

BULLS AND BULLFIGHTING IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH FROM 1920-36: O'BRIEN'S *MARY LAVELLE* AND HEMINGWAY'S *FIESTA*

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This work deals with the symbolism two foreign writers, who came to Spain looking for some kind of liberation, saw in bullfighting. Both of them were particularly interested in the figure of the bull as a victim of a tragedy. That is what made Kate O'Brien and Ernest Hemingway portray their main characters in Mary Lavelle and in Fiesta as symbolic bulls in their dramas of passion. The eroticism involved in bullfighting also has its equivalent in the dramas of both novels. In trying to get to know Spain as "la piel de toro", they made their characters take part in this peculiar and characteristic ritual.

I

Laín Entralgo, an important contemporary essayist on bullfighting, once described it by saying that **"En su esencia el toreo es un encuentro entre el hombre y el toro bajo forma de lidia, en el cual hay desafío, juego, ostentación del poderío humano y muerte real (la del toro) y muerte posible (la del torero); por tanto drama."**¹ Entralgo explained in a few words what bullfighting is all about. However, the symbolism that lies behind it -represented by courage and strength- is exactly what foreign writers, who came to Spain before the Civil War, saw in it and wrote about. In trying to understand the country, its traditions and inconsistencies, its cruelties and beauties, they wrote about something typically Spanish, "la fiesta nacional", and gave different interpretations to it in their novels in connection with drama and passion. The challenge of the bullfighter in a bullring provided them with a wide range of symbols and interpretations of human behaviour when confronted with passion and spiritual death in a game of winning or losing.

The aesthetic value of deadly danger between the victim and his executioner, the bull and the bullfighter, made the Irish writer Kate O'Brien and the American Ernest Hemingway write about the same topic from different points of view, that of a woman

1.- Manuel Ríos Ruiz. *Aproximación a la tauromaquia*, (Madrid: Ediciones ISTMO, 1990), p. 103. Page references to this edition will be supplied in the text following the quote and the abbreviation AT.

and a man. Each one of them saw different attributes in the figure of the bull, epitomized in the victim, which could symbolically stand for a woman in O'Brien's ² *Mary Lavelle* and for a man in Hemingway's ³ *Fiesta*. This duality of the figure of the bull, between masculine and feminine values, is what makes of bullfighting a drama of passions between men and women where both can be victims.

In this sense O'Brien and Hemingway have much in common, although different ways of dealing with bullfighting. The complex parallelisms and symbolism, between men and women as victims and bulls and bullfighters in bullfighting, might best be illustrated by a comparative reading of their two novels.

II

Mary Lavelle, the main character in O'Brien's novel, is a young Irish girl who goes to see a bullfight for the first time while working as a governess in the Basque country. Her love and curiosity for Spain, her desire to get to know the Spanish character, is what makes her go to the bullring. Although extremely shocked at first, she feels sensations she had never known before but in the end she admits it is a beautiful lawless art that gave her the most shocking experience of her life. "She did not know how much an afternoon in the bullring had changed her" (*ML*, p. 128). Furthermore, the bullfight was "the gateway through which Spain had entered in and taken her" (*ML*, p. 128) and the same sort of pleasurable wound she would feel in her love affair with Juanito, the brother of her charges and a married man.

Mary undergoes an emotional change as far as bullfighting is concerned, though her relationship with Juanito will also make her change her ideas about what is sinful but cannot be helped because of passion. As Milagros, Juanito's youngest sister, once put it, bullfighting is "as symbolical and suggestive and heartrending as the greatest poetry and as brutal and shameless as the lowest human impulse. Nothing else can give you that in one moment" (p. 140). She sees all the beauty, horror and sin bullfighting has as well as all the pleasure and pain her sinful love affair with Juanito will bring her, but in both cases she cannot help feeling attracted by the danger and risk.

