The Fatal Art

Hemingway and the Bullfight

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“Why were bulls and bullfighters the very first and the very last thing he had celebrated in his writing?”

José Luis Castillo-Puche

“A bullfighter can never see the work of art that he is making. He has no chance to correct it as a painter or a writer has. He cannot hear it as a musician can. He can only feel it and hear the crowd’s reaction to it. When he feels it and knows that it is great it takes hold of him so that nothing else in the world matters.”

- Ernest Hemingway, *The Dangerous Summer* (Scribner 198; TS 470)
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Introduction

Prior to reading Hemingway’s work, I knew little about Spain and even less about bullfighting. “The Undefeated,” a short story published as part of the collection Men Without Women (1927), introduced me to bullfighting in Hemingway’s writing. The pride and determination of the protagonist, the matador Manuel, enthralled me as he set out to regain his honor in the ring. Bullfighting, I began to see, meant more to Hemingway than a violent spectacle. Through the bullfight he could discuss his philosophy of writing and art, his values, his passions and his fears. As I learned more about Hemingway’s life and work, I realized the bullfight’s great importance for him throughout his career.

Hemingway began writing short stories about bullfighting in 1923, around the time when he saw his first bullfight, probably in early June. He was twenty-two and living in Paris with his wife, Hadley. He had not yet published any fiction, so he worked primarily as a foreign correspondent for The Toronto Star. As soon as he saw the bullfight, he wanted to write about it and he devoted several pieces of journalism to describing his experience of it.

As his excitement for the bullfight intensified, Hemingway returned to Spain nearly every summer in the 1920s for the Festival de San Fermín in Pamplona. His trip to Pamplona in 1925 inspired his first novel, The Sun Also Rises (1926). At this time, he was also planning a long, nonfiction book on the bullfight that would describe its elements for an American audience and convey his passion for it. This book turned into Death in the Afternoon (1932).

Four years after the publication of Death in the Afternoon, the Spanish Civil War broke out. Hemingway played an active part in the war efforts, supporting the Republican side (which anarchists, socialists and communists supported) and fighting against the fascist regime. For
*Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), which tells the story of Robert Jordan, an American who fights for the Republic in Spain, also mentions bullfighting, though not to the same extent as Hemingway’s previous books. Because Hemingway had supported the Republic and had followed Communist Party policies and because the fascist government won the war, Hemingway could not travel to Spain until 1953. Upon his return, he met the matador Antonio Ordóñez, whom he befriended. Ordóñez’s 1959 rivalry with Luis Miguel Dominguín formed the basis of Hemingway’s nonfiction book *The Dangerous Summer* (1985), which was one of the last books he worked on in his lifetime. The typescript amounts to 688 pages, but LIFE magazine published only a fragment of the typescript in 1960. Hemingway died a year later, on July 2, 1961 in Ketchum, Idaho. In 1985, Scribner, Hemingway’s publisher, posthumously published a 166-page edition of the book.

The bullfight, also called the *corrida*, is a centuries old tradition, dating back to the 17th century, when the Spanish aristocracy would use lances to fight bulls on horseback in an event called the *corrida de rejones*, or *rejoneo* (Hardouin-Fugier 19; Thompson 530). Bullfighting on foot, the *corrida de toros*, began to develop alongside *rejoneo* in the 18th century when Felipe V came to power and is now the dominant form of bullfighting (Thompson 532, 523). As fewer noblemen participated in *rejoneo*, the lower classes began to take control of the ring, especially in northern Spain (Thompson 533). Most likely, the first footed bullfighters were the assistants to the aristocrats who had participated in *rejoneo* (Thompson 534).

The 18th century also saw the origins of the modern construction of the bullfight (Thompson 533). A typical bullfight is played out in three *tercios*, or stages, and the matador must be capable of performing each stage (Hemingway, “Bullfighting a Tragedy” 346). The participants consist of the matador and his *cuadrilla*, a team of five to six people who work under
him (Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon* 26). These assistants include the picadors and banderillos, who assist the matador in the first two stages of the bullfight. Bullrings are circular, with a wooden fence, called a *barrera*, surrounding the sandy area where the action occurs. During the bullfight, the matadors, their assistants and the police stand in the *callejon*, the space between the *barrera* and the stands (Hemingway, *Death* 30-31; Hardouin-Fugier 49).

The first stage, called the *Tercio de varas*, involves using lances from horseback to make shallow wounds in a mound of muscle on the bull’s back (Hardouin-Fugier 25). The mounted bullfighter on the horse is called a picador. In the event that the bull unseats the picador, the matador is responsible for using the cape to distract the bull from the fallen horseman (Hemingway, *Death* 96). In the second stage, the *Tercio de banderillas*, the banderilleros, or sometimes the matador, place three to four pairs of banderillas, brightly colored shafts with a barb on the end, into the bull’s neck to tire the bull, lower his head and control how he uses his horns before the third act. The entire second stage takes only about five minutes (Hemingway, *Death* 96-7). The third and final stage is the *Tercio del muerte*. Here, the matador enters the ring alone and executes a series of passes using a red cloth, called the muleta, that bring the bull close to his body. When the matador is prepared to kill, he reveals a sword from beneath the cape and as the bull charges past him, he thrusts the sword between the bull’s shoulder blades (Hemingway, *Death* 98, 208). Bulls seldom die from a single sword thrust. More often than not, the sword hits a bone and the matador may need to attempt the kill numerous times before the bull finally dies from blood loss and exhaustion (Hardouin-Fugier 31).

These three stages together are called a *faena*, and typically last around 15 minutes altogether. At the end of the bullfight, if the matador has done well, the president, who presides over the *corrida*, might permit him to cut off one or both of the bull’s ears or its tail. The
primary judges, though, of a matador’s performance on any given day are the spectators, who are
generally quite vocal in sharing their delight or displeasure (McCormick 4; Hemingway, Death
59). An entire bullfight involves six bulls and three matadors, with each matador killing two
bulls, and a single corrida can last for several hours. If a bull gores one of the matadors, the
remaining two bullfighters kill his bulls (Hemingway, Death 28).

The peak bullfighting season is from the spring to autumn and bullfights take place every
Sunday during this period. Most bullfights begin in the late afternoon, around 5:00 or 5:30 p.m.
(Hemingway, Death 28). There are also several festivals, during which bullfights occur nearly
every day. The Festival de San Fermín in Pamplona is famous for its bull running, where people
run in front of the bulls through the city streets each morning.

The bullfight has inspired numerous writers and artists in addition to Hemingway. The
Spanish poet Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) wrote about the bullfight in his poem “Lament
For the Death of a Bullfighter,” the Spanish painter Francisco Goya (1746-1828) is known for
his series of paintings titled the “Tauromaquia” (1816) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) also
depicted the bullfight in a number of his paintings. The bullfight inspired artists outside Spain as
well, including Edouard Manet (1832-1883), who painted well-known works such as “The Dead
Toreador” and “An Incident in the Bullring.”

In the 1920s, bullfights took place in Spain, France, Portugal, Mexico and some countries
in South America. Recently, anti-bullfighting movements have worked to ban bullfighting and
have had some success. In France, the bullfight has been the subject of debate for years,
especially since a 1951 law banning animal cruelty made an exception for the bullfight on the
grounds of it being a cultural tradition (MacGuill). In 2012, in response to activists’ calls for a
nation-wide ban, France’s Constitutional Council determined that bullfighting would remain
legal in regions of southern France (Todd). In Spain, a landmark vote at the end of 2010 banned bullfighting in the Catalonia region and the ban went into effect in 2012. However, in 2013, a petition came before Spain’s parliament that sought to recognize the bullfight as a national tradition and overturn Catalonia’s ban (Giles). The legislature passed the law November 6, 2013, thereby protecting bullfighting in Spain (“Spain Passes Law”).

In my first chapter, I explore Hemingway’s early pieces on bullfighting, including his journalism, vignettes and short stories. I then consider, in chapter two, how he presented the bullfight in his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, and first book of nonfiction, *Death in the Afternoon*. Finally, in chapter three, I examine the significant and revealing unpublished typescript of *The Dangerous Summer* and compare it to the published edition.

Hemingway’s avid interest in the bullfight endured throughout his life and represents a prominent subject in his work. He wrote about it in diverse genres, bringing it to the attention of his American readership, and used it to express his personal views of defeat, impermanence, courage and fear, making the bullfight as much about Hemingway as it is about the matador and the bull. He viewed the bullfight as an extension of his writing, and he illustrates his philosophy of writing, implicitly and explicitly, through his depictions of the bullfight. Hemingway was a sportsman, adventurer and worldwide traveler, and the bullfight could be seen as a confirmation of his fascination with violence, death, war and masculinity. However, Hemingway came to see the bullfight as much more than a brutal spectacle. Despite its violence, the bullfight reveals Hemingway’s values as well as his sensitivity and fears. A study of the bullfight takes us through Hemingway’s entire literary career as he discovered his identity as an artist, allowing us to trace his development as a man and writer.
The year 1923 was a seminal one in Hemingway’s career. After moving to Paris in December 1921 with his wife, Hadley, Hemingway rapidly integrated himself into Paris’s expatriate community. Eager to learn and launch his career as a writer, Hemingway engaged frequently with such notable authors as Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound and James Joyce. Though Hemingway made his living in the early 1920s as a foreign correspondent for the Canadian newspaper *The Toronto Star*, he thrived in Paris’s rich artistic community and began to focus his attention upon short fiction.

In the spring of 1923, Hemingway was eagerly anticipating the fall publication of his first work of fiction, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*, and finalizing the vignettes that would appear in *in our time* (1924). As the contents of these works reveal, Hemingway’s upbringing in the Midwest and his experiences in World War I profoundly influenced his writings’ content. At this point, however, he had not yet discovered a subject that would endure throughout his career, inspiring multiple short fiction pieces and two of his three nonfiction works. This subject was the bullfight.1

Many have tried to uncover who or what prompted Hemingway’s interest in the bullfight. According to Robert McAlmon, who accompanied Hemingway to Spain multiple times in the 1920s, “his [Hemingway’s] need to love the art of bullfighting came from Gertrude Stein’s praise of it, as well as from his belief in the value of ‘self-hardening’” (McAlmon 161). “Self-hardening” involves looking on a gruesome act or object with detachment. Distancing oneself

1 While one of the vignettes in *in our time* does relate a bullfight, Hemingway wrote the piece prior to ever having seen a bullfight. The biographer James Mellow postulates that Hemingway based the events of the vignette on stories told him by Gertrude Stein, Alice Toklas and Mike Strater (230).
from emotional reactions likely proved useful in World War I when coping with the ramifications of violence. After developing the skill in war, Hemingway appears to have continued practicing it, perhaps to substantiate his masculinity. Recent Hemingway critics and biographers also have cited Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas, both bullfight enthusiasts, as likely inspirations for Hemingway’s initial interest in the bullfight, as well as the painter Mike Strater (Mellow 230; Mandel 127). Through his contemporaries’ stories of the bullfight, Hemingway deduced that a working knowledge of bullfighting might prove useful for writing. In Death in the Afternoon (1932), he explains that bullfighting attracted him intellectually: “I was trying to learn to write, commencing with the simplest things, and one of the simplest things of all and the most fundamental is violent death” (2). The bullfight provided an expedient means of studying violent death during peacetime. His interest in death and belief in “self-hardening” may partly explain why his earliest depictions of the bullfight concentrate upon its brutal physicality.

Some scholars, including Miriam Mandel, argue that Hemingway foresaw the bullfight’s “possibilities as a literary subject and as a metaphor for artistic transactions” (127), but the concentration upon its violence in his early work shows that he appeared to view the bullfight primarily as a tool for writing about war. He did not foresee how rich and stimulating bullfighting would prove as a topic. The occasion of his first corrida would change his conception entirely. From his first bullfighting vignettes in 1923 to his final bullfighting short story in 1936, we see that Hemingway developed from an outsider into an aficionado with an active, emotional investment in the bullfight. As his relationship with bullfighting deepened, Hemingway learned to write from the matador’s perspective. Through the matador’s misfortunes, we feel death’s inevitability and learn of life’s harsh, inescapable realities. Yet in his triumphs, the matador represents a model that Hemingway believes we can aspire to emulate.
The matador’s capacity for making great art redeems the grimness of life and death and in this way, the bullfight defines the balance between brutality and beauty that Hemingway perceived in the world.

I. First reactions to the bullfight

As he anticipated, Hemingway found the bullfight a valuable resource for evaluating death. In a letter to his friend Bill Horne in July of 1923, he marveled at the close proximity to death the bullfight granted him: “It’s just like having a ringside seat at the war with nothing going to happen to you” (Hemingway, *Selected Letters* 88). Hemingway distances himself from the matador’s perspective by claiming a spectator’s “ringside seat” and isolating danger to the ring. Naturally then, the narrators in Hemingway’s earliest bullfighting fiction tend to be spectators. As will be shown later, a critical shift in his work occurs when he switches from graphic descriptions of wounded bulls and matadors to embodying the matador or bull’s character.

But in spite of approaching the bullfight pragmatically, Hemingway’s first bullfight prompted a forceful, and seemingly unexpected, emotional reaction. In the same letter to Horne, Hemingway’s words seem to run onto the page faster than he can write them:

...we [Hemingway and Hadley]...have just got back from the best week I ever had since the Section – the big Feria at Pamplona – 5 days of bullfighting dancing all day and all night – wonderful music – drums, reed pipes, fifes – faces of Velasquez’s drinkers, Goya and Greco faces, all the men in blue shirts and red handkerchiefs circling lifting floating dance...By God they have bull fights in that town. There were 8 of the best toreros in Spain and 5 of them got gored! (Hemingway, *Selected Letters* 88)

Hemingway portrays the revelry surrounding the Feria with vivid colors and action so lively there isn’t even time to place commas between the dancing’s “circling lifting floating” movements. His references to the Spanish artists Velasquez, Goya and El Greco suggest that
Hemingway immediately saw the bullfight as a continuance of Spain’s rich artistic tradition. The revelers’ adrenaline animates historic paintings and the bullfight, being at the center of the festivities, provides the means of bringing classic art to life. By connecting the bullfight to established artistic mediums, we learn to view bullfighting as an equally valid form of artistic expression.

Like many Americans unexposed to bullfighting, Hemingway entered his first bullfight with trepidation about the brutality he would witness, particularly when it came to the disemboweling of the horses (McAlmon 160). But, in McAlmon’s words, Hemingway became “an instant aficionado” (McAlmon 160). While this statement should certainly be qualified by noting that Hemingway’s understanding of and ability to express the bullfight’s intricacies took years to mature, McAlmon does correctly identify his immediate infatuation with the bullfight’s drama. As Hemingway noted, “It isn't just brutal like they always told us. It's a great tragedy— and the most beautiful thing I've ever seen and takes more guts and skill and guts again than anything possibly could” (Hemingway, Selected Letters 88). From the outset, Hemingway found that the bullfight provided not only a place to see death, but also courage and artistry. Within a single phrase, Hemingway names the bullfight both “a great tragedy” and “the most beautiful thing,” suggesting that the bullfight’s beauty is a product of its tragic nature.

This tragic element, which Hemingway would later expound upon, alludes to the ancient dramatic genre. The thirds of the bullfight are analogous to the three acts of a tragedy (DeFalco 192). In this way, Hemingway secures the bullfight a place among historic art forms like the ancient dramas. The classic tragedies have persisted over time because audiences connect

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2 McAlmon incorrectly cites the date of Hemingway’s first bullfight as 1924. The dates of Hemingway’s letters, journalism and travel history (Mandel 131) clearly show that he first attended a bullfight in the spring of 1923.
emotionally to the work. Similarly, the bullfight’s beauty depends primarily upon the emotion the matador imparts to the spectators. In Hemingway’s later fiction, a successful matador truly feels his performance and conveys his emotion to the audience so they may share in his experience. These matadors remain successful even if their bodies suffer injuries, suggesting that the bullfight’s beauty lies in its emotional content more than its visual appeal.

In addition to his letters, Hemingway depicted his impressions of the bullfight in two articles for *The Toronto Star*. These articles provide insight into Hemingway’s early understanding of the bullfight and allude to elements of it that he would explore more deeply in his future work. On October 20th 1923, Hemingway’s article titled “Bullfighting is Not a Sport – It is a Tragedy” appeared in *The Toronto Star*. This article stands apart from his other journalism through the palpable excitement coursing through it. Writing for a Canadian readership with a limited knowledge of bullfighting, Hemingway carefully explains its components and major characters. Hemingway’s method of teaching invites readers to share in his emotional experience. Perhaps with his Western audience in mind, Hemingway describes the seating “like a football stadium” (341) and the ring as circular, contrasting it to “a boxing ring [which] is square” (341). These analogies likely helped his audience relate to the bullfight and may have even helped Hemingway himself, an avid sportsman, to understand the bullfight’s elements while first learning about it. Yet these sporting analogies are counter to his primary argument, namely that the fight represents a drama rather than a game. For this reason, Hemingway leaves sport references behind as he turns from the fight’s context to the opening of the *corrida*.

Hemingway’s description of the bull’s entrance resembles his short stories’ prose style more than his journalism’s as he utilizes lists to increase the sentences’ pace:

He came out all in a rush, big, black and white, weighing over a ton, and moving with a soft gallop. Just as he came out the sun seemed to dazzle him for an instant. He stood as
though he were frozen, his great crest of muscle up, firmly planted, his eyes looking around, his horns pointed forward, black and white and sharp as porcupine quills. (Hemingway, “Bullfighting a Tragedy” 343)

Such detailed descriptions of the bull’s body place the reader in the position of a spectator in the stadium. The bull, a massive, blurry storm of “black and white,” surprises the audience with his “soft gallop.” Then as he stands still, the spectator pauses to appreciate his full physique, even up to the tips of his horns that are “sharp as porcupine quills.” These details break down the barrier between reporter and reader and invite us to share in the spectator’s experience.

The turning point of the article directly follows this passage, when the bull charges the picador: “Then he charged. And as he charged, I suddenly saw what bullfighting is all about. For the bull was absolutely unbelievable” (343). This epiphany catalyzed Hemingway’s fascination with the bullfight. Though he anticipated having the most interest in the moment of the bull’s death, Hemingway spends significantly more time describing the majestic, “absolutely deadly and absolutely vicious” (Hemingway, “Bullfighting a Tragedy” 343) qualities of the bull in life. The bull’s obvious strength coupled with the deceptive grace of its “soft gallop” presents a surprising paradox that enriches the bullfight’s inevitable tragedy. Hemingway’s insistence upon the word “absolutely” describes the extreme nature of the bull and his response to it. Like the bull, Hemingway holds back nothing in his emotion.

As Hemingway repeatedly states, bullfighting “…is a tragedy. A very great tragedy. The tragedy is the death of the bull…It is a tragedy, and it symbolizes the struggle between man and the beasts” (Hemingway, “Bullfighting a Tragedy” 344). The repetition of “tragedy” forces us to see the bullfight through a dramatic lens. However, Hemingway fails to explain how the bull’s death is tragic or why defining the bullfight as a tragedy is important. It seems likely that Hemingway did not yet comprehend what made the bullfight a tragedy, but recognized tragedy
as a critical component. As Hemingway learned more about bullfighting, he expounded upon several ways in which the bullfight appears tragic. One of these types of tragedy, and the kind he alludes to in this letter, is the bull’s nobility. The death of an admirable bull makes the matador and audience regret his death, even while knowing it is inevitable. By referencing the “struggle between man and the beasts,” Hemingway acknowledges the effort both matador and bull exert as they engage one another to the death. “Struggle,” though, does not adequately capture the complementary relationship of the matador and bull that Hemingway’s later work envisions. While the bullfighter and bull are opponents, the bull actively challenges the matador and in doing so, displays noble qualities that complement the matador’s valor. The matador cannot create his art without the bull and the bull’s bravery enables the matador to perform at his best. As a bull’s nobility increases, the greatness of the performance also heightens, but so does the tragedy at the time of the bull’s death. Through the bull’s and matador’s engagement, the bull becomes an essential player in creating the bullfight’s art.

In this article, Hemingway also introduces several contemporary bullfighters. He identifies one matador as Nicanor Villalta, a celebrated bullfighter of the day, and a second young matador as Chicuelo. He shares his appreciation for the gentle gracefulness of a well-made suerte by describing how Chicuelo “floated his cape like a ballet dancer’s skirt into the bull’s face as he passed” (Hemingway, “Bullfighting a Tragedy” 343). He would later use this same image in the short story “The Undefeated” when describing successful passes. However, the focus of the October 20th article remains upon his first reactions to the bullfight and its elements rather than its context or the people that participate. These latter topics he reserved for his second article, titled “Pamplona in July,” that The Toronto Star published one week later.
In “Pamplona in July,” Hemingway places the bullfight in its Spanish milieu and describes the bullfight’s participants – the matadors, members of the cuadrilla and the spectators. Even more than “Bullfighting is Not a Sport – It is a Tragedy,” “Pamplona in July” reads like one of his short stories as he sets the scene at the Festival of San Fermín:

Bullfight fans from all Spain jam into the little town. Hotels double their prices and fill every room. The cafés under the wide arcades that run around the Plaza de la Constitución have every table crowded, the tall Pilgrim Father sombreros of Andalusia sitting over the same table with straw hats from Madrid and the flat Basque caps of Navarre and the Basque country. Really beautiful girls...walk with their escorts in the crowds that pass from morning until night...All day and all night there is dancing in the streets. Bands of blue-shirted peasants whirl and lift and swing behind a drum, fife and reed instruments in the ancient Basque Riau-Riau dances.

(Hemingway, “Pamplona in July” 347)

We can see similarities between this passage and Hemingway’s earlier letter to Bill Horne in which he described the same Festival of San Fermín (cited above). In both, Hemingway provides brief snapshots of the celebration, capturing the festivities’ liveliness and participants’ diversity. Hemingway adds greater detail to “Pamplona in July,” citing the specific town or region visitors have come from and ascribing the “blue shirts” not to men in general, but specifically to peasants. These changes, though minor, show that Hemingway had taken the time to learn more about the Spanish country. He is moving away from being a fan and closer to being an aficionado who can guide his readers through the bullfight. The Festival is no longer a blur of color and energy, but a collection of individuals, any of whom might become a future character in a story. The participants’ diversity illustrates that people of disparate regions and economic backgrounds can share the experience of a bullfight. Through its wide-reaching popularity, bullfighting unifies the Spanish people and weaves itself into Spain’s culture.

Hemingway examines the matadors closely as well. In particular, he describes Maera (also known as Manuel Garcia), a matador known for his emotion and valor (Hemingway, Death
in the Afternoon 78). Hemingway relates Maera’s excellent passes and commends his perseverance through a wrist injury, but more importantly, Hemingway reveals his admiration for the matador. Until this point, Hemingway had praised matadors’ styles, but had never imagined what qualities a matador required or what it would be like to be a matador himself. When Hemingway reveals his admiration for Maera, we see that he aspires to emulate the matador’s bravery and composure. Hemingway often portrayed himself as a teacher, explaining the bullfight to foreigners or giving writing advice to novices. However, by identifying Maera as a role model, Hemingway places himself in the humbling position of acknowledging what he has to learn from someone else:

Maera is Herself’s [Hadley’s] favorite bullfighter. And if you want to keep any conception of yourself as a brave, hard, perfectly balanced, thoroughly competent man in your wife’s mind, never take her to a real bullfight. I used to go into the amateur fights in the morning to try and win back a small amount of her esteem but the more I discovered that bullfighting required a great quantity of a certain type of courage of which I had an almost complete lack, the more it became apparent that any admiration she might ever redevelop for me would have to be simply an antidote to the real admiration for Maera and Villalta. (Hemingway, “Pamplona in July” 352)

The man whom Hemingway describes in this passage is not hardened or stoic, but rather a man in the vulnerable position of trying to “win back” esteem his wife has lost for him. According to this passage, Hemingway entered the amateur fights out of the need to prove himself to his audience, of which Hadley was part, rather than himself. Hemingway did occasionally infuse humor into his articles and his upbeat tone suggests that he may be making light of his “balanced, thoroughly competent” masculinity. Nevertheless, Hemingway has compared his attributes to those of matadors and found himself wanting. He identifies “a certain type of courage” among bullfighters, suggesting that multiple varieties of courage exist. While he does not enumerate the different types of courage, Hemingway must have perceived the matadors’ courage as different from the courage of soldiers since he finds he has “an almost complete lack”
of the matadors’ variety. This passage represents Hemingway’s first mention of courage in relation to the bullfight. A decade later in the short story “The Capital of the World” (1936), Hemingway finally shows us that the emotion that prompts a man’s courage distinguishes the different types. The matador’s “certain type of courage” arises out of fear. A matador faces death each time he enters the ring, but returns again and again. By performing admirably despite his fear, a bullfighter proves his bravery.

Like courage, admiration also comes in multiple forms. Hemingway writes that Hadley’s admiration for him comes in second to her “real admiration for Maera and Villalta.” “Admiration” and “real admiration” differ in their level of intensity. Admiration of the type Hadley has for Hemingway is a weak form of awe. “Real admiration,” on the other hand, implies a feeling of inspiration. The “real admiration” Hadley and Hemingway feel for the matadors paints bullfighters as role models whom one can aspire to emulate. Unable to win her “real admiration,” Hemingway places himself as an admirer of and competitor against Maera. Far from adopting a wounded tone, Hemingway validates Hadley’s veneration of matadors since he too holds them in such high regard.

II. External and internal defeat

After having chronicled his first bullfighting experiences through journalism, Hemingway took to writing about bullfighting in his fiction. It may seem strange that an ambitious writer at the beginning of his career would focus so intently upon portraying defeat, but the contrast between death’s finality and defeat’s ambiguity appears to have intrigued Hemingway. Over the course of several vignettes and short stories revolving around matadors’ misfortunes, he explores how failing in the public eye affects a matador differently than suffering
a personal defeat. Accordingly, these works depict his growing fascination with how matadors live all aspects of their lives.

Gertrude Stein once remarked that when she met Hemingway, he had a “truly sensitive capacity for emotion...but he was shy of himself and he began to develop, as a shield, a big Kansas City-boy brutality about it...because he was really sensitive and ashamed that he was” (qtd. in Brinnin 261). According to Stein, Hemingway lost touch with his sensitivity when “he became obsessed with sex and violent death” (qtd. in Brinnin 261). However, a close reading of Hemingway’s bullfighting works suggests just the opposite. Hemingway began by interpreting the bullfight as a spectacle of death and then, as his knowledge grew, he came to recognize the matadors’ emotion as an essential component of the bullfight. Hemingway’s fiction depicts the violence of the bullfight, but the superficial aspects of bullfighting receive less emphasis than his portrayals of the matadors’ and spectators’ emotions.

