

Martha Gellhorn, *Two by Two*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1958

Notes by Ben Shneiderman, January 9, 2022, ben@davidseymour.com

Martha Gellhorn (1908-1998) was a journalist and novelist, who was Ernest Hemingway's third wife (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martha_Gellhorn). She wrote four novellas in the book *Two by Two*, which included "Till Death Us Do Part" (pages 171-246). Part of that novella focuses on the friendship between Chim and Capa, which are named Lep and Bara.

My only guess about the name Lep was that it was short for "Lepidoptera" or butterfly. Bara is closer to Capa, so that is understandable. Capa was also an invented name, possibly chosen by Endre Friedmann, when he went from Hungary to Paris to recast himself as Robert Capa. Some speculate that his choice was influenced by the desire to sound American, maybe like film director Frank Capra.

Interestingly, Chim was a chosen name made on arriving in Paris 1932, derived from his Polish family name Szymin. However, when Chim joined the US Army in 1941 and became a naturalized U.S. citizen, he used the name David Robert Seymour. I assume that the middle name was as a tribute to his good friend. Immigrant identities were fluid in those days, so choosing new names was common to shed past lives and fit in with new cultures.

Bara and Lep worked as partners, covering the war for several magazines and papers in England and America; they divided the stories but Bara did not like Lep to go to the worst places; he had some anxious feeling about Lep's eyes and his huge horn-rimmed spectacles. If he protected anyone in the world, it was Lep. She was jealous of Lep...Should she parade her jealousy and force choices, Bara would take Lep.... Bara loved Lep; he needed Lep as he needed no one else; Lep was the one fixed point in his life.... Bara was so dashing in his special Gypsy way, loved by women, welcomed by men, a life giver....

And Lep looked something like an owl and something like a panda and something like a head of Buddha, quiet to the verge of invisibility, a man who smiled slowly and rarely laughed, a serious man, given to serious obscure friends like archaeologists and doctors and musicians in Philharmonic orchestras, a small gentle man with a domed forehead over his vast spectacles, not at all a man for war, a professor, who astonishingly enough was only two years older than Bara and often seemed old enough to be Bara's father.

Bara said that Lep was the finest photographer alive, an artist, not a hit-and-run man with a camera like himself. Bara's pictures were the famous ones; everyone wanted Bara's work if they could get it; yet Bara only valued his pictures if Lep did; Lep was his final judge. His final judge in everything, she thought, for if Bara made the decisions in his final way, Lep had the right of veto, which he exerted quietly, hardly bothering to explain himself.... If Lep did not want to do something, then it should not be done; if Lep did not like something, then it was not to be liked.