

The Test of Manhood in Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms

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Abstract

The present study discusses the masculine identity of Frederic Henry, the main character in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. In the past, literary critics had identified Hemingway's main male characters as individuals that demonstrate tough masculine traits. In contrast to the previous critics' views, I argue that Hemingway's central male character, namely Henry is in struggle with regard to his masculine social positions and he is hardly able to prove his masculinity. Moreover, in marked contrast to the previous emphases on biographical readings and psychoanalytical analyses of the novels, this study pays careful attention to the social construction of the masculine identity of Henry. My discussion of the subject is based on the social construction of manhood. This involves examining the motives that lead Henry to participate in the First World War. Henry has no way except rebuilding his masculine identity by joining the war. However, he soon finds out that being involved in the war is not a way to assert his masculine identity. In other words, the war leaves him disenchanted with his search for manhood. Consequently, he is overwhelmed by his disenchantment with his desperate attempts to rebuild his masculine identity as he is eventually unable to find happiness by asserting his manhood neither in the battlefield nor in family life. He becomes distraught and desperate due to the death of his lover Catherine and her stillborn child. Thus, Henry fails in his attempts to prove his manhood.

Keywords: *Hemingway, Crisis of Masculinity, Gender Roles, Henry, Construction of Masculine Identity, A Farewell to Arms*

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1. Background of the Study

The goal of this study is to explore the construction of the manhood through examining the ideas, actions, choices, and motives of Frederic Henry, the central character in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. Critics such as Philip Young and Earl Rovit had previously described the Hemingway's leading male characters as individuals that display tough masculine behaviors during heroic struggles. They claimed that Hemingway tried to portray the bravery of American male despite facing conflicts. Young argued that the leading characters of Hemingway were constructed as "heroes" and Rovit pointed out the same point but used the term, "tyro". According to them, "hero" or "tyro" is constantly full of energy and ready to overcome every obstacle that life puts in his way. In addition, despite having his own emotional and physical pains, the "hero" manages to win through in the end (Young & Rovit). To the contrary of the claims made by the previous critics of Hemingway, I contend that Hemingway's male leading characters, in this case, Henry is in struggles with regard to his male identity and he hardly manages to prove his masculinity or even sometimes he cannot prove it. In contrast to the previous biographical readings and psychoanalytical analyses of both novels, this study examines the social construction of the masculine identity of Henry. The idea that gender roles are formed through culture, tradition and society has been expressed by numerous social theorists. Michel Kimmel is one of the most remarkable theorists in the field, and in his *The Gendered Society*, he states that "our identities are a fluid assemblage of the meanings and behaviors that we construct from the values, images, and prescriptions we find in the world around us" (113). To clarify, it is our interactions, not our biological characteristics that build our gender identity. Due to the fact that gender identities are formed by social and cultural encounters, they constantly come under the influence of the prevailing historical and cultural forces of society. Thus, gender identity is not considered as naturally given neither as a global principle; however it is continuously changing and its cultural and historical context has to be taken into consideration.

The discussion on gender roles which broke out amongst authors in the early of the 20th century can be defined as only a combat between masculinity and femininity (Gilbert and Gubar). This platitude is apparently a clear depiction

of the battle for authority in gender norms that took place at the beginning of 20th century. Male and female gender roles are essentially conflict with each other. The understanding of one gender is influenced by any change in the other one, in the meantime, the same consequences can be perceived on the other as well. It is crucial to comprehend the reciprocal connection between both genders in scrutinizing the alterations in masculinity which happened during this period. The conventional idea of masculine gender depends totally on the oppositional mood of gender roles. The traditional perception of manhood is described as an antipathy towards any feature which culturally symbolizes femininity (Reyna and Cadena 2). Due to considering weakness as a feminine feature, men think highly of power and strength. Moreover, because of associating women with emotion, men employ rationality. The traditional creation of gender perception leads to the idea that manhood symbolizes rationality, and females being symbolized by their bodies, emotion and sexuality (Gardiner 36). One of the clear implications of this paradigm of manhood perception is that it leads to sexual and emotional subjugation since emotionality is deviled as female features. The durability of traditional manhood identity relies completely on the repression of females. Traditional femininity emerges from the conception that males are superior to females. This conception of manly superiority has grown all over history due to the dominance of patriarchal values in society.

In her book entitled *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*, Gail Bederman similarly states that ideological and historical process creates gender identity, that is to say, individuals identify themselves and others as women and men through that process (7). The dawn of the 20th century witnessed numerous changes in masculine values. Furthermore, the social and cultural consequences of the First World War jeopardized the conventional view of masculinity. Charles Hatten believes that a crisis of masculinity was caused by the financial and political changes of the First World War period (79). Societal tendencies altered towards a new concept of gender classification. Therefore, men struggled to safeguard their manhood by practicing various sports and involvement in war (80). Dealing with this crisis of masculine identity pervaded the literary works including Hemingway's works. Hemingway wrote down *A Farewell to Arms* during the interwar period. In addition,

the context of the fiction is amidst the First World War. In this section, historical changes will be illustrated that had a profound impact on the covered subjects of the fiction. *A Farewell to Arms* mainly revolves around the subject of masculine ideals such as bravery during war prior to and following the First World War. Which is also a period when that women were going through the process of governing the domestic realm and directly interfering in the public realm of society. And the aforementioned process posed a serious threat to the male ideals. Both novels deal with the issue of vanishing masculine ideals. Gender roles underwent noticeable changes at the beginning of 20th century in the societies of the West. Social position of men and women evolved and certainly any shift in women's social position or men's social position had impacts on each other. Women achieved political, social and economic success during the early movement of feminism (1859-1920s) and their success was a danger to special privileges of men. Additionally, women's participation in workplace did not merely defy the conventional understandings of womanhood, but it also defied the conventional notions of manhood. White women were not locked up in the private domain of society anymore. Therefore, women liberalization weakened men's position as the mere provider of the family and almost withdrew the exclusive privileges from men gained by the position. Besides, women participated in the First World War as healthcare workers in combat zones. That kind of social contact between men and women was nearly unimaginable in the century until the breakout of the War (Linker 62). Catherine in *A Farewell to Arms* almost plays a stronger role than Henry, in other words, their masculine identity is open to question. In United States, women gained suffrage under constitution in 1920 which is a noticeable shift in gender roles.