The first vignette of *In Our Time* on bullfighting appears at the beginning of Chapter IX. In one paragraph, the narrator recounts an entire corrida – a bull goeses the first matador through his hand and the second matador suffers a wound to the gut shortly thereafter, leaving the third matador with five bulls to kill. The third matador, referred to as “the kid,” perseveres through his exhaustion. While fighting the final bull, “the crowd was quiet because it was a good bull and it looked like him or the bull” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 121), but the kid “finally made it” (121). After the bull’s death, the kid “sat down in the sand and puked and they held a cape over him while the crowd hollered and threw things down into the bull ring” (121). The reader senses the crowd’s displeasure. Nevertheless, we have difficulty in judging the kid with the same certainty as the crowd. As readers, we witness his commendable perseverance and also his public embarrassment, but unlike the crowd, we may benefit from the narrator’s detachment.
While the crowd makes an instant emotional judgment, the reader has the opportunity to contemplate all aspects of the kid’s performance. Looking back upon the narrative, we decide how much weight to give the redeeming and disappointing aspects of his performance and we can ask whether his perseverance or his sickness says more about his character.

This vignette is unique in that it represents the first piece of fiction Hemingway wrote on bullfighting. Its brutal physicality reflects the violence Hemingway expected to find in the ring and also connects it to the wartime vignettes featured before In Our Time’s first eight chapters. Of the bullfighting vignettes, chapter IX is the only vignette that was published twice and revised between its two publications. It first appeared in The Little Review in 1923, before Hemingway had ever attended a bullfight. It then appeared again in 1924, with slight alterations, in In Our Time as the heading to chapter IX. The most significant change made between publications concerns the role of the crowd. In The Little Review, the vignette ends with the young matador, sick on the ground, and the “crowd come [came] down the barrera into the bull ring” (Hemingway, Little Review 3). In contrast, the crowd in In Our Time remains in the stands and instead “hollered and threw things down into the bull ring” (121). Compared to the crowd of In Our Time, The Little Review’s crowd seems like its own animal, a second bull almost, that antagonizes the matadors. Both crowds express intense displeasure, but the fierceness of the crowd in The Little Review makes it appear more primal.

As Kenji Nakajima points out, this modification shows that Hemingway’s understanding of the spectators matured after attending a bullfight: “Hemingway’s revision suggests his awareness and acceptance of this...role of the bullring spectators. That is, it is they that fix, hold, and activate the criterion of bullfight heroism” (26). Hemingway does seem to realize the

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3 Since this vignette is written entirely in the past tense, the word “come” in this sentence appears to be a misprint in The Little Review.
The narrator observes the bullfight from an unspecified position and describes an encounter between nameless matadors. His account of the second matador’s goring is apathetic, imagining neither the pain the matador experiences nor cringing when the “bull caught him through the belly...and...rammed him wham against the barrier and the horn came out” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 121). Instead of becoming emotionally involved, the narrator shares with the reader only what he observes, emphasizing the fast-pace of events with clipped visuals and, through the onomatopoeia “wham,” auditory imagery as well.

The scholar Larry Grimes overstates the narrator’s subjectivity when he writes that the narrator “transforms the exhaustion and utter emptiness of the matador into a sense of completion, of finale, and not a failure” (40), but he correctly identifies the narrator’s role in shaping the foundation upon which the reader can decide the third matador’s fate: “The final shape of the real thing must be determined by the reader on the strength of the lines of motion and emotion established in the vignette” (41). The reader utilizes the narrator’s descriptions to judge whether the crowd’s censure is justified. For this reason, identifying inconsistencies...
between Hemingway’s representation of bullfighting and bullfighting in reality as proof of his immature knowledge of tauromachy (Nakajima 22) is an undertaking of little consequence. Shortcomings in Hemingway’s understanding do not detract from the narrator’s descriptive talents and it is the reader’s complex response to the narrator’s observations that grant the vignette its power. We base our judgment of the bullfight upon both the physical performance and our insights into the matador’s feeling. The narrator’s description adequately conveys all the information pertaining to the bullfight’s physical events. Then the reader’s personal response makes it possible for each reader to interpret the bullfight differently. Thus, disagreements among readers do not detract from the vignette’s worth, but rather demonstrate that emotion is inseparable from bullfighting.

The difficulty the reader encounters when judging the kid’s performance shows that a matador’s survival or bravery while engaging the bull does not automatically ensure his success. Rather, his achievement reflects his comportment during and after the bullfight. Through this vignette, Hemingway opens the reader to considering defeat as a complicated component of bullfighting that requires an insider’s knowledge to judge responsibly. As we look beneath the surface of bullfighting, Hemingway invites us to empathize with the participants. Much of Hemingway’s fiction separates the superficial from the internal; a character’s words or actions relate a limited amount of information, so to fully understand a character’s condition we must look deeper into his or her motivations. Similarly, in life or in the bullfight, an individual’s honorable intent can establish his success even if he physically appears a failure.

Two chapters later, in the vignette preceding Chapter XI of *In Our Time*, Hemingway leaves no doubt in the reader’s mind that the matador has failed. This vignette opens with the crowd’s outrage toward an anonymous bullfighter. As in chapter IX’s vignette, the crowd
responds directly to the matador’s behavior in the ring. This matador has excited the crowd’s disgust after subjecting the bull to so much “bad sticking” that the bull “folded his knees and lay down” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 133). Since the bull cannot charge the muleta, a member of the *cuadrilla* kills him unceremoniously. The matador’s cruel treatment of the bull shows that he has no respect for the animal, himself or the tradition of bull fighting. As Hemingway expressed in his journalism, the bullfight’s tragedy centers on the bull’s death. Though it would be years until he would develop the insight that the matador’s tenderness toward the bull makes its death tragic, he recognizes that the bullfight’s connection to ancient dramas hinges upon the bull dying honorably. By corrupting the bull’s death, this matador dishonors those involved in the *corrida*.

After the bull dies, the crowd’s anger is so uncontainable that the crowd “came over the barrera and around the torero and two men grabbed him and held him and some one cut off his pigtail” (133). The crowd’s descent into the ring directly echoes the crowd’s action in *The Little Review*’s version of the chapter IX vignette with only one preposition differentiating the two; the crowd in chapter IX “come [came] down the barrera into the bull ring” (*Little Review* 3) and the crowd in chapter XI “came over the barrera” (*Short Stories* 133). By revising the version of chapter IX in *In Our Time* to have a less violent crowd, Hemingway reserves the physically threatening crowd for a matador that has truly disgraced himself.

Unlike chapter IX’s vignette, the reader glimpses the matador’s behavior outside the ring. In the latter half of the vignette, the narrator speaks with the matador at a café: “Afterwards I saw him at the café. He was very short with a brown face and quite drunk and he said after all it has happened before like that. I am not really a good bull fighter” (133). This incident is notable for two reasons. First, the use of “I” indicates that the narrator takes on a more active role than in previous vignettes. Though he only observes the crowd in the beginning, he becomes directly
involved as a character, presumably an *aficionado*, at the end of the story. Secondly, Hemingway implies that a matador’s conduct both inside and outside the ring determines his success. Thus victory, and conversely defeat, depend upon both the matador’s public reception and his personal honor.

Grimes offers the vignette’s matador a small commendation in noting that “No allowance...is made by anyone for the courage that brings a ‘not really good bull fighter’ into the ring again and again in spite of it all” (47), but the matador deserves no affirmation when he repeatedly demonstrates his disrespect for his craft. The matador here does not even stumble home to salvage the remains of his pride. Instead he wallows at a public bar, wasting himself upon drink. In his conversation with the narrator, the matador reveals that, “after all it has happened before like that” suggesting that he has lost his pigtail, or *coleta*, on prior occasions. His indifference while admitting that, “I am not really a good bull fighter” shows that he does not value his honor or bullfighting. It seems entirely plausible that he will grow back his *coleta*, only to be publicly shamed again in another arena. This vignette makes clear that a matador does not just uphold his profession while performing, but in all aspects of his life. Matadors first inspire audiences because they enter the ring just as vulnerable as any other man, but calmly face the bull when other men might flee. Then, an extraordinary matador maintains his poise outside the ring, upholding the bullfight’s values of honor and dignity in all aspects of his life. Through the matadors’ commitment to his craft, we see qualities we strive for in ourselves.

Chapter XI’s vignette calls to mind Hemingway’s unfinished story “A Lack of Passion,” originally titled “Disgrace,” that he began writing in 1924 (Beegel 51). The story opens in a hotel
restaurant after a bullfight where a dejected young matador named Gavira sits eating ice cream with his uncle, who is also his manager. Two waitresses titter at Gavira from across the room, though the reader does not understand why. Later, the reader learns that he behaved objectionably in the ring at that day’s bullfight. When one of his picadors fell from his horse, the bull nearly impaled him yet Gavira did not intervene with the cape. Additionally, he failed to kill his bull honorably. In fact, he did not kill the bull at all. Instead, his uncle used a hidden sword to kill the bull from behind the barrera. For this infraction, Gavira is now the target of the spectators’ anger and the city has issued orders for both his and his uncle’s arrest.

For the purposes of this analysis, the most important aspect of “A Lack of Passion” is its separation of public and personal disgrace:

What was disgrace to the crowd, the bare facts of Gavira’s panic before the bull, his lack of any recourse, his loss of nerve at the killing, his many attempts to put the sword into the bull...were not a disgrace that touched them all. All of that might happen to any one, as a player in any game might slump into sudden, unexplained mediocrity. This apparent, this outer disgrace held them together against all outsiders.

Inside there was something else. There was the disgrace of the boy who was no longer responsible, who could no longer keep his obligations, not merely to the public, for that obligation they did not admit, but his absolute obligations to those whose lives were guaranteed and guarded by his cape. (8-9)

Hemingway clearly distinguishes “this outer disgrace” that is a “disgrace to the crowd” from the “disgrace of the boy.” Outer disgrace is transient and may be nothing more than a “sudden, unexplained mediocrity.” But the boy’s disgrace, an internal defeat, may have devastating effects. The separation of the two forms of disgrace suggests that the matador’s experience in the ring remains isolated from anything the crowd witnesses. A spectator can readily identify a matador’s outer disgrace as it depends solely upon the matador’s bravery and style in the ring,

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4 Hemingway altered the name of the young matador multiple times in the typescript. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to him as Gavira since Hemingway most frequently calls him by that name.
but internal disgrace requires a more expert eye to detect. For instance, the third matador’s
defeat in chapter IX’s vignette remains ambiguous because the narrator depicts his physical
struggle, but not his internal state.  

Only members of the *cuadrilla* or *aficionados* understand that outer disgrace “might
happen to any one.” This understanding creates solidarity among them because they know that
“inside there was something else.” Specifically, inside lies the matador’s honor and, as the title
“A Lack of Passion” suggests, Gavira has a void within him where his honor should be. Though
passion is not synonymous with honor, possessing passion correlates with having a fierce desire
to prove oneself and uphold the integrity of the bullfight. The Spanish word * pundonor* also links
honor with various attributes. In *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway writes that *pundonor*
“means honor, probity, courage, self-respect and pride in one word” (91). These qualities lie at
the heart of a matador’s performance. When a matador faces a bull, he externalizes his
conception of *pundonor*. At any given time, any one or combination of these attributes may
motivate a matador’s actions.

In this story, Gavira’s inability to uphold his “absolute obligations to those whose lives
were guaranteed and guarded by his cape” signals his defeat. The stress placed upon matadors’
responsibilities emphasizes that proper bullfighting requires maturity in addition to bravery and
composure. In the context of “A Lack of Passion,” Gavira’s struggles in the ring accord with his
attempts to reach manhood. As Hemingway suggested in “Pamplona in July,” the best matadors
represent exemplary men that embody qualities deserving of “real admiration.” Not every

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5 In his book *Hemingway’s Theaters of Masculinity*, Thomas Strychacz argues that the kid of
Chapter IX’s vignette reaches manhood through his performance and the crowd delights in his
achievement. While Hemingway may emphasize the matador’s youth to portray the bullfight as
a symbolic rite of passage like he does in “A Lack of Passion,” he gives no indication that the kid
succeeds. Moreover, the crowd’s reaction, especially considering the crowd’s violence in *The
Little Review*, expresses displeasure rather than favor.
matador strives to attain manhood – many of the matadors Hemingway depicts are considerably older than Gavira – but they all strive to uphold the qualities that an honorable man possesses. At such a young age, Gavira is unprepared to bear a bullfighter’s duties. The narrator calls attention to his youth by commenting upon his “pimply face” (Hemingway, “A Lack of Passion” 14) and including the odd detail that he eats ice cream after the bullfight (instead of drinking like the matador from chapter XI). Additionally, Gavira seems to have little command over his life; his uncle has maintained control of him ever since enrolling him in bullfighting school as a boy. In this way, the matador’s emotional state manifests itself in his performance, dictating the quality of his work.

Hemingway’s short story “The Undefeated” represents his most comprehensive dramatization of the contrast between outer and inner disgrace. Though it would not be published until 1927, Hemingway began work on the story in 1923, around the same time as the vignettes (Smith 104). In a letter to the editor George Lorimer, Hemingway wrote: “I have never read a real bull fight story, one written without bunk, from the inside by some one who really knew bull fighting. So I have tried to write this one [“The Undefeated”] to show it the way it actually is...” (Hemingway, Selected Letters 148). As Hemingway suggests in the vignettes, the matador’s personal experience encapsulates “the way it actually is.” Accordingly, the narrator of “The Undefeated” incorporates the matador’s thoughts into his narrative, bringing the reader closer to the matador’s reality than ever before. Hemingway’s emerging fascination with bullfighters’ internal states marks a shift in his understanding of bullfighting from a blood sport to a form of artistic expression inseparable from emotion. The matador gives life to his performance through the strength of his feeling, transforming his struggle with the bull into a work of art that the crowd can appreciate.
The story opens upon the matador Manuel as he climbs the stairs to his manager’s, Retana’s, office. He still carries his suitcase from the hospital where he has been recuperating from a bullfighting injury. Unable to conceive of retiring, he now seeks to return to the ring. At this moment, he defies the reader’s expectations of a matador. He appears weak and, as Retana makes clear when he sees him, no one cares or even knows he is alive: “The little man sat looking at Manuel. ‘I thought they’d killed you,’ he said. Manuel knocked with his knuckles on the desk” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 183). But what Manuel lacks in physical ability, he makes up for in conviction. When Retana questions his motives for returning, Manuel reveals that he does not treat bullfighting as a hobby, but as a style of life both in and outside the ring:

> “Why don’t you get a job and go to work?” he [Retana] said.
> “I don’t want to work,” Manuel said. “I am a bullfighter.”
> “There aren’t any bullfighters any more,” Retana said.
> “I’m a bullfighter,” Manuel said.
> “Yes, while you’re in there,” Retana said.

(Hemingway, *Short Stories* 184)

The quick series of statements that construct this dialogue emphasize the forcefulness of Manuel’s passion for his craft and Retana’s cynicism. For Retana, bullfighting presents a means of making a profit. By saying “There aren’t any bullfighters any more,” he implies that he once saw, like Manuel, the tragic beauty that empowers the bull and the artistic grace of the matador, but he no longer interprets the bullfight as a form of art. Moreover, Retana believes the honor and energy of a bullfight are superficial, only lasting “while you’re in there,” and incapable of being translated from the ring into the outside world. Manuel, on the other hand, feels that the title of “bullfighter” should represent the matador’s comportment both inside and outside the ring.

Nostalgic for the days when the word matador meant more than an occupation, Manuel seeks to regenerate his artistic conception of bullfighting despite the expedient, less honorable
approaches his contemporaries now employ. Manuel’s nostalgia emphasizes his age, but age does not motivate his return to the ring. The scholar Scott MacDonald disagrees: “Manuel Garcia is a middle-aged man who is engaged in a stubborn flight from the simple fact that he is too old to be a matador” (11). But MacDonald overlooks Manuel’s heartfelt connection to the bullfight. Instead of age motivating him, Manuel returns because bullfighting embodies a part of his identity. By returning, he desires to uphold the traditional bullfight’s integrity and, in the process, redeem himself by showing that his injury affected only his body and not his spirit.

Through Retana’s comment of “I thought they’d killed you,” the threat of death asserts its presence early on and grows continuously throughout the story. In this way, the structure of the story emulates the rhythm found in a real bullfight. Just as in the ring where there are three stages in which the bull can engage the bullfighters, there are three stages in the story as well. Retana’s office represents the first of three such stages. As later events will uphold, this construction places Manuel in the position of being at once the matador and the bull. In large part, Manuel appears unconventional because he displays more of the characteristics of a bull than a matador in this first episode. His pride leads him to challenge Retana’s decision of using him as a substitute, yet Manuel is clearly subordinate: “He {Manuel} was still playing with the idea of refusing. But he knew he could not refuse” (185). Manuel’s fate lies entirely in Retana’s decision to refuse his request or allow him to fight.

After obtaining a place in the upcoming corrida, Manuel enlists the reluctant help of Zurito, a retired picador. He then enters the second stage of the story and the real bullring. In this arena, the bull’s thoughts encroach upon Manuel’s territory, almost imperceptibly, until their two minds appear joined on the page:

Manuel walked toward him {the bull}, watching his feet. This was all right. He could do this. He must work to get the bull’s head down, so he could go in past the horns and kill
him. He did not think about the sword, not about killing the bull. He thought about one
thing at a time. The coming things oppressed him, though. Walking forward, watching
the bull’s feet, he saw successively his eyes, his wet muzzle, and the wide, forward-
pointing spread of his horns. The bull had light circles about his eyes. His eyes watched
Manuel. He felt he was going to get this little one with the white face. *(Short Stories 199)*

The narrative blends Manuel’s description of the bull with the bull’s point of view so seamlessly
that the reader may overlook the change in perspective. In contrast to Chapter IX’s vignette
which had pitted the young matador against the bull in a moment that “looked like him or the
bull” *(Hemingway, Short Stories 121)*, the reader cannot separate Manuel from the bull. Upon
accessing the bull’s thoughts, the reader learns that the bull also has an objective in the fight,
extcept that his goal is the opposite of Manuel’s: the bull wishes to “get this little one with the
white face” while Manuel attempts to slay the bull. The unity of mind suggests that the tragedy
of the bull will also pertain to Manuel. Manuel’s death feels inevitable just like the bull’s.

The bull’s examination of Manuel has passed unnoticed in critical reviews. For instance,
both MacDonald and James Plath note the multiple perspectives through which the reader views
Manuel – the critic in the stands, the crowd, the café waiters. Strangely, neither MacDonald nor
Plath remarks upon how the bull perceives Manuel even though it is Manuel’s relationship to the
bull, more than his relationship with any other character, that sets “The Undefeated” apart from
other bullfighting works. The bull “felt he was going to get this little one,” and the word “felt”
signals that the bull is a sentient being. Because the bullfight concerns violence toward the bull,
the bull’s capacity to feel makes his death more tragic. Conversely, the bull’s sentience elevates
the battle of man and beast to an encounter of equals. By feeling, the bull becomes a character
rather than a victim and he knowingly contributes to the performance, meaning that any artistic
victories are as much the bull’s triumphs as the matador’s. In granting the bull such a powerful
position, Hemingway makes evident that he respects the bull’s sacrifice and nobility.
Manuel’s unification with the bull justifies the reader’s inclination to draw connections between them. Both Manuel and the bull feel powerful in the ring and embrace the freedom they have there to display their strength and talent. The bull’s confidence is apparent not only in his thoughts but also in his strength as it exudes throughout his sturdy body and the “forward-pointing spread of his horns.” Conversely, Manuel shows his strength in the way he coolly assesses the bull, seeming to master him as he concentrates on each body part in succession. At the same time, Manuel’s methodical approach to the fight suggests an inability to feel its rhythm. Doubt creeps into his mind, threatening his ability to focus, and Manuel must reassure himself: “This was all right. He could do this.” In such an arena, doubt appears as a mild form of weakness, though it also seems natural considering the high stakes of the event. Manuel attempts to push his apprehension out of mind and to think “about only one thing at a time,” but the future oppresses him and the match rushes toward its fatal climax. Neither competitor can forget the gruesome fact that their combat will result in the death of one or both of them.

This reality is the nature of the bullfight. Conventionally, the bull sustains the most grievous injuries and dies as a result. Yet this progression toward death is not dissimilar to Manuel’s current situation in which Retana and the bull continually weaken him in each stage of the metaphorical bullfight that encapsulates the story. In this way, the strength of the connection between the matador and bull foreshadows Manuel’s ultimate mortality. However, his ability to approach the bullfight from the angle of his opponent also demonstrates one way in which Manuel has become one with the bull and consequently gained a deeper understanding of his art than any of his contemporaries.

In Hemingway’s earlier works, a matador’s unity with the bull marked his greatness. For example, Villalta in Chapter XII’s vignette merges with the bull as “…the bull charged and
Villalta charged and just for a moment they became one” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 141). In *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), the matador Romero similarly becomes one with the bull during the kill: “For just an instant he and the bull were one...Then the figure was broken” (222). And Manuel’s artistic, dancelike movements in the match’s opening, where “he held the cape against his hip and pivoted, so the cape swung out like a ballet dancer’s skirt and wound the bull around himself...” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 193), echo Hemingway’s description of Chicuelo’s cape in “Bullfighting is Not a Sport – It is a Tragedy” where he described how it “floated...like a ballet dancer’s skirt” (343). These similarities demonstrate that even though Manuel fails to regain his status as a master of his art, he retains aspects of his former talent.

Despite the stylistic cleanness of his early passes, Manuel’s connection to the bull becomes stronger throughout the bullfight as he tires. They weaken together and Manuel makes increasingly desperate and frustrated movements, which illustrate his lack of command and turn the fight into a struggle for life rather than anything that could be likened to a dance or form of art. Manuel and the bull both fall to the ground in unison, creating mirror images of each other. As the bull lies dead upon the sand, with “his four feet up” (204), Manuel, after attempting to stand, “sat down again, coughing” (204). Manuel and the bull accept their fates and remain equals even in death. While challenging each other, they have granted the other the opportunity to display his full potential. By dying as equals, they sacrifice themselves for the bullfight. We see that the bull made just as important a contribution to the bullfight as the matador.

Upon his collapse, Manuel is ushered into the third and final stage in the story. In the hospital, there is “an electric light in his eyes” (204) that is reminiscent of the blinding arc-lights described in the bullring. As in a bullfight where the third stage ends with the bull’s death,
Manuel emulates the wounded bull from the preceding fight by lying upon his back, utterly helpless in the hands of the doctor and Zurito:

That was it. They were going to cut off his coleta. They were going to cut off his pigtail.
Manuel sat up on the operating-table. The doctor stepped back, angry. Someone grabbed him and held him.
“You couldn’t do a thing like that, Manos,” he said.
He heard suddenly, clearly, Zurito’s voice.
“That’s all right,” Zurito said. “I won’t do it. I was joking.”
“I was going good,” Manuel said. “I didn’t have any luck. That was all.”
(Hemingway, *Short Stories* 204)

Having reached the story’s conclusion, we now wonder whether Manuel is defeated or not. Zurito’s motion to cut off his coleta implies that Manuel suffered defeat in the ring. MacDonald agrees: “It is obvious that Manuel is allowed to keep his coleta not because of any virtue in his performance, but because of Zurito’s desire to comply with the physician and prevent Manuel from sitting up on the operating table” (10). But Manuel’s physical performance only represents one aspect of the bullfight. Manuel’s internal condition is of much greater interest, especially since Manuel’s judgment of the bullfight contrasts with Zurito’s view. Manuel perceives the fight as having gone well; his only flaw was lacking any luck. Subservient to greater external forces such as luck and death, a matador can only control the integrity of his performance.

Manuel does not regard death in a bullfight as a sign of failure, but as an honorable way to die.

Hemingway adopted a similar view of luck concerning his writing. He emphasized the need for luck in order to write successfully and stressed that writing does not always come easily: “For a true writer...should always try for something that has never been done or that others have tried and failed. Then sometimes, with great luck, he will succeed” (Hemingway, “Banquet Speech”). Inspiration does not require luck’s presence, but luck often helps inspiration to come. Bad luck for a writer does not generally entail death, but Hemingway can still
commiserate with Manuel’s misfortune. Believing in his honor, we can see through the urgency of Manuel’s reaction that his *coleta*, his final physical connection to the bullfight, symbolizes his enduring devotion to his art. Manuel occupies himself more with preserving this last association to his art than fighting for his life.

Joseph DeFalco emphasizes Manuel’s personal victory at the end of the fight more than the physical outcome: “...Manuel has overcome the representative of all the forces which have blocked his bid for complete mastery of himself, his condemnation of both bull and society represents the fierce individuality which his victory has brought to the surface” (201). Far from concerning himself with his injuries, Manuel feels only pride. His trials in persuading Retana and Zurito have paid off. At last, his “individuality [is] brought to the surface” and he experiences redemption. Manuel’s injury enhances the idea that it is the way one executes a piece of art, in this case the bullfight, that makes it true. Manuel realizes that his journey to reinvent himself has been personal rather than physical. By redeeming himself in the ring, Manuel renews his self-confidence and leaves behind his despair, shaping himself back into the man he knows he can be. Accordingly, death does not seem to surprise Manuel as much as it is the natural culmination of the fight he began back in Renata’s office.

MacDonald points out that the narrator only implies Manuel’s death and goes on to conclude that Zurito represents the true victor of the story: “Zurito stands above [Manuel], victorious both as a picador and as a man, unbowed and undefeated in every way” (12). According to MacDonald, Manuel’s reckless behavior in endangering the lives of his *cuadrilla* for the sake of personal redemption proves he does not uphold the title of matador. Hemingway does stress a matador’s duty to his *cuadrilla* in Chapter IX’s vignette and in “A Lack of Passion,” validating MacDonald’s point. However, Zurito, despite being “the best picador
living” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 190), conveys none of the passion for bullfighting that Manuel does. He seems to agree to pic for Manuel only to end their argument and not because he understands what the bullfight means to Manuel. MacDonald focuses upon Zurito’s physical portrayal and overlooks his inability to grasp the bullfight’s emotion. As he continues to emphasize external over internal success, MacDonald concludes that Manuel’s denial of his age motivates his desire to return when, in fact, Manuel’s sense of honor presides over his physical condition.

As Wirt Williams states, “‘The Undefeated’ not only has the demanded magnitude, statement, and impact of authentic tragedy, but it offers also one of the noblest tragic conditions: the fatal flaw of the aging matador is also the elevating character that gives him redemption, transcendence, and heroic identity” (90-91). Williams describes Manuel as an “aging matador,” but he uses age only as an adjective and does not suggest that age is Manuel’s “fatal flaw.” Rather, Manuel’s “fatal flaw” is the intensity with which he cares for the bullfight, or as Williams calls it, “the noble hubris” (91). Williams aptly names “The Undefeated” an “authentic tragedy” that embodies both misfortune and triumph. Because of his emotional involvement, Manuel risks his life to return to the ring and, at the same time, exemplifies the passion that a true bullfighter should feel. Having upheld the purity of bullfighting, no injury can detract from his victory.

