CHAPTER II

*The Sun Also Rises*

Ernest Hemingway’s first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, published in 1926 is one of his best novels. The novel is widely regarded as the definitive account of the epoch that followed World War I. *The Sun Also Rises* tells the story of a group of expatriates mired in postwar disillusionment and despair. The story centers on the narrator, Jake Barnes and his love interest, Lady Brett Ashley, with whom he is unable to sustain a romantic relationship due to a war injury that has rendered him impotent. According to W.M. Frohock, “Jake’s physical disability is in large part a symbol for the general feeling of frustration and pointlessness of life” (171).

It portrays and celebrates the empty bohemianism of the ‘lost generation’. It provides a peep into the life of restless American expatriates settled in Paris in the early 20s, and below the surface of the main textures runs yet another quest, that is, quest for meaning to relationships. The mood of emotional impotence dominates the whole novel. According to David Savola, the novel ultimately celebrates the relationship between human kind and natural world. In support of his view he says, “*The Sun Also Rises* is profoundly concerned with ecological considerations, as the passage of Ecclesiastes echoed in its title. The novel presents the main characters as aimless, displaced persons without a secure sense of meaning or value and suggests that the characters could find that meaning and value in cultivating a more intimate connection with the natural environment. The novel criticizes conventional depiction of nature and calls for a literature that offers a more complex picture of the connection between humanity and the natural world” (226).

While making biographical study of the novel, Young asserts that, “The characters in *The Sun Also Rises* are recognizable people taken from real life and the hero has a peculiar psycho-biographical approach” (57). Critics with biographical inclination towards Hemingway’s works observed that there was a close affinity between Hemingway and hero. To quote Young again “The novel *The Sun Also Rises*
is an expression of Hemingway’s obsession with the wound he had received during World War I. He views Jake as physically as well as psychologically wrecked who is humorless and passive” (59).

Philip Young terms Jake’s wound as an “objective correlative” (86) for a spiritually lost post-war world. Thus, the reader might laugh at Jake and his friends. Young contends that “Despite a lot of fun The Sun Also Rises is still Hemingway’s Wasteland, and Jake is Hemingway’s Fisherking” (88). He was articulating, what has become a familiar—and in some quarters at least—an orthodox reading of the novel. It is widely held that The Sun Also Rises is a prose version of The Wasteland, its theme of the sterility of life in the modern world. Jake Barnes is a representative victim of this world and his famous wound, received in the Great War, is a symbol of the general impotence of the times. Young stretches the psycho-biographical approach to its extremity when he observes that “Jake projects qualities of the man who created him, many of his experiences are still either literal or transformed autobiography and his wound is still the crucial fact about him” (54).

Baker also focuses on the manhood prevalent in the novel but he also traces the symbols throughout the novel. According to Baker, much of the strength of The Sun Also Rises may be attributed to the complicated interplay between two points of view which it embodies. According to one of them the novel is a romantic study in sexual and ultimately in spiritual frustration. Besides this more or less orthodox view, however, must be placed with the idea, that it is a qualitative study of varying degree of physical and spiritual manhood, projected against a background of ennui and emotional exhaustion which is everywhere implicitly condemned (144-145). Baker also traced the importance and significance of symbols in The Sun Also Rises. Rain is one of the symbols in the novel and while usually rain stands for life, for fertility, for vegetation and growth it stands for destruction or dislocation, for lost hopes and for bad weather in The Sun Also Rises. Apart from the masculine attributes and the presence of symbols, Carlos Baker praises Hemingway’s truthful depiction of things in his works. In his own words Hemingway once stated “I only know that I have seen” (web). Thus Baker concludes “It is clear that the strongest conviction in
Hemingway the aesthetician—the principle underlying his sense of place and fact and scene, the principle supporting his discipline of double perception—is the importance of telling truth” (54-59).

Bhim S. Dahiya’s main concern has also been focused on the hero but he successfully manages to detach the hero from all types of biographical attachments and finds him to be a developing fictional character. Dahiya states, “Jake is a developing character, and his self awareness as well as his awareness of Brett, is not a matter of sudden realization at the end: his development is built within the very structure of the novel. If he continues to show concern for Brett until the end, it is not because he has any illusion about her. He is fully aware both of Brett and of his own situation from the very beginning” (80). Dahiya praises the Hemingway hero and says, “The important thing to note in case of Hemingway hero is that his consciousness of death does not make him lose interest in life on the contrary, it makes him all the more hungry for life” (92). Dahiya deals with each and every aspect of the hero’s life. But the predominantly accepted notion of the ‘code hero’ is described as a misconception in his work.

James T. Farrell’s critical evaluation of The Sun Also Rises chiefly revolves around the American society and America of twenties after the World War I. Farrell asserts “The mood and attitude of the main characters is that of people on vacation. They set out to do what people want to do on a vacation. They have love—affairs, they drink, go fishing and see new spectacles” (5). Farrell further says that the novel struck deeper chords in the youth of twenties, which Gertrude Stein called “lost generation” (29). The mood of disillusionment portrayed in The Sun Also Rises had been the way of feeling and acting, in fact a social habit in twenties after the World War:

“What’s the matter? You sick?”

“Yes”

“Everybody’s sick. I’m sick too.” (The Sun Also Rises, 16)
Hemingway tries to express this mood through escapades, through drinking, fishing, bull fighting and sexual exploits. Hemingway’s writing was exciting and possessed of an extraordinary power of suggestiveness, it was actually participating in the lives of very real man and woman. Conrad Aiken reiterates about Hemingway’s writing: “Hemingway clearly has the ability to make his story move and move with intensity, through his dialogues” (89). Hemingway maintains his choice of simple words in every aspect of the novel, whether it is the theme of the novel or a scene or facts regarding a character. His use of simple words, arranged in short and simple sentences, can be seen in the novel through out. He tends to express the theme in a nutshell manner:

“You’re an expatriate” (SAR 115)
“You’ve lost touch with the soil” (SAR 115)
“You hang around café’s” etc. (SAR 115)

Cornad believes that, “if there is better dialogue being written today I do not know where to find it…. It is in the dialogue almost entirely that Mr. Hemingway tells his story and makes people live and act” (91). Michael Reynolds too asserts about Hemingway’s skill of writing: “His writing is so incredible because he tried to show what had happened to him in his life and in his times” (58). He would take elements from his life and put them into writing. One of the most persistent themes of twenties, death of love in World War I, has been focussed on, in the essay The Death of Love in The Sun Also Rises, by Mark Spilka. Spilka cites: “all major writers recorded it, often in piecemeal manner as part of the larger post war scene, but only Hemingway seems to have caught it whole and delivered it in lasting fictional form” (18).