Although extremely frightened she goes to a bullring for the first time of her own will with Conlan, one of the "misses" she becomes most friendly with. She felt very ashamed of herself for being there and the idea of bullfighting did not appeal to her but increased her curiosity for Spain. Her decision to go there "was only shoddy bravado,

2.- Kate O'Brien, *Mary Lavelle*, (London: Virago Press, 1984) (Heinemann: 1936). The abbreviation *ML* will be used throughout the text. Page references will be supplied in the text following the quote.

3.- Ernest Hemingway, *Fiesta. The Sun Also Rises*, (London: Grafton Books, 1976) (Jonathan Cape: 1920). The abbreviation *F* will be used and page references will be supplied in the text following the quote.

but she felt all the terror of the brave as she made it" (*ML*, p. 108). Her going there is almost a challenge. At the bullring she sees different cruelties, dangers, helpless victims, death, courage and pain, but after all it becomes a beautiful "afternoon's thrill" (*ML*, p. 116). However, by the same token, she feels ashamed of her adulterous relationship with Juanito, and the idea of being unfaithful to John, her Irish fiancé, hurts and terrifies her. Nevertheless, she breaks all the rules and, despite all the dangers and pain she might suffer, she freely decides to do it and accept the challenge.

Mary's experience at the bullring leads to a "newer self", the kind of person she used to be dies symbolically there, disappears forever. Instead a new person emerges from that shocking experience, it is like a rebirth once she overcomes the savage and barbaric aspects of the "fiesta" and is able to appreciate all the vivid beauty, its anguish and glory. "In this moment of queer dreaminess, its truth knocked and she admitted it. But in the meantime another, newer self stayed musing in the moments just now spent." (*ML*, p. 116). Her affair with Juanito also makes a "newer self" come out of her at the end of the story, when she is leaving Spain to go back to Ireland. Nothing will be the same, she will not be able to go back to John as if nothing had happened and she will have to make him face the truth. Mary is no longer a young girl, experience brings her pain as a result of knowledge but it also brings her wisdom, independence and self-assurance as a person.

Nevertheless, Mary had not met Juanito when she first went to a bullfight. The experience she went through at the bullring was a sort of foretelling and warning of what happens when mingled and confused feelings, appear. Through bullfighting she understands Juanito and Spaniards in general just to say it is "more real, more symbolic, more dramatic, a more personal and searching arrow to the heart than she had dreamed of" (*ML*, p. 116-17). What seemed to be a tragic dream, due to the impossibility of their love affair, becomes as real, dramatic and beautiful as the tragedy of bullfighting was the first time she saw it:

That was all. That was the fruit of her journey to Spain. Anguish and anger for everyone and only one little, fantastic, impossible hope. Yet there it was -a real story. As real as the bullfight- and, oh God, oh God, as beautiful. Life was long; Juanito had a strange and cunning courage. His dreams -ah, they must be as they would be. The perfect thing had happened, the savage and inexplicable. (*ML*, p. 344)

It has often been asserted by specialists that there is a sort of sensual and erotic relationship between the matador and the bull. In this sense, the experience of bullfighting is symbolically parallel to Mary's relationship with Juanito. Throughout the whole story there are different allusions that connect the bullfight with their love affair as if it were a bullfight itself, where Juanito would symbolically stand for the bullfighter or matador and Mary for the bull, the victim. The process of their love affair has all the elements of a bullfight and can likewise be divided into four main parts: the setting and beginning of a bullfight, the passes and the submission of the animal, the dedications before the killing and, finally, the killing of the bull. The series of converging points between the bullfight and their love affair can be expressed in the following way:

BULLFIGHT	M & J's LOVE AFFAIR
Bullring. Music & dancing style as a matador.	The place where J. played "torero" as a child. Music and dancing in the Pza. San Martín.
The matador risks his life Classic passes. Sensuality. Bull's submission.	J. risks his reputation. Courting. Sensuality. M's surrender to Juanito's passion.
Dedications in the bullring. The bull's only day of glory.	The postcard in Toledo. M's only day with Juanito in Toledo.
The sword as a phallic symbol. Blood. Bulls-matador's union. Killing → pleasure. Climax of the fiesta. The Bull is killed at his heart. The heart means pain. Ear-tail trophy. Pronceda's faena was perfect	Juanito's phallus. Mary's loss of virginity. Mary-Juanito's union. Love making → pleasure. Orgasm. Mary is wounded in her heart. Castile means pain. Mary's virginity. Their day in Toledo was perfect.

