

HEMINGWAY AND MALRAUX: THE UNMANNED VIRILE FRATERNITY¹



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In 1919 Paul Valéry proclaimed the death of modernism. Having produced a melting pot of “the most disparate ideas —ingredients from the Russian ballet, —a trace of Pascal’s sombre style [...] —something from Nietzsche, —something from Rimbaud, —certain effects gleaned from among painters [...] —the whole thing fragrant with a fastidiously measured British *je ne sais quoi!*” modernism, he said, had generated “the quintessential *disorder*”.² Valéry argued that “the Europe of 1914 had perhaps gone as far as it could with this modernism”.³ In the vast graveyard of post-war Europe, he casts the intellectual in the role of a “European Hamlet” (1919: 326-328). Confronted by what Stan Smith calls, with reference to *The Waste Land*, a “vision of falling empires” (1994: 144), this “intellectual Hamlet [...] meditates on the life and death of truths”, torn between “order and disorder”, in other words between an inherited authoritative world-view and the ambiguities of an individual consciousness.⁴

This valedictory for modernism was, of course, premature and Valéry’s Hamlet too classical. For modernism, and particularly for a new generation of modernists who began writing in the aftermath of the Great War, there were no “truths”. “There are no ideals for which we can lay down our lives since we know the lies which they conceal even if we do not know what truth is”, wrote Malraux in 1926 (1989a: 110-111).⁵ For his part, Hemingway was preparing the ironically titled *In Our Time* (1925), having understood, “like many other modernists”, as Thomas Strychacz points out, that the post-war landscape “demanded new narrative strategies (1996: 56-57). On both sides of the Atlantic intellectuals shared an aversion for what Paul Fussell calls the “self-destructive stalemate” of the war (1975: 3). They condemned President Harding’s espousal of a return to “normalcy” and France’s return to law and

order under the leadership of Raymond Poincaré, dubbed by J. F. V. Keiger "the hero of normalcy" (1997: 344). The poignant optimism expressed in *Le Feu*, Henri Barbusse's devastating novelistic indictment of the First World War—"The future is in the hands of the slaves, and it is clear that the old order will be changed" (1916: 5)⁶—had been betrayed, and the intellectual backlash was inevitable. Ezra Pound wrote of the United States as "that country in distress" (1927: 89) and Louis Aragon angrily evoked a European landscape strewn with "mental carrion" (1928: 78).⁷

The First World War and its aftermath gave added relevance to the ambiguity, the multi-dimensionality and the anti-authoritarianism which underpinned modernism. What Lyn Pykett describes as the "disruption of 'natural' gender boundaries and hierarchies" (1995: 37) had, however, been at its most assertive at the turn of the century and in the pre-war years. The post-war landscape, in all its confusion, merely served to ratify an anti-patriarchal shift that had already begun. Certainly the Great War, which Elaine Showalter describes as "the most masculine of exercises" (1987: 173), had done little to validate or recommend a male-dominated order. Whether or not, as a consequence of what Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar call "female self-possession", men themselves began to feel "as assaulted on the home front as they were on the military front itself", there is no doubt, as Gilbert and Gubar go on to point out, that the theme of male inadequacy becomes a *leitmotif* "in the most canonical male modernist novels" of the early twentieth century (1988: 34-35). While Wyndham Lewis felt the need to defend masculinity against what he saw as the creeping feminine aestheticisation of modernism, Hemingway and Malraux, two of the most "masculine" of modernist novelists, both writing in post-war Europe, were already cultivating what Robert W. Lewis terms the "Warrior-Writer" image (1992: 58), which they would eventually be locked into after the Spanish Civil War.

In the case of both these writers it is difficult to distinguish between their lives and their fiction, especially since each of them shamelessly cultivated his own legend. Hemingway had been a Red Cross ambulance driver in the last months of the First World War in Italy and had been badly wounded. From 1921 to 1928 he had worked in Paris, initially as a journalist. Malraux, whose formal education, like Hemingway's, did not extend beyond high school level, was arrested in Cambodia in 1923 while on an archaeological expedition which was a barely disguised attempt to pillage poorly-charted Khmer temples in the Cambodian jungle. In 1925 he became co-editor of a French language newspaper in Saigon for some six months. From June of that year, southern China was in the throes of a nationalist-communist

