

MARTHA GELLHORN AND ERNEST HEMINGWAY:  
A LITERARY RELATIONSHIP

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Martha Gellhorn and Ernest Hemingway met in Key West in 1937, married in 1941, and divorced in 1945. Gellhorn's work exhibits a strong influence from Hemingway's work, including collaboration on her work during their marriage. I will discuss three of her six novels: *WMP* (1934), *Liana* (1944), and *Point of No Return* (1948). The areas of influence that I will rely on in many ways follow the stages Harold Bloom outlines in *Anxiety of Influence*. Gellhorn's work exposes a stage of influence that Bloom does not describe—which I term collaborative. By looking at Hemingway's influence in Gellhorn's writing the difference between traditional literary influence and collaborative influence can be compared and analyzed, revealing the footprints left in a work by a collaborating author as opposed to simply an influential one.

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During her lifetime, Martha Gellhorn published six novels, six books of short stories, a co-authored play, several collections of journalism, and over 140 articles and short stories in magazines and newspapers. Sandra Spanier, in a 2002 article describing the 1995 University of Nebraska reprinting of the play co-authored by Gellhorn and Virginia Cowles, observed that

the time seems ripe for a wider recognition of Martha Gellhorn's achievement. When I wrote to her to this effect in 1990, she responded: "Dear girl, people are always 'rediscovering' me, you'd be amazed. Everybody does it and nothing works; I am never going to be a great saleable property. . . . I always said I was going to wait for posthumous fame and glory, suits me fine." (Spanier 275)

Gellhorn has received some recognition for her work, including the O. Henry Award, awarded in 1958 for her short story "The Smell of Lilies." John Updike included her story, "Miami-New York" in *The Best American Short Stories of the Century*. However, this has been the extent of her critical acclaim. In the five years since her death in 1998, more scholarly writing has begun appearing about her work, including several dissertations, critical biographies, and an article about her portrayal of Jewish identity in her fourth novel, *Point of No Return*. One aspect of her writing that has yet to be explored in critical commentary of her writing is her literary relationship with Ernest Hemingway. This relationship sheds new light on Hemingway's novels and the writers he influenced, and it provides a framework to begin to study Gellhorn's novels.

Gellhorn and Ernest Hemingway met in Key West in 1937, married in 1941, and divorced in 1945. During those eight years together, the two authors worked as literary partners—both on articles for *Colliers* and on each other's manuscripts of books and stories in progress, including Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Gellhorn's *A Stricken Field*, *Heart of Another*, and *Liana*. Gellhorn's work, in the 44 years between the publication of *What Mad Pursuit* (1934), her first novel, and her last collection of stories, *The Weather in Africa* (1978), exhibits a strong influence from Hemingway's work. It reveals his collaboration with her on her work during their marriage.

Gellhorn's work, as I will show below, warrants further study because it exhibits a variety of the types of influence Hemingway and his work had over a maturing author. It also shows how a later author will appropriate another author's work to his or her own ends. In order to show the influence that Hemingway had on Gellhorn's writing, I will discuss three of her six novels in detail: *What Mad Pursuit* (1934) her first novel, written before meeting Hemingway, *Liana* (1944) written during her marriage to Hemingway, and *Point of No Return* (1948), published four years after their divorce. Gellhorn published three other novels: *A Stricken Field* (1940), *His Own Man* (1961), and *The Lowest Trees Have Tops* (1967).

The areas of influence that I will rely on in many ways follow the stages Harold Bloom outlines to describe a poet's relationship with his "literary father" in *Anxiety of Influence*. According to Bloom, "strong poets make [their] history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves" (5). He describes a system of six stages that a poet goes through in relation to an earlier influential poet. In *Hemingway and Women*, a collection of critical articles, Sanderson observes:

Much has been said about the “anxiety of influence” that Harold Bloom says male writers experience toward their male precursors. Claims regarding a woman’s literary tradition of mutual inspiration and collaboration remain a matter of debate. The interaction of male and female authors, however, deserves further attention. Although this study adds to the growing evidence that male modernists [...] feared the competition of female writers, the interactions of male and female modernists were at once more complicated and more productive than that.

(293-94)

The interaction between Gellhorn and Hemingway becomes more complicated than even Sanderson posits, not because the male exhibits fear of the female writer, but because all three books that I will discuss exhibit that tension, or anxiety, from Gellhorn who is trying to model herself after Hemingway and separate her work from his at the same time. She is both inspired by his work and trying to “clear an imaginative space” for herself. After *Point of No Return*, where Hemingway is purged from her as is her memory of World War II after him, that anxiety is lost in her writing—although it is still quite apparent in her personal interviews.

Though Bloom’s work has been indescribably influential in the field of literary criticism, it has also caused substantial conflict. Bloom’s system has been used frequently since its publication in 1973 to describe not only poetic influence but also literary influence. One of the most significant challenges has been that of Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert, addressing a gender difference in the nature of the anxiety by describing the nature of the anxiety to be not of influence but “of authorship—a radical

fear that she cannot create” (49). I seek to enhance Bloom’s claims not because of a difference in gender—Gellhorn’s work definitely fits Bloom’s model much closer than that of Gilbert and Gubar—but because Gellhorn and Hemingway’s literary relationship is unique in the stages of their relationship and influence. Bloom answers Gilbert and Gubar’s challenge himself in the introduction to a volume of women autobiographical writers that includes Gellhorn, “the consequences of making gender a criterion for aesthetic choice must finally destroy all serious study of imaginative literature as such” (*Memoirists* xii). Accordingly, Gellhorn should not be read solely because of her gender but because her writing exposes nuances of the process of literary influence.

Nevertheless, there are necessary adaptations to Bloom’s system. The primary difference, shadowing gender and genre, between Bloom’s system and Hemingway’s influence in Gellhorn’s writing is the fact that Hemingway’s role evolves from that of a figurative literary father to that of a real-life literary *husband*. Hemingway’s influence on Gellhorn was not only literary (as Bloom describes) but also collaborative and personal. Sanderson attempts to describe their relationship appropriating Virginia Wolfe’s denotation of “literary sister” to describe Hemingway’s relationship to Gellhorn, along with Dorothy Parker and Lillian Hellman, claiming “they helped to identify and advertise Hemingway’s message, style, method, and persona” (294). I shall agree that Gellhorn’s contribution to identifying and advertising Hemingway’s style took place not only in her public behavior and writing about Hemingway but in her novels as well, as I will describe in more detail. Gellhorn, though female, takes the Oedipal metaphor to its culmination, in effect marrying the father then subsequently killing him off in her literature.



Sanderson does not address the effect their marriage had on Gellhorn or Hemingway's writing, however, this collaborative element brings Gellhorn's relationship to Hemingway closer to Sanderson's model of "literary sister" than Bloom's "literary father." Kierkegaard claimed that "when two people fall in love and begin to feel that they are made for one another, then it is time for them to break off, for by going on they have everything to lose and nothing to gain" (quoted in *Anxiety* 31). Gellhorn crosses this line, and it is the question of how it affects Hemingway's influence on her work that adds to Bloom's study.

Surprisingly, aside from brief allusions like Sanderson's article, Gellhorn's work has hitherto been unexplored in relation to Hemingway; even more startling considering Hemingway's work at this point seems to have been tackled from every approachable angle, and Gellhorn was the only woman married to him who was also a writer. A recent edition of the *Hemingway Review* includes a previously unpublished play, "Safari" by Jane Mason, who was said to have had a long affair with Hemingway. Several articles published in the same issue seek to enlighten Hemingway's works by relating them to the play, even though there seems to be critical consensus in the articles appearing in the journal of "Safari's" mediocrity. One of the articles states this quite bluntly:

The play has many weaknesses and would, I believe, fail if staged. However, the work is of great interest to Hemingway scholars for what it reveals about a woman who was a vital model for at least two of his most memorable female characters. Perhaps more importantly, "Safari"

provides a portrait of a place that both Hemingway and Mason found inspirational. (Trogon 1)

Instead of exploring possible literary qualities of Mason's work, critics are using the play to offer insight into one of Hemingway's characters: after all Mrs. Macomber in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" was supposed to be based on Mason.

Gellhorn's work too can be used in the same way—to enlighten Hemingway's Maria in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Dorothy in "The Fifth Column," and Cantwell's third wife in *Across The River And Into The Trees* (all allegedly based on Gellhorn). Moreover, the main character in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan, is based on a soldier that Gellhorn wrote about in "Men without Medals"<sup>1</sup> showing Gellhorn's influence on Hemingway's writing as well. However, her work does more than merely offer additional insight into a few fictional characters; it reveals his influence on the many stages of another author's development.

Ernest Hemingway's literary relationships with Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Sherwood Anderson are well documented; however, his influence as a mentor to contemporary writers has just begun to be explored. John Bittner eloquently states in a recent article:

biographers have compiled an extensive inventory of the writers who influenced Hemingway's writing [...] Although such influences are important to understanding the genesis of Hemingway's works and his creative process, Hemingway's impact on other authors, both of his own and of subsequent generations, is equally important, as the tributes paid to Hemingway at the time of his death suggest. (1)

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<sup>1</sup> "Men without Medals." *Colliers* 15 January 1938: 9+.