For Hemingway they (the characters) represent the kinds of degradation which can occur at any point in modern society. These characters are all disaffiliates who have cut themselves off from the conventional society. This war-wearied generation was facing the after effects of war and creating a new world for them with their own set of rules, terms and conditions.
“I’ve always done just what I wanted.”
“I know.”
“I do feel such a bitch.”
“Well” I said.
“My God!” said Brett, “The things a woman goes through.” (SAR 184)

Critics have also focused on the aspects of images, irony, humor, satire and other narrative aspects. In the words of Reymond S. Nelson “Hemingway is a highly suggestive expressionist” (32). Linda-Wagner also feels that throughout his works “The imagist-dicta remained at the centre of his works” (61). Writ Williams describes the novel, a tragedy. He views the characters under the preconceived patterns and that leads him to consider The Sun Also Rises as a tragedy. Norman Grebstein and Jackson Benson finds the traces of humor in Hemingway’s work. But in the critical approach of S.P.S. Dahiya a whole new dimension of humor is unveiled. Dahiya states, “Humor in The Sun Also Rises, as in all great comedies, emanates from the idiosyncrasies of characters and incongruities of situations and is fully integrated with the thematic and structural designs of the novel…. Hemingway is as successful in raising a smile as in providing a loud laughter” (75).

R.W. Stallman regards the novel as a static picture of modern wasteland. He views it as a dramatization of the sense of vanity, futility and sterility. In his opinion the novel’s characters are also static and Jake “ends where he began, at the dead end” (184).

If we read through the Hemingway criticism done over the years it is discovered that his works have been subjected to a variety of interpretations. A survey of these critical efforts reveal that most of these attempts have been focused on a few aspects of the writer’s work, mainly centred on the study of Hemingway hero, the Hemingway code and the Hemingway style. It is rather surprising that some very significant aspects of Hemingway’s works have been greatly ignored by the critics.

Hemingway’s works are mirrors of the society. He writes what he sees. His storylines, characters, dialogues, everything reflects the society of twenties. The
aspects which have not gained much critical attention, is his unbiased and realistic approach to his female characters. While his contemporaries visualize women only as demigoddesses or bitches, Hemingway as a true feminist, portrays his woman as human beings, as passing through the same traumas and crisis as men and as emerging equally heroic, if not more, with them. Hemingway’s female protagonists share as much as men. Critics of Hemingway conveniently tend to neglect and ignore the importance of his female characters. Though Brett Ashley has been a centre of many critical interpretations by number of critics for decades, it is clear through the history of that critical reception that Brett’s true nature has been largely ignored. She has been cast aside with scathing descriptions.

Edmund Wilson first tagged her as “an exclusively destructive force” (238). His perception, for the most part remained unchallenged for decades, following Wilson lead, critics quickly labeled Brett as bitch. Brett Ashley has been denounced as a weak character. Allen Tate has called her “false” (642) and has claimed that she is more caricature than character.

The more serious and frequent critical charges against Brett Ashley are that she lacks the characteristics of a woman and worse that she is a bitch. Members of what Roger Whitlow terms the “Brett-the-Bitch” (51) school of criticism include Leslie Fiedler who describes Brett as a “demi-bitch” (319), John Aldridge who calls her a “compulsive bitch” (24) and more recently Reisel Mimi Gladstein who labels her a “part bitch Goddess” (61).

Even those who shy away from the actual term bitch tend to delineate Brett in other destructive ways. Bretram D. Sarason glibly brands “Brett as a woman who made castration her hobby” (10). Theodore Bardacke claims that “Brett is a woman devoid of womanhood” (343). Jackson Benson says that “Brett is a female who never becomes a woman” (69). Reisal Mimi Gladstein apart from calling Brett a bitch Goddess also observes that Brett has a “bisexual image” (62).

A few more of the more sympathetic yet still fundamentally conflicted readings of Brett try to excuse her behavior as a result of her putative pursuit of self-destruction. Whitlow maintains that “Brett is a self-induced sufferer but … she is not
a bitch because nymphomania motivates her self-destructive actions” (52). In Woman and the loss of Eden in Hemingway’s Mythology, Carol H. Smith does not use the term “nymphomania” but states that Brett “hopes to find in the drug of sex, a way to forget the future and the past” (132). Bloom claims Brett Ashley to be a “beautiful alcoholic aristocrat and a Goddess who turns men into swine” (148). Brett Ashley is a very debated character variously termed by various derogatory names by the critics and readers alike.

Soon after the novel’s publication Allen Tate, a prominent poet and critic, commented in 1926 that “Brett is ‘a device’ in the novel which do[es] not improve it but only extends it appeal” (43). This argument belittled the importance of Brett. In 1950s the highly influential critic Malcom Cowley also did not find much importance in Brett. “Brett is a pathetic brave figure” (69). Wendy Martin sees “Brett as a ‘femme fatale’ —a woman dangerous to men” (71).

The readings of Brett are diverse and passionate. Hemingway had a very strong masculine image, popularly known as Papa Hemingway. He has been synonymous with a strong stereotype of masculinity. The He-man image of the writer contributed extensively to the biased treatment of his female characters. Even some critics who ardently believe in the autobiographical connections in the writer’s life and his works, somewhere tend to connect his relation with his mother and other women, to the characters that he had portrayed in his novels.

It rather seems to be a general consensus of Hemingway criticism that his woman characters fall into one of the two categories, either that of the bitch who threatens to rob the Hemingway male of his strength and integrity or that of the dream girl, a mindless creature who makes no demands upon her man and who exists only to satisfy his sexual needs. And according to those critics who categorize Hemingway’s multi-dimensional female characters into these two categories, Brett Ashley falls in the first category and therefore belongs to the Bitch category. A large part of Brett’s harsh criticism and misreadings depended on the critics’ preoccupation with Hemingway’s existing criticism which hugely centred on his masculine writing traits. Another factor would be the war era, the roaring twenties, that reinvented almost
everything, from tradition and values, to style of living and dressing up, to mannerisms of both men and women.

As the time moved into twentieth century critics started re-examining the previous criticism and new theories emerged on the surface, providing a whole new dimensions to Brett. According to this new wave criticism the Bitch became the epitome of twentieth century liberated, empowered new woman. Critics now find her well developed and admire her for her complex personality and hail her as an excelled example of change, power and liberty.

Brett Ashley is a dramatically new character who is radical like ‘New Woman’ figures. She has indomitable will and strength of character that allows her to explore her own prerogatives to forge her own relationships and to attempt to find pleasure and satisfaction in tragic circumstances. In order to appreciate Brett it is rather very important, to have an understanding of the time period that she was a part of. The post World War era when all the old traditions and values lost their significance, saw the emergence of a new war-weared generation.

