

FATHOMS DEEP IDENTITY CRISIS IN ERNEST HEMINGWAY THROUGH *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*

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Abstract

A twentieth century, renowned American writer, Ernest Hemingway, the voice of “The Lost Generation”, was the recipient of the Nobel Prize in 1954. Producing a new type of character, code hero, he has visualised himself in nearly all his works. Highly individual, with set proportions of the mind, psychology and body, he managed to live well through the pages of his works. Perused ontologically, his works transpire his life as an open book. His last major work, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), an award winning novella completes his journey in the sea of life. His split identity finds a spiritual respite in his acceptance. The probable reasons and possibilities of the fleeting inner identity are focused upon in the following piece of creativity.

Keywords: “Lost Generation”, code hero, masculinity, Dutch boy, Dutch dolly, phallic images, Hemochromatosis.

INTRODUCTION

A great legacy finds foothold in a literary genius, as a critic J.O’Hara outlines Ernest Hemingway as “the outstanding author since the death of Shakespeare.”¹

Ernest Hemingway served as a Red Cross ambulance driver in World War I, later worked as a correspondent for the Toronto *Daily Star*, met writers like F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Ford Madox Ford, and achieved fame. He was renowned as a chronicler of the disaffection felt by many American youth after World War I. This generation of youth was dubbed as “Lost Generation” by Gertrude Stein. Hence, Hemingway became the guiding light of this “Lost Generation”. His novels, *The Sun Rises* (1926) and *Farewell to Arms* (1929) established him as the dominant literary voice of his times. His innovative and revolutionary style of writing was adopted by generations of deep young creators and writers.

During Spanish Civil War, he worked as a journalist and wrote many articles and short stories. His bestselling novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), built up the mythic breed of masculinity for which he wished to be known. His work and his life revolved around big-game hunting, fishing, boxing, and bull fighting. His individuality and masculinity found breeding ground in these games with the same fervour as in his characters of his writings.

In 1930s, Hemingway lived in Key West, Florida, and later in Cuba. His fishing experience in the Gulf Stream and the Caribbean proved to be the inevitable background of vivid and graphic

descriptions in the novella, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). Before the publication of this novella, the year 1950s proved to be a professional disaster to Hemingway. His novel, *Across the River and Into the Trees* received vicious reviews from the critics. Against his expectations, he was nearly washed up as a writer. He had to fathom deep to bring out the classic and the unique part of his creativity. Under strain and pressure, he had to gather forth his identity to produce the individuality of the Old Man in *The Old Man and the Sea*. Allen aptly quotes Hemingway's biographer Michael Reynolds' words, "If you get too fixated on Hemingway, you lose the ability to understand him. He's like a deep well: you fall in and you may never come out." 2

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA: A MIRRORED LOOK

The dedication in, *The Old Man and the Sea* reads, "To Charlie Scribner and to Max Perkins," Hemingway's both these friends passed away before the book was published. Max Perkins died in 1947 and Scribner, who was the President of Charles Scribner's Sons, died in 1952. They were among many of Hemingway's literary peers who died in the preceding decade, including Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, and James Joyce.

The magazine, *Life* featured an excerpt of *The Old Man and the Sea* in its September 1952 issue. The five million copies of the magazine sold out in two days. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and also brought him the Nobel Prize in 1954. This best seller made a fortune for Hemingway. It was filmed in 1955 starring Spencer Tracy. Hence, this novella elevated his prestige and reputation to the pinnacle of his literary height. Its publisher, Scribner, on an early dust jacket called the novella a "new classic", and many critics favorably compared it with such works as William Faulkner's, *The Bear* and Herman Melville's, *Moby Dick*.

The Old Man and the Sea was the last major work published by the author during his life time. The plot structure outlines an Old Man, Santiago, who catches a giant fish, marlin, in the waters off Cuba Islands. By the time he reaches the shore, the fish is devoured by the sharks. Defeated he returns home with the skeleton of the fish attached to the boat. The Old Man, Santiago, in the novella is probably, based on Hemingway's close friend and the captain of Hemingway's boat, Gregorio Fuentes. Like Santiago, Fuentes was gaunt and thin, had blue eyes, came from Canary Islands, and had a long, battle-scarred history as a fisherman.

