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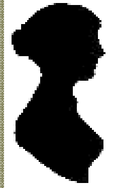

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ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IN LITERATURE,
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This issue features two excellent articles on two icons of early twentieth-century American literature: F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway.

† The lead article in this issue is “Gatsby Sutra” by Richard Marranca, found on page 2. Dr. Marranca publishes fiction, essays, interviews and poetry. He has three books online and a fourth is to be published in print form next year. He is an Assistant Professor at Passaic County Community College in N.J. He sometimes is an adjunct in humanities at Montclair State or New York University. Over the last decade he has had a Fulbright to teach American studies at the University of Munich as well as five summer seminars from the National Endowments for the Humanities / CCHA. He is president of New Jersey Fulbright Association. He travels, hikes, does yoga and is a long-term vegetarian and advocate for nature. He is finishing up a novel that focuses on Cambodia and Burma, which is where he traveled during summer 2011. www.RichardMarranca.com

† On page 9 you will find our second article, “’He’s Quite One of Us’: Belief or Belonging in *The Sun Also Rises*” by Jamie Korsmo. Jamie is currently working toward a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Literary Studies at Georgia State University where she also teaches courses in English Literature. She recently received her Master of Arts degree from the University of Central Oklahoma and wrote her Master’s thesis on the short stories of Sherman Alexie, a modern Native American author.

† Other items, on page 12, include:

-Notable Books and Events of Interest.

† Next ASEBL Journal issue will feature two articles on women in eighteenth-century English literature and an article on women in the work of Rama Mehta. If you wish to submit to future issues of ASEBL, please query the editor (with an ASEBL subject line): gregorytague@hotmail.com.

“Gatsby Sutra”

By Richard Marranca

What can the stories and insights of Buddhism tell us about one of the world’s great novels, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. And what can it tell us about the American Dream, cultural trends, and ourselves?

In just 180 pages, Fitzgerald unfolds the panorama of human desire and its aftershocks. Characters incessantly seek happiness (who doesn’t?) but reap or cause so much unhappiness and suffering. They master the nuances of high society and embody the American Dream of palatial homes, wealth, and glamour. They believe that happiness is based on diversion and display: I have, therefore I am. Progress means bigger stuff. Paradoxically, characters seem to have everything but peace and happiness.

In Munich’s Olympiahalle in 2003, the Dalai Lama said that when he first came to the West he thought everyone was so happy, that they seemed to have everything one could imagine, but that when visiting the homes of some well-to-do people he noticed that their medicine cabinets were full of antidepressants. It made him wonder and, of course from a Buddhist perspective, he meditated on what it meant. In *The Bodhgaya Interviews*, the Dalai Lama says: “We are all human beings, and from this point of view we are the same. We all want happiness, and we do not want suffering.”

The classic novel from 1925 centers on the colorful Jay Gatsby, a once poor boy whose talents and high-flying ambitions propel him into wealth. He wants status and the girl; both pursuits are conflated. The narrator is the calm, detached, moral observer Nick Carraway. He happens to fall in love with Jordan Baker, the glamorous professional golfer who happens to cheat at her sport.

Characters rarely, if ever, have inner dimensions as attractive as their appearance. There is an omnipresent shadow side to everything, the shadows cast by the multitude of lights, the falsity of relationships, greed, criminality, the crashes of the elegant cars, the wasteland amidst the glamour. Gatsby, “a romantic bootlegger,” as Carl Van Doren writes, buys a gaudy mansion in West Egg, a nouveau riche area in Long Island, in contrast to East Egg, the old money area where the good life requires proper bloodlines more than exertion or brains.

Gatsby delves into the dark side of capitalism in order to satisfy his desire: glamour, social acceptance, and Daisy. Money largely creates his persona and charisma, the ability to pursue past and present at once. “Gatsby is materialistic because Americans do not have many other alternatives. Material life offers one of the few recognized ways in which the American can express his idealism,” writes Ronald Berman (86).

The novel depicts layers of individual and societal corruption. In fact, Gatsby’s partner in crime, Meyer Wolfsheim, wears cuff links of human molars and fixes the World Series, which was “to play with the faith of fifty million people” (73). Gatsby himself seems too polite and eccentric to be a criminal, as one who deals with hard-boiled gangsters, but somehow Gatsby makes a heap of money and often refers to others as “old boy.”

Many readers of the novel or viewers of the film adaptations (quite loosely adapted) believe it is a celebration of wealth. Indeed, there is much celebration but it is rarely happy. The Buddhist concept of samsara (continuous flow, as well as the random flow of sensations) has relevance here. Samsara is the false world, or whirlpool of life into which we fall – similar to the cave in Plato’s *Allegory*, or delusion in the movie *The Matrix*. It is living with veiled eyes and masks.

Gatsby creates immense, gaudy parties (extravagant theater) where he plays the role of the mysterious, generous host. People do not really know who he is and create rumors: that he killed a man, that he was related to Kaiser Wilhelm, and so on. The assortment of colorful, sometimes historically-named, sometimes cartoon-like characters (the Ripley Snells, the Stonewall Jackson Abrams of Georgia, Mrs. Ulysses Swett, the Hammerheads, the Belugas…) are not self-contained but require others to create fleeting diversion, a kind of floating world.