Of all the authors whose work might be traced to Hemingway's influence, no figure is more enlightening than Gellhorn. The ties between Gellhorn and Hemingway's writing were so close that she struggled for the rest of her life to maintain a presence separate from Hemingway, both biographically and in her writing. Gellhorn claimed, in her 1981 article titled "On Apocryphism," that "[a]ll writers after him, owe Hemingway a debt for their freedom, whether the debt was acknowledged or not" (301). Apparently, her freedom from Hemingway was more important than her debt to him. "My 'career' had started long before I ever met Ernest Hemingway," she asserted. "It should be noted that I never used his name or my association with him, not when I was married to him or ever after" (Brian 144). Gellhorn was frequently allied with influential authors, including H.G. Wells,<sup>2</sup> but her name is most permanently connected with that of Hemingway, and it is that connection that she resisted in interviews and in the books I will evaluate.

Returning to Bloom, there is trouble in assigning his stages to describe the specific characteristics of each novel. David Cowart discovered this as well when analyzing what he termed symbiotic relationships, between novels and novelists:

As will be seen however, literary symbiosis is a largely contemporary phenomenon, heir in some sense to the modernists' propensity for extensive allusion [...] it concerns basic questions of the relation between individual talent and the tradition, questions of influence and the anxiety of influence, questions of intertextuality, and questions of closure. (2)

Cowart finds that many symbiotic characteristics as he described them fit into more than one or two of Bloom's categories at the same time and concludes that "the usefulness of Bloom's categories, then, may lie primarily in their attributes, which detail some of the

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<sup>2</sup> Wells wrote the introduction to her 1938 collection of novellas, *The Trouble I've Seen*.

many ways in which literary symbiosis can occur” (24). I agree, and will use Bloom’s categories loosely to provide a basic framework for the relationships between Gellhorn and Hemingway’s works.

*What Mad Pursuit* is linked to Bloom’s first two stages—*clinamen* and *tessera*—which both address a younger writer’s completing of a precursor’s work. In *What Mad Pursuit*, Gellhorn invokes Hemingway in the epigraph taken from *A Farewell to Arms*: “Nothing ever happens to the brave.” Bloom’s first stage, *clinamen*, describes a young author “swerving” from a precursor’s work, and Gellhorn’s “swerve” occurs in her re-focusing of the gender of Hemingway’s novel. *What Mad Pursuit* is a feminine completion of *The Sun Also Rises*: Gellhorn copies Hemingway’s style and characterization, places female characters as the protagonists, then engages Hemingway’s prevalent themes—impotence, independence, death, and love—in an attempt to complete the story. The female protagonists in *What Mad Pursuit* are “lost” in a different way from those in *The Sun Also Rises*—not necessarily a futile existence but an unequal one, seeking to be treated as equals and experience the same things that the men are experiencing. According to Bloom’s notion of *tessera*, “a poet antithetically ‘completes’ his precursor, by so reading the parent poem as to retain its terms but to mean them in another sense” (*Anxiety* 14). Gellhorn completes Hemingway’s novel by rejecting his idea of a futile lost generation. Indeed, the ‘killing of the father’ is literal—Ian, the character in her book identified as a poet of the Lost Generation, commits suicide.

At the end of Gellhorn's next novel, however, the title character commits suicide at the end of the novel. The killing of the Lost Generation in *What Mad Pursuit* to make

way for hopefulness is distorted to the killing of the title character who cannot manage being left alone. Biographer Carl Rollyson claims the novel “is suffused with feminist questions” (187). I claim it is suffused with the anxiety Gellhorn feels when her precursor is editing her writing. The end of *Liana* is eerily similar to Chopin's *The Awakening*—a woman giving up the struggle for survival by claiming her own life in a world depicted as being under the control of men. The novel shows the least obvious evidence of Hemingway's literary influence and his relationship to the work is only traceable through biographical knowledge of their marriage. The novel depicts a fear of Gellhorn's work being overshadowed by Hemingway. Bloom's third stage, *kenosis*, does describe a poet seeming “to humble himself as though he were ceasing to be a poet,” (15) and partially describes Liana's suicide as Gellhorn ceasing to exist under Hemingway's influence. The second part of *kenosis* states that the “precursor is emptied out also” (15), but Hemingway is not emptied out by *Liana*, hence the stage is interrupted.

In *Point of No Return*, written after her divorce from Hemingway, Gellhorn utilizes repetition in the form of Hemingway's tropes, names, characteristics, words, and phrasing, but turns these tropes around as a rejection of the Hemingway influence, or in an attempt at discontinuity. Gellhorn also returns to *The Sun Also Rises* as a major influential work. *Point of No Return* exhibits elements of Bloom's *daemonization*, which the later poet does by “so stationing its [the later work's] relation to the parent-poem as to generalize away the uniqueness of the earlier work” (15). At this point in her career Gellhorn has already exhibited frustration with critics comparing her work to Hemingway's and by parodying him, hopes to separate herself further.

As I will discuss in more detail below, Hemingway used the same technique for separation from a literary precursor, seeking to separate himself from Sherwood Anderson's influence when he wrote *Torrents of Spring* as a parody of Anderson's *Dark Laughter*. I claim Gellhorn writes *Point of No Return* to relieve her writing of the memory of Hemingway. She herself considered the book to have a purging function, a description similar to Bloom's stage of *askesis*, "a movement of self-purgation which intends the attainment of a state of solitude" (15). Gellhorn claimed to have written it about Dachau in *Point of No Return* to get rid of the memory of the concentration camp. She wrote, "I wanted him [the protagonist, Jacob Levy] to relieve me of the memory of Dachau [...] If I gave Dachau to Jacob Levy, I would lose it" (*PONR* 328). Incidentally, the character in this novel that commits suicide is again the one who most resembles Hemingway.

Bloom states that the swerve "is necessarily the central working concept of the theory of Poetic Influence, for what divides each poet from his Poetic Father is an instance of creative revisionism" (42). Gellhorn's most distinct revisions occur in her reactions to *The Sun Also Rises*. Her focus in *What Mad Pursuit* and *Point of No Return* (and even *Liana*) is not to change Hemingway's depictions of the Lost Generation and of war but to move past the events and describe their effects. In both *What Mad Pursuit* and *Point of No Return*, Hemingway's novel is re-focused on the difference between men and women's experiences. Both novels parallel their protagonists with characters in *The Sun Also Rises*, and change them to reflect the swerves that Gellhorn needs to separate her writing from her precursor's. The anxiety Gellhorn feels regarding her precursor, Hemingway, is expressed in her need to

address him as an identifiable character in the book—a character who in both novels is murdered before the story has ended.

“Who’s the guy?” “That blot that was in here a little while ago.”

“I thought he was a fairy.”

“No, he thinks he’s a poet.”

“That still doesn’t explain his looks.”

“Ian” Judith sought for and found the necessary explanation, “is one of that deadly group who fought in the war and calls itself ‘The Lost Generation.’”

“That’s nifty,” Charis smiled. “The whole thing’s nifty. It’s like a book; one of those lousy lachrymose books about the people ‘who can’t pick up the pieces, drinking and fornicating in London and Paris. You know the type.’”

(WMP 75-6)

Bloom’s stages seek to explain how a younger author sets himself apart from his precursor or father. With Ian, Gellhorn sets her novel apart from those “lousy and lachrymose books,” most specifically, I claim, from *The Sun Also Rises*. The portrayal of Ian as a part of the Lost Generation is telling and is, incidentally, the most striking link between *What Mad Pursuit* and *The Sun Also Rises* in relation to Bloom’s system of literary influence as a process of rejecting a literary father. The description of the people “who can’t pick up the pieces, drinking and fornicating in London and Paris” is obviously referring to Hemingway and the rest of the Parisian expatriates that Gertrude Stein referred to when she said “you are all a lost generation,” the aphorism that Hemingway immortalized in the epigraph to *The Sun Also Rises*.

Gellhorn’s first book, *What Mad Pursuit*, takes as its epigram a line from Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*: “Nothing ever happens to the brave.” However, the



work itself more closely resembles Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. The first stage of literary influence, *clinamen*, according to Bloom's terms, "always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation" (*Anxiety* 30). Gellhorn's novel "corrects" *The Sun Also Rises* by expressing a frustration with being unable to replicate the lifestyle led by the characters in *The Sun Also Rises*, and then challenges the validity of that lifestyle.

