

Tribhuvan University

Subversion of Conventional Gender Roles in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*

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the Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mrs. Kalpana Darlami has completed her thesis entitled "Subversion of Conventional Gender Roles through Androgynous Acts in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farwell to Arms*" under my supervision. She carried out her research from 2073/11/01 B.S. to 2074/03/25 B.S. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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**Approval Letter**

This thesis entitled "Subversion of Conventional Gender Roles Androgynous Acts in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farwell to Arms*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mrs. Kalpana Darlami has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Abstract

Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* questions traditional concept of male female gender distinction through the character Catherine Barkley's androgynous performance. As Judith Butler questions the very binary of traditional sex and gender by describing them as a cultural construct, Catherine rejects prevailing gender identity by not complying with the norms of gender roles. She does not take traditional concept of gender or femininity granted as she hates institution of marriage, submissiveness, domesticity and modesty, which were stereotypically followed and considered to be the attributes of good women at the time when the novel was written. Moreover, her masculine attitude towards sex, dress and hairstyle reflects ambiguity in gender and sexual identity thereby subverting the traditional femininity. In this way, Catherine subverts the traditional concept of gender or femininity.

*Key Words: Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, Sex, Gender, Androgyny, Performance, Tradition.*

### Subversion of Conventional Gender Roles in *A Farewell to Arms*

Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* explores gender roles, gender consciousness and search for gender equality. In the novel, while being humble and submissive towards Frederic Henry, female character Catherine demands respect and equality as Henry sticks to performing conventional Victorian stereotypes of masculine and feminine roles. Rather, she goes for androgynous roles, that is, having the characteristics of both sexes. For complete experience and freedom, Catherine favours and androgynous ideals. So, this thesis argues that Catherine's rejection of conventional gender roles through her androgynous nature throughout their relationship reflects her search for gender equality thereby subverting conventional gender roles. In order to address these issues, the thesis discusses gender studies with reference to Judith Butler's ideas expressed in *Gender Trouble*. Through using Butler's theory of gender as a starting point, I have tried to explore in how the novel challenges a traditional representation of gender, and the theory provides us with new perspectives on the concept of gender and gender categories.

Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* projects women's consciousness and search for female space through the major character Catherine Barkley. Hemingway's narrative constructs a young woman in the patriarchal Western society. The novel attacks patriarchal culture represses and silences women. The novel suggests that the roles set by patriarchy for the women must be rejected. Catherine acts towards this as she is reasonable, masculine, rational and conscious woman. She is a woman who lived during the time when the norm and values for women was to be religious, submissive, and sexually chaste. In the novel, Catherine tries to lead an independent

life even though she falls in love with Frederic Henry who is an ambulance driver during the war. So, she does not want to live within the four walls of the house. She does not believe in the conventional institution of marriage and religion as she wants to have her child out of wedlock. Catherine's self-confidence is so high that she chooses to live by her own rules by defeating the boundaries of gender the contemporary western society constructed without getting married.

Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, as a war novel, explores conflict between male and female. It is a social depiction of the patriarchal western society. Under the patriarchal order, Frederic Henry and Catherine Barkley are cast in their respective gender roles. Henry is an ambulance driver and Catherine is a nurse aide. Although she is presented in traditional female role, Catherine is a conscious and bold female who adopts ambiguous attitude towards sex and gender. So, the novel examines the boundaries of gender roles of her time. In order to secure her space, she likes to stay single and frequently performs masculine and feminine roles. So, based on these ideas that revolve in and around the characters of Catherine, the novel explores 'search of female voice' in the novel. Thus, Catherine gathers courage to stand up for freedom/space in small ways even though she does not make a strong resistance. As a conscious woman about her limited role, she cannot give in to patriarchal rules. She just does not want to be a sexual object. She is hard worker, brave and independent. She stands firmly on what she believes to be true for herself and for gender equality.

*A Farewell to Arms* (1929) is a first-person account of American Frederic Henry, serving as a Lieutenant in the ambulance corps of the Italian Army. When the novel was first introduced, critics were reading it with a close eye on Hemingway's life, reading that most parts of the novel could be seen as an autobiographical account of the author's tour of duty in Italy. In 1933, T. S. Eliot viewed the novel and said,

"Hemingway is a writer for whom I have considerable respect; he seems to me to tell the truth about his own feelings at the moment they exist" (471). T.S. Eliot admired Hemingway for his truth, but he persuaded literary critics to "move away from biographical criticism of Hemingway's works and see it as a piece of literature having meaning outside the author's life" (471). Regarding the issue of gender, Robert Scholes notes:

When confronted with gender and masculinity issues at this stage, many critics may engage in a reader response based on their belief that the masculine condition is either oppressive or empowering in the novel. They may also decide that they lack some knowledge needed to understand the gender issues in the novel. (22)

The critic remarks that as the novel was written during the time of world war, people might have failed to see the gender issues in the novel. So, at that time, it required special knowledge of gender roles, which was not yet discovered.