insurrection which would provide Malraux with the historical setting of his first novel, *Les Conquérants* (1928), which would rapidly become the basis of the legend of his participation in the Chinese revolution. The masculinity of the image cultivated by these two novelists is equalled by the apparently stereotypical male activities which inspire their writing. From the beginning of Hemingway's career, notes Rena Sanderson, "critics made an issue of the 'masculinity' in his writings" (1996: 170); and, indeed, the First World War, boxing, fishing, bullfighting and heavy drinking are among the principal themes in his early work. Malraux's early novels, from which female characters are all but excluded, deal with the Chinese revolution and an expedition into the uncharted hinterland of Cambodia. Both *Les Conquérants* and *La Voie royale* (1930) focus on the virile fraternity in extreme situations and exemplify what Dominica Radulescu calls Malraux's "glorification of male power and creativity" (1994: 4). The early novelistic universe of these two modernists is profoundly, and in Malraux's case almost exclusively, androcentric. And later, when the first French translation of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* appeared in London in 1944, critics were quick to underline the preoccupation with the virile hero common to both Malraux and Hemingway. They were, wrote Claude Mauriac, "brothers [...] on account of that restrained toughness so much part of virile decency" (1946: 133-134).⁸ Malraux is still viewed as the eulogist of the "virile fraternity" (Dao 1991: 11),⁹ and until Mark Spilka's work and the publication of Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden* in 1986, the American novelist's "hypermasculinity" had rarely been challenged (see Beegel 1996: 289).

Both novelists distanced themselves, for different reasons, from the self-consciously literary circles around them (see Benson 1975: 274; Larrat 1996: 78), and they adopted an individualised camera-eye narrative perspective on the world which is quite alien to the stream-of-consciousness technique prevalent among writers associated with modernism. Malraux and Hemingway eschew recourse to the interiority of the human consciousness as a response to the dislocation of the world outside. Hemingway's "distaste" for Freudianism and his scepticism about the validity of any psychoanalytical approach is well known (Hovey 1975: 180-181), and Malraux, who asserted "I consider what we call the subconscious to be the very essence of confusion" (in Picon 1953: 60),¹⁰ consistently ignores the influence of the psychological throughout his work (see Harris 1996a: 77-94). Nevertheless, these novelists both participate in what Trudi Tate presents as modernism's attempt to make the war and its repercussions on the social and cultural order "readable" and to write them "into history" (1998: 4). Equally both writers use distinctively modernist textual structures in their work, often fragmentary, potentially

incoherent, and as elliptical as that associated with the stream-of-consciousness technique.

Hemingway's ellipses mirror his distrust of the psychological: "There isn't any place", [Catherine] said. She came back from wherever she had been. [...] "I had a very fine show and I'm all right now", we read in the closing paragraphs of Chapter 6 in *A Farewell to Arms* (1963: 28). The reader must supply a meaning here by inferring the psychologically-loaded sub-text, concurring with the projection of Catherine as someone damaged by the war, a victim of what Tate calls "non-combatant war neurosis" (1998: 12). Benson notes that the essence of Hemingway's discourse lies in "what is suggested or left unsaid" (1975: 272). Indeed, in "Big Two-Hearted River", published in *In Our Time*, the reader has to deduce the hidden mainspring of the story: the extent and origin of the psychological damage to Nick Adams, the sole character. The process of externalisation and concretisation in Hemingway's prose no doubt owes something to his experience of journalism and certainly he, like Malraux, quickly rejected what Hans-Robert Jauss calls the provocative and "classic opposition of *res fictae*, *res factae*" (1987: 117).¹¹

Malraux's narrative technique, particularly in his early work, involves a disjointed presentation of material which, in *Les Conquérants* for example, incorporates eye-witness accounts, reports of interviews, and the camera-eye narrator's reading of radio despatches and police records. The absence of relative pronouns and the simple juxtaposition of clipped sentences produce a fragmented, *staccato* prose: "Seven Chinese entered, in a line —buttoned up jackets and white trousers,— without a word. Some young, some old. They stood in front of the table, in a semi-circle. One of the eldest half sat on the desk: the interpreter" (1989b: 177).¹² So telegraphic is the discourse in *Les Conquérants* that to many readers it seemed more a documentary than a novel. In his preface to Andrée Viollis' *Indochine S.O.S.*, Malraux recognised that "reporting continues [...] to be one of the strongest strands of the French novel" (1935: VII),¹³ and his own camera-eye narrator, although individualised, minimally, as a character in the novel, automatically conveys an externalised vision. In *La Voie royale*, the narrative point of view is restricted almost exclusively to that of either main character.