If there is a party with Trimalchio-like excess, there sits happiness. It's all about being cool and being seen. It's about being connected to people who seem to make a lot of money without having to do something useful.

Fitzgerald's values, fears, personality, dreams, etc. are immersed in the novel. Like Gatsby, Fitzgerald saw himself as an outsider, especially during his student days at Princeton when he was relatively poor amidst the wealthy young men. Early on, he desired fame, whether through football, writing, acting, or even the military; when WWI ended, so did the latter opportunity. Fitzgerald fell in love with Zelda Sayre and for a short time worked in an advertising agency, a job for which he was not suited. "His work in advertising may have given him a few ideas about the futility of material dreams and the construction of unfulfilled yearnings," my former colleague, Berndt Ostendorf of Amerika-Institut, University of Munich, mentioned to me.

The publication of *This Side of Paradise* and his subsequent fame enabled him to leave his job and marry Zelda. They had early years full of revelry and travel; later his drinking and her mental instability destroyed their marriage. (Woody Allen's amazing film, *Midnight in Paris*, gives the viewer a few minutes of the Fitzgeralds' glamour and party life, and we get a hint of this also in Barnes and Noble Café, with F. Scott smoking a cigarette and looking stylish in his white collar.) In 1924 in the south of France, F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby*, which was published the following year with disappointing sales. Along the way, he became friends with Hemingway and many other luminaries. With Hemingway, he shared a strong ambition and a lyrical style. Fitzgerald encouraged Scribner to publish Hemingway. Fitzgerald was kind in that way, especially toward writers.

Fitzgerald knew how to have a good time and could play the role of an exhibitionist. He was insecure and prone to immoderate, punishing behavior and mental anguish, which he bravely illustrates in *The Crack-Up*. Zelda shared his dangerous side. Andrew Turnbull wrote that Fitzgerald "recorded the age he was helping to form, and his work and his play became hopelessly intertwined" (116). He was famous at 24 but died relatively forgotten in Hollywood, his unfinished *Last Tycoon* depicting a slice of that crushing exuberance and wasteland. So Fitzgerald understood the allure of the image and of money. He was both drawn to wealth but dismayed by its excess and dangers.

Fitzgerald is similar to Nick Carraway, the recorder of this drama, who exhibits some of the mindfulness and compassion fundamental to Buddhism, which is absent from Tom and Daisy, who are driven by ego, instinct, class. Tom and Daisy are "careless people… they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness." Carraway -- by instinct and ethics -- was detached, above the fray, a witness. He is passive and trustworthy and recognizes the innate decency of Gatsby. Perhaps it's important to note, especially during these times, that Nick is a "well-rounded man." Only someone well-rounded would see through the madness.

To read *The Great Gatsby* from a Buddhist perspective is not always fair. The characters are not Buddhists; they are mostly upper class and wealthy during the Jazz Age. The novel glitters with Jazz Age but has little of its jazz, only Vladimir Tostoff at the end. It is easy to fall into moralizing, but Nick's laid-back moralizing does the trick. In fact, much of what I learned in Prof. Laurence MacPhee's (retired from Seton Hall University) American Literature II class about *The Great Gatsby* was very similar to what I see as a Buddhist (or Taoist, positive psychology, mythical, etc.) view. Yet a few basic ideas from Buddhism can clarify the characters and themes, as if the Buddha were walking amidst the mansions and ash heaps of Long Island, which was not so alien from his own provenance 2,500 years ago.

The novel is inexhaustible, comprising a sort of shorthand to understand ego, power, money, society, dreams, and so much more – things of great interest to those who deal in philosophy and psychology and the good life. There is much suffering in the novel. Buddhism focuses on suffering (*dukkha*) and its cessation. Suffering results from ego and desire; both the round and flat characters are replete with gratuitous ego and desire. Ego leads to illusion and separation from other humans and the web of life. "Buddhism views humanity as an integral part of nature, so that when nature is defiled, people ultimately suffer," wrote Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, a professor at Thammasat University in Bangkok (8).

Suffering also results from the inability to accept change or impermanence. After all, Gatsby rushes toward the past. He is never fully in the present, unless the present is disguised as the eternal past. It has become a cliché to say that we should be in the present, but it is good sense and fundamental Buddhism. Gatsby's present is also weighted by the past. In "Winter Dreams," a tale that in many ways prefigures *The Great Gatsby,* Dexter Green is distraught that "he had gone away and he could never go back any more. The gates were closed, the sun was gone down, and there was no beauty but the gray beauty of steel that withstands all time. Even the grief he could have borne was left behind in the country of illusion, of youth, of the richness of life, where his winter dreams had flourished" (75).