A chief embodiment of American masculinity was Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was a president of America; he represented both masculine ideals of the old era and the intellectual tendency of the modern era. As an adventurer, hunter, and fighter, he was an embodiment of manhood. He was powerful and strong masculine model for American men. (Kimmel 120). He thought that he was in need of highlighting his masculine identity because he was in pursuit of being a real political figure. In *A Farewell to Arms*, Henry may be modeled after Roosevelt. He possibly thinks that he is obliged to join the army in order to prove his manhood; in April 1885,

Roosevelt travelled to region of Dakota for fighting. It is possibly apparent that the major casual factors driving Henry to join the military of Italy was to reach the level of masculine ultimate model in America, a model that was associated with Roosevelt. It is under this circumstance that the central character in *A Farewell to Arms* namely Henry is obliged to demonstrate his manliness in society. He deserts the military in hope of establishing a household and achieving a patriarchal renown, a hope that had been shattered prior to joining the army. Ahead of the First World War, men faced the same challenge as Henry. By 1900s, the gap between male and female children was huge compared to the previous years because fathers were frequently putting their efforts into educating their sons in order to prove the masculinity of themselves and their sons. Kimmel states that a young man that had no love for war in “fighting” was regarded “unnatural” (107). Henry directly falls into that category because as a young man he should fulfill the expectations of society and demonstrate his masculine identity. Thus, he joins the army; however he has no motivation for doing that. He merely imitates what the other men do at that period for proving their masculinity which is fighting.

Roosevelt took a step further, and began to promote The Strenuous Life. One of his great talks was similarly entitled with the aforementioned term, *The Strenuous Life*. Roosevelt detested the idle lifestyle; he had remarked that “our country calls not for the life of ease, but for the life of the strenuous endeavor (Roosevelt 10). This idea is projected in the character of Henry since he lives a challenging life. He is constantly in quest of proving their manhood. The test of masculinity through a tough life is a concept that is possibly applicable to Frederic Henry. The famous speech of Roosevelt is the same as the speech of those men that seek to participate in war and prove their masculinity again because they notice a feminine danger ahead. It is probably amidst war; Henry perceives that living with Catherine Berkeley, his girlfriend, gives him a deserving and reasonable meaning to his masculinity. In other words, a possible factor driving Henry to go to battlefield was to carry out Roosevelt’s command for redefining masculinity because Roosevelt encouraged tough masculine ideals for men (Kimmel 123). Furthermore, Roosevelt built wildlife sanctuary and national parks as well for promoting love for nature and respecting natural environment as a crucial aspect of virile lifestyle. The

aforementioned adoration for natural environment reappears in the portrayal provided by Henry. So, there is a belief that mannish lifestyle and love for nature are intertwined and this belief originates from the philosophy of Roosevelt. Kimmel highlights that Roosevelt provided his people with a necessary custom for forming a strong masculine ideal (124), an ideal that was extremely appealing to those men that were afraid of their own powerlessness in an “increasingly complex” environment (Parker 35). In spite of this, masculine ideals yet would remain under threat in America. In the beginning of 20th century, the feminist enlightened unconventional women emerged and were known as “the New Women”. Men occasionally overemphasized their masculine traits as a reaction to the hazards of the New Women. Bederman affirms that men energetically attempted to strengthen their masculine position during last decade of 19th century and the first two decades of 20th century in America (5). Fraternal associations, sports such as boxing and gymnastics became were growing popular. Henry as an American male is goes to gymnastics in Lausanne in Switzerland (Hemingway 331). He attempts to show his manhood through doing gymnastics. American men followed different strategies to reconstruct their manhood because they found themselves in dilemma with regard to their traditional understanding of masculinity (Bederman 16).

Masculinity was on the verge of losing social privileges during 1920s. Throughout that period, women gained the right to vote and began occupying or appearing in places of business. Men believed that they were in need of reconfirming their manly social status. To put it differently, Kimmel points out that following the First World War, men were not probably enjoying much confidence in the working environment and they were in need of rebuilding their masculine identity (136). Due to the outbreak of the First World War, men’s social position was shifted. The key focus of the Rehabilitation schemes and propaganda campaigns was recovery. In contrast to the past wars of America, men were not promised to receive any retirement benefits, but they were widely anticipated to recreate their manhood by reentering the marketplace or surprisingly going back to battlefield. The concept of full recovery was heavily highlighted by advertisements showing prosthetic arms and legs as Linker affirms that prosthetic body parts paved the way for health workers and the entire individuals of American society to be under the delusion that

technological innovations probably ensure the complete recovery of the devastated human beings of the war (7). As an injured soldier, Henry may find himself disenchanted with war in the end, that is to say, he may not eventually consider war as place for reaffirming his manhood, this issue of disenchantment will be explored fully in the next section. In the wake of the First World War, gender roles considerably evolved. The combination of conventional understandings of both men and women roles was partially caused by the war. As a matter of fact, the post-war period was a watershed moment in the history of America. Due to witnessing the realities of the war, the historians and the people perceived dramatic change after the First World War. They saw the postwar American society as an entirely different environment. In other words, the war created changes in American lifestyle because it produced a lost disenchanted generation and the New Women (Dumenil 3). This means that it is apparently hard for men like Henry and Jordan to assert their manhood since they were living in that period.

