

EXAMPLES OF DIRECT CARNIVALIZATION FROM HEMINGWAY

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Hemingway's long term preoccupation with the theme of Spanish corrida bears testimony to the writer's characteristic sensitivity to the carnival elements in modern culture. Although the relationship between the carnival and the corrida is a fact acknowledged by ethnographic research,¹ it is even more relevant for the present analysis that Hemingway himself clearly perceived the corrida as a vehicle of the carnival tradition. In his monograph on the bullfight lore, *Death in the afternoon*, the author repeatedly defies the common perception of the corrida as spectacle with rigid division into actors and spectators. In the same book, Hemingway aims at a redefinition of corrida which would emphasize the importance of spontaneous participation in this event, and which would encompass the peculiar interaction between the bullfight's onlookers and the action on the arena. The onlookers, argues the author, are actually in a position to influence the course of the bullfight, mainly by voicing their opinions of the matador's work; consequently, the dividing line between the spectators and the actors appears to be in this case relative. The idea of spontaneous participation gains even more importance in view of the fact that the corrida usually constitutes only an element of a much larger festival of untrammelled interaction among the participants. Fiesta, as it is commonly termed in Spanish, bears in its turn close resemblance to the carnival as can be evidenced by juxtaposing a passage from Hemingway's novel *The sun also rises* with Mikhail Bakhtin's definition of carnival:

The fiesta was really started. It kept up day and night for seven days. The dancing kept on, the drinking kept up, the noise went on. The things that happened could only have happened during a fiesta. Everything became quite unreal finally and it seemed as though nothing could have any consequences. It seemed out of place to think of consequences during the fiesta (Hemingway 1926: 159).

¹ See e.g. Arroyo 1967 in the references.

The carnival is a spectacle without foot-lights, in which there is no distinction between the actors and the onlookers. Everybody is an active participant here, everybody takes part in the action. The carnival is not watched, the carnival is not even played, the carnival is experienced. Life is governed then by the rules of the carnival and people live a carnival life.... For the duration of the carnival all rules, bans, and restrictions which order the ordinary non-carnival world are suspended.... All distances between men are abolished (Bachtin 1970: 188, translation mine).

As can be seen, the most conspicuous feature of the fiesta that the passage from Hemingway's novel brings up, i.e. the temporary suspension of ordinary rules and norms and their total inapplicability during the feast, also characterizes largely the carnival. Alike the carnival, the fiesta introduces an entirely different mode of human relations suspending all sorts of hierarchical divisions and thus enabling free familiarization among the participants.

Accordingly, in *The sun also rises* the group of main characters achieve unity with the world of fiesta quite irrespective of their social positions and the fact becomes conspicuous in the case of Brett Ashley's disregard of her aristocratic title.

The dancers did not want me to go out. Three of them were sitting on the high wine cask beside Brett, teaching her to drink out of the wine skins.... Somebody was teaching Bill a song. Singing it into his ear. Beating time on Bill's back (Hemingway 1926: 161).

The main heroes including the war veteran Jake Barnes, the fallen aristocrat Brett Ashley, the bankrupt and alcoholic Mike Campbell, and the man of letters Bill Corton constitute what may be called after Johan Huizinga "a community of players" (Huizinga 1985: 26), whose identity is determined by the types of their relationship with the overwhelming festival that goes on in Pamplona. In the negative sense, the same also holds true for Robert Cohn, formally another member of the community but actually an outsider, for whom the corrida is a mere "wonderful show" (Hemingway 1926: 172). It can be observed at this point that Huizinga's differentiation between true and false players, the latter only "seemingly observing the magic circle of play" (Huizinga 1985: 26, transl. mine), may be applied to Hemingway's novel, wherein there is a clear dividing line between the two categories of heroes. Thus, Cohn's insincere relation with the general festivity and his unreciprocated affection for Brett Ashley designate him to the role of a false player, which is openly denounced by the community of true players:

'Do you think you amount to something, Cohn? Do you think you belong here among us? People who are out to have a good time?' (Hemingway 1926: 183).

However straightforward, the denouncement does not relegate Cohn immediately outside the world of fiesta. "The people who are out to have a good

time", the true players, tolerate him as long as he does not shift to the role of a "spoil-sport", another Huizinga's term denoting a person who breaks the unity of the world of play and brings about the dissolution of the community of players (Huizinga 1985: 27). The weakness of Cohn's character renders such a shift in his role unlikely and guarantees his formal belonging to the group of carnivalers.