The Great Gatsby has similar emperors and Fitzgerald unclothes them all: class, wealth, East Egg, party friends (who really do not know Gatsby or even attend his funeral), the rags to riches story, the American Dream, the New Eden, racism, the myth of the car, the mechanization of the once-pristine landscape, (green is a leitmotif), and more. To critique Gatsby and the glitzy labyrinth in which he is caught is to look closely at myth and mythmaking in America, not always a pretty picture. Of course in looking at the novel, we are looking at ourselves, and the present time is a celebration of what befell Gatsby. Gatsby has to juggle his moral values to pay for his dream. But isn't this always true in places where great wealth insulates the few and turns the majority into worker bees and wallflowers catering to swank snots? "This trend in Gatsby has only enlarged with the current tabloid loving and lusting celebrity 'wannabees,'" my former colleague Joseph Sigrith told me.

Much of nature in this novel, which was once "a fresh, green breast of the new world," has been transformed into vast lawns and immolated by all this fabulous ambition, wealth, and the dark wizardry of technology, with its emphasis on the new and the gigantic and of course the ubiquitous nature-eating car, which causes three deaths in the novel. Gatsby's car, which Tom referred to as a "circus wagon," (121) does not look absurd in relation to our blob-like SUVs, nor does his house look absurd alongside today's mushrooming, mass-produced McMansions. The baronial splendor of the Gatsby house is prevalent in America today (often foreclosed) – and this gigantism advances in oversized meals and waistlines and highways and is a kind of sad destiny, the anti-environmental result of excess. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid, the disenchanted businessman goes to a party at "a magnificent property that made me think of *The Great Gatsby*" (48). Perhaps Fitzgerald hid a prophetic message in Nick Carraway's name (car away).

There is certainly a machine in the garden, to borrow a term from Leo Marx – and it's a killer. There is similar anti-car prescience in Booth Tarkington's *Magnificent Ambersons* (1918) or Orson Welles' movie adaptation, where one of the characters dreads the arrival of the smoke-spewing car. An old way of life will die. Roads will crisscross the countryside. There goes the neighborhood. Nick sees it all: no one seems able to drive. At the end, of course, near the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg and the ash heaps on Long Island, Daisy runs over Myrtle Wilson. "This hideous, man-made wilderness is a product of the technological power that also makes possible Gatsby's wealth, his parties, his car," writes Leo Marx (358). Gatsby is blamed and George Wilson kills both Gatsby and himself. (The car and the gun are phallic symbols and mean doom in the novel.) Perhaps the culmination of this crash allure is David Cronenberg's 1996 cult film *Crash*, where James Ballard, a bored film director (played by James Spader), and Dr. Helen Remington (Holly Hunter) explore the erotica of cars and crashes. In fact, crashes, the ultimate aphrodisiac, foreplay as near-death experience, convey the couple to delirious plateaus among the wreckage. If technology governs us, then the human body, full of curves and allure, is somehow inadequate. Technology has become divine, unquestioned. It watches us.

"These myths and obsessions have always fascinated me," said Adriann Conklin, a recent graduate of University of Nevada, Reno. "The car has given us a false sense of independence and has disconnected us from our physical and social environment. It's such an integral part of our American identity -- we are what we drive, right? All these material myths are impediments to true peace and happiness."

The Hero's Quest: Buddha and Gatsby

Who are they and what did they become?

Siddhartha Gotama, later known as the Buddha, and James Gatz, later known as Jay Gatsby, have opposite paths, with the first renouncing what the other sought. The early Siddhartha Gotama (circa 6th century BCE) has everything society offered: he was a rich young man of the warrior class, whose parents were local rulers. He had fine clothes and elephants and a beautiful wife, Yasodara, and child. But at the age of 29 he set out on his chariot to view the world outside the palace and experienced the Four Passing Visions: an old man, a sick man, a corpse, and monks: "one of the most celebrated calls to adventure in all world literature," according to Huston Smith in *The World's Religions* (83). This shock, this immersion in the world, made him reject his silken life and set out to be an ascetic in the forest. But after a few years, he rejected this too: there is no point in suffering, which in itself is a form of egoism.

As a consequence, he felt determined to reach the higher chakras of belief and practice, so he sat under the Bodi tree (*ficus religiosa*, the Tree of Life) until he reached enlightenment. The image of the tree roots us in the earth but also reaches out into the sky. The result was the Buddha, the awakened one, no longer asleep or unconscious or fearful, the one with clear vision. In *The Art of Loving*, Erich Fromm writes that "this attitude of concentrated meditation is the highest activity there is, an activity of the soul, which is possible only under the condition of inner freedom and independence" (20).

Yet behind this Bodi Tree episode, this mythical and living tree, is a long preparatory journey of yoga, meditation, sacred readings, tradition. Buddhism arises from Hinduism and reacts against it. In Buddhism there is a de-emphasis or rejection of metaphysics, authority, ritual, faith, caste, and so on. Buddhism retained much of the earlier Hindu vocabulary but was more practical and poised for export.

One must find one's way to enlightenment: be a lamp onto oneself. One is to follow the eight-fold path, which leads to balance, compassion, and nirvana ("a blown out fire," as in silencing the ego and passions, an ultimate state of being, peace). The middle path (*majjhima Patipada*), the path between extremes, has similarity to Aristotle's Golden Mean. The eight aspects of the middle path, according to Walpola Sri Rahula, are essential to Buddhism and lead to ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom (46).

