The Sun Also Rises

- Note the presence of wasteland imagery throughout the novel.
- In particular, the novel uses the motif of wounding in the main character, Jake Barnes. This reflects back to the myth of the Fisher King.
- Yet Jake is not the only wounded one in the novel.
- Look also for the spiritual wounds in other characters.

The Sun Also Rises

- Early in the novel, Jake is characterized as different from his friends, particularly Robert Cohn.
- Note ways in which Hemingway gives Jake opportunities to discover a code by which to live. See the trout fishing scene, for example.
Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley

- Note the complexity of the relationship between Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley.
- A common reader reaction to the relationship between Jake and Brett is confusion.
- Although seeing Brett with others makes Jake miserable, he continues to be around her.
- Hemingway provides an interesting comparison between the male characters and the steers used in the bullfighting. What do you suppose he is saying here?
- Also notice Robert’s allusion to the goddess from Greek myth, Circe. Is Robert’s view accurate?

Another interesting insight into the relationship between Jake and Brett can be found in the rather short scene involving Count Mippipopolus.

What have been the count’s life experiences?

Look at this conversation from Chapter VII:

“I told you he was one of us. Didn’t I?” Brett turned to me.
“I love you count. You’re a darling.”
“You make me very happy, my dear. But it isn’t true.”
“Don’t be an ass.”
“You see, Mr. Barnes, it is because I have lived very much that now I can enjoy everything so well. Don’t you find it like that?”
“Yes. Absolutely.”
“I know,” said the count. “That is the secret. You must get to know the values.”

The Novel's Ending

Let's look at this discussion between Jake and Brett toward the end of the novel:

“You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch.”
“Yes.”
“It's sort of what we have instead of God.”
“Some people have God,” I said. “Quite a lot.”
“He never worked very well with me.”