American Modernist Writers:
How They Touched the Private
Realm of Life
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Introduction

The issue of personal identity is one which has driven American writers to create a body of literature that not only strives to define the limitations of human capacity, but also makes a lasting contribution in redefining gender roles and stretching the bounds of freedom. A combination of several historical aspects leading up to and during the early 20th century such as Women's Suffrage and the Great War caused an uprooting of the traditional moral values held by both men and women and provoked artists to create a new American identity through modern art and literature. Gertrude Stein used her writing as a tool to express new outlooks on human sexuality and as a way to educate the public on the repression of women in order to provoke changes in society. Being a pupil of Stein's, Ernest Hemingway followed her lead in the modernist era and focused his stories on human behavior in order to educate society on the changes of gender roles and the consequences of these changes. Being a man, Hemingway focused more closely on the way that men's roles were changing while Stein focused on women's roles. However, both of these phenomenal early 20th century modernist writers made a lasting impact on post WWI America and helped to further along the inevitable change from the unrealistic Victorian idea of proper conduct and gender roles to the new modern American society.

The Roles of Men and Women

The United States is a country that has been reluctant to give equal rights to women and has pushed them into subservient roles. Although other countries have also been reluctant to give rights to women, there are unique aspects of American life which have molded women into a certain ideal. It was not until 1848 that the first national women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, NY. In 1859, the first successful vulcanization of rubber gave women a safer condom to help prevent unwanted pregnancy. In 1866, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B.
Anthony formed the American Equal Rights Association which strove to disseminate discrimination on account of race and gender. Despite some progress, the Women’s Suffrage Movement was put on hold from the years 1918 to 1920 due to WWI. Finally, on August 26, 1920 the 19th Amendment was ratified which gave women the right to vote. Although in 1923 the National Women’s Party proposed an equal rights amendment, it still has not been ratified to this day (Women’s Suffrage).

This brief overview of Women’s Suffrage helps to demonstrate the reluctance of America to give women an equal standing in society. The Victorian era, which technically lasted from the years 1837 to 1901 (during the reign of Queen Victoria) was a time of severe hypocrisy, repression of women, and a strict moral code. This era was contingent on reputation and image. Women were placed into the role of an “ideal woman, wife, or mother.” Women were seen as virginal, pure, chaste, and saintly. They had little to no rights at all except for maintaining their husband and household. Their only respectable job was that of a governess and they were obliged to take care of their parents despite personal obligations of their own. During this era, women were treated more like weak statues rather than human beings. It was thought that they were not supposed to experience pleasure and their moral status weighed heavily on the reputation of their entire family. Women who were “superfluous” or had sex out of wedlock were shunned and put out of their home. This was a serious problem during the Victorian era because there were about 4% more women than men at this time. Men and women during this time were seen to live in “separate spheres”; the women’s sphere being one that was uninhabitable without the presence of a man. Because of this, women were to be protected by their male siblings, in case they did not marry. This is the route that Gertrude Stein takes in her young adult life with her brother Leo (Women in the Victorian era).

Born in 1874, in the middle of the Victorian era, Gertrude Stein witnessed the repressed
roles that women were forced to take on. Not only did Stein come from Jewish/ German descent, but she was born as a woman with little to no rights at all. Fortunately, the Woman’s Suffrage Movement, which had been in progress since the convention in Seneca Falls, gave young Gertrude hope for becoming a successful woman. This movement was a large source of Gertrude’s inspiration in becoming a fiction writer. One of her first pieces of fiction written and published in 1910, entitled Three Lives, focused on different repressed roles that lower class women held in order to show a higher class of women who were in a better social position to provoke change the difficulties that these women were subject to. Stein was highly aware of the “separate spheres” gender roles of the Victorian Era and was inspired by many great women such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, along with other intellectuals, to work for a drastic change in the rights of women. The influence of Stein’s gender as well as the Woman’s Suffrage Movement was reflected in her a letter by to her critic/ friend, Henri Pierre Roche (June 12, 1912):

You are a man and I am a woman but I have a much more constructive mind than you have. I am a genuinely creative artist and being such my personality determines my art just as Matisse’s or Picasso’s or Wagner’s...Now you if I were a man would not write me such a letter because you would respect the inevitable character of my art...But being a man and believing that a man’s business is to be constructive you forget the much greater constructive power of my mind and the absolute nature of my art which if I were a man you would respect... (Stein, The 84)

During the Victorian era, women were confined to the private domain and forbidden to enter the public realm of existence. Gertrude Stein was one of the first women who successfully made her journey from the private to public domain (partly because of her contemporary influences), which was a highly modern move for her to make. As can be seen in The Autobiography of Alice
B. Toklas, Gertrude accomplished this journey in part by taking on the role of a son instead of the traditional role of a daughter.

Stein was an advocate for women’s rights in all fields, particularly education and medicine. She had the privilege of receiving an excellent college education from Radcliffe where she was influenced not only by her professors but by the new Freudian theories and by the influential women at that time. In a college essay, Stein speaks her viewpoint on the education of women:

From the minute the child is born the modern mother’s troubles begin; indeed we may say with Holmes that the education of the child begins a hundred years before it is born...we must study the nature of the individual child. We must realize the different significance of different acts of naughtiness and act accordingly...when we see what an intelligent woman can do in the direction of developing even very poor material and making something of it we realize how very necessary it is for the modern mother to be intelligent and educated. (Stein, *Three*)

The influential power of upper class educated women on not only other women but on men as well was incalculable. Gertrude Stein was able to learn from these contemporaries and use the force of her powerful ambition to become an influential and significant author and public role model. In order to get an idea of the types of literature Stein was reading which helped influence her writing and her future participation in the changing of gender roles in the early 20th century, the following sections take a look at some important activists for woman’s rights as well as contributors to the changes in women’s health care. Elizabeth Cady Stanton along with Susan B. Anthony, were two of the most influential figures in the fight for women’s rights. These two women would have been seen as either saints or enemies to Stein’s class at Radcliffe, depending on the viewer’s attitude toward women’s suffrage. Not only did Stanton write the feminist
bestseller *The Woman's Bible* in 1885 (which Stein inevitably would have read), but she was also an influential speaker. Stanton was a firm believer that women were unjustly looked upon as lesser than men and that if women were only educated, they would be able to make significant contributions to the United States government. In Stanton's 1869 address to the New York State Legislature, she spoke out about oppression and the corrupt laws of the US government. In regards to oppression, she addressed the predominantly male audience in the following manner: “But who of you appreciate the galling humiliation, the refinements of degradation, to which women (the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of freemen) are subject, in this, the last half of the nineteenth century?” (Stein, *Three* 224). Stanton used the illustration of an inhabitant living on another planet looking down on earth to demonstrate the ridiculous restrictions placed on both African Americans and women. She claimed that this other inhabitant would have viewed these groups as monsters, considering the unjust restrictions placed on their freedom. Stanton attempted to throw men off their powerful pedestal by saying: “We do not ask man to represent us; it is hard enough in times like these for man to carry backbone enough to represent himself” (226). These were mighty words for a woman to be speaking in the mid 19th century. For so long, women were ruled by men who looked upon women as weak creatures and did not understand the first thing about their health or mental capabilities. Women basically had two choices: if they were from a wealthy family they were arranged to marry into another wealthy family and their only job was to take care of the household so that they appeared to be socially acceptable in the public eye, or they were forced to take on a job as a servant where they made little to no money, except for room and board. There was also the option of prostitution, which was the only way for a remarkable number of women, but we will focus on “respectable” positions that women were able to hold. Even though these women of the upper classes were cared for financially, publicly, they were oppressed and were not allowed to speak their minds
nor were they ever truly understood because the ruling men insisted that they were different than men, the gender in power. The first female U.S. newspaper columnist, Fanny Fern (1811-1872), began to write a newspaper column entitled “The Working-Girls of New York” after two failed marriages. Because Fern herself had been impoverished and experienced the aspects of life that many women were forced to live in, her column gave upper class women like Gertrude Stein an inside look at the problems that society faced. In one of her columns, Fern writes:

Looking at both these women, the question arises, which lives the more miserable life---she whom the world styles “fortunate,” whose husband belongs to three clubs, and whose only meal with his family is an occasional breakfast, from year’s end to year’s end; who is as much a stranger to his own children as to the reader; whose young son of seventeen has already a detective on his track employed by his father to ascertain where and how he spends his nights and his father’s money; swift retribution for that father who finds food, raiment, shelter, equipages for his household: but love, sympathy companionship -- never? Or she -- this other woman -- with a heart quite as hungry and unappeased, who also faces day by day the same appalling question: Is this all life has for me? (Stein, Three227)

Along with Fanny Fern, Anna Julia Haywood Cooper was an influential figure in the promotion of education for women. Cooper was a born slave who became a teacher and went on to receive her Ph.D. from the Sorbonne in Paris. She was a founder of the Colored Women’s League in Washington as well as an early activist for women’s education and civil rights. Stein would have been interested in Cooper’s discourse, particularly because it focused on the rights of women. Cooper concentrated on the importance of women’s education so that they could “think as well as feel.” Perhaps the most profound statement made by Cooper which struck a chord in the young Stein’s mind, is the following: “Religion, science, art, economics, have all needed the
feminine flavor; and literature, the expression of what is permanent and best in all of these, may be gauged at any time to measure the strength of the feminine ingredient” (Stein, *Three* 232). For so long, women were not allowed to read books, much less write influential novels. This statement was significantly moving for the young would-be female writers of the late 19th and early 20th century. The early views of America on the issue of gender roles were completely warped. These influential women helped to inform the public and spark young brilliant minds like Gertrude Stein’s to continue the good fight for Woman Suffrage and make a lasting difference in the future lives of Americans. The world was in desperate need to understand that men and women are both essential ingredients in life and demeaning women would only hurt the nation and mitigate its progress. This is more perfectly illustrated in the words of Cooper: “All I claim is that there is a feminine as well as a masculine side to truth; that these are related not as inferior and superior, not as better and worse, not as weaker and stronger but as complements—complements in one necessary and symmetric whole”(232).

All of the women mentioned above were great influences on Gertrude Stein during her years at Radcliffe. *Three Lives*, which was the first large body of work published by Stein, continued the job that these women started of informing the upper class women of the oppressive and destructive nature that lower class women were subjected to. *Three Lives* is broken down into three sections: *The Good Anna*, *Melanctha*, and *The Gentle Lena*. Each of these stories is a painstakingly objective and unsentimental portrait of raw American life, carefully compiled by Stein. Stein used plain descriptions of the lives of these women without being sympathetic to 20th century ears. The way that she addressed sexuality, death, and everyday life was unconventional because of it did not skate around the truth like classic literature.

The first portrait is *The Good Anna*. The story of Anna is based on Stein’s observations
and insight on the life of a stern and hardworking German immigrant servant. This portrait was inspired by Lena Lebender; she was “loving and self-effacing whose devotion to Gertrude was well known”(9). Stein had the amazing ability of making a portrait that was raw and simple on the surface but was actually laced with irony due to the striking lesson underneath. The very fact that Stein used simple and repetitive language created a false first impression that her stories were nothing but raw step-by-step descriptions when in all actuality they are filled with underlying emotion and meaning. Stein described Anna as having led “an arduous and troubled life”(37). The true irony in this tale of the Good Anna is that her goodness does not bring her happiness. Instead, her only happiness comes from her friendships through women, while the Victorian view was that being “good” was supposed to make someone happy. Anna works very hard and saves all of her money which she gives freely to friends who are in need. An interesting aspect of Anna is that she is only happy when she has control. Everybody “respected and obeyed Miss Annie, as they called her, and promptly attended to all of her complaints”(39). Anna likes working for fat and lazy women because they allow her to have her way in running the household and they never interfere with her work. A situation that exemplifies this trait is when the niece of her mistress tries to give Anna orders. Upon being told what to do, her control is stripped from her, and Anna eventually abandons her post with Miss Mary (her mistress) so that she does not have to live in misery. The fact that Anna has to have control of a situation demonstrates that women were not comfortable and often broke down in the assumed submissive roles of the Victorian era. For example, the old cure for hysteria was bed rest. Women were not allowed to go anywhere or see anybody. The irony of this cure lies in the fact that women became hysterical because their energies were being repressed. Stein used the simple language of a German immigrant servant to express to society that women cannot be confined or controlled. Another ironic aspect in the story of The Good Anna is the fact that her only true love and comfort comes from another
woman. Anna even states plainly that "a girl was a girl and should act always like a girl, both as to giving all respect and as to what she had to eat"(46). According to these guidelines, Anna is very good indeed but she never makes mention of the "wrongness" in her loving another woman, Mrs. Lehntman.

Woman to woman relationships were deemed immoral and dirty in Stein's time. Even though Stein was proud of her identity, she chose to write in a masked manner in order to get her viewpoints across. The irony laced throughout the story of The Good Anna along with the following portrait of Melanctha softly abolished those old viewpoints. Because women were accustomed to this manner of hidden writing, they would have been able to see beneath the surface of Stein's writing and gather inspiration from her portraits.