After the publication of *The Sun Also Rises*, many American college students in the late 1920s and early 1930s felt they had to live out the ideals set out as belonging to the Lost Generation in *The Sun Also Rises*: "boys and girls on campus after campus began to talk like Hemingway characters [...] revolting against the standards and conventions of their elders, against the accepted notions of middle class society" (Farrell 5). Gellhorn reacted in a similar way, leaving her studies at Bryn Maur and heading for Europe, settling briefly in France and becoming involved with French Pacifists. When she returned to America, she published *What Mad Pursuit* (1934) as a response to her travels and her attempt to experience the life of the Lost Generation. According to Farrell, *The Sun Also Rises* had "struck deep chords in the youth of the Twenties. Hemingway's first books had hardly been published when he had imitators all over America" (5), including, I propose, *What Mad Pursuit*. The challenge to *The Sun Also Rises* is expressed in different ways: by reversing the gender of the protagonist, by increasing the focus on the character behavior in sexual relationships, and by treating the values of the Lost Generation as lost themselves.

Hemingway's novel depicts four men—Jake Barnes, Robert Cohn, Pedro Romero, Michael Campbell—and their relationship to Lady Brett Ashley, a wild,

unhappy woman married to an English lord. O'Sullivan describes *The Sun Also Rises* as having as "the backdrop [...] the conventional theme of courtship and marriage" (66). Gellhorn too uses as a backdrop the conventional theme of courtship and marriage, except that she heightens the perspective of the female protagonists. Mark Spilka argues that the characters in *The Sun Also Rises* are "deliberately shaped as allegorical figures: Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley are two lovers de-sexed by the war; Robert Cohn is the false knight who challenges their despair; while Romero the stalwart bullfighter, personifies the good life which will survive their failure" (239). The contemporary reviews of *What Mad Pursuit* criticized the novel for its flat characters; they too are better understood from an allegorical perspective. Charis, the female protagonist, is a self-proclaimed martyr, constantly wishing that her life would take on higher meaning. She becomes de-sexed, not by the war like Jake and Brett but by an encounter that leaves her with syphilis. The struggle to find meaning, as Charis phrases it and as is quoted in the epigram of the novel, "Nothing ever happens to the brave," becomes the focal point (*WMP* 274).

Charis's quest throughout the book is not one of purpose as in *The Sun Also Rises*, but one of meaning: "I won't go home until I've proved to myself that I matter—in some way, somehow. But, [...] it may be a long wait" (150). She seeks to become a martyr of her generation of women—a symbol that the age of the Lost Generation needs a female alternative. Gellhorn turns Hemingway's ending on its head—instead of the final pages dealing with a discussion of the futility of believing in God, one gets a sense of hope. Charis's walk up the stairs at the end of the book is an ascendance, leading her to a higher understanding than does Jake's hopelessness in *The Sun Also*

*Rises*. This contrast at the end of the novel is important to Gellhorn as separating herself from Hemingway, or as Bloom says, “swerv[ing] away” from her precursor (14). Seeking to separate herself from Hemingway later in her life, she returns to this hopefulness at the end of the *Point of No Return*.

The futility at the end of *The Sun Also Rises* is touched on by Spilka, who describes *The Sun Also Rises* as a parable of “the death of love in World War I” (238). Contrastingly, the focus from the beginning of *What Mad Pursuit* is not to describe the death of love but instead to elaborate on the specific struggles attributed to being female in this new society after the Great War. A contemporary review of the novel described it as following “these three little maids from school out into the world of men” (Bell 18). It is not only the entrance of the young girls into the world of men that Gellhorn is portraying but also their entrance into the world itself. This world, according to Gellhorn, is characterized by gender. In the first chapter of the novel, Charis leaves college after her friend Susan is expelled from school for spending the night at a neighboring boy’s college while the male is neither expelled nor reprimanded. Charis uses the opportunity as her first attempt at martyrdom; she takes a stand against the perceived incongruity in punishments between Sue and her male companion and leaves school with Judith following her lead. *What Mad Pursuit* reflects the frustrations women are feeling assuming their new roles and the new challenges they are confronting in these roles—between women’s roles as ideals and in real experience.

In *The Sun Also Rises*, Brett is the only woman who is developed as a major character. O’Sullivan observes “*The Sun Also Rises* reflects the changing sex role patterns prevalent in Western society during the thirty years before its publication. In

many ways this first novel is Hemingway's good-bye kiss to the Victorian ethos under which he was raised" (65). Brett's characteristics and behavior can hardly be considered feminine: she has a boy's name, short hair, does not wear stockings, shows up at men's houses in the middle of the night drunk and wanting to talk, and loves the gore of a bullfight. According to Bloom's second stage *tessera*, "a poet antithetically 'completes' his precursor, by so reading the parent poem as to retain its terms but to mean them in another sense" (*Anxiety* 14). Sue, in *What Mad Pursuit*, seems to complete Brett's story—adapted for another generation of young people. In *What Mad Pursuit*, Sue describes herself as wanting to "to look a bitch" (76), contradicting Brett's fear that she "won't be one of those bitches" (*TSAR* 243) by staying with Pedro Romero. Sue also is unable to stay faithful to her husband, as Brett finds herself unable or unwilling to remain faithful to her fiancé, Mike, or her true love, Jake. Sue is the first one of the three protagonists to begin acting on her new freedom after leaving college. In New York, she becomes involved with the Lost Generation poet mentioned above, Ian Bradmore.

When Sue does the unthinkable and walks out on her new husband to spend an evening with her former lover: Ian murders her, then commits suicide. *What Mad Pursuit*, as I mentioned above, is linked to Bloom's first stage *clinamen*, where the younger author "swerves" or corrects the older author's work to better suit his or her objectives. Gellhorn not only corrects her precursor's work in her attempt to separate herself from him, but by equating him with Ian in the novel, she literally kills him off. Gellhorn completes Hemingway's novel by rejecting his idea of a futile lost generation, and the 'killing of the father' is literal—Ian kills himself. Ian's suicide can be seen to

symbolize the Lost Generation extinguishing itself. Sue's murder snuffs the innocence of the younger generation, the generation that becomes Hemingway's imitators. In Charis's mind Sue's death is equated with that of a prostitute in the morgue she had to write an article about:

The prostitute Emma, and Sue, Charis thought. Unnatural deaths, as if any death was natural. It would always be like this, without point; ugly, obscene [...] But Sue had only been playing. Naturally she thought she'd be able to back out. And why was Sue the one to be a lesson, an example? It wouldn't do Sue any good now. And they couldn't learn from Sue; they'd all have to go on, until they, too, couldn't back out. It was like that. But why Sue? What had she done except be too young and play too hard? Frightful to be stopped forever before you'd learned anything . . . and no more chances. (*WMP* 129)

By equating Emma and Sue, the passage equates Sue's actions with that of a common prostitute. In another parallel between Sue and Brett, Hemingway, too, uses the comparison between his female character and a French prostitute. Brett's actions are paralleled by that of the *poule* that Jake befriends on the street on the way to the cafe at the beginning of the novel, who he exchanges for Brett at the club.

Sue's death serves as a turning point in Judith and Charis's awareness in their own sexuality; they lose their innocence as well. Judith had been in love with Ross before his marriage to Sue, and after Sue's death she becomes his mistress, sneaking home to her own bedroom before her aunt woke in the morning. Judith is aware that he will never marry her and during the affair she realizes what she has lost. "She wished

she were home, snug and virginal” (133), but nevertheless continues the affair until it is forced to an end when Ross moves to Europe. Before Sue’s death, Charis had been a reporter in a small town in Pennsylvania. During her short tenure there, she became naively involved in a relationship with Mac, her editor. Because of Charis’ naive misinterpretation between Mac’s intentions and his perceived responses from her, the relationship ended quickly. When Charis travels to Paris after Sue’s death, she loses her virginity to a Rumanian law student, Fene, because she feels sorry for him, and she contracts syphilis from the promiscuous encounter. Unlike Judith, however, she does not seem to regret the loss of her own innocence but gains strength from it. “In the end she was unchanged; she went on alone, independent of what had happened outside. I believe in living, she thought; [...] that’s me; and I go on. Nothing ever happens to me...” (275). Charis wonders if she has finally become the martyr she sets out to be.

Charis’s disease leaves her, in a sense, impotent, like Jake, the war-injured narrator of *The Sun Also Rises*. Charis and Michael’s relationship in *What Mad Pursuit* seems to find its equivalent in Brett and Jake’s relationship in *The Sun Also Rises*. Both couples are in love but can not consummate their love: Jake and Brett because of Jake’s injury and Charis and Michael because of Charis’s disease. Jake’s solitary state is not a freedom, but a trap. What is different regarding Charis’s ‘impotence’ though is at the end of the novel she has embraced it. When Charis discovers that because of her disease, she will not be able to marry Michael, she deals with the situation optimistically. On the other hand, Jake will be left alone at the end of *The Sun Also Rises*, not by choice, nor happily or independently. The last lines of *The Sun Also Rises* are almost canonical “‘Oh, Jake,’ Brett said, ‘we could have had such a damned good

time together.’ [...] ‘Yes.’ I said. ‘Isn’t it pretty to think so’” (TSAR 247). *What Mad Pursuit* ends similarly, when Judith and Michael leave Charis in the back seat of a car to what can be imagined as a long and close relationship. Charis observes “How sweetly settled they look! They’re tucked in for life!” (WMP 277).