The ideal is to journey from society (*samsara*) to nirvana; or to seek nirvana in *samsara*. The ideal is to be mindful, aware of the texture of your mind, to find yourself amidst the silence. Mindfulness (continuous reflection on the arising sensations and thoughts) and meditation are really the same. Nick Carraway shows much decency and awareness and sees through the buffoonery of fame and status. Perhaps Gatsby also saw through it all, but couldn't stop himself, as money was his vehicle to success.

The young James Gatz has an interesting heroic construction. He is a striver, an improver of his inward and outward being. As Berndt Ostendorf pointed out to me, Gatsby is, most likely, of German descent, possibly German Jewish. In his childhood he wrote in *Hopalong Cassidy* a schedule that he assiduously follows: "Rise from bed, Dumbbell exercise and wall-scaling, Study electricity, etc., Work, Baseball and sports, Practice elocution, poise and how to attain it, Study needed invention…" (173). For Gatsby, this enthusiastic schedule opens the doorway to the American Dream.

It is a list from a boy who means to get somewhere, a list in the tradition of the polymath Ben Franklin, or those pirates of Enron, etc. Gatz has a chance to attend college but just for two weeks: he is not suited to the janitorial work which pays for it. Like many mythical heroes he does not have much of a family, or you could say he has two fathers: his biological father who was "shiftless and unsuccessful" and Dan Cody, a man of wealth, an embodiment of the West. This is sort of a dual descent myth.

One day, when Gatz is near the water he looks out and sees Cody's yacht anchored in a dangerous shallow and warns him. Cody soon realizes that here is a talented young man, so he hires him to work on his yacht. In his will he leaves Gatz $25,000 but Ella Kaye, the newspaper woman, grabs all the money. This whole experience with Cody ignites his ambition. What does Gatsby desire?

In fact, Nick Carraway tells us that Gatsby "sprang from his Platonic conception of himself…. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end" (98). That is, the world of illusion, or samsara. But it is also another variant of the rags to riches story, Horatio Alger or Willie Loman or many Oprah Winfrey book club choices. These are personal achievement stories full of drama, self-promotion, and dressing up – a major portion of the Hollywood narrative.

In the new world, where things are always new, where New York is never Old York, where a few years makes new music seem old, where products are always new and improved -- hope springs eternal (see Mircea Eliade's *Myth of the Eternal Return*). That is the aura of myth: it is always here, always occurring. It is sacred and elevated. Sometimes it blinds the seeker. It has no author and yet everyone encourages the narrative. Of course, a dream or myth has real aspects as well, and it is meant as an ideal for people to pursue and also propaganda to keep people striving. It keeps stores busy selling lottery tickets. Anyone can become rich. How else can we proceed from where we are? How else can Gatsby persevere? How else can he escape his nondescript life of poverty along the shore? It's easy to poke fun at the American Dream because most of us have some part of it. Immigrants with a lot of culture and no money infuse this dream with new energy and hope.

American Dream

The American Dream begins with Europeans arriving in the New World and continues with westward expansion; in the Declaration of Independence, people have the right to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The American Dream is a big theme for writers such as Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Sinclair Lewis, Arthur Miller, and many others. Progress and the American Dream are a mass ideology focused on money, home ownership, and materialism. But the problem for many people with the American Dream is that it can rarely be satisfied and that it's largely focused on oneself. One never has enough. Of course, it is necessary to dream and aspire in order to act on a plan and accomplish things in life. Most of us know the feeling of being stuck without options and we all know about cultures that seem frozen in time, with that "It is written quality." Yet a dream contains much vanity and unconscious wonderland and therefore blinds the dreamer. In contrast, someone who articulates a vision is more interdependent, grounded, and mindful. Vision is the realm of the bard, the one with far-seeing eyes and compassion -- Emerson's "transparent eyeball." Vision enlarges the self until the self fades. Therefore, the problem is not that Gatsby dreams but that his dreams lack the soul's counterpart, that there is little or no moral framework and perspective, which leads to a jejune search for wholeness, destined to fail. No matter how high Gatsby ascends, he remains a dreamy boy along the shore.

As a young man, Gatsby has a heap of money and uses it to prove he is no longer poor. "The problem, however, is that if one is on the track of proving one is not poor, one is not a loser, one is not anonymous, or something like that, there will never be enough proof," according to James Carse in a lecture years ago at New York University. One cannot grow up or proceed to maturity, and that is the case with Gatsby. Life of course stymies the simplicity of his personal/public myth. Gatsby contains multitudes and divisions, and that is what makes him fascinating and ultimately tragic.

During World War I Gatz is stationed in Daisy's city of Birmingham and gets to know her. She's beautiful, charming, frivolous, siren-like, with a voice "full of money." He falls in love with her, falls in love with her way of life and gorgeous house, and hopes someday to marry her. But fate intervenes: he has other responsibilities and soon goes abroad. He "did extraordinarily well in the war." But instead of quickly returning to Daisy, he studies for a short time at Oxford.

