ISSN 1799-2591
Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 14, No. 5, pp. 1403-1410, May 2024
DOI: https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1405.12

"I've Not Had Much Fun Since the War": Veterans on the Edge of Homosexuality in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*

Ali Alnawaiseh
Department of English Language and Literature, Mutah University, Karak, Jordan

***Abstract*—This article examines sexuality in Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* alongside warfare events and memories brought home from the frontline. This essay argues that witnessing the war firsthand and the unique circumstances from serving on the frontline has the potential to inspire homosexual tendencies among soldiers. This proposition can explain the veterans' performances in the novel, such as Jake Barnes, Bill Gorton, Count Mippipopolous, and Harris Wilson. In varied places in this paper, the discussion depends on Menninger's (1948), Fussell's (2000, 2009, 2013), and Crouthamel's (2008, 2014) accounts of the influence of modern wars on soldiers' sexualities. As this current study shows, in an attempt to hide their newly-found homosexual tendencies, the veterans in *The Sun Also Rises* tend to over-assert their heterosexuality and avoid all nonveteran male environment(s). Reading the novel with Hemingway's male characters' performance of heterosexuality and avoidance leads to new ways of understanding the novel as the current paper discusses sexuality in the context of frontline memories and experiences.**

***Index Terms*—frontline, homosexuality, masculinity, performance, veterans**

I. Introduction

On his first visit to Jake Barnes' apartment in Paris, Count Mippipopolous lures Brett into the conversation about him having "been in seven wars" (Hemingway, 2006, p. 66). The Count continues to say that he has "got arrow wounds," and then he asks Brett if she has "ever seen arrow wounds?" (p. 67). To prove his claims about his war experiences, the Count proceeds to take off his shirt in the presence of Brett and Jake. While the Count's behavior can be plainly expounded as a male who uses his violated flesh to galvanize a female, however, the presence of Jake during the act complicates the scene making it queer and suspicious. Especially, since the Count could've shown his wounds to Brett during their weeks of getaway. One can argue that the Count uses this tactic to ensure that Jake is shown the wounded body. In other words, Jake solely is the target of the Count's display, not Brett as it might seem. The Count here throws on a performance during which he uses the presence of a female to expose his body to another male. Correspondingly, Jake takes close notice of the scene and he relates it attentively:

> The Count stood up, unbuttoned his vest, and opened his shirt. He pulled up the undershirt onto his chest and stood, his chest black, and big stomach muscles bulging under the light … Below the line where his ribs stopped were two raised white welts … Above the small of the back were the same two scars, raised as thick as a finger. (p. 67)

Jake's detailed observation of the Count's body denotes a sensual experience. Accordingly, the Count gives a tour of his wounded body teasingly and seductively. The wounds prove to Jake that the Count is a veteran, too, and then they engage in a coded conversation. After gazing at the wounds Jake announces that the wounds "are something" (p. 67) and he becomes noticeably intimate and engaged, talkative, and relaxed. It seems that the veterans in the novel understand each other and that in the presence of nonveterans, they tend to communicate indirectly. My interpretation of the scene is that the Count, on the one hand, uses his wounds to provide Jake with a homoerotic experience — a reward — to make him relaxed, as the Count can tell that Jake is upset because Brett has been spending time lately with the Count, ignoring Jake. On the other, the Count's performance is displayed to reveal scarred sexuality as well as to reassure Jake that he is not interested in Brett sexually, but instead, he uses her to make a display of heterosexuality. The Count offers Brett "ten thousand dollars to go to Biarritz with him" (p. 41), yet in Zelli's he refuses to dance with her because he does not "enjoy it" (p. 70). But as soon as Brett excuses herself to leave "There were three girls at [the Count's] table" (p. 71). Thus, the Count uses Brett and the girls to inform the public that his sexual orientation is sound. The Count is willing to strip off his top clothes in front of another male veteran, yet, he is reluctant to the potentiality of his body being intimate with a female's body during dancing. These scenes indicate peculiar dynamics in the novel when it comes to sexuality and the interaction between veterans among themselves and nonveterans.

The Sun Also Rises was published eight years after World War I. A war Stoneback (2007) announces it as "the backdrop, the subtext, the ground of being" of the novel (p. 37). On the front page of the novel, Ernest Hemingway quotes Gertrude Stein's famous remarks to him: "*You are all a lost generation*." In his posthumously published autobiography, *A Moveable Feast,* Hemingway (1964), mentions that Stein here refers to the influence of WWI on all

those "who served in the war" (p. 61). Apparently, Stein's words to Hemingway made their way to the narrative of *The Sun Also Rises*, a narrative that is centered around the messy lives of its veteran survivors and their relations with the nonveterans. In the novel, the biggest challenge that veteran survivors have to go through is the difficult process of handling their sexualities to align them with the pre-war culture. This includes intimate camaraderie between them, which often involves intimacy and attachment that can reach the level of homosexuality. This leaves the veterans in the novel questioning their sexuality and, in doing so, we find them sometimes over-assert their attraction to the opposite sex in public urban settings and especially when dealing with nonveterans. Other times we find the veterans avoid all-male environments unless the males are fellow veterans and there is a sense of isolation. This behavior is mostly noticed in the actions of Jake Barnes, Bill Gorton, Count Mippipopolous, and Harris Wilson who go to great lengths to broadcast their heterosexuality to others when it is evident that they have homosexual tendencies. Reading *The Sun Also Rises* with the altered sexuality of its veterans in mind, one starts to notice that the veterans are evident to be both homoerotic and homophobic. Moreover, it is apparent that the veterans perform heterosexuality in the novel.

Several previous scholarships on *The Sun Also Rises* have examined the dysfunctional sexuality in the text. It is worth noting that this current study does not attempt to discredit or go against the previous scholarship on the topic. However, unlike the previous works, this one aims at discussing the novel in light of studies of soldiers' lives on the front and after they had returned home. It maintains that the veterans suffer from what can be described as homosexuality due to exposure. This is attained during the war due to certain conditions on the front as this paper will explain. Hemingway himself witnessed World War I and was injured twice while driving an ambulance in Italy. He was surrounded by soldiers and by their stories of experiences on the front. His depiction of the troubled sexuality of his veteran characters reproduces real accounts. My aim in this paper is to establish a link between the sexual aggravation (troubled sexualities) of Hemingway's veterans in the novel and studies of the soldiers' experiences on the front and after homecoming.

II. Literature Review

The Sun Also Rises has received great critical attention, and scholars of Hemingway have discussed and explored varied topics suggesting the complexity and sophistication of the text. For instance, Leland (2004), argues that *The Sun Also Rises* can be read against the shift in the modern American systems from production to consumption. Leland explains that similar to the shift in the American economy, Jake Barnes' sexual incapability is substituted by spending money for empowerment. Kaye (2006) asserts that Hemingway's treatment of Robert Cohn is misunderstood greatly, as it does not necessarily reflect the writer's antisemitism; rather, Hemingway paints Cohen as the representation of Jewish manhood. Onderdonk (2006) believes that the novel is about male humiliation and the emergence of the new woman represented by Brett. Fore (2007) argues that Hemingway establishes a close link between what is called the cultural narrative and collective understanding of disability. Herlihy (2009) maintains that isolation and foreignness explain much of the characters' baffling behavior, especially Jake's actions. Adair (2012) claims that *The Sun Also Rises* is a novel of gossip and that gossiping keeps the text of the novel moving forward. Cannon (2012) declares that the novel employs pastoral themes to suggest that recovery and repression are far away from being achieved and that trauma persists. Puckett (2013) explores Hemingway's use of male performance in the novel. Puckett asserts that the novel highlights males' performances to represent sexual selection and competition over successful reproduction. Mellette (2014) examines the therapeutic role of leisure activities, such as swimming and fishing, on Jake's emotional development. Kostopolus (2015) reads the novel, especially the bullfight scenes, as an extended metaphor for male virility. Cain (2016) interprets the novel as a testimony to how some desires cannot be fulfilled. Gottlieb (2018) examines Hemingway's use of certain word choices to comment on the "lost generation" contemporaries and how they can never achieve wholeness. Sion (2019) explores the connection between Robert Cohn and masochism. Sion argues that Cohn desires to be humiliated and controlled, which is a behavior he acquires from boxing and dealing with controlling women. Shaheen (2019) explores how modern technological advances and modern marketing techniques have participated in quickening the processes of sexual desire, which introduced new forms of fetishism. Conway (2021) gives a feminist reading of the novel. Conway argues that scholars of Hemingway have always given Brett a secondary role in the novel and that any attention given to Brett is, in fact, to reflect on the male characters. Daiker (2021) presents the centrality of Paris for both Jake and Hemingway. Finally, Liu (2021) explores the behaviors of the group of friends in the novel. Liu argues that the novel is a manifestation of sexual dysfunction, which is echoed through what is called dysfunctional tribalism.

III. Discussion

A. The Homophobic: Find Me a Woman

Thematic representation of dysfunctional sexuality occupies the conscious and unconscious actions of the veterans. However, when it comes to sexuality and sexual representation, Jake Barnes is the most insecure veteran in *The Sun Also Rises*. His burden stems from the intersectionality between frontline experiences and an injury he sustains in the war that leaves him impotent. The influence of WWI on sexuality is well-established and documented thoroughly. In his compelling and attentive work, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Fussell (2000) announces that there is an

association between sexuality and the frontline experience. Fussell finds that the frontline has such influence on the soldiers that it can generate a kind of "temporal homosexuality" (p. 272). Then, Jake's frontline experience and the wound make him struggle with his sexual role and identity. They, in fact, align Jake with the opposite gender with its roles and expectations. The deformed phallus amplifies any possible homosexual tendencies acquired on the front. Therefore, we find plenty of instances of Jack showcasing his connection to women to negate same-sex attraction. He picks up a prostitute (Hemingway, 2006, p. 22) despite the fact that he is impotent just to pose with her in public. Jake extends his heterosexual performance when he takes the prostitute on a horse cab across town to dine (p. 23) then he introduces her to his friends (p. 25). The prostitute is Jake's token of heterosexuality and an indication of his sexual orientation.

The combination of the wounded phallus and residues of same-gender attraction complicate Jake's life. Therefore, we shouldn't be surprised to find him asserting his heterosexuality by performing it as his concern about his public image forces him to do so. Interestingly, Jake's homosexual tendencies become explicit due to the avoidance of all-male environments. For the most part, Jake's moments of insecurities are triggered by his frequent companion, Robert Cohn, who often crosses boundaries that keep Jake comfortable around other men in civilian settings. Then, it is not surprising that Cohn receives the lion's share of the criticism and insults from Jake. Cohn is attached to Jake, but Jake is sensitive to all-alone time with other males, especially those who are nonveterans. As Vernon (2015) puts it, "Jake's hostility toward Cohn … reflect[s] an uncomfortable identification with the nonveteran" (p. 26). As if there is an exclusive secret that nonveterans shouldn't know about. In fact, Jake tries to escape any intimacy that might lead him into acting on his homosexual desires.

Escaping homosexuality requires independence, isolation, and protection. The independence Jake seeks could perhaps be achieved through minimal interaction or exposure to an all-male environment. Often when Cohn visits, in an effort to send Cohn away, Jake suggests having a drink in a nearby café; he says, "I had discovered that was the best way to get rid of friends. Once you had a drink all you had to say was: 'Well, I've got to get back and get off some cables, and it was done'" (Hemingway, 2006, p. 19). Nevertheless, invisibility and independence are two luxuries Jake cannot attain with Cohn nipping at his heels all the time. On the surface, Jake sending a friend away might suggest a general annoyance with visitors who overextend their welcome. Yet, other moments in the text indicate that Jake is apprehensive of all male alone time. In other words, Jake does his best to avoid the possible reconstruction of intimacy with other males outside the front. When Jake turns down Cohn's offer to travel to South America (pp. 17-18), even when Cohn offers to take care of the expenses for both of them, he, actually, spares himself from recalls of, in Fussell's words, "temporal homosexuality." Jake explains that Cohn gets the idea of traveling to South America after reading a book by W.H. Hudson titled *The Purple Land*. According to Jake, the book is "a very sinister" one that "recounts splendid imaginary adventures … in an intensely romantic land" (p. 17). Just the mere representation of South America in Hudson's account is alarming for Jake. One can propose that he romanticized landscapes and scenes in South America and being alone with a very masculine man —a boxer— are the source of Jake's refusal of the trip.

After the great war had ended, new types of studies emerged examining homosexuality among soldiers on the front. In *Psychiatry in a Troubled World*, psychiatrist Menninger (1948) reports that a great number of World War I and II soldiers engaged in what he calls "sublimated" (p. 223) or "disguised" homosexuality (p. 224). The two terms here describe an inactive type of homosexuality in which the soldiers had homoeroticism attitudes but those desires remain largely at bay. In accordance with Menninger's findings, interestingly, in *The Sun Also Rises* Jake proposes going to British East Africa as an alternative to Cohn's original proposal. The difference between the two continents is that South America is romanticized and inspires passion and enchantment in the imagination, or at least that's how Hudson portrays the land in Jake's awareness. On the contrary, the rough conditions of the terrain and the wild beasts in Africa can help Jake engage in "disguised" or "sublimated" homosexuality. East Africa enables Jake to literally construct a space wherein he can gaze at Cohn's body safely. Hence, Jake gets to enjoy his man-only time using the activity of hunting with the violence it brings as his cover-up.

Once same-gender attraction becomes existent, it is thoughtless to expect it to be limited to the geography of the frontline. As Fussell (2000) remarks, "We will not be surprised to find … recall of front-line experience replete with what we can call the homoerotic" (p. 272). Moments of emotional instability caused by a sense of mortality can oblige the soldiers to show emotions and affection to their fellow soldiers that, otherwise, they wouldn't express in an off-front setting. Therefore, the activity of hunting itself with all the associated dangers, and elevating Cohn into a semi-soldier (carrying a gun and being exposed to danger) during hunting is Jake's wish to re-experience life on the front with its homoerotic metaphor. The activity of hunting returns Jake to a safe space he previously experienced during the war, a space where men naturally can be alone, talking and taking care of each other without crossing the line to the physical act of homosexuality. Then, hunting in the wilderness in East Africa gives Jake the option to reconstruct the frontline to experience homoeroticism under homogenous conditions. East Africa, in Jake's imagination, is a place where having approximate physical contact with another man is seen as natural and free of social stigma, unlike how they would be perceived in an urban society or effeminate landscapes.

The unusual intimacy generated between men on the front is attributed, to a great extent, to the brutality of modern wars. As a result, we won't be amazed to see the formation of bonds between the soldiers as a natural reaction to the inhumane environment that surrounds them. Fussell (2009) explains that long exposure to the conditions and

atmosphere of the frontline has the potential of nurturing altered sexualities due to the "deprivation and loneliness and alienation characteristics of the soldier's experience … [and] his need for affection in a largely womanless world" (p. 341). The fear of a rekindling of a homosexual spirit, which might lead to exposure and loss of self-control, forces Jake to shield himself. Incidents of Jake avoiding alone time with Cohn or other men recur in the novel, showing a discernible pattern. It is noticeable that Jake's homophobic insecurities in urban settings come to the surface in the absence of women, a condition largely attributed, as Fussell makes the case, to the "altered sexualities" of men on the front. Jake suggests going to Strasbourg with Cohn because he knows "a swell girl" in the town who could show them around (Hemingway, 2006, p. 14). The suggestion to go to Strasbourg can be read as a desire to minimize the alone time with another male. The absence of women on the trip would likely remind Jake of the affection shared between males when there was a dearth of women on the front. Then, the purpose behind the female companion is ostensibly to lessen the intimate moments between Jake and Cohn as well as to prevent any revival of frontline fantasies.

As an added measure, Jake tries to minimize his time alone with males in urban settings. For example, after Bill arrives in Paris from his European tour, Jake takes him out to eat. On the way, Brett (who just arrived from San Sebastian) spots them, and the following conversation takes place between Brett and Jake:

> "I say I'm just back. Haven't bathed even. Michael comes in to-night."
> "Good. Come on and eat with us, and we'll all go to meet him."
> "Must clean myself."
> "Oh, rot! Come on."
> "Must bathe. He doesn't get in till nine."
> "Come and have a drink, then, before you bathe". (p. 80)

The exchange shows an intense insistence from Jake that Brett should join them. Unknowingly, Brett will serve to prevent any kind of intimacy or homoeroticism between Jake and Bill. Brett, specifically, will prevent situations such as the intimacy that was almost kindled into a romantic interlude right after Brett leaves the two men. In the scene, Jake and Bill are crossing the bridge alongside the bank of the Seine River when Jake remarks that "the island looked dark … and the trees were shadows … Below the water was smooth … A man and a girl passed us. They were walking with their arms around each other" (p. 83). Here, Jake romanticizes the environment and landscapes to the point it starts to sound dreamy. When Jake notices the man and woman walking alongside the river and being intimate it signals his lamentation over his inability to have romantic moments and be intimate with Bill.

Jake's uneasiness about the thought of homosexuality becomes evident at Braddock's club. The club scene provides an insight into Jake's inner self, a self that consciously curses itself and is afraid of spilling its secret. In the club, Jake encounters some homosexual men accompanying Brett, and he immediately shows disgust and enmity toward the men. Jake remarks, "I was very angry. Somehow they always made me angry. I know they are supposed to be amusing, and you should be tolerant, but I wanted to swing on one, anyone, anything to shatter that superior, simpering composure" (p. 28). Elliott (1995) comments on the scene by saying, "It is notable that it is not Brett who elicits Jake's obvious and immediate attention when she enters the bar, but rather her homosexual companions" (p. 17). Jake has anxiety over any implicit homosexuality, and seeing a representation of it in front of his eyes occupies his conscience to the point that it is the first thing he notices. The repugnance Jake shows is part of an ongoing performance and his reaction to the group of gay men is meant to separate himself from the effeminate men. Encountering the homosexuals in the club triggers feelings and insecurities that Jake seeks to suppress. When Jake notices the homosexual men before Brett, it shows that the thought of homosexuality is Jake's most controlling and compelling thought. As a performance, Jake feels the urge to separate himself from the group and takes on an aggressive homophobic stance as he ridicules the men for their effete mannerisms. It is this inward conflict that includes a loathing that pushes Jake to publicly proclaim his disgust and condemnation of homosexuality because his public image is insecure and at stake. Jake is angered by what he perceives and sees, and his reaction to the homosexuals is, primarily, a representation of the sense of guilt and disgust he carries around over the mental and physical loss of his masculinity, which is heightened by his impotency. "The policeman standing by the door looked at [Jake] and smiled" (Hemingway, 2006, p. 28), and, definitely, the policeman's smile indirectly insults Jake's spirit because Jake's war experience and his deformed phallus identify him with the homosexual group. Toward the end of the night, Jake declares that the "whole show" makes him "sick" (p. 29). The show that Jake talks about encompasses more than just the presence of gay men and trotting out a prostitute but is also, perhaps, an allusion to the extra measures he takes to shield himself and the displaying of the soundness of his sexuality in public.

B. Riverside, the New Frontline

The war culture established sexual intimate bonds between the soldiers on the front. As Menninger (1948) reveals, "Many men discovered satisfaction in a physical interest in other men, which often surprised them" (p. 224). Fear of exposing the generated interest in men is the point that formulates the veterans' struggle and catalyzes their burdens. Similar to Jake, Bill Gorton performs heterosexuality by pushing at every opportunity to let everyone—and Jake particularly—know that he is interested in women. When Bill gets to know that Brett's engaged, he says, "That's always just the stage I meet anybody" (Hemingway, 2006, p. 81). Bill's frustration with the rarity of women to pair up with is a claim that is obviously not altogether genuine. Bill here emphasizes his attraction to the opposite sex in the presence of Jake. On another occasion, to be more specific, in the hotel in Pamplona, while Bill is shaving, he notes that

Jake is staring attentively at him. Bill then makes the following remark about his face: "All women should see it. It's a face that ought to be thrown on every screen in the country. Every woman ought to be given a copy of this face as she leaves the altar" (p. 108). Bill suspects Jake has had some homoerotic thoughts about him, and his remarks are a way to kill the fantasies by highlighting the links between his masculine face and women. However, Bill's description of the handsomeness of his masculine face is inviting to Jake as much as it is discouraging. Such incidents show that acts of watching and gazing are essential for fantasizing about homosexuality in *The Sun Also Rises*. In a warless environment, the veterans' frontline fantasies can be rekindled by being intimate with other veterans and as well as watching their bodies as a veteran's body is a visual and physical remnant and token from the front.

In *An Intimate History of the Front,* Crouthamel (2014) explains that when the soldiers came home after the war they felt "emotionally cut off from the opposite sex and isolated in a shattered postwar social and political environment, men were often nostalgic for the milieu from which they had just emerged" (p. 148). Crouthamel's account matches accurately the riverside fishing trip in Burguete. No phase in *The Sun Also Rises* shows emotional revelations and attraction to the veteran's body more than the scene. The trip can be described as a veterans-only getaway during which both Jake and Bill lose their guards and are no longer reluctant to show either spiritual or physical intimacy to each other. The trip gives them the opportunity to connect emotionally (and physically to a certain extent) and reminisce. As a matter of fact, their behaviors and attitudes change significantly as if the new environment returns them to a safe place that exists in a different dimension where they can be their true selves. In the remote mountainous village in Spain Jake and Bill are away from their circle of nonveteran friends, which is something that can explain their relaxed manners.

In Burguete, Jake and Bill do not mind sharing one room (Hemingway, 2006, p. 115), even though they are the only guests at the inn (p. 116), despite not being hard up for money either. What happens the following morning and during the fishing scenes proves that their choice to stay in one room is a mutual choice for more excitement. In the morning, Jake claims the role of the traditional wife; he wakes up early, digs up some worms for the fishing trip (like the wife picking some vegetables or collecting eggs for breakfast), and asks the innkeeper to prepare coffee and lunch for them (pp. 117-118). What's even more, Jake starts using the pronoun "us," announcing their presence as a couple. The division of the role-playing seems natural; Jake's phallus is deformed, so he is naturally selected to be the female (penetrated) in the homoerotic relationship, while Bill claims the role of the male (penetrator). Meanwhile, Bill is seen watching and observing Jake "out of the window" and, like a patriarchal husband, demands Jake to "do that every morning" (p. 118). The two of them start to behave like a romantic couple; right after asking Bill to "get up," Bill "climbed into bed and pulled the sheet up to his chin" (p. 118). Here Bill teases Jake and demands to be seduced to leave the bed. The two veterans become playful and are not afraid either of acting queer.

Evidently, the retreat has its impact on Jake and Bill; it puts them in a state of reminiscing about the old days during the war. Their contact is minimized with nonveterans, and preparing for the fishing trip gives them the excitement of facing the enemies (the trout and the gushy river). The place becomes as wild as the frontline, where wild things can happen and lots of possibilities exist. Under the influence of the excitement and homoerotic desires, Jake and Bill become relaxed and ready to talk about "the sort of thing[s] that can't be spoken of," as Bill announces (p. 120). But the most daring confession is when Bill tells Jake that he is "a hell of a good guy" and he is "fonder of [him] than anybody on earth" and that he "couldn't tell" Jake that in New York (or Paris, possibly) because such confession means that Bill is a homosexual (p. 121). However, during the getaway, Jake and Bill feel close to the old frontline; the conditions are suitable to express his repressed emotions. In an urban setting, both Bill and Jake have to maintain the veneer of their heterosexuality, but here Bill can talk to his comrade veteran without the fear of being judged similar to reports from the front.

Harmony on the front, between soldiers, is essential as wartime necessitates getting along to face the enemy. Menninger (1948) argues that the success of every military endeavor "depended on the ability of men to get along with, live with, and work with other men, and to accept the almost total exclusion of women from their lives" (p. 223). Therefore, Jake's and Bill's war experiences prepared them to be more open and experience intimacy among themselves and with other men in a veteran-exclusive-environment. Eventually, the fishing trip becomes more exciting and harmonious when a third veteran, Harris Wilson, joins Jake and Bill. Both Jake and Bill find Wilson "very pleasant" (Hemingway, 2006, p. 130), and they have a "grand time" and are "very fond of him" (p. 134). The trio starts taking long walks and Wilson starts to "walk between" Jake and Bill (p. 135). Wilson, in turn, announces his joy to have their company: He tells Jake and Bill that they "really … don't know how much it means" to him and that he has not had so "much fun since the war" (p. 134). The fun that Harris talks about here is possibly being intimate with other men in a safe environment under certain conditions. And when Jake and Bill decide to leave for Pamplona, Harris says, "What rotten luck for me. We've had a jolly time here at Burguete" (p. 132). Harris here laments the potential of an emotional void or loss of connection because returning veterans longed for harmony and intimacy with their fellow veterans. As Crouthamel (2014) explains, returning soldiers craved "the emotional support of male friends" (p. 148). After just a few days, the locals in Burguete begin treating the trio as if they were intimately involved; they give Jake's letters to Harris to deliver them (Hemingway, 2006, p. 131). Harris gives Jake and Bill "each an envelope" with "a dozen flies in it" that he has "tied them himself" and explains to them that he "only thought if [they] fished them some time it might remind [them] of what a good time [they] had" (p. 135). The veterans have a bond during which they act as lovers or a married couple on a getaway. This is indicated by the long walks and the emotional conversation, and, in fact, concluding the

trip by giving Jake and Bill souvenirs, Harris wishes to extend the homoerotic metaphor beyond the geography of the riverside.

C. Gaze With Me, the Ring is Exciting

Crouthamel (2014) illustrates that the returning soldiers "approached" "civilians" with "suspicion in the wake of the war, and assumptions about sexual transgressions and transformations that took place during the war fed anxieties about an altered postwar landscape" (p. 147). In Pamplona, Jake meets Montoya, and he describes the situation: "Montoya put his hand on my shoulder … He puts his hand on my shoulder again embarrassedly" (Hemingway, 2006, p. 136). In an urban setting and surrounded by nonveterans, Jake immediately becomes sensitive to receiving affection from men, as if the urban setting is a zone that forces him to physically distance himself from other men by condemning intimacy between males. Then Jake flashes back to previous years when he would come to Pamplona for the fiesta and meet other men who shared the same passion for bullfighting. He narrates that "There was this same embarrassed putting the hand on the shoulder … nearly always there was the actual touching" (p. 137). For Montoya and other men, the ceremony of touching is a celebration of masculinity, as it indicates sharing a common passion for the violence bullfighting brings. Yet, in the city, Jake is sensitive to the expressed emotions between men, the physicality in communication, and the spiritual connection between them due to his anxieties and suspicions unlike how he behaves during the fishing trip in Burguete.

However, despite the self-awareness and disapproval of intimacy between men, there is something about Pamplona that eventually forces Jake to lose his guard, letting his suppressed homoerotic desires out. The most important event in Pamplona is bullfighting, an event that is made possible because the bullfighters are willing to face danger, and in return, they get to be the focal point of the event and receive the gazes of the audience. The audience, as well, gets to fixate on the bullfighters in moments when the fighters are in great mortal danger and might lose their lives. For the veterans among the audience, one can argue that watching the bullfighters resembles "soldiers bathing" in wartime — a concept Fussell (2013) uses to comment on soldiers' frontline memories. Fussell indicates that stories and scenes of soldiers bathing naked are recurring themes and memories among veterans of the great war. As Fussell explains, these stories and scenes are common because they enable the veterans to express and describe the vulnerability of soldiers on the front. Fussell indicates that,

> Watching men (usually "one's" own men) bathing naked becomes a set-piece scene in almost every memory of the war. And this conventional vignette of soldiers bathing under the affectionate eye of their young officer recurs not because there's hardly a better way of projecting poignantly the awful vulnerability of mere naked flesh. The quasi-erotic and pathetic conjoin in these scenes to emphasize the stark contrast between beautiful frail flesh and the alien metal that waits to violate it. (p. 325)

The naked bodies of the soldiers while bathing in *The Sun Also Rises* are projected in the ring by the semi-naked bodies of the bullfighters wearing very tight clothes while facing the horns under the devoted gaze of the affectionate veterans, especially Jake. Both the soldiers' and bullfighters' fragile bodies are targeted: The bulls' horns target the bullfighters' flesh as the bullets target the soldiers' flesh. The violence in the ring appeals to the veterans because it replicates their war experiences. In "Male Sexuality and Psychological Trauma," Crouthamel (2008) indicates, World War I "created a new kind of man brutalized by mass violence, no longer dependent on women for sexual satisfaction, and addicted to violence as a source of sexual releases" (pp. 61-62). This can explain why Jake and other veterans pour into Pamplona annually for the fiesta and why they are specifically enthusiastic about young Romero and cheer for him all along. In fact, the veterans all see Romero as a comrade, while the nonveterans (such as Robert Cohn) in the group of friends greatly remain uncaring about the bullfighting or about Romero.

The excitement that the fiesta brings and the sense of danger from the bulls, and empathy with the bullfighters, loosen Jake up. The conditions reenact the front for Jake and he associates himself with the bullfighters. The veterans in the novel may have experienced sexual arousal while attending some of these events. The bullfighting evokes the experience of being at the battlefront, and in the experience of watching the spectacle; the veterans project their wartime experiences on the bullfighters and the bulls as they wish to kill each other in the ring. While almost all the veterans who attend the fiesta remain controlled observers, Jake declares his homoeroticism over Romero, a young bullfighter, by providing a detailed description of Romero's body. Homoerotic tendencies may be clearly noted in Jake's description of the bullfighter in Romero's hotel room, as the images the reader receives from the description emphasize the attractiveness of Romero in a physical sense. Jakes notes that,

> the boy stood very straight … His black hair shone under the electric light … He was the best-looking boy I have ever seen … The boy was nineteen years old, alone except for his sword-handler, and the three hangers-on … He was standing, straight and handsome and altogether by himself, alone in the room with the hangers-on as we shut the door. (Hemingway, 2006, p. 167)

Jake is sexually aroused from the act of observing Romero. As the excerpt above shows, Jake imagines Romero as a possible sex partner (with Romero as the "male" in the sex act). The young man is "by himself, alone in the room" and "handsome," and Romero likely has an erection as expressed by the words "standing" and "straight," or perhaps due to his tight clothes. It is either that Jake here mourns the loss of this chance with Romero as they "shut the door" or he senses that this level of homoeroticism overpowers him and will push him into acting upon his impulses, but he also realizes that this is a boundary that he cannot cross. Also, during the scene in which Jake "pimps" Brett out to Romero,

he cannot help but notice how attractive Romero is. Jake says, "I noticed his skin. It was clear and smooth and very brown. There was a triangle scar on his cheek-bone" (p. 189). The combination of the fragility of Romero's figure and his scarred face win him Jake's affection as a wounded fellow soldier similar to the officers watching their soldiers bathe on the frontline.

Among the bullfighters, Jake admires Romero the most. He sees him as his hero because Romero's style of bullfighting in the ring greatly resembles Jake's style of dealing with his homosexual tendencies. Jake is always teetering on the edge of homosexuality but manages to never fall into it. Similarly, Romero is always close to being penetrated by the horns because he "gets so close" to the bulls (p. 221), "offering the body, offering it again a little closer" (p. 222), yet, he always dodges it "smoothly, calmly, and beautifully" (p. 219) and misses the horns. Also, as Jake narrates, "Romero's bullfighting gave real emotion, because he kept the absolute purity of line in his movements and always quietly and calmly let the horns pass him close each time" (p. 171). Romero is Jake's young hero who wants him to always belong in the ring so that he can see Romero annually and get emotional support. Romero is a male in a compact and physical struggle, in close proximity with another male (the bull in this case). However, the alpha male will always avoid the horns and their association with the phallic members. Romero manages to avoid the horns, and therefore similar to Jake, he teeters on the edge of homosexuality, but he never falls into it.

Romero teaches Jake lessons inside and outside the ring on how to deal with his homoerotic tendencies. Outside the ring, Romero fights Cohn back not allowing Cohn's punches to subjugate him. To the contrary, Cohn's blows touch Jake greatly as they penetrate Jake's body, and after that, he gets high and relaxed. As if Jake has been eager for a physical close encounter with another male. Jake narrates,

> walking across the square to the hotel everything looked new and changed. I had never seen the trees before. I had never seen the flagpoles before, nor the front of the theater. It was all different. I felt as I felt once coming home from an out-of-town football game … It was like that going up the stairs in the hotel. Going up the stairs took a long time, and I had the feeling that I was carrying my suitcase. (pp. 196-197)

Jake's description of how he feels after he is beaten by Cohn implies a kind of satisfaction, similar to the orgasmic satisfaction one gets after sexual intercourse, complete with the glowing and floating. Jake's insight becomes clearer, and he sees landscapes he has never noticed before. Also, the first thing Jake does when he gets back to the hotel is take a bath. He remarks, "Now it was a hot bath I needed. A deep, hot bath, to lie back in" (p. 197). This is an obvious reference to the aftermath of sexual intercourse. Jake here bathes himself in an imitation of the young soldiers after a battle in Fussell's account.

Cohn's punches give Jake some type of involuntarily homoerotic satisfaction through a forced and violent rape-like encounter; however, he has mixed feelings about it. His sense of guilt is amplified when he hears that Romero fights Cohn back and sees how the young man behaves during the bullfight the next day in the ring. Romero teaches Jake never to surrender to anything that tries to penetrate his body without fighting it back. In the ring, Jake notices that Romero's "fight with Cohn had not touched his spirit but his face had been smashed and his body hurt. He was wiping all that out now. Each thing that he did with this bull wiped that out a little cleaner" (p. 223). Jake imitates Romero by "wiping" his encounter with Cohn by physically bathing and then later verbally by saying, "To hell with Cohn … to hell with him" (p. 226) to show that he doesn't care for the man. *The Sun Also Rises* concludes with a promise that Jake will never surrender to homosexuality despite his desire for the same sex and his bad luck with natural selection. It might be true that Cohn's punches have penetrated Jake's body and touched his spirit; however, he won't surrender to the actual physicality of homosexuality, but he will be there to gaze at the young bullfighters, similar to watching soldiers bathe.

IV. Conclusion

In his compelling work, *Hemingway's Theaters of Masculinity*, Strychacz (2003) argues that "Hemingway's male characters are constituted through their public relationship with an audience rather than through achieving autonomy; and by performance rather than by a process of internal transformation" (p. 8). Strychacz's observation is specifically accurate when we inspect Hemingway's male veteran characters in *The Sun Also Rises*. We witness this type of performance throughout the novel mostly through Jake and Bill's interactions with other veterans and nonveteran characters in the novel. The veterans in *The Sun Also Rises* consciously have homosexual desires, are homophobic, and perform heterosexuality. As is seen in all the incidents discussed in the previous sections the veterans also seek to ensure the public of the soundness of their sexualities. It is very obvious that the veterans cannot get affirmation from their selves alone. Through Jake and the other veterans in the novel, Hemingway manages to talk about just how intimate wartime can be between men who live together, fight together, and come home together. The unique circumstances of life on the frontline can form a strong bond between the men and alter their sexualities, a bond that reaches the level of homosexuality and inspires it. The newly-formed tendencies can be very embarrassing for veterans after they leave the front and controlling the self from acting on them can be challenging. This intimacy, though, greatly influences their lives after the war negatively. In *The Sun Also Rises*, the veterans' emotional affinities toward men still persist; therefore, they throw a performance for reassurance of the soundness of their sexual orientations for those around them. However, the anxiety over falling for homosexuality disturbs their peace because they are not good at masking their tendencies nor can the cover-up last forever. In the process of realigning their behaviors to suit the new life, this group embraces living a life filled with performance.

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Ali Alnawaiseh (Ph.D.) is an English and American Literature professor at Mutah University, Jordan.