

AN EXAMINATION OF GENDER ISSUES THROUGH FEMALE PROTAGONISTS  
IN SELECTED SHORT STORIES

A MASTER'S PROJECT  
BY  
WASSANA CHAIYAPHAN

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Master of Arts Degree in English  
at Srinakharinwirot University  
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AN ABSTRACT

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The main focus of this research is aimed to explore gender stereotypes as presented in selected short stories namely "Hills Like White Elephants", "A Rose for Emily", and "The Chrysanthemums" by Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and John Steinbeck, respectively. The purpose is to analyze the reflection of the male authority concerning these three female protagonists underwent, and the findings reviewed the female protagonists' reaction toward the male authority such as submission, obsession, and compliance. Jig confronts the male authority by being submissive; however, Jig discovers that The American man doesn't have a real love for her. Gender stereotyping is a common practice for those who are weaker will go to a norm: powerless. Emily is dominated and manipulated by her father as well and she ends her life with madness; however, she is more powerful than Jig because Emily fought against male authority; she kills Homer Baron to keep him with her forever. Lastly, Elisa is unique in comparison with Jig and Emily because she can find her self-identity. All of the men in three stories are the same; they are superficial. They take for granted all the women who are powerless; the women are voiceless. On the other hand, Hemingway tends to show the problems of gender issues, where as Faulkner makes use of grotesque elements to solve the problem and Steinbeck is insightful about female issues.

การวิเคราะห์สถานภาพของตัวละครหญิง/ชายที่ปรากฏในเรื่องสั้นร่วมสมัย 3 เรื่อง

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

วาสนา ไชยพันธุ์

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา

ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาการศึกษาศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ

ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ

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สารนิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มีมุ่งหมายหลัก คือ เพื่อวิเคราะห์ สถานภาพของตัวละครเอกหญิงที่ปรากฏในเรื่องสั้นร่วมสมัย 3 เรื่อง ได้แก่ “Hills Like White Elephants”, “A Rose for Emily”, และ “The Chrysanthemums” ซึ่งเป็นผลงานของ เอิร์นเนส เฮมมิงเวย์ วิลเลียม ฟอร์กเนอร์ และ จอร์จ สไตลเบิร์ก และเพื่อวิเคราะห์ปฏิกริยาการตอบสนองของตัวละครเอกหญิงทั้งสามที่ได้ประสบกับการที่อยู่ได้อำนาจของเพศชาย จากการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่า ตัวละครเอกหญิงตอบสนองโดยการยอมเป็นคนไม่มีปากเสียง ต่อต้านอำนาจโดยแสดงตนเป็นคนพินเพื่อน และเชื่อคนอื่น เช่น จิก ถูกเอาเปรียบเพราะเธอยอมเป็นคนไม่มีปากเสียง อย่างไรก็ตามจิกก็ค้นพบว่า The American man ไม่เคยมีรักแท้ให้กับเธอเลย ซึ่งเป็นเรื่องปกติที่เพศที่มีอำนาจเหนือกว่าจะเอาเปรียบเพศที่มีอำนาจน้อยกว่าเสมอ ดังเอมีลีที่เผชิญหน้ากับการที่ถูกพ่อของเธอกดขี่ข่มเหง เอมีลีจบชีวิตตัวเองด้วยความบ้ำฝันเพื่อน แต่เอมีลีเป็นผู้ที่มีอำนาจมากกว่าจิกเพราะเอมีลีต่อต้านอำนาจของเพศชาย โดยการฆ่าแฟนของตัวเองเพื่อที่จะได้เป็นผู้ครอบครองและอยู่ด้วยกันตลอดไป ส่วนอลิสาคงเอกลักษณ์ของตัวเองไว้มากที่สุดเพราะเธอสามารถค้นพบตัวตนที่แท้จริงของตนเอง อย่างไรก็ตาม สำหรับตัวละครชายทั้งสามคนในเรื่อง มีความเหมือนกัน คือเป็นผู้ที่ถือครองอำนาจมากกว่าตัวละครหญิง และ เอิร์นเนส เฮมมิงเวย์ได้นำเสนอมุมมองของปัญหาเกี่ยวกับสถานะทางเพศระหว่างหญิง ชาย ในขณะที่ วิลเลียม ฟอร์กเนอร์ ใช้ความผิดแปลกธรรมชาติในการแก้ไขปัญหาเรื่องความเลื่อมล้ำทางเพศ และ จอร์จ สไตลเบิร์กแสดงความเข้าใจถึงสถานะและบทบาททางเพศของชายและหญิง

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Wassana Chaiyaphan

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Women's liberation movement has been going on since the 17<sup>th</sup> C. Srisermbhok (2003) mentions that, "the women's liberation movement has won not only the right to vote and equal opportunity for education, but change in academe" (26). Similarly Hall (1987) suggests that there are three components of liberty: the secure provision of the basic necessities of food and health, the desire for autonomy, and the right of people to control political power by democratic means (184-185). The secure provision of a vague basic can provide satisfaction of a previously negative utilitarianism or sufficiency. The desire for autonomy has the implication of the need to achieve equality and the right to freedom. And the last one is a realistic version of equality. In the present day in the political scene a number of women were elected presidents in many countries: Micheline Calmy Ray, the President of Switzerland, in 2007, and Mary McAleese, the President of Ireland in 1997 (McCullough. 2007).

Lizbeth Goodman in *Literature and Gender* (1996) has mentioned that a study of gender issues is "concerned with the representation, rights and status of women and men" (xi). It is because people no longer believe that only men are leaders with power, authority and independence, and that women are scheduled to be listeners with passivity, compromise and dependence (1). *UNESCO, Gender-Sensitivity : A Training Manual* (1997) states that the "creation of educational and social environment; in which women and men, girls and boys, are equally treated and encouraged to achieve their full potential, respecting their freedom of thoughts, conscience, religion and belief, and where educational resources promote non-stereotyped images of women and men, would be

effective in the elimination of the causes of discrimination against women and inequalities between women and men”(103).

This shows that women and men should be treated equally in all respects and that education is one tool in helping people achieve equality. However, a study of gender issues is not meant to lead women against men but to enable society to understand the situation, status and the rights of both men and women.

Short stories have become more and more popular among readers around the world. That is because the focus is based on a single prominent conflict involving human suffering and problems. The conflict may be individual or universal. Morgan (2004) mentions that an interesting short story contains five elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict and theme. A short story has only a few characters, of course. Moreover, only one main character called a protagonist presents a conflict to the readers. Meanwhile, several aspects including time, place and atmosphere contribute to making the story more realistic because they tell the readers how, where and when the story takes place. On the other hand, a short story usually has only one plot involving a series of events and the characters' action. However, the plot definitely relates to the central conflict of a story, which can be divided into five important parts: Introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and final outcome. The introduction introduces the protagonist and shows the readers the protagonist's problem. The rising action is shown when the events become complicated for the protagonist and create a conflict. The climax is the peak of the story because after that, things are resolved or there is a major turning point. The falling action is when the atmosphere of the event has subsided. Lastly, a final outcome is the conclusion of the protagonist's major conflict. So, these elements make short stories significant and timeless.

There are three short stories to be investigated in this study: Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" (1927), William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (1930) and John Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums" (1937).

Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner and John Steinbeck are great American writers. Importantly, they have presented their ideas about gender issues in various styles. For example, Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" presents how a woman is trapped and taken an advantage of. On the other hand, William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (1930) demonstrates how a woman becomes mad to achieve freedom. And John Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums" (1937) reveals a woman's self-discovery or awakening. Therefore, each of the three selections will capture a female protagonist's struggles and discovery of her true identity.

"Hills Like white Elephants" was influenced by Hemingway's real life regarding his first wife, Hadley Richardson. Once they journeyed through Spain, she mentioned the 'White Hills' to him which later became his inspiration to write "Hills Like White Elephants" (Hibbison. 2005). In the story the female protagonist, Jig, is pregnant and her boyfriend, an American man, doesn't want a baby. In fact, they are on a trip to Madrid to have an abortion. The woman says the hills look like white elephants. Actually, the curve of the hills refers to the shape of a pregnant woman's belly. Moreover, white elephants for the white mean "useless" or "unwanted" things which could refer to the baby (Olmos. 2001). Similarly the oxford English dictionary explains that "white elephant" is a thing that is useless and no longer needed, although it may have cost a lot of money". The struggle of the female protagonist is that she would like to get married and settle down. For a woman, marriage means security, and her baby is a symbol of the fertility of life. In contrast, a rose, as in "A Rose for Emily", not only refers to the queen of the flowers but also happiness, beauty, pride, prosperity, success and much more. Faulkner has said that

“to a woman you would hand a rose, as you would lift a cup of sake to a man” (152).