Ernest Hemingway has often been accused of misogyny in his treatment of female characters and perhaps, in his treatment of women in his own life. Frederic Busch says, "It is not fashionable these days to praise the work of Ernest Hemingway; his women too often seem to be projections of male needfulness" (4). Many of his stories are seen as prototypical male stories, usually, of young men coming of age. There are few, if any, stories in the canon of women coming of age, however, and Hemingway is not the first to suffer the wrath of feminist critics.

An analysis of gender ideology in which women are always innocent, always passive victims of patriarchal power, is patently not satisfactory. Jackson J. Benson describes Catherine and Frederic's initial encounters by claiming that she is an



innocent victim to his manly intentions, "He fully intends (he spells this out quite clearly) to take a girl, who is described in terms of a helpless, trembling Henry James bird, and crush her in his hands very casually as part of the game that every young, virile lad must play" (83). In fact, Benson finds male domination in the novel.

Though different critics have analyzed the novel in different way, this thesis depicts the search for equality through the female character Catherine Barkley as she counters and challenges the nineteenth century patriarchal western society.

For a long time, Hemingway's writing was viewed by scholars as important statements of the modern condition. But at the same time it also displayed sexist leanings as scholars and critics were found his praise of masculinity at the expense of women and femininity. His male-oriented stories about hunting, fishing, bullfighting, and battle scenes alienated many a female reader.

However, there must have been some quality about Hemingway's work, which still places Hemingway as a best representative of the "Lost Generation." As Margaret D. Bauer writes:

I teach [Hemingway's stories] in spite of his reputation as a misogynist and my own feminist sensibilities," explaining that she presents them to her students "not only because I recognize Hemingway's genius with the craft of the short story, but also to show students that they should not make assumptions about a writer's work based on some vague impression they have of the author's character. (125)

According to Richard Fantina, other critics have even attempted to reclaim Hemingway "as almost a feminist" (85). That the same author could be regarded by some as a sexist and by others an advocate of gender equality makes Hemingway a controversial person.

Bauer uses Hemingway's story "Hills Like White Elephants" (1927) as an example of a case where he praises the strength of a pregnant woman and looks down upon her immature lover, who believes that abortion is an easy solution that can return their lives back to normal. Bauer writes that "Roger Whitlow calls [the story] 'Hemingway's most penetrating attack on men as the exploiter of woman,'" and that "Linda W. Wagner points out that . . . 'Hemingway's sympathy is clearly with the girl'" (129). The pregnant woman in the story reaches a higher level of complexity than the man and recognizes that aborting her child will be a devastating event after which her relationship to him will never return to the status quo.

Richard Fantina confirms Hemingway's interest in female-to-male sodomy and female-dominant sexuality in general by using his novels *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Garden of Eden* as examples of male submission toward women. He writes that "David Bourne in *The Garden of Eden* allows himself to be sodomized and called 'girl' by his wife" (96), and that Brett Ashley looks down upon Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises*, acting as the dominant partner in a relationship.

Hemingway's sympathy for the wife in "Hills like White Elephants," his openness to experimentation with female sexual domination, and his perception of his wife an equal on his safari places him on the feminist side.

In fact, Hemingway's work reflects his vision of ideal womanhood. The women as shown in "Soldier's Home" and "Cat in the Rain" show qualities he dislikes: frivolous, gossipy, whiny, excessively materialistic, conforming to the same pattern. He appreciates women such as Mary, Brett Ashley, and David Bourne's wife, who can prove their so-called "manly" qualities to him in the bedroom by having female-to-male anal sex and in African expeditions by hunting with the rest of the men. He cannot respect women unless he feels that they can match his masculinity.

While it may be a positive feminist point that he does not demand that women submit to him, his views of women seem too binary. Nevertheless, Hemingway's misogyny is over-exaggerated and that he seem to this researcher more open-minded

Hemingway's works often portray the difficulties his characters face when facing societal gender binaries. In this regard, Kim Moreland writes:

Although Hemingway did not use specific language indicating his belief in multiple genders, his works often explore the challenges of having to adhere to strict gender binaries in societies. As a result, his characters often venture outside gender boundaries and exhibit behavior not specific to their gender. I paired each work according to the type of challenges the characters faced with societal gender boundaries. (83)

This shows that the characters in his works encountered problems with traditional gender binaries in society.

