World War I and Its Aftermath: Cultural Change and Transatlantic Modernist Literature
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Critical reading is a familiar exercise to students, an exercise that many of them have been engaged in since the first grade. Critical reading forms a major part (more than fifty percent) of the PSAT, the SAT, the ACT, and both Advanced Placement Tests in English. It is the portion of any test for which students can do the least direct preparation, and it is also the portion that will reward students who have been lifelong readers. Unlike other parts of the United States Academic Decathlon Test in Language and Literature, where the questions will be based on specific works of literature that the students have been studying diligently, the critical reading passage in the test, as a previously unseen passage, will have an element of surprise. In fact, the test writers usually go out of their way to choose passages from works not previously encountered in high school so as to avoid making the critical reading items a mere test of recall. From one point of view, not having to rely on memory actually makes questions on critical reading easier than the other questions because the answer must always be somewhere in the passage, stated either directly or indirectly, and careful reading will deliver the answer.

Since students can feel much more confident with some background information and some knowledge of the types of questions likely to be asked, the first order of business is for the student to contextualize the passage by asking some key questions. Who wrote it? When was it written? In what social, historical, or literary environment was it written?

In each passage used on a test, the writer’s name is provided, followed by the work from which the passage was excerpted or the date it was published or the dates of the author’s life. If the author is well known to high school students (e.g., Charles Dickens, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Jane Austen), no dates will be provided, but the work or the occasion will be cited. For writers less familiar to high school students, dates will be provided. Using this information, students can begin to place the passage into context. As they start to read, students will want to focus on what they know about that writer, his or her typical style and concerns, or that time period, its values and its limitations. A selection from Thomas Paine in the eighteenth century is written against a different background and has different concerns from a selection written by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. prior to the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Toni Morrison writes against a different background from that of Charles Dickens.

Passages are chosen from many different kinds of texts—fiction, biography, letters, speeches, essays, newspaper columns, and magazine articles—and may come from a diverse group of writers, varying in gender, race, location, and time period. A likely question is one that asks readers to speculate on what literary form the passage is excerpted from. The passage itself will offer plenty of clues as to its genre, and the name of the writer often offers clues as well. Excerpts from fiction contain the elements one might expect to find in fiction—descriptions of setting, character, or action. Letters have a sense of sharing thoughts with a particular person. Speeches have a wider audience and a keen awareness of that audience; speeches also have some particular rhetorical devices peculiar to the genre. Essays and magazine articles are usually focused on one topic of contemporary, local, or universal interest.

Other critical reading questions can be divided into two major types: reading for meaning and reading for analysis. The questions on reading for meaning are based solely on understanding what the passage is saying, and the questions on analysis are based on how the writer says what he or she says.
In reading for meaning, the most frequently asked question is one that inquires about the passage’s main idea since distinguishing a main idea from a supporting idea is an important reading skill. A question on main ideas is sometimes disguised as a question asking for an appropriate title for the passage. Most students will not select as the main idea a choice that is neither directly stated nor indirectly implied in the passage, but harder questions will present choices that do appear in the passage but are not main ideas. Remember that an answer choice may be a true statement but not the right answer to the question.

Closely related to a question on the main idea of a passage is a question about the writer’s purpose. If the passage is fiction, the purpose, unless it is a digression—and even digressions are purposeful in the hands of good writers—will in some way serve the elements of fiction. The passage will develop a character, describe a setting, or advance the plot. If the passage is non-fiction, the writer’s purpose might be purely to inform; it might be to persuade; it might be to entertain; or it might be any combination of all three of these. Students may also be questioned about the writer’s audience. Is the passage intended for a specific group, or is it aimed at a larger audience?

The easy part of the Critical Reading section is that the answer to the question is always in the passage, and for most of the questions, students do not need to bring previous knowledge of the subject to the task. However, for some questions, students are expected to have some previous knowledge of the vocabulary, terms, allusions, and stylistic techniques usually acquired in an English class. Such knowledge could include, but is not limited to, knowing vocabulary, recognizing an allusion, and identifying literary and rhetorical devices.

In addition to recognizing the main idea of a passage, students will be required to demonstrate a more specific understanding. Questions measuring this might restate information from the passage and ask students to recognize the most exact restatement. For such questions, students will have to demonstrate their clear understanding of a specific passage or sentence. A deeper level of understanding may be examined by asking students to make inferences on the basis of the passage or to draw conclusions from evidence in the passage. In some cases, students may be asked to extend these conclusions by applying information in the passage to other situations not mentioned in the passage.

In reading for analysis, students are asked to recognize some aspects of the writer’s craft. One of these aspects may be organization. How has the writer chosen to organize his or her material? Is it a chronological narrative? Does it describe a place using spatial organization? Is it an argument with points clearly organized in order of importance? Is it set up as a comparison and contrast? Does it offer an analogy or a series of examples? If there is more than one paragraph in the excerpt, what is the relationship between the paragraphs? What transition does the writer make from one paragraph to the next?

Other questions could be based on the writer’s attitude toward the subject, the appropriate tone he or she assumes, and the way language is used to achieve that tone. Of course, the tone will vary according to the passage. In informational nonfiction, the tone will be detached and matter-of-fact, except when the writer is particularly enthusiastic about the subject or has some other kind of emotional involvement such as anger, disappointment, sorrow, or nostalgia. He or she may even assume an ironic tone that takes the form of exaggerating or understating a situation or describing it as the opposite of what it is. With each of these methods of irony, two levels of meaning are present—what is said and what is implied. An ironic tone is usually used to criticize or to mock.

A writer of fiction uses tone differently, depending on what point of view he or she assumes. If the author chooses a first-person point of view and becomes one of the characters, he or she has to assume a persona and develop a character through that character’s thoughts, actions, and speeches. This character is not necessarily sympathetic and is sometimes even a villain, as in some of the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe. Readers have to pick up this tone from the first few sentences. If the author is writing a third-person narrative, the tone will vary in accordance with how intrusive the narrator appears to be. Some narrators are almost invisible while others are more intrusive, pausing to editorialize, digress, or, in some cases, address the reader directly.

Language is the tool the author uses to reveal attitude and point of view. A discussion of language includes the writer’s syntax and diction. Are the sentences long or short? Is the length varied—is there an occasional short sentence among longer ones? Does the writer use parallelism and balanced sentence structure? Are the sentences predominantly simple, complex, compound, or compound-complex? How does the writer use tense? Does he or she vary the mood of the verb from indicative to interrogative to imperative? Does the writer shift between active and passive voice? If so, why? How do these choices influence the tone?

Occasionally, a set of questions may include a grammar question. For example, an item might require students to identify what part of speech a particular word is being used as, what the antecedent of a pronoun is, or what a modifier modifies. Being able to answer demonstrates that the student understands the sentence structure and the writer’s meaning in
SAMPLE PASSAGE
TO PREPARE FOR CRITICAL READING

In order to prepare for the critical reading portion of the test, it may be helpful for students to take a look at a sample passage. Here is a passage used in an earlier test. The passage is an excerpt from Mary Shelley’s 1831 Introduction to *Frankenstein*.

“We will each write a ghost story,” said Lord Byron, and his proposition was acceded to. There were four of us. The noble author began a tale, a fragment of which he printed at the end of his poem of Mazeppa. Shelley, more apt to embody ideas and sentiments in the radiance of brilliant imagery and in the music of the most melodious verse that adorns our language than to invent the machinery of a story, commenced one founded on the experiences of his early life. Poor Polidori had some terrible idea about a skull-headed lady who was so punished for peeping through a key-hole—what to see I forget: something very shocking and wrong of course; but when she was reduced to a worse condition than the renowned Tom of Coventry, he did not know what to do with her and was obliged to dispatch her to the tomb of the Capulets, the only place for which she was fitted. The illustrious poets also, annoyed by the platitude of prose, speedily relinquished their uncongenial task.

I busied myself to think of a story—a story to rival those which had excited us to this task. One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature and awaken thrilling horror—one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart. If I did not accomplish these things, my ghost story would be unworthy of its name. I thought and pondered—vainly. I felt that blank incapability of invention which is the greatest misery of authorship, when dull Nothing replies to our anxious invocations. “Have you thought of a story?” I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative.

Mary Shelley
*Introduction to Frankenstein* (1831)

1. Tom of Coventry—Peeping Tom who was struck blind for looking as Lady Godiva passed by.

INSTRUCTIONS: On your answer sheet, mark the lettered space (a, b, c, d, or e) corresponding to the answer that BEST completes or answers each of the following test items.

1. **The author’s purpose in this passage is to**
   a. analyze the creative process
   b. demonstrate her intellectual superiority
   c. name-drop her famous acquaintances
   d. denigrate the efforts of her companions
   e. narrate the origins of her novel

2. **According to the author, Shelley’s talents were in**
   a. sentiment and invention
   b. diction and sound patterns
   c. thought and feeling
   d. brightness and ornamentation
   e. insight and analysis
3. The author’s descriptions of Shelley’s talents might be considered all of the following EXCEPT
   a. accurate
   b. prejudiced
   c. appreciative
   d. detached
   e. exaggerated
4. The author’s attitude toward Polidori is
   a. amused
   b. sincere
   c. derisive
   d. ironic
   e. matter-of-fact
5. The author’s approach to the task differs from that of the others in that she begins by thinking of
   a. her own early experiences
   b. poetic terms and expressions
   c. the desired effect on her readers
   d. outperforming her male companions
   e. praying for inspiration
6. At the end of the excerpt the author feels
   a. determined
   b. despondent
   c. confident
   d. relieved
   e. resigned
7. “Noble” (line 2) can be BEST understood to mean
   a. principled
   b. aristocratic
   c. audacious
   d. arrogant
   e. eminent
8. All of the following constructions, likely to be questioned by a strict grammarian or a computer grammar check, are included in the passage EXCEPT
   a. a shift in voice
   b. unconventional punctuation
   c. sentence fragments
   d. run-on sentences
   e. a sentence ending with a preposition
9. In context “platitude” (line 11) can be BEST understood to mean
   a. intellectual value
   b. philosophical aspect
   c. commonplace quality
   d. heightened emotion
   e. demanding point of view
10. “The tomb of the Capulets” (line 10) is an allusion to
    a. Shakespeare
    b. Edgar Allan Poe
    c. English history
    d. Greek mythology
    e. the legends of King Arthur

Answers and Explanations of Answers

1. (e) This type of question appears in most sets of critical reading questions. (a) might appear to be a possible answer, but the passage does not come across as very analytical, nor does it seem like a discussion of the creative process but rather is more a description of a game played by four writers to while away the time. (b) and (c) seem unlikely answers. Mary Shelley’s account here sounds as if she is conscious of inferiority in such illustrious company rather than superiority. She has no need to name-drop, as she married one of the illustrious poets and at that time was the guest of the other. She narrates the problems she had in coming up with a story, but since the passage tells us that she is the author of Frankenstein, we know that she did come up with a story. The answer is (e).

2. (b) This type of question asks readers to recognize a restatement of ideas found in the passage. The sentence under examination is found in lines 3–6, and students are asked to recognize that “diction and sound patterns” refers to “radiance of brilliant imagery” and “music of the most melodious verse.” (a) would not be possible because even his adoring wife finds him not inventive. “Thought and feeling,” (c), appear as “ideas and sentiments” (line 3), which according to the passage are merely the vehicles to exhibit Shelley’s talents. Answer (d), incorporating “brightness,” might refer to “brilliant” in line 4, but
“ornamentation” is too artificial a word for the author to use in reference to her talented husband. (e) is incorrect, as insight and analysis are not alluded to in the passage.

3. (d) This question is related to Question 2 in that it discusses Shelley’s talents and the author’s opinion of them. The writer is obviously not “detached” in her description of her very talented husband. She is obviously “prejudiced” and “appreciative.” She may even exaggerate, but history has shown her to be accurate in her opinion.

4. (a) This is another question about the writer’s attitude. Some of the adjectives can be immediately dismissed. She is not ironic—she means what she says. She is not an unkind writer, and she does not use a derisive tone. However, there is too much humor in her tone for it to be sincere or matter-of-fact. The correct answer is that she is amused.

5. (c) This question deals with the second paragraph and how the author set about writing a story. Choices (a), (b), (d), and (e) may seem appropriate beginnings for a writer, but they are not mentioned in the passage. What she does focus on is the desired effect on her readers, (c), as outlined in detail in lines 13–16.

6. (b) This question asks for an adjective to describe the author’s feeling at the end of the excerpt. The expressions “blank incapability” (line 17) and “mortifying negative” (line 20) suggest that “despondent” is the most appropriate answer.

7. (b) This question deals with vocabulary in context. The noble author is Lord Byron, a hereditary peer of the realm, and the word in this context of describing him means “aristocratic.” “Principled,” (a), and “eminent,” (e), are also possible synonyms for “noble” but not in this context. Byron in his private life was eminently unprincipled (nicknamed “the bad Lord Byron”) and lived overseas to avoid public enmity. (c) and (d) are not synonyms for “noble.”

8. (d) This is a type of question that appears occasionally in a set of questions on critical reading. Such questions require the student to examine the sentence structure of professional writers and to be aware that these writers sometimes take liberties in order to make a more effective statement. They know the rules, and, therefore, they may break them! An additional difficulty is that the question is framed as a negative, so students may find it a time-consuming question as they mentally check off which constructions Shelley does employ so that by a process of elimination they may arrive at which construction is not included. The first sentence contains both choices (a) and (e), a shift in voice and a sentence ending in a preposition. Neither of these constructions is a grammatical error, but computer programs point them out. The conventional advice is that both should be used sparingly, and they should be used when avoiding them becomes more cumbersome than using them. The sentence beginning in line 14 is a sentence fragment (c), but an effective one. Choice (b) corresponds to the sentence beginning in line 6 and finishing in line 11, which contains a colon, semicolon, and a dash (somewhat unconventional) without the author’s ever losing control. This sentence is not a run-on even though many students may think it is! The answer to the question then is (d).

9. (c) Here is another vocabulary in context question. Knowing the poets involved and their tastes, students will probably recognize that it is (c), the commonplace quality of prose, that turns the poets away and not one of the loftier explanations provided in the other distracters.

10. (a) The allusion to “the tomb of the Capulets” in line 10 is an example of a situation where a student is expected to have some outside knowledge, and this will be a very easy question for students. Romeo and Juliet is fair game for American high school students. Notice that the other allusion is footnoted, as this is a more obscure allusion for American high school students, although well known to every English schoolboy and schoolgirl.
With diction, or word choice, one must also consider whether the words are learned and ornate or simple and colloquial. Does the writer use slang or jargon? Does he or she use sensual language? Does the writer use figurative language or classical allusions? Is the writer’s meaning clearer because an abstract idea is associated with a concrete image? Does the reader have instant recognition of a universal symbol? If the writer does any of the above, what tone is achieved through the various possibilities of language? Is the writing formal or informal? Does the writer approve of or disapprove of or ridicule his or her subject? Does he or she use connotative rather than denotative words to convey these emotions? Do you recognize a pattern of images or words throughout the passage?

Some questions on vocabulary in context deal with a single word. The word is not usually an unfamiliar word, but it is often a word with multiple meanings, depending on the context or the date of the passage, as some words have altered in meaning over the years.

This set of ten questions is very typical—one on purpose, a couple on restatement of supporting ideas, some on tone and style, two on vocabulary in context, and one on an allusion. Students should learn how to use the process of elimination when the answer is not immediately obvious. The organization of the questions is also typical of the usual arrangement of Critical Reading questions. Questions on the content of the passage, the main idea, and supporting ideas generally appear first and are in the order they are found in the passage. They are followed by questions applying to the whole passage, including general questions about the writer’s tone and style. Students should be able to work their way through the passage, finding the answers as they go.

Additional questions on an autobiographical selection like this passage might ask what is revealed about the biographer herself or which statements in the passage associate the author with Romanticism.

Since passages for critical reading come in a wide variety of genres, students should keep in mind that other types of questions could be asked on other types of passages. For instance, passages from fiction can generate questions about point of view, about characters and how these characters are presented, or about setting, either outdoor or indoor, and the role it is likely to play in a novel or short story.

Speeches generate some different kinds of questions because of the oratorical devices a speaker might use—repetition, anaphora, or appeals to various emotions. Questions could be asked about the use of metaphors, the use of connotative words, and the use of patterns of words or images.

The suggestions made in this section of the resource guide should provide a useful background for critical reading. Questions are likely to follow similar patterns, and knowing what to expect boosts confidence when dealing with unfamiliar material.
Overview: The Political Climate of War

The plunge of civilization into this abyss of blood and darkness...is a thing that so gives away the whole long age during which we have supposed the world to be, with whatever abatement, gradually bettering, that to have to take it all now for what the treacherous years were all the while really making for and meaning is too tragic for any words.  

Writing the lines above to a friend just a day after Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914, American novelist Henry James (1843–1916), known as the “Master” to many writers whom he influenced in the next generation, expressed a pessimistic vision of the future of civilization as declarations of war accelerated and caught fire. James’s words even hint at the irony of a brutal fate waiting to mock humankind for a blind belief that peace and global improvement could go on forever. James would not live to see the end of the war that had cast such gloom over his declining days; for, after seeking naturalization as a British citizen to protest the refusal of the United States to enter the war, James died in February 1916. James was quite prescient, however, in acknowledging a past he now saw filled with impending disaster, for the seeds of World War I were sown at least as far back as the 1870s when Germany began the process of unification.

The most immediate spark, though, to kindle the conflagration that would engulf the world in war, was set off by a Slavic nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, whose cause was to liberate Serbia from the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Princip, a conspirator and member of the secret society the Black Hand, had specifically traveled to Sarajevo, with several co-conspirators to assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg throne. On the morning of June 28, 1914, after an earlier failed bomb attack and the failure of Princip’s fellow conspirators to take action when the archduke’s motorcade passed their positions, Franz Ferdinand’s touring car inexplicably stopped and reversed course, leaving Princip just feet away from Franz Ferdinand. Princip fired, hitting Franz Ferdinand in the neck and his wife, Sophie, in the stomach; both were already dying as their car sped away to the Governor’s residence to seek medical attention. Princip’s actions precipitated a chain of events that resulted in “the war to end all wars,” a war that would engage millions of men and women at its fronts, would result in a catastrophic loss of life, and would launch sweeping social, cultural, and political change in its aftermath.

According to literary historian Paul Fussell, the “Great War’ was the last to be conceived as taking place within a seamless, purposeful ‘history’ involving a coherent stream of time running from past through present to future.” The world of this first global conflict was a “static” one, a world where relationships were stable, and the meanings of abstractions permanent and reliable. But those beliefs in absolutism, traditional moral action, and stable language were shattered by the war’s end in 1918. Fussell aptly characterizes the last summer of 1914 as “the symbol of everything innocently but irrecoverably lost.”

At the start of a war that should have been a minor conflict, the Third Balkan War, the globe was divided into competing national and imperial identities, with power divided between the Triple Alliance—Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy—and the Triple Entente—France, Russia, and Great Britain. Each of these nations, with the exception of Britain, had conscription to man their armies, and those armies
had grown to number in the hundreds of thousands as European nations had grown more powerful during the scramble for far-flung colonies in the mid to late nineteenth century. The rise of nationalism dominated the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth; the Habsburg monarchy alone was comprised of eleven nationalities, each competing with the others for control. Germany, under the guidance of Otto von Bismarck beginning in 1870, had become a more unified nation, one whose "weltpolitik" at the end of the nineteenth century was increasingly belligerent and militaristic.

With nations entangled in a web of alliances, global conflict became inevitable when Austro-Hungary gave Serbia an ultimatum to which it could not agree. Germany would come to Austro-Hungary's side in the conflict, but Italy would hold back, claiming that it was not obligated to enter the conflict unless Austro-Hungary was attacked. Russia came to Serbia's aid, and by doing so involved its ally France and, ultimately, Great Britain. By July 28, 1914, European states were arming as Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia. As Russia began to mobilize, Germany declared war on Russia on August 1 and signed a secret treaty with the Turkish Ottoman Empire. By August 3, Germany had declared war on France and on August 4 invaded Belgium in an effort to engulf France. In the wake of the violation of Belgian neutrality, Great Britain declared war on Germany on August 4.

By September, war raged on both fronts: the Western—French and Belgian—and the Eastern—Prussian and Russian. As allies lined up on both sides, optimism was high that the war would be over by Christmas. But that was not to be. Germany's relentless advance to Paris ended at the Battle of the Marne in September 1914, when Great Britain came to the aid of the French in pushing the German army back. The Germans could be pushed only so far, however. Reluctant to give up all of the territory they had conquered, the Germans began to dig a system of trenches that, paralleled by French and British trenches, would eventually stretch from the Belgian coast of the North Sea to the tip of Switzerland.

Thus, trench warfare, locking opposing armies in a stalemate, would extend this gruesome war for four years, a period in which new and rapidly developing technologies were employed as efforts to end the war escalated. From the American West came barbed wire, developed in the late nineteenth century for fencing in cattle, which took on a new use in fencing off "No Man's Land," that portion of earth separating the trenches of opposing armies. Yet the trenches hardly protected soldiers from heavy artillery fire, machine gun fire, or from chlorine and other kinds of poison gas used, for example, during the Second Battle of Ypres in April–May 1915. By 1916, the violence had risen to a record of nearly 60,000 casualties in a single day during the Battle of the Somme on July 1, 1916. By the end of 1916, there was widespread despair as war raged on. The construction of armored tanks, developed in 1917 as a way to break through the trenches, offered new hope in ending the stalemated war, as did the use of submarine warfare by the Germans in January 1917, for this was the threat that finally drew the United States into the war. In May 1915, the British Lusitania had been sunk by a German submarine; even though it had carried many American citizens onboard, President Wilson continued to hold back
from declaring war. But in 1917, Germany made clear its intention to engage in unrestricted submarine warfare and secretly reached out to Mexico to wage war on the United States. When the British intercepted and decoded the encrypted telegram, the government shared it with the U.S. ambassador. The United States could no longer remain neutral; Wilson declared war on April 6, 1917. It was the beginning of the end: an inevitable German collapse was aided by American attacks, and on November 11, 1918, Germany signed the Armistice. Fighting ceased at eleven that morning.

**Fighting Men and Their Literary Responses to War**

_That night your great guns, unawares,
Shook all our coffins as we lay,
And broke the chancel window-squares,
We thought it was the Judgment day..._7

Written just five months before the beginning of World War I, Thomas Hardy's poem “Channel Firing” eloquently elicits the response of “dead” generations, like that of his own Victorian contemporaries, to the sounds of British mortar fire in the English Channel during British military preparations. Along with a sense of the terrifying volume of sound, the poem evokes the nearness of the guns to normal English life. Such proximity would continue through the years of conflict all along the Western front, just across the Channel from England. The trenches of Belgium lay only seventy miles across the Channel from London; “England is so absurdly near,” wrote one soldier.* Yet the world of devastated fields, waterlogged trenches infested with rats, and the common sight of dead and mangled bodies, though geographically so near, was indeed a world away.

**John McCrae**

The paradox of proximity matched with vast distance and the longing for a return to what was normal, safe, and home is one of many themes embraced by men who experienced the war firsthand. Perhaps the most iconic poem of the period, one that includes several of the themes found throughout the poetry of World War I, more specifically that of British war poets, is John McCrae’s “In Flanders Fields.”

_In Flanders Fields the poppies blow_  
_Between the crosses, row on row,_  
_That mark our place, and in the sky,_  
_The larks, still bravely singing, fly,_  
_Scarce heard amid the guns below._

_We are the dead; short days ago_  
_We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,_  
_Loved and were loved, and now we lie_  
_In Flanders fields._

_Take up our quarrel with the foe!_  
_To you from failing hands we throw_  

*British poet John McCrae (1872–1918), best known for his poem “In Flanders Fields.”

McCrae (1872–1918) is best known for this poem, one which gives voice to hundreds of thousands dead in Flanders cemeteries only a few short months into the war. The work was first published in the English magazine _Punch_ on December 8, 1915, and gained such widespread attention among the British reading public that it was used as a recruiting tool. In three stanzas of varying lengths, the poem is structured predominantly in iambic tetrameter with stanzas two and three ending, for emphasis, in iambic dimeter, “In Flanders fields.” However, McCrae did not die in Flanders’ fields; he was wounded and died of pneumonia in a hospital in January 1918, as the war drew to a close. Deeply patriotic, the poem charges the living with the mission to fight until the war is won; it never laments the terrible toll of war but insists instead on continuing the conflict. Perhaps McCrae’s vision here was brightened by the sight of seas of poppies that grew and bloomed in the spring of 1915, their seeds germinating as a result of the shelling which caused enormous upheaval in the ground. The poppy acts as a dual symbol here, both exemplifying the color of the blood spilled and offering the hope of renewal that comes with the blooming of flowers in spring,
and now, almost one hundred years since the onset of this war, the poppy continues to act as a memorial to those killed in the war. Like Hardy before him, McCrae chooses the collective voice of the dead as his poetic speaker—here the dead recall what it was like to be alive, hearing the sounds of both the larks above and the guns below and seeing dawn and sunset. The poetic dichotomy marks the boundary between death and life, but that boundary appears permeable as the dead threaten to awake if the living do not heed the call to arms.

**Rupert Brooke**

In “The Soldier,” Rupert Brooke (1887–1915) captures a particular moment in the war, when, in its early stages, young men rushed enthusiastically to the front.

*If I should die, think only this of me:*
*That there’s some corner of a foreign field*
*That is for ever England. There shall be*
*In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;*
*A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,*
*Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,*
*A body of England’s, breathing English air,*
*Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.*

The first stanza reprinted here conveys a deep sense of the poetic speaker’s love of his country and identification as an Englishman, structured in stately iambic pentameter and alternating rhymes. Brooke enlisted on August 4, 1914, as England entered the war, but died of blood poisoning on April 23, 1915, in the Aegean Sea on his way to fight at Gallipoli, a peninsula in the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Brooke was already a promising poet before enlisting, and the publication of the five-sonnet sequence which included “The Soldier” seemed to correspond eerily with his premature death. Originally published in the periodical *New Numbers* in January 1915 and the magazine *Poetry* in April 1915, “The Soldier” also appeared in *The Times*, printed the day after the Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral chose to read it as part of his sermon on Easter Sunday, April 4, 1915. When Brooke died just three weeks later, on April 23, it appeared as though he had unwittingly written his own epitaph. Like McCrae’s poem, Brooke’s is fiercely patriotic but also insists upon the image of the battlefield grave, where the speaker, if he should die, will lie. It is his presence there, the speaker contends, that makes this “corner of a foreign field” English soil.

**Wilfred Owen**

The poetic mood of those who lived longer into the conflict and beyond would darken considerably. Wilfred Owen (1893–1918), in “Dulce et Decorum Est,” memorializes the horror of men wounded and dying from gas attacks. Written in 1917 and published posthumously, the poem ends as the speaker describes the horrors of walking behind the wagon that carries a soldier suffocating from the gas in his lungs.

*If in some smothering dreams you too could pace*
*Behind the wagon that we flung him in,*
*And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,*
*His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin,*
*If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood*
*Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs*
*Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud*
*Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—*
*My friend, you would not tell with such high zest*
*To children ardent for some desperate glory,*
*The old lie: Dulce et decorum est*
*Pro patria mori.*

The poem, in contrast to the structure of its alternating rhyme scheme and stately iambic meter, refuses to acknowledge the glories of dying for one’s country or even the possibility of a dignified death in war. While retaining its rhymes, the metrical structure breaks down in the last two lines as iambic pentameter, sustained for ten lines, shifts into the disjointed
of the war in November 1918, just days before the Armistice was signed.

**Robert Graves**

Robert Graves (1895–1985), unlike the three poets just discussed, lived into ripe old age. Graves served with fellow poet Siegfried Sassoon and was so badly wounded at the Battle of the Somme in 1916 that he was reported dead. Graves, like Owen and Sassoon, also suffered from shell shock, returned briefly to the front in France, and spent the end of the war in England. Graves published poems during the war which were designed to challenge the public's attitudes and to offer the ugly reality of life in the trenches. The very brief “The Trenches (Heard in the Ranks)” paints a vivid image of a macrocosmic/microcosmic universe where soldiers in the trenches are like lice, the playthings of some huge fingernail and thumb.

*Scratches in the dirt?*
*No, that sounds much too nice.*
*Oh, far too nice.*
*Seams, rather, of a Greyback Shirt,*
*And we’re the little lice*
*Wriggling about in them a week or two,*

The imagery, too, is meant to shock—the dying soldier’s face is imaged as a devil’s, black and contorted but “sick of sin,” his lungs “obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud/Of vile, incurable sores.” The strong sense of nationality, pride in identity, belief in death and renewal, the earth as resting place for dead soldiers who somehow maintain a connection with the living—those features so prominent in both McCrae and Owen—do not appear here. This poem, far from being about the dead charging the living to fight on, is about the dying, whose inevitable death is ironically meaningless. Owen, considered by numerous scholars to be the most technically innovative of the poets of World War I, enlisted in 1915. Subjected to shelling from heavy artillery, Owen returned to England as a victim of shell shock and was hospitalized with fellow poet Siegfried Sassoon, with whom he became friends. Owen was returned to the front in France in August 1918 and killed in action in the last battle
Five minutes ago I heard a sniper fire:
Why did he do it?...Starlight overhead—
Blank stars. I’m wide-awake; and some chap’s dead.

While written as a sonnet, like Rupert Brooke’s “The Soldier,” Sassoon’s poem uses the form to structure a vastly different message from Brooke’s. The speaker reproduces the ugly imagery of the battlefront, the “splashing mirk,” the “gruff muttering,” the “flickering horror” of bombardment to work against measured, iambic pentameter lines and a variation on the Shakespearean rhyme scheme structured in eight lines of rhyming couplets (aa, bb, cc, dd), four lines of alternating end rhymes (ef, ef), and a closing rhymed couplet (gg). Sassoon’s soldier seems bewildered by his experiences on the front in darkness lit by the candlelight of the men off duty, the fire of bombardment, and starlight—he represents the individual caught by forces far beyond his control and compelled to ask why.

Erich Maria Remarque

The work of the foregoing writers offers conflicting views among English soldier poets. The work of...
Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970), a German who fought on the opposing side, offers a fictionalized view of his experiences of the war which echo the sense of waste, irony, and despair expressed by Sassoon, Owen, and Graves. Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Im Westen nichts Neues, or literally, *Nothing New in the West*), first published in German in 1928, describes war from the disillusioned perspective of a young German soldier. Largely narrated by Paul Bäumer, who enlists when his school teacher urges him to do so, the novel refuses to present the actions of the soldiers at the front as heroic, but, rather, focuses on the role that random chance plays in determining who lives and who dies. Bäumer is killed in the end, and the balance of the novel appears as a situation report from the front lines. Early in the novel, Bäumer remembers his teacher Kantorek and reflects upon how wrong Kantorek was, along with all the other teachers, to push their students to enlist:

> And that is why they let us down so badly. For us lads of eighteen they ought to have been mediators and guides to the world of maturity, the world of work, of duty, of culture, of progress—to the future. We often made fun of them and played jokes on them, but in our hearts we trusted them. The idea of authority, which they represented, was associated in our minds with a greater insight and a manlier wisdom. But the first death we saw shattered this belief. We had to recognize that our generation was more to be trusted than theirs. They surpassed us only in phrases and in cleverness. The first bombardment showed us our mistake, and under it the world as they had taught it to us broke in pieces.

> While they continued to write and talk, we saw the wounded and dying. While they taught that duty to one's country is the greatest thing, we already knew that death-throes are stronger. But for all that we were no mutineers, no deserters, no cowards—they were very free with all these expressions. We loved our country as much as they; we went courageously into every action; but also we distinguished the false from the true, we had suddenly learned to see. And we saw that there was nothing of their world left. We were all at once terribly alone; and alone we must see it through.4

This brief passage echoes the sentiments of the much older Henry James as he wrote despairingly of the future of civilization; for James seemed to know instinctively that the world as he knew it was no more. The young soldier Bäumer needs only to see death for the first time to realize the same. His calm tone of despair highlights his deep sense of the generational divide and his grim realization of a loss of hope and innocence.