Unlike most novels, *The Old Man and the Sea* has no chapter divisions. This could be attributed to its relative shortness, but there is another reason. From the beginning to the end, a continuous account is given, almost a motion picture of Santiago's three-day ordeal. Until the last page, there is never a moment when the reader is not with him. Chapter divisions or headings would be an unnatural intrusion into this exceptionally intimate slice of life.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE SEA

Fishing requires both calm detachment and violent engagement and it is a kind of masculine flourish. It further illustrates the unity of a world which both oppresses man and out of which the strength to resist that oppression comes.

The story takes place on the sea. Santiago is constantly identified with sea and its creatures. His sea-colored eyes reflect sea's tranquillity and power. Its inhabitants are portrayed as his brothers. Hemingway tells us that Santiago eats turtle eggs for strength and drinks shark liver oil for health. In this way, he internalizes the characteristics of the sea and adopts them as his own. The sea is also seen as the unconscious, from which creative ideas are drawn.

Santiago refers to the sea as a woman, and the sea seems to represent the feminine complement to Santiago's masculinity. According to Santiago, when people love sea, they refer to it as a woman and love her. When they view it as an enemy and rival, they refer to it as man. Santiago

"always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favors, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them." ³ This view of Hemingway indicates that sea can bring fortune and ruin alike. It contains the good and the bad which are equal parts of the greater unity. And hence, sea is symbolic of a unitary whole. Man and man will always yield strife, man and woman, Santiago and the sea, complement each other and create a peaceable unity.

Visual imagery is quite significant in the novella. Santiago's statement that his eyes adjust to the sun during different parts of the day furnishes an example. Santiago says, "All my life the early sun has hurt my eyes, he thought. Yet, they are still good. In the evening I can look straight into it without getting the blackness. It has more force in the evening too. But in the morning it is just painful" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 22). This statement is of the edifying power of age. It clearly states that, it is difficult to find one's way in the morning of the youth, while this task becomes easier for those who have experienced throughout the day and are in the evening of life.

FIRST FATHOM : BIO CREATION GRAPH IN SANTIAGO

Santiago talks to himself with sea as a witness. It is a kind of a dramatic monologue, through which the psychological interpretation encompasses the mind of the Old Man and the author. The old fisherman figuratively sails the author's unconscious, represented in Freudian symbolism by the sea, in an attempt to pull forth the great story from its inchoate depths. "Now it is time to think of only one thing. That which I was born for" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 28). He was searching for greatness in a world which seeks to deprive him of it.

Philip Young, a literary critic, concurs, "Many of the stories...are very literal translations of some of the most important events in Hemingway's own life." ⁴ *The Old Man and the Sea* can be interpreted as an allegory of Hemingway's career, his loneliness and isolation, at the time when he wrote it. Besides, in this novella, the negative aspects of women are highlighted, which result from the author's failed relationships with women, including his mother.

Hemingway's struggle as an author is similar to the protagonist of the novella, Santiago's struggle as a fisherman. Philip Young writes, "*The Old Man and the Sea* is...an account of Hemingway's personal struggle...to write his best.... The...metaphors...need almost no translation." ⁵ Many people thought Hemingway's best days were behind him. Literary critic, Sonny Elizondo agrees, "*The Old Man and the Sea* was published in 1952, after the bleakest ten years in Hemingway's literary career...and people began to think that Hemingway had exhausted his store of ideas." ⁶ One of the most prolific and successful writers of the 1920s and 1930s, Hemingway proved a failure after ten years when he published the novel, *Across the River and Into the Trees*. According to an award-winning biographer James R. Mellow, "*Across the River and Into the Trees* is the worst of the [Hemingway] novels published during Hemingway's lifetime..." ⁷