The eruption of the First World War was a historic milestone in breaking up the 20th century and its aftermath directly impinged on all social levels of the West. During 19th century, the imperialists already brought the world into escalating conflicts. In 1914, the conflicts got to the culminating point and almost every young man was thrown into war around the world. Yet the cruelty of modern war was not perceived till the battle broke out. The use of automatic firearms, chemical weapons, and other types of heavy weapons ended in devastating and mounting death toll because the military forces of all countries strived for implementing modernized and developing war strategies. Purseigle states that due to the influence of war on society and the intensity of brutalities that was witnessed during the war, some chroniclers describe the Great War as “the harbinger of a brutalized twentieth century” (4).

The destructions brought by The First World War produced a culture in which conventional customs largely disappeared. Traditional gender roles were subjected to examination in the aftermath of the Great War. The model of both masculine and feminine identity started to fall into pieces in a society wherein traditional conventions did not seem to be applicable in modern lifestyle. The war shook the very foundation of the masculine ideals. The traditional concepts of vigorous manhood and masculine

courage clashed with the conventional notions of heroism and masculine bravery fell into conflict with the exposures of war veterans to war. The American men found opportunity for demonstrating their masculinities when the Great War broke out, and they travelled to European countries to join the battlefronts. However, According to Elaine Showalter, the First World War was a catastrophe because it caused men to suffer from masculine identity crisis. By all means, that war inflicted hardship and difficulty upon masculinity (171). In the battlefield, men went through a sense of loss and panic and they suffered from mental disorder and shell-shock. Combat veterans were not capable of discovering a means of livelihood and the vast majority of them felt despair and empty. Pessimism infused the mind of young men. To put it differently, the masculine factors driving men toward war resulted in disenchantment rather than empowering masculinity. The Great War weakened masculine ideal.

After the Great War, gender roles underwent numerous evolutions. Women took up the job positions of men because men had not been present at work environments (Joseph 65). At that moment, thus it was possible for women to unshackle themselves from the conventional gender restrictions. The rate of female employment was substantially high. Women handled their own economic status and led their own life (Vernon 43). That is to say, the benefits which women reaped in the wake of the war heightened the pressing concerns of men. Throughout the war men were sent to battlefield and came back to a social environment in which gender norms had shifted dramatically. Women were provided with job openings, for this reason, they were able to gain financial freedom and become self-sustaining. Due to their financial success, the social position of women shifted. According to Smiler, women were entering the men-only spheres and having privileges like “the workplace, and engaging in material comforts” (Smiler et al. 268). West points out that the bitter experience of war shattered any illusion that war is a theater for demonstrating masculinity. In that case, the credibility of the conventional masculine ideals was dramatically diminished by war (West 107). This grave crisis could be noticed in Hemingway’s characters such as Fredric Henry. According to Kimmel, the small triumphs of the beginning alleviated the crisis of manhood; however, a new terrible feeling of restlessness reappeared (127). Since most of the soldiers faced having mental disorder, women took their positions and therefore women were

eventually somehow able to leave the domestic realm. The masculine position of men in society was seriously undermined because women began to raise their families. It is during these historical and social changes that Henry in *A Farewell to Arms* decided to escape battlefield in order to earn a livelihood for his prospective spouse and their baby. He saves his manliness. In the case of not leaving the battlefield, he may identically have other war veterans' fate, which is inability to sustain life. When Henry ultimately comes to know that his existence is merely miserable and pointless, he reflects the despair mood of the Great War veterans. In other words, the idealized masculine image of Roosevelt faded away because harsh realities of war considerably weakened manhood. The markets and industrial firms paved the way for only-men job professions in order to vitalize masculinity, however these endeavors were small or futile. Kimmel affirms that the presence of women both at place of business and at the domestic environment appeared to be the central dilemma (131). Feminization pervaded the entire society. The novels of inter-war period covered the aforementioned issues. According to Kimmel, even though Hemingway detested the high-class lifestyle wherein he had been raised and attained a tough artisan-like manhood, his fictions demonstrate the fragileness of masculine ideal following the Great War (141).

In brief, it is evident that during the early of 20th century and the interwar period, masculinity had considerably changed in the American culture. At the beginning of the century, the way of living had shifted dramatically. The patriarchal society faced challenges in an environment wherein mental power began to step into the shoes of masculine power. In other words, despite the separation of the domestic realm and the public realm in society, female individuals dominated the society by educating infants. Once male individuals come to know that the division between realms of society had ended up undermining masculinity, the chance of being free from women domination had already been ruined. Although men started teaching manhood to their sons and the Boy Scouts started promoting masculine qualities, the efforts of the new male generation to demonstrate their masculinity had been abortive. Once Roosevelt appeared as an apparent national figure of high masculine values in the modern era, the bewildered men ultimately discovered the pioneer to be guided by. It is under this circumstance that the central character namely Henry was

involved with war in *A Farewell to Arms*. By means of his adventures, Roosevelt had directed numerous male individuals of his country; Henry is among those individuals. As a response to Roosevelt's command, Henry goes to battlefield. On the other hand, following the Great War, it would be increasingly evident that the masculine ideal was entirely collapsing in American society. The combat veterans faced having shell-shock and mental disorder, therefore, women took partly their positions in workplaces and were eventually capable of leaving the domestic realm to some extent. The masculine position of men in society was undermined because women partially began to be the provider of their families. To put it differently, there was not any influential position for war veterans in society since feminization even began dominating the working environment.