The portrait of Melanctha is that of a sexually experienced African American woman. Stein's style of writing is significant in this story because it takes on a very modern stance and turns away from the classic form. The classic form of writing consisted of flowery descriptions and plotlines that flowed in a chronological and linear manner. Stein chose to write in the circular, continuous presence fashion. This was very modern in that the narrative did not flow chronologically and the descriptions were raw instead of flowery. Many critics believe that the story of Melanctha is the most reflective of Stein's own personal life. Melanctha is clearly bisexual and strong-minded. Stein used fierce repetition throughout the story to create a sense of the continuous present. She was constantly circling back and forth in the story so that the reader could not forget what had happened to Melanctha and understood the past events that heavily influence the present. "Her main interest was presenting the person; her fascination with the "portrait" -- a form in which she worked for the next twenty years -- was a culmination of years of formal study as well as the result of the contemporary artistic excitement over Cezanne, Picasso, and Matisse as they worked to change the nature of painting, particularly through their
portraits” (Wagner 14). In this story, Melanctha is thirsty for wisdom and “understanding.” She chooses to “wander,” which basically means to sleep around, in order to understand the power of intense passion and emotion. Stein says clearly in this story that “It was not from men that Melanctha learned her wisdom. It was always Jane Harden herself who was making Melanctha begin to understand” (101). Jane Harden is a free-loving woman about town. She is known for her adventures with men and her alcoholism. The fact that Stein chose to take on these highly controversial subjects such as bisexuality is proof that she was truly modern and monumental in liberating the woman from her confined social role. Men never truly please Melanctha, in fact, Jeff, the main man in Melanctha’s life is seen as too practical and logical and unable to understand the truths of passion and love. Melanctha embodies the new and liberated woman who has power over men; however, because of her class and the restrictions on her freedom, she is unable to live a happy feminist life. Her second female friend, Rose, is taken away from her because she decides to marry, and Melanctha is no longer allowed to go to her home. Even Rose’s relationship with her husband Sam portrays the new power that women have over men. Rather than being under the control of her husband, Rose chooses her husband and tells him what to do, instead of it being the other way around.

The short story of The Gentle Lena is the complete opposite of the story of Melanctha as well as the saddest. The objective style used in this story allows the reader to feel their own emotions towards the subject matter instead of having it fed to them. Once again, Stein used irony in the fact that despite of all Lena’s “gentleness,” she ends up completely miserable and eventually dead. Stein expressed her anger towards society the most in this story. “Stein wrote this story to criticize the well-intentioned, first-generation immigrant relatives in the States who saw no alternative but marriage for the wistful young German cousin brought to America as a servant girl,” (Wagner 10). In this story, Stein addresses the question of marriage and why it is
insisted upon for all women. Lena is an extremely passive and quiet young German girl who is brought to the states by her aunt. Lena represents the submissive and quiet girl of the Victorian era. The only happiness that Lena finds is with her fellow lady friends whom she works with as a maidservant. Lena has no desire for marriage and yet she is forced into an arranged marriage (to the equally reluctant Herman) by her aunt which eventually leads to her complete misery and death. The following excerpt from The Gentle Lena demonstrates Stein’s objective style of writing:

Before very long, Lena had her baby. He was a good, healthy little boy, the baby. Herman cared very much to have the baby. When Lena was a little stronger he took a house next door to the old couple, so he and his own family could eat and sleep and do the way they wanted. This did not seem to make much change now for Lena. She was just the same as when she was waiting with her baby. She just dragged around and was careless with her clothes and all lifeless, and she acted always and lived on just as if she had no feeling. (213)

Three Lives is an important piece of women’s literature that not only marks the beginning of modernism but the beginning of feminism as well. Due to Stein’s intellectual training in psychology, philosophy, and medicine, this story focuses on the behavior of women, why they act the way they do, and the problems that need to be addressed in order to invoke change in society. The fact that the women in Stein’s literature are only truly happy with other women marks a sort of “brave new world” of feminine portraiture in contrast to the classic romantic view that women are only happy if they have a hand in marriage with a man.

In 1914 Gertrude Stein published a set of poems titled Tender Buttons: objects, food, rooms. Most critics and readers claim that Stein’s language style in this piece of literature is much too obscure and that it makes no real sense. Some readers have even said that they detest
Tender Buttons because it reads like a book of gibberish. Upon hearing this type of critique of the poems, reading it can be a daunting if not an intimidating process; however, it should be assumed that coming from a great intellectual like Gertrude Stein, there is something great lurking beneath the difficult surface. Despite the outer difficulty, according to literary scholar Kathryn R. Kent, "Stein uses Tender Buttons to rewrite the domestic sphere of women by taking everyday household items and molding them into sensual objects,"(10). Because Stein was a lesbian who lived with her lover Alice B. Toklas for forty-five years, she was able to create a secret code language in a world where homosexuality was strictly unacceptable that reformed the lines of gender roles. The following quote by Stein reflects her pride in lesbianism and her distaste in the Victorian standards for women, "It is one of the peculiarities of American womanhood that the body of a coquette often encloses the soul of a prude and the angular form of a spinster is possessed by a nature of tropics"(Kent19). Through the use of puns and word games in Tender Buttons, Stein was able to illustrate this fact that the spinster is not a dried up prude but that she can be a sensual creature.

Gertrude Stein felt that in order to be successful at the turn of the century she needed to take on the role of a man instead of the traditional role of a domestic housewife. In Stein’s relationship with Alice, she took on the role of the man while Alice took on the role of the woman who cooks and cleans and keeps the house in order. Kathryn Kent views Stein’s words in Tender Buttons as the echoes of a housewife, or even as Alice herself who published her own compilation of a cookbook, memoir, and domestic advice manuel titled The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook (1954) (140). After Stein’s brother left their apartment in Paris, Alice came in to take his place. Many believe that Tender Buttons is a celebration of the replacement of Leo by Alice who would become Stein’s lifelong companion and lover. This can be reflected in the line, “The sister was not a mister. Was this a surprise? It was”(Stein, Tender 65). In order to illustrate
more clearly the roles that both Alice and Stein played, Diane Souhami recounts the media
description of the couple in her biography of Stein and Toklas:

Gertrude’s hat was called a jockey’s cap, a deerstalker’s cap, tweedy and
mannish, with a visor in front and an upcurl at the back....She was reported to be
wearing big men’s shoes, her stockings were thick and woolly, she had a masculine haircut
and sturdy legs, she was stocky, she was plump...she was a hearty irreverent old lady, a
literary eccentric, a grand old expatriate and she was altogether charming.

Alice was described as the Girl Friday, enigmatic bodyguard, typist and constant
companion. She was wearing a Cossack hat and black fur coat. She was tiny, thin,
mouse like, nervous, dark and small. She was Gertrude’s queer, birdlike shadow and
twittered when persuaded to speak at all. (Kent150)

By taking everyday household items such as a cushion and placing them in new roles, Stein’s
prose symbolizes the demolition of the old separate spheres of the Victorian era. The word play
and puns that Stein used mix the private with the public life and in doing so, “the poem
thoroughly queers domesticity and in so doing it remakes the nineteenth-century ‘romantic
friendship’ between bourgeois women into a playful, sexual intimacy, a perfectly unprecedented
arrangement between old ladies”(141). Another reason for this shift from private to public was
the industrial revolution. The emergence of mass produced products and more importantly the
department store, made it less necessary for the housewife to spend all of her day at home and
tending to chores. This is also a reason for the reorganization of sexuality (particularly in
women) because they were shifting from a more private sphere to a more public one and
therefore were able to create stronger friendships with women which sometimes resulted in an
unconventional romantic liaison. Even though women were moving into the public sphere,
unconventional sexual preferences were still largely unacceptable and condemned. For this
reason, Stein wrote *Tender Buttons* under the veil of difficulty in order to conceal her hidden agenda of celebrating lesbian eroticism.