However, Emily, the protagonist, has none of these so a rose is only a symbolic title.

Emily is a big, overweight, strong spinster who confronts her whole life tragedy. She is controlled and manipulated by her father who prevented her real social life. Nevertheless, after the death of her father, she feels released; she is liberated. Later on, she meets her sweetheart, Homer Barron, and wants to marry him. Unfortunately, he is not a marrying man. Moreover, he is going to leave her. She, then, poisons him in order to keep his love and his body with her forever. Emily lives together with her lover's rotting corpse until the end of her life. In some respects Jig and Emily are similar. They both would like to be loved and to get married, but their lovers refuse them. Jig, however, is unable to achieve satisfaction in her life, whereas Emily is.

Just as the titles “Hills Like White Elephants” and “A Rose for Emily” are symbolic of their characters and their situations, so is “The Chrysanthemums”. “The Chrysanthemums” is an elegant flower symbolizing tenderness and the inner self of a woman. Beaulieu (2007) mentions that a common shortened name of Chrysanthemum is “mum”. Importantly, the word ‘mum’ has a perfect meaning when it refers to a woman's characteristics. Elisa Allen is portrayed as a strong, competent and energetic young woman who married Henry Allen. They both live peacefully on their farm. However, their marriage lacks affection. He has no real interest in her Chrysanthemums, her pride and joy. When Elisa has a conversation with the tinker who shows interest in her Chrysanthemums, she feels her passion and feels good. So, she becomes stronger. However, it doesn't last long because she finds out later that the tinker's interest in her and her flowers was a ruse. The tinker's objective was only for Elisa to give him some work so he could earn some money. This grieves Elisa and she cries like an old lady.

These three selected short stories are written by men who usually write about masculine issues. But their writing of strategies to explain females' feelings and struggles makes the stories more realistic, worthy and interesting. It confirms that gender issue is not only a sphere for female writers but also for male writers as well. Therefore these three selected short stories as well-worth a serious investigation.

### **The objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are to explore the protagonists' roles, and their interaction in the situations as presented in the short stories and also to analyze the nature of their conflict and the way they resolve the problems.

### **Research questions**

1. How are gender stereotypes presented in the three selected short stories?
2. In what way does each protagonist emphasize or pinpoint gender issues in each study?

### **Significance of the study**

This study can show that the world is open for women in all fields including politics, religion, and business, depending on their qualifications and their realization of their self-worth. Moreover, this shows the readers social stereotypes that underpin gender issues and to make them understand not only the author's objectives in presenting their stories but also to provoke their concerns about gender problems to maintain a healthy society.

### **Scope of the study**

The scope of this study includes the background, and the review of literature. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 discuss female protagonist in each short story: Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" (1927), William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (1930) and John Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums" (1937) respectively. The last chapter consists of the conclusion and recommendation for further studies.

### **The procedures of the study**

The procedures of the study are as follows:

#### **1. Accumulation of related information**

The organization of the study consists of the following:

- a. Background of women in the twentieth century
- b. The concept of the women's liberation movement
- c. Reflections of authors' background (Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and John Steinbeck) in relation to their works.
- d. Other previous research and criticism related to gender issues

#### **2. Key analyses based on the following:**

- a. Female protagonists' problems will be analyzed showing the nature of their struggles and discoveries if any.
- b. The analyses of these three short stories are based on society's mainstream concept of women in the twentieth century.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion of this study shows the final outcome of the female protagonists indicating how these female protagonists cope with their struggle and discover their true identities.

## **Definition of Terms**

Goodman(1996) gender's definition is concise and quite clear: "Gender refers to ways of seeing and representing people and situations based on sex difference. By contrast, 'sex' is a biological category: female or male". She continues that "Gender is a social or cultural category, influenced by stereotypes about 'female' and 'male' behavior that exist in our attitudes and beliefs. Such beliefs are often said to be 'culturally produced' or 'constructed'"(vii). Hence, gender problem including social attitudes toward males or females in different social functions. For example, in the social frame, males are seen as heroic, strong, reasonable with inborn leadership, whereas females are presented as passive, weak, emotional and submissive.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter includes three important parts: the background of the women's movement in the twentieth century, related research on these three stories, and biographies related to Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner and John Steinbeck in their works.

#### 1. The background of the women's movement in the twentieth century

Alison M. Jaggar mentions that, "in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, women as well as men had natural rights. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they employed utilitarian arguments in favor of equal rights for women under law; and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the development of the liberal theory of the welfare state, liberal feminists demand that the state should actively pursue a variety of social reforms in order to ensure equal opportunities for women"-- Amporn Srisermbhok (2003), *Literary Criticism: Approaches to Feminist Literature*, 2003.

According to Alison M. Jaggar, the women's movement began in the eighteenth century; unfortunately, the cries for equality based on natural rights were refused. An increase in utilitarian and equal rights was achieved. Women received equal rights; for example, recently, women are able to work outside the home and to make their own choices, but other biases against female still exist.

Meade and Hanks mentioned in *A Companion to Gender History* that describe the dynamic of economic, political and social life toward gender issues from 1750-1914 interestingly.

In the eighteenth century Europe, men were authorized to be the majority part of a society because social relations between men and women were determined by

conventions of male dominance. The church named men as legal representatives for all members of families. Moreover, men had more connections in social life and more opportunity to work outside the home to earn wages, whereas women did not. Meanwhile, women spent their entire lives as daughters, sisters, servants, or wives. Unfortunately, within the household women were governed by men as well. Importantly, married women were not allowed to own any property (461-460). This confirms that women were in a male dominant paradigm in the eighteenth century. However, there is one interesting question that Mary Astell asked: "If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves as they must be if being subjected to the inconstant, uncertain unknown, arbitrary. Will of men, be the perfect conditions of slavery?"(462). This question gave rise to the 'anti-slavery campaign' in the early nineteenth century.

The reform of the 'anti-slavery campaign' in the 1820s created a big change concerning resistant to stereotypes because it enabled women to have more connections in society. Besides, it enabled women to become reformers on their own and showed women's power of mobilization (471). Furthermore, women were able to have more connections in economic life, especially in 1870 women were able to work outside in particular forms of light industry, such as weaving or silk-throwing. However, there was a strict hierarchy of labor division as well. For example, men were always paid more and held higher positions than women. That means, men but not women could be supervisors or work in skilled jobs requiring heavy machine work (464-465). Although, women in the nineteenth century had better opportunities than women in the eighteenth century the main stereotypes against women remain unchanged and male was still dominant.

Welter (1966) mentions that in 1820-1860, the status of women in a social scheme consisted of four things; piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Piety was a belief of a society toward religion; women should focus on religion because it kept them close

to home. Society also believed that women should maintain their purity. Therefore, if married, a woman would always respect and listen to her husband who controlled everything. Furthermore, domesticity was meant for women because cleaning the house, cooking, looking after the children were considered a woman's tasks. Women were not encouraged or allowed to work outside the home because that was a man's responsibility. Similarly Toth (1999) mentions that "women's traditional work was child care, food, gardening, sewing, and cleaning-- work that was done in a home" (3). So, according to Welter, women lived according to society's expectations, whereas men had more freedom and were more accepted and recognized in society than women.

Valenze indicates that after the 1870s, increasingly feminism contributed to a new political climate. For example, the women's movement worked towards giving women the vote, the right to own property and the ability to claim equality of protection under the law. A significant rise of feminism demands a higher education and wider opportunities for employment for women which is a good sign of liberal reforms (473).

Mclaughlin, however, points out that in the nineteenth century the ideas of women's roles developed from a group of women who tried to protest against black slavery in the United States (5). She continues that this "first wave was a political movement aimed at challenging the lack of rights for women in the public sphere". The second wave of the women's movement in 1970 was to resolve a gap in the rights and the opportunities women suffered in the public sphere (1).

Consequently, from the first wave to the second one there have developed certain ideas of the women's liberation movement. According to Srisermbhok (2003) "the liberal feminists are after all a just society that allows individuals, whether they are men or women, to exercise their autonomy and to fulfill themselves in equal terms" (15).