**III. Tragedy in life and death**

At the age of eighteen on July 8, 1918, Hemingway caught a glimpse of his own mortality. While working as an ambulance driver during World War I, a shell explosion spewed over 200 pieces of shrapnel into his leg, necessitating surgery and a five-month long
rehabilitation in the hospital (Meyers 32, 45). His injury prompted him to consider the consequences of dying young and over the course of his life, he repeatedly comments upon death’s inevitability. Hemingway’s view toward his own death is paradoxical. As a teenager, he accepted and even welcomed death as an inevitable end to life, but believed himself immune. In a letter to his family written October 18, 1918, Hemingway says:

    There is nothing for you to worry about, because it has been fairly conclusively proved that I can’t be bumped off. And wounds don’t matter...There are no heroes in this war. We all offer our bodies and only a few are chosen, but it shouldn’t reflect any special credit on those that are chosen. They are just the lucky ones.

(Hemingway, *Selected Letters* 18-19)

Hemingway expresses the idea that “wounds don’t matter” in “The Undefeated,” as Manuel’s perception of his performance triumphs over the spectators’ opinions. In this letter, he goes further to call injured or dying men “the lucky ones” whom death has “chosen.” His personification of death alludes to its power over a man. Yet, by believing that “I can’t be bumped off,” the young Hemingway contradicts his portrayal of death as a powerful external force by seeming to think he lives outside death’s grasp.

    As a grown man, Hemingway came to view death much like the uncontrollable entity described in this letter and realized that no one, not even himself, can escape it. The paradox of his later attitude revolves around his acceptance of death. Where he had once welcomed his death, the older Hemingway realizes he will eventually die and seeks to evade death through creating immortal works of art.

    His discomfort in accepting mortality may seem at odds with the perilous situations in which he often placed himself. But remembering back to his 1923 article “Pamplona in July,” where he wrote that bullfighters have “a great quantity of a certain type of courage of which I had an almost complete lack” (352), we perceive that the scope of Hemingway’s dangerous
exploits do have a boundary. For all of Hemingway’s expeditions while hunting or in war zones, he was generally removed from the direct line of danger. A bullfighter, on the other hand, stares death in the face and watches it, in the form of the bull, brush by him.

Almost immediately, Hemingway realized he would not make a successful bullfighter. Through his later work, specifically the 1936 short story “The Capital of the World,” we learn that this “certain type of courage” matadors possess is the ability to return to the ring and face the bull regardless of their fear. A matador’s courage stems not from an absence of fear, but from his actions in spite of it. The boldness that matadors show in routinely tempting death and their control of fear represent the two most significant qualities that win them the admiration of Hemingway and countless other enthusiasts.

In the final vignettes of In Our Time, Hemingway molds the celebrated Spanish matadors Villalta and Maera into characters. Any 1920s reader familiar with bullfighting or who had read Hemingway’s journalism would recognize Maera and Villalta as exemplary matadors. Accordingly, the reader expects Villalta’s triumph in chapter XII’s vignette. But while Villalta’s character is victorious, Hemingway depicts Maera’s death on two separate occasions; Maera first dies in chapter XIV’s vignette of horn wounds and then again in “Banal Story” (1927) of pneumonia. Because of the respect Hemingway held for Maera, we cannot interpret Hemingway’s depictions of his death as insults upon his bullfighting ability. Rather, Villalta’s

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6 Considering Hemingway’s pride for his World War I service and his tendency to exaggerate his wartime achievements (Meyers 39), Hemingway would likely disagree with the idea that he was not a direct participant in the war. Later, during the Spanish Civil War, and, even more, in World War II, Hemingway involved himself in military action. However, the fact remains that Hemingway encountered the front lines as an ambulance driver and later as a journalist, but never as a soldier. Similarly, in hunting—a favorite pastime of Hemingway’s—the rifle separates the hunter from the animal, contrary to a bullfighter who faces a bull unarmed in the ring. I point out these separations from danger not to detract from Hemingway’s bravery, but only to comment that a matador’s direct confrontation of death distinguishes him from other individuals.
victory and Maera’s death allow Hemingway to portray the feats of great matadors and also illustrate their ultimate mortality. Far from detracting from Maera’s image, Maera’s death serves to make his and other matadors’ achievements in the ring all the more inspiring. An ordinary man may never enter a bullring again after feeling the fear associated with death’s proximity. A matador, though, enters the ring time and time again, even after being injured. He has felt the fear of death, or at least the fear a bull incites, but does not let fear compromise his performance.

In contrast to “The Undefeated,” which emphasized the importance of how a man dies, Maera’s death in chapter XIV’s vignette offers a glimpse into the sensation of dying. At the opening to chapter XIV’s vignette, Maera lies injured upon the sand. The bull continues to attack him and “each time he felt the horn coming. Sometimes the bull only bumped him with his head. Once the horn went all the way through him and he felt it go into the sand” (Hemingway, Short Stories 161). Bystanders then rush Maera from the ring to the infirmary, where he awaits the doctor. The doctor arrives, but in the final sentence, Maera dies.

The narrator is the most intimate with the matador in chapter XIV. Bruce Henricksen observes how the narrator’s perspective shifts through the vignettes from that of an American outsider to a matador: “In the last two interludes the narrator seems to have lost both his youth and his Americanness almost entirely, perhaps now a bullfighter himself but in any case able to enter the point of view of the dying Maera” (110). Perhaps seeking to experience the bullfight vicariously, Hemingway joins the narrator to the matador’s consciousness. In doing so, the reader shares in Maera’s experience.

For many of Hemingway’s American readers, this vignette likely marked the first time they ever considered a bullfight from a matador’s perspective. By sympathizing with the matador, the reader connects emotionally to the bullfight even without having extensive
knowledge of it. In this way, Hemingway begins to break down the barrier separating Americans from Spanish culture. Readers gain respect for the courage a matador exhibits each time he faces a bull. In later stories, empathizing with those whom bullfighting captivates will help enable the reader to understand the bullfight’s powerful and tragic allure.

At first, the narrator is distinct from Maera and he observes the events as they unfold: “Maera lay still, his head on his arms, his face in the sand” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 161). But later, when the narrator describes how “the horn went all the way through him and he felt it go into the sand” (161), we too can sense the horn entering his body, though without the pain we might expect. The lack of explicit emotion adds to Maera’s disorientation and from this point onward, the narrator accesses Maera’s thoughts or perhaps is Maera himself. As Maera slips in and out of consciousness, the narrator similarly slips in and out of Maera’s mind. Because of the narrator’s ambiguous relationship to Maera, we both experience the vignette’s events, through Maera, and observe them detachedly, from the perspective of a spectator.

After the bull’s attack, “some one had the bull by the tail” (161). The blurred impression of this character called “some one” makes it feel as if we see the world through Maera’s darkening eyes. The narrator then reverts to observation: “They laid Maera down on a cot and one of the men went out for the doctor” (161). Just as Maera balances on the edge of life and death, the narrator’s view vacillates between two perspectives. When death finally claims Maera, the objectivity of the narrator’s final words, “Then he was dead” (161), signals his dissociation from Maera’s consciousness. The final wrench back to a neutral perspective saves us from Maera’s fate while still allowing us to share Maera’s dying moments.

As imminent as death’s approach feels, death has a less palpable presence in this vignette than life. The characters’ rapid alternation between movement and stillness creates a rhythm in
the prose that corresponds with the pulsating contraction and relaxation of Maera’s heart. The narrator marks how and when each individual moves and in doing so, stresses two patterns of movement. First, a rapid flurry of motion always precedes a period of inactivity. Second, this pattern of activity repeats. Instead of many characters bustling and then halting at once, one character’s episode of motion and quietness leads directly into another character’s, maintaining a persistent pulsation through the vignette. In Maera’s final moments, these cyclic patterns call to mind his last heartbeats. The story begins in a moment of stillness, as Maera lies upon the sand. Then the heartbeat begins when some men lift him and “started to run with him toward the barriers” in a flurry of activity resembling a heart’s contraction. The men then “laid Maera down on the cot” and bystanders “stood around,” signaling a relaxation, as another man runs to fetch the doctor. The doctor, who “came running from the corral,” breaks the moment of inactivity, but his movement halts when he “had to stop and wash his hands.”

At this point, we enter Maera’s consciousness completely and the contribution of other characters’ movements to the heartbeat fades away: “Maera felt everything getting larger and larger and then smaller and smaller. Then it got larger and larger and larger and then smaller and smaller. Then everything commenced to run faster and faster as when they speed up a cinematograph film. Then he was dead” (161). Beyond merely perceiving everything as “getting larger...and then smaller,” Maera “felt everything” bodily which links this passage to the physical beating of his heart. His pulse races wildly with only a vague resemblance to regular cardiac rhythm.

According to Wirt Williams, “The first interchapter... suggests that life is a journey in the dark; the last declares that the great necessity is to survive” (35). Of the vignettes, the last vignette is certainly tied most prominently to the balance of life and death. However, it seems
less concerned with depicting Maera’s struggle to retain life than with relating the sensation of dying. Maera’s calm acceptance of death sets him apart from other men even more than his survival of numerous bullfights. The final vignette’s power lies in its portrayal of a man’s consciousness as he passes into an inevitable void we all must face.

While Maera’s death may have felt final in the vignette, Hemingway depicted it again in “Banal Story,” a piece published as part of the 1927 collection *Men Without Women*. Here, Maera dies of pneumonia in a hospital bed instead of in the ring. This brief story represents one of Hemingway’s most overtly philosophical works. The story opens upon a man who pauses from reading his book to pose questions such as: “Our deepest convictions – will Science upset them? Our civilization – is it inferior to older orders of things” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 274)? The narrator interrupts his musings with the acknowledgement of events happening elsewhere in the world: “And meanwhile, in the far-off dripping jungles of Yucatan, sounded the chopping of the axes of the gum-choppers” (274). We then return to the thinker’s questions, but are transported to another region of the globe in the final paragraph:

And meanwhile, stretched flat on a bed in a darkened room in his house in Triana, Manuel Garcia Maera lay with a tube in each lung, drowning with the pneumonia. All the papers in Andalucia devoted special supplements to his death, which had been expected for some days. (275)

Just as the narrator did when introducing the gum-choppers, the narrator signals events’ simultaneity with the words “and meanwhile.” From the newspapers’ response, Maera had a significant presence in life. The other bullfighters, one hundred and forty-seven of whom attended his funeral, feel his loss the most since they “were very relieved he was dead, because he did always in the bullring the things they could only do sometimes.” But despite Maera’s fame, his death creates only a small interruption in the lives of Andalucian citizens and passes unnoticed by the remainder of the globe:
Men and boys bought full-length colored pictures of him to remember him by, and lost the picture they had of him in their memories by looking at the lithographs...After the funeral every one sat in cafés out of the rain, and many colored pictures of Maera were sold to men who rolled them up and put them away in their pockets. (275)

In death, Maera’s influence ceases and he turns into an inanimate photograph as “men and boys...lost the picture they had of him in their memories.” Eventually, the same men and boys who had exalted him even disregard the photographs, which they promptly “rolled up and put...away in their pockets.”

Thus unlike chapter XIV’s vignette, which focuses on how Maera dies, “Banal Story” envisions Maera’s impact after death and reveals Hemingway’s fear of transience. Maera’s death emphasizes the fleeting nature of life and the rapidity with which memories fade. Despite the greatness of the art he once created, Maera’s art could not endure past his death. As a fellow artist, Hemingway identified with Maera and feared coming to a similar fate. Especially in his later work, we see Hemingway’s desire to create works that would outlive himself. The repetition of “meanwhile” in “Banal Story” makes the thinker, the gum-choppers and Maera appear miniscule in the context of the world. The impact of any one man is negligible and Hemingway leads us to question our position in the grander scheme of time and space.

Recognizing our own insignificance, we perceive that anything that does outlast ourselves as all the more incredible. As Hemingway sought to immortalize himself through writing, his attitude toward the optimal time of death shifted. Creating an immortal work of art inevitably requires time. It then follows that to have more time for art, one cannot die young. When nineteen, Hemingway had embraced death with enthusiasm and on October 18, 1918 he wrote to his family: “And how much better to die in all the happy period of disillusioned youth, to go out in a blaze of light, than to have your body worn out and illusions shattered”
Yet, as early as 1926, Hemingway began to feel time as a threat: “...I am not in competition with my contemporaries but with the clock – which keeps on ticking – and if we figure some way to stop our own particular clock all the other clocks keep on ticking” (Hemingway, *Selected Letters* 187). As “Banal Story” illustrates, Hemingway had realized that “all the other clocks keep on ticking” regardless of one individual’s death.

In a 1926 letter to the poet and editor Ernest Walsh, Hemingway conveys a markedly different view of dying than he did as a teenager. He writes to Walsh: “Don’t let any of us die of disease. Altho the more I think of it the more I think that any form of dying can be made pretty swell. One of the things that I really look forward to is dying – but want to be at least 85 when it happens. Life is pretty swell...” (Hemingway, *Selected Letters* 192). Hemingway always feared that disease would make him “worn out” and he maintained an intense curiosity for the dying process throughout his life. However, as a grown man he came to favor living longer, until he was “at least 85.”

Granted, Hemingway’s arrogance in this letter shows his tendency to perform the role of a stereotypical, fearless man and his role-playing limits the conclusions we may draw. Nevertheless, he specifically comments that he wishes to live a long life. He may have shed his romantic view of dying young in the “happy period of disillusioned youth” because he felt he needed more time to ensure his legacy.

Hemingway’s later short fiction, particularly the short story “The Capital of the World” (1936), reflects his struggle to determine the optimal time of death. As Paul Smith points out, “the writing of ‘The Capital of the World’...signaled his return to short fiction” (321) from a period of writing novels and his first nonfiction book, *Death in the Afternoon*. It also stands out because unlike his other bullfighting fiction, “The Capital of the World” contains no actual

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7 Ironically, and tragically, Hemingway would live to see his own body “worn out and disillusiones shattered” before his death. I discuss this point in more detail in chapter three.
bullfighting. Instead, the story takes place in a hotel restaurant, where a young boy named Paco works as a waiter. Paco, a young, “well built boy” (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 29), aspires to become “a good Catholic, a revolutionary, and have a steady job...while, at the same time, being a bullfighter” (32). His naivety predisposes him toward unrealistic dreams and blinds him to reality. In particular, his inability to see beyond bullfighting’s glamorous façade leads to disastrous consequences. When a mock-bullfight goes awry, a knife severs Paco’s femoral artery and he dies.

Through Paco’s tragic death, Hemingway offers a critique of bullfighting culture. In a profession built upon appearances, a naïve boy cannot distinguish a respectable matador deserving of admiration from a failed matador since both types are adorned in the same attire. Hemingway again emphasizes the importance of evaluating bullfighting from an internal, emotional level rather than a physical one. In this way, Paco’s death results from his blind adoration of bullfighters. Paco’s tragedy also applies to all young men whom bullfighting’s bravado has deceived, whether or not they ever enter a real bullring. Many young men like Paco have admired and wished to become matadors. Even Hemingway began imagining himself as a matador after seeing his first bullfights, although he wrote to Gertrude Stein that he realized “it was too late for me of course” (Hemingway, *Selected Letters* 83). McAlmon recalls that, “Before leaving Paris, Hemingway had been much of a shadow-boxer...Upon returning from Spain, he substituted shadow-bullfighting for shadow-boxing. The amount of imaginary cape work and sword thrusts he made in those days was formidable” (161). If bullfighting can appear so seductive to adults, we can see how its effect upon youths may be overpowering. Bullfighting can bring out the best of Spain, but also pose a danger to those who don’t comprehend the profession’s rigors.
“The Capital of the World” need not only apply to boys; it can speak to any individual who has undergone the transition from immaturity into maturity. In contrast to Paco’s optimism, the other characters’ life experiences have made them aware of reality’s harshness. Bernard Oldsey notes: “...‘The Capital of the World’ is a fictive anatomy of illusion-disillusion. It has a cast of twenty characters...and with few exceptions they are graded on a basis of how much illusion or disillusion they represent...” (107). Disillusionment has, to some extent, affected every character with the exception of Paco, who is also the youngest. Maturity is associated with the necessary, but unfortunate, realization of the world’s harshness. Cheerful immaturity must come to an end. Until this point, Hemingway has associated the bullfight’s tragedy with the death of the bull, but through this story’s bullfight, we come to understand a different kind of tragedy – Hemingway’s tragic view of life: every individual must suffer disillusionment, every individual must die and, ultimately, each of us is insignificant.

Paco’s naivety makes him unable to perceive reality; he thinks of Madrid as “still an unbelievable place” (29) and glamorizes his work, believing that it “seemed romantically beautiful” (29). The words “still” and “seemed” suggest that Paco does not realize that something’s external appearance may not reflect its true nature. In the case of Madrid, we learn of its true nature through one of the priests dining at the Luarca who says, “‘Madrid is where one learns to understand. Madrid kills Spain’” (34). Spain, much like Paco, is full of hope and optimism, but reality unmakes those hopes in Madrid because there, one “learns to understand” reality’s cruelty. The priest’s words also eerily foreshadow Paco’s demise. By aligning Paco with Spain, the narrator invites us to extend Paco’s dilemma to that of the larger population. Since Paco comes from Extremadura, one of Spain’s poorest regions (Gonzalez 167), Paco’s social standing lies below the matadors’ elite status. Fulfilling his dream does not only require
him to confront reality, but to circumvent political norms. Paco’s struggle against an established social hierarchy represents another avenue through which readers may connect with his story.

Whereas “Banal Story” began with a specific individual and broadened its scope, “The Capital of the World” opens with a view of all Madrid “full of boys named Paco” (Hemingway, Short Stories 29) before focusing upon the protagonist. By first observing Paco through a wide lens, we can generalize Paco’s plight to that of many boys. The narrator relates a Madrid joke about a father who posted an advertisement that states: “Paco meet me at Hotel Montana noon Tuesday all is forgiven Papa” (29). The announcement draws responses from hundreds of Pacos across the city. However, the Paco of interest “had no father to forgive him, nor anything for the father to forgive” (29). The lack of having something or someone defines Paco rather than what he does possess. The comment that Paco “had no father to forgive him” also suggests that he does not have a father figure in his life to guide him. As a result, he admires numerous individuals from the disgraced matadors to the anarchist waiter, unable to identify the qualities he should or should not try to emulate.

Of all the lodgers and diners at the Luarca, “for Paco...the only ones who really existed were the bullfighters” (29). It seems common knowledge that a matador’s “descent from the Luarca was swift” (29) and the narrator makes the matadors’ true characters obvious, referring to them not by name but by their condition: “Of the three matadors one was ill and trying to conceal it; one had passed his short vogue as a novelty; and the third was a coward” (30). Paco sees only the fact that they are matadors. He has no conception of the trials and defeats that led them to their present state or how they behave once they leave his sight.

For instance, the cowardly matador “had an intelligent, very open face and he carried himself with much style” (30), but the horn wound he suffered in his first season has made him
bitter and insecure. After Paco’s sister rejects his advances, the cowardly matador sits alone in his room. There, he recalls the days “when he had been good” (33). He once performed with skill, but after his injury he could never face a bull again: “So now when he went into kill, and it was seldom, he could not look at the horns and what did any whore know about what he went through before be fought? And what had they been through that laughed at him” (33)? Though bitter, the cowardly matador is right in asking “what had they been through?” in comparison to his own experience. The spectators do not know what it is like to face a bull, much less what it is like to face a bull after having been wounded. In this way, a matador can have every eye upon him, but still feel isolated in the ring.

Solitude does not affect just the cowardly matador. All the disillusioned characters share his sense of isolation, even when they are all gathered together in the dining room. “The matador who was ill...ate alone at a small table and looked up very little. The matador who had once been a novelty...also ate alone at a separate table” (30). Hemingway repeats the word “alone” in these early scenes as well as at the story’s end, reminding us of solitude’s persistence. As the diners begin to leave, the narrative starts to jump between locations to depict each individual’s different storyline: “Upstairs the matador who was ill was lying face down on his bed alone. The matador who was no longer a novelty was sitting looking out of his window preparatory to walking out to the café” (31). The many locations described in these short snapshots make Madrid seem expansive, since a person may travel to numerous places. But at the same time, Madrid feels confining because we have no sense of how the locations physically connect to one another. The city’s divisions thus echo the characters’ isolation.

In writing about “The Capital of the World”’s stylistic indebtedness to film, Oldsey writes that abrupt scene changes make it possible for many characters’ stories to fit into several
The Capital of the World’ gets its compression by crosscutting from character to character, scene to scene, much as the movies do” (104). The rapid crosscutting between characters condenses many storylines without linking them to one another. Since every character suffers a solitary fate, it seems that Paco, if he were to face reality, would merely shed the isolation of contented naivety for the isolation of disillusionment. Solitude constitutes a constant part of life, but the type of solitude we experience changes depending on our age.

Life choices can also dictate the extent of a person’s solitude. In his 1954 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Hemingway remarked: “Writing, at its best, is a lonely life...For he does his work alone and if he is a good enough writer he must face eternity, or the lack of it, each day” (Hemingway, “Banquet Speech”). Even while living amongst Paris’ rich artistic community in the 1920s, the writing process was a lonely endeavor. In A Moveable Feast (1964), Hemingway recalls the long hours spent alone writing and editing his work: “...sometimes when I was starting a new story and I could not get it going, I would sit in front of the fire and squeeze the peel of the little oranges into the edge of the flame and watch the sputter of blue that they made” (12). Living in Paris in the early 1920s, he benefited from the company and mentorship of other writers living in Paris. But the writing itself he completed alone, in a cold room on the top floor of a hotel, looking “across all the roofs and the chimneys of the high hill of the quarter” (Hemingway, Moveable Feast 11). There, he disciplined himself to write each day “until I had something done” (Hemingway, Moveable Feast 12). Hemingway’s career choice may have augmented his perception of life’s loneliness.

Continuing the feeling of separation, the final scenes “in the deserted dining room” (36) contain only Paco and Enrique, the dishwasher. Emily Hoffman observes that their isolation “calls attention to the split between the experienced adult characters and Paco and Enrique, the
inexperienced youthful characters. While the boys are left to teach each other about the harsh, inevitable realities of life and death, the adult characters dull their pain and disappointment with alcohol and the frivolous pursuit of women…” (96). Enrique represents a pivotal character because he occupies a grey area between naivety and disillusionment. Three years older than Paco, Enrique embodies, in Hoffman’s words, one of “the inexperienced youthful characters.” Due to his inexperience, Enrique does not foresee the consequences of acting as a bull for Paco. He does hesitate after Paco accepts his challenge, saying “‘It is very dangerous. Don’t do it’” (Hemingway, Short Stories 36), but never fathoms that the knives will actually cause injury.

Like Paco, Enrique once aspired to become a matador. After watching Paco use a napkin to perform imaginary passes, Enrique removes his apron and performs “four perfect, languid gypsy verónicas and ended up with a rebolera that made the apron swing in a stiff arc past the bull’s nose as he walked away from him” (35). Having shared Paco’s fantasy, Enrique understands the allure of bullfighting. However, he knows he will never be a matador. After entering an amateur fight and running away out of fear, he knew he could not face a bull again.

Enrique’s one experience in the ring distinguishes him from Paco. Because he has failed, Enrique knows the role that fear plays in bullfighting. Specifically, he recognizes that the lack of fear does not make a matador, but his control of it:

“Look at that,” he said. “And I wash dishes.”
“Why?”
“Fear,” said Enrique. “Miedo. The same fear you would have in a ring with a bull.”
“No,” said Paco. “I wouldn’t be afraid.”
“Leche!” said Enrique. “Every one is afraid. But a torero can control his fear so that he can work the bull...If it wasn’t for fear every bootblack in Spain would be a bullfighter. You, a country boy, would be frightened worse than I was.”
“No,” said Paco.
He had done it too many times in his imagination. Too many times he had seen the horns, seen the bull’s muzzle, the ear twitching...No, he would not be afraid. Others,
yes. Not he. He knew he would not be afraid. Even if he ever was afraid he knew that he could do it anyway. He had confidence. “I wouldn’t be afraid,” he said. (35)

This exchange represents the first instance in Hemingway’s fiction where he explicitly mentions fear in reference to the bullfight. As Enrique states, “a torero can control his fear so that he can work the bull.” Paco believes that confidence overrules fear, but, in fact, the two complement one another in a bullfight. By having fear, the bullfighter shows that he understands the threat the bull poses. Then he shows his ability, and gains the audience’s respect, when he still faces the bull with poise. Paco firmly denies his fear, repeating that, “he would not be afraid.”

Somewhat surprisingly, the admission of fear separates Paco from maturity. Hemingway does not disavow fear; rather, he realizes that fear naturally results from experiences in which we test ourselves and learn of life’s realities. These demanding events usher us into maturity.

As Paco’s death shows, facing a bull, even a pretend bull, is completely different in life than in theory. The moment the knife enters Paco’s body, his perception of the world alters. The narrator repeats that “the knife turned in him, in him, Paco” (37), enforcing the tragic truth of the situation. But despite his sudden realization of reality, he does not die entirely disheartened. Even while “he sat on the floor in the widening warm pool” of his blood, he imagines that he is a matador dying in the bullring:

In the ring they lifted you and carried you, running with you, to the operating room. If the femoral artery emptied itself before you reached there they called the priest. “Advise one of the priests,” said Paco, holding the napkin tight against his lower abdomen. He could not believe that this had happened to him.

But Enrique was running down the Calle San Jerónimo to the all-night first-aid station and Paco was alone, first sitting up, then huddled over, then slumped on the floor, until it was over, feeling his life go out of him as dirty water empties from a bathtub when the plug is drawn. He was frightened and he felt faint and he tried to say an act of contrition and he remembered how it started out but...he felt too faint and he was lying face down on the floor and it was over very quickly. A severed femoral artery empties itself faster than you can believe. (37)
Paco persists in his imagined dream by trying to die as a matador would with a priest at hand. In his dying moments, Paco lies halfway between his former delusions and disillusionment. His half-finished prayer best illustrates his balance between life and death, immaturity and maturity.

At the beginning of the story, Paco did not have “anything for the father to forgive” (29). At the end, Paco asks for God’s forgiveness, a different sort of father but a father nonetheless, in his final prayer. Paco now feels that he has something to confess, suggesting that he has lost his innocence. He does not finish the prayer though, so he is never completely disillusioned.

After Enrique runs for help, “Paco was alone...until it was over” and as he lies there, “feeling his life go out of him,” we learn that “he was frightened.” In his last moments, Paco acknowledges fear and also recognizes his solitude. Paco fears losing his life and Enrique’s absence adds to his fright. In contrast to earlier scenes, Paco is now aware that he is alone. Since his denial of fear and disbelief in his isolation represented his immaturity, the close connection between fear and solitude makes clear that Paco has come closer to disillusionment and hence to maturity. His solitude during this transition emphasizes the idea that we are alone in each stage of our lives as well as in the passage to death.

In Hoffman’s view, death saves Paco from having to cope with the night’s ramifications whereas Enrique must find a way to carry on: “In this respect Enrique may be the story’s most tragic figure. Unlike Paco, who by dying does not have to cope with exposed illusions and the inevitable emptiness and defeat that follows, Enrique must continue living and dealing with his role in the story’s climactic accident” (98). After this night, we may assume that Enrique becomes fully disillusioned since now he understands death’s finality. It remains unclear how he will deal with his new understanding of reality, but Hoffman is right in noting the “inevitable emptiness” that will follow. Enrique’s bleak future does make his tale tragic and Hemingway
leaves little room for imagining brighter prospects. Hemingway suggests through his wartime novels that not even love can counter-balance grim reality since it is fleeting and dies with the individuals who share it. However, if Enrique finds a cause to fight for in his life, like the anarchist waiter or Robert Jordan in Hemingway’s 1940 novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the future may be less grim. A cause, be it for social change or the creation of art, can outlast the individual.