The section entitled GLAZED GLITTER is a pun on social and political change. This section refers to both a collection of glittery coins and the inevitable change that society is facing in both the public and private realms. On a more personal level, change refers to Alice taking the place of Leo in her home and as her constant companion. The line, “Certainly glittering is handsome and convincing” can also read as “change is good!”(Stein, *Tender* 9). There are also several sexual and erotic references throughout *Tender Buttons* which are comically veiled by simple household items and a difficult mask. In the same section mentioned above, the line that reads “It was chosen yesterday, that showed spitting and perhaps washing and polishing” invokes the image of oral sex and of a housewife keeping things shiny and clean, or in terms of lesbianism, maintaining a lover through oral pleasure(9). Even the titles of some sections such as “A MOUNTED UMBRELLA” (20) or “A FRIGHTFUL RELEASE” eroticize the poem by alluding to sex and orgasms(19). In the section titled “THE SELTZER BOTTLE,” Stein sexualizes the bottle by giving it many other uses besides the tradition container of fluids(16). Kathryn Kent analyzes the line which informs us that “the use of this is manifold”(16) by stating that “the ‘man’ within ‘manifold’ hints that a (female) lover could be a ‘man’ through its use. By borrowing markers of heterosexual union, such as ‘husband,’ ‘wife,’ and ‘wedding,’ the poem ‘uses’ these identities to parody their claims to naturalness, forming a complex erotic code”(157).

The following text titled “IN BETWEEN” deconstructs the idealized image of the Victorian woman:

In between a place and candy is a narrow footpath that shows more mounting than anything, so much really that a calling meaning a bolster measured a whole thing with that. A virgin a whole virgin is judged made and so between curves and outlines and real
seasons and more out glasses and a perfectly unprecedented arrangement between old ladies and mild colds there is no satin wood shining. (Stein, *Tender Buttons*)

In this poem, Stein remapped the female body from a vessel for strictly reproductive use into a receptacle for passion and pleasure. The words “place” and “candy” refer to the anus and clitoris while the place in between refers to the vagina. By using the word “candy” and “place” it is difficult to discern which one of these areas is most preferred. The meaning behind Stein’s poem is highly erotic and controversial. She truly took on the role of a man in this piece because before her, only male authors of erotica such as Defoe addressed this type of content. Furthermore, Stein provoked social change by redirecting the view of the spinster as dull and infertile into someone who oozes with sexuality and sensuality. Kathryn Kent gives a powerful analysis of Stein’s poem when she proclaims, “Stein rewrites the nineteenth-century stereotype of the sterile spinster into an empowering lesbian identity, and she makes her relationship with Alice B. Toklas into a model of a new kind of domestic (re)productivity” (165). *Tender Buttons* was monumental in provoking change in the roles that women were placed into by the rules of society. She was both shameless and witty in her pursuit of creating a celebratory attitude towards lesbian cohabitation by exploiting the use of puns in the creation of a highly satirical poem.

The Mother of the “Lost Generation”

In 1933 Stein published a modernized style of her own autobiography by posing under the voice of her lifelong companion, Alice B. Toklas. *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* chronicles Stein’s rise from an ambitious young American girl to one of the most influential woman authors during the early 20th century. In this narrative, Stein poses under the conversational style of her lover in order to write about her life and the important people in it who were among the staples of the new era of modern art. The narrative style of this work is
highly objective and repetitive with long descriptive passages, no dialogue, and a great use of the
stream of consciousness technique. Just like **Tender Buttons** and **Three Lives**, **Autobiography** is
veiled with the modern sense of simplicity in order to conceal the true meaning underneath from
objecting critics. In this case, Stein was celebrating her influential contribution in the beginning of
modern literature as well as her status as an important member of the modern arts social sphere.
Not only is this narrative an important historical witness of the rise of modern American
literature, but it also examines the roles of women and the effects of WWI.

As has been mentioned before, Stein took on the role of a man in order to be successful in
the field of literature at the turn of the century while her lover, Toklas, took on the role of the
loyal housewife. At the beginning of the story, Toklas states, “I have had no liking for violence
and have always enjoyed the pleasures of needlework and gardening. I am fond of paintings,
furniture, tapestry, houses and flowers and even vegetables and fruit trees”(3-4). Stein and
Toklas hosted salons at 27 rue de Fleurus in Paris where many influential modern artists such as
Matisse, Picasso, and Hemingway came to look at Stein’s collection of artwork and discuss art
and politics. During these Saturday salons, Toklas takes on the role of the wife by entertaining
all the women while Stein sits and entertains the men. “Toklas” recollects that she has met three
geniuses, she remembers, “The three geniuses of whom I wish to speak are Gertrude Stein, Pablo
Picasso, and Alfred Whitehead”(5). On the wives of geniuses whose job it was for her to
entertain, “Toklas” recalls:

Before I decided to write this book, my twenty-five years with Gertrude Stein, I had
often said that I would write, The wives of geniuses I have sat with. I have sat with so
many. I have sat with wives who were not wives, of geniuses who were real geniuses. I
have sat with real wives of geniuses who were not real geniuses. I have sat with wives of
geniuses, of near geniuses, of would be geniuses, in short I have sat very often and very
long with many wives and wives of many geniuses. (14)

All throughout *Autobiography*, Stein speaks out under the guise of Toklas’s voice to express her opinion on different types of women and the roles that they play. For instance, when describing Helene, their maidservant at 27 rue de Fleurus, she is described as being an exceptional maid with a strong mind and will. It is written with regret when “Helene was leaving 27 rue de Fleurus because, her husband having recently been promoted to be foreman in his work shop he insisted that she must not work out any longer but must stay at home” (142). It is noted later that Helene regrets leaving and had a much more wonderful time while staying with Stein and Toklas. This echoes the theme in *Three Lives* of women always being happier out of wedlock and with other women. It is easy to see the type of woman that Stein considered herself to be and those of whom she held little to no respect for. Picasso’s mistress, Fernande, is described as having “two subjects hats and perfumes” (14). Toklas recalls that “The conversation around the tea table of Fernande was not lively, nobody had anything to say” (25). Stein does not find interest in petty women who only like to talk of material things. She finds them quite boring. When describing the wife of Carl Van Vechten as she attempts to cry her heart out to Stein about all her marriage problems, “Toklas” recalls that “Gertrude Stein was not particularly interested” (135). In performing more as a man then of a woman, Stein was not interested in the typical type of conversation that women have. She was interested in intellectual endeavors, politics, religion, and science. Therefore, it was the job of Toklas, her wife, to entertain these boring women. When visiting the homes of both the publisher John Lane and the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, Stein did not stay inside to converse with the wives of these men but instead, she went on long walks with the men to discuss important intellectual pursuits.

