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Reading Hemingway’s The Sun Also Rises: Glossary and Commentary

H. R. Stoneback

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Reading Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*

GLOSSARY AND COMMENTARY

H. R. Stoneback

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The Reading Hemingway series of guides to Ernest Hemingway’s (1899–1961) major works of fiction, short stories and novels, are written by scholar-teachers for students, fellow teachers, and other readers who also share an interest in the works of one of America’s, and indeed the world’s, outstanding writers. Just naming Hemingway’s titles invokes recognition of his genius: “Big Two-Hearted River,” The Sun Also Rises, A Farewell to Arms, “A Clean Well-Lighted Place,” The Old Man and the Sea, “Hills Like White Elephants,” For Whom the Bell Tolls, “The Snows of Kilimanjaro.” His Nobel Prize in 1954 confirmed international recognition of his distinction, but it has been exceeded by the early, avid readership of each work that continues unabated and is likely to endure and to confirm an often-invoked maxim of Hemingway’s: “Il faut (d’abord) durer” (“First of all one must endure”). Like some of the famed authors he learned from and sought to emulate or surpass, Hemingway endures, speaking to his readers through both his wisdom of worldly ways and his artistry in presenting them.

Our purpose is not to pursue a topic or theme such as “Hemingway’s Pastoral-ism,” “Hemingway and War,” “The American Expatriates in Paris,” “Hemingway As Existentialist,” or any of the many rewarding approaches that have been and will continue to be taken to these works. Instead, the books in this series will gloss or annotate, page by page, word by word, if necessary, like a good guidebook to a city or country. These books will not tell Hemingway readers what to think and feel about an action, a character, or a place. Rather, the guides point out features and details possibly overlooked or misunderstood by the “visitors.” As the good travel guide may enlarge one’s experience of a place, its art, buildings, or neighborhoods, so these books, side by side with Hemingway’s books, may enrich one’s reading “tours.”

Our plan and hope is to provide a reading or gloss of each detail that may be unfamiliar or obscure. Readers come to Hemingway’s works with differing degrees of prior knowledge. The glosses may be glossed over by the cognizants or read carefully by the newcomers. The former users, however, knowing that Hemingway’s plain
style can mask subtleties, know to be alert to nuances and to attend to Hemingway’s famous iceberg aesthetic. About seven-eighths of actual icebergs are submerged beneath the water’s surface. Not knowing that hidden presence can be dangerous for sailors, as it infamously was for the passengers and crew of the Titanic. Hemingway drew an analogy to a writing style in which, similarly, concealment or omission implied a knowing presence, not omissions because of ignorance or, at the opposite end of such a range, overwriting or inflated prose.

In writing of the art of bullfighting in particular and of Spanish culture in general, in *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) Hemingway included two remarkable passages linking tauromachy to the art of writing. Writers, like bullfighters, may substitute fakery for “straight statement . . . to cover lack of knowledge or the inability to state clearly” (54), the bullfighters so doing in an analogous way. Then Hemingway famously and clearly stated his aesthetic in another—the “ice-berg”—analogy:

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing . . . 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. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing. A writer who appreciates the seriousness of writing so little that he is anxious to make people see he is formally educated, cultured or well-bred is merely a popinjay. And this too remember; a serious writer is not to be confounded with a solemn writer. A serious writer may be a hawk or a buzzard or even a popinjay, but a solemn writer is always a bloody owl. (192)

Thus, these guides may help us note, navigate, and comprehend the “straight statement,” but they may also help us see, feel, and understand the depth and success of Hemingway’s art and craft, often “straight,” often below the surface, subtle, and lovely, as both modern and ancient philosophers perceived existence as twisted, ambiguous, and paradoxical, yet sometimes present in honorable, dignified, and courageous ways.

Hemingway was a realist yet hopeful. “Reality cannot digest ideas,” Jean Paul Sartre had thought. Hemingway witnessed and wrote about the stupidities and cruelties of the twentieth century. Studying his witness in his writings, beyond their aesthetic dimensions, may convince others of their continued importance. However much humanity has developed technologically, it is still often and largely bound by hypocrisy, ignorance, and mendacity, which Hemingway, with his heightened moral awareness, opposed often and well.

The Nobel Prize citation noted that “heroic pathos” centered Hemingway’s elemental “awareness of life” and his “admiration for every individual who fights the
good fight in a world of reality overshadowed by violence and death” (as quoted in Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story*, 528).

Hemingway, the poet in prose, could not so pontificate. His *characters in action*, his stories could.

**IN MEMORIAM**

Years ago James C. Hinkle of the University of San Diego conceived of a series of books glossing and commenting on Ernest Hemingway’s major novels and short stories. He recruited Hemingway scholar-teachers from around the country and began approaching potential university press publishers. He was something of a legend in Hemingway studies and could allegedly recite *The Sun Also Rises* from memory.

Hinkle’s project was cut short by his premature death in 1990. (His parallel William Faulkner project was undertaken by Noel Polk as series editor for the *Reading Faulkner* series at the University Press of Mississippi, and Jim co-authored with Robert McCoy the first volume on *The Unvanquished* before his untimely death.) Jim himself was to have written the series book on *The Sun Also Rises*, but the co-editors-in-chief who succeeded him, Michael Reynolds and Paul Smith (also eminent Hemingway scholars), in turn died before launching the series.

Now at last the often-delayed series has begun with H. R. Stoneback’s *Reading Hemingway’s The Sun Also Rises*, and it is a study that richly rewards our patience. It is dedicated to the memories of James Hinkle, Michael Reynolds, and Paul Smith.

**Robert W. Lewis**
Since its publication eight decades ago, The Sun Also Rises has come to be universally regarded as one of the most important twentieth-century American novels. It endures not just as a masterpiece of modernism and a vivid compelling study of expatriate life in the 1920s but also as a benchmark by which the reader may measure Hemingway’s art and craft, his values and vision. The Sun Also Rises stands at the center of Hemingway’s artistic achievement, one of the three or four enduring glories of his art. If I did not believe that, and if I had not found that view confirmed in my teaching of this novel to more than 4,000 students—from freshmen to graduate students—over the last four decades, if I had not discovered, in lecturing on Jake Barnes’s narrative from the University of Paris to Peking University, from the Rotary Club of Bangkok to small-town American audiences at local libraries, that students, scholars, and readers of every description find this novel perpetually fascinating, compelling, and forever fresh and new, then I would not have spent decades learning to read truly and deeply one of the modern masterworks of fiction. Nor would I have spent years writing this book, in which the results, the lessons of all that study are recorded. This book is intended to serve all readers—students and teachers at every level, literary scholars and Hemingway specialists, and that perhaps mythical creature, the general reader—as they have served so well in contributing to my understanding, my reading of Hemingway.