Daisy embodies so much of what he desired. She represents lost youth, the ultimate refund for Gatsby. But Gatsby is away too long and, worse than that, he is poor. She is flighty and anxious and really needs wealth: money goes to money. Therefore, she marries Tom Buchanan, who gives "her a string of pearls valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars" (76). They live in luxury, travel, have a child. Because they already have so much, Tom exhales few ambitions, as he is born to the manor. His ego and presence are enough to prove his success. It is difficult to ascertain his ambitions. His ambitions are inherited, lazy, and simple, like his affair with Myrtle Wilson.

Years later – after Tom's affairs come to light and Gatsby's rise to wealth and power -- Daisy really seems to love the latter and would have left Tom, but for the hit and run. Rogers Lewis writes that "Against this backdrop, the Gatsby-Daisy relationship seems to shine. It is at least a shared connection in which both partners respond with equal intensity. For Gatsby, it has endured. He has loved Daisy for five years. And if their love is founded upon feelings from the past, these give it, notwithstanding Gatsby's insistence on being able to repeat the past, an inviolability. It exists in the world of money and corruption but is not of it," wrote Roger Lewis (48).

Yet it is sometimes difficult to say why she really loves Gatsby. After all, there is that fluffy scene where she just gushes over Gatsby's wardrobe. "'They're such beautiful shirts,' she sobbed," wrote Fitzgerald (92). This is emblematic of her personality and shows how she prefers the Gatsby persona to the authentic Gatsby/Gatz. But who is the authentic Gatsby? Will the real Gatsby stand up? He's there but, like an archaeologist, we have to go back in time to find most of this person from North Dakota. He's innocent, a good person, a dreamer.

Tom reaches his high point during his football years at Yale (a common archetype in America) and after that he has trouble doing much else that gives him adequate meaning and adventure. He is physically imposing and disdains the nouveau riche, people of color, the poor. At one point, he refers to Gatsby as "'Mr. Nobody from Nowhere.'" This reminds me of the early scene in Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* where the Viscount mocks Cyrano for not wearing elegant gloves; Cyrano replies, "'My elegance is interior.'" The irony is that people such as Tom, wishing to escape history and tradition, fall back on this whenever the need arises.

Tom is all ego, selfishness, and stupidity. Tom's ego separates himself from happiness and from others. He wants everything, but when he gets what he wants he really does not know what to do with the stuff. He wants diversions and affairs because he has too much free time and little sense of purpose. In fact, just after his marriage to Daisy, he has affairs, beginning with a chambermaid in Santa Barbara; and Tom isn't present when his daughter is born. There is a message from many poets and philosophers that relates to Tom appetites: once beauty is captured it is lost.

Tom is a Narcissist with an enlarged sense of himself but he really adds up to a bit player. Buddhism rejects the ego; it is nowhere to be found, an illusion. It is relentless, insatiable. Buddhists say that the emphasis on ego is destructive. "The Buddha tried to make his bhikkhus see that they did not have a 'self' that needed to be defended, inflated, flattered, cajoled and enhanced at the expense of others," wrote Karen Armstrong in *Buddha* (113).

Perhaps we can interpret the Buddha's warning about ego as a warning against excessive and destructive ego. It is difficult to argue that to have no ego is best. That is a psychological/spiritual notion and, from a more practical standpoint, we need an ego to know who we are and to survive. But it is tenable to say that one can never have enough or be enough, and that the greater the desire, the greater the potential for suffering. Greek tragedy explodes with big egos who court disaster. "Material pleasure, even of the most refined order, is never enough, if 'enough' is what you are seeking," wrote Alan Watts in the *Gospel According to Zen* (114). Another problem is that the mind is like a weather system, always changing. What is fixed? What do we truly require?

Tom establishes Myrtle Wilson as his mistress in a small New York apartment, which has overly large furniture and on the living-room table "several old copies of *Town Tattle*" and "a copy of *Simon Called Peter*" (29). Here Tom shares archetypal ground with Citizen Kane but on a reduced scale. Kane and his singing lady are far more interesting than Tom and Myrtle.

Myrtle Wilson is prideful of her higher status and generally denigrates her ordinary husband, who married her in a borrowed suit. Ironically, Gatsby (later killed by George Wilson, the auto mechanic) is also from the lower economic class. Myrtle is unhappy living over his store, and yearns for an expansion of possibilities. As Myrtle feels that she is far above her husband, Tom Buchanan feels the same way toward Myrtle, a mere diversion. He's bored and wants to energize his ego and sense of freedom. When Myrtle teases Daisy, he hits her in the face, breaking her nose. Later, she pays the ultimate price for her affair with Tom, as she is run over by Daisy. But Myrtle is just a plaything and Tom an aggressive user. Behind Tom's attractive outer shell or persona lurks a sinister brutality.

Tom suffers from *tanha*, the desire for the wrong things. It is what increases separation and aloneness. Tom could really do great things for his family and for society, but he is trite and cocooned in willfulness and selfishness. He has great wealth but is merely concerned with his own needs. He is true to himself.