Similarly David Sidorsky (1917) in *The Liberal Tradition in European Thought*

confirms that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion” and “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”(354). Lastly, in *Beyond Individualism: Reconstituting the Liberal Self*, 1992, Jack Crittenden emphasizes that “the modern liberal is more likely to emphasize interdependence instead of dependence, cooperation not competition, and mutual appreciation over private pleasure.”(155).

Hence, the women’s liberation movement is a product of the twentieth century, and the concept of liberal women is that women are equal to men in everything. Importantly, society currently is more open than before to women to exercise their abilities and to be of use to society. As stated “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of ” (534).

## **2. Related Research**

Akers (1999) mentions that in “Hills Like White Elephants”, “Hemingway explores the way men and women are related to each other”. Furthermore, Hemingway also places into the foreground the woman’s point of view (158). For example, he states that “the more the American speaks the more ridiculous he becomes”. The man tries to convince his girlfriend to have an abortion which she doesn’t want. As he tries to convince her, his selfishness becomes apparent.

There are many interesting critical points of view on “Hills Like White Elephants”. The ones that are directly relevant are Diane Andrews Henningfeld’s and Reid Maynard’s.

Henningfeld points out that “Hills Like White Elephants” presents tragic and comic elements within the context of modernism (163). Comic elements include the circle of life which consists of marriage, sexual union, birth and the perpetuation of society. Comedy not only lightens the heart but also carries with it pain and frustration. And death is conveyed in comedy as well as in real life (165). For example, Jig, an American girl, is confronted with a decision, either to keep the baby or to keep her boyfriend because he wants her to have an abortion - he doesn't want to be responsible for his baby. So, Jig needs to find a solution for her problem. Similarly, Maynard (1999), *Short Stories for Students*, explores the ironic manner of the characters. He comments that the story shows the selfishness of the man who wants his girlfriend to have an abortion. He states that “the man's callousness and sterile view are contrasted with the girl's sensitive, sensuous response to life” (171).

Obviously, “Hills Like White Elephants” presents a relationship between a man and a woman in a situation that reveals their characteristics. This study will explore the female protagonist's struggle and how she copes with her problem.

Whereas many critics have given comments on Faulkner's writing such as Ray B. West, Jr, Laurie Lanzen Harris, and Sheila Fitzgerald. West, an American short story writer, poet and critic, mentions that a principle contrast of “A Rose for Emily” is a confusion of time. The story shifts between the past and the present, Emily being a representative of the past who couldn't bend her mind to confront a changed present, which represents real life (148). It appears that Emily is happy with her present moment and she does not want to lose it because her own moment is a freedom which allows her to achieve her true identity. Harris and Fitzgerald (1988), *Short Story Criticism*, mentioned that Faulkner has pointed out that he feels “sorry for Emily's tragedy; her tragedy was, she was an only

child, and only daughter. When she could have found a husband, could have had a life of her own, there was probably someone, her father, who said, 'No, you must stay here and take care of me.' And then when she found a man, she had had no experience in people. She picked out probably a bad one, who was about to desert her. And when she lost him she could see that for her that was the end of life, there was nothing left, except to grow older, alone, solitary" (152). In fact, "A Rose for Emily" captures the story of woman's struggle, a woman who was exploited by her father and her would-be husband. She could overcome all the conditions to achieve her own freedom but she had to purchase it with madness. On the other hand, Fitzgerald and Harris point out that Emily's madness is "an excessive assertion of individuality over community standards, and her fate, therefore, a tragedy" (145). So, the situation influenced Emily's struggle as she became mad. However, she was happy as long as she owned what she wanted. The interesting portrayal of the story makes the researcher curious to explore issues of gender roles between men and women.

#### "The Chrysanthemums"

On "The Chrysanthemums" Cynthia Bily states that "The Chrysanthemums" focuses on two ideas: "that Elisa is oppressed, either by a male-dominated society or by a practical-minded one, and that her flowers are for her some sort of compensation for what is missing in her life" (68). She points out that Elisa had already led a lonely life, in terms of her connections with other human beings, because her only passion was for her garden. Moreover, when she was alone in the garden she found her true self (69). This shows the different ways men and women respond to nature. McMahan, however, points out, that the story's main idea is the frustration of the woman. She does not make clear, however, how this frustration of the woman happened. It may be due to a lack of success, the result

of damage to her pride or a longing for childbirth (78-79). So, “The Chrysanthemums” is built on dissatisfaction with married life which leads to the issue of how men and women are related to each other. For example, one of Elisa’s requirements for a happy marriage is to touch and feel love from her husband on the aesthetic level. Unfortunately, she cannot. Consequently, when she finds another man who appears to feel the same as she does, she is fascinated by him. However, she later discovers that she doesn’t need to belong to someone; she feels strong and happy to live on her own, only to be disillusioned at the end of the story.

### 3. Related biographical background

McConochie (1995), *20<sup>th</sup> Century American Short Stories*, mentions that Hemingway insisted that “fiction must be based on actual experience ... for a writer’s job is to tell the truth and a good story should produce a truer account than anything factual can be.” (3).

Powell (2004), *Short Story Criticism*, reveals of three unique elements of writing style that makes Ernest Hemingway well-known. Hemingway challenged the readers by using the emotion of his words to reveal the thoughts of his characters. He also used the power of repetitive dialogues to capture the attention of the readers, and his works are easy to read (61). These three unique elements can be seen in one of his short stories “Hills Like White Elephants”. Parker (2004) mentions that before Hemingway composed this story, he got the ideas from the 1927 collection of “Men Without Women”. She also claims that “Hemingway’s style was far more effective...in the short story than in the novel” (61). “Hills Like White Elephants” is a story about American travelers in Spain. They are speaking of abortion which the man wants the girl to have because he believes that the baby will be an obstacle to their love. At that moment the girl has only two choices: keep the baby or keep the man. Hemingway uses only dialogue to develop the plot until the climax of the story. Hemingway not only leads the readers to seek the end of the story but also leaves the readers to find out the answer by themselves as to how the girl would resolve her problem.

Akers (1999), *Short Stories for Students*, explains that Ernest “Hemingway’s ambitious and competitive spirit was implicated by his background”. He mentions that Hemingway grew up in comfortable circumstances in Oak Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. Hemingway was born on July 21, 1899 and when he was a child, he liked adventure, often going hunting and fishing. He also went to World War I in Europe as a volunteer in 1918. The experiences in the war impacted his works greatly.

Unfortunately, Hemingway’s final years entwined much suffering because of growing physical and mental pain. He finally decided to commit suicide in 1961 at his home in Ketchum, Idaho. However, he was one of the most famous American writers in the twentieth century. He received many awards such as the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and Nobel Prize in Literature for 1954. Importantly, Hemingway’s work continues to generate critical and popular interest in universities and colleges (156).

William Faulkner was born on September 25, 1897 at New Albany, Mississippi before his family moved to Oxford when he was five. Akers (1999), *Short Stories for Students*, Faulkner spent his boyhood hunting and fishing. He always listened to poetry and to his great grandfather’s legends and stories of the region. To be a poet was one of his dreams. Faulkner approached his passion when he worked at a bookstore in New York where he met his first wife, Elizabeth Prall Anderson. Later, he traveled to New Orleans and lived among a group of writers and artists who encouraged him to begin writing seriously. Faulkner invented a fictional county calling it Yoknapatawpha, which became the setting of many of his novels and short stories. He also incorporated his own life and family story into his short stories and novels. For example, Colonel Sartoris, who appears in “A Rose for Emily” was his great grandfather who was known as the old Colonel (248). Similarly Cowley (1991) states that “another important aspect of Faulkner’s fiction is love between family members- a warmth of family affection, brother for brother and sister, the father for his children-a love so warm and proud that it tries to shut out the rest of the world”.--James G. Lesniak, (1991) ed. *Contemporary Authors: A Bio-*

*Bibliographical Guide to Current Writers in Fiction, General Nonfiction, Poetry, Journalism, Drama, Motion Pictures, Television, and Other Fields*. For instance, the love between Emily and her father would have been almost a perfect love had her father known how to treat love. Unfortunately, he loved Emily too much and he also controlled Emily's love as well. That is what drives Emily to become alienated in her social life before she ends up in madness and commits murder. As Faulkner mentioned, men often "exploit one another" (142). Cromie (2001) mentions that "A Rose for Emily" is a traditional gothic tale using grotesque imagery to explore a culture unable to cope with death and decay (27).