In his foreword to this, the first volume of the Reading Hemingway series, Robert W. Lewis stresses Hemingway’s famous iceberg aesthetic and the necessity for the reader to be alert to nuances and allusions, the seven-eighths of the story that is beneath the surface. Hemingway often noted that for every part of his writing that shows there is seven-eighths of it submerged, and whatever the reader gets from his writing will be the measure of what is brought to the reading. This book is designed as an exercise in close reading, grounded in narrative and aesthetic concerns as well as history, local knowledge, actual and symbolic landscape and inscape, and every aspect of what might be regarded as part of the submerged iceberg of the fiction. My purpose is to equip the reader to sound the depths, to take the full measure of the novel’s allusiveness, obliquity, indirection, and understatement. When Hemingway went to Chartres and changed the title of his novel from The Lost Generation to The Sun Also Rises, he may have seen there an iconic depiction of the Cathedral
of Chartres with a vast sun rising over it. Upon close examination, it can be noted that the sun is depicted as a circular labyrinth. Labyrinths, of course, suggest wrong turns and dead ends but they also convey the certain knowledge that there is a way through the maze, a path that must be followed to reach the center. *The Sun Also Rises* is a labyrinthine work, intricate, complicated, with interconnected passages leading ultimately to the center of Hemingway’s vision.

Since I began my serious study of *The Sun Also Rises* in the 1970s, many people have contributed to my understanding of the novel and Hemingway matters in general. It would be impossible to acknowledge all the writers and critics whose work has been important to me over half a lifetime of study. Here I can only acknowledge those whose contributions have been personal, such as Carlos Baker, Mary Hemingway, Michael Reynolds, and William Walton, for encouraging my earliest ventures in Hemingway criticism. And then there was James Hinkle, who, as Robert Lewis notes, first conceived this series of Hemingway commentaries. When I first met Jim at a Faulkner Conference in the early 1980s, he was introduced to me as the legendary figure who could recite *The Sun Also Rises* from memory. I had only known Jim a few days when I challenged him to recite the novel, more in a spirit of fun than exactitude, and not because I had committed it to memory, although I did think I would recognize any passages where he missed a word or a line. He sailed flawlessly through the first two chapters but then I caught him when he fumbled a few lines from the third chapter. From that night on, Jim and I were friends, a friendship sealed in our love for *The Sun Also Rises*. When he began working on his commentary, the prototype for this study, he asked me to serve as his advisory reader, a task I cheerfully accepted. We had intensive conversations and exchanged long letters about details in the novel; before his death in 1990 I had provided commentary on the first draft of Hinkle’s gloss of the first three chapters. After Jim’s death, his project was taken over by William Balassi. Again, I agreed to serve as reader and exchanged letters with Balassi on his unfinished draft. Although I differed with Hinkle and Balassi on many points, their early work on a glossary of the novel paved the way for this book; thus I salute James Hinkle and William Balassi.

By the time I contracted to do this book the series editor was Robert W. Lewis. No writer could ask for a better editor—for his perspicacious commentary on details and larger matters of design, for his patience and steady encouragement when unforeseeable multiple surgeries and extensive hospitalization made it seem impossible to conclude this book, I salute Bob Lewis. Likewise, I am grateful to Larry Grimes and Allen Josephs, who served admirably as readers for this volume, providing valuable suggestions (sometimes under tight deadlines) and support. I especially want to express my gratitude to everyone at the Kent State University Press who worked on this volume, from editor-in-chief Joanna Hildebrand Craig,
who offered much encouragement and guidance along the way, to Sonia Fülöp, whose fine copyediting improved the book.

I also wish to thank the State University of New York for sabbatical and research support over the years, which facilitated my work on this project. And my colleagues in the SUNY–New Paltz English department who encouraged this undertaking, especially my colleague Daniel Kempton, always willing to listen to my divagations regarding a novel and a writer far removed from his specialty and to drive across the county to reform my Luddite grasp of computer mysteries.

I am grateful to the Hemingway Society and Foundation for its support, especially to all my Hemingway Society colleagues who have listened to and commented on my papers on *The Sun Also Rises* since that first memorable conference on Thompson Island in 1980, when the Society was founded; and before that, at Don Noble’s landmark Hemingway Conference at the University of Alabama in 1976. Thanks are due also to the librarians and archivists who facilitated my research, particularly to the Hemingway Collection staff at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, and the Firestone Library at Princeton.

I wish to thank the photographers who have contributed to this volume, most notably Kimmy Ruth and Brad McDuffie, who followed me around France and Spain on a Hemingway Pilgrimage in 2006, taking pictures of sites I deemed important to *The Sun Also Rises*. The fact that most of these places remain fundamentally unchanged since 1926 underlines the ways in which Hemingway chose to write about the real old things, the good places that do not change. Above all, I want to thank my graduate students, especially William Boyle and Matthew Nickel, for fetching research materials from places otherwise inaccessible and for much else besides; and all the friends and students who have accompanied me on *Sun Also Rises* pilgrimages, in classes and in France and Spain, those who have in many ways helped to keep the wheel(chair) turning and supported and contributed to the writing of this book—Larry Beemer, Michael Beilfuss, Mark Bellomo, Ed Butler, Nicole Camastra, Damian Carpenter, Jane Dionne, Steven Florczyk, Radmila Genyuk, Edward Meisel, Adam Romano, Jenica Shapiro, James Stamant, and Goretti Vianney-Benca. And Ann Gregory, coach, friend, and physical therapist who made me believe I could climb again to my third-floor study and library and finish this book.

Finally, I want to thank Jane Arden Stoneback—Sparrow—who has made all the pilgrimages with me and understood them, who has been fellow pilgrim and navigator from Paris to Roncevaux to all the other places, who has put up with the aftermath clutter from these pilgrimages, the scholarly detritus and debris on four floors of our house, who has been the first and best reader of everything I have written, who believed this book would someday be finished and—through it all—kept on singing.
The following commentaries are keyed to the page and line numbers of the Scribner Library, Scribner Classics, and Simon and Schuster editions of the novel in which chapter 1 begins on page 3 and pages run to the last chapter, 19, ending on page 247. Line numbers begin with the first line of each page.

The commentaries can be read in tandem with the novel, chapter by chapter, or all together after a complete reading of the novel. The guide is like other reference works that may be consulted variously by different readers. We believe this *Reading Hemingway* book will greatly increase one’s pleasure and understanding of *The Sun Also Rises*, one of Hemingway’s finest works.
Title: At various stages of its writing and revision, Hemingway considered different titles for his first novel: *Fiesta, Rivers to the Sea, Two Lie Together, The Old Leaven, Perdu, Lost,* and *The Lost Generation.* In late September 1925, he went to spend a few days alone in Chartres, the great cathedral city of France, eighty-three kilometers from Paris. He took with him the manuscript of his novel; it had been called *Fiesta,* but Hemingway rejected the use of “a foreign word” for his title and then considered *The Lost Generation.* While he was in Chartres he wrote in his notebook a foreword to “The Lost Generation: A Novel,” in which he told his first version of an anecdote about Gertrude Stein and a garage owner’s proclamation that the World War I generation was a “lost generation.” During his time in Chartres, in the shadow of the cathedral, with its multiple reverberations in sculpted stone and stained-glass iconography of Hemingway’s subtextual subject matter in his novel—resonances of Roland and Roncevaux, motifs of pilgrimage, biblical allusions, Catholic historicity, art, ritual, tradition, and authority—Hemingway decided to change his title. “The chief result of his trip to Chartres,” Carlos Baker notes, “was the decision to change the name of his first novel to *The Sun Also Rises*” (*Life Story* 155). It is a change of crucial import, accomplished in a symbolic landscape, sacred terrain that signifies—in the ancient and numinous Catholic Pilgrimage city of Chartres. Readers who are inclined to view the novel as pessimistic or despairing should pay close attention to Hemingway’s process of title selection: if the title had been “The Sun Also Sets” or “The Sun Also Goes Down” or “The Lost Generation,” it might seem a very different novel (see also Svoboda, *Crafting of a Style* 106–10).