Remarque was conscripted into the German army at the age of eighteen and transferred to the Western Front in June 1917. He was wounded by shrapnel in July and spent the rest of the war in an army hospital in Germany. Nine years after the end of the war, Remarque put his reminiscences into fictional form, writing *All Quiet on the Western Front* in just a few months in 1927, but the novel did not appear in print until late 1928, when it was printed in two installments in a German newspaper, and 1929, when it was published in book form in German and English translation. Remarque's insistence on portraying the realities of war and his refusal to portray the war as glorious and German soldiers as heroic earned him the hatred of the Nazis in 1933, when Joseph Goebbels, Nazi propaganda minister, publicly burned Remarque's books. Remarque left Germany in 1931, never to return; he spent the rest of his life in Switzerland, France, and, briefly, the United States.
Women and War: The Battlefront and the Home Front

What men suffer through war is written in histories...but what women suffer is never written.\(^1\)

The lives of women at home were as deeply affected by the war, if in different ways, as those of the soldiers on the front lines of battle. The broader social landscape of war-torn countries reveals widespread displacements of families, famine and starvation, high death rates for women in childbirth, and a high infant mortality rate.\(^2\) Bomb blasts didn’t just land in or near the trenches but leveled entire towns; Ypres was just one example of a town left utterly destroyed at the war’s end. Mortar shells and shrapnel killed countless women and children, who were as unsafe at home as millions of soldiers under direct fire.

Additionally, women in many countries had waged a “war” of their own to obtain the right to vote since at least the middle of the nineteenth century; their militancy would be largely suspended for the duration of the war as many suffragettes and feminists believed that their war efforts would earn them the vote. A leading proponent of women’s right to full suffrage, Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928), supported conscription and suspended the activities of the Women’s Social and Political Union, the organization she founded, in August 1914 for the duration of the war, writing to her constituency:

…we nevertheless believe...it was inevitable that Great Britain should take part in the war and with that patriotism which has nerved women to endure torture in prison cells for the national good, we ardently desire that our country shall be victorious—this because we hold that the existence of all small nationalities is at stake and that the status of France and Great Britain is involved.\(^3\)

Djuna Barnes

The early work of American writer Djuna Barnes (1892–1982) reaches out in both directions during the early stages of the war—toward the experience of fighting suffragettes being forcibly fed as well as to the experience of the soldier in the trenches. In response to the actions of suffragettes on hunger strikes in prisons who were force fed through rubber
Barnes sketched an emaciated, naked soldier, carrying only a rifle with a bayonet as he stalks over a dead body across a ruined landscape where a hand reaches upward from the trench. Barnes seems here to have been inspired by at least two sources: Francois Millet's "The Sower" and an image of the Grim Reaper in the style of Francisco Goya's series "The Disasters of War." With only a month separating their publications, Barnes may well have meant to convey a comparison to starving women's bodies in English jails in her illustrative composition of the emaciated English soldier at the battlefront.

Colette

While Barnes experienced the trench only in her imagination, several women journalists and writers reported on the war firsthand, among them French writer and journalist Colette (1873–1954), who documented life at the front when she visited her husband on the battlefield of Verdun in 1915. Colette's impressions of experiencing an aerial battle at Verdun are...
laced with the description of the battle portrayed through natural images.

While I can still hear nothing but the humming of the engine, my Verdun hostess's sharp eyes have already found on the clear blue of the sky the minuscule pigeon which grows bigger and leaves the horizon; here it is, borne by two convex wings, new, gleaming; it circles the town, rises, seems to meditate, hesitates... Five white bouquets blossom in a wreath around it, five pompons of immaculate smoke which mark, suspended in the windless sky, the point where our antiaircraft shells are exploding—five, then seven, and their concerted blasts reach our ears later still...21

Mary Rinehart

In 1915, American writer Mary Rinehart (1876–1958) was sent to Belgium by the Saturday Evening Post to report on the war. She wanted to document the conditions for Belgian refugees and the “plight of the Belgian army.”22 and, in February 1915, she was allowed to tour the trenches and No Man's Land at the Belgian front, which had been flooded to slow the advance of the German army. “That night,” Rinehart wrote:

when from a semishielded position I could look across to the German line, the contrast between the condition of the men in the trenches and the beauty of the scenery was appalling. In each direction, as far as one could see, lay a gleaming lagoon of water. The moon made a silver path across it and here and there on its borders were broken and twisted winter trees.

“It is beautiful,” said Captain Fastrez beside me, in a low voice. “But it is full of the dead. They are taken out whenever it is possible: but it is not often possible.”...As of the trenches, many have written of the stenches of this war. But the odor of that beautiful lagoon was horrible... any lingering belief I may have had in the grandeur and glory of war died that night beside that silver lake—died of an odor, and will never live again.23

Rebecca West

In contrast to women journalists who chose to tour the front to enhance their firsthand reporting on the war, British writer Rebecca West (1892–1983) chose to explore the home front by visiting and writing about the Scottish Dornock Munitions Factory in 1916. Her article for The Daily Chronicle, “Hands That War: The Cordite Makers,” provides deceptive fairytale associations in a description of women working in extremely dangerous and explosive conditions to produce cordite. The women are “clad in a Red-Riding-Hood fancy dress of khaki and scarlet,”24 but their scarlet hoods are likened to military uniforms, specially treated to be fireproof. “Surely,” West writes,
Mansfield’s fly serves as an image for humanity’s helplessness in the magnitude of war or in the grip of any greater power—the experience of the fly as a microcosm of the human experience of war suggestively echoes the intent of the imagery of the lice in Robert Graves’s “The Trenches.”

**Gertrude Stein**

Gertrude Stein’s tongue-in-cheek spoof *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* fictionally constructs her longtime lover and partner as the speaker/author of an autobiography whose central figure is, of course, Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) herself. Both Stein and Toklas decided to find a way to help in the war effort and ordered a Ford truck from the U.S. to deliver medical supplies to French hospitals for the American Fund for French Wounded. After the armistice, Stein and Toklas drove to the battlefields in France; Stein, speaking through the persona of Toklas, writes:

> Soon we came to the battle-fields and the lines of trenches of both sides. To any one who did not see it as it was then it is impossible to imagine it. It was not terrifying it was strange. We were used to ruined houses and even ruined towns but this was different. It was a landscape. And it belonged to no country.

> I remember hearing a french nurse once say and the only thing she did say of the front was, c'est un paysage passionant, an absorbing landscape. And that was what it was as we saw it. It was strange.

In the midst of what appear to be madcap adventures, with Stein at the wheel or cranking the engine of the Ford truck and making friends with American soldiers (whom she referred to by the names of their home states) all along the road, she turns suddenly and briefly serious to become immersed in the land-
Schanz ignores the sounds of proclamations, ringing of church bells, music of parades, and cheering of crowds which were widely reported as filling Berlin at this joyous time for Germans and structures the poem as an anonymous speaker waits in silence for the concert of sound to begin. The poem suggests a feeling of “calm before the storm,” as though Schanz foresees that, despite the marking of the beat as “the most dreadful of beats,” three orchestras—perhaps symbolizing Germany, Austro-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire—have formed an alliance to “perform in the concert” of war, a concert whose musical success is yet to be determined, as the world breathlessly waits.

Edith Sitwell

“The Dancers,” subtitled “(During a Great Battle, 1916),” by Dame Edith Sitwell (1887–1964), uses the imagery of the dance as a counterpoint to war in a powerful parallel to Shanz’s imagery of silence.

The floors are slippery with blood:
The world gyrates too. God is good
That while His wind blows out the light
For those who hourly die for us—
We still can dance, each night.30

This first stanza of the poem, published in 1918 and inspired by the Battle of the Somme (1916), the bloodiest military operation in history, provides ironic contrasts between the home front and the battlefield. Located, like Schanz’s poem, in an unnamed city, presumably at the home front where concerts and balls can still occur, this poem’s communal “we” imagines hourly casualties at the front in an ironic recognition that a good God makes it possible for those at home to keep on dancing. In addition to her own work, Sitwell published seven of Wilfred Owen’s poems in her journal Wheels; she found his work so moving that she claimed it hit “home so hard that one finds oneself crying.”31

Wheels appeared between 1916 and 1921, published only verse, and set out to mock the standards of taste current at the time, particularly exhibited in the work of writers considered “Georgian,” or conventional, poets. Though several “cycles,” or issues, were published during the war, Wheels heralded the dawn of a postwar spirit, a “dominant mood of bitterness, cynicism, and flippance.”32 In fact, contemporary reviewers of Wheels, whose first issue appeared a few months after the Battle of the Somme, viewed the journal as “the product of the broad effects of the war.”33 For example, the reviewer for Lancet wrote:

The camps and the trenches during the past two years have produced many copies of verses having claim to notice as beautiful poetry, and Wheels, though little of its contents may have been written in the circumstances of war, has an

American expatriate writer Gertrude Stein.

scape of war. Similar to observations of other women who see the front, Stein sees the land in a double vision—at once both a natural, “absorbing” setting and a universal space on the map of war.

Frida Schanz

War affected female poets on both sides of the conflict. In Germany, August 1914 was a month when the nation exploded with enthusiasm for its early successes at the front, as victory after victory was proclaimed—beginning on August 7 with the victory at Liege, reported prematurely, through the fall of Namur on August 24. During the month, the German newspaper Die Tägliche Rundschau gloated that “the great times of heroes, which had almost become a legend, have returned. So, too, did our sons and brothers march off into the holy war.”28 The same newspaper printed the poem “Silence” by German poet Frida Schanz (1859–1944) on August 17, 1914.

Silence, which unfolds to the most dreadful of beats.
Silenced, for days now, for many days now.
A giant lifts the baton. The hall is locked.
Three orchestras perform in the concert.
One spirit, one God, one will of primeval strength
Marks the beat in the hall of breathless silence.29

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During the spring offensive of 1918, Brittain, who was at home tending to her parents, learned of her brother Edward’s death in action at the Italian front. She continued to serve as a nurse in England until April 1919, and thereafter worked as a peace activist, writing for left-wing journals, campaigning for the League of Nations, and writing the memoirs of her war experience.

Brittain’s poem “Sic Transit—,” is dedicated to Victor Richardson, blinded at the Battle of Vimy Ridge in 1917, whom, following the loss of Roland Leighton, Brittain planned to marry and care for. Richardson, though, died two weeks after returning to England in June 1917. The poem’s subheading reads: “(V.R., Died of Wounds, 2nd London General Hospital, Chelsea, June 9th, 1917).”

I am so tired.

The dying sun incarnadines the West,
And every window with its gold is fired,
And all I loved the best
Is gone, and every good that I desired
Passes away, an idle hopeless quest;
Even the Highest whereto I aspired
Has vanished with the rest.
I am so tired.

The title, “Sic Transit,” is an abbreviation of a longer phrase in Latin, “sic transit gloria mundi,” or “so
passes the glory of the world,” and underscores the transitory nature of life and worldly honor. Especially ironic in this context, the poem’s dedication makes it clear that all the speaker has loved has passed away in “an idle hopeless quest.” Death and despair stalk this poem, from its title and subtitle, to the symbolism of its sun dying in the West, to the death even of God in whom the speaker can no longer believe. Red and gold, in the color of the western sky and the reflection in the window, strengthen an implied contrast with the red imagery of blood and the gold of worldly glory. The poem begins and ends with the speaker’s announcement “I am so tired,” which initiates an alternating rhyme scheme maintained throughout the nine lines of this brief, dejected, single stanza, coming full circle at the end in repeating its beginning.

The Cultural Climate: The Avant-Garde and the Emergence of Modernism

The Influence of Filippo Marinetti and Futurism

We will sing of great crowds agitated by work, pleasure, and by riot; we will sing of the multicolored, polyphonic titles of revolution in the modern capitals; we will sing of the vibrant nightly fervor of arsenals and shipyards blazing with violent electric moons; greedy railway stations that devour smoke-plumed serpents; factories hung on clouds by the crooked lines of their smoke; bridges that stride the rivers like giant gymnasts, flashing in the sun with a glitter of knives; adventurous steamers that sniff the horizon; deep-chested locomotives whose wheels paw the tracks like the hooves of enormous steel horses bridled by tubing; and the sleek flight of planes whose propellers chatter in the wind like banners and seem to cheer like an enthusiastic crowd.37

The final proposition in the “Futurist Manifesto” by F. T. Marinetti (1876–1944), quoted above, highlights an imagery which would not only inspire Futurist paintings, like The City Rises by Italian Futurist artist Umberto Boccioni, but also would capture the central theme of the new movement Marinetti meant to initiate with his manifesto: the uncontrollable power of modern machinery, the revolutionary fervor of the masses, the vastness of the modern city, the dominance of energy and speed. Marinetti’s manifesto, appearing initially in Italy, was published as “Le Futurisme” on the front page of the February 20, 1909, edition of the prestigious French newspaper Le Figaro, giving it a broad reading audience as it quickly spread to newspaper audiences in Spain, Poland, Romania, and Russia.

While not the only example of the rise of avant-garde movements in Europe and elsewhere, Marinetti’s Futurism had a notable influence on the development of Modernist literature in Great Britain, Europe, and the U.S. A number of significant events had already laid the groundwork for Marinetti’s flagrant rejection of the past: the invention of the motion picture in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the revolutionary 1901 exhibition in Paris of the work of Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), the founding of the Abbey Theatre and the emergence of the Irish Literary Revival in Dublin in 1904, the posthumous exhibition of the paintings of Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) in Paris in 1907, the premiere of the atonal compositions of composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) in Austria in 1908, and the rise of Cubism, tied to the exhibition by Georges Braque (1882–1963) in Paris.

Marinetti’s manifesto, though, seemed to collect in one textual space the spirit of a vast global celebration of everything modern and new, in the words of scholar Peter Bürger, the avant-garde “can be defined as an attack on the status of art in bourgeois society.”38 Thus, clearly, the avant-garde takes as its initiatory impulse the determination to shock, to trouble, to question and challenge the passivity of the status quo and the normality embraced by middle-class society. In addition, the Futurist Manifesto seemed to herald with delight the advent of war and violence, and Marinetti was determined to promote himself and this new conception of art as explosively as he could. Arguably the most famous clause of the manifesto, the ninth, proclaims:

We will glorify war—the world’s only hygiene—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman.39

Marinetti had claimed for himself a public forum with a wide audience, extending his fame through performances and lectures for the next several
March issue of Poetry, Pound defined the image as “that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time,” and in the next month Pound’s best known “imagiste” poem, “In a Station of the Metro,” appeared in Poetry:

In a Station of the Metro

the apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough.

Coincident with the inception of war and the arrival of American poet Amy Lowell in Great Britain, Pound distanced himself from Imagism, as it came to be called under Lowell’s control (Pound would mock it as “Amy-gism”), and published a new anthology of poetry he entitled The Catholic Anthology, 1914–1915. This anthology, dedicated to casting a broad net to represent the work of poets universally, was Pound’s clear break with Imagism and a sign of his turn toward the new movement “Vorticism” that he would help initiate with Wyndham Lewis. In The Catholic Anthology, Pound published a poem attributed to a conversation with Hulme, entitled “Trenches: St. Eloi.” The poem links Hulme both to the avant-garde and to war:

Trenches: St Eloi
(Abbreviated from the Conversation of Mr TEH)
American poet Amy Lowell. Coincident with the inception of war and the arrival of Lowell in Great Britain, Ezra Pound distanced himself from Imagism, as it came to be called under Lowell’s control.

Over the flat slopes of St Eloi
A wide wall of sand bags.
Night,
In the silence desultory men
Pottering over small fires, cleaning their mess-tins:
To and fro, from the lines,
Men walk as on Piccadilly,
Making paths in the dark,
Through scattered dead horses,
Over a dead Belgian’s belly.

The Germans have rockets. The English have no rockets.
Behind the line, cannon, hidden, lying back miles.
Beyond the line, chaos:
My mind is a corridor. The minds about me are corridors.
Nothing suggests itself. There is nothing to do but keep on."

The attribution here is problematic—is the poem Pound’s or is it his memory of a poem Hulme recited in a conversation? And when and with whom did the conversation take place? Is Pound the poet or the ventriloquist? There seem to be no firm answers to these questions. However, since Pound did not see action and Hulme did, and died at the front, it seems logical that Pound got the gist of the poem from Hulme. Stark images stalk this landscape—a wall of sand bags, men walking as though they were on Piccadilly (a major street in central London), the paths through dead horses and Belgians. The most compelling image, though, is the trench reflected in the line, the path, the corridor—this is the image which connects the speaker/soldier and his landscape. His mind and those of his fellow soldiers and the trenches are one, but he can make no meaning of this insight—he can only keep on fighting and trying to stay alive.

Three more moments of artistic and literary importance before the inception of war, though, should be acknowledged: the development of Cubist art, specifically in the paintings of Picasso and Braque, Roger Fry’s stagings of Post-Impressionist paintings in London in 1910 and 1912, and the rise of the “little” magazine in Europe and the United States, designed to advance the readership for the work of avant-garde writers.

The Development of Cubism

The productive artistic friendship and collaboration between Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso resulted in the development of the artistic movement known as Cubism. The name derived partially from a critic’s comment at Braque’s first exhibition in Paris in 1908 that his paintings were constructed of little “cubes.” But it was Henri Matisse (1869–1954), who suggested the name “Cubism” in describing Braque’s work. Both Braque and Picasso were performing radical experiments with form as Matisse before them had pursued a “revolution in color” and Cézanne had begun to distill the essence of landscapes into geometric forms. Picasso’s contribution to the
experimentation included his use of the shapes of African and Oceanic masks as a model for his work, but the collaboration between both massive talents Picasso and Braque, with the later addition of Juan Gris (1887–1927) and others, shaped the movement until its end just as World War I began.

**The Influence of Post-Impressionist Art**

Shortly after Picasso and Braque appeared on the art scene in Paris, British art critic and painter Roger Fry (1866–1934) opened an exhibition he entitled “Manet and the Post-Impressionists” to an English audience which was largely unfamiliar with early twentieth-century painting—Picasso and Matisse, for example, were barely known. The exhibition ran at the Grafton Galleries from November 1910 through January 1911. Fry included, among others, eight oils by Manet, twenty-one works by Cézanne, twenty by Van Gogh, thirty-seven by Gauguin, three by Matisse, and two by Picasso. The response by viewers and critics was overwhelmingly hostile—one critic wrote, for example:

_The walls…are hung with works which are like the crude efforts of children, garishly discordant in colour, formless, and destitute of tone…that men of talent…should waste their lives in spoiling acres of good canvas when they might be better employed in stone-breaking for the roads…_

But the “damage” had been done; England had been exposed to new developments in painting embraced on the Continent that irrevocably challenged the nature of “bourgeois” taste. Virginia Woolf would utter, in response, one of her best known remarks about this exhibition and about the changing nature of modern life in general when she wrote in “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” “On or about December 1910 human character changed.” The nature of human relationships was changing. Woolf added, and when “human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature.” Woolf could look back from the other side of the war and see that the world had been in the throes of monumental change years before the war that would result in cultural upheaval at the beginning of Modernism.

**The Growth of “Little” Magazines**

To facilitate that upheaval, “little” magazines appeared, journals dedicated to keeping their fingers on the pulse of a rapidly changing cultural scene. Some of the most notable journals to begin the work of gauging the cultural climate were The New Age, The English Review, Poetry, The Little Review, Blast, Wheels, transatlantic review, and transition. The New Age, for example, a weekly journal edited by A. R. Orage, played a significant role in fostering debates about Modernism during the years of its publication between 1907 and 1922. Widely eclectic in the social and political positions espoused by the writers in its pages, The New Age published essays and original literary works by authors like Katherine Mansfield, Ezra Pound, H. G. Wells, and T. E. Hulme.

**THE ENGLISH REVIEW**

The English Review, which appeared in only four volumes from 1908–10, was published by Ford Madox Hueffer (later Ford Madox Ford), and featured a mix of older and newer writers—Thomas Hardy, H.G. Wells, and Conrad, along with Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and D. H. Lawrence. Hueffer gave opportunities in his pages to upcoming writers, and, for the short period of its life, the journal was an important force in the transitional period between traditional work and the appearance of the avant-garde.

**POETRY: A MAGAZINE OF VERSE**

The most substantial, long-lasting, and one of the first of the American journals dedicated to print-
ing poetry is Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, begun in 1912. Monroe, inspired by Walt Whitman’s “To have great poets there must be great audiences too,” dedicated her efforts to publishing the best modern poetry she could find. The list of poets whose works appeared in Monroe’s pages is astounding—just a sample includes William Butler Yeats, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, Amy Lowell, and H. D., among many others. Monroe boasted that her journal posted the “best English verse which is being written today, regardless of where, by whom, or under what theory of art it is written,” writing further and more humbly of the journal itself:

Poetry may not be a grand enough portal, and the lamps that light it may dim in drifting winds; but until a nobler one is built it should stand, and its little lights should show the way as they can. Monroe was incredibly prescient in her understanding of how the world’s view of war would change, writing in her editorial “The Poetry of War,” for the September 1914 issue of *Poetry*:

When Nicholas of Russia and William of Germany, in solemn state the other day, invoked the blessing of God upon their armies, the emotion that went round the world was not the old thrill, but a new sardonic laughter.

As Cervantes smiled Spain’s chivalry away, so some poet of the new era may strip the glamour from war.... But the final word has not been said; the feeling that war is beautiful still lingers in men’s hearts, a feeling founded on world-old savageries—love of power, of torture, of murder, love of big stakes in a big game. This feeling must be destroyed, as it was created, through the imagination. It is work for a poet.

**THE LITTLE REVIEW**

Another important American journal, *The Little Review*, founded by Margaret Anderson in 1914 and continuing until 1929, achieved a reputation as one of the chief periodicals “in the English-speaking world for publishing experimental writing and publicizing international art.” Ezra Pound became the journal’s foreign editor in 1917, influencing its emphasis on international experimentation and including such writers as Djuna Barnes, Eliot, Yeats, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair, Gertrude Stein, and William Carlos Williams. Most notable of the journal’s achievements was its serialization of Joyce’s *Ulysses* in twenty-three installments beginning in March 1918 with the “Telemachos” episode and ending, without completing publication of the novel, after the Society for Suppression of Vice charged the editors to trial, and won the case.

**BLAST**

*Blast*, the last journal to be mentioned in this discussion, was founded and edited in 1914 by Wyndham Lewis and ran for only two issues—June 1914 and July 1915. The onset and escalation of war brought an end to the journal’s publication. Also dedicated to promoting new movements, *Blast* helped shape “Vorticism,” reacting against but influenced by...
Imagism, Futurism, and Cubism, as a viable new way of articulating the nature of emergent art. Its initial issue gleefully announced its new agenda: “Long Live the Vortex.” In it, the writers slam Marinetti among others, including as one of the items:

**AUTOMOBILISM (Marinettism) bores us. We don’t want to go about making a hullo-bulloo about motor cars, anymore than about knives and forks, elephants or gas pipes.**

Two manifestoes follow this initial statement, beginning with blasts and curses for philistinism and bourgeois taste in England and France, then turning to “bless” the oceans, the “hairdresser,” and English humor, among other things. “Our Cause,” the eleven signatories of the manifesto famously wrote, “is NO-MAN’S.” The statement seems to foretell the many locations of “No Man’s Land” in the war while it looks back at Homer’s Odysseus who tricks Polyphemus the Cyclops by telling him that his name is “No man.” In its first issue, Blast included a number of Pound’s poems—as Pound was an important collaborator in this venture with Wyndham Lewis—a play by Lewis, and stories by Ford Maddox [sic] Hueffer and Rebecca West, along with illustrations by Lewis and sculptor and painter Gaudier-Brzeska.

**The Influence of World War I**

With the onset of global war, the momentum of avant-garde art and Modernist literature clearly slowed, the determination to shock trumped by a “war to end all wars” whose horrors mocked the notion of war as hygienic. Post-Impressionism, Imagism, Futurism, Vorticism—these were the names of movements that seemed to have invited the cleansing power of violent change, and so now, as war began in earnest, avant-gardism came increasingly under attack. The war thus represented a break, a gap in the power of artists not only to represent what they could not yet understand, but also to acquire an audience who might listen to their manifestoes or view their works—Modernism was at a standstill. Ezra Pound complained that he was one of the few artists left in London at the midpoint of the war, and T. S. Eliot wrote to Conrad Aiken, “Nearly everyone has faded away from London, or is there very rarely… The vorticists are non-existent.”

Yet, despite its horrors and its ability to crush emerging artistic movements momentarily, the Great War did force a cultural reevaluation not only by artists and writers, but also by the public at large. Out of that historical reassessment, post-war Modernism was born, bringing with it, as literary historian Samuel Hynes observes, “the most important and wide-ranging cultural change in modern English history.”

American writer John Barth, writing about post-modernism in the late 1970s, described the cultural moment of Modernism as: “criticism of the nineteenth-century bourgeois social order and its world view.” “Its artistic strategy,” Barth continues:

...was the self-conscious overturning of the conventions of bourgeois realism by such tactics and devices as the substitution of a ‘mythical’ for a ‘realistic’ method and the ‘manipulation of conscious parallels between contemporaneity and antiquity…; also the radical disruption of the linear flow of narrative, the frustration of conventional expectations concerning unity and coherence of plot and character and the cause-and-effect ‘development’ thereof, the deployment of ironic and ambiguous juxtapositions to call into question the moral and philosophical ‘meaning’ of literary action, the adoption of a tone of epistemological self-mockery aimed at the naïve pretensions of bourgeois rationality, the opposition of inward consciousness to rational, public, objective discourse, and an inclination to subjective distortion to point up the evanescence of the objective social world of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie.

To this “checklist,” Barth adds “the modernists’ insistence…on the special, usually alienated role of the artist in his society, or outside it….” Barth captures and compresses in the paragraph above the most salient literary features of Modernism as it evolved from pre-World War I avant-gardism. The sweeping cultural change observed by Hynes and described in more detail by Barth extended far beyond English culture into transatlantic and global culture. Its appearance in the wake of the Armistice was colored by an overwhelming sense of loss and disenchantment, a sense that the civilization for which the war had been fought was ruined. For D. H. Lawrence, writing a history of civilization in 1924, “‘The War, called now the Great War, came in 1914, and smashed the growing tip of European civilization.’”

Yet despite a pervasive atmosphere of disillusionment, post-war Modernist writers rose to new heights of representation of their world, repudiating the traditionalism of war poets like Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves, and emphasizing the forms of fragmentation, dislocation, and collage as appropriate vehicles for their art. These were the men and women of the post-war “lost generation,” the major Modernists—Pound, Eliot, Woolf, Joyce, Lawrence, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and Hemingway, among others—whose work most defines the highpoint of Modernism in the 1920s.

**Hemingway’s Role in the Rise of Modernism**

*If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest...*
of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast."  

This was the cultural scene that Ernest Hemingway found when he arrived in Paris at the end of 1921. While not in London for Roger Fry's exhibitions of Post-Impressionist art in 1910 and 1912, Hemingway spent time at the Louvre and at the apartment of Gertrude Stein absorbing the radical aesthetics which permeated the work of Cézanne, Picasso, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and others. By March 1922, Hemingway had met Picasso, already a famous artist, through Gertrude Stein—Stein was a collector of Picasso's art and a mentor for Hemingway's writing. Indeed, several critics have argued that Hemingway's story “Big Two-Hearted River” (1925) is indebted for the visuality of its landscapes to Cézanne's own late landscape paintings.  

Though not in London for the rise of Imagisme and Vorticism before the war, Hemingway met Pound early in 1922. Through Pound, Hemingway was exposed to the radical formal experimentation developed through Pound's pre-war associations with avant-gardism and would benefit from Pound's arranging the initial publication of his short fiction collection in our time (Paris: Three Mountains Press, 1924). In tandem with his amazingly quick access to the leading artists, writers, and intellectuals in Paris at the time of his arrival, Hemingway also began to place his work in “little” magazines, which revived in the post-war era. Between May 1922 and May 1929, Hemingway's fiction and poetry appeared in The Double Dealer, Poetry, transatlantic review, Der Querschnitt, The Little Review, This Quarter, The Exile, and transition. In December 1921, Hemingway had arrived at the right place at the right time.
Hemingway's Life (1899-1961)

Ernest Miller Hemingway was born on July 21, 1899, in Oak Park, Illinois, the second of six children of Grace Hall and Dr. Clarence Edmonds Hemingway. Hemingway's love of the outdoors stemmed from summers spent throughout his childhood in northern Michigan where his father, an avid outdoorsman, taught him to hunt and fish. His mother instilled a love of music along with conservative Midwestern values, but, in her attempts to manipulate and force him to bend to her will, his mother “would remain the dark queen of Hemingway’s inner world.”

Regardless of the power of his mother’s hold over him, though, Hemingway managed to minimize her control by determining his own career path after high school graduation. In high school, Hemingway had already decided to become a writer, contributing to the high school newspaper and literary magazine. Instead of following his older sister to Oberlin College, Hemingway moved to Kansas City, Missouri, and took a job as a reporter for the Kansas City Star. But when President Woodrow Wilson reluctantly declared war against Germany and her allies in April 1917, Hemingway was filled with excitement at the possibility of seeing action. Once he turned eighteen in July 1917, Hemingway tried to enlist in the American army but was rejected on the basis of his poor vision. However, when Hemingway learned that the Red Cross was recruiting ambulance drivers to serve overseas, he signed up.

In April 1918, he left the Star for the Italian front with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant, but Hemingway's stay at the Italian battlefields would be brief. After helping extricate women's mutilated bodies from a destroyed munitions factory near Milan in June, he was sent to the town of Schio in the foothills of the Dolomites. Only there a few weeks and eager for action, Hemingway volunteered to staff a canteen near the Piave River, which marked the front line. Hemingway's assignment brought him closer to the action he craved, but on July 8, he was seriously wounded at Fossalta di Piave when a trench mortar shell exploded near the dugout where he was delivering chocolates and cigarettes to the soldiers. One man nearby was mortally wounded, another lost his legs, and Hemingway lived to be decorated as a hero with more than two hundred wounds in his legs.

Later, Hemingway would embellish his own narrative of his actions, but most accounts agree that he did behave bravely and deserved the War Cross of Merit and the Silver Medal of Military Valor awarded by the Italian government. The citation given to Hemingway with his Silver Medal included the following:

**Gravely wounded by numerous pieces of shrapnel from an enemy shell, with an admirable spirit of brotherhood, before taking care of himself,**

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* is widely considered a literary masterpiece and has long been included as part of the high school- and college-level literary canon. However, the novel contains deeply offensive racial slurs, depicts racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic points of view and coarse language and addresses mature themes and topics. The selected work by William Faulkner is likewise highly regarded and critically acclaimed, but also includes racial slurs and addresses mature themes and topics. As works of fiction, these works depict an overall portrait of the time, including some of the prevailing attitudes of the period that are not necessarily those of the author. It is our hope that Academic Decathletes will not only read and discuss these works with a scholarly appreciation for their richness and for the insights they provide into the topic of the First World War, but that they will also approach the subject matter with maturity and sensitivity.

Students should also be aware that all page references cited in the discussion of The Sun Also Rises refer to the Scribner trade paperback edition of the novel, published by Simon and Schuster, that is included in the bibliography at the end of the resource guide.
In early 1920, Hemingway moved to Toronto, found a job as a free-lance writer for the Toronto Star, and began to send Italian war stories to magazines. When Hemingway returned to Michigan again that summer for his twenty-first birthday, his late night antics with his younger sisters and their friends caused his mother to kick him out of the summer cottage, resulting in the further erosion of their relationship.

By fall 1920, Hemingway had moved to Chicago and in December secured a job writing for a monthly magazine. It was there that Hemingway met the next older woman to enter his life, his future wife, Hadley Richardson. Hadley was eight years older than Hemingway, but he pursued her throughout her three-week visit to mutual friends in Chicago; and, by early spring 1921, they were engaged. Hemingway also had the good fortune to meet another person important to determining his future in Chicago, the well-known writer Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941). Once Hadley and Hemingway had made plans to marry in the fall and leave for Europe, Anderson urged them to settle in Paris and provided Hemingway with letters of introduction that could help advance his career. Armed with Hadley’s modest trust fund and Hemingway’s income as the Toronto Star’s first European correspondent, the couple sailed for France in December 1921.