Still, the unavoidable solitude that Enrique faces represents just one aspect of life’s misfortune that this story identifies. Paco’s death illuminates a second tragedy: a man’s insignificance. In the final sentences, Paco’s death is of less consequence than the Garbo picture:

> He died, as the Spanish phrase has it, full of illusions. He had not time in his life to lose any of them, nor even, at the end, to complete an act of contrition. He had not even had time to be disappointed in the Garbo picture which disappointed all Madrid for a week. (38)

Interestingly, these final lines, with the exception of the final sentence, are an addendum to the original draft (Smith 322). In the earlier draft, the story ended with:

> The boy Paco had never known about any of this which raises the question of when is death a misfortune nor about what all these people would be doing on the next day and on other days to come. He had not even had time to be disappointed in the Garbo picture which disappointed all Madrid for a week. (Smith 322)

From the revisions, we can see that Hemingway was first concerned with how a man’s age when he dies alters our interpretation of his passing. When focusing upon Paco’s age, his death seems tragic simply because he is young. Far from going “out in a blaze of light” as Hemingway once envisioned, Paco’s death passes unremarkably and his youth, while granting him the peace of delusion, prevents him from creating anything that will outlast himself. The tragedy of incompleteness would also hang over Hemingway’s book *The Dangerous Summer*, which he
could not finish in his lifetime. Later in the final version of “The Capital of the World,” Hemingway turns the focus to Paco’s dying full of illusions. The inclusion of the statement “He died...full of illusions” shifts our concentration away from Paco’s age and back to the contrast of illusion and disillusion.

In both versions, the narrator ends by commenting upon the disappointing Garbo picture, which suggests that Hemingway wished to emphasize Paco’s insignificance. Smith comments on the placement of the final sentence: “… the sense that Paco had died ‘full of illusions’ was an afterthought, and although it found its way into the ending, it was placed in a penultimate position to his original ironic note that Paco had missed a disappointing movie” (322). Greta Garbo (1905-1990) was a famous Hollywood actress whose film career blossomed during the 1920s and 1930s. By 1936, Garbo had been nominated for two Academy Awards in the Best Actress category for her roles in Romance (1930) and Anna Christie (1930) (“Greta Garbo,” Encyclopedia Britannica) and she had won the New York Film Critics Circle Awards for Best Actress for her work in Anna Karenina (1935) (“New York Film Critics Circle”). Garbo’s worldwide popularity makes her a vivid presence even while though she never physically appears in the story. In contrast to Paco, whom hardly anyone knows, and compared to bullfighters, whose fame is primarily contained within Spain, Garbo’s performances have the power to affect viewers around the globe. Her disappointing film lasts in moviegoer’s minds for precisely one week. While one week is fleeting, the fact that the film persisted for any length of time in people’s memories is at least a slight blow against impermanence, for it lives past the moment people first come in contact with it. Since one week outlives the memory of Paco and also Maera from “Banal Story,” Hemingway emphasizes bullfighting’s transience and suggests that other forms of art, even film, come closer to having some staying power. Performance arts
like acting or bullfighting represent the most ephemeral art forms since they are intangible, lasting only in memory after the initial performance. Arts with material products such as writing or painting may endure longer, but, still, all art will eventually decay.

Thus the final sentence insists upon the brutal constancy of time. Time moves on without pause and Paco has simply run out of it. The story also ends on the word “week,” a unit of time. Time controls the characters’ and the narrative’s course. Against such a foe as time, man’s struggle is futile. The tragedy of Paco’s death is not the conventional tragedy of the bullfight, but the tragedy of life’s harsh reality – life is fleeting, and without leaving behind any sort of material token, we will be forgotten. In such a world, art presents a redeeming feature. Through the creation of art, even ephemeral arts such as the bullfight, the artist momentarily captures time and challenges nature’s rule that time must pass.
The bullring in Ronda, Spain. The wooden barrera encircles the ring and the spectators’ seats are located behind it (Hardouin-Fugier 51).

A picador and the bull in the first stage of the bullfight. The horse is wearing protective padding (Hardouin-Fugier 28).
Manuel Garcia, also known as Maera, placing the banderillas (Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*).

A bull after the second stage of the bullfight, during which the banderillos place the banderillas (Hardouin-Fugier 29).
Nicanor Villalta passing the bull extremely closely in the third stage of the bullfight (Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*).

Chicuelo preparing to kill the bull (Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*).
Chapter Two
- The bullfight in new genres -

In a letter to the Scribner editor Maxwell Perkins, Hemingway wrote: “I hope some day to have a sort of Doughty’s Arabia Deserta of the Bull Ring, a very big book with some wonderful pictures. But one has to save all winter to be able to bum in Spain in the summer and writing classics, I’ve always heard, takes some time” (Selected Letters 156). The letter dates from April 15, 1925, several months before he would begin writing his first novel, The Sun Also Rises (1926), and seven years before he would publish the nonfiction piece he alludes to in his letter, Death in the Afternoon (1932). In 1932, as he looked back on what he knew about bullfighting in 1923, when Hemingway saw his first corrida, he knew that he needed time before he could write a comprehensive book on the subject: “I liked it so much that it was much too complicated for my then equipment for writing to deal with and, aside from four very short sketches, I was not able to write anything about it for five years – and I wish I would have waited ten” (Death in the Afternoon 3). By this timeline, he considers The Sun Also Rises to be a step toward writing “anything about it.” However, it was not until Death in the Afternoon, published nearly ten years after witnessing his first bullfight, that he was able to write beyond the cultural context of the bullfight and describe it technically. These two works show Hemingway’s progress toward truly understanding bullfighting and also, since the books represent his first novel and first nonfiction book, illustrate how bullfighting’s imagery and diverse themes lent themselves to Hemingway’s attempts to write in new genres.

Hemingway was reluctant to write a novel, believing that “the novel seems to me to be an awfully artificial and worked out form” (Selected Letters 156). He felt obligated to write one,

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8 Charles M. Doughty (1843-1926) wrote the first important modern work on the geography of Arabia, Travels in Arabia Deserta (1888, 2 volumes).
though, if only because “it was what I should do if we were to eat regularly. When I had to write
it, then it would be the only thing to do and there would be no choice” (Moveable Feast 76).
Regardless of his restraint, when it came to writing The Sun Also Rises, the words came just as
rapidly as his inspiration. In July 1925, Hemingway traveled to Pamplona, Spain with a group of
friends for the Festival de San Fermín. He began writing the book on his birthday, July 21, just
after the end of the fiesta and finished the first draft on September 21st, a mere two months after
he had began (Meyers 189). The novel tells the story of Jake Barnes, a wounded World War I
veteran, and his relationships with his friends and the bullfighter Pedro Romero during a trip to
Spain for Pamplona’s annual bullfighting festival. With the exception of a few key details,
Hemingway drew significantly upon his 1925 vacation for the book’s content.

The characters of The Sun Also Rises express two conflicting views of bullfighting. Jake,
an aficionado, believes that “nobody ever lives their life all the way up except bull-fighters” (Sun
18), while Robert Cohn, the group’s third-wheel, finds them strange: “I’m not interested in bull-
fighters. That’s an abnormal life” (Sun 18). The Spanish aficionados, notably the hotel owner
Montoya, acknowledge Jake as one of their own. Their acceptance distinguishes Jake from
tourists. He also spends most of the bullfights teaching his friends about what they are seeing,
further separating himself from them by proving his greater knowledge. But after Jake sets up
Lady Brett Ashley with the matador Pedro Romero, leading to a fight between Romero and
Cohn, the Spanish aficionados shut Jake out. Jake starts on the inside of bullfighting society and
ultimately ends up on the outside (Willis 52).

Jake’s personal development is the book’s focus, with his rejection from Spanish society
and bullfighting representing just two aspects of his growth. The scholar Rachel Willis notes:
“With his masculine ideal diminished by its inevitable failure, Jake begins to understand that to
maintain a masculine identity, he must learn to defuse violence instead of participating in it” (53). The bullfight had upheld Jake’s conceptions of his masculinity, but he gains a sense of his true “masculine identity” that does not center on violence when he leaves bullfighting behind. Similarly, Donald Daiker suggests that Jake evolves from a teacher into a learner by the end of the book as he learns to “dominate the bull or any other force that, like Brett, threatens to destroy you” (Daiker 77). Combining these perspectives, Jake exercises control over his life by non-violent methods, namely distancing himself from Brett’s influence.

Morality, in terms of the bullfight, figures little in the plot of *The Sun Also Rises*. Aside from Jake’s friends’ initial worries about watching the bullfight’s violence – worries very similar to those Hemingway voiced in 1923 – no one questions its legitimacy as an artistic or cultural tradition. Rather, we question the morality of the characters as they act promiscuously, irresponsibly and aggressively. In response to critics’ comments that *The Sun Also Rises* teaches its readers that “an action is good if it makes one feel good” (Farrell qtd. in Donaldson 82), Hemingway replied in 1941 that *A Farewell to Arms* was “an immoral book. Let them read *The Sun Also Rises*. It’s very moral” (Hemingway qtd. in Donaldson 82). Unlike *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Sun Also Rises* contains no deaths (besides the bulls’), limited cursing and little ambiguity concerning personal honor.

Bullfighting is not the essence of the book, but rather the center of a milieu in which the relationships of Jake and his friends can play out. After watching a steer get exiled from a herd of bulls, Jake explains that steers can pose a danger when they are separated from the herd. Mike then insults Cohn by comparing him to one:

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9 Hemingway formed easily recognizable characters from his friends who accompanied him to Pamplona in 1925 (Cody 5). He put little effort into protecting the identity of the people on whom his characters in *The Sun Also Rises* were based. However, Hemingway argued that, “if they seemed inspired by real persons and real events, this was purely coincidental” (Cody 5).
“It’s no life being a steer,” Robert Cohn said.
“Don’t you think so?” Mike said. “I would have thought you’d loved being a steer, Robert.”
“What do you mean, Mike?”
“They lead such a quiet life. They never say anything and they’re always hanging about so.” (*Sun* 145-146)

For Mike, who does not appreciate bullfighting as Jake does, bullfighting analogies serve as a ready source of insults. The fiesta heightens the tensions between the characters with its energy and also with its subject matter, making them even more hostile toward one another.

Bullfighting also brings Romero and Brett together. When Brett first sees Romero perform, his colorful attire and youthfulness attract her attention more than his bullfighting:

“‘Oh, isn’t he lovely,’ Brett said. ‘And those green trousers’” (*Sun* 169). She quickly falls in love with him, saying she is “‘a goner’” (*Sun* 187) within several days of meeting him. Brett is not alone in thinking him attractive. After realizing how young Romero is, Jake comments on Romero’s looks:

“He’s a fine boy, don’t you think so?” Montoya asked.
“He’s a good-looking kid,” I said.
“He looks like a torero,” Montoya said. “He has the type.”
(*Sun* 167)

Romero’s good looks distinguish him as a bullfighter, suggesting that part of being a successful matador is having a pleasing, even charismatic appearance that will appeal to admirers. The *aficionados’* acknowledgement of Romero’s handsomeness validates Brett’s attraction to him.

In addition to the matador’s physical appeal, his performance in the ring contains sexual overtones. As Romero kills the bull, “he became one with the bull” (*Sun* 224). Expanding upon similar events in Hemingway’s short stories, Hemingway suggests in *The Sun Also Rises* that sexuality is an intrinsic component of making great art. As he delves further into the relationship
between the matador and bull in *The Dangerous Summer*, he places greater emphasis on the bullfight’s sexualization.

While both genders feel bullfighting’s allure, only men compete and use the bullfight to demonstrate their physical strength. The bullfight is a male-dominated event in which women have no part. Among Hemingway’s characters, Brett is one of the few females who attend bullfights. Women are absent from Hemingway’s short fiction about the bullfight and in *The Dangerous Summer*, Mary Hemingway and Carmen are not usually present. While in Pamplona, Hemingway states that “Pamplona is no place to bring your wife...It’s a man’s fiesta and women at it make trouble” (*Dangerous Summer* Scribner 135; TS 284-285). Though in *Death in the Afternoon* he uses conversation with a female character, the Old Lady, as a means of livening up the narrative, she disappears halfway through the book and doesn’t contribute significantly to the work.

Hemingway understands that women might enjoy watching the matadors perform, but the bullfight has higher significance for men, as only men participate in it and it displays male sexuality and power. In a conversation with the Old Lady, Hemingway compares the relationship of the matador and bull to a marriage, of which Hemingway has an equally tragic view:

...your man who is monogamous while he often lives most happily, dies in the most lonely fashion. There is no lonelier man in death, except the suicide, than that man who has lived many years with a good wife and outlived her. If two people love each other there can be no happy end to it...What has this to do with the bulls, sir? Nothing, Madame, nothing at all...All those who have really experienced it are marked, after it is gone, by a quality of deadness. (*Death* 122)

He states that his musings have nothing to do with the bullfight, but there are clear similarities between them. In both scenarios, the man outlives his partner and is “marked...by a quality of deadness.” Here, we see that love, in addition to death (*Death* 56), can mark a man, and
Hemingway lays the foundation for *The Dangerous Summer’s* discussion of the matador’s love for the bull. The man’s partner, be it a bull or a woman, facilitates a tragic denouement in which the man must experience the intense loneliness of separation. The marriage analogy highlights bullfighting’s sexuality and strengthens our view of the matador as a symbol of male, sexual assertiveness.

Because Hemingway had only begun learning about bullfighting two years prior to 1925, the bullfighting sections of *The Sun Also Rises* focus primarily upon the context of the Pamplona festival and the emotions it elicits rather than its technical aspects. Jeffrey Meyers writes about the effect focusing on the environment could have had on Hemingway’s image: “The context of the bullfights, the festival, the drinking and the peasants seemed to encourage Hemingway’s tendency to appear uneducated and uncultured, to assume a persona and be a tough guy rather than an intellectual” (119). Since he could have appeared “uneducated and uncultured” to the public, Hemingway may have wished to regain some authority as an *aficionado* by focusing on bullfighting’s technical elements in his later book, *Death in the Afternoon*.

Yet *The Sun Also Rises* does showcase some of Hemingway’s expertise about bullfighting. During a bullfight where the bull cannot see well, Jake tells Brett to “‘watch how he handles a bull that can’t see the color’” (*Sun* 221) and he proceeds to narrate the performance:

> With the bull who could not see the colors of the capes, or the scarlet flannel of the muleta, Romero had to make the bull consent with his body. He had to get so close that the bull saw his body, and would start for it, and then shift the bull’s charge to the flannel and finish out the pass in the classic manner. The Biarritz crowd did not like it. They thought Romero was afraid, and that was why he gave that little sidestep each time as he transferred the bull’s charge from his own body to the flannel. (*Sun* 221-222)

Jake teaches Brett how to watch the bullfight and has a greater knowledge of bullfighting technique than the rest of the spectators, who do not understand Romero’s reasons for stepping to the side. Jake’s knowledge allows him to understand the purpose of each of Romero’s actions
and the bravery required to work with such a bull. Compared to the other spectators, Jake has a better appreciation for bullfighting’s complexity.

The Festival de San Fermín does not begin until halfway through the novel. Immediately, it contains explosive energy – a sign of its inherent violence and also the heightened tensions among Jake’s friends that it would provoke. As he often does in other works, Hemingway likens the festival’s clamor to war:

At noon on Sunday, the 6th of July, the fiesta exploded. There is no other way to describe it...The marble-topped tables and the white wicker chairs were gone. They were replaced by cast-iron tables and severe folding chairs. The café was like a battleship stripped for action...the rocket that announced the fiesta went up in the square...The ball of smoke hung in the sky like a shrapnel burst, and as I watched, another rocket came up to it, trickling smoke in the bright sunlight. (Sun 156-157)

Since Hemingway had experience in war and wrote about combat, the comparison may have helped him better to understand the bullfight. The fiesta’s opening turns the city into a battleground, complete with a battleship, rocket and shrapnel. Aside from alluding to violence, the combative images also convey the rush of adrenaline that accompanies such situations and illustrate the intensity of the festival’s sensory stimulation as Jake’s entire body responds to it.

The running of the bulls exemplifies an aspect of the festival that requires little technical knowledge to enjoy. The Sun Also Rises is the only book in which Hemingway would describe the running of the bulls in detail. The first run takes place at the opening of the feria and Jake, though he does not take part, dresses hurriedly so that he can watch the bulls and men run by. He comments: “they passed along and up the street toward the bull-ring and behind them came more men running faster, and then some stragglers who were really running” (Sun 164).

Later in the festival, Jake watches another bull running in which a bull gores one of the runners. He imparts no reaction of surprise or horror at the event. Instead, when he goes to a café later, the waiter, who dislikes bullfights, evinces more shock than Jake: “‘You hear? Muerto.
Dead. He’s dead. With a horn through him. All for morning fun. Es muy flamenco’’ (Sun 202). Jake replies: “‘It’s bad’” (Sun 202). Willis interprets Jake’s response as a sign of his not knowing how to react to the violent news since he has begun trying to distance himself from violence (52). But his terse reply shows his lack of interest. Hemingway wrote the novel in the first person, but Jake’s voice does not assert itself in this section. Regardless of Jake’s possible indifference, Hemingway proceeds to tell us about the man and the family he left behind him when he died. The details of the man’s funeral and death remain part of the backdrop of the festival, a consequence of the bullfight that Jake realizes, but does not dwell on.

Jake saves his emotion for the bullfights. When he first watches Pedro Romero, whom Hemingway modeled after the matador Cayetano Ordóñez (also known as Niño de la Palma), he knows that “this was a real one. There had not been a real one for a long time” (Sun 168). He does not describe any of Romero’s performance during this first bullfight. Instead, he describes how he felt afterward: “We had that disturbed emotional feeling that always comes after a bullfight, and the feeling of elation that comes after a good bull-fight” (Sun 168). Jake, like Hemingway at the time, values bullfighting primarily for its emotional qualities. The “disturbed emotional feeling” comes after witnessing the strength of the bull and its tragic death and suffering through the anxiety that the matador might die. Like other arts, the bullfight exhibits beauty and technical mastery. But unlike other art forms, the bullfight has high stakes, as Hemingway quickly realized: “It is a good deal like Grand Opera for the really great matadors except they run the chance of being killed every time they cannot hit high C” (“Bullfighting a Tragedy” 345). While unsettling, the matador’s triumphs dominate Jake’s and Hemingway’s emotional responses to the bullfight.
Above all, Hemingway loved the feeling of immortality that he could find in a good bullfight (Death 4). Jake may not have felt immortal while watching Romero, but Romero does feel invincible while in the ring. In a conversation with Brett, Romero tells her: “I’m never going to die” (189). Nick Adams, the protagonist of several of Hemingway’s short stories, says something similar in the story “Indian Camp.” After Nick witnesses a man’s suicide, the narrator writes: “he felt quite sure that he would never die” (Short Stories 70). Nick’s and Romero’s statements shows their youthful naiveté. Though Romero deals out death routinely, he does not believe that it can affect him, just as Hemingway, in 1925, may have felt removed from death and not feared it despite his experiences in World War I. As we will see in The Dangerous Summer, immortality figures prominently in the text, but Hemingway has ceased to believe in his own capacity to endure. By the 1950s, he had seen more of death and had numerous life-threatening experiences that brought him face to face with his mortality. The keen interest in the concept of permanence that he develops arises because he realizes, more acutely than ever before, the brevity of life.

In addition to its emotional expressiveness, Romero’s style corresponds with Hemingway’s philosophy of writing: “Romero never made any contortions, always it was straight and pure and natural in line...Romero’s bull-fighting 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” (Sun 171). Romero’s “purity of line” is fundamental to his success as a bullfighter and Jake repeatedly comments on this purity as he performs. His work gives “real emotion,” as opposed to an artificial response some matadors might conjure by using tricks and taking advantage of the spectators’ ignorance. Hemingway’s distinctive style is similar to Romero’s bullfighting as he sought to write purely and with true emotion. Citing Hemingway’s
opinion that “Prose is architecture, not interior decoration, and the Baroque is over,” (Death 191), the scholar Emily Wittman finds that Hemingway preferred “general excellence over formal innovation. As in good bullfighting, aesthetic concerns should not determine a work of writing...” (382). Like Romero, Hemingway uses essential words to convey emotion rather than lengthy, overblown descriptions. The attributes of Romero’s artistry could apply to any number of artistic mediums. Miriam Mandel says that Hemingway “understood the bullfight as a metaphor for all art” (234) and she notes that for him “the bullfight is big enough to encompass all that one wants or needs to read into it” (235). Hemingway’s later works would expound upon the similarities of bullfighting and writing. Here, we see the beginning of this perception.

In Death in the Afternoon, we encounter the first reference to Hemingway’s iceberg principle – that a writer should leave seven-eighths of the content unsaid, beneath the surface (Mandel 234). Additionally, after a section explaining the role of the picadors, Hemingway writes about what makes a compelling character and a talented writer. While we may see picadors and writers as very different from one another, and probably deserving of separate chapters, Hemingway includes them in the same chapter, showing that he sees the bullfight as an extension of writing and vice versa. In this instance, he writes on the construction of character: “When writing a novel a writer should create living people; people not characters. A character is a caricature. If a writer can make people live there may be no great characters in his book, but it is possible that his book will remain as a whole; as an entity; as a novel” (Death 191). His dislike of caricature may have motivated him to draw upon people he knew well for inspiration and also real bullfighters, such as Cayetano Ordóñez for the character of Pedro Romero. Caricature, which involves exaggerating certain elements of a person’s features for an outlandish effect, confines a character to the page. His or her traits have no place in reality. By portraying
a living person who could just as feasibly exist outside the book, where his readers live, as inside, Hemingway could create a novel of lasting worth with which his readers could identify.

Unlike *The Sun Also Rises*, *Death in the Afternoon* is a nonfiction piece and provides a lengthy, 485-page, explanation of bullfighting’s history, matadors and technique. Published in 1932, nine years after watching his first bullfight, Hemingway believed that he had the tools to explain it fully for his readers. In the book, he proves that his knowledge has grown through his inclusion of technical descriptions and passages in which he reflects upon the emotional significance of bullfighting in greater detail than he had done before.

Hemingway began envisioning *Death in the Afternoon* in 1925. He knew that the book was a risk, since it would not sell as well as fiction and the subject matter did not interest a wide audience. Nevertheless, his enthusiasm for the book did not wane and he proceeded with the project: “Somehow I don’t care about writing a novel and I like to write short stories and I like to work at the bull fight book so I guess I’m a bad prospect for a publisher anyway” (*Selected Letters* 156). The challenge of taking on a subject such as bullfighting and figuring out how he could best capture it enticed Hemingway. While staying true to the bullfight and its history, he also wished to make it interesting and rewarding for his readers. In the final product, Hemingway mixes history, anecdotes and short fiction to create a serious, yet personal account of bullfighting.

One year after he first described his idea of a bullfighting book to Perkins, Hemingway wrote again with further details:

> It is a long one to write because it is not to be just a history and text book or apologia for bull fighting – but instead, if possible, bull fighting its-self. As it’s a thing that nobody knows about in English I’d like to take it first from altogether outside – how I happened to be interested in it, how it seemed before I saw it – how it was when I didn’t understand it – my own experience with it, how it reacts on others – the gradual finding out about it
and try and build it up from the outside and then go all the way inside with chapters on everything. (Selected Letters 236)

Hemingway had the goal of writing a book that went beyond history or description to be “bull fighting its-self.” With such a book, his readers would experience the bullfight’s transformative effect just as he had experienced in 1923. When he writes that the bullfight “reacts on others,” the bullfight feels like a living entity that interacts with spectators and produces a measurable change in them. In *The Sun Also Rises*, the aura surrounding the bullfight “reacts” on the characters, heightening the tensions between them even if they are not particularly interested in the spectacle. Hemingway’s portrayal of bullfighting in *Death in the Afternoon* also can elicit spontaneous, emotional responses in readers, regardless of prejudices they may hold against it.

As he did in his past work and as he will do later, including in *The Dangerous Summer* (1985), Hemingway strives to make something of “a certain permanent value” (Selected Letters 237). Bullfighting gains importance as “the one thing that has, with the exception of the ritual of the church, come down to us intact from the old days” (Selected Letters 237). In *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway made the Festival de San Fermín permanent: “I’ve written Pamplona once and for keeps” (*Dangerous Summer* Scribner 136; TS 286). However, he does not say that he succeeded in immortalizing the bullfight. *The Sun Also Rises* focuses on the context surrounding bullfighting, so, at this point, Hemingway had yet to capture the technical brilliance of the art form.

Perkins resisted the idea of a nonfiction bullfighting work, as he suspected it would not sell as well as Hemingway’s short fiction or novels, but Hemingway was insistent. To Hemingway’s credit, he wrote about what inspired him rather than only writing on subjects that the public wished to read (Trogdon 30). If only to keep Hemingway with the publishing company should he write more successful novels in the future, Perkins eventually came round to
the idea of the book. He wrote to Hemingway in January 1932: “The book piles upon you wonderfully, and becomes to one reading it – who at first thinks bull fighting only a very small matter – immensely important” (qtd. in Trogdon 24). As expected, *Death in the Afternoon* received mixed reviews after its publication and didn’t sell well, partly because of the public’s lack of interest in bullfighting and partly because of America’s damaged economy due to the Great Depression, which reduced the sales of books in general (Trogdon 37; Meyers 231).

A review article published in *Time* magazine said that the book would not interest the majority of readers, but still had merit: “...his latest book may not claim so wide an audience, may even alienate some of his new following. An authentic Hemingway showpiece, though, *Death in the Afternoon* will tell you all you want to know about bullfighting...you will be aware that Spain’s national sport is something more than an unexplained spectacle of horrors” (Stephens 113). In another review, Thomas Beer finds that after learning about bullfighting, “there is much more to it than is commonly supposed.” However, he concludes his evaluation with a few blunt sentences: “Unless one is interested in bullfights or in Spain, their natural home, ‘Death in the Afternoon’ is likely to seem excessive in length and in detail. It is suitably illustrated” (Beer 130). Despite not appealing to a wide audience, *Death in the Afternoon* marked the first expansive book on bullfighting in America and, to this day, is one of the most recognized texts on the subject (Kinnamon, *Legacy* 283). It has inspired future American authors to write about bullfighting, such as Barnaby Conrad and Norman Mailer (Kinnamon, *Legacy* 283). Conrad (1922-2013) wrote the fictional work, *Matador*, and though he never met Hemingway, Conrad looked up to him. In a 1986 article to the New York Times, Conrad wrote: “I suppose most men who have heroes they’ve admired since youth have an itch to pass on their enthusiasm, their hero worship, to their children. In my case the hero was Ernest Hemingway.
He shaped my life, changed my life and almost cost me my life” (qtd. in Weber). Mailer (1923-2007), one of Conrad’s contemporaries, authored *The Bullfight: A Photographic Narrative*, a collection of 91 photographs of the three stages of the bullfight and notable matadors.

