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Bulletin, Faculty of Foreign Studies, The University of Kitakyushu, 132. March, 2012. 101-125.

Reading the Terrain: Cultural Setting and Characterization in *The Sun Also Rises*

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Abstract

Because authors have the freedom to highlight any aspect of a story's setting they choose to, landscape depiction is a variable that can at least potentially be made to serve artistic ends. The interrelationship of culture, geographical setting, and characterization found in Ernest Hemingway's novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, serves to highlight some of the ways in which local topography can be used to the author's creative advantage. In *The Sun Also Rises*, rivers and bridges in the story's depiction subtly communicate key details that guide reader interpretation. For example, the border crossing at Bayonne is carefully conceived and emphasizes an ideological disconnect between France and Spain. This apposition is not limited to the single scene, however. In fact, this painstakingly elaborated clash of disparate worldviews serves to frame the entire novel and to some extent explains why the unraveling that occurs at the end of the story seems all but inevitable. As many details of geographic depiction have been carefully chosen to enhance metaphorical effect, the tension created through the actions and attitudes of the protagonists is both foreshadowed and accentuated by the

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surroundings they inhabit. In this way, carefully conceived landscape depiction, while interesting in and of itself, provides ideal camouflage for surreptitious interpretive cues precisely because it is, by definition, part of the narrative "background."

Keywords: Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, Bayonne, bridge, landscape depiction, topography, characterization, metaphor

Introduction

Bridges, when used metaphorically, are not univocal but rather can be individually adapted and strategically incorporated into a story's context to add specific kinds of resonance. For example, the bridge on the Tagliamento River in *A Farewell to Arms* is located at the turning point in that story. The summary executions being carried out at the bridge not only create the incentive for Frederic Henry to desert, but the image of the bridge expresses and accentuates the sudden separation from his past that Henry will experience as a fugitive after his desertion. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* includes a number of diverse metaphors centered on the bridge that parallel ideological, relational, and philosophical aspects of the narrative (Lee; Strack 2000). In general, bridges in Hemingway's fiction are seen to have semantic relevance that belies their matter-of-fact depiction.

While the bridges mentioned in *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are relatively prominent and thereby become obvious subjects for metaphorical examination, the inconspicuous bridge near Bayonne in *The Sun Also Rises* does not at first seem

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to play such a role. In fact, this border bridge, while being of little consequence in and of itself, hints at Hemingway's broader conceptual strategy, revealing a crucial discontinuity in the story's setting, specifically, a cultural gap between France and Spain. Throughout the novel, Hemingway enhances this dichotomy so as to subtly prepare the reader for the climactic depiction of events at the fiesta. By embedding key interpretive details into geographic and cultural descriptions, Hemingway subtly guides the reader into frames of reference that harmonize with the story's outcome. In contrast to the meandering and unpredictable plot, this inconspicuous metonymic and metaphoric priming unerringly prefigures the narrative's direction and allows the reader to faintly discern likely outcomes for the characters and relationships depicted.

Characterization Strategy in *The Sun Also Rises*

Michael Reynolds has observed that, in *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway "was more interested in character *development* than in plot" (Reynolds 1987: 126, emphasis added). While this is undoubtedly true in the sense that Hemingway's prose effectively elicits the distinctive personality traits of each protagonist, the statement is more problematic if understood to mean that characters actually change to any significant extent or develop in response to the events depicted.

Although some prominent characters in Hemingway's fiction display considerable growth in their understanding of their own lives and beliefs (including Frederic Henry, Robert Jordan, and

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Richard Cantwell), the multiple lead characters in *The Sun Also Rises* display the same attributes and attitudes at the end of the story as they had at the outset. Jake simmers in self-pity while never completely facing the bleakness of his chances with Brett, who for her part is constant in her whimsical inconstancy, while Cohn seems no less likely to continue irritating those around him. As such, each of these central characters enters the narrative fully formed and any self-discovery that occurs happens more for the sake of reader understanding than to communicate some fundamental change of heart or new direction with regard to that individual.