While Hemingway partly externalises the psychological through dialogue, Malraux's use of an identified, non-omniscient, externalised narrative perspective allows him to objectify it. His synecdochic presentation serves to imply a psychological subtext. "The novelist", he wrote, "has at his disposal another major means of expression: he can link a decisive moment for his character to the atmosphere around him or the cosmos" (1946: n.p.).¹⁴ Just as the swamp represents Nick Adams' subconscious fears in

Hemingway's "Big Two-Hearted River", so the hostile jungle in *La Voie royale* is a transposition of the turmoil in Claude's subconscious: "Claude was sinking into a kind of sickness in this fermentation where shapes became distorted, elongated, as they rotted away in a world where man did not matter" (1989c: 416).¹⁵ At times Malraux's technique becomes frankly behaviourist. In *Esquisse d'une psychologie du cinéma*, he wrote:

The novel seems, however, to retain a certain advantage over the film: the possibility of moving *inside* the characters. But, on the one hand, the modern novel apparently analyses its characters less and less in their critical moments; and, on the other hand, a dramatic form of psychology —used by Shakespeare and, to a large degree, by Dostoevsky— which allows inner secrets to be suggested [...] through actions [...], is perhaps no less powerful artistically, and no less revealing than analysis. (n.p.)¹⁶

In *Les Conquérants*, written some twenty years before *Esquisse*, Garine's exposure of Nicolaïeff's incompetence leads to Malraux's use of this "dramatic form of psychology" to render the police chief's embarrassment: "Nicolaïeff, who has not answered, slowly brushed away with his hand the mayflies which continued to fall onto the desk, as though he were smoothing out his sheet of paper like a well-behaved child" (1989b: 265).¹⁷

Sustained, as Malraux's European correspondent in *La Tentation de l'Occident* observes, less by any system of thought than by "a flimsy edifice of negations" (1989a: 91),¹⁸ the central characters in the early novels of Hemingway and Malraux articulate a predominantly negative world-view. Confronted by a morally bankrupt society and the absence of any truth, these characters move in the world conveyed by Kurtz's exclamation at the end of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "The horror! The horror!" (1989: 111). It is the same world which haunts Virginia Woolf's Septimus Warren Smith, the shell-shocked First World War veteran in *Mrs Dalloway*: "this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface" (1964: 18). In Malraux's *Les Conquérants*, Garine, the principal protagonist, is the propaganda *commissar* for the Nationalist government of southern China and, reads his Hong-Kong police file, he is "seriously ill" (1989b: 162).¹⁹ Driven by a reductionist and negatively formulated precept —"All the same, there is one thing which counts in life: not becoming a victim [...]" (1989b: 247)²⁰— Malraux's hero is ontologically dysfunctional. He is also unable to define himself socio-politically other than in negative terms. He admits to "the impossibility of devoting [himself] to any form of society whatsoever" (1989b: 154).²¹ Despite

his role as revolutionary cadre, he feels that the revolution is an end (the suspension of all socio-political reality) and not a means: "If I found it so easy to get involved in the revolution, it's because its results are in the distant future and forever evolving" (1989b: 250).²² The rapid deterioration of Garine's health allegorically maps out his progressive distancing from the revolution throughout the novel, and the success of the revolutionary action effectively condemns him to death.

No less distanced from the society he frequents is Hemingway's Jake Barnes. The central character and narrator of *The Sun Also Rises* (1927), Hemingway's first novel, he too is, as the prostitute deduces, "sick" or, rather, as he subsequently explains: "I got hurt in the war" (1970: 13-14). This war injury (he has been emasculated) prevents him from consummating his passionate relationship with Lady Brett Ashley. "We'd better keep away from each other", he tells her in the opening chapters, and the closing lines of the novel convey the same frustrated discourse of unfulfilment, this time permeated with heavily allegorical—and ironic?—evocations linking the military with virility: "Ahead was a mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me" (1970: 186).

With the exception of his conversations with Bill during their fishing trip and his explanations about the art of bull-fighting, Jake's interventions in the numerous dialogue scenes in *The Sun Also Rises* are minimal. Used by Hemingway as a camera-eye narrator, Jake's narrative function is essentially passive. It not only mirrors his *persona* in the novel but also strangely resembles the "feminine state of powerlessness, frustration and dependency" which, according to Showalter, was associated with shell-shocked soldiers in the First World War (1987: 175). "We were a little detached", says the American volunteer injured on the Italian front and who narrates Hemingway's significantly entitled "In Another Country", published in 1927 in *Men Without Women* (1965: 46). Despite his own volunteer status in the Italian army, Frederic Henry, the hero of *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), is portrayed as being strangely "detached" from his adopted cause and views the war as if it were a film: "Well, I knew I would not be killed. Not in this war. It did not have anything to do with me. It seemed no more dangerous to me myself than war in the movies" (1963: 33). Caught up in the chaotic retreat from Caporetto, he decides that he is "out of it" and that, like Nick Adams and Rinaldi in the vignette which precedes "A Very Short Story" in *In Our Time* (1974a: 81), he has "made a separate peace" (1963: 188). Certainly Jake Barnes is "detached", so much so that he is accused of being the ultimate unaccountable intermediary, a "damned pimp" (1970: 145). Ironically, it is

Brett who verbally locks Jake into this at best, spectatorial role, as she asks him to sanction her affair with the young bull fighter, the ultimate symbol of masculinity: "Please stay by me and see me through this" (1970: 140). Just as he surveys the Spanish landscape from the top of the bus, Jake, the only *aficionado* in the group, surveys the running of the bulls through the town centre from the balcony of his hotel room before returning to bed. His role as spectator and the concomitant distanciation from this most masculine of actions are further underscored in the bullfight scene, which he follows through binoculars in a text laden with verbs of visual perception: "I looked through the glasses and saw the three matadors [...] I saw the picadors. Romero was wearing a black suit [...]. I could not see his face clearly [...] but it looked badly marked" (1970: 161-162). Like Malraux's Garine, Jake moves in "another country", not only in that he is an American in Europe—as Garine is a European in China—but also in the sense that in his enthusiasm for the *fiesta* he too achieves that suspension of reality which Garine seeks in revolutionary action, the favoured arena of the Malrucian virile fraternity. Having just glimpsed a banner proclaiming "Hurray for Wine! Hurray for the Foreigners!", Jake reflects that during the *fiesta* "everything became quite unreal finally and it seemed as though nothing could have any consequences [...]. It was the same feeling for any action" (1970: 117).

Arguably, in *Les Conquérants*, Malraux's use of a minimally diagetic, camera-eye narrator situates Garine, although he is the principal focus of the novel, at a further remove from the reader than Hemingway's hero. Garine's remoteness is evoked throughout the novel. Marginalised to the extent of feeling like a supernumerary during his own trial in Switzerland—"an unreal spectacle" (1989b: 152)²³—he is depicted as being multi-dimensionally separate (Harris 1996b: 57-60). He is isolated by his illness, by his anti-social world-view, and by his ideological alienation even within the revolution. He is detached from revolutionary action and from those around him by his status as a cadre. The use of a cinematographic perspective technically reinforces this isolation, emphasising the hierarchical, ideological and psychological distance established between Garine and the revolution by constituting it spatially. When he first arrives at Garine's headquarters in Canton, the narrator must negotiate a veritable obstacle course of gates, doors and sentries before gaining access to the propaganda *commissar's* office. Garine is protectively screened by his guards, his nurses and by the geographical location of his office which overlooks the streets of Canton. In narrative terms, he is also screened by the narrator.

This multi-faceted isolation which characterises Malraux's and Hemingway's early heroes is also stressed in varying degrees by a form of

linguistic alienation. Garine's reliance on the narrator as an interpreter automatically posits a distance between himself and his role in the revolution, but already during his trial in Switzerland, language, this time in the form of the establishment's discourse, had underlined his fundamental estrangement from society: "The text of the oath on which the jurors were sworn in, read in a tired schoolmaster's voice by the presiding judge, surprised him because of its effect on those twelve placid tradesmen" (1989b: 152).²⁴ In *Modernist Fiction* (1992), Randall Stevenson observes that "for most of the modernists" the war, rather than opening up new linguistic frontiers "simply diminished confidence in language's reliability" (1992: 185). In *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederic Henry is unable to relate to the rhetoric driving the war effort:

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain [...], now for a long time I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done to the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear [...]. Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage or hallow were obscene. (1963: 143-144)

The Italian officer arrested by the *carabinieri* for retreating is nonplussed by his interrogators: "It is you and such as you that have let the barbarians on to the sacred soil of the fatherland", says one of the *carabinieri*. "I beg your pardon", says the lieutenant-colonel (1963: 175). In *The Sun Also Rises*, language is consistently devalued, through the drunken dialogue, through Jake's playful relativisation of language (he introduces his "fiancée" as "Mademoiselle Georgette Leblanc" although her name is Hobin [1970: 15]), and through Brett's ultimate dismissal of language: "Let's not talk. Talking's all bilge" (1970: 43). In Malraux's second novel, *La Voie royale*, one of the two central characters, the young adventurer, Claude Vannec, recalls his father's dismissal of the vocabulary used to encourage the war effort, the most extravagant of the "unleashings of imbecility" he had ever witnessed: "Now [...] they are mobilising justice, civilisation and the severed hands of children" (1989c: 375).²⁵ In his turn, Claude too is at odds with what he sees as the dominant discourse of his time ("No desire to sell cars, shares or speeches" [1989c: 394])²⁶ and with the concepts which inspire commitment: "What was to be done with the carcass of ideas which controlled the way men acted when they believed their existence served some *useful* cause; what was to be done with the words, these other carcasses, used by those who want to live according to a model?" (1989c: 394).²⁷

Threatened by the disintegration of the world outside, the characters in these novels are also at risk from the impact of this process on their subconscious. Frequently conveyed allegorically, as we have noted, the threat of the subconscious is also formulated by the characters themselves. In *Les Conquérants*, Garine fears being left alone in the isolation of his hospital room, and the fear of the dark and of sleeping, often triggered by wartime experiences, is a *leitmotif* in Hemingway's short stories and in his early novels. In *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederic Henry admits to himself that "the night can be a dreadful time" (1963: 193), and in *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake Barnes, who cries at night, confesses that because of his fear of the dark "for six months [he] never slept with the light off" (1970: 112). With its cast of socially dysfunctional, physically —and psychologically— damaged characters, Malraux's and Hemingway's early work reflects the painfully dislocated human landscape left by the First World War. As Trudi Tate writes:

Like modernist fiction of the 1920s and 1930s, the war narratives are troubled by the question of how one is placed in relation to the vast, often incomprehensible events of early twentieth-century history. [...] There is also concern in all these writings as to where the war is located. Is it inside or outside; in the world or in your mind; inscribed upon your body or upon the bodies you have seen? (1998: 95)

Like Ad Francis, the punch-drunk boxer in Hemingway's short story "The Battler", the main characters in these early novels seem to have taken "too many beatings" (1974b: 78). Psychologically fragile and often physically injured or debilitated they all are, or become, victims. Garine ignores medical advice, outlasts his usefulness to the revolution and, like Perken, who virtually sabotages his own imperialist project, he is condemned to die prematurely. Both are victims of what could arguably be termed self-inflicted wounds. Those central protagonists in Malraux's novels who escape death —the narrator in *Les Conquérants* and Claude in *La Voie royale*— are hardly presented as masculine role models. Neophytes, their principal role is to witness the downfall of the virile hero. "I don't know anything: I've only just arrived", says the narrator in the opening pages of *Les Conquérants* (1989b: 122), only to be told in the closing pages: "You don't understand anything. [...] You're speaking like a kid" (1989b: 257).²⁸ Claude, whose project to ship Khmer carvings back to Europe is abandoned, is immediately dismissed by Grabot as "obviously a young kid" (1989c: 460).²⁹ Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry are both physical casualties of the war. Jake's wound debars him from a normal social life and condemns him to the role of spectator. The

fiesta ends in a drunken fiasco as the Anglo-Saxons, and particularly Brett—with Jake's help—play havoc with the rituals of bullfighting. Jake is snubbed by the *aficionados* and loses all credibility. He is, as Michael S. Reynolds notes, "a most ineffectual man in a most unpromising place" (1987: 64). For his part, Frederic Henry, having shot an Italian soldier in the back, lost one of his own men and abandoned the ambulances in his command, deserts and makes a "separate peace". Subsequently he is further destabilised by the death in childbirth of his partner Catherine Barkley and the loss of his new-born son. It is however Grabot, the larger-than-life white adventurer, the Malrucian Mr Kurtz and a constant reference in Perken's belligerent discourse, who becomes the ultimate symbol of male decline in these novels. The two heroes of *La Voie royale* are stunned to find him blinded and harnessed to a millstone, the slave of the tribesmen on the Siamese-Cambodian border. The "white chief", as Perken had imagined him, eventually manages to articulate his own truth: "Nothing" (1989c: 457).³⁰ A paradigm of the physical and psychological dislocation of post-First World War society, Grabot signifies the fall of the modernist hero.

While the thematic emphasis in these early novels is on what Wendy Martin describes as "the loss of conviction of masculine invincibility" (1987: 66), it is tempting to read them as Poundian models of "masculine" writing. The unfailingly elliptical, usually unanalytical prose seems consciously "non-literary" and sometimes quasi-documentary, all of which may be interpreted—as indeed Sanderson does in the case of Hemingway—as a "stoic, understated masculine style" (1996: 170). In other words, compensation for the novel's graphic depiction of the dislocation of the masculine ideal may be discovered in a prose which reasserts masculinity through the imposition of a surface, quasi-behaviourist novelistic reality. However, this disjointed discourse is essentially a further reflection of the problems of non-communication, of the loss of confidence in logic and the absence of truth in a dislocated post-war Europe. In this context, it is interesting to note that in her perceptive assessment of Malraux's work, first published in 1948 and recently republished, Claude-Edmonde Magny writes of "the dislocation [...] in the sentences and the style of Malraux's novels" (1995: 36).³¹ This stylistic dislocation, which underscores alienation as a central theme, is in turn reinforced by the cinematographic structure of Malraux's novels—particularly *Les Conquérants* (and later *La Condition humaine* and *L'Espoir*)—which are divided not into chapters but into scenes juxtaposed with little or no hint of transition. The highly-stylised discourse developed by Hemingway and Malraux, perfectly adapted to the transposition of action and to the elimination of introspection, is in reality a vehicle for the

reaffirmation of a thematic which exposes the dislocation of the masculine ethos of physical prowess and psychological self-control.

Wagner-Martin observes that the war had created "a culture without heroes" (1987: 9); but equally in these novels it posited a culture without heroines. Whilst female characters are almost entirely absent in *Les Conquérants* and *La Voie royale*, except as supernumerary sex objects (although Klein's female partner appears briefly in *Les Conquérants* in the passive role of a grief-stricken witness of his mutilated corpse), in Hemingway's first novels, where they are very much present, they are no less damaged than their male counterparts. Although, as Elaine Showalter points out, the Great War had been the "apocalypse of masculinism" (1987: 173), and although a major *leitmotif* in these novels is the loss of patriarchal control, the female characters appear as disorientated as the male characters in the aftermath. If, in *The Sun Also Rises*, Miss Ferguson tries to lay blame for Catherine's pregnancy entirely on Henry, for the "mess (he'd) gotten (the) girl into", Catherine protests that the "mess" is also of her making: "No one got me in a mess, Fergy. I get in my own messes" (1963: 190). The recognition of a shared dislocation underpins Hemingway's texts. In *The Sun Also Rises*, Georgette's response to Jake's revelation that he has been wounded is: "Everybody's sick. I'm sick too" (1970: 13) and in *A Farewell to Arms*, when Catherine says, "I'm all broken. They've broken me", Frederic Henry replies, "Everybody is that way" (1963: 248). While in Malraux's early novels the focus on the loss of patriarchal authority is very male-specific—indeed, women barely figure—in Hemingway's novels the collapse of male dominance is conveyed more subtly through an erosion of gender boundaries. Brett Ashley, with "her hair brushed back like a boy's" (1970: 18), who later balks when Romero wants her to grow her hair long, is in love with a man who has been emasculated in the war and who inverts the gender cliché by opting out of a social event with the excuse: "I've got a rotten headache" (1970: 23). As Rena Sanderson observes, "Brett resembles a traditional man in her sexual expectations, and Jake resembles a traditional woman in his sexual unavailability and his uncomplaining tolerance of others' inconsiderations" (1996: 179). In *A Farewell to Arms*, Catherine asks Frederic, "Darling, why don't you let your hair grow? [...] Let it grow a little longer and I could cut mine and we'd be just alike" (1963: 230). Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry constitute the antithesis of what Showalter terms "the masculinist fantasies" which had initially driven the public image of the war (1987: 169). The First World War, she suggests, "feminized its conscripts" by depriving them of their ability to control (1987: 172). But if, arguably,


Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry are "feminized", to what degree can their female counterparts be said to be masculinised?

In her analysis of "non-combatant war neurosis" (1998: 12), Tate concludes that "not all transgressions of boundaries are liberating, for man or for woman" (1998: 32), and indeed, in *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* the female characters are as confused as the men by the experience of war. As Wagner-Martin suggests, Brett Ashley is "a product of war-ravaged Europe" and, like Jake Barnes, "is maimed by her experiences of World War 1" (1987: 5). In Hemingway's first novel, Brett's "own true love" died of dysentery during the war (1970: 31), and in *A Farewell to Arms* Catherine Barkley's fiancé "was killed on the Somme" where "they blew him all to bits" (1963: 2). The psychological impact of the war on Catherine is stressed throughout the novel: "I haven't been happy for a long time and when I met you perhaps I was nearly crazy", she tells Frederic (1963: 92).

In the aftermath of a war which had invalidated the notion of the noble warrior, the virile hero is caught up in the process of shifting gender boundaries. The evolution of women's social and cultural identity inevitably involves the reassessment of a certain concept of masculinity which had become irrelevant. Hemingway's novels demonstrate an awareness of these changes but they do not offer any compensatory empowering of female characters. By becoming men, women must assume men's vulnerability. Brett is as much of an alcoholic as her male companions and, despite her "new woman" dimension (Wagner-Martin 1987: 4), she has to appeal to Jake for psychological and financial support after her affair with the bullfighter. Catherine may assume responsibility for her "mess" but eventually it kills her. Her death becomes the last in a series of manifestations of man's ineffectualness, a process now so extensive that Frederic is deprived of the ultimate proof of virility: the fathering of a son. In *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* female characters seek to become men and in the process, rather than becoming more powerful, they become accomplices in the evolution of a frailty which encompasses both sexes. As Virginia Woolf's Lily Brisco reflects in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), "the war had drawn the sting of her femininity. Poor devils, one thought, poor devils of both sexes, getting into such messes" (1966: 181).

Pykett refers to "women's empowerment" through the war (1995: 48), and Showalter claims that women "benefitted from the social upheaval of the war" (1987: 195). Although this may be true, particularly of intellectual circles in Europe and the United States in the 1920s as women asserted themselves as professional writers (see Scott 1995: 209-224; Gilbert and Gubar 1988: 143), historians have recently tended to minimise the role of the

Great War in the liberation of women. In *Dismembering the Male* (1996), Joanna Bourke maintains that "the wartime economy did not challenge the relative position of the two sexes" as some critics have suggested (1996: 23). Siân Reynolds claims that "the replacement of mobilised men by women typists" during the war in France reflected a "gradual feminization" which had been in train since the turn of the century (1996: 93), and, according to James McMillan, a similar situation obtained in the USA (1981: 122). In the industrial sector in France, there were, Keiger points out, fewer women employed in 1921, after demobilisation, than in 1906. Moreover the effect of the war on France's demography "strengthened the pro-natalist lobby and weakened the campaign for women's suffrage" (1997: 27).

The focus on the unmanned hero in the early novels of Hemingway and Malraux does not promote any concept of the "new woman". Certainly, there is no suggestion that women are stepping into any power vacuum and assuming the authoritarian stance once assumed by the now beleaguered male hero. There is no hint of a power struggle, neither is there any implication that women are responsible for the demise of the male hero. Indeed, these two novelists, traditionally perceived as unconditional purveyors of the masculine ideal, provide little evidence to suggest that the damage done to the virile hero has been done by anyone other than the virile hero. While some modernist novelists, not least Virginia Woolf—in *Orlando*, for example—take pleasure in breaking through conventional gender boundaries, Hemingway, although clearly aware of the process, focuses almost entirely on the new ineffectiveness of traditional masculinity. For his part, Malraux virtually ignores the role of women altogether in his rendering of the dislocation of the virile fraternity. 

NOTES

¹ I am indebted to Avril Horner in the European Studies Research Institute at the University of Salford for her invaluable help and advice in the writing of this article. Having said that, all errors of judgement are my own.

² "[...] des idées les plus dissemblables"; "[...] une influences des ballets russes, —un peu du style sombre de Pascal [...], quelque chose de Nietzsche, —quelque chose de Rimbaud, —certains effets dûs à la fréquentation des peintres

[...], —le tout parfumé d'un je ne sais quoi de britannique difficile à doser!" All translations are my own.

³ "[...] l'Europe de 1914 était peut-être arrivée à la limite de ce modernisme".

⁴ "[...] l'Hamlet européen [...] Hamlet intellectuel [...] médite sur la vie et la mort des vérités"; "[...] l'ordre et le désordre".

⁵ "Il n'est pas d'idéal auquel nous puissions nous sacrifier, car de tous nous connaissons les mensonges, nous qui ne savons point ce qu'est la vérité".

⁶ "L'avenir est dans les mains des esclaves, et on voit bien que le vieux monde sera changé [...]".

⁷ "[...] les charognes mentales".

⁸ "[...] des frères [...] par cette rude sobriété qui est un aspect de la pudeur virile".

⁹ "[...] la fraternité virile".

¹⁰ "Je tiens ce que nous appelons inconscient pour la confusion même".

¹¹ "[...] l'opposition classique *res fictae, res factae*".

¹² "Sept chinois entrent, l'un derrière l'autre —veste au col fermé et pantalon de toile blanche— en silence. Des jeunes, des vieux. Ils se placent devant la table, en demi-cercle. L'un des plus âgés s'assied à demi sur le bureau: l'interprète".

¹³ "[...] le reportage continue pourtant une des lignes les plus fortes du roman français".

¹⁴ "Le romancier dispose d'un autre grand moyen d'expression: c'est de lier un moment décisif de son personnage à l'atmosphère ou au cosmos qui l'entoure".

¹⁵ "Claude semblait comme dans une maladie dans cette fermentation où les formes se gonflaient, s'allongeaient, pourrissaient hors du monde dans lequel l'homme compte [...]".

¹⁶ "Le roman semble pourtant conserver sur le film un certain avantage: la possibilité de passer à l'intérieur des personnages. Mais, d'une part, le roman moderne semble de moins en moins analyser ses personnages dans leurs instants de crise; d'autre part, une psychologie dramatique —celle de Shakespeare, et, dans une bonne mesure, de Dostoïevski— où les secrets sont suggérés [...] par les actes [...], n'est peut-être ni moins puissante artistiquement, ni moins révélatrice que l'analyse".

¹⁷ "Nicolaiëff, qui n'a pas répondu, écarte doucement de la main les éphémères qui tombent toujours sur le bureau, comme s'il lissait son papier, avec un geste d'enfant sage".

¹⁸ "[...] une fine structure de négations".

¹⁹ "[...] gravement malade".

²⁰ "—Il y a tout de même une chose qui compte, dans la vie: c'est de ne pas être vaincu [...]".

²¹ "[...] l'impossibilité de donner à une forme sociale, quelle qu'elle soit, [son] adhésion".

²² "Si je me suis lié si facilement à la révolution, c'est que ses résultats sont lointains et toujours en changement".

²³ "[...] un spectacle irréel [...]".

²⁴ "Le texte du serment exigé des jurés, lu d'une voix de maître d'école las par le président, le surprit par son effet sur ces douze commerçants placides [...]".

²⁵ "Maintenant [...] on mobilise le droit, la civilisation et les mains coupées des enfants".

²⁶ "Aucune envie de vendre des autos, des valeurs ou des discours [...]".

²⁷ "Que faire du cadavre des idées qui dominaient la conduite des hommes lorsqu'ils croyaient leur existence *utile* à quelque salut, que faire des paroles de ceux qui veulent soumettre leur vie à un modèle, ces autres cadavres?"

²⁸ "—Je ne connais rien: j'arrive"; "—Tu n'y comprends rien. [...] Tu parles comme un gosse".

²⁹ "[...] sûrement un petit jeune [...]".

³⁰ "[...] chef blanc"; "[...] Rien [...]".

³¹ "[...] la dislocation [...] au plan de la phrase et dans le style [...]".

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