In his Chartres notebook foreword, Hemingway pondered what redemption was available to his generation: “There will be many new salvations brought forward. My generation in France for example in two years sought salvation in First the Catholic Church, and DaDaism”—here he had first written “Communism” before crossing it out—“third The Movies Fourth Royalism Fifth The Catholic Church again” (*Facsimile* 2:628). After his foreword he wrote a list of titles, with *The Sun Also Rises* at the top of the list, and *The Old Leaven* (the only other title underlined) at the end of the list. He must have known, with his superb eye and ear for titles, that *The Old
Leaven was not a good title, even if it did point toward his novel’s submerged thesis, the “saluations” it “brought forward”: the old rituals and traditions, such as those of the bullfight and the Catholic Church, the old values that had been neglected and must be relearned, the old joys and delights, such as fishing and wine, that had been forgotten or prohibited. These old things would be the leaven, the agents that would lighten or enliven life and cause it to “rise.” Hemingway’s ear, already well attuned to French, may have heard in leaven the French levain (yeast), or lever and se lever (to raise, to rise), and maybe he already envisioned what would be his novel’s title in French: Le soleil se lève aussi. Fortunately, his excellent ear selected the best biblical title—The Sun Also Rises—and his time in Chartres would have confirmed the wisdom of that choice, given the cathedral’s traditional orientation to the rising sun, symbol of the risen Christ. Any guidebook he might have consulted regarding the cathedral would have drawn Hemingway’s attention to the many depictions in stone and glass of the conflict between the Virtues and the Vices, to the famous maze on the floor of the nave, which symbolized the penitential path of the pilgrim, to the Vierge au Pilier (the Virgin of the Pillar, iconographical cognate to the Virgen del Pilar in Zaragoza, Spain), and to many other subjects that would become recurrent motifs in his work. And if he bought, as any curious traveler or even the casual tourist would, the standard guidebook then available at Chartres, The Tourist’s Practical Guide Book (1924) by Étienne Houvet, Hemingway would have learned many things about the cathedral—ranging from structural matters (“without heaviness,” “perfect in its proportions”), to religious mysteries everywhere depicted in the “mystic city” of the cathedral, to the importance of “two of the most beautiful windows in the church . . . that of Charlemagne and Roland,” and, next to it, “that of Saint James the Great” (Houvet 3, 23). These matters would all be important in the months after Hemingway’s stay at Chartres, when he faced months of difficult revision, tightening (and lightening) the structure, perfecting the proportions, crafting the iconography, and intensifying the Catholic themes and subtexts of his first and—for many readers—his best novel. In an unpublished essay entitled “On Cathedrals,” in which Hemingway discussed cathedrals and different kinds of literary and Catholic conversions, he noted that certain places were not good for writing but were very good for rewriting, for “seeing what is not true and seeing the true that you have not put in and it is always much clearer and easier to re-write something in one of these places than where it was first written” (emphasis added; as quoted in Reynolds, Paris Years 326). And for seeing the “not true” in The Sun Also Rises, for “seeing the true” not yet put in, and beginning the process of rewriting—Chartres was the place.

Epigraphs: Just as Hemingway’s titles are crucial clues to theme and emphases, so too are his epigraphs. It has not always been obvious to readers and commentators that Hemingway does not present Gertrude Stein’s “lost generation” proclamation as a slogan to be endorsed, but as fatuous grandiloquence to be undercut, not only
by the wisdom reflected in the second epigraph, from Ecclesiastes, but also by the
action and design of the novel. Hemingway was pleased when reviewers recognized
that he did not take “the Gertrude Stein thing very seriously,” that he intended
to “play off against that splendid bombast” (Selected Letters 229). Stein’s “assump-
tion of prophetic roles” is mocked just as much by the juxtaposed epigraph as it is
by the larger motions of the novel: “Nobody,” Hemingway said, “knows about
the generation that follows them and certainly has no right to judge” (229). All
generations were “lost,” Hemingway would maintain, but at least his generation
was conscious of how they were lost and how they might be “found.” After the
first printing of the novel, which carried a longer version of the epigraph from
Ecclesiastes, Hemingway urged his editor, Maxwell Perkins, to “lop off the Vanity
of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity—What pro-
fit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?—delete all that” (229). Such
precision regarding the content of the epigraph should lead the reader to recognize
both Hemingway’s exactitude and his skill as homilist, pointing to his actual mes-
sage even before the novel begins. He does not presume to be the “Preacher” of
Ecclesiastes, but he preaches obliquely nevertheless. The revised epigraph, he tells
Perkins, “makes it much clearer. The point of the book to me was that the earth
abideth forever—having a great deal of fondness and admiration for the earth and
not a hell of a lot for my generation and caring little about Vanities.” His novel, he
insists, is not “a hollow or bitter satire but a damn tragedy with the earth abiding
for ever as the hero” (229). The second epigraph, as printed in the shorter version
since the second printing of the novel, consists of Ecclesiastes 1.4–7. (It should be
noted that the ellipses do not indicate omitted words, but verse breaks.) Heming-
way is astute in his insistence on the deletion of the “vanity,” for that might seem to
diminish the cyclical sense of renewal that he wishes to emphasize—the sun rising
on the abiding earth. Nevertheless, it is useful for all readers to consult the entire
book of Ecclesiastes as a kind of submerged subtext for The Sun Also Rises. In the
manuscript pages where he lists tentative titles for the novel, Hemingway writes:
“For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increases [i.e., increaseth] knowl-
edge increaseth sorrow” (Facsimile 2:629). This slight misquotation of Ecclesiastes
1.18 is a telling signpost for the progress of Jake’s pilgrimage, his movement over the
“abiding earth,” his wisdom and grief, his knowledge and sorrow.