The main characters at the end of each novel experience a similar fate: they watch the person they appear to be in love with leave with someone else. (I do not think it is too obvious a point to mention the two Mikes in the last scene of both the novels.) However, when Charis realizes she is unable to marry Michael because of her disease, she exhibits no remorse about pairing him up with Judith. She approves of the switch and says to herself “Don’t lose her, Michael. Make your plans, Michael, but don’t leave Judith out of them” (WMP 273). This is quite contrary to the feelings both Jake and Brett express about her going back to Mike. “‘I’m going back to Mike.’ I could feel her crying as I held her close. ‘He is so damned nice and he’s so awful. He’s my sort of thing’” (TSAR 242). Brett’s fate is one of uncertainty, and by equating Sue with Brett, Gellhorn predicts her future too to be short-lived.

*The Sun Also Rises* ends with Jake and Brett going for a ride through town together before Brett catches her train to go back to Michael. “I settled back and Brett moved close to me. We sat close against each other. I put my arm around her and rested against me comfortably” (247). This scene is not the end of the novel, however. *What Mad Pursuit* ends with Charis choosing to face her disease alone, and embracing a feeling that, undoubtedly, she will be cured: “She raced up the first low flight, two at a time. Then apparently remembering something, she climbed the second flight with due

dignity” (WMP 278). Charis’s optimism contrasted with Jake’s sense of futility is another indicator that, to Gellhorn, Hemingway’s lost generation has ended.

Gellhorn’s rejection of her literary father is also apparent in the lack of significant parental figures in the novel. Left to their own devices, the women in the novel come to terms with their lives by themselves. Charis is looked after by an aunt in Salt Lake City who dies and leaves her an independent income. Judith is left under the care of her aunt in New York of whose “motherliness” was only given in small doses: “She’d had enough motherliness for one morning, and would have to hurry to keep a luncheon engagement” (WMP 140). Sue moves to New York by herself because “having only a father to cope with, she wangled permission for an apartment” (WMP 69-70). The only parent that appears as a character in the novel is Gellhorn’s actual literary father, Hemingway, portrayed by Ian.

Later in her life, as Gellhorn distanced herself from Hemingway, she also distanced herself from her first novel. She

condemn[ed] the book as childish and never include[d] it in any lists of her published works. (She recalls how Hadley, EH’s first wife, had once lost a whole suitcase of Ernest’s early work and what had appeared a tragedy to many was actually a gift to Ernest who was consequently spared the embarrassment of a researcher examining his immature pieces). [Orsagh 22]

In effect, she not only was rejecting and altering Hemingway’s novel, but her own as well. The novel had so many parallels to *The Sun Also Rises* that it failed to create any recognition of Gellhorn as her own author. By rejecting *What Mad Pursuit*, obviously



modeled after Hemingway's work, she also rejected his influence over her work. This rejection is made more ironic, because, before her personal relationship with Hemingway even began, the book was taken off the list of works printed at the beginning of her subsequent novels.

During her marriage to Hemingway, Gellhorn published three books: *A Stricken Field*, a collection of short stories called *Heart of Another*, and *Liana*. It is with these books where the study of Hemingway's influence gets messy. In *What Mad Pursuit*, the allusions to influence from Hemingway's works are easy to make, especially since the novel begins with an epigram taken from *A Farewell to Arms*. Her next novel, *A Stricken Field*, was a war story set in Czechoslovakia. Even though the book was highly touted by Gellhorn's friend Eleanor Roosevelt in her weekly column, reviewers were unsure on whether to treat it as a fiction or as journalism and were not particularly favorable. Roosevelt too referred to the book as "not a novel, it is just daily life under circumstances which, thank God, we do not know in the United States" (Roosevelt 156).

With her next book, *Heart of Another*, Hemingway became more involved and acted as her literary agent, sometimes stepping in with his opinion on publication issues in letters to Maxwell Perkins and Charles Scribner. This process is well documented in a dissertation by Tracey Bitonti, directed by Matthew Bruccoli, and I will touch on her research in some detail. The letters documented by Bitonti concentrate on production details: covers, titles, and dust jacket photos, of two books, *Heart of Another* and *Liana*. "The rest of Gellhorn's correspondence with Perkins and Scribner pertaining to *Heart of Another* deals primarily with business matters such as the contract, the physical design of the book, and the advertising—all matters in which Hemingway was also closely

involved” (Bitonti 105). When *Heart of Another*, her next publication, a collection of stories, was reviewed, the reviews were more favorable, but Gellhorn was frequently compared to her husband, as in a review in the *Saturday Review of Literature*:

Miss Gellhorn certainly out-Hemingways the master in her treatment of women. She is an extremely keen observer of manner and custom, and the detail in her stories is extraordinarily well-handled. Her style is witty and amusing; brilliant at odd times. (Wales 7)

She reacted with disapproval: “I am very resigned to seeing in reviews, that I write like Ernest. It’s a dirty lie, but who cares” (letter to Perkins, quoted in Bitonti 108).

However, the claim was not, in fact, “a dirty lie.” Many of the stories in *Heart of Another*, including “Zoo in Madrid” in particular mimic Hemingway’s style and prose, though they are based on Gellhorn’s own experience in the Spanish Civil War. Gellhorn reacted to the criticism in her next novel, *Liana*, a romance unlike anything Hemingway had written before, or since.

While writing *Liana*, Gellhorn would allegedly give chapters of the work to Hemingway to read as she completed them. According to Winston Guest, Hemingway's first mate on his boat, the *Pilar*, "every night the manuscript for the novel Martha was writing, *The Purple Orchid* or whatever, used to come in for him to read [...] Well, he'd sit up late with an oil lamp reading the manuscript and correcting it" (Brian 144). Biographer Bernice Kert quotes a letter to Perkins from Hemingway. "Ernest wrote Max Perkins that he was enjoying reading the chapters as Martha finished them, 'like in the good old days when there were good magazines and good installments'" (377).

It had been characteristic of their journalism in the past, as described by Leicester Hemingway, that on the stories Gellhorn and Hemingway submitted about the Spanish Civil War "they collaborated on together using ideas from one and the style of the other and submitting them under either/or name." According to Bitonti though, Hemingway's correction of Gellhorn's writing during their marriage seems to be little more than editorial. One of the principal traceable editorial changes on Gellhorn's work by Hemingway as documented in the Perkins/Scribner archives is Hemingway's reinsertion of punctuation. Gellhorn wrote that:

I am an iron enemy of the comma, so when reading over the galleys I react very mulishly to the to-me pedantry of proof-reader, a character who seemed to me drunk on commas.' But Hemingway advised her that she sometimes ruined her effect by not using them, so he wrote STET all over her excisions. She ceded to his judgment in most cases, grumbling, 'I still hate the comma.' (Bitonti 118)

Unlike Guest's recollection, Hemingway mentions reading the novel, not correcting it. Maxwell Perkins observed as well that Gellhorn needed little help with her writing that she submitted: "she was also in full control of her career and her prose. She was in that select company of Perkins's most skilled authors—those who required little help from him" (Berg 399). In other words, Gellhorn was doing the writing, not Hemingway.

Whether or not Hemingway was correcting or reading ceases to be important in terms of Bloom's description of poetic misprison. What becomes important is that Gellhorn knows that the first person to read her work will be the author she is struggling against: and the tension or anxiety of that influence can be seen in the novel. *Liana* is markedly different from *What Mad Pursuit* in the way the influence of Hemingway's work is not immediately apparent. What is apparent is the influence of his relationship with Gellhorn. According to biographer Jacqueline Orsagh, "it is significant that this feminist book emerges from a period when her relationship with Hemingway suffered increasing hostility" (159). As I will explain, Hemingway's influence is easily traceable in the work with biographical knowledge of their relationship, but invisible without it, unlike *What Mad Pursuit*.

Liana is a beautiful mulatto woman native to the island she lives on, and is recently married to a wealthy, white landowner. She has lived with her family on the island for her entire life, has not been educated, and has no understanding of the rest of the world, most specifically Europe, where her husband Marc is from. Their marriage is a failure, both publicly and privately. The community ostracizes the couple when they are married because the marriage breaks social conventions on the island: white men do not marry native women. Marc attempts to dress Liana in "white woman" clothes

and gives her a new name, but they are unable to find any common ground on which to relate to each other. Marc hires Pierre, a young school teacher fleeing the war in France, to teach Liana so that he will have something to talk to her about. Instead, Liana becomes even more distanced from Marc and falls in love with Pierre.

Hemingway's input on the work itself is traceable to the work's conception. Bitonti notes, "in a letter to Scribner on 23 August [1940], Gellhorn expressed her appreciation for a suggestion made by Hemingway and Scribner that she do an unspecified book project for them, perhaps about Cuba" but replies to the suggestion saying she cannot write fiction 'to order' (101). However, her next novel, *Liana*, is set on an unidentified island in the Caribbean, a tropical paradise similar to Cuba where Gellhorn is living with Hemingway. The island becomes an important symbol in the novel: outlining the relationship between internal and external struggle. Though the entire novel takes place on the island, it is not a secluded community. The war in Europe is beginning to affect the island's economy and strain relationships with neighboring islands controlled by rival European countries.