Akers claims that Faulkner was considered America's greatest twentieth century novelist. Many critics also point out that Faulkner is an isolated and provincial artist because of his working alone and presenting a remote country in his books (139). Faulkner published almost twenty novels, several volumes of short fiction, and two volumes of poetry. He not only wrote for many magazines and newspapers but also gave lectures at American College as well as foreign universities. He won two Pulitzer Prizes: a National Book Award and the Nobel Prize for Literature. Faulkner died on July 6, 1962; the same date as his great grandfather's death.

Hunt (1988), *The Riverside Anthology of Literature*, mentions that John Ernest Steinbeck was a believer of his own words in written stories. He used his written words to create and develop stories in order to make them realistic, powerful and lively. "Great writing has been a staff to lean on, a mother to consult, wisdom to pick up stumbling folly, strength in weakness and courage to support sick cowardice". A writer's duty is to "lift up, to extend, to encourage." For Steinbeck, suffering is caused by "economic and social injustice and much of his best work has an element of protest about it" (354). Akers (1999), *Short Stories for Students*, states that John Ernest Steinbeck was born on February 27, 1902, in Salinas, California. His birthplace influenced his writings and was

the setting of his early stories as well, including “The Chrysanthemums,” one of Steinbeck’s most famous short stories. It takes place in the Salinas Valley, which was largely rural and agricultural, and a place of small towns and small farms. For example, the main part of “The Chrysanthemums” concerns a flower garden that the protagonist loves before she discovers her own identity. “The Chrysanthemums” is a story about an intelligent and creative woman, the protagonist, who is forced into a stifling existence on her husband’s ranch. Jackson J. Bennett says that the protagonist, Elisa Allen, “was based on Steinbeck’s first wife, a bright and energetic woman who gave up her career to follow her husband” (59).

Steinbeck grew up as a devoted reader and wrote for his high school newspaper. He attended college as an English major. He took a job with a newspaper in New York in 1925. Steinbeck wanted, however, to be a writer so he decided to go back to California and published his first novel in 1929. After that, he married the first of his three wives - Carol Henning. He began writing about California locations which appear in many of his works. Steinbeck was one of the more successful writers of his time. In 1940, he won the Pulitzer Prize for “The Grapes of Wrath”, the Nobel Prize for literature in 1962, and the United States Medal of Freedom in 1964. Four decades after he died of heart failure on December 20, 1968, he continues to be one of the more popular writers and his works are still read by many people (59-60).

## CHAPTER 3

### “HILLS LIKE WHITE ELEPHANTS”

A female protagonist, Jig, is focused in this examination reflecting gender issues presented throughout the story. Two areas will be investigated. Firstly an examination of gender stereotypes employed by the female protagonist and her boyfriend will be explored. Secondly an examination of how the female protagonist underpins gender issues in certain situations will be discussed.

#### **Gender stereotypes:**

The story takes place somewhere at the train station in Spain between Madrid and Barcelona. There are two rail lines going in the opposite directions which refer to a destination that is unable to connect together because its destinations are passed in the opposite direction. Moreover, one side of the railway is dry and desolate, whereas the other side is green. We could compare these with Jig's life. She is on the verge of making a decision; either she will choose to take the green side or the dry one. To take the green side means to keep the baby; on the other hand, to take the dry side refers to having an abortion. At the train station, Jig and her boyfriend are having a vague conversation while they are waiting for the train to Madrid. From the tone of their conversation, we can say they are trying to have a good time. They are quietly talking because they don't want people to know what they are talking about. Moreover, Hemingway doesn't tell the readers exactly what problem they are facing. However there appear to be some clues; the American man is trying to convince Jig nicely by saying:

The American man said “It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig. It’s not really an operation at all. I know you wouldn’t mind it, Jig. It’s really not anything. It’s just to let the air in.”

The girl did not say anything.

“I’ll go with you and I’ll stay with you all the time. They just let the air in and then it’s all perfectly natural”

“Then what will we do afterward?”

“We’ll be fine afterward. Just like we were before.”

“What make you think so?”

“That’s the only thing that bothers us. It’s the only thing that’s made us unhappy.” (6).

After examining their conversation, we can see that they are talking about having an abortion. They are unmarried. We assume that Jig is pregnant and her boyfriend, who Hemmingway simply calls ‘the American man’, is trying very hard to persuade her to have an abortion. There are several reasons for his wanting her to have an abortion: lack of responsibility as the nature of men. He refuses to be a father, a person who responsibly dedicates himself to his children to ensure that they have a good life.

Shamefully the American man eagerly turns down his baby’s opportunity to be born which he does not want to take any responsibility he is supposed to. Men naturally reject married life, and enjoy traveling. Married life means a family including a wife, children, and home. Importantly, it is a settled, substantial, and safe life. In contrast, traveling is adventurous which rejects a settled life, stability, and responsibility. All one needs is a suitcase. For example:

“He did not say anything but look at the bags against the wall of the station. There were labels on them from all the hotels where they had spent nights” (8).

“I’d better take the bags over to the other side of the station” the man said. She smiled at him.

“All right. Then come back and we’ll finish the beer.”

“He picked up the two heavy bags and carried them around the station to the other tracks. He looked up the tracks but could not see the train. Coming back, he walked through the barroom, where people waiting for the train were drinking. He went through the bead curtain. She was sitting at the table and smiled at him.” (9).

The bags refer to traveling, and traveling refers to a voyage, and a voyage must be away from the home, perhaps temporarily, perhaps permanently.

It is more likely that men rather enjoy traveling more than women because it is their nature. Moreover, the American man dominates Jig, attempting to convince her to have an abortion by using his power of words as the following:

“I know we will. You don’t have to be afraid. I’ve known lots of people that have done it.”  
 “So have I,” said the girl. “And afterward they were all so happy.”  
 “Well,” the man said, “If you don’t want to you don’t have to. I wouldn’t have you do it if you didn’t want to. But I know it’s perfectly simple.”  
 “And you really want to?”  
 “I think it’s the best thing to do. But I don’t want you to do it if you don’t really want to” (7).

As well, we can see how he uses his words to dominate his girlfriend’s feelings:

“You’ve got to realize,” he said, “that I don’t want you to do it if you don’t want to. I’m perfectly willing to go through with it if it means anything to you.”  
 “Does it mean anything to you? We could get along”  
 “Of course it does. But I don’t want anybody but you. I don’t want any one else. And I know it’s perfectly simple” (8).

We see that Jig is dominated by feelings for her boyfriend. It also shows that women are always dominated, or taken advantage of by men. However, Jig has a different mindset from her boyfriend; she would rather keep the baby than have the baby aborted. We can see here two examples of a woman’s nature; a nature of motherhood in her sub-consciousness and a correlation of women’s nature. Jig feels a natural longing to be a mother; actually, it is already in her sub-consciousness. She imagines that the hills look like white elephant and that they are such lovely hills for her. Her boyfriend, however, does not see it that way. For example;

“The girl was looking off at the line of the hills. They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry.

“They looked like white elephants,” she said.

“I’ve never seen one,” the man drank his beer.

“No, you wouldn’t have” ” (5).

In addition, the cave of the hills refers to a belly of a pregnant woman and a white elephant in contrast refers to something unwanted, which refers to ‘a baby.’ Jig has a connection with her baby as a mother so she wants to keep her baby because she realizes that if she aborts it she will never ever get it back. Fore example, she expresses her feeling by saying that;

“No, we can’t. It isn’t ours any more.”

“It’s ours.”

“No, it isn’t. And once they take it away, you never get it back” (8).

However, another reason that Jig tells us is a correlation of women’s nature. Jig’s passion is to marry her boyfriend and have a family together. Importantly, a marriage is a woman’s hope and dream. Santorum (2003) mentions that there are three elements of how marriage benefits women. Married women are healthier than single women of the same age and they also suffer less long term chronic illness because they have a husband to help them in their suffering. Moreover, the essence of married life is ‘selflessness’ because it is giving oneself to somebody else and becoming one. So, it is more likely that they will take good care of each other to make each other happy which leads to a healthier life as well. Marriage also increases income by fifty percent for women and twenty-five percent for men. It is possible to say that a quality of happy and healthy life is conducive to a good job and it pays them off. Lastly, married women are far less likely to be victims

because they have a husband to protect them, providing security for them. To many women to marry is their passion.