At the very beginning of a bullfight there is a parade of all the people who are taking part in it. This parade and all the different parts of a bullfight are always the same. It is almost a religious ritual, as Mary seems to suggest: "The ceremony began. The procession came out.." (*ML*, p. 111). Also, at the beginning of Mary and Juanito's adulterous relationship, they decide to go to the Hermitage of the Holy Angels in Toledo. However, Toledo was not the place where they made love but a place where Juanito used to play "torero" as a child. That place would stand for the bullring, which is the place where bullfighters kill bulls. Yet another striking coincidence is the music in the bullring and the fact that Pronceda moved with "a dancer's impudence" or El Sastrito's "dancing style", as Mary noticed, which contrasts with Mary and Juanito's together dancing at the Plaza San Martín the first time they were alone. Furthermore, Mary herself recalls that moment relating it to a bullfight: "And a tune rang through her as harshly as if played by a band at a bullfight". (*ML*, p. 120)

When the actual bullfight starts, the matador strolls into danger with classic passes, risking his life in the same way Juanito risks his reputation as a married man and a politician. The sensuality of those passes reminds one of the foreplay engaged in by Mary and Juanito, and the final "sheer love" (*ML*, p. 310) she experiences, after their love-making, also echoes Pronceda's faena "the matador drew his enemy to his breast

and past it; brought him back along his thigh as if for sheer love; let him go & drew him home again" (*ML*, p. 114). After the initial passes the bull, as a taker of challenges, still rushes at the yellow cape but in the end submits to its destiny: "saw the innocent bull run towards the ribboned darts" (*ML*, p. 116). In the same way, Mary knows what is going to happen and even so submits to the wound which is going to be inflicted on her. "I know you'll hurt me and that what I'm asking for will be painful and unhappy for me. I know the risks, too." (*ML*, p. 307).

Before killing the bull, changing the cape and taking the sword, the matador dedicates his killing in the same way Juanito dedicated the postcard to Mary and bought a significant, large reproduction of the Burial of Count Orgaz for her -in a clear and sexual reference to orgasm- while she was looking at some miniature swords in Toledo. That day in the bullring is the only day of glory a bull can have. Mary thinks that the day spent in Toledo with Juanito is all they will ever have, but Juanito thinks that "you can't isolate a day. You'd have to be a brute -a sort of animal- to do it" (*ML*, p. 246) in a clear reference to the bull. That remark also shows Juanito's idealism contrasted to Mary's more realistic point of view as far as their relationship is concerned.

The killing of the bull is the final and most dangerous act of the bullfight. The matador has to sink the sword in the bull's heart to the very hilt. The sword here is a symbol of Juanito's virility, whereas the bull's bleeding is related to Mary's loss of virginity. The sensuous nature of bullfighting makes Mary consider that "Pronceda seemed to fight his bull as if they were alone" (*ML*, p. 234), which echoes the moment Juanito and Mary were together "in bodily sensation alone" (*ML*, p. 309). The moment of truth, the moment to inflict a deadly wound on the bull -already wounded with darts- and on Mary -a wounded "San Sebastian" (*ML*, p. 309)-, implies pleasure for the matador and physical pleasure for Juanito. A bull has to be killed at the heart and Mary's spiritual wound is also in her heart. She went to Castile, the heart of the country, to find the real Spain, only to discover she was hopelessly in love with Juanito. Her journey to Madrid, in general, means pain for Mary, another sort of deadly wound.