This lack of isolation of the island from Europe is mirrored in Liana and Marc's relationship. When Liana lived with Marc as his mistress the situation did not meet disapproval with the community, in fact "a man could not have any other kind of mistress" (3). When Marc marries her it becomes a different situation entirely, and one that neither Marc nor Liana predicted. When Liana marries Marc she does so with an expectation and excitement of becoming "Madame Royer" and imagines herself at Marc's house, standing "at the head of the steps on the terrace, wearing a dress made of lace, shaking hands with the other wives who came to play cards in the evening" (18).

Instead, the town people are insulted by Marc's marriage to a mulatto woman and "no white people ever came to the house. There were no parties, the lights never burned at night" (24). This segregation, so to speak, causes most of the tension in the marriage. "In the beginning she thought by behaving like a white lady she would be one and her husband would think she was one, and they would be happy. He was not deceived but he found this pose decent; it separated his wife from the servants" (2). Instead, Liana is alone, separated from her family by her new lifestyle, the servants because of her behavior, the white women because of her color, and Marc because of her resentment toward him for failing to respond to her attempts to please him.

In an attempt to make Liana more like the European women in town Marc not only dresses her and teaches her to speak differently, he renames her:

Her name was not Julie; Julie was the name he chose for her. She despised it knowing he wanted a wife that would fit that name, neat faced with a small pink mouth and a terrible tidiness in her and around her. Her mother had named her Liana (2).

Gellhorn too was struggling with a name change, between her own and that of her precursor, now husband, Hemingway. "Like Liana, who must answer to Royer's 'Julie,' Gellhorn was asked to answer to the Hemingway name" (Rollyson 188). Though Gellhorn used her married name, Mrs. Hemingway, socially, "in private letters she was 'Mrs. E. Hemingway' or 'Martha Hemingway' she never used his name to sign her published writing" (Rollyson 187). At the same time that Gellhorn is giving Hemingway chapters of the book to read she is attempting to create work of her own and the

struggle is evident in the struggle Liana exhibits with her two names. Gellhorn sought to mark off the edges of her text with *her* name, not Hemingway's.

The contrast between Liana's names—one native and one European—serves to create a further displacement of her life from Europe. Pierre opposes Marc's attempt at changing Liana's name to one more suitable for a European and refuses to call Liana by anything but her real name: "imagine changing a beautiful name like Liana for a little dumpy name like Julie" (45). Though Pierre teaches her about the war in Europe, giving her newspapers to read and explaining the political struggles in his native France, she fails to fully comprehend the political significance of the war: She is instead affected by the stories of children and wounded people that she reads about in articles that Pierre gives her. However, the war in Europe begins to disturb the male characters more significantly and Liana cannot understand Pierre's reaction:

Why would a man act this way? What was wrong with him? What sickness did he have inside himself to behave like this, refusing all the pleasure and delight that was here and now, and tormenting himself for a distant war that did not concern him. (183)

Pierre is not able to enjoy the island any longer, and stops giving lessons to Liana in the afternoons to sit by the radio and listen to news of the war. This seems a direct anti-thesis of Gellhorn and Hemingway's reactions to the war. While Hemingway was working on *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, he refused to let Gellhorn turn on the radio to hear the war reports. Unlike Marc, or Hemingway for that matter, Pierre is unable to rest while Europe is being taken over by the Germans. Apparently the tension felt by Pierre in the novel about leaving the island paradise to serve his country was a real tension felt

by Gellhorn and Hemingway in their relationship. Gellhorn was ready to go to Europe to cover the war and Hemingway “wanted a wife to stay at home” (Rollyson 187).

While working on *Liana*, Gellhorn frequently left Cuba, and Hemingway, to cover stories in Europe and the Caribbean. During their marriage, she did not stop acting as a correspondent for *Colliers*. She sought to maintain her financial independence from Hemingway, even though it took time from him and from her fiction. As discussed in Kert’s biography, Hemingway resented this and expressed his disapproval. But Gellhorn did not relent: in the final stages of completing the novel she left Cuba for New York and worked with Scribner correcting the proofs of the novel before publication. From New York she headed to Europe to report on Finland for *Colliers*—and filed for divorce.

When Pierre decides to leave for France, he leaves Liana behind and alone. Winston Guest commented later that he thought Gellhorn “was obviously painting a rather unattractive portrait of Ernest” and described Hemingway as “very gallant” for helping her with the project (Brian 144). While neither Pierre nor Marc seems to be a portrait of Hemingway, they both exhibit characteristics that can be seen to represent the different types of anxiety exhibited by Gellhorn in her relationship to him. To Liana, Marc is someone who has isolated her and suppressed her true spirit, as Hemingway overshadows Gellhorn in her writing. Pierre is Liana’s teacher in the novel, as one assumes Gellhorn expected Hemingway to be: he teaches her about books and self-expression while she teaches him about the native plants and animals. Pierre’s presence removes her isolation—she not only acquires company, but also acquires knowledge from him. When Liana learns to read and becomes more self-aware, she



beings asserting herself as independent of Marc, but instead of becoming more independent, she becomes more attached to her school teacher, Pierre.

When Liana overhears Pierre and Marc talking about Pierre's return to France and that he is not planning on taking Liana with him: she writes a letter to Pierre ending their relationship herself. Interestingly, Gellhorn was Hemingway's only wife to divorce him, instead of the other way around. When Liana severs her relationship with Pierre, she burns everything that he had given her, most importantly all of her notebooks from his teaching. "The lessons were a trick since they led nowhere. The lessons were a cheat since no matter how much she learned no one would admit she had changed" (269). Hemingway's lessons to Gellhorn too about her writing were a trick as well. According to Jeffrey Meyers's biography of Hemingway, Gellhorn had sought Hemingway out in Key West with the purpose of aligning herself with him and had flirted with him even though she knew he was married to Pauline. Gellhorn denied this claim, saying the meeting was a coincidence. However, when Liana burns her notebooks, the only product of her lessons with Pierre, it expresses a frustration with Gellhorn's expectations from her own relationship with Hemingway.

Together, Pierre and Marc turn Liana into someone "that belongs nowhere" (234), not even on her own island. At the end of the novel, Liana indeed belongs nowhere: not with Marc because of her affair with Pierre, not with Pierre because he is leaving for France, and not with her family because her lifestyle has changed. Rollyson called this novel Gellhorn's "only feminist book," and while I agree that the book is bringing up feminist issues, it is by far her "only" book to do so. He observes that the "issues of race and sex are paramount in the book—indeed, they are identical" but they

are not identical. When Perkins expressed concern with the element of miscegenation in the novel Gellhorn responded, “not having heard the word miscegenation banded about much, in my daily chats with folks, I had to think about it. Oddly enough I’d never thought of that at all; I mean Liana’s color to me was a sort of accident and her terrible bad luck, but it had nothing to do with her really” (Quoted in Bitonti 117). Though Liana’s race is what separates Marc from the townspeople at the beginning of their marriage, by the end of the novel Liana’s race is less of a threat to Marc than her gender. In the novel, Liana rebels against Marc and in his absence gets drunk with the servants. Marc catches her and reacts in a fury: “this was a white man’s house, he wasn’t going to let those niggers turn it in to some kind of disgusting black gin shop” (275). When Marc’s anger subsides he “could see Liana as a woman now and not as a negro” differentiating the blacks on the island as “that sly always-spreading menace” and women as “such fools” (276). According to Marc, when the black islanders rebel they “threatened to overwhelm the whites” in their rebellion, but Liana just “felt she had to do something dramatic [...] a big tragic gesture to show her heart was broken” (276). Once Pierre is gone, Marc’s focus is not on Liana’s future but that of the island. “Everything needed to be saved; the island needed everything; everything belonged to the island” (283) he thinks, but Liana no longer belonged to the island and could not be saved.

Left on the island after Pierre’s departure, Liana goes to her room, locks the door, and slashes her wrists. Her death is one of purity, she puts on “her finest nightgown that was made of white satin [...] she must be clean and fresh, her room must be pretty and spotless, there must be nothing nasty or soiled to leave behind” (278).

She has burnt her possessions, including the notebooks that connect her to Pierre. Gellhorn too seeks to leave nothing behind to connect her to Hemingway, as well as the connection to her own writing. Liana's death is planned and the circumstances are especially symbolic: in her own room, alone, wanting to cleanse herself of all that is "nasty or soiled" in her life. In fact, Liana dies with the nightgown "twisted about her and slipped above her knees and this way the stains were hidden, so she looked almost as neat as she wished to be" (281). But in the end, her death is ignored: Marc hears the water running and becomes annoyed at her wasting resources but soon starts to make other plans for himself and ceases to hear the running water. Pierre, from a boat headed for Europe, sees that her light is out and laments that "she had not waited for him; she had not marked his going" (284). He is not concerned about Liana, but himself, thinking that he "had not imagined he would be leaving so completely. He had counted on someone to miss him and to remember" (284). Both men have forgotten Liana, curled up in her white gown and "her face was tired and grey against the white tile of the bathroom floor" (282).