Although the seven day celebrations occupy not more than one third of the novel's action, it is self-evident that the mood of festivity and the free familiarization between the characters and the world is not demarcated by the temporal frames of the fiesta. Characteristically, the original title of the novel had been simply "Fiesta" until the writer replaced it by the citation from Ecclesiastes, perhaps in an effort to confer more dignity upon the theme of perennial flux of things, which the fiesta does celebrate in its own way. In *The sun also rises* there is little substantial difference between "before", "after", and "during" the fiesta as regards either the activities of the characters or the over-all conception of the fictional world. The community of players is actually set up at the beginning of the novel, and the union of the characters is induced by their similar mental characteristics rather than by their common purpose of going to Spain for the fiesta. The carnival atmosphere permeates the entire novel and it is just as strongly felt in the bohemian Paris as during the actual fiesta in Pamplona.

Characterizing further the carnival, Bakhtin emphasizes ambivalence as the fundamental concept which informs the specific carnival logic and which consists in a peculiar fusion of mutually exclusive opposites such as birth and death, wisdom and stupidity, elevation and degradation (Bachtin 1970: 193). An illustrative example of an analogous fusion is provided by a common carnival image of pregnant Death, which in a typical way binds together two antithetical elements producing an ambivalent whole. Analogically, Bill Gorton's estimation of the fiesta as "a wonderful nightmare" (Hemingway 1926: 232) appears to be a sample of the carnivalistic ambivalence discernible in the novel in more than one instance. The fiesta itself is a highly ambivalent phenomenon linking together a folk festival which sanctions drastic excesses in behavior, and a religious feast observed by "all the dignitaries, civil and religious" (p. 160); yet, what is even more relevant, the carnival ambivalence clearly underlies the structural organization of the novel. First of all, Jake Barnes' war wound which renders him impotent is perceived by the characters in a dual tragicomic perspective, as indicated by the following dialogue between Jake and Brett:

'Besides, what happened to me is supposed to be funny. I never think about it ... I laughed about it too, myself, once.' She wasn't looking at me. 'A friend of my brother's came home that way from Mons. It seemed like a hell of a joke.' (p. 26)

Furthermore, Barnes' impotence is counterbalanced in the novel by his repeatedly emphasized moral manhood as well as by his love relationship with Brett. The figure of Hero-Lover-Impotent is constantly confronted with the equally ambivalent character of Robert Cohn, a former boxing champion and a moral weakling. Hemingway's fiction seems to display a certain inclination towards carnival-like ambivalent characters e. g. the honest cheat from "The gambler, the nun and the radio", the noble prostitute from "The light of the world", or the modest anarchist from "The revolutionist". At times, Hemingway links his characters into pairs reflecting the sharp carnival contrast between the carnival King and the Fool, e. g. the hero and the coward in "The short happy life of Francis Macomber", or the sage and the innocent in "A clean well lighted place".

The sustained appearance of carnival traces in the works thematically unrelated to the carnival testifies to the claim that in a large part of his fiction Hemingway transposes the language of carnival into the language of literature. The very Hemingwayan dialectics of success and defeat may also be viewed as reminiscent of the alternation of elevations and degradations of bullfighters, the thing that Hemingway often brings up in *Death in the afternoon*. The type of carnivalization employed by Hemingway must be, however, clearly differentiated from the one discerned by Bakhtin in Dostoyevsky's novels. In the case of Hemingway's fiction, the impact of carnival categories should be viewed as direct, stemming from the writer's poignant sensitivity to the carnival elements in modern culture, to which his close association with the phenomena of *corrida* and *fiesta* bears testimony.

As a comprehensive process, carnivalization involves inasmuch the conception of characters as that of setting. Since the carnival carries along a characteristic handling of spatial relations, it is legitimate to inquire to what extent the model of artistic space in Hemingway succumbed to the over-all process of carnivalization.