Gender is different from sex because gender is a social construct and sex is based on human anatomy. Furthermore, gender is a label that is associated with non-physiological characteristics that society or specific cultures assign to men and women. Gender refers to socially created roles, feelings, and behaviors believed to be appropriate for men and women by society. Gender identity is a person's own sense and definition of their gender. When discussing gender roles, terms that have traditionally been used include masculinity, femininity and androgyny. Sandra Bem, a well-known gender role researcher, defines the characteristics such as masculine: "acts as a leader, aggressive, ambitious, analytical, assertive, athletic, competitive, defends own beliefs, dominant, forceful, has leadership abilities, independent, individualistic, makes decisions easily, masculine, self-reliant, self-sufficient, strong

personality, willing to take a stand, and willing to take risks" (45). On the other hand, Bem identifies the following characteristics as feminine: affectionate, cheerful, childlike, compassionate, does not use harsh language, eager to soothe hurt feelings, feminine, flatterable, gentle, gullible, loves children, loyal, sensitive to the needs of others, shy, soft spoken, sympathetic, tender, understanding, warm, and yielding. Androgyny is the combination of both high numbers of feminine characteristics and high numbers of masculine characteristics in one personality.

Within the last century, gender role norms have shifted for men and women. As the number of women entering the workforce continue to increase, the once prevalent view of women "barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen" and men "bringing home the bacon" have changed for many. Numerous historical reasons contributed to this societal change in mindset; however this differs for diverse groups of people considering that historical context varies across ethnic groups Gender roles for women began to shift during World War II (e.g., late 1930's to mid-40's) when the number of women working outside the home increased dramatically (Goldin 745) Due to the large numbers of men overseas in the military, women began to hold jobs that traditionally belonged to men.

After the war ended many women left their jobs but things didn't return to "normal" as far as mindsets were concerned. Attitudes about women working outside the home began to change for men and women. This change shaped the way men and women view gender roles today. Whereas maintaining a home had always been considered a woman's job, increases in male contributions to housework began during this period (Sullivan et al. 20). Along with a shift in attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of men and women shortly after World War II, research on gender roles flourished during the 1950s.

Gender is everywhere in the world and nobody can be independent of it.

Gender lets individuals know what interactions are appropriate in a given context. Yet gender is a complicated social construct. It is simultaneously a way to act, a power structure, a set of social pressures, an identity. As Judith Lorber notes, "Gender is created and recreated through interaction, but it also constrains behavior. The ways that individuals interact with others, categorize themselves, work, parent, and find partners is all part of the social construction of gender" (23). So, Lorber believes that gender is created through social interaction and activities, which shapes behaviours in society.

Judith Butler sums up the difficulty of understanding the individual actor within the social construction of gender, writing "the 'I' that I am finds itself at once constituted by norms and dependent on them but also endeavors to live in ways that maintain a critical and transformative relation to them" (3). Individuals act in accordance with, and against, gender norms and understandings of behavior. We do this consciously and unconsciously, restricted by boundaries yet testing and stretching those boundaries.

One of the most notable gender and masculinity researchers is Raewyn Connell, who has written books and articles on masculinity in the western world since the early 1980s. She sees gender as "the structure of social relations that centers on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes" (11). Gender, though connected to ideas of the body, is yet very separate and so much more than understandings of maleness and femaleness. A biological male may enact femininity in his choice of clothes, friends, and occupation. A male may also enact masculinity and outwardly portray the gender identity of 'man' by engaging in the behaviors associated with manliness. This

includes how he interacts with his boss, sports buddies, and potential partners; how he cuts his hair; how he walks; the car he drives; and the cadence of his speech and vocabulary. At the present time in the United States, there are behaviors that are understood to be 'manly' and thus expected behaviors of those displaying the masculine gender. These expectations are adhered to in varying degrees among individual men. But these expectations differ around the globe and across time.

The construction of gender happens socially through interaction and within institutions. Gender is a context specific construct. Understandings of gender change over time and location. These changes are enacted by individuals, but also shape the larger structure of gender. These changes happen within the current context of gender. Consequently, gender needs to be located historically and culturally. Butler sums up this understanding well. Terms such as 'masculine' and 'feminine' are notoriously changeable; there are social histories for each term; their meanings change radically depending upon geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imagining whom and for what purpose.

Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) has changed our thinking about traditional gender roles and gender identity as she focuses on social, economic, and political equality for women. She argues against this system of categorizing people, stating that gender should be seen as a fluid human trait that can shift and change in a given context rather than one that remains fixed. As she writes, "Gender is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time. An open coalition, then, will affirm identities that are alternately instituted and relinquished according to the purposes at hand; it will be an open assemblage that permits of multiple convergences and divergences without obedience to a normative telos of definitional closure" (16).

Butler also challenges the prevailing attitude that sex causes gender, which then defines sexuality and desire. She argues that these factors should be independent of one another rather than inextricably connected. So, this thesis, by drawing on Butler's ideas, looks at subversion of conventional gender roles in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*.

Butler argues that “gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts” (519), adding furthermore that “gender [...] must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (519). This argument proves helpful for the interests of this study since Butler goes on to assert that:

Significantly, if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity. . . . (519)

Hence, a gendered identity could be understood to be a factitiously abiding identity, which could herald the possibility of subversion within the heterosexual matrix.

Thus, Butler undermines the distinction between sex as a natural given category and gender as an acquired cultural- social category. She argues that sex also is a socially constructed category which comes out of social and cultural practices through the repeated acts, that is performance.

In *A Farewell to Arms*, the protagonist Catherine Barkley challenges traditional concept of male female gender distinction. As a strong, determined and powerful rather than a passive and subservient woman, she performs roles traditionally considered to be masculine. She develops masculine attitude towards sex as she puts on masculine dress, and hairstyle, which reflects ambiguity in gender and sexual identity. When we talk about gender equality in the general feminist theory, it means that men and women should be given the same rights, opportunities, resources and protection with the taken-for-granted social and cultural construction of male/female category or normative heterosexuality. But Judith Butler deconstructs the hierarchy between traditionally conceived notion of sex and gender as she holds that both get their signification through social practice through time. She believes that sex assumes significance or gets social meaning in social milieu within a given culture; sex is also social construction. So, this blurring helps women to question their traditional concept of gender identity ultimately liberating them from traditional role of sex and gender. So, Catherine Barkley, when compared to the Victorian woman ideals of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity, actually embodies the modern individual as she refuses to take traditional concept of sex and gender for granted.

According to traditional feminist criticism, sex is a biological category; gender is a historical category. Butler questions that distinction by arguing that our "gender acts" affect us in such material, corporeal ways that even our perception of corporeal sexual differences are affected by social conventions. In *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, Butler says that sex is not "a bodily given on which the construct of gender is artificially imposed, but... a cultural norm which governs the materialization of bodies" (3). Sex, for Butler, "is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time.



Following the argument of Butler, we could argue that *A Farewell to Arms* disproves the unidirectional continuity of the construction of sex and gender with the intention of asserting that one's body does not once and for all determine one's gender in a hegemonic discourse predicated upon heterosexuality, as gender itself is "a free-floating artifice" (Butler 10). Butler, accordingly, argues the ostensibly natural relationship between sex and gender:

If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of "men" will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that "women" will interpret only female bodies. (10)

This follows that, as has been articulated in the first chapter of this study, "man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one" (Butler 10), which follows that "gender and sexuality aren't innate 'essences' but social constructions that can be contested and redefined" (Dolan 14). In this regard, Hemingway subverts the assumedly linear interaction between the notions of sex and gender through the representation of the Catherine's obsession with masculine nature.

Right from the very beginning of Catherine Barkley and Frederic Henry's meeting and relationship, Catherine constantly acts in a way that shows that, she is, in fact, playing the same game of attraction as Frederic. She asks him to tell her that he loves her and also says that she loves him. This is clear by her actions that she is well aware of the fact that it is only a game and she often rules the roost. So, the stereotype

that only the male is active and the female passive is deconstructed here. She does not want to behave within the framework of traditional gender identity. At one point she tells him, "Please put your hand there again" and on the next page she won't let him put his arm around her shoulders (29). This shows that she is well aware that neither of them is serious when they talk about love during the early stages of their courtship and she often begins the conversation. She repeatedly calls him "a good boy", (29). This act of repeatedly calling him 'good boy' seems to give a sense of belittling his manliness and at the same time she does not feel subservient to him when she says this at all. She takes charge of their sexual interactions, telling Frederic "Oh I love you. Put your hand there again" (29) and it is she who decides when to it is time to stop. Rather than being a helpless and submissive woman, Catherine is a playful, active and willing participant in their physical relationship. She does so in order to convince herself that she is same as men.

Butler believes that gender is discursively constructed, it could be performatively reconstructed in a subversive way, which breaks the unidirectional understanding of the relationship between sex and gender by arguing that sex has always been gender all along, thereby arguing that "the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all" (Butler 11). This innovative treatment of patriarchy's factitious assertion of the stable gendered identities serves as a means of contesting the socially and culturally determined roles for individuals by letting the characters 'do' their gender identities subversively.

