"I, TOO, SING AMERICA"

STUDENTS' ESSAYS
ON 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE

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Introduction

Jasna Poljak Rehlicki, Petar Botić
and Mislav Uzunić

This collection of essays comprises a selection of papers written by students of English Language and Literature who attended the Survey of American Literature II (20th century) course in the year 2014/2015 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. Writing an essay for the class was a requirement, and the students were free to choose their own topic. The purpose of the assignment was to present and elaborate prevailing motifs and problems in 20th century American literature, such as the pursuit of happiness, existential crisis, race, class, and sexuality. Students were expected to show an understanding of contemporary American texts which demands a deeper comprehension of social and cultural processes and changes within 20th century American history and literature. Many students provided an analysis beyond the literary works and issues discussed in class, thus offering an original and insightful addition to the discussion of contemporary American literature, and contributing to the interdisciplinarity of this collection which is divided into five sections: The American Dream, Social Criticism, African-American Literature, Identity Issues, and Gender Issues.

The first part is titled "THE AMERICAN DREAM" and deals with the American ideal, or rather, criticizes the idea that material wealth can indeed provide happiness. The five essays included in this chapter draw their main inspiration from "The Roaring Twenties," especially Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, with some of the authors providing an even further analysis by discussing the topic from a more modern and racially biased viewpoint found in Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*.

The second part of the collection is titled "SOCIAL CRITICISM" and includes six essays dealing with American society and providing a critique from the aspects of the Beat Generation, modernist and postmodernist criticism, and works such as *Beloved*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, or *A Raisin in the Sun*. The problems discussed rely on issues of the individual's freedom within the society, coping with motherhood in the all changing world, and the crisis of values in the periods we know as Modernism and Postmodernism.

The third part is titled "AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE" and includes three essays that consider the problems of race, identity, and values of African Americans in 20th century America. Like other American authors,

African American authors also dealt with the concerns of one's place in the society, the problem of changing values, and the pursuit of happiness embodied in the ideal of the American Dream. A peculiarity of the African American literature, however, is the issue of racial identity, something that was a constant occupation, and inspiration for African American literary works such as *Beloved* and *A Raisin in the Sun*, which were also the main focus for the essays found in this section.

The fourth part titled "IDENTITY ISSUES" deals with problems such as questioning our own identity and existence, and disillusionment with the traditional concept of an ideal character or hero. The five essays included in this part discuss an emergence of new, modern heroes who are not ideal or "heroic" in the classical sense – they are ordinary people, often confused or alone, trying to find their place in the world through material and spiritual wellbeing. The literary works discussed in this part range from the early 20th century texts including William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, to more modern works such as Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.

The fifth part of the collection titled "GENDER ISSUES" consists of five essays that discuss the concepts of masculinity and femininity, and provide an analysis of the characters found in literary works such as Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, W. Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. In their essays, the students discuss masculinity and femininity in the light of the post-World War I United States, the relationship between the two, and the problems faced in the forever-changed world of that time.

We must point to the fact that this collection exceeds its main objective of thinking and writing about 20th century American literature for the purpose of one particular course. The papers gathered here should also provide an exemplar to any future students of Survey of American Literature II (20th century), both in how to form and style their essays, and to give them a general direction in discussing relevant problems and motifs of 20th century American literature. However, one should bear in mind that this collection is not intended only for present and future students of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek, but also to all those who deal with 20th century American literature in their studies. Finally, we hope that this collection of essays illustrates the importance of how students' reading, thinking, and writing about literature enriches their knowledge of language, history, society, and culture in the twentieth-century United States, and contributes to their understanding and decoding the past and present issues of the contemporary world within the scope of American studies and beyond.

Part I: The American Dream

It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And then one fine morning—

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

(*The Great Gatsby*)

"Money Can't Buy Happiness": The Representation of the American Dream in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*

Andrea Đumlija

The American Dream is rooted in the Declaration of Independence which states that "all men are created equal" with the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Over the course of history the idea of the American Dream has changed from being about the discovery of happiness into a desire for wealth. Property ownership, along with the upward mobility on the social scale, developed into the two most important aspects of every American Dreamer's desire. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the American Dream as "an American social ideal that stresses egalitarianism and especially material prosperity; also: the prosperity or life that is the realization of this ideal." Being a prominent cultural legacy, the theme of striving to achieve the American Dream is commonly present in various literary works from different literary periods. Two such works are very well known novels *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry. In both the main characters are in pursuit of the American Dream as a status of belonging to the wealthy upper-class but they eventually realize that their dreams essentially revolve around a desire for love and acceptance.

