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The Gaze and the Iceberg: War Tourism in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929)

There was a fog in the square and when we came close to the front of the
cathedral [of Milan] it was very big and the stone was wet.

“Would you like to go in?”

“No,” Catherine said.

Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*

Tourism and the First World War make, at first sight, a paradoxical pair. To associate the unremitting, unheeded death of millions of people in a desolate landscape with notions of leisure time and pleasure sounds almost blasphemous, and yet tourism slips into both the memory and the experience of WWI in a variety of ways. Historical and cultural studies have mostly focused on the former, pointing out how the imposing apparatus of commemoration set up after the conflict – at a mass level and through a variety of different media (Winter 2) – triggered tourist practices from the very beginning of the war. The phenomenon was pivotal in Europe but took hold in the United States as well, although American war dead amounted to a small percentage of the losses in countries like France, Germany, and Great Britain (as the actual fighting of US troops lasted only for a few months before the armistice in 1918). While monuments remembering the soldiers' sacrifices were erected in myriad cities and smaller towns throughout the States, thousands of visitors were regularly mobilized to battlefields and graveyards in Europe. Pilgrimages to mourn the fallen buried in France and Belgium were conceived as tourist trips,

with the possibility of relying on guided tours and guidebooks during visits to the sites (Hulver).¹

Comparatively little scholarly attention has been given to the relationship between soldiers and tourism² – a relationship that was particularly tangible in the US, mainly due to the fact that since it was fought far away, on a global scale but mostly on the European continent, WWI held a taste of the exotic for civilians and especially for combatants. Mark Meigs notes that not only did American magazines constantly discuss war theaters, especially France, from a tourist point of view (91), but the soldiers themselves were also somehow tourists, who, “as they trained and fought ... became aware of the rich European culture around them” (71). To a significant extent, their attitude was the result of the conscious efforts made to teach them about the value of French history and culture, a common heritage that war propaganda depicted as being under attack by the ruthless German Kultur. Once at the front, moreover, soldiers were able to collect their own impressions of military life by means of portable cameras, which virtually transformed every member of the American Expeditionary Forces into a “war” tourist. Steven Trout maintains that doughboys (as the soldiers of the army and the navy were informally called) “mugged for one another’s cameras with bottles of wine or beer in hand, documented the girth of their fifty-pound backpacks, posed with French (or German) girls, captured blurry images of the Old-World scenery as it moved past their railcars, and, whenever possible, recorded the devastation of the Western Front” (53).³

In the domain of literature, the case for Europe as an endangered museum of refinement and civilization gained popularity especially among women writers. At times openly interventionist, the latter’s works were often characterized by an “anti-tourism” rhetoric: “real travelers,” the true custodians of the Old World’s heritage (namely France’s), were set in opposition to “mere tourists,” that is American citizens who only saw the outbreak of war as a hindrance to their vacation plans and routine (Cohen 186). The decision itself to enlist as volunteers, on the part of male characters, could be cast in terms of a journey of discovery. In Edith Wharton’s novella “The Marne: A Tale of War” (1918), the young protagonist, Troy Belknap, is an ardent Francophile whose repeated

summer trips through France culminate in his sneaking into the US army as the only active means of defending the culture and civilization of his beloved country. Claude Wheeler, the protagonist of Willa Cather's novel *One of Ours* (1922), finds his true vocation by enlisting as a volunteer officer in the American Expeditionary Forces. As in the case of Wharton's novella, his deeply felt experience of the landscape and culture of France – which the reader can appreciate by means of descriptive scenes interspersed in the narrative – make him a “true traveler,” and, at the same time, it morally shapes him as a courageous and dedicated soldier.