In order to question her status quo as traditional feminine, Catherine enacts a romantic drama, pushing Frederic in the role of submissive lover. Here, she does not perform her traditional feminine role. The dialogue proceeds with Catherine telling Frederick to beg her for love: "And you do love me?"; "Say, I've come back to

Catherine in the night.""; "I love you so and it's been awful. You won't go away?"

(29). At this, Frederic remarks that she has been "probably a little crazy" (29) as he at first does not understand Catherine's performance. But Catherine makes it clear as he soon discovers when she clarifies:

"You're a nice boy," she said. "And you play it as well as you know how. This is a rotten game we play, isn't it? . . . You don't have to pretend you love me. That's over for the evening. . . . Please let's not lie when we don't have to. I had a very fine little show and I'm all right now. You see I'm not mad and I'm not gone off. It's only a little sometimes. (30)

Catherine manipulates overlooked expectations of feminine behavior and desire, and later Frederic's reaction shows that she has performed male roles. Here, by her verbal performance, she deconstructs gender, openly questioning through self-conscious shaping. Not only can Catherine change her behavior and attitude, she is aware of the stereotypes and the expectations attached to male and female in society.

Catherine continually shows insightful judgment and enthusiasm and has a far more important role in the novel as she does not want to be just a sexual object of Frederic's desires. In Frederic's life, so many things happen: he is shot during the war, admitted to the hospital, makes Catherine pregnant and is left alone behind when she dies in the end. Catherine goes to the hospital in Milan; she works day and night in the hospital. She goes with Frederick when he has to flee the country after deserting the army. She tries to make their unborn child legitimate as she visits the library to find out about the process. But she does not feel guilty about conceiving the child without wedlock. She is supportive and she stays positive and calm even in the most stressful and gruesome situations. When Frederic has regrets and grievances about fleeing the

country, he says: "I feel like a criminal. I've deserted from the army". Catherine replies: "Darling, please be sensible. It's not deserting from the army. It's only the Italian army" (194). She has a calm and reassuring quality, confidence and wisdom, which makes her domineering personality. This also shows that gender is a temporal process: one learns to perform gender correctly over time. So, while Catherine plays a role similar to that of male, which deconstructs the traditional feminine gender because she takes active charge of the changes and situation around her as if she is a male. She breaks the traditional role of gender identity as she performs so-called male roles. In her relationship with Frederic, she does not become serious like males in patriarchal society.

Catherine and Frederic lead compatible and active sexual life irrespective of their different occupations, their personalities and their interests. They praise each other and this gradually turns into a love so deep that Frederic at one point says "I felt faint with loving her so much" (230). Their life and identity becomes dependent on each other. The love of Frederic and Catherine does not ruin their life; rather it brings happiness. When Frederic stays in the hospital, she becomes the major person to make the decision about their relationship. The fact that she spends six months at the hospital having non-marital sexual relations with him proves that she is unconventional woman; because at that time, this act would be seen as scandalous behavior. She considers herself the owner of her sexuality and enjoys her time with him. During the stay in the hospital, Frederic, he says:

"I'll have to go back to the front pretty soon" and Catherine replies:  
 'We won't think about that until you go. You see I am happy, darling, and we have a lovely time. I haven't been happy for a long time and when I met you perhaps I was nearly crazy. Perhaps I was crazy. But

now we're happy and we love each other. Do let's just be happy. You are happy, aren't you? Is there anything I do that you don't like? Can I do anything to please you? Would you like me to take down my hair? Do you want to play?" Frederic replies: "Yes and come to bed". She says: "All right. I'll go and see the patience first." (105)

This exchange of dialogue between Frederic and Catherine does not in any way reflect her submissiveness and insecurity. In real sense, if we look closely, we can see that she is completely in charge of everything. In other words, she takes the lead in her relationship with Frederick.

Catherine never appears to embody the attributes of Victorian woman such as characteristic of submissiveness, as she becomes a "good girl" for Henry (124). The closer analysis of the novel reveals Catherine's dominance and struggle for subverting gender binary in her relationship with Frederic. As she remarks: "No I'm not. But you mustn't mind, darling. I'll try and not make trouble for you. I know I've made trouble now. But haven't I been a good girl until now? You never knew it, did you?" (124). Catherine confesses that Catherine has always been trying to parodying male nature and behaviour.

Throughout the novel Catherine emphasizes on the equality of herself and Frederic. She even talks about cutting her hair short so that they would be same. The following dialogue between them shows this:

'I wouldn't let you cut yours.