The 20s acquired on isolated position in the cultural history as it was bounded by a war and depression. A chronological presentation of events does not really give more than their surface. The real value lies, not merely in newspaper copy or in public event, but in the ways in which the literature expresses—formally, climatically and meaningfully—the several important preoccupations, mores of thoughts and attitudes of the times. In the words of Frederick J. Hoffman—

If literature is important to history, it is not because it serves as a social document or as a foot-note to political or intellectual history, but primarily because it is a culmination, a genuine means of realizing the major issues of its time …. Literature is not valuable simply because it ‘uses’ the matter of the time, nor merely because it has degrees of formal excellence but because it helps us to see the reality of any idea in a full, clean and meaningful form; the form is the matter, the matter is in the form and the reality which is thus
formally given is a moral and aesthetic anecdote of one or another aspect of the time (12-13).

The nineteen twenties can be neatly separated as a period of illusion between two severe political realities—the end of the First World War, which tarnished liberal idealism and the Wall Street Crash of 1929, which in turn discredited the entire social and political action of the Jazz age. It was a period of tension between past and present: an era of lost orientations, new-manners, self-conscious fashions, the exploration of new tastes, a search for personal identity through the quickening flux of modern history.

In most of the countries in the West but especially in the United States, the nineteen twenties was a period of intensified style in life: an era of new manners, a modernized world-weariness, a dedication to a changing historicist sense of fashion. That was a period of behavioral experimentalism and new styles of personality. There was a criticism of the pre-war generation and of the civilization it had made: it was a failure of communication, of social meaning and values and of morality. These failures were of crucial nature because they touched closely the dominating emotional and aesthetic needs of the younger generation which were not caused by the war but were revealed by the events of the war.

This decade was marked by a disrespect for traditions and an eager wish to try out any suggestions regarding the nature of man—his personal beliefs, convictions or way to salvation. The nineteen twenties was marked as a period of radical changes in morals and manners, its accent was on disillusionment on the social or political level coupled with fantasies of success on the personal level. It was also marked by tremendous affluence. The twenties saw the dominance of youth and feminist freedom resulting in the conception of a ‘new woman’ in literature. The creative writer either surrendered to the stress of history or sought to redefine the recurrent metaphors of faith and belief, like Hemingway, who sought refuge in action as an antidote to nihilism.
In 20s, it was the remarkable spectacle of a large part of the emerging literary generation leaving home and expatriating itself to Paris. Most of the writers in Paris wrote about America. They seemed to be ready to think of America not as a static society, but as a rapidly changing one and their reactions to the change were not always those of cries for more of the same, but rather of desire to reconvert some of the American past into valuable currency. Far from being remote from American culture: they shared its confusions—its attachments to the past, its speedy rush to the future.

Change was the norm of the time as new advances in technology, radical new social theories and two brutal World Wars changed the face of the world forever. 20th century American literature reflected these times, leaving behind the romantic and spiritual world of the past for the harsh realities of modern society. The modernist writers focused on writing about real human fears, emotions and desires. First World War has created an independent chapter in the history of American literature, it produced writers who wrote exclusively on war and its destructiveness.

Fitzgerald and Hemingway have created the most penetrating literary accounts of the America in 20s. The common experience they shared in the First World War was of sheer disillusion. The values of society seemed hollow and artificial by comparison with the stark and harsh realities of the battle field. Disillusioned with society in general and America in particular, they cultivated a romantic self-absorption—a deliberate retreat into private emotion. The war and experience in Europe had given the young Americans a new maturity and a broader outlook. And because they had been freed from their narrow home atmosphere and were informed by their European experiences, the literature which they produced was more spirited and significant. They could see American habits and outlooks objectively and so write about them candidly.

Gertrude Stein is said to have remarked that the gang of young American expatriates writers represented by Hemingway and his contemporaries were “all a lost generation”(i). The characters of the lost generation novels live in restless pursuit of excitement and pleasure. Their Europe was made of elegant restaurants, picturesque
bars and intriguing local customs. They enjoyed in kicking over the conventional traces, indulging in heavy drinking and moving from one place to another looking for aimless and casual sex.

Hemingway has reflected fully, the temper, mores and modes of 20s in his writings. The writer of nineteen twenties who, in fact, does embody the strain and crisis of the times as a matter of language is surely Ernest Hemingway, who in *The Sun Also Rises* achieves brilliant achievement in organizing post war tensions, pressures and situations. The novel is a dramatization of the psychological, emotional and spiritual lostness of the post war generation. Hemingway has presented in this novel the post war realities of disintegration and chaos in human relationships, emotional sterility and spiritual draught with great clarity and intensity. He reveals that his generation has “lost its guiding purpose and has been driven by time, fate or nerves into the feverish atmosphere of strained passion” (SAR 93).

In *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway has been mainly pre-occupied with showing the after-effects of war on those who have either experienced war at their own cost or have seen from close quarters, the pain and suffering caused by it. As a realist Hemingway has brought out the chaos of values, the gloom, the emptiness and frustration of his contemporary world. The strength of the novel lies in the positive note that it strikes. The novel does not depict the lostness of lost generation only but also suggests a way out of this atmosphere of spiritual aridity and moral chaos. He dramatizes the positive key of life also which revolves around humanistic values such as love, sympathy, a sense of human solidarity, compassion and commitment, to the values of friendship.

The war served as a presiding background of all Hemingway’s fiction in the 1920s. Hemingway’s position as an apprentice writer surrounded by women probably explains the important challenge posed to him by feminists. His response to the bohemian and sexually permissive environment that the feminist movement induced was ambivalent. Turning away from the sexual anarchy of the times, Hemingway adopted a kind of philosophical primitivism.
Frederick J. Hoffman gives special mention to Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* in his epic *The Twenties*, when he observes “A brilliant achievement in organizing postwar tensions, pressure and situations, *The Sun Also Rises* offers a concentrated picture of the 1920s. In its shifts of scene, its maneuvering of dramatis personae, its precision of narrative detail” (102).

The main spirit of twenties was marked by a general feeling of discontinuity associated with modernity and a break from traditions. The change was inevitable. In 1920s, with the passage of 19th amendment, women gained the right to vote, attaining the political equality, they had so long been fighting for. The 1920s saw significant changes in the lives of women, as a generational gap began to form between the ‘new woman’ of 1920s and the previous traditional generation.