At first, Jay Gatsby's life seems to be a perfect example of living the American Dream, especially the one of the Roaring Twenties. Living in a giant mansion, having flashy parties and luxurious cars, and serving gallons of liquor are a part of reputable Gatsby's everyday life. Although he is very famous for his parties, he does not mingle with his guests; in fact, nobody really knows anything about him. To those who surround him, Jay Gatsby's success and personality are measured and evaluated according to the amount of money he is ready to invest in a party. Gatsby himself perceives money as the key to success. However, he is not as shallow as is the traditional interpretation of the American Dream. Soon we realize, as Pidgeon explains, that "Fitzgerald makes it clear that Gatsby does not enjoy these things for himself, they are merely being used to realize his dream . . . the acquisition of Daisy" (180). The flashy parties and the ostentatious lifestyle proved to be a way of trying to get Daisy's attention. When they first met, he was a poor young soldier who had nothing to offer her, and Daisy had neither time nor patience to wait for him so she married the snobbish Tom Buchanan. She is a representation of high

status and wealth, but also, for Gatsby, she represents love. Coming back from the war, Gatsby spends all of his days trying to attain enough a fortune to attract Daisy by being able to provide for her lavish lifestyle. He buys a house practically across from hers and when Daisy finally comes to visit, Gatsby's room is described as much simpler than the rest of the house: "His bedroom was the simplest room of all" (Fitzgerald 93). Conveniently, that is the only part of the house that no one gets to see. His room again, just like not showing up at his own parties, represents the true parts that only Daisy gets to see. Further, Gatsby shows her his wardrobe and starts throwing shirts in front of her, and she says: "'They're such beautiful shirts,' she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. 'It makes me sad because I've never seen such – such beautiful shirts before'" (Fitzgerald 93). Gatsby, however, does not show them to brag, he does it as a sort of a reassurance thus proving to Daisy, the love of his life, that he can now provide for her, love her like she deserves to be loved. Everything materialistic that he attained never really mattered and Daisy, her respect and love for him, turned out to be the only true valuables Gatsby yearned for: " . . . he stared around at his possessions in a dazed way, as though in her actual and astounding presence none of it was any longer real" (Fitzgerald 92). Even though money is reason enough for Daisy to love someone, it has to be inherited. In order to be completely worthy of Daisy's love and acceptance in the society she lives in, Gatsby had to be an aristocrat by birth. At this point, the American Dream and all of its values, be it the egalitarianism, entrepreneurship, or material wealth, collapse disastrously. Because of the contorted interpretation of the American Dream that equates happiness with inherited material wealth, Gatsby tries to buy true love with money and status, and in the end, he loses both Daisy and his life:

> *Gatsby instills Daisy with a kind of idealized perfection that she neither deserves nor possesses, and when his dream crumbles, all that is left for Gatsby to do is dying. Gatsby's dream is ruined by the unworthiness of its object [Daisy and love], just as the American Dream in the 1920's is ruined by the unworthiness of its subject – money and pleasure.* (Shen 1729)

Despite the temporal and socioeconomic differences between the characters, the play *A Raisin in the Sun* also depicts achieving the American Dream in a materialistic sense as an instrument for trying to attain something greater and more valuable. In the beginning of the play, set somewhere around the 1950s, a poor African American family, the Youngers, are about to receive a ten thousand dollar insurance check from the deceased Mr. Younger's life insurance policy. At first, the Younger family's perception of the American Dream revolves around money. Every member of the family wants to spend the money according to their own individual wishes. Mama wants to buy a house and Ruth, Walter's wife, agrees with her. Walter Lee, on the other hand

wants to invest in a liquor store with his friends, but his sister, Beneatha, wants to use the money for her medical school tuition. Except for the wise old Mama, they are all obsessed with money and living the corrupted American Dream:

> *MAMA: Oh – So now it's life. Money is life. Once upon a time freedom used to be life – now it's money. I guess the world really do change . . .*
> *WALTER: No – it was always money, Mama. We just didn't know about it.*
> *MAMA: No . . . something has changed. You something new, boy. In my time we was worried about not being lynched . . . You ain't satisfied or proud of nothing we done. I mean that you had a home; that we kept you out of trouble till you was grown; that you don't have to ride to work on the back of nobody's streetcar – You my children – but how different we done become.* (Hansberry 92)