Hence, Jig's desire representative woman representing a woman's hopes and dreams; married life with someone who loves her. Marriage means the provision of basic necessities of love and security. We need not now ask why marriage is Jig's priority.

### **How Jig underpins her role in certain situations:**

Jig has a really sad life and she is the most pitiful of the protagonists in this study; Jig, Emily, and Elisa. Jig is pushing her life very hard to achieve her goal. She is young and she may have a bright future waiting for her. However, her shoulders carry a heavy burden at the moment. How Jig can underpin her role toward a certain situation will be explained below. According to Srisermbhok, there are two strategies that impinge on Jig's character; the right to speak out and equal opportunity. But, she can't change the circumstantial situation: she is dominated by the male. Several events prove how Jig is able to raise up her voice. For example, at the train station, she suggests to her boyfriend that they have a beer and that they should try a new taste like 'Anis del Toro' (a brand of Spanish flavored liqueur) as well (4). She begins her conversation with;

"What should we drink?" the girl asked. She had taken off her hat and put it on the table. "It's pretty hot," the man said. "Let drink beer."(5).

Moreover, she continues suggesting that her boyfriend try a 'Anis del Toro', which they have never tried before, by saying that;

The girl looked at the bead curtain. "They've painted something on it," she said. "What does it say?"

“Anis del Toro. It’s a drink.”

“Could we try it?”

The man called “listen” through the curtain. The woman came out from the bar (5).

Trying the new drink, ‘Anis del Toro’, is like looking forward to the future, perhaps the road to a good future will be rough; the taste of ‘Anis del Toro’ is bitter. And Jig’s passion is still looking forward to having a married life with her boyfriend and to keeping the baby. Unfortunately, Jig’s dream is hard to realize because her boyfriend wants only her. He doesn’t want a baby for a baby will be an obstacle to their love and a baby will change their love and they will be unhappy. However, Jig has equal opportunities to determine her future. Regarding the abortion issue, the American man, obviously, dominates Jig by his words to induce her to have an abortion. He, nevertheless in the end, leaves it up to Jig to decide telling her “well... if you don’t want to do it you don’t have to. I wouldn’t have you to you it if you didn’t want to. But I know it’s perfectly simple.” (7).

So, Jig has the right and the opportunity to determine her future including the baby’s future as well. But she can’t get through the situation but will do everything to impress the American to make him love her more. There is one reason to support her decision, that is the need of security. According to Hall, there is only one component of liberty that appears on Jig’s need; the secure provision of the basic necessity of food and health. Oxford (2005.) mentions that ‘secure’ refers to the feeling of being happy and confident about oneself or a particular situation. Further than that, it refers to a protection of something so that it is safe and difficult to be attacked or damaged (1320). To marry the American man is to be secure and that can fulfill Jig’s passion. She will feel safe, substantial, and settled. Importantly, Jig hopes that she can feel love from her boyfriend

because all she needs is love from him. To have a family is not just to marry the American man but Jig also wishes to have a happy life with her husband and kids together. We can assume that Jig is unable to live by herself but she needs protection from her boyfriend. It shows that Jig is framed by stereotypical traditions of conventional women; she is a submissive person. To sum up, to achieve what she wants, Jig attempts to do everything to impress her boyfriend even going as far as deciding to have the abortion as the following conversation:

“I think it’s the best thing to do. But I don’t want you to do it if you don’t really want to.”  
 “And if I do it you’ll be happy and things will be like they were and you’ll love me?”  
 “I love you now. You know i love you.”  
 “I know. But if I do it, then it will be nice again if i say things are like white elephants and you’ll like it?”

And finally she expresses that;

“Then I’ll do it. Because I don’t care about me.”  
 “What do you mean?”  
 “I don’t care about me.”  
 “Well, I care about you.”  
 “Oh yes. But I don’t care about me. And I’ll do it and then everything will be fine.”

This example literally confirms that Jig cannot live by herself, but also that she needs security. Jig’s action actually underpins the situation by attempting to do everything to impress her boyfriend even going as far as having an abortion. However, the underlying meaning reassures the reader that Jig has painfully discovered that the American doesn’t really love her. Therefore, she is being sarcastic.



## CHAPTER 4

### 'A ROSE FOR EMILY'

Faulkner has made Emily very special in presenting gender issues throughout the story. Emily, a female protagonist, is a core for an analysis in this study. The analysis will be divided into two parts; an examination of how gender stereotype is related to Emily's character, her father and her sweetheart- Homer Barron, and how Emily underpins her role in certain situations.

#### **Gender stereotypes as employed by Emily, her father and her sweetheart, Homer Barron.**

Faulkner opens the story with the death of Emily Grierson who wants to be loved and to love and to have a husband and a warm family. The townspeople are very interested in Emily's death. So, the whole town attends Emily's funeral because they are curious to see the inside of Emily's house which none of them has ever seen, except for two female cousins. Emily was born to a middle class family; she lives with her father and a Negro servant, named Tobe. Emily's life is a tragedy because her whole life is dominated by her father until his death. When Emily becomes a teenager, her father drives away all the young men who want to date her so she has never been able to meet young men. So at thirty, she is still single. Her father doesn't realize that he has thwarted Emily's womanhood. When her father dies, Emily is liberated. Two years of her father's death, Emily meets her sweetheart, Homer Barron who is from the North; he comes to pave the sidewalks in Emily's home town during summer. They start dating and Emily has the most wonderful time she has ever had. Soon, Emily finds out that her sweetheart is going

to leave her and she can't allow that because she loves him very much and she expects him to marry her and to have a family; he is her would-be husband. Furthermore, she would do everything to keep him with her forever. Emily achieves satisfaction. She gets what she wants in spite of being called by society "a mad woman". Emily achieves what she desires but at the expense of her sanity.

Regarding Emily's role, she wants to avenge her lessons from her father who dominated for 30 years causing her to miss out a real social life of her own. When she meets Homer Barron, whom she loves, she will not let herself be dominated again. Everyone needs social activity to be accepted. Emily, however, has never experienced that. So, when her father dies, the townspeople are "glad... at last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone and a pauper, she had become humanized"(718). They are happy for her freedom that she can celebrate.

Moreover the narrator continues that;

"Then we knew that this was to be expected too; as if that quality of her father which had thwarted her woman's life so many times had been too virulent and too furious to die"(720).

Townspeople disagree with the way Emily was treated by her father; they were quite upset and so are very happy for her after his death. There are two reasons to consider why Emily's father dominates her. He may selfishly want to maintain his love that he has her and to ensure that his daughter has a good future. She deserves the best man who suits her; he drives away those men who are not good enough for his daughter. On the other hand, he doesn't want any body else to take his daughter away from him because he wants her to look after him as long as he is still alive. Faulkner sees him as a selfish father. He says that Emily is a "young girl with a young girl's normal aspirations to find love and then a husband and a family, who was brow-beaten and kept down by her father,

a selfish man who didn't want her to leave home because he wanted a housekeeper, and it was a natural instinct of –repressed which-you can't repress it”, *The Story and Its Writer*, (1180). Emily's father is presented as the conventional stereotype of men maintaining their power by being the controller, whereas Emily represents women as being controlled. However, Emily challenges herself to become a new person. She develops her strengths by her experiences; she becomes strong, straight, smart, and clever. Emily's strength appears in her refusal to pay the taxes, her negotiation for the purchase of poison, and the murder of her sweetheart. For example, a refusal to pay taxes, when the aldermen come to tell her that she must pay her taxes she has no fear. While they are trying to explain to her that there is an official contract in a written word that her father loaned some money from them a long time ago, she is strongly confident to retort that she has nothing to do with any taxes of her father in Jefferson. In the following exchange between Emily and the aldermen we can show how strong she is:

“She did not ask them to sit. She just stood in the door and listened quietly until the spokesman came to a stumbling halt. Then they could hear the invisible watch ticking at the end of the gold chain. Her voice was dry and cold.  
 “I have no taxes in Jefferson. Colonel Sartoris explained it to me. Perhaps one of you can gain access to the city records and satisfy yourselves.”  
 “But we have. We are the city authorities, Miss Emily. Didn't you get a notice from the sheriff, signed by him?”  
 “I have received a paper, yes,” Miss Emily said. “Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff...I have no taxes in Jefferson.”  
 “But there is nothing on the books to show that, you see. We must go by the --?”  
 “See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson.”  
 “But miss Emily--?”  
 “See Colonel Sartoris.”(Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost then years.) “I have no taxes in Jefferson. Tobe!” The Negro appeared. “Show these gentlemen out.” (716-717).