Near the end of his life, between 1957 and 1960, it was to Paris in the 1920s that Hemingway’s imagination returned. Reliving both fictionally and factually his participation in a Modernist renaissance in literature and painting, Hemingway also sought to recover the creative wellspring from which his early work had sprung. In those glorious years, especially

"Hearted River."
from 1925 to 1929, Hemingway produced his most important work, now major landmarks in twentieth-century American literature. Hemingway kept close the memory of Paris, his “moveable feast,” with him until he died.

For much of the time between the end of 1921 and 1928, Hemingway lived in Paris, first in a cold-water flat above a dance hall and then, upon the couple’s return after the birth of their son in Toronto, in a flat adjoining a lumber mill. In the 1920s, the couple could live cheaply, conserving their money to travel and, occasionally, eat well. Hemingway could also afford to rent an additional room in another building near the flat to use for his writing. In the first two years—1922–23—Hemingway filed eighty-eight stories with the Toronto Star based upon travels to the Genoa Economic Conference, to Italian war sites where he had the opportunity to interview Mussolini, to Constantinople to observe the Greco-Turkish war, and to the peace conference in Lausanne. These experiences, along with those from his weeks in Italy during World War I, provided him with material he would use later in both In Our Time and the subsequent American expansion of that volume, In Our Time.

Early in 1922, armed with his letter of introduction from Anderson, Hemingway made his way to Sylvia Beach’s bookshop, Shakespeare and Company, a gathering place for expatriate writers, including James Joyce and Ezra Pound. In February, Pound, on the strength of Anderson’s introductory letter, invited Hemingway to tea; in the aftermath of their meeting Pound became an important mentor and lifelong friend, one of the few friends that Hemingway never turned on. Hemingway met Pound just after his extensive involvement in editing Eliot’s The Waste Land and as he championed the appearance of James Joyce’s Ulysses published the same month by Sylvia Beach. In exchange for Hemingway teaching him to box, Pound helped Hemingway learn to write in a compressed, imagist style. Between February and July 1922 alone, Hemingway had met and formed friendships with Pound, Sylvia Beach, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Lincoln Steffens, and Wyndham Lewis. And in May 1922, Hemingway had begun to publish his poetry and fiction in the “little” magazines—his first two-page story appeared in the May 1922 issue of The Double Dealer and six of his poems appeared later in Harriet Monroe’s Poetry.

However, at the end of the year, a serious mishap occurred which Hemingway would never forget and which probably helped to doom his marriage. On her way in December 1922 to meet Hemingway in Lausanne, Hadley carefully packed all of his manuscripts, typescripts, and carbon copies, thinking
Hemingway published his second work, *in our time*, in a very limited edition of 170 copies with William Bird's Three Mountains Press. Pound had edited the small volume of eighteen sketches, characterized by one of Hemingway's biographers as a "mosaic of modern violence."

These brief vignettes were inspired by Hemingway's experiences in war, in Michigan, at bullfights, and as a journalist for the *Toronto Star*. Using words like machine gun fire, Hemingway turned an account of the execution of six Greek ministers during Greece's war with Turkey into the following:

> One of the ministers was sick with typhoid. Two soldiers carried him downstairs and out into the rain. They tried to hold him up against the wall but he sat down in a puddle of water. The other five stood very quietly against the wall. Finally the officer told the soldiers it was no good trying to make him stand up. When they fired the first volley he was sitting down in the water with his head on his knees.

Another coup occurred in 1923 when Hemingway met Edward O'Brien, the editor of annual volumes of the best short stories, in Rapallo, Italy. Hemingway told O'Brien about the loss of his manuscripts on the train and showed him the remaining manuscript of "My Old Man"; O'Brien loved the story, accepted it for *The Best Short Stories of 1923*, and dedicated the entire volume to Hemingway.

Creatively stimulated by the formidable intellects that surrounded him, Hemingway began to plan a new volume of short stories which would build upon the tiny volume *in our time*. This new collection, now entitled *In Our Time* and published by Boni and Liveright in the U.S., appeared in October 1925, as Hemingway's first commercially produced work. Working partly under the influence of Joyce's collection *Dubliners*, Hemingway used the brief vignettes from *in our time* as interchapters thematically and symbolically connecting the longer stories, four of which were new. Furthermore, Hemingway knew how he would close the volume—with the two-part story he had written earlier, "Big Two-Hearted River." The collection includes several of Hemingway's finest pieces of short fiction: "Indian Camp," "The Three Day Blow," and "The Battler." "Big Two-Hearted River," however, is the finest of the collection.

"Big Two-Hearted River" follows Hemingway's alter-ego, Nick Adams, as he fishes in Michigan. Many details are deliberately left out of the story, but the assumption can be safely made that Nick has returned from war and has come to the river to heal. The land he hikes through, like the battlefields he has left, is barren, "burned-over country," and provides a symbolic parallel to Nick's utter resistance to interior revelation. Nothing much outwardly happens in the story—just a guy going fishing—at
least, apparently nothing significant. However, what is most significant in this story is that which is not written—the reader must intuit Nick’s mental state and the way in which ritual activities performed in fishing help to protect him against further psychic pain as he heals. And it is that very place where Hemingway evokes a landscape in which, as he told Gertrude Stein, he was “trying to do the country like Cézanne,”74 that Nick finds solace. Many years later, in *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway would reminisce about one of the moments of capturing the words of this story on the page:

> When I stopped writing I did not want to leave the river where I could see the trout in the pool, its surface pushing and swelling smooth against the resistance of the log-driven piles of the bridge. The story was about coming back from the war but there was no mention of the war in it.

> But in the morning the river would be there and I must make it and the country and all that would happen.75

An important detail to notice in this passage is that Hemingway specifically refers to his craft as “making”—he must “make” the country and the river and the events, not tell or describe them. The concept of writing as craft, as “making,” largely attributable to the influence of Pound and Eliot,76 and surely inspired by Stein and Cézanne as well, accentuates the three-dimensionality that Hemingway sought as he brought a fictional world into being. Set as it is, at the end of a collection that features the omnipresence of violence, this story acts as the capstone statement on how the individual must find a way to go on living “in our time” in the aftermath of war and revolution.

If the loss of his manuscripts signaled the first sign of trouble between Hemingway and his wife, the discovery that Hadley was pregnant was the next. Hemingway was just beginning to get his work in print, and Hadley insisted that they return to North America for their child’s birth. They sailed in August 1923 on the *Cherbourg*, their luggage laden with copies of *Ulysses* to smuggle into Canada, and, ultimately, into the United States where the novel had been banned. John Hadley Nicanor Hemingway was born in October 1923 in Toronto, where Hemingway continued working for the *Star* and waited for the first available moment to travel back to Paris.

Before they sailed for Toronto in August 1923 to await the birth of their child, the Hemingways, following up on a suggestion by Stein and Toklas that the best bullfighting in Spain took place in Pamplona during the festival of San Fermín, made the trip there in July. Hemingway had been to Madrid to see his first bullfights the year before, but in Pamplona, he would have the opportunity to see some of the best bullfighters in Spain. Writing in October for the *Star*,

Hemingway elaborated on the significance of the bullfight, which to him, was “not a sport. It is a tragedy, and it symbolizes the struggle between man and the beasts.”77 While in Toronto, itching to return to Europe, Hemingway would cling to these memories of Spain.

By January 1924, Hemingway and family had returned to Paris where Hemingway seized the opportunity to work as an editor on Ford Madox Ford’s recently launched *transatlantic review*, where several of his early stories first appeared. Through this connection, Hemingway was able to expand his acquaintance with other contemporary writers to include Nancy Cunard, Djuna Barnes, and e. e. cummings, among others. Hemingway managed to persuade Ford to begin serializing Gertrude Stein’s monumental *The Making of Americans*, though the work was far too long to continue. Stein was pleased, though, and gloated as she wrote in the persona of Alice in the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, that Alice and Hemingway had copied the manuscript:

> …and it was printed in the next number of the transatlantic. So for the first time a piece of monumental work which was the beginning, really the beginning of modern writing, was printed, and we were very happy.78

Throughout the early months of 1924, Hemingway was working hard, writing many of the stories he would later collect in *In Our Time*: “Indian Camp,” “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” “Soldier’s Home,” and “Cross Country Snow,” among others. In May, he began writing “Big Two-Hearted River,” but its completion would be delayed by another trip to Pamplona for the festival and to Burguete for fishing at the end of June through the end of July. With the completion of “Big Two-Hearted River” in August, Hemingway was ready to send the manuscript of *In Our Time* out to find a publisher but continued to publish the individual stories from late 1924
become infatuated. Because of the jealousy and tension caused by fierce male competition for Duff, the festival turned into a debauched carnival during which Hemingway took copious notes. In Madrid, just after leaving Pamplona, Hemingway began a story that, by the end of July, had evolved into the beginning of *The Sun Also Rises*, initially entitled *Fiesta*. By mid-September, Hemingway had completed the first draft. Although biographers agree that it is unlikely that Hemingway had an affair with Duff, and this may account for much of the sexual tension in the novel, his attraction was so obvious that Hadley feared for her marriage. The real threat to the marriage, though, was not Duff, but Hadley's friend, Pauline Pfeiffer.

By the end of 1925, the Hemingways had become a threesome, not only through the addition of their baby, but through the arrival of Pauline Pfeiffer, who joined their household during a winter vacation at Schruns. While Hemingway had known Pauline before meeting Duff, his attraction to Duff took precedence until the end of the Pamplona festival; with that, and the novel, behind him, Hemingway found...
Pauline more attractive than before. While, as a young man, he may have been ripe for an affair, near the end of his life, Hemingway reflected bitterly upon the change in his marital status, blaming Pauline for the breakup of his first marriage and writing about the “oldest trick in the book”:

It is that an unmarried young woman becomes the temporary best friend of another young woman who is married, goes to live with the husband and wife and then unknowingly, innocently and unrelentingly sets out to marry the husband.

Hemingway had decided, between Pamplona and the trip to Schruns, that he needed to change publishers from Boni and Liveright, who had published In Our Time, to Scribner’s, whose editor Max Perkins had been courting him on the strength of promise of his manuscript The Sun Also Rises. To find an easy exit from his contract with Boni and Liveright, who had rights to his next three books, Hemingway wrote a scathing satire, The Torrents of Spring, in which he leveled an attack at the publisher’s prominent author and his own former mentor, Sherwood Anderson. Hemingway knew Boni and Liveright would reject the book, leaving him free to break his contract and offer it to Scribner’s, along with a promise of The Sun Also Rises. In New York in February 1926, Hemingway met with Boni and Liveright, got them to agree that by refusing The Torrents of Spring his contract with them was null and void, and signed with Scribner’s. Back in Paris in March, Hemingway and Pauline became lovers.

Scott Fitzgerald wrote presciently to a friend about Hemingway’s need to change the women in his life with each new major work:

I have a theory that Ernest needs a new woman for each big book. There was one for the stories and The Sun Also Rises. Now there’s Pauline. A Farewell to Arms is a big book. If there’s another big book I think we’ll find Ernest has another wife.

By early May 1926, Hadley knew that Hemingway and Pauline were involved, and in August, after another vacation in Spain at Pamplona and Madrid, both Hemingways announced to friends that they were separating. On October 22, The Sun Also Rises came out to very mixed reviews. Several reviewers recognized that it was a roman a clef “in which many of the characters had been ‘practically kidnapped’ into the novel by Hemingway.” Duff Twysden, originally angered by her portrayal, later seemed only to quarrel with the mischaracterization of an affair with Romero, claiming that she “had not in fact slept with the bloody bullfighter.” While some reviewers were disgusted by what they viewed as immoral characters, including Hemingway’s own mother who wrote him that he had written “one of the filthiest books of the year,” others were moved by the power of Hemingway’s prose. Conrad Aiken, renowned poet and critic, found Hemingway “the most exciting of contemporary American writers of fiction.”

In December 1926, after promising Hadley all of the royalties from The Sun Also Rises, Hemingway filed for divorce. By May 1927, with the divorce finalized and a dispensation from the Catholic Church, Hemingway married Pauline in a church ceremony in Paris. As Fitzgerald later acknowledged, Hemingway, with a new wife, would, in a few months, begin another “big” book. In the meantime, though, throughout 1927, Hemingway’s stories were appearing in magazines: “The Killers,” one of his finest and most intense tales, appeared in Scribner’s Magazine; “Fifty Grand” came out in Atlantic Monthly; two more stories, “In Another Country” and “A Canary for One” appeared in Scribner’s Magazine; “Italy—1927” appeared in New Republic; and “Hills Like White Elephants” came out in transition. Hemingway now had enough material for another collection of short fiction; Men Without Women was published in October 1927, just two weeks after Hemingway announced to friends that he had begun a new novel. This, however, would be an abortive attempt, entitled “A New Slain Knight,” which reached more than 50,000 words before Hemingway abandoned the project. In March 1928, the same month he dropped this abortive manuscript, Hemingway wrote the beginning of A Farewell to Arms.

During the early stages of writing though, Hemingway was beset by injuries—a scratched eye and a head injury caused by a falling skylight. Paris was losing its luster for the new Hemingway couple, many of their friends had left, and Pauline, now pregnant in early 1928, wanted to have her baby in the
United States. Hemingway learned about Key West, a rather exotic location in Florida, from friend and fellow novelist John dos Passos; so, in March, he and Pauline sailed for Florida. During the twelve years Hemingway lived intermittently in Key West, he produced a prodigious amount of fiction—*A Farewell to Arms*, *Death in the Afternoon*, *Green Hills of Africa*, and *To Have and Have Not*, as well as the beginning of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Hemingway worked intensively on *A Farewell to Arms* through April, May, and June, completing more than three hundred pages of manuscript before the birth of his second son, Patrick, on June 28. While Pauline recuperated from a difficult caesarean birth, Hemingway traveled in Wyoming with a friend from the war, Bill Horne, and continued writing there until he completed the first draft of the novel in late August.

By November, Hemingway had begun the move to Key West, still keeping the apartment he and Pauline had shared in Paris, and in early December, traveled to New York to pick up his oldest son, Bumby, for his six-month visit. While on the train from New York to Florida, Hemingway received a telegram from his sister notifying him of his father's suicide. Hemingway rushed to Chicago, leaving the child in the care of a porter for the rest of the journey to Florida. Facing financial troubles and illness, Dr. Hemingway had shot himself in the head. Hemingway took over, managing the funeral and arranging for his mother's and younger siblings' future. He promised his mother a monthly income and, in early 1930, set up a trust fund with his earnings and money from Pauline so that his mother would have an income for life.

The typescript of *A Farewell to Arms* was finished in late January, and Hemingway invited Max Perkins to Florida to pick it up. In February, Perkins offered $16,000 for serialization of the novel in *Scribner's Magazine*; Hemingway accepted. In the novel, Hemingway returned to the scene of World War I, writing of the love affair between an American, Frederic Henry, and a British nurse, Catherine Barkley. Henry, a thinly disguised persona for Hemingway himself, is wounded in the knee and convalesces in a hospital where he has an affair with Catherine. When he's healed, Henry leaves Catherine, now three months pregnant, to return to the Italian front, where he is caught up in the retreat from the Battle of Caporetto. Henry escapes what he believes will be execution, as all officers are being interrogated and shot in reprisal for the Italian loss, and flees to Switzerland with Catherine. The novel ends bleakly and tragically when Catherine gives birth to a stillborn son and dies shortly after from loss of blood. Henry is left alone to walk back to the hotel in the rain.

As the novel began serialization in *Scribner's Magazine*, censors banned the magazine's publication in Boston, and Hemingway argued furiously for maintaining banned obscenities in the novel. When the novel came out in book form in September 1929, Perkins cabled Hemingway that it was receiving rave reviews. By October, the book had sold more than 33,000 copies—Hemingway had his first bestseller and recognition as a first-rank American writer. Throughout 1929, as the novel appeared in serialization, the Hemingways traveled—to Cuba, to France, to Spain, including Pamplona, and back to France to end the year there. Now Hemingway could command large sums for articles—writing on bullfighting for *Fortune* magazine, he was to be paid $1000. Although he did not yet know it, Hemingway had written, with two exceptions—*For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and the Sea*—the novels upon which his reputation would stand; from this point forward, his career and critical reputation would begin its decline.

Returning to Key West in February 1930, Hemingway continued his fascination with bullfighting by beginning his nonfiction study of the sport, *Death in the Afternoon*. While hunting in Wyoming in the summer and convalescing from a seriously broken arm in November, Hemingway continued to write. In November, he sold the movie rights to *A Farewell to Arms* for $80,000—a staggering sum at the beginning of the Great Depression. His take, though, after publisher and agent fees, amounted to $24,000. In early January 1931, the Hemingways found a house they wanted to buy in Key West—a Spanish colonial mansion set in the midst of a lush tropical garden; with the help of Pauline's very wealthy uncle Gus Pfeiffer, the Hemingways were able to buy the house and conduct extensive repairs.

Here Hemingway would finish *Death in the Afternoon*. In this work, Hemingway attempted to do what he claimed no one had done in English or Spanish—“explain that spectacle both emotionally and practically.”74 For Hemingway, as one biographer argues, the bullfighter and the writer were both artists who must exhibit “grace under pressure” while “overcoming death and becoming (for an instant) immortal.”75 In the intervals when Hemingway was not writing, he and Pauline traveled to Pamplona once again, this time joined by the acclaimed Jewish-American bullfighter Sidney Franklin, whose name would find its way into the pages of *Death in the Afternoon*. By the end of the year, Pauline had given birth to their second son, Gregory, Hemingway had completed *Death in the Afternoon*, and the family returned once more to Key West.

Signs of trouble, though, began to appear in this second marriage as Pauline was warned, after two very difficult caesarean deliveries, to avoid having more children. The couple's relationship began to deteriorate dramatically. Hemingway was poised for the possibility of another affair. One of the few women Hemingway fell in love with but did not marry was Jane Mason, whom he had met in September 1931. When they met, Jane was twenty-two and married.
The affair with Jane lasted until 1936, when, at the end of that year, Hemingway met his next wife. During the 1930s, Hemingway kept up a pace in travel and writing that would have killed a lesser man. He had discovered marlin fishing off the coast of Cuba, spent time there during the summer of 1932, and had begun writing stories again after a dry spell following the disappointing sales of *Death in the Afternoon*. From Key West in late summer, Hemingway traveled to Arkansas and to Montana and Wyoming before returning to Key West. In December 1932, Hemingway refused to attend the film premiere of *A Farewell to Arms* and placed another of his tightly crafted stories, “A Clean Well-Lighted Place,” in *Scribner’s Magazine*.

In early 1933, Hemingway had completed fourteen new stories, which were included in the collection entitled *Winner Take Nothing* published by Scribner’s in late October. The collection includes “A Clean Well-Lighted Place” and Hemingway’s first attempt to write about lesbianism, “The Sea Change.” As with *Death in the Afternoon*, the reaction to and reviews of the collection were mixed. But Hemingway made a lucrative deal to write articles and stories for *Esquire* while moving back and forth between Key West and Havana for frequent fishing trips. By late summer of that year, he had returned to Spain to follow the bullfights, and in November, he went on his first African safari with Pauline. This expedition formed the basis of the soon to be written “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” as well as *Green Hills of Africa*.

By the end of 1934, Hemingway’s recent work had not appeared to rave reviews and phenomenal sales, and Hemingway was offended, when in January 1935, Scribner’s offered him only $4500 for the serialization of *Green Hills of Africa*. For much of spring and summer 1935, Hemingway fished the waters of the Caribbean off the coast of Bimini and suffered another mishap when he accidentally shot himself in both legs while trying to kill a shark on the deck. During this time, Hemingway developed a character named Harry Morgan, who appears in a sequence of stories set in Key West and Cuba and who became the protagonist of his next novel, *To Have and Have Not*. Hemingway, irate over the negative reviews of *Green Hills of Africa*, had begun to suffer from depression and insomnia in January 1936.

From January through April 1936, Hemingway stayed put in Key West, but by the end of April, he was back on his boat the *Pilar*, fishing the waters of the Gulf Stream. Hemingway produced two splendid stories in the late summer and fall of this year, both developed from his African safari, “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” published in *Esquire* and “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” in *Cosmopolitan*. Both stories are dark: in “Snows,” the protagonist, a writer named Harry, has developed gangrene in an infected wound and waits, in and out of conscious-

ness, for his inevitable death. He dies, thinking of his failure to write his greatest work. In “Macomber,” the protagonist Macomber is portrayed as a coward in contrast to the big game hunter who leads him and his wife on safari. In a last moment of glory, Macomber stands his ground when a wounded water buffalo charges him, shooting the buffalo in the last minute as his wife, apparently trying to save his life, shoots at the buffalo but hits and kills Macomber instead. Both stories foreground Hemingway’s code of masculine conduct—grace under pressure, courage, and honor—but both male protagonists call that code into question as they try to enact it, finding their supreme moment of courage in facing death.

Hemingway was clearly aware of events in July 1936 as Spain exploded into civil war, and later in the year Hemingway helped the war effort of the Spanish republic by contributing money for two ambulances. Writing steadily through November, Hemingway was close to finishing the new novel, *To Have and Have Not*, by year’s end. Even though the novel garnered sufficient attention to appear later in a film version starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, it has been widely viewed by critics as a failure. The protagonist, Harry Morgan, is a tough character who makes his living taking fishing parties out on his boat in the waters off Key West and Cuba. Occasionally, Harry smuggles liquor and engages in illegal activities—seemingly forced into this kind of activity by the desperate need to survive financially. The Great Depression is an important force at work in the novel, and the themes and tone are much informed by Hemingway’s own leftist politics as well as his involvement in and travel to Spain during its civil war. Of course, Harry is doomed and will only learn the meaning of living as he dies—his dying

Ernest Hemingway with film cameraman, Joris Ivens, and two soldiers during the Spanish Civil War, c. 1937-38.

and France, to defeat Francisco Franco's fascist army. But now, democratic nations would have to face the growing power of fascism as Hitler's Nazis rolled into Poland, Norway, Belgium, and Holland, and the world inched ever closer to the brink of global warfare once more. Hemingway remained in Cuba until August, working on his novel. Seeing Pauline only briefly in Montana during the summer, Hemingway traveled to Sun Valley, Idaho, with Martha, remaining there alone after Martha left for an assignment for Collier's magazine to travel to Finland, until mid-December. When Hemingway returned to Key West in December, he found that Pauline had closed the house and taken the children to New York. With this clear message that his marriage to Pauline was finally over, Hemingway packed his belongings and manuscripts and moved to Cuba where he would live primarily until the last few years of his life.

As Fitzgerald had predicted, Hemingway so far had chosen a new wife for each major book—Martha’s book was *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway's fictional attempt to capture the spirit of patriotic guerrillas fighting fascism in the Spanish Civil War. Hemingway worked steadily on the novel in Cuba from May through August 1939. Dedicated to Martha, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* appeared in October 1940 to the best reviews since his earlier masterpiece, *A Farewell to Arms*. Taking its title from a line in John Donne's *Meditation XVII*, “and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee,” the novel performs a meditation on death as Robert Jordan, Hemingway’s American protagonist fighting with the guerrillas, faces death at the novel’s end. Jordan is an experienced dynamiter whose mission, given him by a communist general, is to destroy a bridge. In the guerrilla camp, Jordan meets and falls in love with Maria, a young woman who has been brutally raped by fascists. Jordan is betrayed by the leader of his guerrilla band, a cowardly man, who tries to prevent Jordan from detonating the bridge. Jordan succeeds in blowing up the bridge anyway and in getting himself severely wounded when his horse is shot from beneath him. Jordan bids Maria and the guerrilla band goodbye as he waits for the fascist advance that will bring his inevitable death.

Another of Hemingway's men who must exhibit grace under pressure and find the meaning of his life in his death, the wounded Jordan waits with a machine gun he will use when he sees the first fascist lieutenant and consciously performs an act of saying goodbye to the world at the same time he feels most integrated with it. “He could feel his heart beating against the pine needle floor of the forest.”

In November 1940, his divorce from Pauline final, Hemingway married Martha in Wyoming. Their newlywed and seemingly idyllic life was captured in early January 1941 by an article in *Life* magazine entitled “The Hemingways in Sun Valley.”

Ernest Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn in Sun Valley, Idaho.


words: “No matter how a man alone ain’t got no bloody—chance.” One critic, writing shortly after the novel's publication, observed, “The expertness of the narrative is such that one wishes profoundly it could have been put to better use.” While the novel seems to present itself as social commentary, many critics found it hard to see Harry Morgan as heroic or worthy of their admiration.

At the end of 1936 as his affair with Jane Mason faded, Hemingway met the woman who would become his third wife, Martha Gellhorn, in Sloppy Joe’s Bar, one of his favorite hangouts in Key West. As their affair evolved, Hemingway made four trips to Spain with Martha from March 1937 through November of 1938. His role was to cover the war for the North American Newspaper Alliance, sending regular dispatches from the front lines. When not touring battlefields, he worked in Madrid on the documentary film *The Spanish Earth*, writing the narrative and recording its soundtrack.

In early 1939, Hemingway had begun work on his next novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, in Havana, where, in April, he and Martha moved to a rented farm, *La Finca Vigia*, together. The Spanish Civil War was virtually over; the elected government had been powerless, without the support of the U.S., England, and France, to defeat Francisco Franco's fascist army.
panied by photographs from renowned Spanish Civil War photographer Robert Capa. The article not only displays images of Hemingway’s pheasant hunting in Sun Valley, but also celebrates the publication of For Whom the Bells Tolls by featuring Capa’s photos from the war along with a photo of Gary Cooper, who had already been chosen to star in the film of the novel. After spending time with Cooper in Los Angeles and traveling to China to cover the Sino-Japanese war, the Hemingways returned to Cuba for the summer and to Sun Valley at the year’s end. In Sun Valley, Hemingway learned in December 1941 that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor—America now had no choice but to declare war on Japan and did so on December 8. Hemingway itched once more to see battle action, but back in Cuba in the beginning of the year, he spent time instead patrolling Cuban waters in search of German submarines, as his drinking escalated and his marriage began to deteriorate.

In the summer of 1943, Martha accepted a post with Collier’s as a European war correspondent and left for Europe without Hemingway. Hemingway refused to budge until March 1944, when he, too, agreed to cover the war for Collier’s. In London waiting to start his assignment, Hemingway met and began an affair with Mary Welsh Monks, a fellow journalist also in London to cover the war. By this point, the marriage was deteriorating, and Martha needed little excuse to decide it was time to call it quits. Despite suffering the effects of a concussion he sustained in a car crash, Hemingway flew along on Royal Air Force missions, traveled on board a landing craft in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, and, back in London in July 1944, continued to court Mary. By early 1945, Hemingway had agreed to divorce Martha and returned to Cuba to spend time with his sons. In March 1946, Hemingway married Mary, and began his new book—this one would be Mary’s book—The Garden of Eden (published posthumously in 1986). Perhaps his most amazing feat of the year, though, in addition to his work on this latest novel, was saving his wife’s life. Mary was suffering from complications following a procedure to end an ectopic pregnancy and had been given up by the doctors for dead; Hemingway, who never forgot what he had learned as the son of a doctor, inserted an IV tube into her arm and stabilized her.

By the beginning of 1947, a “Hemingway industry” had sprung to life as scholars published critical analyses of Hemingway’s work in literary journals and magazines, but Hemingway would produce nothing new during the year. Probably by early spring 1948, Hemingway had begun to work on Islands in the Stream, remaining and writing in Cuba for much of the year. While in Italy in December, Hemingway, now close to fifty, met eighteen-year-old Adriana Ivancich, the daughter of an aristocratic Venetian family, and became immediately infatuated. Adriana would inspire the development of the female character Renata in Across the River and Into the Trees, but, as their visits were well chaperoned, there was never a possibility of an affair between them. However, because of her awareness of Hemingway’s infatuation with the young woman, Mary forced a showdown in Cuba in 1951, letting Hemingway know that she would not leave him unless he came to her, completely sober, to say that he wanted to end their marriage.

Across the River and Into the Trees began serialization in Cosmopolitan in fall 1950, followed by publication as a volume by Scribner’s, to widely negative reviews. Even the dust jacket images were a problem as Hemingway had insisted that the publisher use Adriana’s sketches, which were so bad they had to be redrawn by a professional artist. Perhaps Hemingway’s infatuation with a woman so much younger and his use of her as a model for his leading female character, Renata, weakened his ability to achieve artistic distance and strengthen the material. Hemingway’s protagonist, Colonel Richard Cantwell, like so many of Hemingway’s other characters, undergoes a serious reassessment of his life, especially now that he’s reached middle age; the narrative serves as a long flashback written in interior monologue during which, among other things, Cantwell thinks about Renata and his experience during the second world war. Despite so many negative reviews, the book did sell rather well, perhaps in part because it was Hemingway’s first novel in a decade. Hemingway remained in Cuba for the rest of the year, becoming increasingly abusive with Mary. Adriana and her mother came to visit in October, staying at the Hemingway farm amidst increasing tension until the end of January 1951; while they were there, Hemingway completed the manuscript of Islands in the Stream, the first of his works to be posthumously published (1970).

The year 1951 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of The Sun Also Rises, but critics lamented this anniversary as a sad one for an author who had published only one novel—and that one negatively received—in eleven years. Hemingway was already furious with critics who panned Across the River and Into the Trees, so he was fueled by a passion to restore his reputation as he began the novel that would do just that, The Old Man and the Sea. Hemingway wrote steadily, finishing a draft of more than 26,000 words in mid February. From there, he revised and continued to toy with the notion of making The Old Man and the Sea a fourth section to be added to his “sea” book, Islands in the Stream. The year would be marred, though, by the death of his mother on June 28, and the sudden death of Pauline, during an operation to remove a tumor, on October 1.
The political atmosphere in Cuba began to shift in 1952; in March, Fulgencio Batista seized power in a military coup and declared himself dictator. The Hemingways spent most of the year at the finca or on the Pilar, as Hemingway, having completed *The Old Man and the Sea*, agreed to let *Life* publish it in a single installment in its September issue. When the novella appeared on September 1, it received rave reviews from the critics, and the magazine sold more than 5 million copies in just eight days. On September 8, Scribner's published 50,000 copies of the novel, which sold out within a few days; and by the year's end, Hemingway was discussing the possibility of selling the rights to film the novel. This would be the last major work of fiction published in Hemingway's lifetime.

The novel's protagonist Santiago is an aged Cuban fisherman whose livelihood is based upon being able to catch fish. At the heart of the tale is the epic battle between man and beast—the beast here takes the shape of a huge marlin who tests Santiago's strength to the limits of his endurance. But Santiago, in winning, also loses, for after having secured the huge fish to the side of his boat, Santiago is unable to keep the sharks, drawn by the fish's blood trailing in the water, from devouring its flesh. When Santiago reaches shore, he has little more than a skeleton left of his enormous catch, and as Santiago sleeps at the end of the novel, he dreams of lions in Africa—a symbolic moment which underscores the old fisherman's courage. In 1953, Hemingway was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction on the strength of this novel, but an even greater honor awaited—the Nobel Committee cited the novel as a contributing factor in their decision to award the Nobel Prize for Literature to Hemingway in 1954.

Discussions of filming of the novel began in early April 1953, when Spencer Tracy, who would take the leading role, arrived in Cuba to discuss the prospect with Hemingway. Hemingway was to receive a $25,000 advance in royalties and the same amount to supervise the photography of marlin fishing. The Hemingways spent the rest of the year in Europe, traveling back to Pamplona for the first time in many years and then to Africa for a safari that would last until January 1954. However, as they flew over Murchison Falls in late January, the Hemingways' plane crashed; everyone survived, but when the wreck was spotted with no sign of the party, news papers mistakenly announced Hemingway's death. After they were picked up by a riverboat, the second plane the Hemingways boarded caught fire on takeoff, and Hemingway's death was erroneously announced a second time.
remain on good terms with Castro after the fall of the Batista government, he decided to leave the home he'd lived in for twenty years and move to Idaho. In October 1958, the film *The Old Man and the Sea* was released, and even though it received mixed reviews, it won the Oscar for Best Original Score, and Spencer Tracy was nominated for Best Actor in a Leading Role. Hemingway was delighted and applauded the film's emotional intensity and cinematography.