The first page of the novella describes Santiago as once a great fisherman, but now he is regarded as a failure, as he has gone, "eighty four days without taking a fish" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 3). Therefore, "many of the fishermen made fun of the old man..." (*The Old Man and the Sea* 4). The complete diction used to describe Santiago's sail illustrates that how unsuccessful he was as a fisherman. Hemingway writes, "The sail was patched with flour sacks and...it looked like the flag of permanent defeat." (*The Old Man and the Sea* 3). Moreover, Elizondo points out, "The simplicity of Santiago's house further develops our view of Santiago as...unsuccessful.... His house is very simple with a bed, table, and chair on a dirt floor." ⁸ In

ten years, Hemingway could not produce a successful novel, this situation is quite similar to Santiago not catching a fish in eighty four days.

Hemingway's 'doing nothing' brought the disapproval of his parents, who felt their son was loafing instead of working. Hemingway's birthday present at the age of twenty-one was a Get-Out-Of-The-House-Until-You-Grow-Up-And-Get-A-Real-Job letter which his mother personally handed to him.

He did get out and find a real job, married a girl named Hadley Richardson, and moved to Paris as a correspondent for the *Toronto Star*. His newspaper work succeeded. His other literary attempts, the ones that really mattered to him, did not work out. Ceaselessly Hemingway kept submitting manuscripts. And, ceaselessly they kept on getting rejected. He had hopes for the manuscripts, though. Every writer has hopes for unsold manuscripts which he or she intends to revise, resubmit, and finally sell. But, in December of 1923, a suitcase containing almost everything he had written, originals and carbons, was stolen and never recovered. The entire material, from which he hoped to build literary and financial success, was wiped out. And, it came as a deep crash for him.

A connection can be tracked between Hemingway's suitcase and Santiago's marlin. The marlin was a fish to keep a man all winter. It's another interesting speculation is based on the premise that all writing is at least partially autobiographical. Santiago's mixed bag of triumph and tragedy certainly has a precedent in the life of Hemingway, his creator.

Hemingway and Santiago had to prove themselves again. Hemingway writes, "[]he thousand times [Santiago] had proved it mean nothing. Now he was proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it." (*The Old Man and the Sea* 49) To save their reputations, Santiago had to catch a great fish, this is directly linked to Hemingway's quest to write a great novel. "[T]he old fisherman figuratively sails the author's unconscious...in an attempt to pull forth the great story from its...depths." Elizondo writes further, "The sharks are...embodiments of literary critics tearing apart Santiago's (Hemingway's) catch (book)." ⁹ Hemingway thought that *The Old Man and the Sea* was a great novel. Before the book was published, he said (as quoted by Philip Young), "It's as though I had gotten finally what I had been working for all my life." ¹⁰

Interestingly, one might also read this statement of fate as an expression of Santiago's own place in a symbolic story about the writing process itself. Santiago, a product of Hemingway's authorial imagination, was born to play the role he has in the narrative. In this way, the character's succumbing to fate is a comment on the creative process by which the author controls the destiny of his or her characters.

Santiago thanks God that marlins "are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are more noble and able" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 47). And, he thinks to himself, "I wish I was the fish....with everything he has against only my will and my intelligence" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 48). The dissociation between intelligence, on the one hand, and nobility and ability on the other, amounts to an exaltation of the natural and animalistic over the human. Herein, one has to accept intelligence as the mark of humanity. This heightens the stakes of the struggle between the marlin and Santiago, and almost necessitates the long battle that ensues. As, Santiago's eventual victory can be seen as deserved only if he has proved his worthiness and nobility through suffering. Nobility is not a quality of character but contains a series of actions.