Years before setting out to write his World War I novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), Ernest Hemingway had vigorously distanced himself from the approach to war fiction of the “lady novelists,” as Wharton, Cather, and a handful of other women war writers were called in the male-dominated modernist circles.⁴ The problem, for him, was not so much that their works were sentimental or prone to the arguments of the propaganda (a frequent accusation). The real crux was that of authenticity. In an often-quoted letter to Edmund Wilson written right after the publication of Cather's *One of Ours*, Hemingway mocked the novel's conclusion, pointing out that the protagonist's heroic death in battle was clearly derived from D. H. Griffith's movie *The Birth of a Nation* (1915): as a “poor woman,” Cather “had to get her war experience somewhere” (*Selected Letters* 105). In *Green Hills of Africa*, he would again stress the fact that “seeing” the war is “irreplaceable” for a writer (55), a metonymic act signaling the testimony's physical proximity to the field of action; as argued by Margaret Higonnet, this position receives further validation by the event of the maiming and ultimately the death of the subject involved (192). If on the one hand the condition of eye-witnessing tends to exclude women (it is no surprise that only one woman, Charlotte Yonge, is admitted to the *Men at War* literary anthology Hemingway edited in 1942), on the other, it complies with the fundamental rule of all writing according to him: “only to tell honestly the things [one] ha[s] found true,” to narrate “from the writer's assimilated experience” even in the case of fiction (*Death in the Afternoon* 11, 153). As it happens with other writers of the Lost Generation, the image of war that emerges from such an alleged commitment to authenticity is a disillusioned one, doing away with forthright patriotism, a belief in

tradition and authority, and romantic notions of the military experience as a noble and heroic enterprise. Warfare in the industrial age is chaos, disorientation, and a perpetual source of ironic disenchantment.⁵

Such a changed vision of the conflict, and of writing's relationship to it, is strictly intertwined with the way in which war as tourism is represented, a dimension that so far has been overlooked in investigations of Hemingway's second novel.⁶ First of all, as a fictional work based on autobiographical elements, *A Farewell to Arms* draws from Hemingway's experience as a Red Cross volunteer in northern Italy; this experience is used to create a feeling of intimacy not only between the narrator and the object of narration, but also between the narrator and the reader. Whereas a canonical moment of war literature is the soldier's arrival at the front, Hemingway's novel confronts us with an *in-medias-res* beginning, in which the protagonist indirectly introduces himself as somebody who has dwelled near combat zones for some time. Later on, we will come to know that his name is Frederic Henry and he is an American sanitary officer attached to a unit of the Italian army, but at the outset of the novel, he is simply part of an unspecified collective entity with whom he appears to share a condition of waiting:

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising ...

The plain was rich with crops; there were many orchards of fruit trees and beyond the plain the mountains were brown and bare. There was fighting in the mountains and at night we could see the flashes from the artillery. In the dark it was like summer lightning, but the nights were cool and there was not the feeling of a storm coming. (3)

The protagonist is clearly an insider to the foreign scene he depicts, the Italian eastern front where the war between the Italian and the Austro-

Hungarian army is being fought. The mountain areas of Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (two of the theaters of military action that Hemingway appears to mix up in the above description) were (and still are) remote and alien to most of the novel's readers, especially if compared to the more familiar French towns and countryside that feature prominently in other U.S. war narratives. And yet, instead of providing his audience with some recognizable references that may help to orient them, Hemingway chooses to give spatial coordinates that are detailed and accurate and at the same time extremely generic. The aspect of the river and the plain, as well as the effects of the troops' passage on the trunks and leaves of the trees, are meticulously described, but the locations remained unnamed, explicitly indeterminate ("a house," "a village"). While at the center of the description there are the estranging effects of war on the surrounding nature (the leaves fall early, the lightning-like artillery explosions are not followed by a storm), what dominates in the two passages is the scopic function. Clearly not engaged in action, the protagonist and his companions exhibit a spectatorial attitude through which they visually consume the war scene ("we saw the troops marching along the road," "we could see the flashes from the artillery"), as if the latter were a show rich in effects ("In the dark it was like summer lightning").