2. Background of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*

During the Great War, Ernest Hemingway enlisted in the Red Cross in Italy and worked as a chauffeur of ambulance service in the country at the beginning of 1918. At that time, Italy was in a coalition with America, France and Britain against Germany and Austria-Hungary. During his stay in Italy, Hemingway's experiences deeply left great impact on him and they would eventually be the cause of writing one of his greatest well-known novels, *A Farewell to Arms*. This novel, in which the dreadful facets of war have been exposed, is a remarkable literary work for examining the manhood of its leading character namely Frederick Henry. It is throughout the First World War, Henry an American lieutenant is employed in Italian military as an ambulance service manager in battlefield and front lines. He becomes infatuated with a nurse named, Catherine Barkley. He gets wounded during a bombardment and is admitted to a hospital in Milan where his love affair with Catherine develops. Eventually, Catherine becomes pregnant and Henry has to go back to the front lines. After a short period of time, Italian military is obliged to withdraw and during the withdrawal Henry and his staff get isolated from the others. Under the great risk of being shot to death by the Italian paramilitary police forces, Henry flees from the army and finds Catharine. They jointly get into a sailing craft to Switzerland. They spend a number of months very delightedly till Catharine dies after giving birth to a stillborn baby. The novel is retrospectively related and it is indistinct when Henry begins to recall past experiences following the death of his lover.

It is clear that there should be a factor that pushes an American citizen to go to a bloody war in a European country, a war that has erupted and there is not specific reason behind the involvement of his country. He hardly can speak Italian (Hemingway 7). And he is considered as an expatriate in the novel. Undoubtedly, the factors drove Frederic Henry to go to battlefield do not seem quite clear. Throughout this section, this study will investigate the two basic aspects of the fiction. First, the concept of masculinity will be discussed in the fiction and the significance of the concept both historically and ideologically in connection with the fiction. Consequently, the study will confine its attention to point that Frederic Henry is not glorifying war as means for proving one's masculinity; on the other hand, he is explicitly condemning war and remarking on the ongoing quest for a reconstructed masculinity with his hindsight and his decisions. The quest for masculine values functioned as a considerable factor for Henry to be involved in war because he was in a changing environment in which women were undergoing liberalization process, men was in a fight to recover his manhood prior to the First World War and the growing disenchantment occurred therein.

Ernest Hemingway's literary products present masculine values, which include heavily drinking alcohol, fighting, and females. In Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, the hero, Frederic Henry, participates in the battle as a way to strengthen his manhood, he enters the combat zone for this purpose during the First World War in Italy. The struggle of crisis of masculinity reflects in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, specifically in Henry as a central character of the novel. In other words, battlefield initially turns out to be a way via which Hemingway's characters, in this case Henry, could show manliness because the financial and political fields deprived male people of the conventional ways of maleness since the arrival of female in the labor world.

3. Henry's Struggle for the Manhood in Battlefield

Ernest Hemingway explores the struggle for reconstructing masculine values in his war fictions especially in *A Farewell to Arms*:

The next year, there were many victories. The mountain that was beyond the valley and the

hillside where the chestnut forest grew was captured and there were victories beyond the plain on the plateau to the south and we crossed the river in August and lived in a house in Gorizia that had a fountain and many thick shady trees in a walled garden and a wistaria vine purple on the side of the house. Now the fighting was in the next mountain beyond and was not a mile away (Hemingway 5).

The preceding quote plainly demonstrates the way Henry perceives war at the beginning, he thinks of war as something attractive and constructive. Henry is blending war with a vivid pretty portrayal of scenery in Europe. Hemingway's central characters frequently derive great pleasure from natural surroundings. This probably proves that war serves as a momentary distraction from the real issue of woman appearance in the public sphere. Furthermore, In the light of the fact that the battlefield is a place for brining men together, a general feeling of fraternity will apparently arouse between men in that space where women is not present. In spite of Hemingway's attention to battle as a way to confirm manliness, as pointed out earlier, the battle does not serve this purpose for Henry. Henry is void of zeal and is involved in the battle with shallow manner. Along with other soldiers, he is compelled to be concerned with issues of life, death and bachelorhood, nevertheless he follows that unenthusiastically. While talking with his mate combatants, Henry continuously puts forward merely evasive responses saying that the reply cannot be stated in a straightforward way and is related to the internal part of his character. This indicates that Henry goes into the armed forces basically to found his manhood using the typical manly action of battle (Hatten 83). Henry joins the Italian army so as to confirm his manly power, but stays separated from the duty as he says, "It evidently made no difference whether I was there to look after things or not" (Hemingway 16). Because of this disengagement and indifferent attitude towards the war, Henry's attempt to assert his manhood through battle is initially on the verge of failure.

However, Henry begins to have a relationship with a nurse named Catherine. And before expressing his special fondness for her, he is ordered to go to the Front, wherein he is seriously injured. He is admitted to a hospital in

Milan for receiving medical treatment. Although the doctors inform Henry that his treatment takes six months, but he appears particularly eager for returning to battlefield. He considers the duration overly long. This is a devastating storm that hits Henry's masculine principle of military commitment: "But I can't wait six months" (Hemingway 105). The doctor treats Henry very kindly and softly asks Him: "You are in such a hurry to get back to the front?" (Hemingway 105). In his reply to the doctor, Henry says, "Why not?" "It is very beautiful" (Hemingway 106). The doctor says, "You are a noble young man." He stooped over and kissed me very delicately on the forehead" (Hemingway 106).