Women were one of the dominant forces supporting the reform era from 1900 to 1920, attempting to wipe out prostitution, abolish the saloon, and in general trying to raise the social standards. After World War I, however, women sought less to change the other sex and concentrated on changing themselves. Women appeared in droves in the speakeasies and the new cocktail bars. As the Flapper—the new woman of the post-war decade—changed her attitude toward the consumption of alcoholic beverages, she also rapidly changed those pertaining to courtship, marriage and the rearing of children, the knee length dress, beauty contests and companionate marriages, all phenomena of the decade. In the essence the Flapper of the twenties demanded the same social freedom for herself that men enjoyed. Consequently she left home and asserted herself in the wide and outer world. This new woman of 1920s was labeled ‘Flapper’. It was both an image and an attitude. The flapper smoked, drank, danced and voted. She cut her hair, wore make-up and dressed differently. She was economically independent and belonged to working class. Wikipedia describes Flappers as,

*a new breed of young western women in the 1920s who more short skirts, bobbed their hair, listened to Jazz and flaunted their disdain for what was then considered acceptable behavior. Flappers were seen as brash for wearing
excessive make-up, drinking, treating sex in a causal manner, smoking, driving automobiles and otherwise flouting social and sexual norms. (Web)

The flapper epitomized not only the new, liberated status of woman but also the confident, energetic and highly materialistic society which was emerging in mid-twenties America. Less content to sit demurely at home, reading ‘appropriate’ novels and awaiting male suitors, more and more women were entering full or part-time employment beyond the restricted range of jobs traditionally open to women—teaching, cleaning and shop work.

_The Sun Also Rises_ not only exemplifies the themes common in modern American literature but it also presents Hemingway’s personal belief system through complex characters. The characters in the novel are urban cosmopolitans, freed from their economic and moral roots and to explore the pleasures of time, the consumption of new styles in sexual relationship. One such character is Lady Brett Ashley. Brett is one of Hemingway’s richest female characters; her personality gradually emerges as an intriguing mix of femininity and masculinity, strength and vulnerability, morality and dissolution. She stands out as one of Hemingway’s most developed female character. In the novel Brett enjoys a unique position of power.

Brett Ashley exemplifies the modern woman in her struggle for a post Victorian identity. Viewed from the perspective of American literary history, Brett Ashley is a dramatically new character who is radical like those new woman figures, who were emerging in the twenties. Michael S. Reynolds associates her with the “new women of the period (post-war era) who had been sexually liberated and who came of the age with the movie sex symbol ….. woman of the first Freudian generation for whom it was mandatory to discuss sexuality openly” (134).

Wendy Martin asserts in her essay: “The new woman’s radical challenge to the traditional social structure is seen in Lady Brett Ashley, who has stepped off the pedestal and now roams the world. Entering the public sphere without apology, she dares to frequent places and events previously off limits for her, such as the bar and the bullfights” (68).
As discussed Brett fits the flapper image of twenties ‘New Woman’ and ‘Flapper’. Brett is the emancipated woman of Hemingway in the sense that she denounces femininity both in her appearance and behavior. She is dark haired, sensuous, unsubmissive woman. Right from the beginning of the book, men find her irresistible; she attracts every single male who is present in her company, with her strikingly beautiful looks and confident body language. All the male characters appear to be in awe of her beauty through out.

John Atkins asserts that the “most celebrated of all Hemingway’s women is Lady Brett Ashley. She is a convenient symbol of the expatriate woman of the twenties” (14). Brett is bewitching in her appearance, Jake as narrator, first introduces Brett, he says:

Brett was damned good-looking. She wore a slipover jersey sweater and a tweed skirt and her hair was brushed back like a boy’s. She started all that. She was built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht and you missed none of it with that wool jersey. (SAR 22)

Identifying Brett’s image with that of a flapper only suggests that she was one of the mainstream women of that era. As a type of new woman of the 1920s she radiates independence, intelligence and beauty. Robert Cohn, too, is immediately captivated by Brett, and a little later, he says:

“She is a remarkably attractive woman.”
“Isn’t she?”
“There is a certain quality about her, a certain fineness. She seems to be absolutely fine and straight” (SAR 38).

Every significant male character in the novel at one point or another comments on Brett’s female attractiveness. When introduced to Brett, Bill Gorton says:

“Beautiful lady.” (SAR 74)
And later he says,
“She’s damned nice.” (SAR 76)

Mike Campbell admires Brett and says,

“Brett, you are a lovely piece. Don’t you think she’s beautiful?” (SAR 79)

Count Mippipopolous alludes to a quality similar to that ‘certain fineness’ when he remarks:

“You got class all over you.” (SAR 64).

And then there are Jake’s repeated narrative descriptions of Brett’s beauty and her personality:

“Brett wore a black, sleeveless evening dress, she looked quite beautiful.”
(SAR 146)

and again where he admires her,

“Brett was radiant.” (SAR 207)

Miller describes Brett as a woman “who is aware of and trapped by her beauty” (65). But Brett seems somewhat less sure of her appearance. It is a misconception that Brett is vain about her personal appearance. Rather she seems less aware of her appeal. When Mike asks Jake:

“Don’t you think she’s beautiful?”

Brett responds quickly:

“Beautiful! With this nose?” (SAR 79)

It, thus becomes clear that she is not vain about her physical beauty; in fact, there is a growing insecurity in her about her appearance. Another sign of this uncertainty appears in Brett’s response to allow the riau—riau dancers to encircle her. She seems uncomfortable when they choose her as “an image to dance around” (SAR 155) and instead wants to join the dance herself.

Physical beauty is just one aspect of her personality and now the critics also find her as a well developed character. It is quite fair to say that Brett knew exactly
what she was doing and refused to be taken advantage of. She is strong, bold, independent, self-employed, open and explicit about her thoughts.

Roger Whitlow gives three major reasons to re-evaluate the charges against Brett: —“Brett and other characters in the novel live in a milieu in which relationships and responsibilities are intentionally loose and disordered and her behavior merely reflects this milieu. —While Brett’s behavior towards men is sometimes thoughtless, it is never cruel and central to an understanding of Brett’s character. —She is a woman, who, like Catherine Barkley, has a mind disordered by the impact of the war” (54).

Hemingway makes it clear that this is an exceptionally appealing woman—bright, beautiful and sexual and to call Brett “non-feminine” or ‘bisexual’ or ‘a perversion of femininity’ is to measure her by a standard of womanhood which is confining and constricting indeed.

Lorie Watkins Fulton asserts in The Hemingway Review, that for decades Jake Barnes narration of The Sun Also Rises has effectively obscured the intricacies of Brett Ashley’s character, “Freed from the limits of Jake’s narration, imposes a re-examination of Brett and her role in Jake’s life shows that she stands as one of Hemingway’s most developed female personae, a woman eminently worthy of Jake’s fascination, as well as our own” (63).