Since its inception, therefore, *A Farewell to Arms* seems to have simultaneously evoked and denied a tourist dimension, a sort of hide-and-seek effect that to some extent may be compared, as we shall see, with Hemingway's celebrated "Iceberg Theory."⁷ The depicted scene is not so arranged as to be perceived as a tourist setting, through a "collection of signs" (Urry 3) that delineate the exotic place in terms of an easily identifiable, familiar reality (as it would have been the case of a typically "Old-World," postcard image of WWI devastation). The protagonist rather describes the foreign space as if he knew it by long acquaintance, from the "inside," and at the same time he identifies himself as a detached "sightseer," an attitude he often adopts throughout the narrative. At this early stage, as Jackson Benson argues in a classic study of the author, Frederic Henry is characterized by a general lack of awareness, a moral flaw that Benson metaphorically assimilates to Hemingway's negative vision of tourism: "He is, to use the epithet Hemingway applied to

such people [i.e., superficial and behaving like fraternity boys], a *tourist* through life and the war he has enlisted in" (82, my emphasis). If he is a tourist, however, Frederic Henry is a very special one. In the conceptual and rhetorical divide between "mere tourists" and "real travelers," which Jonathan Culler has long identified as "integral to [tourism] rather than outside it or beyond it" (156), the protagonist positions himself at the extreme edge of the second category. He has been for some time in Italy, speaks the language, and not only interacts but actually cohabits with native people. He has therefore penetrated into regions that are normally inaccessible to outsiders, that inner space which according to Dean MacCannell is the ideal destination of tourist travels; in other words, he is quite advanced in the search for "authenticity" that all tourists, as modern pilgrims, share (105-6).

MacCannell's understanding of tourism not only implies that people perceive their own lives as lacking the sense of reality they seek in the "real lives" of others, but also that their pursuit influences the structuring of tourist spaces into a transition from "front" to "back stage." However, although this quest for authenticity "is marked off in stages in the passage from front to back [and] movement from stage to stage corresponds to growing touristic understanding" (105), what tourists are shown is not the "institutional *back stage*," but rather a "staged back region," which MacCannell otherwise defines as "staged authenticity" (99). Interestingly enough, Hemingway's "Iceberg Theory" has something in common with MacCannell's notion of tourist authenticity. As Hemingway famously wrote in *Death in the Afternoon*, if a prose writer has enough knowledge of what he is writing about, "he may omit things that he knows," and if he is writing "truly enough," the reader "will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer stated them." Like the "real traveler" version of the tourist, who only deals with truly authentic experiences, the "real" writer – and the reader in turn – enjoys a sort of deep knowledge of things, of which just a very limited portion, however, is allowed to surface: "The dignity of movement of the ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water" (153-54). If transposed to the typical dynamics of a touristic apprehension of reality, the seven-eighths of the underwater iceberg may correspond to the "back stage," the real stake of the tourist journey that

in Hemingway's case is the concealed information of all genuine writing, what can only be hinted at and felt, but never fully revealed.

From a properly thematic point of view, tourism is evoked early on in *A Farewell to Arms*. In Book One, before Frederic Henry's wounding due to a shell explosion, action is very limited, as the protagonist suggests with reference to the postcards he sends home ("There was nothing to write about," [34]). The war's progress is slow, and at the appearance of the first snow, which brings the offensive to a halt, the officers of Henry's unit advise him to take a leave and travel around Italy (Chapter 2). The places they recommend are classic tourist destinations like Sicily, Rome, Naples, Amalfi, and Capri. When the unit's priest, with whom Henry has a special relationship despite the fact that he is constantly the butt of the officers' jokes, suggests that he should visit his family at the tiny village of Capracotta (in the Abruzzi), someone retorts that the young American should rather see "the centres of culture and civilization" (8). Significantly, the text omits a direct account of the protagonist's trip. In the following chapter, upon his return to the front, Henry briefly enumerates to his roommate Rinaldi the locations he has visited ("I went everywhere. Milan, Florence, Rome, Naples, Villa San Giovanni, Messina, Taormina – "), but declines to relate any of his "beautiful adventures" (11). Later on, during his conversation with the priest, the reader learns that Henry has failed to visit his friend's parents at Capracotta, although they were eagerly waiting for him. Refusing to illustrate the protagonist's journey through the country, Hemingway disregards all expectations about an "inside look" into the Italian landscape and culture, thus dispensing with a time-honored tradition of Anglo-American travel writing about Italy.⁸ The only report Henry gives to his disappointed priest friend concerns his replacement of the Abruzzi trip with an experience of heavy drinking and casual sex: "I had gone to no such place but to the smoke of cafés and nights where the room whirled ... nights in bed, drunk, when you knew that that was all there was, and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you ..." (12-3). In such a random search for pleasure and excitement, the visited places are so irrelevant that they remain unmentioned.