The previous conversation between Henry and the doctor reveals that Henry is facing the imminent collapse of his manhood in case of not obtaining formal permission for returning to the battlefield. Currently, Henry thinks that battlefield is a place for him for proving his manhood, but he cannot manage to prove it due to his injury. Thus, he will possibly suffer from a sense of abandonment because he will not be able affirm his military commitment as a young man. Long waiting seems to be his only available option and it will entirely destroy his manhood. In her article entitled *Invalid Masculinity: Silence, Hospitals, and Anesthesia in A Farewell to Arms*, Diane Herndl talks of waiting periods, she points out that at outbreak of the First World War, men were joining the armed forces in order to reinforce their manhood through doing acts of bravery in war, but the majority of soldiers eventually realized war stands for waiting in deep ditches and their subjection to constant bombardment underground. Waiting comprises most of Henry's involvements in war: "waiting out bad weather, waiting for shelling to begin so that he can drive his ambulance, or waiting in the hospital to get well. He is wounded, in fact, while he is waiting" (42). While Henry undergoes waiting period in the hospital, his masculine identity goes under attacks since the doctor behaves toward him in a womanized manner, in other words, Henry describes the doctor's fingers as delicate, moreover, the doctors gives a kiss to him in an extremely delicate manner. Along with his suffering from a bodily injury, Henry feels that his manhood is on the verge of collapse because of his incapability to move freely. Henry has an urgent intense thirst for proving his manhood by returning to battlefield, but the medical expert does not comprehend his thirsty. He ultimately finds a surgeon named Dr. Valentini to perform

surgery on his leg immediately in opposition to previous doctor's opinion on the surgery; in this manner, Henry will be able to rejoin the army sooner in the long run. During his recovery in the hospital, Catherine reunites with him. She assists him during receiving treatment. Following the flourish of her love affair with Henry, Catherine informs him that she is going to give birth to his infant. Becoming a father is apparently a hope for Henry to show his manhood through family life.

After his recovery from the injury, Henry rejoins the military to reaffirm his masculine identity. It is there that the fraternal spirit becomes volatile among the soldiers in the initial part of the story; the manhood of the troops appears to be in doubt. This is shown while Henry is being left by two sergeants and simultaneously he is desperate for their assistance in order to pull out their bogged down vehicle in the mud. He intentionally executes one of the sergeants when they are running away. Henry shouts: "'Halt,' I said... 'I order you to halt,' I called. They went a little faster. I opened up my holster, took the pistol aimed at the one who had talked the most, and fired. I missed and they both started to run. I shot three times and dropped one." (Hemingway 218). At this point, Hemingway gives the readers an accurate portrayal of collapsing manliness in the lines of the soldiers.

In addition to the point that Henry opens fire on fugitive soldiers, it seems that he is also carrying out his duty as he is obliged to punish the weaklings of war. Despite that it is obvious that he will similarly escape from the battlefield later on, thus this action ultimately cannot be considered as heroic. Furthermore, Henry fails to hit one of the escaping soldiers and he has no way except leaving the rest of the action to his companion named Bonello: "I commenced to reload the empty clip. Bonello came up. 'Let me go finish him,' he said. I handed him the pistol.. Bonello leaned over, put the pistol against the man's head and pulled the trigger." (Hemingway 218). This reaction of both Henry and Bonello looks awkward and casts considerable doubts on bravery in battlefield. In almost every part of the narrative, there is a sense that Henry ought to discover bravery and masculinity within himself rather than in the battle. Taking into account the aforementioned point concerning manhood, Hemingway places the leading character of that novel in a war zone that is questionable because

it is strange to see an American individual in a European front. In this reasonable manner, combat zone serves as an appropriate context for Henry to prove his manhood and bravery. The previous quote elucidates that combat zone is not definitely a place for searching for bravery. This powerful image pops up again in the satirical lines wherein Henry is about earning a medal for bravery, he sees medal as an object of ridicule: “if you can prove you did any heroic act you can get the silver. Otherwise it will be the bronze. Tell me exactly what happened. Did you do any heroic act?’ ‘No’, I said. ‘I was blown up while we were eating cheese.’” (Hemingway 68). It is said that Henry was carrying several wounded soldiers on his back and helped others but he absolutely refuses it. He has no interest in any medal for bravery in any way. In other words, these satirical lines demonstrate the relationship between Henry and acts of bravery in battlefield. He goes through a similar experience in another part of the novel; he wonders how many enemy soldiers he killed, he knows for certain that he have not killed any one of them. However, he is “anxious to please” others and says “I had killed plenty” (Hemingway 101). A British major informs Henry that the army almost lost the war; in addition, he tells him that “we were all right as long as we did not know it. We were all cooked. The thing was not to recognize it. The last country to realize they were cooked would win the war. We had another drink” (Hemingway 142). However, the reader would consequently realize that Henry is not concerned about winning or losing the war. The only extremely courageous thing that Henry does throughout the book is his escape from the Italian paramilitary police when he is on the brink of being shot to death, however, his flight paradoxically may show his lack of bravery since he is escaping from the military and the combat zone: “I looked at the carabinieri. They were looking at the newcomers. The others were looking at the colonel. I ducked down, pushed between two men, and ran for the river,... The water was very cold and I stayed under as long as I could.” (Hemingway 241). The total glories thing that Henry performs here is escaping from the Italian paramilitary police and saving his own life by throwing himself into this cold river named Tagliamento.