The plot of *The Sun Also Rises* unfolds spontaneously as a number of diverse individuals "mix with each other"(130) and combust. To the extent that the sum total of the actions and reactions of the main characters becomes the story, settings and overall narrative contexts provide crucial interpretive insights. Throughout the book, high-intensity situations and conceptually rich backdrops expose awkward and intriguing aspects of each protagonist, at times revealing more about them than they seem to know even about themselves. While it is widely recognized that these characters and settings have some basis in Hemingway's real life experiences, the various enhancements and elisions apparent in the published story point to an artistic vision that goes far beyond simple travelogue (cf. Sarason 8). In particular, the geographical settings and cultural contexts in the novel display the author's deft ability to control minute aspects of the narrative for dramatic effect.

Although Hemingway does indeed create atmospheres ideal for

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revealing the 'true nature' of each respective character, there is one locale in particular that seems more designed to hide the truth than to reveal it. France is consistently depicted as a setting in which a person's true character may remain hidden indefinitely. Jake claims to like France because there, if he tips well, he will be loyally appreciated for his "valuable qualities." In the same extended passage, he reflects: "Everything is on such a clear financial basis in France. It is the simplest country to live in" (233). These allusions to the alleged simplicity of life in France strongly intimate that because material wealth is the basis for human relations, personal character is irrelevant to the social hierarchy. Money determines everyone's place and on this straightforward basis, life proceeds harmoniously.

The crass materialism Hemingway ascribes to Parisians and the Paris-dwelling expatriates is in sharp contrast to the admirable qualities attributed to the inhabitants of provincial Spain. The local residents flocking to the fiesta at Pamplona, although unsophisticated, are generous and spiritually vital. Bullfighting is seen more as a logical consequence of the local character than an idiosyncrasy of it. In fact, Hemingway viewed it as a prime example of unspoiled Spanish culture (cf. Josephs 152). In this context, Pedro Romero, "the idealized bullfighter whose classic style had been long awaited to save the bullring from its decadence" (Reynolds 1987: 126), is portrayed as an archetypal representative of Spanish honor and high sentiment. Taking Romero as his ideal, Hemingway intimates that the so-called "valuable qualities" which a Parisian waiter might

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acknowledge in a customer are of no value in the bullring.

The narrator comments that bullfighters who stay at Montoya's only once are strictly "commercial" and lack "*aficion*" (131) and so, naturally, Romero's portrayal explicitly states that he returns to Montoya's year after year. As Reynolds has noted, an earlier manuscript of *The Sun Also Rises* had named a contemporary bullfighter, the ill-starred Nino de la Palma, as Lady Brett's love interest, but this second-rank *torero* was destined to be replaced in the story by the legendary Romero in late stages of the writing (Reynolds 1987: 126, 130). Undoubtedly, a less than archetypal bullfighter would not have served Hemingway's literary purposes. It was precisely an idealized Spain and an idealized bullfighter that the author finally chose to portray.

Upon reflection, just as Romero seems to be the prime representative of Spanish culture in the story, Count Mippipopolous may be seen to exemplify French culture, albeit French culture viewed through the lens of Hemingway's expatriate experience. Although not French himself, Count Mippipopolous is unique among the story's more central characters in that he never leaves Paris and thereby becomes irretrievably associated with it. Reynolds has remarked that Count Mippipopolous is one of Hemingway's unfinished characters in the novel, as he makes a few intriguing appearances and then never surfaces again (Reynolds 1987: 124). In contrast to the relatively meager passing descriptions of Harvey Stone and the Braddocks, his portrayal gives readers the false expectation that he will play some continuing role in the plot. Despite the fact that his

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failure to reappear after Pamplona may leave some questions unanswered, the brief passages that depict him nevertheless add conceptual balance to the story.

In exemplifying the free-flowing expatriate life in Paris, the Count provides a counterweight to Romero's embodiment of traditional Spanish virtues. Count Mippipopolous is a thoroughly dispassionate admirer of surface beauty, someone who will facilitate trysts if he cannot enjoy one himself, and a facile purveyor of decadence. As such, he is an ideal companion and personage of heroic stature for Lady Brett. Count Mippipopolous is compliant and complicit and utterly dependable within the range of his own interests. He has "been around" (59) even more than the other members of Brett's coterie. For this reason, although he is characterized by Brett as "one of us" (32), he actually represents the purest example of the dissolute lifestyle that the Parisian expatriates enjoy. Consequently, during the conversation concerning "values" (60-61), he mentions that his values are no longer changing, implying that his values have, in fact, adjusted to accommodate his lifestyle. Brett then remarks: "You haven't any values" (61). It would be easy to take this as an example of Lady Brett's dry wit and nothing more were it not for Hemingway's tendency to camouflage his moral commentary by writing ethical observations into his dialogue, passing them off as the subjective opinions of his protagonists. As such, these caustic moral assessments may be leveled with devastating force, all the while protecting the narrator's rhetorical pretense of objectivity.