Hemingway, however, all but abandons the tourist track from that point forward. He rather makes it a pivotal aspect of the love affair between

Henry and the English nurse Catherine Barkley, a growing mutual attachment that contributes to change the way in which the former relates to the conflict. In the initial phase, Henry's attitude is callous and careless, but not explicitly adversarial. Although committed to performing his job successfully (as suggested by his attempt to help a sick soldier who nevertheless does not escape the brutal and ineffectual treatment of his superiors), he is emotionally and morally indifferent to both the war's ends and to his role in it, to the point of excluding the possibility of his own death ("Well, I knew I would not be killed. Not in this war. It did not have anything to do with me. It seemed no more dangerous to me myself than war in the movies," [34]). This self-absorption and sense of unreality prompts a series of appetitive fantasies about trips to places in Europe untouched by the war: "I wanted to go to Austria without war. I wanted to go to the Black Forest. I wanted to go the Hartz Mountains ... I could go to Spain if there was no war." As his thoughts turn to the upcoming rendezvous with Barkley, the tourist fantasy expands to envisage a stay in Milan, where he "would like to eat at the Cova and then walk down the via Manzoni in the hot evening and cross over and turn off along the canal and go to the hotel with Catherine Barkley" (34-5). The imagined leisure time of the two lovers in the city is rich in details, as Henry accurately lists the gestures they would perform once they have arrived at the hotel and then reached their room, where they would enjoy a night of erotic fulfillment in the hot Milan summer.

While these escapist visions nourish his increasing attraction to the recently met young woman, Henry is soon to have his first dramatic encounter with the reality of war. In chapter 9, after having occupied a dugout across the river from the enemy troops, as they are eating cheese and drinking wine, Henry and his fellow ambulance drivers are suddenly hit by an Austrian mortar shell. Although he is badly wounded on his knee, his life is safe, but Passini, another driver, dies a horrible death on the spot, despite his desperate attempt to help him. The event is a major shock for Henry, both at the physical and at the psychological level, marking what critics commonly regard as his ever more distinct awareness of the absurdity and pure destructive capacity of war (Benson 90-2; Phelan 54). Another powerful – and decisive – moment of recognition takes place much later, during the retreat of Caporetto in Book III. After being captured by

the military police who question officers and have started to execute them for treachery, he manages to break away and plunge into the river, floating down with the current. The episode strengthens Henry's negative view of the (Italian) military leadership as irrational, ineffective, and tyrannical, a view that throughout the narrative has often been upheld by soldiers of the lower ranks. Henry understands his desertion "as a personal strike against an irrational employing class," while "the failure of the front becomes a justification for leaving the war effort" (Hatten 90, 91). The American lieutenant is now ready to reunite with Barkley, who will further enforce the legitimacy of his desertion by championing their choice of the private over the public cause, what he famously names a "separate peace" (217).⁹

