

“The road bare and white”: Hemingway, Europe and the Artifice of Ritualised Space

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ABSTRACT

Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) are novels in which imagined space and material place interact, collide and contradict. Despite both texts being set in Europe, Hemingway's prose reveals American anxieties regarding war and identity. His protagonists are emasculated by war and alienated from the myths that have generated singular ideals of American masculinity. The novels imbue European landscapes with ritual and symbolism that create new imagined landscapes on which to perform and reassert this lost identity. Simultaneously, they are texts that expose the artifice of such performative endeavours. These oppositions and dissonances are read here through the prism of Foucault's paradigmatic "heterotopia". Foucault suggests that we are in an "epoch of juxtaposition" in which our conflicting understanding of space and place "cannot be superimposed". This paper argues that Hemingway's fiction offers a consciously empty form of symbolic space. The failure of the imagination and the knowing artifice of text suggest that the postwar heterotopia leaves no place for material manifestations of mythic autonomy, agency or free will. Hemingway imposes a distinctly American aesthetic on his European experiences. The now mythical frontier provides a mythic locale for the rituals of war to be performed. In this sense, war is heterotopian in its competing material and mythic constructions. Hemingway's fiction explores the liminal gaps between such certainties. This analysis moves from the vibrant streets of Paris and the whirling chaos of Milanese nightlife to 'clean' Alpine lakes, the reductive simplicities of Spanish life and the violent horrors of the Caporetto Retreat. The rituals performed in Europe provide a chance to relocate lost American identities but this process is ultimately revealed as empty and futile. These are textual spaces that are themselves heterotopian. Their prose experiments suggest sub-textual depth yet simultaneously reveal emptiness and futility lying beneath the sparse and economical tone.

Keywords: Hemingway, landscape, Foucault, heterotopia, ritual



Ernest Hemingway's novels are multi-faceted affairs. His terse prose invites analyses and debate with regards to its stylistic innovations and myriad sub-textual possibilities. His protagonists display a curious combination of masculine bravura and tender vulnerability. His thematic concerns are simultaneously rooted in early twentieth-century contexts and universal questions regarding mortality, sex and truth. It is his complex engagement with European landscapes, however, that are of interest here. Space and place are multi-functional in Hemingway's writing. Europe in particular holds a power over the writer that reflects his love affair with its cities and geographical histories. But Europe also operates as an analogue for mythic America. Hemingway searches for a lost American past in which certainties regarding American selfhood are more readily available. Participation in European conflict provides a material opportunity to enact and perform the self-determining autonomy encoded in mythic American narrative. In this sense, European landscape is both material and symbolic. Hemingway's texts offer a self-conscious exploration of this apparent contradiction.

This argument sets out to read this tension in two of Hemingway's early novels. In *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) Hemingway writes protagonists who are beleaguered by the complexities of their First World War experience. Jake Barnes, traumatised and injured during "that dirty war" (2012: 25), stumbles through the whirling social complexities of Parisian life and seeks ritualistic salvation in Northern Spain. Frederic Henry, meanwhile, is disillusioned by the futility and emptiness of combat. He too seeks salvation, but in a love affair with Catherine Barkley and the 'cold clean' landscapes of Alpine Europe. Through these protagonists, Hemingway plays out American anxieties and imposes an American aesthetic on European landscape. Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry engage in performative activities that range from competitive fishing trips to quasi-Alpine survival. These ritual enactments offer opportunity to perform mythic American autonomy. They suggest a corporeal self that is self-governed and evidence of a singular and certain subjectivity. They act as ballast against the material uncertainties of rapid social change and the impersonal and arbitrary nature of mortality in a newly mechanised era.

Hemingway never set a novel in America but his novels are always about America. They demonstrate anxieties regarding the status of American selfhood in modernity. The First World War denies agency or ritual power over mortality. Technology and the machinations of vast social systems leave the American subject powerless. America's mythic past, however, tells a different story. It offers paradigmatic constructions of autonomy and striking self-definition. The westward movement of Manifest Destiny and the significance of the frontier are mythical-historical discourses that favour and develop pragmatism, bravery and single-mindedness. These are foundational narratives that sit in stark contrast to the arbitrary dangers of the First World War and the isolation felt by post-industrial American subjects. Hazel Hutchinson (2015) describes the American experience of the First World War as one of "conflicting elements" and that, "[f]rom its opening weeks, the First World War was a war of contradictions" It was "[f]ought in defense of idealism and civilisation, [but] quickly became the most incoherent and inhumane war in history" (2). Hutchinson adds that such inconsistency is manifest in American literary responses to the war which is, she argues, "in itself something of a contradiction—the superb made out of the monstrous" (2). This is certainly the case in

Hemingway's writing. The tensions between the symbolic, the ideological and the material are made evident in the ritualistic and the performative. Soldiers and veterans search for meaning through enactments of their mythic past. The brute materialities of mechanised war remove agency. Conscious engagement in myth may bring it back. The novels confront the moral dilemmas facing combatants exposed to technological violence whose previous philosophical certainties are metaphorically blown apart. Prior to the First World War, Aimee Pozorski (2004) claims, modernist fiction and art had approached the *new* "as a radical break from past history and literary predecessors" (75). Technology and the clean, metallic lines of the future were a means to escape the self-serving narratives of the nineteenth century. The events of the war, however, were a catalyst for changes to modernism's relationship with the early twentieth century.