Viewing Brett's appraisal of Count Mippipopolous's morality

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alongside the almost religious treatment of Romero and the bullfighting values associated with him, it becomes apparent that Hemingway has established a relatively stable ethical continuum by vividly depicting the remote extremes of this spectrum. These standards are not rigid criteria used to judge individuals in any absolute sense. Instead, offhand ethical observations coalesce to loosely characterize each protagonist's values or lack thereof, in this way showcasing the gradual buildup of moral tension that will bring out the worst in everyone and cause the Spanish outing to unravel. Expressed as a continuum, Romero's anachronistic but fervently held values lie at one extreme while the thoroughly modern Count's complete lack of values lies at the other.

Although the opposition of Romero and Count Mippipopolous may or may not be an intentional one, they are both quintessential characters, embodying the carefully elaborated conceptual opposition that Hemingway creates with respect to Spain and France, a structural artifice which is central to the story and by no means incidental. Throughout the novel, Hemingway uses both obscure details and seemingly spontaneous narrator insights to firmly establish this diametrical cultural relationship.

Into the Crucible

One example of this pronounced cultural and geographical dichotomy is found in Hemingway's subtle use of color in the story. At the beginning of chapter II, the narrator mentions that Cohn is reading "The Purple Land" by W. H. Hudson and further remarks

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that this book "is a very sinister book if read too late in life. It recounts splendid imaginary amorous adventures of a perfect English gentleman in an intensely romantic land" (9). Hemingway's Spain is not "purple" however, but "white." Once Jake, Bill, and Cohn have entered Spain, the narrator refers to white roads, white cattle, whitewashed buildings, white wicker chairs, and high white clouds, among other things, extending even to a comment on the very final page that the houses of Madrid "looked sharply white" (247). All told, descriptions of the Spanish setting include 15 total references to the color white. By contrast red and brown are mentioned twice respectively, with references to gray, green and blue occurring only once each. White is by far the dominant color in Hemingway's description of Spain.

Aside from white, Hemingway places great emphasis on the heat of Spain, as well. This in itself is unremarkable. After all, Spain lies to the south of France and furthermore has a reputation for being a warm country by European standards. What sets references to Spain's heat apart in *The Sun Also Rises* is Hemingway's repetitive and somewhat peculiar phrasing. Not only does the author comment that it is "baking hot" in Pamplona's square (103), he also twice mentions the strange shapes of the "heat-baked" mountains (93, 108). Comments on "baking" heat bring to mind temperatures much higher than humans generally experience. Furthermore, the strange shapes evident in Spain's "baked" landscape imply that staying for a long period in such a hot country might transform a person in unexpected and not necessarily positive ways.

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Hemingway's rather idiosyncratic characterization of the Spanish surroundings in terms of "white" scenery and "baking" heat artificially links these ideas in the mind of the reader. At a subconscious level, the two ideas combine to summon up the image of a kiln in which pottery is fired, or perhaps a "white-hot" crucible in which metal is tested and purified. Although never explicitly stated, this trip into Hemingway's stylized "white land" of Spain, then, will be a trial by fire for each protagonist, but especially for Cohn. In retrospect, the "Purple Land" comments made at the beginning of the book were but the first of many subtle hints to the reader that Cohn will be entirely out of his natural element at the fiesta.

The Bridge near Bayonne

As has already been mentioned, the story can be neatly divided into two geographical and cultural settings, these disparate settings being used to accentuate characterization. Given such a strategy, one would expect a careful author like Hemingway to firmly delineate this distinction at the geographic boundary between these two cultural tectonic plates, and in this respect, Hemingway does not disappoint.