Hemingway's failed marriages and rejection by a teenage girl also influenced the writing of this story. James R. Mellow claims that, in 1948, Hemingway fell in love with a nineteen-year-old Italian girl named Adriana Ivancich. They kept up a six-year correspondence, and

during that time, Hemingway expressed his love and loneliness for her. Adriana, however, was not in love with Hemingway; and she only thought of him as a friend. Hemingway was married four times, and his last marriage, to Mary Welsh, was also in jeopardy during the time he wrote this novel. When Hemingway was married to Mary, he told a friend that "[m]arried couples could find themselves on roads that diverged and...it had already happened in [his] marriage."¹¹ Also, at the time Hemingway was writing this book, a teenage girl rejected him.

Hemingway's loneliness is clearly reflected in Santiago's external conflict and characterization. Santiago's wife is dead, so he is lonely before he faces his external conflict. Hemingway writes, "Once there had been a tinted photograph of his wife on the wall but he had taken it down because it made him too lonely to see it..." (*The Old Man and the Sea* 8). Adding to Santiago's loneliness, Manolin, his only companion, is not allowed to fish with him anymore. Santiago misses Manolin. During the rising action, when he hooks the marlin, he says, "I wish I had the boy" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 37). He reiterates this remark throughout his ordeal. Since Manolin cannot go with him, Santiago has to sail his boat by himself, "beyond all people in the world" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 36). "He is surrounded by a seemingly endless expanse of...water."¹² This isolation adds to the depth of rejections.

SECOND FATHOM: MASCULINITY AND FEMINITY

The aligned masculinity and power between Santiago and fish becomes the centripetal force of the novella, as it progresses. The connection between the fish's behavior and masculine behavior is brought out powerfully when Santiago tells himself, "Keep your head clear and know how to suffer like a man. Or a fish..." (*The Old Man and the Sea* 71). Comforting one with grace, in the face of pain, is central to the novella's idea of manhood. Santiago himself says, "pain does not matter to a man" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 64). And, it is only by ignoring his pain he can sustain the effort to capture the fish. Withstanding pain, then, handling it as a man is the essence of proving himself worthy to catch the marlin.

The imagery here is obviously sexual, emphasizing the feminine character of the sea. Santiago's final confrontation with the fish after he wakes up, further develops Santiago's equality with the fish. The operative conception of manhood is also upheld towards which Santiago works tirelessly. Pulling in the circling fish exhausts Santiago, and the exasperated old fisherman exclaims, "You are killing me, fish. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 71). It is interesting to note that Santiago does not seem to care who kills whom. This, like so much of Santiago's relation to the fish, seems to recall an aristocratic code of honor in which dying by the hand of a noble opponent is as noble an end as defeating him. Indeed, it might even be a preferable end because one does not know under what conditions one will die. Santiago's obsession with valorising his opponent seems to be a far cry from the common idea that one must devalue or dehumanize the victim.

Closely related to the above concept is the 'Code Hero,' a phrase used to describe the main character in many of Hemingway's novels. Some critics regard Santiago as the finest, most developed example of these code heroes. In this novella, both Santiago and marlin share the same power and status.

In this phrase, 'code' means a set of rules or guidelines for conduct. In Hemingway's code, the principal ideals are honor, courage, and endurance in a life of stress, misfortune, and pain. Often in Hemingway's stories, the hero's world is violent and disorderly, moreover, the violence and disorder seem to win.

The 'code' dictates that the hero should act honorably in the midst of what will be a losing battle. In doing so he finds fulfilment, he becomes a man or proves his manhood and his worth. The phrase 'grace under pressure' is often used to describe the conduct of the code hero. At every fathom this proves to be true for both Santiago and the marlin

Hemingway's hatred of women is also apparent in this novella. Most of the references about women in the story are negative. One of Santiago's and Hemingway's beliefs is that females lack self-control. Elizondo notes, "The representation of femininity, the sea, is characterized expressly by its caprice and lack of self-control."¹³ This is apparent in the exposition, when Santiago says, "If [the sea] did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 20). Moreover, "[Santiago] remembered the time he had hooked one of a pair of marlin...and the hooked fish, the female, made a wild, panic stricken, despairing fight that soon exhausted her" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 35).