The trench warfare of World War I [...] complicated modernists' interest in "the new" as these atrocities were only modern insofar as they employed killing machines and systemic warfare. Instead of confidence in this new approach to literary valuation, ambivalence came to the forefront to underwrite modernism as a field. (75)

The nature of modernity, therefore, is complex and contradictory. Technology offers newness and progress; qualities long associated with America's national project. However, in the light of the First World War, technology also suggests disempowerment and a subjectivity detached from certainty. The material nature of American autonomy vanishes and is replaced by myth. Such myths are in turn revisited through repetitions of performative ritual and new configurations and understanding of spatial constructions and dynamics. To return to Hutchinson, she explains that at the war's end, "America was a modern, urban, materialistic society and a powerful player on the international stage". However, the contradictions, inconsistencies and "social divisions" that undermined such apparent success meant that "[it] was not long before many were looking back to the prewar years with nostalgia as a golden era of American life" (15) What the analysis in this article contends is that landscape, both as imagined and material, is the site for such nostalgic and mythic constructions to take place.

Hemingway's fiction is part of a long debate regarding America's relationship with landscape and the manner in which myth and historicity overlap in such constructions. Cultural historian Richard Slotkin (1973) argues that America's "myth consciousness" (4) sets it apart from other modern nations. Its "continual pre-occupation with the necessity of defining or creating a national identity" (4) means that America's mythic past is closely tied to the historical record. Slotkin describes these narrative beginnings as a process of "mythogenesis" (4) in which "the founding fathers [...] tore violently a nation from the implacable and opulent wilderness" (4). This is the moment, therefore, when the material nature of historical event and the mythic nature of national narrative start to form their intertwining relationship. Charles Fiedelson (1953) writes that this origin story is the basis for "a mode of perception that united past, present [...] ideas and material fact" (81). America is a nation constantly engaged with its mythic origins. Material acts of all types always have the potential to symbolise and propagate those myths and this potential underpins the mundane performance of daily life. This complicates dichotomous understandings of myth and materiality. The superficially

straightforward aspects of work or social relations take on ritual potential. Subjectivity exists in a material present as well as a mythic and narrativised past.

Sacvan Bercovitch (1993) writes of a uniquely American “historicity of myth” (7). This is a system that underpins “national ritual” and “strategies of symbolic cohesion” (1). National myths are treated with material reverence. They do not belong in a forgotten and misty past but in a recent history. They are a guiding principle for hegemonic American identities and aesthetics. America’s continental conquest is an example of this meeting of myth and history. Tony Tanner (1987) describes America’s westward movement towards an ever-receding frontier as an “attack” carried out with “aggressive delight and almost sadistic savagery” (9). Among such violence lies the opportunity for the autonomy that defines American selfhood. In retellings of this mythic paradigm lies performative and ritual mimesis of this original violence. Jake’s vicarious spectatorship of bullfighting or his failed attempts at masculine competition through fishing and fighting demonstrate this. For Frederic, however, the impersonal and random violence of the war cannot stand in for the autonomous violence that lies at the heart of American expansion. Thus, he decides on the dichotomous rituals of sex and enacting a pioneer identity in the purity and cleanliness of central Europe. This is R.W.B. Lewis’ (2009) paradigmatic “American Adam” moving “unsullied by the past” (4) and achieving the self-determination and reliance that underpins so much of America’s historic self-worth. These notions of identity are then repeated, echoed and propagated in culture. Frederick Jackson Turner (2008) argues that the western frontier is the “true point of view” (2) in America’s cultural and literary identity. It is the “meeting point between savagery and civilisation” (3). Turner ascribes both mythic and material qualities to the frontier. It is a physical site whose “wilderness” initially “masters the colonist” (3). “Little by little”, Turner continues, the American settler “transforms the wilderness” (4) and creates a “new product that is American” (4). Dominion over land, therefore, is a symbolic and material demonstration of American autonomy. The problem for combatants in the First World War is that the violent materiality and muddy quagmires of the conflict provide no outlet to perform and revisit this mythic relationship with landscape.

In order to read these tensions theoretically, and provide a paradigmatic shape to this analysis, it is useful to turn to Foucault’s term *heterotopia* (1986). Human engagements with space involve multiple and competing codifications. Such “intersection[s] of time with space” (22) lead to the imaginative creation of a “hierarchic ensemble of places: sacred places and profane places; protected places and open, exposed places; urban places and rural places” (22). Heterotopian space is both imagined and real. It is “a sort of mixed, joint experience” (24) and a “simultaneously mythic and real contestation” (24). For societies in which experiential actuality is disordered, unsatisfying and dissonant with national myth, the heterotopia provides opportunity to reconcile and reconstruct. Resultant configurations are systems of spatial and temporal compensation,

[...] their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. This latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation [...] (27)

Thomas Beebee (2008) argues that Foucault's model contains a "cognitive dissonance" that "focuses readers' attention on nation or region" (2) and that "territory and boundaries [...] are not ontological givens" (3). Dana Rus (2011) adds that the American frontier is heterotopian in its mythical-symbolic construction. She contends that the frontier "creates a subject and then that subject takes this to other spaces to either propagate [or] rebuild an America or use such a paradigm to impart new constructions of a new place" (217). Heterotopian place has the potential to be mythic and imaginative yet still exist in the material world. However, experiential and existential tensions arise when these constructions are, in Foucault's terms, "absolutely not superimposable" (23).

Hemingway's protagonists experience such dissonance. The anxieties of modernity force them into ritualistic enactment of their mythic past. They are always aware, however, that these are futile processes in which emptiness and meaninglessness are never far beneath the surface. These uncertainties and complex spatial relationships hang over them and their traumatic experiences of conflict. The First World War rebuffs notions of self-determination and autonomy. Europe's landscapes have the potential for America's mythic past to be enacted but are also chaotic sites in which each combatant is made aware of the futility of individual action. Men such as Frederic Henry and Jake Barnes explore their landscapes caught in something of a double bind. They seek opportunities to perform the rituals of America's mythic past but are always aware of their ultimate powerlessness. Stanley Cooperman's (1967) often-cited criticism suggests that Hemingway's protagonists use ritual as a "bulwark against passivity" and a means of countering "fear of the unknown or unmanageable" (184). In the context of the First World War such thinking allows its participants a glimpse of agency removed by the advances in technological weaponry and corporeal vulnerability in the face of new technology and the mechanised nature of the First World War. This combination, Cooperman states, "eliminates the battlefield as a source for ritual" (185). Participation in conflict is no longer an opportunity to enact traditional modes of American masculinity or to play the hero. Its violence is random and offers the subject no real chance to participate in an active sense. Death is arbitrary; the subject plays no part in their mortality. Both novels here demonstrate that the war itself does not allow for performance of American autonomy and that agency is dependent on mythic nostalgia. Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry move through spatial constructions and repeatedly attempt conscious enactment of ritual in their social relations and performative behaviour. Whether it be Jake's comedic fishing trip or Frederic's signifying beard, every action is both material and ritual. This paradoxical tension is what drives each text. The key factor in this is that they are aware of the artifice of their ritual actions even as they are performing them. Therefore, the spaces in which such performances happen are simultaneously sites of possibility and futility. They are places in which Jake and Frederic can demonstrate American autonomy while knowing that this is merely a fiction.