Carefully selected cultural differences between Spain and France have been juxtaposed in the scenes leading up to and immediately following the border crossing (90-93). Jake, Bill, and Cohn travel by taxi to Bayonne in France, said to be like a "very clean Spanish town" (90) through French Basque country with houses and villages looking "clean and well off" (91). After a brief stop, they cross the

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river at the border into the frequently emphasized "dust" of Spain. Through these landscape depictions, Hemingway has associated France with money (clean towns, well off houses and villages) and Spain with ancient tradition (dust). The border guards of the respective countries are depicted in starkly different terms, as well. While the sword-brandishing Spanish carabineers have military discipline and efficiency, their French counterparts are "fat" and slovenly (92).

During this bridge scene, Jake matter-of-factly comments, "We crossed the Spanish frontier" (92). This use of the word "frontier" expresses the idea of a border between nations, a frontier in the older English sense of the word simply referring to a territorial edge. Such a lexical choice on the part of an American author is illuminating. Although the context dictates the older meaning, the American connotations are not lost and impart to Spain a nuance that is prototypically American: the idea of vast territory as yet unspoiled by encroaching civilization.

In this way, the border crossing over the bridge marks a key turning point in the story as characters leave the "safe suburban feeling" of France (232) and cross into the passionate land of *Corrida de toros* ("the running of the bulls") (173). Hemingway's subtle use of the word "frontier" followed by a selective depiction of well-chosen aspects of Spanish culture transforms Spain from a European nation with longstanding cultural traditions and great military and commercial achievements into an uncharted wilderness.

Reynolds has noted that Hemingway's conception of the American

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West informs much of his fiction despite his strong tendency to situate his stories in foreign settings (Reynolds 1992: 27). The fact that Pamplona does not lie in the middle of some vast and uninhabited outlying area is overcome not only through Hemingway's deft control of nuances during the border crossing scene but by way of subsequent narrative details, as well. When Bill exclaims, "This is country" (117), with respect to the scenery encountered on their fishing trip to Burguete, he is not merely commenting on the beauty of the local scenery. As an extension of Hemingway's overall strategy, Bill's comment displaces Spain from its twentieth-century European setting and emphasizes the pre-industrial wildness of the land.

Although ostensibly featuring depictions of Spain, Hemingway's complex nuances have actually created a hybrid, fictional locale that partially parallels nineteenth-century American frontier literature. In these wilderness settings, humans were often pitted against the merciless forces of nature (cf. Reynolds 1992: 31-33). Hemingway's decision to use the word "frontier" instead of "border" reflects the author's awareness that the settings of frontier literature are well-suited to testing the character of individual inhabitants in a way that the socially situated and historically replete urban and countryside settings of Europe are not.

The Bridges of Paris

Carlos Baker has noted that the opening passages of *The Sun Also Rises* are filled with many more "facts of municipal or gastronomic geography...than are justified by their dramatic purpose"

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(Baker 52). Furthermore, Baker specifically includes the bridges depicted among these allegedly unjustified features. As for the food or the restaurants mentioned, it will be left to other scholars (e.g. Stoneback) to assess Baker's claims, but there is a strong argument to be made against such a viewpoint with respect to the bridges. Baker himself has noted how the bridge in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is the imagistic focal point of that book, stating: "Wherever the reader moves along the circumferences of the various circles, all radial roads lead to and from this bridge" (Baker 246). For this reason, all the more, it is surprising that Baker would assert metaphorical vacuity for bridges in these early scenes in *The Sun Also Rises*. Indeed, if declaring the complete absence of metaphorical connotation with regard to a particular object depicted in a literary text represents a perilous proposition generally, it is particularly risky when Hemingway is the author in question.

When bridges do appear in Hemingway's stories, plausible metaphorical interpretations tend to depend crucially on details of the particular bridge's construction and surroundings (e.g. Strack 2006: 8-9). Such fine-grained depiction of bridges, depiction which emphasizes precisely the metaphorical aspects that best harmonize with a work's more explicit semantic content, may be discerned in the works of other authors, as well.

For example, the complex collaboration and technological sophistication necessary to produce a giant span like the Brooklyn Bridge make it ideal for imagistically expressing large-scale societal progress rather than small-scale interpersonal relationship.

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Mayakovsky's "Brooklyn Bridge" (1925). and Hart Crane's "To Brooklyn Bridge" (1930), two poems which explore the Brooklyn Bridge's role as a social and cultural artifact, are relatively straightforward examples that lend credence to this proposition.