The character in this novel who commits suicide is not one that is aligned with Hemingway, but with Gellhorn. The suicide in *What Mad Pursuit* was by the character representing Hemingway, Ian, the Lost Generation poet. While Ian's suicide was public, violent, and unexplained, Liana's suicide takes the form of a baptism or a renewal. The innocent woman who has let the men control her is dead, as is the part of Gellhorn under Hemingway's control. According to Rollyson, "Gellhorn seemed to find herself all at one in the composition of this book. It could not have escaped Hemingway: she had written him out of her life" (188).

With this novel she had succeeded in creating something that was unlike his, ironically, while including him and her close relationship to him in the novel. When Perkins read the manuscript, he said he did so “with admiration. It seems to be a very remarkable performance, and to be successful to the veriest end” (quoted in Bitonti 116). “Charlie Perkins promised to make *Liana* (the official title) his first big book of 1944. Paramount and the Book-of-the-Month club were showing some interest” (Kert 383). Though the book did win critical acclaim and made several best-seller lists, the interest Scribner mentioned never panned out and “an embarrassed Charlie Scribner told her that the Book-of-the-Month Club had passed over *Liana*” (Kert 383). The reviews of this book were important in two ways: one that they were more favorable than the last two books Gellhorn had published, and this time they did not allude to Hemingway.

After her divorce from Hemingway, Gellhorn published another novel, *Wine of Astonishment* (1948, later re-titled *Point of No Return*), which garnered high critical appraisal. In *Point of No Return*, Gellhorn has passed another stage in her writing, she not only has become adept at fiction, as her success with *Liana* shows, she also becomes successful at transforming her stories from their journalistic roots to fiction: drawing most significantly on her experiences at Dachau the day the concentration camp was liberated.

Before writing *Point of No Return*, Gellhorn co-authored a play with Virginia Cowles, in which she mocks the status of women correspondents at the front as compared to men, and Gellhorn had first-hand experience as to what her role was supposed to be in the war. *Point of No Return* was published the same year as the famous war novel *The Naked and the Dead* by Norman Mailer, and frequently occupied the same display space (Bitonti 131). In her failed attempt to separate herself from Hemingway, Gellhorn creates something new: she focuses on the involvement of women in war. In her previous book, *Liana*, war had become foreign and out of the frame of reference of the female protagonist. Gellhorn showed an awareness of her re-gendering of the war-novel in her next book even during the production process—she reacted to writing biographical material for the book jacket in a letter to her editor at Scribner: “it is damn silly to beat your brains out for 14 months trying to write a book that is not a woman’s book, and then have to explain how you came to be that way.” (Quoted in Bitonti 129). When Gellhorn writes *Point of No Return* she is placing the

female subjects in the war as well, as Red Cross Workers and civilians, while maintaining the male perspective. Dotty phrases it quite succinctly:

Maybe it was allright [sic] the way they had their wars in the old days. But now women get mixed up in them and they can't take it. I don't mean the danger; I mean what you see. After you've seen enough of it you get frightened. What's the use of loving a man and having children and trying to make a life, if it is all going to be wasted" (316).

With its focus on what will happen after the war, the novel is as much about Kathe's and Dotty's experience with war than it is with Levy's and Col. Smithers's experiences.

Willa Cather had written a war novel with a male protagonist 20 years before (*One of Ours*) and been publicly humiliated by critic and friend H L Mencken in reviews for writing a war novel without ever having gone to war:

What spoils the story is simply that a year or so ago a young soldier named John Dos Passos printed a novel called *Three Soldiers*. Until *Three Soldiers* is forgotten and fancy achieves its inevitable victory over fact, no war story can be written in the United States without challenging comparison to it—and no story that is less meticulously true will stand up to it. (141)

Mencken criticized *One of Ours* because Cather, as a woman, had no first-hand experience in the war, overlooking the fact that neither did Stephen Crane before writing *The Red Badge of Courage* years earlier. Cather refuted the importance of his allegation, claiming she wrote the novel about the relations at home during the war—

that the war itself was only secondary. Twenty years later, Gellhorn's reviews for her war novel were more sympathetic. According to one critic:

Because women have a greater penchant for grace, compassion, and tenderness in their living and writing, they are at an initial handicap in approaching the subject of war. Martha Gellhorn has come closer to that subject than any other American woman writer. Her war is a farewell to arms kind of intimate drama in which nothing is sacred but an individual's integrity and where courage and honor really have no meaning except in a very personal and social way. (Braunstein 10)

Note that Braunstein, even though highly complimentary, compared the novel to one of Hemingway's. In fact, the novel does parody Hemingway's treatment of war, women, and Jewish characters. I claim that *Point of No Return* exhibits evidence of a failed attempt by Gellhorn to distance herself from Hemingway by parodying his tropes in a form of what Bloom refers to as *daemonization*. *Daemonization* is the stage that the later poet achieves by "so stationing its [the later work's] relation to the parent-poem as to generalize away the uniqueness of the earlier work" (15). Gellhorn uses Hemingway's forms to draw away from the uniqueness of the forms as being only Hemingway's.

After her divorce from Hemingway, and for the rest of her life, Gellhorn was determined to shake off any influence he might have had on her writing. In an interview quoted in her *New York Times* obituary, Gellhorn asked "Why should I be a footnote in somebody else's life?" pointing to the fact that she had been writing before she met Hemingway and long after leaving him (Lyman 234). Gellhorn explains in the afterword

to the re-issue of *Point of No Return* “I lose what I write. As if my memory were a black hole, information vanishes after the work is done. I am left with floating wisps of disconnected knowledge and snapshots of recall. [...] If I gave Dachau to Jacob Levy I would lose it” (*PONR* 328). With this novel, Gellhorn loses more than her memory of Dachau: she attempts to permanently cut her ties with Hemingway.

Unlike Hemingway’s war novels, the focus of *Point of No Return* is not on relationships during the war as much as it is on what is to become of the characters’ lives after it. The characters are all past “the point of no return”—they cannot go back to who they were before the war; the war has changed them. Levy does not plan to return to his family in St. Louis but instead imagines a life in the Smoky Mountains alone with Kathe in a cabin, where no one will bother them and he can keep her safe from harm. Col. Smithers does not want to return to the same little town in Georgia where the status quo was still the same as it had been when he was in high school and his rank and status as a commander of troops was unknown. The men’s plans are contrasted from the women’s by Dotty’s uncertainty:

“Or maybe you are scared of going home. Jail’s safe. You don’t have to decide anything there. Maybe it is a good idea; maybe I could use it myself. Because God knows,” she said softly, “I cannot see what I’m to do next.” (317)

Dotty does not know where to go after the war; her experience has changed her in a way she does not know how to rationalize.

Ironically, Gellhorn’s daemonization of Hemingway could have been learned from Hemingway himself; Hemingway used a similar technique at the beginning of his writing



career to separate himself from Sherwood Anderson. In the case of Anderson and Hemingway, Anderson was an early mentor of Hemingway's. Thus, as Leslie Wagner-Martin observes, "when critic Edmund Wilson, in a 1924 review of Hemingway's early work, linked him with both Stein and Anderson, he planted the seed of rebellion in Hemingway, who would not accept being called anyone's pupil" (Wagner-Martin 397). Anderson had been influential in Hemingway's early publishing contracts and had introduced him to Gertrude Stein, long noted, and eventually even by Hemingway himself in the posthumous *A Movable Feast*, to have been instrumental in guiding Hemingway to establish his signature style. Hemingway, however, fought against this connection in his writing—

Eager to establish a reputation independent of Anderson and to break with Boni and Liveright, their mutual publisher, Hemingway wrote a satiric parody of Anderson's fiction [*Dark Laughter*], *The Torrents of Spring*. He submitted it to Boni and Liveright, and, as he had anticipated, it was refused [thus breaking his contract]. When Scribner's published both the parody and his new novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway succeeded in publicly distancing himself from the older writer. (Small and Reynolds 1)

Hemingway did accomplish his goal as he thought of it, and distanced himself from Anderson in the public eye. However, according to Bloom's notion of literary influence the distancing that Hemingway and his public perceived only served to align them more closely.

*Point of No Return* is not a direct parody of one of Hemingway's novels, as Hemingway did to Anderson's *Dark Laughter*, but a pastiche of Hemingway emblems.

She does not parody one of Hemingway's works: she parodies Hemingway. She uses items directly attributed to Hemingway's style—the protagonist is a driver (jeep, instead of ambulance in *A Farewell to Arms*) during the war; the characters names are familiar: Jacob (Jake, *The Sun Also Rises*), Kathe (Catherine, *A Farewell to Arms*), Dorothy Brock (Dorothy Bridges, "The Fifth Column"), Bill Gaylord (Bill Gordon, *The Sun Also Rises*); lines: nothing, nothing, nothing ("Nada, nada, y pues Nada," "A Clean Well-lighted Place)—and uses them to find her own meaning while in effect using them up, or as Bloom says, "tak[ing] away the uniqueness" of Hemingway's work by making it her own. She also returns to *The Sun Also Rises* as the major influential work. The novel is her first to feature a male protagonist, a young soldier and jeep driver in WWII, and the story becomes real and dynamic.