The spatial characteristics of the carnival can be determined by a recourse to Huizinga's general study of play, whose distinctive features, according to the researcher, include spatial limitation and enclosure within a clearly demarcated territory (Huizinga 1985: 23). Spatial boundaries, then, isolate the play as qualitatively different from the sphere of ordinary life, and point to a definite disconnection between the terrains of play and not-play. Because the rules of play have a spatially limited validity, they do not threaten the stability of the ordinary exterior order. A slight modification of the above remarks is needed in the case of the carnival which, in fact, is not destined to occupy any enclosed terrain. The space of the carnival supersedes the ordinary space in much the same way as the introduction of the carnival rules suspends the operation of the ordinary ones. For the duration of the carnival the territory of not-play assumes the role of a peripheral outside.

It should also be observed that as a syncretic phenomenon comprising a number of play elements the carnival possesses a dynamism ready to cross any sort of spatial borders. This peculiar feature of the *fiesta* is clearly indicated in *The sun also rises*:

At noon of Sunday, 6th of July, the *fiesta* exploded. There is no other way to describe it (p. 157).

It is also characteristic that the "explosion" of the *fiesta* takes place in a square, the traditional center of the carnival.

Before the waiter brought the sherry the rocket that announced the *fiesta* went up in the square... People were coming into the square from all sides, and down the street we heard the pipes and the fifes and the drums coming (p. 158).

The centrality of the square epitomizes the common character of the feast and it should not be viewed as a spatial restriction. It is perhaps interesting to notice at this point that in the historical beginnings of the bullfight it was the town square that performed the function of the later arena (Defourneaux 1968: 113). Notwithstanding, for the carnival the square constitutes the focal point wherefrom the celebrations radiate to the ever enlarging circumference. The *fiesta* in *The sun also rises* presently moves beyond the area of the square and incorporates the adjacent space.

All the time rockets were going up. The café tables were all full now. The square was emptying of people and the crowd was filling the cafés (p. 159).

The progressive expansion of the *fiesta*, which tends to include the total space of the city, brings into focus the conspicuous carnival quality of spatial continuity. The unified carnival identity produced by the *fiesta* quickly assimilates the not-play elements within reach such as the groups of outsiders who become "absorbed" by the festival.

The *fiesta* was solid and unbroken, but the motor cars and tourist cars made little islands of onlookers. When the cars emptied, the onlookers were absorbed into the crowd. You did not see them again except as sport clothes, odd-looking at a table among the closely packed peasants in black smocks. The *fiesta* absorbed even the the Biarritz English so that you did not see them unless you passed close to a table (p. 213).

The inclusive character of the general feast entails a significant spatial corollary: the abolishment of the pre-carnival diversity and the imposition of the "solid and unbroken" festival identity relativize the notions of outside and inside undermining their traditional attachment to open and closed spatial forms. The *fiesta* carries along a specific sense of interiority which cancels out the geometrical divisions into outside and inside within its own territory. Indeed, the geometrical enclosures in *The sun also rises* guarantee no insulation from the all-pervading *fiesta*. The cafés and bars evidently take over the features of the carnival square so that the constant goings "in" and "out" of the characters within the festival terrain come to resemble movements

in a closed room. Ultimately, the fiesta becomes a mental category, a moral stance fostered by Hemingway's community of players and preached by them in the city of Pamplona. In view of this, it is self-evident that the fiesta's borders cannot be drawn along any geometrical lines though the integral inside of the fiesta seeks to be distinctly differentiated from the foreign and peripheral outside of not-play. Therefore, the sole basis whereupon the fiesta delineates the borders between outside and inside consists in the principle of identity and difference. In *The sun also rises* the demarcation is rendered dynamically as a progressive expansion of the territory of play, and a steady enlargement of the carnival's inside. The outcome of the expansion is represented symbolically towards the close of the novel by the narrator's concluding journey to the end of a railway line:

The Norte station in Madrid is the end of the line. All trains finish there. They don't go on any where (p. 251).

Finally, Jake Barnes reaches the very edge of the total space and the territory of play becomes identical with the world at large.