Having anticipated the public’s resistance, Hemingway developed a strategy for making the bullfight accessible, which he explains in his 1926 letter to Perkins. He would “take it first from altogether outside” and then “go all the way inside.” Where Jake Barnes started as an *aficionado* and then lost this elite status, Hemingway, the narrator, starts the book as a novice before becoming an *aficionado*. By beginning the book as a novice, he establishes a comfortable relationship with the reader. He explains that he, like his readers, was unsure of the bullfight when he first saw one. He recognized that few English-speakers understood bullfighting and he sympathized with them, having been in a similar situation ten years earlier. After we have identified with Hemingway, he then gently shifts the discourse away from our preconceptions of bullfighting into teaching us about the bullfight’s details from the view of an expert. Knowing the resistance that he would likely encounter with such a book, this tactic helped him to open his readers’ minds. His strategy makes the bullfight accessible and relatable, breaking down some of the stigma surrounding bullfighting and showing how it can be an artistic, cultural tradition rather than just a brutal display of violence.

Immediately, in the first chapter, Hemingway confronts the controversy of bullfighting’s morality before delving into specifics:

So far, about morals, I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after and judged by these moral standards, which I do not defend, the bullfight is very moral to me because I feel very fine while it is going on and I have a feeling of life and death and mortality and immortality, and after it is over I feel very sad but very fine. (*Death 4*)
Hemingway’s sense of morality is straightforward. Sadness on its own does not constitute immorality, only feeling “bad.” He can feel “very fine” from seeing the contrast of life and death played out in front of him without being a corrupt person. By stating that “I do not defend” the moral standards he describes, Hemingway tells us that he does not plan on using the book to make an argument about bullfighting, but rather to clear away misconceptions and teach readers about its components.

Even so, critics argue over whether Hemingway’s values are more American than Spanish and what the distinction means for Hemingway’s ethics. In response to Harry Levin’s comment that Hemingway primarily valued the bullfight for its violence, Kinnamon writes: “Hemingway...explicitly insists that the bullfight is an artistic and emotional failure when a bullfighter is gored. But Mr. Levin very rightly implies that Hemingway’s values are different from ‘ours.’ They are different precisely in that they are Hispanicized” (Corrida 53).

Hemingway, steeped in Spanish culture, enjoys bullfighting’s bloodiness more than the average American might, but he does not revel in its violence. In the introduction to the The Dangerous Summer, James Michener reminds readers that “Bullfighting is far less barbarous than American boxing, and the death of men comes far less often...” (Michener 17). Michener’s comment puts the bullfight in perspective for Hemingway’s readers and shows them that if they object to bullfighting because of the matadors’ risk of death, their restraint may have no basis. In his youth, Hemingway enjoyed boxing, but the bullfight always held greater meaning for him. Unlike boxing, which he enjoyed purely for its sport, he could find value in the bullfight from an artistic, emotional and athletic point of view.

Hemingway recognizes that Americans attend sporting events, like boxing matches, for the enjoyment of seeing a winner declared and don’t wish to mix games with death: “We, in
games, are not fascinated by death, its nearness and its avoidance. We are fascinated by victory and we replace the avoidance of death by the avoidance of defeat” (Death 22). He understands that people enjoy watching others succeed and victory heightens the pleasure of sporting events. In *Death in the Afternoon*, he tries to show his readers that bullfighting is as valuable a product of Spain’s culture as sports are of America’s. He does not look down on Americans for not understanding bullfighting; he realizes that the American culture does not accept death, and does not embody it in a tragic spectacle, as Spain’s does.

America is not the only country that does not have a culture conducive to bullfighting. For two reasons, France and England also don’t possess Spain’s excitement for bullfighting: “One is that the bulls must be raised in that country and the other that the people must have an interest in death. The English and the French live for life” (Death 265). Hemingway does not begrudge America, France or England for their distaste for death; rather, he acknowledges the differences in the cultures and tries to teach us why Spain enjoys bullfighting. Hemingway believes that the Spanish people have pride, common sense, which heightens their interest in death since they will inevitably face it one day, and impracticality, which makes them view death romantically instead of as a threat (Death 264). Hemingway may have exaggerated his claims about death’s presence or absence in certain cultures. His main point is clear: He shows that Spain’s love for bullfighting is as important and valid culturally as America’s enjoyment of sports.

In Malcolm Cowley’s 1932 review of *Death in the Afternoon*, he notes Hemingway’s use of moral vocabulary in describing different matadors:

“Death in the Afternoon” is not at all an unmoral book, nor does it treat bull-fighting as an immoral subject. If Hemingway praises the performance of a great matador, almost all his adjectives are rich in moral connotations: they are words like true, emotional, not
tricked, pure, brave, honest, noble, candid, honorable, sincere. Other matadors are not merely inartistic: they are low, false, vulgar, cowardly; they are even “cynical.” (Cowley 121-2)

Hemingway concluded that the bullfight aligned with his values, so when describing matadors’ performances, the matadors he felt most strongly about acquire a tone of moral superiority. Without explicitly focusing on the bullfight’s morality, he portrays the bullfight in a way that emphasizes its goodness. Yet Hemingway may have been too quick to judge some matadors’ shortcomings. He leaves no middle ground, classifying matadors as either moral or immoral and his feelings about the bullfight’s ethics as either good or bad. He does not consider what may have influenced a poor performance, suggesting a lack of empathy for struggling artists that he would not learn to develop until he faced severe troubles of his own in the 1950s.

Hemingway had few qualms when it came to writing about death, but some topics were too gruesome for him to describe, such as the death of Alcalareno II, a thirty-seven year old matador known for his small stature (Hemingway, Death 227). Hemingway abstains from giving details in the book, but uses the incident to illustrate the effect that learning of death can have on a child:

> I made the mistake of telling my son about it. When I came home from the ring he wanted to know all about the fight and just what happened and like a fool I told him what I’d seen. He did not say anything except to ask if he had not been killed because he was so small. He himself was small. I said yes he was small, but also because he had not known how to cross with the muleta. I hadn’t said he was killed; only hurt; I’d had that much sense although it was not much. (Death 227-228)

The bull’s death can leave you “as empty, as changed and as sad as any major emotion” (Death 207), but the death of a matador has a lasting impact that forces an observer to confront the immediacy of dying and failure. Consequently, Hemingway learned to exercise caution when mentioning the subject. Being small himself, Hemingway’s son identified with the matador. After this scene, the American bullfighter Sidney Franklin enters the room with more news:
Then somebody came in the room, Sidney Franklin I think it was, and said in Spanish, “He’s dead.”

“You didn’t say he was dead,” the boy said.
“I didn’t know for sure.”
“I don’t like it that he’s dead,” the boy said.
The next day he said, “I can’t stop thinking about that man who was killed because he was so small.”
“Don’t think about it,” I said, wishing for the thousandth time in my life that I could wipe out words that I’d said. “It’s silly to think about that.”
“I don’t try to think about it, but I wish you hadn’t told me because every time I shut my eyes I see it.”
“Think about Pinky,” I said. Pinky is a horse in Wyoming. So we were very careful about death for a while. (Death 227-228)

His son’s reaction conveys all the shock and fright that we would expect in a young child or any individual who is sensitive to death, as many of us are. Hemingway may, at times, appear hardened to death, as when he describes the explosion of a munition plant in the story “Natural History of the Dead,” which he includes inside Death in the Afternoon. But in addition to describing the violence of the explosion, he writes about his shock upon discovering that some of the dead were women (Death 135). Hemingway may have written of these horrors to show his ability to withstand such extreme events. But at the same time, he recognizes the impact that the sight or description of death can have on a person and realizes he must be “very careful about death for a while.”

A matador’s death represents one of the tragedies of bullfighting, as well as a matador’s failure. The character of Juan Belmonte in The Sun Also Rises exemplifies the misfortune of failure. Belmonte (1892-1962), a real matador, appears in The Sun Also Rises, Death in the Afternoon and the typescript of The Dangerous Summer, where his comment that the best bullfighter is the one who makes the most money (TS 232) amplifies the rivalry between the two competing matadors. In Death in the Afternoon, Hemingway extols Belmonte’s merits. He describes him as a “genius, who could break the rules of bullfighting and could torear, that is the
only word for all the actions performed by a man with the bull, as it was known to be impossible to torear” (Death 68-69). Belmonte changed the technique of bullfighting to include closer passes than matadors had attempted before. Belmonte’s genius lies in his domination of the bullfight in a style that required as much intellect as bravery. He would pass the horn “as mathematically close to his body as possible without moving his feet” (Death 68), a feat requiring knowledge of bulls and, as the word “mathematically” suggests, a calculated assessment of the bull’s proximity and speed. Considering Belmonte’s sickliness (Death 69), which prevented him from having the athleticism of other matadors, his achievements are all the more incredible.

But in The Sun Also Rises, Hemingway’s portrayal of Belmonte is hardly complimentary. Compared to Romero, Belmonte is older and more accomplished. Hemingway acknowledges his former greatness, describing how he “in his best days, worked always in the terrain of the bull. This way, he gave the sensation of coming tragedy” (Sun 218). However, he then remarks that he can no longer perform as he used to: “When he retired the legend grew up about how his bullfighting had been, and when he came out of retirement the public were disappointed because no real man could work as close to the bulls as Belmonte was supposed to have done, not, of course, even Belmonte” (218). The public holds him to unrealistic standards that surpass his greatest accomplishments. Unable to satisfy the public, himself, or outperform Romero, he “felt defrauded and cheated, and Belmonte’s jaw came further out in contempt” (218).

The competition between Belmonte and Romero foreshadows the rivalry between Luis Miguel Dominguín and Antonio Ordóñez that Hemingway describes in The Dangerous Summer. Belmonte appears similar to Dominguín. Both men are older than their competitors and express their defeat through facial tension. Eerily, Belmonte’s difficulties also anticipate Hemingway’s
troubles in the 1950s. Belmonte’s decline proves that geniuses are not immune to failure. His struggle could have augmented Hemingway’s concern about his future as a writer and led him to question whether he could continue writing in later years at the same or higher standard as he did in the 1920s or whether he might fail one day too. Hemingway, like Belmonte’s character in *The Sun Also Rises*, would have difficulty creating art. Tragically, both men committed suicide within one year of each other (Bentley).

Hemingway portrays some of his most vivid fears of bullfighting pictorially, rather than in writing. A sequence of photos in *Death in the Afternoon* shows a matador undergoing surgery after a horn wound, matadors being wounded in the ring, a dead matador after a goring, a hospitalized matador and a bull that left the bullring alive because the matador could not kill him. In his captions to the photos, Hemingway writes under the first two: “Afraid of this” and for each subsequent photograph, titles each one “And this,” ending with “And these” on the image of the surviving bull. In total, we see a list of fears that builds upon itself: “Afraid of this, afraid of this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and these.” Through this unconventional method, Hemingway admits his apprehensiveness and we learn that Hemingway is not indifferent to witnessing matadors’ injuries. Fitzgerald once said that, after the psychoanalysts are forgotten, “E.H. will be read for his great studies into fear” (Fitzgerald 325). Hemingway’s feelings toward fear are implied repeatedly across his bullfighting works.

We can sense in *The Sun Also Rises* and *Death in the Afternoon* that a matador’s loss of talent or courage represents a crucial element of the bullfight’s tragedy. Yet, Hemingway does not explicitly call Belmonte’s disappointing return from retirement a tragedy. Nor does he call

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10 Bulls can learn from previous experiences, so bulls that have already faced a picador or a cape are all the more dangerous the next time they enter the ring. Hemingway calls bulls who have been exposed to the cape and muleta “absolutely unkillable” (*Death* 118).
Cayetano Ordóñez’s loss of courage a tragedy even though he never recovered from it: “Courage comes a short distance; from the heart to the head; when it goes no one knows how far away it goes...” (Hemingway, Death 222). In the scholar Allen Josephs’s essay, titled “Meditation on Tragedy in the Corrida,” he comments that Hemingway infrequently uses the word “tragedy,” preferring to say one matador had more luck than the other (111). According to Josephs, Hemingway kept a list of matadors who started their careers well and ended in failure, a list that amounted to around 760 bullfighters. With this list in mind, Josephs states: “That may not constitute a Greek tragedy, but they certainly add up collectively to almost unimaginable bathos: the almost innumerable, mundane, quotidian, small tragedies of failure” (112). The everyday tragedies, which can happen even to promising men, pose the greatest threat.

The conclusion of the fiesta in The Sun Also Rises comes as a relief for the characters, but the end of Death in the Afternoon leaves us feeling that there is more to come. The final chapter includes references to everything that would have been in the text “if I could have made this enough of a book” (Hemingway, Death 270). Here, Hemingway provides brief snapshots of Spain and its people, filling in the context surrounding the bullfight that we missed in earlier pages: “It would have had the change when you leave the green country behind at Alsasua; it would have had Burgos far across the plain and eating the cheese later up in the room; it would have had the boy taking the wicker-bound jugs of wine on the train as samples; his first trip to Madrid...” (270). The tone of the chapter is not regretful, as if Hemingway wished he had written the book differently. Instead, it contains all of Hemingway’s love for the country and represents one of the book’s most evocative chapters. The bullfight is a product of Spain and he could not conclude a book about bullfighting without describing the Spanish culture and people. He writes that a true bullfighting book would have “had Spain in it” (Death 273). Building upon
his description of Pamplona from *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway’s dedicates *Death in the Afternoon*’s final chapter to portraying all of Spain. His love for the bullfight only begins to express his feelings for Spain.

In his final sentences, Hemingway writes: “No. It is not enough of a book, but still there were a few things to be said. There were a few practical things to be said” (*Death* 278). As we can see from the numerous appendixes that Hemingway added to the text later, he was never finished with *Death in the Afternoon* in the same way that he could finish one of his novels. In the 1950s, the book that would become *The Dangerous Summer* began as an appendix to *Death in the Afternoon* before it expanded into 688 typed pages. Yet having more to say or not being quite “enough of a book” does not detract from Hemingway’s sense of accomplishment concerning the book. He felt that he had done his duty to teach the bullfight to his readers. He succeeded, creating an insightful and complete analysis of bullfighting that is accessible to any reader, even if the book’s length does require the reader to have at least a minimal interest in bullfighting if he or she is to read it in its entirety. Its length gives us a sense of Hemingway’s passion for the bullfight and for Spain as he devoted years of his life to planning the book and risked negative reviews for its sake. The commentary that Hemingway offers and his powerful descriptions in the final chapter convey his intense emotion and, collectively, provide us with a vivid sense of his kinship with Spain.
Juan Belmonte (Hardouin-Fugier 174)

Hemingway (white pants and dark top, in front of the bull) participating in an amateur bullfight at Pamplona’s Festival de San Fermín (Hardouin-Fugier 157).
Hemingway in Madrid, Spain 1923 (*Ernest Hemingway*)

Hemingway with an ox in the summer of 1927 (Plath 63).
Hemingway (leaning forward) at a bullfight with his wife Pauline (seated at his right) (Plath 59).

Bull running at Pamplona’s Festival de San Fermín in 2011 (Govan).
Chapter Three  
- The Dangerous Summer -

During the summer of 1959, two Spanish matadors – Antonio Ordóñez and Luis Miguel Dominguín – fought in a series of mano a mano bullfights across Spain for the title of Spain’s preeminent bullfighter. *Mano a mano* means “hand to hand” and refers to the one on one competition between two bullfighters. Unlike traditional *corridas*, in which three matadors each kill two bulls, two matadors perform in a *mano a mano*, alternating their performances and killing three bulls each. Ordóñez’s and Dominguín’s competition received attention from Spanish as well as American newspapers and, in August 1959, *LIFE* magazine commissioned Hemingway to record the season’s events. Hemingway accompanied Ordóñez from May 1959 (Hotchner 206) until September, at which time he left Spain and began the arduous task of writing. The product of his work is *The Dangerous Summer*, which appeared first in *LIFE* magazine during September 1960 and then, after Hemingway’s death, in book form in 1985.

However, neither of these texts represents *The Dangerous Summer* as Hemingway intended for it to be read. The typescript, which is held at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, fills 688 pages and contains 108,746 words (Kennedy, William; Hotchner 239). In comparison, the *LIFE* publication totals 70,000 words and the book contains only 45,000 (Meyers, “Presence of Grace” 56). A.E. Hotchner, an editor and friend of Hemingway, is largely responsible for the editing of the *LIFE* publication. The editor Michael Pietsch further condensed the piece to create Scribner’s edition (Weber 116). While Scribner’s text more or less accurately presents the first 493 pages of the typescript, ending with Ordóñez’s and Dominguín’s

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11 There is some inconsistency in reports of the total number of words in the typescript. In a letter Hemingway wrote to Charles Scribner Jr., he estimated that the book came to over 120,000 words (*Selected Letters* 905).
last encounter in Bilbao, Spain, the manuscript is filled with details of the countryside and bullfighting. The typescript’s latter 195 pages continue past the Bilbao bullfight into Ordóñez’s fall season. Hemingway may have assumed and accepted that LIFE would only publish through the Bilbao *corrida*, but the book he envisioned extended far beyond the scope of the rivalry.

During the summer of 1959, Dominguín, age 33 (Daley), and Ordóñez, age 27, performed in bullfights throughout Spain and southern France. Dominguín had been in retirement since 1953 (Meyers, *Biography* 521), but he returned to bullfighting that spring to meet Ordóñez, who was also his brother-in-law, in the ring. As the two matadors performed together more frequently, they attracted international attention and their rivalry heightened, necessitating a series of *mano a manos*. The *mano a manos* began in Valencia and continued in Málaga – where both matadors gave spectacular performances – then moved up to Bayonne, France and back to Spain for the fourth and final *mano a mano* in Ciudad Real. Following Ciudad Real, Ordóñez and Dominguín competed together in Bilbao, though not in a *mano a mano* (Lewine 213). There, the competition ended with the goring of Dominguín. Scribner’s version concludes with a conversation between Hemingway and Dominguín in the hospital after the Bilbao bullfight. However, the typescript continues past the Bilbao bullfight to chronicle the remainder of Ordóñez’s season. Without Dominguín as a competitor, Ordóñez’s adversary became the government, which threatened to arrest matadors attempting to fight without the appropriate number of picadors (Hemingway, *Dangerous Summer* TS 617-618). In September, the authorities arrested Ordóñez. They released him soon thereafter, but forbade him from competing for the rest of the season, so he and his wife traveled to Cuba to visit Hemingway and

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12 Hemingway neglects to mention the reason why Ordóñez did not have enough picadors. Two of his picadors were suspended weeks earlier for placing their pics too deeply in the bull. Ordóñez ignored their suspension and continued to fight until his arrest (Blashill).
his wife, Mary. The four of them then traveled to Ketchum, Idaho, but a family emergency cut the Ordóñez’s visit short. Disappointed by this turn of events, Hemingway concluded the text in a tone of despondent resignation.

Only the typescript fully captures Hemingway’s experience of bullfighting in the final decade of his life and illuminates how bullfighting affected him as a man and writer. As in his fiction from the 1920s, we see Hemingway’s interest in the “double dicho”: “A man can be destroyed but not defeated” (Hotchner 73). But now, the line separating defeat and destruction carries personal significance. In *The Dangerous Summer*, the matador Dominguín strives to maintain his position as Spain’s best bullfighter and, though he lives through the injuries he sustains in Bilbao, he comes in second to Ordóñez. Similarly, as Hemingway’s health deteriorated and writing became laborious, he felt the threat of defeat and he strove to prove himself physically and mentally. Given the quantity of editing that went into condensing *The Dangerous Summer* and directing its focus to the rivalry, it might seem as if Hemingway’s condition had beaten him. On the other hand, he may not have intended *The Dangerous Summer* to be solely about the rivalry. The rivalry represents just one portion of a text that describes Hemingway’s feelings about Spain and bullfighting over a larger period of time. In *The Dangerous Summer*, Hemingway succeeds in immortalizing a new era of bullfighting. Even more significantly, the many parallels he draws between bullfighting and writing demonstrate that the text is as much, if not more, about Hemingway than Ordóñez or Dominguín.

I. **Hemingway’s return to Spain and bullfighting**

Ordóñez’s and Dominguin’s rivalry peaked in 1959, but *The Dangerous Summer* begins in June 1953 with Hemingway’s return to Spain after an absence of 14 years. Hemingway’s
support for the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) had prevented him from visiting the country after Francisco Franco came to power. Considering his great love for Spain, Hemingway did not take pleasure in the separation: “...I had been away for fourteen years. A lot of that time though was like being in jail except that I was locked out; not locked in” (*Dangerous Summer* Scribner 46; TS 8). With the exception of a few bullfights in Mexico, Hemingway had also been kept apart from bullfighting. At the opening of *The Dangerous Summer*, he states that he “took little interest in bullfighting then” (Scribner 45-46; TS 8), and he mentions “the abuses that had come into bullfighting” (Scribner 46; TS 9), such as shaving the bulls’ horns, as another reason for staying away.

However, Hemingway’s restraint quickly dissipated upon his return to Spain: “...for many reasons...I had lost much of my old feeling for the bullfight. But a new generation of fighters had grown up and I was anxious to see them” (Scribner 48; TS 17-18). This reference to the “old feeling” prepares us for Hemingway’s frequent allusions to the past, which appears both desirable and haunting. Hemingway’s choice to begin *The Dangerous Summer* in 1953 rather than 1959, when the mano a manos took place, shows that the book is not a strictly objective account of Ordóñez and Dominguín’s rivalry, but rather a book about Hemingway’s experience of and reflection upon bullfighting in the final decade of his life. Moreover, Hemingway had a sense that the bullfights of 1959 were among the last that he would see in his lifetime: “It had been worth while spending the summer, one of the few you had left to spend, to see what we had seen if I could make the perishable part, last. Nothing was built to last anymore but I always built to last whether there was going to be any such thing as last or not” (TS 590-591). This book

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13 I have kept all of Hemingway’s original spelling, grammar and punctuation in my quotations.
represented his final opportunity to record any aspects of the bullfight that he might have left out of his previous work.

Bullfighting had changed since the days of Juan Belmonte in the 1920s and 1930s. Matadors worked closer to the bull than ever before. As a result, horn shaving\(^{14}\) and using smaller bulls – which Hemingway calls “half bulls” (TS 518) – became commonplace. Matadors also employed tricks, another aspect of modern bullfighting Hemingway abhorred, to please the crowd. These tricks exploited the bull’s weakened condition or a physiological trait, such as farsightedness. For instance, the matador could raise the bull’s head in a series of passes and then kneel, facing away from the bull, in the sand. While this appears daring to an uneducated eye, the matador’s proximity to the bull renders him essentially invisible to the bull since the bull’s eyes’ cannot focus on nearby objects (TS 576). The Spanish Civil War had changed bullfighting as well. In some rural regions, people no longer practiced bullfighting (TS 176) and, as a whole, the industry struggled for money (Scribner 75; TS 122). Dominguín’s and Ordóñez’s rivalry was, in part, a ploy to increase ticket sales.

Nevertheless, Hemingway says, 1950s bullfighting was not without its merits: “I knew present day bull fighting...was much more dangerous and infinitely closer and better done than the old days and I knew they needed the half bull to do it. That was all right with me...as long as he was big enough to be respectable and not a Novillo or admitted three year old, and as long as his horns were intact and he was not tampered with” (Scribner 59; TS 56-57). Hemingway found much to be impressed with in modern bullfighting, provided that the bullfight was conducted with honor. As we see through his descriptions of Ordóñez’s and Dominguín’s

\(^{14}\) The tips of bulls’ horns were cut off to make bullfighting safer for the matadors. The horns were then shaved so that the alterations weren’t noticeable.
encounters, the new style rejuvenated his passion for and expanded upon his previous knowledge of the bullfight.

After the publication of For Whom the Bell Tolls in 1940, Hemingway spent the decade engaged in journalism, working as a foreign correspondent for PM newspaper and Collier’s magazine (Weber 97-98). When World War II broke out in 1939, Hemingway was living in Cuba at the Finca Vigia (“Lookout Farm”), the house and property that he first rented and soon purchased. He involved himself in the war efforts by outfitting his fishing boat, Pilar, into a Q-boat, which he used to search for German submarines in the waters around Cuba (Hotchner 10; Mellow 526). Eager to witness the war for himself, Hemingway traveled to Europe in 1944 with his third wife, the journalist Martha Gellhorn, to work as a war correspondent for Collier’s magazine. At the end of the war, the couple divorced and, in 1946, Hemingway married Mary Welsh (Mellow 545).

As for writing fiction, Hemingway published Across the River and Into the Trees in 1950. Unfortunately, the book, while it sold well, received poor reviews and critics questioned Hemingway’s capacity as a writer. The Old Man and the Sea (1952) was an immediate success and was admired by most critics and reviewers. It earned Hemingway the Pulitzer Prize in 1953, as well as the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. Hemingway’s fame skyrocketed after winning the Nobel Prize and it was around this time that he developed his most well known persona – “Papa,” a name that he had begun to encourage his friends to use about him years ago (Meyers 310) and that now became even more common. Hemingway was one of the few writers who cultivated a public personality (Clifford 172). For much of his life, he had supported the public’s view of him as a stereotypical, masculine man by taking part in and writing about experiences such as war, blood sports and hunting. We might therefore expect that a superficial reading of
The Dangerous Summer would show us a competitive man with little empathy for the bulls or failed matadors. But the complete manuscript reveals Hemingway’s true condition, as we learn of his vulnerabilities, new insights into bullfighting and the season’s trials in addition to its triumphs.

Hemingway viewed his persona and his true self as two separate identities. Ordóñez also kept two identities, the matador and the man, and warned Hemingway of mixing the two:

One time when I showed him a photo in a Paris weekly of him dedicating a bull to Jean Cocteau at some French ring he said, “That’s not me.”
“The face is very like you.”
“That’s not me at all. That’s the torero.”
He had been telling me that he did not like me to sign books that people brought “your friend” or “from his friend.”
“How can you do that if the man is not your friend? It’s dishonest and it gives the man a place he does not truly have.”
“I don’t mind doing it,” I said.
“You should,” he said. “You and I should never do things like that.”
“Maybe it’s the writer doing it. Not the man,” I told him.
“Don’t do it,” he said. “It’s not the thing for you to do.”
First he had worked out the principle that what the torero had to do for politeness as a torero the man was not responsible for. The man was only responsible for what the torero did with the bull and for all things in relation to other toreros. (TS 401-402)

Hemingway readily perceived that two sides of him existed – the famous writer and the man – even though he did not feel as strongly as Ordóñez about keeping his personal and public selves distinct from one another. Unlike Ordóñez, Hemingway could not leave his artistic identity behind when he needed distance and space from being a public figure. Over the years, he had created and developed an image of himself as he wanted the public to see him – adventurous, brave and affable – and being a writer was an integral part of both these images. As life became more difficult for him, he found it easier to play the part of the persona rather than himself.