Faulkner's portrays Emily as not only having a strong mind, but as being almost aggressive as well. She not only doesn't invite them to take a seat but she also expels them from her home without saying goodbye. Of course, this refers to her straight forward personality. However, this also shows that she does not fit in with society well.

Emily doesn't realize that it is important to behave well toward others. Another thing is that she has a very strange personality. She believes that Colonel Sartoris is still alive when in fact he has been dead for ten years. Her mind is already lost; there is no past, present, and future in her notion. However, we can't blame her, but her father. The father should be blamed because if he had not manipulated or dominated her, she would not have had a strange personality. We can see her strong mind and aggressiveness when she purchases the poison from the druggist. She wants the best poison that he has. However, the law requires the reasons for using the poison. But Emily refuses to give a reason because when the druggist asks for more information, she just stares straight into his eyes which makes him dare not inquire further but sells her the 'Arsenic' ,poison for rats, instead:

"I want some poison," she said.  
 "Yes, Miss Emily. What kind? For rats and such? I'd recom--"  
 "I want the best you have. I don't care what kind."  
 The druggist named several. "They'll kill anything up to an elephants. But what you want is ---"  
 "Arsenic," Miss Emily said. "Is that a good one?"  
 "Is...arsenic? Yes, ma'am. But what you want---"  
 "I want arsenic."  
 The druggist looked down at her. She looked back at him, erect, her face like a strained flag. "Why, of course," the druggist said. "If that's what you want. But the law requires you to tell what you are going to use if for."  
 Miss Emily just stared at him, her head tilted back in order to look him eye for eye, until he looked away and went and got the arsenic and wrapped it up (719).

Because of her strong insistence and afford, it empowers her to achieve what she wants. A final example of her strength and aggressiveness is when she murders her sweetheart and sleeps with his body for over forty years; she cuddles with the rotting corpse the rest of her life. Poisoning people is very complicated for normal women because women's strength is compromising and it is women's nature to dislike violence. In contrast, it is

easy for Emily to kill Homer Barron because her mind is abnormal. It is also ironic because sometimes even strong men can't even do that. Emily is not only a strong and straight forward person but also smart and clever in organizing things as well. For instance, she controls all the suspicions of the townspeople soundly after Homer Barron was missing. First of all she makes the townspeople think that she will marry Homer Barron because they start dating for awhile. Moreover, the townspeople see Emily and Homer Barron every Sunday afternoon driving by happily in the yellow-wheeled buggy. Secondly, Emily makes them think that 'they are married' because Emily orders a man's toilet set in silver, with the letters H.B. on each piece; H.B. refers to Homer Barron. Furthermore, on the next day, she buys a complete outfit of men's clothing, a nightshirt for her sweetheart, Homer Barron. Hence when Homer Barron is gone, the townspeople aren't surprised and don't suspect anything. Importantly, after awhile Emily's house starts to smell and the smell is getting stronger and strongest because of the rotting corpse of Homer Barron who has been dead for a long time. When those people complain to judge Stevens, they request the Board of Aldermen to solve the problem. But, they refuse to confront Emily, and only sneak into her yard to sprinkle lime to stop the smell as seen in the following:

"We must do something about it, Judge. I'd be the last one in the world to bother Miss Emily, but we've got to do something." That night the Board of Aldermen met-three gray-beards and one younger man, a member of the rising generation.

"It's simple enough," he said. "Send her word to have her place cleaned up. Give her a certain time to do it in, and if she don't ..."

"Dammit, sir." Judge Stevens said, "will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?"

Emily has planned everything cleverly so the townspeople don't suspect her behavior,

even though the government couldn't find any evidence to accuse her because they can't arrest the citizen simply because their houses have a bad smell. According to Srisermbhok, Emily is a representative of women's liberation movement because she employs three components of liberal women in her personality; right to voice out, equal opportunity, and be able to change. The right to voice out means she has right to express her thoughts when she is receiving injustice such as tax issue and purchase of the poison. Secondly, she gets an equal opportunity to do what she would like to do such as to date, to love Homer Barron, to buy poison and to murder Homer Barron. She, however, seems happy. Finally she is able to change the situation from being an object to become a subject. As she loves Homer Barron very much, she wants his love, and she wants him to be with her. So, when he wants to leave her, she decides to kill him because she wants to keep him with her forever. She lives with his dead body until the end of her life. According to Hall, there are a few areas to clarify Emily's struggle; a provision of basic needs and searching for autonomy.

### **How Emily underpins her role toward a certain situation**

In some respects Jig and Emily are similar. They both are women who want to be loved and to love and to have a husband and a family, but their lovers refuse them. Emily, nevertheless, achieves her satisfaction. She employs two components to liberalize her life; the secure provision of basic necessities and the desire for autonomy. Thus, the main reasons for her severe behavior are to secure love and to achieve her autonomy. Emily grows up together with abnormal circumstance such as the atmosphere a household. Fore example, not only is Emily oppressed by her father as well. She has no mother to consult with when she needs advice. She has a servant, but he can't be her friend; a servant's duty

is only to clean and cook. Moreover, the front door of their house has never opened. The house is absolutely dirty which can be seen from the following description:

“It smelled of dust and disuse—a close, dank smell. The Negro led them into the parlor. It was furnished in heavy, leather-covered furniture. When the Negro opened the blinds of one window, they could see that the leather was cracked; and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their things, spinning with slow motes in the single sun-ray.”

The dim atmosphere inside the household can cause her repression as well. Moreover, she has no friends—only two cousins, but they don't have any relationship because Emily has never gone out of her home. Sadly, Emily has no connection to a social life. The biggest concern of Emily's life is to be loved and to love. When fate draws her to fall in love with Homer Barron, it is a beginning of her new life; it is the biggest change in her life. She makes herself ready for this new love; she cuts her hair short which makes her look like a girl and somehow she looks like an angel in colored church window. Emily's desire is to have a family with Homer Barron and have a happy life together. But there is nothing perfect in the world; Homer Barron is going to leave her. Actually, the townspeople pity Emily because she wants to marry Homer Barron but he is not suitable for her; he is not the type of a man who will marry as, he is an irresponsible drunkard, and is the Yankee from the north and Emily is a southerner. In the past, the north and the south made a civil war because of disagreement about slavery. As a result the north and the south don't really like each other very much. There are many comments on Homer Barron, but it doesn't matter for Emily because she loves him, and he is her would-be husband. So, Emily thwarts his attempt to run away from her. She, finally, decides to poison him in order to keep his love and his body with her forever. After his death, Emily still acts with Homer Barron as if he were still alive such as she sleeps with his dead body and embraces his rotting corpse. Faulkner describes that;

“The violence of breaking down the door seemed to fill this room with pervading dust....Upon a chair hung the suit, carefully folded; beneath it the two mute shoes and the discarded socks. The man himself lay in the bed. For a long while we just stood there, looking down at the profound and fleshless grin. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay; and upon him and upon the pillow beside him lay that even coating of the patient and biding dust. Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron gray hair” (722).

The iron gray hair is a hair of Emily which proves that she sleeps with a rotting corpse all the time. So, Emily reforms herself from being the object to being the subject; she changes from being controlled to being a controller. It is, however, the climax of the story, and it makes ‘A Rose for Emily’ one of Faulkner’s greatest short stories.

Nevertheless, Emily does everything to fill up her satisfaction. Hall suggests that an absence of a secure provision of basic necessities leads to a miserable life. So, to make life happy is to satisfy a negative such as to accept what we have or to make a positive one such as trying to succeed and get what we want. A negative side such a leaving is unacceptable for Emily. She makes it positive for herself by possessing her sweetheart’s love and body for good. However, everything that Emily does is part of her search for her true identity because she cannot see a clear picture of her future. She doesn’t have any other good boyfriends. But, when she finds Homer Barron, she can see her future. She, definitely, senses that she can’t afford to let her future slip away. She finally finds her answer; she must poison him because it is the only way to keep her future with her forever. She succeeds, achieves everything she desires even though she is called a mad person.