In the time span between Henry's wounding and return to the front, the tourist discourse consolidates, gaining a more realistic dimension. It is no accident that this period (chapters 18-23) corresponds to the protagonist's physical distance from the battlefields: after being transferred to the American hospital in Milan, he is joined by Catherine, and, as he convalesces, the couple enjoy plenty of leisure time in the city. Every night Henry returns to the hospital where Catherine works, but especially in the beginning, when he needs assistance, she accompanies him in a series of recreational activities that include carriage riding in the park, dining out in fancy restaurants like Biffi's or Gran[d'] Italia, people-watching in the galleria, and tasting selections of Italian wines: "We drank dry white Capri iced in a bucket; although we tried many of the other wines, fresa, barbera, and the sweet white wines" (101). The narrator even details the ingredients and look of the special sandwiches they buy at a "little place" near the galleria, "ham and lettuce sandwiches and anchovy sandwiches made of very tiny brown glazed rolls and only about as long as your finger. They were to eat in the night when we were hungry" (102). Later, when he undergoes rehabilitation therapy and spends more time by himself, Henry becomes a habitué of the typical life of the expatriate circles, going to the horse races at San Siro, reading magazines and engaging in conversation at the Anglo-American club, buying chocolates and drinking Martini at the Cova (an old patisserie located in the prestigious via Montenapoleone), and – last but not least – having his silhouette cut by a street artist. Although the whole Milan section reads like an expansive fulfillment of Henry's previous daydreaming, the proper actualization of his hotel fantasy takes

place – with some significant variations – right before his departure for the front, when the two lovers spend their last hours together in a luxury hotel near the train station (drinking Capri in their room).

The novel's stress on tourist-like situations and activities has something to do with the sense of impermanence typical of life during wartime, as suggested by the identification of the Milan hotel as a temporary home ("we felt very happy and in a little time the room felt like our own home," 138). Yet, evidently Hemingway is engaged in a larger cultural project: the definition of a space of cultural consumption that has little to share with more ordinary tourist experiences. If Milan appears in the guise of a connoisseur route, Henry and Barkley are *aficionados* rather than proper tourists. A category, that of *aficionados*, that Hemingway had already explored in *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), his previous novel about the postwar years focusing on a party of expatriates who move around seedy cafés in Paris, fishing trips in the Pyrenees, and *corridas* in Pamplona, constantly in search of a more "authentic" way to experience life.¹⁰ In his reading of *The Sun also Rises* as an "itinerary," a sort of pre-arranged trip, John Atherton has argued that "travel indications do not constitute in themselves descriptions of Paris; on the immediate level they evoke nothing in particular for the reader, at least if we exempt from the category of reader those who know the Rue du Cardinal Lemoine . . .;" however, although not proper descriptions of places, "these route markers provide the infrastructure that legitimizes the evocation of atmosphere" (202). Similarly, in the Milan section of *A Farewell to Arms* (and elsewhere), Hemingway makes his narrative hinge on a few markers – names of streets, cafés, restaurants, shops, hotels, etc. – that not only serve to evoke a particular atmosphere, but more properly work like the tip of the iceberg, the only expressible part of the wartime experience. Just as the text fails to disclose any "inner" spaces in conventional tourist terms (a telling example is Barkley's refusal to enter the Milan cathedral when Henry suggests the possibility of doing so in chapter 23), so the activities the protagonists carry out in and around the markers, however pleasurable, are characterized by reticence, stoicism, and a sense of ominous if manageable tragedy. Hemingway's redefinition of tourism as a practice performed by a few "cool" people, who know beforehand the right places to go and the right things to do, thus falls in line with his repression of the traditional war tale and its pre-established values of outward heroism, loyalty, and self-sacrifice.

