An American in Paris : strategies of otherness in *The Sun Also Rises*

Morgan George

Cycnos, études anglophones
revue électronique éditée sur épi-Revel à Nice
ISSN 1765-3118 ISSN papier 0992-1893

George MORGAN

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS : STRATEGIES OF OTHERNESS IN *THE SUN ALSO RISES*

> Duff said, «I say. That's a shabby way to treat an Ambassador.» Don said, «But he's only an American Ambassador.» Bill said, «They don't know that here though.» «Go on, Hem,» Duff said. «You know him. Go out and say something to him.»
> «Give him the keys to the city,» Pat said. «Give him the keys to my room,» Dan said. (First draft of *The Sun Also Rises*, Manuscript p. 7).

> Masquer la nature et la déguiser... Il y a des lieux où il faut appeler Paris, Paris, et d'autres où il la faut appeler capitale du royaume. (Blaise Pascal, Thought N° 49).

Set in Paris and Northern Spain, shortly after World War I, *The Sun Also Rises* (1), Hemingway's first major novel, evokes the physical dissipation and spiritual corruption of a shifting community of expatriate (mainly American) men and one (English) woman. Little happens, particularly in the early chapters of the novel devoted to life in the French capital. What action there is mainly depicts the attempts of these individuals to find a measure of conviviality in trivial talk, sex for some and carousing for all in café, restaurant and night-club. As a socio-historical depiction of post-War depression, the story is unconvincing. Settings and characters are sketchily drawn; the dialogue is rarely searching and authorial comment is non-existent. Yet this portrait of a «lost generation» (2) haunts the reader with images and conversations of tantalizing simplicity, conveying a sense of bewilderment and alienation. By its very terseness, Hemingway's language is resonant with symbolic and mythical connotations. Such, for instance, is Paris itself, a world of nightmarish and inescapable contradictions, as perceived by Georgette, the Belgian prostitute, and Jake, the American newspaper correspondent, two of the many foreigners who inhabit this bizarre city :

«What's the matter ?» she asked. «Going on a party ?»
«Sure. Aren't you ?»
«I don't know. You never know in this town.»
«Don't you like Paris ?»
«No.»
«Why don't you go somewhere else ?»
«Isn't anywhere else.»
«You're happy, all right.»
«Happy, hell.» (*TSAR*, pp. 14-15).

Alongside the Paris of drinking, dining and endless car-rides, Hemingway evokes another Paris, a city which is more a state of soul, the mirror image of the spiritual condition of those citizens who temporarily inhabit and are conditioned by it. This is no emblematic symbolism however, establishing Paris once and for all as a kind of existentialist inferno. The city and, broadly speaking,

all the physical locations in the novel, express obliquely the essential «otherness» of the characters, their inner emotional natures which are habitually repressed in their everyday exchanges («Let's not talk. Talking's all bilge, says Brett , the English aristocrat (*TSAR*, p. 55)). As the above dialogue suggests, Paris symbolizes the divergent state of mind of individual characters. Hence, the numerous and inconclusive divisions of opinion about the city which stud the first nine chapters of the novel and the fluctuations of characters' mood within the flow of the narrative. Brett, more sensitive than most to the «rottenness» of their spiritual condition, sees Paris one moment as a «pestilential city». Seconds later, she can recognize its strangely indispensable quality : «I was a fool to go away... One's an ass to leave Paris.» (*TSAR*, p. 75). In the literal interpretation which is central to Hemingway's stylistic technique, Paris represents both a source of corruption and the possibility of a form of sanity.

Most revealing of all of Paris's symbolic function is the discussion between Jake Barnes, the first world war veteran and foreign correspondent through whose eyes and words the novel is related and Robert Cohn, a Princeton-educated Jew and romantic escapist. Cohn is intent on leaving Paris for South America. Jake's reply comes as near as anything in the novel to a philosophical statement of spiritual values :

> «Listen, Robert, going to another country doesn't make any difference. I've tried all that. You can't get away from yourself by moving from one place to another. There's nothing to that.»
> «But you've never been to South America.»
> «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 ?»
> «I'm sick of Paris and I'm sick of the Quarter.»
> «Stay away from the Quarter. Cruise around by yourself and see what happens to you.»
> «Nothing happens to me. I walked alone all night and nothing happened except a bicycle cop stopped and asked to see my papers.»
> «Wasn't the town nice at night ?»
> «I don't care for Paris.» (*TSAR*, pp. 11-12).

Once again, this Paris is no mere capital city with its buildings and boulevards, its history and art. For Cohn, the Princeton-educated Jew and romantic escapist, it is the reminder of a world of spiritual desolation and repressive authority. For Jake, on the other hand, it is «a good town», a «nice» town, the banal adjectives, by their stark simplicity, accruing undefinable metaphysical connotations. For him, the city has come to represent a cryptically coded space, an imaginative and emotional environment, most easily perceived in darkness, indispensible to the on-going quest for a full existence, for «living your life». Without this Paris, without its nerve centre, the «Quarter», the lone explorer runs the risk of some vague but ominous fate : «see what happens to you». Hemingway is perhaps no more than semi-ironical when he confers a Pascalian persona on Jake, the tight-lipped chronicler of Paris mores. Like the Port-Royal philosopher, Jake attributes Cohn's problems to his inability to remain confined to one place, one town or country or room (3). Cohn, reflects Jake further on, suffers from the «two stubbornesses» : on the one hand, the belief that «South America can fix it», and, on the other, his dislike of Paris.To lend a more philosophical bent to Jake's words, perpetual movement, centrifugality and flight from self towards an ethe-

real dream state have led Cohn to refute Pascal's ideal of repose, centralization ans self-knowledge. Like so many of the characters in the novel, although in a way peculiar to himself, Cohn neglects not only the «otherness» of social intercourse (he will abandon his fiancée and ultimately break off from all his friends) but also the «otherness» of his own nature, the dark inner zones of consciousness, imaged here by the references to Paris.

In an introduction to *The Sun Also Rises*, Malcolm Cowley has criticized what he calls the «street by street accounts of Jake's wanderings through Paris» (4) and sees them as a major weakness in the narrative structure. It is my contention that without these accounts and the wealth of associations and symbolism they provide, the novel would fail to communicate Hemingway's essentially metaphysical vision. In the pages that follow, I would like to suggest therefore an alternative reading of the Paris chapters of Hemingway's story in which physical and spatial depiction serves not merely as a backdrop to the action but as an essential element in the psychic and spiritual drama which constitutes, in my opinion, the hidden core of the novel. As several discussions in the text suggest, the crux of the problem is the loss of values; more precisely, it is the loss of some former wholeness represented both by Jake's war wound, and by the alienated condition of this expatriate community. Without wishing to be exhaustive, I will examine some of the verbal techniques involving the city of Paris with which Hemingway embodies the concept of estrangement from others and from the «other» in self as well as Jake Barnes's endeavours, in the course of his peregrinations through this «good town», to find a solution to the Pascalian dilemma.

*
**
***

In the opening paragraphs of Chapter VI, Jake proffers one of his many desultory observations on the city landscape. Riding back from the right bank on yet another cab-trip across Paris, he circumvents an unnamed monument which he acknowledges with his personal brand of laconic whimsy before continuing his journey towards Montparnasse :

> The taxi rounded the statue of the inventor of the semaphore engaged in doing same, and turned up the Boulevard Raspail, and I sat back to let part of the ride pass. The Boulevard Raspail always makes dull riding. It was like a certain stretch on the P.L.M. between Fontainebleau and Montereau that always made me feel bored and dead and dull until it was over. I suppose it is some association of ideas that makes those dead places in a journey. (*TSAR*, p. 40).

The passage, like many of the visual notations in the novel, is insignificant as description. However, as insight into the functioning of Jake's rôle and Hemingway's text, it is invaluable. Seen from one angle, that of the writer, the monument provides an auto-reflexive image of the inventor inventing, of the author Hemingway in the act of «doing same», creating a system of coded verbal signals intended to connect not only the writer with his «vision» or «meaning», but also to bridge the distances between the production and the perception of the text, between the writer and that distant «other», his reader. As such, it can be read as a coded invitation to decipher the signs, to look beyond the surface meaning of the text to the hidden messages within. From another angle, that of the narrative proper, the

statue presents Jake with an image of an idealized *alter ego*, one of the many on the Paris scene towards which he half-consciously aspires. Almost alone in the novel, Jake emerges, like the flag-waving inventor, as a would-be communicator. His days are spent talking and reconciling, sending and receiving messages, riding buses and taxis or merely walking the streets in endless seemingly pointless wanderings but which serve to draw together the threads of the city into a single web. The fact that Jake does not consciously explicit this relationship is perfectly in keeping with the character Hemingway is creating for him. It is in his nature as a member of the lost generation to suppress his innermost thoughts. These however are conveyed indirectly by the author through a patterning of allusions to the urban landscape. Monuments, churches, cafés and so on are intended by Hemingway less as a physical backdrop to the action but as a series of coded pointers to the protagonists' moods, signifying, beyond their conscious perceptions and comments, their psychic and spiritual condition, their essential «otherness».

Hemingway's coding functions in several distinct ways which it may be useful to explore in order to elucidate and justify the Paris guide-book aspect of the novel (5). To begin with, a word about the oblique use of patronyms and toponyms which is a key feature of Hemingway's symbolisation technique. A modicum of research reveals the anonymous inventor to be Claude Chappe, a French engineer who set up the first semaphore visual telegraph between Paris and Lille in 1794 and whose invention was widely used to establish communications during the Napoleonic Wars. The detail serves firstly to illustrate the use of bi-lingual phonetic puns that Hemingway regularly slips into his text, even when, as here, the name is implied rather than explicit. «Chap» is a British colloquialism used often and somewhat idiosyncratically by Brett, aristocratic English nymphomaniac (6). In her usage, the term applies indiscriminately to men and women, establishing a kind of verbal blending of opposites which she seeks but never achieves on the sexual level despite her hyper-active night-life. Secondly, the historical references in the passage illustrate Hemingway's networking of cultural allusions and their inclusion in his thematic design. Jake moves in a world of Napoleonic reminiscences recalling the emperor's military greatness and subsequent fall. In addition to Claude Chappe's rôle in Bonaparte's successes, the two towns mentioned by Jake, Fontainebleau and Montereau have precise Napoleonic implications. Though both are railway stations on the Paris-Lyon-Mediterreanean railway, they are also the sites of the emperor's last victory against the allies in 1814 and his subsequent surrender at the Château de Fontainebleau The Paris chapters of the novel abound in veiled allusions of this kind. The rue des Pyramides and the rue de Rivoli through which Jake travels on his journey to the Latin Quarter with the whore, Georgette, both carry connotations of early Napoleonic victories (*TSAR*, p. 15). So does the Arc de Triomphe du Caroussel, erected to celebrate Bonaparte's victories of 1805 in front of which the cab passes (though once again no *explicit* allusion is made) on its way through the Tuileries (*TSAR*, p. 16). It is here, ironically enough, that Jake's war wound deprives him of any opportunity for sexual conquest. Even the brandy Count Mippipopolous orders for Kate and Brett dates back to 1811, the acme of Napoleon's achievement (*TSAR*, p. 62).

For Jake, these «associations of ideas» never entirely reach the conscious level of perception, remaining rather as his nocturnal «other» both illustrating and conditioning his conscious attitudes and behaviour (7). For the reader, they supply oblique but precious information about the workings of the protagonist's mind while adding an additional ironical twist to our perception of his condition.

While Napoleon appears to constitute one of his «*alter egos*» with whom Jake, the ex-soldier, unconsciously identifies, the reader can nonetheless measure the distance which separates the legendary career of the French emperor and the pathetic exploits of the war veteran. Hemingway's strategy, conducted here with consummate skill, consists in conveying to the reader his character's inner desire while demonstrating the auto-censorship to which this inner «other» self is subjected. One of the more explicit examples will help illustrate Hemingway's technique. The statue of Marshal Ney, situated at the intersection of the Boulevard St. Michel and the Boulevard Montparnasse, a little way from Jake's flat, makes direct allusion to the Napoleonic legend. Jake reads the inscription on a wreath left by «the Bonapartist Groups, some date; I forget.» and stops to admire the Marshal's military stance : «He looked very fine, Marshal Ney in his top-boots, gesturing with his sword among the green new horse-chesnut leaves.» (*TSAR*, p. 29). The character's adulation of an ideal hero-figure, «the bravest of the brave» in Bonaparte's words, combines here with the suppression of undesirable fact. On the one hand, Ney's legend for courage was established in the face of crushing defeat following the Russian campaign. On the other, the Marshal was publicly executed only a short distance from the spot where his memorial now stands on December 7th 1815, possibly the date referred to and conveniently forgotten by Jake. The analogy with Jake, ex-soldier and *aficionado* of all combat sports, is obvious. He too conducts his heroic struggle against the meaninglessness of existence only to be finally defeated. It is the irony of the comparison, however, which seems to bear the weight of Hemingway's purpose pointing out the tragic distance which separates the present generation from the mythical past which they continue, subconsciously, to venerate. The Marshal's sword, brandished among the fresh spring leaves, is a poignant reminder of Jake's sexual disability, of the phallic «sword» lost in combat on the Italian front, a front where Napoleon, needless to say, achieved some of his greatest victories.

Jake's obsession with French military figures and battles, embodied in symbolically-charged references to place-names and buildings (the list could include Crillon, Denfert-Rochereau, Belfort) is counterbalanced by a similarly close webbing of allusions to religious figures enshrined in the names of districts, streets and churches visited by Jake in the course of the narrative. In fact, original religious «purity», particularly martyrdom, and more recent heroic military struggle constitute the two thematic poles which most frequently convey the tragedy and ironic oppositions of Jake's existential dilemma (8). Without wishing to be exhaustive, one could mention Montmartre («Martyr's Mount») (*TSAR*, p. 62), the church of St. Etienne du Mont (St. Stephen of the Mount), the first Christian martyr (*TSAR*, p. 25), the rue Saint Jacques (St. James) (*TSAR*, p. 78), the apostle and yet another martyr whose shrine in Compostello was the centre of medieval pilgrimages, ironically reminiscent of the latter-day excursion by Jake and his friends to the drinking and bull-fighting fiesta at Pamplona (9). All provide Jake with obscure reminders of a paradigmatic event involving the violent loss of some primordial goodness. At Montmartre, also alluded to as the «hill» (*TSAR*, p. 61), he is aware of reliving a distorted, modernistic version of Calvary : «I had the feeling as in a nightmare of it all being something repeated, something I had been through and that now I must go through again.» (*TSAR*, p. 64).

Topographical description and allusion in Hemingway's novel is always less than realistic representation. Visual detail is rarely sufficient to reconstruct a physical setting. Closer examination of Jake's labyrinthine wanderings through

Paris reveal however that geographical locations are regularly invested with more than representational significance. Names are used as talismans to denotate a state of consciousness, a zone in the emotional geography of the character. Similarly, monuments, cafés, streets or entire districts come to embody a feeling, an association of meaning which ultimately signify the spiritual or psychic mood of the protagonist Hemingway is concerned to portray.

This feature of Hemingway's technique is best illustrated by the way in which different districts of Paris appear both to condition and reveal Jake's inner life as he criss-crosses the city from Left Bank to Right, from the centrally situated Latin Quarter to a variety of loci on the Paris periphery. This geographical patterning provides Hemingway with one of his most effective symbols of Jake's diverse attempts not only to come to terms with other people but to pull together the different facets of his owh fragmented self. In a general way, Jake appears to weave a spider's web, drawing invisible threads of communication between the peripheral districts of the city and the more central areas. Distance, or inaccessibility from the centre, is inseparable from an awareness of an inner divide. The more excentric a location, the more frequently it conveys a sense of alienation or loss. Madame Lecomte's restaurant, for instance, situated on the Ile Saint-Louis but on the «far side of the island», conveys the perception of an irretrievable degeneracy. Despite its aristocratic overtones (suggested by the owner's name : «The Count»), the establishment is no longer what it was, «a quaint restaurant on the Paris quais as yet untouched by Americans» (*TSAR*, p. 76). Similarly, Montmartre, on the northern fringes of the city, provides the setting for the discovery of corruption and separation suggested by Jake and Brett's deceptively bland leave-taking :

> «Good night, Brett,» I said. «I'm sorry you feel rotten.»
> «Good night, Jake. Good night darling. I won't see you again.» (*TSAR*, p. 65) (9).

On the southern outskirts, the Parc Montsouris is also the site of human and psychic estrangement. Jake perceives it first as a place of former but lost vitality and communication : «The restaurant where they have the pool of live trout and where you can sit and look out over the park was closed and dark.» (p. 27). It is significant that this locale first serves as a backdrop for a discussion of Jake's «difference», his symbolic wound, then shortly afterwards for yet another experience of estrangement as he and Brett become aware of their bizarre «love» which both draws them together yet holds them apart :

> «...It's a lot of fun, too, to be in love.»
> «Do you think so ?» her eyes looked flat again.
> «I don't mean fun that way. In a way it's an enjoyable feeling.»
> «No,» she said. «I think it's hell on earth.»
> «It's good to see each other.»
> «No. I don't think it is.»
> «Don't you want to ?»
> «I have to.»
> We were sitting now like two strangers. (*TSAR*, p. 27).

Geographically situated between the Latin Quarter and the periphery, Montmartre («Mount Parnassus») is appropriately and ironically enough, the customary rendez-vous point of the American writers. The name of the «in» café, The Select and its close rival The Dingo (with its bi-lingual pun on «wild dog» and «lunatic») suggest the two antinomic forces which collide here; the intellectual elitism of

would-be artists and the vicious in-fighting of a tight-knit community. Though nominally gathering-places, these cafés are in fact presented by Hemingway as either hide-outs for the solitary or theatres of dissension. Typical of the latter is the couple formed by Robert Cohn and his fiancée Frances Clyne who row, split and row again as Frances accuses the writer of self-pitying isolationism : «You pity yourself so much you can't remember what the other person said» (*TSAR*, p. 50). Among the loners is Harvey Stone, seeking solace in drink and yearning for a kind of Pascalian solitude : «When I'm like this I just want to be alone. I want to stay in my room. I'm like a cat.» (*TSAR*, p. 43). Habitually, the patrons of these establishments are installed at the terrace, away from the more congenial setting of the bar and in a position of alienated observer of the passing crowd. Despite appearances, Montparnasse symbolizes non-communication, the ironic divide between the individual and the reality around and within him.

The other, no longer fashionable cafés in the area, the Dome, the Rotonde, and the Closerie des Lilas, also receive apposite thematic treatment from Hemingway. By virtue of their names, all evoke an enclosed space, specifically circular in two cases, similar in outline to Paris itself. Simultaneously, they prefigure the circular bull-ring in chapter XVIII in which the toreador transcends his ultimate loneliness to achieve communion with the dark blind energy within the bull as well as with his own inner life (*TSAR*, p. 216). The Parisian drinking and eating arenas however represent a bygone era of communication to which the present generation no longer responds. Jake remarks on the «sad tables of the Rotonde» (*TSAR*, p. 42) before passing on to The Select. Earlier, he had ignored the whole line of these cafés along the boulevard, their «tightness» or «closedness» signifying Jake's inability to communicate here, even with the unknown stranger who waves to him from the terrace : «I did not see who it was and went on. I wanted to get home. The Boulevard Montparnasse was deserted. Lavigne's was closed tight, and they were stacking the tables outside the Closerie des Lilas.» (*TSAR*, p. 29). Certain locations, unlike the semaphore memorial, are indissociable from Jake's inability to respond either to the outside world of others or to the otherness within.

Jake's instinctive response to this situation is to seek the refuge of his flat in the Latin Quarter on the upper section of the Boulevard Saint-Michel. The fact is significant for several reasons. Firstly, one observes Jake reacting again in Pascalian terms, withdrawing to the emotional centre of his room; secondly, because it points to the symbolic significance of the «Quarter» as a focal point or radius for communication with others and with self. Claude Chappe, to return to the unnamed hero, raises flags on the fringes of the Latin Quarter and in sight of Montparnasse as though in an attempt to communicate between the centre and the outer reaches. As mentioned earlier, it is the Quarter which constitutes the nerve-centre of Jake's existential experiments in «living (his) life». No single location in Paris however is without its drawbacks, its metaphoric ambiguities. The «Quarter» in fact is perceived alternatively as a form of existential hell and the gateway to a quasi-mystical fusion with self and others. On one level, the district constitutes a social gathering-place, a focal point where strangers and friends meet in trivial pursuits, seeking conviviality in casual encounters. Jake, for instance, who brings Georgette, the Belgian whore, to a restaurant here : «I had picked her up because of some vague sentimental idea it would be nice to eat with someone.» (*TSAR*, p. 16). Behind Jake's bland explanation, however, lies a whole quest for «otherness», taking the shape here of social intercourse. In the Quarter, unlike Montpar-

nasse, characters achieve a measure of human communication and integration. With Georgette, Jake drinks, jokes, touches glasses. He is called by voices from «the other room»; he invites Georgette to «have coffee with the others.» Similarly, the dancing-club on the Mont Sainte-Geneviève provides a gathering-place in which people meet, mingle and fall in love. Jake even finds momentary animal contentment here : «It was hot and I felt happy» (*TSAR*, p. 23). Yet, the signs are that this form of conviviality is inadequate, at least as perceived by Jake, and, fleetingly, by Brett. It is a measure, moreover, of the Pascalian perspective of Hemingway's text that these characters react in ways and terms reminiscent of the 17th century philosopher's analysis of the human predicament. Their frantic fun-seeking (*divertissement* in Pascal's French) stems from boredom, Pascalian *ennui* as Jake admits on several occasions : «I was bored enough», he confesses in the restaurant (*TSAR*, p. 17). This in turn leads to disgust the quest for superficial knowledge (*fausses apparences* in Pascal) : «This whole show makes me sick is all», asserts Jake (*TSAR*, p. 21), and induces a further awareness of moral and spiritual wretchedness (Pascal's *misère*). «Oh, darling, I've been so miserable», admits Brett outside the night-club (*TSAR*, p. 24), one of several occasions on which she uses the adjective in this way.

Thus, for the reader, following Jake on his nocturnal round, the Latin Quarter comes to represent a spiritual desert in which physical activity only serves, in the long term, to exacerbate a sense of futility and inadequacy. Yet, as I hinted earlier, the «Quarter» is also seen by Jake as a vital centre and an existential laboratory for experiments in «living your life». In fact, in Hemingway's text, no place or toponym is ever unequivocal nor can its «symbolic» associations be fixed once and for all. Like so many semantic flags, they acquire new meanings and ambiguities in keeping with the shifting moods of the characters themselves.

Central to Hemingway's handing of the urban landscape is the degree of «receptivity» of his characters at various moments to physical stimuli from their environment. The more attentive the character to the sensorial features of people and places about them, the stronger the positive associations binding the observer not only to the otherness of external reality but to the «Other» within himself. Slow, careful scrutiny of a circumscribed environment, similar to Pascal's recipe for contemplation within one's room, seems to provide several examples of this form of experience, all of them occurring within the Latin Quarter. In Chapter IV, Jake flees the futile bickering of Montparnasse to take refuge in his flat in the vicinity of Pascalian Port Royal. Here, within the confines of his room, he rejects social communication («To Hell with people») to devote himself in dream and memory to his inner life. Significantly, he discovers a forgotten world of emotion achieving by the same token that peace of mind and union with his own feelings which are so frequently repressed in everyday, expatriate Paris. Remembering first «the others, the Italians» and the hospital «liaison colonel», he finally achieves an orgasmic psychic communion with an internalized image of Brett, a relationship denied him in his physical life :

> 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 down the street, and then I went to sleep.
> (*TSAR*, p. 31).

However cathartic, this experience is limited, predominantly cerebral and ego-centric. Such in fact is the metaphysical nature of Jake's «symbolic» wound :

the «old grievance» or original sin of consciousness which prevents complete absorption in inner meditation. The return to the lumbering Paris trams signals the continued presence of the other world of external phenomena. The Pascalian formula is tried and, in this form at least, found wanting...

Several parallel experiences suggest however that attentive scrutiny to the physical world is the surest way to the inner world of psychic well-being. Landscape and people hold up a mirror to the caring observer revealing, though others, the «otherness» of his own nature. As Jake and Brett drive through the dark streets of the Mont Sainte-Geneviève, the name itself a reminder of the 5th Century visionary and patron saint of Paris, they are jolted together in the enclosed, slow-moving cab, a metaphorical analogue of Pascal's «room». As though for the first time, Jake sees her clearly, discovering an uncharacteristic intensity of vision signified by a lyricism and precision of language seldom found in his descriptions of other people :

> We were sitting apart and we jolted close together going down the old street. Brett's hat was off. Her head was back. I saw her face in the lights of the open shops, then its was dark, then I saw her face clearly... Brett's face was white and the long line of her neck showed in the bright of the flares. The street was dark again and I kissed her. (*TSAR*, p. 25).

Looking into her eyes, he sees through them, as through a looking-glass, into unsuspected depths :

> My arms were around her and she was leaning back against me, and we were quite calm. She was looking into my eyes with that way she had of looking that made you wonder whether she really saw out of her own eyes. They would look on and on after every one else's eyes in the world would have stopped looking. (*TSAR*, p. 26).

A second example of this visionary initiation once again involves a slow, nocturnal peregrination through the streets of the Latin Quarter, this time in the company of Bill Gorton, the American writer. Their path leads them, circuitously and in defiance of pedestrian logic, round the entire Ile Saint-Louis, (yet another oblique reminder of a soldier-saint (10)), across the Seine, and through a labyrinth of narrow streets heading up the hill towards Montparnasse. The fact that both religious and military names line the route once more adds metaphorical resonances to this quasi-mystical pilgrimage. The rue du Cardinal Lemoine, named after a XIIIth century cleric and scholar, gives onto the Place Contrescarpe, situated at the former limits of the medieval city fortifications. The route leads then towards the «rigid north and south of the rue Saint-Jacques, with its echoes of the pilgrimage centre at St. Jacques de Compostello in Northern Spain. Finally, this ritual journey takes the two companions past the Val de Grâce (Vale of Grace) military hospital, originally built as a convent, before leading them out of the «Quarter» to the Boulevard Montparnasse where they emerge opposite the Port Royal Abbey of Pascalian fame. During the climb, Jake has once more become intensely aware of the physical world about him, the music from the Nègre Joyeux (negritude in the novel is frequently suggestive of the dark inner world of self) or the pouring wine in the kitchen of the Café des Amateurs, literally the Lover's Café. The fact that neither man feels the urge for a drink («No.. I don't need it», says Bill) (*TSAR*, p. 78), in a city where drinking is an habitual means of forgetting, of getting «blind» or «tight», with the literal suggestions these terms connote, conveys the momentary transformation produced by this incursion into the secret dark world of the Paris centre, a transformation which has produced both a sense

of emphathetic closeness with a travalling-companion and an inner peace and intensity of perception.

The Pascalian formula for centralization, for focussing on the realm of inner consciousness, the self-knowledge of the «other» within, combines on both these occasions with physical and emotional awareness of fellow human-beings, man or woman, of the other without. The solitude of the contemplative soul needs the complementary balm of altruistic care, of «love». The point is perhaps most tellingly made by Hemingway's juxtaposition of two Paris «bridge» scenes. In the course of his travels, Jake regularly crosses the Seine; but crossing bridges, like viewing statues, signifies more than the pleasure of viewing the river. They symbolize, on the one hand, Jake's attempts to draw together the opposite zones of the city, the business-oriented Right Bank (Jake's office is situated near the Opera) and the imaginative and cultural areas of the Left Bank but also, on the other, his efforts to fuse the opposite poles of his own nature, the diurnal and the nocturnal reaches of consciousness. His enjoyment in both instances is indissociable from an encounter with an anonymous other. In Chapter VI, crossing the river near the Place de la Concorde, he admires the bargemen returning from the upper reaches :

> Crossing the Seine I saw a string of barges being towed down the current, riding high, the bargemen at the sweeps as they came towards the bridge. The river looked nice. It was always pleasant crossing bridges in Paris. (*TSAR*, p. 41).

On this occasion, Jake stands alone, the moment unshared by any other person while the emptiness of the barges metaphorically points up the hollowness of the experience, similar to his solitary mental communings with Brett. In contrast, the bridge between the Ile Saint-Louis and the Left Bank, is the location of an almost Joycean epiphany in which light and dark, male and female, self and other fuse in a moment of silent elemental intensity :

> «It's pretty grand», Bill said. «God, I love to get back.»
> We leaned on the wooden rail of the bridge and looked up the river to the lights of the big bridges. Below the water was smooth and black. It made no sound against the piles of the bridge. A man and a girl passed us. They were walking with their arms around each other. (*TSAR*, p. 77).

This time, the moment is shared : by Jake and Bill Gorton at the beginning of their foray into the Quarter, but also by the couple of anonymous lovers. Here, the known and the unknown are locked in a double embrace.

It may be excessive to claim that Hemingway is positing here his own ideal, the healing of the «old grievance» of psychic dissociation and social estrangement. The author has so distancied himself from his text, and even from his chief protagonist, that it would be foolhardy to make any philosophical claims on his behalf. The novel is primarily a verbal structuring of places, situations and attitudes. But it is also, as we suggested earlier, *about* metaphysics, about wholeness and loss and, as such, invites the reader's own conclusions and critical judgment. Those moments when Jake comes closest to fullness, emotional and spiritual, are those when he establishes subtle and unspoken links between himself and those around him, and through them, with the stifled, but ever-active depths of his own soul. These are the moments too when he most resembles his ultimate hero and *alter ego*, the bull-fighter, Pedro Romero whose name echoes not only the Roman Church but also its first father. Pedro it is, at all events, who most fully demonstrates the lost art of combining the demonstration of concern for others with

inner strength and wholeness :

> «he did it all for himself inside, and it strengthened him, and yet he did it for her, too. But he did not do it for her at any loss for himself. He gained by it all through the afternoon.» (*TSAR*, p. 216).

That Pedro achieves this dual communion with others and with self in Spain rather than Paris is finally irrelevant. The French capital, the Quarter in particular, possesses still the potential for wholeness, for the symbolic healing of the wound of self-awareness. For Paris, like the bull-fight arena, is an image of the human condition. And the individual becomes there as he makes himself. What distinguishes Pedro from the «lost generation» is faith, and the traditional ritual art of invoking the mysterious «other» within the bull. What distinguishes Jake from his fellow Americans too is not only his extreme awareness of his psychic wound but also the willingness and the ability to draw upon the techniques of rememoration, of quasi mystical rediscovery of selfhood. The French capital city, like Pedro's arena, is the otherness, the mental space the which is capable of restoring him to the fullness within himself. The *aficionado*, the man of passion, the man of faith also, feels his way through the Paris of Pascal... and simultaneously too espouses Pascal's *pari*.

FOOTNOTES

(1) All quotations in this article are taken from *The Sun Also Rises*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1954. Future references will be abbreviated to *TSAR*.

(2) See Gertrudes Stein's observation quoted in Hemingway's epigraph.

(3) Cf. Pascal, Pensée 139 : «J'ai découvert que tout le malheur de l'homme vient d'une seule chose, qui est de ne pas savoir demeurer en repos, dans une chambre. Un homme qui a assez de bien pour vivre, s'il savait demeurer chez soi avec plaisir, n'en sortirait pas pour aller sur la mer ou au siège d'une place. On n'achètera une charge à l'armée si cher, que parce qu'on trouverait insupportable de ne bouger de la ville; et on ne recherche les conversations et les divertissements des jeux que parce qu'on ne peut demeurer chez soi avec plaisir.» The theme of Hemingway's novel along with numerous motifs and expressions shows a striking resemblance to Pascal's reflexions in *Les Pensées*, particularly Thought 139. It is interesting to note that the author of *The Sun Also Rises* situated his hero's appartment at the upper end of the Boulevard Saint Michel in a district called Port Royal named after the Jansenist abbey where Pascal composed his *Thoughts*.

(4) Malcolm Cowley, «Introduction to *The Sun Also Rises*», *Three Novels of Ernest Hemingway* (New York; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. xxvii.

(5) The streets, monuments and bars, in as far as we have been able to establish, all tally with the Paris of the early 1920s when Hemingway wrote his novel, mostly on the terrace of the Closerie des Lilas on the Bd. Montparnasse. Only one reference clashes with the Paris of reality. There is an Avenue but no *Rue* Denfert-Rochereau in Paris (*TSAR*, p. 72). In the unlikely event that Hemingway confused the two, the Avenue is at the top end of the Bd. St. Michel, not half way down as the author suggests. Nor have I been able to trace the statue of the «Gentleman who invented pharmacy». Bill Gorton's comment («Don't try and fool me on Paris») is mostly likely charged with wry authorial humour. Hemingway who had an intimate knowledge of Parisian landscape and street network, no doubt has tongue in cheek at this point, possibly to cock a snoop at the over-zealous commentator, more likely to remind the reader willing enough to take the trouble to check that this is after all an «unreal City», to borrow Eliot's phrase, a Paris of fiction and imagination, not a mere text-book copy of the reality. For a useful anecdotal guide to the American connection in Paris, Cf. Brian N. Morton : *Americans in Paris*, The Olivia & Hill Press, Ann Arbor, 1984.

(6) Hemingway's Brett appears to owe much of her personality to the Honourable Dorothy Brett, an English aristocrat, feminist and party-giver in the London of the early 1920s. She was also an intimate of the English novelist, D.H. Lawrence.

(7) «Reading» and «books» are frequently referred to as a source of unconscious conditioning or irrational behaviour. Jake says of Cohn's South American and Paris fixations : «He got the first idea out of a book, and I suppose the second came out of a book too.» (*TSAR*, p. 12). All of Jake's «associations of ideas» are based upon his own forgotten reading. Of his own negative attitude to the Boulevard Raspail, he comments : «Perhaps I had read about it once.» (*TSAR*, p. 42). Raspail, like Jake's other heroes, fought for his beliefs, helping to restore the Republic in 1848, and was subsequently imprisoned for his pains.

(8) The martyrdom theme is recurrent in toponymic references throughout the novel. Montmartre is another Paris example. Non-Parisian instances include Saint Sebastian, a IIIrd century Roman officer and martyr who is signified both in the name of the Spanish city and in the arrow-wounds Count Mippipopolous exhibits to Brett and Jake.

(9) Other places of pilgrimage mentioned in the novel include Roncevaux, both a monastery and the site of a legendary battle, and Lourdes, a modern pilgrimage centre. The Select Café in Montparnasse is jokingly compared to the Catholic shrine as a place of «mystic» vision (*TSAR*, p. 51). Jake also suggests a visit to a monastery in Alsace founded in the VIIth century by Saint Odile (*TSAR*, p. 6) who was miraculously cured of blindness and who later cured others. «Blindness», or being «blind» in all its meaning, and their contraries «vision» and «seeing» are central features of Jake's inner quest. Colloquial terms such as «rotten» are used with compulsive frequency by the characters in the novel and are generally charged with literal metaphysical or metaphorical connotations. Other words which function in this way include «hell», «tight», «blind», etc.

(10) Louis IX (1214–1270), King of France, who undertook several Crusades to the Holy Land. He also built the Sorbonne and the Holy Chapel in central Paris.