

6. For a discussion of Hemingway's marriage to Pauline, see Jeffrey Meyers, "Ernest Hemingway's Four Wives." *Married to Genius* (New York, 1977), pp. 174-189, for the critical reception of "The Short Happy Life," see Jeffrey Meyers, *Hemingway The Critical Heritage* (Boston, 1982).

7. Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life," p. 147

### "OMNE ANIMAL POST COITUM TRISTE" A NOTE AND A QUERY

In one of his earliest case histories, Sigmund Freud quoted a famous Latin dictum which has been often cited but does not seem to have been traced conclusively to a particular source: "Omne animal post coitum triste."<sup>1</sup> The sentiment expressed in this proverb was pervasive in antiquity and has continued to interest modern researchers. While attempting to provide a commentary on this notable but elusive quotation, I also hope to provoke a response from some reader who can confirm or disprove its alleged source, the medical writer Galen.

The context in which Freud mentions this saying is as follows

It is quite possible that the starting-point of a minor melancholia like this may always be an act of coitus: an exaggeration of the physiological saying 'omne animal post coitum triste.' [An accompanying footnote in editor's brackets reads: "'Every animal is sad after copulating.' This quotation has not been traced."]<sup>2</sup>

This elusive proverb is cited as anonymous by Havelock Ellis and Gaston Vorberg, although the latter

cited it in a fuller form: "*omne animal post coitum triste praeter fallum mulieremque*" ("Every animal is sad after copulating, except a rooster and a woman").<sup>3</sup> Alfred C. Kinsey et al. in their famous report on *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* mention the quotation and attribute it to Galen:

A marked quiescence of the total body is the most widely recognized outcome of orgasm. The famous aphorism, *post coitum triste* one is sad following coitus —, is not only a distortion of Galen's original statement, but an inadequate description of the usually quiescent state of a person who had experienced orgasm. There is neither regret nor conflict nor any tinge of sadness for most persons who have experienced orgasm. There is, on the contrary, a quiescence, a calm, a peace, a satisfaction with the world which, in the minds of many persons, is the most notable aspect of any type of sexual activity. [An accompanying footnote reads: "Galen (ca 130-200 A.D.) actually said: *Triste est omne animal post coitum, praeter mulierem gallumque* (every animal is sad after coitus, except the human female and the rooster)"]<sup>4</sup>

This reference simply to "Galen" is rather vague, to say the least, in view of the facts that he wrote over one hundred treatises and that his complete works fill twenty thick volumes. Also, it is rather strange to imply that these are the very words of Galen, since he wrote exclusively in Greek, not Latin. Nevertheless, in Freud's day Galen was frequently studied and cited in the Latin translation which accompanied the Greek text in the authoritative edition of C.G. Kuhn.<sup>5</sup> It is entirely possible, then, that this quotation is derived ultimately from Galen, but this has yet to be confirmed.

While the exact source of this quotation remains elusive, the basic sentiment is clearly rooted in a long classical tradition. The statement attributed to Galen has three elements: (1) post-coital depression, (2) the libidinal superiority of women, and (3) the libidinal superiority of the cock. Both (1) and (2), but especially the latter, were clearly stated by classical authors who preceded Galen by many centuries. The theme of post-coital depression is at least as old as the Aristotelian treatise *Problems* (877b, or 4, 10, 12 in some editions), which poses the question: "Why do young men, when first they begin to have sexual intercourse, hate those with whom they have associated after the act is over?"<sup>6</sup> In a later variation (1st cent. A.D.), Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* (Book 10, chap 83, sect. 171) offers this view "Man [*homo*, implying both male and female] is the only animal with which mating for the first time is followed by repugnance."<sup>7</sup>