On the contrary, Santiago believes that males have an abundance of self control. He knows that the marlin he has hooked is a male before he sees it. He says, "He took the bait like a male, and he pulls like a male, and his fight has no panic in it" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 35). According to Elizondo, Hemingway believed that, "To be a man is to behave with honor and dignity ...and...to display a maximum of self-control."¹⁴ The manner in which Hemingway exalts males further deprecates females.

Santiago also associates femininity with deceptiveness. In the exposition, when he sees the Portuguese man-of-war, he refers to it as "agua mala," which means "you whore" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 24). Whore is a derogatory term used towards women, so Santiago sees the Portuguese man-of-war as a symbol of femininity. After he calls the Portuguese man-of-war a whore, he says, "The iridescent bubbles...are beautiful. But they ...[are] the falsest thing in the sea" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 25).

In the denouement of the novella only one tourist woman appears briefly and her innocuous observation is significant. The woman sees the remains of Santiago's marlin—a long spine with a huge tail at the end. Upon seeing the remains of the marlin, she asks a waiter what it is, and in broken English, the waiter tries to explain that sharks ate the marlin. But, she thinks he is trying to say that the remains are that of the shark, and she says, "I didn't know sharks had such handsome, beautifully formed tails" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 99). "The female tourist...represents the feminine incapacity to appreciate Santiago's [Hemingway's] masculine quest... She does not speak the waiter and Santiago's language...so [she] is ignorant of the old man's [Hemingway's] great deeds."¹⁵

Hemingway, all through, felt displaced from his real self. In an article on revisiting the biographical history of the author, Mauricio D. Aguilera Linde offers up the fact that, Ernest's mother Grace Hemingway was so determined to present both of her children as twins that she often dressed Ernest in "pink gingham dresses and flower ornamented hats-during the boy's first months" and that it wasn't until first grade that "the long hair or the Dutch-boy haircut his mother adored - was abandoned." This gender perception in Hemingway's upbringing was not restricted to physical appearance, but it was embedded in deep fathoms of the self too. Grace, "the sensitive artist, the opera singer," was "firm, strong, daring, and domineering" while; Ernest's father the "natural-born hunter, woodsman, and sportsman brought up in the manly tradition of Teddy Roosevelt" was "nervous, weak, cowardly and insecure."¹⁶

Mauricio substantiates further that as Hemingway grew to see "his mother as the root of evil, he associated Grace's world with a destructive, emasculating power" thus resulting in the author choosing to "assert his masculinity through the resurrection of the father's image."¹⁷

Therefore, the idea of displacement as an attempt to distance oneself from a newfound unfamiliarity with one's body can be traced back to Hemingway's childhood that challenged all preconceived notion of static gender. Santiago becomes the instrument for Hemingway to explore the ideas of alienation of his own perceived gender through psychological displacement.

The Freudian concept of projection finds space in Santiago's masochistic drive and then anger with his body when it begins to fail could be seen as Hemingway's projection of his own internal hatred of the masculine. Santiago comes to be a projection of Hemingway's internal anger against masculinity. He disdains his body as it ages, yet he has the desire to endure the most intense trials. As, he had to keep up to his prestigious masculine figure, just beneath this garb, one can feel the author's growing subconscious animosity towards his encapsulated social figure.

Although Santiago fits within the wise old man archetype, his interaction with the ocean allows him to express his inner feminine side, the side of which he actually identifies the strongest. The manifestation of the conflict that Hemingway experienced internally surrounding his gender identity comes in his interaction with the great marlin.

After the fish that Santiago has hooked has exhausted itself, it swims near enough to the boat for the protagonist to deal a fatal blow with a fishing spear. It's hard to ignore the immediate phallic connotation in the segment of which Santiago, "lifted the harpoon as high as he could, and drove it down with all his strength" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 72). Santiago is able to feel, "the iron go in" and drive it further, pushing his weight into it (*The Old Man and the Sea* 72). At the outset, this culmination of the long struggle to simply keep the fish hooked expresses a phallic dominance over what has previously been identified as the feminine ocean.