Three of the four main characters in the novel are named after familiar Hemingway characters. John Smithers is the only main character in the novel who escapes a renaming, but even that is not complete. Col. Smithers is based on a real life person that Gellhorn and Hemingway knew from their reporting of WWII, General James Gavin, to whom the book is dedicated. Col. Smithers can also be considered a renamed character in that aspect, although not directly on a character of Hemingway's. In *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake's name is brought into focus by Brett: "You have an awfully biblical name, Jacob" (*TSAR 87*). Even though Gellhorn evokes Hemingway's character in the protagonist of *Point of No Return*, at the same time she distances Jacob from the castrated narrator of *The Sun Also Rises*. In Jacob's reaction to the surgery rooms in Dachau:

Unaware of having moved, his hand slid down to protect himself. In Italy, that was why the guys were so scared of mines; they were scared they'd catch it there. It had happened to two men he knew and afterwards he only wanted to forget about them; it was the very worst; it was the oldest deepest fear. (*PONR 277*)

Jacob is protecting himself from becoming Jake—crippled by the war and unable to go forward in his life, and love a woman. Gellhorn further aligns Jacob with Jake in another allusion to Jake's injury in *The Sun Also Rises*. In *Point of No Return*, Dotty asks Jake: "one way or another, she thought, we're diseased. You could, perhaps, not expect to come out of a war fresh as a daisy and sound as a dollar" (*PONR 318*).

Like Jake in *The Sun Also Rises*, Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*, and Robert in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, at the end of *Point of No Return*, Jacob has also been injured in the war. Ironically, his injury occurs, not in action, but after peace has been declared, further emphasizing the focus of the book on the period *after* the war rather than during it. After visiting Dachau, the liberated concentration camp, Levy is so overcome with hatred for Hitler's treatment of Jews that he purposefully runs over a group of Germans in the street and is injured in the accident. Jacob in *Point of No Return* is considerably distanced from Hemingway's anti-Semitic Jake, mouthpiece of the Lost Generation, by his Jewish heritage, as I will discuss in more detail later.

After Henry's injury in *A Farewell to Arms* he looks forward to spending his life with Catherine Barkley. Jacob too dreams of being with his fiancé, Kathe, when he heals from his injuries. Kathe is a young Belgian girl, working as a waitress in Luxembourg. Levy meets her at her restaurant and falls in love. Though her name

obviously refers to Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms*, the relationship has all the markings of Robert and Maria's in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, with a scared, young girl and a brave experienced soldier. Kathe has none of Catherine Barkley's bravado or sexual confidence, suggesting that she is not part of the Lost Generation killed off by Gellhorn in *What Mad Pursuit*.

Hemingway was supposed to have based Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms* on Agnes Von Kurowsky, a nurse he met in Italy. In *A Farewell to Arms*, Catherine gets pregnant by a soldier and dies at the end in childbirth. In *Point of No Return*, Sgt. Postalozzi, one of Levy's fellow soldiers, marries an Agnes, who is a nurse and is, later in the novel, pregnant. One imagines the same fate for Agnes Postalozzi in *Point of No Return* as Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms*, but Kathe's fate is still presented as innocent. The relationship between Agnes and Sgt. Postalozzi, an Italian-American who loses his legs in a minefield, is interesting too because Catherine, in *A Farewell to Arms*, was first involved with an Italian before becoming involved with Henry.

Dorothy Brock's position at the front is more similar to Catherine Barkley's, though her name alludes to a character in Hemingway's "Fifth Column," Dorothy Bridges. Gellhorn's Dorothy is a woman who has tried to do what she is supposed to do for the war but physically and mentally and emotionally is not cut out for it. As a Red Cross volunteer at the officer's club, she is giving her body for the men who fight. Her role in the war seems to be little more than cheering soldiers up: whether it be as a relationship with Col. Smithers or a visit to Levy in the hospital. Her function is presented as debilitating personally. It is Dottie who, in the passage quoted above,

voices all of the dissatisfaction with the war and the toll it has taken on all of them. Catherine Barkley's reaction was to fall in love with a soldier; Dotty alternatively becomes calloused to love and life.

The character of Dorothy in "The Fifth Column," written before Hemingway and Gellhorn are married, is allegedly based on Gellhorn and represents a very unflattering portrait of her. Gellhorn retaliates in *Point of No Return* for the uncomplimentary representation by creating a character, Bill Gaylord, that I propose is a derisively named Hemingway. Gaylord is an avid detective fiction reader, like Hemingway was himself. In one passage from a novel that Gaylord reads aloud to Col. Smithers, he refers to Key West—where Gellhorn met Hemingway—as a rough place. After a series of events that leave him unable to return to his life after the war as it was before, including receiving a letter from his wife asking for a divorce, Gaylord devises a plan to attack to the enemy front after dark and take them by surprise. His renegade scheming is plainly reminiscent of Hemingway's famous submarine-hunting expeditions aboard his fishing boat, the *Pilar*, in the waters around Cuba, looking for German submarines. Except, unlike Hemingway's failed hunting expeditions, Gaylord's expedition is fatal: he is discovered by the enemy and killed while crossing the river back from the expedition.

Like Ian, the Hemingway character in *What Mad Pursuit*, Gaylord is killed off in the middle of the novel. The circumstances of his death are even similar to Ian's, in that it is portrayed as a type of suicide. Unlike Ian though, Gaylord is well liked and missed by the other characters in the novel, especially by Col. Smithers, his commanding officer. This is completely opposite to the characters' reactions to Ian's death in *What Mad Pursuit*, who is described by Charis as "to be dumped with the rest of the garbage

by order of the city Health Commissioner” (*WMP* 83), and unlike *Liana*, it is again the Hemingway character who is being abolished in the novel.

In *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway describes a generation of people that have seen so much carnage in WWI that they are now “lost.” In *A Farewell to Arms*, Catherine Barkley dies in the hospital and Henry is now alone. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert is left to die in the woods after he is injured. However, in *Point of No Return*, Gellhorn is describing a later war and a later generation; her characters survive at the end, though they are not untouched by their experience. Not only is *Point of No Return* stylistically an evocation and rejection of Hemingway it is also a thematic rejection of the Lost Generation that Hemingway originated. Like in *What Mad Pursuit*, Gellhorn expresses her most divergent challenge to Hemingway at the end of the book. Again, instead of Hemingway’s normal jog into futility and lost souls, a characteristic she takes from him in *Liana*, the end of *Point of No Return* is about hope and reconciliation. The last lines of *Point of No Return* are especially symbolic:

The air felt cool against his injured body. The city was closed in, under the curfew. It was so quiet you might think you were in the country, the wonderful country of woods and mountains that he remembered and longed to see. She will, he thought, I know she will; *and found his hope again.* [Italics mine] (325)

Jacob’s experience is not one of death but of rebirth.

Jacob Levy’s rebirth takes place on his return from the liberated concentration camp of Dachau, and it is here that the switch from uncertainty after the war to hopefulness takes place in the novel. At Dachau, Levy goes from innocent bystander,

observer, jeep-driver, to someone who is affected by everything that he sees. “Once he has seen Dachau, however, and realizes how much the Jewish people suffered under the Nazis, he reconstructs his identity” (Nazimek 70). He shifts from a position of observation to one of participation. “Initially the protagonist, Jacob Levy, constructs a non-Jewish identity that directly opposes the negative stereotypes of Jews: he strives to avoid being unattractive, troublesome and whiney” (Nazimek 69). These are the same characteristics that Hemingway used to describe Robert Cohn in *The Sun Also Rises*, an unflattering portrayal. By naming her Jewish character after Jake, Gellhorn equalizes Jake and Robert, and reveals how much of Robert is suppressed in Hemingway’s Jake as well.

In accordance with this desire to conceal his heritage, Jacob also suppresses his name when he meets Kathe, telling her his name is “Jawn” Smithers in order to disguise his Jewish heritage. In the hospital after his injury, he writes a letter to Kathe in which he rejects the fictitious non-Jewish name and reclaims his own, “the signature was printed twice as big as the rest of the letter” (300). According to Nazimek, in exploring the Jewish identity as portrayed in the novel, Jacob “is dramatically transformed from a handsome, easygoing boy into an experienced and determined man. Most importantly, he finally recognizes his Jewish heritage and senses his inherent connection to the Jews in Dachau” (Nazimek 78). Gellhorn’s daemonization of Hemingway in *Point of No Return* also shows that she too is attempting to conceal her name, Mrs. Hemingway. She has tried Hemingway’s name, and his style, and has decided to reclaim her own, and her own style. Her novels after *Point of No Return* do not return to Hemingway influences.