Years later in his memoir of Paris in the 1920s, A Moveable Feast, Hemingway
tells another version of Stein’s declaration that all the young men who served in the
war were a lost generation: “‘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.’” Hemingway then notes how he tried to balance Stein’s quotation with the
Ecclesiastes epigraph, and he implicitly charges her with “egotism and mental lazi-
ness versus discipline,” and he thinks: “Who is calling who a lost generation?” He
concludes: “But the hell with her lost-generation talk and all the dirty, easy labels”
(Moveable Feast 29–31). Readers of The Sun Also Rises would do well to exercise caution with regard to the “easy labels” that have been affixed to the novel in the course of eight decades of literary criticism.
Robert Cohn: Cohn is a common variant spelling of Cohen (census records indicate a total of 39,772 occurrences, 3,730 in the 1920 census), a surname said to be of Hebrew origin, signifying rabbi, bishop, or priest. In general practice the name Cohn is not pronounced “con,” but in the same manner as Cohen, or “cone.” Thus there is no hint of the “con man” in Robert’s character; nor would there seem to be any rabbincial or priestly wisdom or authority. It is well known that Robert Cohn was based, to some degree, on Harold Loeb, Hemingway’s friend who accompanied him to the 1925 fiesta at Pamplona. Loeb was of distinguished lineage—his mother was a Guggenheim, his father a member of Kuhn, Loeb and Company. Hemingway may have echoed the latter fact in the roughly homophonic naming (Cohn/Kuhn) of his character. It is interesting to note that the Loeb’s had strong, and far longer, associations with Harvard than with Princeton; they were major Harvard alumni benefactors from the 1880s to the 1930s (Synnott 11–12). Loeb certainly served as a partial model in the early stages of the novel’s composition, but given Hemingway’s axiom, embraced years before The Sun Also Rises, that the writer must invent from what he knows, that “writing about anything actual was bad,” and that “everything good he’d ever written he’d made up,” Loeb’s role as initial character-model tells us nothing substantial about the created character of Cohn (“On Writing” 237).

Long after The Sun Also Rises appeared, Loeb published his memoir The Way It Was (1959) and, after Hemingway’s death, an article entitled “Hemingway’s Bitterness” that was included (with memoirs by other presumed prototypes for Hemingway’s characters) in Bertram Sarason’s Hemingway and “The Sun” Set (1972), a study of the novel as roman à clef. All such reminiscences belong to the terrain of memoir, a very different country from the terroir of fiction.

It is far more important to give careful consideration to Hemingway’s last-minute revisions that made “Robert Cohn” the first words of the novel and the primary subject of character presentation and analysis in the opening chapters. As late as the galleys, the novel began: “This is a novel about a lady. Her name is Lady Ashley and when the story begins she is living in Paris and it is Spring. That should be a good setting for a romantic but highly moral story” (Svoboda, Crafting of a Style 99). The radical changes suggested in Scott Fitzgerald’s critique (after publication-ready copy
had been sent to Scribner’s) convinced Hemingway to cut his first chapter, with its focus on Brett Ashley as the central subject of the novel, and much of his second chapter. Fitzgerald was surely right in urging Hemingway to get rid of the “careless + ineffectual” prose, the “condescending casualness” of the tone (Svoboda, Crafting of a Style 137–40). Rather than revision, Hemingway chose radical excision, and in the process he sacrificed some valuable background information about Brett and Jake. More important, by delaying Brett’s appearance in the novel until more than midway through chapter 3, and beginning instead with Robert, he risked altering the focus, the deep structure, and the very rhythms of his “novel about a lady.” Put another way, it could be argued that this revision radically and unduly foregrounds Robert Cohn as the principal subject of the novel. Indeed, after the opening chapters, and especially after chapter 6, Cohn is increasingly absent from the narrative, from the rendered action of the novel. He remains present, primarily as a touchstone of bad behavior, as it becomes clear that this is Jake’s story “about a lady,” and thus ultimately a story about himself. The revised beginning does have the effect of clarifying for the reader that this is, in one sense, a novel of manners, one concerned with conduct and character. And if Robert Cohn is a principal antiexemplar (as opposed to such exemplars as Count Mippipopolous, Montoya, and Pedro Romero), it may be a very effective strategy to begin with a definition of antiexemplary behavior before attempting to articulate, or codify, the “values” (see the crucial scene with the count, 57–61) that are the foundation of exemplary behavior.

3:1–6 boxing . . . Princeton: Since Robert Cohn is thirty-four years old in 1925 (see 9:9), it is likely that he entered Princeton in 1909 and graduated in 1913 (as did Harold Loeb, who was a wrestler, not a boxer, at Princeton). One reason that Jake is not impressed by Robert’s championship title is that there was no intercollegiate boxing—only student boxing clubs—at Princeton from 1880 to 1919. At best, Robert’s “title” would have been intramural. Another reason Jake is not impressed is implicit in Robert’s dislike of the very sport at which he excels; his lack of passion suggests for Jake (and Hemingway) a certain inauthenticity, a betrayal of the spirit of sportsmanship. If boxers figure importantly in the novel as adumbration of the role of bullfighters, Cohn may be seen as a precursor to the bullfighter gone bad, the bullfighter without passion (e.g., the later out-of-retirement Belmonte, as compared to Romero, 213–15).

In fact, the reason given for Robert’s pursuit of excellence in boxing—“to counteract the feeling of inferiority” he experienced as “a Jew at Princeton”—sheds historically precise light on anti-Semitism at Princeton in the early 1900s, and athleticism as the primary path to undergraduate success. In Robert’s freshman year, 1909, Princeton admitted the largest number of Jewish students in its history—thirteen—a number not surpassed until the 1920s. (In comparison, Harvard admitted seventy-one Jewish students in 1909.) Princeton long had the lowest Jewish student enroll-
ment of any Ivy League institution—in 1918, for example, Princeton’s total was 30, Harvard’s 385, Penn’s 596, and Columbia’s 1,475 (Synnott 16, 96, 181). Edwin Slosson’s 1910 volume, Great American Universities, reported that anti-Semitism was “more dominant at Princeton than at any of the other” major universities he studied; it was commonly said that “if the Jews once got in,” they would “ruin Princeton as they have Columbia and Pennsylvania” (105–6). Clearly, Jake is aware of Princeton’s reputation for anti-Semitism. The important question to ask is what does Jake feel about Robert’s experience as outsider, as the despised “other,” at Princeton? Since Jake is Catholic, he surely knows that Princeton also had a reputation for anti-Catholicism; indeed, in 1909, when thirteen Jewish students matriculated, only fifteen Catholic students matriculated at Princeton, and both groups were treated with equal scorn (Synnott 179).