The simultaneous resistance to and occupation of tourist spaces and experiences also affects the novel's vision of the cultural "other." A case in point is the portrayal of Rinaldi, Henry's closest friend, an effective example of Hemingway's depiction of both the success and the limits of intercultural communication. Although the two friends share some common ground – from interest in women to a critical view of war – the Italian surgeon officer appears as an exaggerated version of Henry, being on the one hand a hypersexualized and inveterate womanizer, on the other so cynical as to border on nihilism. In fact, the two characters embody very different models of masculinity. In the two extended conversations they engage in, one right after Henry's wounding in chapter 10 and the other after his return to the front in chapter 25, Rinaldi appears to overstep the boundaries of acceptable homosocial exchange, as if taking advantage of Henry's weakened physical condition (in both cases, the latter lies in bed). First, he expresses his loving feelings without inhibitions, constantly calling Henry by the affectionate nickname "baby" ("look, baby, this is your old tooth-brushing glass. I kept it all the time to remind me of you," [151]); furthermore, he repeatedly invites Henry to exchange kisses with him, he himself kissing his freshly-wounded friend more than once ("I felt his breath come toward me," [62]). Although their relationship is characterized by a high level of irony and playfulness, Henry never fails to back out of Rinaldi's display of affection, taking refuge in his clipped answers – while Rinaldi's lines are much longer – or explicitly resisting him ("I never kiss you. You're an ape," [151]). Being presumably perceived by Henry as "effeminate" or even "incipiently homosexual," "Rinaldi represents a threat to Henry's Anglo-Saxon notion of masculinity" (Hatten 88), a notion firmly grounded in the capacity to restrain the passions. But one might as well say that the less than virile Italian officer embodies a time-worn stereotype of the Anglo-Saxon tourist imagination and of its subtly imperialistic rhetoric, which "impos[ed] feminine characteristics on the Italian other" at least since the 19th century (Edwards 79).¹¹ The same tourist gaze is replicated elsewhere in the novel. Collecting signs based on preconceived expectations about national attitudes, it reappears when the narrator notices that "the Italians were full of manners" (117), or when Barkley makes fun of the Italian army.¹²

In the novel's last book, the covert reference to tourism reaches its climax. After Henry's desertion, since he is wanted by the Italian military

police, the two lovers decide to escape across the border. Their final destination is the mountain area of Montreux, in Switzerland, but first they reunite in Stresa, a well-known location on the Lago Maggiore which curiously they had discarded when planning, guidebook-style, a trip to take during Henry's convalescence ("We had planned to go to Pallanza on Lago Maggiore ... There are walks you can take and you can troll for trout in the lake. It would have been better than Stresa because there are fewer people at Pallanza," [128]). The tourist topic, which haunts the novel's last chapters, is introduced for the first time verbatim in chapter 37, when the Swiss authorities in Locarno question the couple, who, in order to avoid suspicion, declare that "[they] are tourists and want to do the winter sport" (249). That of the carefree vacationers is thus the last mask that Henry and Barkley wear, after setting up a whole series of "masquerades" throughout their relationship (Strychacz 92). The dark irony of the situation becomes more intense as they rent a room in a chalet in the mountains above Montreux, where for a few months they lead a clandestine existence waiting for their baby to be born. Despite their condition as fugitives and the fact that the war is still going on in the bordering nations, the protagonists, surrounded by the gorgeous scenery of the Swiss Alps, cannot help having a good time: they dine on the porch when the sun is warm, read books and magazines, take walks along the lake observing the local fauna, hike in the woods, and occasionally reach the nearby villages, where they taste traditional products like the *glühwein*, a "hot red wine with spices and lemon in it" (268).

The theme of the pleasure trip is so pervasive that it emerges symptomatically at the level of dialogue, for instance when Barkley expresses her desire to go to America and visit the Niagara Falls and the Golden Gate ("That's what I want to see," [262]). Here Barkley is playing another of her many roles, that of the average tourist (someone who is after "easy" markers as the above), for she and Henry are clearly practitioners of an elite type of vacationing. It is no coincidence that just as for the Milan section Hemingway drew from his own experience as he convalesced in the city, so the Swiss portion of the novel is based on the winter holiday that in January 1922 he and his first wife (Hadley Richardson) took in Chamby sur Montreux. The newly-married couple had retreated to Switzerland for

sledding and especially skiing, a sport which Hemingway – like Henry – was keen on learning (Lynn 156). Just like in the Milan chapters, this virtuoso version of tourism is not concerned with static snapshots – descriptive disclosures of the expected inner meaning of a place – but rather calls to mind a moving picture. The “feeling” of things rests on restrained accounts of performed actions and external descriptions of phenomena often based upon repetition with variation, as in the following passage:

When the sun was bright we ate lunch on the porch but the rest of the time we ate upstairs in a small room with plain wooden walls and a big stove in the corner. We bought books and magazines in town and a copy of “Hoyle” and learned many two-handed card games. The small room with the stove was our living-room. There were two comfortable chairs and a table for books and magazines and we played cards on the dining-table when it was cleared away. (258)

Rather than a single-shot still picture, the passage depicts a scene endowed with movement. Through the repeated mention of the “small room with a (big) stove,” the image of the interior space progressively expands to include new elements and thereby new perspectives. The place where the couple habitually eats lunch becomes a “living-room” that, thanks to the added detail of the “two comfortable chairs” and “table for books and magazines,” offers a fresh angle of vision at whose center is placed another activity they undertake (playing cards). As Zoe Trodd put it, “Hemingway’s prose, which he repeatedly described as an iceberg, is also a glacier waterfall, infused with movement by his multi-focal aesthetic ... [Hemingway] often uses repetition to slowly progress – re-representing an image or idea from a different angle” (15).

More markedly than the chapters set in Milan, moreover, the Swiss section is characterized by a sense of impending doom that renders the lovers’ idyll particularly excruciating. The war is even more remote now, as evidenced by the few references to its progress and by Henry’s declaration that he is “through with it” (265); yet it casts a heavier shadow on those who have survived it. Paradoxically, the tourist-like activities Henry and Barkley engage in become an aesthetic substitute for their fighting in war:

the carefully chosen undertakings, the seriousness, exactness, and calm concentration with which they are performed (and its counterpart at the level of style), are a sort of training to their final struggle with death in the guise of a fatal childbirth.¹³ Like boxing (at which, and it is no coincidence, Henry works hard while Barkley prepares for labor), and later bullfighting or safari hunting, vacationing may thus be counted as yet another form of “grace under pressure,” according to Hemingway’s famous definition of courage (*Selected Letters* 200).¹⁴

As this analysis has demonstrated, the tourist imagination is intertwined with the narratives of World War I, but it can serve very different ideological and rhetorical purposes. While in more traditional representations of the conflict being a “true traveler” – as opposed to a “mere tourist” – is a prerogative of the valiant soldier, in Hemingway’s “protest” novels the theme of tourism, although apparently denied, in fact reappears in a strongly idiosyncratic form, as part and parcel of the protagonists’ refusal to view war as a heroic enterprise undertaken for a just cause. Although it constantly collects tourist markers, *A Farewell to Arms* never turns them into descriptive pictures that unveil to the reader the inner significance of a place. Hemingway’s celebrated “Iceberg Theory,” which entrusts prose writing with the task of omitting the illustration of feeling, complies perfectly with his redefinition of tourism as a practice for connoisseurs striving to have their personal experience of “authenticity.” Resembling moving pictures rather than static photographs, the tourist-like activities featured in the novel first appear as mere evocations or fantasies, then assume a more realistic scope, to be eventually recast as a sort of full-blown vacation ironically taken amidst the tragedy of the conflict. The final portion of novel thus reinforces the idea that, for Hemingway, tourism could be yet another moral and especially aesthetic equivalent of the war he otherwise utterly rejects. Recounted through his dynamic and laconic prose, trips are rituals performed by initiates with the same serious awareness required by dangerous activities dealing with violence and death.

Right after the armistice and for about two decades, different narrative models competed to affirm the way in which the conflict had to be remembered. In many novels, magazine articles, monuments, and a variety of other written and visual records, the war was still associated with the

widely-shared values of military manliness, courage, and patriotism, while a cluster of literary works (namely, the ones by the Lost Generation of Modernists) advanced a dark and anguished vision of the conflict (Trout 1-10). After 1945 in particular, *A Farewell to Arms* has been on the winning side of the (inter)national battle of memory, but the reasons for its success should not only be attributed to its radically innovative representation of the themes of war and love. A role of considerable importance has certainly been played by Hemingway's depiction of tourist travel: an experience for the few that can reach the many, thanks to the generous use of anti-rhetorical markers, tips, and guidebook-style instructions which make Henry's (and Barkley's) routes both marketable and infinitely reproducible, on each of our personal maps.