After the bull has been killed, the matador receives the ear-tail trophy. Juanito's trophy, as a matador, is what nobody else will ever have from Mary. The bull gives its life and Mary gives Juanito "all she had, the first and best of herself" (*ML*, p. 312). At the end of Mary's first bullfight, she admits Pronceda's faena was perfect, as perfect as the day she spent in Toledo with Juanito. She wants to remember that day and she also wants Juanito to remember their day. Pepe, an ex-matador, helps her to remember both dramas by giving her a memento, a matador's cape, before she leaves Spain for good."

III

In Hemingway's *Fiesta*, a group of English and American expatriates living in Paris in the 20s go down to Pamplona for the "San Fermín" in an empty search for new sensations in a decade full of disillusionment. The narrator of the story, Jake Barnes, is an American journalist who is hopelessly in love with the beautiful Brett Ashley but who is also sexually impotent as a result of his World War I wounds. She is a sensuous and promiscuous woman who is in constant search for the kind of love she cannot obtain

from Jake, even though she returns his passionate love her own way. The other main characters in the novel are Robert Cohn, an American writer and boxing champion during his years in Princeton, Mike is Brett's fiancé and Bill is an American friend of Jake's. They are all part of an elitist circle from which Robert Cohn is shut out from the very beginning, due to his inability to accept defeat with the same kind of dignity they all display.

Jake and the other members of the group decide to meet in Pamplona for the July bull festival and it is there where jealousy and new passions appear in the heat of the fiesta. Once they are all together they realize that Robert Cohn, after a week-long affair with Brett in San Sebastián, refuses to face the fact that she does not love him any more. Instead she falls in love with a young matador, Pedro Romero, who will have to fight Robert Cohn and defeat him spiritually.

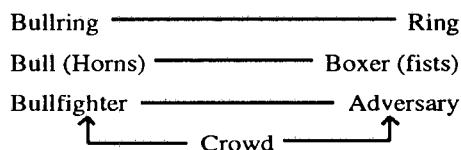
In *Fiesta*, in the same way as in *Mary Lavelle*, bullfighting is not just the scenario for the story but it plays an important role in comparing the bullfight and the bull with the main characters, particularly with men. Here it is the brute force of the animal, the bull, as something essentially masculine, that interests Hemingway, its fights with the other bulls and its ultimate test against the matador. In Hemingway's novel there are also some interesting examples that show how he portrayed men's behaviour in relation to that of bulls, either in isolation or in a group, the herd.

Before the fiesta begins they all go to see the bulls, that also travel to Pamplona by train, unloaded at the corral. At this point a great deal of boxing imagery is used to describe the way the bulls fight each other, placing a special emphasis on the muscles, the crowd and the fact that a bullring may very well resemble a ring in this sense.

The bull charged and came out into the corral, skidding with his forefeet in the straw as he stopped, his head up, the great hump of muscle on his neck swollen tight, his body muscles as he looked up at the crowd on the stone walls [...] trying to reach him behind the planks with a half-dozen quick, searching drives with the right horn. (*F*, p. 116)

While they are watching all this, Jake notices that the bull knows exactly how to use his horns to defend and attack, and so he tells Brett "He's got a left and a right just like a boxer" (*F*, p. 116). Here the parallelism is even more evident: a corral looks like a ring and a bull fights the other bulls and steers in the same way a boxer would, using its horns instead of fists and looking up at the crowd after the victory. All this boxing imagery can be visualized as follows:

BOXING IMAGERY



Another interesting parallelism that appears in this section is the idea of bulls in the herd and the way they behave in comparison with that of men in a group, particularly this group of foreigners who will in due time show their hostility towards Robert Cohn, the steer in this case, the newcomer, who does not fit into the group and stands out just like the steer in the corral.

When the next bull came out, all three, the two bulls and the steer, stood together, their heads side by side, their horns against the newcomer. In a few minutes the steer picked the new bull up, quieted him down, and made him one of the herd. When the last two bulls had been unloaded the herd were *all together*. (F, p. 117, my emphasis)

The bulls are unloaded gradually, one by one until they are all together in Pamplona as a herd ready for the fiesta. Jake, Bill, Cohn and Mike do likewise, they come to Pamplona one after the other until they form a group of men ready for the bullfights that would go on for a week. Jake, who is the expert, tells the others bulls are only dangerous when they are alone and detached from the herd, which is what turns Cohn into a dangerous man in the end because he is detached from the group-herd.