The early sections of *The Sun Also Rises* depict the lively and transactional atmosphere of Paris in the years directly after the war's end. It is a city in which the individual is simultaneously performer and spectator. Jake Barnes and his extended network of associates, rivals and colleagues sustain an uneasy and fragile series of relationships. The city abounds with gossip, scandal and questionable moralities. Jake navigates Parisian public space in sequences that are both evocative and claustrophobic.

The city, like each spatial construction examined here, operates on a multitude of levels. Its contradictions are what Foucault defines through “relations of proximity between points or elements” (1986: 23). These are not simplistic oppositions but constructions and phenomenon whose differences are rendered complex by the human desire to squeeze them together. They exist as palimpsest rather than as two dimensional cartographies. Much has been made of the so-called Lost Generation of expatriate writers in the 1920s. The Paris of this era is now itself a highly romanticised space and central to popular engagement with American literature. However, it is not just retrospectively that such mythogenesis has been attached to Paris. Donald Pizer (1986) explains that it was this very opportunity to both live in a mythic space and to add to that myth that attracted so many American artists there in the first place. Paris held “Edenic power” (142) in which those Americans traumatised by their experiences of war could recalibrate and regenerate their identities. Material Paris is also mythic Paris. Pizer adds that Hemingway and his literary peers in Paris “tend towards the spatial” in a city that “exists as a condition of thought, emotion and memory” (142). These texts, therefore, work as complex representation and as metatextual commentary on the act of writing. The city and the self-aware textual representation of the city are both heterotopian. Hemingway is engaged in what Foucault describes as a “whole network of knowledge that enables us to delimit or [...] formalize” (23) space. Hemingway’s Paris and the text itself, therefore, are heterotopian in their layers of myth, experience and representation.

These three elements form the underlying tensions in Jake Barnes’ first person narrative. The deceptive complexity of Jake’s selfhood is always tangible yet clouded and obfuscated by the elliptical nature of his phrasing. As is usually the case with reading Hemingway, the gaps resonate with subjugated meaning and experience. Jake’s war trauma is ever present yet barely discussed. His impotence is only evident in coded dialogue or his attempts at a compensatory and performative American masculinity. Jake searches for meaning in his daily activities and his frenzied social life provides opportunity to participate in the economic life of Paris. Every social interaction begets economic transaction. Money is loaned, spent, wasted and earned and Jake’s initial sense of self is based on a determination to calibrate a valid selfhood in this context. The war, however, has undermined Jake’s American autonomy and his “mala fortuna” (25) hinders his sexual agency. The appearance of economic success and activity offers a manner in which to superficially redress these imbalances. The passages in which daytime Parisian life is depicted are lively and enjoyable. For example, *Rue Soufflotis* is described on a “fine morning”, with Jake smoking and reading the papers, surrounded by “flower women”, “students” on their way to the law school or the Sorbonne, and “trams and people going to work” (28). Once at work himself, Jake sits “at the typewriter” and completes a “good morning’s work” (29). The scenes are of a functioning and vibrant city and Jake is able to participate and engage in what Paris has to offer.

It is during the evening, though, that the veil begins to slip from Jake’s narration. The ritualistic nature of his life in Paris is made clearer and the city becomes a Foucauldian “heterotopia of compensation”. Jake’s social relations and transactions are superficial attempts at creating tangible meaning. He uses Parisian nightlife and café culture as a way to participate in city life. His evenings are spent wandering from bar to restaurant to bar. Paris at night is complex and labyrinthine. Left on his own “on the terrace of the

Napolitain”, Jake watches “the *poules* going by, singly and in pairs” (12) until one of them joins Jake at his table. The resultant exchanges contain their own subtexts. Paris’ surface glitters but a cab ride along the “Avenue de l’Opera” moves past the “locked doors of [...] shops” with their “windows lighted”. Georgette, Jake’s companion, is a “pretty girl” but only with “her mouth closed” (20). Even the Pernod they share is “imitation absinthe” (21). Paris is a city that refuses to reveal its depths. All that it offers instead is the opportunity to engage in ritualised behaviour. The transaction with a prostitute never suggests intimacy or desire. It is merely a performative and compensatory prop standing in for illusory and fragmentary sexual identity.