There will be exceptions, of course, but generally speaking, bridges selected for inclusion in literary works tend to be appropriately highlighted so as to reinforce more explicit semantic content in the stories or poems that surround them. Since literature often features depiction carefully orchestrated to achieve some desired effect, the fact that authors use bridges to accentuate transitions in a story's plot should not be in any way surprising. Recognizing this potential for bridges to be strategically incorporated into a work with "dramatic purposes" firmly in mind, a close examination of the passages in which bridges appear in the novel would seem warranted.

In one of the opening scenes, Bill and Jake are leaning against the railing of a wooden foot-bridge in Paris, enjoying the view of Notre Dame and some other larger bridges along the river(77). Unlike the Brooklyn Bridge, this foot-bridge is ideally suited to express a desire for intimacy in a relationship, and this scene offers no details of description that would contradict such a general interpretation. If anything, the inclusion of Notre Dame, a famous cathedral that is bound to have associations with weddings for the Catholic Jake, is another element that strengthens such a view. The combination of images, the wooden footbridge and the cathedral, give the reader a fleeting glimpse beyond Jake's tough exterior to a more sentimental side of his character.

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Furthermore, just as Jake and Bill lean against the railing, a couple with their arms around each other walks by. The wooden foot-bridge, accompanied as it is by the view of the cathedral and the other bridges, has already imparted certain romantic nuances to the scene, but Hemingway's specific inclusion of the embracing couple shows the passage to be more than a simple attempt to add local color. The superabundance of consonant details found in this metaphorical bridge scene reveals a yearning that Jake has hidden even from himself; although outwardly cynical, deep down he retains a desire for his relationship with Brett to take a romantic turn. Occurring early on in the story, Hemingway inconspicuously shapes reader expectations to parallel Jake's own unrealistic hopes for the relationship.

Granting the metaphorical implications of these bridge scenes at the outset of the story, it is noteworthy that no bridges at all are mentioned following the events of Pamplona. Whether a question of active omission or passive neglect, the fact that bridges are entirely absent in the denouement is perfectly consonant with the general situation Hemingway is depicting. Had Hemingway referred to bridges at the end of the book as he had at the beginning, such depiction would have hinted at ongoing intimacy for the couple, a proposition that readers would already have understood to be unlikely. While Baker is undoubtedly correct in claiming that the bridges mentioned in the opening passages serve to vitalize the setting and give Paris a concrete geographic identity (Baker 52), his assertion that they do no more than this uncharacteristically underestimates

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Hemingway's ability to smuggle background metaphor into a story even through the most innocuous details. If the bridges at the beginning of the book subtly heighten the reader's expectations concerning relationship-oriented events yet to come, then the bleakness of Jake's prospects in the final scenes would only have been diminished had bridges been introduced.

Three-handed Bridge in Burguete

From the outset of the story, Hemingway misses few opportunities to portray Robert Cohn in a negative light. He generally misreads the feelings of his companions, in turn irritating Harvey Stone (43-44), Bill Gorton (95), Mike Campbell (141), and even Jake (193, 222). He is alone in his dislike for Paris (42), fishing (92), and bullfighting (166). He is shown to be culturally insensitive when he attempts to refuse the second meat course of a traditional Spanish meal (94) and seems both foolish and arrogant in expecting to be bored by the bullfight (162, 165-166).

At one point, a reference to him in the text is even immediately followed by a reference to a "three-inch long cockroach" (91), effectively drawing some indefinite parallel between the two. As Cohn is consistently portrayed as an outsider with respect to the group, the observation by Bill and Jake that the cockroach seemed out of place in such a clean hotel proves to be but another example of Hemingway's subtle ability to metaphorically reinforce key aspects of the plot using unrelated details of description.

With such a constant stream of unflattering depiction, it cannot

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be seen as incidental that Cohn did not accompany Jake and Bill on their fishing trip. Perhaps to affirm and further establish the strength of the bond between the two men, they are depicted as crossing numerous small bridges together(116-117) as they proceed to their fishing spot. Indeed, this male-bonding excursion to Burguete is described by the narrator as a highly satisfying trip, with good weather, good fishing, good food, and, most importantly, good company. Regarding this, the reader understands that the trip was a great success precisely because Cohn had decided not to come along.