Thus Jake’s meditation on Robert’s experience of anti-Semitism at Princeton may indicate one important reason that Jake is, at the beginning of the novel, Robert’s friend. Jake is empathetic because he knows that as a Catholic he, too, would have experienced Robert’s sense of “outsiderness” at Princeton. In this Cohn-at-Princeton sketch that opens the book, then, it can be seen that Jake identifies with Robert, not with Princeton. He likes Robert at the outset; he thinks they share a love of sports, and they are tennis friends. At Princeton, undergraduate “success was measured principally by athletic accomplishment.” Even if you were Catholic (but not if you were Jewish), “athletic honor” might well result in an invitation to join one of the prestigious, otherwise-closed, all-WASP eating clubs, such as the Tiger Inn, “which prided itself on the athletic prowess of its members” (Synnott 178). Given all these historical facts, one wonders why Robert went to Princeton. In the characteristic early twentieth-century view of the typical student at the “Big Three” American Universities, the Yale man, known for “conformity,” had to be “athletic, hearty, extroverted,” and the Harvardian, known for “individualism,” was associated with “intellectualism” and “eccentricity”; but the Princetonian had to be “neither a strong individualist . . . nor a conformist,” and what mattered most was to be “‘smooth’—that is, socially adroit and graceful” (Synnott 4). Why indeed did Robert go to Princeton? He is anything but smooth, socially adroit, and graceful, and the progress of Jake’s disenchantment with Robert is more an index of his social clumsiness and gracelessness than it is a mark of anti-Semitism. The fabric of the novel has threads of the widespread cultural anti-Semitism of its time woven throughout, yet Jake’s focus remains fixed on Robert’s conduct, the particularity of his behavior as an individual human being, not as a member of a prejudicially excluded or derided group. To dismiss the anti-Semitism clearly represented in the novel, to treat it as merely reflective of its time and place, as many commentators have, may risk evasion of a problematic matter; but to fail to see the rigorous focus on individual conduct is to miss one of the novel’s primary themes entirely (see, e.g., Traber 169–72).
3:9–10 Spider Kelly: There have been many boxers named Spider Kelly, more than twenty of them, and five who were in the ring during the 1888–1915 era. It has been widely and apparently erroneously reported that Hemingway’s Spider Kelly was an undefeated flyweight who fought from 1887 to 1901. Detailed boxing records from as far back as 1880 indicate only one flyweight Spider Kelly, with a record of 0-1 in his one fight in 1924. In fact, since almost all the Spider Kellys (and dozens of other Kellys) who fought in the pertinent years had dismal records, with more losses than wins, it could be that Hemingway, who was familiar with boxing history, chose the name “Spider Kelly” as a kind of marker for those familiar with boxing history, to indicate that supposed star-pupil Robert Cohn had a less than admirable trainer and thus was not much of a boxer, thereby underlining Cohn’s other antiexemplary traits. This assumption does not ring wholly true, since Jake seems to admire Spider Kelly, and he seems to see Spider’s training skills reflected in Robert’s performance in the ring—“very fast” and “good.” The historical subject files of the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton contain materials indicating that John H. “Spider” Kelly was head of Princeton’s boxing programs from 1902 or 1903 until his death in 1937. I can find no record of a John H. Kelly among boxers active from 1880 to 1903, or at any other time. Of the twenty-six John Kellys with listed fights in boxing archives, all but two began their boxing careers after 1910. According to Princeton archivist Daniel Santamaria, “The establishment of a boxing program, at either the intramural or intercollegiate level, was a matter of some debate” at Princeton during the years of John H. Kelly’s presence there (letter to author, 2 March 2005).

The Princeton archives also contain a 1940 article entitled “The Manly Art of Self-Defense” (no author given) with information about John H. Kelly. A hard-hitting iron foundry worker from Trenton, New Jersey, he is said to have received his “Spider” sobriquet from Gentleman Jim Corbett because he was so fast and moved in the ring like a “nervous insect.” He turned professional in 1887, and he “easily became champion of the Paperweight class (less than 100 lbs)”—how many boxers were there under 100 pounds? Eventually, it is reported, he won the flyweight and bantamweight titles “and then courageously fought George Dixon for the Featherweight crown[,] receiving a draw decision.” Another fighter he is reported to have fought is one Jack Hagen, with whom he toured the country during the war, “giving exhibition bouts for the Liberty Loan drives,” and raising millions of dollars. It is reported that he had been “unbeaten in the professional ring” from 1887 to 1902, before he came to Princeton in 1903 “as boxing instructor, on a private fee basis.” This 1940 article indicates that he gave private lessons to boxing club members, or to whoever sought instruction. There are several problems to be noted here: (1) If he was a champion, an undefeated professional for fifteen years, why is there no mention of him in detailed boxing archives that list even the fights of winless boxers who had career records of 0-1 (including at least two Spider Kellys)? (2) If he fought George Dixon, who was featherweight champion (record: sixty-three won,
twenty-nine lost, forty-seven draw), why is there no record of it in the detailed list of Dixon’s fights? (3) Dixon did fight a draw with the Bantamweight Tommy Spider Kelly (“The Harlem Spider”) in 1888 but it was not a title fight and this Spider Kelly’s dismal career record was five won, eight lost, four draw. (4) Dixon fought a certain Paddy Kelly twice in 1888–1889; this Kelly fought him to a draw in 1888 and lost in 1889, and that was his total fight career: 0–1–1. (5) If Princeton’s Spider Kelly fought one Jack Hagen, why is there no listing of such a fight, no record of any boxer named Jack Hagen? The answer may lie between the lines of an article that celebrates Spider Kelly as synonymous with Princeton boxing and equally trumpets his Irish wit and gift for storytelling (The Nassau Sovereign). An obituary article from the Princeton archives notes that Spider Kelly was “a figure surrounded by legend, brimming with color . . . ready Irish wit . . . countless stories” (“Obituary” 729). Clearly a beloved figure at Princeton, this Spider Kelly (who claimed he didn’t know how old he was) also seems to have been a man well acquainted with the Blarney Stone and other magical sources of talk and storytelling.

3:11 featherweights: Boxers weighing between 118 and 127 pounds are known as featherweights. It would be a forced reading to detect here the secondary sense of featherweight, meaning an insignificant or unimportant person or thing. Neither Jake nor Hemingway would base approval or disapproval of boxers on their weight class. Indeed both Jake and Hemingway admired Charles Ledoux, the bantamweight (i.e., 112–118 pounds, thus lighter than a featherweight) who was regarded as one of the hardest punchers, pound for pound, in boxing history (see 80:8–9).

3:17–18 read too much: This is the first of numerous references to Robert’s reading, which is an important motif in chapters 2, 3, and 6. The reference to Robert’s “spectacles” is echoed in later allusions to his nearsightedness and introduces a significant pattern of eye and vision imagery that recurs throughout the novel.

4:3–10 mistrust: By the second paragraph of the novel, Jake has mentioned three times Cohn’s supposed title—“middleweight boxing champion.” He is naturally suspicious of this claim both because it probably comes off as undergraduate boastfulness and because he knows there was, strictly speaking, no boxing championship, or nothing but club boxing and private instruction, at Princeton. Whatever Cohn’s “title” was, if any, his classmates do not remember him—and this was Princeton at a time when athletic skill was the key to undergraduate popularity. Moreover, Jake is a precise observer and a kind of investigative reporter who likes to see truly and get the facts right. Finally, given his experience of the world, Jake mistrusts the very notions of frankness and simplicity. But he does get Robert’s boxing “story” verified indirectly from Spider Kelly, whose reputation for storytelling, for blarney, may also have some bearing on the reports of Robert’s championship. And
maybe Robert learned more than just boxing from Spider Kelly, especially if we see Robert as a romantic storyteller given to fantasy and daydreams, with a deficient sense of fact.

4:18–19 nice boy: The repetition of the word “boy” stresses Jake’s view—later confirmed—of Robert’s immaturity for a man of thirty-four, his perpetual “undergraduate” demeanor. At the same time, Jake sees Robert as “nice,” “friendly,” and “shy,” endearing qualities that help to explain Jake’s friendship with him. Jake’s addition of “bitter” to his list of Robert’s personality traits suggests the complexity of Jake’s understanding of his friend’s character.

4:20 painful self-consciousness: Again, Jake may empathize (as a Catholic) with Robert’s experience of being an outsider at Princeton; also, given his war wound, Jake knows a good deal about “painful self-consciousness,” and where it crosses the line into self-absorption and self-pity.

4:21 married by: Robert’s passivity and inability to act decisively—in matters of the heart and art—are stressed by the passive grammatical structure here and the carefully ironic constructions in the next three paragraphs: “fell among literary people,” “taken in hand by a lady,” “the lady who had him.”

4:32 fell among: Jake echoes the biblical and proverbial expression “fell among thieves,” ironically associating with thieves the “literary people” who lead Robert to spend his money on a literary magazine that he funds as an “angel” (a patron, or financial backer, especially in the arts). Biblical echoes pervade The Sun Also Rises, although they are often submerged as they are here. See the story of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke (10.27–36). Given Hemingway’s subtle mastery of the art of deep allusion, the reader might be expected to sense here an ironic or straightforward reference to Jake’s efforts, especially in the opening chapters, to have compassion, to alleviate Robert’s suffering, to be his friend, and to love his “neighbor.”

5:2 review: The so-called little magazines of the period played a crucial role in the development of modernism in all the arts, and in particular in the international literary renaissance that developed shortly before and peaked not long after World War I. Although Jake is ironic about Robert’s editorial role in this review, noting that he began as a financial backer (“purely as an angel”) but then grew to like the exercise of editorial authority, he does not criticize—indeed, he reveals nothing about—the content of Robert’s review. Hemingway probably had in mind here Broom, the little magazine established by Cohn’s prototype, Harold Loeb. For a number of years Loeb had owned and operated the well-known avant-garde Sunwise Turn Bookshop in New York City at 53 East Forty-fourth Street, an important bookstore but also
a center of the arts where important new artists had their first solo exhibits (e.g., Charles Burchfield in 1916), and where the art celebrity Peggy Guggenheim (Loeb’s cousin) worked and first met the great photographer Alfred Stieglitz. Loeb sold his interest in the Sunwise Turn (a name echoed in the title of Hemingway’s novel) to establish in 1921 Broom: An International Magazine of the Arts. The first issues listed Harold Loeb and Alfred Kreymborg as editors until the latter was dropped and Loeb became the sole editor. Expensively and handsomely produced, and printed on fine paper with color prints by noted artists such as Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Henri Matisse, and Pablo Picasso; original woodcut covers by Natalia Goncharova and Fernand Léger; and photography by Man Ray, Broom in its brief existence (1921–1924) published a list of writers that constitutes a veritable roster of modernism: Jean Cocteau, Malcolm Cowley, Hart Crane, e. e. cummings, John Dos Passos, T. S. Eliot, Luigi Pirandello, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and many others. The magazine began in Rome, and at various times Berlin, London, and New York were listed as its place of publication. It was one of the most important arts magazines of its time.

5:3 Carmel . . . Provincetown: Both towns were known for much of the twentieth century as rather elite artsy retreats, or what some might call “bicoastal bobo” (bourgeois bohemian) centers, to distinguish them from, say, Greenwich Village, the more authentic or gritty bohemian quarter of New York. Although in the later twentieth century both towns were associated with elite vacation or seasonal retreat patterns, the origins of their reputations may be found in the early concentration of artists and writers for reasons centered in low-priced picturesque landscape. When the so-called Great Gale of 1898 destroyed much of Provincetown’s fishing industry, for example, many of the abandoned buildings were taken over by painters and writers. And when Carmel’s most famous writer, Robinson Jeffers, went to Carmel just before World War I, he went for reasons of landscape and cheap real estate. By 1925, when Jake associates Robert with Carmel (“Garden of God” country) and Provincetown (“Land of First Light”), both places, though still evocative of the arts, had taken on an identity that had more to do with wealth than art. The best days of the Provincetown Players (Eugene O’Neill, Djuna Barnes, Edna St. Vincent Millay et al.) were in the past. This fact probably plays a part in Jake’s place fixing for Robert’s review, which, in its shifting of locations both echoes and diminishes the locations among which Harold Loeb’s Broom moved: Rome, London, and Berlin. That is, Robert’s magazine is provincial, not part of the international scene, in Jake’s eyes.

5:21 Braddocks: This is a transparent naming of a character based on Ford Madox Ford (1873–1939), the English novelist and an important editor-publisher in the Paris expatriate community. In 1924 Hemingway became a deputy editor for Ford’s transatlantic review, which during its brief existence (1924–1925) published work by
Joseph Conrad, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), and James Joyce as well as cummings, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Pound, and Stein. Hemingway may well have been influenced by Ford’s work, especially *The Good Soldier* (1915) and the second volume—*No More Parades*—of the World War I tetralogy *Parade’s End*. Hemingway owned the typescript of *No More Parades* and probably read it carefully in 1924, when he was Ford’s editorial assistant. The role of Braddocks was more substantial in *The Sun Also Rises* before Hemingway cut several pages that dealt with him from the opening—material that Hemingway later used in the ninth chapter (“Ford Madox Ford and the Devil’s Disciple”) of his Paris memoir, *A Moveable Feast*. Although this passage identifies Braddocks as one of Cohn’s two friends (“his literary friend”), the deleted material makes it clear that Braddocks doesn’t think much of Cohn’s work.

5:23 **Frances:** The character of Frances is based on Kitty Cannell, Harold Loeb’s companion. Kitty and Harold socialized with Ernest and Hadley Hemingway and, in March 1925, introduced them to Pauline Pfeiffer (who would become Hemingway’s second wife in 1927).

5:27 **allowance:** Three hundred dollars a month was a considerable sum of money in the 1920s, especially given the exchange rate at twenty or more francs to the dollar. With apartment rentals available at the equivalent of ten dollars per month, and breakfasts, drinks, and restaurant meals averaging from five to twenty-five cents, one could live comfortably for a dollar a day. Some American expatriate memoirists have cited the exchange rate as the main reason there were so many writers and artists in 1920s Paris.

6:1–2 **novel:** Jake seems to take away from Robert’s novel with one hand as he gives with the other: it’s not as bad as the critics would say it is, but it is a “very poor novel.” But this amounts to a double condemnation of Robert’s writing, which is here linked, as in the recurrent pattern, with Robert’s reading. He reads a great deal, but what kind of books does he read, and what effect does their quality have on his writing? (See 8–9.) Harold Loeb’s first novel, *Doodab*, was published in 1925 and was neither a popular nor a critical success. Reviewers cited its propensity for daydreams and fantasy.

6:6 **l’Avenue’s:** The restaurant L’avenue (the correct spelling) was at 1–3, rue du Départ, near the Gare Montparnasse (the train station for points west), a part of the Hôtel L’avenue. After dinner, Jake and Robert follow the Parisian custom of going somewhere for coffee and drinks. The Café de Versailles was across the place de Rennes from L’avenue, at 171, rue de Rennes. It was a restaurant de nuit (open late) with dancing. (The reader who wishes to trace exactly Jake’s movements around Paris should consult a Baedeker or Blue Guide from the 1920s.)
6:7 **finest**: Fine (rhymes with seen) is a type of brandy familiar to readers of Hemingway’s work, yet not as easy to find in France now as it was in the 1920s. Some readers have confused it with cognac, the most celebrated of French brandies, produced in the region of Cognac. The confusion may stem from the fact that certain expensive cognacs are identified as *fine champagne*. It is linguistically and economically incorrect to assume that Jake, given his exactitude when it comes to details, would drink the much more expensive drink without specifying that he was drinking a cognac—*fine champagne*. The finest ordered in *The Sun Also Rises* may be *fine d’Alsace*, *fine de Bordeaux*, *fine de Bourgogne*, or whatever brandy of whatever region the café had as its house *fine*—but they are not cognacs.

6:10 **Strasbourg**: The capital of the Alsatian region in eastern France, Strasbourg is a large historic city on the French-German border. Jake seems to have a fascination with frontiers, with border crossings. (See his later multiple French-Spanish border crossings.) In 1922–1923, Hemingway wrote three *Toronto Daily Star* articles dealing with Strasbourg, one about a hair-raising Paris–Strasbourg flight he made in 1922, and two others dealing with inflation and French-German border crossings (“A Paris-to–Strasbourg Flight,” “German Inflation,” and “Getting into Germany,” in Hemingway, *By-Line*). Exemplary Hemingway characters always know exactly where they are and where they are planning to go and why. Seasoned travelers and well-informed pilgrims have a lively sense of place, a strong devotion to the *deus loci* (the spirit of place). Unlike Robert, who has drifted or has been led by someone else (“taken in hand,” as if on a leash) from Carmel to Provincetown to Paris, Jake knows why and where he wants to go. In this scene, Jake proposes all the destinations, four of them in addition to Strasbourg. Strasbourg, the ancient *Strataburgum* (“fortified town on the roads”), interests Jake not only because it is a borderland that has been both French and German but also because it has one of the most celebrated cathedrals of Europe, the cathedral of Notre-Dame. Such features as the red sandstone west front (by Master Erwin Steinbach) and the sculpture of the south transept doorway featuring the Coronation and Death of the Virgin, and allegorical figures of the Church and the Synagogue (Jake and Robert?) place the Cathedral of Strasbourg, considered one of the great achievements of medieval art and architecture, very high on the list of European cultural and religious routes and pilgrimages. This is the kind of place knowledge that compels Jake’s travels.

6:10–11 **Saint Odile**: In French, this is Sainte Odile, or, if referring to the place, mont Sainte-Odile. When Jake proposes a “walk” from Strasbourg “up to Saint Odile,” he is not talking about a little stroll in the woods; it is forty-one kilometers, one way, and the last six kilometers are steeply uphill. Why does he propose Sainte-Odile? Although it is one of the most visited sites in Alsace, it is, for the casual tourist, a rather obscure place. Yet mont Sainte-Odile, obscure only for nonpilgrims, has long
been one of the important sites of Christendom and a famous place of pilgrimage. As Catholics living in France, Hemingway and Jake would have known this, or they could have read it in any good guidebook, where they would have learned that Sainte Odile was the patron saint of Alsace; born blind, she recovered her sight when she was baptized. Her father, the Duke of Alsace, rejected her because of her disability and because he wanted a son. At last, he recognized her vocation and gave her the Hohenberg mountain (renamed the Odilienberg) as a sacred place to establish her famous convent, where, after a legendary lifetime of wonder working, of healing and miracles, she died in 720. The pilgrimage to Sainte-Odile was immensely popular in the Middle Ages, went through a long period of neglect, and once again became popular by the early 1900s. During five pilgrimages each year, pilgrims stop on their climb up the mountain to bathe their eyes in the source Sainte-Odile, the miraculous spring of the patron saint of the blind, believed to heal all eye ailments, all vision problems (in the physical and the spiritual senses of the term). At the top of the mountain, pilgrims visit the saint’s sarcophagus in her chapel, after which many take the long walk around the so-called Pagan Wall, the Celtic and Roman ruins that surround Sainte-Odile’s ridge. It is thus an adumbration of the Pagan-Christian nexus, the sacred-profane landscape pattern that informs other settings in The Sun Also Rises, such as Roncevaux, Pamplona, even Paris.

It is instructive to see that the first place Jake suggests as a walking destination is a well-known place of pilgrimage. Yet the significance, the reach of this allusion, does not stop there, for we are dealing, as always in Hemingway’s works, with precisely coded signals. A survey of the novel reveals an extraordinary number of references to eyes, vision, nearsightedness, and blindness, especially in the sense of “blind drunk.” In fact, however, the most extensive and explicit variation on the blindness motif occurred in the deleted opening chapter, just before the Sainte Odile allusion. In some respects, Fitzgerald may have been right to urge Hemingway to cut that chapter, yet many important matters are, shall we say, seen much more clearly with the help of the deleted material. This is what Jake says about blindness in the discarded chapter 1: “But when [Brett] had been drunk she always spoke of it as having been blind. ‘Weren’t we blind last night, though?’ It was short for blind drunk, and the curious part was that she really became, in a way, blind. . . . Brett first lost her power of speech and just sat and listened, then she lost her sight” (Svoboda, Crafting of a Style 133). Eye-blindness-vision image clusters recur throughout the novel (see especially 224, 235). From the beginning of the novel, when Jake is contemplating a pilgrimage to the numinous place of Sainte Odile, whose blindness was healed by baptism, Jake’s primary need is to see clearly his situation with Brett, to deal with his version of blindness. Hemingway’s buried landscape clue, his allusion to Sainte Odile, might have been clear to readers before now if the initial “blindness” passage that precedes the Sainte Odile allusion had not been cut. And given that this novel, this book, is centrally concerned with vision, we should not be surprised to learn
that the standard iconographic representation of Sainte Odile shows her holding an open book, with the open pages turned outward, facing the viewer: one large piercing eye gazes from each open page. It is a powerful and haunting image of vision, of eyes that—as Jake says in another context—“look on and on after every one else’s eyes in the world would have stopped looking” (26). And here, as Jake the writer invites Robert the writer to walk up to Sainte-Odile, he may be hoping for a miracle, thinking of his own book, and thinking of Robert’s nearsightedness, his problem with books, with reading and writing them, with seeing clearly. (See also Stoneback, “From the Rue Saint-Jacques.”)

It should be stressed that Hemingway’s Sainte Odile allusion is anything but obscure, or accessible only to a limited group of French or Alsatian Catholic pilgrims; indeed, he might have expected most of his readers to recognize it, given the fact that the American National Shrine of Saint Odilia, from which location prayer cards and “Saint Odilia Blessed Water” (from her spring in France) are distributed throughout North America, is in the Midwest (Minnesota). The Prayer to Saint Odilia implores, “through the intercession” of Saint Odilia, that the “Patroness of the eyes and afflicted” will protect the petitioner “from the darkness of ignorance and sin” and cure “the blindness of the eyes and other bodily infirmities.”