Jake’s impotence means that his relationships with women are a conscious artifice. The remainder of his evening with Georgette is spent in social and performative activities that leave Jake bored and increasingly angry. The arrival of a boisterous group of young American men disturbs his night with Georgette and their simplistic grasp of night time ritual leaves Jake ready to “swing on one, any one, anything to shatter that superior, simpering composure” (17). Jake desires to disrupt their superficial happiness. They cannot see how shallow and performative such rituals are. For Jake, this is symptomatic of life in Paris. It is a city that shines with surface potential but hides ugly truths and sordid unhappiness. This is evident in the interactions between Jake and Lady Brett Ashley. Despite their attraction to one another, their relationship cannot be consummated. The Adamic certainties of American myth break apart and reform into rage at feminine sexuality. Brett’s autonomy and sexual agency are outside of Jake’s control. Jake responds with performative ritual through his interaction with Georgette, his acts of quasi-violence and his homoerotic and vicarious admiration of bullfighting. Parisian night life is a heterotopian space in which all of these competing constructions and actions can co-exist and clash. It is a site of experiential contradiction. As with so much else in the text, Jake’s impotence is only hinted at. It is shrouded in euphemism and suggestion. During a moment of intimacy, Jake confirms, “there’s not a damned thing we could do” (23). The manner in which such dialogue dances around the core truth is matched by Jake’s own determination to follow the “swell advice” of the Catholic Church and “not [...] think about it” (25). The injury, and by extension the war, are always present yet always repressed. Corporeal injury is the only constant truth of mechanised war but it is the one that Jake refuses to face. Something made all the clearer in the lengthy passages of description assigned to Spain and its promise of extensive and performative ritual.

Foucault describes subjective experiences of space as multi-faceted and plural. “The space in which we live”, he argues, “which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space which claws and gnaws at us is [...] a heterogeneous space” (24). In space we are surrounded by contradiction and by “diverse shades of light” (24). The understandings and conclusions we take from our surroundings are “irreducible” (24). In Hemingway’s Spain, these ontological conditions are evident in self-conscious artifice and constructedness. Hemingway imposes a knowingly imperfect American aesthetic on his evocation of Spanish life. It is an aesthetic that harks back to mythic battles with wilderness and the self-reliant heroism of the frontiersman. Jake and Bill Gorton’s travels across Spain’s northern landscapes provide Hemingway with an opportunity to revisit, rewrite and potentially satirise the westward continental conquest of America’s mythical-historical past. Given that the First World

War is often characterised by spatial stasis or retreat, Spain provides a heterotopian landscape in which Jake and Bill can evoke the rituals of conquest and dominion. The central chapters of *The Sun Also Rises* feature lengthy and poetic descriptions of Spanish landscape. These are littered with phrasing and imagery hugely familiar in American myth. Their travels are across “farming country with rocky hills”, “patches of grain on [...] bare hillsides” and past “a long string of six mules, following one after the other, hauling a high-hooded wagon loaded with freight” (80). As the men continue their journey across Basque country, the “barren” and “hard-baked” hills give way to a “sudden green valley” in which a “stream” runs “through the centre of town and fields of grapes” (82) encircle the residences. This is a return to an Edenic origin. Jake’s loss of autonomy, symbolised by his impotence, is compensated for by his rugged movement across unforgiving land to a nurturing and golden site of fecundity and fertility. He is thus able to enact the mythic adventures of those foundational and Adamic Americans who have shaped hegemonic cultural identities. However, this mythic performance is undermined by Jake and Bill’s means of movement. They are not self-reliant travellers. Instead, they are on board a public bus driven through landscape that they do not know. They are spoken to in a language that they barely understand and are victims of frequent jokes, jibes and mockery. This landscape demonstrates the artifice of ritualised space. It is heterotopian in its competing yet simultaneous constructions that are, to repeat Foucault, “absolutely not superimposable” (23). Hemingway is self-consciously interrogating the American proclivity towards a mythic and nostalgic understanding of selfhood. Richard Slotkin (1992) explains that, in American narrative, the “original mythic story is increasingly conventionalised and abstracted until it is reduced to a deeply encoded and resonant set of symbols, icons, keywords or historical clichés” (5). Once more, the novel operates as its own textual heterotopia. Hemingway simultaneously makes use of and undermines such familiar language. He suggests ritualised space then reveals the artifice beneath it.

Another example of this process is evident in Jake and Bill’s fishing trip in the “valley of the Rio de la Fabrica” (88). This time their journey takes the form of a hike past a “field of buckwheat” and a “white house under some trees on the hillside” (89). The idyllic setting and a river packed with leaping trout evoke Jeffersonian agrarian ideals and opportunity to make the land productive. Yet, once more, Hemingway undercuts the mythic and ritual potential of their actions when the transparently competitive nature of the two men is made clear. The trip is reduced to a set of comedic and performative masculine tropes. The singularity of Adamic and mythic American masculine subjectivity is undermined as a result. Judith Butler (1988) argues that gender is “in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed” (519). That this is the case is revealed through Jake and Bill’s engagement with the ritual of hunting. So long a necessity for American survival, here it becomes what Butler describes as “a stylized repetition of acts” (519) Phallic fishing rods are brandished and Jake’s successful haul is organised on the floor “side by side, all their heads pointing the same way” (91). Bill mimics this as he too displays his competence and mastery with his own fish, “each one a little bigger than the last” (91) and surveys them with a face that is “happy and sweaty” (91). The performative implications here are clear. These are men that have been emasculated by their mechanised present. If Paris is a space in which, to use Foucault’s

terms, Jake's life is "ill-constructed and jumbled" (30) then this "heterotopia of compensation" is an attempt to meet such panic with a space that is "perfect", "meticulous" and "well-arranged" (30). Jake and Bill's material experiences do not coalesce with myth and so they play out these anxieties in this puerile and immature display. Jake's impotence remains prominent as he and Jake compare the sizes of their catch. Just as their bus journey through Spanish landscape is both mythic ritual and a material rebuff of that same potential, the fishing trip is a comic demonstration of performative compensation.

In San Fermin, meanwhile, the bullring operates as a heterotopia that is, to use Foucault's terms, capable of "juxtaposing in a single real space several spaces, several sites that are themselves incompatible" (28). Its heightened sense of performative ritual and Jake's insistence that he fulfils the requirements of an *aficionado* are clear indications of the central position that ritual holds for exerting an illusory control and a performance of violence as a means of grasping at long gone corporeal autonomy. The bullring and the traditions of bullfighting are an ongoing preoccupation in Hemingway's writing. They offer a ritualistic encounter with mortality but one that takes place in controlled and artificial environs. The bullring is, according to Gabriel Rodriguez-Pazos (2014), a "space where tragedy is transcended by art" (84). The First World War is a theatre of combat that cannot offer the same. Death is random on the battlefield. There are no opportunities to demonstrate expertise or bravery.