'It would be fun. I'm tired of it. It's an awful nuisance in the bed at night.

'I like it.'

'Wouldn't you like it short?'

'I might. I like it the way it is.'

"It might be nice short. Then we'd both be alike. Oh, darling, I want you so much I want to be you too'. (266)

Catherine's longing for cutting her hair short in order to be like Frederic shows that she rejects the traditional concept of feminine identity -- custom of keeping long hair. She no longer wants to retain the traditional gender identity. Considering the role of physical appearance in establishing an identity, Catherine's desire for haircut is the clearest example of how physical appearance influences our perception of ourselves and our identity. It is remarkable to see how the haircut changes her understanding of her own gender identity. Although she tends to make seemingly submissive comments at times to Frederic, such as "I'll say just what you wish and I'll do what you wish" (96), but she remains the master all the time. For independent identity, in the words of Virginia Woolf, "one must be woman-manly or man womanly" (102). Here, Woolf emphasizes on androgynous characteristics. She does not believe in being androgynous at superficial level; she talks about the androgynous brain and the androgynous not just androgyny as physical characteristic. So by wavering between male and female gender, Catherine becomes androgynous, which helps subvert pre-conceived gender identity.

Butler argues that "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts, adding furthermore that "gender [...] must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (519). This argument proves helpful for the interests of this study since Butler goes on to assert that:

This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of a constituted social temporality. Significantly, if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style. (520)

Hence, a gendered identity could be understood to be a fictitiously abiding identity, which could herald the possibility of subversion within the heterosexual matrix.

Catherine is a rebellious woman. She does not repeat conventional codes because she questions traditional values of marriage as she refuses to officially marry Frederic. This refusal also reveals how Catherine goes against the Victorian ideal of domesticity and matrimony. She tries to act or perform non-conforming values. In this way, she subverts gender stereotype by not tenuously sticking to it. Catherine refuses to marry her first lover for eight years because she thought it would "be bad for him" (18). She seems to regret not marrying him more for his sake than hers, as she states, "I could have given him that anyway" (18). She "refuses a traditional feminine role of wife" many times even after she gets pregnant as she says, "I'm not going to be married in this splendid matronly state" (261). Catherine's treatment of her baby also shows how she does not want to be confined by domesticity as well as

feminine values. When she tells Frederic she is pregnant, she says, "I did everything. I took everything but it didn't make any difference" (124). She tends to reject motherhood as Catherine sees it as a hindrance and is more worried about how she looks as a pregnant woman rather than about making plans after the delivery of the baby. She does not discuss going home to start a family and a life with Frederic. Instead she talks about going on travel around the country and see different places. Living a traditional domestic life and performing traditional feminine role never seems to be the priority for Catherine as she possesses androgynous attributes within her mind. Thus, Catherine exploits her knowledge of both sexes and performs masculinity and femininity by the rules.

Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* deconstructs the nature/culture binary by theorizing identity as a performance that can be chosen and thereby parodied as a method of critique. Performativity conceptualizes how one's sense of self is formed but can also be reformed. Regulatory narratives naturalize categories of sex, gender, class, race and nationality to legitimate the status quo and to shape and control identity. Butler offers solution to this problem by suggesting to us we manipulate the forms of identity available to us:

[The] subject is not determined by the rules through which it is generated because signification is not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition [of those enforced discourses and gestures, so] it is only within the practice of repetitive signifying that a subversion of [the imposed] identity becomes possible. (145)

Thus, one can "perform" an identity using the prevalent codes and meanings in society, but a parody of the naturalized role reveals that identity as a construct. So as



identity can be constructed and reconstructed through performativity, it gives us more options and some control over the self. This enables people to assume subjectivities that break the rules of gender identity.

Catherine is not like traditional women who are shy in sexual matters. She rejects the taboo associated with sex as she openly asks Frederic about his visit to prostitutes. She wants to have experience on sex through his experience. So, Catherine asks Frederic about his physical relationship that took place before the two of them met:

Tell me. How many people have you ever loved?"

"Nobody."

"How many others really?"

"None."

"How many have you — how do you say it? — stayed with?"

"None."

"You're lying to me."

"Yes." (95)

This could be interpreted as Catherine having manly opinion about sexual activities. This way, she questions traditional gender roles. This could also be seen as further proof that Catherine herself is a woman of adventure like males, whose own experience would possibly be intensified by the stories told by Frederic. She is a woman who knows what she wants. The evidence suggests that she is being playful while also getting what she herself wants as she complains, "I wish I'd had it to be like you. I wish I had stayed with all your girls . . ." (265). Catherine expresses the desire to be sexually deviant just like Frederic and shows a frivolous attitude towards

the notion of having sexual affairs. This explains how androgynous act of Catherine deconstructs existing traditional gender roles by emulating masculine nature.

