He places ego (the most controversial among all the three terms) between id and superego. Ego designates the self of the individual, the entity that makes a balance between the brutality of the id and the unearthliness of the superego (Dwyer, *Angles on Criminal Psychology*, 25–26).

RSI, illustrated using circles, overlap in the middle and shape a knot, so the removal of any individual part would destroy the knot as a whole.

Lacan divides the development of each individual into three chronological periods: 0–6 months of age, 6–18 months of age, and 18 months to 4 years of age. In each stage, the subject has a particular understanding of reality (the surrounding world) which leads to a specific individual perception of the self. What distinguishes and defines these three periods is the three registers (RSI) that Lacan puts forward. Although he assigns each register to a stage, he states that these stages occur simultaneously in every individual. For Lacan, what constitutes the subjectivity of each individual is nothing more than discourse between the three orders (RSI), a notion encapsulated in Lacan's well-known maxim that the unconscious is structured like a language.[305] Language to Lacan means the structure that defines not only our conception of the world but also that of ourselves and our subjectivity.

Although Lacan earlier concentrates more on the Symbolic, later he focuses on the Real. As identified by Bruno Bosteels, Lacan's concern with "the lack of being" later on turns into a fascination for "the being of lack."[306] The Real "constitutes the very kernel of the subject's being, the kernel that is simultaneously created and extirpated by the advent of the signifying order."[307] The Real is the state of completeness which is lost forever at the moment of our entrance into reality and fortifies the craving for a reunion with it by constantly recalling its loss. To cite Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, "the Real is 'being' as it

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[305] Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection* 179.
[306] Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, XV.
[307] Zupančič, "Ethics and Tragedy in Lacan," 174.

is, being without alterity, 'given', 'identical to itself', 'omnipresent and dense'" and "the real, Lacan says, is 'pure and simple', 'undifferentiated', 'non-human', 'without fissure', 'always in the same place.'"[308]

The first phase, dominated by the memory of the Real, occurs before infants reach six months when they have no sense of a boundary and cannot distinguish between themselves and other things or people.[309] It is only aware of bodily pleasures and needs since it only has a material existence; consequently, there is nothing but needs and their fulfillment. During this period, the infant is closest to the Real which represents the lost state of being. The individual will never return to this phase although the wish to return never disappears. The eternal striving to return to the Real resembles Freud's *Fort-Da* game.[310] The Real is the most material aspect of our existence. Due to the fact that, as Lacan puts it, all our being is filtered through and constructed by language, which is slippery by nature, any effort to attain the Real is doomed to fail. Thom Martin states, "The real is an orphan unconscious: the real is a necklace threaded with stars."[311] The individual always strives to articulate the Real, which is an impossibility. The Real therefore designates a state that is lost at the very moment of coming into existence and the older the individual becomes, the further away they move from it. Since the Real cannot be expressed, the individual's psyche from the first moment of development is always separated from the Real. Nonetheless, the Real never ceases to affect the individual's life and constantly reminds them of its traumatic absence.

Although the Real is one of Lacan's most fundamental terms, it has at times been misunderstood. He uses the adjective "real" to talk about something impossible to grasp, articulate, verbalize or

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[308] *Lacan*, 192.

[309] Designating a genuine truth, the notion of the Real was Lacan's focus during the 1960s (Julien, xvii).

[310] Freud sees his eighteen-month-old grandson repeatedly throwing a cotton reel out of his cot saying "Oo," while his mother gives it back saying "Ah." Freud calls these sounds *Fort* (gone) and *Da* (there) and elaborates on it in his 1920 "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." He interprets it as the effort the child makes to overcome the sense of anxiety it has in the absence of parents (Ian Buchanan, *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (2010), 174).

[311] "The Unconscious Structured Like a Language," 452.

symbolize, to which only the fetus in the mother's womb is close; later on, the baby develops and the loss of the Real becomes irrevocable. Remaining nothing more than an illusion or a nebulous memory, the Real is that state of mind in which the infant lives before having any sense of differentiation or distinction-making. Yet the individual is always under the influence of the Real, because it is released during the traumatic moments when the individual seeks to express its materiality. Parker holds the view that although the "real is impossible to grasp," it "appears only transitorily at moments of traumatic revelation."[312]

Similarly, discussing the term "extimacy" in his essay "Extimité," Jacques-Allain Miller attempts to decipher Lacan's use of the term by construing it as "the real in the symbolic."[313] In this respect, he takes the view that Lacan regards the Real as an exterior that exists in the interior instead of taking the exterior as the opposite of the interior. He goes on to claim, "extimacy says that the intimate is the Other—like a foreign body, a parasite."[314] Miller adds:

> This is what we find in "The Agency of the Letter", when Lacan speaks of "this other to whom I am more attached than to myself, since, at the heart of my assent to my identity, to myself, it is he who stirs me" [. . .] where the extimacy of the Other is tied to the vacillation of the subject's identity to himself.[315]

Furthermore, the more individuals strive to reach the Real, the more disappointed they become as the Real is doomed to eternal exile or individuals are increasingly exiled from the Real. As a result, it is impossible to grasp the Real. Nonetheless, Lacan's theory, as Yannis Stavrakakis remarks, calls for "the

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[312] *Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 88.
[313] 75.
[314] "Extimité," 76.
[315] "Extimité," 77.

recognition of the unrepresentable real" rather than "tabooing the real."[316] He adds, "The fact, however, that the symbolic can never master the real [. . .] does not mean that one should abstain from symbolising" it.[317] Although the Real intrinsically features no absence, no lack, and no gaps, it becomes a lack by means of the Symbolic (the third register of development) because it evades linguistic articulation. The individual can approach the Real but can never seize it.

Absence as a natural feature of the Real seems to be responsible for key misunderstandings. Like the Derridean slippery chain of signifiers, the Real resists being defined. The newborn baby is only close to (not within) the Real, because boundaries begin to develop as soon as they are born. The lack of the Real starts when the fetus is in the mother's womb and satisfies its nutritional needs by nourishing itself from the mother's body. After birth, the infant who only understands pleasure starts to distinguish between erogenous body organs (oral, anal, and genital body parts), which satisfy the infant's biological needs. Hence, this stage entails the earliest feelings of fragmentation. The Real can be conceived of as analogous to an unconscious level of language. As Fred Botting defines it, "[a] mystery between the fullness of the living body and the subject's alienation in signification, the real, for the subject of analysis, is linked to the traumatic loss of plentitude."[318] Correspondingly, the effect of the Real is felt throughout life as that of the unconscious, while the individual finds it difficult to pinpoint the root of this intimidating compulsion to search for the Real.

Nevertheless, the infant discovers that these bodily satisfactions fail to fulfill their need to overcome this sense of fragmentation. The fetus in the womb starts to identify with the mother and sees no distinction between its body and the mother who fulfills its needs (even before any articulation of the

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[316] *The Lacanian Left*, 9.
[317] *The Lacanian Left*, 9.
[318] *Sex, Machines and Navels*, 83.

need) through the umbilical cord. Later on, although closeness to the mother still exists to some extent, the infant signals its separation by crying and demanding the fulfillment of a need. Some scholars understand the time after birth as a period of complete closeness with the mother and the time of unmediated gratification. Rafey Habib writes, “the imaginary phase is one of unity (between the child and the surroundings), as well as of immediate possession (of the mother and objects), a condition of reassuring plenitude.”[319] However, other interpreters of Lacan consider the moment of birth, rather than the age of six months, as the end of complete unity with the mother and the immediate actualization of needs. For instance, Matthew Colbeck suggests that Lacan has revisited “Freud’s concept of *das ding*/the Thing (the object of yearning or desire for the Subject, lost from the moment of birth; a primordial, subconscious ‘lack’),”[320] or Adrian Johnston suggests:

> For a living being thrown even well before the actual moment of biological birth into a pre-existent inter- and trans-subjective set of matrices of mediation and destined thereby to become a ‘speaking being’ (*parletre*), these Real needs are forced, within the surrounding strictures imposed upon the little human being by both Imaginary others and Symbolic Others, into being (mis)communicated in the form of socially recognised, language-symbolised demands.[321]

It could be argued that the root of this misconception is, firstly, the lack of disruption in the infant’s need for fulfillment and the shortness of the delay to its satisfaction and, secondly, in the strength of connection not only with the mother’s body but also its surroundings in the first six months of life after birth. However, it appears that even if an infant is not aware of a separation, a loss of complete unity (the Real) begins with a child’s first existence in the mother’s womb, because the state of dependence,

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[319] *A History of Literary Criticism*, 589.
[320] *The Language and Imagery of Coma and Brain Injury*, 51.
[321] “Repetition and Difference,” 189.

including the need to be fed by the mother, begins there. This situation changes when the infant sees its reflection in the mirror at the age of six to eighteen months, an act that leads to the emergence of the Imaginary register.

From the 1930s to 1950s Lacan conducted studies on the Imaginary, that phase in which infants see their reflected image in the mirror. Unlike monkeys who perceive another monkey in the mirror, the human child identifies itself with the mirror image, and this act of self-identification affects the child's character: "A baby monkey and a human baby are equally fascinated at first by their mirror images, but once the monkey realises the image is empty it loses interest in it, while the human child continues to identify with it and seeks to penetrate its meaning."[322] As a result, the ego is formed through the image the infant sees in the mirror.

Although Lacan stresses the mechanism of the Symbolic, Kristeva dwells on the mirror stage (the Imaginary) and formulates from her reflection her formulation of the abject. In Lacanian doctrine, moreover, the father occupies the dominant role, while Kristeva's theory focuses on the mother figure.

A person's confrontation with the self's mirror-image initiates the mirror stage. The mirror stage creates an ontological view of the world, and the image in the mirror thereby produces a transformation in the infant's sense of subjectivity.[323] It is the Imaginary register that accounts for the formation of the ego in each individual. The mirror plays a substantial role in the infant's fundamental view of the self and the universe since it is through this image that they, for the first time, develop a sense of 'I.' The infant sees their image and learns that they have control over it; however, the image is different from the infant's self-

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[322] Richardson, *The Experience of Culture*, 14.

[323] Ontology is one of the three branches of metaphysics (the other two being natural theology and universal science), which is concerned with the study of existence and is usually put in contrast with epistemology, which is the study of knowledge (Atmanspacher and Primas, "Epistemic and Ontic Quantum Realities," 304).

concept, because the image in the mirror has a unified form (*Gestalt*). Lacan refers to this stage as the Imaginary. Since this image comes from the outside, the image the infant has of itself is perceived to be from the outside.

Accordingly, the infant is confronted with an image that is itself and simultaneously not itself. The infant now adopts this image as their own "Ideal ego" or "Ideal-I," which is an ideal for perfection. As "a template of the integrated self that it might become," the Ideal-I makes the infant feel joyful.[324] Consequently, the fullness of the mirror image helps to relieve the earlier sense of fragmentation. Nonetheless, Anna Mollow states:

> The process of ego formation that Lacan calls the mirror stage—which signifies not only a specific developmental phase occurring in the early months of childhood but also a structural component of subjects' self-understandings throughout our lives—is founded on a "misrecognition": no person can ever fully embody the ideal-I, as this phantasmatic image of formal integrity always coexists in reciprocal relationship to another immutable aspect of ourselves, the "*corps morcelé*," or "body in pieces."[325]

Thus, the completeness of the image inside the mirror clashes with the image the infant has of itself and produces a paradox that continues during the child's lifetime, even after they enter the third stage. Lacan calls this "dehiscence," a term in botany denoting the opening of an organ to emit its contents. By reading dehiscence as a fundamental component of the human psyche, Lacan postulates that the infant develops its sense of physical unity from the external image in the mirror, which produces in turn "a méconnaissance—an illusion, a boundary made visible and tangible only through the complicity of

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[324] Mollow, "Lacan and Disability Studies," 171.
[325] Mollow, "Lacan and Disability Studies," 171.

others"; therefore, its ego is formed by "the person's past attachments [. . .] that are established and then abandoned."[326] It makes the infant feel forever alienated from both itself and the world around. Accordingly, any sense of autonomy comes to be simply an illusion for the ego because the image is more complete than the infant's perception of itself. At the same time, the infant wishes to be similar to the mirror-image. The aspiration to become like this image engenders affection for the mirror-image, whereas the integrity of the image conjures hatred. This hatred also derives from the moment the infant compares its mirror-image to the 'ego Ideal' (the ideal point of one's being). In this respect, Lacan writes in *Écrits*:

> This development is experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the individual's formation into history: the mirror stage is a drama whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation—and, for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to what I will call an "orthopedic" form of its totality—and to the finally donned armor of an alienating identity that will mark his entire mental development with its rigid structure. Thus, the shattering of the *Innenwelt* to *Umwelt* circle gives rise to an inexhaustible squaring of the ego's audits.[327]

For the child, the mirror-image begins to define the boundaries of the self. The child develops relationships with others and comes to perceive that he or she has no control over the boundaries of its body image; therefore, the mental concept of the essential self becomes corrupted. Later, the mirror is replaced by the people with whom the individual identifies, which means that the child adopts the images of other people as its own. Because the child has no control over its surroundings, the world defines the

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[326] Weiner, *The Lost Drum*, 4.
[327] Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition*, 78.

individual's *Gestalt*.[328] These circumstances cause the child to identify the self's image in the mirror of language and thus bring about the next register, the Symbolic.

In the 1950s—the period of Lacan's "return to Freud"[329]—the notion of the Symbolic register is introduced. A consideration of this register leads Lacan to the conclusion that "the unconscious is structured in the most radical way like a language."[330] Emerging when the child is between eighteen months and four years of age, the Symbolic stage witnesses the construction of an individual's subjectivity. While the mirror image constitutes the ego, the Symbolic provides the child with subjectivity. In short, the process of becoming an adult is a journey of moving away not only from the self but also from the unity with the mother figure and of advancing towards a father figure, Symbolic language. Some thinkers believe that, compared to the Symbolic (language), the self-image in the mirror is of more dominance and primacy. For instance, Debra B. Bergoffen observes, "The mirror stage announces the uniqueness of Lacan's approach to the subject."[331] In contrast, another group of thinkers, such as Slavoj Žižek, claims that the Symbolic stage forms the core of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Žižek justifies this view by recalling that, according to Lacan in *Seminar I* (*Freud's Papers on Technique*), "[i]f we must define that moment in which man [sic] becomes human, we would say that it is at that instant when, as minimally as you like, he enters into a symbolic relationship."[332] David H. Fisher convincingly writes, "Although Lacan clearly made the Symbolic Order [. . .] the basis for both psychoanalytic theory and practice, it is equally clear that Lacan believes signifiers to have been built up [. . .] out of a dialectic of

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[328] Johansson, "Psychoanalysis, Film and the 'Other,'" 143.
[329] Johnston, *Irrepressible Truth,* 226.
[330] Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*. 179.
[331] Bergoffen, "The Science Thing," 569.
[332] *Jacques Lacan*, 18.

signifieds (images) in the Imaginary order."[333] Furthermore, the Imaginary and the Symbolic are two mechanisms that are simultaneously at work (along with the Real) without either possessing priority. It could be argued that because Lacan gives the title "knot" to the interaction between this triad, his conception of the psychic apparatus is an organic unity where all parts exercise equal significance.

The symbolic register is also relevant for the present work as the subjectivity of Nick Adams (the code hero) in Hemingway's short stories vis-à-vis Kristeva's notion of the abject is shaped in relation to his interaction with the Symbolic. In this respect, Yannis Stavrakakis states, "Lacan's radical decentrement of subjectivity with respect to the signifier depends on a particular understanding of this symbolic level, the register of the signifier, the big Other."[334]

According to Freud, the father becomes the symbol of power and authority after children realize that their mother has no penis and begins to fear "castration."[335] Lacan calls it "the Law of the Father" and says that it "describes a cultural order of the exchange of women between men."[336] This phase is also called "the big other" stage. "The Other" refers to the social conventions created by language (a defining system made up of signifiers), which forms the subjectivity of the individual and rather paradoxically also bars them from having an independent voice.[337] According to Nadia Bou Ali, "[t]here is no subject prior to the Other and the encounter with the Other affirms the subject as an 'empty set', as what is out of place

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[333] Wyschogrod, Crownfield, and Raschke, *Lacan and Theological Discourse*, 13.

[334] *Lacan and the Political*, 21.

[335] The infantile boy, Freud holds, notices that girls do not possess a penis and starts to feel threatened by the fear of its loss, which is called castration. Therefore, he begins to think that "it is best to make peace with the father who threatens castration" (Bocock, *Sigmund Freud*, 34), whereas girls try to compensate for this lack and overcome a feeling of inferiority by trying to win a man for their future.

[336] Campbell, *Jacques Lacan and Feminist Epistemology*, 158.

[337] This quality of the symbolic forms a main principle in the present discussion of abjection in Hemingway's short stories.

in the chain of signifiers that constitute the social link."[338] The discourse of the Other acts like a signifier that rules over the subject as the signified. However, the present work investigates the way Hemingway's art creates a world that struggles to give a voice to the individual and thereby facilitates discourse with the Other, which can result in the recreation or redefinition of the Other's dominant position. It echoes Colette Soler's statement in "The Symbolic Order (II)":

> I would like to begin today with the idea that the unconscious is linked to symptoms through speech. Lacan set out to think psychoanalysis on the basis of this notion, and to understand it we must immediately specify what speech is. [. . .] according to Lacan, speech—that is, full or true speech—is an act. An act is something that has a creative function; it brings something new into the world. The creative function of speech is the main thing you have to understand.[339]

When children learn language, they become familiar with pre-defined (gender) norms and (social) rules in order to communicate with others. Lacan himself compares his own notion of the Name-of-the-Father and Freud's Oedipus complex and explains that it refers to the child's and the mother's lack of what the biological father possesses. Stephen Friedlander states that everyone (including the parents) fears castration; similarly, the child becomes aware of the fact that the mother as the creator of the baby cannot be self-sufficient and tries to satisfy herself by means of another person, the father.[340] The mother desires the father for the sake of something she lacks and he possesses (the phallus). In this way, the first act of substitution (the replacement of an unacceptable emotion with an alternative feeling to gratify needs) takes place in the child's mind, and "[i]t is through this initial act of substitution that the process of signification begins and the child enters the symbolic order as a subject of lack"; hence, the symbolization

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[338] "Measure against Measure," 14.
[339] "The Symbolic Order (II)," 47.
[340] "The 'Third Party' in Psychoanalysis," 152.

in Lacan is referred to as a phallic act.[341] Yet Lacan employs the word phallus not to mean penis, but to designate all the power and authority in the monopolistic hands of language as the Symbolic order. He thus regards discourse to be phallogocentric, which means that it focuses on and is governed by the phallus (the Symbolic), not only on the level of syntax and semantics but also in the context of logical concepts and conventions.[342] The Symbolic can also be read as the opposite of the Real, since the Real as the realm of absolute materiality, integrity, and completeness differs from language as the representative of the Symbolic. Therefore, Lacan is considered to have discussed the Real by means of language as the medium of therapy.

Hence, by the Name-of-the-Father, Lacan means all the rules and contracts in language and society through which people communicate. Although Lacanian psychoanalysis insists on the inaccessibility of the truth, language exercises so great a role in his thought that he asserts, "'it is with the appearance of language that the dimension of truth emerges.'"[343] However, this quotation raises the question: if the Real (truth) is undefinable and resists being verbalized, then how would it be possible for language to reveal it? Lacan's adroit use of "dimension" before "truth" could mean that language as a defining system assigns a frame for every concept but fails to do so when it comes to the Real. Thus, the Real would be the breach, rupture, and fracture in the structure of language. Under the influence of Saussure, Lacan regards the letters of language as signifiers that refer to some meaning designated the signified. Each signifier sheds light on a signified, and since this signified may be merely another signifier, we may fail to achieve a final signified. This everlasting movement continues even as we always demand pragmatic sense-making. Freud's concept of castration has similarities to Lacan's theory that meaning is

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[341] Homer, *Jacques Lacan*, 56.
[342] Abrams and Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 128.
[343] Quoted in Nusselder, *Interface Fantasy*, 43.

castrated and that the subject is thus barred (as in S/*s*). For this reason, what individuals think of themselves differs from who they really are. While adults in a "community regulate objects" by means of language, the child "finds herself imprisoned by her inability to discriminate between real and imaginary objects, let alone to control them. The acquisition of language releases her from this prison."[344] The Symbolic register to which the individual looks reflects not only the image of the individual but also that of any other concept in the individual's mind. Hence, "the subject is inserted into a language system and is then spoken from it and by it – at the level of the unconscious."[345] Assigning meaning to linguistic voids also applies to sexuality. The Other defines what "male" or "female" is and in doing so constructs the way individuals should act and live according to their sexuality.

This process of meaning-making works in all cases except for the Real: the Real slides and slips away from the domain of verbalization. Thus, the individual is doomed to take the images the Symbolic reflects to be reality since, firstly, there is no other mirror (i.e., a defining medium) available, and, secondly, other individuals are, in the same manner, standing in front of the language mirror which provides them with subjectivity, and are thereby using the same medium (i.e., language) to communicate.

In addition, it is essential to be aware of the common fallacy of equating language with the Symbolic order. Language consists of both the Symbolic and the Imaginary. These two axes of language are presented in Lacan's Schema L, where the unconscious as the discourse of the other suggests the Symbolic aspect, while the Imaginary relation between the other (*autre*) and the ego (*moi*) corresponds to the Imaginary.

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[344] Bruss, "Lacan and Literature," 66, 65.
[345] Saguaro, "The Mirror Stage," 143.

Unlike the ego which is involved with *méconnaissance* (misunderstanding of the self due to the contradiction between the fullness of the body image in the mirror as the Ideal-I and the incompleteness of the chaotic physical body), the subject is concerned with the discourse of the Other. While the contradiction between the mirror image and the mental image of the self leads to insecurity, the Symbolic order promises stability. If the mirror image suggests what individuals might be, the Symbolic hints at what society (pre)supposes them to be.

The moment the child enters the Symbolic stage, any wish to experience something oneself becomes a hallucination as all forms of knowledge and experience are mediated through the lens of culture, society, education, and other institutional forms, which Lacan refers to as the Other. Unlike the Cartesian tradition, which reduces the interaction between the mind, the physical body, and the world, Lacan does not view this unending attempt to find meaning as a search for a lack (as it was in the Real) or for a need (as in the Imaginary), but rather a search for what he calls "desire."

By desire, Lacan means not the desire of the subject, but the desire of the Other, and the object of this desire is accordingly to be the desire of the Other rather than that of the subject.[346] By struggling to conform to the pattern that the Other has devised for the subject, the subject unconsciously aspires to preserve a state of being desired by the Other. Discussing the concept of the Other in Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetics, Paul A. Vatalaro notes that Lacan in his *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* observes, "*'man's desire is the desire of the Other,'*" and that he positively takes the Other to imply

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[346] Nobus, "The Moral Principle," 111. The concept of desire might seem like a catch-22 situation, but I would like to clarify it to the readers even if my wish for clarification is not fulfilled due to the fact that I am also doomed to live within the Other's sovereignty and thus not an exception to the rule of subjects being entrapped into language.

"Power, a creative force that finds endless expression in the world and in the human mind."[347] However, it could also be argued that desire is the force that drives us to retrieve the irretrievable Real. Acting as the constant reminder of a lack, it exists only for the sake of ceaselessly recalling the distance we have to the Real. As a name for this object of desire, Lacan employs the term *objet petit a*.

In 1964 Lacan develops the concept *objet petit a* or *objet a* to designate the lost object of desire.[348] Objet a is a vestige of the Real and the only object that language fails to define. Since "[d]esire is not a relation to an object, but a relation to a LACK,"[349] objet a is referred to as the cause of desire rather than the aim of desire. In fact, any search for objet a is "necessarily unsuccessful, for objet petit a is always a lost object that can never be found."[350] As it is exclusively available to the Other, objet a is what the Other desires the subject to desire. It is the original object that is never restorable because it resides in an absence (the Real), so it, on the one hand, triggers the desire and, on the other hand, acts as the illusive destination the individual seeks to reach. Hence, it is the existence of objet a that fuels the motor of the Other's desire. According to Bruce Fink:

> [Desire] has a cause, a cause that brings it into being, that Lacan dubs object (a), cause of desire. The bracketing or placing in parentheses of the object [. . .] is a sign of the object's transposition from the imaginary register to the real [. . .]. Object (a) as the cause of desire is that which elicits

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[347] *Shelley's Music*, 147.
[348] The letter "a" in *objet petit a* stands for the French word *autre* meaning "other" (Wolfreys, *Key Concepts in Literary Theory*, 72).
[349] Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary*, 38.
[350] Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 33.

> desire: it is responsible for the advent of desire, for the particular form the desire in question takes, and for its intensity.[351]

Therefore, object petit a constantly escapes the recuperation of language and, though it is elusive, its pursuit ignites the subject's desire.

Unlike objet petit a, which promotes the survival and persistence of desire, the concept at the opposite pole of desire is *jouissance* (the French word for "enjoyment"). Desire, along with objet petit a, seeks to satisfy and answer the call of the Symbolic order, whereas jouissance is in search of the Real as the total materiality of existence. Being analogous to orgasm, jouissance surpasses the amount of pleasure the individual can tolerate, which is called the "pleasure principle."[352] Therefore, jouissance can be taken to be rebellious and subversive in nature. It strives to break the boundaries and, in this sense, seems to have affinities with the notion of the abject put forward by Kristeva. In contrast to objet petit a, viewed as the cause of desire helping the consistent existence of the Other, jouissance generally tries to transgress the Symbolic order. Although the Other intends to restrict enjoyment by means of desire, jouissance aims at surpassing the conventionally accepted (or the devised) degree of pleasure. Therefore, by virtue of their drive to break the boundaries, jouissance and abjection are both connected with subversion.

It can thus be inferred that the Lacanian subject is eccentric and barred. If the Imaginary makes human beings feel separated from the Real, the Symbolic moves them to the furthest distance from it. The individual has no language to begin with, so they have to learn the language that the society uses and

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[351] *The Lacanian Subject*, 91.

[352] To Freud, the pleasure principle represents the opposite of the "reality principle." While the former insists on instant gratification of needs, the latter is associated by the Other's attempt to postpone it. The pleasure principle represents "the demands of the libido," while the reality principle stands for "the demands of the external world" (Cassegård, *Shock and Naturalization*, 85).

thereby their idea of the self is constructed by this language. It means that the child finds in the Symbolic a solution to the chaos and contradictions initiated in the mind during the Imaginary state. In other words, as the individual has no access to the Real, it is replaced by language, and this matter moves the Real further away and makes it even more unattainable. For this reason, according to Lacan, the Real denotes the repressed part of the mind to which we have no access for the simple reason that it has been repressed.

Accordingly, when he maintains, in "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason since Freud," that the unconscious is structured like a language, he means *un langage* (the syntactical and semantic structures) rather than *une langue* (a specific language such as English or French).[353] Expressed differently, as it comes before the individual, language exists as a defining and thereby dominant structure. Moreover, due to the fact that language has the ability to and function of naming entities by assigning signs for them, it is inherently concerned with deprivation.[354] Unlike Freud who views, "the unconscious as a dark dungeon full of libidinal imps hiding behind rational volition and planning unwholesome incursions,"[355] Lacan regards the unconscious as the "discourse of the Other" ("a systemic social formation") which as a "hoard of words also accounts for my own singularity, thanks to the agency of the specific condensation of signifiers that appears as a symptom, that is, my symptom."[356] This difference between Lacan and Freud also appears in the different perspectives they adopt toward the conscious and unconscious states of mind. While Freud intends to invigorate the ego, Lacan takes the unconscious as the domineering component of our existence. Therefore, when he makes a comparison between the structure of the unconscious and that of a language, he is referring to being rather than the unconscious.

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[353] Rivkin and Ryan, *Literary Theory*, 530.
[354] It should be borne in mind that this discussion is all linked to the absence of the Real.
[355] Rabaté, "Lacan's Turn to Freud," xi-xii.
[356] Rabaté, "Lacan's Turn to Freud," ii.

The concept of love in Lacan will be considered here, since the concept of romance between the characters in the stories will be discussed in the present work. Lacan introduces the concept of love in *Seminar V*, but it is in *Seminar VIII* that he elaborates on this notion in the discussion of "transference." Whereas Freud talks about "narcissism" and relates it to the formation of the ego, Lacan associates it with the mirror image. He posits that the infant feels an erotic attraction to the image of the self in the mirror, which initiates the ego in the individual and, as explained before, this narcissism produces paradoxical feelings of eroticism and aggression. Although this eroticism originates from the Imaginary stage, it becomes the prerequisite for all eroticism afterward. In this respect, Lacan believes that love is the re-inscription of this narcissistic relation between the individual and the mirror image (acquired in the Imaginary register) which, in the Symbolic order, strives to allow love to be experienced.

Lacan does not agree with the idea that love might seem to be the most personal element of the human psyche, because love has to do with the Symbolic and societal conventions. About the dominance and supremacy of the Symbolic for Lacan, Lewis Kirshner writes:

> For Lacan, as well, private desire is anchored to shared social reality—notably by scenarios of romantic love in which narcissistic motivations to create a subjective object are constrained by a culturally organized intersubjective field. Thus, while the attraction to a beloved may be taken as real by the lover, as if that person alone could fulfill the lover's desire, there is a symbolic boundary of permissible objects and behaviours, defined by rules, customs, narrative models, and the like, that may not be crossed.[357]

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[357] "Rethinking Desire," 87.

Hence, the power of the Other leaves no room for even the most private parts of the psyche, such as love, to be privileged with any autonomy.

Having gained the sense of ego in the mirror stage, the child begins to like people, not because of emotions that are waiting to be directed towards someone, but due to the individual's need for these people. Therefore, love can be read as an answer to the child's egoism and narcissism. Similarly, Freud in his *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* proposes:

> Even those persons whom the child seems to love from the very beginning, it loves at the outset because it has need of them, cannot do without them, in other words, out of egoistical motives. Not until later does the love impulse become independent of egoism. *In brief, egoism has taught the child to love.*[358]

Here, Lacan takes the view that when an individual loves someone, they reveal that the beloved possesses something that they lack. This issue is encapsulated by his famous quote, "love creates its object from what is lacking in reality [*réel*]."[359] In other words, the lover finds something lacking in themselves and thus attempts to soothe themselves by offering the beloved what they do not have. As Charles Shepherdson notes, Lacan, comparing Plato's *Symposium* to an analysis session in *Seminar VIII*, hypothesizes the importance of love as significant in psychoanalysis. The analysand commonly falls in love with the analyst for they assume that the analyst possesses what the analysand lacks. Hence, because

[358] *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, 144.
[359] Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition*, 366.

the objective of Lacanian analysis is language, it could be inferred that the objective is also "to help the patient to love."[360]

If love seems to have similarities with desire, Bruce Fink, in *Lacan on Love*, draws attention to the fact that although both desire and love are connected to lack, they differ in that love implies "giving what you do not have," but it is hardly "dependent on lack in quite the same way as desire is" because desire is in its nature striving to achieve the unachievable; otherwise, it would disappear.[361] Todd McGowan sees it differently. Referring to Lacan's statement in *Écrit*, "Desire is neither the appetite for satisfaction nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second, the very phenomenon of their splitting (*Spaltung*)," he concludes that what leads to the formation of desire is "an initial demand for love that is unsatisfied";[362] for instance, the infant cries for love but is instead offered a toy. Distinguishing between "need" (*besoin*), "demand" (*demande*), and "desire" (*désir*), Lacan emphasizes, "Demands are answered by the satisfaction of biological needs. Yet, while needs can be satisfied, and demands can be responded to, desire remains insatiable. The object of desire, according to Lacan, is the desire of the other."[363] It could also be argued that the difference between love and desire lies in the main feature of desire, which is that desire is the desire of the Other, rather than that of the subject. This point of view could be criticized by those who say that, as explained above, love is also defined by the Other; however, in love the subject sees a lack in themselves and then tries to fulfill it by means of having a beloved, while in desire it is the Other that feels a lack.

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[360] "Lacan and Philosophy," 140–41.
[361] *Lacan on Love*, 182.
[362] Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, 219.
[363] Frie, *Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity*, 163.

The objective of the present chapter was to reduce misunderstandings or ambiguities regarding the Lacanian mode of thought that could occur in the chapters to follow as, on the one hand, Julia Kristeva bases much of her theory on Lacan's ego-formation via the mirror image in the Imaginary stage, and, on the other, Kristeva's notion of the abject as a means to deconstruct the position of subjectivity for individuals as well as that of the Other has been employed. In fact, the present study intends to portray how Hemingway's short stories and his code hero employ the potentiality of abjection to trigger a change in the Other.

5 Julia Kristeva and the abject

As a Bulgarian-French literary critic, philosopher, semiotician, feminist, novelist, and psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva has closely worked throughout her career on the intersection of linguistics with semiotics and literature.[364] She is often associated with the term intertextuality and has examined literary notions as various as "semanalysis," "melancholy," "nationalism," "love," "loss," and "abjection," the last of which is linked with "revolt." Revolt therefore offers much potential for discussions on abjection.[365] The notion of the abject has proved so rich in meaning that scholars have deployed it well beyond literary studies in studying for instance, political subversion, queer theory, and film studies. To understand what Kristeva means by the abject, an overview of subjectivity in psychoanalysis and its interaction with culture and language (the Symbolic) will be provided and explained in the present chapter. It is essential for the Kristevan reader to understand the journey the individual normally undergoes before becoming a subject and to be aware of the effect of the mirror

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[364] See, for instance, Mader and Oliver, "French Feminism," 320.

[365] By combining Saussure's "semiology" and Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of "dialogism," Kristeva presents the theory of "intertextuality" which argues that every text (of any type) is produced by other texts and embodies little autonomy (Edgar and Sedgwick, *Cultural Theory*, 123). With the term semanalysis, Kristeva calls for the necessity of abandoning the old theory of semiology advanced by Saussure and structural linguistics, because, in Kristeva's view, semiology has failed to attach enough importance to the signifier. Her mindset seems more similar to the structuralism of Ronald Barthes who puts forward the notion of the reader as made up of the plurality of an infinite number of other texts. Having combined the way structuralism looks at language with what semiotics regards language to be, Kristeva proposes the new concept of semanalysis which sees language as a signifying process that is significantly correlated to the speaking being and *sujet en procès*. Nonetheless, later on Kristeva disregards semanalysis and focuses on the notion of intertextuality which has received much literary attention (Ian Buchanan, *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (2018), 427). From the Lacanian model of thought (which Kristeva follows), loving someone requires narcissism and a sense of 'I' requires a movement away from the mother (as the abject) to the father (as the ideal). As a result, the individual sets out on this journey by casting off (abjecting) the mother figure. It means that the ego has links to "a sense of loss" (Lechte, *Julia Kristeva*, 169). It suggests that primary identification is closely associated with the sense of loss. Therefore, loving someone (which depends on having a sense of 'I') is closely linked with loss. Generally, the three concepts of love, loss, and abjection are so interrelated that Sara Beardsworth considers the three dimensions of "the triadic structure of narcissism" to be "idealization (*Tales of Love*), abjection (*Powers of Horror*), and primal melancholy (*Black Sun*)" (*Julia Kristeva*, 60).

image and the corresponding ego-ideal or the feeling of narcissism created in the Imaginary order. This point is the basis of her thought.

Kristeva challenges Lacan's idea that subject formation is initiated at the moment of language learning and that before the Symbolic, the infant encounters a lack of the Real. Rather, she takes the view that long before language starts to intrude on the mother-child relationship, the child has already cast off the mother. Therefore, abjection flourishes when the child, in order to define its identity, starts to see itself as separate from the mother. This separation from the mother's body is the prerequisite of gaining subjectivity, and, as Sara Beardsworth puts it, "The phrase 'ab-jection of the mother's body' expresses a semiotic capacity for turning the maternal container into a maternal 'space' from which the subject-to-be may separate."[366] That is to say, the first thing the child casts off to gain an independent identity is the mother's body.

Never leaving the individual, this rejection of the mother continually haunts us throughout all the post-Oedipal stages in the form of abjection, to use Kristeva's words, "like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion" (*PH* 1). Abjection occurs in different forms, such as nausea, vomiting, blood, body waste, silence, and absence. The presence of these abject images in the Nick Adams stories provides the setting and visual clues contributing to the notion of abjection in terms of sexuality, upon which the present work will elaborate.

By abjection, Kristeva means the experience of rejecting what the individual exorcises in order to neutralize any threat to its defining boundaries. Accordingly, she gives the name "abject" to that which agitates the self and is thus cast off. Kristeva takes the notion of the abject from Lacan and develops it as

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[366] *Julia Kristeva*, 84.

the main element in the formation of subjectivity. Unlike Lacan who shows more interest in the Symbolic, Kristeva finds the pre-Symbolic of higher significance and shows tendencies toward moving back into the realm of drives (Freud's *Trieb*) and instincts that belong to the Real. Abjection does not equate to drive, but points to the way the individual manages feelings of borderlessness. Emerging between four and eight months of age, abjection represents the visceral reactions of the body to disgusting bodily fluid wastes (the abjects). Kristeva takes abjection as a necessary process in the formation of individuality and links it to the time before the mirror stage in the Lacanian model of thought, that is to say, before "the development of a discrete 'I'" or ego.[367] The word abject, as a verb, literally means cast away, reject, jettison, expel, or exorcise. Since Kristeva's abject tends to break the borders defining the 'I,' it produces the feeling of horror, disgust, and repulsion. By threatening the sense of 'I,' the abject constantly reminds the individual of his or her fragility and vulnerability. This Kristevan concept seems so complicated that Megan Becker-Leckrone calls it Kristeva's "very least reassuring and most notoriously difficult theoretical concept."[368] Therefore, the Lacanian RSI, the signifier and signified in the process of meaning-making, and any other rudimentary concepts of structural psychoanalysis come into play here.

The only quality that the abject shares with an object is "being opposed to *I*" (*PH* 1). The subject tries to form itself by making objects, but when it comes to the abject all attempts to give it a form fails. The abject frustrates the survival of the Symbolic, because the abject as a "jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses" (1-2). Therefore, abjection clarifies

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[367] Cuddon, et al., *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 2.
[368] *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 20.

the boundaries of the self by means of Ockham's razor.[369] These threatening attacks (abjects) never leave the individual, so this process of repulsing (abjection) persistently haunts life.

The abject is paradoxical in nature, for it is simultaneously part of the individual and foreign to it. It is characterized by "simultaneous attraction and revulsion."[370] Hence, the concept of the abject, along with love and loss, plays a crucial role in making meaning and subjectivity, which is important to poststructuralists. Kristeva proposes that the abject and abjection constitute meaning by being "the primers of my culture" and also make me by being "my safeguards" (*PH* 2); in other words, they help me define myself by what I am not. Abjection happens at the moment I expel the abject because I feel (rather than think) disgusted. For the reason that I have not come into the state of having a subjectivity yet, my experience has nothing to do with thoughts; it is only drives and feelings.

In brief, abjection suggests the mechanism of the psyche to jettison the abject and the abject represents whatever makes an impediment to maintaining the purity of the self and contaminates the core of our existence. In other words, the abject designates what must be expelled by the subject to gain an independent identity. This process of abjection never ends for the individual's body which is constantly producing fluid corporeal wastes.[371]

The concept of subversiveness is of such central importance to the theory of abjection that according to Beardsworth, "abjection in conditions of late modernity corresponds to the instability of the

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[369] Favoring minimal thinking, "Ockham's razor" was introduced by the fourteenth century philosopher William of Ockham as the law of economy and parsimony. Ockham's razor favors "a theory that postulates fewer entities, processes, or causes is better than a theory that postulates more" (Sober, *Ockham's Razors*, 2). It endorses the omission of anything that could be omitted in order to get to the core of an entity.

[370] Kokkola, *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature*, 129.

[371] Selden Widdowson, and Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 133.

symbolic function."[372] Abjection and the Symbolic are so interwoven that, from Kristeva's perspective, in the process of abjection which is "managed by the Other, 'subject' and 'object' push each other away, confront each other, collapse, and start again—inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject" (*PH* 18). That is to say, the abject has the strength to put the Symbolic into motion. The abject innately has the capacity to violate the boundaries of both the self and the Other. In this regard, Kristeva notes, "In abjection, revolt is completely within being. Within the being of language. [. . .] the subject of abjection is eminently productive of culture. Its symptom is the rejection and reconstruction of languages" (*PH* 45). In the context of the present work, it means that by providing the individual with the mechanism of abjection language has already attempted to guarantee its own survival and authority, while, in this ostensibly self-protective act, the system paradoxically makes it possible for the individual to sabotage the power of this authority by moving the defining boundaries back or forth, which could turn into acts of sabotage to destabilize language. Put simply, the threat to the boundaries of the self could subversively put the borders of language into jeopardy as well.