Finally, sick of arguing, Mama buys a house and, to everybody's surprise, it is in a neighborhood well known as white-only. She trusts Walter with the rest of the money and they start packing for moving into their new home. Meanwhile, Walter invests in a liquor store after all and his "friend" runs away with the money. At this point, the family starts to realize the cost of selfishness. Further, the appearance of Mr. Linder who offers them money not to move into his neighborhood because they are black, at the same time shocks, infuriates and encourages Walter and the rest of the Younger family to stop thinking about how to make and spend money, and to start thinking like a loving family that deserves respect. The difference between Gatsby's and the Young family's view about the American Dream is that the Youngers realize in time the true "value" of material wealth and use this knowledge and awareness to try and attain acceptance in society as a loving African American family, while Gatsby dies in denial and with the belief that money really can buy true love. The Youngers do try to buy acceptance and respect by using money in an attempt to climb higher on the social scale just like Gatsby, however, they achieve happiness not because of the money and the new house but through the realization of their love for each other and their own worthiness both as individuals and as a group. They are more aware of moral standards than Gatsby who bootlegs his way into making a fortune during Prohibition, and creates a false JAY with a completely materialistic mindset just to make his life *seem* as though it is the American Dream. The Youngers stay true to themselves and they leave out the false reality of excessive materialism by putting the family first. As Mitchell concludes:

> *Through Hansberry's careful craftsmanship, the universal themes of the importance of dreams and the frustration of dreams deferred, the strength of family, the importance of not selling out, the problems of conflicting expectations, the belief that love and trust will win over deceit and selfishness, and the dangers of prejudice and stereotyping are as powerful today as they were nearly four decades ago when she wrote the play.* (2)

By investing money into a house in a white neighborhood the Youngers try to fight for equality and acceptance.

To conclude, the primary idea of the American Dream was to ensure the best possible life for a US citizen by following the philosophy of egalitarianism and hard work. However, the dream turned into a purely materialistic ideology that equates money and wealth with happiness. Both Gatsby and the Youngers try to follow these "ideals" to attain something that is not attainable with dollars – love, acceptance, and pride. Wealthy or not, these values do not come in the form of a cheque or a large mansion. Following the corrupted American Dream and lust for money thinking it can make anything right unfortunately led to Gatsby's tragic downfall. On the other hand, the Youngers realize in time the catastrophic effects of this obsession with the materialistic, and even though they use some of their money to set off to a new house in a classier neighborhood that is not what bonds them. The realization that they should respect and love each other bonds them. Moving away to a nicer but white neighborhood is their way of beating society's expectations and conquering the American Dream closer to its original sense that enables the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

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Daisy Buchanan as a Representation of the American Dream

Tina Hocenski

Definitions of the American Dream can be found in all dictionaries nowadays. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary the American Dream is "an American social ideal that stresses egalitarianism and especially material prosperity," but it can also mean "the prosperity or life that is the realization of this ideal." The dream was created by the first settlers who came to America. For them, the dream was connected to God and religion, and they thought if they worked hard enough that God would save them when the apocalypse comes (Pidgeon 178). Due to the fact that "hard work was associated with God, and since hard work often resulted in wealth, it was not long before these two things became associated" (Pidgeon 178), and the dream became corrupted. The concept of the American Dream became very appealing to authors who started to write about it, giving their views. One of these authors is Francis Scott Fitzgerald, whose novel *The Great Gatsby* "enjoyed enthusiastic reviews, and won Fitzgerald warm praise from writers he deeply admired" (Lass 158). It could be said that Fitzgerald presents the American Dream or the distorted values of it through one of the main characters in the novel, namely Daisy Buchanan.

First, the American Dream can be "excitingly desirable" (Donaldson 206) to a lot of people, just like Daisy is to Gatsby. It is evident from the beginning of the novel that Daisy represents Gatsby's American Dream: " . . . his own dream for himself is modified somewhat when, as an officer waiting to go overseas during the war, he meets Daisy Fay and falls in love with her . . ." (Handley 33). Furthermore, the American Dream can also be so alluring that it makes people do things they would not normally do. Since Daisy cannot stay with Gatsby, because he does not have enough money, his life quest becomes getting Daisy back, which eventually means getting rich illegally. Due to Daisy's alluringness Gatsby breaks the law to achieve his American Dream.