Carolyn Heilbrun emphasizes the androgynous life style in practice in *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* in which “for the first time a group existed in which masculinity and femininity were marvelously mixed in its members of Bloomsbury group” (118). Here, Woolf’s intellectual stimulus in the Bloomsbury group has been positive because of group’s open-minded view on sexuality and desire as Heilbrun writes that, “The fusion within the Bloomsbury group, perhaps for the first time, of “masculinity” and “femininity” made possible the ascendancy of reason which excludes violence but not passion; Bloomsbury consciously rejected the Victorian stereotypes of “masculine” and “feminine” in favor of an androgynous ideal (126). Thus, Woolf advocates androgynous acts for gender equality.

On the surface, one can describe Catherine 'queer', however, she pursues own set of values which can also be acceptable choices of how to be an independent woman. Catherine makes some very unconventional choices for her time and place and she needs to be acknowledged for being bold for the freedom of choice when it comes to religion, sexual liberation and women in the workforce. Catherine always wants to be independent, bold and male protecting figure. She no longer wants to remain docile as women have been since the time immemorial. In all situations, she wants to remain so. She wants to live as a human being. So she always treats Frederic in that way and wants to be treated in the same way. Her statement that "There isn't any me. I'm you. Don't make up a separate me" (103) can be understood that by saying this she reassures him that she is faithful and committed during a conversation where Frederic is displaying insecurities about their relationship. She uses this expression in a loving way to tell him that she is very serious in her commitment to

him, and perhaps also that she expects the same dedication from him. Catherine telling Frederic that they are the same person is neither strange nor scandalous, but a sign of love, fidelity and devotion. When Frederic brings up the question of marriage, saying "I'll marry you the day you say", Catherine replies "Don't talk as though you had to make an honest woman out of me, darling. I'm a very honest woman. You can't be afraid of something if you are only happy and proud of it. Aren't you happy?" and he replies, "But you won't ever leave me for someone else?" (104). Here, her self-assurance and sense of independence is evident, proving that she is not a woman who follows society's norms, but rather chooses to live by her own rules and thereby redefining the gender boundaries and rules of her time. In her opinion, they do not need a legal document to prove their love and commitment to each other but Frederic feels insecure about this even though he is a male.

One of the important things that Catherine does in the novel is to act as protecting male figure. She does so repeatedly throughout the novel. This indicates, like Butler argues, that gender identity is created through the repetition of acts, acts that we learn to perform from an early age, and that consequently make our gender identity appear as natural. Butler notes that because gender is a performance, and a performance of a temporal character, meaning that a gender identity is created through the repetition of acts over time, there is space and possibility for change. Butler explains how, "Possibilities of transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" (520). Gender is an act, and thus it can be changed, which Catherine tries to do repetitive androgynous acts.

Catherine is a modern and independent woman of her time. This becomes clear when she declares that she has no regard for religion during a time when being

religious was considered the norm and the church had great influence on people's lives in Western society. About marriage, Catherine states "You see darling, it would mean everything to me if I had a religion. But I haven't any religion" (104). Frederic, on the other hand, struggles with the idea of religion through the novel and seems indecisive on the subject. This suggests that he is more conservative than she is. Catherine also says that she has no beliefs in a life after death, while Frederic is more confused and hesitant. The ideas of religion and marriage are two factors that have traditionally placed women in the home. This limitation or confinement renders women as subservient to men. The fact that she opposes both religion and marriage shows that she is a strong rebellious woman who does not adapt to the norms of society but instead makes choices that suit her as a person. Her sarcastic statement "I'm having a child and that makes me contented not to do anything. I know I'm awfully stupid now and I talk too much and I think you ought to get away so you won't be tired of me" (264) suggests a bygone era in which a woman's work centered around maintaining a home and filling it with children. But Catherine wants to get out of this stereotyping by repeatedly bringing male/female binary to question through her androgynous acts.