Due to its shapelessness, the abject embodies ambiguity and confusion and thus seems aligned with chaos and disorder. Thus, the one who lives in the abject is called by culture a pervert, as Oliver, in *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-Bind*, explains: "The pervert becomes fascinated with the repulsive and disgusting forces of the abject and eroticizes them, idolizes them. In this way the pervert fortifies himself against the threat from this abject."[373] Perversion forms such a significant part of Kristeva's elaboration on the abject that she relates it to the act of writing in the art of abjection and adds, "The writer, fascinated by the abject, imagines its logic, projects himself into it, introjects it, and as a

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[372] *Julia Kristeva*, 92.
[373] *Reading Kristeva*, 88.

consequence perverts language—style and content" (*PH* 16). Thus, David B. Johnson asserts that Kristeva "places the subject starkly before the fragility of the organism."[374]

With respect to our ability to make changes, Kristeva points to language's potential to be paradoxically subverted within the rules it has instituted. Hence, Kristeva's speaking subjects are supposed to be capable of making changes, provided they use language. In a similar manner, Toril Moi draws our attention to the fact that "Linguistic practice, as she [Kristeva] sees it, is at once system and transgression (negativity), a product of both the 'drive-governed basis of sound production' and the social space in which the enunciation takes place."[375] It is this gap inside the language structure that Nick Adams shrewdly employs to subversively enter into a dialogue with language. Later on, it will be shown how he achieves this position via abjection.

Relating revolt to foreignness, Kristeva says, "Foreignness is carried to forbidden revolt, a hubris giving rise to abjection."[376] In this respect, the notion of revolt is central to Kristeva's mode of thought. Although Kristeva's books cover theories of subjectivity and language, they have, as Cecilia Sjöholm suggests, one feature in common: they "all explore the movement between surge, challenge, revolt, subversion, and the necessary loss or sacrifice that any revolution will necessarily claim."[377] The present work investigates the manner in which Hemingway's short stories as a Lost Generation literary product reveal the code hero's attempts to create an act of subversion in regard to gender norms through abjection, which is an act that is doomed to be associated with suffering as well as loss. The notion of rebellion is fundamental in this respect, and it could be argued that Hemingway's short stories consistently depict a

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[374] "The Postmodern Sublime," 129.
[375] Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, 24.
[376] *Strangers to Ourselves*, 45.
[377] *Kristeva and the Political*, 25.

form of revolt against the gender definitions of the Other by means of abjection. As this study focuses on abjection, I will only refer to Kristeva's further terminological apparatus insofar as it helps clarify the concept of the abject.

Under the influence of Freud and Lacan, Kristeva connects Freud's stress on the predominance of sexual drives in the human psyche and Lacan's linguistic formulation of psychic development. In other words, she bridges the concrete world of the body and the abstract sphere of language and mind. If Freud concentrates on the biological impact of sexuality (drives) on the human psychic development and Lacan on the linguistically constructed identity of the individual (subjectivity), Kristeva blends these two lines of thought in order to highlight the necessity of recognizing the significance of the feminine.[378] To summarize, Kristeva sees an interaction between the physical body image in the mirror, its boundaries, and the consequent narcissistic notion of *Ideal-ich*, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the linguistically determined borderlines that either define or threaten the limits of subjectivity. It means that in the theory Kristeva puts forward, "[t]he body, moreover, is the place of the material support of the language of communication."[379]

Kristeva denounces Lacan's overlooking of the feminine and proposes to emphasize the maternal effect in the context of the individual's psychic development. Since Kristeva identifies misogynist sexism in both Freud and Lacan, she tries to make some modifications by introducing her concept of the "semiotic chora."

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[378] The way Kristeva sees women resembles Marxism in that she considers them analogous to the suppressed working class. In spite of recognizing the biological difference between men and women, she finds the root of women's oppression not in this distinguishing feature but in the meaning that culture assigns to these differences. Therefore, she is taken to belong to materialist French feminism. She finds the solution in men and women trying to access the semiotic chora or "the *semiotic* dimension of language" (Tyson, 103). From this perspective, Nick Adams' struggle is to practice the semiotic chora via abjection.

[379] Lechte, *Julia Kristeva*, 99.

Dawne McCance believes that Kristeva's concept of "the chora" also emerged from her critique of Edmund Husserl's phenomenological subject and the modification of the Hegelian notion of negativity.[380] To Kristeva, *chora* (from the Greek word for womb) is one side of a binary, while the other side is the Symbolic. She distinguishes between the semiotic and the Symbolic in *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984). Adopting Lacan's pattern of psychic development, she designates the time before four months of age the semiotic chora, an association which should hint at the realm of drives. Located before the Imaginary, the semiotic represents the signifying ability that has nothing to do with words, but with bodily drives and the somatic aspect of language. For instance, a baby communicates by means of babbling sounds intending to fulfil pleasure or death drives although they have not yet learned the language. It very much resembles the musical rhythm of poetry in which sounds "disrupt the purely 'thetic' (thesis-making) logic of rational argument by drawing on a sense or sensation that Kristeva locates beyond surface meaning."[381] Therefore, the semiotic chora, unlike the Symbolic, favors disruption and diversity.

Kristeva's semiotic has provoked controversies and differing interpretations. For instance, according to Andrew Milner and Jeffrey Browitt, the semiotic is a rephrasing of Lacan's Imaginary. They believe that Kristeva "renamed Lacan's 'Imaginary' the 'semiotic' and insisted that it persists into adulthood as an alternative mode of signification."[382] In contrast, in Oliver's view, Kristeva's "semiotic operates between Lacan's Real and his Imaginary. Kristeva's semiotic is, in some sense, the Real, which makes its way into the Symbolic through the Imaginary."[383] Nonetheless, it could be argued that Milner and Browitt's understanding of the semiotic as merely another word for the Imaginary is too simple, for if

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[380] "Chora," 521.
[381] Belsey, *Poststructuralism*, 16.
[382] *Contemporary Cultural Theory*, 134.
[383] *Tracing the Signifier*, 98.

it had been the case, there would be no necessity for Kristeva's extensive elaboration on the term. Similarly, Silverman's considering it to be synonymous with the Real also lacks justification, since the Real is the mere realm of drives and material being with no sense of the Other, while the semiotic, since it provides the field of the abject, has to do with differentiating the self from the non-self and fending off the latter. Therefore, it could be argued that neither of these interpretations is compelling.[384]

Stacey K. Keltner's account of Kristeva's semiotic and Symbolic is more comprehensive. In his perspective, the "semiotic and the symbolic are two modalities of the signifying process that are never experienced as separate, but are theoretically separable as two tendencies within signification."[385] While the chora is the area of irrationality, rhythm, and impulse, the Symbolic is that of logic, coherence, structure, and grammar. Keltner concludes that what must be taken into consideration is that what constitutes signification is the relation between these two heterogeneities. It could therefore be argued that the semiotic chora resembles, without being identical to, the Imaginary aspect of language, the other the Symbolic aspect of it. As a result, the semiotic is no longer considered a stage that occurs in the course of the individual's development and then disappears. While Kristeva associates the semiotic with the pre-Oedipal stage and the mother figure, she links the Symbolic with the father. Similarly, the semiotic has a subversive nature, whereas the Symbolic guarantees rules and favors definitions. It is via the semiotic that the baby makes use of seemingly meaningless sounds in order to communicate with the mother. Thus, the subversiveness of the semiotic lies in the fact that although these rhythms and sounds are not necessarily regulated by the language system, they still act like signifiers that signal something.

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[384] "The subject's capacity to negate, reject, abject is the most powerful expression of the chora" (Sjöholm, *Kristeva and the Political*, 36).

[385] Keltner, *Kristeva: Thresholds*, 22.

Other readings of the semiotic contribute further nuances to the term as well. Elaborating on the semiotic chora, Kristeva takes "rhythm" as one of the significant characteristics of the semiotic. Although rhythm is commonly associated with consistency and harmony, Tom Jones proposes that by rhythm Kristeva means "interruption rather than regularity, stimulation rather than security, and imagining that the great ethical and political imperative to promote the irruptions that challenge fixed forms of social organisation that place the subject under restrictions."[386] Jones adds, "One of the structures against which Kristeva believes the revolutionary poetic subject strives is the family. She suggests that homosexuality and anality are challenges to the family, and parallel to the challenge constituted by the irruptions of rhythm in poetic language."[387] These abrupt sentences can represent the repulsion the semiotic chora causes in the Symbolic and the interventions it makes in the process of signification. Newton notes, "semiotics should not concern itself with sign systems as such but with the signifying process which both creates and undermines systems of signs."[388] This juxtaposing quality of creating and undermining language structure is what facilitates the productive dialogue (intertextuality) between the semiotic and the Symbolic.

Jane Spencer's reading of the semiotic is accurate and worthy of observation because it reveals the rebellious potentiality of this Kristevan notion in terms of gender. According to Spencer, the semiotic, as an impulse that agitates the Symbolic, arises from the drives that develop before the impact of language. Due to the fact that it has no trace of language definitions, it has no idea of gender; however, Kristeva refers to this area as feminine not because of it being female, but for its ability to be disruptive. It is interesting to note that Kristeva "detaches femininity from the female subject" by negating defined

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[386] *Measure: Robert Creeley*, 110.
[387] *Measure: Robert Creeley*, 111.
[388] *In Defence of Literary Interpretation*, 172.

sexual identities, an act that liberates women from being taken as feminine.[389] She takes the view that the Symbolic force has designated this weak social status for women; therefore, they can often do nothing but simply conform to this institution. Hence, men, being entitled to more social power, "become the greatest marginal-revolutionary writers" to create gender norms.[390] Consequently, "men are credited with being better at giving expression to a revolutionary force still theorized as 'feminine.'"[391] This point especially applies to Nick Adams whose all too virile life cries out for redefinitions in terms of sexual identity, which could liberate not only women but also men.

To sum up, the semiotic chora as the site of drives interacts with the Symbolic. While the former invites the individual to corporeality, the latter refers to language and culture. It does not mean that either one of these aspects of signification is positive or negative since discourse requires the incorporation of both in the process of signification.

In spite of the fact that it is the function of the Symbolic to restrain and govern the semiotic in the signifying interaction between the semiotic and the Symbolic, the semiotic has the capacity to penetrate into the boundaries of language and disrupt its uniformity. This quality of signification has led to the works of many scholars in the field of political gender performance, such as Judith Butler. That is to say, while the paternal Symbolic defines the maternal semiotic as its counterpart, the semiotic chora, as the other element in this Hegelian dialogue, has the potential to cause changes and transgression in the Symbolic too.

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[389] Spencer, "Feminine Fictions," 520.
[390] Spencer, "Feminine Fictions," 520-521.
[391] Spencer, "Feminine Fictions," 521.

In contrast to the Symbolic (rules and conventions), the semiotic chora bears connotations of rebellion and transgression. In the context of the rebellious potentiality of the semiotic, Elizabeth Wright, in her entry to "Psychoanalytic Criticism" in *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism*, reveals the anarchistic nature of the semiotic in emphasizing:

> The Semiotic is involved in the production of a poetic text that disrupts and subverts the conventional language system (for a comprehensive introductory survey, see Moi, 1986). Kristeva takes her examples from male avant-garde poets, which illustrates her position regarding a gender-free marginality but does not please feminists.[392]

Taking poetic language as the most subversive form of avant-garde writing, Kristeva considers Stephane Mallarmé, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Georges Bataille, Louis Ferdinand Céline, and Antonin Artaud as examples of such art. In the present work, Hemingway will be considered in the same context. In other words, unlike the conventional view of Hemingway and his code hero as the misogynist prototype of masculinity, it will be argued that these characters (code heroes) are indeed feminine because of the revolutionary moments they create. It is time to doubt the conventional view of Hemingway's stories that these characters are chauvinistic and to read his texts anew.

Emphasizing the crucial role of literature in making a change, Kristeva astutely notes in *Revolution in Poetic Language*: "The text is a practice that could be compared to political revolution: the one brings about in the subject what the other introduces into society. The history and political experience of the twentieth century have demonstrated that one cannot be transformed without the other."[393] Her

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[392] "Psychoanalytic Criticism," 773.

[393] Kristeva, *The Portable Kristeva*, 30.

view of the text as a political practice corresponds with her preoccupation with intertextuality, since the creative use of language by various texts as elements of a network could subvert dominant discourses. Ultimately, it could be argued that, as a linguist, Kristeva, makes her audience aware of how the flesh interacts with the abstract and how closely the somatic interrelates with the Symbolic.

As the semiotic aspect of signification is governed by drives, it scarcely cares about being in agreement with the Symbolic. Hence, any act that is the result of bodily drives puts the semiotic chora into motion and can consequently be regarded as a subversive act of revolt. In this regard, Hemingway's code hero, whether by sleeping with different women or by abstaining from living by conventional social standards, allows his bodily drives to freely articulate themselves. In this way, he aids the semiotic aspect of language to win over the Symbolic one. It does not mean that any act in the context of our drives could be taken as a heroic achievement because the semiotic chora is allowed to express itself as long as it does not destroy the other aspect of signification (the Symbolic). Otherwise, no signification would ever be realized. In this respect, Lisa Baraitser acknowledges:

> Kristeva's privileged practices deal with the subject's constant battle with symbolic collapse by releasing the drives into the symbolic, but without threatening to destroy it. Her argument is that we must have access to heterogeneity, otherwise, the symbolic becomes stagnant and thus there is no possibility for change or in fact for signification; but heterogeneity overwhelming breaks up the symbolic and leaves us with only psychosis or borderline states.[394]

Based on Baraitser's words, Hemingway's short stories can be read as an art of abjection.

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[394] Stavrakakis, *Routledge Handbook of Psychoanalytical Political Theory*, 115.

Furthermore, the theory of intertextuality has also been read in the context of gender. Comparing Kristeva to Luce Irigaray, Claire Colebrook, in "Feminist Criticism and Poststructuralism," holds the view that Kristeva's distinguishing merit lies in her taking gender as neither totally essential nor completely arbitrary, but something in between, which Colebrook describes as "metaphysical."[395] She concludes that it was this novelty in Kristeva that paved the way for post-structuralists' anti-linguistic interest in the body, as seen particularly in Rosi Braidotti, Elizabeth Grosz, and Judith Butler. In this respect, Colebrook writes, "there is a body that relates to otherness through touch, sound and rhythm, and does not have a clear distinction between self and mother."[396] In this way, the Kristevan mode of thought connects the material world to that of concepts and in doing so creates enormous revolutionary potential in terms of gender and its socially constructed norms.

Kristeva goes even further by taking bodily forces and biological needs as socially and linguistically constructed, insisting, "biological urges are socially controlled, directed, and organized, producing an excess with regard to social apparatuses."[397] It could be understood that subjectivity is rooted in what the Law-of-the-Father has constituted for us. Symbolic tyranny can hardly be negated; however, there can always be the possibility of moderating language by means of making a dialogue and interaction between the individual (the speaking being) and the defining Symbolic (the speaking system). It is this accomplishment, as will be investigated in the present study, that has been produced by Hemingway's code hero who struggles during his entire life journey to come into a conversation with the Symbolic in order to attain subjectivity.

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[395] "Feminist Criticism and Poststructuralism," 227.
[396] "Feminist Criticism and Poststructuralism," 227.
[397] Kristeva, *The Portable Kristeva*, 31.

Kristeva justifies our ability to create signifying acts through her hypothesis that the subject has a dynamic nature. She contends that the individual's position in relation to language is not a static unchanging one, and she calls it "Le Sujet en Procès ('The subject on trial-in process')"; forming the title of a chapter in Kristeva's book *Polylogue*, the subject-in-process could be taken as "the speaking subject."[398] Firstly, Kristeva is of the opinion that, like identity that is fragile and unstable, language has some gaps which make it possible for the individual to play with it. Secondly, she believes that although the semiotic exclusively dominates the pre-Oedipal stage, the Symbolic is "the dominant though not exclusive modality of language in the Oedipal and post-Oedipal stages."[399] It means that in the Oedipal stage, there is an interaction between these two modalities that justify Kristeva's proposition of signification being a process ("signifying process"). What can be inferred from these two postulations is that discourse at such a dynamic stage would thus entitle the individual to plasticity and mobility.

Due to the fact that psychoanalysis is concerned with self-expression and any expression has to do with possessing a sense of 'I', subjectivity forms an issue of high significance to psychoanalysis. While Lacan finds the Symbolic as the main force in the construction of subjectivity, Kristeva gives prominence to the semiotic chora. Whereas the former conflicts with jouissance, the latter cooperates with the abject. Hence the study of gender performance in terms of the abject necessitates some clarification regarding subjectivity.

In addition, knowing what subjectivity implies in Kristeva's mode of thought seems essential in the present study because Nick Adams engages in all the struggles throughout his journey in order to define his subjectivity anew or to changes it, not only in himself and culturally-defined manhood but also

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[398] Lecercle, *Philosophy Through the Looking-Glass*, 42.
[399] Tong, *Feminist Thought, Student Economy Edition*, 148.

in the subject-position of language. Beginning from the view that “any theory of language is also a theory of the subject,” Oliver regards Kristeva’s subjectivity as produced by language (the Other) and sees it not as a stable ego that constitutes meaning but as “a biosocial situation.”[400] She writes:

> Infants are born into a world where words already have meanings. Meaning is constituted through an embodied relation with another person. In this case, meaning is Other; it is constituted in relation to an other and it is beyond any individual subjectivity. Insofar as meaning is constituted in relationships—relationships with other, relationships with signification, relationships with our own bodies and desires—it is fluid.[401] And the subject for whom there is meaning is also fluid and relational.[402]

Although Oliver’s reading does not negate the fluidity of subjectivity, it focuses on its constructedness by the Symbolic. In contrast, Cecilia Sjöholm finds subjectivity to be a field of subversion and transgression rather than the construction of the Symbolic. She is of the opinion that:

> The subject, for Kristeva, *is* the very symptom of the unconscious, breaking with the symbolic. [. . .] The question is, of course, if Kristeva’s own notion of subjectivity as a function of radical negativity, as a continuous deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning and so on, can be

[400] Kristeva, *The Portable Kristeva*, xviii.

[401] This notion of relationships constituting meaning aligns with Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality. By intertextuality Kristeva means both “the way in which all texts echo each other” (*Sim and van Loon, Introducing Critical Theory*, 170) and “the way that discourses or sign systems are transposed into one another – so that meanings in one kind of discourse are overlaid with meanings from another kind of discourse” (Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 367).

[402] Kristeva, *The Portable Kristeva*, xviii.

brought up from the cellars of the unconscious, avant-garde poetry, perversion and psychosis and so on, and assessed in terms of contemporary political thought.[403]

However, it could also be argued that what forms the originality of Kristeva's formulation and distinguishes hers from other psychoanalytical accounts of subjectivity is the cyclical interaction between the individual's subjectivity and the language that produces it. This matter also articulates the nature of *sujet en procès*.

Kristeva, along with Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, has been considered one of the pillars of French feminism whose main preoccupation is subjectivity. French feminism, unlike Anglo-American feminism which concentrates on activist social politics, is preoccupied with rejecting essential notions of gender and considers how patriarchal language orders and defines gender. While subjectivity is of great importance to Kristeva, her thought distinguishes itself from that of Irigaray and Cixous.

In spite of the fact that most French feminists characteristically investigate subjectivity in relation to gender, they also approach the Symbolic in their own way. With this issue in mind, Stephen Littlejohn and Karen Foss point out, "Kristeva dismisses the notion of sexual difference as something that structures the identities and relations between men and women, concerning herself instead with sexual differentiation, that is, the processes within individuals that result in sexed subjects."[404] Yet, seeking the difference between Kristeva and the other intellectuals of her school in a different manner, Beth Jensen highlights abjection as the significant stage in achieving a sense of 'I' and reflects:

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[403] *Kristeva and the Political*, 36–37.
[404] *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, 415.

> [F]ear and horror are intertwined with desire in this complex relationship. She contends that the pre-self, in the process of separating from the M/other, experiences "abjection". After separation, the *sujet en procès*, the "subject-in-process," though grounded in the Symbolic, experiences unending disruptions in its encounters with the "cast-off". Abjection, however, is not a stage from which the pre-subject passes but rather a process it experiences before and after its entry into language.[405]

One of the other Lacanian concepts that is relevant in the present discussion of Kristeva's formulation of the abject is *jouissance*. Keeping in mind that Kristeva, like Lacan, believes the child discovers the existence of boundaries in the moment that it sees its body image in the mirror, Jensen reflects:

> Prior to abjection, in its earliest union with the M/other, the pre-subject experiences nothing but sensation or, as Kristeva would say, *jouissance*, extreme orgiastic pleasure associated with the maternal body. During this early idyllic existence, the child has no sense of "I" since boundaries separating it and the M/other do not exist. In the process of moving towards the Symbolic, it experiences "primary narcissism" as it encounters for the first time the most primitive stirrings of "self." Still unable to distinguish boundaries between M/other and self, the pre-subject continues to be governed by the drive-induced pulsions of the Semiotic *chora*, the locus of the undifferentiated bodily space shared by M/other and child.[406]

In this light, Kristeva hypothesizes that what gives rise to the abject is jouissance, in that "One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it [*on enjouit*]" (*PH* 9). It means that the person who enjoys is

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[405] *Leaving the Mother*, 20.
[406] *Leaving the Mother*, 20-21.

the Real me rather than the Symbolic me. The abject brings the individual to their corporeality. Having no control over it, they cannot stop it, because it is fascinating. As a result, the abject is something irresistible, but what makes the difference in regard to subjectivity is the extent to which each individual practices it and the new boundaries it results in.

As explained before, jouissance has to do with the semiotic chora. Representing the phase before both the mirror stage and language acquisition, the chora, as McCance remarks, lacks unity, because it is innately "rhythmic, nourishing, maternal, and as formed by what Sigmund Freud defined as instinctual drives."[407] Due to the fact that it forms one aspect of signification (the other being the Symbolic), the chora has the ability to make modifications in the position of the subject. McCance, in this respect, adds that the chora "re-emerges whenever its drives decentre the positioning of a transcendent subject and open language to unconscious heterogeneity"; as a result, the chora stands for the "semiotic modality of significance, experienced as *jouissance.*"[408]

Being in direct contact with language, the abject and jouissance enter into a dialogue with language differently. They both are rooted in the animalistic or somatic aspects of our being which act against culture, but the type of repression that produces them varies. While jouissance comes from the secondary repression in Freud, what brings about the abject is the Freudian primary repression. It is the repression of the maternal body, prior to the construction of the ego or the entrance of language, that creates abjection. In this respect, Kristeva maintains:

> If, on account of that Other, a space becomes demarcated, separating the abject from what will be a subject and its objects, it is because a repression that one might call "primal" has been effected

[407] "Chora," 521.
[408] "Chora," 521.

> prior to the springing forth of the ego, of its objects and representations. The latter, in turn, as they depend on another repression, the "secondary" one, arrive only a *posteriori* on an enigmatic foundation that has already been marked off. (*PH* 10-11)

Here the concept of intertextuality in relation to the dialogue between culture and the pervert is relevant; the pervert trespasses on culture, which in turn contributes to the image of the pervert as nothing but culture. Prohibiting jouissance, culture tries to regulate the pleasure principle. As explained in the previous chapter, jouissance (in contrast to pleasure that is created by culture) is the outcome of pure drives. To put it differently, while pleasure has more tendencies toward the Symbolic, jouissance is linked with the Real. In this connection, Hanjo Berressem writes, "It is thus the Symbolic, or, more specifically, the super-ego, that banishes *a*bjects into the Real where they can only be enjoyed painfully and intensively."[409]

Kristeva locates bodily enjoyment in the moments of losing one's subjectivity within culture (the Symbolic). This matter being the case, what distinguishes the pervert from others is that the pervert seeks to experience jouissance through living in the abject. And therein lies the reason for Kristeva's association of abjection with jouissance. She considers jouissance "As jettisoned. Parachuted by the Other" (*PH* 9). She observes:

> [I]t jettisons the object into an abominable real, inaccessible except through jouissance. It follows that jouissance alone causes the abject to exist as such. One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it [*on enjouit*]. Violently and painfully. A passion. And, as in jouissance where the object of desire, known as object *a* [in Lacan's terminology], bursts with the shattered mirror

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[409] "On the Matter of Abjection," 25.

> where the ego gives up its image in order to contemplate itself in the Other, there is nothing either objective or objectal to the abject. (*PH* 9)

Becker-Leckrone infers from Kristeva's words that abjection is "a gravitational field that summons the subject from its proper place to a no-man's land where the subject is not only 'beside himself' but also almost ceases to be."[410] What could be also inferred from Kristeva's words is that since the one who experiences the moment of pure joy is the real me, not the me that language has designated for me, the abject resembles a gravity that attracts me towards my most visceral and somatic state, over which the individual has little control. Therefore, jouissance is connected to trauma. In other words, what makes jouissance traumatic is that the individual continues to experience it after entering language, but they fail to comprehend what it is because it does not belong to the Symbolic. It means jouissance is the joyful moment of forgetfulness, the ecstatic moment of forgetting one's being which is doomed to live within language.

Kristeva goes on, in *Powers of Horror*, to consider how jouissance along with the Symbolic creates a conflict within each individual. She writes, "Thus braided, woven, ambivalent, a heterogeneous flux marks out a territory that I can call my own because the Other, having dwelt in me as alter ego, points it out to me through loathing" (*PH* 10). It means that every individual possesses, on the one hand a subjectivity that culture has defined ("territory") and, on the other, a jouissance-pursuing 'I' that drives have made ("flux"). Hence, inside every person, there is a paradoxical ("heterogeneous") state, a conflict between their own desire to simply follow the pleasure principle to achieve bodily orgasm and the desire of the Other which cares about the reality principle. This Other "precedes and possesses me, and_ [sic]

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[410] *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 33.

through such possession causes me to be" (*PH* 10). In Hemingway's stories, the code hero's pursuing his sexual drives and pleasure-oriented activities stands for the struggle of his jouissance-pursuing ego over the jouissance of the Other. Similarly, the immorality for which Hemingway's code hero is notorious could be taken as his effort to define the boundaries of his real self against the efforts of language to disrupt them. All this justification leads to the abject nature of the short stories which transpires in the lower layers of the iceberg.

Thus, being in the service of drives, jouissance attempts to create orgasmic moments of existence. It leads to the loss of subjectivity within the ruptures of language. Exploiting linguistic gaps to break the authority of the Symbolic, jouissance is the effort of the individual to pursue desire. Although culture wants the individual to forget their corporeality and animalistic tendencies, jouissance endeavors to remind them of these bodily forces. As Kristeva stresses, "The abject confronts us, on the one hand, with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of animal" (*PH* 12). It could therefore be argued that through jouissance the individual casts off (abjects) language for its assault on the boundaries of the self. It aids the individual of any tendency (sexual in the present study) with the opportunity to experience a fuller articulation of the self.

If the speaking being attempts to protect the boundaries of the self through abjection, culture also constructs rituals to define its own borders. Abjection is a kind of debasement that challenges cultural conventions, so it is linked with a wide range of loathsome or nauseating items, varying from bodily wastes, animalism, blood, death, disease, ugliness, uselessness, and filth, to horror and darkness. These images of the abject have been employed in Hemingway's short stories to create an atmosphere that functions as a background for the dialogue Nick enters with the Symbolic. The prominence of these images will be read in detail in the next chapter.

Kristeva holds the view that culture attempts to manage abjects (taboos) by means of social religious rituals that tackle these disturbing entities. Rituals could be regarded as culture's self-defense

mechanism against threats to its autonomy, which is similar to how religion operates. Rituals create the borderline between nature and culture, jouissance and sense, futility and vanity, and dirt and purity. Guaranteeing the stability and autonomy of the social system, rituals aim at cleansing the society of the abject (all that threatens social orders).

Regarding rituals and religion as purification and catharsis, Kristeva equates them with art. By incorporating what culture has rejected or denied about our being, these social systems have facilitated the release of human drives, which leads to the relief of the Symbolic that could repeatedly be threatened by the semiotic chora's poetic language.

In this sense, Kristeva could be categorized with a group of thinkers who take literature as a form of catharsis. However, she believes that art purifies by invoking what cultures reject. That is to say, art has the ability to cleanse by conjuring up dirt, which means it purifies by causing nausea and vomit. Kristeva insists that the abject, pursuing us throughout our entire life, has given rise not only to great literature, such as Louis Ferdinand Céline, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Comte de Lautréamont, Marcel Proust, Antonin Artaud, and Franz Kafka but also to that of the Old Testament. As religions and institutions claim to detoxify societies employing rituals, Kristeva suggests that art and religion are "[t]he various means of purifying the abject—the various catharses" (*PH* 17).

Adopting an objective attitude through a journalistic writing style, Hemingway welcomes religious and cultural deviations into his fiction. He treats diversities as if they were parts of life, so the reader rarely finds any sentences that disparage these diversities. Sexual transgression plays an important role in stories as various as "The Soldier's Home" (incestuous love of Krebs for his sister), "Mr. and Mrs. Eliot" (sexless marriage), "The Three-Day Blow" (homosexuality), and "Cat in the Rain" (homosexuality). Hemingway, without judging these perversions, presents a picture of the characters living jouissance for jouissance's sake, and thereby creates moments of abjection to culture and violates ethical boundaries. In explaining Hemingway's stories, Matthew Nickel, in his essay "Religion," suggests

that "two important religious themes emerge consistently in his writing: the human affinity for sin or darkness and a deep yearning for the discipline and aesthetics of tradition and ritual."[411] However, it could also be argued that Nickel's two proposed themes together produce a dialogue rather than existing separately. That is to say, the dark world of sins could be taken as the abject of the stories which challenges the ritual and religious traditions, which could lead to aesthetics (sublimation) in terms of gender liberation.

As discussed above, Kristeva considers jouissance as one of the acts that agitates culture. As jouissance tends to keep a distance from the ego and move towards the Real, it is often perceived as a threat to culture. The way the Symbolic manages this tendency is to bring it into the service of culture. Therefore, within the Symbolic, corporeal joy is permitted as long as it strengthens language. For instance, sex as a strong life drive could be considered the emblem of jouissance, and thus it is only favored by culture for the sake of public benefit and is tolerated as long as it leads to procreation. Therefore, religion as a governing system disdains sex out of marriage.

If we take the Lacanian view that the father figure as the representative of the Law-of-the-Father teaches the child about social ethical virtues, in Hemingway's short stories, Dr. Hemingway (Nick's father), in "Fathers and Sons," summarizes the sexual codes of behavior when he warns, "masturbation produced blindness, insanity, and death, while a man who went with prostitutes would contract hideous venereal diseases" (*CSS* 371). Therefore, from the very beginning of his journey, Nick learns about the codes of society and the fact that he faces ruin if he deviates from these norms.

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[411] "Religion," 347.

If Hemingway created sexual scenes gratuitously, there would be no difference between his art—a masterpiece of world fiction—and pornographic stories. Instead, Hemingway, by portraying jouissance (homosexuality, masturbation, abortion, and sex out of marriage), creates moments of abjection and illustrates the abject life his code hero leads. Since jouissance is the moment of orgasm and loss of subjectivity, Nick Adams by practicing jouissance for jouissance's sake repels the subjectivity that culture tries to define for him (men). It means that the code hero living just for his bodily enjoyment challenges the boundaries of culture, which coerces language to reassess its own boundaries. This matter results in creating a horrible moment for culture to experience abjection. In other words, infringing social norms and violating linguistically-defined relationships, Nick rejects language by making an abject of himself, which in turn transforms a moment of abjection into the Symbolic. That is to say, these moments portray the transformation of the death drive into the life drive.

The somatic is of such great importance to Kristeva that she finds it the site of the abstract, linguistic, and psychic. This significance goes so far as to her pointing out the importance of corporeal drives, and she notes, "Significance is indeed inherent in the human body" (*PH* 10). However, it seems that this sentence could be read differently. Underlining the corporeal and its interaction with the Symbolic, Kristeva advances the view that culture goes as far as to define the most personal, or the least cultural, attribute of our being, that is our body. It is the culture that locates a body, identifies it, designates in relation to which other bodies a body is allowed to experience orgasm, and commands how to experience it. Therefore, the Symbolic admires "straightness" and scorns homosexuals and others as "perverts." To Kristeva, it is this interaction between the Symbolic and the somatic that plays a crucial role in the dynamics of the signifying process.

On the whole, Kristeva's elaboration on the term abject not only forges a link between the Real and the Symbolic in the inner world of the psyche but also interrelates the psychical features of existence with those of the somatic world. It could be argued that although the abject is material in essence, it has

the ability to bring about either material or immaterial changes, or both. It means that Kristeva's innovative outlook on the way the individual's mind could trigger and impact the outer world makes this material theory promising for the future of contemporary societies.

Ultimately, the quintessential abject is a corpse, "the most sickening of wastes" (*PH* 2-3), for it is both human and non-human. The corpse stands on the very edge of existence because it is difficult to decipher whether it is a person or not. Furthermore, it simultaneously stimulates the senses of horror and affection. It provokes the fear of being a corpse one day and ironically also the delight because of its resemblance to the observer's body. The other commonly mentioned instances of the abject is the skin on top of warm milk, feces, blood, and other bodily fluids. As liquids tending to congeal, they turn away from embodying any fixed form or shape. Hence, shapelessness (constituting one of the most outstanding characteristics of the abject) fundamentally questions orders and shapes, which is a substantial pillar of any revolutionary act. Although dead bodies and blood in Hemingway's stories have often been taken for granted as the common elements of any war story, the present work classifies them as elements of an art of abjection.

Because the abject belongs to the realm of the chora (mother's womb), it could also be read in relation to the mother figure and the maternal.[412] Arguably, the root of the paradoxical feelings of love and hate towards the abject are rooted in the same nature found in the context of the mother figure. Taking abjection as an attempt to cast away, François Debrix writes:

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[412] Putting emphasis on the mother figure and maternal body is a serious concern to French feminism. If Cixous proposes *écriture féminine* (feminine writing) and Irigaray calls for *parler femme* (the feminine language), Kristeva posits the pre-linguistic (pre-Oedipal) language of the semiotic chora. If the previous feminists were obsessed with women, Kristeva prefers to focus on the mother figure and to bring the term maternal into consideration.

> [A]bjection is yet another (perhaps futile) attempt to fend off this image of the unitary, inaccessible, and undifferentiated maternal body. But, at the same time, through this very repulsive motion, there is a strong attraction and libidinal attachment to that which is supposed to be so foreign to us, to that which disgusts us (because it reminds us of a primal pre-Oedipal point where our "body" was not distinguishable from others, and particularly from that absolute Other that is, for Kristeva, the maternal body).[413]

It means that the reason why we are attracted to what we resent (the abject) is due to the fact that it reminds us of our birth. When we are separated from the mother's womb (the chora), we have contradictory feelings of pain and pleasure or horror and freedom at the same time. Therefore, the abject has links with the feminine rather than the masculine.[414]

Kristeva in *Powers of Horror* makes a connection between abjection and Freud's "uncanny." In spite of the fact that Freud's uncanny seems similar to Kristeva's abject, they have fundamental differences in that the former has roots in the return of the repressed, while the latter comes from the individual's confrontation with something material. In other words, the abject has to do with primary repression, while the uncanny (similar to jouissance) is linked to secondary repression. The uncanny, jouissance and secondary repression have to do with the return of the repressed, which is not the case in the abject. The abject is rather related to the threats and taboos.

The uncanny might remain silent in the unconscious, and, as Noëlle McAfee notes, "so long as it doesn't return, it is well out of sight."[415] However, it is not the case with the abject; the abject "remains on

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[413] *Tabloid Terror*, 73.
[414] Ian Buchanan, *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (2018), 1.
[415] *Julia Kristeva*, 48

the periphery of consciousness, a looming presence, as we've seen is the case with filth and death. So, too, with the mother."[416] Being something once home-like (*heimlich*), the uncanny returns as something unhome-like (*unheimlich*). According to Freud, the mother (womb) is the most home-like place in the world, which is at the same time the most unhome-like place one could face. It feels so home-like due to our originating from it and, at the same time, very unhome-like because returning to it (the prenatal state of existence) produces the horror of death in the individual. For this reason, McAfee proposes, "What could be more 'familiar' than the mother's womb? The ultimate *unheimlich* place."[417]

In contrast, when it comes to the abject, there is no sense of memory; it is a purely physical confrontation with something material. To quote Kristeva, "Essentially different from 'uncanniness', more violent, too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory" (*PH* 5). Reasoning from this fact, Alissa Burger recognizes the main difference between these two notions is the idea that "the abject holds no sense of familiarity for its viewer" and "is defined predominantly by its position of being unrecognizable, unfamiliar."[418] Although both trigger horror, the horror that the abject arouses results from encountering something strange in the familiar rather than from a vague sense of familiarity in the thing we encounter (which is what happens with the uncanny).

A tangible example to clarify the uncanny is the mother's breast. A child grasping the mother's breast feels safe and guarded, but later on, they give up this experience and consequently forget the feeling associated with it. However, later on, as grown-up individuals they wonder why looking at a woman's breast in a painting, for instance, produces a feeling of relief and security in them. It is because

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[416] *Julia Kristeva*, 48.
[417] *Julia Kristeva*, 48.
[418] *The Wizard of Oz as American Myth*, 59.

something which was once familiar turns in the passage of time into something unfamiliar. As culture identifies it as a taboo for children to cling to the breast when they are older, the individual after specific ages is no longer permitted to have this feeling of security by grasping the mother's breast.

Conversely, in the case of the abject, there is no remembered experience that exists to serve as the origin of a feeling. Suppose that a child or an individual encounters excrement and feels disgusted. This feeling arises from a process that occurs at the moment of confrontation. It means that the mind's analysis of this material takes place immediately after the individual encounters the object with no link to the past. The reason for the feeling of horror and disgust lies in the fact that this object is a material inside the body (intestines) and concurrently something the body must expel in order to survive and define its own materiality. Therefore, it has nothing to do with the past and memory. It means that all the abject deals with is the moment of confrontation. Accordingly, the abject is connected with primary repression.

Kristeva's perspective is highly influenced by Freud's (and later on Lacan's) elaboration of primary and secondary repression in regard to the pleasure principle, and this influence has a large impact on her theorization of the abject although she does not directly talk about it. To Lacan, abjection is linked to "the Thing." To quote Robert Miles,

> [i]n Lacanian terms, the hinge of abjection is the "Thing", the residue or remnant of the moment whereby the associative "thought" of the primary processes is transformed into language, is structured, rather, as a signifier, so partaking at once, of the reality principle, the unconscious, and language. For Lacan, the "Thing" is simultaneously a primal interdiction, a manifestation of primordial law, and the imperative to unobtainable good. As such the "Thing" has an affinity with

jouissance, with, in Freud's terms, the drive that impels us beyond the pleasure principle to repetitions which embody, in the most intense fashion possible for the human, the paradox of pleasure and pain.[419]

Miles adds that what puts abjection in motion is the fissure that the "co-existence of two incompatible things: desire and 'law'" produces in the individual.[420] This feature of the abject relates it to crime and transgressive acts, as discussed earlier in the present chapter.

The main feature of the abject is the fundamental disturbance it causes to the boundaries of the self (and maybe those of language). When we speak of the uncanny, there is already a subjectivity that remembers something forgotten, while the abject aims at the concept of subjectivity itself. Therefore, the abject makes the individuals discover their self on the verge of collapse in regard to subjectivity, because it is not easy to decide whether the confronted entity belongs to the individual or not. It means that, like jouissance, abjection is the moment in which the self and non-self are confronted with one another. This issue leads to a sense of delirium that, it could be argued, mainly distinguishes the abject from the uncanny and makes it more threatening ("more violent," *PH* 5) and consequently endows it with greater potentiality, for, as Kristeva puts it, "'abjection' names not a thing but a potentiality" (*PH* 33). Similarly, it seems to be the impact of this delirious rupture that makes Kristeva regard the abject as more violent than the uncanny.

The notion of blurring boundaries seems so fundamental to Kristeva's proposition that she posits that "abjection is above all ambiguity" (*PH* 9). Whereas the Symbolic favors light and clarity, the abject promotes obscurity and uncertainty. The murky feature of the abject could be read as one of its affinities

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[419] "Abjection, Nationalism and the Gothic," 49.
[420] "Abjection, Nationalism and the Gothic," 49.

with the chora which has to do with the maternal body.[421] Highlighting the notion of ambiguity in Kristeva's definition, David Fisher summarizes her thought as follows:

> [T]he maternal image is at once a source of fascination and rejection.
>
> Kristeva summarizes the ambiguity of *chora* when she states that "the semiotic chora is no more than the place where the subject is both generated and negated, the place where his unity succumbs before the process of charges and states that produce him" (*Revolution* 28).[422]

In contrast to the Symbolic, the notion of the abject resists any sense of boundaries. It encourages unclarity and infects the individual with the plight of defining the subject-object boundary. Whatever threatens the boundaries of the self resonates with the murky nature of the abject. Simply put, the abject menaces the self-other boundaries by contaminating the purity of existence.

To call Hemingway's stories abject art we need to know what abject art designates. Focusing on the integration of the suppressed, Tina Chanter defines abject art as pointing to "the hypocrisy that is evident in the wielding of the criteria according to which that which is rejected by civilized society— as animal/feminine/primitive-need, usefulness, ugliness—is precisely necessary in order for the pursuit of ideals of freedom, goodness, and beauty."[423] Although Chanter's view seems to portray an important attribute of abject art, it could be argued that it does not distinguish it from other pieces of art or, as argued, from obscene pieces of writing.

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[421] This wavering notion of borders is also reflected in the fact that Nick as an American has come to a Europe made up of warring countries that are struggling to move their borders on the map. In this sense, America possesses associations with the Symbolic, while Europe is closer to the semiotic. Further, in the end, Nick has to return to America, just as every individual has to live within the Symbolic to maintain its subjectivity. This notion will be described in more detail in chapter seven.

[422] "Kristeva's Chora and the Subject of Postmodern Ethics," 98.

[423] *The Picture of Abjection*, 32–33.

In this respect, Deborah Caslav Covino's description is even more compelling when she warns, "There is no gain in wrenching beauty so that it includes wrinkles and spider veins."[424] Covino continues:

> Wrinkles are not beautiful, but they are the markers of a sensate and emotional history that can be appreciated as an existential process of momentous events. Understanding the tyranny of the normal as a force that affects the full range of abject bodies— "deformed" by gender ambiguity, race, ethnicity, fat, age, disproportion, disfunctionality, disease—acts of inspired abjection do not deny our desire to lead abjection-free lives; rather, they present conjunctions of the extraordinary and the ordinary. A memorialization of feces as art, for instance, makes abjection part of a process that is aesthetically valuable, as an intensified representation of the sheer elements of being, without responsibility to beauty, or even to distinguishing the normal from the abnormal.[425]

According to Covino, abject art is blessed with being true-to-life in integrating the ugly and beautiful, or the clean and filthy, with no sense of judgment or discrimination.

Nevertheless, adhering to a more materialistic point of view, it could be argued that abject art surpasses the coexistence of the beautiful and the filthy or of the legal and the forbidden. In fact, abject art does all these things in order to stand against the inefficiency of the governing system in any field or aspect of life, which in the present discussion is gender norms. In addition, abject art is the intellectual protest of the contemporary world for the amelioration of all involved. It can therefore be argued that Hemingway's short stories belong to this compassionately welcoming type of art.

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[424] *Amending the Abject Body*, 108.
[425] *Amending the Abject Body*, 109.

Ultimately, Hemingway's short stories should be recognized as an art that forms abjection. His short stories by incorporating outlawed entities and taboos, such as homosexuality, unmarried relationships, non-procreative sex, prostitution, and living outside a social bond, to name just a few, could be taken as an abject art.

The next chapter intends to elucidate how these stories force language to take notice of the code hero and consequently of other modes of the abject (homosexuality and unmarried couples) whose voice has been suppressed. In this way, the seemingly whimsical code hero turns out to be a change-maker in culture. In regard to this justification, Ruth Y. Jenkins asserts, "Acknowledging what is abject—whether in the self or the other—defuses the threat abjection poses to the Symbolic Order and instead provides culture with a source of creativity, growth, and change."[426] To sum up, Hemingway's short stories not only deviate from the norm and transgress some aspects of the presupposed masculinity: they also cause culture to modify gender conventions.

Indeed, Nick Adams's struggles can be read as his striving to be a speaking being and to make his life the practice of a poetic language to disrupt the Symbolic order. Defining the speaking being as "those who not only use language but are constituted through their use of language,"[427] McAfee indicates that according to Kristeva:

> [T]he speaking being becomes a crucial constellation for understanding oral and written literature, politics and national identity, sexuality, culture, and nature. Where other thinkers might see these fields as separate domains, Kristeva shows that the speaking being is a 'strange fold'

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[426] *Victorian Children's Literature*, 174.
[427] *Julia Kristeva*, 14.

> between them all — a place where inner drives are discharged into language, where sexuality interplays with thought, where the body and culture meet.[428]

Comparing Kristeva's post-structuralism with that of Derrida, McAfee adds, "where Derrida was concerned with deconstructing structuralism, Kristeva thought it essential to 'dynamize' the structure by taking into consideration the speaking subject and its unconscious experience."[429] In other words, the present work should highlight how the code hero makes a non-conformist of himself by refusing to live the life of a civilized man in society and thereby occupies the position of a speaking being. This sentiment aligns with Miglena Nikolchina's description:

> The speaking being is constituted as an exile in language, yet from this perspective of strangeness, from an expositioning with regard to meaning, emerges the utopia of a world without boundaries, a world that is constituted as a polyglottic community of strangers, an exile from language, in the translinguistic trajectory towards the body.[430]

The way Kristeva puts it, in order to constitute a self, the subject must eject the abject, and it occurs when, as Adam Geczy and Jacqueline Millner note, "subjectivity is threatened," and that is why "abject art continues the early postmodern assault on subjectivity, although at the same time seeks to access the truth of the subject outside the chimera of representations."[431] Accordingly, this study proposes to show how this common mechanism of the psyche in response to the need for defining the boundaries of the self (abjection) turns into a threat to the subjectivity of the Symbolic.

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[428] *Julia Kristeva*, 1.
[429] *Julia Kristeva*, 7.
[430] *Matricide in Language*, 74.
[431] *Fashionable Art*, 80.

Although the abject threatens the subject, it allows the possibility of making a change in language, for, in accordance with Yael Navaro-Yashin's definition, the abject is "that which is anti-*system* (subjective, social, or political), *constitutive* of the *system* in its very negativity (an 'anti-thesis'), or as utterly external to *system* (a 'non-*system*')."[432] Hence, chapter seven will discuss the manner in which, like other components of abject art, the code hero's adventures subversively disturb the Symbolic and disrupt gender standards within language. This perspective of abject art is similar to that of Kristeva, in "The System and the Speaking Subject" (1975), where modern semiotics is distinguished from that of Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, and the Prague School, as she compares the modern semiotics analogous to a "socially subservient system."[433]

Even though Hemingway's heroes have been mostly condemned for their male chauvinism, recent critiques have tried to adopt a more innovative perspective. For instance, Debra A. Moddelmog in "Sex, Sexuality, and Marriage" assesses Hemingway's stories as the mere portrayal of Hemingway's spirit of the age, "a time of changing gender identities for white middle-class men like Hemingway, as the idea of self-restrained moral manliness was replaced by that of aggressive, overtly sexualized masculinity."[434] However, it could also be argued that the code hero constructively acts to cause a revolution in terms of gender via abjection. If the Symbolic is the realm of the Father and manipulates society (including men) by pretending to favor masculinity more than femininity, the hero (by being sexually excessive in fulfillment of a narrow prototype of so-called manliness, as well as by being too concerned with socially constructed manly activities, such as fishing and hunting) turns out to be an intense disappointment by fulfilling the presuppositions of language regarding manhood too much. He

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[432] *The Make-Believe Space*, 151.
[433] Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 112.
[434] "Sex, Sexuality, and Marriage," 357.

proves to be a failure in that he does not follow the pattern that the Symbolic has established for men, including loving a woman, getting married and forming a family, and living among the people of a society. To sum up, as will be explained in the next chapter, what Hemingway's code hero abjects is not women, but the ideal type of relationship that language has devised for these two defined sexes.

Although Kristeva references avant-garde artists to elaborate on the power of the semiotic chora, she does not negate the capability of ordinary citizens to make use of poetic language. According to McAfee, Kristeva, in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, argues:

> Meaning is not made just denotatively, with words denoting thoughts or things. Meaning is made in large part by the poetic and affective aspects of texts as well. This revolution is not limited to the language of artists, but is present in ways that ordinary human beings try to express themselves. All our attempts to use language neatly, clearly, and in an orderly way are handmaidens of our attempts to be neat, clearly demarcated, orderly subjects. But such attempts are continuously disrupted by certain elements of our signifying practice.[435]

This type of poetic language in both form and content closely resembles that of Hemingway's stories, which are usually compared to the laconic language of journal articles.

Well-known for their clear, realistic, simple style, Hemingway's stories received James Nagel's compliment, in "Brett and the Other Women in *The Sun Also Rises*," who says that Hemingway's style "changed the nature of American writing. Newspapers and magazines produced decades later bear clear indications of the transformation in style brought about by this remarkable book (*The Sun Also Rises*)."[436]

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[435] *Julia Kristeva*, 13.
[436] "Brett and the Other Women in *The Sun Also Rises*," 87.

Interestingly, this neat, clear, and orderly (to use Kristeva's words) pattern is intruded upon by the code hero's practices. Nick Adams' signifying practice repulses (abjects) supposedly masculine roles. However, we should take into consideration that the neatness and clarity of style as the representative of language orderliness is disrupted by the filthy ambiguous elements of the abject, in that the former (which stands for the Symbolic) interacts with the latter (which represents the poetic language and semiotic chora). Disrupting conventional prototypes of masculinity, the stories result in a dialogue between Nick and the signifying system of gender norms.

Thomas Putnam in his essay, "Hemingway on War and Its Aftermath," endorses Hemingway's style as a reaction to Victorian novelists' elaborate style of writing, and refers to Henry Louis Gates's comment that Hemingway "using a distinctly American vernacular, created a new style of fiction in which meaning is established through dialogue, through action, and silences—a kind of fiction in which nothing crucial or at least very little—is stated explicitly."[437] This description of meaning-making parallels Nick Adam's entering into dialogue with the Symbolic by means of refusing to submissively live the prototypical life designated for him. This aversion to entering the manly space echoes the silences Nick produces in the linguistically defined sphere of gender, which in turn makes the implicit writing style of the stories resonate with the profound lifestyle of the code hero. In other words, the writer's style of writing, along with Nick's lifestyle, corresponds to Hemingway's iceberg theory, according to which most of what happens in the stories occurs beneath the surface.

The code hero's unforeseen acts of diversion from the cultural norms and repugnance toward living in the social community hint at the inability of language to facilitate the individual's self-

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[437] Hutchisson, *Ernest Hemingway*, 66.

articulation and sexual heterogeneity. This matter echoes Zoe Trodd's words in the essay, "Hemingway's Camera Eye: The Problem of Language and an Interwar Politics of Form," where she argues:

> Within his form, Hemingway embedded a further commentary upon language's depleted capacity for expression. For example, his paratactic syntax—which juxtaposes clauses and like syntactic units without subordinating conjunctions—creates static, abrupt sentences that seem to stammer or bark; anticipating Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1941), where the leaders of the Revolution have tongues that "stammered and barked."[438]

Dissenting from the law is so fundamental to the concept of the abject that Kristeva comments:

> It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. The traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience, the shameless rapist, the killer who claims he is a savior . . . . Any crime, because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject, but premeditated crime, cunning murder, hypocritical revenge are even more so because they heighten the display of such fragility. (*PH* 4)

In this respect, the life of Hemingway's code hero is not that of a felon, criminal, or philanderer but just the life of an outsider who speaks to language within the Symbolic.

What the short stories accomplish is a call for more heterogeneity rather than the destruction of language. It is this subtle difference that distinguishes the code hero from criminals or vulgar characters. He behaves with such scrupulous honesty that the reader does not always detect any deceitfulness in his

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[438] "Hemingway's Camera Eye," 211.

behavior or statements. Correspondingly, when he has a sexual relationship with a woman he clearly and directly lets her know about the purely bodily orientation of the act, which bears no sense of love or commitment. For instance, Nick, in "Summer People," repeatedly abstains from saying "I love you" to Kate, or in "The Strange Country," Roger is averse to saying this sentence to the young girl despite the girl's begging to hear it from his mouth. In addition, he recurrently calls her "daughter" to define the relationship and remind her not to take their relationship as a romance, and even after the girl insists that he say this sentence, he "lied" and "lied again" (*CSS* 616) three times. He makes great efforts not to abuse the girl, so even after hearing "I love you" from Roger's mouth, she immediately says, "I'll try to make it come true" (616). Thus, by continually breaking the boundaries of language, the code hero resists the rules that language has defined for him.

Given that family is the very core of every social structure, its destruction would lead to that of society. This transgressive act seems very prominent in Hemingway's short stories, in that Nick prefers to have sex with different girls (Marjorie, Prudence, Trudy, and other girls) rather than get married and have children. Hemingway has allocated the issue of marriage such little space that without receiving any background about Nick's wife and their marriage, the reader suddenly, in "Cross-Country Snow," discovers that Nick is married, and his wife (Helen) is pregnant. Instead of staying with Helen, Nick is concerned about his friendship with George and their skiing experience. It portrays the triviality of male-female familial bonding in the context of the stories. Similarly, in "Fathers and Sons," when Nick is described as spending time with his son, he wallows in the nostalgia of his lascivious behavior with Trudy (a young Indian girl) in the presence of Trudy's brother, Billy. His son plays such a minor role in the story that the reader does not learn his name and when they are together Nick feels "quite alone but this boy had been with him" (*CSS* 375). All of these issues, along with many other instances and clues which will be discussed in the next chapter, imply that Nick is unwilling to conform to the linguistically-defined masculinity of a husband or father. That is to say, Nick abjects the fundamental elements of a culturally-

set family structure. This aspect of Nick Adams' lifestyle fits in well with Kristeva's definition of the revolutionary poetic subject who strives to come into dialogue with the Symbolic.

6 The abject and modernism

As modernist literature is highly influenced by the early twentieth-century American expatriate writers in Europe, particularly Paris, it occupies, so to speak, a Europe-America border zone, as expressed by Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury commenting on Hugh Kenner's *A Homemade World: The American Modernist Writers* (1975):

> On European soil, he is saying, the Modern movement was born, but it appeared unrooted. In the United States, it found what it needed, a "homemade world," where it could grow in what William Carlos Williams called 'the American grain.' Then it could be reexported to its origins as an approved twentieth-century product.[439]

Because of the back-and-forth movement of the artists, modernist literature has a vague, marginal position, at once belonging to neither Europe nor America and yet to both of them. Many prominent modernists of the 1910s and 1920s, such as Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Malcolm Cowley, and Ernest Hemingway lived part of their lives away from their place of birth. The ensuing alienation aligns with the self-alienation Kristeva discusses, since "[b]y demonstrating the impossibility of a pure, authentic, 'whole' state free of alienation, Kristeva's theory of the abject argues that humans, as social, speaking beings, are always-already alienated, and that our subjectivity rests precisely upon this 'lack' or self- exile."[440] This aspect of abjection in particular can be applied to the modernist literature of the twentieth century.

It might seem that modernist literature, because it favors simplicity of style and meaning—ideas that seemingly resist the formlessness of the abject—bears little affinity with abjection. Nevertheless,

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[439] *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*, xix.
[440] James, "Abjection, Ambiguity, and Female Sweatshop Workers," 65.

some critics have pointed out the significance of abjection for modernist literature. David B. Johnson comments that Kristeva "sees in modernist literature an especially strong gravitation toward the experience of abjection."[441] Similarly, emphasizing that "Kristeva privileges modern literature," Keltner concludes that "Kristeva credits modern literature with unveiling abjection at the heart of all meaning."[442] However, as Julia Kristeva explains the abject in her study on modernist writers, it can also be investigated in the context of the writers belonging to the Lost Generation such as Ernest Hemingway.

Regarding the historical background of the term, modernism as an artistic movement proves resistant to admitting any homeland, and in this way, it could correlate with the indeterminate position of the abject. This evasion of locus is also reverberated in modernist preoccupations with dichotomies, which Kristeva observes in Louis-Ferdinand Céline. She maintains, "When reading Celine we are seized at that fragile spot of our subjectivity" and "A universe of borders" which is "the turning point between social and asocial, familial and delinquent, feminine and masculine, fondness and murder" (*PH* 135). This merging is also suggested by Charlotte Jones in her analysis of Dorothy Richardson's novels, which sees the root of this fusion of opposites in the essence of reality by quoting from May Sinclair's "The Novels of Dorothy Richardson":

> [I]t is absurd to go on talking about realism and idealism, or objective and subjective art, as if the philosophies were sticking where they stood in the eighties. [. . .] All we know of reality at first hand is given to us through contacts in which these interesting distinctions are lost. Reality is

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441 "The Postmodern Sublime," 129.
442 *Kristeva: Thresholds*, 72–73.

> thick and deep, too thick and too deep, and that the same time too fluid to be cut with any convenient carving knife.[443]

However, the common ground of modernism and abjection goes beyond the idea of exile and blended borders.

In her discussion of abjection in *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva reads abjection in terms of both content and style, stating that literature of abjection "perverts language—style and content" (15). The notion of abjection is so rich in content that Kristeva defines it as diversely as "recognition of the *want* on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded" (5), "above all ambiguity" (9), "a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego)" (15), "an alchemy that transforms death drive into a start of life, of new significance" (15), or "a woman, 'any woman,' the 'woman as a whole'" (85). Yet according to Kristeva, abjection commands two main aspects, one relating to individuals and the other to culture, since "abjection is coextensive with social and symbolic order, on the individual as well as on the collective level" (68). These two dimensions of abjection influence the central theory of most studies of abjection vis-à-vis modernist literature. For instance, Glen Willmott argues that:

> It is now possible to schematize some of the forces at play in abjection and a modern political unconscious. Where figures and voice of the self are represented, two antithetical patterns have emerged: in one pattern, the abject self finds its artistic sublimation in an imaginary, masterful I of the mirror stage, so that the restless separations and boundary-drawing and language-founding (hence, as Kristeva says, culture-building) drives of the self are recontained in

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[443] *Realism, Form, and Representation in the Edwardian Novel*, 89.

> a play of narcissistic *doublings*; in the other pattern, the abject self finds its artistic sublimation in the symbolic circuitry of a new reality principle.[444]

Describing the first pattern as "introverted" and the second as "extroverted," Willmott considers H. P. Lovecraft and Joseph Conrad as representatives of abject introversion, and W. B. Yeats and D. H. Lawrence as representatives of extroversion.[445] Hence, in addition to playing a crucial role in the psychic development of the individual, abjection represents the rupture in the body of the Symbolic. Therefore, abjection is relevant for studies with different literary, psychological, and cultural considerations.

Since during the twentieth century many different fields of thought converge on the notion of the self, modernist literature dwells broadly on ideas of self and subjectivity. Taking James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928) into consideration, Mary Ann Gillies and Aurelea Denise Mahood remark: "The novels of the period are characterized by a personal and textual inwardness as the writers looked inward in an effort to capture new personal realities."[446] Similarly, identifying the centrality of the self in modernist fiction, Vicki Mahaffey suggests:

> [I]nstead of being chronological or sequential, narratives began to break and flow like waves, with an alternating rhythm that was also reshaping the idea of the self from a static entity into something that was more generally unstable, although it also fluctuated regularly from the mind to the world and back again. The concept of the self as a pendulum moving between isolation and connection, thought and sensual experience, coherence and dissolution, was anticipated by Walter

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[444] *Modernist Goods*, 122.
[445] *Modernist Goods*, 123.
[446] Gillies and Mahood, *Modernist Literature*, 9.

> Pater in his famous conclusion to *The Renaissance*, when he wrote that what is real in this life "fines itself down" to what he called "this strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves." Such a movement is perceptible in Molly's diurnal weaving and unweaving of her thoughts at the end of *Ulysses*, and in the fluctuation between vision and blindness in James' *The Ambassadors.*[447]

Since recognition of the self necessitates differentiating between the self and non-self, the theory of abjection also carries profound implications for the literature of the century which strives to revise its identity by presenting a redefinition of itself or to "Make it New" in Ezra Pound's words.[448] It means that abjection, as the fabricator of subjectivity, could be discussed in relation to modernist writers.

Modernism's obsession with the self pertains not only to the subjectivity of fictional characters but also, more importantly, to that of art itself. As the nature of modernist fiction, similar to the nature of the abject, is dynamically unstable, every modernist writer has exploited this changeability in their own distinctive manner. Instability and change are so interwoven in modernism, or to put it differently, modernism is so preoccupied with alteration and change, that Jesse Matz hypothesizes:

> Modernity meant *change* – a perpetual departure from all tradition, a fascination always with the new, a hunger for the future rather than the past. As Baudelaire first put it, modernity favored "the transient, the fleeting, the contingent," and fascination with these things meant making fiction, too, more dynamic, protean, and variable.[449]

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[447] Mahaffey, *Modernist Literature*, 10.
[448] P. Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*, 26.
[449] "The Novel," 218.

He stresses in his conclusion: "But along with this dynamism comes skepticism. Modernity's changes also made writers doubt their judgment and their senses, making doubt perhaps the dominant mood of modern fiction."[450] If skepticism and doubt are the constitutive parts of modernism, then all meanings, as well as all identities, lose their autonomy. According to Katherine J. Goodnow, "the abject is everything that threatens the collapse of order by threatening the collapse of meaning and the annihilation of the self."[451] Thus, rebellion is associated with abjection and it is seen in modernist literature with its "willingness to doubt previously accepted beliefs and institutions."[452]

Though appreciating skepticism, Kristeva, in her discussion of Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*, emphasizes, "It is possible to be cynical without being irremediably abject; abjection, on the other hand, is always brought about by that which attempts to get along with trampled-down law" (*PH* 19). Hence, what specifically characterizes abjection is the effect it has on the Symbolic. By violating the so-called norms, modernist art attempts to stain the purity dominant in the realm of culture. In this regard, considering abjection as "feeling polluted inside, filth, traversing the taboo," Joshua Schuster associates sonic pollution and visual dirt with staining the pure Symbolic and notes:

> I want to examine how punk music, which emerged in the mid-1970s in England and the United States, very much advocated an intentional self-pollution with loud, brash music, screamed lyrics, and clothes that were used, dirty, and torn. Punks reveled in bad feelings and mocked the image of clean corporate capitalism.[453]

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[450] "The Novel," 218.
[451] *Kristeva in Focus*, 30.
[452] Goodnow, *Kristeva in Focus*, 23.
[453] *The Ecology of Modernism*, 147.

Therefore, modernism's effort to flout conventions makes substantial contributions to the understanding of abjection.

Well-known for welcoming taboos and violations of conventions, modernism projects the image of an outcast, pointing back to its abject quality. This aspect of modernist literature creates abjection by making it indefinable to the Other and thus polluting. If we take Kristeva's claim that "literature may also involve not an ultimate resistance to but an unveiling of the abject: an elaboration, a discharge, and a hollowing out of abjection through the Crisis of the Word" (*PH* 208), then modernist literature due to its disinterested outlook on the so-called normativity must show little resistance to this unmasking. However, a question that arises is whether it is justifiable to call a work of art abjection solely because it transgresses any norms and/or defies taboos. One response to this question is offered by Anna-Margaretha Horatschek who describes the transgressive aspect of abjection in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* "as an exponent of a normative model of self-formation that is dramatized by transgressive behavior."[454] She explains that challenging norms can be read through abjection if feelings that are supposed to accompany abjection are also present, because:

> For Kristeva, feelings of horror, fear or dread, disgust, revulsion, and nausea or physical reactions like vomiting, fainting, or trembling signal that the individual is confronted with the tabooed limits of those aspects of reality which his or her culture has circumscribed as 'normal', 'real', or 'true', and which are included in the semantic field of a cultural reality.[455]

Yet, it could also be argued that what particularly characterizes transgressive abjection is not only the feeling of disgust and the "theme of suffering-horror" (*PH* 141), but also repetition. Repetition to Kristeva

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[454] "Logicized' Taboo," 195.
[455] "Logicized' Taboo," 195–96.

shapes an essential quality of all abjection, because "[t]he abject, mimed through sound and meaning, is *repeated*" (*PH* 28), as Kristeva's italicization of the word implies. Hence, the repeated feeling of horror and disgust influences revolt read in light of abjection.

In terms of the revolutionary aspects of abjection, Glenn Willmott takes modernism as "arising out of the collapse of a workable symbolic order"[456] and asserts:

> Kristeva says that modernism is managed by the (collapsed) Other because its writing remains a symbolic process. But this process will be uniquely vulnerable to repressed structures, such as the rhythms of the *chora* and divisions of the abject. Indeed, the 'very logic of the symbolic' must 'conform' to them. Modernism must try to generate or restore a symbolic order of the Other — from the ground up, as it were.[457]

What is important in Willmott's statement is, however, his emphasis on modernism's constructiveness in its attempt "to generate or restore a symbolic order of the Other," which uncovers the optimum reality of abjection in relation to the Other and enables dialogue between the Symbolic and the semiotic.

The interest of modernist literature in the semiotic plays a significant role in the function of abjection in the rhetorical style of the era. Observing that "[t]ransgressive language is a matter of modern literature for most thinkers including Kristeva,"[458] Melanie Maria Lörke refers to Gabriele Schwab's view that "literary language- and subject-*Entgrenzung* are intriguing for the reader because they have their origin in the intermediary field, or in the semiotic (Kristeva), and appeal to the same areas in the reader's

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[456] *Modernist Goods*, 47.
[457] *Modernist Goods*, 37.
[458] *Liminal Semiotics*, 36.

mind."[459] According to Schwab, "poetic language, which is strongly influence by principles of the intermediary, tends to lack symbolic characteristics," and it is seen in authentic *Entgrenzung* which "only occurs in modern texts that deny totality such as *Finnegan's Wake*, *The Waves*, *The Unnamable*, and *Gravity's Rainbow.*"[460] Schwab's view of literary language also accords with Kristeva's idea in that when "the limit between inside and outside becomes uncertain," the narrative is challenged and "its makeup changes; its linearity is shattered, it proceeds by flashes, enigmas, short cuts, incompletion, tangles, and cuts" (*PH* 141). These features of a narrative style go well with the technique for which modernist writers are well-known, that is, "stream of consciousness."[461] Although Kristeva mainly focuses on Céline in her discussion of abjection, she recognizes some features of the abject in other writers. For example, when she alludes to James Joyce's style and rhetorical devices, she asserts that:

> The abject lies, beyond the themes, and for Joyce generally, in the way one speaks; it is verbal communication, it is the Word that discloses the abject. But at the same time, the Word alone purifies from the abject, and that is what Joyce seems to say when he gives back to the masterly rhetoric that his *Work in progress* constitutes full powers against abjection. A single catharsis: the rhetoric of the pure signifier, of music in letters—*Finnegans Wake*. (23)

Accordingly, the stream of consciousness can be interpreted as an attempt to move further away from the Symbolic and to approach the semiotic in that, in spite of employing words (in Kristeva's words, to "conform" to the "logic of the symbolic," 15), stream of consciousness tends to violate the rules of syntax.

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[459] *Liminal Semiotics*, 37. In *Subjects Without Selves: Transitional Texts in Modern Fiction*, Schwab proposes that it is the language of modernist and post-modernist texts that constitutes the reader's subjectivity. Schwab also puts forward the idea of "[t]he double function of feast—preserving order and permitting excess—appeared as *Begrenzung* (limitation) and *Entgrenzung* (delimitation)" (Lachmann, "Poetics and Hermeneutics," 223).

[460] Lörke, *Liminal Semiotics*, 37.

[461] "[S]tream of consciousness refers to an uninterrupted flow, in which logic, conventional syntax and even at times punctuation are abandoned" (Cuddon et al., *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 364).

Moreover, similar to abjection's "collapses" of meaning (*PH* 2), modernism tends to present a fragmented image of the world. This matter is apparent in the works of Samuel Beckett, Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce. One of the other justifications for the abject nature of the stream of consciousness technique emerges in the thought of William James, who coined the phrase (stream of consciousness). According to Duane Schultz, explaining consciousness as a "stream" that "flows and changes," James, by emphasizing "the physical human being" and "the importance of the body, particularly the brain, in mental life," erects a bridge between the bodily conditions (brain) and mind (phenomenon).[462] The style Joyce introduces is often associated with modernist literature, and thus, due to their affinities, it could be decoded in the light of Kristeva's abjection.

The change promoted in abjection as well as in stream of consciousness proposes instability and the zest for change to be main concerns of modernism in the contexts of society, politics, and culture, including gender. Taking "the multiplicities of gender developed by the novelists of the ensuing century" into account, Deborah Clarke emphasizes that "[s]uch instability is anticipated at the start of the century" and recognizes:

> The era is not so easily categorized or labeled [. . .]. When Hemingway's Frederick Henry likens soldiers carrying ammunition to pregnant women in *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), and Faulkner's Joe Christmas of *Light in August* (1932) realizes that he feels 'even within him' the voices of African American women, any notion of stable gender identity vanishes.[463]

In this regard, gender notions in the new century are the familiar that become the strange, a phenomenon thematized in the literature of the era; for this reason, modernist fiction allows so-called

[462] *A History of Modern Psychology*, 144.
[463] "Gender and the Novel," 590.

"perverts" who lack judgment to enter into the discourse. This matter is explained by Laura Doan and Jane Garrity who refer to "the inclusion in modernist studies of the experiences of dissident sexual subjects," including the "lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered," and use the term "queering modernism."[464] Such inclusion of diversity is valuable because it fortifies the semiotic and, in turn, perturbs the Symbolic.

Gender purification in relation to abjection features in twentieth-century literature in genres that conventionally seem to have little affiliation with the issue, for instance, in detective stories. In a revision of prototypical twentieth-century crime fiction, Gill Plain examines the sexual politics of crime in the work of Agatha Christie and Raymond Chandler in whose narratives, Plain suggests, the body has to do with the borderline between the Symbolic and semiotic. She emphasizes, "Christie's key bodies are the corpse, which may be either 'grievable' or 'semiotic', and the monstrous body of the mother both of which are, for Julia Kristeva, sites of abjection."[465] She believes that the tensions in the work of Christie and Chandler are "indicators of a more substantial border: that which divides the articulable from the unspeakable, and in so doing constitutes the narrow line between the stability of social organisation (the symbolic), and the chaotic rupture of corporeal desire (the semiotic)."[466] Plain concludes that Christie and Chandler are writers of abjection because of the manner in which they deal with the body due to the presence of "an unobtainable homosocial ideal embodied by the concept of 'semiotic masculinity.'"[467] She ultimately concludes that crime fiction in its attempt at "the symbolic articulation of this impossible semiotic yearning" becomes "a mode of resurrection and reconfiguration. What Kristeva says of abjection

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[464] "Modernism Queered," 542.
[465] *Twentieth Century Crime Fiction*, 26.
[466] *Twentieth Century Crime Fiction*, 26.
[467] *Twentieth Century Crime Fiction*, 27.

holds equally true for crime fiction's attempts to assert authority over the abyss."[468] However, abjection in modernist literature goes beyond the revision of gender. Along with gender politics, the issues of race and ethnicity are also challenged in the twentieth-century literature of abjection. For example, reading Mike Gold's 1928 play, *Hoboken Blues*, as a criticism of "those European values that fail to recognize leisure and play as subtle yet effective methods of black resistance to capitalism,"[469] Tyrone R. Simpson highlights the significance of race and religion in agitating American identity and maintains:

> [T]hat the Abyssinian surpasses the Golds in his claim on Jewishness, an ethnic classification that the family must efface to qualify for admission into white American society, retains blackness in the novel as an abject construct. Blackness appears in this scene as a stupefying signifier for the ethno-racial affiliation that bars the Golds from full American citizenship.[470]

That is to say, both sexual and racial minorities make a new appearance in the literature of the twentieth century.

In the contexts of race and color, the dejected and cast-off are commonly symbolized in women and their desire, which comes back as "an inescapable boomerang" (*PH* 2). According to Oliver, "women do embrace the abject" because they reject their mother, and "[b]ecause our traditional discourses on motherhood do not distinguish between the abject mother and all women, they perpetuate the denigration of women. Within these discourses we reject the mother's breast as abject and thereby reject all women as abject."[471] This view of women represents newly empowered women, since, as Marianne Dekoven puts it, modernist obsession with gender creates "an irresolvable ambivalence toward powerful femininity,"

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[468] *Twentieth Century Crime Fiction*, 27.
[469] *Ghetto Images in Twentieth-Century American Literature*, 56.
[470] *Ghetto Images in Twentieth-Century American Literature*, 58.
[471] "Nourishing the Speaking Subject," 79.

voices "a male modernist fear of women's new power," and leads to "the combination of misogyny and triumphal masculinism that many critics see as central, defining features of modernist work by men."[472] This ambivalent feeling towards empowered women creates an image of women that, similar to the abject, generates the contradictory emotions of fear and joy, as Kristeva's approach leads to "figuring women as dangerous and/or victimised, Other, Ideal, and/or figure of terror, stereotyped."[473]

However, the manner in which Kristeva relates women to the abject underscores the power of the masculine (Law-of-the-Father), since, according to Renée Dickinson, "Kristeva's understanding of the abject reveals the role of language in erasing (or containing) the fleshy feminine abject and, thus, the difficulties for women modernists to find and use language to express issues of female subjectivity."[474] In this regard, Kristeva's text could be itself accused of abjecting women out of a fear of powerful women, thus explaining the curious absence of female writers from the book. Intending to add a female writer to Kristeva's catalog of "apocalyptic" literature, Sara Crangle adds Mina Loy to the list, and suggests that:

> [Loy] will not let us ignore the horror of abjection because she understands that the category 'abject' permits exclusions and denunciations with the power to do significant harm. A political righteousness drives Loy's explorations of the marginalised, particularly women and the poor. Loy sought to reconfigure abjection by challenging the disgust it engenders and honouring its ubiquity.[475]

Therefore, the various modes of rejecting the feminine could also be investigated in terms of Kristevan abjection, and some recent studies on the abject explicitly regard physical rejections, ascribed as they are

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[472] "Modernism and Gender," 174.
[473] Wisker, *Horror Fiction*, 237.
[474] *Female Embodiment and Subjectivity in the Modernist Novel*, 106.
[475] "Mina Loy," 296.

to the maternal and corporeal, as defense mechanisms against a psychic assault on the self. For instance, Andrzej Gasiorek comments that, in *Mrs Dalloway*, "[t]his sense of exclusion leads to another – her visceral rejection of Doris Kilman, who represents in monstrous form the lesbian desire and the radical politics that Clarissa has cast aside,"[476] and "This voice exists in the margins of Mrs Dalloway. Clarissa abjects Doris, viewing her as a blood-sucking 'spectre' and a 'brutal monster.'"[477] Moreover, the notion of resisting physical and mental assaults and attacks is the central theme of the abjection mechanism depicted in twentieth-century literature on war and battlefields.

Because modernist literature emerged during the violence of World War I (and later on World War II), many works of modernist literature, besides the resulting scholarship, meditate on war and violence. On the one hand, war's link with the instability associated with the abject forms an arena for a conflict of opposites, such as that of life and death, self and the Other, or inside and outside. On the other hand, battlefields and wars form spaces where the most repugnant images of the abject, such as violence, bloodshed, maladies, and corpses (the ultimate image of the abject) occur. In fact, decaying bodies feature as a major obsession in modernist literature.

Modern literature is so concerned with the image of the infected body that Peter Fifield, investigating ailment ("afflicted body") in the work of T. S. Eliot, associates it with the abject in modernism and regards illness as "a central preoccupation of literary modernism."[478] He writes:

> Such bodies are accordingly found scattered throughout the contemporary volume *Poems* (1920) and *The Waste Land*. In those texts, illness is not a rhetorical overflow to be cleaned up or cured,

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[476] *A History of Modernist Literature*, 358.
[477] *A History of Modernist Literature*, 359.
[478] *Modernism and Physical Illness*, 1.

> but something legible and load-bearing in the depiction of modernity. Reified rather than rhetorical, illness is used to body forth the material qualities of abjection and otherness, rather than a hyperbolic negativity.[479]

Likewise, Lisa K. Perdigao, in her reading of Willa Carther's *The Professor's House* and Richard Wright's *Native Son*, asserts, "Their plots hinge on the recovery of the dead and buried bodies at the center of the narratives."[480] She regards these dead bodies, moreover, as an attempt at human renewal, or "an act of recovery" as she calls it, since "[t]he representations of dead bodies in these modern novels indicate how the writers respond to the tension between the material and the discursive, between metonymy and metaphor," and so "the dead body becomes a site of linguistic crisis for modern writers."[481] It reveals how World War I with all its casualties nourished writers with innovative explorations of the corpse and the drama of dead bodies.

In fact, wartime artists experienced the dark life of the abject in such a way that Henry James, for one, writing a letter to his friend Howard Sturgis in 1914, predicted the twentieth century to be "[t]he plunge of civilization into this abyss of blood and darkness."[482] Thus, early twentieth-century literature reflects the abject by virtue of artists' direct contact with the ultimate level of material filth, i.e., dead bodies and massacres. The art of the era depicts the corporeal filth and material assault which the artists not only experienced themselves but also tried to defend themselves against using their craft. In other words, modernist fiction employed war fatalities to approach a more authentic definition of human beings in a world that attempts to empower language by means of annihilating the material existence of humans.

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[479] *Modernism and Physical Illness*, 121.
[480] *From Modernist Entombment to Postmodernist Exhumation*, 51.
[481] *From Modernist Entombment to Postmodernist Exhumation*, 51.
[482] Schloss, *Culture and Criticism in Henry James*, 122.

That is to say, modern literature depicts the human struggle to be reborn like a phoenix from the flames of war. Charles Lemert states that modernism "was originally forged in the terrible furnaces of the Holocaust from whence comes its steadfast commitment to protecting the human spirit."[483] It reveals that modernism as a movement is an intellectual endeavor to defend the boundaries of humanity against assaulting brutalities, and, for this reason, it can be argued that modernism itself is an act of abjection. That is to say, depicting "the atrocities of war" which Kristeva recognizes as "the true cause *of fear*" (*PH* 142), modernist fiction may provide insight into abjection, for "the theme of suffering-horror is the ultimate evidence of such states of abjection within a narrative representation" (141).

Taking all these abject attributes of modernist literature into account, it would be appropriate to investigate the ways in which abjection has been employed by different modernist writers in a distinctive manner. As Hemingway plays a crucial role in modernist American literature, it is necessary to study the abject in his fiction, especially in the character of Nick Adams and in the characters of other short stories, in which, in David Seed's view, "Nick as character, especially in the vignettes, 'exemplifies the sights and experiences of war. He is both seen and seeing; object and subject.'"[484] However, the current research takes Nick to be neither an object nor a subject, but rather an abject.

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[483] *Postmodernism Is Not What You Think*, 43.
[484] Wagner-Martin, *The Routledge Introduction to American Modernism*, 66.

7 The abject in Hemingway's short stories

This study seeks to investigate Nick Adams and the other protagonists, also referred to as code heroes, of Hemingway's short stories vis-à-vis their sexual identity, self-articulation, and subject formation. The present chapter discusses how love—widely considered to be one of the most human of all feelings—can, in Hemingway's narratives, turn into the most bestial material substance. The stories stage this abjection. In other words, abjection in the narratives is depicted in the code hero's behavior when he is confronted with love (as the abject), which, in turn, serves as a defense mechanism to cast off the dung of love.

Regarding sexuality and gender, Hemingway's scholars often find either machismo or feminist advocacy in his work. However, the notion of androgyny always figures significantly in the study of Hemingway.[485] Furthermore, while Hemingway may not have actively contributed to gender liberation, it is important to consider the time and context in which he wrote.

New theories from contemporary scholarship can be applied to unlock new approaches to his work. Messent, although he wrote on Hemingway in the 1990s, seems to be ahead of his time in this respect. He often alludes to obscurity in Hemingway's world, and in regard to the abject in gender formation, he uses terms such as "confusion," "ambiguity," and "attractions and dangers"—terms that, as discussed in chapter five, are associated with abjection.[486] Abjection is closely connected with obscurity, for it is about defining self-boundaries by jettisoning a threat that is paradoxically a part of the self. It results in horror due to the loss of distinction between the self and the other or the subject and object. This horror is accompanied by joy and pain and can be interwoven with pleasure. Thus, there are parallels

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[485] Spilka, *Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny*, 3.
[486] Messent, *Ernest Hemingway*, 88.

between the approach used in the present work's approach to gender and that of Messent, though he does not invoke the term "abject" as such.

This chapter examines the code hero's rejection of conventionally predefined male roles and characteristics and examines the extent to which fictional elements contribute to an atmosphere of the abject. In particular, it will consider masculine roles that the dominating power structures have defined for the code hero and the process of subject formation that he constructively undergoes by means of abjection. Moreover, it will analyze the extent to which the protagonist accepts and deploys language principles, the ways in which he violates them, and finally the reverberations his performance produces in the language structure as the supposedly total authority in defining gender identity. Nick Adams's stories will form the major skeleton of the discussion, but the other stories will help give flesh to the discussion.

Although each short story has an independent plot, some features and patterns of thought are commonly shared among them, and not only in the Nick Adams stories. Michael Reynolds observes a similar pattern in *In Our Time* and proposes, "It is the repetition of thematic experiences that binds the collage together: war, violence, water, darkness, isolation, babies, and most centrally, failed relationships."[487] Yet there is another motif in the stories that is not identified by Reynolds and connects the parts of this collage. Creating a more organic unity, the shadow of abjection haunts the atmosphere of the stories, the characters' relationships, the writing style, and the settings.

The stories relate and collectively produce a vibration in the realm of gender identity. Therefore, the structure that is proposed in this chapter is largely applicable to most of Hemingway's short stories. For reasons of space, only a few of the stories will be considered. Along with longer narratives such as

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[487] "Hemingway's *In Our Time*," 47.

"The Undefeated," "The Strange Country," and "The Last Good Country," the most remarkable of all the stories are "Indian Camp" and "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place." While "Indian Camp" describes the journey Nick undertakes over the course of the stories, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" depicts what all these struggles accomplish. After giving in the previous chapters a general picture of this chapter's concern with abjection and gender liberation, it is time to focus the discussion in greater detail.

Seeking to compensate for the early misogynist readings of Hemingway's stories, some modern scholarship on Hemingway has shifted to the opposite pole of the feminine-masculine dichotomy. Its findings wholly disagree with previous studies by denying the stories' hostility and indifference to women and proposing that his stories are focused on gender identity, including that of women. It is difficult, however, to find evidence for the standpoint that Hemingway is a writer with feminist concerns. For example, regarding Hemingway's writing as the portrayal of a "crisis in which a woman starts questioning her desire and her identity,"[488] Daniel Thomières, in his analysis of "Cat in the Rain," reads all the events and components of the story in relation to George's wife, as "she symbolically feels compelled to look at herself in the mirror on the dressing table. She cannot identify with what she sees. Hemingway knows that identity is a problem bound up with our imagination."[489] While Thomières' perspective seems original, this approach requires more grounds and justifications from the other texts than is given. While many readings of Hemingway can be justified textually, the intention of the present work is to illustrate how these various readings with seemingly contradictory approaches relate to one another and in turn unveil further parts of the iceberg hidden under the surface.

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[488] "Being and Time," 1

[489] "Being and Time," 2.

Although it might initially appear that the stories portray the male character's marriage as a disappointment, a closer inspection reveals that disappointing marriages are not due to one specific gender, but rather the failure of the marriage itself. In this respect, the code hero does not generally exhibit a hostile attitude toward or indifference to women. If the stories were misogynistic, there would be negative comments about women. Although there are some cases of men behaving aggressively toward women, the narrator and the structure of the stories rarely feature misogyny. For instance, though Harry calls his wife a "rich bitch" (*CSS* 43) in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," the narrator adds that Helen was a "nice woman [. . .] she was very pleasant and appreciative" (46). Likewise, if the stories were uninterested in women, they would not feature women at all or supply the topic of dialogues between male characters. The code hero's emotional or sexual attraction to women is further highlighted by scenes that show the code hero either thinking about women or sleeping with them (which also refutes the idea that the code hero is homosexual). Although the male protagonists show resistance to serious long-term relationships with women, they rarely show any animosity to women in and of themselves.

Nick's interest in women becomes more visible in "The Three-Day Blow" when he remembers his first love Marjorie and he regrets losing her. If Nick were a woman-hater, he would not decide to have the company of his sister Littless on his travels. Nick decides to leave his home when he becomes aware that he is being tracked by two guards who want to arrest him and send him to a reform school for an unknown reason, though ostensibly because he killed a deer. To help Nick, Littless insists on accompanying him, which he at first rejects in the following conversation:

> "I'd worry about you," Nick Adams told her. "I don't even know where I'm going."
>
> "Sure you do."
>
> "If there's two of us they'd look harder. A boy and a girl show up."
>
> "I'd go like a boy," she said. "I always wanted to be a boy anyway. They couldn't tell anything about me if my hair was cut."

> "No," Nick Adams said. "That's true."
>
> "Let's think something out good," she said. "Please, Nick, please. I could be lots of use and you'd be lonely without me. Wouldn't you be?"
>
> "I'm lonely now thinking about going away from you."
>
> "See? And we may have to be away for years. Who can tell? Take me, Nickie. Please take me." She kissed him and held onto him with both her arms. Nick Adams looked at her and tried to think straight. It was difficult. But there was no choice.
>
> "I shouldn't take you. But then I shouldn't have done any of it," he said. "I'll take you. Maybe only for a couple of days, though." (505)

The fact that Littless is also dissatisfied with her sex and that she would like to accompany Nick on this journey also hints at the androgynous nature of the abjection which the stories evoke. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the present chapter. Moreover, when he says that just thinking about leaving his sister makes him feel lonely, he rejects the assumption of the code-hero's indifference to women. Finally, Nick cannot ignore her insistence on accompanying him and decides to take her on his trip into the forest.

Thus, while the stories do feature the hysterically dominant feminine stereotype with the likes of Margot Macomber, they also accommodate the supportive and compassionate Littless. However, what distinguishes Littless from the other women in the stories is that as Nick's sister, she does not seem to arouse sexual tendencies in Nick. This matter may be why she is the only woman whose relationship with the code hero is not rejected or betrayed by him. Therefore, the stories do not generally contain anti-female narratives depicting a male protagonist's hatred towards women.

In addition, Nick's relationship to Littless could be read through Lacan's notion of the subject being in search of a more defined self. As discussed in chapter four (under 4.1, "Lacan's theory"), individuals spend their lives seeking a part of themselves that is eternally lost. From this Lacanian

perspective, Richard Fantina, in "Elements of Masochism in Hemingway's Work," suggests, "This pursuit of the forever elusive union with the self is conducted through sexuality. In Freud (and Lacan) this sought-after unity has affinities with the desire to be one with the mother, to return to a pre-birth state, or even the desire for a sibling."[490] Though Littless sits on Nick's lap, it does not seem that she has sexual feelings for Nick, since she is recounting a story and is, in this moment, imitating a sex worker's assistant. Nick stops her, which maintains and protects their sibling relationship. What is rejected by the code hero is marriage rather than women, a notion that also undergirds the androgynous themes of the stories.

What matters most regarding androgyneity in the stories is that the stories are not reduced to the despair and disillusionment of married men. If they portray the cheating and betrayal of women, they inform the reader of marriages that promise little happiness to these women and of the cruelty of men to their female partners. In this light, one of the most striking scenes of a woman being abused by her husband is depicted in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" when the couple Helen and Harry have the following conversation. Harry begins:

> "All right then. I'll go on hurting you. It's more amusing. The only thing I ever really liked to do with you I can't do now."
>
> "No, that's not true. You liked to do many things and everything you wanted to do I did."
>
> "Oh, for Christ sake stop bragging, will you?"
>
> He looked at her and saw her crying.
>
> "Listen," he said. "Do you think that it is fun to do this? I don't know why I'm doing it. It's trying to kill to keep yourself alive, I imagine. I was all right when we started talking. I didn't

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[490] *Ernest Hemingway: Machismo and Masochism*, 48.

mean to start this, and now I'm crazy as a coot and being as cruel to you as I can be. Don't pay any attention, darling, to what I say. I love you, really. You know I love you. I've never loved any one else the way I love you."

He slipped into the familiar lie he made his bread and butter by.

"You're sweet to me."

"You bitch," he said. "You rich bitch. That's poetry. I'm full of poetry now. Rot and poetry. Rotten poetry."

"Stop it. Harry, why do you have to turn into a devil now?" (*CSS* 43)

By getting married to Helen for the sake of her money, Harry has not only abused her, but he also insults her and accuses her wealth and its luxurious byproduct of being the cause of waste of his talent as a writer. Therefore, Hemingway was not concerned with presenting a flawless picture of men. His stories hardly show any trace of hatred towards a particular sex, and there is little male or female chauvinism in the stories. In short, they employ an androgynous perspective.[491]

The other aspect of marital love the stories depict is connected with materiality. The stories constantly remind the reader that, in the context of marriage, immaterial love is quickly translated into something material. For instance, what keeps the Macomber couple in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" together is money and beauty. Similarly, Harry's marriage in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" resembles a business in that "[h]e had traded it for security" because "[s]he would have bought him anything he wanted" (46). Hence, marriage as a sacred union with religious solemnity or as the expression

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[491] By androgyny the present study means "having the characteristics or nature of both male and female" and "neither specifically feminine nor masculine" (McKee, *The Woman's Film of the 1940s*, 162).

of an emotional bond in social ethics is turned into something materialistic and corporeal. Commenting on "Now I Lay Me," James Phelan writes in this regard that John recommends:

> marriage as the cure for Nick's ailments. John's idea of marriage clearly does not include either equality of emotional intimacy; instead, it emphasizes material comfort ("marry the one with the most money," he says a few lines later) and sexual release (I don't suppose I'm the only one who hears other verbs underneath "marry" in John's recommendation, "Marry them." After John articulates this view of marriage, Nick more forcefully moves to end the conversation, twice saying "let's sleep a while," and finally succeeds.[492]

It could be argued that Hemingway does not aim to reproach either sex, but to criticize marriage for hindering communication and blaming the language that has formulated such a social contract. This matter is why Signor Maggiore in "In Another Country" says, "A man must not marry" (*CSS* 209). Ultimately, the stories do not depict a positive view of love; marriages usually fail.

The view the stories take towards love is similar to that towards marriage. In "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," Harry sums up at last one view promoted by stories when he says, "Love is a dunghill [. . .]. And I'm the cock that gets on it to crow" (*CSS* 43). This perspective appears to degrade love. Specifically designated by feces, the abject represents the most animalistic aspect of our being, so by using the word "dung," Harry mixes these two fundamental features of the abject (bestial and excretory attributes) in his description of love.

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[492] "'Now I Lay Me,'" 62.

The emptiness of this bodily-orgasm-oriented perspective towards love is further stressed in "The Strange Country" when Robert, who is not young anymore, has sexual intercourse with a girl whom he repeatedly calls "daughter" (*CSS* 607). The story recounts:

> In the dark he went into the strange country and it was very strange indeed, hard to enter, suddenly perilously difficult, then blindingly, happily, safely, encompassed; free of all doubts, all perils and all dreads, held unholdingly, to hold, to hold increasingly, unholdingly still to hold, taking away all things before, and all to come, bringing the beginning of bright happiness in darkness, closer, closer, closer now closer and ever closer, to go on past all belief, longer, finer, further, finer higher and higher to drive toward happiness suddenly, scaldingly achieved. (615)

In this respect, Ronald Berman regards Hemingway's fiction (along with that of Edmund Wilson and F. Scott Fitzgerald) as a depiction of Henry James' worries "about the diminishing modern capacity to feel anything."[493] In a discussion of *A Farewell to Arms*, Berman observes:

> When Frederic Henry says, in the brief passage I have cited, that he has never loved anyone, irony is not intended; nor is there an indirect allusion to the emotionally crippling effect of the war. Both question and answer reverberate in Hemingway's writing of the twenties. In two stories of 1924 they are premonitory: "The End of Something" has Nick tell Marjorie "No" to the question of love; and "Soldier's Home" frames the same "No" to the same question. In the latter, Krebs, remarks, "I don't love anybody," cutting off even the possibility.[494]

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[493] "Order and Will," 259.
[494] "Order and Will," 259.

Arguably, the manner in which Hemingway's code hero encounters love distinguishes him from the other characters in his stories and from protagonists depicted by other writers. Instead of facilitating communication, love ruins the individual in Hemingway's fiction. Due to the deceptive nature of love in the stories, the code hero resists entering a love relationship. In this regard, Robert W. Lewis argues, "Francis Macomber is a protagonist whose one change in the story is a rejection of passion. He is made to see the futility of 'suffering' in love, of the "sweet agony" of romance. This theme is not explicit, but it is implied by the characters, the language, and the action."[495] It underlines the threatening and paradoxical nature of love as it is depicted in these stories. The stories also hint at the root of this view of love in the narratives, the Symbolic.

An investigation of marriage in the narratives reveals two aspects: first, what marriage does to the individual (the code hero), and, second, the role it plays in relation to language. As marriage is a cultural construct, it is language that sets the standards, patterns, and norms of married life. It means that the individual's desire has little space in this social contract. In this sense, marriage compromises the individual's sense of self. In this way, individuals who sign this contract are doomed to move further away from themselves and thus from the womb-like atmosphere of the semiotic chora. The behavior of Hemingway's protagonists towards marriage stems from their reaction to or defense against this social contract because they perceive it as a threat to their identity.

The power of institutions of any kind, including language, religion, or culture, dominates the identity of characters to the extent that it dictates the private sexual life of characters. In "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," Francis Macomber, for one, has learned "about sex in books, many books, too many books" (*CSS* 18), and this education turns out to be such a failure that not only does

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[495] *Hemingway on Love*, 82.

Margot Macomber sleep with Wilson, but notably her husband Francis does not mind it. Just as the sexual education Francis receives from books ruins his marriage, the legal rules in Nairobi lead to his physical destruction in a similar manner. When Francis wants to shoot the bulls from the car, Wilson cries, "Not from the car, you fool!" (*CSS* 22), for according to Swahili laws travelers are only allowed to shoot when not in a car.[496] Repeatedly in the stories, institutions of different forms are designed to lead to the destruction of the self.

Regarding the significance of the abject to the Symbolic, because society owes its existence and survival to the legal contract between two persons, marriage is usually encouraged by institutional systems. In light of Kristeva's statement that the abject and abjection are "The primers of my culture" (*PH* 2), bachelorhood could thus be understood as a social deviation. Though religion, social conventions, and cultures command people to marry and have children, they usually forbid sex out of marriage or between people of the same sex, which align more with jouissance. It means that marriage regulates sex by giving it form, that is, by giving it family. As a formless act, sex outside of marriage relates to the abject and makes culture face a state of indecisiveness in that it is neither illegal nor desirable, but rather subversive. The contradictory quality that being single bears is exploited in the stories to help the male protagonist protect his self-boundaries on the one hand and to make a fracture in the structure of the Symbolic on the other hand. Nick, by rejecting language's expectations of him as a man, creates a gap in one side of the man-woman binary. He thereby refuses to collaborate in the shaping of this sexual dichotomy which forms the very basis of gender norms in society. Therefore, the effect of Nick's act is echoed not only in his own life but also in the language structure and consequently in the life of those of other sexualities.

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[496] Roberts, *Hemingway's Short Stories*, 54.

Thus, each protagonist becomes one breech baby to "make a lot of trouble for everybody" (*CSS* 68) as Nick's father, the representative of the Symbolic, says in "Indian Camp."

These points mean that if marriage is an abject to the self of the individual, sex-out-of-marriage can be taken as an abject to the governing systems, such as religion or cultural norms, that promote marriage. In terms of marriage, the ideology that the code hero pursues in the stories is articulated well in the words of Signor Maggiore of "In Another Country," when he calls the narrator, who hopes to marry, a fool. This idea is also stressed in the following dialogue, in which the narrator questions Signor Maggiore about the purpose of marriage:

> "Why must not a man marry?"
>
> "He cannot marry. He cannot marry," he said angrily. "If he is to lose everything, he should not place himself in a position to lose that. He should not place himself in a position to lose. He should find things he cannot lose."
>
> He spoke very angrily and bitterly, and looked straight ahead while he talked.
>
> "But why should he necessarily lose it?"
>
> "He'll lose it," the major said. He was looking at the wall. Then he looked down at the machine and jerked his little hand out from between the straps and slapped it hard against his thigh. "He'll lose it," he almost shouted. "Don't argue with me!" (*CSS* 209)

With respect to the present discussion of the abject, it could be argued that what Signor Maggiore means by "it" (in the context of marriage), in "He'll lose it", is one's identity. This notion also appears in other stories as well. For instance, Bill in "The Three-Day Blow" says to Nick, "Once a man's married he's absolutely bitched," and continues, "He hasn't got anything more. Nothing. Not a damn thing. He's done for. You've seen the guys that get married" (*CSS* 90).

It is not only men who lose their identity in married life: women are also affected. For example, the American wife in "Cat in the Rain" is deprived of her femininity and not entitled to have a name. She

is referred to as the American wife, while her husband is called George. Though she deeply craves very basic needs, George orders her to read something:

> "And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes."
>
> "Oh, shut up and get something to read," George said. He was reading again.
>
> His wife was looking out of the window. It was quite dark now and still raining in the palm trees.
>
> "Anyway, I want a cat," she said, "I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can't have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat." (131)

All the items she mentions as her wishes relate to the feeling of stability and to the possession of a home and conventional family life—perhaps common desires in a marriage, but desires that remain, for her, unfulfilled. As Warren Bennett writes, the American wife "wants to do for the cat what George will not do for her, provide a place of acceptance and comfort."[497] Thus, communication in marriages of Hemingway's short stories is doomed to be hindered, and desires are predestined to be neglected.

The idea that communication between two persons of the opposite sex is difficult forms a main theme in the stories. Arguing that the safari stories of "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" depict the "lies of civilized life, forcing men to confront the truth about themselves – especially the truth about their unmanly response to women,"[498] Rena Sanderson asserts:

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[497] "The Poor Kitty and the Padrone," 252.
[498] "Hemingway and Gender History," 185.

> One of the features that runs throughout Hemingway's writing is the recurrence of failed communication between men and women. Linguistic studies of gender-linked differences in language that result in miscommunication confirm what we have long known — Hemingway had a great ear for dialogue (Smiley). In his renderings of common speech, he captures those moments when men and women stop truly hearing each other.[499]

Hence, marriage functions so destructively and inefficiently in the stories that it is frequently unfulfilling.

In sum, the stories mainly follow a pattern in which marriage is doomed to fail for one reason, or no reason, as in "The End of Something." This pattern of failed marriages is reflected in the depiction of the woman with the need to feel feminine in "Cat in the Rain," the uncommunicative dialogue between the couple in "Hills Like White Elephants," the separation of the American couple at the end of "A Canary for One," the gaps of signification in the dialogue in "The Sea Change," the death of the major husband because of pneumonia in "In Another Country," and the distant couple in "Out of Season." Marriage at its best would be that of the sympathetic couple in "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog," which is doomed to end with the man going blind and thus wanting his wife to leave him so that she does not have to take care of him.

Although unions disintegrate for various reasons, what these stories have in common is that the couples are usually American, which could signify that Hemingway's primary concern is that of America and American life. Hemingway's fiction is so obsessed with America that he may overlook possible commentary on other countries and cultures in which his stories take place. Whenever the stories accommodate characters from Europe or other continents, it is to clarify something about American

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[499] "Hemingway and Gender History," 190.

characters. In this regard, Stephen Gilbert Brown in a comparison between Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and the Nick Adams stories argues, "Prudy and Jim signify the solidarity of Nick and Huck respectively with The Other, who in each case becomes a medium for their 'education' to repressed American realities, whether sexual or racial."[500] Although the present study relates to "repressed American realities" in relation to gender, it takes a new look at these realities in terms of the way in which the territories of the self are defended against attacks of the American culture (the Symbolic). It is these safeguarding endeavors that distinguish Hemingway's protagonists and allow them to be classified as code heroes rather than code characters.

Hemingway's stories largely deal with the issues of American émigrés in Europe, either an American code hero or an American couple. While America claims to be the land of a religious utopia, the ultimate world power, and the Law-of-the-Father, Europe is associated with more freedom to define one's self. In order to create a sense of self, Nick departs the American world of menace and confusion and enters the Europe of the first half of the twentieth century, where he experiences corpses and violent fatality. The war scenes symbolize the inner struggles he experiences in order to produce a winner (performer) in relation to the totalitarianism America represents.

This attempt to define the border of the self is implicit in the characters' backward movement in the stream of the culturally founded river of sexual identity. It means that they resist conforming to the gender roles defined by language. They cast off the patterns favored by language in different ways, such as singleness and bachelorhood, separation, divorce, and abortion.

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[500] *Hemingway, Trauma and Masculinity*, 110.

One of the other justifications for the originality of the code hero and the atmosphere of abjection in the stories is the fact that the Europe of the twentieth century, due to its different schools of thought and art, seems to be more heterogeneous than twentieth-century America, regulated as it is by the American dream and values of Puritanism; hence, abjection as the individual's attempt to safeguard the self seems to be easier to achieve in Europe than in America.[501]

If the Nick Adams stories depict the journey from America to Europe, Nick's journey also moves from innocence to experience. In truth, Nick undertakes to enter into dialogue with language and thus achieve a subject position in relation to the Symbolic. Nick's process of self-definition is portrayed in his efforts to defend his personal boundaries via abjection. The abject features from the beginning of "Indian Camp" when Nick makes his first appearance.

The story depicts a caesarean section being performed by Doctor Adams (Nick's father), who is assisted by Nick and his uncle, George. The Native American woman who has been in labor for two days in a camp finally has a C-section for her breech child. While the woman is crying in pain, Nick's father and uncle laugh at her, whereas Nick tries to avert his gaze from the scene. Finally, the woman delivers the baby, and they go to see her husband, who has been lying on another bed listening to his wife's screams, but they find that he has committed suicide. They depart seemingly indifferent to the man's death.

Despite the brevity of "Indian Camp," the story is so rich in content that Philip Young avers, "The most significant and interesting of these stories, however, is that first one. It is called 'Indian Camp,' and

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[501] Further discussion on America-Europe dichotomy appears later in this chapter in section 11 ("Local settings").

it reveals a great deal about what its author was up to for some thirty-five years of his writing career."[502] Young reads the shocking effect of the violence Nick faces in this story as the reason for his life-long horror and the nervousness noticeable in the next stories. This story is the most significant for the present discussion of the abject as it succinctly condenses the themes of the other stories.

If Dr. Adams is in control of the stage, he represents the Law-of-the-Father, who faces the challenge of a baby being born in breech presentation (the code hero) which results in a cesarean delivery rather than natural childbirth. The challenge between the doctor and the breech baby is what is described as "a game," when the doctor after the surgery is likened to "football players [. . .] in the dressing room after a game" (*CSS* 69). It can also be described as a struggle between the hero and the governing system which constantly refuses (and finds it threatening) to allow the individual to come into dialogue with it. The baby symbolizes that Nick will struggle to be reborn as a subject-in-process in the stories, and it is similar to the way the code hero challenges language, which will be elaborated in the present chapter.

The journey from innocence to experience and the theme of achieving a sense of 'I' through rebel can also be seen in the stories where small traces of subjectivity are manifested, such as in Hemingway's two fables, "The Faithful Bull" and "The Good Lion," though the majority of critics find these stories of less intensity and depth. In this light, focusing on the allegorical feature of the texts as the main characteristic of fables, Kenneth G. Johnston regards the two fables as "an allegory of the author's state of mind during the 1950's, that is, Hemingway is the bull who attacks his early critics, whereas the evil lioness may represent Martha Gellhorn, or Diana Trilling, or Gertrude Stein (*FHA*, 1977)."[503]

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[502] *Ernest Hemingway*, 6.
[503] Stark, "Ernest Hemingway," 474.

The good lion's performance in "The Good Lion" is closely affiliated with and presents parallels with the subjectivity Nick accomplishes. Although "The Good Lion" is usually taken as a fable for children, it effectively depicts the abjection that Hemingway's code hero makes. Just as Nick leaves America for Europe, the lion leaves Africa to visit Venice. Whereas America to Nick Adams represents a land of cultural domination and the supremacy of the Symbolic, Europe is a land away from his homeland that is disciplined by language. Though Nick's homeland is America, psychically he feels more *heimlich* in Europe, as the good lion does in Africa. As it is often a person's homeland that dictates the norms by which they live from childhood, living an abject life in Europe presents less cultural resistance for an American than living in the United States.

Similarly, Africa to the good lion symbolizes a land ruled by the Phallus where the bad lions cannot tolerate the good lion's appetite for pasta (instead of human flesh). In the end, however, he is doomed, like Nick, to return to the society governed by the Law-of-the-Father. Nick gets married and becomes a father just as the good lion ultimately gives up by ordering "Hindu trader sandwiches" (*CSS* 484). Nonetheless, in both cases there is change. For "Africa had changed" (*CSS* 484) the good lion, and Nick's journey results in his coming to greater self-clarity. Hence, both become mavericks, and both challenge the commonly accepted mode of life among their compatriots.

Although the lifestyle the code hero adopts is not forbidden, it is not accepted by his community and culture. Eating meat is the norm for the bad lions in the same way that marriage is appreciated by culture in the other stories. Thus, the fable depicts how unacceptable and abject it seems to the other lions when the good lion chooses not to eat the Hindu traders. If pasta-eating has made a dissenter out of the good lion, Nick's nomadic lifestyle has similarly made him into a non-conformist.

In addition, the lion's ability to traverse borderlines, as suggested by his wings, underlines the concept of fluidity and the borderless nature of the abject. Providing the opportunity to go beyond borders, travel, as a common motif in Hemingway's stories, makes a profound impact on the identity of the

characters. This viewpoint is reflected in Hemingway's conclusion that "the good lion had flown all the way from Africa and Africa had changed him" (*CSS* 484). What matters is that the change the lion (code hero) makes as an individual is not the result of effort, but the result of his journey to Africa. This journey has made a change-maker out of the lion within the structure of culture.

It means that the transgressive and rebellious nature of the stories does not result from a character who stands up to a dictator and fights for the liberation of the community, but from a character whose gentile smile quietly produces a defiling presence and forces culture to devise a sewage system and ultimately to allocate space for him in order to prevent the whole system from stinking. This smile represents the grace under pressure for which Hemingway's protagonist is commonly known.

A gentle smile to describe the code hero is a key characteristic because this rebel is rarely concerned with standing against language or overthrowing the Symbolic, as his abjection takes place without denying the un-masterability of the Law-of-the-Father. The fact that the ultimate victory belongs to language rather than to the code hero is implied in "In Another Country" when, in the end, it is the healthy American soldier who receives medals rather than the wounded Italian soldiers who have lost their wives, since the system favors passive individuals. The protagonist acts as if he is aware that any wish to subvert language would be as inconceivable as a newborn yearning to be older than his father. The code hero's abjection "curbs the other's suffering for its own profit" (*PH* 15). He feels the need to negotiate with language to give more space to the realization of the semiotic. This matter aligns with Kristeva's distinction between the two modes of social structure, as Katherine J. Goodnow explains:

> For Kristeva the major distinction is between social orders that allow differing amounts of space for the dissenting voice: the voice that she sees as part of a 'semiotic' rather than the 'symbolic' register or form of experience. The social order that is dominated by the symbolic is, in essence, one marked by the valorization of rationality, technology, evaluative judgments, strict logic, naming, and the delineation of opposites (man/woman; rationality/emotionality; prose/poetry,

> etc.). In contrast, a social order with some space for the semiotic is one with a place for rhythm, 'pulses' and colour, a feeling for the 'unnameable' and for the flow of opposites into one another, and a desire for 'jouissance' rather than for control, clarity, and the observance of rules.[504]

Hence, because one cannot rid themselves of the Symbolic, both Nick and the good lion are reported to have conformed to convention by the end of their stories. In spite of being forced to give up and return to the realm of language, they prove themselves code heroes due to the more subject-like locus which they enter by means of their struggle. Therefore, at the end of the story the lion "knew that he was at home but that he had also traveled. He was very happy" (*CSS* 484). Thus, this happiness stems from the change in him that the travel has caused.

To come back to Nick and marriage, the concern of the current discussion is the institutional structures that promote marriage and the way marriage perpetuates these structures. Therefore, while certain behavior might be perceived as a deviation within one system, another institution might regard it as total conformity. This situation also contributes to the equivocally undefinable or viscous, ungraspable feature of the abject and its escape from being trapped or belonging to a specific area. Accordingly, the stories emphasize the relativity of social values and, thus, their constructedness, all part of what Hemingway astutely depicts in the lower parts of the iceberg. For example, whereas being faithful to one female partner is normally favored by language, in "The Faithful Bull" the same act is considered a digressive behavior. What distinguishes the faithful bull from the other bulls, in contrast to the code hero, is that he does not have sex with different female mates. Despite the master's desire for the bull to mate with various cows, the bull has fallen in love with one cow. Hence, the master sends him to the bullring

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[504] *Kristeva in Focus*, 4.

where he is killed, but what makes it more interesting is that after his death the matador holding the sword in his hands says that he was the one the master "had to get rid of because he was faithful" (*CSS* 486). Then, he adds, "Perhaps we should all be faithful" (*CSS* 486). With the first mention of "faithful," the master means non-conformity (being loyal to one cow), but with the second he means fidelity to one's self (being a code hero). The juxtaposition of these two senses of faithfulness also adds to the contradictory quality of the abject in terms of its creation of the self within the code hero and in terms of what it does to language.

"Fight" and "faithfulness" are two main features of the code hero. The code hero is constantly at odds with a force that harms his self, and fighting arises from his attempt to be faithful to himself. It leads to either the master's disposing of him and his demise or to the code hero's finally giving up and doing what he has long been resisting, such as Nick eventually getting married. In both cases, what is significant is the alteration that these attempts cause.

The image of the male protagonist is that of the faithful bull who "would fight with deadly seriousness exactly as some people eat or read or go to church" and who "liked to fight as men might like to sing or to be the King or the President. He never thought at all. Fighting was his obligation and his duty and his joy" (*CSS* 485). Singing or attempting to be a king or president are forms of self-expression and the desire to live the life of a subject, and the capitalization of the two words reflects the masterful position belonging to these two titles. These lines elucidate the nature of the struggles the code hero faces in that, like the Kristevan model of thought which takes abjection as an unconscious and unplanned mechanism, the faithful bull fights without thinking ("never thought at all") and the fight is simultaneously a "joy" to him. It seems that Hemingway is delivering Kristeva's notion of abjection that "One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it *[on enjouit]*" (*PH* 9).

Bachelorhood, loneliness, and isolation from social life represent the haven that provides Nick with a sense of security. The further he moves away from civilization and the representations of culture,

the more protected he finds his personal boundaries. There is a satisfactory agreement between this reading of Nick's life and the code hero's interests in masculine activities and adventures, such as bullfighting, purely physical sex, shooting, fighting in war, and hunting, which all produce an ecstasy in which one forgets being in the outer world and experiences the purity of jouissance (forgetting one's self within the Other and feeling the core of being).

One of the other aspects of these manly exercises pertains to conflict. The fact that the code hero constantly fights to exorcise any threat to his identity borders is reflected in the inner and outer conflicts with which he is engaged. These include hunting, fishing, bullfighting, fighting in the war, experiencing traumatic situations, receiving physical and emotional wounds, suffering from illnesses, and being attacked by animals. This matter is depicted through scenes as various as the narrator sailing on a stormy sea after a bar fight in "After the Storm," hunting lions in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," the cesarean section surgery in "Indian Camp," gangrene in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," and the American soldier's hospitalization after being wounded in a fight in "Now I Lay Me," to name just a few.

One of the many examples of these struggles and wounds is Nick in "In Another Country" who goes fishing as a remedy for his pains and injuries. He is wounded not only physically but also mentally. As Rina Arya argues in her book on abjection, "Threats to the boundary come in different forms and are divided into those that come from outside (external) and those that are issued from within (internal)."[505] In this sense, by embracing the wilderness, the code hero's so-called masculine activities represent a reaction to being rejected by culture. It means that the more civilized a typical gentleman looks, the less he is supposed to favor these so-called manly exercises. The masculine activities stand in such a strong

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[505] *Abjection and Representation*, 40.

juxtaposition with high culture that Hemingway's male characters with proficiency in these skills show little tendency to want to be married, for what matters least to them are institutional codes of conduct. In other words, these codes of conduct construct a self out of the protagonist that is a non-self to the protagonist. As a result, the more he maintains distance between himself and language and culture (the city) as the major representative of the Symbolic, the more he can live close to his real self that once existed in the Lacanian Real.

According to Lacan, after leaving the mother's womb, the child is doomed to suffer forever from the lack of objet petit a. In this way, the individual is eternally trapped by the desire of the Other. At the same time, as indicated by Kristeva, the mechanism of abjection contributes to the purification of one's identity by means of constantly directing the non-self down into the drain like a sewage disposal system. Therefore, though Nick rejects culture and its constituent definitions of masculine roles because he cannot escape from it, he finds no way but to abjectly slip away from it in order to be closer to his real identity.

Though it might be inferred from the interest he shows in male bonding that he possesses some traits of homosexuality or asexuality, the fact that he is attracted to women and has sex with them challenges such assessments. Nor can he be defined as someone who deceives women because he never pretends to be in love with them. Therefore, he neither fits the definitions that language provides for masculine behavior, nor does he conform to homosexual norms, which language considers perversion. He must thus be someone for whom language has failed to assign a title, and thus, "The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite"; therefore, it is as if he looks into the face of language and "stabs" it (*PH* 4). Addressing the system, the protagonist demonstrates no feeling of regret for what he has done or the fracture he has caused in the body of the Symbolic. In other words, the code hero causes a condition for the Symbolic similar to the borderline patient in that "When the fortified castle of the borderline patient begins to see its walls crumble, and its indifferent pseudo-objects start losing their obsessive mask, the subject-effect—fleeting, fragile, but authentic—allows itself to be heard in the advent of that interspace,

which is abjection" (*PH* 48). What Nick does is a form of artistic performance that behaves like a catharsis for the purification of gender in twentieth-century America. By pursuing extra-marital sex with various women, which is considered a taboo for religion and language, he promotes an emasculated manhood which culture can neither suppress nor overlook.

By refusing to be part of society and the community, Nick produces an absence or a gap in the cultural gender roles that he was supposed to fill. In this sense Nick could be called an abject artist or prophet and would reflect Kristeva's notion of religion and art as ways to cleanse the abject:

> The various means of purifying the abject—the various catharses—catharsis par excellence called art, both on the far and near side of religion. Seen from that standpoint, the artistic experience, which is rooted in the abject it utters and by the same token purifies, appears as the essential component of religiosity. That is perhaps why it is destined to survive the collapse of the historical forms of religions. (*PH* 17)

Therefore, Nick and the code hero, in general, could be taken as the pioneer of a new kind of "religiosity" that brings about, in Oliver's words, "an apocalypse without god."[506] To sum up, for Hemingway's code hero marriage and romance with women possess so little potency that they not only hinder communication but also, in their abject-like nature, threaten the unity of self. Therefore, it seems necessary to underscore that what makes a rebel out of the code hero is not his immorality but rather his "attention to the fragility of the law" (*PH* 4).

As for male characters, one of the other main themes investigated by Hemingway's critics is male bonding. Friendship between men is a prominent motif in Hemingway's stories. It starts with Nick's

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[506] *Reading Kristeva*, 103.

accompanying his father and uncle in "Indian Camp," continues with the friendship between Nick and Bill in "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow," and culminates in "Cross-Country Snow" when Nick and his friend George go skiing in Switzerland for the last time before Nick leaves for his new life as a husband and father.

Richard Gray adopts a very neutral attitude toward the question of sexuality in male bonding and describes "the experience of men working together as a prototype of human connectedness, a frail defense against the world in which we find ourselves exiled."[507] It could also be argued that the comradery between male characters is an expression of the fact that it is not only the limits of Nick's self that are constantly being broken, but those of the other men. If Nick spends his time with Bill instead of a woman, Bill is also doing the same. Although we do not know the story of Bill's life, it seems to be similar to Nick's. Therefore, the men who show compassion in their male friendship do so as an essential part of refusing romance with women in order to protect their own boundaries, not only as individuals but also as a fragile group. Hence, laying aside the perspectives of feminist thinkers like Judith Fetterley and Joyce Wexler who criticize Hemingway's male chauvinism, it is the fragility of men and the susceptibility of their identity that form the focus of the stories. This matter aligns with Strychacz's view that "the concept of the Hemingway 'hero' and 'code hero' evokes the solitary male testing his spirit and prowess against the pressure of outside forces and other men."[508]

With respect to the abject, Hemingway's short stories feature a code hero that screams at culture for the perpetual assaults on his sexual individuality. For instance, worried about the collapse and agitation of his psychic boundaries, Nick, so assured of the destructiveness of a committed relationship,

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[507] *A History of American Literature*, 278.
[508] *Hemingway's Theaters of Masculinity*, 170.

ends a satisfactory relationship with his first girlfriend, Marjorie, by starting a fight and sending her away. When he later regrets it and confesses, "it was my fault" (*CSS* 91), his friend, Bill, reminds him that a life-long relationship is a "danger" and "There's always that danger," so "You'll have to watch yourself" (92). Nick agrees with Bill and says, "I'll watch myself" (92). This act of observing oneself represents the mechanism of abjection within the narratives. In other words, Nick gives an affirmation that he will defend ("watch") his sense of self against the Symbolic which "threatens one's *own and clean self*," as Kristeva says (*PH* 65).

The code hero is averse to living his masculinity in relation to the opposite sex since such a living has proven to be a mirage. It echoes the work of Moddelmog in "The Disabled Able Body and White Heteromasculinity," which reads the wounds of male protagonists as a sign of their castration.[509] In "The Mother of a Queen," the shattered image of masculinity is further tarnished by the impossibility of being a man, since the matador (the queen from the title), as a homosexual, spends "all kinds of money around women trying to make himself seem a man and fool people" (*CSS* 317). He earns money in the ring by what is considered a deeply masculine activity in the world of Hemingway's fiction and ironically spends it all on women to negate his real sexual tendency. It is as if the story has compressed the undefinable and paradoxical quality of the abject in the homosexuality of a matador who typifies conventional masculinity at its extremes. Hinting at the closely interwoven traits of masculinity and femininity, the stories ultimately represent a false masculinity as well.[510]

Notwithstanding the common belief that language, as a phallocentric authority, privileges men with the power and strength of which women are deprived, Hemingway's stories reveal the machinations

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[509] "The Disabled Able Body and White Heteromasculinity," 189.

[510] The general atmosphere of the stories is haunted by falsity, so that, like sham masculinity, the concept of identity and anything related to it lacks authenticity. Hence, relationships bear little veracity or stability.

of this unscrupulous deception. His male characters are doomed to live with castration. Accordingly, the question becomes, whether castrated men can marry women at all.

Although it might seem that the stories' literary merit is in the code hero's heroic attempt at self-definition, the mark of Hemingway's art, with regard to abjection and gender identity, also lies in the way the code hero allows language to enact and exert power. Without trying to overpower the Symbolic, the narratives are aware of the undeniable presence of culture and its supremacy, so it takes little to topple language. Hemingway's art contributes to an actualization of fluidity in gender identity, as Messent writes:

> Throughout his work Hemingway compulsively examines gender confusion and sexual ambiguity. Testing masculinity and its limits and writing out of gender anxiety, he recognises both the attractions and dangers of alternative constructions of sexual role. There is a clear and unusual recognition of the insufficiency of traditional forms of masculinity and of the need to renegotiate them – to 'feminise' aspects of the male self – in his work.[511]

What distinguishes Messent's view from that of other scholars is that he does not assume that the stories are the product of a misogynist mind with no consideration for femininity, nor does he side with those who defend women characters in Hemingway for the sake of feminist concerns. Messent's view explains why the stories feature a variety of characters and themes with little prejudice, as Kevin Alexander Boon writes in his discussion of *The Sun Also Rises*: "The subject matter, which covers Spanish bullfights, infidelity, marriages of convenience, careless living, homosexuality, anti-Semitism, post-war depression, and characters who reject conventional society, was unusual for the time and represented a break from the

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[511] Messent, *Ernest Hemingway*, 88.

subject matter of traditional novels."[512] Hence, what the stories depict is the constant struggle of Nick and other protagonists not only in various stories as a collection but also within each story, all reported in a journalistic manner. The frequent repetition of words and sentences (or even themes and motifs), with which Hemingway's style is commonly associated, works to intensify the force of this resonance.

Closely linked to "Prohibition and Law," Kristeva's notion of the abject pertains to "Religion, Morality, Law" (*PH* 16) when she writes:

> Abjection persists as exclusion or taboo (dietary or other) in monotheistic religions, Judaism in particular, but drifts over to more "secondary" forms such as transgression (of the Law) within the same monotheistic economy. It finally encounters, with Christian sin, a dialectic elaboration, as it becomes integrated in the Christian word as a threatening otherness—but always nameable, always totalizeable. (17)

These words mean that, in contrast to the abject that refuses form, religion and law (as the representatives of the Symbolic) try to channel the abject into a structure. Abjection is like a spring that resists deformation and returns to its original form. For this reason, the investigation of the abject in Hemingway's short stories necessitates the study of form, religion, and law as well.

What distinguishes Hemingway's code hero from other characters is not whimsicality, but rather the fact that the other characters resemble springs that have lost their tension. The code hero does not resist the pressure of language and has a desire to go back to its original form (Lacan's Real) which belongs more to the semiotic than the Symbolic. Interestingly, the protagonist's ability to recoil leads to the governing system's plasticity as well. This matter surfaces in the character Phil in "The Sea Change,"

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[512] Boon, *Ernest Hemingway*, 57.

who cannot stand hearing what the girl intends to say, but later in the middle of the story stops resisting her attempts and repeats the sentence, "Go on" (*CSS* 304). During the climax of the narrative Phil confesses several times that he has become "a different man":

> "I'm a different man, James," he said to the barman. "You see in me quite a different man."
>
> "Yes, sir?" said James.
>
> "Vice," said the brown young man, "is a very strange thing, James." He looked out the door. He saw her going down the street. As he looked in the glass, he saw he was really quite a different-looking man. The other two at the bar moved down to make room for him.
>
> "You're right there, sir," James said.
>
> The other two moved down a little more, so that he would be quite comfortable. The young man saw himself in the mirror behind the bar. "I said I was a different man, James," he said. Looking into the mirror he saw that this was quite true. (305)

The fact that Phil changes at the end of "The Sea Change" baffles the Law-of-the-Father.

Hence, the stories seek to diminish the power of the Symbolic by means of highlighting the attempts of Nick Adams and other code heroes to live a life outside of the male-female dichotomy. In his journey towards the *heimlich* womb, the more the code hero tries to define himself, the more undefinable he proves to be for language. That is what the narrator of "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio" means by "What you wanted was the minimum of government, always less government [. . .] although they had not found a new name for it" (*CSS* 367). It aligns with how Kristeva "examines the confrontation with the

maternal, the 'coming face to face with the unnameable' (58), the 'abject' that she sees at the base of all religions. She discloses this sense of the abject in religious rituals of defilement and purification."[513]

Some critics have regarded Hemingway's stories as either rebuking religion in general or expressing an antisemitism widespread during the early twentieth century.[514] It is interesting to note that Kristeva is commonly accused of antisemitism too. However, Oliver states:

> Kristeva's point is that through style abject language is cathartic because it is antipolitical. That is, it has no affiliations and undermines any claims of affiliation. The appropriate effect of abject language is aesthetic. And this aesthetic experience can somehow be therapeutic for the reader as well as the writer. This experience takes the reader and writer back to a "presymbolic" existence, an immediacy earlier and beyond symbols.[515]

There does not seem to be antisemitism in Kristeva's notion of the abject; it seems that abject literature has the potentiality of being not only political but also anarchist and revolutionary. Politicalness, on the one hand, has to do with a move back to the pre-Imaginary, and, on the other hand, is concerned with moments of jouissance when a culture loses its ability to be recognized. Oliver's interpretation seems more convincing when she states:

> In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva insists that the "artistic" and the "political" are two modalities of the same process. Revolution in either sphere is brought about through the introduction of the semiotic that points up the process of production, whether it is linguistic or

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[513] Jonte-Pace, "Situating Kristeva Differently," 10.

[514] Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*, 26. *The Sun Also Rises* is often discussed in the context of Hemingway and antisemitism.

[515] *Reading Kristeva*, 102.

> political or both. Kristeva also suggests that a revolution in one sphere is a revolution in the other.[516]

In connection with this notion of abject literature, Hemingway's introduction of the code hero does not only make an impact on the reader or express an aspect of the author's inner self, but also acts like a therapeutic session for the twentieth-century American community regarding its gender identity. His stories arguably show little concern for religion in itself; instead they deal with the institutionalism of religion as one form of tyranny and one of the many representatives of the Symbolic. It means that religion in Hemingway's stories differs from the concept of the holy, and, to some extent, the narratives challenge this fallacy. Therefore, similar to the abjection of the code hero in the realm of gender, it is a revolution that lies very deep at the heart of Hemingway's short stories, with religion as just one instance of totalitarianism, the other being language and education.

In this regard, the significant effect of language and religion (or churches) as two institutional systems influences the discussion in the following passage from "Wine of Wyoming":

> "Books are all right," Fontan said. "Monsieur il fait les books."
>
> "Yes, that's so, all right. But too many books are bad," Madame Fontan said. "Ici, c'est une maladie, les books. C'est comme les churches. Ici il y a trop de churches. En France il y a seulement les catholiques et les protestants—et très peu de protestants. Mais ici rien que de churches. Quand j'étais venu ici je disais, oh, my God, what are all the churches ?"
>
> "C'est vrai," Fontan said. "Il y a trop de churches."

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[516] *Reading Kristeva*, 96.

"The other day," Madame Fontan said, "there was a little French girl here with her mother, the cousin of Fontan, and she said to me, 'En Amérique il ne faut pas être catholique. It's not good to be catholique. The Americans don't like you to be catholique. It's like the dry law.' I said to her, 'What you going to be? Heh? It's better to be catholique if you're catholique.' But she said, 'No, it isn't any good to be catholique in America.' But I think it's better to be catholique if you are. Ce n'est pas bon de changer sa religion. My God, no."

"You go to the mass here?"

"No. I don't go in America, only sometimes in a long while. Mais je reste catholique. It's no good to change the religion."

"On dit que Schmidt est catholique," Fontan said.

"On dit, mais on ne sait jamais," Madame Fontan said. "I don't think Schmidt is catholique. There's not many catholique in America."

"We are catholique," I said.

"Sure, but you live in France," Madame Fontan said. (*CSS* 346–347)

As Catholicism was an early form of organized Christianity, in the dialogue between Fontan, Madam Fontan, and the narrator, the word "catholique" designates the untouched state of one's being, the state of being close to the *heimlich.*[517] This mode of interpretation equates Catholicism with purity and condemns language, suggesting it has sullied this supreme cleanness. In this sense, the statement, "I think it's better to be catholique if you are" can be understood as a response to the breaking of boundaries in the self of individuals. It could also be regarded as a disclosure of the vigor of this ambush which has succeeded in violating the virginity (purity) of religion (Catholicism), though it is supposed to be the

[517] Similarly, the Native Americans, as the primary inhabitants of America, also play a role in the short stories, but due to the vastness of the concept, it deserves a study in its own right.

words of an ultimate power beyond the material. In other words, the corruptness of the assault advances so dramatically that it enters into the most ostensibly rigid and solid entity, religion.

In addition, because religions so often regulate sexual practices among their doctrines, sexual relationships can provide an effective platform for debates about religion. Despite many controversies over the sexual orientation of Hemingway's characters and the perspectives the stories adopt towards them, critics have mostly agreed on the significance of bodily sex in his narratives. Hence, a growing body of literature has investigated sex in the stories as the indispensably peculiar interest of the code hero. It acts as "the opium of the people" as the story "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio" suggests, in that "Religion is the opium of the people. [. . .] and music is the opium of the people. [. . .] And now economics is the opium of the people; along with patriotism the opium of the people in Italy and Germany" (*CSS* 367). What all these forms of opium have in common is that they promise to give individuals a sense of "I." In other words, they provide a sense of relief in individuals by defining who they are, though in different ways.

Hemingway's art aggravates the Symbolic structure to the extent that totalitarian regimes of any kind, political or religious, promulgate such works of art as taboo or sin, as "[m]ost of Ernest Hemingway's books were banned in one place or another, at one time or another."[518] Hemingway's personal assistant, Valerie Danby-Smith, who later married his younger brother, says, "His books were banned in Ireland because of the country's very strict Catholic code. We didn't read him. His books had cursing in them, we were told."[519] Similarly, in the 1930s, "Ernest Hemingway's novels were banned in

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[518] Monteiro, *Critical Essays*, 70.
[519] Castro, *Looking for Hemingway*, 66.

Detroit and other cities because of his sympathy for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War,"[520] and *A Farewell to Arms* was prohibited in Italy by the Mussolini government.[521] It suggests that Hemingway's fiction is something difficult for an institution to tolerate.

"The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio" sheds light on the relationship between abjection and institutions in that it presents governmental systems and the way every individual responds to them. The narrative holds sex so high on the list of opium types that it regards sex as the opiate "of the best of the people," while radio proves to be "a cheap one" (*CSS* 367). It suggests that abjection is a spectrum with two poles: the abject under the control of the Symbolic at one end and the abject being exploited by the code hero to reveal one's self (the Real) at the other. The position of an individual's opium on the spectrum indicates how "good" (to use the narrator's term) a person is, as the forms of opium far from the code hero's opium are considered the cheap ones. Hence the radio, in which the patient, Mr. Frazer, finds relief, corresponds to the medium of culture servicing the desire of language.

Unlike inferior drinking or superior sexual intercourse, radio occupies a cheap position. Given that media forms play a crucial role in the tyrannical autonomy of the Symbolic, radio, in this story, falls on the language pole of the abject spectrum. Though Mr. Frazer attempts to decrease his suffering by listening to the radio, "[i]n that hospital a radio did not work very well until it was dusk [. . .] it did not work well at all until it began to get dark outside; but all night it worked beautifully" (*CSS* 358). The fact that the radio could be heard only at night refers to darkness, the time of sleep, and thus when an individual's self-awareness is less acute (a prerequisite to tyrannize people); further, the X-ray stands for the light that code heroes artificially generate in the narratives, similar to the lights at night in cafés and

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[520] Walker, *Hate Speech*, 40.
[521] Oldsey, *Hemingway's Hidden Craft*, 48.

pubs which constantly reappear in the stories.[522] This matter is also implied in the effect of X-ray machines on radio waves in that they "ruined their morning reception," and "it was a shame the hospital could not use their machine at a time when people were not using their radios" (*CSS* 359). What X-ray machines have in common with the abjection which the code hero makes is that just as the machine penetrates the body and reveals the organs inside, the code heroes' acts of absenting themselves from the sexually defined roles within culture unveils a deeper level of self. In addition, his actions, like the rays of the machine, cause disturbances in the function of the Symbolic and, consequently, its dominance as the master signifier when people are awake and more likely to listen to the radio during the day.

It means that this kind of abjection, without seeking to damage the radio station (language), weakens it by making changes in the pattern established for the radio (a loudspeaker for the Law-of-the-Father). The narrator's comments also seem consistent with this reading of the story: "What you wanted was the minimum of government, always less government. Liberty, what we believed in, now the name of a MacFadden publication. We believed in that although they had not found a new name for it yet" (*CSS* 367). The code hero disturbs the receiver of the waves so that the message cannot be completely or regularly received by individuals.

While radio is considered the opium of miserable people, sex is the opium of the elite. Appearing as it does in this story as a form of "opium," coitus persistently attracts the reader's attention, defining the code hero's character throughout the narratives. There have been, consequently, many interpretations of sexual intimacy in Hemingway's fiction. Exploring the code hero's sexual experiences through "Hemingway's education in naturalism, Darwinism, and natural and sexual selection," James Puckett

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[522] More elaboration on the artificiality of light in cafés will be provided later in chapter seven, section 7.12.2.

argues that many instances of sexual intercourse depicted by Hemingway represent "male performance" and "increase individuals' success in reproductive competition."[523]

Although this approach is relevant, it fails to consider that the male protagonists' copulation does not lead to any offspring. As the protagonist mostly follows the philosophy of *carpe diem* in his sexual endeavors (as opposed to being concerned with procreation), his resistance to reproduction must carry considerable significance. The hero resists serious relationships with women and resists reproduction not because he hates women but because "FEAR OF WOMEN" is the "FEAR OF PROCREATION" (*PH* 77). In this respect, Richard Fantina's perspective seems more persuasive. Regarding Hemingway's male characters' sexual submission to women as their effort "to establish a new masculinity." Fantina reads the relationships of the male protagonist as a rebellion against patriarchy.[524] He concludes:

> Hemingway's heroes seem, at times, to groan under the weight of the coercive tension of the patriarchal imperative and his dominant women characters provide the occasion for these protagonists to drop their traditional masculine armor [. . .]. Hemingway's heroes often find this state of well-being in their submissive relationships with women.[525]

Yet it can also be argued that the idea of dropping the "traditional masculine armor" in relation to the abjecting absence the code hero performs in the linguistically-constructed gender identity is an abjection that helps with the clarification of self-boundaries and thus results in the "state of well-being." Thus, the laying down of conventional arms that Fantina talks about is represented by refusing to use sex as a means of procreation, which is a service that society expects copulation to serve. This reading also

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[523] "'Sex Explains It All,'" 125.
[524] *Ernest Hemingway: Machismo and Masochism*, 38.
[525] *Ernest Hemingway: Machismo and Masochism*, 38.

corresponds to Kristeva's notion of the abject, in that sex, as "a sovereign opium of the people" (*CSS* 367), is "jettisoned. Parachuted by the Other" (*PH* 9).

The quality that makes the system want to get rid of the abject is the dirt it produces, as "Defilement is what is jettisoned from the 'symbolic system.' It is what escapes that social rationality, that logical order on which a social aggregate is based, which then becomes differentiated in short, constitutes a classification system or a structure" (*PH* 65). As Kristeva talks about defilement in relation to rituals, Hemingway, by jettisoning the acts and behavioral patterns that rarely seem to belong to the code hero's real self, speaks of defilement in terms of gender rituals ("pollution rituals," *PH* 76). Thus, code hero is the name given to any character (of any sexual orientation) who practices these acts of subversion that are constantly repeated in various narratives, like rituals. It means that the code hero produces, or turns out to be, a defilement, and because defilement is "an element connected with the boundary, the margin, etc., of an order" (*PH* 66), the code hero proves to be a threat to the social organism. Therefore, Hemingway, oddly enough, takes the primal level of animality in humans (sex) as the most virtuous state of their being. Nor is there any contradiction with the idea that sex is the opium of the people when we take into consideration that these forms of opium both precede a revolution and follow it. Hemingway writes: "Revolution, Mr. Frazer thought, is no opium. Revolution is a catharsis; an ecstasy which can only be prolonged by tyranny. The opiums are for before and for after" (*CSS* 368). In other words, opium causes the individual to be in a state (an ecstasy) less affected by the Symbolic and thus more polluting to the governing system, as apparent in the statement "What you wanted was the minimum of government, always less government" (367). The story emphasizes the importance of recognizing the difference between what the system has injected into the mind of the individuals and the ability of the individuals to experience the reality. In this respect, when the Mexican asks, "You do not believe in education?," Mr. Frazer says, "No", "In knowledge, yes" (368). It means that the protagonists try to achieve a more real feeling of 'I' by leaving the self that society has prescribed for them (to be family men).

This reading makes more sense by taking into consideration the question the narrator raises after talking about the privilege of sex and alcohol:

> But what was the real one? What was the real, the actual, opium of the people? He knew it very well. It was gone just a little way around the corner in that well-lighted part of his mind that was there after two or more drinks in the evening; that he knew was there (it was not really there of course). What was it? He knew very well. What was it? Of course; bread was the opium of the people. Would he remember that and would it make sense in the daylight? Bread is the opium of the people. (*CSS* 367)

This passage aligns with the way Kristeva interprets the abject, since, tending to move away from the Symbolic towards the semiotic, abjection is a journey from the father figure to the maternal or, in Kristeva's words, "the journey to the end of the night" (*PH* 58). Therefore, the less logical or cultural the locus to which the individual belongs is, the more easily the abject is lived. Similarly, when the answer bread is remembered in drunkenness ("in that well-lighted part of his mind that was there after two or more drinks"), it is inferred that the eminence of bread is more easily recognizable in the light of drinking, a state of comparative freedom from the superego and culture. Moreover, in questioning the probability of its logic "in the daylight," the narrator provides more insight into the abject nature of bread in the story by indicating its being identified in the darkness of night and the light of the drunk mind which are associated with the mitigating power of the Symbolic as implied in the quotation above.

Therefore, compared to the two abject types of opium (sex and drinking), bread seems to be of a deeper significance. It might first seem to refer to the financial and economic side of life; however, the text of the story does not convincingly corroborate such a reading. Since the examples of opium that the narrator mentions ascend in terms of violence, and accordingly in that of abjection, ranging from the ones substantially praised by language (such as religion and art) to the corporeal enjoyments (of sexual intercourse, alcohol, and finally bread), bread connotes something much more violent than the other

forms of opium: bread is the Christian notion of Christ's flesh. Eating human flesh, held by many as one of the most impure acts, an already dirty act (anthropophagy) becomes filthier when the flesh of God is being consumed. In this regard, Kristeva holds that religion and its rituals by "bringing together body and bread" become a narrative that tames "cannibalism" (*PH* 118). Therefore, religion (the Symbolic) not only accommodates the most abject act of eating the flesh of Jesus, but also turns it into a religious ritual or, in Kristeva's words, a "frontier, a repulsive gift that the Other, having become alter ego, drops so that 'I' does not disappear in it but finds, in that sublime alienation, a forfeited existence" (9). Hence, by referring to bread as the ultimate opium, the narrative alludes to the importance of the abject in religion as the so-called most unearthly type of institution. It is so important that religion, commonly understood to be an intensely spiritual institution, has not failed to take this corporeality into consideration. In this respect, discussing the "ambiguity of the flesh" in relation to the way religion and the Christian church read sin, Kristeva, in *Powers of Horror*, argues:

> Was Adam a sinner to begin with, or did he become one of his own "free will"? Does not sin have a mortgage on the power of the spirit and grace? If God can grant remission of sin, can a man, a priest do the same? What is meant by the sin of angels? Is sin original and hereditary? And so forth. It is a long story, and if it has officially been brought to a close in the institutions that rule society in our time, it is brought to life again every time a man touches on those areas, those nodes, where symbolicity interferes with his corporeality. (125)

Hence, it is inferred that the way an institution of any type deals with the abject reveals the strategy it has devised to absolve the individual of their being and to prevent them from encountering their real self. Therefore, the manner with which religion handles abjection deeply positions the abject within the political framework.

Although abjection aims at defending the individual against external offenses, it simultaneously reveals the vulnerability of language. In this regard, Beardsworth maintains:

> The religious codifications of abjection shore up the subject and society *at their limits*. Thus, while Freud discovered in the formation of the sacred the underpinning of social organization at these limits, the function of authority predicated on the relation to the father, Kristeva discovers there, not the law of the father, but the symbolization of what is beyond its reach: the limit of law.[526]

Thus, according to this interpretation of bread, the story intimates the willingness of people to feel holy by transubstantiation, which accords with Kristeva's statement that "so many victims of the abject are its fascinated victims—if not its submissive and willing ones" (*PH* 9). In this sense, the victims of the abject look like the opium users about whom Hemingway's narrator comments, "one commences and cannot stop. It is a vice" (*CSS* 362). As a vice that one cannot stop, opium relates to the contradictory feature of the abject in that "one does not desire it, one joys in it [*on enjouit*]" (*PH* 9). All these issues suggest the corruptive nature of the Symbolic structure which has entered the holy concept of Christ in the name of religion in which, in Kristeva's words, "[t]he clean and proper (in the sense of incorporated and incorporable) becomes filthy" (*PH* 8).

What these forms of opium have in common is that they allow the individual to lose their self and to approach a sense of selflessness. This feeling of selflessness results from either the radio or sex; while the former represents the ultimate authority of the Symbolic in which the individual loses all its being, the latter represents the part of the psyche that is obsessed with enjoyment in the Lacanian Real. Sex in the stories allows the code hero to experience a moment of orgasm closest to the Real (jouissance), which is regarded not only as abominable but also menacing to culture since it designates the collapse of language.

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[526] *Julia Kristeva*, 119.

As cultural abjection and self-abjection occur together in the stories, jouissance can be understood as a menace to culture, on the one hand, and to the individual, on the other. In other words, while jouissance is linked to death, abjection as an attempt to define one's self is the individual's attempt to avoid death. For this reason, throughout the narratives, Hemingway repeatedly reminds the reader that dying scares the code hero. Therefore, through abjection, the male protagonist transcends the desire for language and thus experiences a jouissance-like state of transgression by resisting procreation. The subversive aspect of jouissance lies in the fact that the individual loses self-awareness, for "jouissance demands an *abjection* from which identity becomes absent" (*PH* 54). It means that abjection also causes jouissance, for in jouissance there is no slave over whom the master may assert their authority and thus the notion of sovereignty no longer makes sense. Therefore, any attempt or behavior that leads to jouissance can be regarded as a subversive act of abjection.

Accordingly, *The Powers of Horror* takes jouissance as an abject to culture and religion. The concept of jouissance is so central to the term abject that "jouissance alone causes the abject to exist as such" (9). Similarly, in accordance with the philosophy of hedonism, the ideology that influences the life of the code hero could be summarized as sex for its own sake. Hemingway, by means of assigning to the code hero specific characteristics and behaviors that are constantly repeated in the stories, creates rituals that contribute to the purification and catharsis of both the code hero and twentieth-century American gender.

With regard to Hemingway's viewpoint on sexuality, as with other issues, critics have not agreed on a congruent understanding of sexual identity in his work. In addition to discussions on misogyny, queer theory and minority studies have provoked many controversies which, in turn, have demonstrated that a large part of the iceberg remains below the surface of the water.

For instance, celebrating androgyny in Hemingway's stories, Mark Spilka "shows how the Victorian literature favored in the Hemingway house (such as Little Lord Fauntleroy) shaped ambiguous

notions of gender roles."[527] Similarly, Kenneth Lynn holds the view that like the cross-dressing that Hemingway was forced to tolerate in his childhood, his characters show traces of androgyny.[528]

Taking a different viewpoint, Scott Donaldson, former president of the Ernest Hemingway Society, states that "Hemingway's 'virulent scorn' for homosexuals and his 'contempt for homosexual writers' like Oscar Wilde and André Gide became so strident that he eventually opened himself 'to counterattack by psychologically-oriented critics.'"[529] Yet it can also be argued that it is rarely well-grounded to conclude *ex silentio* that a writer hates homosexuals simply because the two people he does not praise are homosexual.

However, Gerry Brenner holds a different perspective and believes that Hemingway, by means of the theory of omission, adroitly hides the main theme and subject of the story, as with lesbianism in "The Sea Change." He concludes, "Instead of expressing contempt for a perverse young lesbian in 'The Sea Change,' Hemingway generates admiration for her. She is considerate of Phil, the man she is leaving, and she is courageous to act upon the discovery of a new dimension of her sexual makeup."[530] Beyond this explanation, it is difficult to find any textual clues to justify the writer's admiration for the girl. She is kind to Phil because she wants to be with both the girl she loves and Phil. This matter can be linked more to bisexuality rather than with Hemingway's approval of the girl. Arguably, the key moment of the story regarding gender is when the girl says, "We're made up of all sorts of things" (*CSS* 304). It hints at an individual's sexual fluidity, to which culture is averse. This matter is mirrored in Phil's response to the girl when she asks whether she can talk about her feelings: "I'd rather not hear" (303).

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[527] Kennedy, "Hemingway's Gender Trouble," 192.
[528] Hays, *The Critical Reception*, 160.
[529] McParland, *Appropriating Hemingway*, 66.
[530] Brenner, *Concealments in Hemingway's Works*, 12.

Taking this matter into account, Babett Rubóczki's evaluation seems more worthy of support and more groundbreaking when, in her study of the queer uncanny in "The Sea Change" and "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot," she states, "Questioning the dichotomic readings that confine the subtle complexities of sexuality into the oppositional categories of homo/heterosexuality in the stories, I find that the characters in them fluctuate between sexual identities and roles that cannot be defined within the binary of homo- and heterosexuality."[531] She proposes "a less dichotomist and more nuanced understanding of Hemingway's depiction of gender crisis in these stories."[532] As Rubóczki indicates, Hemingway's intention seems to be to highlight the fluidity of gender identity as opposed to the solidity that language favors. This interpretation also pairs well with Reynolds who refers to Hemingway's "lifelong insistence that there were no taboo words, no forbidden subjects."[533]

Although these readings of gender in Hemingway's fiction seem to contradict one another, the same diversity of interpretation can be integrated into a holistic approach which makes sexual minorities more visible and thereby supports their sexual integration. Cumulatively, these diverse interpretations reveal that the stories adopt an attitude in strong juxtaposition with the gender-normative culture of early twentieth-century American society, in which homosexuality had little voice and the queer community was broadly excluded. As Arthur S. Leonard observes, "Until 1962, private acts of consensual sodomy between adults were serious criminal violations in every state."[534] Standing against a stream that tries to drown the so-called undesirable and corrupted, Hemingway's fiction attempts to bring sexual minorities back to life by allocating space to them in his liberal world of fiction and thereby hindering the efforts of culture to suffocate them. In an era when even whispering about queer issues was a taboo, Hemingway's

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[531] "Queering Perspectives of the Uncanny," 388.
[532] "Queering Perspectives of the Uncanny," 399.
[533] "Ernest Hemingway, 1899–1961," 30.
[534] "Same-Sex Unions," 1405.

stories dared to shout about them. Describing Hemingway's contemporary society, Doris Weatherford maintains:

> Homosexuality, either male or female, was a topic undiscussed in the 1940s. Words about it were whispered, if spoken at all, and many women doubtless lived and died without ever taking any personal cognizance of the lesbians in their midst. Lesbians themselves often failed to understand why they seemed different from other women; many married, had children, and never quite grasped why they were unhappy in that role.[535]

If his society resists integrating the minorities, Hemingway welcomes them to his fiction**.** Some thinkers who concentrate on Hemingway's biography argue that he, himself, was a minority and his so-called sexually perverse characters indicate his sexual desire. They commonly refer to Robert McAlmon who told "stories about what he believed to be Ernest's homosexuality ever since Ernest's first trip to Spain with him in 1923"[536] or to the report of Matthew J. Bruccoli (Fitzgerald's biographer) that Zelda (Fitzgerald's wife) "believed her husband was involved in a homosexual liaison with Hemingway."[537] However, Debra Moddelmog rejects such statements and explains that "Hemingway risks writing about sexually taboo subjects such as homosexuality and miscegenation because this risk carries the possibility of breaking into new aesthetic territory and reaching a deeper level of truth."[538]

If language, as was the case at the time of writing, does not give voice to the minorities, Hemingway, by integrating sexual diversity into his stories, provides a space where it is considered. This shapeless presentation of sexual identity reflects the formless quality of the abject. Although the Symbolic

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[535] *American Women During World War II*, 269.
[536] Dearborn, *Ernest Hemingway*, 289.
[537] Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 338.
[538] *Reading Desire*, 3.

attempts to give it a shape, gender in Hemingwayesque world is a mass that cannot be molded into a specific shape. To think otherwise is a delusion.

Although Hemingway integrates characters with non-heteronormative sexual identities into his stories, his protagonists rarely show any traits of these marginalized groups. What matters is the liberalism that both the code hero and the third-person narrator of the stories manifest, since they hardly fail to notice those characters within the queer community in their observations. Although the code hero shows sexual desire toward women, he rejects satisfying this desire through marriage, the method prescribed by culture and religion. This matter is the core of the transgression and chaos that Nick and other major male characters produce.

If the code hero were homosexual, then language would cast him aside as someone perverse, abrogating the possibility of dialogue with the Symbolic. Due to the fact that there is no indication that he is homosexual, the code hero deprives language of any excuses to reject him or his male identity. In other words, through the exploitation of the power that the Symbolic grants male members of society, the code hero opens up new horizons in the field of gender for the good of all involved, including not only straight men and women but also those of non-heteronormative sexual orientations. What fortifies the pillars of this abjection is the fact that the code hero is not a criminal. Without explicitly disobeying the rules, he does not provide the law with any legal reasons to imprison him or sentence him to death.

Hemingway rarely talks about homosexuality explicitly and in many cases merely suggests it. The following lines of “A Simple Enquiry,” for instance, illustrate how indirectly the homosexual major tries to find out if Pinin (a nineteen-year-old orderly) is interested in men:

> “You are nineteen?” he asked.
>
> “Yes, *signor maggiore*.”
>
> “You have ever been in love?”
>
> “How do you mean, *signor maggiore*?”

> "In love—with a girl?"
>
> "I have been with girls."
>
> "I did not ask that. I asked if you had been in love—with a girl."
>
> "Yes, *signor maggiore*."
>
> "You are in love with this girl now? You don't write her. I read all your letters."
>
> "I am in love with her," Pinin said, "but I do not write her."
>
> "You are sure of this?"
>
> "I am sure." (*CSS* 251)

Though some critics interpret this indirect mode of writing as part of Hemingway's journalistic style and his theory of omission, it can also be read as resulting from a language structure that does not facilitate any chance of expression for homosexuality within the chain of signification. This matter justifies the idea that Hemingway's craft inserts taboos as an abject into his art. What distinguishes him from other modernist writers and, in the long term, makes his art more anarchist is that he does it quite gently and peacefully. This style also highlights that although the reality of homosexuality exists, culture resists validating it. Accordingly, the title of "A Simple Enquiry" suggests that, despite the question of homosexuality being a simple matter, no one dares to name or mention it. This notion is strongly implied in both the title and plot of the narrative, in that the major continues asking Pinin personal questions in the hope of becoming a romantic partner:

> "And you are quite sure that you love a girl?"
>
> "I am sure."
>
> "And," the major looked at him quickly, "that you are not corrupt?"
>
> "I don't know what you mean, corrupt."
>
> "All right," the major said. "You needn't be superior."
>
> Pinin looked at the floor. The major looked at his brown face, down and up him, and at his hands. Then he went on, not smiling, "And you don't really want—" the major paused. Pinin

> looked at the floor. "That your great desire isn't really—" Pinin looked at the floor. The major leaned his head back on the rucksack and smiled. He was really relieved: life in the army was too complicated. "You're a good boy," he said. "You're a good boy, Pinin. But don't be superior and be careful some one else doesn't come along and take you."
>
> Pinin stood still beside the bunk.
>
> "Don't be afraid," the major said. His hands were folded on the blankets. "I won't touch you. You can go back to your platoon if you like. But you had better stay on as my servant. You've less chance of being killed." (*CSS* 251–252)

The last sentence in this passage refers to the probability of an individual surviving when they obey the Law-of-the-Father, even if it is according to its own definitions corrupted. For this reason, if Pinin accepts being the major's servant, he will be at a lower risk of being killed.

This reading of the story can be linked to Kristeva's assertion that "[t]he abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them" (*PH* 15). According to this definition, nothing could be more abject than a ruler (the Symbolic) who is perceived as being perverse. For this reason, the narrator of "A Simple Enquiry" comments, "life in the army was too complicated" (*CSS* 251). Being the ultimate field for the exercise of institutional authority, the army represents the most fierce essence of language. Thus, when the governing system itself proves to be perverse, it loses its validity by virtue of accommodating within itself the "filthy, defiling element" (*PH* 65) which it prohibits outside itself.

In this sense the teenage Pinin, like the other code heroes, experiences filth and corruption at the very heart of the Symbolic. Such an experience, repressed by the protagonist, makes him incapable of forming any life-long relationship with women. If it is the case, not only does the individual fail to live his true self, but it could also be argued, as Oliver in regard to "modern forms of perverse repression"

writes, "Rather than inscribe meaning with meaning, or give form or structure to bodily affects and drives, symbolic Law is reduced to techniques designed to manage, regulate, and spy to more efficiently contain."[539]

In sum, by abjecting the masculine role that language has defined for him as a man, the male protagonist makes himself an abject, in that while he is a member of a society that language regulates, he escapes its pre-defined gender roles and expectations. It means that he is simultaneously part of language and apart from it and thus represents filth in the framework of the Law-of-the-Father. Although the present study is not a biographical one, it is interesting to note that in this respect the code hero's experience very much resembles Hemingway's own. His biological father was disgusted by his stories: "When his parents received the first copies of their son's book *In Our Time* (1924), they read it with *horror*. *Furious*, his father sent the volumes back to the publisher, as he could not tolerate such *filth* in the house."[540] Like his father who could neither abnegate his fatherhood to Ernest nor tolerate Ernest's presence in their house, Nick Adams, via his aversion to participating in a loving relationship with women, produces the sense of horror, fury, and filth to the Symbolic, or in Kristeva's words, "by not becoming integrated with a given system of signs, is abjection for it" (*PH* 14).

In dealing with the issue of change-making on a broader scale with regard to gender roles, Hemingway's code hero endeavors to jettison the masculine role predefined for him by language, religion, law, or any other institution, and thus opts for absenting himself from culturally constructed society. However, his absence has little to do with inertness: he is very active in performing this absence. What the code hero performs accords with Kristeva's description of "the abjection of self":

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[539] "Meaning against Death," 62–63.
[540] Hallengren, *Nobel Laureates in Search of Identity and Integrity*, 117; emphasis added.

> [T]he abject simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject, one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very being, that it is none other than abject. The abjection of self would be the culminating form of that experience of the subject to which it is revealed that all its objects are based merely on the inaugural loss that laid the foundations of its own being. There is nothing like the abjection of self to show that all abjection is in fact recognition of the want on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded. (*PH* 5)

Therefore, the code hero's abjection of self is heroic insofar as he reveals the want of the Symbolic (language) in terms of gender. In contrast to this reading of the male protagonist's absence, some modern critics regard Hemingway's code hero as a failure, "unable to conquer stress and remain in control – as expected from men at the time. The suggestion that the Hemingway hero is on a triumphant journey is, therefore, invalid."[541] Yet from another perspective, there is nothing more heroic than embarrassing language by causing it to encounter a signifier (the code hero) that avoids being pinned down to a specific signified.

Further, it might seem masochistic that by absenting himself from society Nick deprives himself of the joy of a romantic relationship and of having a family of his own. There is considerable agreement between this reading of the code hero's masochism in terms of the abject and Mazzeno's discussion of sexuality and the code hero in Hemingway. He emphasizes, "Richard Fantina (2005) argued that beneath the rugged, he-man persona Hemingway created in his life and glorified in many of his characters lay

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[541] Dömötör, "Anxious Masculinity and Silencing," 121.

another personality trait that, through careful reading, one can discern from his texts and perhaps from some actions in his life as well: masochism," and he adds, "As Fantina demonstrates, evidence of masochistic traits in Hemingway's men often vitiates the famous Hemingway code."[542] However, unlike Mazzeno who finds the code hero's masochism vitiating, in the present examination, it is regarded as something formative in relation to gender in the chain of signification. Like the disturbance of Mr. Frazer's radio caused by X-ray machines in the hospital in "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," the masochism of the code hero reveals interferences in the waves of language.

Correspondingly, this masochism is in accordance with Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg's elaboration on Kristeva, when she writes:

> Masochism elevates the subject to the constitutive principle of subjectivity. As Julia Kristeva has argued, the abject is that which cannot be assimilated; it is both a jettisoned object, an object which is thrown out and up, and also a subject that is always already displaced, destitute, or exilic. [. . .] The destitute or abject subject includes within himself his own exclusion; he casts "within himself the scalpel that carries out his separations"; he inevitably strays.[543]

Similarly, Harold Bloom's view of Hemingway's art is consistent with reading the abject in the stories as a performative act of gender roles, when he hypothesizes in the introduction to *Ernest Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms"* that Hemingway:

> is an elegiac poet who mourns the self, who celebrates the self (rather less effectively) and who suffers divisions in the self. In the broadest tradition of American literature, he stems ultimately

542 *The Critics and Hemingway*, 205.
543 *Sublime Surrender*, 38.

> from the Emersonian reliance on the god within, which is the line of Whitman, Thoreau, and Dickinson.[544]

Here Bloom's "divisions in the self" is read vis-à-vis the abject as the shattered boundaries of the self, and the act of excretion (rather than the excretions) is regarded as "the god within" Hemingway's art.

Although generalizing about Hemingway's characters is unfair, in order to more readily elicit the notion of the abject, the male characters have been categorized into three groups: authorities such as Nick's father (Dr. Adams) in "Indian Camp"; those who are more passive such as the Native American woman's husband; and, finally, those who are symbolically a breech baby (such as Nick). While the members of the first group only care about telling their own stories with little care for others, the second group, like the woman's husband, do not play an obvious role in modifying the structure of language, but rather seem to fortify its hegemony. Though most men of Hemingway's world fall into this second category, this degree of passivity with respect to feminine pain results in the death of masculinity, expressed in Dr. Adams' comment in "Indian Camp," "They're usually the worst sufferers in these little affairs" (*CSS* 69). This group helps to reveal how their omission from society and life results from their apathy about the suffering of others. The third group, the breech baby conventionally called the code hero, generates a situation in which the system faces a source of defilement that must be jettisoned in order to maintain the borders of the Symbolic. Both the second and third categories of male characters experience death. However, the death that the second group undergoes is related to their failure to achieve success in the eye of the governing structure, while that of the code hero is a sort of accomplishment insofar as the protagonist's self-effacement from society is rooted in the death drive.

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[544] *Ernest Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms,"* 9.

As the code hero is perceived as dysfunctional by society, their unwillingness to procreate results in the fortification of their death drive. As the death drive, according to Freud, can either be aggressive or self-destructive, the code hero's diversion from the social norms of masculinity can be read in the context of the death drive.[545]

Due to the interwoven relation of the life drive and death drive, which leads to the individual's self-destruction, the male protagonist makes himself a hero by guiding these two intertwined drives to generate a death drive in the language structure as well. Put differently, the married sexual intercourse that culture has ordained to guarantee its survival is cast off by the protagonist, which threatens the life of society. If we take Freud's view that "'the goal of all life is death' (*Das Ziel alles Lebens ist der Tod*)" to mean "all life arises *from* and *returns to* a pre-existing [. . .] 'non-living matter,'"[546] the code hero wonders that if that is the case, then the language structure should also move towards a non-living state.[547] It means that the code hero employs the life drive (sexual instincts and libido) for his own jouissance rather than the jouissance of the Other.

Although they have death in common, the second and third types of male characters strongly contrast with one another. This contradiction is manifested from the very beginning of Nick Adams' journey in "Indian Camp" when the suicide of the breech baby's father preys on Nick's mind so much that the issue of killing oneself takes up the last lines of the short story:

"Why did he kill himself, Daddy?"

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[545] Zografos, *Architecture and Fire*, 26. From a Lacanian perspective, the concept of death drive does not mean death, but a principle according to which every organism tends toward the lowest level of tension (Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary*, 150).

[546] Gaston, *Derrida and Disinterest*, 112.

[547] What matters in terms of the code hero's abjection is that his lifestyle triggers a vibration in the flow of the Symbolic order, rather than an attempt to see it fade into nonexistence.

"I don't know, Nick. He couldn't stand things, I guess."

"Do many men kill themselves, Daddy?"

"Not very many, Nick."

"Do many women?"

"Hardly ever."

"Don't they ever?"

"Oh, yes. They do sometimes." (*CSS* 69–70)

Repeatedly asking his father questions about the pain of having a baby and suicide, Nick becomes familiar with the realities of life and the pains associated with each gender role. The fact that Nick detests the easy life that this passive group of men leads is pithily expressed in the last sentences of the story when Nick asks his father, "Is dying hard, Daddy?," and his father answers, "No, I think it's pretty easy, Nick. It all depends." In the end Nick "felt quite sure that he would never die" (70).

In a similar way, along with the narrator's emphasis in the last sentence of "Indian Camp" that Nick "felt sure that he would never die" (70), Nick's claim, in Hemingway's posthumously published "Night Before Landing," on the way to war in Europe that "other people can get killed, but not me, I feel that absolutely" justifies the parallel existence of the war in the outside world and the one between Nick and language, the latter of which, it could be argued, creates stronger resonances.[548] He believes no one can kill him, because the war to which he is going differs from that of the other soldiers in that the act of just setting off for this war in itself signifies considerable courage and a great victory. Hence, by deciding never to die, Nick begins his journey towards becoming a breech baby.

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[548] Grimes, *The Religious Design of Hemingway's Early Fiction*, 61.

As the cause of the sufferings of the mother in labor, which in turn leads to the father's suicide, the breech baby can be understood as a murderer. In this sense, Nick Adams, who lives the life of a breech baby, shows some degree of willingness to move back towards the world of the mother's womb (*heimlich*) associated with the semiotic chora. However, because he is a breech baby, he has already committed murder. Therefore, the simultaneous death of the father and birth of the baby reflects the close affinity between life and death. In the same way, Nick's endeavor to define his boundaries causes a major traumatic absence or gap in the language that has, to this point, defined masculinity.

Further, by absenting himself from the gender formula within the chain of signification, Nick effectively kills himself too. He chooses to die in order to be alive and be a speaking subject. As a result, his abjection is related to both his life and death, as well as those of the Symbolic. It shows that death lies deep in the heart of the abjection that the code hero performs. It is the murder suggested in the words of Kristeva when she argues:

> Opposite religion or alongside it, "art" takes on murder and moves through it. It assumes murder in so far as artistic practice considers death the inner boundary of the signifying process. Crossing that boundary is precisely what constitutes "art." In other words, it is as if death becomes interiorized by the subject of such a practice; in order to function, he must make himself the bearer of death.[549]

In this regard, the emphasis of all the stories, like that of "Indian Camp," lies mainly on the birth of the baby, representing Nick's coming of age as a subject, rather than anything else.

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[549] *The Portable Kristeva*, 56.

In contrast to the category of inert men (the second group), it is the baby boy himself who represents the male dissenters who coerce the doctor (the Symbolic) into deviating from the norm (natural birth). That is to say, although a fetus is limited to life within another body, it can effectively exploit its freedom within that limited womb to move its body in a direction different from what those outside the womb's world expect. In other words, he makes a change within, which leads to a modification outside, similar to the way in which Nick performs, because, although he is restricted to living within the Symbolic, his lifestyle has an impact on language.

However, only a very small number of men fall into the category of the code hero (the breech baby), a fact well reflected in the following part of the story:

> "Do ladies always have such a hard time having babies?" Nick asked.
>
> "No, that was very, very exceptional." (*CSS* 69)

In the same way that the breech baby causes trouble for the doctor in the delivery, Nick's behavior and performance in his life with regard to manly conventions upset the Symbolic. Agitation of the system is represented in the warden's pursuit of him in "The Last Good Country"; in addition, this story suggests that the drunk warden falls asleep, referring to the numbness, however slight, that Nick provokes in authority. The fact that it is this state of drunkenness and sleep that Nick exploits to escape alludes to the possibility of defying the total domination of language, though only for a while. Although the feasibility of language to lessen its authoritarian position is in the background of the stories, Hemingway does occasionally refer explicitly to it, as in "Under the Ridge" when "[t]he French tank commander had got drunk to be brave for the attack and finally was too drunk to function" (*CSS* 468). It refers to the strategies of the Symbolic which could lead to its dysfunction, though devised to fortify it. This kind of performance seems so intimidating to the language structure that it could force culture to review its strategies.

The act of having a child, commonly taken for granted by language as the sole natural purpose of sexual intercourse, is depicted as unachievable in a conventional marriage. The significance of such a notion is stressed in the opening lines of "Mr. And Mrs. Elliot" in which the first capitalized words draw attention to the marriage between Cornelia and Hubert and the extreme effort that they put into their attempts to conceive a child: "MR. AND MRS. Elliot TRIED VERY HARD to have a baby. They tried as often as Mrs. Elliot could stand it" (*CSS* 123). In this regard, referring to the torturing quality of the sexual experience, the second sentence of the story, with the word "stand," draws attention to how the present model of sexuality presented by language has ruined the natural state of being (the Real).

Although the reader could take Mrs. Elliot's "standing it" as a clue to Cornelia's homosexuality, Teodóra Dömötör highlights the trauma and menace that becoming a mother imposes on Mrs. Elliot, and writes:

> In the case of Mrs. Elliot's sickness, we are not merely presented with a matter of sea sickness (for they are traveling to Europe by boat); Mrs. Elliot does not want Mr. Elliot's child. The simple thought of conceiving leaves her frail. The narrator articulates the idea of marital discord through the repetition of the word "sick" in a consistent manner in order to emphasize its significance and its underlying secondary meaning.[550]

The story, however, in emphasizing the impossibility of conception despite the characters' desire for it, refutes Dömötör's claim by reporting, "although they wanted a baby more than anything else in the world", a sentence which is repeated once more in "they tried several times to have a baby" (*CSS* 124).

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[550] "Anxious Masculinity and Silencing," 123.

Even in the case of "Indian Camp" in which a baby is born, though Dr. Adams' caesarian section means to reduce women's suffering, the unavailability of anesthetic points up the insufficiency in advances made so far to reduce the pain. This idea is also expressed in the doctor's statement that he finds this experience of childbirth "one for the medical journal" (*CSS* 69). Further, the lengthy period of pain after his arrival ("It all took a long time," 68) suggests there is quite a long way left to go for the sexual liberator (the code hero) attempting to accomplish the state of painless childbirth.

In sum, instead of speaking or giving long lectures on sexual liberation, the code hero acts to aid sexual emancipation. However, the ultimate sexual liberation will take place when doctors start to normalize a caesarean section "with anesthetic" so that women in labor do not feel such immense pain from childbirth. This liberation would not only prevent women's pain but could also open up the possibility for their male partners to enjoy accompanying women in observing the birth of a new life as the result of their bodily enjoyment (jouissance). Signifying the failed patterns of interaction between various sexualities, the suffering of the woman poses an obstacle to the presence of the husband at the scene of delivery and thus leads to his death. Furthermore, the husband of the American Indian woman, by committing suicide because he is unable to stand his wife's screams, stands for the passivity of masculine society regarding women's suffering, which ultimately leads to their own death rather than to that of women. As a result, the system in which a birth gives rise to fatality cannot guarantee its survival by procreation.

In such a governing system, self-castration seems the only means for the code hero to accomplish a sense of 'I.' Paradoxically, there exists a sort of vigor in his inactive performance within language. If he is supposed to be plagued with the fear of castration, he circumvents it by eradicating masculinity at its very roots, without negating its surface features. He absents himself sexually from language, and, indeed, the matter of absence generally occupies a prominent position in Hemingway's stories. In this regard, David Tomkins, highlighting the absence of Jake Barnes' penis and his sexual absence in *The Sun Also*

Rises, proposes, "it is through his emphasis on absent (yet nonetheless crucial) things that Hemingway makes the experience of loss central to the production of a new postwar American literature."[551]

This act of omitting one's sexual identity from the kingdom of the Symbolic is explicitly depicted in "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen," when the sixteen-year-old boy rushes into a hospital and begs Dr. Wilcox and Dr. Fischer to castrate him in order to get rid of his "awful lust" which is "a sin against our Lord and Saviour" (*CSS* 299–300). They cannot help him, for Dr. Wilcox is "unable to find this emergency listed in his book" (300). It signifies that intentional castration is so intolerable to the Symbolic that it possesses no signifiers (entries) inside language ("book"). When the doctor refuses to perform the surgery himself, the boy does it himself, and thus, in lieu of waiting in fearful sexual suspense all his life, he faces the ultimate trauma by producing one of the most abject scenes in the stories: the doctors, as the most submissive agents of the Symbolic, "receive the youth self-mutilated with a razor" and bleeding (300). Although he is supposed to have died of "[l]oss of blood," the narrator tells the reader that the doctor could not refuse to "receive" him (300). By his self-amputation, the boy forces the hospital to receive him, regardless of the medical book. In other words, his performance accomplishes the victory of adding an entry into the doctor's guidebook.

Likewise, in connection with the bible of the Symbolic, Robert Paul Lamb, in "Hemingway on (Mis)Reading Stories: 'God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen' as Metacriticism," refers to the failure of the doctor's medical book to include "emotional and cultural" illnesses and highlights "semiotic confusion throughout Hemingway's fiction."[552] He writes:

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[551] "The 'Lost Generation' and the Generation of Loss," 746.
[552] *The Hemingway Short Story*, 156.

> Through the dimness and snow, an incongruous, concrete image appears—a silver French racing car in a lighted show window with the words "Dans Argent" on the hood. The narrator recalls that he "believed" this to mean "the silver dance or the silver dancer" and was "pleased" by his "knowledge of a foreign language[.]" Implied in his verb tense ("believed") is that he now knows that it meant either "in money" or "in silver," but thematically what is more important is that in the very first paragraph a signifier has been misread because of a faulty mastery of a sign system (French), and the character who misread it assumed that he read it correctly.[553]

Reading the story thus as the depiction of the insufficiency and inefficiency of the "sign system" (master signifier), it could be argued that the story draws attention not only to the lack in the structure of language but also to how the code hero (a patient boy) adds to this book of signification. As Doctor Fischer puts it, "any future editions should be further cross-indexed" (*CSS* 298). Further, the fact that Hemingway has employed French for the words of these lines stresses the rigidity of rules governing society. Given the relative intolerance to freedom in the syntactical structures of language, using French could allude to the solidity and sturdiness of the Symbolic that does not welcome any ease or free movement that could violate the strict rules governing this linguistic system. In spite of such solidity Hemingway's short stories (code heroes) manage to undermine it by producing blood.

The story emphasizes that the teenage boy self-mutilates. He does not self-castrate because he "didn't know what castrate meant" (300). Hence, this story provides one of the ultimate images of the abject ever created in Hemingway's fiction, for it depicts the Phallus (master signifier as a whole) with a bleeding emasculated particle (the teenage boy as one member of the society). Although there is only one

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[553] *The Hemingway Short Story*, 156.

cell that is bleeding, it is enough to bloody the Phallic language as a whole regardless of the fact that the hemorrhage seems unimportant.

What agitates the boy is the constant arousal of his organ and the “awful lust” (299) and “sin” (300) it is said to cause him. Although Doctor Fischer tells him that it is a “natural thing,” the boy claims that it is “against purity” (300). His indifference to the filth he produces by his blood lies in this abject bodily filth being a means to secure and protect the purity of his self. If there is no sense of fulfillment in being a man and the only thing penises do is to become aroused, then the code hero finds release in severing his phallus, a vasectomy to the Symbolic and culture that, as explained before, desperately depends on this corporeal organ for its survival.

A gentler version of the boy’s self-mutilation is repeated in “Under the Ridge” when the fearful soldier Paco shoots his own hand in order to avoid the battlefield. The soldier’s fundamental act of fighting on the battlefield frightens Paco to the extent that he refuses to participate in combat—which is one of the most masculine conventional concerns of Hemingway’s code hero. It thus echoes one of the stories’ main themes, the conflict in the realm of sexual relationships in society and the way the code hero refuses to take part in it.

These two stories also share similarities in the way they employ French. While in “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen,” the French words imply a totalitarian authority, “Under the Ridge” tells the reader about an apathetic French man, with “wooden-holstered Mauser pistols strapped” to his legs, who walks away after witnessing the death of soldiers:

> We had been there all morning in the place the middle-aged Frenchman had come walking away from. I understood how a man might suddenly, seeing clearly the stupidity of dying in an unsuccessful attack; or suddenly seeing it clearly, as you can see clearly and justly before you die; seeing its hopelessness, seeing its idiocy, seeing how it really was, simply get back and walk away from it as the Frenchman had done. (*CSS* 465)

One of the important points of "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" is that it happens on Christmas Day. The story provides various religious allusions, which are present from the beginning in the story's title: the name of a Christmas carol sung to accompany the dance of Protestant celebrations.[554] Hence, some critics read the boy's wish to be castrated as the sexual repression occasioned by Christian doctrines. For instance, George Monteiro considers this story as evidence that Hemingway rebelled against the narrow Puritanical perception of "the uncleanness of adolescent thoughts of sex."[555] Similarly, exploring the story's allusions to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and the King James Bible, Horst H. Kruse concludes that Hemingway aims at "satirizing Middle America and its puritanical attitudes."[556] Thus, in both cases, it is the notion of strict Puritan rules facing a bloody masculine organ that seriously threatens the well-cut definition of the system.

Putting forward a different point of view, Jeremy Kaye studies the notion of anti-Jewish sentiments for which some thinkers castigate Hemingway. Kaye reads this story as Hemingway's apology and compensation for the antisemitism of his previous works, especially for the character Cohn in *The Sun Also Rises*. To investigate this proposition in "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen," these critics highlight the humanitarian feelings of the Jewish Doctor Fischer in contrast to the indifference of the Christian Doctor Wilcox to the boy's bleeding. Nonetheless, Kaye reads the roots of Cohn's behavior in the characteristics of the code hero, entirely separate from his Judaism, and adds, "Hemingway asked Wilson to 'change 'Jews' to 'New York people,' . . . [because] I did not mean to give any derogatory or anti-Semitic meaning as it would read today.'"[557] Nevertheless, it can also be argued that the fact that the story happens on Christmas Eve bears some implications for the interpretation because, similar to Jesus

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[554] Mays, *Women in Early America*, 177.
[555] "Grace, Good Works, and the Hemingway Ethic," 74.
[556] Lamb, *The Hemingway Short Story*, 154.
[557] "Race and Ethnicity: Jews," 344 (italics and ellipsis in the original text).

Christ who was born of no father (hence, no phallus), this boy also tries to resurrect himself by emasculating himself, and, as a result, to live as if there is no Law-of-the-Father. In other words, seeking a clearer self-definition, he seeks a rebirth by a violent act of abjection, since an organ that is meant to aid the expression of his sexuality has itself become a blight on his sexual identity.

Furthermore, the reader is not informed of the patient's future, and the narrator immediately shifts to the two doctors' conversation about the mistake Dr. Wilcox made during the boy's first visit to the hospital. In respect to our discussion, it shows, first, that it is the patient's mere act of self-amputation that drives the narrative's central theme rather than the result of that patient's act, and second, how the medical team as the executive representatives of the master signifier react to this act of elimination. Unconcerned with the status of the patient, the doctors in the last lines of the narrative are obsessed with the evaluation of themselves, their performance, and their religious orientation. This matter is reflected in the last part of the story which includes the following dialogue between Horace (narrator), Dr. Fischer, and Dr. Wilcox:

> "I only mean it in the friendliest way. Doctor," Doc Fischer said, looking at his hands, at his hands that had, with his willingness to oblige and his lack of respect for Federal statutes, made him his trouble. "Horace here will bear me out that I only speak of it in the very friendliest way. It was an amputation the young man performed, Horace."
>
> "Well, I wish you wouldn't ride me about it," Doctor Wilcox said. "There isn't any need to ride me."
>
> "Ride you, Doctor, on the day, the very anniversary, of our Saviour's birth?"
>
> "Our Saviour? Ain't you a Jew?" Doctor Wilcox said.
>
> "So I am. So I am. It always is slipping my mind. I've never given it its proper importance. So good of you to remind me. Your Saviour. That's right. Your Saviour, undoubtedly your Saviour— and the ride for Palm Sunday."
>
> "You're too damned smart," Doctor Wilcox said.

> “An excellent diagnosis, Doctor. I was always too damned smart. Too damned smart on the coast certainly. Avoid it, Horace. You haven’t much tendency but sometimes I see a gleam. But what a diagnosis—and without the book.”
>
> “The hell with you,” Doctor Wilcox said.
>
> “All in good time. Doctor,” Doc Fischer said. “All in good time. If there is such a place I shall certainly visit it. I have even had a very small look into it. No more than a peek, really. I looked away almost at once. And do you know what the young man said, Horace, when the good Doctor here brought him in? He said, ‘Oh, I asked you to do it. I asked you so many times to do it.’”
>
> “On Christmas Day, too,” Doctor Wilcox said.
>
> “The significance of the particular day is not important,” Doc Fischer said.
>
> “Maybe not to you,” said Doctor Wilcox.
>
> “You hear him, Horace?” Doc Fischer said. “You hear him? Having discovered my vulnerable point, my achilles tendon so to speak, the doctor pursues his advantage.”
>
> “You’re too damned smart,” Doctor Wilcox said. (*CSS* 300–301)

Such an obsession with reviewing religious identity and professional efficacy suggests how the act of the boy, which seems to be something very personal, triggers the Symbolic to reconsider and reevaluate itself. Hence, the two doctors concern themselves more readily with their discussion about the boy rather than with the boy himself and, in spite of their laidback tone, the content of their talk demonstrates that the boy’s self-mutilation has created profound meaning in terms of culture. Thus, as in “Indian Camp,” which can be regarded as the summation of the whole of Hemingway’s short stories, “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen” represents the abjection that the stories create.

The narrator also introduces this concept in the first lines of the story: “the dirt blew off the hills that now have been cut down, and Kansas City was very like Constantinople. You may not believe this. No one believes this; but it is true” (*CSS* 298). The very first words forewarn that the dirt the boy creates

in the hegemonic structure of the Symbolic ("hills") has the capability of toppling the whole structure of the capital city of the late Roman, or Byzantine, Empire, which is the symbol of ultimate power and an authoritarian system. This view of the Symbolic is similar to the image of the dead elephant in "An African Story" when the narrator says, "Now all the dignity and majesty and all the beauty were gone from the elephant and he was a huge wrinkled pile" (*CSS* 552).

Having discussed some of the phenomena of abjection in the context of the male characters of Hemingway's short stories, the discussion will now turn to how the narratives also support a similar reading of the female characters. The way Hemingway's female characters behave is captured well in the depiction of the woman in labor in "Indian Camp," who, as the narrative reports, can do nothing but bear the pain.

Despite abundant research on Hemingway's male characters, only very few critics have taken his women into serious consideration. Ignorance of Hemingway's female characters is rooted in the masculinity for which his art, sometimes notoriously, is well-known. Even the studies that consider women, usually refer to little vigor or complexity in their typical characteristics. In this way, del Gizzo evaluates Hemingway:

> [Hemingway] has often been criticized for his inability to create fully dimensional female characters. Critics have argued that "Hemingway's women" are generally caricatures who fall into two categories, determined by their relationship to the men in the novels: bitches and sex

kittens. His female characters have been understood so frequently as mere reflections of male fear or fantasy that critic Leslie Fiedler once suggested that there are "no *women* in his books."[558]

Nevertheless, some later scholars attempt to refute accusations of misogyny by describing Hemingway's female characters as complex and nuanced and going as far as to make goddesses out of them. In this regard, praising the women of the stories, Jeffrey Meyers holds an entirely feminist point of view and writes, "One could say a great deal about Hemingway's female characters. They have a very special magic. It is a fresh yet melancholy charm, of the sort that only Anglo-Saxon women of good breeding possess."[559]

If the code heroes are regarded as philanderers because they show little interest in any commitment in a relationship, then women could be called seducers because they cheat or abandon the male characters who, for a variety of reasons, favor life-long relationships. Moddelmog recognizes that "[n]ot only do many of Hemingway's female characters find sex pleasurable, but they are also sexually adventurous."[560]

On the other hand, proposing a more inclusive classification, Carlos Baker divides Hemingway's female characters into two types of *femme fatale*: "abnormal" women and "norm-women," the former having a more complicated character. While the normal woman acts submissively, their "'abnormal' cousins" escape being under the control of men.[561] Similarly, Kim Moreland, trying to moderate the extreme lines of thought, proposes something different from the notion of generalizing all female characters into one category. Considering men to be the ones who leave, Moreland, in her analysis of the

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558 "Catherine Barkley," 105.
559 *Ernest Hemingway*, 112.
560 "Sex, Sexuality, and Marriage," 364.
561 *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 111.

three characters of *To Have and Have Not* (Marie Morgan, Helen Gordon, and Dorothy Hollis), makes a distinction between Hemingway's bitch female characters and his virtuous women. She explains:

> Each of these three female characters is last pictured alone. In each case, their men have left them, whether through death, incipient divorce, or disinterest. Like Marie, they all know that "good men are scarce" (261). And each responds to her loneliness in a psychologically complex way that subverts the easy binary opposition between flat ideal and bitch-goddess. Superficially dissimilar, these women share a common fate that is identifiably female and that Hemingway presents in a complex and sympathetic fashion that also calls into question the actions of his male characters.[562]

The advancement Moreland makes in the study of Hemingway's women lies in the last sentence of this quotation where she draws attention to the interaction between the actions of the male and female characters. The iceberg theory, which welcomes a deeper investigation of sexuality in the stories, promises an approach that considers not only male and female characters but also an approach that examines the ones Moreland calls "bitches" and gods or goddesses.

It has sometimes been observed that women in the stories often appear in a negative context. They quarrel, cheat, and divorce their husbands, usually for no logical reasons, but the reader has little access to the history of their behavior for Hemingway's journalistic style and omission do not allow for detailed information on the characters' lives and backgrounds. On the other hand, happiness is not depicted in the scenes and stories that do not feature women, meaning that unhappiness and misery are

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[562] "To Have and Hold Not," 91.

omnipresent in the stories and are not necessarily caused by the women. Thus, the female characters cannot be blamed for the code hero's evil destiny or the gloomy ambiance of the narratives.

When women appear to be the reason for a ruined marriage or a relationship difficulty, the destruction they cause is not rooted in their inherent vice, but rather in the death drive that governs relationships. The fact that their behavior is often passive could be a consequence of the system of signification that does not tolerate their proactivity. Therefore, in the analysis of departures and ruined relationships, it is more valuable to consider the complexity of sexuality in the stories. It is not women's unfaithfulness that causes relationship rifts, but rather the fact that women, like other characters, suffer from failing relationships. T. S. Eliot's "objective correlative" can be applied here.[563] These situations, events, and objects involving women occur and create settings in the stories, which can be described as abjection. Further, as the abject is associated with filth in the individual's sense of self, male and female characters lack the stability of identity, which in turn causes the impossibility and instability of relationships.

Being doomed to lie down and wait for the baby to be born, the woman in labor in "Indian Camp" screams until the end of the delivery and finally goes quiet when she falls sleep. However, it could be argued that there is more than passivity in the latent content of the story. Although she seems to lie on the bed submissively, the pain she suffers produces a scream that drives her husband to suicide. Therefore, she shows a reaction and thereby makes a vibration in the physical world around her.

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[563] The term "objective correlative" was introduced by T. S. Eliot in his essay on *Hamlet* as an artistic technique in which "objects and events in the external world are used to express complexes of thought and emotion" (Habib, *A History of Literary Criticism*, 629).

Like men who are burdened by lack of identity inherent to life within the Symbolic, the lack of self also afflicts women, and arguably even more than their male fellow characters. Therefore, if Liz, the waitress in “Up in Michigan,” displays contradictory acts of reticence, abstinence, irritation, eagerness, interest, and finally guilt towards Jim’s sexual assault, her behaviors are rooted in the lack of selfhood that culture has provided for individuals, rather than in the docility commonly accompanied with being a Hemingway-woman. Yet, Hemingway focuses more on the way men help the realization of individual gender identity. Like Kristeva, who stresses the importance of men’s attempt to liberate femininity through the power that language has granted them, Hemingway shows how men’s social privilege could be employed for sexual liberation. Therefore, Hemingway has not debased women, for if he did not care about them, he would not trouble himself to give them a place in his stories at all and instead would content himself with a fictional world populated by male characters busy with the supposedly masculine activities of hunting and bullfighting.

Hence, while the cries of the woman in labor in “Indian Camp” lead to her husband’s death, it is the birth of the baby boy that puts an end to the suffering of the woman. Representing the rebirth of masculinity, the birth of the baby erases the passive image of masculinity and produces a masculine identity that alleviates the excruciating agony of the female. As Sara Beardsworth puts it, “Since abjection bears on the life-support it is highly ambiguous. Life and death drives both support the emergent ego, as we have seen, for the death drive is the carrier wave of the life drive.”[564] What makes this rebellious rebirth of high prominence is that it blooms out of the heart of passive femininity (the lying mother’s womb), which suggests how closely the feminine and masculine are interwoven. It should be borne in mind that, as a male writer, Hemingway portrays the experience of the sexuality which he has access to,

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[564] “From Revolution to Revolt Culture,” 46.

without claiming to be aware of the way women live and feel. In this way, the trustworthiness and modesty of his art can be appreciated.

The idea of the male characters of the stories being characterized by vigor and supremacy and the female characters by weakness and feebleness is disproved by those female characters who control men rather than being controlled by them. Hemingway's work is pioneering in the context of early feminists' concerns in that it shows little trace of sexual discrimination or prejudice by associating the Symbolic with maleness. At times, he also sometimes dares to correlate the Phallus with a woman figure.

For instance, in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," Margot Macomber has characteristics that challenge the conventional image of women in Hemingway's stories. She commits adultery without any attempt to hide it from her husband; she also shoots her husband, ultimately killing him. Although some take it as her attempt to save her husband from the buffalo which accidentally hit him, the very act of holding a gun and taking a shot does not accord with the model of Hemingwayesque female in much of the literature. Regarding Margot Macomber and Brett Ashley in *The Sun Also Rises* as exceptions to "those women characters who accept their place in Hemingway's universe as a lower order of being than men,"[565] Nina Baym explains that Margot kills Francis Macomber "at the very moment when his belated manhood (through blood sport and male bonding) threatens her dominance."[566]

It seems that, unlike the prototypical kindness with which women are conventionally associated, this type of woman troubles the code hero. The ultimate image of this destructiveness appears when Margot is worried that Francis, who has overcome his cowardice, will act like a man. It suggests that to survive in a marriage, a man must not be manly, that is to say, he must not abide by the rules of male

[565] *Feminism and American Literary History*, 71.
[566] *Feminism and American Literary History*, 72.

dominance; this notion forms the main irony of not only this story but many other Hemingway short stories. Furthermore, the story is not about the evil nature of women, but rather about their plagued sexual role and the inefficiency of a culturally-defined relationship. It is the married sexual relationship, rather than women, that is portrayed as a blight on men's happiness and identity. The story of the Macombers represents the standpoint from which the stories see relationships since when the story tells us that the only virtue Margot has is her beauty, it also highlights the importance of Margot's finances ("Margot was too beautiful for Macomber to divorce her and Macomber had too much money for Margot ever to leave him," *CSS* 18).

In addition, some advocates of biographical approaches relate the occasional appearance of Hemingway's female emblems of dominance to his biological mother, Grace. In this respect, writing on the effect of John Masefield's poetry on Hemingway, Mark Spilka in his analysis of the artist Grace Hall (Hemingway's mother) writes, "it was her approval that he most desired, her recognition of his writings and himself, the artist he most wanted to equal in confidence and maturity, the person he most feared to confront, to the point of being afraid to attend her funeral in 1951, from which he abjectly stayed away."[567] It can be inferred from Spilka's words that Grace had something in common with Lacanian Other in that Hemingway simultaneously strove to win her approval as the authority and wished to have the same position of power ("confidence"). The relationship between Ernest and his mother strongly resembles the struggles of the code hero to achieve a sense of 'I' and in this way to experience some levels of subjectivity, like that of the master signifier.

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[567] *Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny*, 174. Though some evidence suggests that Spilka had Kristeva's notion of abjection in mind in this sentence, it is interesting that the role of Grace, according to Spilka's statement, is that of a threat to Ernest. His inability to face her corpse in the funeral is one of the ultimate images of the abject, for he shares with her the quality of being an artist, so it reminds him of his own ultimate death. This feeling of the abject that he experiences haunts his fiction.

Thus, the question arises: while abjection tends to move towards the womb and semiotic chora, what do we make of the mother figure as a dead body? The abject figure of the mother is highlighted in “The Mother of a Queen” when the matador comes back to Mexico from Spain after five years and faces the bill of his mother’s funeral. It is the price he has to pay; otherwise “his mother’s grave would be opened and her remains dumped on the common boneheap” (*CSS* 316). Hence, the mother figure instead of being the most *heimlich* becomes a menace and causes feelings of horror and affection. On the one hand, the mother as the first object to be rejected plays a crucial role in Kristeva’s theory of abjection; on the other hand, she notes, “the corpse represents fundamental pollution” (*PH* 109). Hence, the corpse of the mother in the story could be the ultimate image of the abject.

The women of the stories are often understood as conventionally passive like Liz Coates who gets raped in “Up in Michigan” or unconventionally aggressive like Margot Macomber in “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber.” What these types of female characters have in common is that, like any other character, they can live as long as they respect the limits of the linguistically defined female identity. Robert Penn Warren offers a description of Hemingway’s best women. Elaborating on Hemingway’s characters and situations, Warren observes:

> His best women characters, by the way, are those who most nearly approximate the men; that is, they embody the masculine virtues and point of view characteristic of Hemingway’s work. But the monotony is not merely a monotony deriving from the characters as types; it derives, rather, from the limitations of the author’s sensibility, which seems to come alive in only one issue. A

> more flexible sensibility, one capable of making nicer discriminations, might discover great variety in such key characters and situations.[568]

Although Warren is correct that Hemingway's limitations of sensibility must be taken into consideration, it is difficult to agree with the judgment that his best female characters resemble his men, because the stories allow no inference that women are belittled or that their innate strength is underestimated. Taking this matter into account, it could be argued that Warren himself has not succeeded in keeping an impartial standpoint towards the female characters.

Furthermore, although Hemingway's female characters do not possess a good reputation in terms of possessing a subjectivity, it does not mean that the women are wicked, but that they may be judged on the way they are supposed to behave and act in relation to men. In this sense, his women are no longer taken as vicious, sinful, or unfaithful by nature, but as deprived of having an option to be otherwise.

Although individuality rather than sexuality is the concern of the stories when it comes to the female characters, the stories adopt a different outlook towards American women. As will be explained in the present chapter, America, representing the full dominance of language, does not often give individuals (including women) a chance to have subjectivity; therefore, the American women of the stories suffer more under the authoritarian societal norms than European women. Hence, like the American men of Hemingway's stories who prefer male bonding to relationships with women, the American women of the narratives, compared to the European women, appear less fulfilled by relationships with men and show little compassion for men. This perspective is also substantiated by the narrator's comment in "The Short

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[568] "Ernest Hemingway," 44.

Happy Life of Francis Macomber" that American women are "enameled in that American female cruelty. They are the damnedest women. Really the damnedest" (*CSS* 9).

Whatever the issue is with Hemingway's female characters, there are few textual clues to conclude that the stories downgrade women for their sexuality. The story of the code hero rarely seems to be the story of masculinity in opposition to femininity, but rather the chronicle of the protagonist's attempts to defend the self, which in turn opens up a larger number of potentialities in terms of not only masculinity and femininity but also of gender identity in general.

Although the code hero's rejection of love and marriage forms the main body of our discussion in terms of the abject, further examination is required to support the hypothesis that this renunciation could be taken as an effort to define self-boundaries. Therefore, more analysis of the text will be provided to further investigate the abject in the stories. The present chapter will discuss the setting of the stories and the objects occupying the narratives in order to transfer the unstable nature of the abject as a "heterogeneous flux" (*PH* 10).

The quality of mixing the internal and external pollution is saliently echoed in scenes of battlefields, for which Hemingway's fiction is remembered, as bloodshed and dead bodies are an inescapable consequence of war. The same applies to the maladies and ailments of afflicted characters which create images of infection, disability, and death. The violence and fatality of war is vivid in "A Way You'll Never Be," "A Natural History of the Dead," and "Under the Ridge." In most cases, these situations and events cause or are accompanied with the end of a relationship. In other words, the separations take place either due to a disease or because of conflict (external war or internal conflicts). For instance, in "The Battler" Ad Francis, a former boxing champion, is left alone by his wife after his depression, Harry in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" leaves his wife by dying of an infection (gangrene), and the wife in "One Reader Writes" leaves her soldier husband who has just come back from three-year military service in Shanghai after becoming aware that he has been infected with syphilis. Similarly,

sometimes internal conflicts result in separations like the collapse of the marriage of Hubert and Cornelia in "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot." Therefore, the notion of corrupted bodies and ailments generally overshadow the stories, and few stories ever show life at peace or in order, internally or externally.

In regard to the abject features of the stories, blood plays a significant role in many of the narratives as it embodies the violence and corporeality of the abject. The image of blood appears in many stories, including "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" which tells the story of the American Francis Macomber who seeks courage on an African safari. However, he moves further towards cowardice and, by trying to conform to gender conventions, towards his destruction at physical and psychological levels. In the process of attempting to attract the attention and admiration of his wife Margot by conquering his fears and killing a buffalo, he is shot by Margot and dies. Margot also commits adultery, but as the story comments, "it was the poor sod's own bloody fault" (*CSS* 21). Being unable to jettison filth (conventional masculinity) from himself, Macomber ends up sullied by blood (after being killed by his wife, Margot). It is only death that can purify him, and the death scene accentuates the blood coming out of his body (the blood that "sank into the dry, loose earth," 28). Since Macomber was polluted with the filth of blood, Wilson, the guide, calls him "a bloody four-letter man as well as a bloody coward" (8). Blood plays such a significant role in the story that it is used to characterize not only Macomber's fear ("bloody fear," 26), but also the objects (animals) that menace him; for instance, "the blood spoor" of the buffalo bull or its "dark blood on the short grass" (14), the wounded "bloody-headed lion" (18), and the buffalo's bloody scene after Macomber's shot with its "mouth tight closed, blood dripping" and "his little pig eyes bloodshot" (27).

References to blood appear throughout Hemingway's narratives. To refer to "Indian Camp" again, blood maintains a strong presence through the images of the mother's bleeding womb and of the father's throat cut with a razor "from ear to ear" with the blood flowing "down into a pool where his body sagged the bunk" (*CSS* 69). Investigating the significance of these scenes, Jeffrey Meyers writes: "the pregnant

wife is considered unclean, vulnerable, and in danger; the husband absorbs her weakness and associates her blood with his own death."[569] Meyers' reference to uncleanness and vulnerability and the link between the mother's blood and the father's death strikingly align with Kristeva's theory of abjection: "blood, as a vital element, also refers to women, fertility, and the assurance of fecundation. It thus becomes a fascinating semantic crossroads, the propitious place for abjection where death and femininity, murder and procreation, cessation of life and vitality all come together" (*PH* 96).

Furthermore, emphasizing the polluting quality of the abject, Kristeva categorizes sources of pollution into two categories, those from within and those from without. Calling the former "menstrual" and the latter "excremental," she explains:

> Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.) stand for the danger to identity that comes from without: the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death. Menstrual blood, on the contrary, stands for the danger issuing from within the identity (social or sexual); it threatens the relationship between the sexes within a social aggregate and, through internalization, the identity of each sex in the face of sexual difference. (*PH* 71)

Not only could the blood coming out of the woman's womb be taken as a polluting object similar to menstrual blood, but it also produces more pollution: the breech baby of "Indian Camp." It means that the woman in labor produces filth in a manner similar to Zuzana Kovar's description of the abject:

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[569] "Hemingway's Primitivism and 'Indian Camp,'" 306.

> Abject(ion) is productive in one sense – in that it produces shit – but is unproductive in another – in that it is still at times associated with the feminine in accordance with Kristeva, and therefore inherits the whole of this gender's historical condition.
>
> What needs to be mobilised in order to in part begin to rethink abject(ion) and to be able to approach it as a process of change that in fact not only produces shit, but also produces bodies, is this second point.[570]

Therefore, the woman's blood is a regenerative locus of pollution, in which a pollutant gives birth to another pollutant, which, in turn, distorts the socially accepted norms of sexual relationships in a community, in that the breech baby (the code hero), as filth, threatens the sexual identity of society by becoming a dangerously unfit member of the aggregate. In this way, the blood from the mother's womb, as something feminine, produces more horror by producing a child that turns out to be a menace to language in the way that Kjetil Rødje describes menstrual blood:

> The particular abject status of menstrual blood, Kristeva argues, is associated with its feminine status, as a threat to the male, phallic power of the reigning symbolic order. Feminine defilements do not fit in, not merely in terms of being bodily waste but particularly in terms of its association with feminine bodily orifices. Menstrual blood thus threatens not only a bodily order but furthermore a patriarchal order as it becomes a threat to the social organization of the relationship between the sexes and the prescribed identity of each sex.[571]

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[570] *Architecture in Abjection*, 6–7.
[571] *Images of Blood in American Cinema*, 92.

In addition, Kristeva's idea of life threatened by death is added to the uncleanness of the mother's blood when the concept of blood as the prototype of an internal polluting object is mixed with the external polluting quality of the father's corpse.

It could thus be argued that the violent polluting effect of blood, along with death and malaise, reflects the code hero's struggles to purify the self from the non-self (the symbolic order as the abject) by means of making a polluting object out of himself. Hence, Hemingway's stories exist on the borderline of being, on the one hand, the bloody abject of literature that ought to be cast off and, on the other hand, one part of its main body. In this sense, blood, read in the context of abjection, becomes a leitmotif for exploring gender in the literature of twentieth-century America.

Similarly, references to water feature in many of his stories and constitute, in turn, a salient motif for intensifying the representation of the abject. The fact that a writer, characterized by economy of style, mentions the word "water" so many times over the course of his short stories is an indication of its high significance in the narratives, and that it acts as much more than just a signifier denoting an object. It is essential to note that these frequent repetitions are accompanied with many metonymical and synecdochic allusions to water as well.

The scholarly literature has offered many different interpretations of the water motif. For instance, Silvia Ammary comments: "Instead of artists absorbing the bright colors of the gardens, the rainy weather prevents this from happening [. . .]. We do not need to remember how it rains in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* to figure out that rain in Hemingway's fiction is an important symbol of the disintegration, decay,

grief, despair, a strong discomfort, and ennui."[572] However, presenting a Lacanian reading of "After the Storm," Ben Stoltzfus reads water as a psychoanalytical sign and argues:

> The narrator's attempt to get at the woman floating in the ship that "looked a mile long under the water" (374) is the sign of this prohibition and the symptom of desire. The narrator's failure to pry the woman away from the ship, even in death, confirms the overriding Law of the Phallus. Failure is synonymous with castration and the perceived death of the self.[573]

Stoltzfus's view could have the potential to stimulate innovation in Hemingway scholarship if he had elaborated on it in greater detail.

Recapitulating Nick Adams' journey, "Indian Camp" takes place around the scene of a woman in labor. The omnipresence of water in the story evokes amniotic fluid. Similar to the fetus surrounded by the embryonic fluid inside the mother's womb, the world that surrounds Nick Adams in various stories is a watery one. Just like the baby boy, Nick is reborn through a diversity of traumatic, unsettling experiences which echo his attempt to define the self (the baby) from the non-self (the mother). This sense of unsettlement produced by the fluidity of water also accords with the narrative's not locating Nick in a specific city or country; it seems as if he lives the life of a nomad. Indeed, abjection is connected with rejecting any "borders, positions, rules" (*PH* 4).

As water and associations with it are ubiquitous in the stories, "Indian Camp," inaugurating the journey of Nick Adams as it does, opens with a scene of water at the lake shore where Nick, his father, and Uncle George set off towards the camp by boat. However, the narrative does not restrict the water

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[572] *The Influence of European Culture*, 15.
[573] "Hemingway's 'After the Storm,'" 53.

motif to the first lines of the story, for the image of water is continually evoked in various shapes and motifs, such as the meadow “soaking wet with dew” (*CSS* 67), “the water” Nick’s father poured “out of the big kettle into a basin” (68) before the baby’s birth, the water which “Nick trailed his hand in” (70), and by the words that remind the reader of the presence of water, such as “shore,” “bay,” “rowboat,” “beach” (67), the dead husband’s wet hands, or the mist surrounding the boats (highlighted twice in the initial lines of the story).[574] Similarly, the story ends by reminding the reader of the pervasiveness of water as Nick and his father leave the camp via the rowboat. It suggests that the world of the “Indian Camp,” like the majority of Hemingway’s other stories, is the domain of the semiotic chora (the maternal uterus).

The stories create a sense of instability by implicitly putting the reader in a state of opacity. It often challenges the reader to find stability or certainty in understanding the story. In this respect, Gerry Brenner believes, “Hemingway’s ploy was to write works whose subtle or ambiguous elements” are “undiscerned upon first reading.”[575] Moreover, this ambiguity is accompanied with an unknown sense of achievement, since the narrative mood produces in the reader the feeling of something promising to come, though no promises are fulfilled. Corroborating this interpretation of the stories, Nick stories “recede into silence with the protagonist either alone or protected by nuanced barriers of ambiguity and irony.”[576] This feeling is a mixture of misery and hope, loss and victory, submission and dominance.

In addition to the theory of omission that is often applied to Hemingway’s work, other literary techniques such as ambiguity also challenge the reader. The journalistic style of the texts means that

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[574] Mist, similar to haze, can be related to fear, in that Kristeva believes, “‘fear’—a fluid haze, an elusive clamminess—no sooner has it cropped up than it shades off like a mirage and permeates all words of the language with nonexistence, with a hallucinatory, ghostly glimmer” (*PH* 6). In the same way, mist in the stories functions to represent the unveiling of a promising future in gender identity, though such an unveiling might last just for an instant and seems like a mirage-like flash of light.

[575] *Concealments in Hemingway’s Works*, 166.

[576] F. Scafella’s *Hemingway: Essays of Reassessment* (1991), quoted in Morsi, “*Amerika ist immer woanders*,” 141.

numerous pronouns, such as “it” and “they,” have vague referents. Already from this suggestive use of vague language, it could be inferred that much of the iceberg is hidden beneath the water. The ambiguous use of pronouns features prominently in “Hills Like White Elephants,” when the couple use “it” and “that” several times to mean either abortion (“It’s really not anything [. . .] it’s all perfectly natural,” *CSS* 212; “it’s perfectly simple,” 213; “I don’t want you to do it if you don’t want to,” 214) or pregnancy (“That’s the only thing that bothers us. It’s the only thing that’s made us unhappy,” 212; “I’m perfectly willing to go through with it if it means anything to you,” 214). Although the reader can attempt to decipher their meanings throughout the story, the ambiguity of pronouns may destabilize the reader’s understanding of the story.

Because the abject is at the borderline of self and other, it is also related to uncertainty and instability, for the not-yet-constituted ego is unable to relate to external objects. In this regard, Kristeva acknowledges:

> On the one hand, the non-constitution of the (outside) object as such renders unstable the ego’s identity, which could not be precisely established without having been differentiated from an other, from its object. The ego of primary narcissism is thus uncertain, fragile, threatened, subjected just as much as its non-object to spatial ambivalence (inside/outside uncertainty) and to ambiguity of perception (pleasure/pain). (*PH* 62)

Thus, as the locus of abjection, the stories portray a world that possesses no anchoring point and depict it in motifs that distort any sense of certainty or clarity. Consequently, the atmosphere of Hemingway’s story is made up of unstable, moving elements and hangs thus in a state of suspension. This suspension applies equally to objects, relationships and characters. Thus, the code hero lives in a slippery world where everything escapes his grasp.

Nick’s performative life stands in relation to the way in which he attempts to interact with language despite facing a lack of consistency, although consistency is necessary for the recognition of

boundaries in general and of self-boundaries in particular. As defining one's borders is contingent upon repelling and exorcising the non-self, when an atmosphere does not allow the individual to have a clear image of the environment, the borders of the self are difficult to specify. However, the code hero employs the psychological strategy of adapting to a world that is in constant movement by living an undefined gender. Hence, the atmospheres of the stories, rather than signifying the nature of the symbolic, reflect the heroism constituted on Nick Adams's psychic plane.

Further, the incertitude appears as motion and instability and is visualized in the physical mobility of characters and pendant items, although other fictional elements in the spatial and temporal setting of the stories also contribute to this visualization. Apart from the stories' real geographical locations, the settings may serve as projections of something within the protagonist's mind and thus language (the governing system). For instance, Hemingway's depictions of landscapes often differ from their appearance in reality. In this respect, Laura Gruber Godfrey, author of *Hemingway's Geographies*, has proposed that Hemingway employs "deictic expressions of time and place" to convey "long and dense relationships":

> [T]hat principle of "hidden" or barely suggested geographical details seems to have been on Hemingway's mind when he crafted his earliest, and also his last, Nick Adams fiction. It is geographical omission that demands readers to test their knowledge of the place Hemingway's narrator describes, find what it lacks, and texture the empty spaces themselves [. . .]. What we create is a vague and indeterminate *image* of place, yet a highly specific *feeling* of a relationship

> with place. This explains my own shock at seeing the green and lush terrain of northern Michigan for the first time, having imagined it in black and white for over a decade.[577]

Although Godfrey emphasizes the quality of vagueness and indeterminacy in descriptions of place, her italicized "feeling" implies the general ambiance that the stories generate in relation to the code hero's mental development. Nonetheless, this "*feeling* of a relationship with place" echoes two simultaneous sites, one within and one outside. While the former is connected to what is going on in the hero's inner world, the latter relates to what is happening to the Symbolic. As the abject signifies a fearful state of being somewhere in-between, the physical settings of the stories as the background to Nick's journey play a significant role in giving the reader the delirious feeling of being in-between.

Additionally, the idea of the inner world's being reflected in the outer surroundings finds further validation in the scholarly literature. For instance, with regard to Africa as the setting of stories by Hemingway and Edgar Rice Burroughs, Dave Kuhne comments:

> Hemingway follows the precedent established by Conrad in that Hemingway employs African settings as testing grounds that spark epiphanies and interior changes in his characters, for instance, the change that Francis Macomber experiences in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber."[578]

Similarly, in his consideration of Constantinople as a setting in *In Our Time*, Mel Kenne detects a sense of horror and relates it to the city's erotically seductive visual attraction. He writes:

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[577] *Hemingway's Geographies*, 59–60.
[578] *African Settings in Contemporary American Novels*, 23.

While Hemingway's writings about Constantinople and the new war in Turkey often do appear to be biased in favor of Western authority in Turkey and the Middle East, they also suggest that the young journalist was projecting a more personal conflict onto the larger one between the Greek and Turkish cultures. Beneath the smooth veneer of cynicism and worldliness, we might sense a highly talented but naïve young American writer who, even as he hones the prose style that will later make him famous, is trying desperately to come to terms with a world lying far beyond the pale of his native genius.

An aspect of this projection might be seen as a form of culture shock suggested by the young reporter's confrontation with "Otherness" in the form of dirt in Constantinople. A symptom of one stage of culture shock is an obsession with dirtiness in the foreign culture when the stranger compares it to her or his own country, where everything "makes sense." It is the unfamiliar ordering of one's new surroundings that makes them appear dirty, and this sense of dirtiness inspires fear and distrust of people, food, strange customs, and social institutions [. . .]. This fear may find its conscious expression in the eroticism of experiences that contain an essence of this Otherness.[579]

Although Kenne does not refer to Kristeva's notion of the abject, his elaboration on Constantinople aligns well with the present study of abjection. It is as if the protagonist of the short stories is living in a world parallel with that of Hemingway, because Nick Adams, like Hemingway, feeling "fear" when confronted with the Symbolic ("customs and social institutions"), tries to defend the boundaries of his self ("his own country") against the assaults of filth ("dirtiness in the foreign culture") which signifies a non-self

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[579] "Dirty, White Candles," 497.

("Otherness"). Further, the way in which Kenne correlates fear with eroticism in Constantinople alludes to the paradoxical feelings of joy and horror that the abject arouses.

In the context of abjection, the stories' local settings also carry profound implications. Forming one of the main narrative threads, space could also be read in terms of the abject, as Estelle Barrett notes:

> As a process that determines borders between inside and outside, abjection can also be understood as a spatial concept. In-between, composite and ambiguous, abjection is that which does not respect borders, positions and rules. The place of the abject is the place of the splitting of the ego. The abject implies an ego that repeatedly places, separates and situates itself and 'therefore *strays* instead of getting his bearings, desiring, belonging or refusing . . . instead of sounding himself as to his "being", he does so concerning his place: "Where am I?" instead of "Who am I?"' (Kristeva 1982: 8). To be abject is to be an exile or deject possessed by a non-object.[580]

Reminiscent of Hemingway's actual experience of being wounded on the front (i.e., a geographical borderline) when he was an ambulance driver in Italy, Nick's psychological injuries bring borders into relation with this essential feature of the abject. Kristeva describes it thus: "Owing to the ambiguous opposition I/Other, Inside/Outside—an opposition that is vigorous but pervious, violent but uncertain" (*PH* 7). This state of being at the confusion of the borderlines is presented through various fictional elements, the most Hemingwayesque of which is the battle front which serves as the setting for several stories.

[580] *Kristeva Reframed*, 102.

Moreover, the concept of conflict and struggle correlates well with battlefield scenes. For instance, Nick Adams is wounded on the Italian front, which highlights the struggle he faces in defending his self-boundaries. If the Italians try to protect their borders against enemy forces, Nick attempts to defend the boundaries of his self by evading love and marriage. The wars in which the code hero participates in the outer world, such as the Spanish Civil War ("The Denunciation," "The Butterfly and the Tank," "Night Before Battle," and "Under the Ridge") and the fight against Mussolini and Italian fascism ("Che Ti Dice La Patria"), occur concurrently with an inner war. Moreover, this inner turmoil is represented by the narratives' recurring contrast between America and Europe.

Present in the lower layers of many stories, the contrast between America and Europe forms a main thread of "Wine of Wyoming" (1930), in which the narrator recounts his journey to Wyoming with his friends during Prohibition and their visit to a restaurant owned by a French couple called the Fontans, who make home-made wine. Although "Wine of Wyoming" is not praised by critics as much as other Hemingway's stories, it has received some attention. Gabriela Tucan comments on this story in a reaction to Joseph Flora's *Ernest Hemingway: A Study of Short Fiction*:

> Flora sees the importance of this otherwise neglected story in its subject: marriage and the way it proclaims the values of the religiously conservative tradition of Catholicism. He then argues that the Fontans, the married couple, "represent the best of the Old World traditions. They believe that the married state is indeed the best course of life for most people, and they worry that American culture has underdetermined it, that their sons will be hard pressed to duplicate what they have found through marriage."[581]

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[581] *A Cognitive Approach to Ernest Hemingway's Short Fiction*, 179.

In contrast to Flora who sees the story as concentrating on marriage and thereby breaking with conventions, Susan Beegel claims that the story "predicts the death of hunting in the next generation."[582] However, both of these views share a concern for a lost purity and spoiled cleanness either in terms of traditions or in terms of the code hero's so-called masculine identity. Both are compelling in their own ways.

Similar to Flora's and Beegel's perspectives which concentrate on assaults on norms and conventional activities, Harry Robert Stoneback relates "Wine of Wyoming" to corruption and "a pattern of European-American contrasts."[583] Proposing that the story portrays the separation from France as a pain from which the expatriate writers such as Hemingway and MacLeish suffered, Stoneback sees the story as:

> a searching examination of American spiritual dryness and its concomitant messiness and hypocrisy. The story develops a complex tapestry depicting Prohibition as spiritual aridity, a condition making communion extremely difficult even for those who long for it, those expatriate Americans or immigrant Europeans who, however wise they may be in the ways of tradition, are caught in the dry country. Betrayal breeds betrayal. Tradition and civilization, as anchored in the European-Catholic vision of the story, are betrayed. The land itself is betrayed. In the cumulative imagery of the mines, the reckless shooting, the cars whirling on the cement roads, there is more than a hint of the familiar machine-in-the-garden motif. Finally, the narrator betrays the very

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[582] "Eye and Heart," 84.
[583] "'Mais Je Reste Catholique,'" 221.

> sacrament he celebrates. Like a good American, he hits the road, leaves Wyoming behind. Where will he go? Back to France? What person, what place, what grace is safe from betrayal?[584]

However, the "spiritual aridity" that results from Prohibition might also express the story's confrontation with the Symbolic, and Stoneback's "betrayal" might evoke the transgressive nature of abjection. The reader is exposed to the transgressive nature of Hemingway's fiction from the very beginning: the title instantly informs the reader about the French Fontans' illegal winery in America. Due to the Prohibition movement, producing and consuming alcohol was banned in America in 1919. Interestingly, the state of Wyoming was among the last states to adopt this new law.[585]

"Wine of Wyoming" features defining qualities of the abject. Catherine Keyser stresses the matter of filth by examining the dirt the American guests produce and infers from Fontan's epithet *cochons* (French for "pig") for the Americans that "[t]his piggishness threatens to contaminate the Fontan family."[586] This reading is strengthened by the dirt the Americans actually produce in the Fontans' house, for the American women who have had too much to drink vomit (a typical image of the abject in Kristeva) on their table. The risk of dirt soiling the walls of Fontan's family is further set in relief by the narrator's repeated comments that "the house was very clean and neat" (*CSS* 343), "there was a clean tablecloth" (344), and that Madame Fontan looked "clean and rosy-faced" (348).

In sum, America and Europe are more than the physical reality of two continents: they serve as representative topographies of the code hero's mind. It seems as if the code hero is dwelling psychologically between America and Europe, set apart from one another like two hostile forces.

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584 "'Mais Je Reste Catholique,'" 221.
585 Plume, "Eighteenth Amendment," 527.
586 *Artificial Color*, 106.

The binary of Europe and America in Hemingway's works has been discussed by various scholars. For instance, Todd Gitlin, referring to Hemingway and other writers of the two continents, emphasizes the rich history of "[t]he cultural side of American anti-Europeanism" and concludes:

> In one long strand of American opinion, Europe meant culture while America meant either nature or God or the combination—the wilderness as opposed to the city, the natural as opposed to the cosmopolitan, the raw as opposed to the cooked, the plowman as opposed to the pantywaist. But still, America for all of its history *needed* Europe—its ideas, its investment, its markets, its unwanted "huddled masses yearning to breathe free," at times its cachet.[587]

While the Other menaces the self, Hemingway offers the possibility that the Other (America) may be threatened by the assaulted self of the code hero (the Fontans). This mutual hostility or violation between the Symbolic rules and the desire of individuals is embodied by the French couple, the Fontans, who make and sell wine in their house in America. Even if they are meant to obey the rules that American Prohibition has imposed on them, they break the law as European foreigners by refusing to live according to the rules of the land of dreams. In other words, the Fontans, representing here the code hero, follow their own dream. They turn their home into a restaurant to serve wine to guests.

Unlike the prototypical Hemingway narrative, which tells the story of an American in Europe, "The Wine of Wyoming" distinctively features a European couple who live the life of offenders in America. Now, as a rule, the Symbolic is represented throughout the stories by the country in which the characters are brought up and educated.

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[587] *The Bulldozer and the Big Tent*, 98.

In the light of the present discussion concerning Europe and America in the stories, because Nick is born in America and then has adventures abroad in Europe, America, as the domain of the Symbolic, stands for the land of passive submissive people who do not attempt to be influential or make changes. The story, while undertaking to criticize Americans for their eating habits, describes American women as passively reading books (language) while they lie in bed (submissiveness), incapable of giving birth to a baby (unproductiveness). Although such eating seems to nourish them, it has resulted in such obesity that it has made them infertile. The dialogue expressing this idea moves from the subject of American restaurants to Mrs. Fontan's attitude toward her son's American wife:

> "I never eat at the hotel. Maybe they eat all right there. Only once in my life I ate at a restaurant in America. You know what they gave me? They gave me pork that was raw!"
>
> "Really?"
>
> "I don't lie to you. It was pork that wasn't cooked! Et mon fils il est marié avec une américaine, et tout le temps il a mangé les *beans* en *can*."
>
> "How long has he been married?"
>
> "Oh, my God, I don't know. His wife weighs two hundred twenty-five pounds. She don't work. She don't cook. She gives him beans en can."
>
> "What does she do?"
>
> "All the time she reads. Rien que des books. Tout le temps elle stay in the bed and read books. Already she can't have another baby. She's too fat. There ain't any room." (*CSS* 343)

What is more, these lines raise the question of marriage between people of these two continents specifically in the context of the Europe-America dichotomy. In this regard, discussing the work of James

Fenimore Cooper and Hemingway in general, Renata Wasserman draws attention to "the awareness of differences" and the fact that "it is no longer necessary to forge a single, coherent image of national identity," which can be considered in light of the rupture the abject develops in the monolith of identity.[588] Wasserman also adds, "Blocked marriages between Americans and Europeans no longer stand for the impossibility of crossing the boundary between nature and culture, American and European, self and other-categories now rearranged along different axes. Male and female are irreconcilable on either side of the ocean."[589]

In terms of the abject and abjection, similar to the other short stories, "Wine of Wyoming" illustrates both threats of the self's territories and the rejection of these threats. Hence, the narrative incorporates different scenes of menace and external force. For instance, although the Fontans manage a restaurant, they at first resist allowing the American guests to enter their home, which implies the precariously threatening feature of the abject, for the guests threaten the Fontans with reporting their brewery to the American police ("Go on, give us some beer. You know me," *CSS* 342).

In addition, the fact that Americans read too many books signals the extent to which they live under the influence of social education and cultural rules. Apart from the prescriptive position of books, what adds to the dominance of books is that the only available medium for a book to communicate with its readers is language which is, in turn, part of the governing system (culture). What is interesting in this regard is the manner in which the Fontans (code heroes) jettison the dirt of this American (Puritan or Symbolic) attack on their self.

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[588] *Exotic Nations*, 249.
[589] *Exotic Nations*, 249.

Furthermore, like Nick and other code heroes that attempt to add nuance to the Other by their nonconforming lifestyle, the Fontans disturb linguistic medium not only by ignoring and violating grammatical rules of the American language but also by inserting a different system of signs (French language) into their speech in English. The Fontans' mother tongue, mixed with the English language, means that a significant portion of the story is in French, so much that Hemingway warns, "'Don't let anyone tell you it's not a good story or has too much French in it' (Letters, 323)."[590] In addition, the insertion of French sentences into the American dialogue implies the constructedness and arbitrary nature of language and thereby exposes its potential to be violated.

The question of whether America or Europe is better has little place in Hemingway's work. Instead, his short stories have to do with his concerns for America. When he discusses European issues, it is in the service of explaining American identity and his perspectives on it. Hence, the stories present a writer's concerns about the identity of his fellow Americans, which has undergone assaults not only in terms of gender but also regarding other aspects of identity. For instance, when Fontan asks the narrator, "How do you like America?," the narrator, inserting French sentences into his English statement, replies, "It's my country, you see. So I like it, because it's my country. Mais on ne mange pas très bien. D'antan, oui. Mais maintenant, no" (*CSS* 345).

This story deals with the manner in which legal regulations (symbolized by Prohibition) attack the identity of the individuals and thus lead to corruption in various aspects of their lifestyle, including religion. Hemingway's stories are therefore not about religion, but about the intimidating nature of the governing systems and the loss of purity in the subjectivity of individuals. In fact, one of Hemingway's

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[590] L. Martin, "Crazy in Sheridan," 360.

short stories' main achievements is revealing a world of abjection which, unlike the way Kristeva sees Céline's work, "leaves the doors of progress open" (*PH* 136). Hemingway's narratives belong to the literature which:

> represents the ultimate coding of our crises, of our most intimate and most serious apocalypses. Hence its nocturnal power, "the great darkness" (Angela of Foligno). Hence its continual compromising: "Literature and Evil" (Georges Bataille). Hence also its being seen as taking the place of the sacred, which, to the extent that it has left us without leaving us alone, calls forth the quacks from all four corners of perversion. Because it occupies its place, because it hence decks itself out in the sacred power of horror, literature may also involve not an ultimate resistance to but an unveiling of the abject: an elaboration, a discharge, and a hollowing out of abjection through the Crisis of the Word. (*PH* 208)

Apart from the Europe-America dichotomy, other binary oppositions help shape the narratives' evocation of abjection. Indeed, Kristeva "describes the polluting aspects of abjection in terms of binary opposition and implied m(O)therness."[591]

So concerned with shattering limits, the stories are also preoccupied with the broken border of land and sea. In this regard, shores and beaches portray the image of water invading the land, crossing and muddying borders. They are mentioned in various stories (inter alia "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," "The End of Something," "Big Two-Hearted River," "One Trip Across," "Summer People," "The Last Good Country," "A Train Trip," "Fathers and Sons," and "Cat in the Rain"). One of the images of nature that embodies the motif of disrespecting borders appears in "Ten Indians": when Nick "awoke in the night

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[591] Bihlmeyer, "Phallic (M)Other in Mainstream Culture," 157.

he heard the wind in the hemlock trees outside the cottage and the waves of the lake coming in on the shore" (*CSS* 257). "After the Storm" also provides this reading with a passage enriched with images of instability accompanied with those of penetration into margins and limits:

> Brother, that was some storm. I was the first boat out and you never saw water like that was. It was just as white as a lye barrel and coming from Eastern Harbor to Sou'west Key you couldn't recognize the shore. There was a big channel blown right out through the middle of the beach. Trees and all blown out and a channel cut through and all the water white as chalk and everything on it; branches and whole trees and dead birds, and all floating. Inside the keys were all the pelicans in the world and all kinds of birds flying. They must have gone inside there when they knew it was coming. (*CSS* 283–284)

These lines, filled with motifs of abjection, represent the way the shore or land (solidity) loses its recognizability because of the power of water. Further, it seems as if all nature (blown out trees and branches, or dead birds) projects this distortion. In short, presenting a framework of the abject, this short text unites the four elements of water, earth, air, and fire, respectively, represented by the sea, shore, storm, and light.

The ambiguous nature of the abject is visualized in the stories not only in their spatial settings but also in their temporal ones. Hence the dichotomy of light and darkness in the present study carries profound implications in relation to the protagonist's actions and the atmosphere of the stories. For this reason, many important events in the stories take place in the darkness of night; for instance, the evacuation of the Greeks from Eastern Thrace in "On the Quai at Smyrna," the self-mutilation of the teenage boy in "The Gambler, The Nun, and the Radio," or the caesarean section and suicide of the baby's father in "Indian Camp."

The words "dark" and "darkness" are prominently used many times in the short stories. The darkness of night shares the quality of horror proper to the abject and obscures one's surroundings, thus

necessitating a struggle to defend the boundaries of the self. As Kristeva writes, “There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat” (*PH* 1). This matter bears a resemblance to the frightening sound of animals at night in Hemingway’s stories, such as the hyena in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” (“He’s the one makes the noise at night. I don’t mind it. They’re a filthy animal though,” *CSS* 47), the roaring of the lion all night in “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,” or the opening lines of “Now I Lay Me” (“THAT NIGHT WE LAY ON THE FLOOR IN the room and I listened to the silk-worms eating. The silk-worms fed in racks of mulberry leaves and all night you could hear them eating and a dropping sound in the leaves,” 276). Producing abjection, the dark journey of Nick Adams realizes Kristeva’s “night in which the outline of the signified thing vanishes,” “I *seek* (myself), *lose* (myself), or experience *jouissance*—then ‘I’ is heterogeneous” (*PH* 10). Therefore, darkness is an essential part of the road which leads to the heterogeneity that the protagonist causes by means of the heroic realization of jouissance (moments of self-loss).

Hemingway also refers frequently to man-made light in the dominant darkness of the environment, for example, in the “big porcelain stove” shining in the corner of the room in “Cross-Country Snow” (*CSS* 144), the “lantern light” in “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” (11), “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” (42), and “Summer People” (497), “the fading light” in “Landscape with Figures” (595), and the light of a neon sign in “The Strange Country” (613). Among the various interpretations of light in Hemingway’s stories, Steven K. Hoffman’s seems most convincing. He writes:

> [S]ince the café in “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” must eventually close, even the legitimate haven has distinct limitation. These facts should be enough to alert us to the possibility that tangible physical location is not sufficient to combat the darkness. The clean, well-lighted place is not actually a “place” at all; rather, it is a metaphor for an attitude toward the self and its existential context, a psychological perspective which, like the café itself with its fabricated conveniences and electric light, is man-made, artificial. The “cleanliness” of the metaphor

> connotes a personal sense of order, however artificial and temporary, carved out within the larger chaos of the universe, a firm hold on the self with which one can meet any contingency. By "light" Hemingway refers to a special kind of vision, the clear-sightedness and absolute lack of illusion necessary to look into the darkness and thereby come to grips with the *nada* which is everywhere. At the same, vision must also be directed at the self so as to assure its cleanness. With cleanness and light, then, physical locale is irrelevant. Whoever manages to internalize these qualities carries the clean, well-lighted place with him, even into the very teeth of the darkness. The degree to which the Hemingway character can develop and maintain this perspective determines his success (or lack thereof) in dealing with the Void.
>
> The man who does achieve the clean, well-lighted place is truly an existential hero, both in the Kierkegaardian and Heideggerian senses of the term. In the former he is content to live with his angst and, because there is no other choice, content to be in doubt about ultimate causes. Nevertheless, he is able to meet the varied and often threatening circumstances of day-to-day living, secure in the knowledge that he will always "become" and never "be". In the latter he can face the unpleasant realities of his own being and the situation into which he has been "thrown" and can accept with composure the inevitability of his death. In both instances he is an "authentic" man.[592]

In accurately mentioning how the external darkness relates to one's psychology, Hoffman sets the code hero's lit-up cleanness in contrast with the local darkness and praises him for carrying light within himself, even in the very heart of darkness.

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[592] "Nada and the Clean, Well-Lighted Place," 176–77.

Nonetheless, the inner world of the protagonist does not have to be considered isolated from the Other, though he lives a self-alienated life; on the contrary, he does interact with the external world. Instead of striving to clean the defiled structure of culture, he adds more dirt to it to such an extent that the Other also experiences this dirt. Put simply, instead of feeling "content to live with his angst" (to use Hoffman's words), he causes angst. In this way, the code hero could be considered a generator of defilement, which may take the form, as in the present discussion, of gender fluidity. Further, because his filth cannot lead to the removal of the dirt of language (the totalitarian power of the Symbolic), he, in Hoffman's words, "can accept with composure the inevitability of his death."[593]

Intensifying the sense of ambiguity which hinders the identification of one's surroundings (the non-self), darkness makes defining the boundaries of the self more difficult. Darkness is frightening not just because it does not allow individuals to see their surroundings; it also makes it impossible for individuals to have a vision of their own body (self). In short, darkness generally makes orientation an illusion. Thus, to quote Kristeva, "abjection is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it—on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger" (*PH* 9). This perspective resembles the collapse of existence about which the young American soldier in "Now I Lay" is worried when sleeping in darkness. Having survived a night of bombing, Nick, the soldier, is afraid to sleep in the darkness of night for he thinks he will die if he sleeps ("because I knew my soul would only go out of me if it were dark. So, of course, many nights I was where I could have a light and then I slept," *CSS* 279).

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[593] "Nada and the Clean, Well-Lighted Place," 177.

The trauma of war causing the soldier's insomnia in "Now I Lay" recalls the caesarean section and suicide scene that Nick witnesses in "Indian Camp." As a result, Nick can no longer fall asleep (be passive) for the rest of his life. The darkness and threats of night also cause sleeplessness in other characters; for example, Jack of "Fifty Grand" cannot sleep on the nights before his fights; Nick in "In Another Country" is "very much afraid to die" when "walking home at night through the empty streets with the cold wind and all the shops closed, trying to keep near the street lights" (*CSS* 208); in "A Canary for One," "In the night the American lady lay without sleeping because the train was a *rapide* and went very fast and she was afraid of the speed in the night" and "all night the train went very fast and the American lady lay awake and waited for a wreck" (259); and, finally, the narrator of "Now I Lay Me" emphasizes, "I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body" (276).

Marriage in the stories is also considered a kind of sleep, given the loss of identity it brings about. For instance, "Now I Lay" contains a dialogue between Nick (called Signor Tenente) and his Italian commander who recommends that he get married:

> "You ought to get married, Signor Tenente. Then you wouldn't worry."
>
> "I don't know."
>
> "You ought to get married. Why don't you pick out some nice Italian girl with plenty of money? You could get any one you want. You're young and you got good decorations and you look nice. You been wounded a couple of times."
>
> "I can't talk the language well enough."
>
> "You talk it fine. To hell with talking the language. You don't have to talk to them. Marry them."
>
> "I'll think about it."
>
> "You know some girls, don't you?"

"Sure."

"Well, you marry the one with the most money. Over here, the way they're brought up, they'll all make you a good wife."

"I'll think about it."

"Don't think about it, Signor Tenente. Do it."

"All right."

"A man ought to be married. You'll never regret it. Every man ought to be married."

"All right," I said. "Let's try and sleep a while."

"All right, Signor Tenente. I'll try it again. But you remember what I said."

"I'll remember it," I said. "Now let's sleep a while, John."

"All right," he said. "I hope you sleep, Signor Tenente." (*CSS* 281)

The commander, representing the Law-of-the-Father, advocates marriage as a principal way of coping with Nick's worries. Marriage is the sleep he hopes for Nick to have, in that both marriage and sleep suppress self-awareness. The conversation between the soldier and his commander clarifies the linguistically-defined concept of marriage: a marriage in which talking has no place. It highlights that having a language in common bears no significance in marriage while wealth and appearances do matter. This system thus displays apathy toward a common ground of marital communication since the system invariably privileges its own survival via marriage and procreation.

Since expressing one's subjectivity through language is impossible, being averse to using language as a linguistic system is an abjection that helps the characters to protect themselves. Hence, in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," the day after Margot Macomber commits adultery with Wilson, the narrator reports, "She looked younger today, more innocent and fresher," and "She hadn't talked much last night" (*CSS* 21). It suggests that sex outside marriage functions more efficiently and gives Margot the blessings that marriage conventionally promises. It could be described as the degradation of marriage when adultery, rather than legal commitment, provides a person with the feeling

of looking younger and fresher. This notion surfaces again in "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot" when the narrator, comparing the appearance of Mrs. Elliot to herself during her time of celibacy, reports that she "had seemed much younger, in fact she had seemed not to have any age at all," while after marriage "[m]any of the people on the boat took her for Elliot's mother" (123).

Artificial light in the stories suggests an attempt to surpass the pleasure principle of the Other, in that man-made light overcomes the ambiguity that darkness imposes and consequently assists the clarification of object surfaces and boundaries. This artificial light represents the light the code hero's act of abjection creates in the stories. For instance, in the fable "The Good Lion," when the good lion returns to his homeland, Italy, his father says, "We have night lighting here now," and the father lion (representing the Law-of-the-Father) immediately confesses, "It bothers my eyes a little" (483) which alludes to the nuisance the good lion has made of himself.

However, there are some characters who challenge the menace of darkness in the stories, similar to what Kristeva calls the "nocturnal power" of literature (*PH* 208), though she herself writes during "the darkness and horror of night" (135) and claims to have "spelled out abjection," "[t]hroughout a night without images" (207). Similarly, abjection helps Hemingway's code hero to face the horror of darkness and to prevent the destruction of the self, as observed in the words of the blind man in "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog," when he says, "This isn't like the real dark. I can see very well inside and now my head is better all the time and I can remember and I can make up well" (*CSS* 489). He then adds comments such as "We do wonderful things in the dark," "I rather like the dark. In some ways it is an improvement" (*CSS* 489), and "I just think beautiful happy dirty thoughts" (490). Accordingly, Hemingway's short stories, demonstrating a great deal of attention to the concept of darkness, reveal the interaction between the code hero and the governing system.

With respect to darkness and artificial light, no other story is as illuminating as "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," which features an old waiter who seems to exhibit close affinities with Nick Adams in

terms of abjection. Although Hemingway does not provide the old waiter's name in the story, he could be read as an older Nick who has strived to achieve a level of subjectivity in relation to the Symbolic and has thus attained a higher sense of self-awareness. For this reason, "[n]ow, without thinking further, he would go home to his room. He would lie in the bed and finally, with daylight, he would go to sleep" (*CSS* 291). Now that he has finally helped to define his self-boundaries after so many years of struggle, he has found a way to sleep fearlessly, which is suggested by his sleeping "with daylight." Therefore, his insomnia is no longer a suffering, but rather what he regards in the last sentence of the story as something "[m]any must have" (291). The insomnia he refers to is the necessity of being a code hero who stays awake in the darkness of night to turn on an artificial light to obtain a clearer view of the world, as he does in the clean well-lit café.

Among the various locations in the short stories, cafés and bars have attracted special attention from critics. While some scholars interpret cafés in light of the historical reality of Hemingway's epoch or his biographical realities, others prefer a more abstract interpretation, reading the atmosphere of cafés as the projection of something deeper under the surface of the iceberg.

For instance, Leon Betsworth reads Hemingway's interest in cafés in the following way: "The café's clean and orderly condition parallels the methodical approach of the writer who hopes to bring artistic order to creative chaos."[594] He adds: "For the expatriate writer in Europe, the concept of 'being at home' was a complex and interesting one, and one to which the café was often central. Playing a crucial

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[594] "A Café Is a Very Different Thing," 63.

role in the social and cultural life of cities such as Berlin, Paris, and Vienna, the café provided constancy and relative security in a period characterized by upheaval and flux."[595]

In contrast, instead of exclusively reading the setting of "The Sea Change" as an external locale, McVicker Pettipiece emphasizes that the public bar is the location of the dialogue between the couple who are about to break up. Pettipiece equates the bar with the inner world of the characters, revealed in a conversational style which is "representative of the more enigmatic behavior of men and women" as "changeable creatures."[596] She observes:

> [T]his scene is set in a public place, a bar, it would almost appear as if the couple are fearful of too directly confronting what is at the root of their situation. In a public place, one is less likely to expose the soft inner core of the self; instead, one must follow a certain code of behavior, of politeness. This compounds the ambiguity of the language, because the characters cannot give much voice to the "unspeakable" subject that confounds their relationship. The element of ambiguity with regards to the characters' motivations is perhaps why Hemingway is so effective. Ambiguity, lack of perception, fear of disclosing the inner self's desire for love, all these things occur in his works and in his life.[597]

Correlating the public atmosphere of the café with the unspeakable subject, Pettipiece stresses the way the setting conveys the notion of ambiguity as a central motif in Hemingway's narratives.

Hemingway's stories place cafés and bars in a binary opposition with home*;* paradoxically, what the code heroes (such as the old waiter and the old man in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place") find more

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[595] "A Café Is a Very Different Thing," 65.
[596] *Sex Theories and the Shaping of Two Moderns*, 72.
[597] *Sex Theories and the Shaping of Two Moderns*, 72.

heimlich is the café. It aligns with Hemingway's affinity for gathering his fellow artists, like Pablo Picasso, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and the other members of the Lost Generation who, seeking the articulation of their self, found refuge in their café meetings.[598] This reading is also consistent with that of Edmund Wilson who regards the stories in "Winner Take Nothing" as dominated by a sense of insecurity and understands the café "as a refuge from the 'nothing' that people fear."[599]

Although cafés and bars figure prominently and recurrently among Hemingway's settings, the café setting is more thoroughly exploited in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," which tells the story of two waiters (one young and married, the other old and single) who wait at night for a deaf old customer (who has recently tried to commit suicide) to leave so that they can close the café. Among all cafés present in Hemingway's stories, the one in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" is so important that it is named in the title. Taking care of a clean well-lit café until late at night, the old waiter provides people, like the old deaf man, with a haven away from home. Distinguishing the two spaces of the café and the outdoors according to their cleanness or filth, the old waiter works to make sure "that the place be clean and pleasant" (291).

In relation to abjection, the setting's "electric light" (*CSS* 288) —an artificial source of light– highlights the constructedness of the café as a place for the anarchists, like the old waiter and the old man, to rest for a while, free from the expectations of language. Further, the atmosphere inside the café contrasts strikingly with the outdoors, in that the former imposes no threats to the guests (outcasts), while the latter shows little tolerance for them. Thus, the guests indoors have "no fear or dread" (291) and experience less menace, while the waiter worries that "The guard will pick" up the soldier who is going by on the street with a girl (288).

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[598] Law, "Food," 250.
[599] *Literary Essays and Reviews*, 425.

This idea of the old waiter taking care of the café with firm commitment is even more evident when the young waiter insists on closing the café to go home early and the old waiter replies, "Each night I am reluctant to close up because there may be some one who needs the café" (290). In fact, he has created light (café) in the heart of darkness (night) so that those who seek to protect themselves from the darkness of the outdoors can take refuge in the café. The notion of a place away from home in which to drink, which the code hero favors especially in the darkness of night, is so strong in the collection that it reappears not only in Nick's stories but also in the fable "The Good Lion" when the good lion "flew down *lightly* and walked to Harry's Bar" (483; italics added).

The café in Hemingway's short stories is a sanctuary for the practitioners of abjection, those who have attempted to enter into discourse with language. This notion is implied in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," when the deafness of the old man who does not leave the place figuratively suggests the fact that he has closed his ears to culture. Though he is unable to hear sounds, he prefers quiet places, and thus, as the story reports, instead of going to a bar with music, he goes to this quiet café instead. His deafness to language also accords with his failed suicide which signals his attempt to end living (absent himself) within the framework of the Symbolic. In a world that deprives individuals of their subjectivity by imposing identities on them, suicide could be read as a reaction to protect oneself, as Kristeva describes: "Abjection then wavers between the *fading away* of all meaning and all humanity, burnt as by the flames of a conflagration, and the *ecstasy* of an ego that, having lost its Other and its objects, reaches, at the precise moment of this suicide" (*PH* 18). In this sense, life and death are so interwoven that abjection not only becomes "a debtor who sells you up" but also "reaches its apex when death, which, in any case, kills me, interferes with what, in my living universe, is supposed to save me from death" (*PH* 4).

What adds to the semiotic locus of the old guest's mentality and emphasizes his refusal to live under the influence of language is his habitual drunkenness and his uninterrupted ordering of brandy. This perspective is further supported by the narrator's description: "The old man liked to sit late because he

was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference" (*CSS* 288). The fact that he is able to find a quiet place shows that his deafness must mean more than what it denotes. Just as the old waiter says to the old man, "You do not want music. Certainly you do not want music" (291), in the world of the code hero there is no need for something like music that is soothing, for in his inner haven, as the narrator says, there is "not fear or dread" (291), but a freedom from external threats. The authoritarian pillars of language have already been trampled by those who enter the café. Therefore, they have come to a new understanding of the Law-of-the-Father, which now seems to them like a nothing, *nada,* providing society with empty concepts of "man." The story describes the world in the café as follows:

> It was no fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it all was *nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada*. Our *nada* who art in *nada*, *nada* be thy name thy kingdom *nada* thy will be *nada* in *nada* as it is in *nada*. Give us this *nada* our daily *nada* and *nada* us our *nada* as we *nada* our *nadas* and *nada* us not into *nada* but deliver us from *nada: pues nada*. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee. (291)

This passage has brought considerable interest to "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," and the concept of nada that it advances has provoked different interpretations in Hemingway scholarship.

On the basis of the *nada* paragraph of "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" and the meaning commonly inferred from the word *nada* (Spanish for "nothingness"), the café has mostly been taken as a place of nothingness, hopelessness, despair, and absurdity. For example, proposing that "[t]he old man, who finds refuge in the Spanish café, lives in nada," Ammary proposes that the story indicates:

> the loss of Christian ethics: forgiveness, charity, selflessness, forgiveness, and a sense of genuine brotherhood. *Nada*, then, as Hemingway defines it in this story, is the death of God and faith

> which characterizes the twentieth century. *Nada* is also T. S. Eliot's spiritual wasteland, the new bible of Modernism.[600]

Indeed, critics broadly relate nada to existentialism in a similar fashion. For instance, Robert P. McParland in his Heideggerian reading of nada takes it "as 'das Nicht', an awareness of existential forces that impinge upon the human self."[601] Reading nada as a domineering power forms the main body of the critique of Hemingway scholars regarding the term. Similarly, relating nada to "nihilism" and death, as implied in the death of the old man's wife and his suicide, Hoffman, in "*Nada* and the Clean, Well-Lighted Place: The Unity of Hemingway's Short Fiction," concludes that the old man's lack of fear or dread refers to "a pervasive uneasiness, an existential anxiety that, according to Heidegger, arises when one becomes fully aware of the precarious status of his very being."[602] Hoffman infers that nada is "the ultimate unmanageability of life."[603]

In contrast, William Barrett takes a more optimistic view by noting that nada in Hemingway indicates the courage present in his writings, rather than nihilism which he takes as a misconception, because the tone of his stories is that "of somber and clear courage."[604] He describes "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" as:

> one of Hemingway's best and one of his most courageous too, for in it he names the presence that had circulated, unnamed and unconfronted, through and behind much of his earlier writing. The passage itself only names what the story as a whole work of art reveals: the presence that

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[600] *The Influence of European Culture on Hemingway's Fiction*, 63.
[601] *Philosophy and Literary Modernism*, 172.
[602] "*Nada* and the Clean, Well-Lighted Place: The Unity of Hemingway's Short Fiction," 174.
[603] "*Nada* and the Clean, Well-Lighted Place: The Unity of Hemingway's Short Fiction," 175.
[604] *Irrational Man*, 285.

> Hemingway and his hero experience—a presence that is fully as real as the lights and shadows of the café, and the solid objects in it, tables, chairs, and human bodies, is Nothing.[605]

Although Barrett innovatively sheds new light on the notion of nada, it requires more explanation to establish itself within the framework of Hemingway studies.

In the present discussion of abjection, nada is the insulted master position of language after the code hero's abjection. Hence, nada is a promising concept in that it opens up a new landscape of possibilities. In terms of cultural abjection, it is a sense of nothingness and existentialism that, in Steven K. Hoffman's words, "is always a dark presence which upsets individual's equilibrium and threatens to overwhelm the self."[606]

If we take feces as an example of Kristeva's abject, then Hemingway's code hero (who undergoes the process of abjection with respect to gender identity) is someone who suffers from constipation but finally manages to rid himself of the waste. As individuals are doomed to repeated obstruction in their self-articulation because of language's totalitarian nature, there is a constant need for the code hero to trigger an interaction with language, to force the system itself to suffer from the limitations of conversation. It results in a larger number of possibilities in the interpretation of gender within the community. In addition, the theory of the Symbolic's loss of its authoritarian power is further supported when we take into consideration the replacement of the words "Father" (God) and "heaven" with nada (nothingness), in the prayer "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name," which reads, "Our *nada* who art in *nada*, *nada* be thy name!"[607] Therefore, unlike those who take nada as an omnipresent

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[605] *Irrational Man*, 284.
[606] Quoted in Köseman, "The Death of the Profound Natural Aesthetics," 29.
[607] Oldsey, *Hemingway's Hidden Craft*, 299.

fearful nothingness, the story's perspective on nada can be understood as something promising and be read as a threat to language.

Hence, the difference between the old waiter and the old man in the present discussion lies in what they do regarding abjection. While the old waiter keeps the café open, keeping its light on in the darkness of night for anyone "who needs the café" (*CSS* 290), the old man is just a guest of the café. In this sense, these two characters represent Ernest Hemingway and his code hero in that Hemingway, by means of writing, has created a world that accommodates the characters who cause more defined borders around their self. Hemingway's support of the so-called deviant is represented by the clarity the café's electric light provides for the guests in the middle of the dark night.

As a result, code heroes such as Nick Adams, after long years of abjection and resistance, end up with a subject-like position via a dialogue with the Symbolic which they themselves have provoked. Through a reluctance to live the life their fellow men choose to live, the protagonists, as the masters of abjection, trigger a disorder and chaos in the system, which in turn introduces new definitions of gender within the language apparatus. Put differently, the process of abjection that the protagonist undergoes invites a discourse with the Symbolic that leads to the possibility of more dynamic gender concepts and accordingly to renewed sexual materiality.

To sum up, within this framework, the old waiter and the old man share similarities with Ernest Hemingway and Nick Adams. In contrast, the young waiter behaves like most ordinary men in society, fulfilling the expectations of culture by hurrying home every night to go to bed with a wife and begin a family. Generally, the two old men of the story demonstrate that they have a deeper knowledge of the world as compared to the young waiter, and for this reason, unlike the young waiter, they show no interest in going home. They have understood that the world is generally *unheimlich*. The old waiter welcomes drunk men and stays up all night to receive them; in contrast, the young waiter does not allow "the very old man" who is "walking unsteadily but with dignity" (*CSS* 290) to enter the café, suggesting the

impediments to the project of abjection and hinting at the fact that abjection does not necessarily lead to notable success and thus could seem to be doomed to failure. Nonetheless, abjection in any form is an accomplishment for it leads to a less ambiguous image of the self and, in this sense, can also be termed maturity. In this regard, age seems to serve in this story as a threshold into the process of abjection.

The way the unwelcomed old man walks away from the café door after being refused entrance by the young waiter suggests that he is drunk, just like the old man inside the café. It implies that the narrator attributes both seniority and drunkenness to those characters who are interested in being in the café, and it provides the reading of the café as a haven concerning abjection with more credibility. In contrast, the young man shows so little understanding of these abjecting men that he asserts, "An old man is a nasty thing" (*CSS* 289). This statement is denied directly by his old colleague, a man who lives to receive this group of defiling men. Moreover, the fact that the rejected old man walks down the street unsteadily, not falling but "with dignity," echoes "the dignity of the dead fish" in "The Old Man and the Sea" and its narrator's famous quote that "a man may be destroyed but not defeated."[608]

In short, through various narrative strategies, Hemingway has invented a world in which every particle serves to convey a feature of the abject, with its ambiguity, instability, and horror. Hence, the objects presented in the narratives along with the settings of the stories provide a venue for moments of self-definition, or abjection.

In accordance with Kristeva's emphasis on the abject as inherently savage and violent, aggression forms one of the dominant elements of the stories, represented by war, battlefields, corpses, and blood. Therefore, along with the central themes of violence and terror, abject images feature throughout the

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[608] Rao, *Ernest Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea,"* 48.

narratives. This matter may account for readers' disgust at the war scenes or the fights with nature, such as bullfights and fishing. If we regard these images in the context of the hero's struggle to survive, then they could be interpreted as grace under pressure in terms of abjection as a self-defining or self-protective affair.

As the abject is associated with disgust and repulsion, the disgust that Hemingway's narratives convey to the reader sometimes becomes so strong that he, at times, tried to hide his stories from his parents due to their offensiveness. For instance, he predicted how disgusted they would be "by the 'vulgarity' and violence" of the vignettes in *In Our Time*.[609] These repulsive images take various forms: the blood coming from under the door in "A Train Trip," the rape in "Up in Michigan," the gonorrhea that the American soldier contracts from a sales girl in a taxi cab in "A Very Short Story," Harry's dying of gangrene in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," the boy in "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen," who mutilates himself with a razor, and the miles of bloated corpses in "A Way You'll Never Be" that "lay alone or in clumps in the high grass of the field and along the road, their pockets out, and over them were flies and around each body or group of bodies were the scattered papers" (*CSS* 306).[610] These examples reveal how the abject is located at the fragile line between life and death; in other words, how it infects life with death.

Just as Nick and the reader are introduced to violence in "Indian Camp," brutality and aggression remain central themes of the next stories as well. Pointing to one of the major characteristics of the abject, scholars often argue that violence is a prominent feature of Hemingway's code hero. Discussing manic depression in Hemingway's narratives, Raymond S. Nelson in *Hemingway: Expressionist Artist* regards

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[609] Lamb, *The Hemingway Short Story*, 7.
[610] Infection and disease in Kristeva's theory of abjection include excrement (*PH* 53).

Hemingway's stories as similar to expressionistic paintings.[611] Here, commenting, "Hemingway's story depicts aggressive behavior as a proof of manhood," Armengol takes "Ernest Hemingway as an example for the traditional conception of violence as a test of manhood in twentieth-century American literature" and concludes that "violence as a test of manhood was transformed into one of his main fictional subjects."[612] Armengol is so convinced of the viability of this mode of reading violence that he stresses it in his later writing, *Richard Ford and the Fiction of Masculinities*, as follows: "Hemingway's personal obsession with violence as a test of manhood was transformed into one of his main fictional subjects. His works dealt once and again with the issue of male violence, which he often idealized as a symbol of virility."[613] Without violence, it would appear, there is no code hero.

However, some efforts have also been made to investigate new perspectives on violence in Hemingway's stories. For instance, focusing on the protagonist's transformation as the result of violence, Michael T. Wilson notes in his discussion of "The Short, Happy Life of Francis Macomber," "violence and the male reaction to it determine the largest emotional change that is possible for a man, a stark revision of the core of the sentimental transformation."[614] Though his point of view seems convincing, it seems to accept, through its emphasis on maleness, the conventional machismo that plagued the early generation of Hemingway scholarship. Therefore, Jackson J. Benson's perspective is more compelling as he defends Hemingway's "excessive preoccupation with violence" without recourse to sexism by arguing

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[611] *Hemingway: Expressionist Artist*, 3.
[612] "Gendering Men" 75, 81, 83.
[613] *Richard Ford and the Fiction of Masculinities*, 103.
[614] "Hemingway's Gendered Sentimentalism," 96.

that the writer's concern is "not with violence for its own sake, but with the emotional responses of human beings confronted with violence."[615]

Brutality, present in myriad forms, is of such significance in Hemingway's narratives that some critics suggest they are invariably war stories and understand them as the portrayal of Hemingway's contemporary historical realities. However, battlefields in Hemingway's art are more than mere journalistic accounts of his war experiences. Rather, the motif of war specifically condenses the sense of violence and aggression that turn up recurrently in the whole collection of short stories.

Although, in light of the iceberg theory, revulsion and abhorrence might not seem so extreme in Hemingway's narratives, at times, it goes further than the abhorrence produced by the hypocritical feature of the abject (the doctor's dishonesty) in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," who convinces the two Native Americans to steal the logs that have fallen off the steamer and threatens them not to talk about it. Execration is often aroused by the cruelty of his characters towards other human beings or animals (nature).[616]As many stories depict fighting on either battlefields or in bullrings, the bloodshed of soldiers and bulls forms a dominant image in the general atmosphere of Hemingway's work. For instance, in "The Faithful Bull," the matador "handed his sword to his sword handler. He handed it with the hilt up and the blade dripping with the blood from the heart of the brave bull who no longer had any problems of any kind and was being dragged out of the ring by four horses" (*CSS* 486). Though violence in Hemingway's stories is commonly associated with war and fighting, Lynn, in a comparison between violence in Hemingway's work and in that of Stephen Crane, notes, "The violence of Ernest Hemingway's early novels and stories are expressive, so we have been told, of a far more cruel, pointless, and degrading war

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[615] Tyler, *Student Companion*, 34–35.

[616] When the doctor in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" fails to silence the two Native Americans laughing at him, he decides to go hunting squirrels with Nick.

experience than the Civil War that Stephen Crane conjured up out of talking with veterans and reading the *Century* magazine."[617] This degrading aspect of war is specifically described in "A Natural History of the Dead" which parodies natural history by narrating the events of World War I:

> The first thing that you found about the dead was that, hit badly enough, they died like animals. Some quickly from a little wound you would not think would kill a rabbit. They died from little wounds as rabbits die sometimes from three or four small grains of shot that hardly seem to break the skin. Others would die like cats; a skull broken in and iron in the brain, they lie alive two days like cats that crawl into the coal bin with a bullet in the brain and will not die until you cut their heads off. Maybe cats do not die then, they say they have nine lives, I do not know, but most men die like animals, not men [. . .].
>
> The only natural death I've ever seen, outside of loss of blood, which isn't bad, was death from Spanish influenza. In this you drown in mucus, choking, and how you know the patient's dead is: at the end he turns to be a little child again, though with his manly force, and fills the sheets as full as any diaper with one vast, final, yellow cataract that flows and dribbles on after he's gone. (*CSS* 338)

As war incurs casualties, the stories feature many images of war victims and injuries in both the literal and metaphorical sense of the word. Hence, the narratives include these images of dead bodies and ailments. The abject image of war and its horror in Hemingway's art is effectively summarized at the beginning of chapter 2 of *In Our Time*, which, in the account of the evacuation of citizens from eastern Thrace after the Greeks' defeat by Turkey, describes a young crying girl who feels scared and is tired of holding a blanket over a woman in labor under the rain:

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[617] "Violence in American Literature and Folk Lore," 188.

> *Minarets stuck up in the rain out of Adrianople across the mud flats. The carts were jammed for thirty miles along the Karagatch road. Water buffalo and cattle were hauling carts through the mud. No end and no beginning. Just carts loaded with everything they owned. The old men and women, soaked through, walked along keeping the cattle moving. The Maritza was running yellow almost up to the bridge. Carts were jammed solid on the bridge with camels bobbing along through them. Greek cavalry herded along the procession. Women and kids were in the carts crouched with mattresses, mirrors, sewing machines, bundles. There was a woman having a kid with a young girl holding a blanket over her and crying. Scared sick looking at it. It rained all through the evacuation.* (*CSS* 71)

It seems as if Hemingway has described Kristeva's abject in the form of a vignette that conveys the feeling of horror through literary motifs and imagery. As Iris Marion Young writes, "phobic fear of the abject is a paralyzing and vertiginous dread of the unnameable. [. . .] Abjection, Kristeva says, is a peculiar experience of ambiguity," and the vignette pictures such a paralyzed world of ambiguity through describing soaking people and things stuck in mud under the rain.[618] The story starts with the ultimate example of a "pure signifier" (*PH* 51) (minarets as the emblem of purity and spirituality) plagued with dirt (mud) and ends with sick frightened people. This vignette could be a good example for Kristeva's statement that abjection "is the crying out theme of suffering-horror. In other words, the theme of suffering-horror is the ultimate evidence of such states of abjection within a narrative representation" (*PH* 141).

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[618] *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 145.

One of the notable images of the abject also takes place in "The Undefeated" which includes scenes of savagery in the bullfight when the bull violently kills the horses and is then finally killed:

> Manuel drew the sword out of the *muleta*, sighted with the same movement, and flung himself onto the bull. He felt the sword go in all the way. Right up to the guard. Four fingers and his thumb into the bull. The blood was hot on his knuckles, and he was on top of the bull. The bull lurched with him as he lay on, and seemed to sink; then he was standing clear. He looked at the bull going down slowly over on his side, then suddenly four feet in the air. Then he gestured at the crowd, his hand warm from the bull blood. (*CSS* 204)

Another repulsive image takes place in "Big Two-Hearted River" when, describing Nick's skill and knowledge in fishing, the narrator talks about the "dead trout, furry with white fungus, drifted against a rock, or floating belly up in some pool" (176). The story depicts the cruelty of Nick's behavior when, trying to catch the trout, he threads the hopper on the hook. However, the culmination of the story's repulsive images occurs at the end of the story when the writer describes how Nick cleans the trout:

> He took out his knife, opened it and stuck it in the log. Then he pulled up the sack, reached into it and brought out one of the trout. Holding him near the tail, hard to hold, alive, in his hand, he whacked him against the log. The trout quivered, rigid. Nick laid him on the log in the shade and broke the neck of the other fish the same way. He laid them side by side on the log. They were fine trout.
>
> Nick cleaned them, slitting them from the vent to the tip of the jaw. All the insides and the gills and tongue came out in one piece. They were both males; long gray-white strips of milt, smooth and clean. All the insides clean and compact, coming out all together. Nick tossed the offal ashore for the minks to find. (180)

Apart from the first paragraph which portrays the slaughter of the fish, the second paragraph adds to the abject sense in the story. The fact that Nick mixes blood and dirt to clean the trout makes it closer to the

qualities of Kristeva's abject. It resembles the catharsis that, in Kristeva's view, art effects by invoking what cultures discard.

"An African Story" also pertains strikingly to the theme of animal cruelty. Here, David accompanies his father and his guide, Juma, in hunting an elephant for its tusks. Though it is David who tells his father about the elephant, the adventures become so savage that David feels sympathy for the animal like "his brother" (551), whereas his father enjoys the butchery:

> There was plenty of blood. One stream as high as David's head that had squirted bright on trunks and leaves and vines and another much lower that was dark and foul with stomach content.
>
> "Lung and gut shot," his father said. "We'll find him down or anchored—I hope the hell," he added.
>
> They found him anchored, in such suffering and despair that he could no longer move. He had crashed through the heavy cover where he had been feeding and crossed a path of open forest and David and his father ran along the heavily splashed blood trail. Then the elephant had gone on into thick forest and David had seen him ahead standing gray and huge against the trunk of a tree. David could only see his stern and then his father moved ahead and he followed and they came alongside the elephant as though he was a ship and David saw the blood coming from his flanks and running down his sides and then his father raised his rifle and fired and the elephant turned his head with the great tusks moving heavy and slow and looked at them and when his father fired the second barrel the elephant seemed to sway like a felled tree and came smashing down toward them. But he was not dead. He had been anchored and now he was down with his shoulder broken. He did not move but his eye was alive and looked at David. He had very long eyelashes and his eye was the most alive thing David had ever seen.
>
> "Shoot him in the earhole with the three oh three," his father said. "Go on."

> "You shoot him," David had said.
>
> Juma had come up limping and bloody, the skin of his forehead hanging down over his left eye, the bone of his nose showing and one ear torn and had taken the rifle from David without speaking and pushed the muzzle almost into the earhole and fired twice, jerking the bolt and driving it forward angrily. The eye of the elephant had opened wide on the first shot and then started to glaze and blood came out of the ear and ran in two bright streams down the wrinkled gray hide. It was different colored blood and David had thought I must remember that and he had but it had never been of any use to him. Now all the dignity and majesty and all the beauty were gone from the elephant and he was a huge wrinkled pile. (552)

The fact that "Probably the elephant is going to find where he was born and they'll kill him there" (551) hints at the impossibility of reaching the Real as the origin and at the abject quality of the story, insofar as "[t]he abject is the violence of mourning for an 'object' that has always already been lost" (*PH* 15).

Another example of human ferocity towards animals occurs in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." Francis Macomber spends two days hunting animals with his wife, Margot, and their guide, Wilson, on a safari in Africa. The story consistently depicts brutality with nature. On the first day, Francis shoots a lion, which occasions in a medley of disgusting images:

> Thirty-five yards into the grass the big lion lay flattened out along the ground. His ears were back and his only movement was a slight twitching up and down of his long, black-tufted tail. He had turned at bay as soon as he had reached this cover and he was sick with the wound through his full belly, and weakening with the wound through his lungs that brought a thin foamy red to his mouth each time he breathed. His flanks were wet and hot and flies were on the little openings the solid bullets had made in his tawny hide, and his big yellow eyes, narrowed with hate, looked straight ahead, only blinking when the pain came as he breathed, and his claws dug in the soft baked earth. All of him, pain, sickness, hatred and all of his remaining strength, was

> tightening into an absolute concentration for a rush. He could hear the men talking and he waited, gathering all of himself into this preparation for a charge as soon as the men would come into the grass. As he heard their voices his tail stiffened to twitch up and down, and, as they came into the edge of the grass, he made a coughing grunt and charged. [. . .]
>
> He heard the *ca-ra-wong*! Of Wilson's big rifle, and again in a second crashing *carawong*! And turning saw the lion, horrible-looking now, with half his head seeming to be gone, crawling toward Wilson in the edge of the tall grass while the red-faced man worked the bolt on the short ugly rifle and aimed carefully as another blasting *carawong*! Came from the muzzle, and the crawling, heavy, yellow bulk of the lion stiffened and the huge, mutilated head slid forward and Macomber, standing by himself in the clearing where he had run, holding a loaded rifle, while two black men and a white man looked back at him in contempt, knew the lion was dead. (*CSS* 16–17)

The next pages of the story add to the aggression of the story because the lion hunting ends with many shots instead of one, which leads to the defacing of the animal, as "the lion lay, with uplifted, white-muscled, tendon-marked naked forearms, and white bloating belly, as the black men fleshed away the skin. Finally, the gun-bearers brought the skin over, wet and heavy, and climbed in behind with it, rolling it up before they got in" (17). The next day of hunting, this time targeted at buffaloes, offers a similarly nauseating account of their safari adventure:

> [. . .] the gun-bearer shouted wildly and they saw him coming out of the bush sideways, fast as a crab, and the bull coming, nose out, mouth tight closed, blood dripping, massive head straight out, coming in a charge, his little pig eyes bloodshot as he looked at them. Wilson, who was ahead, was kneeling shooting, and Macomber, as he fired, unhearing his shot in the roaring of Wilson's gun, saw fragments like slate burst from the huge boss of the horns, and the head jerked, he shot again at the wide nostrils and saw the horns jolt again and fragments fly, and he did not see

> Wilson now and, aiming carefully, shot again with the buffalo's huge bulk almost on him and his rifle almost level with the on-coming head, nose out, and he could see the little wicked eyes and the head started to lower and he felt a sudden white-hot, blinding flash explode inside his head and that was all he ever felt. (27)

Though the story could conceivably end the description of their hunting with a shot, it depicts bloodshed. In general, these stories present the "wound with blood and pus" to show "what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death" (*PH* 3) and to intensify the image of uncleanness and impurity. These hunting adventures could also be read as a "purifying sacrifice" (*PH* 99) paradoxically by means of blood impurity.

However, the stories depict not just the cruelty of humans to animals, but also that of animals to humans. For instance, a description which intensifies the feeling of violence with images of the abject appears in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," when Harry, recalling the mountains of Bulgaria and Constantinople, describes a frozen boy who has been partly eaten by dogs and a wounded officer who "*was caught in the wire, with a flare lighting him up and his bowels spilled out into the wire, so when they brought him in, alive, they had to cut him loose*" (*CSS* 53). Another story that depicts the repulsive brutality of animals to humans is "The Good Lion," wherein "[t]he bad lions would roar with laughter and eat another Hindu trader and their wives would drink his blood, going lap, lap, lap with their tongues like big cats. They only stopped to growl with laughter or to roar with laughter at the good lion and to snarl at his wings" (*CSS* 482).

Yet violence is not necessarily a personality trait of the code hero, but an inherent feature of the abject space in which the code hero exists. It is also a manifestation of the abjection that the code hero creates. Therefore, what must be taken into consideration is not only the brutality that assaults the code hero but also the protagonist's reactions to this menace, as Lisa Tyler writes: "*In Our Time* is a work about men's responses to violence and their capacity for empathy."[619] Though these motifs of brutality and outrage are offensive and vulgar at the first sight, if we take the protagonist's act of abjection as a mode of purification, then the violence in the stories constitutes an effective constructive part of the individual's psychic development. In many ways, it resembles tribal rituals which lead to a communal catharsis. Hence, violence can be seen more as a response to the actions of the code hero rather than an imposition of violence by an outside force on the characters. Moreover, while violence forms an inseparable element of self-definition, the code hero himself can also be regarded as a form of violence with which language itself must cope.

To conclude, since abjection is linked to the semiotic chora (the somatic aspect of language), corporeality forms the major body of the narratives. Hence, the code hero, who has tendencies toward the semiotic, shows little concern for linguistic self-articulation. Moreover, because the semiotic chora, unlike the Symbolic, promotes disruption and heterogeneity, Nick's actions do not conform to social norms of sexuality and codes of conduct. As a result, Hemingway's short stories can be regarded as a coalescence of materiality and perturbation which allows the so-called sexual perversions, such as adultery, incest, and homosexuality, to such an extent that Helen in "Soldier's Home" can say to her brother Harold, "Couldn't your brother really be your beau just because he's your brother?" (*CSS* 114).

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[619] "'Dangerous Families' and 'Intimate Harm,'" 37.

In sum, what the stories specifically feature is a code hero who, by being a non-conformist within the structure of society, creates disturbances in the definitions that culture has constructed for sexuality. The journey, which Hemingway chronicles in most of his stories, is that of a code hero who begins his journey as a teenage boy, passively observing how life works. However, as he becomes an adult, he succeeds in becoming a disturbance within the structure of language not only by vomiting on himself but also by refusing to enter any serious romantic relationship and regurgitating on the Symbolic. It is what he does to the Symbolic that makes his actions abject, rather than uncanny, for without committing any crime, he, to use Kristeva's term, adopts an individual lifestyle and thereby "uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it," and thus in relation to the Symbolic becomes "a debtor who sells you up, a friend who stabs you" (*PH* 4).

8 Conclusion

The present study has proposed to determine whether there is a theoretical concept that can correlate the different critical approaches to gender in Hemingway's short stories. More precisely, it has argued that Kristeva's notion of abjection explains how the fictional elements of Hemingway's short stories come together conceptually as an organic unit illustrating in diverse ways the world's assaults on the code hero and the code hero's self-defense. In other words, they depict a world ruled by a governing system that has already bestowed the tyranny of subjectivity upon itself. Although this reading of the stories and the code hero is novel in Hemingway scholarship, it needs to be developed and expanded upon to generate new approaches that could prove more liberating regarding gender in contemporary society.

Many scholars have advanced generalizations about the themes of the stories. For instance, according to Lisa Tyler, "the chief theme of Hemingway's writing concerns how best to cope with suffering and defeat, how to live with dignity in a world that is racked with violence and loss."[620] The present study has focused on finding a theoretical concept that amalgamates the different understandings of gender in Hemingway's short stories, justifiable in themselves despite possessing many contradictions. As discussed in the literature review, this incongruity most notably exists in the context of Hemingway's misogyny. For instance, while Brian Harding refers to Hemingway's failure to create substantial woman characters, Jennifer Haytock elevates female characters above Hemingway's men to stand for the code hero. Both lines of thought offer enough evidence for their hypotheses. The present study has employed Kristeva's theory of the abject in order to unite these different perspectives.

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[620] *Student Companion*, 25.

The male protagonist's acts of abjection ultimately demonstrate that the themes of the short stories relate how effectively an individual (the code hero) of any sexuality reacts to a governing hostile language, which, in turn, can decrease the suffering of all involved in the context of gender identity. That is to say, the stories, by means of exploiting the linguistic signifying system to narrate, ironically depict the possibility of using a tyrannical language system in a way that could topple its stability or question its monopoly. If such a performance does not mean experiencing subjectivity for the protagonist, it would most probably represent success in moving the governing system slightly away from the autocratic subjectivity it has bestowed upon itself. Due to the fact that the Symbolic, favoring monologues, has hardly predicted any opportunity for dialogue and it shows little tendency to delegate subjectivity to any being other than itself, the lifestyle of the code hero and the struggle to speak could be regarded as an act of anarchy.

However, what distinguishes the short stories and adds to their literary prominence is how realistically they represent the supremacy of the Symbolic although, at the same time, they depict how such an understanding could accompany an act of performance. It is this coalition of strategies that adds to the artistic value of Hemingway's fiction. The stories produce moments of jouissance in that they allow the dominance of language to disappear instantly by providing the characters with the opportunity to appear to be temporarily slipping away from the gender position defined for them even before they enter the world. The fact that the code hero does not conform to any gender norms is expressed in the nomadic unstable lifestyle that he pursues and the shapelessness in which it results, in a way very similar to the way John Patrick and Gregory Hemingway describe the sky, in the foreword to the collection of Hemingway's short stories, as the "white cumulus clouds that continuously change in shape and size at the top of the shallow northeast trade wind" (*CSS* XII). Though the clouds can never overcome the supremacy of the sky, their steady alteration of form reduces the stability of its whole appearance as a gestalt. That is to say, aiming to produce moments of jouissance facilitates experiencing one's self free from the constraints of language, which always chases and overshadows individuals.

The fact that the code hero's moments of deviation from the Symbolic are brief lies in the nature of jouissance, which is described in a nutshell by Kristeva:

> What is so terrifying about it is that it is so terribly clear and such gladness. If it went on for more than five seconds, the soul could not endure it and must perish. In those five seconds I live through a lifetime, and I am ready to give my life for them, for it's worth it. To be able to endure it for ten seconds, you would have to undergo a physical change. I think man ought to stop begetting children. What do you want children for, what do you want mental development, if your goal has been attained? It is said in the gospel that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are the angels of God in heaven. It's a hint. Is your wife giving birth to a baby? (*PH* 19)

The life of Nick Adams and the other code heroes accords with Kristeva's reading of the resurrection in the gospel for, through their aversion to procreation, they avoid the material growth of the society and thus define a new value for themselves that is different from the one language has presupposed for them (the providers of profit by means of adding to the number of the dominated). In this regard, I consider non-procreation as the highest form of the abjection that takes place in Hemingway's short stories and helps the code attain a more defined self.

Hence, by means of withdrawing from fully performing the socially predefined acts such as marriage, procreation and family formation, the characters, who seem conventional according to the rules of culture, cause ambiguity in the governing system and consequently chaos. By means of sex out of marriage the code hero causes an abjection which metaphorically resembles the following lines in "Nobody Ever Dies":

> Then, *in the dark* on the bed, holding himself carefully, his eyes closed, their lips against each other, the happiness there *with no pain*, *the being home* suddenly there *with no pain*, the being alive returning and *no pain*, the comfort of being loved and still *no pain*; so there was a

> hollowness of loving, now no longer hollow, and the two sets of lips *in the dark*, pressing so that they were happily and kindly, darkly and warmly *at home* and *without pain in the darkness*. (*CSS* 477; emphasis added)

Therefore, this outlook on Hemingway's stories resembles the way Kristeva expresses her celebration of Dostoyevsky's art in that "by symbolizing the abject, through a masterful delivery of the jouissance produced by uttering it, Dostoyevsky delivered himself of that ruthless maternal burden" (*PH* 20).

Nonetheless, some features sharply distinguish Hemingway's art from the other masters of literary abjection. What is of significance in the present study of the abject is that the philosophy underlying Hemingway's stories holds that eradicating the Symbolic is not only unattainable but also ominous, for, as treated in the previous chapters, it would lead, on the one hand, to the death of the code hero and the code hero's complete removal from the structure of the society, and, on the other, to the collapse of the community. Therefore, what the characters can do is to exploit the ruptures of language rather than destroy it or explicitly challenge it. This interpretation illuminates what Roger in "The Strange Country" means by "innocuous" when he discusses making up "stories about something innocuous" which might lead to "all sorts of other stories" (*CSS* 643) (e.g., sexual diversity in the present discussion). However, there is no guarantee that all these performances would result in other kinds of stories. This notion is condensed in the repeated word "might" in Roger's statement: "But first you might be saving me and then next you might be saving the world. Then you might start saving yourself" (643). This view of the code hero resembles the interpretation of Edmund Wilson, as quoted by David Bromwich:

> Hemingway has expressed with genius the terrors of the modern man at the danger of losing control of his world, and he has also, within his scope, provided his own kind of antidote. This antidote, paradoxically, is almost entirely moral. Despite his preoccupation with physical contests, his heroes are almost always defeated physically, nervously, practically: their victories are moral ones.[621]

Ultimately, it is still the Symbolic that is the disciplinarian.

The abjection the code hero causes is brief, so short that it is barely acknowledged by the system though it does agitate the stability of language by virtue of being repeated. This view is reflected in the guards following Nick without reason during various stories and failing to capture him. In regard to the impact of these repetitive acts of jouissance, Mari Ruti notes:

> [I]f repetition (and perhaps even Butlerian reiteration) has to do with the relentless return of signs, with their automatic pressure, the encounter (*touché*) with the real jolts the subject beyond this relentlessness, this automatism. In Lacan's words, it ushers the subject "beyond the *automaton*, the return, the coming-back, the insistence of the signs" (1964, 53). At such moments, jouissance defeats the signifier, thereby making it impossible for the "service of goods" to proceed with business as usual.[622]

Therefore, the study of the abject in the stories is not confined to the way that the governing system attacks the limits of the individuals' self in terms of gender identity, but it, more importantly, is concerned with the way the individuals turn this menace into an attack on the solidity of language structure. In this

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[621] "Wilson's Modernism," 202.
[622] "The Ethics of the Act," 77.

sense, the narratives move the monologue the Symbolic favors toward a dialogue, which means appealing for the subjective-like position of individuals. In other words, the narratives become a locus for the signifieds (code heroes) that strive to cross the divide between Lacanian signifier and signified despite its impossibility, for the ultimate objective is simply to create a new sound whose meaning the Symbolic should seek to figure out, as "the danger of filth represents for the subject the risk to which the very symbolic order is permanently exposed" (*PH* 69). It means that the brief moments of jouissance, on the one hand, act like illusionary points de capiton for the survival of the code hero's self because, as Berressem writes, "the subject finds itself only negatively, as that which is subtracted from pure jouissance,"[623] and, on the other hand, prompt immense distress to the structure of the Symbolic because, in Oliver's words, "[t]he abject threat comes from what has been prohibited by the Symbolic order, what has been prohibited so that the Symbolic order can be."[624] Therefore, what identifies the code hero is the temporary acts of gender deviation that cause threatening assaults to the system.

The characters' acts of transgression resemble a flash of light in the darkness of night very similar to the way Kristeva notes about fire in relation to the abjection in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed.* Kristeva emphasizes the fact that this moment of jouissance must be brief not to be fatal: "There are seconds—they come five or six at a time—when you suddenly feel the presence of eternal harmony in all its fullness. It is nothing earthly. I don't mean that it is heavenly, but a man in his earthly semblance can't endure it. He has to undergo a physical change or die" (*PH* 9). Similarly, those who approach a subject position in Hemingway's short stories do not isolate themselves from the limitations of language. What they do is exploit the potentialities and fractures of language in order to deviate from the way they are

[623] "On the Matter of Abjection," 25.
[624] *Reading Kristeva*, 56.

conventionally supposed to act. In other words, they exploit the gaps in the definitions of maleness and femaleness that language has fixed and thereby become members that neither align with the prototype of manhood or womanhood nor belong to the group of revolting outlaws. Instead, they can be called constructive mavericks. In this sense, the male protagonists can be understood to display few signs of misogamy or machismo, which is reflected in the old waiter's words in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" that a man "might be better with a wife" (*CSS* 289), though he himself is not married. This matter means that Hemingway's male protagonists do not necessarily see themselves as not needing a wife, nor are they uninterested in women, and what they reject—for instance in Wilson's statement in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" that "Women upset" (*CSS* 7) —is not women but being in a domestic relationship with them. In sum, they neither deny their being sexually a man nor do they have anti-female attitudes or tendencies; on the contrary, they sporadically make positive comments about women and never seem to insult the opposite sex. Rather than womanizers, Hemingway's protagonists could be described as jouissance-seekers. In short, the code heroes' achievement forces language to confront the question of what to do with these deviants for whom the system has not ordained a space, but whom it cannot overlook.

In this regard, the restless and nomadic lifestyle the code hero pursues aligns with Kristeva's definition of a "deject" in that "The one by whom the abject exists is thus a *deject* who places (himself), *separates* (himself), situates (himself), and therefore *strays* instead of getting his bearings, desiring, belonging, or refusing" (*PH* 8). It all takes place due to the characters' following the common mechanism of abjecting and exorcising whatever threatens the borders of the self.

Thus, in terms of abjection, the conflict that is present in the stories takes place between the governing system and the code hero. In this respect, classifying Hemingway as a modernist writer and Thomas Pynchon as a postmodernist, Gerhard Hoffmann distinguishes the two schools of literature by the fact that while modernist literature depicts "the test of character in boundary situations," postmodern

literature has to do with "the uncertainty of the outer *situation* that the character faces [which] is extreme and leads to paranoid" and "The excess in postmodern narrative is generally not determined by the excess of sorrow, grief, inner unfullfillment, loss of identity, though these plays a role too, especially in Pynchon, but by an aesthetic excess, an excess at the borderline of the aesthetically possible, on the edge of intelligibility."[625] Hoffmann adds that in Hemingway's stories the character wins, whereas in those of Pynchon the situation succeeds. Though Hoffmann's classification may apply to many writers of these two literary schools, the interaction between the surroundings and the code hero in Hemingway's narratives depicts more the possibilities that exist beyond the borderline of linguistic definitions by means of the protagonist's slipping away from the dominance of the outer situation, which leads to the paranoia of the governing system.

Therefore, one aspect of the code heroes' character is their making filth of themselves within the structure of language with the contradictory result of ridding their selves of filth in terms of gender. In this sense, Nick Adams, as the prototype of Hemingway's protagonists, can be discussed within the context of Kristeva's discussion of Oedipus:

> Entering an impure city-miasma-he turns himself into *agos*, defilement, in order to purify it and to become *katharmos*. He is thus a purifier by the very fact of being *agos*. His abjection is due to the permanent ambiguity of the parts he plays without his knowledge, even when he believes he knows. It is precisely such a dynamics of reversals that makes of him a being of abjection and a

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[625] *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, 66. As Alfons Grieder describes, Karl Jaspers introduced the notion of *Grenzsituation*, translated as "boundary situation," "limiting situation," or "border situation" in his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (1919), which refers to the situations that enable "humans to ascend to *Existenz*, self-being: 'To boundary situations we react meaningfully not with planning and calculation but with a totally different activity: *the bringing into being of one's possible Existenz*; we arrive at self-being by entering open-eyed into boundary situations'" (330).

> *pharmakos*, a scapegoat who, having been ejected, allows the city to be freed from defilement. The mainspring of the tragedy lies in that ambiguity; prohibition and ideal are joined in a single character in order to signify that the speaking being has no space of his own but stands on a fragile threshold as if stranded on account of an impossible demarcation. (*PH* 84–85)

Thus, the scapegoat Nick and the other code heroes produce and insert modulation into the system of gender. What distinguishes their performance is the impact on the resonance of the signifying system, since, according to Kristeva:

> [I]ntonation, at the same time as being a token of emotivity close to drives, is a syntactic organizer both very precocious and very profound. It allows one, before solid syntactical categories have been established, and wherever there is ambiguity, to identify the true semanticological value of the constituents. (*PH* 196)

Having examined the significance of abjection in the narratives, I hope the present study has contributed to a deeper investigation of gender issues in Hemingway's oeuvre. Due to the virtual sources available to researchers, advances in different fields of research have become so phenomenal that the present study could soon be considered to belong to an older school of thought on Hemingway. Nonetheless, the present study has demonstrated that particular issues in gender studies in Hemingway's works require more investigation, which has been restricted here owing to the richness of analysis they would inevitably produce. Hence, I would like to "generously" (used ironically) share these gaps and potential points of discussion with my fellow scholars, which I hope will contribute to future studies.

The first criticism that the reader might make about the present work is why the great bulk of the study takes the stories' men into consideration while the women characters have not been given the same attention. First of all, the manifest content of Hemingway's narratives mostly concerns men and their affairs. Second, as discussed in chapter two (under 2.3.2.2, "Hemingway as a misunderstood feminist"), because being a code hero is not tied to sexuality, the term is not exclusively confined to the men in the

stories; therefore, female characters (similar to minorities) can also be regarded as code heroes. That is to say, though Nick is commonly taken as the prototype of the male code hero, the narratives depict female versions who also struggle to gain subjectivity, such as Margot in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," the American wife in "Cat in the Rain," the woman in "Hills Like White Elephants," and even Nick's sister Littless. Third, in spite of the fact that the manifest content of the narratives has more to do with men, their latent content is more concerned with the matter of gender in general. Yet further work with the focus on the female characters needs to be carried out to enrich Hemingway scholarship.

In addition to further research on Hemingway's women characters, I would propose a comparative reading of abjection in Hemingway's fiction (particularly "Indian Camp" as the main representation of the term in Hemingway's art) and abjection in Céline's work, because, whenever Kristeva elaborates on abjection in Céline in *Powers of Horror*, it seems as if she could be discussing Hemingway's position on birth and death in relation to abjection. For instance, there are close affinities between the manner in which Hemingway narrates the woman's childbirth in the dark atmosphere of "Indian Camp" and the way Kristeva describes Céline's *Journey to the End of the Night* in regard to abjection as "a journey to the dark portals of life, where the woman in childbed succumbs to infection, life to death, women's fever to the delirious hallucinations of man, reason to enigma" (*PH* 160). In general, maternity motifs in works of fiction can be analyzed in terms of abjection, because, as Renée Dickinson writes, "Through maternity, then, woman is both abject and abjecting."[626] For this reason, the moment of childbirth in "Indian Camp" is relevant for so many other stories by Hemingway. Moreover, similar to the dichotomies present in Hemingway's short stories and discussed here, Kristeva recognizes the dominance of binaries in the "Celinian universe" and adds, "The Celinian universe remains dichotomous; without a

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[626] *Female Embodiment and Subjectivity in the Modernist Novel*, 106.

third party, or because of the latter's failure, two terms rise up, facing each other, Woman and Lover, Sex and Corpse, Woman in childbed and Doctor, Death and Words, Hell and the Writer, the Impossible and Style" (*PH* 160). There seems to be some similarities between the two writers, and especially in their manner of coping with abjection in relation to gender. As a result, the similarities and differences between abjection in Hemingway and that in Céline might also provide fodder for interesting literary scholarship.

At the end of this investigation of Hemingway, no unequivocal conclusion concerning Hemingway's attitude to gender has been reached. Yet, in a measure, the study also liberates scholarship from the preoccupation of deciphering which sexuality the stories are concerned with. Now, as a reader, I allow myself to freely experience the various forces that assault the individuals' gender identity as I identify not only with Nick Adams, but also with many other characters who express dissatisfaction with being a mere gap already filled in with language. As Mazzeno writes, "The best criticism changes the lenses, and thereby gives readers new ways of reading, seeing, visualizing the art. It is the interaction between the literature and its criticism that Hemingway's oeuvre remains most vital."[627]

Hemingway's work is not only free of misogyny, but it also shares some affinities with material postfeminism in that, due to the abject world it portrays, it depicts interest in the material; further, taking gender as a social construct, it causes vibrations in the patriarchal hierarchy of the system. The abjection that the short stories produce resembles the treatment of borderline cases when:

> [T]he fortified castle of the borderline patient begins to see its walls crumble, and its indifferent pseudo-objects start losing their obsessive mask, the subject-effect—fleeting, fragile, but authentic—allows itself to be heard in the advent of that interspace, which is abjection. (*PH* 48)

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[627] *The Critics and Hemingway*, 5.

Moreover, similar to postfeminism (compared to feminism), Hemingway's stories deal more with individuals and their constructed identity in a way that is liberated from sexual bigotry. Therefore, although Hemingway's short stories are the literary products of his time, in their abject being they aid humanity with its movement towards the inaccessible gender utopia, or the unattainable Real, similar to the way in which Kristeva, in her discussion of Dostoevsky, conceives of abjection as reaching "the height of harmony with the promised land" (*PH* 18). Though reaching this Eden is just a mirage, movement towards it would be taken as a success, and the pathway recognized as the destination.

In summary, the present work argues that Hemingway's short stories portray a world in which the semiotic evades repression by the Symbolic. Therefore, finding the opportunity to babble like babies, the characters repeat the thetic phase within the Symbolic, which adds to the act of signification. As Oliver contends, "without the semiotic element of signification, signification would be empty and we would not speak; for the semiotic provides the motivation for engaging in signifying processes."[628] In this way I also read Comley and Scholes's judgment that "The code of 'baby-talk' gives us one kind of meaning for 'Papa'"[629] which makes "an irreverent transgression of the boundaries established by the public relations apparatus."[630] The stories as a milieu of abjection unveil the compassionate side of Hemingway, who cares about humanity and individuals regardless of their sexuality.

[628] Adamczewski, *Following the Textual Revolution*, 65.
[629] *Hemingway's Genders*, 4–5.
[630] *Hemingway's Genders*, 3.

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