Stein’s home at 27 rue de Fleurus became a famous place for young and talented American writers to come and experience art as well as the highly regarded Miss Stein herself. Among
these American writers was the young Ernest Hemingway. These young modernist writers listened and learned from Stein in a world that was drastically changed after the great World War I. It is mentioned in *Autobiography* that Gertrude Stein and Sherwood Anderson were the mentors of young Ernest Hemingway. Stein taught Hemingway, who was a newspaper editor at the time, that "Observation and construction make imagination, that is granting the possession of imagination" (74). Once, when Hemingway wrote in one of his stories that Gertrude Stein always knew what was good in Cezanne, she looked at him and said, "Hemingway, remarks are not literature" (76-77). So as the story goes, Hemingway "sat in front of Gertrude Stein and listened and looked" (212). Stein was like a literary mother to young expatriates who fled to Paris after the war whom she called the "lost generation." By studying the novels of the modernist author, Ernest Hemingway, one notices the influence that Stein had on his view of gender roles.

Ernest Hemingway was in his early 20's when he first met Gertrude Stein in Paris and started working for a newspaper. His start in journalism laid the foundation for his sharp and bare-bone narrative style. Most of the conflict that underlies Hemingway's fiction is the problem of emasculation, responsibility, and women. By studying the characters in his stories, it is clear that Hemingway had insecurities in his manhood and perhaps felt threatened by the Woman’s Suffrage Movement. This is not to say that he was sexist, for there does seem to be a sense of worship towards women in some of his characters; however, he beautifully illustrated the reluctance of men to give woman an equal standing and sometimes this was at the cost of a man’s dignity.

*In Our Time* is the first book that Hemingway published which was actually a compilation of several short stories. In these stories, Hemingway focused on his conception of masculinity and femininity and the threat of the latter on the former. Most of Hemingway’s male characters such as Nick Adams and his friend George pride themselves on being true males.
This includes hunting, fishing, drinking heavily, and being able to perform well sexually.

Although the men in these stories pride themselves on being manly wanderers who do not need a woman to control them, their true fear is that they will lose themselves in women, women whom they can’t seem to live without. In the story titled “Mr. and Mrs. Elliot”, a couple is faced with sex problems due to the fact that the husband is a prude (which makes him non masculine) and the wife is actually a lesbian. Mr. Elliot is celibate until marriage. He is “twenty-five years old and had never gone to bed with a woman until he marries Mrs. Elliot” because “he had led a clean life,” and “he wanted to keep himself pure so that he could bring to his wife the same purity of mind and body that he expected of her” (Hemingway, In161). On the other hand, Mrs. Elliot is forty years old and finds heterosexual sex repulsive (“They tried as often as Mrs. Elliot could stand it”), and she only becomes happy when her girlfriend comes to live with them. “Mrs. Elliot became much brighter after her girl friend came and they had many good cries together...Mrs. Elliot and the girl friend now slept together in the big medieval bed” (163-64).

This story is quite comical because it is satirizes the man who looks down upon sexually active men and chooses to be celibate until marriage (a highly emasculating choice) who in the end is punished for his feminate nature by marrying a lesbian. This story also echoes themes from Stein’s Three Lives, for the woman only finds happiness with another woman. Comley and Scholes view “Mr. and Mrs. Elliot” to be inspired by T.S. Eliot’s Wasteland in that “it is meant to invoke a puritan wasteland of impotence and sterility in which lesbian sexuality flourishes” (81). The fact that Mr. and Mrs. Elliot try very hard to get pregnant with absolutely no success nor pleasure derived from the process satirizes the traditional view of society that sex is primarily for procreation. Comley and Scholes feel that “the object of the satire is not the Elliots as individuals but the culture that has made procreation the sole legitimate object of sexual activity, transforming erotic play into alienated labor” (82). Stein took on the same modernist
style of writing which did not focus on the people themselves but on their behaviors and the
social and political stigmas that caused them. Published in 1925, this story allows Hemingway to
speak out to the lost generation of the roaring 20’s by showing them through these characters
that sex without pleasure is ridiculous and outdated.

In, “Cat in the Rain” is about a young woman who does not receive the attention she
desires from her husband and therefore feels neglected and unwomanly. Hemingway’s female
characters embody many different aspects of women; however, they never embody a well-
rounded woman who is neither dependent nor condescending towards her husband. This should
not be seen as a criticism of the woman but rather as a focus on the lost generation of men who
are confused as to what they want and look for in a mate. It is interesting that the husband and
wife in this story are not given names but are simply called an American couple. The husband
desires that the wife keep her hair “clipped close like a boy’s” and does not respond to his wife’s
maternal instincts for wanting to rescue a kitten that is out in the rain(91). It can be speculated
that this woman is pregnant because “something felt very small and tight inside” her(93). These
characters resemble the American husband who likes a liberated wife and a wife who still wants
to feel like a woman by growing her hair long and bearing a child. The wife likes to feel
important, like a little girl, and enjoys the gentle and fatherly way that she is treated by the hotel
keeper. This shows that women do not always want to be manly and independent but would
like some gentle affection as well.

While it may be a stretch to claim that the husband in “Cat in the Rain” has an aversion to
fatherhood, “Cross Country Snow” is about a man who feels repressed and controlled by his
girlfriend’s accidental pregnancy. Nick and his friend George go on a ski trip together and, with
an air of immaturity and irresponsibility, they talk of bumming it together and of their desire to
not have to settle down. The following dialogue between Nick and George demonstrates their
unwillingness to take responsibility and eagerness to blame the woman:

"Is Helen going to have a baby?" George said, coming down to the table from the wall.
"Yes."
"When?"
"Late next summer."
"Are you glad?"
"Yes. Now."
"Will you go back to the States?"
"I guess so."
"Do you want to?"
"No."(111)

Comley and Scholes feel that "the force of temporality is encoded in a pregnancy that will end the iterative joys of youth"(18). Nick Adams, the man who is being "controlled" by Helen in "Cross Country Snow," expresses the same fear of commitment towards his girlfriend, Marjorie, in "End of Something." Even though Marjorie and Nick are very much alike in that they like to hunt and fish together, Nick still gets cold feet and suddenly leaves Marjorie due to his fear of commitment. This fear of commitment may be due to the fact that Marjorie has too many androgynous traits that threaten to emasculate Nick. Nick bitterly says to Marjorie, "You know everything...It isn’t fun anymore"(Hemingway, In34). These stories seem to confirm D.H. Lawrence’s theory that Hemingway’s men have a fear of "getting connected up"(20). However, in The Three Day Blow, Nick reflects to himself, "All he knew was that he had once had Marjorie and that he had lost her. She was gone and he had sent her away"(47). Leslie Fielder claims that:

Hemingway is only really comfortable in dealing with "men without women." The relations of father to son, of battle-companions, friends on a fishing trip, fellow inmates
in a hospital, a couple of waiters preparing to close up shop, a bullfighter and his
manager...yet he feels an obligation to introduce women into his more ambitious fictions,
though he does not know what to do with them beyond taking them to bed. (13)

Perhaps the woman most negatively characterized in Hemingway’s short stories is the mother of
Nick, Mrs. Adams, whom critics such as Roger Whitlow claim is based on Hemingway’s own
mother(96). Mrs. Adams is an old-fashioned, patronizingly self-righteous woman who
emasculates her husband, Dr. Adams, by treating him in a condescending nature.