Moreover, Daisy is all about materialism and money and so is the American Dream. What differentiates Gatsby from Daisy is the fact that his dream is not materialistic. By connecting his dream with Daisy, his dream becomes spiritual, which also makes it harder for him to achieve it. When compared to Daisy, Gatsby is a total opposite who cannot survive in that materialistic world, in a world where Daisy's voice is "full of money" (Fitzgerald 76). Gatsby does not want to accept the fact that Daisy's one true love is money,

and that "she shows more emotion for . . . [his] possessions than for . . . [him]" (Donaldson 208). He does not want to accept that his dream could be so superficial. Therefore Daisy also represents this particular distorted value of the dream, while on the other hand Gatsby represents the everlasting innocence of the dream.

The American Dream can also be characterized with adjectives, such as selfish and careless. These characteristics can also be used to describe Daisy. Daisy represents the Old Money, aristocrats who have inherited the money and are therefore wealthy (Poljak Rehlicki). From the beginning of the novel, it is evident that it would be very difficult for Gatsby to get Daisy back, because Daisy was "mentally" very different from him: "Daisy cannot stand emotions. After all, sophistication is merely an emphasis on ritual without emotion. In fact, it leaves no room for emotion because emotions are dangerous; they are demanding and cannot always be controlled" (Pidgeon 181). Just like Daisy, the American Dream shows no room for compassion or emotions. Daisy is one of the "careless people . . . [who] smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made . . . " (Fitzgerald 114). The American Dream is also "careless," it is not interested in the prosperity of all but the prosperity of the individual.

What is more, the American Dream is beguiling. At first it is innocent, just like Daisy was the first time Gatsby saw her: "She was just eighteen, two years older than me, and by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville. She dressed in white and had a little white roadster . . ." (Fitzgerald 48). He started to fall in love with this innocent vision of her and idealize her, and when he met her again, he realized that his vision was far more beautiful than Daisy ever was: "There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams – not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion" (Fitzgerald 61). Daisy was a part of the idealization, a part of his vision, but when he got what he wanted, when he met her again, the significance of her and the dream "had now vanished forever" (Fitzgerald 60). Daisy could therefore represent the beguilement of the American Dream, which may seem attractive at first but eventually leads a person towards destruction.

Furthermore, the American Dream can also be haunting. People can start obsessing over it, and eventually lose their way. That is what happened to Gatsby. Even though he was disappointed in Daisy, he still could not give up on his dream, because it became a part of him: "But he has 'thrown himself into . . . [the dream] with creative passion,' and it has, in fact, become more

than Daisy herself. Gatsby is true to the dream – he has this fine capacity for imaginative wonder – but the reality cannot measure up to it" (Handley 34). Gatsby made a mistake by letting his dream, and consequently Daisy, define him, which in the end cost him his life. Daisy haunted Gatsby like the American Dream haunts some people, and for him there was no way out.

Lastly, the American Dream is also out of reach for some, which is also visible through one of the symbols from the novel, the symbol of the green light. That particular light "is the green light at the end of Daisy's dock in East Egg which becomes the dominant symbol of Gatsby's emotional complex" (Quirk 583). The light can therefore represent Daisy, as Gatsby's dream, as well as the American Dream for other people who will never be able to reach it. By observing the light, Daisy seems too far away, and so does the dream. For Gatsby, Daisy is out of reach, just as the American Dream is for some, and many people can only stare at their green light from a distance.

In a nutshell, with *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald shows how the true values of the dream, which were innocent at first, became corrupted. The corrupted values can be observed through Daisy's character. She is desirable, all about the money, selfish, and careless, beguiling, haunting, and out of reach just like the American Dream. The dream can seem so desirable at first that one can get obsessed with it, but in the end turn out to be the total opposite of what one had expected. It is all about the individual success and money which results in the lack of empathy and selfishness. Fitzgerald wants to make people be aware of the fact that money can destroy a person, and that materialism can destroy societies. He also implies that, some people are born living the dream, while some will never have the opportunity to realize it. Some people, like Gatsby, try to achieve it, but fail: "The boy from small town in the Midwest makes it to the big time and falls as quickly, and as unnoticed, as the stars who shot to drunken prominence at his parties . . ." (Handley 35). Gatsby could not achieve his dream, because of the distorted values of the American Dream. Fitzgerald presents us with these values of the dream through the character of Daisy, and implies that sticking to the indulgence of immesurable wealth and meaningless life will eventually "lead . . . to the wasteland of money without humanity" (Handley 35).