As the Batista government collapsed in January 1959, Hemingway bought a home in Ketchum, Idaho. Hemingway celebrated his sixtieth birthday in Spain, returning once again to Pamplona and following the bullfighting circuit until October, when he left Spain for Paris, where he continued working on his memoirs as his mental condition obviously worsened. A year later, despite suffering from insomnia and hypertension, Hemingway left in August 1960 for his last trip to Spain. Twice in August and September, Hemingway wrote his wife from Spain that he felt he was on the edge of a nervous breakdown. Finally, in October, Hemingway flew back to the States and entered the Mayo Clinic in November to be treated with electroshock therapy for a variety of ailments, including paranoia and depression. Sadly, just as he had been unable to attend the Nobel Prize ceremony because of his poor health, now, he was hospitalized and had to decline an invitation from John F. Kennedy.

In February 1957, Hemingway began working on his memoirs, which, edited by his widow Mary, were posthumously published as *A Moveable Feast* in 1964. In fact, Hemingway alternated his time during this year and part of the next on two works which would not appear until after his death: the memoirs and a last novel entitled *Garden of Eden*. But times were changing again as Hemingway remained in a Cuba now undergoing revolution, headed by Fidel Castro, against Batista's dictatorship. For some time, Hemingway had contributed money to the Communist Party in Cuba, but he had serious reservations about Castro. Outwardly, though, Hemingway expressed his support for Castro, writing a friend, "I believe completely in the historical necessity of the Cuban Revolution." Even though Hemingway managed to remain on good terms with Castro after the fall of the Batista government, he decided to leave the home he'd lived in for twenty years and move to Idaho. In October 1958, the film *The Old Man and the Sea* was released, and even though it received mixed reviews, it won the Oscar for Best Original Score, and Spencer Tracy was nominated for Best Actor in a Leading Role. Hemingway was delighted and applauded the film's emotional intensity and cinematography. As the Batista government collapsed in January 1959, Hemingway bought a home in Ketchum, Idaho.

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Kennedy to attend his inauguration as President of the United States in January 1961.

Near the end of January, Hemingway left the Mayo Clinic and flew back to Idaho to continue work on his memoir. But in April, his depression and anxiety on the rise again, Hemingway attempted suicide. Even though he underwent another series of shock treatments at the Mayo Clinic after this attempt, Hemingway had not been cured and returned to Ketchum, determined once more to take his own life. Early on the morning of July 2, just short of his sixty-second birthday, Hemingway went down to the basement for his shotgun while Mary slept upstairs. He walked back up to the foyer of the residence, turned the gun on himself, and pulled the trigger. Mary would frantically argue that Hemingway had not committed suicide but had died cleaning his gun. The evidence at the death scene, however, which indicated that he had anchored the gun against his head and pulled the trigger, supported the fact that he had died by his own hand. While Hemingway was buried in Ketchum in a private ceremony attended by only immediate family and close friends, the family later dedicated a stone memorial in his honor in Sun Valley, Idaho, inscribing it with words Hemingway had used as an epitaph for a friend who had died in a hunting accident years before:

Best of all he loved the fall
The leaves yellow on the cottonwoods
Leaves floating on the trout streams
And above the hills
The high blue windless skies

…Now he will be a part of them forever

—Ernest Hemingway – Idaho – 1939

The entire world paid attention to the death of this literary giant—the New York Times published an obituary on the front page on July 3; and John F. Kennedy, on the afternoon of Hemingway’s death, publicly lamented the loss, issuing this public statement:

Few Americans have had a greater impact on the emotions and attitudes of the American people than Ernest Hemingway. From his emergence as one of the bright literary stars in Paris during the twenties—as a chronicler of the “Lost Generation,” which he was to immortalize—he almost single-handedly transformed the literature and the ways of thought of men and women in every country in the world. When he began to write—the American artist had to look for a home on the Left Bank of Paris. Today, the United States is one of the great centers of art. Although his journeys throughout the world—to France, to Spain, even to Africa—made him one of the great citizens of the world, he ended life as he began it—in the heartland of America to which he brought renown and from which he drew his art.

Focus on the Novel
The Epigraphs

The novel begins, before the opening of the story, with two epigraphs which form counterpoints in theme and set the mood that dominates the fictional atmosphere. The first, “‘You are all a lost generation.’—Gertrude Stein in conversation,” is one of the most frequently quoted epigraphs from any modern novel; but it deserves to be placed carefully within its context to assess its association with the major theme of the novel. In fact, Hemingway expanded upon the quote many years later when he wrote about its context in A Moveable Feast. He had been to visit Gertrude Stein, he wrote, and, after she complained to the owner of the mechanic shop where her Ford truck was being repaired, Stein told Hemingway that the owner blamed the mechanic, a young man who had fought in the last year of the war, and told him, “‘You are all a génération perdue.’” Then Stein turned to Hemingway:

“That’s what you are. That’s what you all are,” Miss Stein said. “All of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation.”

“Really?” I said.

“You are,” she insisted. “You have no respect for anything. You drink yourselves to death…”

“Was the young mechanic drunk?” I asked.

“Of course not.”

“Have you ever seen me drunk?”

“No. But your friends are drunk.”

“I’ve been drunk,” I said. “But I don’t come here drunk.”

“Of course not. I didn’t say that.”

“The boy’s patron was probably drunk by eleven o’clock in the morning,” I said. “That’s why he makes such lovely phrases.”

“Don’t argue with me, Hemingway,” Miss Stein said.

“It does no good at all. You’re all a lost generation, exactly as the garage keeper said.”

As he walked back to his apartment from this visit, Hemingway thought about Stein’s comment, about the young mechanic and what his experiences might have been in the war, and how “all generations were lost by something and always had been and always would be.” That night he told Hadley, “You know, Gertrude is nice, anyway... But she does talk a lot of rot sometimes.”
the links between the “lost generation” of the first epigraph and the generations of the second; the implication here may well be that the generation which is passing away is indeed Stein’s own (Stein was twenty-five years older than Hemingway), and the coming generation is Hemingway’s and that of all of the Moderns. In addition, Hemingway is implying that Stein’s generation is lost in its own way—Stein does talk a “lot of rot.” The reader of Ecclesiastes knows that the epigraph is framed by the narration of the “Preacher” who, just before the epigraph has said: “Vanitie of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanitie of vanities, all is vanitie.” Stein’s vanity in her pompous announcement about his generation is painfully apparent in Hemingway’s depiction of her in A Moveable Feast. But vanity is hardly limited to Gertrude Stein, it is the vice of choice of many of the characters in The Sun Also Rises.

The epigraphs, however, are not only meant to suggest an underlying ironic viewpoint through their context and connection, but also to say something very applicable to the characters and the scene about to emerge in the world of the novel. The generation in the novel is lost—every character has yet to find his/her way in an almost post-apocalyptic world. But the passage from Ecclesiastes counterpoints this view, insisting that the earth continually renews itself as one generation passes into the next. The rhetoric of the passage underscores this reading of eternal renewal by employing a continual present tense—the “passeth” of the seventeenth century becomes “passes” as the language changes through time. And the narrative of The Sun Also Rises, while told by Jake Barnes in the first person about events in the not too distant past, suggests an eternally present carnival that never seems to end as the sun eternally rises.

The Historical and Literary Context of the Novel

As Hemingway began to write The Sun Also Rises, he had just turned twenty-six, and in Pamplona and Paris, he had found his subject. Inspired by the three-dimensionality and light in Cézanne’s landscapes, he had already begun to demonstrate his mastery of his own technique of “making” the place as landscape in “Big Two-Hearted River.” He was immersed in Modern painting, meeting Picasso and Joan Miró, among others, in Gertrude Stein’s art-filled apartment. He had met and become friends with Gertrude Stein, who considered herself the only truly “Modernist” writer. Though Stein gave little detailed advice to Hemingway about his writing, she did present her own experimental and innovative rhetorical style as a model and offered general suggestions to the younger writer.

Ezra Pound had become Hemingway’s first literary friend in Paris, exhibiting, as Pound always did,
Jake’s wound. Lacking the comfort of rituals and their power of renewal, Brett and Mike sink instead into a debauched lifestyle where only alcohol and indiscriminate sex seem to matter. Robert Cohn is the outsider, not only as a Jew, but also because he has not fought in the war. Cohn’s lack of understanding, therefore, of what it means to live in the aftermath of global warfare is evidenced through his juvenile affection for a silly romance like *The Purple Land*, which fuels his desire for adventure in South America.

**Contemporary Critical Response**

As a first novel and a new Modernist work, *The Sun Also Rises* evoked a very mixed critical response. Some reviewers applauded the artistry and technique of the novel while decrying its subject matter. Poet Conrad Aiken’s review offers this viewpoint:

> The half dozen characters, all of whom belong to the curious and sad little world of disillusioned and aimless expatriates who make what home they can in the cafés of Paris, are seen perfectly and unsentimentally by Mr. Hemingway and are put before us with a maximum of economy…. These folk exist, that is all; and if their story is sordid, it is also, by virtue of the author’s dignity and detachment in the telling, intensely tragic.103

Even Virginia Woolf, who faulted the novel for the impoverishment of the characters’ empty lives, wrote:

> Each word pulls its weight in the sentence. And the prevailing atmosphere is fine and sharp, like that of winter days when the boughs are bare against the sky…. Mr. Hemingway’s writing, one might paraphrase…gives us now and then a real emotion, because he keeps absolute purity of line in his movements, and lets the horns (which are truth, fact, reality) pass him close each time.104

Woolf, using a bullfighting metaphor particularly apt for discussing this novel, had grasped the way in which Hemingway’s muscular prose could produce emotion. One anonymous reviewer, though, seemed to be one of the first to acknowledge that, through his first-person narration, Hemingway had crafted a protagonist in Jake Barnes whose wound symbolized a far greater malaise than his own personal loss.105

More serious critical attention and analysis of the novel’s position as a part of Modernist writing would have to wait, however, until after the Second World War had been fought and won. With the work of critics like Malcolm Cowley, writing in 1944, for example, the novel could be opened anew to investigations of the depth of its symbolic nature, to its participation in the mythology of the *Fisher King* used by Eliot in *The Waste Land*, and to the power of ritual to heal. Through close reading rather than superficial analy-
Hemingway’s own cryptic comment in *Death in the Afternoon* in which he used the iceberg as a metaphor for his writing, suggests that the majority of the meaning is buried beneath the surface:

>If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them.

>The dignity of movement of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water.\(^{107}\)

### Mapping the Structure of the Novel

An important feature that lies beneath the surface of *The Sun Also Rises* is the structure binding it together into a coherent work. Hemingway organized the novel into three large sections, or books, of uneven lengths, inviting comparison to the structure of a three-act play. The first book offers a prologue, conflicts and complications, and rising action; the second draws the action to the height of the climax; and the last speeds the drama to a conclusion by means of rapidly falling action. Furthermore, the parallel is apt since Hemingway works to dramatize the action rather than describe it. Book I includes scenes spread across seven chapters, all of which take place in various locations in Paris as the cast of characters assembles for a trip to Spain for the festival of San Fermin in Pamplona. Book II serves as the structural middle of the novel and is the longest with eleven chapters, beginning as the characters make plans for the trip to Spain and ending on the last day of the fiesta. Book III is the shortest section with a single chapter, XIX, which follows Jake as he leaves Pamplona for a solitary vacation to San Sebastian, but is called to Madrid in response to telegrams from Brett Ashley begging for his help. The novel ends with Brett and Jake touring Madrid in a taxi before their night departure on the Sud Express for which Jake bought tickets earlier in the day. Although the novel does not make it clear, it is reasonable to assume that Jake and Brett will return to Paris on the overnight train, where Brett will meet Mike after his detour to Saint Jean de Luz, and Jake will continue his life as before. With Jake’s eventual return to Paris, the novel returns to the place where it began.

Two processes help to organize the structure of the novel—the process of cyclical repetition and that of pairing or parallelism. When Hemingway shipped his manuscript to Scribner’s in April 1926, it was really not yet ready for prime time. Fortunately for Hemingway and for the work, he gave the proofs to F. Scott Fitzgerald to read after he had sent them to Scribner’s—Fitzgerald sent him back a ten-page critique outlining cuts and revisions he felt still needed to be made for the novel to be publishable.\(^{108}\) Hemingway would later deny the importance of Fitzgerald’s intervention, but he did take his advice and cut the original beginning of the novel to start instead with Jake’s description of Robert Cohn.

This beginning is important not only because it reflects Fitzgerald’s own method of using a first-person narrator—in *The Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway—to reveal his thoughts, opinions, and observations of another, but also because it sets up a parallelism between Jake’s character and Robert Cohn’s. While Cohn is not physically impotent as Jake is presumed to be, he is a Jew—thus metaphorically impotent in a larger, anti-Semitic society—who is also emasculated through his inability to let go of his infatuation with Brett Ashley. Parallels exist among the female characters as well; Jake brings the prostitute Georgette out for an evening on the town where they meet Brett, who, despite her title, displays a similar amorality, collecting, using, and discarding men at her whim. The novel is filled with reflections not only between similar characters but also between places—Paris at the opening of the novel is reflected by a much paler Madrid at the novel’s end.

Places in the novel serve additionally to advance the circulatory structure of movement in the novel. The characters circulate from café to café, from boulevard to boulevard, and from restaurant to restaurant as they move about Paris in the opening chapters. In the novel’s middle, they move about Spain, fishing in Burguete, traveling to San Sebastian, and moving from café to café and back and forth to the bullflights in Pamplona. In the last chapter, Jake returns to San Sebastian from Pamplona and then back to Madrid before embarking on his final journey, after the novel’s end, to return full circle in Paris. San Sebastian, in fact, on the coast of the Bay of Biscay, acts as a...
nodal point binding all these geographical spaces together as trains move through San Sebastian from Paris to Pamplona, and from Pamplona back, to Madrid from San Sebastian, and ultimately from Madrid to Paris on the Sud Express. San Sebastian also serves as a destination for Brett and Mike, for Brett and Cohn, and, finally, for Jake’s brief vacation alone near the novel’s end.

The Cast of Characters

Since this novel has been widely recognized as a roman à clef, the characters have fairly recognizable counterparts among Hemingway’s acquaintances during the twenties in Europe. Lady Brett Ashley stands in for Lady Duff Twysden, whom Hemingway met and became infatuated with in Paris. As already noted, Robert Cohn stands in for Harold Loeb, a writer and another of Hemingway’s acquaintances. However, the fact that these characters can be historically identified is not necessary to appreciate the artistry of the work. The most important characters include the following:

JAKE BARNES

“Undressing, I looked at myself in the mirror of the big armoire beside the bed.... Well, it was a rotten way to be wounded and flying on a joke front like the Italian.” Jake is the wounded protagonist of the novel who acts as the narrator, recounting events from the recent past. The nature of his wound is never explicitly revealed, but references to the wound suggest that it is a wound in the groin, suffered during World War I, that has rendered him impotent. He handles the frustration of his inability to fulfill his love for Brett Ashley with grim resignation. Jake embodies a Hemingway ideal—the ideal of male stoicism in the face of insurmountable adversity; despite his inability to live a completely full life as a man, Jake is admirable for his tolerance of a group of perpetually shiftless drunks and bankrupts, for the fact that he does occasionally work at his newspaper office, for his relative restraint in the midst of chaotic scenes, for his devotion and loyalty to characters he cares about, and for his afición for the art of bullfighting.

ROBERT COHN

“She stood holding the glass and I saw Robert Cohn looking at her. He looked a great deal as his compatriot must have looked when he saw the promised land. Cohn, of course was much younger. But he had that look of eager, deserving expectation” (29). Cohn is the first character whom Jake describes, and he clearly acts, in part, as a foil or double for Jake. Cohn’s Jewishness, obvious from his last name, is contrasted by his Germanic/Anglo-Saxon first name, but Jake has a Biblical first name; Brett even comments on it, “You’ve a hell of a biblical name, Jake” (30). Her remark is cleverly positioned at the point in the narrative just after she’s met Cohn and Jake has seen Cohn look at Brett as though she were the promised land. Cohn is a Princeton-educated Jew who has learned to box in order to fit in, but who has also been unable to shed his illusions about life. Jake makes a point of mentioning Cohn’s reading The Purple Land, a work that inspires Cohn’s desire to go to South America and affirms his impossibly romantic view of the world. Cohn is primed for his affair with Brett Ashley, who will dump him unceremoniously in San Sebastian; however, Cohn refuses to let go. Jake characterizes him succinctly when he comments, “Cohn had a wonderful quality of bringing out the worst in anybody” (104).

LADY BRETT ASHLEY

“Brett was damned good-looking. She wore a slipover jersey sweater and a tweed skirt, and her hair was brushed back like a boy’s. She started all that. She was built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht, and you missed none of it with that wool jersey” (29–30). Brett reflects not only Hemingway’s real, but most likely unconsummated passion for Duff Twysden, but also his youthful passion for Agnes von Kurowsky, for, as Jake tells Cohn, he met Brett when she served as a nurse in the hospital where he was recuperating from his wounds. Brett serves as the feminine center and major attraction of the novel in that many of the male characters revolve around her. A scene in Pamplona makes this explicit—Brett is surrounded by riau-riau dancers who “wanted her as an image to dance around” (159). She has been in love with Jake, has a brief affair with Cohn, is engaged to Mike, and has another brief affair with Romero. She has been married twice, but both marriages were unsuccessful and she has had no children. Thus, like most of the other characters of the novel, she, too, is sterile and “lost,” engaging in meaningless love affairs and living with no pur-
pose on the mere surface of life. In his bitterness at her rejection, Robert Cohn refers to Brett as “Circe”; Mike is amused by this and tells Jake that Cohn has told Brett “she turns men into swine” (148). Later Brett, increasingly uncomfortable with Mike’s verbal attacks on Cohn but sick of Cohn herself, will refuse to show sympathy for Mike’s jealousy, commenting, “But he didn’t need to be a swine” (185).

FRANCES CLYNE
“The lady who had him, her name was Frances, found toward the end of the second year that her looks were going, and her attitude toward Robert changed from one of careless possession and exploitation to the absolute determination that he should marry her” (13). Frances appears only in the Parisian scenes and has attached herself to Robert Cohn for the past several years with the expectation that he will marry her.

GEORGETTE
“I had picked her up because of a vague sentimental idea that it would be nice to eat with some one. It was a long time since I dined with a poule, and I had forgotten how dull it could be” (24). Georgette Hobin is a Parisian prostitute whom Jake picks up briefly for companionship. When Jake tells her he’s sick, Georgette replies that she’s sick too, implying that she may have venereal disease. Jake takes her to dinner and then dancing at a bal musette, where Brett, Cohn, and Frances appear as well. Jake, well aware that his circle will recognize Georgette as a prostitute, ironically introduces her as his fiancée, using a fake last name, Leblanc, for her since he doesn’t know her real one. Mrs. Braddocks immediately makes an association to the real singer Georgette Leblanc and asks the prostitute if she’s related to her.110

COUNT MIPPIPOLOUS
“And the count’s been a brick, absolutely!” (61). The count is a wealthy older man whom Brett adds to her entourage when she meets him after leaving the taxi with Jake at the Café Select. The count tells Brett, “You got the most class of anybody I ever seen,” (65), while he and Brett visit Jake in his apartment, treat him to champagne, and take him to dinner. The irony of course lies in the count’s lack of class—not only does the rhetoric of his comment about class to Brett seem to come out of a gangster movie, but the count’s insistence on stripping to display the scars of his arrow wounds hardly seems the behavior of an aristocrat. The count may be dazzled by Brett but suffers no illusions about the possibility of a relationship with her; in fact, he recognizes that Jake and Brett love each other and suggests that they get married.

BILL GORTON
“Here’s a taxidermist’s,’ Bill said. ‘Want to buy anything? Nice stuffed dog?’”
“Come on, I said, ‘You’re pie-eyed’” (78). Bill is Jake’s friend from the States; he arrives for a visit with Jake and accompanies him on the fishing trip to Burguete and then on to Pamplona for the fiesta. Bill, like Cohn, is a writer, who has become successful and wealthy; but like so many of the others, Bill flings himself into the drunken debauchery of the Spanish fiesta. Bill provides great moments of comic relief and also allows Hemingway the opportunity to poke fun at a very well-known American critic of the time, H. L. Mencken. Hemingway scatters references to Mencken in several places in the novel, bringing him into the conversation with Harvey Stone at the Café Select. Jake admits he can’t read him; “Oh, nobody reads him now,” Harvey replies (50). Hemingway has more fun with Mencken during the fishing scene between Bill and Jake. Mencken had reviewed Hemingway’s tiny volume in our time, writing:

The sort of brave, bold stuff that all atheistic young newspaper reporters write. Jesus Christ in lower case. A hanging, a carnal love, and two disembowelings. Here it is set forth solemnly on Rives handmade paper, in an edition limited to 170 copies, and with the imprimatur of Ezra Pound.

It’s not hard to see why Hemingway would want to pay Mencken back in his first novel.

MIKE CAMPBELL
“I’m not one of you literary chaps.’ Mike stood shakily and leaned against the table. ‘I’m not clever. But I do know when I’m not wanted. Why don’t you see when you’re not wanted, Cohn? Go away. Go away, for God’s sake. Take that sad Jewish face away’” (181). Mike is a bankrupt and a drunk whom Brett has decided to marry. He seems to understand and accept her infidelities, but becomes violently resentful toward Cohn, who just can’t seem to leave Brett alone.

MONTOYA
“He always smiled as though bull-fighting were a very special secret between the two of us; a rather shocking but really deep secret that we knew about” (136). Montoya owns the hotel where Jake and the circle of acquaintances stay in Pamplona. Jake has stayed in his establishment in the past, and Montoya respects Jake’s knowledge of and passion for bullfighting. Montoya shows his disgust openly, though, when he realizes that Jake is responsible for bringing Pedro Romero and Brett together.
PEDRO ROMERO

“Romero was the whole show. I do not think Brett saw any other bull-fighter. No one else did either, except the hard-shelled technicians. It was all Romero” (171). Romero is a young bull-fighter who becomes infatuated with Brett. They are particularly unsuited for each other due to their differences in age and their differences in culture. Brett picks him up briefly, has an affair with him, then leaves when she realizes how much he would try to change and control her. Brett acknowledges, after Jake comes to her in Madrid, “I’m not going to be one of these bitches that ruins children” (247).

Minor characters who appear briefly in the narrative but deserve mention here include Harvey Stone, a broke expatriate character in Paris with whom Jake plays poker and whose dislike for Cohn helps round out the reader’s perspective on him; the Braddock, a couple based on Ford Madox Ford and his mistress at the time, artist Stella Bowen, who appear briefly in the café and dancing scene in Paris; Edna, a young woman whom Bill Gorton has picked up in Biarritz and meets again in Pamplona; and Belmonte, an older bull-fighter whose fame had been in working very close to the bulls, but who, on the afternoon he fights near the end of the festival, earns the crowd’s rowdy disapproval.

Setting the Modernist Landscape

Setting in The Sun Also Rises alternates between cityscape and rural landscape, including the major modern cities Paris and Madrid, the villages along the border between France and Spain, the Spanish coast, the town of Pamplona, and the mountainous countryside of northern Spain. The characters who travel among these places are generally expatriates, experiencing more or less fully what this section of Europe has to offer while leading lives that strike the reader as markedly temporary and rootless. Even Jake Barnes, the one expatriate character who lives and works in Paris, travels its boulevards incessantly, and seems virtually homeless, his continual movement by foot, in taxis, on buses and trains, a sign of restlessness that resists the stability and security of settling down. Thus characters even experience time as an ever-present moment, circulating the landscape, trapped in an eternal “now.”

Hemingway, while offering a narrative that more or less follows a chronological pattern, also resists that chronology by presenting experience through Jake’s consciousness as cyclical, in which one experience succeeds the next without separation—the past and present become one. Hemingway’s choice of the passage from Ecclesiastes as his second epigraph underscores this perception of the eternal renewal of the earth while it casts an ironic view of a generation that, rather than passing away, seems stuck on an endless and pointless treadmill. This is the lost generation, with Jake in the advance guard, on the move and going nowhere in a modernist landscape.

PARIS

While character, not place, takes first priority as Jake Barnes initiates his narrative with a description of Cohn and not Paris, part of the formation of Cohn’s character and Jake’s perspective on him involves his attitude to Paris. When Cohn comes up with his wild scheme to go to South America early in the novel, Jake tells him:

“South America hell! If you went there the way you feel now it would be exactly the same. This is a good town. Why don’t you start living your life in Paris?”

Cohn swiftly replies: “I’m sick of Paris, and I’m sick of the Quarter” (19). Jake finds much to like about Paris but not without some irony; as he sits on the terrace of a café after Robert leaves, his thoughts linger on the bustle of traffic of the Parisian evening, including the darker side of the hustle of Paris in the streetwalking of its poules, or prostitutes. The prostitute Jake picks up for momentary companionship will later declare that she, too, doesn’t like Paris, replying when Frances asks her if she loves Paris, “No, I don’t like Paris. It’s expensive and dirty” (26). Yet Paris offered expatriates and natives alike a uniquely twentieth-century experience of not only living in, but also creating, the modern world.

From the time Pablo Picasso arrived in Paris, in the very early years of the twentieth-century and before, Paris had served as a Mecca for avant-garde artists.112 From 1904 on, Paris became increasingly international, attracting artists, writers, and musicians from around the world—Picasso’s studio in Montmartre served as a gathering place for such diverse artists and writers as Max Jacob, Juan Gris, Georges Braque, Marc Chagall, and Guillaume Apollinaire. A few years later, in 1910, the center of artistic vitality would shift to the left bank and Montparnasse in the studio of Marc Chagall, who gathered Russian, Polish, and Jewish painters and writers into his fold. Vital to those artists, and in addition to their studios or salons, was the presence of the Parisian café. The café became a meeting place where, even though there were French laws regulating group meetings, artists and writers could subvert those laws by gathering informally to exchange ideas, find publishers, and plan “little” magazines. The artistic avant-garde—Jean Cocteau, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Guillaume Apollinaire, and many others—met at the very cafés where later Hemingway found quiet spaces to work and write and his fictional counterpart Jake and his acquaintances would visit—the Select, the Dome, the Rotonde, and the Coupole.
By the twenties, Americans comprised a sizeable portion of expatriates living in Paris, some of them war veterans who had seen Paris during the war and had vowed to come back. In sharp contrast to a repressive and censorious atmosphere in the States during Prohibition, Paris was a far more open society and offered expatriates a wealth of culture for a small amount of money. American expatriate writers, especially Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, John dos Passos, and Hemingway, could only write about America by leaving it. The characters Hemingway creates—several of them novelists like Cohn and Bill Gorton—act in reverse manner to the members of the avant-garde inhabiting the many artistic colonies of Paris. Hemingway’s characters do not discuss their art, nor with the exception of a few rare occasions, do they discuss anything of social significance; but this may very well be the point as the novel, set in its early chapters in this intensely artistic milieu, is itself the artwork which offers poetic expression of the meaninglessness and malaise of the characters’ lives.

PAMPLONA

Jake’s friends and acquaintances among the café society of Paris resurface in Pamplona as the narrative tracks the expatriates who gather around Jake to experience the running of the bulls and the bullfights during the festival of San Fermín. While the expatriate society is the central focus of the narrative in Paris, Jake offers glimpses of life among the natives in Spain as foils to measure the expatriates against. For, although the circle surrounding Jake ebbs and flows, moving from cafes to hotels to restaurants in Pamplona as they did in Paris, there is a center in Pamplona unlike anything in Paris—the bullring. It is the performance in the bullring that brings moral values into sharp relief—for through courage, honor, and the ever-present risk of death, the bullfighter performs a series of actions which transcend their nature as ritual and become art, and only true aficionados who are trained in observing the sport can appreciate the artwork. Jake alone, among the expatriates, has the sensitivity to understand the meaning of what he witnesses in the ring; even Brett, for all her attention on the fight and its details, has only one aim, and that is to seduce the bullfighter she finds so attractive.

The bullring certainly supersedes even the cathedral in Pamplona, as Jake, a lapsed Catholic, enters and tries to pray. This exercise turns to comedy when Jake begins to pray for everyone he knows, for a fine fiesta, for more money, and finally thinks, “I was a little ashamed, and regretted that I was such a rotten Catholic, but realized there was nothing I could do about it, at least for a while, and maybe never…” (103). But Jake’s narrative includes not only explicit references to entering churches or going to mass, as he does in Paris, but also implicit references to the concept of the pilgrimage. Pamplona, along with the monastery of Roncesvalles which Jake and Bill pass on the way to Pamplona and visit later, is located on the route of a very important, centuries-old pilgrimage to the town of Santiago de Compostela. Jake’s pilgrimage through a Modernist wasteland, however, rather than resulting in healing and salvation, returns him to the expatriate nightlife of Paris in the company of a woman whose love he can never experience.

THE IRATI RIVER

Before the festival begins, Jake and Bill head to the Irati River to fish; this geography, too, like Pamplona, offers a sharp contrast to Paris. The bus trip up to Burguete allows Jake to experience communion with the Basque peasants along on the ride and to sense the change in geography from barren hillsides to wooded mountains and green plains, far away from urban life. Fishing and the experience of being in tune with nature suggest a renewal of life that Jake could not experience in Paris; so Jake describes the terrain and offers details of every move related to the fishing. Through rituals such as this, just as the ritual of the bullfight offers connection with an ancient and meaningful past, Jake is able to find momentary healing for his psychic wound. Jake’s description of his ritual of packing the fish makes these associations clear:

I took the trout ashore, washed them in the cold, smoothly heavy water above the dam, then picked some ferns and packed them all in the bag, three trout on a layer of ferns, then another layer of ferns, then three more trout, and then
While the assumption might be that first-person narration can be most revealing of the narrator’s interior thoughts, Hemingway has turned such a notion upside down by constructing Jake as a narrator who proceeds by deflection and indirection. Jake escapes excessive interior introspection by offering Cohn as his beginning focus, for example, or by shifting into dialogue when Jake is in the company of other characters, making sure, of course, that Jake doesn’t spend too much time alone. Even when Jake is alone and, it would seem, almost forced to be introspective, he deflects his own and the reader’s attention away from the physical and psychic wounds which cause him the most pain.

Hemingway had used first-person narration very little before March 1925, perhaps choosing it in his first two major novels as he became more secure in his craft. Surely, with the example of Fitzgerald’s blockbuster *The Great Gatsby* as his most immediate model, Hemingway realized that, despite its potential disadvantages—narratorial unreliability and/or excessive identification of narrator and author—first-person narration could offer him a sense of unity, as everything that might be distorted and dispersed by third-person narration is filtered through Jake’s consciousness. If Jake is at all unreliable, then it may be due to the undecidability which Hemingway deliberately instills in his narrative—Hemingway’s great model for this would be the character of Marlow in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The ambiguity of Hemingway’s tale, like Conrad’s, marks the text as Modernist, embracing a worldview that, through the choice of first-person narration, insists upon the fragmentation of absolute truth into individual perceptions.
HEMINGWAY’S “TELEGRAMMATIC” STYLE

Hemingway’s style was shaped by several key influences—journalism, poetry, and painting. What might be called his “telegrammatic” style was shaped early in his career by Hemingway’s work as a newspaper journalist. The style sheet for the Kansas City Star provided Hemingway with 110 rules to follow in writing his stories, the most important of which were: “Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs. Use vigorous English and ‘Avoid the use of adjectives.’”115 In fact, the succinctness and economy of the telegram—a form of communication Hemingway used frequently in his work as a journalist to correspond with the home office from abroad as well as with friends in other cities and countries—paired with the rules of the newspaper style sheet to suggest the shape of the short, simple sentences, uncomplicated by subordination or adjectives, which are the signature of Hemingway’s style. Jake and Brett use telegrams to communicate far more than the words say in the last chapter of the novel. Brett’s telegram reads:

COULD YOU COME HOTEL MONTANA MADRID AM RATHER IN TROUBLE BRETT (242).

The one possibly extraneous word in this brief message is the word “rather” which is critical to conveying the flavor of Brett’s speech and character. The word suggests that Brett is almost ashamed to ask for Jake’s help and more in a jam than she’s willing to admit. Jake’s reply includes the address, so offers even fewer words in the body of his message:

LADY ASHLEY HOTEL MONTANA MADRID ARRIVING SUD EXPRESS TOMORROW LOVE JAKE (243).

Jake’s one extraneous word might be the word “love,” but that word says everything in conveying the loyalty and devotion which will motivate him to leave his retreat at the beach and go immediately to Brett’s aid.