In “The Doctor and The Doctor’s Wife” Dr. Adams is emasculated twice: first by his
friend Dick Boulton and then by his wife. When Dick comes over to help Dr. Adams cut up
some logs that drifted to the shore, he insults the doctor by saying, “Well Doc, that’s a nice lot of
timber you’ve stolen”(Hemingway, In24). Dr. Adams then retaliates by saying, “If you call me
Doc once again, I’ll knock your eye teeth down your throat.” Dick condescendingly replies,
“Oh, no, you won’t, Doc”(25). This comment is emasculating because it implies that the “Doc”
isn’t man enough to fight for what he believes in and that he is of a weak nature. Dr. Adams
angrily storms home to his pious wife who shuts herself up in their cottage. Due to her self-
righteous nature, Mrs. Adams does not support her husband after his bout with Boulton. After
explaining what had come to pass, and suggesting that Dick Boulton wanted to fight so that he
didn’t have to repay a debt to Mr. Adams in the way of labor, Mrs. Adams treats him like a child
by replying, “No. I can’t really believe that any one would do a thing of that sort
intentionally”(26). Instead of standing up for himself, Dr. Adams exudes his cowardly nature for
a second time by simply walking back out of the cottage. Leon Linderoth views Mrs. Adams
(along with other Hemingway women) as a “pure bitch.” “They are treated entirely
unsympathetically by [Hemingway]. He can find no saving grace about them. These women
seem to be total corrupters of the men with whom they associate. [They] work constantly to
unman their husbands in subtle ways...[and they] are alike in their unmitigated bitchery” (28). A more accurate interpretation of Mrs. Adams is that of an old fashioned woman from the Victorian era who cannot form an egalitarian relationship with her husband. Both men and women are affected negatively from non-egalitarian relationships and Hemingway turns the tables on the Women’s Suffrage Movement by demonstrating that men long for equality as well as women. Leslie Fiedler puts it nicely by saying that Dr. Adams is caught in “the trap created by a culture animated by the decadent remains of Puritanism wherein patriarchy had given way to matriarchy”(32). If we view Mrs. Adams as a character who Hemingway’s mother, and Nick as Hemingway himself, it might be assumed that Hemingway created male characters who have a fear of settling down because they are afraid of being emasculated. This can also be seen as Hemingway’s way of showing society that gender roles must change and maintain balance in order for happy relationships to flourish. Mimi Gladstein claims that Mrs. Adams is “illustrative of Philip Wylie’s concept of ‘momism,’ a theory that saw the American female as emasculating, not allowing her male child to reach maturity”(52). Why does it seem that Hemingway has such a complicated attitude towards women? In the beginning of the 20th century, gender roles were beginning to change. Being raised by a Puritan mother, and entering a world where women were gaining more freedom, Hemingway explored the behavior of men and women through his stories in order to question himself and the public as to what constitutes ideal human behavior.

One of Hemingway’s most popular short stories that was not included in In Our Time, is “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber.” This is the story about a young American couple who go on a hunting safari in Africa, and we discover that the husband is a coward and that the wife is restless. In Hemingway’s stories, the “true men” are those who exude confidence in themselves and their sexuality and like to do many past time activities such as hunting, fishing,
or any other activity that involves “hanging with the guys.” As we have seen in the short stories of *In Our Time*, Hemingway is obsessed with what constitutes the “true man” and the type of women who are associated with them. In Macomber, the husband, Francis Macomber, reveals to his wife that he is a coward after backing out of a lion hunt on an African safari. Robert Wilson, the hunting guide, represents one of Hemingway’s classic heroes who exudes bravery, shows little to no moral inhibitions, and always wins the girl while at the same time he finds no real need for them. Francis’s wife, Margot, is an “extremely handsome and well-kept woman of the beauty and social position” who finds herself disappointed upon discovering that her husbands lack of manliness(Hemingway, *The Complete* 5-6). According to Roger Whitlow, Margot Macomber is “not only the most critically maligned female character since Lady Macbeth but also the most serious victim of inaccurate ‘party-line’ criticism in all of Hemingway”(59). Many critics interpret Margot to be a heartless and insensitive wife who murders her husband after he exudes a tiny bit of self confidence. Robert Wilson symbolizes the ideal male character who does not need a woman and thrives on traditional masculine past-time sports. Wilson does not hold women in esteem and when Margot gets upset with Francis for being a coward, Wilson proclaims, “women upset, amounts to nothing. Strain on the nerves and one thing’n another”(7). Wilson’s comment shows that he does not respect women or their actions. He holds the traditional view that women can be petty and that their emotional outbursts should be ignored. Wilson also does not respect Francis because he cannot perform well in manly activities and because his wife makes him a cuckold. Francis “had a pleasant smile if you did not notice how his eyes showed when he was hurt”(8). Not only is Francis a coward, but he allows his wife to emasculate him with criticism and severe disappointment.

Robert Wilson plays the role of the voice of reason, or rather, the voice of Hemingway. He criticizes women as evil man-killers when he says, “They are the hardest in the world; the
hardest, the cruelest, the most predatory and the most attractive and their men have softened or
gone to pieces nervously as they have hardened. Or is it that they pick men they can
handle?”(9). Wilson’s words describe the problem with gender roles during the roaring twenties.
Although women were gaining some personal freedom, some men felt that their masculinity was
being threatened and believed in the Victorian virgin whore dichotomy for women. While on a
hunting safari for a dangerous and intimidating lion, Francis backs out of the hunt by saying to
Wilson, “I’d like to, I’m just scared, you know”(15). In fact, Wilson knows very well what
Francis means. In regards to American men, Wilson claims, “it’s that some of them stay little
boys so long. Sometimes all their lives. Their figures stay boyish when they’re fifty. The great
most American men are cowardly and that is why he is paid so much. He is paid to help these
weak American “boy-men” to feel more masculine. Wilson even keeps a double cot in his tent as
though he is prepared for the man to act as a coward and for the wife to turn to him for his “true
manliness.” After Margot discovers that her husband is a coward, she sleeps with Wilson in a fit
of spite and lust. After the hunting incident, Margot feels like her needs are not being met as a
woman. She wants a strong man, therefore she resorts to the overly sexed hunting guide. When
Francis discovers that his wife has slept with another man, the following conversation between
them demonstrates Francis’s weakness and emasculation by his wife:

“Where have you been?” Macomber asked in the darkness.

“Hello,” she said. “Are you awake?”

“Where have you been?”

“I just went out to get a breath of air.”

“You did, like hell.”

“What do you want me to say darling?”
"Where have you been?"

"Out to get a breath of air."

"That's a new name for it. You are a bitch."

"Well, you're a coward."

"All right," he said. "What of it?"

"Nothing as far as I'm concerned. But please let's not talk, darling, because I'm very sleepy."

"You think that I'll take anything."

"I know you will, sweet."

"Well, I won't."

"Please, darling, let's not talk. I'm so very sleepy."

"There wasn't going to be any of that. You promised there wouldn't be."

"Well, there is now," she said sweetly. (18-19)

Wilson despises Margot for being a bitchy woman and Francis for being a coward. Although he could care less for Margot, he defends her by saying to himself, "How should a woman act when she discovers her husband is a bloody coward? She's damn cruel but they're all cruel. They govern, of course, and to govern one has to be cruel sometimes. Still, I've seen enough of their damn terrorism" (10). Wilson's criticism of Margot should be read as the voice of Hemingway. Because he grew up with a controlling and emasculating mother, Hemingway despised women who disrespected their husbands. This criticism of male and female character types can be viewed as Hemingway's observation of the changes in gender roles after the war and of America's behavior in dealing with these changes. Women did not get the right to vote until 1920 (shortly before this was written) and Hemingway's characters illustrate the lost generation's struggle in dealing with these social changes. The men in his stories feel both threatened and intrigued by
powerful women. The story abruptly ends when Margot kills her husband in the end. Shortly before this accident, Francis was becoming more brave and this seemed to threaten Margot. Wilson takes Francis on a buffalo hunt from the car which gives Francis the illusion of safety. Shortly after this successful hunt and Francis's newfound courage, they attempt to kill the "scary" buffalo and Margot kills her husband in an attempt to help him when he paralyzes in fear. Wilson turns to Margot and coldly says, "That was a pretty thing to do, he would have left you too" (28). Although many critics agree with Wilson and view Margot as a murderer, it is never made certain as to whether she meant to kill Francis. The reader is left to determine this for his or herself; however, if you choose to view Margot as a man-killer, the murder can symbolize women's attempt of gaining freedom from their husbands. Margot was free and could do whatever she wanted when she thought her husband was a coward. Wilson even suggests that women marry weak men so that they can maintain a sense of control. Therefore, Margot kills Francis when he becomes brave so that she will not have to fall under his control. "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" epitomizes the war of the sexes that has come about since women's suffrage and World War I. Men and women both want control and freedom but it is difficult for the man to give his wife any freedom without feeling emasculated and at the same time the woman doesn't feel like a complete woman with a husband who is not manly. The question that Hemingway addressed in this story is whether women even need "true" men in order to be happy because they just take away from their freedom.

Hemingway offers a more complete depiction of gender roles of the lost generation in his most popular novel, The Sun Also Rises, which was published in 1926. This novel is set in Paris and Spain and it epitomizes the issues faced by the "Lost Generation" of expatriates who flocked to Europe in order to be more financially comfortable because of favorable exchange rates. The novel is about a group of friends, one woman and four men, who each symbolize the massive
changes that America faced after the devastation of the Great War. Because there is no real resolve or conclusion in *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway accomplished a complete recognition of the confusion of society in the early twentieth century. Sibbie O'Sullivan describes this story as “a modern-day courtesy book on how to behave in the wasteland Europe had become after the Great War”(17). Due to Hemingway's previous training as a writer for newspapers, his narrative style in *The Sun Also Rises* is short, choppy, and in a “dead pan” voice. Like we have seen in Hemingway's short stories, this novel takes on the modern style of irony and interjected complex sentences without being didactic. Hemingway may have been inspired to write in this new modern style by Gertrude Stein, whom he admired and looked up to. The main themes of early twentieth century modern literature were life abroad, post-WWI confusion, the ideal of travel, and alcoholism. Hemingway managed to capture all of these themes in perhaps the most historically accurate way. After the devastation of WWI, all of the traditional views on love, life, religion, and family had been uprooted and young Americans, like those in *The Sun Also Rises*, strove to establish new moral codes and ideals. This was the “Lost Generation.” Michael S. Reynolds explains that the end of the war signaled a change in the traditional values, that “home, family, church, and country no longer gave the moral support that Hemingway’s generation grew up with. The old values--honor, duty, love--no longer rang...true”(78). Hemingway used the characters Lady Brett Ashley, Jake Barnes, and Robert Cohn to demonstrate the loss of romance and chivalry and a generation’s attempt to cope with this loss.

The novel begins by introducing Robert Cohn, a Jewish American who still believes in the old ways of romance, who is emasculated by overpowering women, and who uses violence to overcome his lack of confidence and masculinity. Cohn represents the loss of traditional love and romance after the war. He also represents every character trait that is anti-“true man.” Cohn is a man who takes up boxing in college because the criticism of his classmates made him feel
emasculated. In order to gain back his masculinity, Cohn becomes a boxer, a rather good one at that. However, despite the fact that he takes on a rather masculine sport, Cohn is the type of pseudo-man who does things not because he wants to but because he feels it is what he is supposed to do. In the first paragraph of the novel, Hemingway states that, “He (Cohn) cared nothing for boxing, in fact he disliked it, but he learned it painfully and thoroughly to counteract the feeling of inferiority and shyness he had felt on being treated as a Jew at Princeton”(11). Hemingway makes sure to let the reader know that he is “not impressed” by this title(12). According to Hemingway’s code, a man does not do things because he is supposed to, instead, he does them because his manliness compels him to naturally do them. Another way that Cohn breaks the code of a “true man” is that he only gets involved with women who control him. “He was a nice boy, a friendly boy, and very shy, and it made him bitter. He took it out in boxing, and he came out of Princeton with painful self-consciousness and the flattened nose, and was married by the first girl who was nice to him”(12). Cohn’s wife eventually leaves him for another man and then he is said to “had been taken in hand by a lady...She was very forceful, and Cohn never had a chance of not being taken in hand”(13). Through his relationships with these controlling women who clearly choose him because they know he won’t leave or control them, Cohn is shown as being weak and therefore he is emasculated. Being the old-fashioned romantic of the story, Cohn feels that traveling to new places will change him and better his life. Upon his announcement that he will be traveling to South America, Barnes speaks the voice of reason and the loss of romance in the 20th century by saying, “You can’t get away from yourself by moving from one place to another. There’s nothing to that”(19). Other ways that Cohn disobeys the code of manliness is when he does not stand up for himself against Barnes, when he gives up a fishing trip with the guys in order to wait for a woman who does not want him, and when he passes out while the rest of the gang is getting drunk. This type of man cannot survive in post
WWI America. Cohn is a demonstration of what type of man not to be in the new century; this is further proved later on by the way he acts toward the beautiful and unobtainable, Brett Ashley.

Jake Barnes is the narrator of this story and most likely the voice of Hemingway. He is a young expatriate who is living in Paris and was made impotent by an accident in the war. This is the only personal fact that the reader gets about Jake Barnes. He does not talk about himself and instead discusses the people around him. Jake resembles every aspect of the “true man” except for his impotency. Due to his impotency, Jake is described by Roger Whitlow as a “psychological cripple”(14). He is unable to achieve the highest level of love and pleasure and therefore has numbed himself by dealing with the careful calculations of every day life. Throughout the novel Jake makes a careful record of all the he spends as well as his idea of what is socially acceptable behavior. Jake’s philosophy on money reflects the new morals of consumerism in a world disillusioned by war when he says, “you paid some way for everything that was any good. I paid my way into enough things that I liked, so that I had a good time. Either you paid by learning about them, or by experience, or by taking chances, or by money. Enjoying living was learning to get your money’s worth and knowing when you had it”(77). However much Jake wants to ignore his impotence and place all value in life on money, we find a double meaning for his words when he talks about his friendship with Brett:

Women made such swell friends. Awfully swell. In the first place, you had to be in love with a woman to have a basis of friendship. I had been having Brett for a friend. I had not been thinking about her side of it. I had been getting something for nothing. That only delayed the presentation of the bill. The bill always came. That was one of the swell things you could count on. (152)

In this case, the “bill” can mean two things: either an actual bill that Jake paid while taking his
“friend” out, or more importantly, the bill of heartbreak at knowing that at the end of the night he will never be able to actually be with Brett. Leslie Fiedler describes the character of Jake as “Hemingway romanticizing his own position, mourning his own middle age, and sentimentalizing his continued desperate concern for virility”(73). Like Jake, Hemingway was also impotent and feeling difficulties in dealing with this type of emasculation. Because Jake is unable to perform accurately as a man, he uses other avenues to make up for this like participating in activities that are characteristic to men. These include fishing and going to bullfights. One of the main reasons why Jake enjoys bullfights is because the sport is so raw and non-feminine; he claims that “nobody ever lives their life all the way up except for bullfighters”(18). Jake symbolizes the loss of traditional values after the war and because of this loss, Jake deals by revolving his life around calculating his expenditures and participating in manly activities. Sibbie O’Sullivan describes these classic scenes in Hemingway’s stories where the men travel without women as “pastoral interludes, in which his male characters seek relief from social tensions”(80). The main social tension of all are the powerful women in his stories like Lady Brett Ashley. At the beginning of the novel, when Brett is first introduced, Jake encounters a group of flamboyant homosexuals and is thoroughly put off by them. Jake is not disgusted by these men because of their sexual orientation, but because he is jealous and angry that they can choose not to have sex with women while Jake has no choice but to not have sex due to his castration in the war. Upon seeing these men enter the bar with Brett he says, “somehow they made me angry. I know they are supposed to be amusing, and you should be tolerant, but I wanted to swing on one, any one, anything to shatter that superior, simpering composure”(28). Even though Jake dislikes the homosexuals, the way he describes them as being superior is a new way of looking at deviant character types. Not all men are secure in their masculinity and therefore feel humiliated because of it; but the homosexual chooses to be feminine and is proud of it.
Lady Brett Ashley also embodies the more liberal views in society after the war. She embodies a new liberated woman who wears her hair short and exults her power over men. All throughout the story, Brett is never seen talking with other women. She acts more like a man than a woman but she uses her power of womanhood to control men. If Jake Barnes typifies the "Lost Man" of post-war America, then Brett Ashley symbolizes the "Lost Woman." Brett loses her husband who gave her the title "Lady" in the Great War and therefore she represents the new women after the war, the women without men. First of all, Lady Brett Ashley's power is of the utmost importance. Every man in this novel describes her beauty as superbly wonderful and out of this world. When Jake first introduces Brett, he says, "Brett was damned good-looking. She wore a slipover jersey sweater and a tweed skirt, and her hair was brushed back like a boy's. She started all that. She was built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht, and you missed none of it with that wool jersey"(22). According to this description, Brett "started" the new feminist style of short hair and simple, less feminine clothing. Brett is admired by men and women alike which sets a great example for the new "lost generation" of the 1920's. Robert Cohn falls foolishly in love with Brett's beauty at first sight and says, "She's a remarkably attractive woman"(38). Further on in the story, Cohn is humiliated and emasculated by Brett when he follows her around like a "steer" and she will have nothing to do with him. Cohn is eventually ousted from the group when he refuses to give up on his old-fashioned romantic ideas of love and beats up Romero, Brett's new love interest. Because of the way that Brett uses and throws away men, some critics have claimed that she is devoid of womanhood. Leslie Fiedler says that Brett is "a female who never becomes a woman"(4). However, these accusations are misleading and untrue. Brett simply represents the new feminist woman who has proudly discarded the old feminine ways and has taken on the role of a powerful and independent woman. Every male character in this novel finds Brett Attractive; Bill Gorton says that she is a "Beautiful lady"(74)
and later on he says, "She's damned nice"(76). And later one, Mike Campbell says, "Brett, you are a lovely piece. Don't you think she's beautiful?"(79). Although Brett still displays some signs of being dependent on men when she calls on Jake for support and help, she definitely represents the transition of women in America from the repressed homemaker to the independent and powerful equals to men. Although she is not a completely sexually liberated and freethinking woman, she is seen by Michael Reynolds as "on the leading edge of sexual revolution that produced two types of the 'new woman': the educated professional woman who was active in formerly all male areas and the stylish, uninhibited young woman who drank and smoked [and] devalued sexual innocence...."(57). Although these two descriptions of women are still narrow and somewhat sexist, we can definitely see that Brett holds a combination of these traits and is striving to survive in post-WWI society. Kumar puts it best when he states that the novel "paves the way for complete androgynous relationships through an acceptance and absorption of the new values as well as the new female ideal"(104). Times had changed, chivalry had died, and Americans were striving to find out how to live in this wasteland of America. At the end of the novel when Brett reminisces on how wonderful their life could have been together, had Jake not had his accident, Jake sarcastically responds with, "Isn't it pretty to think so"(251). This famous line of *The Sun Also Rises* symbolizes the end of the old days of romance and the beginning of the modern world, based on reality. A reality that includes impotent men, homosexuals, and independent women.

Although there have been many changes in society since the time of Stein and Hemingway, these two modernist writers marked an important shift in the gender roles of American society. Due to the important historical events such as Women's Suffrage and WWI, the old Victorian moral codes were thrown out and new moral codes were put in their place. The "Lost Generation" of America that included such important literary geniuses as Stein and
Hemingway played a large part in this shift from private to public. These modernist writers did not become popular after they died; they were widely read and loved by the generation of that time and therefore mark an important change in society at the beginning of the twentieth century. Stein helped to strip away some of the old ideas that women must always be married and act submissive to men while Hemingway explored the issues that these changes brought about. He objectively looked at the experiences of men and women in the “Lost Generation.” These two writers marked the beginning of a downhill progression of changes in private and public life that brought America to where it is today, a land that is slowly legalizing gay marriage, has a wide variety of safe birth control for women, and allows men and women to switch roles without being so cruelly condemned.
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