Fulton states that many charges against Brett remain unchallenged or insufficiently challenged and the majority of critics continue to view her as a flawed character. And many such misinterpretations stem from the fact that readers in their first approach see Brett as Jake sees her. Scott Donaldson supports this point of view and asserts, “Jake Barnes tells the story of The Sun Also Rises so unobtrusively and convincingly that it never occurs to us to challenge his views of events” (26).

Jake emphatically says more than once:

“To hell with Brett. To hell with you Lady Ashley” (SAR 38).
This attitude could effect his narration, which seems questionable. Jake admits that he blames his desire for Brett on Brett herself.

“Probably I never would have had any trouble if I hadn’t run into Brett when they shipped me to England. I suppose she only wanted what she couldn’t have” (SAR 39).

Another example of Jake’s biased narration appears in chapter seventeen. Just after Brett begins her affair with bullfighter Pedro Romero, a lot of sarcasm and pun assumes an integral part of Jake’s narration when he talks about Brett as well as other characters also. Jake sees her, “Coming through the crowd in the square, walking, her head up as though the fiesta were being staged in her honor and she found it pleasant and amusing” (SAR 210).

However, it becomes clear on the very next page that he has totally misrepresented her desire for attention. Brett only wants to talk to Jake. Jake obviously narrates through his own prejudices and he remains our primary source of information about Brett. Jake uses sarcasm and indifferent attitude when he answers Cohn’s questions:

“I don’t believe she would marry anybody, she didn’t love.”

“Well”, I said, “She’s done it twice.” (SAR 38)

A lot of contempt that Brett has been through is because of the excessive admiration and infatuation that most of the male characters of the novel bestow on her and how she is unable to reciprocate all their feelings in the same way. Before labeling her bitch or circe one must measure, both, the milieu she is part of and the individuals whose interests she frustrates.

Brett is associated with many men in the novel and she denies their wishes in many ways. Brett is liberated, empowered and determined to do what she wants, she never comes under any compelled demand of any male character, be it Cohn or Romero. Anything imposed on her was returned with staunch and strong reactions,
but her reactions were never cruel. She is always composed in her behavior. As count once says:

“Mr. Barnes,” the count poured my glass full.

“She is the only lady I have ever known who was as charming when she was drunk as when she was sober.” (SAR 59)

Harold Bloom aptly indicates her importance in his statement when he says: “Whose novel is it anyway? Take Brett out of it and vitality would depart” (2).

No matter how largely Brett has been caste aside with scathing descriptions such as a nymphomaniac, a woman devoid of womanhood or a woman who never becomes a woman really, she will remain the central point of the novel without argument. Brett celebrates the spirit of the fiesta with her untamed charming personality. Almost all males along with the narrator Jake Barnes, somewhere or at some point of time or other, possess a desire to have a relationship with her. Brett enjoys a unique position of power in the novel-in today’s vernacular world she wears the pants in all her relationships. Brett as a human being is governed by her heart.

The entire character of Brett Ashley takes its shape amid the narration of Jake Barnes. These two share the most important relationship of the novel, a relationship exhibiting flavors of love, desirability, anger, support and jealousy as well. Observation of these two characters’ relationship opens us to find two disillusioned realistic people. As members of lost generation Brett and Jake continue to live without any definite purpose, suffering from their past. Jake and Brett’s relationship is like a roller coaster ride. A piece of conversation at the very beginning of the novel indicates the true nature of their relationship:

The taxi went up the hills, passed… we were sitting apart and we jotted close together going down the old street … Brett’s face was white and the long line of her neck showed in the bright light of the flares. The street was dark again and I kissed her. Our lips were tight together and then she turned away and
pressed against the corner of the seat, as far away as she could get. Her head was down.

“Don’t touch me,” she said. “Please don’t touch me.”

“What is the matter?”

“I can’t stand it.”

“Oh, Brett.”

“You mustn’t. You must know. I can’t stand it, that’s all. Oh, darling, please understand!”

“Don’t you love me?”

“Love you? I simply turn all to jelly when you touch me.”

“Isn’t there anything we do about it?” (SAR 25-26)

It indicates that they love each other, they feel there is nothing they can do about it and it is painful and destructive for them to be together. The problem for Brett is that she needs the companionship of a man who can fulfill her physical and psychological needs. But Jake can’t offer her sexual pleasure. Both know that Jake has limitations in this regard due to his wartime injuries; therefore, they arrive on the conclusion:

“There is not a damn thing we could do,” I said.

“I don’t know” she said. “I don’t want to go through that hell again.”

“We’d better keep away from each-other.” (SAR 26).

This dilemma of wanting each other and at the same time staying apart continues through out the novel.

Brett said “Would you mind very much if I asked you to do something?”

“Don’t be silly.”

“Kiss me just one more before we get there.” (SAR 27)

Brett seems to possess the only real satisfactory relationship with Jake. It is deep and she can be her real self with him. Brett’s understanding of Mike Campbell is
equally accurate. Although she does not have for him, the same deep liking and regard, she has for Jake, but she chooses him for marriage; because as she tells Jake:

“He’s my sort of thing.” (SAR 243)

Brett enjoys his company, “I heard Brett go into the room next door …. Mike woke up as she came in and they talked together. I heard them laugh. I turned off the light and tried to go to sleep…. (SAR 122).

But Mike becomes obsessive and that turns Brett off and she decides not to Marry him either: “I can’t even marry Mike.” (SAR 242) she tells Jakes.

“Why do you follow Brett around? Haven’t you any manners? How do you think it makes me feel?”
“You’re a splendid one to talk about manners.” Brett said, “You’ve such lovely manners.”
“Come on, Robert,” Bill said.
“What do your follow her around for?” Bill stood up and took hold of Cohn.
“Don’t go,” Mike said. “Robert Cohn’s going to buy a drink.”
Bill went off with Cohn. Cohn’s face was sallow. Mike went on talking. I sat and listened for a while. Brett looked disgusted.
“I say, Michael, you might not be such a bloody ass,” she interrupted, “I’m not saying he’s not right, you know.” She turned to me.” (SAR 142)

Even in the end of the novel in conversation with Jake. Brett admits, “I’m going back to Mike.” I could feel her crying as I held her close. “He’s so damned nice and he’s so awful. He’s my sort of thing.” (SAR 243)

Robert Cohn, with whom Brett eventually agrees to have a brief affair, fawns over Brett, he follows her almost everywhere, in fact, Robert Cohn is a bully who says all the wrong things about Brett. Right from the beginning Cohn dreams of having an affair with Brett.
The music started and Robert Cohn said: “Will you dance with me, Lady Brett?”