Naturally, the whole pattern of carnival expansion is presented in its complete form in *The sun also rises*, and it is hardly ever repeated by Hemingway though a drive towards spatial immensity, totality reappears in a number of his works. An example of a congenial conception of expanding space is provided by the well known short story "The snows of Kilimanjaro". The story's hero, the writer Harry, has been wounded during a safari and is now waiting with a gangrened leg for a rescue plane to take him out of the camp in the middle of an African plateau. Harry's forced immobilization confines the present action to the area of the camp, yet, the scene shifts continuously from the immediate camp to imaginary space evoked by Harry's bitter recollections. Bulgaria, Constantinople, Paris appear in kaleidoscopic variety providing a counterpoint to the stability of spatial relations in Harry's immediate surrounding. The story is significantly concluded by Harry's realistic dream in which the rescue plane comes at last, takes the hero aboard, and departs in the direction of the hospital in Arusha. Suddenly, the course of the plane alters:

Then they began to climb and they were going to the East it seemed, and then it darkened and they were in a storm, the rain so thick it seemed like flying through a waterfall, and then they were out and Compie turned his head and grinned and pointed and there, ahead, all he could see, as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro. And then he knew that there was where he was going (Hemingway 1953 : 76).

The passage seems to be a remarkably apt illustration of Gaston Bachelard's remark that "immensity is the movement of motionless man" (Bachelard 1970: 184). Harry's physical immobility is finally compensated by his imaginary

movement toward the vastness of Kilimanjaro, "as wide as all the world",² entailing infinite enlargement of the fictional scene.² Both in the story and in Hemingway's first novel, with its concluding symbolic end of a railway line, the model of artistic space betrays a natural inclination towards identification with the total space.

The pattern of expanding room does not exhaust the number of colloraries ensuing from the carnivalized conception of space. The latter story brings into focus a specific rendering of the in-out opposition bearing traces of the carnival impact. The camp where Harry is bitterly remembering episodes from his life is a typical sample of a territory whose differentiation as a form of interiority is a volitional act of the characters. It is no less important that the natural openness of the camp is clearly restricted: from his cot the hero can only see "a little pocket of the plain" (p. 59) so that the exterior plain comes to resemble a view from a window. As in Hemingway's first novel with its strong dichotomy of play and not-play, the categories of "in" and "out" remain principally mental, and as such they possess a dynamism which does not favor their absolute polarization but rather allows for a sort of mutual permeation. This peculiar osmosis of spatial categories is reflected on the structural level of Hemingway's fiction by the characteristic configuration of spatial entities. A certain insufficiency in the closing of space is so largely displayed by Hemingway's prose that it is perhaps pertinent in this case to speak of half-open space. The point can be illustrated by a brief discussion of Hemingway's handling of such an insulated territory as hospital. A hospital serves as the scene for "The gambler, the nun and the radio", a short story which attempts to penetrate the state of mind of a hospital patient Mr. Frazer. First of all, the hero's spatial enclosure is counterbalanced by his acute awareness of the outside; Mr. Frazer not only entertains himself for hours looking out of the hospital window, but he even recognizes some unique significance in the view from it:

If you stay long enough in a room with the view, whatever it is, acquires a great value, and becomes very important and you would not change it, not even by a different angle (Hemingway 1953 : 473).

Furthermore, the narration reveals a peculiar perception of the hospital clearly indicating its characteristic distinctness.

... Mr. Frazer was knocked out by the leaded base of the lamp hitting the top of his head. It seemed an antithesis of healing or whatever people were in the hospital for, and everyone thought it was very funny, as a joke on Mr. Frazer and on the doctor. Everything is much simpler in a hospital, including the jokes (p. 473).

² The foregoing interpretation focuses exclusively on the author's handling of spatial relations in the story and it does not attempt to invalidate the symbolic significance of the mentioned episode.

Such conspicuous qualities as inapplicability of normal standards or ambivalent comicality bring about almost immediate associations with the carnival. The relationship between the hospital and the carnival becomes evident in the further course of the story throughout which Hemingway strains to point out the commonness of the territory, its unrestricted accessibility. Analogically to the carnival square, the hospital of the story facilitates free contacts and encounters in total disregard of social hierarchies. Mr. Frazer finds himself at ease both in the company of a gun-wounded Mexican card player and conversing with a baseball loving nun. The foregoing links with the carnival square account for the ease with which the hospital finally succumbs to a transformation into a territory of a minor fiesta.

That night the Mexicans played the accordion and other instruments in the ward and it was cheerful and the noise of the inhalations and exhalations of the accordion, and of the bells, the traps, and the drum came down the corridor (p. 484).