From this point forward, the novel takes another direction. The manliness of Henry reappears once again by the time he goes to “a gymnasium in the arcade to box for exercise (Hemingway 331), and leaves Catherine, his lover, in a room. However, Henry henceforward plays another role

because he is living with a pregnant woman that will prospectively give birth to a baby in the near future and as a result, becoming a father. Therefore, an alternative way is available for Henry for demonstrating his manhood which is being in charge of taking care of Catherine. Due to coming to his pregnant lover's rescue, he creates a small environment in which he manages to shoulder his familial burdens, that is to say, he takes up a patriarchal position in a familial circle. Previously, men had failed to secure this traditional position prior to the eruption of the war due largely to the considerable dominance of women in society. During that period, women were chiefly provided the new generation with all-round education, Kimmel says that men were afraid of their sons' gloomy future because they were in danger of being "mama's boys" (105). In this respect, the decision about deserting the manly military sphere and its fraternal spirit similarly turns into a decision about going under family obligations and proving manhood in a whole new atmosphere. Frankly, Henry actually had played the role of a sick boyfriend during his torrid love affair with Catherine. While meeting Catherine in the first half of the novel, he did not appear to be a concerned prospective spouse; by contrast, he acted like a mama's boys. In addition, he essentially does not appear to be helpless man following his recovery from his illness and his subsequent rejoining the military for a short time.

While the cruelty of war does not succeed in providing what Henry desired, the novel exposes sexual occurrence as a method to assure masculine strength. The sexual occurrence falls into two key groups: firstly, he interacts with whores; secondly a relationship is there between Henry and Catherine Barkley. The novel initially shows the readers that relationship with women leads to ideal masculinity. While disassociating from their habituated social circles, men still had the capacity to affirm their masculine power as well as sexual independence by sexual occurrences. Nonetheless, this new form of sexual relation still hinders Henry, or the other fighters for the same issue, to confirm masculinity by carrying power above female characters. Indeed, Rinaldi, a fellow combatant, frequently visits brothels and deals with the women insensitively. He practices women objectification so that he can affirm his masculinity; however this becomes a failure as soon as the female characters turn to be acquainted. At first, Rinaldi gives a description of his connections with "girls;" yet, his views alter,

furthermore he commences to mention the whores as “old war comrades” and “friends” (Hemingway 65). Hatten declares that by sharing sexual aspiration, the female characters have gone through a manly experience and have to be dealt with as men (89). Sexual independence, especially as presented through loose sexual manners, is usually categorized as a branch of the men’s experience. However, in this situation, men do not succeed in exercising sexual supremacy on women. Therefore, sexual supremacy fails to affirm masculinity; as long as women are also able to participate in loose sexual activities, the activities cannot be measured as masculine any longer.

The other type of sexual occurrence, Henry’s relationship with Catherine Barkley, leads the concept of reified sexuality to be a failure. Henry at first illustrates his association with Catherine Barkley as tactical, saying, “This was a game, like bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards” (Hemingway 30). At first, the relationship is a match of policy for Henry and far from a demonstration of sentiment. He starts the relationship for the same motive of his participation in the battle as a device to strengthen his manly identity. The relationship develops as long as Henry widens emotions for Catherine; moreover it does not help to highlight his masculine power any longer. As a matter of fact, it can be argued that within the building of their relationship, Catherine Barkley presumes the manly function. A key part of such a declaration is the notion of inactivity opposed to activeness. Inactivity is most frequently regarded to become a womanly feature, whereas action and danger portray masculinity. Hatten claims that Catherine, who connects the sexual association enthusiastically in the occurrence of reified aspiration turning her to be like a prostitute, is reluctant to agree to the inactive status that the allusion present her” (94). Eagerly labeling herself a prostitute throughout a debate of their stay in a hotel, Catherine orally affirms her dominance over their sexual connection (Hemingway 152).

Additionally, Catherine reveals that she is not interested in the social set of laws, but she is obsessed with sexual desire, which denies her mate of the manly status as an initiator sexually (Hatten 95). When she confesses her emotions for Henry, Catherine lets Henry know that she desires to

shorten her hair, stating, "I want you so much I want to be you too" (Hemingway 290). Declaring this speech, Catherine intends to eradicate gender categorization by identically turning into the man she feels affection for. Henry apparently does not carry any authentic masculine power concerning their relationship; and she is preventing him from objectifying her. Accordingly, the relationship, akin to the battle and loose sexual activity, does not help to Henry strengthen his masculinity.

Catherine's challenge to the set gender positions goes beyond her authority of sexuality. She also reveals a lot of independence, which Hemingway noticed as a manly model. In the last section, the location changes from the death and life circumstances of battle to that of the delivery of Catherine's and Henry's infant. This vital view undermines gender; Henry shows weakness as he frequently begs, "God please do not make her die. I'll do anything you say if you don't let her die" (Hemingway 330). Henry's rejection carries a clear sense of weakness and extreme anxiety to agree to his spouse's fate. Catherine calmly consent to the loss of her life, telling Henry, "Don't worry darling...I'm not a bit afraid" (Hemingway 330). Hatten claims that dying boldly, she challenges and overcomes the fearful situation, which death brings to her, in a womanly version of a battleground, and furthermore she gains the exact kind of heroic reputation that constantly evades Henry (96). Despite the fact that Catherine is a woman, she is the merely character who has the competence to show a firm masculinity.

Catherine turns to be the essential device for the triumphant expression of a manly experience (Hatten 96-7). Hemingway praises masculinity possibly in an ironical way for the merely character, who is able to express authentic masculinity, is the woman protagonist. Hemingway portrays the infirmity of masculinity through the hero, Henry. For Henry, the battle does not confirm masculinity; however, it unveils his weakness. Consequently, Hemingway adopts the battle as a device to scrutinize masculine power, not having the same end. Undoubtedly praising boldness and independence, Hemingway attributes the masculine features to the heroine, and the battle undermines the allotment of masculine power to the combatant.