In San Fermin, the chaotic whirl of the fiesta and Jake's increasingly shaky grip on his social life is offset by the potential offered by bullfighting. His self-proclaimed expertise is performed as ritual. His dialogue with local hotelier Montoya about bullfighting is a "deep secret that we knew about" yet the matadors that they admire are "well-framed" (130) on the walls of Montoya's office. Romero, the star matador of the moment, is an idealised masculine figure through whom Jake can vicariously perform. Jake's performative expertise is his doorway to what Foucault describes as a space of "curious exclusions" and "illusion" (29). It is as if Jake's passionate knowledge and appreciation of Romero's skills are compensation for Jake's wartime trauma. Jake brings Brett to the bullring so that he can demonstrate his entry into a secretive world of ritual knowledge. He is keen that she appreciate that she is watching "activity with a definite end" rather than "a spectacle with unexplained horrors" (127). This eschatological and linear urge toward completion is not something offered by the chaos of the war. In the bullring, however, Jake's desire for certainty can play out until a fixed end point.

Romero himself transcends the material physicality of the bullfight. Jake observes that he always remains "straight and pure and natural in line". Not for him the twisting "corkscrews" and "raised elbows" (127) of lesser fighters. Romero's performance "dominated the bull by making him realize he was unattainable" (128). This ritual violence is a dance and an art form. Its obvious brutality is hidden behind a veil of expertise and self-defined dominance. The corporeal nature of this blood sport has little place in Jake's thinking. The notion of pierced flesh or broken bodies would sully his fascination. Romero's body, therefore, is also a heterotopian space. Jake imposes an aesthetic on its appearance and movement that shifts focus away from his own wartime injuries. The violent deaths of a succession of bulls operate as an extended metaphor for Romero's sexual prowess. His sexual encounter with Brett is, like most issues that Jake

flinches from, buried in rumour and euphemism. However, the epic and ritual struggle with the bull always culminates in an act of penetrative completion. The bull sags and falls and Romero presents his sword to an adoring public. This sexualised violence and its ritual autonomy encapsulates Jake's twofold self-awareness. He knows that these are just rituals but also knows that such rituals are the only manner in which he can intellectually process his vanishing subjectivity. His fashionable Parisian social life only throws up petty rivalries and withering disdain. Even the carnivalesque traditions of the San Fermin fiesta are ruined by these relationships. His own ritual activities are undermined and rendered futile and comedic. But in the bullring he can immerse himself fully in an act that will always work toward completion. The bullring is the most transparently artificial space that Jake inhabits but the purity of the ritual and Jake's physical removal from it mean that it becomes, paradoxically, the one that holds most meaning.

The notion of constructed space and place and the ritualistic processes and imposed meanings that can be found there are central in Hemingway's 1929 novel *A Farewell to Arms*. Hemingway's story of disillusionment is a deceptively complex narrative in which Frederic Henry, a volunteer ambulance driver for the Italian army, recounts a gradual yet profound disillusionment with the war. A serious leg injury and the brutality of the Caporetto Retreat result in an act of desertion and immersion in an intense relationship with the British nurse Catherine Barkley. Frederic's narrative ends bleakly as he walks away alone from the Swiss hospital in which Catherine has died during the delivery of a stillborn child. The novel is superficially a tale of attempted heroism, injury, desertion for a love affair and the loss of a child. However, its complexity lies in Frederic's limited reflexive recollections. His narration is a self-consciously limited response to national and personal trauma. Catherine's death and the stillbirth are metonymic of Frederic's new and problematic relationship with heroism and the dynamics of mechanised conflict. The deaths are a reminder that the only certainty to be taken from mechanised war is corporeal damage and the frailty of the human body. Narrative tension exists in gaps between the narratives of American ideology and Frederic's own traumatic experiences. The novel frequently revisits these liminal spaces and explores the process of attaching self-consciously artificial meaning where none is immediately apparent.

The text opens with what Anders Hallgren (2001) describes as "one of the most pregnant opening paragraphs in the history of the modern American novel" (np). It reads:

In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves. (1)

The passage communicates the destructive materiality of war through restrained and understated description of European landscape. The metronomic march of the military pierces the cyclical rhythm of the natural world. The transient nature of human endeavour and mechanised conflict sit in an uneasy relationship with the ageless earth. Again,

Hemingway presents a landscape in which it is possible to pursue several layers of complimentary yet competing meaning. The strange passive tone of this prose suggests that this landscape is one in which individual human agency is absent or futile. The troops are an anonymous mass far removed from notions of grandeur or heroism. The dust and autumnal falling of leaves symbolise death and the road bare and white is a landscape made empty by the trauma of mechanised conflict. The appearance of this paragraph at the opening of the novel sets up Frederic Henry's singular and ongoing search for meaning. He, like Foucault, seeks to "imagine a sort of systematic description" (26) but this will ultimately prove elusive. The novel moves from the Austro-Italian front through the whirl and chaos of wild Italian nightlife to the sublime cleanliness of Alpine Europe. Each landscape is witness to a series of rituals. These range from the boorish masculine dynamics of the Italian army to the decadence of leave and end up in the reductive roles adopted in Frederic and Catherine's relationship. Some fail instantly, some last a little longer but all are united by the sense that they hide nothing. Beneath the ritual is only emptiness. Yet, this does not mean that they offer nothing to the performative subject. Frederic and Catherine use and embrace ritual as an alternative to intellectual disillusionments and material traumas. They adopt idealised roles and impose a combination of American pioneer traditions and associated pastoral simplicities on European landscape. Ritual and ritualised space offer blanketing warmth or absurd bravura. It offers an alternative narrative that is at least as empty as that provided by the hegemonic ideologies that drive and underpin conflict. Midway through the novel, Frederic states that he "was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice". Frederic has "seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards in Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it" (165). Ideological discourse, therefore, is also ritualistic but, unlike those conscious choices made by Catherine and Frederic, its rituals offer only violent dishonesty. There is no salvation, no warmth nor any performative benefit to it.

One of the major innovations in this text is the manner in which the body continually operates as a ritualised and heterotopian space. Unlike in *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway repeatedly foregrounds corporeal vulnerability in this narrative. The symbolic wholeness of the Adamic American subject is disrupted and fragmented. The impenetrable male body is broken and its organic materiality clashes with its symbolic indestructibility. Soldiers' injuries are omnipresent. A significant early example comes from Catherine in one of her first exchanges with a still optimistic Frederic. She recalls hearing of her fiancé's death and how she hoped he would arrive at the hospital in which she was employed with a noble injury, "something picturesque" (19). This is clearly fantasy when it is revealed that "he didn't have a sabre cut [...] they blew him all to bits" (19). Mythic agency and the muscularity of heroism are replaced by the frail and organic nature of corporeal conflicts. Frederic rejects Catherine's statement and assures her that male bodies "won't crack here" (19). As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that exposure to such a forceful and violent death has given her insight. It is knowledge that Frederic will only gain through his own experiences of corporeal pain and slow recovery. The soldier's body, therefore, is subject to competing constructions and offers another example of heterotopian space. Catherine understands the material nature of war in a way that Frederic cannot. The simplicity of traditional valour and the promises of heroism

mean that Frederic sees potential in his body and those of his peers. As the novel progresses, the two figures become aligned in their thinking. The body is weak and fragile. It is subject to the enormous mechanised forces unleashed by the war. Movement, conscious ritual and the mutual satisfactions of sexual intimacy provide welcome alternatives to such stark realisations.

Frederic's own debilitating injury is sustained in comedic anti-heroic circumstances. It is drawn upon several times in the novel as a means of undermining idle constructions of heroism. Heterotopian imaginings of landscape provide the basis for examining constructions of American selfhood. While Frederic lies in a Milanese hospital, for example, the visit of his "war brother" (60), the vainglorious Rinaldi, is a study in the emptiness of such constructions. Rinaldi is unsatisfied with Frederic's prosaic assertion that he was, "blown up while we were eating cheese" (59). He desires a heroic tale of "valorous conduct" (59) that can be reproduced in the *Lancet* as proof that Frederic should receive military decoration. Rinaldi's attitude to the masculine world of combat is an unquestioning celebration of symbolic and performative masculinity. His is a ritual world of good-natured mocking, alcohol consumption and liberal employment of local prostitutes. As juxtaposition, Hemingway offers the thoughtful and isolated figure of the Priest. His visit to the hospital lifts Frederic. Kind, eloquent and gentle, he is the antithesis of the boorish and giggling Rinaldi. Consequently he is the object of derision and mockery. He often cuts a desolate, lonely figure. Yet he engages Frederic in a manner that his other peers cannot. His devotion to spirituality and the idyllic life of his native Abruzzi intrigue Frederic. This is an alternative to the damaging superficialities of military habitation. However, despite promises to the contrary, Frederic neglects to visit the priest's family in Abruzzi while on leave. Instead, he indulges in a decadent Milanese weekend of promiscuity and inebriation. His memories are a blur of "the smoke of cafes and nights where the room whirled" and "nights in bed, drunk, when you knew that was all there was and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you" (12). This distinction between urban deprivation and the simplicity and openness of Alpine Europe is a central opposition in *A Farewell to Arms*.

To achieve this ritualistic self-awareness, however, Frederic must move from a state of innocence to that of experience. Lewis' American Adam embodies "heroic innocence" (5) and Frederic's early experiences with the Italian military serve to underline that he fits this description. His narration, though, spoken from a point beyond the end of the novel, subtly indicates that the masculine group rituals of drinking and regular visits to the local brothel are offset by a sense of cultural isolation. As with landscape, Hemingway cannot fail to impose an American aesthetic on this European community. Frederic makes efforts to ingratiate himself but there is always the sense that his American identity sets him apart. Slotkin (1973) argues that such division is emblematic of America's desire to forge a monolithic and specifically non-European national selfhood.

[...] where the European stood amid the ruins of established society and used its fragments to build a new house, the American felt himself to be the creator of something new and unprecedented [...] where the European craved confirmation of older values, the American saw himself as exploring new moral grounds, returning to the primary sources of value for a new beginning, a new creation of the moral universe. (370)

As such, Frederic's return to Europe as the solitary American signifies such division. His elliptical narration of group interactions suggests difference and division. The postcards he sends back to America are "strange and mysterious" (35) and contain very little. Superficially, there is "nothing to write about" (35). Frederic's inability to carry out this act of writing betrays his distaste for his Italian peers. He describes them in his narration in derogatory and stereotyped terms. One superior is "fat and prosperous" while another is a "tiny man with the long thin neck and goat beard" (35). Frederic quickly loses faith in official forms of military protocol. His uniform requirements demonstrate the cumbersome nature of codified obedience and offer another source for examining ritual. The "steel helmets" (32) are too heavy to be worn with any comfort. Endless lines of soldiers in uniform are, "sweaty, dusty and tired" (32). He recalls the "ridiculousness of carrying a pistol" and the manner in which he "carried it flopping against the small of my back with no feeling at all except a vague sense of shame" (28). The men carry a holster as a means of uniform and to display their military status. Rinaldi undermines this when he insists on filling it with "toilet paper" (29). There is, of course, a clear link to Jake Barnes' impotence here. War is a symbolic opportunity to perform masculine feats of sexualised heroism but is also the theatre in which such constructions are proved false.

Warscapes—be they on the battlefield, of a corporeal nature or the seemingly goodhearted friendship of the masculine group—are thus necessarily heterotopian. They are spaces in which these competing understandings of participation in conflict can co-exist and clash. They are also the spaces in which Hemingway's narrative experiments can take shape. This is clear in the central portions of the novel in which Frederic participates in the infamous Caporetto Retreat. This devastating Austrian attack on the Italian front line happened on 24th October 1917, and is described by Giovanna Procacci (2002) as "an event without precedent" (141). He goes on to detail the chaos of the subsequent retreat. "The mass of humanity—men, women and children—fled in total confusion from the advancing enemy often without a clear destination, the civilians without a plan and the stragglers without orders" (141). Such violence, fear and degradation in these chapters are sustained, unrelenting and candid. This is the precursor to Frederic's decision to leave the war and seek meaning elsewhere. To fully construct this juxtaposition, Hemingway details page after page of bewilderment. Frederic wanders through landscapes so broken by war that they are indistinguishable from one another. There is little direction to his movement. This inaction and turpitude is a rebuttal to the American promises of fulfilment that brought Frederic and so many like him to the European theatre. Among days and days of rain, Frederic and his small group attempt to navigate their way through the chaos. The Italian landscape and the power of enemy weaponry are as one. Houses and villages are "badly smashed" and "wrecked" (162). The surrounding woods are full of Austrian guns and there are "iron shrapnel balls in the rubble of the houses and on the road" (166). The retreat itself comprises endless "columns of troops and guns" (173). The movement is slow and frustrating. Cars and trucks grind along for a few yards and then stop for hours. When compared to Jake's journey through Spanish landscape and the references to American myth, these sequences offer something of a subverted Manifest Destiny. This is not a coterie of brave and self-determining pioneers moving toward a god given notion of national completion. Feeble vehicles are "loaded with household goods" with "mirrors projecting up through mattresses and

chickens and ducks tied to carts" (176). Frederic's car becomes stuck in mud and, despite prolonged efforts to shift it, is abandoned. This is not a conquest over hostile landscape. It is a submission to it. Absent are the well-ordered and clearly demarcated lines between frontier and wilderness or between east and west.

Threatened by armed and furious *Carabinieri* who are determined to halt the retreat and arrest deserters, Frederic is faced with a choice. He can accept arrest and a loss of agency or plunge into icy waters of the Tagliamento River and make his escape. The "cold" and "icy" (201) river marks a contrast to the chaos of the retreat and abuses of the "executing officers" (200). The water acts as a cleansing agent for Frederic. It is a baptism in which he is offered a symbolic rebirth. The river marks a liminal space between the materiality of conflict and the remainder of the text in which Frederic adopts self-conscious ritual. Hemingway is too complex a writer to offer simple contrast and water operates as both a physical border between competing landscapes and a contemplative and performative space in which to pursue dwindling hopes of agency.

Frederic and a pregnant Catherine's escape from military police late in the novel encapsulate this use of water. They row thirty-five kilometres across Lake Geneva to the Swiss shore on a pitch-black night. Such action is another example of Foucault's "heterotopia of compensation". This is a space on which myth and imagination are imposed on the material world through the corporeal self. The darkness allows Frederic intense focus on the rhythms of his body and the autonomy of escape. Frederic's narration describes the way that he "pulled, raised, leaned forward, found the water, dipped and pulled" (241). The repetitive nature of such language hovers on the edge of poetic mantra. The rhythms provide order and control in a world where this is no longer possible. The alpine lake at night offers a suitably blank page on which to consciously enact ritual. Frederic can reassert and enact the mythic autonomy refused to him during his frantic and chaotic escape from Caporetto.

Switzerland itself offers a pastoral simplicity. Its neutrality and cold offer empty space in which Frederic and Catherine can perform a simple life away from conflict. The opening chapters of Book V detail an idyllic mountain landscape that is ancient and untouched by modernity. The chaotic noise of the front and the social activity of Italian cities and hotels are replaced by the noise of a "stream in the rocks" (257). Frederic and Catherine enact a pioneer life in descriptions of the land that foreground the romantic and the sublime. Their "brown wooden house" is simply heated by a fire of "pine wood" that, as Frederic recalls, "crackled and sparked and roared" (257). Their view is of "the lake and the mountains across the lake on the French side" (258). They are figures alone in the world and this isolation allows them focus on their corporeal identities. Frederic indulges in memories of "invigorating" (258) walks. He and Catherine look up at "a high snowy mountain [...] so far away that it did not make a shadow" (259). Yet, as with Jake's rendering of Northern Spain as an analogue for the American frontier, here too, there is clear evidence that Frederic and Catherine are performing self-conscious rituals that embody both domestic simplicity and the nostalgic traditions of an agrarian past. Their pioneer existence is dependent upon the domestic service of Mrs Guttingen who provides them with heat, food and comfort. This is not an autonomous journey into untapped or uncharted space. It is the performative action of privileged individuals. At no point does the weather create any real danger for them and at no point are they required

to demonstrate the fortitude required for survival. Chiefly, though, performativity and ritual are evident in Frederic and Catherine's relationship and Hemingway's representation of femininity in *A Farewell to Arms* more broadly. Masculine heterosexual gratification and boasts of sexual virility and performance permeate the early stages of the novel. Foucault (1978) argues that discourse of this nature results from the need to quantify sexuality and sexual experience through "the nearly infinite task of telling" (43). Sex is represented and constructed by a discourse that explores "the interplay of innumerable pleasures, sensations and thoughts which, through the body and the soul, had some affinity with sex" (43). Thus, attitudes to and experiences of sex are controlled by language. As a result, heterosexuality becomes normative through dominant narratives. The passive feminine sexual subject is part of the same process. Female sexuality in this novel is a narrative controlled by its masculine speaker. Nurses and prostitutes are the dominant representations of femininity in *A Farewell to Arms*. Nurses are sexually pure while the prostitutes are corrupt. Marc Hewson (2003) discusses the inclusion of this attitude in this novel as evidence of Hemingway's narrow chauvinism with regards to sex. He suggests that "male satisfaction is the sexual order of the day" and that sex "be there when the men want it" (54). The large number of prostitutes mentioned in the early stages of the novel "indicates that the soldiers perceive women as possessions" (54). Catherine's presence in the novel signifies the other side of this construction. Her submissiveness and sexual acquiescence help Frederic reject the chaos of the front and embrace a carefully constructed relationship. Catherine's body and their shared sexual intimacy offer the same ritualistic space for Frederic as that of the constructed and heterotopian descriptions of space elsewhere in the novel. Catherine is nurturing, emotionally responsive and focused on the healing of wounds. She helps Frederic to blanket his trauma by taking her place in the nostalgic rituals of a traditional male-female dynamic.