The fact that the Mexican guests bringing loud music and rough behavior into the hospital have been ordered to visit the wounded gambler by the police, and that they actually are friends of the gambler's enemy still adds to the carnival atmosphere of the story. However self-imposing the parallels with Hemingway's first novel are, it must be noted that the story does not reflect the novel's clear-cut dichotomy of play and not-play territories. There is no possibility of simple identification of the hospital with the play terrain since in the story the very distinction between play and not-play is blurred and indefinite; it is the outside which encroaches upon the hospital through the agency of the Mexican visitors; yet, it is the hospital, where "everything is much simpler", that readily adapts to the carnival-like feast. Therefore, the mentioned hospital's kinship with the carnival square must be seen primarily as consisting in the identity of function. In this respect, Mr. Frazer's hospital belongs to a whole class of places for which Hemingway's fiction displays a strong preference, e. g. cafés, bars, inns, waiting rooms, train compartments, all marked by the performance of the carnival square function.

A discussion of space in Hemingway cannot overlook the characteristically Hemingwayan "good place", a notion closely related to the Hemingway code, which in turn has been comprehensively explicated in Hemingway criticism. An early formulation of the code can be found already in *The sun also rises*, wherein the narrator thus defines the mastery of a bullfighter: "the holding of his purity of line through the maximum exposure" (p. 225). In view of the whole bulk of Hemingway's fiction the statement may be regarded as pertaining to the hero's code of conduct; it is the persistent concern of the Hemingway hero to hold his "purity of line" in extreme situations of trial. "Maximum exposure" naturally precludes the hero's sustained attachment to any particular territory; consequently, the "good place" in Heming-

way may only take the shape of a temporary haven, of a spatial representation of the code. An example of such a representation is to be found in the much discussed short story "A clean well lighted place". For the present purpose it is enough to recall that in the story two waiters are discussing an old man, who as a rule stays in the café till the closing time, and that both the older waiter and the old man attribute a unique significance to the café, clearly differentiating it from ordinary drinking places. Towards the close of the story the café comes to assume chapel-like qualities; when the older waiter explains his own reluctance to leave in terms of his metaphysical fear of nothingness, the café becomes a spatial enclave in the midst of existential void. The moment the waiter leaves the café he himself becomes, what Gaston Bachelard names poetically, "a being bordered by nothingness" (Bachelard 1970: 215). It yet merits emphasis that the café's deep interiorization is entirely mental, and that its qualitative insulation from the outside is not reflected by its spatial configuration. It is significant that all the characters in the story are located at the edges of the café's territory: the two waiters are sitting near the door and the old man on the terrace. The relations to the outside are even more explicitly brought out by the waiter's observing of the adjacent street.

A girl and a soldier went by in the street. The street light shone on the brass number on his collar (Hemingway 1953 : 379).

The ironic location of a chapel-like enclave in a café, which still shares its commonness with the carnival square, results in its characteristic half-open spatial configuration. The carnival square function does not allow for a complete closure of spatial entities so that their differentiation as forms of interiority can hardly be carried out otherwise than on a mental basis. In the mentioned stories the in-out distinction is drawn according to the principle of identity and difference, and it is scarcely justified by the actual configuration of space. In the latter story, for instance, the café's internalization is founded on such elusive qualities as cleanness and well-lightedness.

Perhaps the most explicit example of a half-open intersection between natural openness and volitional internalization is provided by the story "The big two-hearted river", a detailed account of a war veteran's fishing trip to the country of his youth. Having reached the river, the hero most literally shapes the surrounding space by levelling the ground and pitching his tent. The shaping entails a spatial discontinuity of the area: the homogeneous open space of nature is broken by the hero's sense of interiority imposed on the area of his camp. The "good place" also incorporates the immediate vicinity of the camp: the meadow and the river, where the hero fishes and which constitutes the real edge of the interior area. Beyond the river extends the swamp, the distinct outside, of which the hero is vaguely apprehensive.

The juxtaposition of two spatial categories within a single geometrically open territory well illustrates the dynamic character of spatial configurations in Hemingway. The final statement of the story indicates significantly that the exterior swamp also holds some allurement for the hero: "There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp" (Hemingway 1953: 232). Ultimately, the story's polarization between "in" and "out" appears to be a precarious balance of mental categories. The story also proves effectively that the hero's immobilization in an intimate space, being contrary to the nature of the code, is not possible. Movement, "maximum exposure", once again turns to be the only mode of fulfilment of the Hemingway hero's search for intimacy represented in spatial terms as his constant going beyond all the good places, as an unceasing penetration of the looming outside.

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