HEMINGWAY’S SYNTAX AND DICTION

The notion of Jake’s love and devotion to Brett also suggests another feature of Hemingway’s style which would seem to eliminate emotion; but, rather than doing that, Hemingway sought to build the perceptions of the moment the narrator describes to the point where the reader can infer the sensations as they were experienced, with that experience now conditioned by memory. This is achieved through a rhythm of short sentences, usually filled with a predominance of “and’s” as the rhetorical figure polysyndeton116 allows the sentence to accumulate words and convey immediacy. The scene in the aftermath of Jake’s look at himself, obviously naked, in the mirror provides a powerful example of Hemingway’s management of both the present participle functioning as an adjective, with the immediacy of its “–ing” form, and polysyndeton to evoke powerful emotion:

I lay awake thinking and my mind jumping around. Then I couldn’t keep away from it, and I started to think about Brett and all the rest of it went away. I was thinking about Brett and my mind stopped jumping around and started to go in sort of smooth waves. Then all of a sudden I started to cry. Then after a while it was better and I lay in bed and listened to the heavy trams go by and way down the street, and then I went to sleep (39).

The passage also serves as a model for Hemingway’s use of short sentences, uncomplicated by subordination, and his virtual elimination of adjectives. As one critic of Hemingway’s prose style observes, there are even cinematic and photographic techniques deployed by Hemingway throughout his prose. In this passage, the reader experiences a collage of present participles—thinking, jumping—which are juxtaposed with verbs in past tense—lay, couldn’t, started, stopped, listened—as the sentences build on each other while also splicing from one scene to the next. Furthermore, as Jake’s emotion subsides, so much is left out of the scene that the reader must meet the prose in the creation of a three-dimensional communication of meaning. The passage succeeds in accomplishing Hemingway’s aim of evoking the “real thing,” the “sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion and which would be as valid in a year or in ten years or, with luck and if you stated it purely enough, always…”117 The effect is immediate and startling.

INFLUENCES—STEIN, POUND, AND CÉZANNE

Hemingway had learned the values of concision and repetition from Gertrude Stein, whose own work featured juxtaposition and repetition in the formation of a continuous present. But he had also learned the lessons of Ezra Pound’s version of imagism, with its juxtaposition, compression, and concision, squeezing language to leave only that which can’t be eliminated. Linked to the example of Pound’s poetry is Hemingway’s fervent study of the landscapes of Paul Cézanne. Cézanne chose to perfect an impressionist style of painting that featured surface rather than depth, capturing on that surface a fleeting moment. Thus the impressionist painting could capture the moment as it is being experienced.118 Critic Robert Lamb argues that Cézanne’s painting is a production of a conception materialized after a long series of perceptions; so through flattening space in the painting and dispersing objects across a “decentered canvas” consisting of a series of planes, Cézanne restores a sense of three-dimensionality.119 Hemingway sought to accomplish the same effects in his prose, disassembling nature and then reassembling it according to his own vision. Hemingway
The passage resists describing a scene with a center—Jake’s vision shifts from left to right, and back and forth, in his effort to capture the scene in its entirety on one canvas. While there is depth in the view of Pamplona, the city comes near as Jake can see the skyline, the walls, and the cathedral; and, while there are mountains beyond, there are also mountains beyond those mountains, their depth cut through by the road and the plain. Hemingway, however, isn’t just word-painting a landscape here; he’s added people. In the space of the ellipsis in the above passage, Hemingway wrote:

“I was up in front with the driver and I turned around. Robert Cohn was asleep, but Bill looked and nodded his head (99).”

By adding Cohn’s lack of perception of the scene and Bill’s nodding acknowledgment of it, Hemingway brings the unspoken human emotion, appreciation, and understanding between Bill and Jake into the moment.
Hemingway was in Paris during much of Modernism’s “annus mirabilis,” or miraculous year—1922—the year that James Joyce’s Ulysses was published by Sylvia Beach’s Shakespeare and Company in February and T. S. Eliot’s The Waste Land first appeared in October in the first issue of the Criterion. These two works helped frame the shape of Modernist literature and had an enormous impact on the development of young Hemingway as a writer. Reading Ulysses in March 1922, Hemingway wrote to Sherwood Anderson, “Joyce has a most god-damn wonderful book.” Joyce’s fame had spread so rapidly that spring that knowledge of the work was critical for an expatriate writer starting out. Hemingway was also well aware of the evolution of The Waste Land, having befriended Ezra Pound just after he edited Eliot’s poem. Both works employ mythological forms along with elements of ritual to uncover meaning in post-world war culture. For Joyce, the pattern of Ulysses’ quest to return home to Ithaca after years at war with the city of Troy, offered a timeless model for his modern quester, Leopold Bloom, in his search for a replacement for his lost son. Bloom’s travels through Dublin during the course of a single day reproduce, book by book, the extended travels and trials of Homer’s hero.

Eliot, too, had been influenced by mythology in writing The Waste Land, turning to Arthurian legend and the Grail quest cycles, Sir James Frazier’s The Golden Bough, and Jessie L. Weston’s From Ritual to Romance for inspiration. In analyzing the landscape of a post-war world, Eliot wrote of Joyce’s Ulysses that this work had paved the way for finding the means of “controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.”

In its own way, Hemingway’s novel seeks to accomplish a similar aim. As Hemingway wrote in Death in the Afternoon:

The individual, the great artist when he comes, uses everything that has been discovered or known about his art up to that point...and then...goes beyond what has been done or known and makes something of his own.

Like Eliot, Hemingway sought to use art to make sense out of the chaos of modern life. Critic Richard Adams argues that Hemingway, influenced not only by Joyce and Eliot, but also by having read The Great Gatsby shortly before beginning composition of The Sun Also Rises, organizes his work along similar structural principles. The novel opens in the modern city where the expatriate community displays an appalling level of sterility and loss of purpose, and then it follows their antics as they seek meaning in alcohol and promiscuity. Fishing and the bullfight seem to offer the promise of spiritual redemption through the order established by means of ritual behaviors, but Jake, similar to Eliot’s Fisher King, is impotent and incapable of restoration to full manhood.

In the Grail legends, the Fisher King, one in a line of keepers of the Holy Grail, is wounded in the leg or the groin, his impotence symbolic as his land is sterile. For Jake, who is certainly not guarding the Holy Grail, only his work and his participation in healing and cleansing rituals appear as the means by which he’s partly able to make sense of his world. Brett’s association with Circe links the narrative to Homer and Joyce—Circe turns men into beasts, thereby displaying their true nature, but Circe, like Brett, falls in love with the man she can’t have. The carnival in Pamplona, though not directly related to the Grail legends, certainly links back to Bacchanalian fertility festivals in ancient Greece and Rome. The continual cyclical movement of traveling, questing, and searching by all of the major characters recapitulates the mythological cycles that inform Hemingway’s text.

Themes and Symbolism

The overarching themes of The Sun Also Rises are suggested by its epigraphs—devastation, waste, and sterility in the aftermath of war counterpointed by a continual cycle of renewal and rebirth. As Hemingway wrote to Maxwell Perkins in December 1926, “people aren’t all bad as some writers find them to be or as hollowed out and exhausted emotionally as some of the Sun generation.” Of course not. But the Sun generation, those lost expatriates momentarily inhabiting a foreign land, epitomize the sterility of empty individuals who seem to have lost their moral center. And post-war Paris offers the ideal setting in which to collect these lost souls.

An iconic figure in Paris associated with these themes appears both in Hemingway’s memoir A Moveable Feast and the novel. The statue of Marshal Ney, depicted by Jake and remembered years later by Hemingway, serves as an icon which gathers together a number of associations with the concept of lost generations, the fact of war and nobility in defeat, and the quality of loyalty as redeeming. Ney, in command of Napoleon’s army during the invasion of Russia in 1812, remained with the rear guard during the retreat from Moscow and fought valiantly; later, though, in the Battle of Waterloo, 1815, Ney was blamed for Napoleon’s defeat. In his memoir, shortly after leaving Gertrude Stein’s flat, Hemingway can’t let go of his annoyance with Stein over her “lost generation” comment, and stops at the Closerie des Lilas to keep company with the statue of Ney. Hemingway notes Ney’s failure at Waterloo and thinks about how all generations are lost in one way or another, but he also notes Ney’s faithfulness to Napoleon and determines to do his best to help Stein get published.
As Jake Barnes passes Ney’s statue at night on his way back to his flat, he thinks, “He looked very fine, Marshal Ney in his top boots, gesturing with his sword among the green new horse-chestnut leaves” (37).

In the narrative of 1926, the motivation for including the statue seems to be much different than it would be later on, for the statue, with its erect sword, can be read in two ways. First, the statue seems to offer an ironic comment by presenting the image of a man, noble despite defeat in the Napoleonic Wars, viewed by a broken man, who, though his generation has won the war, has lost both his physical manhood and his way. However, Ney may also serve as a double for Jake, who, though wounded and broken, acts as the narrative’s moral barometer, against which all the other characters are measured as he restlessly seeks the way to live life well, nobly, and honorably.

If the statue of Ney with its erect sword brings to the forefront the issue of Jake’s masculinity, then perhaps the deepest investigation in the novel is the interrogation of manhood posed by Jake’s sexually impotent character. Jake is a figure of persistent and unquenchable desire who must continuously deflect and redirect that desire. Indeed, Jake’s most significant quest is his search for his own identity in the face of his physical emasculation. He can’t express his desire for Brett in the normal way, so he facilitates her affair with Pedro Romero, experiencing vicariously what he can’t experience actually. Jake even admits, after listening to Cohn talk about his relationship with Frances, “I have a rotten habit of picturing the bedroom scenes of my friends” (21). References to the wound are oblique and indirect and scattered throughout the narrative. The first reference appears when Georgette, the prostitute, makes an advance that Jake rebuffs—she quickly asks if he’s sick and later, at dinner, asks what’s wrong. “I got hurt in the war,” Jake tells her; “Oh, that dirty war,” Georgette responds (24). In a parallel scene later with Brett, Jake and Brett are caught up in a moment of unfulfilled passion; “Please don’t touch me…” Brett tells him, “I can’t stand it” (33). Within a few minutes, Brett laments the hell she’s put other men through and how she’s paying for it by her inability to consummate her passion for Jake, but Jake deflects this emotion, commenting:

“Don’t talk like a fool,” I said. “Besides, what happened to me is supposed to be funny. I never think about it” (34).

Brett knows very well that Jake’s wound is anything but funny, “Chaps never know anything, do they?” And Jake replies, “No…Nobody ever knows anything” (35).

Jake’s own brief reflection on the wound comes after looking at himself in the mirror; “Well, it was a rotten way to be wounded” (38). Remembering a visit from an Italian colonel in the hospital, Jake thinks, “He was putting himself in my place, I guess. ‘Che mala fortuna! Che mala fortuna!’” (39). A later reference to the wound occurs in a scene between Jake and Bill as they prepare for their fishing trip. Bill has teased Jake about wanting to be a writer and being an expatriate out of “touch with the soil” (120). Suddenly Bill lets slip,

“You don’t work. One group claims women support you. Another group claims you’re impotent.”

“No,” I said. “I just had an accident.”

“Never mention that,” Bill said. “That’s the sort of thing that can’t be spoken of” (120)

Without meaning to, Bill has exposed a nerve but attempts to close the subject almost immediately, as though it’s far too terrifying a prospect to consider. Their conversation turns toward joking about “Henry’s bicycle,” a reference to the mysterious injury Henry James suffered that prevented him from fighting in the Civil War and an obvious parallel to Jake’s injury. Jake hints at the possible cause of his injury, joking about the similarity between a tricycle and his plane—“A plane is sort of like a tricycle. The joystick works the same way” (120). “You’re a hell of a good guy, and I’m fonder of you than anybody on earth. I couldn’t tell you that in New York. It’d mean I was a faggot,” Bill says, affirming the concept of homosocial male bonding while disclaiming homosexuality. “I’m not a good guy” (121), Jake insists.

Jake is a good guy, though, as he journeys through the narrative’s waste land, sharpening his sense of selfhood in reaction to other characters. Against other men, Jake stands out as one who works and tries to interpret correctly the meaning of the carnival which surrounds him in Paris and Spain. Cohn, as...
a Jew, but one who boxes, serves as Jake's negative; though able to defend his manhood as a boxer—and he does with Romero—he is emasculated not only by his own incorrect behavior but also by an anti-Semitic society. His embarrassing and decidedly un-masculine behavior about Brett in Pamplona incites a drunken Mike to insult him, comparing him to a castrated ox and thus unwittingly pairing him with Jake:

"Tell me Robert. Why do you follow Brett around like a poor bloody steer? Don't you know you're not wanted? I know when I'm not wanted" (146).

The suggestion of homosexuality that enters the novel in several places also serves to sharpen the boundaries around what constitutes masculinity. In the reader's first view of Brett, she enters the bal musette accompanied by a "crowd of young men" who quickly become identified as gay—in Jake's description, "I saw white hands, wavy hair, white faces, grimacing, gesturing, talking" (28). Jake parodies their flamboyant style when they catch sight of Georgette and recognize her as a prostitute:

One of them saw Georgette and said: "I do declare. There is an actual harlot. I'm going to dance with her, Lett. You watch me."

The tall dark one, called Lett, said: "Don't you be rash."

The wavy blond one answered: "Don't you worry, dear." And with them was Brett (28).

Jake's disgust at this display and at Brett's being in this crowd is obvious, but the scene underscores more than what might be considered Jake's, or even Hemingway's, homophobia; the view of this particular group of young gay men serves as another negative measurement of what, in Jake's evolving consciousness, constitutes manhood.

Black characters, additional examples of what constitutes the "other" to white, Anglo-Saxon maleness in the novel, also advance the characterization of "negative" manhood. At Zelli's in Montmartre, the black drummer takes liberties with Brett which, while possible in bohemian Paris, would be unacceptable in the more racist States. "He's a great friend of mine" (69), Brett tells Jake, suggesting yet another conquest among the many men she's picked up. As Jake and Brett dance, the drummer sings and keeps the beat to the motion of their bodies; "You can't two time—" the drummer sings, then his words turn into silenced lyrics expressed only by ellipses; "……the drummer shouted and grinned at Brett" (70–71). The drummer provides a mocking contrast to the seriousness of the situation between Brett and Jake while reminding the reader of the role of secondary manhood relegated to black men. This notion is supported in the later references to a prize-fight Bill has seen in Vienna between a "nigger" and a local white boy. Bill defends the black fighter, "'[a]wful noble-looking nigger'" (77), who is trying hard not to beat the local white favorite.

"My God, Mister Gorton," said nigger, "I didn't do nothing in there for forty minutes but try and let him stay. That white boy musta ruptured himself swinging at me. I never did hit him" (77).

Probably based upon black prizefighter Larry Gains, who fought in Paris and Germany and whom Hemingway knew and trained with, the black fighter in this brief passage represents once again the impossibility of full black manhood in a predominantly racist, white society.

Given the presence of impotence redefining manhood in the waste land and the impossibility of the fulfillment of love, Brett stands at the center of the narrative as the emblem of "new" womanhood, liberated from the private home through her recent access to suffrage, higher education, and the professions. Brett drinks and smokes and wears her hair like a man's, proclaiming her liberation from conventional morality. Yet she is as sterile as any in Jake's "waste land." Enslaving men in her circle, like Circe on her island, Brett does turn men into pigs—Cohn and Mike are no doubt the best examples of this; however, she's unable to consummate her love for Jake or to end her promiscuous lifestyle. Her one shining moment occurs when she leaves Romero, refusing to be "one of these bitches that ruins children" (247), but her comments about Romero's increasing efforts to control her provide a more accurate reason for her leaving him. Brett is left at the end of the narrative with the emptiness and irony of Jake's remark about the good time they could have had together, "Isn't it pretty to think so?" (251).

If the narrative operates in part as a quest, or a pilgrimage, to a "holy" or redeeming center, that center is the bullring, the point to which Jake has lured the reader all along. So it is fitting that the climactic moments of the novel occur in Pamplona during a carnival that encircles the seriousness of facing death in the bullring on any given afternoon. The bullfighter, stoic in the face of a bull's horns that can emasculate him just as Jake is emasculated, represents an ideal of male courage and nobility. Metaphorically linked with the war that wounded Jake, the violence of the bullfight recreates the emotion of living on the edge. In a crucial and rare moment of self-reflection, just before the "explosion" of the festival, Jake tries to make sense of his life, giving painful expression to the plight of his "lost generation":

Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about (152).
Introduction

Four writers, all affected differently by World War I and all connected differently to Ernest Hemingway, were vital to establishing the milieu of transatlantic Modernism in which Hemingway flourished. Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner were all part of an adult generation deeply affected by the war; their work during and in the aftermath of war contributed to the “making of the new” and the accomplishment of major cultural change in life and art which began in the 1920s.

Ezra Pound (1885-1972)

Pound in the Context of World War I

Ezra Loomis Pound was already in Paris when Hemingway arrived, widely published and connected to every phase of the emerging Modernist scene. Pound had arrived in London in 1908 and had published his first volume of poetry, *A Lume Spento*, in that year. In 1909, Pound was already securing his connections to writers with whom he shared common ground and to publishers who would help advance his career—Elkin Matthews, Ford Madox Hueffer, T. E. Hulme, Wyndham Lewis, D. H. Lawrence, and most important of all, W. B. Yeats. Pound had come to Europe deeply influenced by the work of fourteenth-century poet Dante Alighieri and the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Provencal troubadours, and had trained himself not only as a poet of his own original work, but also as a translator, transforming the work of these and other earlier poets into a new shape. In 1912 and 1913, Pound's work appeared in Orage’s *The New Age*, Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry*, and Dora Marsden’s *The Egoist*, which, in his position as poetry editor, he transformed into a more literary magazine.

By the end of 1912, Pound had decided to form a new movement he named “Imagisme,” proclaiming his friend and former love, poet Hilda Doolittle, “H. D. Imagiste.” Through Imagisme, Pound promoted his work and that of his friends H. D. and Richard Aldington, and proclaimed the major points of the manifesto he helped to draft with F. S. Flint in the March 1913 edition of *Poetry*:

1. Direct treatment of the “thing,” whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome.

By the end of 1913, Pound had completed another volume of poetry, had become friends with the sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, and was close enough to Yeats to serve as his secretary in the winters of the next three years. In April 1914, Pound married Dorothy Shakespear and embarked upon a new avenue of translation and of inspiration for his poetry—the work of Chinese and Japanese poets and dramatists as represented in the extensive notebooks of sinologist Ernest Fenollosa. The concept of the Chinese ideogram as an immediate and compact image-sign would become increasingly important to the evolution of Pound's work. As the world moved into war, Pound seemed to take little notice, paying more attention to promoting a new poetic movement and renouncing Imagism, which had been taken over by American poetess Amy Lowell. Together with Wyndham Lewis, Pound formulated a movement he called Vorticism, expounded in the pages of *Blast*, the journal founded and edited by Lewis. In 1915, however, Pound could no longer ignore the personal, emotional impact of the war when he learned that...
Gaudier-Brzeska had been killed in France. In fact, the onset and escalation of the war effectively ended the fledgling publication *Blast*, which lasted for only two, but two very influential, issues. In 1916, Pound would account for his feelings about the war, publishing his tribute to his sculptor friend, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*.

Inspired by this loss and his desire to write an epic modeled on Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, Pound began work on the epic that would consume him for the rest of his life and which would remain unfinished at his death, *The Cantos*. Pound published earlier and less skilled versions of the first three cantos in the July and August issues of *Poetry* in 1917, then included them, much revised, in *A Draft of XVI Cantos* with Three Mountains Press in 1925.

Still much consumed with the horror and uselessness of war, especially after the death of writer and philosopher T. E. Hulme—who had a tremendous influence on Pound—at the front in 1917, Pound came into contact with Major C. H. Douglas, a man whose concept of economics and its relationship to corporate profits and the impoverishment of workers would have a huge impact on Pound’s thinking about the war and about society. By 1919, Douglas’ *Economic Democracy* was being serialized in the prestigious “little” magazine *The New Age*.

In 1920 Pound published *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, using this poem in part as a means of saying farewell to London. While traveling in Italy, Pound met Joyce and persuaded him to move to Paris where he helped him get established. By early 1921, Pound had moved to Paris as well and first saw Eliot’s draft of what would become *The Waste Land*. In January 1922, while Eliot was back in Paris, Pound completed extensive revisions and excisions of the manuscript, which helped shape the final version of *The Waste Land* as published simultaneously in *Criterion* and *The Dial*, and then in book form, with Eliot’s extensive footnotes, late that year. In addition to working on Eliot’s manuscript, Pound met Picasso and Hemingway in January and February 1922. Pound was essential in helping Hemingway get published, promoting his tiny volume *Three Stories and Ten Poems*, and Hemingway remembered Pound’s kindness many years later as he drafted his memoirs:

> Ezra was the most generous writer I have ever known and the most disinterested. He helped poets, painters, sculptors and prose writers that he believed in and he would help anyone whether he believed in them or not if they were in trouble.

Pound had continued, since 1921, to publish sections of cantos; V, VI, and VII were published in *The Dial*, for example, as Pound continued to revise older versions and draft new cantos. The Malatesta Cantos, VIII – XI, were finished by the end of 1923, and in 1925, Three Mountains Press published a deluxe edition of the reworked and revised first eleven cantos, *A Draft of XVI Cantos*.

In 1925, Eliot rededicated *The Waste Land* to Pound, referring to him as *il miglior fabbro*, or, the better craftsman (maker, poet), and in the same year, Pound left Paris for Rapallo, the Italian seacoast town that would be his home for years to come. Those remaining years would make Pound a pariah for his increasingly virulent anti-Semitism, his open support of Mussolini’s government during World War II, his imprisonment in Pisa for treason against the United States in 1945, his institutionalization in St. Elizabeth’s Psychiatric Hospital until 1958, and his lapse into public silence for much of the rest of his life.

When Ezra Pound died in 1972, he had become a silent and bitter man, one who felt deeply that he had failed in *The Cantos*, instilling this sense of failure in the later cantos and writing in the notes for Canto CXVII, incomplete at his death:

> I have tried to write Paradise
> Do not move
> Let the wind speak
> that is paradise.
> Let the gods forgive what I have made
> Let those I love try to forgive what I have made.

Near the end of his life, though, Pound would have a final opportunity to connect briefly to the glorious promise of his early years. From 1924 until 1968, the manuscript and typescript pages of *The Waste Land*, which Eliot had given to collector and patron John Quinn, were presumed lost. In 1968, though, the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library released the news that the manuscript had been in its collection since 1958. In 1968, Valerie Eliot, T. S. Eliot’s widow, invited Ezra Pound to her hotel room.
ends with “Medallion.” Each of these major parts contains shorter segments, some titled and some numbered—thirteen in the first major part and five in the second part. The poem, Pound’s last major poem before he began work on *The Cantos*, is semi-autobiographical in that Pound constructs “personae” — “E. P.” and “Mauberley” — as alternate versions of himself and as poetic speakers, voicing frustration with historical conditions and personal limitations which impede poetic production. In fact, the poem can be read as a staged conflict between Pound’s earlier aestheticism and his growing awareness of politics.

The entire poem is constructed through juxtaposing and paralleling segments with little explicit connections made among them. The first three segments of the poem offer Pound’s poetic persona and the age in which he lives as their poetic subject. The culmination of this exposé on a commercialism and corruption which degrades the nature of art comes in the fourth and fifth segments, where Pound blasts society in a denunciation of the First World War. For the rest of the first major part, the speaker explores the sources and background of this decay in society by examining the collapse into mediocrity evidenced in the nineteenth century and by examining the speaker’s contacts — the Jew Brennbaum or Mr. Nixon — in terms of their resisting or yielding to what the “age demands.”

In the “Envoi,” the speaker bows out of London. In the briefer second part, Hugh Selwyn Mauberley emerges as poetic speaker/persona, creating parallels with the first part while at the same time developing an opposition. This part ends with “Medallion,” the one work presumably left behind by Mauberley, which emerges as a counterpoint to the last poem of the first section, “Envoi,” and produces an image of beauty called for by the entire poetic sequence. Fusing the arts of painting, music, and sculpture, a haunting portrait emerges from the closing poem of the sequence in which the colors red-gold, gold-yellow, and topaz predominate:

Luini in porcelain!
The grand piano
Utters a profane
Protest with her clear soprano.

The sleek head emerges
From the gold-yellow frock
As Anadyomene in the opening
Pages of Reinach.

Honey-red, closing the face-oval,
A basket-work of braids which seem as if they were
Spun in King Minos’ hall
From metal, or intractable amber;
The face-oval beneath the glaze,
Bright in its suave bounding-line, as,

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Hugh Selwyn Mauberley

(Of course I’m no more Mauberley than Eliot is Prufrock. Mais passons.) Mauberley is a mere surface. Again a study in form, an attempt to condense the James novel.

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, one of Pound’s earlier long poems, is a fine example of the modern poetic sequence. The poem consists of two main parts, the first extends from the “Ode” to “Envoi (1919),” and the second begins with “Mauberley 1920” and

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*Photo courtesy of Mary de Rachewlitz.*
Beneath half-watt rays,
The eyes turn topaz.135

Our focus and the discussion of the poem which follows will center on two excerpted segments directly connected to Pound’s revulsion to war—IV and V of the first major part of the poetic sequence. The disease of the modern age culminates in these two segments in the wasteful destruction of young lives in World War I and the return of those not killed to the corrupt society for which they fought. Whereas the first three segments of the first part are structured in quatrains, these two break with that formal arrangement, turning to free verse consisting of stanzas of varying lengths and lines of varying rhythms.

IV
In the brief first stanza, “THESE fought in any case,/and some believing,/pro domo, in any case.,” the speaker refers to the anonymous millions who fought “in any case,” but not all believing—only some—that they were fighting “pro domo,” for the home, a symbolic allusion to an oration by Cicero demanding reparation from the Roman priests and Senate for the destruction of his house. “These” alternates with “some,” both indeterminate designations for the many faceless victims of war, and the stanza ends with an ellipsis—allowing the line to drift off into undecidability.

The second stanza exhibits a stunning example of anaphora—the repetition in the first five lines which begin with “some,” building momentum and emphasis as each line details a different reason for “some” soldiers joining the war. Some were “quick to arm” but others “from fear of censure”; none of these “some,” however, seem to have joined for the sake of what they believed to be a noble cause. Once again, an ellipsis installed in the sixth line of the stanza suggests the space the reader must fill in—what is it that these “some” learned later? The last line of the stanza offers a partial answer, but not one that underscores any sense of nobility; for in progression from those who joined “for love of slaughter,” there were those “some” who evolved by “learning love of slaughter.”

The third stanza begins with the word “Died,” emphasizing the theme of meaningless death and advancing the references to ancient Rome by invoking and mocking Horace’s claim, “dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.” Here, in these first two lines, even though “some” died “pro patria,” those deaths were non “dulce” and non “et décor...” The speaker allows the rest of the phrase from Horace to trail off in ellipses, leaving the thought incomplete. Pound echoes the title and sentiments of war poet Wilfred Owen’s mocking reference in his “Dulce et Decorum Est” to the “old lie” of the sweetness of dying for one’s country.

Pound’s speaker alludes to the depth of the trenches in the line “walked eye-deep in hell” and to the illusions of young men who allowed themselves to be persuaded by “old men’s lies.” Steeped in disillusionment, the young came home to “a lie,” “to many deceits,” “to old lies and new infamy,” and to “usury age-old and age-thick.” Thus the middle four lines of the stanza are dominated by the repetition of “lies,” “home,” and “believing/unbelieving,” ending in the first appearance of “usury” in Pound’s work—this concept would become the root of all evil in his work—the lending of money at exorbitant rates of interest linked to economic abuses of the poor. This one word provides a strong pivot for Pound’s turn from an earlier aestheticism to a newfound emphasis on political engagement coincident with his departure from London and move to Paris. Pound may also be alluding here to negative historical stereotypes of Jews as moneylenders—Shakespeare’s Shylock the Jew provides just one literary example of this historical prejudice. Usury in this line is historically encrusted—“age-old and age-thick” and at the heart of the economic reasons for war, and the “original sin” resulting in “the spiritual destruction of civilization.”136

The fourth stanza acknowledges the loss of life, “wastage as never before,” in all classes, “young blood and high blood,” and begins another sequence of repetitive, echoing phrases beginning with “Daring as never before,” extending to the single line stanza, “fortitude as never before,” and linking to the first line of the last stanza, “frankness as never before.” These examples of daring, fortitude, and frankness are undercut by “disillusions as never told in the old days,” once more reinforcing the empty “wastage as never before,” the second half of the first line inverting “Daring as never before” at its beginning. The poem ends with death and the horrid irony of wasted heroism: “hysterias, trench confessions,/ laughter out of dead bellies.”

V
The next segment of this sequence on the war, V, offers an epitaph for the millions of war dead—“THERE died a myriad” (191). The Greek source of the word myriad describes a quantity that is numberless or infinite, while in English the word supports, through its lack of specificity, civilization’s inability to provide an accurate count of dead soldiers and civilians. And this myriad, numberless millions, died for nothing: “For an old bitch gone in the teeth./For a botched civilization.” The speaker alludes to the British empire, i.e., Britannia, as the “old bitch,” and uses consonance to pair the term with “botched” in the next line. In the next brief section, the speaker deliberately employs the forms of Anglo Saxon poetry, using a kenning of Pound’s own invention, “earth’s lid,” as a marker of the grave. The section closes
Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (Excerpt)

By Ezra Pound

IV

THESE fought in any case, and some believing,
pro domo, in any case...

Some quick to arm, some for adventure,
some from fear of weakness, some from fear of censure,
some for love of slaughter, in imagination, learning later...
some in fear, learning love of slaughter;

Died some, pro patria, non “dulce” non “et decor”...
walked eye-deep in hell
believing in old men’s lies, then unbelieving
came home, home to a lie,
home to many deceits,
home to old lies and new infamy;
usury age-old and age-thick
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.
Young blood and high blood,
fair cheeks, and fine bodies;
fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,
dissillusions as never told in the old days,
hysterias, trench confessions,
laughter out of dead bellies.

V

THERE died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization,

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
Quick eyes gone under earth’s lid,

For two gross of broken statues,
For a few thousand battered books.

“Hugh Selwyn Mauberley IV–V” By Ezra Pound, from PERSONAE, copyright ©1926 by Ezra Pound. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.
with a biting satiric assessment of that civilization for which a “myriad” died—“For two gross of broken statues./For a few thousand battered books.”

**T. S. Eliot (1888-1965)**

**Eliot in the Context of World War I**

Like Pound, Thomas Stearns Eliot was already abroad when Hemingway arrived in Paris at the end of 1921. Eliot first spent a year abroad studying at the Sorbonne in 1910-11, where he became friendly with a French medical student and fellow lodger, Jean Verdenal. When Eliot returned to the States, he remained in contact with Verdenal, who joined the war as a medical officer in 1914 and was killed in the Dardanelles in 1915. Eliot arrived in England to study at Oxford University in July 1914, just before the outbreak of world war. While still a graduate student in philosophy at Harvard, Eliot had compiled a small portfolio of poems (among them “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”) which would soon make him famous, but his most immediate intellectual preoccupation was with the work of philosopher F. H. Bradley, whose *Appearance and Reality* (1893) was the topic of his doctoral dissertation. Before beginning his studies and work on his dissertation in England, Eliot traveled on the continent, stopping in Marburg, Germany, for a summer course of reading in philosophy, but he was forced to leave hastily due to the outbreak of war in August. In London, Eliot met Ezra Pound in September—Pound was soon to become one of the foremost of Eliot’s supporters—and by October, Pound had sent Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” to Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry*, where it would appear in June 1915.

The poem seems to explode on the closing pages of *Poetry*, capping, as the last poem in the volume, a series of far more traditional lyrics and meditative verses along with memorials to Rupert Brooke, who had just died in April. Although written before the war, the poem offered powerful insights into the hopelessness and despair of a civilization in the midst of war. Indeed, Eliot had written, in the third line of the poem, what arguably may be considered the first line of modern poetry in English: “Like a patient etherized upon a table.” This startling metaphor, following the line “When the evening is spread out against the sky,” provided a rude awakening for the reader who would soon be introduced to Eliot’s vision in *The Waste Land*. Eliot had prefaced his poem with untranslated Italian lines from Dante’s *Inferno* in which Guido da Montefeltro, a traitor lodged in the eighth circle of Hell, agrees to tell Dante his story, only because he believes that a living man like Dante could never return to the world above from this depth to broadcast his shame.

The first line of the poem opens as an invitation to the reader from the poetic speaker: “Let us go then, you and I.” The poem offers a series of shocking juxtapositions—the evening sky and the etherized patient, streets that follow like arguments, and yellow fog/smoke which wraps itself around the house like a cat. The young man, the “I” at the center of the poem, seems out of place and out of time, unable, like Hamlet, to make his move, growing old amidst the meaningless siren songs of mermaids, and paradoxically awakening to the sound of human voices in which “we”—the “you and I” of the opening line—drown. With the publication of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” Eliot had prepared the way for the appearance of his masterpiece, *The Waste Land*, seven years later.

In April 1915, Eliot met Vivien (alternatively spelled Vivienne) Haigh-Wood, and married her, despite his family’s opposition, in June. From this point on, Eliot was truly an expatriate; England would remain his residence for the rest of his life. In addition to the fortuitous friendship with Ezra Pound, Eliot soon gained entrée into the most influential literary circles in England, particularly Lady Ottoline Morrell’s literary salon, where he was introduced to the Sitwells (siblings Edith Sitwell, Osbert Sitwell, and Sacheverell Sitwell), Virginia and Leonard Woolf, Aldous Huxley, and Wyndham Lewis. Not only did he continue to publish poems in *Poetry* and other literary journals, his work was also included in Pound’s *Catholic Anthology* of 1915. Despite finishing his doctoral dissertation in 1916, Eliot was unable to return to the States to defend his dissertation because of the difficulties of transatlantic travel during wartime.

Eliot entered the world of business, working for Lloyds Bank, in 1917, but continued publishing his poetry while editing and reviewing for the prestigious journals the *Little Review* and the *Egoist*. In May 1919, Leonard and Virginia Woolf’s Hogarth Press...
published Poems, a collection of seven of Eliot’s early poems. Writing in his autobiography, Leonard Woolf insisted upon the importance of this publication to his press:

The publication of T. S. Eliot’s Poems must be marked as a red letter day for the press and for us…Tom showed us some of the poems which he had just written and we printed seven of them and published them in the slim paper covered book. It included three remarkable poems which are still, I think, vintage Eliot: “Sweeney among the Nightingales,” “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service,” and “Whispers of Immortality.”

In the same year the Woolfs published Poems, Eliot traveled with Pound on a walking tour of southern France and published his influential critical essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” in the final issues of the Egoist. By 1920, shortly after meeting James Joyce in Paris, The Waste Land began to take shape in Eliot’s creative imagination, but there would be setbacks. Vivien’s health had been fragile for some time, and Eliot was suffering from exhaustion. In 1921, during a leave of absence from Lloyds, Eliot convalesced in Margate (a seaside town in England) and then in Switzerland; and while he was in Paris briefly in January 1922, Eliot shared the manuscript of The Waste Land with Pound. After Pound’s and Vivien’s editorial interventions, the poem was published in the fall and winter in the Criterion, the journal Eliot edited from England, in the American journal Dial, and in book form, with notes.

Eliot stayed with Lloyds Bank until 1925, when he joined the publishing firm Faber and Gwyer, later Faber and Faber; his new firm would publish the first collective volume of his poetry—Poems, 1909–1925. Pound had been passionate in seeking assistance for releasing Eliot from the drudgery of working in a bank, soliciting donations from his many friends and acquaintances in Paris and elsewhere. Hemingway, who never met Eliot, refers satirically to Pound’s formation of “Bel Esprit,” a fund to help Eliot leave the bank, in A Moveable Feast, conflating Pound’s Major Douglas with Eliot, nicknaming him, to Pound’s dismay, “Major Eliot.” But Hemingway did contribute before, as he acknowledges,

the publication of The Waste Land…won the Major the Dial award and not long after a lady of title backed a review for Eliot called The Criterion and Pound and I did not have to worry about him any more.

Throughout his later life, Eliot never forgot Pound who had been among his earliest champions, supporting him even when it was politically inexpedient to do so. Eliot marshaled support for Pound during his period of imprisonment for treason, visited him at St. Elizabeth’s, and worked tirelessly for his release from the institution where he was confined for eleven years.

And, although Pound and Hemingway no longer had to worry about Eliot in the wake of The Waste Land, Eliot remained a businessman-poet, working as a publisher and editor for Faber and Faber until very near the end of his life. In the poetry of the remaining years after the triumph of The Waste Land, Eliot, having become a British citizen and having been confirmed in the Church of England, turned toward more religious themes, evidenced in the later masterpieces “Ash Wednesday” (1930) and Four Quartets (published as a complete volume in October 1943), and more conservative political positions expressed in collections of critical essays such as After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy (1934).

Eliot distanced himself from his increasingly mentally ill wife, formally separating from her in 1933 and, in 1957, found happiness by marrying a woman more than thirty years his junior, his former secretary, Valerie Fletcher. Eliot remained extremely productive in his declining years, writing poetry, publishing critical essays, lecturing at various universities, and producing drama until his death in January 1965. In 1948, when Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, he eloquently reminded the audience about the value of poetry in his acceptance speech:

When a poet speaks to his own people, the voices of all the poets of other languages who have influenced him are speaking also. And at the same time he himself is speaking to younger poets of other languages, and these poets will convey something of his vision of life and something of the spirit of his people, to their own. Partly through his influence on other poets, partly through translation, which must be also a kind of recreation of his poems by other poets, partly through readers of his language who are
not themselves poets, the poet can contribute toward understanding between peoples.\[44\]

The Waste Land

I, therefore, invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide.... When the two gases previously mentioned are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected; has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.\[44\]

In offering the scientific example of the operation of a catalyst in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), Eliot explained his own understanding of the poetic impulse as the major poem which would become The Waste Land began to take shape in his imagination. Eliot's theory of "impersonality" motivates his creation of multiple voices in the poem—looking ahead, for example, to Eliot's Nobel acceptance speech, the reader becomes aware of how Eliot's belief in the voices of other poets speaking through him as he speaks to those who will follow him informs the totality of his work. Thus the problem of how to assess the role of the speaker in this magisterial and quintessentially Modernist poem is at the core of critical debate about its interpretation.

The Waste Land is a symphony of voices signified by its earliest title, "He Do the Police in Different Voices," an allusion to Dickens's Our Mutual Friend in which the character Sloppy displays dramatic skill in reading crime news from the papers. The preliminary title strikes two ways—and has caused a great deal of critical debate in response to the question of who speaks the poem—first, the title begins with "He," suggesting a single speaker who acts as a ventriloquist in mimicking a variety of voices; but, second, the title also stresses the nature of different voices which themselves may threaten to overwhelm any individual voice. Ultimately, the original title does seem to suggest a direction for the poem which would change rather dramatically as other "voices"—Ezra Pound's and Vivien Eliot’s—added themselves to the voices mingling on the typed and handwritten manuscript pages.

In writing about the poem's early construction, critic Hugh Kenner argued that "it is doubtful whether any other acknowledged masterpiece has been so heavily marked, with the author's consent, by forces outside his control."\[44\] Kenner meant to refer primarily to the way in which the poem was reproduced as a single volume with the addition of scholarly notes, after having been published without notes in the Dial and Criterion, but his comment applies just as well to the major editorial interference performed mostly by Pound but also by Eliot's first wife. When she learned that the manuscript/typescript of The Waste Land was in the Berg collection of the New York Public Library, Eliot's second wife, Valerie, published a facsimile edition in 1971. What emerges from the facsimile is how different a poem this might have been without Pound's extensive intervention. An important example of Pound's editing as a force for change appears on the very first page, as Pound slashed through the entire first section of the facsimile—a total of fifty-four lines voiced by an anonymous speaker who recounts the events of the evening as he and friends go to shows, go drinking, turn up at a house of ill repute, and almost get picked up by the cops. Instead the poem as it now exists begins with those chilling and unforgettable first lines:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.\[44\]

These lines set the tone of contrasting imagery in which death and life compete for prominence in a set of images which faintly suggest the deadly sites of trench warfare, a sharp contrast indeed to Chaucer's Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, the work inversely echoed here:

When April with his showers sweet with fruit
The drought of March has pierced unto the root
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower...\[45\]

The view that Eliot's opening lines invoke the aftermath of a land stricken by war is supported by the lines which follow where the scene switches to the reminiscences of "Marie" and her childhood in Munich. If, as Valerie Eliot claimed in the facsimile edition of The Waste Land, Eliot met the real Marie, Countess Larisch, at some indeterminate time and place (but very likely either 1911 or 1914), then this occasion is strikingly coincident with the onset of war. For Marie, in her aristocratic past and connections to the royalty of Austria and Germany, represents the abuses of the Habsburg dynasty; shortly after her meeting with Eliot, she and her country would become the enemy.

After the intervention of Pound and Vivien Eliot, the poem, as it now stands, consists of five sections: "The Burial of the Dead," "A Game of Chess," "The Fire
Sermon,” “Death by Water,” and “What the Thunder Said.” Each section, in similar fashion to Pound’s Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, contains stanzas of varying lengths in which thematic units are juxtaposed to form a mosaic of collages with little connection among the units. These are the fragments that must formulate in the reader’s mind to create the scene and establish meaning. “These fragments,” intones the anonymous speaker at the poem’s end, “I have shored against my ruins” (50).

The focus in the discussion of the poem which follows will center on the ending of “I. The Burial of the Dead,” lines 60–76, and lines 111–173 of “II. A Game of Chess.” The last section of “The Burial of the Dead,” is a stanza of seventeen lines in free verse which begins with a translation of a line from French poet Charles Baudelaire’s “Les Sept Viellards” and ends with another echo from Baudelaire’s well-known Fleurs du Mal (Flowers of Evil). Eliot acknowledges these sources in the footnotes—citing the original French source for the first line of the passage:

Fournmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant.

Baudelaire’s teeming, swarming city, Paris, where the specter clutches at the passerby in broad daylight, becomes Eliot’s “Unreal City,” London, also populated by swarms of dead. The “brown fog of a winter dawn” offers a metaphoric vision of the misma of the trenches as the “crowd” flows “over London Bridge” and “up the hill and down King William Street.” “I had not,” the anonymous speaker says, “thought death had undone so many.” Eliot adds, with this line and the next, a vision from Dante’s Inferno, Cantos III and IV, to Baudelaire’s image of the modern city. Both visions resurrect not only the millions dead in the war, but also the walking, living dead who inhabit the war land. The speaker reinforces the impression of walking, or “flowing” up and down city streets as he reaches Saint Mary Woolnoth, at the intersection of King William Street and Lombard Street, leading into the heart of the financial and banking district of London. The speaker notices, as Eliot remarks in his footnote to this line, the “dead sound on the final stroke of nine.”

In the next eight lines, the speaker continues to mingle past and present, calling to “Stetson” in modern-day London while referring to the Battle of Mylæe between the Romans and the Carthaginians in 260 B.C.E. The planted corpse in Stetson’s garden suggests by inversion the many unburied corpses left to rot in the trenches during bombardments which made it impossible to retrieve the bodies. An accompanying reference in lines 74–5 alludes to John Webster’s The White Devil, acknowledged in Eliot’s footnote, but the lines which are so compelling in their similarity to the situation of the unburied dead in World War I are the following: “And with leaves and flowers do

cover/The friendless bodies of unburied men.” The speaker ends the stanza by mingling languages, capturing the reader’s attention with the English “You!” followed by Baudelaire’s French, acknowledging his resistance to and union with the reader: “hypocrite lecteur” (hypocritical reader), “mon semblable” (my double/likeness), “mon frère” (my brother). In “A Game of Chess,” two scenes are composed which act, in part, as inverse reflections. The first “scene” includes lines 111–138, and appears as a dialogue between a man and a woman—the woman’s speech is quoted, the man’s is not. The image that emerges in quoted speech displays a woman on the verge of hysteria, one who frantically seeks for some way to go on living with a man who is only able to offer cold comfort—“And we shall play a game of chess.” Very likely patterned upon Vivien herself, who would need institutionalization for mental illness in 1938, the female speaker insists that her “nerves are bad tonight,” and begs the male speaker to stay with her. Her language is filled with repetitions—speak, think, nothing—as she seems to attempt, frantically, to communicate with her partner. In the typescript of this passage, Vivien had written in bold print along the side: “WONDERFUL.” The dysfunction and failed nature of relationships in The Waste Land becomes abundantly clear in the male speaker’s (assumed) nonverbal response to the woman’s demand: “Think.”

I think we are in rats’ alley.
Where the dead men lost their bones.

When the female speaker asks the man “Do you remember/Nothing?” he replies, “I remember/Those are pearls that were his eyes,” an intentional allusion to Shakespeare’s The Tempest:

Full fathom five thy father lies.
Of his bones are coral made.
Those are pearls that were his eyes.
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

As Ariel’s speech in The Tempest describes a sea-change, the transformation of one substance into another, Eliot’s male speaker transforms Shakespeare into the syncopation of jazz: “O O O O that Shakeshepherian Rag—/It’s so elegant/So intelligent....” What is left after the woman’s frantic searching, “What shall I do now? What shall I do?” is only the safety of ritual—

The hot water at ten.
And if it rains, a closed car at four.
And we shall play a game of chess.
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

In a reversal of this more upper-class existence—an existence that is underscored by its pointlessness,
The Waste Land (1922) (Excerpts)

By T. S. Eliot (1888-1965)

Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculos meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σιβύλλα τι θείας; respondebat illa: ἁπο θανεῖν θείον.

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

[...]

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying "Stetson!
"You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
"That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
"Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
"Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
"Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,
"Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!"

II. A GAME OF CHESS

[...]

"My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
"Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.
"What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
"I never know what you are thinking. Think."

I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones.

"What is that noise?"
The wind under the door.

“What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?”

Nothing again nothing.

“Do

“You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
Nothing?”

I remember

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

“Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?”

But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—

It’s so elegant

So intelligent

“What shall I do now? What shall I do?

“I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street

“With my hair down, so. What shall we do to-morrow?

“What shall we ever do?”

The hot water at ten.

And if it rains, a closed car at four.

And we shall play a game of chess,

Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil’s husband got demobbed, I said,

I didn’t mince my words, I said to her myself,

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Now Albert’s coming back, make yourself a bit smart.

He’ll want to know what you done with that money he gave you

To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.

You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,

He said, I swear, I can’t bear to look at you.

And no more can’t I, I said, and think of poor Albert,

He’s been in the army four years, he wants a good time,

And if you don’t give it him, there’s others will, I said.

Oh is there, she said. Something o’ that, I said.

Then I’ll know who to thank, she said, and give me a

straight look.

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

If you don’t like it you can get on with it, I said,

Others can pick and choose if you can’t.

But if Albert makes off, it won’t be for lack of telling.

You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.

(And her only thirty-one.)
I can’t help it, she said, pulling a long face, 
It’s them pills I took, to bring it off, she said. 
(She’s had five already, and nearly died of young George.) 
The chemist said it would be alright, but I’ve never been the same. 

You are a proper fool, I said. 
Well, if Albert won’t leave you alone, there it is, I said, 
What you get married for if you don’t want children? 

Hurry up please its time 
Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon, 
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot— 
Hurry up please its time 
Hurry up please its time 
Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight. 

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night. 


waste, and trivializing of culture—the scene which follows is voiced by a female friend of “Lil’s” who describes Lil’s predicament to a friend. Lil’s husband, Albert, has gotten “demobbed” (this word written in by Vivien on the typescript), or demobilized from the service. The aftermath of war is once more apparent among these “little” lives as the speaker portrays Lil’s loss of teeth and potential loss of her husband, who has told her “I swear, I can’t bear to look at you.” Insidiously, the speaker has told Lil, “...he wants a good time,/And if you don’t give it him, there’s others will, I said.” Lil’s response is that the pills she took to bring on an abortion—this is implicit rather than explicit in the text, “It’s them pills I took, to bring it off”—are the cause of her aged appearance and loss of teeth. “What you get married for if you don’t want children?” the speaker demands. The hint of abortion and unwanted children coupled with aging and the return of men who will never be the same after the war underscores the sterility which pervades the poem.

Throughout the section, the speaker’s language is counterpointed by the refrain “HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME,” presumably the pub proprietor’s insistence that it’s closing time. But the refrain also provides a faint echo of Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress,” which insists upon the enjoyment of physical pleasure before it’s too late, for “...worms shall try/That long preserv’d virginity,/And your quaint honour turn to dust./And into ashes all my lust.” But the most compelling lines of Marvell’s “carpe diem” poem are: “But at my back I always hear/Time’s winged chariot hurrying near.” The urbanity of Marvell’s satiric seduction of his coy mistress contrasts with the common Cockneyisms of the pub patrons going home as well as with the poignancy of Ophelia’s madness and suicide in Hamlet, for the language of Eliot’s speaker slides from “Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight./Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight” to Ophelia’s last words before she lapses into silence, “Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night,/good night.”

**Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)**

**Woolf in the Context of World War I**

Slightly older than both Pound and Eliot, and seventeen years older than Hemingway, Virginia Woolf was an established writer before any of these. Woolf had begun writing essays and reviews before World War I and had published her first novel, The Voyage Out, in 1915, a work she had begun to develop eight years earlier. During these years before the war, Woolf’s mental state was fragile—she began to suffer mental breakdowns shortly after her mother’s death in 1895 and in 1904, after the death of her father. After spells in nursing homes in 1910 and 1912, Woolf attempted suicide in 1913, after delivering the manuscript of her
Like Pound and Eliot, Woolf did not have direct experience of the war; but she was personally acquainted with the poet Rupert Brooke, and, as a pacifist, found his patriotism "revolting." But the fact that Woolf was affected by the war is undeniable—and her writing demonstrates her keen awareness that any "sense of immunity from effects of the war—shared by much of the civilian population—was an illusion." In Sussex in 1914, Woolf experienced something similar to martial law—as the countryside, only fifteen miles from the North Sea, prepared for the possibility of invasion. By 1915, Woolf had begun to experience loss—her brothers-in-law and Rupert Brooke had all gone to war. Brooke's death, in fact, provided a turning point in Woolf's increasing perception of how the reality of war could shatter the illusion of civilian immunity, despite her disapproval of the sentimentality of Brooke's public and poetic glorification of war.

But Woolf's efforts to make sense of the war for her own sake and the sake of her writing, would only succeed after the war, when she could shape her perspective into personal and communal experience. Septimus Warren Smith, for example, in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), is a victim of shell shock who cannot return to normal life, whose treatment by physicians is badly mishandled, who continues to see visions of his friend killed in the war, and who, in a delusional state, throws himself out of a window to his death on the pavement below. As an alter-ego for Woolf herself, Smith offers a realistic portrayal of dementia by a writer who knew madness from the inside.

Woolf met Eliot in 1918 and invited this younger writer into her circle. In June 1922, just a few months before *The Waste Land* appeared in print, Woolf wrote in her diary about the experience of hearing Eliot recite his poem:

_Eliot dined here last Sunday & read his poem. He sang it & chanted it rhythmically. It has great beauty & force of phrase: symmetry; & tension. What connects it together, I'm not so sure. But he read till he had to rush…. One was left, however, with some strong emotion. The Waste Land, it is called; & Mary Hutchinson, who has heard it more quietly, interprets it to be Tom's autobiography—a melancholy one._

In addition to the edition of Eliot's *Poems* published by the Woolfs, the Hogarth Press also brought out *The Waste Land* in September 1923, nine months after the American Boni and Liveright edition; the poem proved to be one of the most typographically challenging works ever typeset by Virginia Woolf. Eliot, however, was very pleased with the volume which resulted.

In October 1927, only days after publishing *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf reviewed Hemingway's *Men Without Women* and *The Sun Also Rises* for the New...
Throughout the 1930s, Woolf was increasingly politically active, for the world was hurtling toward war once again. Her break with individual and collective consciousness as the primary phenomena through which to convey experience began after completing The Waves, a novel she referred to as an “abstract mystical eyeless book.”

So she thought up, in her bath, a sequel to A Room of One’s Own (1929), the work which would split into two and become a deeply feminist novel, The Years (1937), and a brilliant anti-fascist tract, Three Guineas (1938). Three Guineas is unique in Woolf’s oeuvre; it is passionate in its exposure of a fascist, masculine culture in the heart of England and unrelenting in its attack on a pervasive sexism which denied women access to higher education, to a voice in government, and to employment in the professions. In July 1940, Woolf published the last work to appear in her lifetime, a biography of her friend, the painter Roger Fry; and by the spring of 1941, Woolf had begun to revise her last novel, Between the Acts, a novel whose title directly refers to the world stage in between two acts of war. In March 1941, Woolf, feeling despair about the escalation of World War II, believing that her political arguments had fallen on deaf ears, and fearing that she was going mad once more, drowned herself, truth, reality, whatever you like—pass him close each time.”

York Herald Tribune. Woolf viewed Hemingway’s position as a Modernist with some disbelief, finding his characters in The Sun Also Rises already “shaped, proportioned, weighed.”

“It is a bare, abrupt, outspoken book,” Woolf wrote, but, she acknowledged, his “candour is modern and it is admirable.” Finding his landscape descriptions and his description of the bullfight sharply outlined, Woolf also finds something missing, something faked. When she reviews the critical opinion of Hemingway she has advanced in discussing the novel, she finds that he isn’t looking at life from a new angle, “What he sees is a tolerably familiar sight. Common objects like beer bottles and journalists figure largely in the foreground. But he is a skilled and conscientious writer. He has an aim and makes for it without fear or circumlocution.”

Certainly there is more than a little irony in Woolf’s observation here—the notion of beer bottles and journalists littering Hemingway’s pages seems quite tongue in cheek, and her tendency to remain close to bullfighting as a metaphor for writing surfaces throughout her review. She closes with her opinion of the collection of stories as sterile, and an analogy to which Hemingway had to pay attention: “though Mr. Hemingway is brilliantly and enormously skilful [sic], he lets his dexterity, like the bullfighter’s cloak, get between him and the fact.... But the true writer stands close up to the bull and lets the horns—call them life, truth, reality, whatever you like—pass him close each time.”
herself in the river Ouse near her home in Sussex, Monk’s House.

“The Mark on the Wall”

*Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.*

Virginia Woolf’s short story, one of the two stories published in the Woolfs’ Hogarth Press first print offering, provides a fine example of early Modernist experimental fiction using an interior monologue that hints at stream of consciousness narration. The narrative never becomes full-blown stream of consciousness, for it retains logical connections and complete sentences, but the suggestiveness of multiple associations that occur throughout the monologue do reflect an important aspect of stream of consciousness. Furthermore, the story itself takes place fully within the speaker’s consciousness at a moment when she seems not to move or do anything else but sit and think as she continually casts her eye on the mark on the wall. However, the careful reader also has to pay attention to time and tense in this narrative, for while Woolf portrays the center of the narrative in present tense, expressing the immediacy of the moment, the speaker frames the narrative in the past tense—the introductory paragraph, where the speaker attempts to fix the time when she first noticed the mark on the wall, and the closing passage whose final sentence announces that the mark “was a snail.” Thus Woolf suggests the relativity and fluidity of time and space, the form of her story matching this theme in the narrative.

While the story clearly unfolds within a narrating consciousness, that consciousness is brought back to external reality through repeated mention and almost obsessive observation of the mark on the wall, offering a powerful comparison to Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s madwoman in “The Yellow Wallpaper.” While there may be no evidence that Woolf knew Gilman’s story or intended to allude to it, there is an uncanny resemblance between the two writers in their own lives—both were diagnosed as mentally ill, both were subjected to the “rest cure” developed by neurologist Silas Weir Mitchell (1829–1914), and both reacted strongly to this treatment. In fact, Gilman’s purpose in writing her story was deliberate in its intention to send a message to Mitchell that treatment meant such as his, instead of curing women, drove them mad. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf allowed her fury at this medical mistreatment to come to the forefront in a “savagely rational caricature of the ‘treatment’ she herself had received.”

*...invoke proportion; order rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months’ rest, until a man who went in weighing seven stone six comes out weighing twelve.*

Surrounded by an exterior world marked as dominant and masculine, Woolf’s narrating female persona in “The Mark on the Wall” allows her obsessive and repetitive attention to the mark on the wall to reveal a fragile consciousness, filled with interior raving that which resist masculine culture and war, revolting against the crushing dominance of that world.

The story alternates between the observation of concrete reality and an interior, associative consciousness that balloons between each moment of observation of the mark. For example, the narrator mentions the mark on the wall in virtually every paragraph of the story with only a few exceptions, yet the narrator never makes a move to touch or examine the mark, despite declaring that she should “jump up and see” for herself. The fact that the mark turns out to be a snail is significant for the overall symbolism and theme of the story, which is understated and implicitly political, an observation supported by the subjects of the narrator’s reveries.

The narrator begins to examine the nature of her own consciousness in the first paragraph when she thinks of the “cavalcade of red knights riding up the side of the black rock” and “the crimson flag flapping from the castle tower.” While red and crimson certainly associate with the “real” fire in the grate of her room in the past when she first noticed the mark on the wall, they also point in two other directions—toward militarism, as the knights may launch a siege, and toward the medieval past, as indeed all of the past forms a contrast and backdrop to the modern which emerges in this story. In the next paragraph, for example, Woolf begins with the swarming of thoughts like ants, seemingly so miniscule and unimportant and ends with a view of life in modernity as a tearing “asunder” of people in momentary, fragmentary perceptions of other lives, other scenes, forced by being rushed “past in the train.”

“The mystery of life!” the narrator thinks, “The ignorance of humanity!” Again, the narrator reflects on loss and the past while contrasting life in modernity to “being blown through the Tube at fifty miles an hour—landing at the other end without a single hairpin in one’s hair!...Yes, that seems to express the rapidity of life, the perpetual waste and repair; all so casual, all so haphazard....” In addition to contrasting the past and a uniquely Modern present, the narrator also formulates a contrast between what is “natural” and what is manufactured or man-made. Being blown from the Tube into “asphodel meadows like brown paper parcels pitched down a shoot in the post office!” juxtaposes nature, the asphodel meadows, with the simile linking people to a modern phenomenon of a package mechanically propelled through the post office mail chute.

(continued on page 76)
The Mark on the Wall

By Virginia Woolf

Perhaps it was the middle of January in the present year that I first looked up and saw the mark on the wall. In order to fix a date it is necessary to remember what one saw. So now I think of the fire; the steady film of yellow light upon the page of my book; the three chrysanthemums in the round glass bowl on the mantelpiece. Yes, it must have been the winter time, and we had just finished our tea, for I remember that I was smoking a cigarette when I looked up and saw the mark on the wall for the first time. I looked up through the smoke of my cigarette and my eye lodged for a moment upon the burning coals, and that old fancy of the crimson flag flapping from the castle tower came into my mind, and I thought of the cavalcade of red knights riding up the side of the black rock. Rather to my relief the sight of the mark interrupted the fancy, for it is an old fancy, an automatic fancy, made as a child perhaps. The mark was a small round mark, black upon the white wall, about six or seven inches above the mantelpiece.

How readily our thoughts swarm upon a new object, lifting it a little way, as ants carry a blade of straw so feverishly, and then leave it....If that mark was made by a nail, it can’t have been for a picture, it must have been for a miniature—the miniature of a lady with white powdered curls, powder-dusted cheeks, and lips like red carnations. A fraud of course, for the people who had this house before us would have chosen pictures in that way—an old picture for an old room. That is the sort of people they were—very interesting people, and I think of them so often, in such queer places, because one will never see them again, never know what happened next. They wanted to leave this house because they wanted to change their style of furniture, so he said, and he was in process of saying that in his opinion art should have ideas behind it when we were torn asunder, as one is torn from the old lady about to pour out tea and the young man about to hit the tennis ball in the back garden of the suburban villa as one rushes past in the train.

But as for that mark, I’m not sure about it; I don’t believe it was made by a nail after all; it’s too big, too round, for that. I might get up, but if I got up and looked at it ten to one I shouldn’t be able to say for certain; because once a thing’s done, no one ever knows how it happened. Oh! dear me, the mystery of life! The inaccuracy of thought! The ignorance of humanity! To show how very little control of our possessions we have—what an accidental affair this living is after all our civilization—let me just count over a few of the things lost in our lifetime, beginning, for that seems always the most mysterious of losses—what cat would gnaw, what rat would nibble—three pale blue canisters of book-binding tools? Then there were the bird cages, the iron hoops, the steel skates, the Queen Anne coal-scuttle, the bagatelle board, the hand organ—all gone, and jewels too. Opals and emeralds, they lie about the roots of turnips. What a scraping paring affair it is to be sure! The wonder is that I’ve any clothes on my back, that I sit surrounded by solid furniture at this moment. Why, if one wants to compare life to anything, one must liken it to being blown through the Tube at fifty miles an hour—landing at the other end without a single hairpin in one’s hair! Shot out at the feet of God entirely naked! Tumbling head over heels in the asphodel meadows like brown paper parcels pitched down a shoot in the post office! With one’s hair flying back like the tail of a racehorse. Yes, that seems to express the rapidity of life, the perpetual waste and repair; all so casual, all so haphazard....
But after life. The slow pulling down of thick green stalks so that the cup of the flower, as it turns over, deluges one with purple and red light. Why, after all, should one not be born there as one is born here, helpless, speechless, unable to focus one’s eyesight, groping at the roots of the grass, at the toes of the Giants? As for saying which are trees, and which are men and women, or whether there are such things, that one won’t be in a condition to do for fifty years or so. There will be nothing but spaces of light and dark, intersected by thick stalks, and rather higher up perhaps, rose-shaped blots of an indistinct colour—dim pinks and blues—which will, as time goes on, become more definite, become—I don’t know what....

And yet the mark on the wall is not a hole at all. It may even be caused by some round black substance, such as a small rose leaf, left over from the summer, and I, not being a very vigilant housekeeper—look at the dust on the mantelpiece, for example, the dust which, so they say, buried Troy three times over, only fragments of pots utterly refusing annihilation, as one can believe.

The tree outside the window taps very gently on the pane....I want to think quietly, calmly, spaciously, never to be interrupted, never to have to rise from my chair, to slip easily from one thing to another, without any sense of hostility, or obstacle. I want to sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts. To steady myself, let me catch hold of the first idea that passes....Shakespeare. ...Well, he will do as well as another. A man who sat himself solidly in an arm-chair, and looked into the fire, so—a shower of ideas fell perpetually from some very high Heaven down through his mind. He leant his forehead on his hand, and people, looking in through the open door—for this scene is supposed to take place on a summer’s evening—But how dull this is, this historical fiction! It doesn’t interest me at all. I wish I could hit upon a pleasant track of thought, a track indirectly reflecting credit upon myself, for those are the pleasantest thoughts, and very frequent even in the minds of modest mouse-coloured people, who believe genuinely that they dislike to hear their own praises. They are not thoughts directly praising oneself; that is the beauty of them; they are thoughts like this:

‘And then I came into the room. They were discussing botany. I said how I’d seen a flower growing on a dust heap on the site of an old house in Kingsway. The seed, I said, must have been sown in the reign of Charles the First. What flowers grew in the reign of Charles the First?’ I asked—(but I don’t remember the answer). Tall flowers with purple tassels to them perhaps. And so it goes on. All the time I’m dressing up the figure of myself in my own mind, lovingly, stealthily, not openly adoring it, for if I did that, I should catch myself out, and stretch my hand at once for a book in self-protection. Indeed, it is curious how instinctively one protects the image of oneself from idolatry or any other handling that could make it ridiculous, or too unlike the original to be believed in any longer. Or is it not so very curious after all? It is a matter of great importance. Suppose the looking-glass smashes, the image disappears, and the romantic figure with the green of forest depths all about it is there no longer, but only that shell of a person which is seen by other people—what an airless, shallow, bald, prominent world it becomes! A world not to be lived in. As we face each other in omnibuses and underground railways we are looking into the mirror; that accounts for the vagueness, the gleam of glassiness, in our eyes. And the novelists in future will realise more and more the importance of these reflections, for of course there is not one reflection but an almost infinite number; those are the depths they will explore, those the phantoms they will pursue, leaving the description of reality more
and more out of their stories, taking a knowledge of it for granted, as the Greeks did
and Shakespeare perhaps—but these generalisations are very worthless. The military
sound of the word is enough. It recalls leading articles, cabinet ministers—a whole
class of things indeed which as a child one thought the thing itself, the standard thing,
the real thing, from which one could not depart save at the risk of nameless damna-
tion. Generalisations bring back somehow Sunday in London, Sunday afternoon walks,
Sunday luncheon and also ways of speaking of the dead, clothes, and habits—like the
habit of sitting all together in one room until a certain hour, although nobody liked
it. There was a rule for everything. The rule for tablecloths at that particular period
was that they should be made of tapestry with little yellow compartments marked
upon them such as you may see in photographs of the carpets in the corridors of the
royal palaces. Tablecloths of a different kind were not real tablecloths. How shocking,
and yet how wonderful it was to discover that these real things, Sunday luncheons,
Sunday walks, country houses, and tablecloths were not entirely real, were indeed
half phantoms, and the damnation which visited the disbeliever in them was only a
sense of illegitimate freedom. What now takes the place of those things I wonder, those
real standard things? Men perhaps, should you be a woman; the masculine point of
view which governs our lives, which sets the standard, which establishes Whitaker’s
Table of Precedency, which has become, I suppose, since the war half a phantom to
many men and women, which soon, one may hope, will be laughed into the dustbin
where the phantoms go, the mahogany sideboards and the Landseer prints, Gods
and Devils, Hell and so forth, leaving us all with an intoxicating sense of illegitimate
freedom—if freedom exists....

In certain lights that mark on the wall seems actually to project from the wall. Nor is
it entirely circular. I cannot be sure, but it seems to cast a perceptible shadow, sug-
uggesting that if I ran my finger down that strip of the wall it would, at a certain point,
mount and descend a small tumulus, a smooth tumulus like those barrows on the
South Downs which are, they say, either tomb or camps. Of the two I should prefer
them to be tombs, desiring melancholy like most English people, and finding it natural
at the end of a walk to think of the bones stretched beneath the turf....There must be
some book about it. Some antiquary must have dug up those bones and given them
a name....What sort of a man is an antiquary, I wonder? Retired Colonels for the most
part, I dare say, leading parties of aged labourers to the top here, examining clods
of earth and stone, and getting into correspondence with the neighbouring clergy,
which, being opened at breakfast time, gives them a feeling of importance, and the
comparison of arrowheads necessitates cross-country journeys to the country towns,
an agreeable necessity both to them and to their elderly wives, who wish to make
plum jam or to clean out the study, and have every reason for keeping that great ques-
tion of the camp or the tomb in perpetual suspension, while the Colonel himself feels
agreeably philosophic in accumulating evidence on both sides of the question. It is
ture that he does finally incline to believe in the camp; and being opposed, indites a
pamphlet which he is about to read at the quarterly meeting of the local society when
a stroke lays him low, and his last conscious thoughts are not of wife or child, but of
the camp and that arrowhead there, which is now in the case at the local museum,
together with the foot of a Chinese murderess, a handful of Elizabethan nails, a great

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1 This is probably a reference to ‘The Peerage of the United Kingdom,’ which is included in Whitaker’s Almanack.

2 Many of the popular paintings of Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1802–1873) were reproduced in steel engravings by his brother
Thomas (1795–1880).
many Tudor clay pipes, a piece of Roman pottery, and the wine-glass that Nelson drank out of—proving I really don’t know what.

No, no, nothing is proved, nothing is known. And if I were to get up at this very moment and ascertain that the mark on the wall is really—what shall I say?—the head of a gigantic old nail, driven in two hundred years ago, which has now, owing to the patient attrition of many generations of housemaids, revealed its head above the coat of paint and is taking its first view of modern life in the sight of a white-walled fire-lit room, what should I gain? Knowledge? Matter for further speculation? I can think sitting still as well as standing up. And what is knowledge? What are our learned men save the descendants of witches and hermits who crouched in caves and in woods brewing herbs, interrogating shrew-mice and writing down the language of the stars? And the less we honour them as our superstitions dwindle and our respect for beauty and health of mind increases ... Yes, one could imagine a very pleasant world. A quiet spacious world, with the flowers so red and blue in the open fields. A world without professors or specialists or house-keepers with the profiles of policemen, a world which one could slice with one's thought as a fish slices the water with his fin, grazing the stems of the water-lilies, hanging suspended over nests of white sea eggs .... How peaceful it is down here, rooted in the centre of the world and gazing up through the grey waters, with their sudden gleam of light, and their reflections—if it were not for Whitaker’s Almanac—if it were not for the Table of Precedency!

I must jump up and see for myself what that mark on the wall really is—a nail, a rose-leaf, a crack in the wood?

Here is Nature once more at her old game of self-preservation. This train of thought, she perceives, is threatening mere waste of energy, even some collision with reality, for who will ever be able to lift a finger against Whitaker's Table of Precedency? The Archbishop of Canterbury is followed by the Lord High Chancellor; the Lord High Chancellor is followed by the Archbishop of York. Everybody follows somebody, such is the philosophy of Whitaker; and the great thing is to know who follows whom. Whitaker knows and let that, so Nature counsels, comfort you, instead of enraging you; and if you can't be comforted, if you must shatter this hour of peace, think of the mark on the wall.

I understand Nature's game—her prompting to take action as a way of ending any thought that threatens to excite or to pain. Hence, I suppose, comes our slight contempt for men of action—men, we assume, who don't think. Still, there's no harm in putting a full stop to one's disagreeable thoughts by looking at a mark on the wall.

Indeed, now that I have fixed my eyes upon it, I feel that I have grasped a plank in the sea; I feel a satisfying sense of reality which at once turns the two Archbishops and the Lord High Chancellor to the shadows of shades. Here is something definite, something real. Thus, waking from a midnight dream of horror, one hastily turns on the light and lies quiescent, worshipping the chest of drawers, worshipping solidity, worshipping reality, worshipping the impersonal world which is proof of some existence other than ours. That is what one wants to be sure of....Wood is a pleasant thing to think about. It comes from a tree; and trees grow, and we don't know how they grow. For years and years they grow, without paying any attention to us, in meadows, in forests, and by the side of rivers—all things one likes to think about. The cows swish their tails beneath them on hot afternoons; they paint rivers so green that when a moorhen dives one expects to see its feathers all green when it comes up again. I like to think of the fish
balanced against the stream like flags blown out; and of water-beetles slowly raising domes of mud upon the bed of the river. I like to think of the tree itself: first the close dry sensation of being wood; then the grinding of the storm; then the slow, delicious ooze of sap. I like to think of it, too, on winter's nights standing in the empty field with all leaves close-furled, nothing tender exposed to the iron bullets of the moon, a naked mast upon an earth that goes tumbling, tumbling all night long. The song of birds must sound very loud and strange in June; and how cold the feet of insects must feel upon it, as they make laborious progresses up the creases of the bark, or sun themselves upon the thin green awning of the leaves, and look straight in front of them with diamond-cut red eyes. . . . One by one the fibres snap beneath the immense cold pressure of the earth, then the last storm comes and, falling, the highest branches drive deep into the ground again. Even so, life isn't done with; there are a million patient, watchful lives still for a tree, all over the world, in bedrooms, in ships, on the pavement, lining rooms, where men and women sit after tea, smoking cigarettes. It is full of peaceful thoughts, happy thoughts, this tree. I should like to take each one separately—but something is getting in the way. . . . Where was I? What has it all been about? A tree? A river? The Downs? Whitaker's Almanack? The fields of asphodel? I can't remember a thing. Everything's moving, falling, slipping, vanishing. . . . There is a vast upheaval of matter. Someone is standing over me and saying—

'I'm going out to buy a newspaper.'

'Yes?'

'Though it's no good buying newspapers. . . . Nothing ever happens. Curse this war; God damn this war! . . . All the same I don't see why we should have a snail on our wall.'

Ah, the mark on the wall! It was a snail.

The mark on the wall, the narrator thinks, should give comfort if one can’t take comfort in the stability of the pecking order of rank: “The Archbishop of Canterbury is followed by the Lord High Chancellor; the Lord High Chancellor is followed by the Archbishop of York.”

As the narrative draws to a close, the speaker grabs a “plank in the sea”—it is the thought of the solidity of wood that comforts her, “worshipping solidity, worshipping reality, worshipping the impersonal world which is proof of some existence other than ours.” Even when the tree falls, the narrator thinks, its life isn’t over as it’s transformed into wood furniture, wood paneling, wood in shipbuilding. Then the narrator brings the reader back full circle to the room where men and women sit smoking cigarettes after tea, much like the room where the narrator sat at the story’s beginning, smoking a cigarette after she and her companion “had just finished our tea. But solidity, security, reality, seem to dissolve as the narrator becomes increasingly confused, “What has it all been about?” “Everything’s moving, falling, slipping, vanishing….” Then someone stands over her and says “I’m going out to buy a newspaper.” But, her companion adds, “it’s no good buying newspapers…. Nothing ever happens. Curse this war; God damn this war!” And then he remarks that he doesn’t see “why we should have a snail on our wall.” In just a few concluding sentences, the narrator has created an alternating rhythm between solid and fluid, past and present, stasis and flux. The snail, which the narrator confirms as the mark on the wall at the story’s end, has not moved, symbolizing a war which has not moved, as, indeed, in early 1917, it seemed the war would never end. And the narrator’s extended reflection on modernity and the past offers a new way of seeing the world in flux as the upheaval of global war had begun to turn the past into the present.

**William Faulkner (1897-1962)**

**Faulkner in the Context of World War I**

Only two years older than Hemingway, William Faulkner was as eager as Hemingway to see action in the war. He had begun to write verse and, even though he was not yet enrolled at the University of Mississippi, he began to publish illustrations and poems in the university yearbook in 1916. Faulkner had, however, according to his own account, seen an airplane for the first time and imagined himself a pilot, just as soon as he was old enough to go “to France and become glorious and beribboned too.”

In spring 1918, Faulkner did attempt to enlist in the air corps, but was turned away because he was too short, a little over 5’5”, and too slight. However, motivated perhaps by the engagement of his sweetheart, Estelle Oldham, to another man, Faulkner enlisted in the Canadian Royal Air Force, falsifying his documents to present himself as an Englishman and changing the original spelling of his name Falkner to Faulkner. Faulkner trained in Toronto from July through November 1918 but never saw action, as the Armistice brought peace before he could be deployed. When he returned to Oxford, he enrolled at the University of Mississippi in September 1919, where he continued to write and publish in the university newspaper and yearbook. By November 1920, Faulkner, never really interested in a university education, had dropped out.

While working in New York in 1921, Faulkner luckily met Elizabeth Prall, the future wife of Sherwood Anderson, the writer who would be as influential in Faulkner’s career as he had been in Hemingway’s. But Faulkner stayed in New York only briefly, returning to Oxford at the end of 1921 where he continued to write and publish in the university newspaper and yearbook. By November 1920, Faulkner, never really interested in a university education, had dropped out.
page story entitled “A Divine Gesture,” appeared in the May 1922 issue of the journal, and in 1925, Faulkner published several pieces in the journal, including articles, poems, and sketches of life in the city entitled “New Orleans,” as well as a series of short pieces in the New Orleans Times-Picayune. Faulkner seemed to imbibe Modernism in this bohemian milieu; in Sherwood Anderson’s circle, he was a party to continuous debates about art. While in New Orleans, Faulkner completed the typescript of his first novel, Soldier’s Pay, the tale of a seriously wounded aviator who returns to his home in Georgia at the end of the war. Once the novel was accepted by Liveright, Faulkner sailed for Europe.

After landing in Genoa in August 1925, Faulkner toured Italy, Switzerland, and France. From mid-August through early November, Faulkner was in France, largely in Paris, first in Montparnasse and then near the Luxembourg Gardens. In 1957, Faulkner would remember going to the café James Joyce frequented in order to get a look at him, but he insisted that Joyce “was the only literary man that I remember seeing in Europe in those days.” After a brief visit to England late in the year, Faulkner returned to the States in December. Back in New Orleans in early 1926, Faulkner resumed his friendship with Anderson; his foreword, however, to William Spratling’s Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles, annoyed Anderson, who felt that Faulkner had insulted and parodied him.

In 1927 Faulkner placed his second novel, Mosquitoes, with Liveright; but later in the year, Liveright rejected Faulkner’s next novel, Flags in the Dust, which finally appeared in abbreviated form as Sartoris in 1929. Early in the stages of composition of what would become Flags in the Dust, Faulkner’s imagination had begun to be peopled with characters from the southern Mississippi delta who inhabited a county Faulkner would later name Yoknapatawpha and a town called Jefferson. Inspired in part by Anderson’s fictional recreation of his own small town past in Ohio, Winesburg, Ohio, Faulkner began to understand, with Anderson’s encouragement, what Anderson meant when he told him: “You’re a country boy; all you know is that little patch up there in Mississippi where you started from.”

Much later in an interview, Faulkner would remember the monumental impact such advice had on his development as a writer:

I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it, and that by sublimating the actual into the apocryphal I would have complete liberty to use whatever talent I might have to its absolute top. It opened up a gold mine of other people…

Through much of 1928, though little is known of Faulkner’s activities, it seems that he stayed in Oxford, writing the work that became his first masterpiece, The Sound and the Fury. In January 1929, Faulkner published Sartoris with Harcourt Brace, dedicating it to Sherwood Anderson; and in October 1929, just weeks before the stock market crash, Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith published The Sound and the Fury.

Throughout the 1930s, Faulkner wrote voraciously and published short stories as well as the novels As I Lay Dying, Sanctuary, Light in August, Absalom, Absalom!, and The Wild Palms. Although written in February 1930 under a different title, “All the Dead Pilots” was rejected by a number of magazines before Faulkner included it in his first collection of stories, These Thirteen, in 1931. The publication of his short fiction paid him more than the money he earned on his first four novels, and Faulkner was desperate for money as he had finally married his childhood sweetheart, Estelle, in June 1929, after her divorce from her first husband. In April 1930, Faulkner bought a crumbling mansion in Oxford, Mississippi, a place in constant need of repair that he named Rowan Oak. By 1932, Faulkner’s literary output and reputation were climbing; in Contempo: A Review of Books and Personalities, one of the numerous “little magazines” of the period, Faulkner...
was compared favorably to Sherwood Anderson and Hemingway, among others, and named “the most creative of contemporary American writers.”

Faulkner would also embark on another lucrative venture in the 1930s, he signed on as a scriptwriter in Hollywood, though he would generally refuse to write the scripts for films made of his own novels. Faulkner worked intermittently in Hollywood through 1945; in spring 1943, he had been assigned to the script for Hemingway’s *To Have and Have Not*.

Working on the script for Hemingway’s novel and on the script of Raymond Chandler’s *The Big Sleep* in spring and summer of 1944 interrupted Faulkner’s work on *A Fable*. By August 1945, Faulkner, attempting to get out of his Warner Brothers contract, wrote to a friend, “I think I have had about all of Hollywood I can stand.”

By the 1940s, Faulkner and Hemingway had been aware of each other’s work for some time. Faulkner’s library included a copy of *To Have and Have Not*, and Hemingway’s library included fifteen titles by Faulkner from the 1930 edition of *As I Lay Dying* to *The Mansion*, published in 1959. While there is some dispute about whether the two men ever met, they did briefly exchange letters in the late 1940s after Faulkner’s comments in a creative writing class at the University of Mississippi were made public.

Faulkner had been asked to rank himself among his contemporaries; his response was:

1. Thomas Wolfe: he had much courage and wrote as if he didn’t have long to live; 2. William Faulkner; 3. Dos Passos; 4. Ernest Hemingway: he has no courage, has never crawled out on a limb. He has never been known to use a word that might cause the reader to check with a dictionary to see if it is properly used; 5. John Steinbeck: at one time I had great hopes for him—now I don’t know.

Hemingway, of course, took this as an insult to his manhood rather than his artistic ability, and when Faulkner heard that Hemingway was offended and furious, he wrote an apologetic note:

*I’m sorry of this damn stupid thing. I was just making $250.00, I thought informally, not for publication, or I would have insisted on looking at the stuff before it was released. I have believed for years that the human voice has caused all human ills and I thought I had broken myself of talking. Maybe this will be my valedictory lesson.*

*I hope it won’t matter a damn to you. But if or when or whe[n]ever it does, please accept another squirm from yours truly.*
Faulkner continued to attack the shame of segregation, adopting a reasonable and moderate approach to solving the problem, but refused an invitation to debate the subject of integration from W. E. B. DuBois, one of the founders of the NAACP, claiming that while DuBois’ position would be ethically, morally, and legally right, his own position, in advising “moderation and patience” would be practically right.144

Faulkner spent his last years continuing to write and publish, beginning a position as writer in residence at the University of Virginia in 1957, and promoting American culture abroad. Early on the morning of July 6, 1962, Faulkner died suddenly, his cause of death listed as a coronary occlusion.

“All the Dead Pilots”

I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking.185

One of six stories Faulkner wrote with World War I as their subject, “All the Dead Pilots” was first sent out, beginning in February 1930, to five different magazines, initially under the title “Per Ardua.” The title is the first part of the motto of the Royal Air Force, “Per ardua ad astra,” or, “Through adversity to the stars,” thus clearly connected to Faulkner’s own brief affiliation with the Canadian Royal Air Force. Faulkner may have thought of this story as a companion to a second story set during the war entitled “Ad Astra” published in American Caravan in March 1931. By his last attempt to publish “Per Ardua” in a magazine, Faulkner had changed its title to “All the Dead Pilots,” but was not able to place it until he included it in his first volume of short fiction, These Thirteen. When Faulkner later included the story in his 1950 Collected Stories, he placed it, significantly, with a grouping of five stories about World War I, entitling the section “The Wasteland.”

The story is structured into seven sections, narrated in first person by an anonymous war veteran as he thinks back to the closing months of the war thirteen years later. The first and seventh sections frame a tale which follows the escapades of an American from the South, John Sartoris, as he competes with the squadron commander for available women first in London and then in France. The first section begins the questioning of heroism which dominates the story by referring to photographs—those “snapshots hurriedly made” of the pilots during the war and those “modern photographs of them, the recent pictures made beside the recent shapes of steel and canvas...they look a little outlandish.” While the photographs seem to suggest permanence in the sense of staying the flow of time for just that moment of the picture, the narrator resists the suggestion of permanence by insisting that even those pilots living after the Armistice are dead—“thick men now, a little thick about the waist...with wives and children in suburban homes,” no longer the “hard, lean men who swaggered hard and drank hard because they had found that being dead was not as quiet as they had heard it would be.” During the war the snapshots, on the other hand, of those elite few offered a glimpse of “some dim and threatful apotheosis of the race seen for an instant in the glare of a thunderclap and then forever gone.” “That’s why this story is composite,” the narrator concludes the first section of the story, “a series of brief glares in which, instantaneous and without depth or perspective, there stood into sight the portent and threat of what the race could bear and become, in an instant between dark and dark.”

Having laid the foundation for what would appear to be a revelation about heroism, courage, and the meaning of the brevity of life balanced by the inevitability of death, the narrator shares just a bit of information about himself as he opens the second section of the story—he is himself a wounded pilot, who has lost a leg and is trying to get used to it. “Some dim and threatful apotheosis of the race seen for an instant in the glare of a thunderclap and then forever gone.” During the war the snapshots, on the other hand, of those elite few offered a glimpse of “some dim and threatful apotheosis of the race seen for an instant in the glare of a thunderclap and then forever gone.” “That’s why this story is composite,” the narrator concludes the first section of the story, “a series of brief glares in which, instantaneous and without depth or perspective, there stood into sight the portent and threat of what the race could bear and become, in an instant between dark and dark.”

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The narrator’s reference to the “synchronized” camera, which links to his meditations on photographs at the story’s opening and closing. The narrator’s reference to the “synchronized” camera connects to the development of aerial photography, which really came into its own during World War I, as pilots flew over battlegrounds filming the sites with mounted cameras to get a better concept of how to resist and mount attacks in trench warfare.

The narrator, in introducing the central characters of the middle of the story, Spoomer and Sartoris,
“pro patria,” that well-known quotation from Horace, linking it to the thought of real patriotism in contrast to its ironies, as he thinks “I know no man deserves praise for courage or opprobrium for cowardice, since there are situations in which any man will show either of them.” Thus this narrator seems to establish the possibility for heroism while undercutting its reality.

The central tale, told from Sections II through VI, follows the rather madcap and slapstick escapades of Sartoris as he tries to trip up Spoomer, whom he suspects of sleeping with his “girl,” a young woman of loose repute, in the village of Amiens. Sartoris, who, according to the narrator has a vocabulary of about two hundred words, seems to have far more words than that in relating his adventures to the narrator, but the narrator wants to portray him as dumb and silly in life while at the same time heroic in death. Sartoris continuously releases Spoomer’s dog, when he suspects Spoomer of having gone to Amiens, in order to track him and catch him in the back street pub with his girl.

In the midst of a German bombardment of the town, Sartoris tracks Spoomer and finds his uniform in the bedroom where he and the girl are presumably hiding. Sartoris grabs the uniform, dresses up an unconscious ambulance driver in Spoomer’s clothes, puts a note with Spoomer’s name and squadron number in the pocket, and flies back to his squadron’s aerodrome. When Spoomer returns the next day, wearing women’s clothes, he’s sent back to England, and Sartoris is demoted for dereliction of duty. Sartoris and the narrator share a laugh that Spoomer has indeed been rewarded, “‘He’s got to go back to England, where all the men are gone,’” Sartoris says. “‘All those women, and not a man between fourteen and eighty to help him. I have to laugh.’” The reader knows, when Sartoris describes the new night-flying squadron he’s been assigned to, that he is doomed: “‘I can’t fly Camels in the daytime, even,’” Sartoris tells the narrator, “‘And they don’t know it.’” By early July, Sartoris is dead—“November 11, 1918, couldn’t kill him, couldn’t leave him growing a little thicker each year behind an office desk, with what had once been hard and lean and immediate grown a little dim, a little baffled, and betrayed, because by that day he had been dead almost six months.”

Faulkner’s keen sense of the dead and the past adds another layer to the tale in the use of Sartoris as its central heroic/unheroic character, for Sartoris is from the South, “from a plantation at Mississippi, where they grew grain and Negroes, or the Negroes grew the grain—something.” Johnny Sartoris is one of a number of characters in Faulkner’s fiction with the last name of Sartoris, most notably Colonel John Sartoris and Bayard Sartoris, ancestors of the present Johnny, both of whom fought in the Civil War. So Faulkner is able, by using John Sartoris as a character, to link the aftermath of World War I to an American South peopled with ghosts in the aftermath of the Civil War; these ghosts are powerfully embodied in stone by the Confederate soldier who stands guard even today, facing south into the heart of Dixie, over the square in Faulkner’s own home town of Oxford, Mississippi.

The story’s closing section reproduces pieces of mail, reminding the reader that the narrator is a mail censor; these letters and a parcel will provide the news of John Sartoris’ death on the 4th of July, 1918. There is a letter from John to his aunt in Jefferson, Mississippi, a package with Sartoris’ effects, a letter from the major announcing Sartoris’ death and burial place, and, finally, letters from his great aunt. “[L]et those foreign women alone,” his aunt advises, “I lived through a war myself and I know how women act in war, even with Yankees.” The aunt’s closing advice underscores the Southern position on this war overseas,

“it dont look like they will ever get done fighting over there. So you come on home. The Yankees are in it now. Let them fight if they want to. It’s their war. It’s not ours.”

Unwittingly, the great aunt’s conclusion that this is the Yankees’ war now heightens the irony of Sartoris’ death on Independence Day. The censoring narrator has both revealed and obscured Sartoris’ story, suggesting the slipperiness and impermeability of language. “The courage, the recklessness, call it what you will,” explains the narrator, “is the flash, the instant of sublimation; then flick! The old darkness again.” Now, the truly fragile nature of heroism and of the media used to record it form the core of the narrator’s conclusions. Heroism, he thinks, can’t be a steady diet, for:

…being momentary, it can be preserved and prolonged only on paper: a picture, a few written words that any match, a minute and harmless flame that any child can engender, can obliterate in an instant. A one-inch sliver of sulphur-tipped wood is longer than memory or grief; a flame no larger than a sixpence is fiercer than courage or despair.

Both text and photograph, those media designed to protect and preserve a present reality in the future, can be annihilated as quickly as a flame can consume them or a memory can fade and disappear.

“The aim of every artist,” Faulkner later wrote, “is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that 100 years later when a stranger looks at it, moves again since it is life.” But even in the act of arresting that motion, Faulkner was always tragically aware of how easily the text, like the courage and heroism of all those dead pilots, could disintegrate into ash.
All the Dead Pilots

By William Faulkner

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In the pictures, the snapshots hurriedly made, a little faded, a little dog-eared with the thirteen years, they swagger a little. Lean, hard, in their brass-and-leather martial harness, posed standing beside or leaning upon the esoteric shapes of wire and wood and canvas in which they flew without parachutes, they too have an esoteric look; a look not exactly human, like that of some dim and threatful apotheosis of the race seen for an instant in the glare of a thunderclap and then forever gone.

Because they are dead, all the old pilots, dead on the eleventh of November, 1918. When you see modern photographs of them, the recent pictures made beside the recent shapes of steel and canvas with the new cowlings and engines and slotted wings, they look a little outlandish: the lean young men who once swaggered. They look lost, baffled. In this saxophone age of flying they look as out of place as, a little thick about the waist, in the sober business suits of thirty and thirty-five and perhaps more than that, they would look among the saxophones and miniature brass bowlers of a night club orchestra. Because they are dead too, who had learned to respect that whose respect in turn their hardness had commanded before there were welded center sections and parachutes and ships that would not spin. That’s why they watch the saxophone girls and boys with slipstream-proof lipstick and aeronautical flasks piling up the saxophone crates in private driveways and on golf greens, with the quick sympathy and the bafflement too. “My gad,” one of them—ack emma, warrant officer pilot, captain and M.C. in turn—said to me once; “if you can treat a crate that way, why do you want to fly at all?”

But they are all dead now. They are thick men now, a little thick about the waist from sitting behind desks, and maybe not so good at it, with wives and children in suburban homes almost paid out, with gardens in which they putter in the long evenings after the 5:15 is in, and perhaps not so good at that either: the hard, lean men who swaggered hard and drank hard because they had found that being dead was not as quiet as they had heard it would be. That’s why this story is composite: a series of brief glares in which, instantaneous and without depth or perspective, there stood into sight the portent and the threat of what the race could bear and become, in an instant between dark and dark.

II

In 1918 I was at Wing Headquarters, trying to get used to a mechanical leg, where, among other things, I had the censoring of mail from all squadrons in the Wing. The job itself wasn’t bad, since it gave me spare time to experiment with a synchronized camera on which I was working. But the opening and reading of the letters, the scrawled, brief pages of transparent and honorable lies to mothers and sweethearts, in the script and spelling of schoolboys. But a war is such a big thing, and it takes so long. I suppose they who run them (I don’t mean the staffs, but whoever or whatever
it is that controls events) do get bored now and then. And it’s when you get bored that you turn petty, play horse.

So now and then I would go up to a Camel squadron behind Amiens and talk with the gunnery sergeant about the synchronization of the machine guns. This was Spoomer’s squadron. His uncle was the corps commander, the K.G., and so Spoomer, with his Guards’ Captaincy, had also got in turn a Mons Star, a D.S.O., and now a pursuit squadron of single seaters, though the third barnacle on his tunic was still the single wing of an observer.

In 1914 he was in Sandhurst: a big, ruddy-colored chap with china eyes, and I like to think of his uncle sending for him when the news got out, the good news. Probably at the uncle’s club (the uncle was a brigadier then, just recalled hurriedly from Indian service) and the two of them opposite one another across the mahogany, with the newsboys crying in the street, and the general saying, “By gad, it will be the making of the Army. Pass the wine, sir.”

I daresay the general was put out, not to say outraged, when he finally realized that neither the Hun nor the Home Office intended running this war like the Army wanted it run. Anyway, Spoomer had already gone out to Mons and come back with his Star (though Ffollansbye said that the general sent Spoomer out to get the Star, since it was going to be one decoration you had to be on hand to get) before the uncle got him transferred to his staff, where Spoomer could get his D.S.O. Then perhaps the uncle sent him out again to tap the stream where it came to surface. Or maybe Spoomer went on his own this time. I like to think so. I like to think that he did it through pro patria, even though I know that no man deserves praise for courage or opprobrium for cowardice, since there are situations in which any man will show either of them. But he went out, and came back a year later with his observer’s wing and a dog almost as large as a calf.

That was 1917, when he and Sartoris first came together, collided. Sartoris was an American, from a plantation at Mississippi, where they grew grain and Negroes, or the Negroes grew the grain—something. Sartoris had a working vocabulary of perhaps two hundred words, and I daresay to tell where and how and why he lived was beyond him, save that he lived in the plantation with his great-aunt and his grandfather. He came through Canada in 1916, and he was at Pool. Ffollansbye told me about it. It seems that Sartoris had a girl in London, one of those three-day wives and three-year widows. That’s the bad thing about war. They—the Sartorises and such—didn’t die until 1918, some of them. But the girls, the women, they died on the fourth of August, 1914.

So Sartoris had a girl. Ffollansbye said they called her Kitchener, “because she had such a mob of soldiers.” He said they didn’t know if Sartoris knew this or not, but that anyway for a while Kitchener—Kit—appeared to have ditched them all for Sartoris. They would be seen anywhere and any time together, then Ffollansbye told me how he found Sartoris alone and quite drunk one evening in a restaurant. Ffollansbye told how he had already heard that Kit and Spoomer had gone off somewhere together about two days ago. He said that Sartoris was sitting there, drinking himself blind, waiting for Spoomer to come in. He said he finally got Sartoris into a cab and sent him to the aerodrome. It was about dawn then, and Sartoris got a captain’s tunic from someone’s kit, and a woman’s garter from someone else’s kit, perhaps his own, and pinned the garter on the tunic like a barnacle ribbon. Then he went and waked a corporal who
was an ex-professional boxer and with whom Sartoris would put on the gloves now and then, and made the corporal put on the tunic over his underclothes. “Namesh Spoomer,” Sartoris told the corporal. “Cap’m Spoomer”; swaying and prodding at the garter with his finger. “Dishtinguish Sheries Thighs,” Sartoris said. Then he and the corporal in the borrowed tunic, with his woolen underwear showing beneath, stood there in the dawn, swinging at one another with their naked fists.

III

You’d think that when a war had got you into it, it would let you be. That it wouldn’t play horse with you. But maybe it wasn’t that. Maybe it was because the three of them, Spoomer and Sartoris and the dog, were so humorless about it. Maybe a humorless person is an unflagging challenge to them above the thunder and the alarms. Anyway, one afternoon—it was in the spring, just before Cambrai fell—I went up to the Camel aerodrome to see the gunnery sergeant, and I saw Sartoris for the first time. They had given the squadron to Spoomer and the dog the year before, and the first thing they did was to send Sartoris out to it.

The afternoon patrol was out, and the rest of the people were gone too, to Amiens I suppose, and the aerodrome was deserted. The sergeant and I were sitting on two empty petrol tins in the hangar door when I saw a man thrust his head out the door of the officers’ mess and look both ways along the line, his air a little furtive and very alert. It was Sartoris, and he was looking for the dog.

“The dog?” I said. Then the sergeant told me, this too composite, out of his own observation and the observation of the entire enlisted personnel exchanged and compared over the mess tables or over pipes at night: that terrible and omniscient inquisition of those in an inferior station.

When Spoomer left the aerodrome, he would lock the dog up somewhere. He would have to lock it up in a different place each time, because Sartoris would hunt until he found it, and let it out. It appeared to be a dog of intelligence, because if Spoomer had only gone down to Wing or somewhere on business, the dog would stay at home, spending the interval grubbing in the refuse bin behind the men’s mess, to which it was addicted in preference to that of the officers.

But if Spoomer had gone to Amiens, the dog would depart up the Amiens road immediately on being freed, to return later with Spoomer in the squadron car.

“Why does Mr. Sartoris let it out?” I said. “Do you mean that Captain Spoomer objects to the dog eating kitchen refuse?”

But the sergeant was not listening. His head was craned around the door, and we watched Sartoris. He had emerged from the mess and he now approached the hangar at the end of the line, his air still alert, still purposeful. He entered the hangar. “That seems a rather childish business for a grown man,” I said.

The sergeant looked at me. Then he quit looking at me.

“He wants to know if Captain Spoomer went to Amiens or not.”

After a while I said, “Oh. A young lady. Is that it?”

He didn’t look at me. “You might call her a young lady. I suppose they have young ladies in this country.”
I thought about that for a while. Sartoris emerged from the first hangar and entered the second one. “I wonder if there are any young ladies any more anywhere,” I said.

“Perhaps you are right, sir. War is hard on women.”

“What about this one?” I said. “Who is she?”

He told me. They ran an estaminet, a “bit of a pub” he called it—an old harridan of a woman, and the girl. A little place on a back street, where officers did not go. Perhaps that was why Sartoris and Spoomer created such a furor in that circle. I gathered from the sergeant that the contest between the squadron commander and one of his greenest cubs was the object of general interest and the subject of the warmest conversation and even betting among the enlisted element of the whole sector of French and British troops. “Being officers and all,” he said.

“They frightened the soldiers off, did they?” I said. “Is that it?” The sergeant did not look at me. “Were there many soldiers to frighten off?”

“I suppose you know these young women,” the sergeant said. “This war and all.”

And that’s who the girl was. What the girl was. The sergeant said that the girl and the old woman were not even related. He told me how Sartoris bought her things—clothes, and jewelry; the sort of jewelry you might buy in Amiens, probably. Or maybe in a canteen, because Sartoris was not much more than twenty. I saw some of the letters which he wrote to his great-aunt back home, letters that a third-form lad in Harrow could have written, perhaps bettered. It seemed that Spoomer did not make the girl any presents.

“Maybe because he is a captain,” the sergeant said. “Or maybe because of them ribbons he don’t have to.”

“Maybe so,” I said.

And that was the girl, the girl who, in the centime jewelry which Sartoris gave her, dispensed beer and wine to British and French privates in an Amiens back street, and because of whom Spoomer used his rank to betray Sartoris with her by keeping Sartoris at the aerodrome on special duties, locking up the dog to hide from Sartoris what he had done. And Sartoris taking what revenge he could by letting out the dog in order that it might grub in the refuse of plebeian food.

He entered the hangar in which the sergeant and I were: a tall lad with pale eyes in a face that could be either merry or surly, and quite humorless. He looked at me. “Hello,” he said.

“Hello,” I said. The sergeant made to get up.

“Carry on,” Sartoris said. “I don’t want anything.” He went on to the rear of the hangar. It was cluttered with petrol drums and empty packing cases and such. He was utterly without self-consciousness, utterly without shame of his childish business.

The dog was in one of the packing cases. It emerged, huge, of a napped, tawny color; Ffollansbye had told me that, save for Spoomer’s wing and his Mons Star and his D.S. O., he and the dog looked alike. It quitted the hangar without haste, giving me a brief, sidelong glance. We watched it go on and disappear around the corner of the men’s mess. Then Sartoris turned and went back to the officers’ mess and also disappeared.

Shortly afterward, the afternoon patrol came in. While the machines were coming up to the line, the squadron car turned onto the aerodrome and stopped at the officers’
mess and Spoomer got out. “Watch him,” the sergeant said. “He’ll try to do it like he wasn’t watching himself, noticing himself.”

He came along the hangars, big, hulking, in green golf stockings. He did not see me until he was turning into the hangar. He paused; it was almost imperceptible, then he entered, giving me a brief, sidelong glance. “How do,” he said in a high, fretful, level voice. The sergeant had risen. I had never seen Spoomer even glance toward the rear, toward the overturned packing case, yet he had stopped. “Sergeant,” he said.

“Sir,” the sergeant said.

“Sergeant,” Spoomer said. “Have those timers come up yet?”

“Yes, sir. They came up two weeks ago. They’re all in use now, sir.”

“Quite so. Quite so.” He turned; again he gave me a brief, sidelong glance, and went on down the hangar line, not fast. He disappeared. “Watch him, now,” the sergeant said. “He won’t go over there until he thinks we have quit watching him.”

We watched. Then he came into sight again, crossing toward the men’s mess, walking briskly now. He disappeared beyond the corner. A moment later he emerged, dragging the huge, inert beast by the scruff of its neck. “You mustn’t eat that stuff,” he said. “That’s for soldiers.”

IV

I didn’t know at the time what happened next. Sartoris didn’t tell me until later, afterward. Perhaps up to that time he had not anything more than instinct and circumstantial evidence to tell him that he was being betrayed: evidence such as being given by Spoomer some duty not in his province at all and which would keep him on the aerodrome for the afternoon, then finding and freeing the hidden dog and watching it vanish up the Amiens road at its clumsy hand gallop.

But something happened. All I could learn at the time was, that one afternoon Sartoris found the dog and watched it depart for Amiens. Then he violated his orders, borrowed a motor bike and went to Amiens too. Two hours later the dog returned and repaired to the kitchen door of the men’s mess, and a short time after that, Sartoris himself returned on a lorry (they were already evacuating Amiens) laden with household effects and driven by a French soldier in a peasant’s smock. The motor bike was on the lorry too, pretty well beyond repair. The soldier told how Sartoris had driven the bike full speed into a ditch, trying to run down the dog.

But nobody knew just what had happened, at the time. But I had imagined the scene, before he told me. I imagined him there, in that bit of a room full of French soldiers, and the old woman (she could read pips, no doubt; ribbons, anyway) barring him from the door to the living quarters. I can imagine him, furious, baffled, inarticulate (he knew no French) standing head and shoulders above the French people whom he could not understand and that he believed were laughing at him. “That was it,” he told me. “Laughing at me behind their faces, about a woman. Me knowing that he was up there, and them knowing I knew that if I busted in and dragged him out and bashed his head off, I’d not only be cashiered, I’d be clinked for life for having infringed the articles of alliance by invading foreign property without warrant or something.”

Then he returned to the aerodrome and met the dog on the road and tried to run it down. The dog came on home, and Spoomer returned, and he was just dragging it by
the scruff of the neck from the refuse bin behind the men’s mess, when the afternoon patrol came in. They had gone out six and come back five, and the leader jumped down from his machine before it had stopped rolling. He had a bloody rag about his right hand and he ran toward Spoomer stooped above the passive and stiff-legged dog. “By gad,” he said, “they have got Cambrai!”

Spoomer did not look up. “Who have?”

“Jerry has, by gad!”

“Well, by gad,” Spoomer said. “Come along, now. I have told you about that muck.”

A man like that is invulnerable. When Sartoris and I talked for the first time, I started to tell him that. But then I learned that Sartoris was invincible too. We talked, that first time. “I tried to get him to let me teach him to fly a Camel,” Sartoris said. “I will teach him for nothing. I will tear out the cockpit and rig the duals myself, for nothing.”


“Or anything. I will let him choose it. He can take an S.E. if he wants to, and I will take an Ak.W. or even a Fee and I will run him clean out of the sky in four minutes. I will run him so far into the ground he will have to stand on his head to swallow.”

We talked twice: that first time, and the last time. “Well, you did better than that,” I said the last time we talked.

He had hardly any teeth left then, and he couldn’t talk very well, who had never been able to talk much, who lived and died with maybe two hundred words. “Better than what?” he said.

“You said before that you would run him clean out of the sky. You didn’t do that; you did better: you have run him clean off the continent of Europe.”

V

I think I said that he was invulnerable too. November 11, 1918, couldn’t kill him, couldn’t leave him growing a little thicker each year behind an office desk, with what had once been hard and lean and immediate grown a little dim, a little baffled, and betrayed, because by that day he had been dead almost six months.

He was killed in July, but we talked that second time, that other time before that. This last time was a week after the patrol had come in and told that Cambrai had fallen, a week after we heard the shells falling in Amiens. He told me about it himself, through his missing teeth. The whole squadron went out together. He left his flight as soon as they reached the broken front, and flew back to Amiens with a bottle of brandy in his overall leg. Amiens was being evacuated, the roads full of lorries and carts of household goods, and ambulances from the Base hospital, and the city and its immediate territory was now interdict.

He landed in a short meadow. He said there was an old woman working in a field beyond the canal (he said she was still there when he returned an hour later, stooping stubbornly among the green rows, beneath the moist spring air shaken at slow and monstrous intervals by the sound of shells falling in the city) and a light ambulance stopped halfway in the roadside ditch.

He went to the ambulance. The engine was still running. The driver was a young man in spectacles. He looked like a student, and he was dead drunk, half sprawled out of the cab. Sartoris had a drink from his own bottle and tried to rouse the driver, in vain.
Then he had another drink (I imagine that he was pretty well along himself by then; he told me how only that morning, when Spoomer had gone off in the car and he had found the dog and watched it take the Amiens road, how he had tried to get the operations officer to let him off patrol and how the operations officer had told him that La Fayette awaited him on the Santerre plateau) and tumbled the driver back into the ambulance and drove on to Amiens himself.

He said the French corporal was drinking from a bottle in a doorway when he passed and stopped the ambulance before the estaminet. The door was locked. He finished his brandy bottle and he broke the estaminet door in by diving at it as they do in American football. Then he was inside. The place was empty, the benches and tables overturned and the shelves empty of bottles, and he said that at first he could not remember what it was he had come for, so he thought it must be a drink. He found a bottle of wine under the bar and broke the neck off against the edge of the bar, and he told how he stood there, looking at himself in the mirror behind the bar, trying to think what it was he had come to do.

“I looked pretty wild,” he said.

Then the first shell fell. I can imagine it: he standing there in that quiet, peaceful, redolent, devastated room, with the bashed-in door and the musing and waiting city beyond it, and then that slow, unhurried, reverberant sound coming down upon the thick air of spring like a hand laid without haste on the damp silence; he told how dust or sand or plaster, something, sifted somewhere, whispering down in a faint hiss, and how a big, lean cat came up over the bar without a sound and flowed down to the floor and vanished like dirty quicksilver.

Then he saw the closed door behind the bar and he remembered what he had come for. He went around the bar. He expected this door to be locked too, and he grasped the knob and heaved back with all his might. It wasn’t locked. He said it came back into the shelves with a sound like a pistol, jerking him off his feet. “My head hit the bar,” he said. “Maybe I was a little groggy after that.”

Anyway, he was holding himself up in the door, looking down at the old woman. She was sitting on the bottom stair, her apron over her head, rocking back and forth. He said that the apron was quite clean, moving back and forth like a piston, and he standing in the door, drooling a little at the mouth, “Madame,” he said. The old woman rocked back and forth.

He propped himself carefully and leaned and touched her shoulder. “Toinette,” he said. “Où est-elle, 'Toinette?" That was probably all the French he knew; that, with vin added to his 196 English words, composed his vocabulary.

Again the old woman did not answer. She rocked back and forth like a wound-up toy. He stepped carefully over her and mounted the stair. There was a second door at the head of the stair. He stopped before it, listening. His throat filled with a hot, salty liquid. He spat it, drooling; his throat filled again. This door was unlocked also. He entered the room quietly. It contained a table, on which lay a khaki cap with the bronze crest of the Flying Corps, and as he stood drooling in the door, the dog heaved up from the corner furthest from the window, and while he and the dog looked at one another above the cap, the sound of the second shell came dull and monstrous into the room, stirring the limp curtains before the window.
As he circled the table the dog moved too, keeping the table between them, watching him. He was trying to move quietly, yet he struck the table in passing (perhaps while watching the dog) and he told how, when he reached the opposite door and stood beside it, holding his breath, drooling, he could hear the silence in the next room. Then a voice said:

“Maman?”

He kicked the locked door, then he dived at it, again like the American football, and through it, door and all. The girl screamed. But he said he never saw her, never saw anyone. He just heard her scream as he went into the room on all fours. It was a bedroom; one corner was filled by a huge wardrobe with double doors. The wardrobe was closed, and the room appeared to be empty. He didn’t go to the wardrobe. He said he just stood there on his hands and knees, drooling, like a cow, listening to the dying reverberation of the third shell, watching the curtains on the window blow once into the room as though to a breath.

He got up. “I was still groggy,” he said. “And I guess that brandy and the wine had kind of got joggled up inside me.” I daresay they had. There was a chair. Upon it lay a pair of slacks, neatly folded, a tunic with an observer’s wing and two ribbons, an ordnance belt. While he stood looking down at the chair, the fourth shell came.

He gathered up the garments. The chair toppled over and he kicked it aside and lurched along the wall to the broken door and entered the first room, taking the cap from the table as he passed. The dog was gone.

He entered the passage. The old woman still sat on the bottom step, her apron over her head, rocking back and forth. He stood at the top of the stair, holding himself up, waiting to spit. Then beneath him a voice said: “Que faites-vous en haut?”

He looked down upon the raised moustached face of the French corporal whom he had passed in the street drinking from the bottle. For a time they looked at one another. Then the corporal said, “Descendez,” making a peremptory gesture with his arm. Clasping the garments in one hand, Sartoris put the other hand on the stair rail and vaulted over it.

The corporal jumped aside. Sartoris plunged past him and into the wall, banging his head hollowly again. As he got to his feet and turned, the corporal kicked at him, striking for his pelvis. The corporal kicked him again. Sartoris knocked the corporal down, where he lay on his back in his clumsy overcoat, tugging at his pocket and snapping his boot at Sartoris’ groin. Then the corporal freed his hand and shot pointblank at Sartoris with a short-barreled pistol.

Sartoris sprang upon him before he could shoot again, trampling the pistol hand. He said he could feel the man’s bones through his boot, and that the corporal began to scream like a woman behind his brigand’s moustaches. That was what made it funny, Sartoris said: that noise coming out of a pair of moustaches like a Gilbert and Sullivan pirate. So he said he stopped it by holding the corporal up with one hand and hitting him on the chin with the other until the noise stopped. He said that the old woman had not ceased to rock back and forth under her starched apron. “Like she might have dressed up to get ready to be sacked and ravaged,” he said.

He gathered up the garments. In the bar he had another pull at the bottle, looking at himself in the mirror. Then he saw that he was bleeding at the mouth. He said he didn’t
know if he had bitten his tongue when he jumped over the stair rail or if he had cut his mouth with the broken bottle neck. He emptied the bottle and flung it to the floor.

He said he didn’t know then what he intended to do. He said he didn’t realize it even when he had dragged the unconscious driver out of the ambulance and was dressing him in Captain Spoomer’s slacks and cap and ribboned tunic, and tumbled him back into the ambulance.

He remembered seeing a dusty inkstand behind the bar.

He sought and found in his overalls a bit of paper, a bill rendered him eight months ago by a London tailor, and, leaning on the bar, drooling and spitting, he printed on the back of the bill Captain Spoomer’s name and squadron number and aerodrome, and put the paper into the tunic pocket beneath the ribbons and the wing, and drove back to where he had left his aeroplane.

There was an Anzac battalion resting in the ditch beside the road. He left the ambulance and the sleeping passenger with them, and four of them helped him to start his engine, and held the wings for his tight take-off.

Then he was back at the front. He said he did not remember getting there at all; he said the last thing he remembered was the old woman in the field beneath him, then suddenly he was in a barrage, low enough to feel the concussed air between the ground and his wings, and to distinguish the faces of troops. He said he didn’t know what troops they were, theirs or ours, but that he strafed them anyway. “Because I never heard of a man on the ground getting hurt by an aeroplane,” he said. “Yes, I did; I’ll take that back. There was a farmer back in Canada plowing in the middle of a thousand-acre field, and a cadet crashed on top of him.”

Then he returned home. They told at the aerodrome that he flew between two hangars in a slow roll, so that they could see the valve stems in both wheels, and that he ran his wheels across the aerodrome and took off again. The gunnery sergeant told me that he climbed vertically until he stalled, and that he held the Camel mushing on its back. “He was watching the dog,” the sergeant said. “It had been home about an hour and it was behind the men’s mess, grubbing in the refuse bin.” He said that Sartoris dived at the dog and then looped, making two turns of an upward spin, coming off on one wing and still upside down. Then the sergeant said that he probably did not set back the air valve, because at a hundred feet the engine conked, and upside down Sartoris cut the tops out of the only two poplar trees they had left.

The sergeant said they ran then, toward the gout of dust and the mess of wire and wood. Before they reached it, he said the dog came trotting out from behind the men’s mess. He said the dog got there first and that they saw Sartoris on his hands and knees, vomiting, while the dog watched him. Then the dog approached and sniffed tentatively at the vomit and Sartoris got up and balanced himself and kicked it, weakly but with savage and earnest purpose.

VI

The Ambulance driver, in Spoomer’s uniform, was sent back to the aerodrome by the Anzac major. They put him to bed, where he was still sleeping when the brigadier and the Wing Commander came up that afternoon. They were still there when an ox cart turned onto the aerodrome and stopped, with, sitting on a wire cage containing chick-
ens, Spoomer in a woman’s skirt and a knitted shawl. The next day Spoomer returned to England. We learned that he was to be a temporary colonel at ground school.

“The dog will like that, anyway,” I said.

“The dog?” Sartoris said.

“The food will be better there,” I said.

“Oh,” Sartoris said. They had reduced him to second lieutenant, for dereliction of duty by entering a forbidden zone with government property and leaving it unguarded, and he had been transferred to another squadron, to the one which even the B.E. people called the Laundry.

This was the day before he left. He had no front teeth at all now, and he apologized for the way he talked, who had never really talked with an intact mouth. “The joke is,” he said, “it’s another Camel squadron. I have to laugh.”

“Laugh?” I said.

“Oh, I can ride them. I can sit there with the gun out and keep the wings level now and then. But I can’t fly Camels. You have to land a Camel by setting the air valve and flying it into the ground. Then you count ten, and if you have not crashed, you level off. And if you can get up and walk away, you have made a good landing. And if they can use the crate again, you are an ace. But that’s not the joke.”

“What’s not?”

“The Camels. The joke is, this is a night-flying squadron. I suppose they are all in town and they don’t get back until after dark to fly them. They’re sending me to a night-flying squadron. That’s why I have to laugh.”

“I would laugh,” I said. “Isn’t there something you can do about it?”

“Sure. Just keep that air valve set right and not crash. Not wash out and have those wing flares explode. I’ve got that beat. I’ll just stay up all night, pop the flares and sit down after sunrise. That’s why I have to laugh, see. I can’t fly Camels in the daytime, even. And they don’t know it.”

“Well, anyway, you did better than you promised,” I said. “You have run him off the continent of Europe.”

“Yes,” he said. “I sure have to laugh. He’s got to go back to England, where all the men are gone. All those women, and not a man between fourteen and eighty to help him. I have to laugh.”

VII

When July came, I was still in the Wing office, still trying to get used to my mechanical leg by sitting at a table equipped with a paper cutter, a pot of glue and one of red ink, and laden with the meager, thin, here soiled and here clean envelopes that came down in periodical batches—envelopes addressed to cities and hamlets and sometimes less than hamlets, about England—when one day I came upon two addressed to the same person in America: a letter and a parcel. I took the letter first. It had neither location nor date:

Dear Aunt Jenny,

Yes I got the socks Elnora knitted. They fit all right because I gave them to my batman he said they fit all right. Yes I like it here better than where I was
these are good guys here except these damn Camels. I am all right about
going to church we don’t always have church. Sometimes they have it for
the ak emmas because I reckon a ak emma needs it but usually I am pretty
busy Sunday but I go enough I reckon.

Tell Elnora much oblige for the socks they fit all right but maybe you bet-
ter not tell her I gave them away. Tell Isom and the other niggers hello and
Grandfather tell him I got the money all right but war is expensive as hell.

Johnny.

But then, the Malbroucks don’t make the wars, anyway. I suppose it takes too many
words to make a war. Maybe that’s why.

The package was addressed like the letter, to Mrs Virginia Sartoris, Jefferson,
Mississippi, U.S.A., and I thought, What in the world would it ever occur to him to
send to her? I could not imagine him choosing a gift for a woman in a foreign country;
choosing one of those trifles which some men can choose with a kind of infallible tact.
His would be, if he thought to send anything at all, a section of crank shaft or maybe a
handful of wrist pins salvaged from a Hun crash. So I opened the package. Then I sat
there, looking at the contents.

It contained an addressed envelope, a few dog-eared papers, a wrist watch whose
strap was stiff with some dark dried liquid, a pair of goggles without any glass in one
lens, a silver belt buckle with a monogram. That was all.

So I didn’t need to read the letter. I didn’t have to look at the contents of the package,
but I wanted to. I didn’t want to read the letter, but I had to.

—Squadron, R.A.F. France.
5th July, 1918.

Dear Madam,

I have to tell you that your son was killed on yesterday morning. He was
shot down while in pursuit of duty over the enemy lines. Not due to care-
lessness or lack of skill. He was a good man. The E.A. outnumbered your
son and had more height and speed which is our misfortune but no fault
of the Government which would give us better machines if they had them
which is no satisfaction to you. Another of ours, Mr R. Kyerling 1000 feet
below could not get up there since your son spent much time in the hangar
and had a new engine in his machine last week. Your son took fire in ten
seconds Mr Kyerling said and jumped from your son’s machine since he
was side slipping safely until the E.A. shot away his stabiliser and controls
and he began to spin. I am very sad to send you these sad tidings though it
may be a comfort to you that he was buried by a minister. His other effects
sent you later.

I am, madam, and etc.

C. Kaye, Major

He was buried in the cemetary just north of Saint Vaast since we hope it
will not be shelled again since we hope it will be over soon by our padre
since there were just two Camels and seven E.A. and so it was on our side by that time.

C. K. Mjr.

The other papers were letters, from his great-aunt, not many and not long. I don't know why he had kept them. But he had. Maybe he just forgot them, like he had the bill from the London tailor he had found in his overalls in Amiens that day in the spring.

...let those foreign women alone. I lived through a war myself and I know how women act in war, even with Yankees. And a good-for-nothing hellion like you....

And this:

...we think it's about time you came home. Your grandfather is getting old, and it don't look like they will ever get done fighting over there. So you come on home. The Yankees are in it now. Let them fight if they want to. It's their war. It's not ours.

And that's all. That's it. The courage, the recklessness, call it what you will, is the flash, the instant of sublimation; then flick! the old darkness again. That's why. It's too strong for steady diet. And if it were a steady diet, it would not be a flash, a glare. And so, being momentary, it can be preserved and prolonged only on paper: a picture, a few written words that any match, a minute and harmless flame that any child can engender, can oblitercote in an instant. A one-inch sliver of sulphur-tipped wood is longer than memory or grief; a flame no larger than a sixpence is fiercer than courage or despair.
Out of the “waste land,” Eliot’s incomparable metaphor for the aftermath of global war, writers like Hemingway, Pound, Eliot, Woolf, and Faulkner shaped the cultural course of twentieth-century transatlantic Modernism. Their refusal to accept and bow to the despair of a “lost generation” gave weight and substance to the belief, so eloquently expressed by Faulkner, that it is through the literary work that the human race survives, in the “puny inexhaustible voice” of the poet, “still talking.”
NOTES


2. Attributed both to H. G. Wells and President Woodrow Wilson, this phrase aptly describes the war that initiated the appearance of the modern world.


4. Ibid., 23.


8. Qtd. in Fussell, 64.


11. The Latin has been translated as: “It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.” The line comes from the *Odes* of Roman poet Horace in which he exhorts the Romans to fight against the enemies of Rome. Horace, *The Odes: New Translations by Contemporary Poets*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, III.2, 162. In the English translation, former poet laureate Robert Hass renders the line as: “Honorable and sweet to die for one’s country.”


16. See *Lines of Fire* for more on these points.


19. A slang term used to refer to American soldiers in World War I, specifically those in the American Expeditionary Force.


22. Qtd. in *Lines of Fire*, 137.


25. Ibid., 125.


31. Ibid., 493.


43. Ezra Pound, “In a Station of the Metro,” *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, II.1 (April 1913) : 12. The spacing of the poem is reproduced here to match the way it was originally printed in *Poetry*.


47. Ibid.


50. *Poetry* continues publishing today, celebrating its centennial in 2012.

51. Qtd. in “Poetry: A Magazine of Verse,” *The Modernist Journals Project*, published by Brown University and The University of Tulsa, online: <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/mjp/render.php?view=mjp_object&id=1202232622296875>. The website where digitized copies of *Poetry* and other “little magazines” can be viewed is an incredible online resource for students of the emergence of Modernist works in journals and periodicals of the first half of the twentieth century, for it provides valuable contextual material while also reproducing entire issues of twenty-two journals.


59. Hynes, 11.
61. See Hynes for further development of this point, 311.
62. D. H. Lawrence, qtd. in Hynes, 326.
63. Hynes, 348.
64. Ernest Hemingway to a friend, 1950, epigraph qtd. in Ernest Hemingway’s A Moveable Feast, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1964, title page.
68. Lynn, 90.
72. Qtd. in Flora, 42.
75. Qtd. in Lynn, 212.
77. Hemingway, A Moveable Feast, 207.
79. French for “novel with a key,” that is a novel with characters who are thinly disguised real people.
81. Qtd. in Hays, 5.
82. Grace Hemingway, qtd. in Hays, 10.
83. Conrad Aiken, qtd. in Hays, 9.
84. Hemingway qtd. in Meyers, 227.
85. Meyers, 118.
87. J. Donald Adams, “Ernest Hemingway’s First Novel in Eight Years.”
89. Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bells Tolls, qtd. in Lynn, 491.
91. See Lynn, 536, for more details about this confrontation and quotation from Mary Hemingway’s autobiography How It Was.
92. See Meyers, 445, for a quote from Julien Dedman of Scribner’s verifying this information.
94. Posthumously published in the centennial year of Hemingway’s birth, this novel was unfinished at the time of Hemingway’s suicide and edited by his son Patrick, setting off a controversy about how an author’s unfinished work should be edited after his death. A longer and re-edited version of the manuscript, entitled Under Kilimanjaro, was released in 2007 by scholars Robert W. Lewis and Robert E. Fleming.
95. Qtd. in Keith Kinnamon, “Hemingway and Politics,” The Cambridge Companion to


97. This suicide scenario, although disputed by Hemingway’s widow, Mary, is confirmed in two biographies: Lynn, 592, and Meyers, 560–561.

98. An image of the memorial with the words clearly visible may be viewed online at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hemingway_memo-rial.jpg>.


100. Hemingway, A Moveable Feast, 29.


104. Virginia Woolf, qtd. in Hays, 10.

105. Hays, 11.

106. See Hays, 22, for this claim.


109. Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, New York: Scriber, 2006, 38. All future quotations in the text are from this edition, and page numbers will be indicated in parenthetical citation.

110. Georgette Leblanc was a well-known Parisian soprano and actress, who had been the mistress of the playwright Maurice Maeterlinck and who had acted in many of his plays. By the twenties, scholars speculate that Leblanc had become involved in a lesbian relationship with Margaret Anderson, the editor of The Little Review, which had published Hemingway’s short story “Mr. and Mrs. Elliott.” Hemingway liked Anderson but not Leblanc; in a letter to Ezra Pound, Hemingway referred to Leblanc as “Georgette Mangeuse le Blanc,” (Lynn, 320) or Georgette the eater, which, with its suggestion of devouring, provides an ironic contrast to the prostitute Georgette and her bad teeth. Just as importantly, though, Georgette Leblanc had financed and starred in the film production “L’Inhumaine” (“The Inhuman Woman”) in 1924 which Hemingway may have seen—he was in Paris in November 1924 when the film was screened—this film like so many of the period was experimentalist and sought to present the multifaceted features of modern art.

111. Qtd. in Lynn, 266.

112. This claim and the information about Paris which follows is supported by a splendid PBS film, available for viewing on the internet, entitled “Paris: The Luminous Years, Toward the Making of the Modern,” online at <http://www.pbs.org/programs/paris/>.

113. See Donald Pizer, American Expatriate Writing and the Paris Moment, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996, 74, for this claim and further: “…the close similarity between the expatriate experiences of Jake…on the one hand, and those of Hemingway…on the other, reveals the powerful autobiographical foundation of almost all expatriate writing set abroad” (74).


115. Qtd. in Lamb, 37.

116. Polysyndeton is “the repetition of conjunctions…[it] render[s] what we say more vivacious and energetic, exhibiting an appearance of vehemence, and of passion bursting forth as it were time after time.” This definition from the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974, 656) quotes Roman rhetorician Quintilian (c. 35–c. 100) to elaborate on the effects that may be achieved through the use of this figure.

117. See Lamb, 60, 64, 109, for more elaboration of these concepts and Lamb, 60, for the quotation from Hemingway’s Death in the Afternoon.

118. See Lamb, 54 and following, for a discussion of impressionism and expressionism and their relevance to the study of Hemingway.

119. Lamb, 64.

120. Qtd. in Lynn, 161.


124. Qtd. in Adams, 59.


126. Pound was fascinated by what he understood, from the work of Ernest Fenollosa, as the nature of the Chinese written character—both a graphic sign and a picture of a thing, or pictograph, and by the manner in which Chinese characters could be combined to form ideogrammatic, pictographic collages. See Ernest Fenollosa, The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry: A Critical Edition, eds. Haun Saussy, Jonathan Stalling, and Lucas Klein, Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2008.

127. In the brief description given of Blast, the editors of the Modernist Journals Project write: “Despite its short life, Blast was a powerful influence in the shaping and promoting of modernism.” “Blast,” The Modernist Journals Project, Brown University and The University of Tulsa, online at <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/mjp/render.php?id=1158591480633184&view=mjp_object>.


133. The modern poetic sequence is a distinct genre of poetry, considered by scholars as “the modern poetic form within which all the tendencies of more than a century of experiment define themselves and find their aesthetic purpose.” “The sequence,” scholars M. L. Rosenthal and Sally M. Gall add, “has been [the] great vehicle for discovering the full possibilities of dynamic interplay among poems and fragments conceived under the same ultimate psychological pressure or creative impulse.” See The Modern Poetic Sequence: The Genius of Modern Poetry, M. L. Rosenthal and Sally M. Gall, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, vii.


135. Ezra Pound, “Medallion,” Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (Life and Contacts), Personae: The Collected Shorter Works of Ezra Pound, New York: New Directions, 1971, 204. All quotations are from this edition and will be identified by parenthetical citation in the text. The allusions in the poem are identified as: Luini, a sixteenth-century Italian painter associated with Leonardo; Anadyomene, the goddess Aphrodite rising from the sea; Reinach, Salomon Reinach (1858–1932), an archaeologist and museum curator; Minos, king of Crete in Greek mythology and son of Zeus whose wife Pasiphae bore the monstrous Minotaur resulting from her encounter with a bull.

136. Ruthven, 133.


139. Hemingway, A Moveable Feast, 111.

140. Ibid.


147. Baudelaire’s poetry intended to shock its contemporary audience out of complacency—six poems from *Les Fleurs du Mal* were banned in France—but managed to exert major influence on the development of Modernism through an unshrinking realism and devotion to exposure of the vice and decadence at the heart of nineteenth-century French society.


150. The passage Eliot lifted from Baudelaire appears in Baudelaire’s “Au Lecteur,” or, “To the Reader,” from *Les Fleurs du Mal* and insists upon the reader’s identification with the poetic speaker as well as the evil Baudelaire poetically exposes to view.


153. The line is a direct reference to Gene Buck and Herman Ruby’s “That Shakespearian Rag,” a hit in 1912. “But Shakespeare never knew/Of ragtime in his days/But the high bowered rhymes,/Of his syncopated lines./You’ll admit, surely fit, any/song that’s now a hit...,” qtd. in Rainey, “Editor’s Annotations,” 97.


157. Ibid.

158. Ibid., 15.


162. Ibid., 103.

163. Ibid., 104.

164. Ibid., 107.


170. Qtd. in Lee, 194. Seven stone six is the equivalent of approximately 106 pounds, while twelve stone would equal about 168 pounds. Woolf is using the example of a man, since her “mad” character is a man. Septimus Warren Smith, but the rest cure was used predominantly on women; see, among many sources, Ellen...

172. Ibid., 22.


175. Qtd. in Gresset, 35.

176. Qtd. in Gresset, 66.

177. Ibid., 68


181. Ibid, 74.

182. Hemingway to Faulkner, qtd. in Fruscione, 76.

183. Qtd. in Gresset, 93.

184. Qtd. in Gresset, 98.


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