Notes

¹ On the relationship between tourism and the memory of WWI, see Lloyd, Iles, Butler and Suntikul, Murphy. With reference to the US, see also Budreau and Trout. This essay expands a preliminary analysis I carried out in De Biasio.

² Buchanan (612) has recently commented on the general scarcity of studies on war-time soldiers and tourism, providing a useful bibliography of notable exceptions (among which, with reference to WWI, Meigs).

³ In 1914, Kodak marketed a hand-held pocket camera, the use of which was widespread among enlisted men, although military orders in the summer of 1918 restricted it to officers: "Seldom utilized, for obvious reasons, during combat, this portable form of memory technology provided recreation for soldiers during intervals of leisure" (Trout 53).

⁴ This long-lasting epithet seems to have been originally used by H. L. Mencken (12), then perpetuated by Cooperman, also in the variant of "belligerent women on the home front" (30, 31).

⁵ Hemingway's insistence on the importance of the "big wound" (Higonnet 192) and on the "jealousy" of writers who did not have a direct experience of war towards those who did (*Green Hills of Africa* 55), seems to corroborate Keith Gandall's thesis, which maintains that quintessential male American modernist novelists "were motivated, in their celebrated postwar literary works, not so much . . . by the experiences of the horrors of World War I but rather by their inability in fact to have those experiences" (5). Hemingway had tried to enlist in the army when he turned eighteen, but was rejected because

of poor vision in his left eye.

⁶ While the theme of travel and the representation of geographical space in *The Farewell to Arms* have often been analyzed (see Reynolds, Sinclair, Ammary, Godfrey), to my knowledge there is no specific study of tourism (and of its connection to war) in the novel. Hemingway's representation of tourist travel, on the other hand, has been discussed with reference to *The Sun Also Rises* (Atherton, Field, Ammary, Cagidemtrio) and "Hills Like White Elephants" (Pottle).

⁷ I wish to thank Carlo Martinez for discussing this analogy with me.

⁸ Italy as privileged destination for Anglo-American travelers/tourists (and its literary representation) has been the subject of a great number of studies; most recently, see Hom.

⁹ When Henry feels doubtful or insecure about his choice, Catherine Barkley often reassures him by ridiculing the Italian military. For instance, she criticizes the self-conceited "legitimate" war hero Ettore Moretti stating that "We have heroes too ... But usually, darling, they're much quieter" (103); later on, when he confesses he feels like a criminal because he has deserted from the army, she soothingly invites him to "be sensible. It's not deserting from the army. It's only the Italian army" (211), a distinction he welcomes with a laugh of relief.

¹⁰ Drawing a parallel between *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*, Michael Cirino notices that both protagonists are Americans that interact with natives and speak second languages; he concludes that Jack Barnes "establish[es] himself as an insider rather than a tourist" (46).

¹¹ The characterization of Rinaldi might owe something to the influential masculine model of the cinematographic star Rudolph Valentino: "As in the case of [Giuseppe] Mazzini, Valentino's seductive masculinity generated continual critiques of his supposed femininity, and by the twentieth century, Americans were beginning to view this linkage as somehow perverse, and associated with gender and sexual abnormality" (Baldassar and Gabaccia 9). The political side of this gender/national representation concerns the American discourse on Risorgimento Italy, in which a frequent opposition was drawn "between virile Americans and effeminate Italians ineligible for the republican citizenship enjoyed by and reserved for Americans" (Gemme 45).

¹² See note 8.

¹³ Hatten maintains that in the novel's conclusion "the ideal of masculine behavior is vindicated in its performance by Barkley" (97), while Henry's attitude, by comparison, would underline the limitations of his own masculinity.

¹⁴ The phrase was later given currency by Dorothy Parker's article on Ernest Hemingway, "The Artist's Reward" (1929), for *The New Yorker*.

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