The theme that men's libido is inferior to women's has a long history in classical literature – from Hesiod (ca. 700 B.C.) to the Athenian "golden age" of the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. and throughout the following Roman period. From often-cited fragments of Hesiod's lost poem *Melampodia* we learn that it was the earliest source of a famous mythical proverb about the pleasures of love. According to the myth, Zeus and his wife Hera once quarrelled over the question of who enjoyed sex more: men or women? They called in as an arbiter the one mortal who had experienced intercourse both as a man and as a woman, the Theban seer Tiresias. His famous

reply (which is cited slightly differently in the various reports of it) has been translated "Of ten parts [of love's pleasure] a man enjoys one only, but a woman's sense enjoys all ten in full."<sup>8</sup> The same story was told with slight variations by many later classical writers, of whom the most famous are Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, 3 316-338) and Apollodorus (*The Library*, 3 6. 7) As for Hesiod, he seems to have had some second thoughts on the subject. his poem *The Works and Days* (586-588) maintains that it is (only?) in the summer that woman's libido is strong and man's is weak – a view which was shared by many subsequent classical authors, including Aristotle, as M.L. West has documented.<sup>9</sup> Finally, we may turn to Euripides and Nonnus for two additional illustrations of this classical stereotype that woman had a superior but excessive libido. The heroine in Euripides' tragedy *Andromache* (220-221) proclaims "Well, we women are infected/With a worse disease than men, but try to conceal it"<sup>10</sup> The "disease" in question here, as numerous commentators including Paley and Stevens have pointed out, is the painful passion of love.<sup>11</sup> Near the end of antiquity, Nonnus wrote in his epic *Dionysiaca* (Book 42, 209-210): "Every woman has greater desire than the man, but shamefast she hides the sting of love, though mad for love herself."<sup>12</sup>

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1. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey et al., I (London, 1966), 199; hereafter cited as Freud.
2. Freud, pp. 198-99 (and n. 1, p. 199).
3. Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, III (Philadelphia, 1924), p. 247, Gaston Vorberg, *Glossarium Eroticum* (Hanau, 1965), p. 647
4. Alfred C. Kinsey et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 637-38 (and n. 54, p. 638).
5. Carolus G. Kühn, ed. and trans., *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, 20 vols (Leipzig, 1821-33).
6. Aristotle, *Problems*, trans. W.S. Hett (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), p. 117
7. Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham, III (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), p. 401
8. Hesiod et al., *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homeric*, trans. H.G. Evelyn-White (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), p. 269. Tiresias, of course, was the famous blind seer of mythology. This particular myth was designed to explain how he became blind. Originally a man, Tiresias was magically transformed into a woman after an encounter with two copulating serpents. Seven years later, a similar encounter transformed him back into a man. Later he became entangled in Zeus' and Hera's quarrel about the pleasures of love-making. His decision in favor of Zeus prompted the angry Hera to strike him blind.
9. Martin L. West, ed., *Hesiod Works and Days* (London, 1978), p. 305. Cf. also Alcæus, frag. Z 23 (Lobel-Page).
10. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, eds., *The Complete Greek Tragedies. Vol. 3. Euripides* (Chicago, 1959), p. 568.
11. F.A. Paley, ed., *Euripides*, II (London, 1874), 254; P.T. Stevens, ed., *Euripides' "Andromache"* (London, 1971), p. 121.
12. Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, trans. W.H.D. Rouse, III (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), p. 243

### FRISBEE AND NIGHT PEOPLE

While browsing through the 1956-57 volume of the *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, I came across two items of lexical-historical interest. The first of these involves the word *Frisbee*. *Frisbee* is listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary Supplement* with a first use of 8 July 1957 (*Newsweek*, p. 85). Dr. Stancil E.D. Johnson, the Official Historian of the International Frisbee Association, has confirmed for me in a letter of 20 February 1981 that this is the earliest printed appearance of the word known to him.

A slightly earlier reference is supplied, however, by the *Alumni Weekly* of 3 May 1957. In the "On the Campus" column on p. 16, we find the following lead paragraph

The first hot day of the year has come and gone, leaving a wake of indolence. Boys sprawled on the lawns in the sun, making vague motions of studying. Shielded by dark glasses or straw hats they spread a few books around them on the grass while they dozed in the heat. Activity of greater violence gained some support. Games of "frisbee" and baseball were played among the scattered sunbathers, and in the green space between McCormick and Dod Hall a furious and irregular mass soccer game claimed the attention of some sixty students last week.

It is interesting that the student author of the column, Robert M. Rehder '57, set off *frisbee* in quotation