The “Papa” personality masked his physical and mental troubles. By 1950, Hemingway was consuming excessive quantities of alcohol and his intake worsened until his doctor,
according to Mary, restricted him to six ounces of whisky a day and two glasses of wine
(Hemingway, Mary 439). Then in January 1954 while on safari in Africa, two plane crashes left
him with a fractured skull and spine along with a dislocated shoulder, a ruptured liver and
numerous other injuries (Meyers, Biography 504-505). By the time Hemingway traveled to
Spain in 1959, he struggled with high blood pressure, inflammation, weight gain and depression
(Hotchner 189; Meyers, Biography 510). He had no intention of writing a full-length book on
the summer season; he wished only to attend some bullfights and work on an appendix to Death
in the Afternoon.

LIFE magazine approached him about covering the mano a manos between Ordóñez and
Dominguin after the first mano a mano in Valencia (TS 649). They requested only 4,500 words
(Hemingway, Selected Letters 905) and Hemingway, not having any perception of how
consuming the undertaking would become, agreed to write the piece. He then had no choice but
to stay for the entire season. He struggled with the pace of the 1959 summer. In a letter to his
wife, Mary, on August 20th, 1959, Hemingway wrote: “The life, the hours, the road and the strain
are impossible as you know” (Letter to “My dearest Kitten”). Bullfights were held on nearly a
daily basis and they would often drive all night to reach the next city in time for the following
day’s corrida. But the worst of his problems began in 1960, when he began the actual writing of
The Dangerous Summer. Hemingway had previously prided himself on his ability to recall past
events and conversations: “‘I have always made things stick that I wanted to stick. I’ve never
kept notes or a journal. I just push the recall button and there it is. If it isn’t there, it wasn’t
worth keeping’” (Hemingway qtd. in Hotchner 39). Memory had served him well when writing
his last bullfighting book, Death in the Afternoon, but this time, Hemingway found it difficult to
remember events with the same clarity. In need of help, he sent a letter to Bill Davis, asking for him to send newspaper clippings about the summer’s bullfights (Stanton 196).

Even after using outside sources to furnish material, the writing proved arduous. The words amassed rapidly, rising from 8,693 words to 63,562 in just over five months (footnote Selected Letters 902), but structuring the text and completing it proved to be very difficult for Hemingway. In April, he requested an extension, explaining to LIFE that he needed the additional time to do the subject justice: “I can jam through and finish it by April 14th as I said I could but it would be unfair to Life, Literature and the Persuit of Happiness. It needs a month more solid work and then typing, correcting, and retyping to be what I want it to be” (Hemingway to Mr. Thompson). By stating that the work needed “correcting and retyping,” he acknowledged that the manuscript required editing. Still, he could not bring himself to delete anything. In June, Hemingway called Hotchner to ask for his help in excising 70,000 words. Hotchner traveled to Hemingway’s home in Cuba, but found Hemingway resistant to his comments. Only after four days of haggling over sentences did Hemingway agree to implement some of Hotchner’s suggestions (Hotchner 240). Even then, the cuts he made were minimal.

Usually, Hemingway diligently edited his work. He would begin each day by editing and revising what he had written the day before: “When I am working on a book or story I write every morning as soon after first light as possible...I always rewrite each day up to the point where I stopped” (Hemingway, “The Art of Fiction”). Once he completed the piece and typed it or had it typed, he would revise the typescript and then revise it again when he examined the page proof prior to publication (Hemingway, “The Art of Fiction”). His editing capabilities had always been innate and natural: “The most essential gift for a good writer is a built-in, shockproof, shit detector. This is the writer’s radar and all great writers have had it”
(Hemingway, “The Art of Fiction”). Hemingway’s “shockproof, shit detector” had allowed him to take instances from his life and weave them into a fictional fabric for his novels and short stories. Bernard Oldsey calls Hemingway “a fine editor of his own fiction” with an “uncanny” knack for making the correct choices for his narratives (213). And even when someone else would help to edit his work, Oldsey points out, “Hemingway chose wisely which advice to accept and which to reject” (213). At some point in the course of writing *The Dangerous Summer*, he lost his internal editing system and he did not know how to edit his own work or how to decide which comments of others he ought to accept. The over-long, often rambling manuscript (we have it in typescript) of *The Dangerous Summer* is the result. However, readers interested in the full scope of Hemingway’s life can greatly benefit from this large, unfinished project. The abundant anecdotes and tangents that appear in the typescript provide crucial information into Hemingway’s responses to the bullfight and perceptions of the world.

When Hemingway returned to Spain in the summer of 1960 to fact-check and take pictures, the strain nearly overpowered him. He collapsed in a bullring in August and was mistaken for dead, constituting the second time in his life that he would read his own obituary (Hemingway, Mary 486). His letters to his wife increased in desperation, as we see in this letter to Mary written on August 15th:

> Kittner I don’t know how I can stick the summer out. Am so damned lonesome and the bullfight business is now so corrupt and seems so unimportant and I have so much good work to do....If there was any way to do it would take the next plane. But every time I’ve ever been this bad have pulled out of it into a belle epoque and will try to do it again...Only thing I am afraid of, no, not only thing, is complete physical and nervous crack-up from deadly overwork. (Mellow 599-600)

Hemingway appears to be remembering his recovery into the “belle epoque” that brought forth *The Old Man and the Sea* after the disappointment of *Across the River and Into the Trees*. But
his hopefulness is slight in the face of the depression and anxiety that set him on the verge of a breakdown.

His troubles broke his confidence in his ability to write, a confidence that formed an essential part of his self-perception: “it doesn’t matter that I don’t write for a day...as long as the knowledge that I can write is solid inside me” (Hemingway qtd. in Hotchner 298). The difficulty he faced when editing his work had wounded him, but his inability to write was debilitating. Hemingway once told Hotchner, “If I can’t exist on my own terms, then existence is impossible” (qtd. in Hotchner 297). Whether his ailing health made it hard to write or whether his devastation concerning his writing fueled his ill health, Hemingway’s mental faculties quickly deteriorated. LIFE published *The Dangerous Summer* in three parts in September 1960. The publication outraged Hemingway, who complained of his picture on the magazine’s cover and feared that he had been unfair to Dominguín (Stanton 205). Two months later, on November 30th, he was admitted to the Mayo Clinic for the first of two hospital stays (Hotchner 276). During his second hospitalization, he received electrical shock treatments (Hotchner 293) and, having convinced the doctors of his restoration, he left the hospital at the end of June 1961. Those close to him realized that he was still not at all well (Mellow 603; Meyers, *Biography* 559). On July 2, 1961, Hemingway committed suicide in his home in Ketchum, Idaho (Meyers, *Biography* 559-560).

Hemingway faced great hardship in writing *The Dangerous Summer*; he must have been powerfully motivated to keep from setting the work aside. At first, the rivalry between Ordóñez and Dominguín seems to lie at the heart of the story. But on closer inspection, we see that the manuscript concerns itself with capturing a new era of bullfighting and Hemingway’s journey through Spain. His goal was clear; he wanted to “make a story which has...permanent value”
As in the 1920s, Hemingway tasked himself with creating an enduring work of art. He vowed to write a subject only once and if we assume that he continued this practice, then *The Dangerous Summer* must contain a new theme: “...I have always tried to write only one story on anything if I got what I was after the first time, because there was a hell of a lot I wanted to write about and I knew even then that the clock runs faster than the pen” (qtd. in Hotchner 56). Now, in 1959, time was running short. Hemingway wished to make modern bullfighting and post-war Spain permanent through his writing and, additionally, prove to himself that he could still create lasting art. Should he fail, the stakes were high: “When a writer, having written any one thing the way it should be, writes it again...then he is usually through as an artist” (Hemingway qtd. in Stanton 191). Considering that being an artist represented a critical part of his identity, any loss of his writing ability could have lessened his will to live.

When he finished the draft of *The Dangerous Summer*, he lacked confidence in what he had created: “This other is done for better or for worse. The monument is made or not. I hope it is, and if it is not, that somebody else can make it on from where this stops” (TS 688). Hemingway was unsure of whether his work had any permanent value. His uncharacteristic suggestion that another could “make it on from where this stops” shows the extent of his resignation.

In a sense, Hemingway did not succeed; *The Dangerous Summer* is not as effective and compelling as his other published works and, unlike *Death in the Afternoon*, which served to introduce Americans to bullfighting, it lacks focus. However, when viewing *The Dangerous Summer* as a journey that takes us through Hemingway’s experience of bullfighting and Spain during the 1950s, the details and digressions add richness and are highly revealing about Hemingway’s state of mind late in his life and career. Thus, the book is not “a pale imitation of
Death in the Afternoon" (Biography 523), as the scholar Jeffrey Meyers argues, but a new, if uncompleted, work.

II. “Slipping back into the bullfighter’s view”

Hemingway could have written The Dangerous Summer simply as a piece of journalism, reporting the season’s events as they occurred without interpretation or bias. Almost immediately, however, he became Ordóñez’s companion, traveling with him to nearly every corrida and coming to know him intimately, despite having vowed not to befriend a bullfighter:

Don’t start being friends with bullfighters again and especially not with this one [Ordóñez] when you know how good he is and how much you will have to lose if anything happens to him. Fortunately I have never learned to take the good advice I give myself nor the counsel of my fears. (Scribner 51; TS 27-28)

At nearly every bullfight, Hemingway would “sweat him out” (TS 563) as he worked perilously close to the bull. The fear of losing a friend to a horn injury drove him to seek distance between himself and matadors.

The fact that Ordóñez was the son of the acclaimed matador Cayetano Ordóñez, also known as Niño de la Palma, added to Hemingway’s anxiety. He had known Cayetano during the 1920s at the height of his talent, when he “had absolute technical perfection” (Scribner 50; TS 23). In Death in the Afternoon, Hemingway says of Cayetano: “[He] looked like the messiah who had come to save bullfighting if ever anyone did” (88). Cayetano even served as the inspiration for Pedro Romero in The Sun Also Rises, the artful matador who catches the eye of Lady Brett Ashley (Meyers, “Presence of Grace” 56). He receives only a passing mention in the first part of The Dangerous Summer, but his memory hangs over the text as the bullfighters attempt increasingly dangerous passes and Hemingway’s anxiety increases. After the summer season ends, we learn the role Cayetano played in forming Hemingway’s resolution:
I did not tell him [Antonio] that the worst things I had ever seen happen in the ring were when his father commenced to have disasters with the bulls...I had never seen Antonio’s father, expect to speak formally, since I had quit being friends with active bull fighters because of what I had to go through when he could no longer cope with bulls...his father had been very great until the bulls destroyed his nerves. But when his nerves were gone that year the crowd had tried to lynch him twice at the end of bull fights at two different rings in the north. (TS 525-526)

A horn wound drained Cayetano of his courage, destroying his technical ability in the ring. Hemingway feared that a similar misfortune would befall Antonio and he could not bear to watch another friend suffer defeat. Hemingway also notes the crowd’s hostility toward Cayetano. Though he believed that paying attention to the audience marks an artist’s deterioration, we see that the crowd does, in fact, play a role in measuring the strength of the artist’s work. Hemingway felt his reviewers turn against him after writing *Across the River and Into the Trees*, so he could have empathized with Cayetano when the spectators oppose him.

His concern for Ordóñez did not just make him nervous, but also threatened his writing:

“I was slipping back into the bull fighter’s view of bullfighting again... but I was still keeping my critical faculties intact” (TS 127). He relates his anxiety directly to his own mental competency.

The reasoning behind this correlation becomes clearer when we learn that Hemingway believed anxiety negatively affected the quality of his work. In a 1958 interview, he said that only death can put an end to a writer’s desire to write, but worry can have an equally destructive effect:

“Worry destroys the ability to write. Ill health is bad in the ratio that it produces worry which attacks your subconscious and destroys your reserves” (Hemingway, “The Art of Fiction”).

Though he spoke specifically of worry over finances, “worry” appears numerous times in *The Dangerous Summer* as a result of dangerous bullfights and political instability. When the picadors begin running into trouble with the government, he chastises himself for feeling overly apprehensive: “Don’t worry about it as long as they are fighting. What are you getting to be,
Ernesto? A worrier?" (TS 570). He tried to disregard his fears, but the threat of illness and his concern of having degraded Dominguín loomed overhead. As the 1959 season progressed, Hemingway began to fear and obsess about the potential ruin of his own career and body.

Additionally, the *mano a manos* between Dominguín and Ordóñez echoed the 1947 *mano a mano* between Dominguín and Manolete, the reigning matador of the 1940s ("Dominguín, Top Matador"). Dominguín’s and Manolete’s competition came just three years after Dominguín became a full matador. Manolete came out of retirement specifically to challenge Dominguín, just as Dominguín came out of retirement to compete against Ordóñez in 1959. The 1947 competition resulted in Manolete’s death, for which some people blamed Dominguín, saying he had pushed the older matador too far: “The ordinary man never forgave him for being in the Linares bullring the afternoon Manolete died. He had provoked the melancholy Cordovan beyond limits of human endurance, thereby doing the unthinkable, contributing to the destruction of a legend” (Whitney). The similarities between the 1959 and 1947 rivalries cast an ominous shadow over the season.

Hemingway’s friendships with both matadors made emotional conflict inevitable and “neutrality was becoming increasingly difficult” (Scribner 111; TS 230). In part, the immersion back into bullfighting excited him: “The way it turned out I would not have missed the Spring, Summer and Fall for anything else that you could do” (Scribner 60; TS 65). At least at the time he wrote these words, he remembered the summer fondly. Yet he also felt that his intimacy with Dominguín and Ordóñez made the summer unbearable: “...we have stayed good friends which was one of the things that made the 1959 campaign so terrible. If Luis Miguel had been an enemy and not my friend and Carmen’s brother and Antonio’s brother-in-law it would have been easy. Not easy, perhaps, but you would not have cared except as a human being.” (Scribner 55;
TS 43-44). Given Hemingway’s ties to both matadors and the knowledge that only one matador could be named the victor, the summer was primed for some sort of a loss.

Hemingway and Dominguín had been friends prior to the 1959 season. They had spent time together at Hemingway’s Cuban home, the Finca Vigia (Hotchner 138), in 1954 and Hemingway described him as “a wonderful companion” (Scribner 55; TS 43). Nevertheless, his affections quickly transferred to Ordóñez. For much of the text, Hemingway’s descriptions of Dominguín’s performances appear pale compared to Ordóñez’s. We can clearly perceive Hemingway’s bias toward the younger matador. Even Ordóñez, who believed that Hemingway “defends his true friends” (qtd. in Meyers, “Presence of Grace” 56) in the book, acknowledged that Hemingway may have blown the rivalry out of proportion (Stanton 199). Hemingway became too caught up in the drama of the competition to remember that the rivalry was, in part, a creation designed to rejuvenate the bullfighting business (Castillo-Puche 321-322; Stanton 195).

The many ways by which he was connected to Dominguín made Hemingway feel guilty for not supporting him wholeheartedly. To cope with his guilt, Hemingway chose not to care about Dominguín’s predicament “as a human being,” meaning that he avoided thinking of Dominguín as a fellow man in need of support. Considering the similarities between their situations, Hemingway could have sympathized with Dominguín. However, he chose to break all ties with Dominguín as a way of denying their shared experience. Even after justifying his coldness, his guilt still remained. Just prior to the publication of The Dangerous Summer in LIFE magazine, he wrote the editors a frantic telegram (Hemingway, Telegram to Time-LIFE, Inc.), asking them to acknowledge Dominguín’s successful performances following 1959 as a way of lessening the negative impact of his comments in the text.
Caught up in Ordóñez’s successes, Hemingway describes his style at length and with energy. In contrast, Hemingway commends Dominguín for his talent as a banderillero, but rarely recognizes his cape work. When Dominguín beats Ordóñez in a corrida at Zaragoza, Hemingway writes it off as luck: “It was true that Luis Miguel had beaten him, on paper, but the draw of the bulls is luck, or is supposed to be, and on the two bulls Antonio had been ahead. The added bull made the day come out in Luis Miguel’s favor” (Scribner 117; TS 243). After The Dangerous Summer appeared in LIFE magazine, any semblance of friendship between Dominguín and Hemingway dissipated. Dominguín was furious at what Hemingway had written about him, calling Hemingway “a liar in all sorts of ways” and describing Ordóñez as “a butcher” (Whitney). Though harsh, Dominguín’s comment against Ordóñez seconds other bullfighting aficionados’ distaste for Ordóñez’s killing style – a shortcoming Hemingway never acknowledges in print. When describing how Ordóñez killed his bulls during 1959, the French bullfight critic Jean Cau criticizes Ordóñez: “...out of every 100 or 150 bulls that he dispatches in the course of a year, he ‘kills’ a dozen and assassimates the rest...” (Cau qtd. in Stanton 199). Ordóñez tended to drive the sword into the bull’s shoulder rather than between the shoulder blades, earning the shoulder area the nickname of “el rincón de Ordóñez,” or “Ordóñez’s corner” (Stanton 198). Despite not mentioning Ordóñez’s flaws in the book, Hemingway knew Ordóñez could improve his technique. In a letter to his son, Patrick, on August 5, 1959, he wrote: “His killing is rapid but is still defectuous [faulty] except recibiendo. But he does kill them decently and get them out of the way” (Selected Letters 895). He wrote this letter in the midst of the mano a manos – between the Valencia and Málaga bullfights – so he must have consciously chosen to omit details of Ordóñez’s faults from the text.
Hemingway also didn’t accurately represent Ordóñez’s involvement with horn shaving, though he notes when Dominguín fought bulls with clipped horns (Stanton 197). The vehement anti-bullfighting author Michael Ogorzaly chastises Hemingway for not acknowledging Ordóñez’s infractions: “When he did mention abuses like horn shaving in The Dangerous Summer, he failed to connect them with Ordóñez, choosing disingenuously to associate them instead with Ordóñez’s rival, Luis Dominguín” (159). As a result of shielding Ordóñez’s faults, the character of Ordóñez appears one-dimensional. His failures are justified or passed off as insignificant; his emotions while performing tend toward the extremes, putting him in “black rages” (TS 119) or states of joy as he “left the human race” (TS 506). The ups-and-downs that Dominguín experiences are what make his story more striking.

The scholar David Bromwich considers what qualities make certain characters from Death in the Afternoon and The Dangerous Summer heroic: “…all the more interesting fighters are subjected to a continuous moral inquest by their chronicler. It is sometimes assumed that Hemingway’s usual hero is a man of supreme courage, beyond challenge by his rivals…But his books contain no such character” (Bromwich 195). Certainly, the rivalry challenges both Ordóñez and Dominguín physically. However, Hemingway portrays Ordóñez as infallible so early on in the text that the rivalry does not pose as significant a threat to him as it does to Dominguín. As the defending premier bullfighter, Dominguín has the most to lose. Lastly, Hemingway subjects Dominguín to, as Bromwich puts it, “a continuous moral inquest” as he performs. Dominguín sold more tickets than Ordóñez and Hemingway questions whether Dominguín only fought for the money and berates his willingness to use tricks or perform with tampered bulls. Hemingway did not likely intend for Dominguín to be the most compelling character, but his faults and challenges make him precisely that.
Hemingway may have felt uncomfortable criticizing Ordóñez after taking his side. With Ordóñez, Hemingway could revisit memories of his youth while also gaining optimism for the future. Ordóñez reminded him of the beauty of bullfighting from the 1920s and 1930s and at the same time, made him eager for the next generation of matadors who would work close to the bulls and perform purely, without deceit or trickery. From his praise, there is no doubt that Hemingway saw Ordóñez as a fellow artist. Hemingway had no friends in the 1950s who were writers or artists (Meyers, Biography 310). He had a habit of forming tight friendships and then destroying them and had fallen out with most all of his previous artist friends, of which there were many, with the exception of Ezra Pound and James Joyce. As Meyers notes, “Their absence coincided with the emergence of Papa Hemingway, his last public persona” (Meyers, Biography 310). It was perhaps not by accident that he had created Papa Hemingway at the same time as he ended his friendship with the writer John Dos Passos in 1937. Dos Passos had been one of Hemingway’s closest friends since they met during World War I in Schio, Italy, where Dos Passos also served as an ambulance driver (Meyers, Biography 29), and he was the last of Hemingway’s literary friends. After their break, Hemingway lost all ties to the artistic and literary society of which he was once part. Putting on the Papa persona dulled his emptiness, making him feel as if he were still part of a community. Ordóñez may have fulfilled his need to share the creative part of his life with another person. Additionally, as a competitive person himself, Hemingway could understand Ordóñez’s drive. When he was a young man, Hemingway had sought to surpass great deceased writers such as Tolstoy and Stephen Crane (Meyers, Biography 133) and he competed against his contemporary William Faulkner to prove himself the master of Modernism (Fruscione, “Rivalry and Influence” 78).
As a young father in 1923, Hemingway lamented that his son, Jack, would not grow up to be a bullfighter (Selected Letters 83). In a way, Ordóñez filled that long-standing desire. Hemingway viewed Ordóñez almost as a son and having already asserted himself as “Papa” to the public, the paternal role came easily to him (Castillo-Puche 140). During their first meeting in 1953, Ordóñez’s words laid the foundation for a father-son relationship: “‘Tell me. Am I as good as my father?’ So looking in those strange eyes, the grin gone now along with any doubt that we were going to be friends, I told him that he was better than his father and I told him how good his father was” (Scribner 52; TS 29). From this conversation, we learn of Antonio’s desire to distinguish himself from his father, though in the latter part of the typescript we see that Antonio takes pride in being Cayetano’s son. While fighting in Ronda, his hometown (Stanton 189), he emulates his father’s style: “...he wanted to show his friends in town the glory he had brought back with him and show the others who had been rude to his father that he was his father’s son and proud of that and of his father who was there” (TS 607). He performs his father’s signature pass – a rebolera – in Ronda and again in Nimes, a city in southern France (TS 608, TS 659).

Hemingway mentions his own father only once in the text, just after explaining how Cayetano’s loss of courage led him to resolve never to befriend bullfighters: “He [Antonio] knew all that and we never talked about that except that I had told him my own father had shot himself and I still loved him” (TS 525). With the words “except that,” Hemingway links Cayetano’s failure to his father’s death. Even though Cayetano lived, Hemingway suggests that his defeat as

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15 Hemingway first saw Ordóñez perform in Merida, Mexico in February 1947 (Meyers, Biography 520), but they did not formally meet until 1953. In 1947, Ordóñez was not a full matador – he gained that distinction in 1951 (Meyers, Biography 522). Hemingway had attended the Merida bullfight to see Manolete perform, but came away very impressed with the younger matador (Meyers, Biography 520).
a bullfighter had a similar effect on Antonio as his father’s suicide had on him. We might expect Hemingway to be equally critical of suicide as he is of disgraced matadors, but this is not the case. Hemingway continued to love his father and suggests that Antonio do the same. He does not feel that either of their fathers’ actions deserves reproof. When we recall that he wrote these words only about eighteen months prior to his own suicide, we can see that suicide, to Hemingway, was not an unforgivable action. He hoped that those he loved, like Ordóñez, would continue to love him after his death.

Hemingway shared a strong bond with Ordóñez and he repeatedly calls attention to their partnership. He appears somewhat desperate for Ordóñez’s affection. In two almost identical instances in the typescript, Ordóñez asks Hemingway to watch from the callejon, the area surrounding the ring where the bullfighters stand, during his next bullfight. Hemingway responds by saying that he did not want to be a nuisance, which leads Ordóñez to reassure him: “‘You’re not a nuisance,’ he said. ‘You’re my partner’” (TS 282). This conversation repeats itself in the typescript two hundred pages later (TS 491). Hemingway did not wish to infringe upon Ordóñez’s space, although, at this point in the text, he knew very well that Ordóñez would not extend the invitation if he didn’t value his opinion. Since Hemingway voices his fear of being “a nuisance” on two occasions, he may have needed the reassurance of hearing Ordóñez call him his partner.

José Luis Castillo-Puche, Hemingway’s close friend from the 1950s, supports the idea that Hemingway depended on Ordóñez: “Antonio was not only a human being but an art object” (203). Ordóñez fulfilled Hemingway’s need for companionship as well as a subject for his writing. In reference to the distress that Hemingway felt over his partiality, Castillo-Puche writes: “Even though Ernesto may have been tempted at times to put an end to this passionate
involvement with Antonio, he was neither free enough nor strong enough to do so” (Castillo-Puche 141). Ordóñez had rejuvenated Hemingway’s interest in the bullfight and by extension, rekindled his artistic passion: “I was tired of bull fights and I disliked many things about bull fighting, and some I hated. But each time I saw Antonio with the cape my afición or passion was as fresh and new and strong as it had been in the time when it had been almost the only thing there was” (TS 573-574). As Hemingway wrote in “A Lack of Passion” (1925), passion is necessary when creating art. After feeling his enthusiasm for the bullfight wane in the early 1950s, its return would have encouraged him and made him hopeful that he could regain his past energy. Though it is possible that Hemingway only wished for his passion to be reborn and did not actually feel its rejuvenation, the enthusiasm with which he writes of Ordóñez’s facility with the cape suggests that the bullfight had captivated him once again.

Artistic passion formed the basis of Hemingway’s and Ordóñez’s relationship. They both had strong feelings about bullfighting and though Ordóñez had probably not read Hemingway’s novels (Meyers, Biography 522), he enjoyed referring to the bullfight as writing: “He was very pleased, always, to call the faena writing” (Scribner 103; TS 209). The scholar Joseph Fruscione states that their relationship grew from their enjoyment of blending their respective mediums: “Each feels an affinity with the other as a fellow ‘writer’ and insider privy to the secrets and techniques of their respective crafts. For both, equations of bullfighting with writing underscore the aesthetics of Ordóñez’s art, couple their crafts, and draw the two men closer to each other” (Fruscione, “Mano a mano” 75). By joining their two arts, Hemingway’s writing process gained a visual element and Ordóñez’s cape work acquired longevity through words.

Hemingway felt obligated to record Ordóñez’s performances, transferring his ephemeral art into a written, permanent form. He wrote of the difference between bullfighting and writing:
“A bullfighter can never see the work of art that he is making. He has no chance to correct it as a painter or a writer has. He cannot hear it as a musician can. He can only feel it and hear the crowd’s reaction to it” (Scribner 198; TS 470). Because writing endures longer than a pass of the cape, Hemingway took it upon himself to immortalize Ordóñez’s artistry through writing, both for future generations and so Ordóñez could appreciate what he had accomplished. Hemingway acted as Ordóñez’s eyes that could record the “magic” (TS 573) he created: “...I saw it for him and that was the deep base of our whole relationship. I had told him that I wanted to write something that would make it permanent. Pictures do not keep it and neither do films” (TS 573). He did not believe a film recording could immortalize bullfighting. The camera may have been too physically and emotionally removed to sufficiently capture the bullfight’s essence. In contrast, from his seat in the barrera or standing in the callejon, Hemingway could record all that he felt and describe every pass with an aficionado’s knowledge to make them come alive for the reader.