Right after the group of foreigners has seen the unloading of bulls, Cohn says there is no point in being a steer and then Mike shows his "breeding" as a bull by picking on Cohn, telling him he behaves like a steer following Brett around all the time. He is told to shut up and show "a little breeding" but he replies only bulls have it "Breeding be damned. Who has any breeding, anyway, except bulls?." (F, p. 118). Hemingway makes his parallelism clear here, between men and bulls, by choosing a word that applies to both but with different meanings. Mike, as a bull, is also attacking Cohn, as a steer, in the same way one of the bulls attacked a steer at the corral.

Another significant element in this novel is that "Los San Fermín" is a pagan-religious celebration where both men and bulls mingle and run down with the bulls behind them through the streets on their way to the bullring. It is not just a mere bullfight but there is more to it, more contact between man and bull, even physical contact. It is this confusion of men and bulls running together that appeals to Hemingway, this sort of two-sides-of-the-same-coin effect: a man that is a bull and a bull that is a man. In this sense, Hemingway -just as his friend, Picasso, did in some of his paintings and drawings- gives an interesting and symbolic interpretation of the myth of the Minotaur, a myth that started in Greece but that is present in most Mediterranean cultures, though particularly present in Spanish culture.

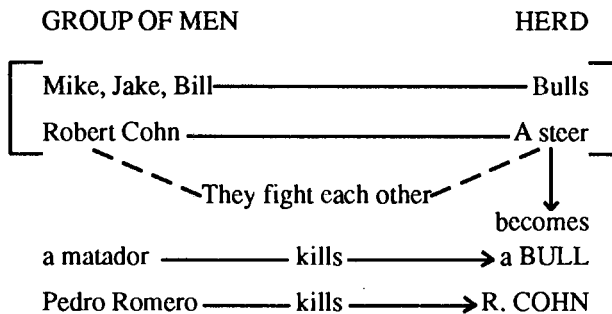
Apart from that hint at Classical Greece, in this group of men-bulls Brett, the only woman, is described by Cohn as a kind of Circe who turns all who drink from her cup into animals. She is an enchantress, almost seen as a goddess by the Basque dancers who only wanted her as an image to dance around because of her beauty. All the men -except for Bill- who get to know her in the story, fall in love with her -Jake, Mike, Cohn and Pedro Romero- and feel jealous or fight each other in different ways. Cohn fights everybody else in order to win her love again and fails to face the fact that she is a woman of many men who has now taken a fancy to a bullfighter after seeing him in the bullring.

The figure of the bullfighter, the matador, appears when they go to the bullfight and see Pedro Romero. He was a real matador "There had not been one for a long time"

(*F*, p. 136), he had the “old thing”. He was a very handsome bullfighter who knew how to dominate “the bull by making him realize he was unattainable, while he prepared for the killing” (*F*, p. 140). A real matador also needs a good fighting bull to show all his abilities and art in the bullring. Cohn had been behaving so far like a steer, always following Brett around, but when a real threat (epitomized in the figure of a bullfighter) appeared, not only did he turn into a bull but into a fighting bull.

Robert Cohn reacted as a bull, like the boxing champion he had once been, when he was told Brett had gone off with the bullfighter and knocked down Mike and hit Jake, his other two rivals. In the same way, the next morning at the “encierro” a bull caught a man and pierced another: “as the bulls passed, one shot ahead caught a man in the running crowd in the back and lifted him in the air [...] the bull lifted him and then dropped him. The bull picked another man running in front, but the man disappeared into the crowd”. (*F*, p. 163)