6:13 kicked: Robert, fearful of Frances’s reaction when Jake mentions the girl in Strasbourg, kicks Jake under the table to get him to change the subject. Jake continues, and Robert kicks him again. This is a perfect example of how Hemingway renders character in concrete details—the particularity of Robert’s action reveals, with no authorial commentary necessary, the uxorious, insecure, immature “taken in hand” and leash-led aspect of Robert’s personality. For decades, I have asked students to comment on one rendered action in each chapter that reveals character, and what it reveals; hundreds—no, after thirty-some years, thousands—of students have stated that the key piece of behavior in chapter 1 is this kick, that it shows Robert is some kind of a “wimp,” a guy they would not like to have as a friend; and if they feel negative toward Robert already after chapter 1 (and most do), it is not because of what Jake says about Robert in his biographical summary, but because of his surreptitious kicking.

6:18 Bruges: Changing the location subject after he is kicked, Jake proposes Bruges, the “Venice of the North,” across the French border in West Flanders, Belgium, a picturesque and historic city, a place of pilgrimage famous since the Middle Ages for its Procession of the Holy Blood. In 1150 the count of Flanders returned home to Bruges from the Crusades with a few drops of the blood of Christ given to him by the patriarch of Jerusalem. The sacred relic is conserved in a gold and silver reliquary that is carried in the Procession of the Holy Blood. The Bruges allusion may do more than reinforce the novel’s overarching pilgrimage theme, for the focus in
Bruges is the blood, just as the focus in the novel is those arenas of blood ritual that emphasize that much knowledge worth having is bought with blood: the bullfight, the church, hunting, fishing, and war (as in the baptism of fire, the “blooding” of Jake). It should be noted, too, that Bruges was an important staging area for pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela, in western Spain, from northern Europe, and there is a thirteenth-century Church of Saint-Jacques (see 7:8:6-7).

6:19 Ardenness: The Ardenness Forest stretches over parts of France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Germany; again, Jake’s fascination with borders, frontiers, is suggested. Especially around the village of Saint-Hubert, Belgium, the woods are—or were, in the 1920s—regarded as among the most beautiful in Europe. It might be that Jake, as a war veteran, has some interest in seeing the sites of the Battle of the Ardenness (also known, interestingly enough, as “the battle of the two blind men”). But since Jake seems more interested in hiking in the woods than visiting battlefields, we must assume it is the Saint Hubert—hunting resonances that lead him to suggest the Ardenness. Saint Hubert, known as the Apostle of the Ardenness, is the patron saint of hunters, and he is particularly venerated in the village of Saint-Hubert, in the heart of the Ardenness. The abbey contains the shrine of Saint Hubert, and there is an annual pilgrimage. The Mass of Saint Hubert is celebrated there (as it is in many forest villages in Belgium and France) to the accompaniment of hunting horns. The legend of Saint Hubert, frequently depicted in sculpture, stained glass, and painting, tells how Hubert, a very worldly man and an avid hunter, met a great stag in the forest on Good Friday, bearing between its antlers a crucifix surrounded by rays of light. Then he heard a voice saying: “Hubert, unless thou turnest to the Lord, and leadest an holy life, thou shalt quickly go down into hell.” This event, of course, marked his conversion and his turn to an exemplary Christian life. Had Jake and Robert gone to the Ardenness, they might have witnessed one of the splendid huntsmen’s Masses of Saint Hubert, with horns reverberating from the church into the surrounding forest; or they might have participated in the pilgrimage to Saint-Hubert, with hunters and animals gathered inside and outside the basilica for the bénéédiction des animaux, the blessing of the beasts. The only Hubert specifically mentioned in the novel is the Montana boy with his parents on the train full of pilgrims in chapter 9; Hubert’s parents are ironically presented, in part, as anti-pilgrims, and even though they’re from Montana, they don’t care for fishing or, presumably, hunting. All that we know about Hubert is that he desperately longs to “get in the water,” to swim; there may be a hint that he plays a part in the novel’s pattern of bathing and immersion, the cleansing and baptismal imagery, and thus the named Hubert may hearken back to the implicit but unnamed presence of Saint Hubert in the opening chapter (see 85–88).

6:31 Senlis: Jake’s final place proposal is much closer to home, forty-four kilometers north of Paris. He seems to have given up on the more complicated, longer-distance
pilgrimage locations and settled for nearby Senlis. Jake may also feel that Robert will be bored by the pilgrimage places, as he later says he might be bored by the bullfights. In any case, Senlis is one of the oldest French towns and has a very rich history. It was a royal residence for the first two dynasties. Sights one can assume Jake would want to see are the Gallo-Roman arena (where bullfights may have been held, as they once were in Paris), the magnificent cathedral of Notre-Dame (which contains sculpted pilgrim figures, including Saint Jacques/Santiago), and the cabinet de travail of Saint Louis in the old Château royal. (Saint Louis, the crusader, was one of Hemingway’s favorite saints—see, e.g., Selected Letters 683, 824.) Given the walk-in-the-woods theme of the overall conversation, we can assume Jake’s “hike in the woods” around Senlis might be in the bois or Forest of Saint-Hubert, long a center of la chasse, of hunting, as well as the French center of the cult of Saint Hubert (as the village of Saint-Hubert in the Ardennes is the cultic center of Belgian hunting). And their “hike in the woods” from Senlis would likely take them through the Forest of Chantilly, and a few kilometers down the way to the tiny forest village and Church of Saint Firmin (San Fermín), that native of Pamplona who became the bishop of Amiens and has at least seven French towns named after him. Thus this proposed walk is a kind of submerged foreshadowing of the journey to the Fiesta of San Fermín (chapters 15–18).

7:2 Grand Cerf: The Hôtel du Grand Cerf was in the heart of Senlis, at 47, rue de la République. Grand Cerf means Great Stag, and popular lore associates the many hotels and cafés in rural France that are called the Grand Cerf with the mystical stag of Saint Hubert. I have confirmed this connection in conversations with hunters in rural France, in cafés and restaurants and hotels named the Grand Cerf, and once, long ago, in a café (called the Grand Cerf) in rural Brittany somewhere near the magical Forest of Paimpont, I saw a fine wood carving of Saint Hubert meeting the great stag with the crucifix in its antlers occupying the entire front of a rustic bar. Jake knows what the voice from the Grand Cerf says: “Change your life or go to Hell.” In less than a page, then, Jake proposes to Robert five particular (not random) pilgrimages involving borders, frontiers, medieval history, cathedrals, and the Christian iconography of hunting, with place adumbrations of the possibility of healing, miracles, and transformed lives. Place and symbolic landscape are always touchstones in Hemingway’s work.

7:12–13 she led him: As chapter 1 closes, Jake reiterates that he rather likes Robert, feels compassion or empathy over his situation with Frances, and underlines again how Robert’s passive life is “led.”