According to Dr. C.George Boeree's online textbook, phallic images were most directly correlated to the concept of "mana" or "spiritual energy," used and displayed during harvest season with the hope of increasing crop yield.¹⁸ The spear is culmination of Santiago's spiritual energy, the concept of dominance radically shifts outside of the sexual realm. This "monster" (sea) is the animalistic essence of Santiago, and the great marlin itself is a product of the feminized ocean. There is reason to associate the great marlin as a tangible element of Hemingway's projected femininity. The act of driving the culminating spiritual energy through the masculine phallic image, into the hidden feminine aspect of the author's true desire becomes a symbolic representation of Hemingway's internal conflict of gender identity. However, as the story continues this symbolic act becomes representative of Hemingway's own inability to remove or fled from his desires of feminine expression.

At the end of the novella, readers are able to see that Santiago has been ultimately defeated by the ocean. Driven almost to the point of death, the protagonist returns back to his village with no product to sell, and only the bones to tell the story. The ocean, refusing to let the tangible product of femininity be taken back to land and butchered by the predominantly male fisherman, has reclaimed the flesh of the marlin. In the final few pages of the book, Manolin comes in to comfort Santiago. Mentally and physically shaken by the events, Santiago only replies by telling the boy that, "They beat me, Manolin," the sharks that consumed the marlin "truly beat me" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 96). Processing this scene with the concept of the ocean symbolizing the feminine desires and expressions of Santiago, the first open acknowledgement of submission appears to be laid forth.

Manolin replies with "*He* didn't beat you. Not the fish" (*The Old Man and the Sea* 96). The italicized "*He*" that appears in that line is obviously a reference to the biological sex of the marlin that Santiago has been battling with for days. The protagonist recognizes that the victory

over the marlin was only a very temporary victory, just as if one was battling deep psychological desires and manifestations and may have had a temporary breakthrough. The vastness and strength of those desires within an individual, when paralleled with an ocean, can only be fleeting. Hemingway is positing that all must secede to the natural world, and our inherent natural desires. In this specific text these natural desires represent Hemingway's projected battle with his feminine self, the end of the novella symbolizing his acceptance of his own feminine desires.

THIRD FATHOM : THE END WITH A BEGINNING

Hemingway's obituary ran on the front page of *The New York Times* on July 3, 1961.

Special to The New York Times

Ketchum, Idaho, July 2--Ernest Hemingway was found dead of a shotgun wound in the head at his home here today.

His wife, Mary, said that he had killed himself accidentally while cleaning the weapon.

At the time of the shooting, Mrs. Hemingway, the only other person in the house, lay asleep in a bedroom upstairs. The shot woke her and she went down the stairs to find her husband's body near a gun rack in the foyer. Mrs. Hemingway told friends that she had been unable to find any note.

Just thirty three years before:

On this day in 1928, Dr. Clarence Hemingway spent the morning at his office, and then entered his home in Oak Park, Illinois, for lunch. He burned personal papers in the basement furnace. Then he walked up the stairs to his second-floor bedroom and in the semi-darkness cast by the drawn shades, sat on the marital bed. Dr. Clarence E. Hemingway was also devoted to hunting. He shot himself to death at the age of fifty seven, despondent over a diabetic condition and many financial troubles. The death weapon was a Civil War pistol that had been owned by the physician's father.