A fighting bull is an animal that attacks and charges blindly against anything that incites or irritates him, either with his horns or with his fists, as is the case with Cohn. A bull is a naturally shy animal, according to specialists, it only charges when forced to. “What are bulls? Animals. Brute animals.” (*F*, p. 164). A fully grown up bull has to meet its ultimate test in the bullring, face to face with the bullfighter, and that is what Cohn did when he found Brett and Pedro Romero in the bullfighter’s room. Cohn nearly killed the young matador but the matador showed more dignity and still wanted to fight, in doing so he defeated Cohn spiritually as a man and physically as a bull. All these parallelisms between bulls and men and the process Cohn undergoes, first as a steer and then as a fighting bull, can be seen as follows:



Before being killed, the bull goes back a few steps trying to get closer to the fence “Cohn went back against the wall” (*F*, p. 168). When the matador knows he has dominated the bull and has placed him in the right position, that is, with his feet together as if resting, then he goes in to kill in the same way Pedro Romero “was waiting to get strength enough to get up and hit Cohn again [...] Cohn was crying and telling her how much he loved her [...] then Cohn leaned down [...] and the bullfighter chap hit him in the face” (*F*, p. 169).

The matador killed the bull and ruined the man, he “will never want to knock people again” (*F*, p. 169). Cohn was defeated because he refused to accept Brett did not

love him and he showed no dignity in his final act, either, when he refused to fight any more. He never acted according to the code, like the other members of the group, he was too emotional. At the beginning of the story, he told Jake his life was going very fast and he was not really living it, Jake replied saying "Nobody ever lives their life all the way up except bullfighters" (*F*, p. 12). Paulino Losada echoes Jake's words in relation to

esa hormigueante atracción por el riesgo que, en nuestro tiempo, es la emoción que inspira la obra de Hemingway [...] el valor estético del peligro de muerte y de las situaciones en que el hombre juega con la vida para más intensamente vivirla. Sólo se posee verdaderamente lo que se arriesga. El peligro nos da el sabor de la vida. (*AT*, p. 113)

Robert Cohn took the wrong side, in order to live his life "all the way up" he should have been a bullfighter instead of his victim, a bull.

IV

Bullfighting is basically a drama of passions, a tragedy between "a cunning little man dressed in a fancy suit" (*ML*, p. 113) and an animal, where both combatants "in the still place of their drama" (*ML*, p. 114) have to fight in a deadly game in order to survive. Consequently, death is always present, in one way or another, at the end. Although the victim is usually the bull, the most characteristic animal of the only country, Spain, where "la muerte es el espectáculo nacional" as F. G. Lorca wrote (*AT*, p. 40).

Like the Spanish poet, Kate O'Brien and Ernest Hemingway were very much interested in the creative possibilities of death and in the figure of the victim. However, in *Fiesta* and in *Mary Lavelle* the main characters, the victims seen as bulls, are a man in Hemingway's case and a woman in O'Brien's novel. This duality of the figure of the bull is what makes Francisco Umbral paradoxically consider that "el toreo es una expresión virilmente femenina que afronta la tragedia" (*AT*, p. 104). In this sense, even though a bull is the male of any bovine animal, it can symbolically represent both masculine and feminine values if it stands for strength and courage when confronted with death; those being attributes that apply to people in general when they play the role of victim.

Mary Lavelle sees herself as a bull because her decision to have an affair with Juanito leads to the knowledge that it is only a forbidden dream with no future, in which the radical transformation of her inner self is a kind of spiritual death. She is a victim of adverse circumstances -he is a married man- and she cannot change them despite the courage she showed in challenging society and facing her destiny. As a victim, she cannot fight and defeat an adversary who is in a better position than herself, though there is always "a little, fantastic, impossible hope" (*ML*, p. 344). Robert Cohn is also seen as a bull, a very strong bull, who has to fight a real matador and meet his destiny, his spiritual death, by having to admit, no matter what he does, Brett will never love him again, if she ever did. In this sense, both O'Brien and Hemingway see in the duality of the bull two different attributes that are characteristic of the animal: courage and strength. Whereas

O'Brien emphasizes her heroine's courage, Hemingway prefers to point out his hero's strength as an element of masculine display.