In contrast, Gatsby is a decent person. He goes about life with insouciance and longing, and it is quite easy for Nick to say: "'You're worth the whole damn bunch put together'" (154). That's really the best thing anyone can say to Gatsby and it pleases him. He gets noticed for his innocence and inherent good nature. He is really a wonderful, larger-than-life character and there is a little of him in all of us – the part always striving for what is out of reach, for those fleeing ineffable moments, some Eden just ahead. The trouble is that he is trying to buy Eden. Gatsby is a romantic quite capable of love, one of the few in the novel capable of genuine feelings toward others. Yet he flourishes and dies within the framework of his illusions, a victim of the blinding American Dream and its high price and occasional violence. He does not live past his illusions: he had much potential to do good in the world. He really was a young man, and we should not be too judgmental. Like the fool in the Tarot deck, all smiles and hope as he walks toward the precipice, Gatsby was headed toward trouble.

If the characters suffer with their grandiose ambitions and egos, making others suffer too, a Buddhist (and mythical) view shows that they are merely involved in a drama of their own creation, locked behind their own egos and masks, entertained by glittering frivolity, suffering rather than finding peace, refusing the call to a deep, authentic happiness. Buddhism helps us understand this, though we can get this from many sacred traditions and poetic souls. Wisdom has many converging points.

Happiness is not acting, unless one loves to be in a play. If the American Dream is about having wealth, rising identity, a big car, a big house, big meals, more and more technology, the siren call for excess, and so on, then these characters are winners. They are winners in the Race of More but losers in not being developed, compassionate beings interdependent with others and society and even with the larger realm of the planet. Like drug abusers, they suffer most when the party has ended and they have to face their ghostly fragmented selves, their lack of wholeness -- atomized egos in the empty mansion rooms. They've lost nature, spirituality, integrity, kindness, and therefore their highest qualities.

Gatsby fails because his dream lacks the roots of wisdom and dies because the gun, for many people, is an equalizer and problem solver. Nick returns to his home (like the typical hero in myth) out west, with life education rarely obtained at college. Leo Marx writes: "It is Nick who must decide, finally, upon the value of that dream" (356). Nick was becoming corrupted in that world of stocks and bonds, where he hardly seems suited. Nick must have seen Gatsby in himself and so felt restless and divided, as we all do. We are afraid to be where we are, so we go somewhere else and be something else.

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"He's Quite One of Us": Belief or Belonging in *The Sun Also Rises*

By Jamie Korsmo

In Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, Count Mippipopolous is introduced to Jake Barnes as "one of us," which raises the issue of forfeiture of religion for a sense of belonging for the novel's characters. As they struggle through the hedonistic world of their lost generation, Jake and Brett sacrifice their own religious beliefs in exchange for membership in this group that Brett frequently refers to as being "one of us." While Brett remains trapped in this life of moral corruption and surplus, Jake breaks free from this group affiliation at the end of the novel. The religious mockery and seemingly failed attempts at practicing traditional spirituality create a feeling of exclusion from society within these characters and therefore, also initiate the need to create a new group to which they can belong without any pretenses or fictions. This new group is founded on both the physical and psychological wounds inflicted by the war and all of the underlying nuances connected to these specific wounds, be it sexual frustration or social exclusion. Analysis of their corrupt world, their personal losses, and their responses to the moral dilemmas they face will show how characters exchange their belief systems for activities that signify belonging to this group.

In the beginning of the novel, Brett visits Jake at his lodging in the middle of the night and begins describing Count Mippipopolous in an attempt to convince Jake that the Count possesses the same attitude and value system as both he and Brett. She states, "The count? Oh, rather. He's quite one of us" (Hemingway 40). This inclusion of the Count in their group of displaced wanderers is a representation of Brett's notion that the Count and Jake share more than just a physical attraction to the same woman (Brett). Jake refers to his war wound as something "funny" that happened to him that he never thinks about and later, when praying in Pamplona, Jake thinks "about something funny Brett told [him] about [the Count]" (103). This funny thing is their respective wounds that both men received during the war. According to William Kerrigan, with regards to the funny thing that Brett told Jake about the Count, "Jake is not…recalling an amusing anecdote. Rather he is communicating an important narrative detail which invites the reader to reapprehend certain incidents at the beginning and disposes him to recognize certain evocations at the end" (88). By using the word "funny" to refer to both Jake's wound and the Count's wound, the reader is able to make the connection without it ever being explicitly stated.

Regardless of Brett's reasons for attempting to bring Count Mippipopolous into the group, the members are clearly connected by some very distinct commonalities. Membership in this club is founded on both the physical and emotional wounds that the war has left on its affiliates and the commiseration that occurs through their shared experiences. Without ever talking directly about their injuries, these characters find a way to comprehend the damage caused to the other members by the war and attempt to fill the void left by their resulting inadequacies with a life of excess and debauchery. Both Jake and the Count have physical manifestations of the damage caused by the war in the form of their damaged genitals (and the Count's arrow wounds on his torso), in addition to the emotional scars that also remain. This absence of the true masculine symbol defines Jake and the Count as fundamentally lacking in the eyes of society. Further, Jake's wound identifies him as both part of the post-war present (as a survivor of the war) and as part of the pre-war past (as a physically damaged, sexually impotent male). By refusing to name the wound, Jake is giving in to the fear that the war and his altered physical state have created in him. While Brett may not have any outward scars, the war has severely damaged her as well. The love of her life was killed in battle when she was younger, and it left her completely emotionally paralyzed. After this tragedy, Brett proceeded to enter into two loveless marriages and file for two profitable divorces. She is only attracted to men who cannot fulfill her sexually (like Jake) or men she cannot stay with (like Pedro Romero and Robert Cohn).