4. Henry's Disenchantment with his Manhood, War and His Existence

Henry may not be consequently considered as a representative of a tough American masculine ideals due to the devastating effects of war on him as Thomas F. Strychacz affirms that "Henry is physically and psychically damaged, and therefore potentially a seriously disabled spokesman for masculine values" (95). To put it differently, the war is surrounding Henry and a chaotic and disenchanting future awaits him. Ray B. West states that as an individual of twentieth century Henry's life is full of disenchantment with attaining "the ideals it had been promising throughout the nineteenth century" (15). The disenchantment is one of the underlying themes of the novel. Lost Generation writers including Hemingway experienced the feeling of disenchantment with society and war after the Great War. Therefore, as a lost individual, Henry experiences a sense of disenchantment with war and the social environment of American during nineteenth century. I believe that part of Henry's disenchantment is caused by the collapse of the masculine values in American society because it is clear that a causal factor driving Henry to war in Italy is to recover his masculinity.

However, the highly significant factor is certainly the quest to rebuild his masculine identity. In the beginning of the third chapter of the novel, Henry effectively shifts his focus from the beauty of a Gorizia's scenery onto the aftermath of war on it, and vice versa: "When I came back to the front we still lived in that town. There were many more guns in the country around and the spring had come" (Hemingway 10). He keeps on describing this scenery affected by war, in addition, he provides the reader with an image of masculine values that are under fire in modern society due to the appearance of women: "I saw the town with the hill and... the mountains beyond, brown mountains with a little green on their slopes. In the town there were more guns, there were some new hospitals, you met British men and sometimes women, on the street, and a few more houses had been hit by shell fire" (Hemingway 10). On the other hand, his passionate and detailed portrayal of the town probably demonstrates that he is apparently enjoying his masculinity that he has lost in social sphere of America. The relationship between the town's scenery and its urbanization functions as a representation of rival conceptions of masculine ideals and it throws the survival of the masculine ideals into serious doubts in the

societies of modern era including American society. Henry's involvement in war can be considered as a final bid for reconstructing his masculine identity, in other words, it appears that there was not an obvious motive for Henry to go to battlefield in Italy except to flee from a social environment wherein men were not able to secure their liberty, therefore, through his travel, he is attempting to restore his liberty. Besides, Henry actually takes pleasure in his love affair with Catherine at the beginning and after healing his wound, he actually rejoins the military with a considerably revived masculine spirit. However, during his expeditions against the shackles of American society, he does not actually take pleasure in the social liberty that he had hopelessly yearned for.

It is reasonable to expect that Henry experiences disenchantment with war during inpatient treatment and finds out that the war in Italy is not what he was looking for. However, his whole disenchantment with warfare does not initiate during receiving his medical treatment. Besides being disenchanted with warfare, Henry wishes for enjoying a comfortable existence with his lover. Henry reluctantly decides to go back to battlefield that he detests. His blind faith in going to war is shaken. He is faced with two problematic decisions either leaving Catherine behind or fleeing from the war forever. Fleeing from the war is a more difficult decision, but he is actually compelled to go back to war, thus possibly no option is left to him due to his hardly surviving conventional morality. It appears that this conventional impulse pushes him rejoining the Italian army. But as a lost individual, Henry calls the conventional views of war into doubts; therefore he deserts the army again. He believes that conventional "abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, ..., the numbers of regiments and the dates. Gino was a patriot, so he said things that separated us sometimes" (Hemingway 196). He questions the glorification of war, thus he says that "there were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity." (Hemingway 196).

The above speeches of Henry plainly demonstrate his growing doubts over the glorification of war. The Italian soldier named Gino as a flag-waver is speaking of being extremely enthusiastic about defending one's homeland

and thus being a glorious martyr due to commitment to that cause; on the other hand, Henry rejects these claims and considers them as hollow expressions. He is constantly “embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice” (Hemingway 196). To put it simply, he perceives these expressions as a meaningless in the face of the widespread devastation caused by war. For him, discussing war is not much about useless abstract ideas as it is about the death of human beings and the concrete realities. Probably, at the very time that Henry going back to battlefield subsequent to leaving the hospital, it is fairly obvious that his exact position is with Catherine, that is to say, he can find his manhood by going under family obligations. The complete glories thing that Henry does is fleeing from the Italian battle police and saving his own life by throwing himself into the Tagliamento River: “I looked at the carabinieri... I ducked down, pushed between two men, and ran for the river, my head down. I tripped at the edge and went in with a splash. The water was very cold and I stayed under as long as I could. I could feel the current swirl me and I stayed under until I thought I could never come up.” (Hemingway 241). At this point, Henry is on the verge of being killed, but his escape paradoxically may demonstrate his lack of bravery because he is fleeing from the battlefield and the military.

Furthermore, Henry dramatically goes through disenchantment in the wake of deserting the military. Henry finds out that the correct position to rebuild his masculine identity is with his lover Catherine. Hemingway was probably able to give a happy ending to the story at the very moment that Henry and Catherine reunited with each other, and this ending in an incredibly powerful way would demonstrate the war as the root of all evil confronted with beauty of a lovely couple’s comfortable lifestyle, however, he did not give that ending to the story. By extending the story, Hemingway as leading figure of the Lost Generation wants to show that Henry politically and morally experiences disenchantment with warfare, furthermore, this disenchantment infiltrates into his love affair with Catherine. After rebuilding his romantic relationship with Catherine, Henry as a lost individual undergoes a sense of hollowness and meaninglessness about life, this experience resembles to the same sense experienced by the Lost Generation writers following the Great War since, as Augustyn says, they were “disenchanted young expatriates in postwar” world (139).

In other words, Henry fruitlessly attempts to find meaning for his actions. Towards the end of the novel, Henry and Catherine move to Switzerland and get settled there. They desperately wait for the birth of their child. Catherine goes into a difficult labor and dies in childbirth. The baby also dies at birth. Thus Henry undergoes a total despair, he faces a catastrophic future and the feelings of disappointment fill him:

I could see nothing but the dark and the rain falling across the light from the window. So that was it. The baby was dead. That was why the doctor looked so tired. But what if he never breathed at all. He hadn't. He had never been alive... Maybe he was choked all the time. Poor little kid. I wished the hell I'd been choked like that. No I didn't. Still there would not be all this dying to go through. Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about" (Hemingway 349-350).

As it is stated above, Henry becomes quite disenchanted with life as he notices his repeated attempts to survive and rebuild his manhood are fruitless from the beginning. The above passage demonstrates the absolute senselessness of life as perceived by Henry because life takes back everything from him and makes him extremely desperate. Hemingway artistically employs short simple sentences to depict the hollow and painful feelings of Henry in this unpleasant situation. Every dreadful accident befalls Henry and they are fully beyond his grasp, he cannot figure out the reasons behind them. He appears as a downhearted individual belonging to the Lost Generation. The preceding passage clearly exhibits the almost complete collapse of Henry's masculinity since his masculinity is tearing down due to the awfulness of battlefield and the ongoing meaningless battle of life. Thus, He connects the fate of the tough masculine values such as honor, bravery and fearlessness with an inescapable decline rather than war. He may not have expected this fate at the beginning of his travel, but the ending of the story shows that the tough masculine values do not coexist alongside war. Plainly, the end of the novel is essentially melancholy. Henry escapes from the warfare and the military in order to rebuild his manhood through shouldering household responsibility, however, he becomes totally deprived of everything since Catherine gives birth to a

stillborn baby and eventually dies in childbirth. Hemingway exhibits the unattainability of a peaceful life following the First World War; therefore, Henry becomes the very embodiment of the Lost Generation. It is obvious that Henry makes abortive attempts to build a loving patriarchal family and he finds himself in total despair.

Ultimately, Henry goes through three stages of disenchantment. First, he joins battle in Italy since he lives in a social environment wherein his masculine identity is constantly in considerable danger of being undermined from the beginning. The manhood of individuals like Henry was socially under fire as it was discussed in the opening section. Henry tries to prove his manhood by joining the Italian military, however, by the time, he falls in love with Catherine, he begins to find out that his manhood cannot be proven by being involved in war. Therefore, he looks for masculinity in the unification with his lover and going under family obligations. In other words, he eventually performs an action that he is not able to do anymore in America. Furthermore, following his love affair with Catherine and leaving the hospital, he rejoins the Italian front merely as a dull routine, that is to say, he does not rejoin for the sake of good reputation. In addition, after his final escape from the battlefield, Henry completely resolves to shoulder family responsibilities in order to show his masculinity, even though his escape may be considered as a pusillanimous deed. On the other hand, following his doomed attempts to build a happy familial life, Henry finds himself lost because his son has been stillborn and his lover dies in childbirth at the end. As a veteran of the Great War, he is finally left with completely meaningless life.

5. The Outcome of Henry's Quest for Manhood

To sum up, Henry joins the Italian army to rebuild his manhood during a historical period that traditional tough masculine roles were under danger in the societies of the West including American society. Despite the fact that Henry is interested in the glorification of war at the beginning, but he almost immediately finds out that battlefield is not an environment for reconstructing his manhood. The Italian combat zone merely causes him to be disenchanted with his idealistic views concerning war and doing acts of bravery during the war. His outstanding act of bravery is deciding to desert the Italian army. Following the recovery from his injury, he does seem

fully prepared to leave the battlefield, thus he rejoins the army merely with a sense of compulsion rather than a courageous act. On the other hand, by the time, he finds out that taking on family commitments is the right way to prove his manhood, he deserts the army forever. That is to say, what he is looking for to prove his manhood through is not warfare; it is rather through taking on family commitments that he has been in quest of even prior to his travel for joining the Italian army.

Nevertheless, disenchantment overwhelms Henry during his quest for manhood and understating his social existence. He initially decides to leave America and join the Italian army due to his disenchantment with the American society. In other words, he feels that his masculine social position is under fire, thus he goes to war to rebuild his masculinity, however he quickly finds out that being involved with war is not the perfect answer that he is looking for. During his involvement with war, he experiences disenchantment with military glory, thus he escapes from the military. His escape may apparently be associated with lack of bravery, but it is simultaneously considered as an act of bravery because he attempts to build a family life with his lover, Catherine after his escape. However, his attempt to build a peaceful family life becomes abortive because Catherine gives birth to a dead baby and she dies in childbirth, thus he becomes totally disenchanted with the whole life and he falls into a black deep despair.

Henry becomes the embodiment of the male lost individual during the beginning of the twentieth century, an individual that desperately fights for proving his manhood and falls completely into despair. In addition, Henry serves as the personification of the Lost Generation following the First World War. He suffers the misery of recreating his true masculine identity as a war veteran in a changed social environment. It is highly unlikely that Henry would be able to enjoy a peaceful life and liberty, moreover, to prove his manhood as a lost individual following being involved with the First World War.

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