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The Pursuit of Wealth in *The Great Gatsby* and *A Raisin in the Sun*

Luka Kurmaić

From its beginnings, the United States of America has attracted people by being a fabled land of opportunity, a country where every worthy, hard-working person can find their future and ensure their prosperity. This vision is called the American Dream, and it is inextricably connected to the pursuit of material wealth. However, many individuals and even entire families have effectively been ruined by this relentless struggle for riches. Indeed, Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* are both works which explore the different ways and circumstances in which the American Dream is pursued, the resulting negative consequences of that pursuit, and the impact it has on human lives; in essence, they describe the degradation of the American Dream.

Gatsby, the eponymous, central character of Fitzgerald's novel, at first seems to us a typical aspiring social climber. His childhood and character are similar to those of characters from the books of Horatio Alger: "Alger's stories all follow the same pattern; a poor boy perseveres through hard work, goes from rags to riches, climbs the ladder of success, and earns not only wealth but also acceptance from the "better people", the wealthy in our society" (Pidgeon 2). Like Horatio Alger's protagonists, Gatsby is a destitute youth who strives for a loftier position. Aware that this endeavor will require great effort, skills, and sophistication, he methodically crafts himself a daily routine of self-improvement, much like the ones Benjamin Franklin described in his own written advice to others. The deeply American nature of Gatsby's character and aspirations make him relatable and heroic, while his obvious wealth and refinement paints the picture of a successful American Dream.

However, as we learn, his dream is unfulfilled so long as Daisy is not his. As the story unfolds, we realize why Daisy is so crucial to Gatsby. "Her voice is full of money," Gatsby says of Daisy, and Nick then describes her as "high in a white palace, the king's daughter, the golden girl" (Fitzgerald 65). Gatsby does not love Daisy and nor does he want her as his wife because of her character, but because her very existence is so intrinsically linked with money and social status. An important symbol in the work, the green light at the end of Daisy's dock, "signals him into the heart of his vision," (Pidgeon 4) as well as "symbolizes what Gatsby longs for: the American Dream . . ." (Chandizi and Ghasemi 2). Daisy becomes a symbol of wealth, of the "better people," in whose ranks Gatsby wishes to be included. By becoming Daisy's

husband, Gatsby would become part of this circle of people and their life, and only once that had happened Gatsby would feel a success. This single-minded pursuit is the decisive reason for Gatsby's tragic fate. The result is Fitzgerald's critique of the American society of the Roaring Twenties. The upper-class aristocracy, the "old money," cannot ever accept the "new money" and regards them with disdain. The American higher classes are presented as a corrupting force, a caste which corrupts honest, ambitious men such as Gatsby. It is a cynical, harsh ending which posits the notion that the noble American Dream has been corrupted and perverted. However, at the heart of Gatsby's failure there is still a deeply personal and individual issue at hand rather than the disapproval of the aristocracy. It is Gatsby's inability to accept that he cannot achieve all his heart's wishes which dooms him to failure.

An entirely different set of circumstances are at work with Walter Younger, the protagonist of *A Raisin in the Sun*. There are several key differences, the most obvious one being Walter's race. As an African American, his struggle for wealth is also a test of the American Dream's universality. Is it truly accessible to all Americans, and do all Americans view it in the same light? One of the most rampant causes of racism at the time was the housing industry (Jose 4), which the play uses as a backdrop for the Younger family's private and social issues. Walter, arguably the designated heroic figure of this play, seeks to rise above his station and achieve financial security and independence. This relatively modest ambition is treated as a delusional dream by the rest of Walter's family, which shows us the appalling standard of life African American families were forced to endure. The "African American Dream" as portrayed in the play is less of an attempt at becoming a high-class, well-off individual than it is an attempt to rise out of the lower-class and acquiring a pleasant, ordinary life which the stereotypical white American already enjoys. The "African American Dream" is presented as an incomplete, poor man's version of the idealized experience. The notion of race becomes paramount, particularly in Walter's case, who sets the "white man" as his benchmark: "Sometimes when I'm downtown and I pass them cool, quiet-looking restaurants where them white boys are sitting back and talking 'bout things . . . sitting there turning deals worth millions of dollars . . . sometimes I see guys don't look much older than me" (Hansberry 37).

As with Gatsby, the American Dream brings disorder and decay into Walter's life. Unbridled ambition as well as imprudent, rash decisions hurt the most important thing Walter has – his family. Just like Gatsby could not feel satisfaction in his riches without Daisy, