NORMAN, PAPA, AND THE AUTOEROTIC CONSTRUCTION OF WOMAN

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CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE HEMINGWAY/MAILER CONNECTION ARE MANY. Hortense Calisher once quipped that Norman Mailer was one of those writers who too early got caught up in Hemingway's jockstrap (188).[1] For Peter Swenger, Hemingway and Mailer are catalogued as writers of the School of Virility (133).[2] Jeffrey Meyers names Mailer as Hemingway's "most important disciple" in what he identifies as the "hardboiled" school of writers (570).[3] Indeed, a linking of the two is almost a cliché by this time, the younger Mailer referencing Hemingway often, not only in interviews, but also in his writing. One of Mailer's biographers, Carl Rollyson, contends that Mailer saw Hemingway as a role model in that he "had shown how a writer could become his own man" (*Lives* 143). When Gregory Hemingway wrote his remembrance of his father, *Papa: A Personal Memoir,* Mailer wrote the Preface. The connections are numerous and varied. In another sense the relationship could be characterized as an ongoing *mano a mano*, an almost Oedipal contest, as the younger writer attempted to emulate and outdo the master in myriad manners: the creation of a larger-than-life celebrity persona, drinking, brawling, and challenging peers to boxing matches both literal and figurative. Both had war experiences when young and both used those experiences to feed their fiction. Hemingway wrote the quintessential World War I novel, *A Farewell to Arms;* Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* occupies a similar status as the definitive war novel of World War II. Both married multiple times, Mailer beating Hemingway by two wives. Both became favorite whipping boys for feminist critics, condemned for their misogynistic portrayals of

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women and chauvinistic notions about relationships between the sexes. Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* devotes a chapter to Mailer, whom she characterizes as "a prisoner of the virility cult" (314), one who sees sex as war and war as sexual. Judith Fetterley's *The Resisting Reader: a Feminist Approach to American Fiction* includes chapters on both Hemingway and Mailer. And while I do not disagree with much of the criticism, in my appreciation for the major talents of these two writers I must invoke Norris Church Mailer, who comments on the tensions of living with Mailer: "Part of him was this wonderful, sweet, intelligent, terrific, funny guy that I was in love with. And another part, I just couldn't stand" (qtd. in Newman 128). It is a tension applicable to my situation as a professor of literature, one who recognizes and teaches the brilliance of these men as writers, while never loath to point out some of the less than savory aspects of their personalities and artistic creations.

In keeping with that perspective of appreciating the talents while acknowledging alternative readings, this essay identifies another similarity in the writings of Hemingway and Mailer, one that perhaps springs from an analogous impulse of these two self-absorbed and often ego-maniacal writers—their creation of a certain kind of dream fantasy woman, a projection of autoerotic impulses, by which they allow themselves, imaginatively, privileges that they did not have in life. In their fiction, they create a fulfillment that privileges male satisfaction; man is the subject, woman an object, a means to that end. Whereas life may not have afforded them realization of certain of their fantasies, they can, to borrow a phrase from Seinfeld, be "masters of their own domain" in writing or following from the egocentric nature of the two, they can accomplish in their writing a fantasy fulfillment, for as Woody Allen quips in *Annie Hall*: "Don't knock masturbation: it's sex with someone I love."[4] My hypothesis is validated in *The Spooky Art* where Mailer makes the connection explicit, noting that "[t]he act of writing is so close to the psychic character of masturbation that if we are going to discuss the world of the writer, then we ought to deal with this as well" (135).

The cases in point for this study are Catherine Barkley for Hemingway and Marilyn Monroe for Mailer.[5] These choices may strike some as an odd pairing, perhaps inappropriate. After all, one is a fictional character and the other was a real woman. Not withstanding that demurrer, in terms of the authors' autoerotic uses of these women, the comparison is justified. Hemingway took the real Agnes Von Kurowsky, the woman who, in the words of Harry, his alter-ego writer of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," was "the first one,

the one who left him" and formed a fictional daydream who could never get away (48). Various members of Hemingway's family and biographers have written of the traumatic effect on him of Kurowsky's "Dear Ernest" letter. But, while the actual woman may have gotten away in his life, the author captures her forever on the pages of his daydream projection in *A Farewell to Arms*. On the other hand, Marilyn Monroe was a real woman, but one who recreated herself as a fictional character, a characterization Mailer validates: "Marilyn had been polishing her fables for years" (*Marilyn* 18). Just as Agnes Von Kurowsky is the one who left Hemingway, who metaphorically got away, Marilyn is one who got away from Mailer, as he was never invited to meet her when she and Arthur Miller were his neighbors in Connecticut. In his review of the Marilyn biography, Dean MacCannell theorizes that "Mailer is burned up about this, fantasizing that Miller did not have him over out of fear that he would steal Marilyn" (123). It is a view supported by Mailer, who acknowledges in his introductory chapter that "in all his vanity he thought no one was so well suited to bring out the best in her as himself, a conceit which fifty million other men may also have held" (*Marilyn* 19–20). However, as a skilled writer the older Mailer can rectify the missed opportunity. What did not happen in real life can be played over and over in the reel life of his fictional fantasy.[6]

Generations of critics have analyzed and dissected the character of Catherine Barkley.[7] Their conclusions run the spectrum from the "Catherine is the real hero" minions to those who see Hemingway's female characters as "a convenience and a technique to turn a monologue into a dialogue" contingent (Tharp 191). The latter diagnosis is supportive of my hypothesis that in his creation of Catherine Barkley, Hemingway, in addition to turning his monologue into a dialogue, creates an ideal masturbatory fantasy, a technique to allow him to tell himself what he wants to hear; he gets both his say and the opportunity to put satisfying words into her mouth. Hemingway, as writer, in the assertive role of creation, uses the phallic pen to fulfill his erotic fantasies as his surrogate Frederick lies flat on his back and is ministered to by the "fresh," "young," and "beautiful" Catherine.

Frederick's selfish behavior toward Catherine enhances the connotations of autoeroticism; he is not concerned that she has work to do or may be tired, his satisfaction is all that matters. "Come back to bed" he tells her when she says she has charts to fill, work to do. Although she is on duty the day Doctor Valentini visits him, Frederick implores, "And can you be on night

duty tonight?" Like the selfish boy that he is, he cajoles, "You don't really love me or you'd come back again" (102). The autoerotic state is one of complete self-absorption and Frederick is nothing if not totally self-centered. The narrator (Frederick after the fact) comments on how popular Catherine is with the other nurses "because she would do night duty indefinitely" (108), and she does it indefinitely because of Frederick's demands.

Hemingway, when he distances himself as author, is aware of Frederick's selfishness and to his credit creates a scene where Ferguson reminds him of it. "You might give her just a little rest," she suggests, although doubtful that he will (109). She even reminds him that while he is sleeping, Catherine, after having fulfilled his sexual needs, is still working. Still, lest reality intrude too much on this remonstrance, there is an element of boasting involved; the implication is that he is so potent and insatiable that Catherine never gets to rest. Hemingway does end the scene with Miss Gage coming into the room, having a drink with Frederick and assuring him no less than four times in the space of one page, "I'm your friend," thus providing a modicum of absolution (110). In the end the three nights that Catherine is off duty serve only to add further piquancy to the resumption of their lovemaking and can be read as an Epicurean enhancement to the pure Hedonism of Frederick's self-indulgence. Absence acts to increase the appetite. Holding off is just another way to add potency to the reunion.

Hemingway creates Catherine/Agnes as compliant, docile, and anxious to please. "I'll say just what you wish and I'll do what you wish," says the fantasy woman (105). It is hard to imagine that the twenty-six year old veteran nurse would speak to the nineteen-year-old "kid," as she called him in such a servile manner.[8] Then, having given him an enema and prepared him for surgery, she is summoned back to his bed: "You see," she said. "I do anything you want." The most telling exchange in this scene is when she says: "I want what you want. There isn't any me any more. Just what you want" (106). And, indeed there isn't any woman there, just what the Hemingway's surrogate figure wants. The reality of a masturbatory fantasy is a lone individual, doing just what he wants. His only limitations are those of his imagination.

To further enhance the argument that, at one level of this novel, Hemingway is engaging in an autoerotic fantasy, there is Catherine's insistence that she does not exist as a separate entity. "There isn't any me. I'm you," she insists. "Don't make up a separate me" (115). The oneness of the two is reinforced by Ferguson, "You're two of the same thing," she proclaims, citing

in particular that they both have no shame and no honor and are equally sneaky (247). Of course, like the good little autoerotic fantasy that she is, Catherine often assures Frederick of her lack of any will separate from his: "I'll go any place any time you wish," which of course she will, since as a creation in Frederick's memory and Hemingway's fantasy, she has no autonomy outside of their needs and minds (252).

In the published photos of Agnes Von Kurowsky during her time in Italy, her hair is very neatly situated under her nurse's cap, so it is difficult to know what it looked like unconfined. In Hemingway's fantasy, however, he makes full use of the erotic resonance of woman's hair in the sexual encounter, hair being a traditional and timeworn symbol of female sexuality. It is not coincidental that Brett Ashley, one of Hemingway's most castrating women, has short hair, hair that her young love Pedro Romero wants her to grow so she will be more womanly.

Catherine's hair is a key component of her attractiveness for him: "She had wonderfully beautiful hair and I would lie sometimes and watch her twisting it up in the light" (114). There is a voyeuristic quality to his description of these scenes: "I watched her brushing her hair, holding her head so the weight of her hair all came on one side" (258). Watching her brush with the light shining on her hair, he remarks that the sight makes him feel faint. In a particularly sensual image, Frederick remembers taking the pins out of her hair so that it cascades down around the two of them, making him feel as if they are either "inside a tent or behind a falls" (114). A number of scholars have written about Hemingway's hair fetishes and I won't rehearse them here; however, the impact of hair on Frederick's sexual responses is evident in a scene where he watches Catherine having her hair done in a beauty salon.[9] While most men would be annoyed having to wait while a woman gets her hair curled, Frederic finds it "exciting to watch." He finds it so arousing that his "voice was a little thick from being excited" (292). In Hemingway, we must read between the lines and what Hemingway does not make explicit is exactly what the woman who runs the salon sees. But it is obvious that she notices something out of the ordinary and the reader can readily interpret that there must have been evidence of arousal as the salon owner is moved to comment, "Monsieur was very interested. Were you not, monsieur?" (293). This is followed by a smile, further confirmation that the owner saw something that is not made explicit for the reader. If further

corroboration of the importance of hair as a trigger in Hemingway's autoerotic arsenal is needed, this scene is ample proof.

In still another scene, the sexual connotations of hair are coupled with Catherine's desire to merge with Frederick. She suggests that he grow his hair longer and that she cut hers so "we'd be just alike only one of us blonde and one of us dark" (299). Though he tells her he likes her hair as it is and does not want her to cut it, she argues for the change so that they would both be alike. "Oh, darling, I want you so much I want to be you too" is the language Hemingway gives her, to which Frederick, making my argument, responds: "You are. We're the same one" (299). Reading the strong autoerotic nature of this recreation of Hemingway's first serious love affair, it is obvious that they are one and the one is Hemingway, indulging his fantasy. Furthermore, Catherine adds, "I don't live at all when I'm not with you," as the Catherine character has no existence outside of Hemingway's self indulgence (300).

Hemingway, as a novelist, has great latitude in his creation of characters. He can use real-life models and situations, and as a fiction writer recreate persons and places to fit his plot and interpretation. Judith Wilt, in explaining the romantic appeal of Ayn Rand's writing, theorizes that a particular allure for the romantic writer of creating a fantasy is being allowed to live in it while one is creating it (173–74). Hemingway's romantic fantasy operates in a similar vein. While *A Farewell to Arms* can be lauded for its hard-hitting realism, it is also Romance with a capital R. Hemingway can recreate his love affair with Agnes Von Kurowsky to his liking and live in it while he is creating it. All the elements are there, a love story that prefigures Erich Segal's *Love Story* and a war story Hollywood could not resist making and remaking.[10] Furthermore, Wilt suggests, if a writer creates a fantasy and can live in it while writing it, it is Romance, and if the writer can live in it after having created it, it is philosophy, creating the "sublime equipoise" (173–4). Hemingway has created the "sublime equipoise" in *A Farewell To Arms.* The strong stoical contents cushion the fantasy, lifted it beyond the realm of pure autoeroticism. At the same time Hemingway has a philosophical rationalization for killing the "one who left him." Catherine cannot live in the theoretical structural design because she must fulfill Frederick's philosophy of the "biological trap." She is the one who is caught off base, the brave one who may have died many times before her death, but she barely mentions it. Hemingway can recreate his war experiences and love affair, but can, at the same

time, assuage his wounded pride at having been left by Agnes in the creation of a Catherine who is devoted unto death.[11]

The reader must construct a mental image of Hemingway's dream girl from the narrator's description of a "quite tall," blonde with "tawny skin and grey eyes" who Frederick thinks is "very beautiful" (Hemingway, *Farewell* 18). Mailer's fantasy woman poses no such problem, for her image is world-famous and she probably served and may well still do duty as an instrument for millions of men in autoerotic contexts. She is so well known that Mailer needs only her first name for the title of his biography. But, in the event that the reader does not have a strong imagination, Mailer is nothing if not generous in that he supplies the visual as well as the verbal tools to implement the fantasy.[12] Marilyn's life-size face, mouth slightly open, eyes in a sleepily half-open position, stares out from the cover, invitingly. Inside there are numerous photos, pictures taken from the time she was an unknown starlet, throughout her career and from her last photo-shoot. In many of them she is posed naked—Marilyn stretched out on red satin, tangled in white sheets, and climbing out of a swimming pool, one leg swung up so that her genital area is probably spread wide where the mind's eye but not the camera can venture.

Mailer gives permission for a wide latitude of readings by calling his work a novel biography, "a *species* of novel ready to play by the rules of biography" (*Marilyn* 20). Quoting Virginia Woolf to the effect that a biography may capture six or seven of a person's selves, where there may be as many as a thousand in the individual's reality, Mailer rationalizes his portrayal. And in his argument that none of the extant biographies of the time had provided a complete and satisfactory portrayal, it is worth noting that he references Carlos Baker's biography of Hemingway (18–9). Mailer underlines his qualification to accomplish this "novel" of Marilyn Monroe by arguing that as a literary man he is best equipped to achieve an imaginative act of appropriation by the exercise of his skill. Appropriation is the telling word here, helping to make my argument about his use of her for his autoerotic fantasy.

That Mailer considers Marilyn an instrument for sexual flights of the imagination is evidenced by the initial images he uses to describe her. In the first paragraph of his book he likens her to a violin, calling her "a very Stradivarius of sex." Continuing the violin metaphor he rhapsodizes, "the sugar of sex came up from her like a resonance of sound in the clearest grain of a violin" (15). Moreover, for those male readers who might shrink from the

possibility of intercourse with this larger than life icon of sexual appeal, he promises that "even the most mediocre musician would relax his lack of art in the dissolving magic of her violin" (15). "Come," his sub-text reads, "any and all, from the sex maven like me to the pimply faced nerd, all are welcome to use this book for their masturbatory stimulation tool. Marilyn is our instrument." In addition, he saw his writing about her as an instrument for erotic attraction, a kind of aphrodisiac. In his inscription of the book to Barbara Davis (Norris Church Mailer) early in their relationship, he confirms that he "knew when I wrote this book that someone I had not yet met would read it and be with me" (Mailer, *Ticket* 89).

The facts or factoids, as Mailer calls them, about Norma Jean/Marilyn are mostly culled from Fred Lawrence Guiles, with regular citations from Maurice Zolotow; here and there he does quote from Diane Trilling and Norman Rosten. Mailer is acutely conscious of the impossibility of knowing the "truth" and does not pretend that he will arrive at it, only as Rollyson explains, an attempt to create a whole person, "while at the same time conceding that the search for wholeness is elusive and problematical" (*Marilyn* 49). For my purposes here, the focus will be those instances in the narrative when Mailer is indulging his sexual fantasies.[13] In one such instance he imagines a studio executive questioning Marilyn about the nude calendar pose. The questions are salaciously pointed: "Did you spread your legs? . . . Is your asshole showing? . . . Any animals in it with you?" (*Marilyn* 92).

If, as many reviewers complain, Mailer's *Marilyn* is nothing but a thinly disguised commercial maneuver, I would argue that it is not as Robert D. Callahan opines, "wasting square miles of forest in a Brobdingnagian mercantile enterprise" (50). A cursory reading reveals how much fun and personal satisfaction Mailer is getting as he lives in his fantasy. And why shouldn't a writer be allowed his autoerotic daydreams? On the distaff side are those like the *Booklist* reviewer who likens Mailer's appropriation to feeding on dead flesh and is disgusted by his "self-satisfied prose" and the reduction of the woman to a "figment in Mailer's stylishly lurid dreams" (363). Hugh Leonard's view is harsher and lends further support to my thesis that Mailer is using Marilyn for his autoerotic pleasure. Leonard detests the book and calls it "an exercise in necrophilia" (80).

Whereas Hemingway sets time limits to his autoerotic fantasy as he is reinventing a particular time period in his life, Mailer gives his wide scope. His being a biography of the whole life of a woman he never met, he can

give his imagination full range to satisfy any number of his fantasies by recalling scenes from a wide array of Marilyn's sexual experiences, lovers, husbands, and final days. As early as in his description of the sixteen-year-old bride, Mailer indulges his sexual visualizing: "We close our eyes, and see the movement of her hips" (*Marilyn* 46). He interrupts the presentation of facts to gratify his libidinous daydream, "Her wedding peels off like a stripper kicking a gown" (46). Writing about her activities and weight training, he cannot resist picturing how "[h]er plumped breasts bounce like manifests of the great here!" (49). Ever the sexual combatant, Mailer theorizes that Jim Dougherty, her first husband, was feeling threatened by Marilyn's maturing sexuality, "feeling the natural discomfort of any man when his prize is capable of getting him into murderous fights" (50).

Throughout the text, Mailer makes little attempt to disguise the autoerotic nature of his enterprise. Acknowledging the nature of his imaginings, he writes: "It is not too great a demand on our *voyeurism* (emphasis mine) to see a young husband in bed" (53). Inviting the reader along on this escapade of indulgence, he assures us that "we may as well enjoy one more situation where we can have no certainty" (60). His sentences may begin with a "why not assume" or, after a rhapsodic stint of theorizing about how a lie becomes a script for an actor and whether or not Marilyn was telling the truth to one of her early lovers, or just acting a script, acknowledges: "Let us return then to the *little* (emphasis mine) of which we can be certain" (58).

In his musings about writing, Mailer acknowledges his understanding of the connection between creation and autoeroticism. In another instance he likens writing to psychic excretion (*Spooky* 140). Paradoxically, he also inveighs against masturbation, because he claims the "ultimate direction of masturbation always has to be insanity" (137). Nonetheless, it is difficult to take Mailer at his word, for if he rationalizes his stance that masturbation is bad because "everything that's beautiful and good in one goes up the hand" (137), he seems not to mind if it is someone else's hand. Carole Mallory writes of his taking her to a pornographic movie, watching the screen mesmerized and then reaching for her hand to put in his unzipped pants (171). She comments on her awareness that at that moment she is nothing but an object for his satisfaction.

In one area of the presentation of autoerotic fantasy, at least the published ones, Mailer has considerable advantage over Hemingway. Although he may have fought for the right to use more realistic language, Hemingway wrote

in an era of strict censorship, coming up with his own clever way of conveying his meaning while still abiding by the strictures of publishing in his day. Since he could not print the obscenity and since much of what his peasant characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* say is unprintable, Hemingway devised the cunning stratagem of writing "obscenity" or "unprintable" whenever one of his characters uses a forbidden word. Thus his gypsies utter such oddities as "I obscenity in the milk of thy mother" or go "unprint thyself." Only when he has the freedom of writing in Spanish can Hemingway's characters curse openly. Thus Robert Jordan swears at the gypsy, "You *hijo de la gran puta!*" which can be loosely translated "son of the great whore," equivalent to son of a bitch (Hemingway, *For Whom* 274). When Jordan and Pilar hear the planes attacking El Sordo's enclave, Pilar asks Jordan if she thinks Sordo is *jodido* (298). Hemingway could not have used "fucked," an English equivalent. Hemingway developed this two-pronged method of surmounting the censorship challenge for his Spanish Civil War book, but, maybe because his characters are both English speakers, or maybe because the context is so different, his language in this earlier book remains within the bounds of propriety in most instances. There is the moment when Frederick returns from the hospital in Milan and Rinaldi is teasing him, offering to take out his liver and replace it with a good Italian liver. Frederick responds, "Go something yourself" (*Farewell* 169), which while it has the same obvious connotation is not nearly as powerful as "Go obscenity yourself."

In the Caporetto retreat, after they have picked up the two young girls, Hemingway again depends on what is not printed, but suggested by the blank line: _____. Aymo tries to reassure one, saying "Don't worry. . . . No danger of _____," (196). In case the reader should miss the implication of the blank, Frederick tells us that Aymo used the vulgar word.

Mailer began his writing career when such strictures were still in place and following in Hemingway's footsteps, he developed his own strategy for conveying the language of the American fighting man in *The Naked and the Dead.* Since he could not use the four-letter word that is the mainstay of a soldier's vocabulary, he invented a three-letter word as a substitute. His fighting men use "fug," phonetically similar, but able to pass the censor's inspection. The civil rights movements of the 60s and early 70s also liberated language and by the time he was writing *Marilyn,* Mailer had wide latitude not only about what he could write, but also in the language he could use to write about it. Gone was the constriction of having to use fug instead of fuck.

Thus, in describing the allure of Marilyn's publicity stills, Mailer explains, that for a man looking at the pictures it is as if she is whispering, "You can fuck me if you're lucky" (*Marilyn* 91). In the crudest language he is free to write derisively about Marilyn's having been reputed to be Schenek's or Hyde's girl first; therefore bedding her was not any "glory" to Darryl Zanuck's "sausage." He explains that Zanuck had the reputation of stamping female actresses by putting "his own meat into a star's meat" (90). Mailer can unreservedly write about blowjobs, anal sex, and use any and all obscenities. Hemingway's sexual iceberg is very much seven-eighths under water. When Rinaldi asks Frederick, if he is in love and married, he expresses sympathy, asking "Is she good to you?" When Frederick's positive response comes too easily, Rinaldi clarifies, using a euphemism, "I mean is she good to you practically speaking?" (*Farewell* 169). We know this is a sexual euphemism because Frederick tells Rinaldi to "shut up." Rather than being explicit, Rinaldi asks, "Does she ——?" (169). Again, Hemingway does not fill in the blank and we can only surmise from Frederick's angry response that he is asking sexually explicit questions. In the exchange that follows, Rinaldi claims not to have any sacred objects, so Frederick asks, "I can say this about your mother and that about your sister?" (170). Once more Hemingway avoids the actual language and evades the censors. Mailer, on the other hand, is so liberated from any restraints to his fantasies and/or language that he even creates his own obscenity. In trying to find a way to describe how physically appealing Monroe looked during the time she was married to Joe Dimaggio, Mailer searches for the appropriate metaphor or adjective. First he writes, "She looks fed on sexual candy" (*Marilyn* 102). However, that does not satisfy him. Therefore he decides to "examine a verb through its adverb" and resorts to creating the word "fucky" to describe the sexual energy she was emitting. No, he proclaims, never again "will she appear so fucky" (102).

In what each man is allowed or allows himself to write of his autoerotic fantasy, their styles could not be more opposite. Hemingway is controlled, using few adjectives; there are no specific descriptions of either the genitalia or the sex act itself. It would not be until *For Whom the Bell Tolls* that he created the "earth moved" metaphor to describe orgasm (174).[14] Mailer, *au contraire*, indulges in florid flights of linguistic high jinks. Everything is explicit. He repeats an apocryphal story about Marilyn's comment when she finally signed a contract with the studio: "Well, that's the last cock I suck" (*Marilyn* 78). He envisions some of her modeling photos as suggesting, "Take me from

behind" (79). He is even detailed about her gynecological history, speculating on painful periods, many abortions, and whether or not she used a diaphragm (171–3).

It should be noted at this juncture that if both men created desirable and docile fantasy women for their erotic fantasies, their writing is not without their opposites, bitch women, destroyers of male potency, not the women of dreams, but those who inhabit their fictional nightmares. Hemingway's Margot Macomber is a bitch goddess of the first order, turning her husband, the great American boy-man into a whining cuckold before she finally does away with him altogether with the eponymous named Mannlicher rifle.[15] Mailer's consummate bitch is the Jewess of "The Time of Her Time," who if she doesn't turn him into a boy-man, accuses him of being a man who loves boys when she categorizes him as a latent homosexual (503). But that is another article.

A philosopher colleague and I were once discoursing on the differences between men and women in their choices of characteristics for an ideal fantasy partner.[16] Besides the physical and sexual qualities Hall listed, he added that a major component of the ideal fantasy woman's appeal would be that she would have disappeared in the morning. A real woman is annoying because the man has to deal with her once his satisfaction has been achieved; she may demand consideration and attention from him. A fantasy woman is all satisfaction and no responsibility. For Hemingway and Mailer, the ultimate disappearance is achieved. They can creatively enjoy their fantasy women with no possibility of the women becoming demanding, because the women are deceased, one done away with in fiction, the other dead in real life. Hemingway wrote a number of possible endings for *A Farewell to Arms.* In one both Catherine and the baby survive. In another Catherine survives, but the baby does not; in another the baby survives but Catherine doesn't. His choice, artistically and autoerotically gratifying is to free Frederick of all responsibility, leaving him with memories of a compliant, devoted Catherine who is on call for instant replay in his memory. Whatever the aesthetic justifications, Hemingway did choose to tell the story as Frederick's recreation of the past. Catherine is dead when he begins the story, but their lovemaking is resurrected at his choice. Let me add here that Agnes von Kurowsky, Hemingway's Catherine model, was far from dead when he rewrote their history. She lived a long full life and seems never to have regretted his loss. Like Frederick's Catherine who is dead before his narration

begins, so Mailer's Marilyn is likewise a memory, having been dead a decade when Mailer's rapturous portrait is published.

Sexologists tell us that most human beings fantasize when they are having sexual relations. At sperm banks male clients are given pornographic materials to help them achieve their goal. Writers have a power that most of us do not. They can not only create their own sexual fantasy to please themselves, but they can also sell it to us. My argument here is that on one level that is exactly what Hemingway and Mailer do.

NOTES

1. This was in the context of a review of the lack of women writers in the canon.
2. Swenger's focus is their fascination with the bullfight.
3. Meyers writes that "Mailer was obsessed with Hemingway, fastened onto the son after he had failed to meet the father" (570).
4. Thanks to my colleague Ezra Cappell for reminding of this scene.
5. A longer study could survey a number of their texts interpolating the auto-erotic construction of others of these writers' fantasy women, but for this shorter study, the primary focus will be on one character for each.
6. As a side note, Norris Church Mailer makes an observation about the fantasy connection between Hemingway and Marilyn for Norman Mailer. When they visit the finca in Cuba, she writes: "I was a little sad, seeing Norman poking about in Hemingway's house, wondering what they might have said to each other if they had indeed ever met. Kind of like the phantom affair he might have had with Marilyn Monroe, if they had ever met, which they didn't" (305).
7. Sandra Whipple Spanier catalogues them in "Hemingway's Unknown Soldier: Catherine Barkley, the Critics, and the Great War."
8. Jean Wyrick, exploring Catherine's credibility as a twentieth-century woman, observes: "Few women, if any, live only to serve, their wish to deny their own personalities and to assume those of their lovers" (43).
9. A key text is Carl Eby's *Hemingway's Fetishism: Psychoanalysis and the Mirror of Manhood.* Binghamton: SUNY Press, 1999.
10. The first film version was in 1932, starring Gary Cooper and Helen Hayes, directed by Frank Borzage. In 1957 Charles Vidor directed Rock Hudson and Jennifer Jones. Even a scholarly book on the subject inspired a Hollywood production. Richard Attenborough's *In Love and War* was inspired by James Nagel and Henry S. Villard's *Hemingway in Love and War.*
11. Hemingway's masterful ability to amalgamate his experience, historical data, and fiction are nowhere more in evidence than in the retreat from Caporetto scenes of *A Farewell to Arms.* See Reynolds, 105–180.

12. I am not unmindful of the fact that the book began with Lawrence Schiller's photographs and Mailer's participation grew as he warmed to the subject. However, I would contend that this strengthens my argument.
13. To that end I will avoid discussion of Mailer's interesting takes on her search for a true self, issues of how her personality was molded by the traumas and privations of her childhood, her survival techniques.
14. It should be noted that the "earth moved" metaphor has maintained a place in the cultural lexicon.
15. I am not unaware of the debate about whether or not Margot killed her husband on purpose or accidentally. For purposes of this study I will take my cue from Hemingway's comment that he saw her as "a bitch for the full course." I develop the characterization more fully in *The Indestructible Woman in Faulkner, Hemingway, and Steinbeck*, 62–64.
16. David Hall and I created and team-taught a course in Sexuality at the University of Texas at El Paso. He is the author of, among other books, *Eros and Irony.*

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