Overall, Emily underpins her problem under a certain situation by turning herself

from being the object to being the subject instead. The important thing is it makes her dream come true.

## CHAPTER 5

### 'THE CHRYSANTHEMUMS'

Steinbeck presents a very simple life concerning marriage; however, there is something that we should realize- a neglected relationship. This chapter will examine two pillars. First is an examination of gender issues through Elisa Allen, the female protagonist; how Steinbeck uses gender stereotypes to portray both Elisa and her husband, Henry Allen. Second is an attempt to answer how Elisa's problems underpin gender stereotypes.

**An examination of gender stereotypes as employed in Elisa Allen and her husband, Henry Allen.**

Elisa Allen, thirty five, and her husband, Henry Allen, live on a wealthy ranch. There is a sense of richness in the Allen family; they own a farm with lots of land, cattle, horses, and tractors. There is, however, something missing. It is a lack of intimacy, affection, passion, tenderness, care, sharing, and interest in their married life. This kind of relationship is like a house built on a frail foundation. It can collapse easily. Elisa almost falls in love with another man who understands and has an interest in her chrysanthemums, whereas her husband doesn't. Steinbeck opens the story describing the situation as "a time of quiet and of waiting. The air was cold and tender." (42).

It leads readers to feel the loneliness of Elisa, and her waiting for something exciting to cheer up her life. Elisa Allen is taking care of her chrysanthemum garden, and she is an expert in growing, staking, and rooting. She is very skilled in growing her

chrysanthemums. Furthermore, she has the best chrysanthemums in this area. Meanwhile, her husband, Henry Allen, is only interested in operating his farm, tending to the business of his apple tree orchards and his cattle. For example, he has been successful in selling thirty steers to a 'Western Meat Company'. That evening, he will take his wife to dinner at a fancy restaurant in the town to celebrate his success. However, Elisa's passion is not centered on material things that her husband provides for her. What she desires and needs is interest from her husband; she wants him to acknowledge what she is doing, especially with her chrysanthemums garden. She has, however, never received it. The ignorance of her husband brings loneliness and pain to her life daily. One day, however, a tinker arrives who not only cures her wound, but he is fascinated by her as well. He makes Elisa feel valuable because he is interested in her chrysanthemums. Moreover, Elisa discovers her identity; she feels stronger than usual, and she has found that she doesn't need interest from her husband anymore. After he leaves, however, she feels sad. Elisa and her husband drive to town for their dinner out. Elisa, then, finds out that everything that the tinker had done that day was a ruse. Her chrysanthemums are not valued by him at all. The tinker had merely pretended to have interest in her chrysanthemums because he had wanted to earn some money to live on. Finally, Steinbeck closes the story with a tear on Elisa's face. Her husband doesn't know what happened. Moreover, he doesn't know that she is crying. The examination will begin with a discussion of the difference between the male and female characters including a lack of passion and affection in their relationship. It will particularly focus on Elisa's character. There are a number of ways Steinbeck shows the gender stereotyping of Elisa and Henry; the machines used on the farm versus growing chrysanthemums, a fighting trip versus a movie trip, and sleeping in a spring-wagon versus sleeping in a big bed in a house. A comparison of gender issues is presented in each situation. Firstly, when Steinbeck describes Henry he associates him

with business suits, cigarettes, and machines. Machines, cigarettes, and business tend to be only for men. For example, machines are used for heavy work and need a strong person to work on them. Cigarettes or smoking are usually seen as the prerogative of men, at least at the time of the story. Elisa, on the other hand, is introduced by the beautiful yellow chrysanthemums she grows. The chrysanthemum, definitely, refers to beauty, tenderness, compromise, and sensitiveness of women. Secondly, Henry enjoys watching the fights. Elisa, however, doesn't. When Henry suggests that they could see the fights after their dinner, she says "No, I wouldn't like fights" (43). By nature women don't like the fights because fighting means violence and aggressiveness, but men do prefer it. Lastly is the challenge of dangerous adventure usually preferred only by men who are strong. Consider the following conversation between Elisa and the tinker:

"You sleep right in the wagon?" Elisa asked.

"Right in the wagon, ma'am. Rain or shine I'm dry as a cow in there."

"It must be nice," she said. "It must be very nice. I wish women could do such things."

"It ain't the right kind of a life for a woman."

Her upper lip raised a little, showing her teeth. "How do you know? How can you tell?" she said (47).

From this conversation we can see that the prevailing attitude was that women should stay home because it is safe and they need to be protected from danger outside. Similarly, the chrysanthemum garden needs a fence to protect it from the animals.

There is a little room for love between Elisa and Henry because of their lack of intimacy and affection which is necessary between a wife and a husband. To sum up, Elisa is neglected by her husband. He neglects her interests, her chrysanthemums, and her hobbies. First, Elisa devotes herself to her chrysanthemums. We can see her passion when she describes her chrysanthemums. She talks with excitement when she talks about them with the tinker. He asks if he can have some chrysanthemum shoots for another lady.

“Why yes you can,” Elisa cried. “I can put some in damp sand, and you can carry them right along with you. They’ll take root in the pot if you keep them damp. And then she can transplant them.”

“She’d sure like to have some ma’am. You say they are nice ones?”

“Beautiful,” she said. “Oh, beautiful.” Her eyes shone (46).

Whenever she talks about her chrysanthemums, we assume that she is expressing her emotion through them. Unfortunately, her husband has never let her explain how beautiful and tender her chrysanthemums are. He doesn’t know how she grows them, how they become gorgeous flowers and how many pests such as aphids, sow-bugs, snails, and cutworms that she has to destroy before they destroy her green chrysanthemum sprouts. Importantly, sometimes, what people need is only ‘understanding’ from someone they love. It sounds like a very small thing; however, there is much meaning to this simple “understanding”. Henry doesn’t understand how much the chrysanthemums means to his wife. Importantly, he doesn’t understand what his wife needs from him, a simple acknowledgement, a simple interest in her chrysanthemums and her usual activities in order for her to feel he cares for her. She needs more than his few words to her:

“At it again,” he said. “You’ve got a strong new crop coming.”

Elisa straightened her back and pulled on the gardening glove again.

“Yes. They’ll be strong this coming year.” In her tone and on her face there was a little smugness’.

“You’ve got a gift with things,” Henry observed. “Some of those yellow chrysanthemums you had this year were ten inches across. I wish you’d work out in the orchard and raise some apples that big”(43).

Henry starts his greetings with ‘At it again,’ to his wife instead of ‘How are your chrysanthemums?’ There is an ambiguous meaning. We can interpret that he is annoyed at her spending time on her chrysanthemums again or he may be teasing his wife. Even when he admires his wife’s success in growing chrysanthemums, they are ten inches bigger than last year, he still wishes that she could do that with his apple orchard as well. Hence, he is happier to talk about his apple trees than her chrysanthemums. Secondly he

neglects her hobbies. This obviously shows that they lack intimacy. Moreover, they don't share their moments of happiness and sadness together which is why people have partners; it is to share both the good and the bad times. The following conversation shows this:

She was silent for a while; then she said, "Henry, at those prize fights, do the men hurt each other very much?"

"Sometimes a little, not often. Why?"

"Well, I've read how they break noses, and blood runs down their chests. I've read how the fighting gloves get heavy and soggy with blood."

He looked around at her. "What's the matter, Elisa?" I didn't know you read things like that" (50).

Henry and Elisa live in the same house and sleep in the same bed, but they don't know each other well. So, this answer suggests that they ignore each other. Moreover, they have no symbols of love in their marriage such as calling each other sweetie, honey, darling, because this is a crucial ingredient of love to make their life more meaningful. But, there is no such activity for the Allen's. There is nothing wrong between Elisa and Henry, actually; they just don't care about the small detail, which makes them have less desire toward each other.