Butler does not believe in feminist criticism which tries to resist a system by which it is constituted as a category, and by which women are constituted as subjects, and instead she asks for a resistance from within that system, meaning that one needs to question the categorization, rather than escaping it. Butler argues that to think of women as a single category is to reduce the multiplicity of gender identities to a limited concept. So she views that it is time to allow a radical critique that seeks to free feminist theory from the necessity of having to "construct a single or abiding ground" (7). As a result, Butler rethinks "possibilities for sexuality and identity within

the terms of power itself" (42). According to Butler, the division between sex and gender keeps the binary intact, and thus it needs to be rejected. She views that sex--though biological--cannot be prior to gender as both get their meaning through social construct as Butler argues: "Gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts" (10). In this way, this categorization is understood within gendered frameworks that are socially constructed

Likewise, it is clear that Catherine is well aware of the expected norms and standards of her time and she challenges these by exclaiming that "You always feel trapped biologically" (125). This shows that she is not comfortable in the traditional female role and that she is very aware of the fact that she is using her submissive style of conversation in order to pave her separate way. She often deconstructs gender through her acts or speech and she thinks over the fact that it is her job as the woman to be pregnant with child, something that biology has decided and she cannot do anything about. While they are in the boat going to Switzerland, Frederic tells the pregnant, rowing Catherine: "Watch out the oar doesn't pop you in the stomach" and she answers: "If it did, life might be much simpler" (245). Here, she suggests on the subject of abortion and the freedom of choice for women when it comes to motherhood. This is an indication that she is playing with the ideas of what it means to be male and female. Once they are in Switzerland they both live a domesticated life, going on walks, making plans for their future together and preparing for the arrival of their baby. Once, Catherine comments about their unborn child: "She won't come between us, will she? The little brat?" (269). This depicts Catherine distancing herself from the archetypical loving mother figure by using unexpected language in

referring to their baby. This behaviour is considered unconventional and ambiguous within the status quo.

In her life, Catherine, in fact, gets the same amount of enjoyment, benefit and satisfaction from their relationship as Fredric. When he finds out that she is suffering from loss of blood shortly after giving birth, his devastations shows:

Everything was gone inside of me. I did not think. I could not think. I knew she was going to die and I prayed that she would not. Don't let her die. Oh God, please don't let her die. I'll do anything for you if you won't let her die. Please, please, please, dear God, don't let her die. Dear God, don't let her die. Please, please, please, dear God, don't let her die. God, please make her not die. I'll do anything you say if you don't let her die. (291)

When Catherine dies, it is a great tragedy for Frederic. Her death devastates his life. He loses not only the woman that he loves, but he also suffers the loss like that of a strong male protector and when she asks him to go away at the end of her struggle it is clear that there is nothing he can do to help her. Catherine reassures Frederic by saying "Don't worry darling...I'm not a bit afraid. It's just a dirty trick" (255). It shows strength and grace on the part of Catherine. When she dies, she does not die just as a passive spectator but as an active force of human society and civilization.

Catherine is a woman who is forceful in getting what she wants. In this way, Catherine Barkley possesses the courage, wit and determination to behave androgynously and live by her own rules and that makes her a rebel who questions the traditional notion of gender identity. She constantly makes attempts to get out of status quo of tradition feminine identity by performing male roles just as women, according to Butler, take on their feminine identity through performing gender roles

dictated by patriarchy. Catherine Barkley does not live in the shadow of her male counterpart Frederic. But she continually proves herself to be an independent, honorable and courageous woman.

To sum up, this thesis on Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* analyzes how the protagonist Catherine Barkley subverts traditional concept of male female gender distinction by emulating masculine nature through her androgynous acts. Catherine performs roles traditionally considered to be masculine. Throughout the novel, she acts like a male figure because she always emerges as domineering with Frederic Henry. Everywhere she is in charge of everything. In difficult times, it is Catherine who acts as a guide or counselor. She does not seek her equality by remaining within the traditional concept of gender as other feminists advocate for. As But Judith Butler postulates the hierarchy between traditionally conceived notion of sex and gender should be deconstructed for complete emancipation of women. She believes that both sex and gender are social construct as they get meaning in social milieu within a given culture. So, this helps women to question their traditional concept of gender identity ultimately liberating them from traditional role of sex and gender. So, Catherine Barkley, by acting and performing masculine roles, creates different gender identity as she refuses to take traditional concept of sex and gender for granted. This enables her to experience and enjoy being both male and female.

Catherine disowns traditional notion of marriage, motherhood and domesticity as she declares that she possesses no religion. She prefers to cultivate masculine attitudes as she wants to have short haircut, which shows her frustration about the limits of traditional femininity. She frequently asks Frederic not to get biologically trapped for freedom. While being respectful towards Frederic, Catherine tries to convince him that she has not been submissive woman as she says that she has never

been a "good girl." She constantly makes attempts to get out of status quo of tradition feminine identity by performing masculine roles. In this way, Catherine's vacillation between masculine and feminine roles in the novel ambiguity in gender and sexual identity, which ultimately helps subvert the concept of traditional feminine gender role.



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