Cohn should have been the fourth bridge player at Burguete, the person who would have been paired with Harris, an amicable Englishman met by chance. From the outset of the story, Cohn often claims to be playing and winning at the game, and so the fact that Bill, Jake, and Harris are finally forced to play "three-handed bridge" (125) seems all the more telling. Had Cohn been there, his presence would have evened out the sides, symbolically allowing perfect camaraderie to occur. While it may be said that Jake, Bill, and Harris have a wonderful time because of rather than despite his absence, Hemingway's inclusion of the reference to "three-handed bridge" nevertheless points to a shortfall caused by Cohn's self-serving change of plans. Whether present or absent, Cohn is a perpetual irritation.

With respect to this fishing trip, Hemingway has apparently combined and edited the events of two separate Spanish fishing trips that he actually participated in (cf. Sarason 67; Loeb 121; St. John

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1968-69: 183; St. John 1971: 191). While comparing events in the story with the various accounts of people present at the time of these actual outings to Burguete is somewhat revealing, details of such accounts should not overshadow details in the work itself. Perhaps Bill Smith, often thought to be one of the models for Bill Gorton's character in the story, put it best when he observed, "Hemingway was not a diarist; he was an artist" (St. John 1968-69: 195). Whether rearranging memories of actual events to suit a particular story or latching onto true but insignificant details and giving them outsized narrative weight, Hemingway's art demanded greater symmetry than real life typically afforded.

With respect to such artistic shaping of the narrative, the name of the card game, "bridge," accentuates the loss of connection and increases the isolation engendered by Cohn's absence on the fishing trip. An objection may be made that invoking the name of a game that happened to be popular at the time to demonstrate Hemingway's metaphorical artifice is going too far. If this claim were based solely on the references to the card game in *The Sun Also Rises*, evidence for such an assertion might indeed seem inconclusive. The observation that Hemingway is using "bridge" as a symbolic marker for human interrelationship is strengthened, however, by examination of similar uses of the game by other authors writing around the same time.

One prominent example is Sinclair Lewis's close attention to bridge parties in his widely read novel, *Main Street*. Published in 1920, the story depicts Carol Kennicott's life in a small town in

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rural Minnesota. In this town, playing bridge with members of a club called "the Jolly Seventeen" is a virtual prerequisite to gaining social acceptance (Lewis 47). These bridge gatherings are as frequent as they are revealing, offering protagonists and readers alike opportunities to "dissect" (cf. Vidal) each character and ascertain their relative position in the community hierarchy. In this respect, not only does the card game provide a context for examining the various relationships in the story, but the name of the game, "bridge," corresponds to this literary artifice, subtly advertising its presence. No less than other authors of the time, Hemingway was thoroughly capable of using a passing societal fad like bridge to his authorial advantage.

In Paris, the young expatriates move freely, interacting mostly without thought or consequence. Beginning in Burguete, however, consequences begin to pile up. Jake and Bill fish, talk, eat, sleep, and play cards, and in so doing, cement the loyalty of their friendship while Cohn's status as a group member becomes more and more tenuous. There can be little doubt that the narrator's portrayal of Cohn as an unwelcome outsider succeeds in setting him up as a scapegoat in the story. The Spanish setting, a stylized venue in which a premium is placed on loyalty, accentuates Cohn's absence, thereby turning an otherwise insignificant change of plans into a portentous and singularly irksome event (101-102).

Even more telling are the incidents that occur thereafter. It is said that pressure makes diamonds, but no diamonds result from Hemingway's pressure-filled depiction of Pamplona; each character

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is tried in the fires of the fiesta and found wanting. Cohn attempts to live out his private romantic fantasies to the embarrassment of all present. Mike reveals the extent of his insecurity and jealous temper while Lady Brett loses all pretense of aristocratic bearing and restraint. Even generally cool-headed Jake shows he will do most anything for Brett's sake, extending even to risking his hard-won reputation as an *aficionado*. Although Jake's friend, the easygoing Bill Gorton fulfills his faithful sidekick role without attracting undue attention and thereby escapes the story relatively unscathed, Hemingway will allow no one to leave the country without something to regret. What could have been an enjoyable Spanish holiday has been ruined by individual flaws and unfortunate group chemistry. Undoubtedly, such a disaster would not have happened in Paris, or at least Hemingway would like us to think so.