Brett smiled at him. “I’ve promised to dance this with Jacob…….”

“How about the next?” asked Cohn.

“We’re going.” Brett said. “We’ve a date up at Montmartre.”

Dancing, I looked over Brett’s shoulder and saw Cohn, standing at the bar, still watching her.

“You’ve made a new one there.” I said to her.

“Don’t talk about it, poor chap. I never knew it till just now.” (SAR 22-23)

As Miller says Brett is beautiful but at the same time unaware of her looks and appearance. Her looks got her many lovers but she never commits herself to any of them or encourages anybody’s feelings. Brett once says to Cohn:

“For God’s sake, go off somewhere. Can’t you see Jake and I want to talk.” (SAR 181)

But way too far from being cruel to Cohn, on several occasions she intervenes to prevent Mike from being cruel: “Shut up, Michael. Try and show a little breeding.” (SAR 141)

Cohn was the one who calls her all sorts of name from ‘circe’ to ‘sadist’. “He calls her circe.” Mike said, “He claims she turns men into swine. Damn good. I wish I were one of those literary chaps.” (SAR 119)

The seductive nature of Brett, an embodiment of New Woman, is the central theme of the novel. She has apparently never seen a corrida before and Jake explains it all to her in great details. He watches her closely to see how she responds to it, especially the goring of the horses. Far from being repulsed, she is fascinated and wants to sit in the front row, close to the action. She is intrigued by the ritual violence in the ring, a counterpart of the sexual violence all around her. Her fascination towards bull fights attracts her to Pedro Romero.
“Oh, isn’t he lovely,” Brett said, “And those green trousers.” (SAR 165)

Even though it becomes quite evident that Brett’s prime interest in Romero is of infatuation, but she still shows her caring nature towards him. Hemingway has depicted how a ‘New Woman’ is conscious of her inner self and her emotions. Brett confesses:

“Because I’m a goner,” Brett said.
“How?”
“I’m a goner. I’m mad about the Romero boy. I’m in love with him. I think.”
“I wouldn’t be if I were you.”
“I can’t help it. I’m a goner. It’s tearing me all up inside.”
“Don’t do it.”
“I can’t help it. I’ve never been able to help anything.” (SAR 152)

In Brett Ashley, Hemingway makes an attempt to deviate from the misogynistic views and he makes an attempt at creating a complex character. Brett Ashley exemplifies the modern woman in her struggle for a post-Victorian identity. She knows the difficulties. She knows she is weak and their lies her strength.

*The Sun Also Rises* is not a guide to reasonable behavior. It is not a song in praise of the so-called lost generation. It is a thorough moral examination of its times. If the readers or critics do not approve of Brett’s rather random sexual activities, it is quite possible that neither Jake nor Hemingway wanted approval for her so-called promiscuity. Brett Ashley was what she actually wanted to be. She is the type of woman who runs her own life, on her very own terms and conditions and her very own rules. Those were the modern times which witnessed the first sexual revolution of the twentieth century, the time when women stood out to become sexually liberated. And Brett Ashley precisely represents that generation of New-Woman.

In Brett Ashley, the readers find how troubling some of the adjustments to the new free life style can be. Brett values independence more than anything, as she proves over and over by disregarding the old social norms. Neither does she
compromise with her individuality nor does she suppress her voice in favor of what she regards to be the right cause or the right action. Hemingway has shown many dimensions of a new woman, for example, her strong will to do whatever she considers right as well as her vulnerability.

No, It wasn’t that. He really wanted to marry me. So I wouldn’t go away from him, he said. He wanted to make it sure I could never go away from him after I’d gotten more womanly, of course. (SAR 242)

Brett chooses her freedom above everything and that makes her the legendary epitome of new liberated woman. Brett also had generous side to her character about which Jake once mentions and which shows Brett as a very generous person:

I shouldn’t think so. She never has any money. She gets five hundred quid a year and pays three hundred and fifty of it in interest of Jews. (SAR 320)

Brett definitely comes across as a genuinely dignified person and even Jake admits that she never had plenty of money but in the course of novel, she is seen rejecting all the monetary proposals made to her. Firstly Brett turns down the count’s offer of ten thousand dollars in exchange for accompanying him on a trip to Biarritz:

“Oh, everywhere. He just brought me here now. Offered me ten thousand dollars to go to Biarritz with him. How much is that in pounds?”

“Around two thousand.”

“Lot of money. I told him I couldn’t do it. He was awfully nice about it. Told him I knew too many people in Biarritz.” (SAR 33)

Brett even refuses to take any type of financial help from Romero.

“I didn’t know whether I could make him go and I didn’t have a soul to go away and leave him. He tried to give me a lot of money, you know. I told him I had scads of it. He knew that was a lie. But I couldn’t take his money, you know.” (SAR 242)
Delbert E. Wylder says that “Brett plays the role of a mother to a group of men who ‘behave like adolescents’.” (92) Lorie Watkins Fulton later develops this idea a little more. She notes that Brett shows this mothering quality in her behavior towards Mike and Romero. Brett treats Mike as a child who must be kept in line. The day after Cohn beats Romero, Brett nurses him and even sends Jake of look after Mike.

Brett must possess truly extraordinary qualities to occupy such a prominent position in Jake’s life; however she also represents all that he can never have, and she sometimes appears as a narrowly drawn character because Jake’s conflicted mind projects that image of her. Reading beyond Jake’s narrative bias, one can see that Hemingway creates Brett as a character worthy of Jake’s devotion, a real woman with qualities as well as complexities.

Willingham praises Brett and asserts:

Brett is seen as a role model for woman who has the courage of define her own standards and abide by own authentic self and further she is novel’s main character. (36)

Lady Brett Ashley is fictitious, as far as literature is concerned but her spirit is representative of millions of women. To many women, she is an inspiring character because they are given the opportunity to live vicariously through her. She represents women of her time, in that she has a voice, her opinion matters and she is considered equal to men.

Brett captivates people with her presence and stature. Her proud carriage and charisma make her an inevitable icon or image around which to dance or to seat upon a wine cask as if enthroned in a pagan court adorned with garland of garlic:

Some dancers formed a circle around Brett and started to dance. They wore big wreaths of white garlic around their necks. They took Bill and me by the arms and put us in the circle. Bill started to dance, too. They were all chanting.
Brett wanted to dance but they did not want her to. They wanted her as an image to dance around. (SAR 155)

A thorough assessment of Brett’s life reveals a number of trials no less traumatic than those experienced by certain male characters. Readers do get a slight glimpse into Brett’s past which was rather horrifying:

That was rather good. Ashley, chap she got the title from, was a sailor, you know. Ninth baronet. When he came home he wouldn’t sleep in a bed. Always made Brett sleep on the floor. Finally, when he got really bad, he used to tell her he’d kill her. Always slept with a loaded service revolver. Brett used to take the shells out when he’d gone to sleep. She hasn’t had an absolutely happy life, Brett. Damned shame, too. She enjoys things so. (SAR 203)

Brett survives all this and emerges as a strong person. It is also very important to note that none of the characters in the novel actually dislike, disrespect or ultimately reject Brett, even when they perceive that they have been hurt by her or when she refuses to adhere to their expectations. Brett is not just a woman, but an extraordinary woman for that age.