One of the most important qualities that members of this group possess is the silence with which they treat important issues. Brett constantly asks Jake to refrain from talking about his feelings for her or other things that make her uncomfortable (like the way her relationship with Pedro Romero ended). The Count never directly mentions his mutilated genitalia to Jake, but the two men seem to have an understanding of the subject between them. Jake continually chooses silence when it comes to important matters throughout the novel. During one of Jake's sleepless nights, he attempts to convince himself that "the Catholic Church had an awfully good way of handling all that. Good advice, anyway. Not to think about it" (Hemingway 39). The fact that Jake is clearly trying to persuade himself that "not thinking about it" is the best course of action is an early indication in the novel that Jake may not be a permanent fixture in the group.

Another important, albeit more obvious, characteristic of the members of the group is their insistence on drinking vast quantities of alcohol. Jake and Brett are constantly going out for a drink at various cafés around Paris and Spain, which always turns into an excessive amount of drinking. At the end of the novel when Jake and Brett are eating in Paris, Jake notices that Brett's "hand was steady enough to life [the martini glass] after that first sip…Brett did not eat much. She never ate much. I ate a very big meal and drank three bottles of rioja alta" (Hemingway 248-9). Clearly, Brett has a problem with alcoholism, shaking hands and all. At least Jake eats food on a regular basis, but this does not negate his clear dilemma with alcohol. Bill and Jake argue with the inn keeper in the country about the price of their lodgings, but decide to accept her steep offer when they discover that the price includes all the wine they can drink. When Brett and Jake desire a minute alone to pretend to discuss their relationship, Brett sends the Count out for champagne, claiming that "he loves to go for champagne…He's extraordinary about buying champagne. It means any amount to him" (Hemingway 62-3). This type of continuous drunkenness acts as a buffer against the need for addressing any type of real emotion or serious situation. However, this can backfire and lead to exacerbated encounters, such as the incident in which Robert Cohn drunkenly fights all of the other males in the group, including Jake, Mike, and Pedro Romero. These examples all show how the members of this group indulge themselves in a life of surplus, primarily through excessive drinking.

As far as religion is concerned, Jake never denies his affiliation with the Catholic Church, although he often places it in the category of things to remain silent about. He may rarely initiate conversation about his beliefs, but he never shies away from answering questions on the subject as honestly as possible. When Jake and Bill are on the train to Pamplona, Jake admits to the American travelers that he is "sore" about the dining cars being full because he is a Catholic and yet, is still being excluded (Hemingway 93). Bill later asks Jake for a clarification of this statement when they are fishing alone (which seems to indicate that Jake never actively mentioned his religious associations to Bill before this incident), to which Jake responds, "Technically" (129). Bill asks him what he means by that and Jake vaguely states that he, himself, is uncertain about the subject. Once the group has reached Pamplona, Brett asks Jake to accompany her inside the San Fermin Cathedral so that she can pray. After a few minutes of uncomfortable silence, Brett wants to leave, claiming, "I'm damned bad for a religious atmosphere…I've the wrong type of face" (212). She then tells Jake that he does not look very religious, to which Jake responds, "I'm pretty religious" (213). At another point in the novel, Brett is not allowed to enter San Fermin because "she had no hat" (159), a sign which could also represent the fact that she does not belong in church and was instead detained for this reason. When Brett tells Jake that she wants to watch him go to confession and he indicates that she would not understand the language, he is referring to Latin, Spanish, and also the language of religion. Brett claims that what she has instead of God makes her feel "damned good," which leads Jake to realize that it is futile to attempt a conversation with Brett about God because she would not understand anyway. All of these examples illustrate Jake's acceptance of his status as a Catholic ("rotten" or otherwise) and Brett's refusal to make lasting ties with religion in her life.

In his struggle to come to terms with his life and religious beliefs, Jake must also make peace with his feelings for Brett. While he is alone in San Sebastian, Jake decides to enjoy himself by going out for a pleasant swim in the ocean. He swims out to a floating raft and dives into the water several times. He "dove deep once, swimming down to the bottom. [He] swam with [his] eyes open and it was green and dark. The raft made a dark shadow" (Hemingway 239). The dark, murky water represents Jake's inner turmoil regarding his feelings for Brett. He has not come to a final decision at this point about whether or not he will continue to subject himself to her truculence in the same destructive manner as before. But after his cathartic dive, Jake is finally able to see clearly the negativity and inevitable failure that always surrounds his interaction with Brett. On Jake's second day of swimming at San Sebastian, he is much more aware of his surroundings, noticing individual people and their characteristics (such as the soldier with one arm or the nurses in uniform), unlike on the previous day when he only mentions that “there were quite a few people in the water and on the beach” (Hemingway 238). He seems to be more in tune with the limitations of his body and at ease with his previously illustrated inner turmoil. Instead of the “green and dark” water of the previous day, with his newly found sense of self, the water appears to be “lightening” and clean (242).