Catherine operates as a constructed counterfoil to the ritualised and nostalgic masculinity that Frederic retreats to. Frederic can complete his immersion in myth through this relationship. Yet, it is important to remember that Catherine also requires the comfort of such construction. She has already made her decision to oppose the violence of the war. Her relationship with Frederic blankets her from a world that she cannot bear or understand. Sandra Whipple Spanier (1990) reads Catherine as a character that consciously decides to "submerge herself in a private love relationship" in a "courageous effort to construct a valid alternative existence to a hostile and chaotic universe" (86). Catherine's wilful subservience manifests itself in her adoption of a clearly demarcated domesticity. She adopts her role consciously rather than buckling under the pressure of social obligation and group expectation. Just as the pain killing gas protects her from pain during her fatal labour at the denouement of the novel, so her blissful cocoon of romantic tranquillity cushions her from memories of her eviscerated fiancée and the brutality of mechanised conflict. Repeated images of protective layers—the warmth of a heated room, the privacy of a shared bed and, perhaps most telling of all, the blanketing intimacy of sexual engagement—accumulate throughout Frederic's memories of their relationship. At the extreme of her behaviour is the wish to disappear entirely into the identity of the unified couple. She expresses a desire to be immersed in the preservation of Frederic's contentment. Hemingway's economic prose offers a binding symmetry. Catherine states,

“I want what you want. There isn’t any me any more. Just what you want” (96). It is important to remember, however, that this devotion is narrated by Frederic. These are the recollections of a reticent and opaque voice. Frederic too wants to abandon war for a self-conscious construction of safety and happiness. He is fully aware of the artifice of his new reality and this is reflected in Hemingway’s elliptical prose. His transformation from combatant to civilian is merely the shedding of one constructed identity for another. Frederic convinces himself to “forget the war” and make a “separate peace” (217). The acts of forgetting and of symbolically shedding his identity are conscious decisions. Forgetfulness, so often a passive occurrence, is an anti-heroic assertion.

At the bleak climax of the novel, the deaths of Catherine and her stillborn child provide a stark rebuttal to this new construction. The corporeal reality of the two deaths shows again that Hemingway’s novels present a paradox. Only symbolic and self-conscious ritual can help the American subject to enact autonomous selfhood. Yet, death and the fragility of the corporeal self reveal the ultimate futility of such pursuits. *A Farewell to Arms* is a liminal novel, caught in a heterotopian struggle between constructed, imagined landscape and material experience. Moral clarity is only evident in Frederic’s fatalist response to the loss of Catherine and her child:

Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or gave you the syphilis like Rinaldi. But they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you. (289)

Ultimately, death and corporeal injury are the only certainties available to Frederic Henry and Jake Barnes. Selfhood and its various facets such as autonomy, agency or self-determination are just constructs. Mechanised conflict and the unpredictable violence of combat experience are experienced first and foremost on the body. The particularities of pain and mortality mean that only singular understandings are available in this regard. The body in landscape is undoubtedly material but it can also participate in ritual and performance that helps the American subject to return to the moral certainties of a mythic age. Frederic’s polemical tirade is the most lucid moment in *A Farewell to Arms*. Mortality and powerlessness eventually hold sway over ritual and performance. The anonymous “they” overpowers the terrified self. This is not to say, however, that Frederic’s actions have been meaningless. Hemingway places value in ritual but this is always underwritten by the fact that this does not extend beyond the ritual itself. If the American subject is to navigate the new uncertainties of the mechanised world then his engagement with space is crucial. He must connect with atavistic and anachronistic rituals and narrate new constructions of selfhood on the land beneath him. Death is a certainty and how this happens is beyond subjective comprehension. To enact myth and ritual along the way is not simply a delusion. For Hemingway, it is where the search for truth and meaning may find some traction. As records of the First World War, then, these novels expose the hubris of nationalist ideology and the futility of patriotic masculinity. They also reveal the indifference of ancient landscape and the possibilities offered by

experimental prose in exploring the gaps and ellipses between hard truths and subjective and uncertain experience.

These novels, then, represent landscapes that are multi-functional. They are a record of European war and its associated traumas and violence. They are also an opportunity for this American writer to recalibrate his American identity in a new creative space. Finally, they are spaces that are both symbolic and material. Hemingway imposes a mythic and nostalgic spatial American aesthetic on his constructions of Europe. However, these constructions are, as Foucault argues of the heterotopia, competing and clashing. In Hemingway's prose, they offer a dissonance that cannot be rectified. These novels are heterotopian in their insistence on space as both a site of compensation and a knowing opportunity for the artifice of ritualised behaviour. Foucault describes the twentieth century as an "epoch of simultaneity" and "of juxtaposition" and "near and far". (22) Hemingway's war reflects such constant and crippling opposition. It is written as an emblem of the trauma of epistemological and experiential uncertainty. These novels offer a knowingly artificial palate on which the traumatised American subject can use the artifice of American ritual and myth to address such difficulties. However, the texts themselves are also heterotopian in their recognition that this is a self-aware process masking persistent and nagging emptiness.

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