John Atkins says that “the most celebrated of all Hemingway’s woman is Lady Brett Ashley. She is a convenient symbol of the expatriate woman of the twenties” (234). For one of the first times in the literature of twenties, we are able to see a view of woman that is not typically expressed. In Jamie Barlowe’s essay Re-reading Woman II: The Example of Brett, Hadley, Duff and Women’s Scholarship. She argues: “in our patriarchal world women’s integrity has had no definition aside from its oppositional or obstructionist relationship to male integrity, just as women’s sexualities have only begun to be socially defined apart from the heterosexuality of men” (25).

This argument suggests that Hemingway moved away from those stereotypical roles of women and sought out a new mindset through the character of Brett Ashley. Through her relationship with Jake, Mike, Cohn and Romero, it is fair to say that
Brett knew exactly what she was doing and refused to be taken advantage of. Rather than looking at her as the head bitch of the novel, she should be viewed as a woman with a strong will, who would never allow herself to be seen as weaker than a man. In a situation of patriarchy and feminist independence, Brett chooses independence and decides against marrying Romero because Brett has found that Romero is an old fashioned man and would expect her wife to be a traditional woman, with long hair and sitting at home waiting for her husband to come home and do the daily chorus, which was against her free, liberated mindset and against the freedom which she attained after much turmoil. So, she decides not to marry him:

“I’m thirty four, you know. I am not going to be one of those bitches that ruins children … I am not going to be that way. I feel rather good, you know. I feel rather set-up.”

“Good”
She looked away. I thought she was looking for another cigarette. Then I saw she was crying. I could feel her crying, shaking and crying. She wouldn’t look up. I put my arms around her (SAR 243).

Brett very conveniently takes all the blame for the failure of her relationships whether it was with Romero or Cohn who tries to dictate her and impose their wishes on her, which she very nicely rejects and chooses her freedom above everything.

Brett appears as strong, intelligent human being who despite all kind of adverse situations, possesses a mind of her own and rather takes all her decisions independently. Despite her nymphomania, however, of which she makes a candid confession to Jake, Brett is an intelligent woman who has an understanding of each one around her. She may oblige Robert Cohn and spend a week with him in San Sebastian but she recognizes him for “the conceited ass” (SAR 220) he is. Similarly she comes to know of the Count very soon that the Count is not a serious fellow. She searchingly questions him:

“Never fall in love!”
“Always” said the Count. “I’m always in love.”
“What does that do to your values?”
“That, too has got a place in my values.”
“You haven’t any values. You’re dead, that’s all.” (SAR 54)

The cross examination highlights her power to analyze and judge a person. Equally accurate is her understanding of Mike Campbell. She firstly chooses him as she feels.

“He’s my sort of thing” (SAR 215)

But after watching Mike’s attitude in Pamplona, she decides not to marry him. Though she is still engaged to Mike, yet she affirms:

“I can’t even marry Mike.” (SAR 242)

She tells Jake. At the end Brett’s renunciation of Romero is a moral, positive act on her part. She tells Jake that, “I’m thirty-four, you know. I’m not going to be one of those bitches that ruins children.” (SAR 243)

This certainly is a remarkable change in Brett, who, in Paris would move with homosexuals and would go away freely with anyone without caring about the after consequences. She has decided now to regain her dignity and self respect. At last she comes out morally strong and rises again like the sun. She tells Jake that,

“You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch.” (SAR 243)

War and post war experiences have made her, loose her love as well as faith. Brett finally succeeds in setting her house in order. She is able to recompose her disintegrated self. She attains order and overcomes the inner chaos and sexual distortions and disorders in her personality. It is to her credit that even in her present
situation she is able to identify the moral and emotional vacuum around her. No doubt, she has her own weaknesses but she overcomes them stoically.

For thorough understanding of full complexity of her character, it is required that she should be considered in contrast to other women in the novel. Jake’s retrospective observations on the other female characters in the novel are also pertinent for this context. Ernest Hemingway has his unique style of writing. His characters epitomized the post war expatriate generation, for future generations. After a redemptive analysis of Hemingway’s minor male and female characters, Whitlow concludes that: “Our fascination with his violence has lured us away from considering each work on its own merits and attempting to see his women for what they really are in each work” (63).

Robert Cohn’s wife, who was wealthy, left him for a miniature painter. She can be perceived as an extreme case of New Woman who values her personal and sexual freedom in relation, to her social obligations. A similar step is taken by Brett when she goes with Robert Cohn. Another female character is Frances Clyne who stands in contrast to Brett. Whereas Brett is loving without constraints: Frances is domineering, jealous, possessive and determined to marry Robert.

“Her attitude toward Robert changed from one of careless possession and exploitation to the absolute determination that he should marry her.” (SAR 5)

To demonstrate all these attributes of a new woman in Frances, Hemingway makes Jake recall a scene in 1924 in which he, Robert and Frances had dinner in Paris.

“We had dined at I’ Avenue’s and afterward went to the Cafe' de Versailles for coffee. We had several fines after than coffee, and I said I must be going. Cohn had been talking about the two of us going off somewhere on a weekend trip. He wanted to get out of town and get in a good walk. I suggested we fly to Strasbourg and walk up to Saint Odile, or somewhere or other in Alsace. “I know a girl in Strasbourg who can show us the town,” I said.
Somebody kicked me under the table. I thought it was accidental and went on: “She’s been there two years and knows everything there is to know about the town. She’s swell girl.”

I was kicked again under the table and, looking, saw Frances, Robert’s lady, her chin lifting and her face hardening.

“Hell,” I said, why go to Strasbourg? We could go up to Bruges, or to the Ardennes.”

Cohn looked relieved. I was not kicked again. I said good-night and went out. Cohn said he wanted to buy a paper and would walk to the corner with me.

“For God’s sake,” he said, “why did you say that about that girl in Strasbourg for? Didn’t you see Frances?”

“No, why should I? If I know an American girl that lives in Strasbourg what the hell is it to Frances?”

It doesn’t make any difference. Any girl. I couldn’t go, that would be all.”

“Don’t be silly.”

“You don’t know Frances. Any girl at all. Didn’t you see the way she looked?” (SAR 6)

Robert is unable to confront Frances directly and has to excuse himself to explain her jealousy to Jake. The second major scene with Frances takes place a year later, after Robert has become intrigued with Brett. In her desperation, Frances confides in Jake:

We have dreadful scenes and he cries and begs me to be reasonable but he says he just can’t do it. (SAR 47)

When the three of them meet for drink at the Select, Frances baits Robert publicly, talking to Jake about him in the third person and openly voicing his most deplorable traits:
She turned to me with that terrible bright smile. It was very satisfactory to her to have an audience for this. (SAR 49)

In practical terms, her futile pursuit of security and wealth has been a waste of time, and her labeling of Cohn as selfish and cruel is not simply sour grapes, but how such realistic views, that could be reconciled to marriage, contrast with the ideal of wedded bliss. Frances perceives Cohn’s real reason for not marrying her:

If he marries me … that would be the end of all the romance. (SAR 51)

Frances is presented in terms that contrast directly with Brett’s relationship with Jake, her pained acceptance of tragedy, her independence of spirit, her pervading and undemanding love. Her role in the novel is central even though she leaves for England at the very initial stage in the novel. But she exposes Cohn in a way that nobody else could.

The prostitute Georgette Hobin functions in the novel in a similar fashion. The section that Jake narrates about her reveals his sense of irony and suggests for the first time that he is ‘sick’ as a result of war, which in a way happens to be the centre of most of the problems in his relationship with Brett in the novel. Jake’s encounter with Georgette allows Hemingway’s to introduce Jake’s sexual dysfunction prior to his meeting with Brett, where the consequences are more deeply felt. It also shows Jake’s need of companionship to assuage his loneliness. Jake even leaves money for Georgette with whom he wanted to spend sometime.

“I took a fifty-Franc note from my pocket, put it in the envelope sealed it and handed it to the patronne.

“If the girl I came with asks for me, will you give her this?” I said.

“If she goes out with one of those gentleman, will you save this for me?” (SAR 23)
His evening with Georgette was not a unique experience for Jake, for he observes that he had dined with prostitutes before, although not for a long time and had “forgotten how dull it could be.” (SAR 16) As a prostitute with a venereal disease, Georgette embodies the degradation of sex for money, a point underscored by her bad teeth and disastrous smile. Her characterization was not presented with depth, and the situations were rather not described from her point of view.

Georgette, who does not like Paris and exchanges sexual favors for money is persistently set in contrast to Brett, who loves Paris and refuses a great deal of money to go away with Count Mippipopolous. The character of Georgette, accomplishes several other things. When she objects to the restaurant Jake has chosen, calling it “no great thing.” (SAR 16) He responds, “May be you would rather go to Foyot’s why don’t you keep the cab and go on?” (SAR 16)

One additional dimension to the Georgette’s scene is that the prostitute instantly objects to Frances’ domineering manner—a manner Robert was apparently oblivious to all along. Hence this brief scene with Georgette does a great deal for the novel, introducing the central problem with Jake, the ironic sexual humor that pervades the action, the lost-generation pathology eroding the relationships. She is indeed a minor character but she does help in establishing the atmosphere of Paris. With the homosexuals she combines marvelously to establish the perversions that had become the norm in the Paris of the Post-war years.

Another character almost totally ignored in Hemingway criticism is Edna, the extraordinary attractive young woman. Bill had met her at Biarritz. Mike speaks to her in terms that parallel to those of the earlier scene with Brett. Mike says:

“I say, she is a lovely girl. Where have I been? Where have I been looking all this while? You’re a lovely thing.” (SAR 180)

Edna goes off with Mike and Bill, leaving Brett with Jake to confess that she is obsessed with Pedro. When Brett leaves to be with Romero, Edna functions as her surrogate in the group: Edna is there when Jake is knocked out by Robert. Later, Jake
takes her to see the holding pens before the running of the bulls, as he had with Brett, and she is there in the arena when the bulls come in, screaming as the bulls enter.

Edna wants Mike and Bill to get into the ring with them and she enjoys the excitement of the fiesta without complications. She and Bill appear to be the only truly healthy people in the novel, although she lacks Bill’s delighted humor, and she disappears into the crowd when Brett returns to the group for Pedro’s final appearance. Brett emerges as unique even when measured against Edna, who resembles her in many respects, projecting the same new woman persona. But, Edna has no special meaning for Jake and he does not dwell on her personality.

To encapsulate, all types of female figures are found throughout the whole spectrum of Hemingway’s work and he has portrayed them so minutely and beautifully that it is not possible to miss any chance to appreciate them as the representative figures of his times.

Ernest Hemingway was no sexist. On the contrary, his work championed the woman’s cause, and in Brett Ashley he has given a heroine, hell bent on liberation. It seems evident that Hemingway wanted to make a statement about the dogged pursuits of women. Above all the critical accusations, one should consider that Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* was true depiction of the 20th century scenario, a novel way ahead of its time. Perhaps that contributes to reader and critics finding it hard to grasp. Nothing was quite the same after the war. Skirts rose from the ankle to the knees and a little beyond. Girls bobbed their long hair, rolled their stocking to mid thigh, smoked in public and danced all night to the jazz music. Time was changing. Between 1925 and 1930 over one million American marriages ended in divorce. It is in this context that one should read of Brett and other female characters of novel.

These are the ‘New Woman’ of the period, the women who had been sexually liberated, had their own identity and economic independence. They are representatives of the women who came of age with liberation. They are the women of the first Freudian generation for whom it was kind of mandatory to discuss sexuality openly. If Frances Clyne makes the reader as uncomfortable as she makes Jake and if Brett Ashley leaves us a bit flabbergasted with her random sexual
encounters, perhaps that is how Hemingway wanted his reader to feel. Perhaps he was
telling his times as truly as he knew. As Hemingway himself wrote in spring of 1925.
“I’m trying in all my stories to get the feeling of the actual life across, you can’t do
this without putting in the bad and the ugly as well as what is beautiful” (197).

The moral condition did not exist in a fictional vacuum, it was an accurate
reflection of the world Hemingway had inherited. Though Hemingway nowhere
commits himself is so many words on the question of emancipation of women the
very fact that he does not assign them a separate limited sphere but rather makes them
participants in the same questions with which men are engaged regarding the meaning
of life, such as sexual liberty and war, speaks volumes for his support to the woman’s
cause. He puts women on the plane where they duly share with men the quest of the
human spirit for the meaning of life, where in fact the gender differences cease to
exist.


Hereafter abbreviated as SAR in the text.