The closing scene of the novel provides the reader with a sense of closure as to what will ultimately happen between Jake and Brett with regards to their religious beliefs as well as their relationship with one another. When Brett and Jake are talking about the outcome of Brett’s affair with Pedro Romero, she mentions (whether we can believe the truth of her statement or not) that she chose not to be a bitch to Pedro and that “it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch” and that not being a bitch is “sort of what we have instead of God” (Hemingway 249). But Jake states that “some people have God…quite a lot” (249), a possible indication that he may have found religion again and will be giving up his aimless lifestyle. Brett’s response to Jake’s statement is that God “never worked very well” with her, so we can safely assume that she will never give up her membership in the meandering club of lost generation expatriates because it is the only thing she knows and the only thing in which she truly believes.

In order to understand fully Brett’s final intentions regarding her life and religious affiliations, it is necessary to analyze the outcome of her relationship with Pedro Romero. With regards to this situation, Brett indicates that she ended the relationship and sent him away for his own good, because she did not want to be “one of these bitches that ruins children” (Hemingway 247). However, after a closer reading of the text, it is easy to see that it is Romero who most likely left her, especially considering that the only pieces of information we receive about what happens between them, after Brett and Romero leave Pamplona, we hear from Brett herself. As Bill is explaining to Jake what happened in the fight between Robert Cohn and Romero on the night before the bull fight, Bill comments that “Brett couldn’t hold him” (Hemingway 26), a statement which literally means that Brett could not physically restrain Pedro Romero from defending himself against Cohn, but also has an obvious underlying meaning that she could not hold on to him or maintain their relationship. Brett’s insistence on lying to Jake about the outcome of her relationship with Romero is just another example of her choice to continue “being a bitch,” and since this is what she claims to have “instead of God,” we can only assume that she is choosing to retain her membership in the moral-less group that she has been engaged with up to this point. This decision also shows her clear forfeiture of the only religion she claims, this “not being a bitch,” in order to continue her current lifestyle.

Also in the closing scene, Brett moves closer to Jake in the cab and tells Jake that they “could have had such a damned good time together,” to which Jake responds, “Yes…isn’t it pretty to think so?” (251). Brett’s choice of the masculine word “damned” in contrast with Jake’s use of the feminine word “pretty” seems to indicate that Jake has finally resigned himself to the way in which Brett constantly reminds him of his war wound and the fact that they can never be together physically. Whether or not Jake is choosing to identify himself as a homosexual with this phrase, it will now be possible for him to overcome his sexual limitations and establish meaningful relationships with people who will accept him as he is. Wolfgang Rudat argues that “Jake terminates the absurd romantic relationship between a sexually crippled man and a highly sexed woman in an appropriately absurd fashion…through his sardonic use of the word pretty” (“Sexual Dilemmas” 5). By successfully distancing himself from Brett, Jake is able to construct a more emotionally fulfilling life for himself in which his inadequacies are not the primary factor by which he judges his own level of happiness.

Thus, some light has been shed on the woundedness of Jake and his relationships with other members of the group of wounded expatriates. Being “one of us” involves both the psychological scars inflicted by the war and the physical damage done to the member’s bodies. Religion is treated almost mockingly by Lady Brett, who understands her status as a sinner, but refuses to give up her life of excess in order to find redemption. She claims to have a religion of her own, that of “not being a bitch,” but this ends up simply playing the role of her stand-in for religion, given that she lied about her relationship with Pedro Romero and has therefore continued “being a bitch.” Jake operates under the moral financial code of the novel, never denying his religious ties, but not knowing how to use them in his everyday life, until his cathartic moment while swimming in San Sebastian and his subsequent decision to exorcise himself of Brett in order to attain a degree of satisfaction and happiness in his life that can only be achieved through rejection of his group membership. Clearly, Brett will continue in her life of excess, while Jake has abandoned it for a more meaningful existence.

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Notable Books and Events of Interest:

~*Battle Runes: Writings on War* has been published by Editions Bibliotekos (2011). There are twenty-one authors (thirty-seven individual works – short stories and poems from all over the world) writing about the physical and psychological ravages of war on individuals and families. Parts of the book are shocking and horrifying, but in the end there is hope. The book has received a * **5-Star Rating on Amazon.com** from the Midwest Book Review.

~John Guzlowski, poet, writer, and (emeritus) professor, will be reading at St. Francis College on 11 October 2011. Details are at the Bibliotekos website www.ebibliotekos.com The theme of Dr. Guzlowski’s reading (borrowing from the title of his latest collection of poems about his parents’ experience as slave laborers in Nazi camps) is: Lightning and Ashes – Two Lives Shaped by World War II. John Guzlowski’s powerfully distrubing story “The German” is included in *Battle Runes*.

~Moral Sense: The Biology of Morality is a colloquium expected to take place at St. Francis College, at some point in early 2012, to mark the renovations to our science center. The colloquium will feature a psychologist, a biologist, and a philosopher on the topic of the moral sense. For more information, feel free to query Gregory F. Tague. Announcements will most likely appear on Dr. Tague’s Academia.edu and LinkedIn pages.