On the Instantiation of Dichotomous Conceptual Frames

To say that Hemingway has effectively used the apposition of France and Spain to tease out certain aspects of the narrative is not to imply that there is only one reading of the text. Interpretation of a narrative depends upon the particular aspects of the story one pays attention to. This paper's analysis, in focusing on the different settings in *The Sun Also Rises*, highlights an interpretation with respect to these settings, specifically a reading that emphasizes the dichotomy between France and Spain. It is possible to find other alternative conceptual frameworks for the story. To cite one example, Mark Spilka has persuasively argued that Cohn's troubles occur

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because he is a naive romantic at a time when chivalric love has become passé (Spilka 241-242). Spilka makes his case by locating key aspects of "romantic" frames in the text, principally with respect to Cohn and Barnes. Undoubtedly there are other complex conceptual formulations at work in the text as well.

This is not, however, to imply that the interpretation of Hemingway's conceptual frames might simply be a matter of critical preference. Having located specific domains of interest within the story, it will be difficult to plausibly assert fundamentally different readings *with respect to those domains*. One cannot convincingly say that, with respect to love, there is no great difference between the outlooks of Jake and Cohn. Neither can one say that, with respect to the author's use of Spain and France as settings, Hemingway simply desired a change of scenery. While I tend to agree with Stoneback's assertion (53-54) that broad "wasteland" interpretations of the French setting as a whole are implausible, I cannot concur with his conclusion that there is, in fact, no noteworthy disconnect between France and Spain in the novel.

Almost without fail, the geographical and cultural settings in the story are distinguished so as to emphasize their dichotomous relationship, thereby facilitating the types of characterization Hemingway accomplishes. For this reason, the border crossing at the bridge is simultaneously a concrete expression of the juxtaposition of disparate frames of reference in the story and a key to identifying the presence of these frames.

Once one recognizes the bridge as a point of conceptual disconnect

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in the novel, the stark contrasts that exist between depictions of France and Spain and the careful ways in which Hemingway emphasizes these come into focus. Isolated references pile up gradually so as to inform the reader's overall perspective and offer interpretive cues that prefigure or parallel the story's plot. Whether through the bridge crossings in Paris, by way of the narrator's observations about the Spanish scenery, or in the precisely formulated way that Cohn's absence in Burguete is emphasized, apparently insignificant facts accumulate and ultimately coalesce to form highly stylized cultural settings.

The narrator's offhand comments on France and Spain blend in seamlessly with the overall flow of the narrative so that even as the implicit conceptual framework is instantiated, its extent and the unified effect that it creates go undetected. Considering the author's oeuvre in its entirety, it may not be an exaggeration to say that the surreptitious instantiation of semantically freighted details lies at the very heart of Hemingway's otherwise Spartan literary strategy. Setting such broad generalizations aside, it can be stated more certainly that, although the plot of *The Sun Also Rises* may seem largely rudderless, intriguing details pull the story along in ways that tend to defy the reader's conscious awareness.

Conclusion

That Hemingway should use minor details of depiction to prefigure and parallel the plots of his stories will not be surprising to those who have studied his narrative techniques. What might be surprising,

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however, is how consistently he is able to utilize apparently realistic landscape features or actually existing artifacts like bridges to great literary effect. In fact, as has been previously asserted in this paper, the conceptual import of the border bridge in *The Sun Also Rises* is not a lone instance of bridge metaphor in Hemingway's fiction. On the contrary, it actually represents just one of many bridge depictions that harmonize with the overall narrative movement of the respective work. While the border bridge's literary function is simple in and of itself, attention to it exposes an abundance of consonant images in surrounding passages. The range and homogeneity of these interlocking details of depiction reveal a minutely orchestrated characterization strategy in *The Sun Also Rises* that belies its free-flowing plot.

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Bulletin, Faculty of Foreign Studies, The University of Kitakyushu, 132. March, 2012. 101-125.

ISSN 1347-0299

BULLETIN

FACULTY OF FOREIGN STUDIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF KITAKYUSHU

No. 132 March, 2012

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THE UNIVERSITY OF KITAKYUSHU

Kitakyushu, Japan