This setback had devastated Ernest, who commented, "I'll probably go the same way." This was the first time when Hemingway's life began to crack apart. The most obvious external evidence was a succession of bizarre physical accidents, many of which were bashes on the head. One, in Paris, left him with a split head needing nine stitches; his car accident lacerating his scalp and requiring fifty seven stitches; three months later, he came flying off a motorbike evading German fire in Normandy. He suffered headaches, tinnitus, diplopia, showed speech and memory problems for months. Back in Cuba after the war, he tore open his forehead on the rear-view mirror when his car skidded. Five years later, while drinking, he slipped on the deck of the Pillar, and concussed himself. It seemed as if he was trying to emulate his late father. The theme of a father's suicide cropped up frequently in Hemingway's short stories and a novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Mr. Hemingway was given his first shotgun at the age of ten. Hemingway was only eighteen when he signed up for the First World War – but only as a non-combatant. He had a defective left eye, inherited from his mother, which kept him out of battle. He went to Italy to man the Red Cross canteens and evacuate the wounded. Helping a wounded man to safety one evening, he was shot in the leg and hospitalized in Milan. As an adult, he sought out danger. He narrowly escaped death in the Spanish Civil War when three shells plunged into his hotel room. In World War II, he was injured in a taxi accident that took place in a blackout. The author nearly died of

blood poisoning on one African safari; he and his wife walked away from an airplane crash in 1954 on another big-game hunt.

He loved being in the thick of the war – dodging bullets, watching men being shot to hell all around him. But, what Hemingway was doing was not bravery, but psychotic self-dramatization. And, while analyzing the image of Hemingway, what is uncovered is an extraordinary sub-stratum of self-harming. Most of the time, for just over half of his life, Hemingway seemed hell-bent on destroying himself.

He also wasn't physically well which was mainly caused by many years of heavy drinking and his previous injuries. He suffered from headaches, high blood pressure, weight problems, and ultimately diabetes. All this manifested into an inability to write at times, and consequently made him unable to complete several works for many years.

The genetic disease, Hemochromatosis, ran in his family, which caused the inability to metabolize iron which results in symptoms of physical and mental deterioration. Hemingway had been diagnosed with it in early 1961, the year he killed himself. There have been five suicides in the Hemingway family over four generations -- Hemingway's father, Clarence; siblings Ursula, Leicester and Ernest; granddaughter Margaux. The generation skipped was just barely: Hemingway's youngest son, Gregory, died in 2001 as a transsexual named Gloria, of causes that put a lot of strain on the term 'natural'.

One can locate the writer's trauma in two childhood experiences. It seems that it was his mother Grace's habit to dress him, as a child, in long white frocks and fashion his hair like a little girl's. It was a nineteenth century custom to dress infants alike, but she took it to extremes. She referred to him, in his cute lacy dress, as "Dutch dolly". She said she was his Sweetie, or, as he pronounced it, "Fweetee". Once, when Ernest was two, Grace called him a doll too often. He replied, "I not a Dutch dolly... Bang, I shoot Fweetee." **19**

But, she also praised him for being good at hunting in the woods and fishing in the stream in boys' clothes. It was too confusing for a sensitive kid. He always hated her, and her controlling ways. He would spend the rest of his life in a galloping parody of masculinity though Dutch dolly indeed. He wanted to show his mother that there was no confusion in his head.

"I shoot Fweetee." The trouble was that he also wanted to shoot his father. Clarence Hemingway was a barrel-chested, six-foot bully, a disciplinarian who beat his son with a razor strop. Ernest did not retaliate directly. He bottled it up and subsumed it into a ritual. He would hide in a shed in the family backyard with a loaded shotgun and take aim at his father's head. Martin speculates that, when Clarence shot himself, Hemingway, aged twenty nine, felt the terrible guilt that he had fantasised about killing him. One wonders if Clarence's suicide had burdened his son with a lifelong death wish. Unable to handle this, he took to blaming his mother for his father's death. "I hate her guts and she hates mine," he wrote in 1949. "She forced my father to suicide." **20**

He suffered a chronic identity crisis. Henceforth, he could be warm and generous or ruthless and overbearing. His friendships were often unstable, at times cruel and other times just the opposite. And, his relations with women were full of conflict. He sulked like a child when, on his first safari, his wife Pauline shot a lion before he did. He was pursued, for the rest of his life, by a colossal death wish – either to join his late father, or to expiate his guilt at his father's death by mirroring it.

Death resided at the heart of Hemingway's life, a constant spur to his creative imagination, a constant companion, a dark secret lover. Themes of violence and suicide informed his stories from the beginning. His letters are full of references to his future suicide. A letter to

John Dos Passos describes in more detail Hemingway's experience of depression, "I felt that gigantic bloody emptiness and nothingness. Like couldn't ever fuck, fight, write, and was all for death." **21**

He was given medication and, horribly, a course of electroconvulsive shock treatments. In the spring of 1961, he was asked to contribute a single sentence to a presentation volume for John F Kennedy's inauguration. Hemingway could not oblige. In April, his wife Mary found him sitting with a shotgun and two shells. He was sent to hospital in Ketchum, Idaho, his birthplace, but he tried twice more to end his life, once by walking into the path of a plane taxiing on the runaway. There was a two-month period of hospitalization and comparative peace and quiet, when he appeared sane to his doctor and deranged to his wife. He seemed to be acting, right to the end. He was released and was sent home one more time. He had a picnic lunch with wine and, the next morning, shot himself.

"The accumulating factors contributing to his burden of illness at the end of his life are staggering," writes Martin, listing Hemingway's bipolar mood disorder, depression, chronic alcoholism, repetitive traumatic brain injuries, and the onset of psychosis. But, it seems clear that the defining problem of his life was his experience of childhood. His confusion over gender, his Oedipal desire to kill his father for beating him, together led to what Martin calls "a retreat into a defensive façade of hyper-masculinity and self-sufficiency." **22**

CONCLUSION

Enormous and significant evidence exists to support the diagnoses of bipolar disorder, alcohol dependence, traumatic brain injury, and probable borderline and narcissistic personality traits in Hemingway. Late in life, Hemingway also developed symptoms of psychosis likely related to his underlying affective illness and superimposed alcoholism and traumatic brain injury. Hemingway utilized a variety of defense mechanisms, including self-medication with alcohol, a lifestyle of aggressive, risk-taking sportsmanship, and writing, in order to cope with the suffering caused by the complex co morbidity of his interrelated psychiatric disorders. Ultimately, Hemingway's defense mechanisms failed, overwhelmed by the burden of his complex co morbid illness, resulting in his suicide. However, despite suffering from multiple psychiatric disorders, Hemingway was able to live a vibrant life until the age of sixty one and within that time contributed immortal works of fiction to the literary canon.

The stories and letters written by Hemingway that were composed after the publication of *The Old Man and the Sea* and published posthumously have provided profound evidence to gather real Hemingway through his words and works. These revelations into his personal life create the ability to drown fathoms deep and offer new forms of critique, potentially opening up entire new visions within the text.

Hemingway is no longer looked upon as a bastion of stereotypical masculinity. His identity is as complicated as any other human being in the world, fluidly shifting throughout the gender spectrum. Hemingway's desire to embody the proclaimed perfect man was the outside representation of his own inner struggle with gender identity. Exploring the depths of this award-winning text reveal the complicated and often contradictory mentality that Hemingway had to internalize throughout his life. Perhaps, it was leading to the mental instability that would be his ultimate demise. Regardless, Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* remains an incredibly relevant text that continues to be subject to new elements of critique since its publication, whether focusing on the allegorical elements of the story or opening up new avenues and vistas in to the fathomless realms of the author's inn-ness. Hemingway wrote aptly in *The*

Old Man and the Sea (80): "But man is not made for defeat . . . A man can be destroyed but not defeated." Hemingway was destroyed, even by his own hand, but not defeated. His grandiosity reached such proportions that he once admitted he would have liked to have been a king **23** (Baker, 1969, p. viii), and when he finally prepared to die by his own hand, he selected from his wardrobe a cherished garment he had affectionately named his "emperor's robe." **24** The final self inflicted jerk exposes a majorly unified identity, which Hemingway attained towards the finale of his life. The emperor's robe and its master remain eternally undefeated.

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