This is why when the tinker enters Elisa life; it makes her find her passion, her strength, and her true self-identity. Elisa discovers her passion to talk about her chrysanthemums, to share, and to love. Firstly, the tinker appears to ask for directions because he has gotten lost. Elisa suggests to him the easiest way to get to the Los Angeles highway. Then he asks for something to mend because he has no money left in his pocket. Elisa has nothing for him to mend because she tells him that she can do it by herself. The tinker has been asking about things to mend for many times, which makes Elisa feel irritable and tells him that she has nothing for him to fix. The thinker, finally, enquires

about her chrysanthemums. Elisa suddenly changes her mood and talks to the tinker nicely; in addition, she finds something for him to mend. She gives him chrysanthemum sprouts as well. The conversation below can explain more clearly;

He learned confidentially over the fence. "Maybe you noticed the writing on my wagon. I mend pots and sharpen knives and scissors. You got any of them things to do?" "Oh, no," she said quickly. "Nothing like that." Her eyes hardened with resistance..... "All right, then. Take a pot," he continued earnestly, "a bent pot, or a pot with a hole. I can make it like new so you don't have to buy no new ones. That's a saving for you." "No," she said shortly. "I tell you I have nothing like that for you to do." His face fell to an exaggerated sadness. His voice took on a whining undertone. "I ain't had a thing to do today. Maybe I wont have no supper tonight. You see I'm off my regular road. I know folks on the highway clear from Seattle to San Diego. They save their things for me to sharpen up because they know I do it so good and save them money. " "I'm sorry," Elisa said irritably "I haven't anything for you to do." His eyes left her face and fell to searching the ground. They roamed about until they came to the chrysanthemum bed where she had been working. "What's them plants, ma'am?" The irritation and resistance melted from Elisa's face. "Oh, those are chrysanthemums, giant whites and yellow. I raise them every year, bigger than anybody around here"(45). "...Come in to the yard" (46).

The more thoughts the tinker and Elisa share about chrysanthemums, the more Elisa almost loses control of her feelings; she is fascinated by him. Steinbeck narrates:

"She was kneeling on the ground looking up at him. Her breast swelled passionately." "...Kneeling there, her hand went out toward his legs in the greasy black trousers. Her hesitant fingers almost touched the cloth. Then her hand dropped to the ground. She crouched low like a fawning dog." (47).

Further than that, when the tinker is leaving, she is sad. As she watches the caravan leaves, he says farewell to him softly because she doesn't want anybody to hear and to know that she feels sad. However, the tinker helps her to find her passion. Secondly, Elisa discovers her strength and her self identity. After the tinker leaves, Elisa goes back into the house. She takes a shower, and she dresses up in her favorite dress to get ready for

dinner with her husband. She is very beautiful; further than that, she feels really happy, strong, positive, and confident in herself, and surprises Henry:

Henry came banging out of the door, shoving his tie inside his vest as he came. Elisa stiffened and her face grew tight. Henry stopped short and looked at her." Why-why, Elisa. You look so nice!"

"Nice? You think I look nice? What do you mean by 'nice'?"

Henry blundered on. "I don't know. I mean you look different, strong and happy."

"I am strong? Yes, strong. What do you mean 'strong'?"

He looked bewildered. "You're playing some kind of a game," he said helplessly. "It's a kind of a play. You look strong enough to break a calf o over your knee, happy enough to eat it like a watermelon."

And finally she repeats that;

"I'm strong," she boasted. "I never knew before how strong" (49).

So, Elisa feels confidence in herself, which makes her feel stronger and happier than she has felt for a long time. Importantly, she feels how strong she is. Thus, she finds her true identity. Lastly, Elisa finds her awakening. In general, life is not always happy and sometimes there comes a surprise. Elisa finally discovers that the tinker isn't interested in her chrysanthemums at all; he is no different than her husband. All his talk about the chrysanthemums is not true, it is insincere. There is no lady who asks him to bring a chrysanthemum's sprouts, which Elisa has proudly provided. Importantly, he does it on purpose to sell the pot and Elisa can understand that when she sees the chrysanthemum's sprouts scatter beside the road while she is on her way for dinner. But, the tinker has kept the pot:

Far ahead on the road Elisa saw a dark speck. She knew. She tried not to look as they passed it, but her eyes would not obey. She whispered to herself sadly, "He might have thrown them off the road. That wouldn't have been much trouble, not very much. But he kept the pot," she explained. "He had to keep the pot. That's why he couldn't get them off the road" (49).

As Steinbeck explains how much Elisa loves her chrysanthemums, her grief can't be expressed in words, especially when she finds that the tinker cares only for her pot so he

can sell it and make money. So, Elisa is awoken. She knows now that there was no sincerity in the tinker's words. It was only a ruse. Elisa is, again, manipulated by a stranger, the tinker.

### **How Elisa's problems underpin her role in certain situations**

Elisa feels a lack of interest from her husband which makes her feel lonely and neglected. Thus, her requirement is that someone shows an interest in her. There is only one thing to make her feel valued as a person. Elisa needs to know that someone is interested in her to prove that she is valuable. Thus, when the tinker shows an interest in her and her chrysanthemums, she feels happy. Moreover, she finds that she is stronger. According to Hall, Elisa is looking for self autonomy and equality. Being neglected by her husband, Elisa lacks confidence in herself so she is searching for her autonomy.

After her discovery, her searching becomes true because she gains her confidence back and has learnt to come to term with herself. Secondly, Elisa seeks for equality because things that she does are men's activities or prerogatives. But she wants to try to do things associated with men such as spending life in a spring-wagon and working in the apple orchard, but she has not yet got a chance.

Elisa needs more intimacy and interest from her husband in order to make a happy, and warm family, and to make her life worthy. If Elisa and Henry had a strong relationship, it would create a strong foundation for their family which would make them happier. Importantly, Elisa would not be searching for someone to show interest in her and she would not be hurt twice as she is in this story. Elisa is not different from the other women such as Jig or Emily in that they need to be loved, to love, to have a good family, to be respected, and to be valued by their lovers. Because their requirements have not

been fulfilled yet, they try in every way to achieve what they want. On the other hand, if their lovers would give them what they really want, then their suffering would be less than they are facing right now.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

The result of an examination of gender issues through female protagonists in three short stories; 'Hills Like White Elephants', 'A Rose for Emily', and 'The Chrysanthemums', demonstrates three effects of the male authority toward female protagonists' reaction; submissive, obsessive, and compliant. The details are explained as follows;

#### **Submissive**

The male authority pushes Jig to become submissive because her boyfriend has a power over her. When Jig is pregnant, he takes advantage of her. He wants her to abort the baby because the baby is an obstacle of their love; he wants only Jig. In this case, Jig also wants to marry him because marriage means the settling down of her life as well as security and stability. Hence, she satisfies her needs by being submissive to have an abortion as her boyfriend requests in order to marry him. Gender stereotype is a common practice for those who are weaker will go to a norm: powerless.

#### **Obsessive**

As well, the effect of the male authority causes Emily to become obsessive because she is controlled by her father until his death. So, when she meets her boyfriend, she wants to marry him. She decides to murder him in order to possess him; importantly, so they can live together forever. Jig and Emily are similar in the way of desire to marry their boyfriends. However, Emily is different from Jig because she can overcome the obstacle to reach for what she is looking for, but it is exchanged with her obsession.

### **Compliant**

Elisa is one of the products of the gender problem that the male holds a power over the female because Elisa is ignored and neglected by her husband, which causes her suffering. So, when a new man, Tinker, pays attention to her and her chrysanthemums, she complies with his words. She becomes compliant, which helps her discover her confidence and feel stronger. Although, Elisa receives a painful lesson from Tinker; that he is not sincere toward her. However, the lesson helps her to find her autonomy; importantly, she can learn how to lead her life better.

Nevertheless, society's stereotyping of gender produces men with more power than women, which creates pain for women. Therefore, they have to search for their own way to help them fill up their satisfaction such as Jig, Emily, and Elisa. Apparently, gender problems are not exactly from the women, but the society's stereotyping as well. Overall the study of gender issues through female protagonists' struggles is utilized in many ways. Fore example, to gain more knowledge and more understanding about gender issues including the appreciation of the author's works, concerning gender issues in other events.

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# VITAE

**VITAE**

Name: Miss Wassana Chaiyaphan  
Date of Birth: September 17, 1979  
Place of Birth: Nakhonphanom  
Address: 22 Moo.5, Nakhamin Sub-district, Phonsawan District,  
Nakhonphanom Province, 48190

## Education Background:

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2007 | Master of Arts (English) from Srinakharinwirot University |
| 2002 | Bachelor of Arts (English) from Mahasarakham University   |
| 1998 | High school from Piyamaharachalai School, Nakhonphanom    |