For all of the bullfight’s emotional strength, it is a temporary form of art. Its artistry affects only those who witness it and, soon, it exists only as a memory, subject to decay and alteration. Hemingway strove to “make something permanent of a thing that was impermanent and could die with him or only live in the memories of those few who saw it and could really understand it” (TS 665). He and Ordóñez fused their respective mediums as Hemingway created permanent written art that would, through its subject matter, make Ordóñez’s art permanent as well. The success of The Dangerous Summer affected Ordóñez in addition to Hemingway and increased the pressure Hemingway felt to write well.

All favoritism aside, Ordóñez’s and Dominguín’s styles could not have been more different. Dominguín enjoyed performing tricks and is said to have “fought with icy elegance
and executed slow disdainful veronicas” (Whitney) while Ordóñez, “a technical purist”
(“Dominguín, Top Matador”), “would turn loose that strange molten quality he had inside
himself” (Scribner 112; TS 231). Only Ordóñez’s style affected Hemingway emotionally. After
writing that Dominguín’s cape work did not move him, he tried to pass off emotion as “only a
detail” (Scribner 54; TS 40). However, Hemingway repeatedly mentions Ordóñez’s
emotionality, suggesting that feeling is, in fact, a critical component of the bullfight. A
matador’s ability to feel the art he creates and impart some of this emotion to the audience
determines the quality of the performance:

> When he feels it [the work of art] and knows that it is great it takes hold of him so that
nothing else in the world matters. He is controlled by it as he controls it and the closer
and slower and more beautifully and classically he works the more dangerous it is. But
his confidence increases as his skill extends and lengthens. All the time he is making his
work of art he knows that he must keep within the limits of his skill and his knowledge of
the animal. Those matadors are called cold who visibly show that they are thinking of
this. Antonio was not cold and the public belonged to him now.
(Scribner 198; TS 470-471; my italics)

In something of a paradox, an artist’s mastery of his art allows his creation to control him,
instead of the artist controlling what he creates. Editors of Scribner’s text omitted the two
sentences about the artist’s control and confidence from the published version, which are
italicized in the passage above, but the line beautifully illustrates Hemingway’s perception of
composition. For all of the time Hemingway spent rewriting and consciously choosing his
words, he also felt that an outside influence guided his work. Most often, this influence is luck:
“For a long time now I have tried simply to write the best I can. Sometimes I have good luck and
write better than I can” (Hemingway, “The Art of Fiction”). Luck, to Hemingway, helped him to
accomplish feats that he could not achieve on his own, just as the matador “feels it” and lets it
take over. While he wrote in *A Moveable Feast* that working well “needed luck as well as
discipline” (13), he could not command luck to come. Hemingway’s writing schedule aided him
to stay focused and write to the best of his ability, but luck would appear by chance and, at these
times, if his luck was good, it would inspire him to write better than he thought possible.

As Hemingway points out, the bullfighter can only feel his performance. He does not have the benefit of reading what he has made or hearing it played back to him. Thus, the superior matador is the one who infuses true emotion into his work. Dominguín, with his “icy elegance,” represents one of the “cold,” dispassionate matadors. But Ordóñez, with his keen intuition and intensity, could not only make his passion obvious, but pass it on to the spectators. Like the matador Pedro Romero in *The Sun Also Rises*, Ordóñez could move his audience to feel what he experienced: “And each pass as it reached the summit gave you a sudden ache inside. The crowd did not want it ever to be finished” (*Sun* 223). Romero, like Ordóñez, could transfix the crowd and make them feel his “sudden ache inside” as he killed the bull. In 1925, Hemingway had just begun to realize the extent of the matador’s feelings for the bull, which he would elaborate upon in *The Dangerous Summer*. By using the word “ache” to describe the crowd’s and matador’s sensation at the moment of the bull’s death, we see that Hemingway realized, at least in part, that the matador’s killing of the bull was not a pure rush of victory, but a source of pain as well.

In one of the first passages of the text depicting Ordóñez’s facility with the *muleta*, his cape work moves Hemingway deeply. In Scribner’s version, we read:

> Antonio almost made me choke up with the cape. Not the kind of choking where people sob like the classic picture of the Frenchman at the Fall of France but the kind where your chest and throat tighten up and your eyes dim seeing something that you thought was dead and done with come to life before you. It was being done more purely, more beautifully and closer and more dangerously than it could be done and he was controlling the danger and measuring it exactly to a micrometric proportion. (Scribner 57)

As strong as Hemingway’s emotion is in this passage, his words are milder than in the unpublished text. Hemingway wrote the phrase “choke up” in pencil above the word “cry,”
which he crossed out. He also inserted the word “almost,” lessening the strength of his emotional response. In the typescript, we can see through his revisions and we learn that the performance discomposes him more than Scribner’s edition suggests:

Antonio made me cry with the cape. Not the kind of crying where people sob like the classic picture of the Frenchman at the Fall of France but the kind where your chest and throat tighten up and your eyes get wet seeing something that you thought was dead and done with come to life before you. (TS 50-51)

Both versions reference the act of crying, but only the typescript describes true tears. In the typescript, Hemingway had initially written that the cape work “made me cry” and made “your eyes get wet,” but he crossed out these phrases and replaced them with “made me choke up” and “your eyes get dim,” which then appeared in Scribner’s edition. Hemingway may have felt that the revised version, though a less accurate portrayal of his experience, better upheld his public image.

In Kenneth Lynn’s scathing review of The Dangerous Summer, he criticizes the predominance of Hemingway’s public persona in Scribner’s publication: “What makes The Dangerous Summer prospectively such an appalling book is its demonstration that the Famous Personality has at last triumphed utterly...” (177). Hemingway’s public persona may have begun to overwhelm him after World War II, as Lynn states. But Lynn may have come to a different conclusion had he read the typescript instead of Scribner’s edition. The typescript shows considerably more of Hemingway the man than Scribner’s edition does, as the revisions made to the passage I quote above show.

The self-consciousness that we saw in Hemingway’s revision also appears in an anecdote describing a bike accident:

Going down the gravelled walk of the hotel to the stone courtyard, blocked with cars I heard a crash and turned to see a Vespa skidding on it’s side. Men ran toward the man who had been riding it who looked badly injured. But the girl who rode the rear saddle
had been skidded out into the road where the two way traffic was passing. I went out fast and picked her up and carried her until we could find a car to take her to a dressing station. All cars seemed to be on other business. I was afraid she had a fracture at the base of her skull. She was bleeding sluggishly but there was no hemmorage and I was very careful to carry her gently and carefully and at the same time not get blood on my suit. I did not care about the suit but what had happened to the poor girl was a bad enough omen without taking evidence of it into the first row of seats at the bull ring. (TS 173-174)

Hemingway instantly reacts by running toward the girl and carrying her away from the road.

While recognizing the nobility of this action, his subsequent thoughts complicate our opinion of him. He worries about getting blood on his suit and admits to being more concerned about “taking evidence of it into...the bull ring” than her condition. As he concludes the story, he contemplates why he acted the way he did:

We found a car finally and she got off to the dressing station in good hands. We went over to find out guests at the restaurant by the river. I felt very bad about the girl being hurt on the day of the fiesta and about her grey, dusty, childish face. I was worried about the possibility of a cranial fracture and I was ashamed that I had thought in all the time that I had carried her not only of her but not to be blood soaked. Then I knew it was a correct reflex under the circumstances and I prayed for the girl and for Antonio and we left the restaurant and drove to the ring. (TS 174)

Hemingway realizes his self-centeredness and is “ashamed that I had thought in all the time that I had carried her not only of her but not to be blood soaked.” In the end, he feels that his desire not to introduce bad luck into the bullring justifies his actions. After a prayer, he leaves the incident behind him. This passage illustrates Hemingway’s character – his heroism along with his egoism – but more importantly it shows Hemingway as self-aware, even unsure of himself.

Hemingway was prone to exaggeration. As a teenager, he embellished the story of his wounding in World War I to include his rescue of another soldier when, in fact, he didn’t learn what had happened to him until the day after his injury took place (Mellow, Biography 61). But he doesn’t appear to have exaggerated his account of the Vespa accident to make himself into a hero. Rather, in this passage we see the actual account of the girl’s accident and his response.
Unguarded and unedited, Hemingway writes the typescript without conforming to his audience’s expectations, providing us with a glimpse of his real self.

III. Finding his place in Spain

Both the typescript and published versions of *The Dangerous Summer* are journalistic in their adherence to reality, reporting what actually happened. As much as Hemingway felt the story would have benefitted from one of the matador’s deaths, he refrained from altering the events that transpired. The writer Edward Stanton agrees that one of their deaths would have improved the book: “...the subject lacked the dignity required by the tragic vision that informed his previous work on Spain. Only the death of Ordóñez or Dominguín in the bullring might have given Hemingway a suitably elevated subject” (Stanton 201). A death could have made the story tragic, yet transcendent. Instead, Hemingway told Hotchner that the book tells of the “gradual destruction of one person by another with all the things that led up to it and made it” (Meyers, *Biography* 520), making the book a tragic tale of defeat.

But in other ways, the text is not journalistic. Hemingway’s attachment to Ordóñez eliminates the impartiality associated with reporting, and the unbroken narrative – the typescript contains no chapter divisions – gives the text a feeling of spontaneity, as if Hemingway wrote it as a stream of consciousness. Hemingway includes experiences that stretch beyond the scope of the rivalry, such as the motor accident described earlier, giving us a sense of the rhythm of daily life during a bullfighting season. These anecdotes describing matadors, places from his past and encounters with people on the road contribute to the typescript reading like a personal journal rather than a piece of professional journalism. Hemingway includes the context surrounding the
bullfighting in *The Dangerous Summer*, as he did in *The Sun Also Rises*, but he concentrates upon the matador’s, rather than the tourist’s, experience.

For the most part, the digressions do not advance the plot. In one instance, Hemingway himself remarks that a particular bullfight “is not worth writing about” (TS 317) and then goes on to describe the day in detail. He may have intended to omit the corrida later, but the reluctance he showed when asked to delete passages for LIFE magazine suggests otherwise. Devoted to presenting the summer and fall of 1959 in their entirety, he resisted cutting any part of it. Also, considering his struggles with writing and editing in the late 1950s, he may have chosen to ignore his own editorial comments. Unsure of himself, he probably had difficulty distinguishing events that advanced the story of the matadors from events that did not. As his confidence deteriorated, he began to doubt the quality of his work. Though he once wrote in a letter to L.H. Brague Jr., an editor at Scribners, that writing "has never gotten any easier to do and you can't expect it to if you keep trying for something better than you can do." (Selected Letters 893), he had never had such profound difficulties expressing himself as he did at the time he wrote *The Dangerous Summer*.

Michael Pietsch judged that the digressions would cause readers to lose interest: “In editing the manuscript I pulled out the passages that might have required a bit of patience on the reader’s part, in order to highlight the parts of the manuscript that were excellent” (qtd. in Weber 119). In accordance with Pietsch’s comment, Stanton calls the typescript of *The Dangerous Summer* “undisciplined” (200), because of the repetitiveness of the numerous bullfighting descriptions. However, while Pietsch’s omissions do concentrate the story upon the rivalry, the focus comes at the cost of learning about Hemingway’s day-to-day experiences and opinions of
bullfighters besides Ordóñez and Dominguín.\textsuperscript{16} The author Ronald Weber agrees with Pietsch that Scribner’s version of the book reads more smoothly than LIFE’s version or the typescript, but nevertheless laments the loss of certain passages that provided “rich, narrative-slowing asides” (Weber 120).

Some of these omitted passages include breathtaking descriptions of the countryside (Meyers, “Presence of Grace” 56), bullfights and even humorous anecdotes, such as the following excerpt. As Hemingway gets into the car with Ordóñez after a bullfight, a reporter asks if he may ride with them to their next \textit{corrida} and interview them along the way. Hemingway declines, but the reporter was not to be deterred from getting a story:

To discourage one reporter who wanted to drive with us to Paris I told him where we were really going was Le Mont St. Michel and various Normandy battle fields and we could not take anyone with us because Mary sometimes became irascible at reporters. He understood about this finally and after we had left Paris, to which we had proceeded directly, Mario found in a newspaper the two full pages this reporter wrote on his trip to Mont St. Michel with us complete with everything I said to him and everything he said to me on the imaginary journey. (TS 49)

The editors probably cut this anecdote because it does not pertain to the rivalry. But from this excerpt, we learn of Hemingway’s celebrity status in Europe and, in the story’s conclusion, we see a glimpse of his sense of humor that is not often visible in his work:

His conversation was much more scintillating than mine but he gave me some very good lines that he must have been saving for years and I met a girl who was working as a manicurist in a hair dressing establishment who took out a clipping from her purse and read to me a political statement attributed to me by this reporter. It had, she said, helped to guide her life politically and she said she would always be grateful to me and

\textsuperscript{16} In a particularly beautiful passage describing the work of a young matador, Mondeño, Hemingway writes: “But I can never forget Mondeño fighting erect and slow and solemn as though he were sleepwalking in a world where there was only himself and the bull and the great unknown country that they both might enter” (TS 368). Hemingway made a point of watching Mondeño perform and he wrote that he “interested me more than any other new matador I had seen in years” (TS 628). This information could have illustrated Hemingway’s rejuvenated passion for the bullfight, but Pietsch eliminated most of Hemingway’s comments about Mondeño from Scribner’s version.
remembered me in her prayers. So one must feel gratitude if not trust in the French press. The article was illustrated by scenes of the car being loaded at Le Havre. The reporter, Mario, Mary and I were certainly present in the pictures. But we had never seen him after the loading. (TS 49-50)

Hemingway had a wide readership in Europe as well as America and his books gained popularity after World War II (Baker 68). Following the publication of The Sun Also Rises, the annual Festival de San Fermín in Pamplona attracted thousands more tourists than it had in the 1920s and 1930s. When Hemingway traveled to Pamplona in the 1950s, he commented on how it had grown: “It is all there as it always was except for forty thousand tourists have been added. There were not twenty tourists when I first went there nearly four decades ago. Now on some days they say there are close to a hundred thousand in the town” (Scribner 136; TS 286). Largely because of him, Pamplona evolved into a tourist destination. To acknowledge his impact on the city, Pamplona erected a statue of Hemingway in July 1968 that honored his love of the city, the festival and the fame he brought them (“Hemingway and Pamplona”).

Nostalgic for the Pamplona of his memories, Hemingway was not pleased with the abundant tourists: “...the more people that think it is terrible, brutal degrading relic of etc. the better” (qtd. in Kinnamon 46). Hemingway made a point of visiting other sites from his past, Spanish Civil War battlefields and the countryside that inspired scenes in The Sun Also Rises, to see for himself whether the modern sites differed from his memory of them. While driving through regions he had described in The Sun Also Rises, he expresses relief at “finding the country unspoiled” (Scribner 139; TS 292). He has a similar reaction when driving through places he remembered from the Civil War: “...it helped a little, as always, to purge some things that happen on the earth to see how little difference it has made to the dry hills that once were all important to you” (Scribner 119; TS 249). The hills’ constancy consoles him. Remembering that he often felt anxious that time was running short, witnessing the effect of time’s passage on
a landscape could have reminded him that he, too, had aged. The second use of “it” in the passage (“...how little difference it has made to the dry hills...”) could indicate either war or time’s passage. In either interpretation, the land does not retain the scars of battle as vividly as his memory.

As he and his companions drove through the countryside, he recorded the Spanish scenery. To Hemingway, it was a travesty to drive through the country without taking the opportunity to admire the land, which may partly explain his fondness for road trips: “…it was wicked to cross such beautiful country as though you were on a train, passing through towns you should have spent a day in, or a week, without stopping, unrolling the country that you might never see again as though it were a film instead of the place you really loved” (TS 615). By driving through Spain, he came to know the country and people personally. Direct experience provided the basis of his knowledge of the country, granting authenticity to his works that take place there.

Viewing the country also brought him closer to renowned Spanish artists. Just as he saw Goya’s art in the people’s faces during the 1923 Festival de San Fermin (Hemingway, Selected Letters 88), the land reminds him of a painting: “…The river was green, narrow and deep. Trees grew along its banks and weeds swung in the current...Aranjuez was quiet in the early chilly spring and the restaurant was like a painting by Sisley of a place by the Seine beyond Bas-Meudon” (TS 98). While in Spain, he felt connected to his own creativity as well as other artistic mediums. We have seen how he identified with bullfighting, a performance art, while in Spain. Here, in the reference to the Impressionist painter Alfred Sisley (1839-1899), we see that he also connected with visual art. He admired Cézanne and Goya and drew inspiration from their work. As a young man in Paris, Hemingway enjoyed visiting the Musée de Luxembourg to view
Cézanne’s paintings. The biographer James Mellow notes that in a deleted section of “Big Two-Hearted River,” Nick Adams says that “He wanted to write like Cézanne painted” (Mellow, Biography 150). Hemingway said he aspired to this goal as well. Similarly, one of his favorite places in Spain was the Museo Nacional del Prado, the country’s foremost art museum in Madrid. According to Castillo-Puche, Hemingway would make directly for the gallery containing Goya’s paintings:

As Ernesto strode along that wooden floor and stood enraptured before one canvas after another, he was as beside himself with joy as on those afternoons when he sat in a front-row seat watching top-flight matadors in action. Here in the Prado, too, he couldn’t have been happier, though it was a different sort of happiness...Ernesto called Goya his “señor padre”...He would stand there very quietly, as though intoxicated by this world of Goya’s, this Spanish world so close to his heart. (Castillo-Puche 279)

Hemingway found inspiration in the vibrancy of Goya’s paintings and his ability to bring people and the bullfight to life, a feat Hemingway also strove to accomplish. According to the scholar Keneth Kinnamon, Goya epitomized Hemingway’s approach to art in which the artist’s “appetite for experience” offers him the material he needs to create his work (55). Both artists drew from their lives for subject matter and their work profits from their having participated in the events they describe or illustrate. For Hemingway, developing a strong understanding of bullfighting by experiencing the matador’s daily life was essential for writing anything of value about it.

Over the years, Hemingway developed a knowledge of bullfighting that was superior to that of other Americans and even some Spaniards. Hemingway’s status as an aficionado became a crucial part of his identity. In a scene between him and Ordóñez, we see Hemingway’s wish to distinguish himself from the average tourist:

One time Antonio said to me, “Ernesto, how many people in the public in the Madrid ring do you think know and understand what they are seeing and what we are trying to do?”
“What’s the capacity of the ring?”
“Twenty three thousand,” he said.
“Maybe a hundred and fifty.”
“Make it fifteen,” he said. “Twelve if you don’t count you and me.”
“Do you think we know?”
“Yes,” he said. “We know.”

(TS 122-123)

Hemingway wanted the distinction of being among the select few aficionados. If indeed there were only fifteen people who “know and understand” in the ring out of 23,000, that would place Hemingway among the top 0.06% of spectators. Ordóñez’s incorrect addition aside, we still see that Ordóñez considers Hemingway among an elite group of spectators and as his equal in bullfighting knowledge. Hemingway also sought to distance himself from the spectators who “make a cult of bullfighting” and are “matador worshippers” (Scribner 119; TS 246), not seeming to notice that others might interpret his affection for Ordóñez as the very type of reverence he criticized.

Hemingway was confident that the Spanish people accepted him as one of their own. When he traveled to Spain in 1956, he was at home there, as we see in a letter dated November 5th: “In spite of having been on the Republican side am considered a Spanish author who happened to be born in America” (Selected Letters 873). During the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway had supported the Republicans, who opposed the fascist government Franco represented and that he ruled until his death in 1975. Though Franco had banned the printing of For Whom the Bell Tolls in Spain, in which Hemingway voiced his support for the Republicans, it was common knowledge that Hemingway opposed the fascist government. It is surprising – and Hemingway certainly found it so – that he was able to move about freely in Spain while Franco still held power (Meyers, Biography 498).

Corroborating Hemingway’s feeling of acceptance, the Spanish political philosopher Salvador de Madariaga saw Hemingway as a part of Spain: “He was in Spain, inside Spain,
living her life” (Madariaga 18). Hemingway’s celebrity following *The Old Man and the Sea* helped him feel part of Spain – spectators would even applaud as he entered the plaza de toros (Meyers, *Biography* 520; Mellow 595) – and he welcomed the chance to adopt the country as his home. Kinnamon writes that Hemingway, unconsciously or consciously, embraced Spanish theories of tragedy, heroism and morality: “An account of the effects of his contacts with the Spanish environment and character on his work should clarify the crucial result of his expatriation – that it has involved, to a remarkable degree, alienation from American and assimilation of Spanish values” (45). Among the “Spanish values” Kinnamon may be thinking of, *pundonor*, the Spanish word for honor, stands out as one of the Spanish traits Hemingway most admired and frequently mentioned in his writing.

Hemingway’s reputation in Spain was not always as positive as his letter suggests. The scholar Jeffrey Herlihy-Mera writes: “...Spaniards at times ridiculed him for his pretensions of insider status with bullfighting circles and for what some perceived as his poor ability to speak Spanish” (Herlihy-Mera 84). Similarly, the writer A.L. Kennedy stated that he was a “foreigner trying too hard to be part of Spain” (Kennedy, *On Bullfighting* 36). Francisco Ynduráin, a literary critic, remarked that Hemingway’s knowledge of Spain did not delve deep enough. He argues that Hemingway’s works set in Spain only focus on death and display a limited knowledge of Spanish culture: “Outside of the bullfight, Hemingway has not seen, has not been interested in almost anything else, except for the people and the landscape. Do not expect him to

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17 His long-term residence outside the United States in France and Cuba stretches the traditional conception of an American novelist. Though he loved Spain “more than any other except my own” (Scribner 43; TS 1), he never traveled to Spain with the intention of establishing a permanent residence and he continued to identify America as “my own” country. After 1940, Hemingway primarily resided in Cuba, just outside of Havana. Only after Castro came to power did he and Mary buy a house one mile northwest of Ketchum, Idaho (Meyers, *Biography* 517). Hemingway left Cuba for the last time in July of 1960 (Meyers, *Biography* 519).
talk to you about our history, our art, way of thinking, or literature. His experience is voluntarily limited” (Ynduráin, qtd. in Twomey 60). Similarly, many Spanish critics were conflicted over *For Whom the Bell Tolls* since the novel did not fully represent the Spanish people’s struggles during the Spanish Civil War (Twomey 56). The Spanish writer Anteo Barea concluded that Hemingway’s misconceptions outweighed the book’s redeeming elements: “Reading *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, you will indeed come to understand some aspects of Spanish character and life, but you will misunderstand more, and more important ones at that” (198). Hemingway’s negative comments about the beloved Spanish bullfighter Manolete in *The Dangerous Summer* also damaged his image after LIFE’s publication of the work (Michener 15).

Hemingway lived both inside and outside Spanish culture, not unlike Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* whom the hotel owner, Montoya, first accepts as an aficionado then avoids when Jake’s friends’ act disrespectfully. Confident in his declaration of himself as a Spanish author, Hemingway may have been unaware that some people did not approve of him. It is clear, nonetheless, that Hemingway took great pride in his connection to Spain and still sought acceptance from its people and especially from Ordóñez.

**IV. Expanding upon his knowledge of the bullfight**

The extent of Hemingway’s involvement with bullfighting in 1959 suggests that, more than ever before, he wished to participate in the bullfight, even if he could only do so vicariously. During the four months he spent traveling with Ordóñez, he watched countless bullfights, spent almost all his time with bullfighters and subjected himself to grueling hours on the road. His willingness to live a matador’s life in all regards except for fighting bulls demonstrates his desire to belong to the bullfighting community. His numerous comparisons between the bullfight and
writing or war helped him to understand the matador’s perspective and feel included in the *cuadrilla*, as if he were a retired bullfighter. Being an *aficionado*, he already possessed an extensive technical knowledge of the bullfight. But while writing *The Dangerous Summer*, he immersed himself in the matador’s psychology, both on and off the sand, and through this intimate connection, discovered new insights into the matador’s character.

As he faces the bull, the matador occupies a different physical and mental space from the spectators. In the short story “The Capital of the World,” the cowardly matador complains that the audience who judges him for showing fear does not know the courage required to face a bull (Hemingway, *Short Stories* 33). The spectators in *The Dangerous Summer* also have difficulty sympathizing with the matador, but Hemingway is an exception. Because of his combat background, he felt that he could commiserate with bullfighters: “…bullfighters feel nothing in common with people who have never faced a bull and never been in danger of death from one. The gap is as great as the one between pilots and aircraft crews and ground staff personnel in war time” (TS 130-131). He had flown with the Royal Air Force during World War II (Meyers, *Biography* 413), but he never served as a pilot, so his comparison loses some strength. Nevertheless, he did have experience with war and, through this analogy, he separates himself from ordinary spectators by claiming to know how the matador feels as he stands, alone, in the ring.

Sensing the bullfighter’s solitude, Hemingway calls for solidarity among matadors: “Everyone in bullfighting helps everyone else in bullfighting in the ring. In spite of all rivalries and hatreds it is the closest brotherhood there is. Only bullfighters know the risks they run and what the bull can do with his horns to their bodies and their minds” (Scribner 141-2; TS 299). This insistence upon unity does not appear in his earlier work. The matadors in his short fiction
usually fight their own battles and resign themselves to a life of isolation. Hemingway’s need for acceptance in the 1950s likely contributed to the fervor with which he promoted solidarity in *The Dangerous Summer* and prompted his anger at the lack of support that Ordóñez received from other matadors upon his arrest: “There was a lot of talk by the matadors about solidarity but no solidarity appeared and certain matadors were only too happy that they could substitute” (TS 625). Rather than unite, each matador opted to fend for himself. The idea of solidarity among matadors parallels the brotherhood that connected Hemingway to other writers – a brotherhood that for Hemingway deteriorated in his later years. Witnessing Ordóñez’s peers take advantage of his misfortune, Hemingway may have been reminded of his own ailing health and feared that his friends would also desert him when he most needed them. When he wrote that solidarity transcends “all rivalries and hatreds,” he may have hoped for rather than believed in the statement’s truth.

Hemingway speaks of solidarity as if he did not doubt its existence and also encourages unity outside the bullfight. While preparing to begin a road trip, his driver makes the sign of the cross. Hemingway first reacts sarcastically, but then mimics the driver’s action: “I didn’t hire you to drive by miracles, I thought, nor exclusively by divine intervention...Then I thought again and remembering the women and children involved and the necessity for solidarity in this passing world I repeated his gesture” (Scribner 69; TS 95-96). He alters his behavior after recognizing that everyone shares in the experience of life and will, inevitably, pass on.

Hemingway was not a religious man despite having been raised in a Protestant household and converting to Catholicism just before his marriage to Pauline Pfeiffer (Mellow 323); his action does not signify his belief in God. Instead, it symbolizes his support for a fellow man, and belief in their common humanity.
Feeling the need for companionship in “this passing world,” Hemingway takes a moment in the typescript to modify his earlier portrayal of the matador’s solitude: “Everyone gave everyone confidence now and no one felt alone in anything. Antonio could not wait for the bull to come out and he was never alone with the bull because the bull was with him. He gave no feeling of being alone with him or isolated with him, nor that the bull was his enemy” (TS 507-8). The matador may still be isolated from the spectators, but he has “no feeling of being alone.” Unlike in “The Capital of the World,” Hemingway now offers an escape from perpetual solitude. The matador and bull form a bond that abolishes feelings of animosity. By proposing that the strength of mutual understanding can foster companionship even in a duel to the death, Hemingway no longer suggests that solitude is an unavoidable part of life. Still, the alleviation of loneliness is ephemeral. In a moment’s time, the bull will die and, possibly, the matador as well, making him alone once more.

The intensity of the rivalry between Ordóñez and Dominguín feels out of place after reading about solidarity’s importance. It is unclear whether Hemingway emphasized the matador’s competitiveness because LIFE commissioned him to describe a rivalry or whether he truly felt the matadors needed a rivalry in order to perfect their style. In either case, the idea of having one clear victor appealed to him. As Meyers observes, Hemingway relished “absolute victory” (Meyers, Biography 404). In his early fiction, he used the word “absolute” to describe the power of the bull: “He seemed like some great prehistoric animal, absolutely deadly and absolutely vicious” (Hemingway, “Bullfighting a Tragedy” 343). His use of “absolute” in The Dangerous Summer takes on a different meaning. Rather than using it as a superlative, it serves as a measure of the bullfight’s outcome. He favored the structure of mano a manos over traditional corridas since “the comparison could not be absolute” (Scribner 153; TS 336) when
three matadors competed. But even after Dominguín’s injury at Bilbao, it is difficult to compare the two matadors. Miriam Mandel notes that Ordóñez and Dominguín were too different to compare side by side: “...Ordóñez and Dominguín came from different backgrounds, had different personalities and styles, and were at different stages in their careers […] They were not childish competitors for a prize; they were separate, distinct, and distinguished figures del toreo” (Mandel 68). The numerous ways in which Ordóñez and Dominguín differed from one another made it impossible to objectively compare them. Consequently, the rivalry between Ordóñez and Dominguín could never have ended in an absolute victory as Hemingway envisioned.18

After Dominguín’s injury in the final mano a mano, Ordóñez had no immediate competitors: “Antonio was the only thing that could save bull fighting because he could do always what the others could only do sometimes and he could do it with real bulls with real horns. He needed a rival, though, a true rival, not a contrived or built up one, and this rival, Luis Miguel, had already been eliminated” (TS 550).19 He portrays Ordóñez as a hero who “could save bull fighting,” but needs a competitor to assist him. Ordóñez could have needed a rival for two reasons: either a rivalry would sell tickets and thereby save bullfighting monetarily, or a

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18 Hemingway also uses “absolute” when describing his goal of immortalizing Ordóñez in The Dangerous Summer: “...I wanted to come over and write the truth, the absolute truth, about his work and his place in bullfighting so there would be a permanent record; something that would last when we were both gone” (Scribner 82; TS 162-163). He wanted to uncover the “absolute truth” and create a “permanent record” that could stand up against time. Thus, he sought the same concrete success in his writing that he wished to find in the bullfight.

19 This passage echoes Hemingway’s words from The Sun Also Rises when he described Pedro Romero’s prowess over Belmonte: “His return from retirement had been spoiled by Romero. Romero did always, smoothly, calmly, and beautifully, what he, Belmonte, could only bring himself to do now sometimes” (219). Down to the detail of Belmonte, the older matador, coming out of retirement to fight Romero, Hemingway envisioned Ordóñez’s and Dominguín’s relationship more than 30 years earlier. A key difference is that Belmonte chooses not to compete against Romero since “it would lead only to a bad horn wound or death” (Sun 219). No rivalry exists between them.
rival would help Ordóñez continue to grow as an artist. Professional rivalry helped to motivate Hemingway to improve his own writing, so he may have concluded that a similar experience would benefit Ordóñez.

Hemingway was notoriously competitive; he sought to outperform deceased writers (Hemingway, “The Art of Fiction”) as well as his contemporary, William Faulkner (1897-1962). Sherwood Anderson, the author who helped Hemingway to publish his first book, once said of him: “There is the desire always to kill...he cannot bear the thought of any other men as Artists...[he] wants to occupy the entire field.” (Anderson qtd. in Brinnin 255). Hemingway disliked admitting that he received help from other writers, preferring to see his style and career as entirely his own (Mellow 245). Anderson’s comment that he “cannot bear the thought of any other men as Artists” alludes to Hemingway’s reluctance to acknowledge other writers’ influences on him.

Though Anderson spoke of Hemingway’s “desire always to kill” metaphorically, the association reminds us of the bullfight’s violence. With each bull the matador kills, he dominates the ring. Hemingway sought a similar outcome in his quest to destroy his competition. With regard to Faulkner, the writers’ rivalry began with the publication of Death in the Afternoon (1932), in which Hemingway included a couple of jabs at Faulkner’s style. They may never have met, and if they did meet it was not more than once, but they accosted one another frequently through their work (Fruscione, “Mano a mano” 70). The Dangerous Summer contains no mention of Faulkner, but the scholar Joseph Fruscione notes that Hemingway criticizes Dominguín in many of the same ways he once criticized Faulkner: “By and large, Hemingway criticized Faulkner and Dominguín in similar terms, using variants of the word “trick” and stressing that hew knew ‘how it [was] done’” (“Mano a mano” 76). Casting Ordóñez
as himself and Dominguín as Faulkner, Hemingway may have mapped his own rivalry onto the matadors’. Knowing that Faulkner pushed him to innovate (Fruscione, “Mano a mano” 71), he may have decided at the end of his life that rivalry is necessary if an artist wishes to improve his craft.

The Málaga feria, the second mano a mano, provides proof of the benefits that intense competition can have on an artist’s performance. Here, we see both matadors at the height of their talents. Even James Michener, who criticizes the work as a whole, says the chapter describing the Málaga bullfight “is one of the most evocative and exact summaries of a corrida ever penned. It is a masterpiece...” (Michener 17). The matadors’ clean technique and control of the muleta contribute to the splendor of their performance. However, their ability to educate the bull defines their skill: “Luis Miguel took him with slow, two-handed, low passes and began his education with the muleta. He stopped his trotting tendency and held him so he would charge from one place and then follow the cloth at the rhythm that he created for the bull” (Scribner 170-1; TS 379). In order to teach, the matador must understand bulls thoroughly. This knowledge allows him to form bulls, which the public might have rejected, into noble animals (TS 592). Even when Ordóñez draws a bull that will not charge, he chooses to shape him into a fighting bull rather than display the bull’s defects: “He made a perfect and an almost unbearably emotional faena with this bull, holding him controlled in the long, slow passes in any one of which, if he had hurried or been even a shade abrupt, the bull would have broken in his charge and left the cloth to gore him. This way of fighting is the most dangerous in the world and on this last bull he gave an entire course in how to do it” (Scribner 175; TS 389). Ordóñez “gave an entire course” to the bull and the public, showing both of them what a matador is capable of when he truly understands bulls. As the object that reflects the matador’s skill, the bull is akin to
a piece of stone ready for a sculptor to shape. For this reason, Hemingway frequently uses the word “invent” (Scribner 73; TS 107) during corridas to describe the act of crafting a bull.

The matadors in Hemingway’s early bullfighting work do not teach the bulls, probably because these fictional pieces portray idealized bullfights where the bulls do not lack courage or need significant correcting. However, we can trace the theme of education back to his first short stories. David Bromwich finds that education is embedded in Hemingway’s work:

“Hemingway’s books...mean to instruct. One can learn from reading them how to clean a fish; where a bad hunter is satisfied to have placed a shot; the parts of the stadium a matador will most avoid on a gusty day” (Bromwich 189-190). As Bromwich notes, Hemingway tended to teach readers about the subjects he knew well, such as fishing and hunting. Then, as his knowledge of the bullfight grew, he taught his readers about bullfighting. Like his protagonist Jake Barnes who introduces his friends to the bullfight, Hemingway set as a goal in the early 1950s to “show it to Mary and Gianfranco” (Scribner 46; TS 8), his wife and friend. For an individual to teach any subject, he or she must possess an extensive knowledge of it. Accordingly, an artist capable of educating others – either humans or bulls – represents an expert in his field and Hemingway sees this ability as the mark of a successful artist.

While his passion for teaching remained constant, his feelings about death changed considerably from the beginning to the end of his career. During the 1959 season, he and the matadors encountered death on an almost daily basis. As Hemingway and Hotchner watch Dominguin perform in Valencia, Hotchner asks:

“What’s he preoccupied about?”

“Death,” I said. It was all right to say it in English if you said it low. “Antonio carries it around for him in his pocket.” (Scribner 187; TS 421)
Always superstitious, Hemingway had rules about how one could talk about death during a bullfight, if one had to speak about it at all. Death, in this scene, represents a real threat that might appear if spoken of too loudly. It hung about the ring as the matadors fought and occupied Hemingway’s thoughts. On the occasion of his 60th birthday, he could think only of death’s approach: “…I might not have noticed I was sixty if Mary had not made it so important and so pleasant. But that party drove it in” (Scribner 140; TS 296). The “pleasant” nature of the party does not dull the sensation of being forced to accept, and celebrate, an unpleasant truth.

However, Hemingway chooses not to face or succumb to his fear and, in some instances, mocks death. His birthday had brought dying into the forefront of his thoughts and he uses the next several paragraphs to express his feelings on it through the lens of bullfighting. Shortly after his birthday, he and Antonio begin treating dying as inconsequential: “We had spoken about death without being morbid about it and I had told Antonio what I thought about it which is worthless since none of us knows anything about it. I could be sincerely disrespectful of it and sometimes impart this disrespect to others, but I was not dealing with it at this time” (Scribner 140; TS 297). His decision to simply “not [deal] with it” is steeped in denial. After the mano a manos conclude, he tries to convince himself that he does not fear death: “We had thrown the Gates of Fear tradition out of the window and the fear of death was just something you remembered from another time. It was remote now like a bad dream. It was there, of course, but it was remote and remembered like a grave illness that was gone” (TS 507). We can tell that its presence haunts him and that he thought about it often. He could not have believed that Ordóñez was invulnerable since he had seen him injured in Aranjuez, but he treats death lightly nonetheless. When perceived as “something you remembered from another time,” death feels remote and this distance probably helped him cope with his anxiety. Though neither he nor
Ordóñez “knows anything about it,” Hemingway has clear opinions, at least, on how one should die.

Killing, as Hemingway writes in *Death in the Afternoon*, puts a man “in rebellion against death” and gives him “pleasure in taking to himself one of the Godlike attributes; that of giving death” (233). From this passage, Bromwich concludes that killing, to an artist, heightens the artist’s sense of mortality whereas killing, to a man of action, convinces him of his hold on life:

> When...an artist chooses to give death, it confirms his sense that all life, apart from his work, is a drawn-out siege against the nada that it will not conquer anyway. On the other hand, the man of action will choose to give death more often, because his life embodies a less acceptable fate. Only by excluding things from life can he prove the solidity of the choice he represents; those exclusions lie about him in the dead forms of the beasts he has killed....” (196-7)

Bromwich’s characterization of artists and men of action explains Hemingway’s conflicting views of death. His knowledge that life “is a drawn-out siege” against dying motivated him to produce enduring work. Yet, by hunting or participating vicariously in the bullfight, he assured himself of his hold on life. Prior to the 1950s, Hemingway undoubtedly was rejuvenated during moments of danger or aggression. During World War II, he had written: “I think there is a renewal of immortality through storms, attacks...These things make a katharsis which...is an ennobling thing to those who are suited for them and have the luck so that they survive them” (Hemingway qtd. in Meyers, *Biography* 400-401). The matador’s psychology is similarly complicated. Killing bulls proves to the matador that he lives, but he also knows that a horn injury could take away his life at any moment. In his final years, Hemingway’s physical condition made it impossible for him to forget how much he had aged. As a result, he may have realized that he could not conquer death and shied away from activities that tempted it. While on safari in 1953, Hemingway preferred to observe the animals rather than hunt them (Zaphiro qtd. in Meyers, “Nubile savage” 1). Then while in Spain, he tells Ordóñez to practice moderation
when he frets over Ordóñez passing the bull too close to his body: “Give me a little bit too much...That’s just enough for me” (TS 543). Hemingway’s sudden distaste for threatening situations contrasts with his earlier eagerness to participate in war and hunting.

Hemingway admired, and perhaps envied, those who could face mortality on a daily basis with composure:

If his [Ordóñez’s] courage ever failed for the smallest fraction of a second the spell would be broken and he would be tossed or gored...This was Antonio’s regular appointment with death that we had to face each day. Any man can face death but to be committed to bring it as close as possible while performing certain classic movements and do this again and again and again and then deal it out yourself with a sword to an animal weighing half a ton which you love is more complicated than just facing death. It is facing your performance as a creative artist each day and your necessity to function as a skillful killer. (Scribner 141; TS 298-299)

Hemingway uses the word “we” when he speaks of facing death each day, although only Ordóñez had the “regular appointment with death.” As he watched bullfights from behind the barrera, he felt as if he were the matador on the sand. Consequently, he could not escape confronting man’s mortality each day even though, as a writer, his profession did not put him in danger of dying. Hemingway respected those who could create art while encountering the emotional and physical challenges of facing death. From his description of courage, we learn that the motivations associated with the matador’s killing of the bull extend far beyond aggressiveness.

The matador’s treatment of the bull represents one component of the bullfight’s integrity as an art form. This may seem ironic, since the bull is doomed to die from the moment he sets foot in the ring. But to bullfighting aficionados such as Hemingway, the bullfight offers the bull a chance to die honorably, as a contributor to a piece of art. Death, even in the context of the bullfight, is never defensible if it lacks a higher purpose. On one occasion, after a corrida in which the picadors injured the bull excessively, Hemingway wrote that the bulls “were murdered
by the pics” (Scribner 81; TS 160). He differentiates between killing recklessly and killing for a purpose. The bull deserves respect and the matador must treat him with honor, not killing him cruelly or artlessly. For this reason, he objected to a French newspaper article that glorified killing in the bullfight by calling it the “Agonie Spectaculaire”:

I’ve never defended killing anything I hope but only tried to state how and why it is done and by whom and where and what to and the pleasures and the sorrows that it brings and what sort of men engage in it and why. The art of fighting bulls is something else and its esthetics and its ethics are most complicated. It cannot exist without danger of death to the man and without death for the bull. But the Agonie Spectaculaire is a bad phrase and it stayed with me a long time when I read it the next afternoon. (TS 663)

For an author who wrote about war, hunting and blood sports, Hemingway’s hope to have “never defended killing anything” comes as a surprise. He does not mean that he objects to killing in any form. Rather, he doesn’t support killing cruelly and he differentiates between individuals who kill recklessly and those who kill for a purpose.

Hemingway did not understand what motivated the matador to kill until years after he became an aficionado. In vignette XII of In Our Time, the bullfighter Villalta’s hatred toward the bull suggests that he takes pleasure in killing (Hemingway, Short Stories 141). Hemingway wrote this piece in the early 1920s, when he still had much to learn about bullfighting, and, at the time, he may have believed that hatred was the foundation of the matador-bull relationship. In the 1950s, he recognized that the bullfight’s drama results from the suspense of impending death, but he chose not to focus on the matador’s or bull’s deaths as he did in his early fiction. He watched the bullfight for “the art of fighting bulls...and its esthetics and its ethics....” He concerned himself with understanding the mentality surrounding the bullfight rather than its violence. His attention to the motivations behind killing illustrates how the bullfight made him more sensitive to an animal’s manner of death, rather than hardening him as he expected. In
1923, he had come to the bullfight with the intention of observing violence, but he left it with insights into how a matador can treat a bull with respect and still perform his fatal art.

Through conversations with Ordóñez, Hemingway discovered that the matador loves the bull. It pained Ordóñez to use a trick, or truco, to kill: “Every other bull fighter in Spain used the truco every day if he could and Luis Miguel’s bull fighting was built on it or at least around it. But to Antonio it was a trick you did not play upon the animal you cared about nor upon the other animal, the public, who paid to see you do what you were born to do and could not live without doing” (TS 595-596). Ordóñez tries to care for the bull, teach him and sculpt him, but, in this instance, he had injured his wrist and might have been gored if he had not used the trick. Bullfighting represents the occupation Ordóñez was “born to do and could not live without doing,” much like Hemingway, who felt he could not live without writing. Respecting the bull, or the pen, translates into respect for the craft.

As he learned more about bullfighting, Hemingway came to understand the complexity behind the matador’s relationship to the bull. In the short story “The Undefeated,” one of his first pieces about the bullfight, the matador and bull briefly share a sense of partnership. The connection between the matador and bull grows in The Sun Also Rises, during the following conversation between Jake Barnes, Brett, and the matador, Pedro Romero. Romero begins the dialogue while Jake translates:

“The bulls are my best friends.”
I translated to Brett.
“You kill your friends?” she asked.
“Always,” he said in English, and laughed. “So they don’t kill me.” (Sun 189-190)

Far from hating the bulls, Romero admits that they are his “best friends.” The bull reciprocates his violence and Romero treats the bull as his equal. But Romero’s laugh betrays a lightheartedness about killing that is absent from The Dangerous Summer. Ordóñez’s feelings
toward the bull extend beyond partnership or friendship to love. Scribner’s edition alludes on occasion to this compassionate relationship, as when Ordóñez, after killing a bull, stands “before him with his hand raised, not in triumph but as though to say good-bye” (Scribner 205; TS 486-487), but the typescript reminds us of it frequently.

The following scene from *The Dangerous Summer*’s typescript closely imitates the scene between Brett and Romero in *The Sun Also Rises*, except that the matador, Ordóñez, now questions Hemingway:

> “You love the animals you kill?”
> ‘Of course,” I said.
> “Me too.”
> After a while he said, “You love them all?”
> “No.”
> “Me neither,” he said.

Only the great bull fighters really love bulls and recognize them as their partners in this most perishable art that takes a man with one kind of nobility and a beast with another to make it come true. (TS 438-439)

One characteristic of a great bullfighter is his love for the bull. Love elevates the bullfight beyond an encounter between a man and animal to a representation of fortitude and sacrifice. The matador’s and bull’s noble qualities, while distinct from one another, are complementary. Honor characterizes the matador’s nobility, as Hemingway wrote in *Death in the Afternoon*. He does not elaborate upon what qualities comprise the bull’s nobility, but we can surmise that it contains both physical strength and fearlessness. The matador’s and bull’s partnership adds to the tragedy of the bull’s death and complicates the matador’s feelings toward killing.

While the matador’s love makes it harder for him to kill, it also makes the bull’s death all the more necessary. Because the bull must die at someone’s hand as soon as he enters the ring, the matador wants him to have the most meaningful death possible. When the matador kills him
honorably, after shaping him into a noble animal, the bull dies having contributed to a work of art: “He seemed to want to kill the bull without disillusioning him and he set him up for killing with the last wonderful pass...I think he had never wanted to kill a bull less and he had never wanted more to kill him well” (TS 662-663). The word “disillusionment” brings to mind “The Capital of the World,” in which the narrator also mentions disillusionment at the moment of death. In “Capital of the World,” disillusionment refers to Paco’s belief that he could become a matador and avoid fear and isolation. In The Dangerous Summer, the bull mistakengly believes that he can escape the ring alive. We saw in “The Capital of the World” the pain associated with disillusionment, so when the bull dies with all his illusions, we may feel that the swift sword thrust at least allowed the bull to maintain its pride to the end. Because he cares for the bull, the matador facilitates a manner of dying that minimizes the bull’s mental pain.

In the typescript, we learn that the intensity of the matador’s love can take on such strength that it becomes sexualized:

All the greatest bull fighters know bull fighting is partly a sexual thing and that if you do not feel it you can’t do it truly. When a bull fighter, while he is fighting constantly, runs with women to kill his deadly loneliness or to make him sleep or to make him forget what he has to do the next day, or to prove to himself and others that he is a man, or simply because he wants the women, he takes out of himself and spends what he should carry to the bull and sooner or later he is bankrupt inside himself. (TS 590)

Hemingway believes the matador must avoid women in order to save himself for the bull. In spite of the pain that comes from killing the animals he loves each day or the loneliness he feels, he must refrain fromcourting women for the sake of his artistic performance. In For Whom the Bell Tolls, Robert Jordan’s and Maria’s love binds them into one identity, so that if Robert should die, Maria tells him that she “will be thee when thou are not there” (Bell 263). Similarly, in The Sun Also Rises, Romero and the bull “for just an instant...were one” (Sun 222) as Romero plunges in the sword. We might expect that Hemingway would continue using the same
symbolism in *The Dangerous Summer*, and he does, to an extent, as when he writes that Ordóñez and the bull “were one” (Scribner 204; TS 486) as “the blade slid in slowly high up between the very top of the shoulder blades” (Scribner 204; TS 486). But he chooses to focus on mental, more than physical, unity. Ordóñez and the bull unite by joining their consciousnesses. Manuel from “The Undefeated” achieved this psychological union briefly, but Ordóñez sustains it throughout the corrida. In the ring, Ordóñez can “think in their minds” (TS 138) and his work strengthens as he begins “working in the bull’s head” (Scribner 72; TS 104).\(^{20}\) The melding of matador and bull is not so complete that Ordóñez loses his identity. Ordóñez willingly enters the bull’s consciousness and integrates his thoughts with the bull’s; we do not see the bull imposing his thoughts upon Ordóñez. Yet, his success in the ring depends upon his having a comprehensive knowledge of the bull, which he acquires through putting himself in the bull’s position.

Hemingway also sexualized the writing process: “When you stop [writing for the day] you are as empty, and at the same time never empty but filling, as when you have made love to someone you love. Nothing can hurt you, nothing can happen, nothing means anything until the next day when you do it again” (Hemingway, “The Art of Fiction”). His passion for writing emulates the matador’s feelings for the bull and he shows his love by investing his entire being into his work. If he, as a writer, were to compromise his art by not putting all his energy into writing, he would become “bankrupt inside himself.” Hemingway lived to write. In spite of his adventurous exploits, his statement that “nothing means anything until the next day when you do it again” suggests that he felt the most alive when he was writing. He could not fathom a life

\(^{20}\) As Hemingway realizes Ordóñez’s ability to commune with the bull in this way, he too tries to understand the bull’s mentality. He writes during one bullfight that a half-bull was “tired inside himself” (TS 519). An observant spectator could describe the bull’s fatigue, but Hemingway takes it a step farther to imagine the lethargy the bull experiences internally.
where he could not compose. Increasingly during the 1950s, Hemingway found that he would be unable to exist without his lifeblood, writing.

\[ V. \quad \textit{An artist’s tragedy} \]

As Hemingway watched Dominguín struggle to prove himself during the summer season, he began to think of the different forms that tragedy takes in the bullfight. The bullfight’s tragedy still revolves around the death of the bull; the realization of the matador’s intense love for the bull makes its death all the more saddening. But there is a second type of tragedy that applies to the bullfight and art in general – the tragedy of an artist losing his artistic genius. Hemingway chronicles Dominguín’s gradual realization that he cannot regain the height of his capabilities and, at the same time, records the descent of his own career as a writer.

“Bitter lines around the mouth,” Hemingway writes, “are the first sign of defeat” (Scribner 139; TS 293). He looks toward the lines of Dominguín’s mouth as an indicator of his mental condition. Dominguín felt that he was Spain’s premier bullfighter and he did draw more people to the bullfights than Ordóñez (Scribner 65; TS 82, TS 637), but we see the frustration reflected in his face as Ordóñez surpasses him. In Zaragoza, during one of the summer’s first bullfights, Dominguín performs skillfully, but without inspiration. After he kills his bull, Hemingway describes his walk around the ring: “The crowd was for him and he made a round of the ring, thin-lipped and faintly smiling. It was a look we were to get to know very well that summer” (Scribner 115-116; TS 239). His face’s tautness shows that he realizes he has not performed as well as he could have in past years. As his lips become thinner and his smile disappears, the more tragic his character becomes.
In Valencia, during the first mano a mano, Dominguín performed beautifully with his first bull and after killing it, he walked around the ring “with his tight-lipped smile that was becoming sad lately” (Scribner 146; TS 306). His faint smile has taken on a cheerless tone. In the final bullfight described in Scribner’s edition, Luis Miguel performs a trick for the audience where he kneels before the bull. However, Ordóñez had “temporarily, educated them out of a taste for this sort of thing” (Scribner 196; TS 466) and the public does not respond as he had hoped. As Dominguín gets to his feet, “he looked tight-lipped and disillusioned” (Scribner 196; TS 467). All hints of a smile vanish and he now recognizes that Ordóñez has won over the crowd and most likely the series of mano a manos. Again, we see that “disillusionment” has appeared in The Dangerous Summer to characterize the pain of reality. By the end of the mano a manos, Dominguín, though an accomplished bullfighter, can no longer definitively state that he is the superior matador.

Reading about how Ordóñez’s victory affected Dominguín, we wonder whether Hemingway, like Dominguín, felt defeated when he could not create art of the caliber he expected of himself. On the final pages of the typescript, Hemingway writes:

While I was writing this I tried not to think about this year. But now it is coming back as bad as ever. At least I ought to go and check up how he’s doing with his liver. It will be all right though. He has a good doctor and he’ll follow George’s diet now. This other is done for better or for worse. The monument is made or not. I hope it is, and if it is not, that somebody else can make it on from where this stops. (TS 688)

He lacks confidence in his work and cannot tell whether he has succeeded in making a lasting piece of art. By hoping that “somebody else can make it on from where this stops,” he relinquishes control over the text and weakens his power as its creator. His acquiescence does not justify the rampant editing that took place in creating the published edition since its editors omitted so many of his insights and emotions that are crucial to understanding the full scope of
the work. Nevertheless, he found, like Dominguin, that his work did not meet his expectations. The process of writing *The Dangerous Summer* disillusioned Hemingway, exposing the seriousness of his condition to him and causing him grief. Yet, in the complete manuscript, however flawed it is, he did succeed in creating a lasting and enduring work that, while not as polished as his earlier pieces, captures and expresses his return to bullfighting and immortalizes his emotional response to the art.
Luis Miguel Dominguín, 1959 (Daley)

Antonio Ordóñez (left) and Dominguín (right) at a bullfight in Malaga, Spain in August, 1959 ("Dominguín Gored Second Time").
Hemingway with Antonio Ordóñez in the 1950s (Hardouin-Fugier 157).

Ernest Hemingway (white cap) and Mary Hemingway before the running of the bulls in Pamplona during the 1950s (Castillo-Puche 80).
The statue of Ernest Hemingway erected by the city of Pamplona. Hemingway’s wife, Mary, is pictured with Pamplona’s mayor and his wife at the statue’s unveiling (Castillo-Puche 296).

“La Seine au bas Meudon” by Alfred Sisley. Hemingway refers to this painting in the typescript of *The Dangerous Summer* (“Alfred Sisley”).
Bullfighting advertisements for a series of bullfights from 1957 in which Antonio Ordóñez and Luis Miguel Dominguín both participated (Reus).
Works Cited

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**Pictures**