Levy, from the beginning of the novel, had been defined by his natural good looks. "Except in the movies, Lieutenant Colonel Smithers had never seen such a handsome man," and he becomes suspicious of Levy's Jewish last name "feeling that someone was making a fool of him" (10). When Levy is injured, the loss of his looks is what is most lamented by the people around him. "Dorothy Brock imagined under the white gauze, the fine bones crushed and that face, which would give any woman pleasure even if Levy meant nothing to her, ruined" (*PONR* 314). However, his looks are what set him apart in the beginning of the novel from his heritage. Before meeting him Smithers thinks he knows "what he looks like, a greasy little kike with those eyes they've got" (9). However, the accident destroys Levy's appearance:

He mucked himself up pretty thoroughly too. His nose will need plastic surgery to make it look like a nose again. He almost tore off his left cheek and he knocked out a lot of teeth [...] And two broken ribs and a broken shoulder and a compound fracture of the left arm and a fractured skull.  
(*PONR* 293-94)

Dottie alludes to the fact that Jacob's injuries, like Jake's in *The Sun Also Rises*, have also affected his relationship with women, especially his fiancé Kathe. Dotty reminds Jacob of how he promised to take care of Kathe and then left her. "You ask a girl to marry you, you let her get her hope up and plan and look forward to a lovely life and then, as soon as you can, you fix it so she will have nothing" (*PONR* 317). Unlike Hemingway's Jake, Jacob moves past his injuries and at the end of the novel he is struggling to overcome them and looking forward to being with Kathe. Jacob's injuries cause his supervisory officer Col. Smithers to lament over his wasted talent. "Here's to



nothing, he thought, here's to what we all got, nothing, nothing, nothing" (*PONR* 302). Incidentally, this line is mimetic of Hemingway's line in "A Clean Well-lighted Place: "It was all a nothing and a man was a nothing too. [...] Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it all was *nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada*. Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name" (italics mine). In both passages the characters are lamenting the fact that religion means nothing in the face of death.

Through the exploration of Levy's heritage and religion, Gellhorn is again attempting to differentiate her work from that of Hemingway's. Instead of rejecting the presence of God, as Hemingway does, she strives to place her characters with the right God. Levy, in an attempt at prayer, comments: "It don't make sense, I haven't got any arrangement with God, I don't even know whose God I'd be talking to. I must be goofy (174). His attempt at prayer is futile, as he does says he does not even know which God to pray to. However, even though he does not have a relationship with God, he does not doubt the presence of God "how do I know how it is with God, it can't hurt to put a word in for her" (174). The symbolic treatment of religion in the novel is also an indication of its concentration on hope and civilian life after the war. This is unlike Hemingway's wars, where there are no Gods.

Moreover, her novels after *Point of No Return* no longer show dependence on Hemingway's influence. The two novels written after *Point of No Return*, *His Own Man* and *The Lowest Trees Have Tops*, are no longer suffused with obvious Hemingway references, and she does succeed in her writing, if not in her public life, to separate herself from Hemingway.

Thirty years later, she even renames the book to make it her own. When *Wine of Astonishment* was re-issued as *Point of No Return*, Gellhorn, in a new afterword, explained, “in this new re-issue (1989), I am reclaiming my original, true title, *Point of No Return*, and thus reclaiming the book for myself” (PONR 332). According to Gellhorn, the title had been changed by its editor:

Long before I finished the book, I told Max Perkins, the great Scribner’s editor, its name, *Point of No Return*, and he objected. It was too bleak, too despairing, people would not read a novel with that grim title. If anyone had suggested editing my work, I would have refused with fury. But I caved on what was fundamental to this book, its name. [...] Giving up my true title did not alter the writing or the shape of the story; it simply spoiled the book for me. (PONR 331)

Gellhorn in her previous book, *Liana*, had debated about the appropriate title of the book up to the minute it was being printed; in press releases the book appeared under two names: *Share of Night*, *Share of Morning* and *Liana*. However, that indecision four years previous had formed into a resolution as to what her next book should be named. “When this novel [*Point of No Return*] began to ferment, or what ever novels do, it had its name” (PONR 327) and when Gellhorn was done with it, she had hers as well.

Gellhorn published two novels after *Point of No Return: His Own Man* and *The Lowest Trees Have Tops*. Bloom outlines one more stage in his system that I have not yet discussed, *aphrophrades*, or “return of the dead” (15) where a younger writer’s later work opens again to that of his precursor, as though the writer has returned to the beginning of a cycle. Gellhorn’s two novels do not achieve that stage. Although, her last collection of novellas, *The Weather in Africa*, does come close. The four stories take place on Mt. Kilimanjaro, scene of Hemingway’s much-studied “Snows of Kilimanjaro” but are removed from Hemingway’s themes and style, confirming a growth of Gellhorn’s own style in her writing.

All three books written by Gellhorn during their marriage exhibit the tension, or anxiety, as Bloom describes it, of setting Gellhorn apart from Hemingway, but it is interesting to note that there was nothing contemporary of Hemingway’s to distinguish herself against—only what he had written before. The eight years that Hemingway and Gellhorn were together is the longest period in Hemingway’s writing career that he went without writing a novel. Between *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) and *Across the River and into the Trees* (1950), Hemingway edited *Men at War*, a collection of war stories, but published no novel of his own.

Though Bloom does describe poets that were also contemporaries by using the well-known collaborative pair Wordsworth and Coleridge and states “a change like the one I propose should help us read more accurately any group of past poets who were contemporary with one another” (11), he does not address the influence that a collaborative relationship can have on a poet’s work. Stillinger argues that

the collaborative authorship of writings that we routinely consider the work of a single author is quite common, and that instances [...] can be found virtually anywhere we care to look in English and American literature of the last two centuries [...] the frequency with which this kind of multiple authorship turns up, once one starts looking for it, is rather strikingly at odds with the interpretive and editorial theorists' almost universal concern with author and authorship and single entities. (5)

Stillinger addresses the influences of authors working together, such as Hemingway and Fitzgerald in *The Sun Also Rises*, and author/editor relationships, such as Hemingway and Perkins at Scribner's. *Liana* shows evidence of Hemingway's influence, but the evidence is much different from that of one writer reading another's work as described by Bloom: it becomes biographical.

APPENDIX  
BOOKS BY GELLHORN

*What Mad Pursuit* (novel)

New York: Stokes, 1934.

*The Trouble I've Seen* (stories) Introduction by HG Wells.

New York: Morrow, 1936.

London: Putnam, 1936.

*A Stricken Field* (novel)

New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1940.

New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1940.

London: Jonathan Cape, 1941, 1942.

London: Virago Books, 1986. (new Afterword by the Author.)

New York: Penguin, 1986. (new Afterword by the Author.)

*The Heart of Another* (stories)

New York: Scribner's, 1941.

London: Home and Van Thal, 1946.

*Liana* (novel)

New York: Scribner's, 1944.

London: Home and Van Thal, 1944.

New York: Popular Library, 1953.

New York: Penguin, 1972.

London: Virago Books, 1987. (new Afterword by the Author.)

New York: Penguin-Virago, 1987. (new Afterword by the Author.)

London: Picador, 1993.

*The Wine of Astonishment* (novel)

New York: Scribner, 1948.

New York: Bantam, 1949.

Republished as: *Point of No Return*.

New York: New American Library, 1989.

New York: Plume, 1989.

Lincoln: U Nebraska P, 1995.

*The Honeyed Peace* (stories)

Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1953.

Middlesex, U.K.: Penguin, 1956.

Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries P, 1970.

Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978.

*Two by Two* (stories)

New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958.

London: Longman, 1958.

*The Face of War* (collection of journalism)  
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959.  
London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1959.  
London: Sphere, 1967.  
London: Virago, 1986.  
New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1988.  
London: Granta Books, 1993.

*His Own Man* (novel)  
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961.

*Pretty Tales for Tired People* (stories)  
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965.  
London: M. Joseph, 1965.

*The Lowest Trees Have Tops* (novel)  
London: M. Joseph, 1967.  
New York: Dodd-Mead, 1969.

*The Weather In Africa* (stories)  
London: Allen Lane, 1978.  
Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.  
New York: Dodd-Mead, 1980.  
New York: Avon, 1981.  
London: Eland, 1984.

*Travels with Myself and Another* (collection of essays)  
London: Allan Lane, 1978.  
New York: Dodd-Mead, 1979.  
London: Travel Book Club, 1979.  
Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980.  
London: Eland, 1983.  
Oxford: Isis, 1986.  
New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 2001.  
London: Eland, 2002.  
Whereabouts Press, 2001. (Introduction by Bill Buford.)

*The View from the Ground* (collection of journalism)  
New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1988.  
New York, London: Granta, 1989.  
London: Granta, 1998.

*The Short Novels of Martha Gellhorn* (reprints *Trouble I've Seen*, *Two by Two*, *Pretty Tales for Tired People* and *Weather in Africa*)

London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991, 1992.

London: Picador, 1994.

Also published as: *The Novellas of Martha Gellhorn*.

New York: Knopf, 1993.

New York: Vintage, 1994.

*Love Goes to Press: A Comedy in Three Acts* (play) Co-written with Virginia Cowles.

Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1995.



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