However, in *Mary Lavelle* -contrary to what happens in *Fiesta* where all the main characters are men and there is only one woman- there are other characters, men and women, that do not necessarily see themselves as either bulls or bullfighters just because they happen to be men or women. To give an example, Don Pablo is also a victim of passion, first of his unrequited love for his wife and then of his secret and senile infatuation with Mary; his heart condition -as a symbolic element of passion- killed him. So in this sense, Don Pablo is as much a victim as Robert Cohn is in Hemingway's novel. On the other hand, Conlan, a woman, can be identified with the role of the bullfighter because, according to Pepe, she understands the bullfight "like a matador" (*ML*, p. 277). She feels for Mary what Juanito feels, yet she is also a victim of her "evil nature" (*ML*, p. 207). She admires good matadors and courage because she does not have any herself, as she says, even though she shows great courage in telling Mary how she feels about her. She is also interested in death and, in losing Mary, she experiences a kind of death, only rewarded by the fact that for the first time she had loved somebody and had become less bitter. That kind of spiritual death implies, as in Mary's case, a rebirth and a change. Nevertheless, in *Fiesta* there are different kinds of victims. Jake is a victim of the war, his wounds made of him a sexually impotent man. Brett, on the other hand, is a victim of herself, of her promiscuous nature and her inability to find the perfect companion, only Jake seemed to be able to give her what she was looking for except for one thing. However, it is interesting to see that, whereas we can have either men or women as victims in both novels, O'Brien chose a woman for that role and Hemingway a man as main characters.

The black figure of the bull stands for all the dark aspects of passion -sin, illicit love, adulterous love, jealousy, promiscuity, etc. In both novels, the "fight" between a symbolic matador and a symbolic bull takes place for love: Mary loves Juanito, her symbolic bullfighter, and Cohn fights a real bullfighter for Brett's love. Accordingly, all the characters that appear in *Mary Lavelle* who are related to passion have some kind of black quality about them; for instance, Don Pablo has black eyes, Conlan has black brows, Mary dark lashes and Juanito has dark hair and a black sports car. On the other hand, in *Fiesta* we do not know all that much about the characters' physical appearance in relation to passion. Instead Montoya, the hotel owner, gives Jake a very precise definition of what passion is for him "Afición means passion. An aficionado is one who is passionate about the bullfights" (*F*, 110). Jake, as well as his friends, claims to be an "aficionado", he has passion but the other Spanish "aficionados" do not think the same: "it amused them very much that I should be an American. Somehow it was taken for granted that an American could not have afición. He might simulate it or confuse it with excitement, but he could not really have it." (*F*, 110). And that is exactly what happened to Brett with the bullfighter in the end, she did not really have passion, she simply confused her pursuit of true love with the excitement of a new affair with a bullfighter. All those characters who really had passion, the kind of passion the bull has, are heartbroken in the end for different reasons, just like a bull has to be killed at its heart by a matador.

Both O'Brien and Hemingway were more interested in defeat than in victory, in the bull than in the matador. That is the reason why in both novels the symbolic or real

bullfighter is Spanish whereas the figure of the bull is represented by a foreigner, an American, Cohn and a young Irish girl, Mary. However, the matador is the winner, the one who takes all, though the prize may be different in each case. In *Mary Lavelle* Juanito's trophy is Mary's virginity whereas in *Fiesta* Pedro Romero's ear-tail trophy is Brett's love. The two "matadors" are typically Spanish, Juanito's name evokes that of the proverbial Latin lover -Don Juan- and Pedro Romero's surname is quite a common surname in the history of bullfighting.

The trip to Spain that all these characters experience is like an inner journey in which all the hidden passions, animal instincts, possessed by both men and women, come out and explode to express themselves in terms of sex and violence -two of the most primitive instincts of human nature. All this is related to the idea foreign writers who came to Spain before the Civil War had of Spain as a place of liberation. Some of them found that kind of liberation expressed in bullfighting which is, after all, a symbol of the passion that lies in every one of us.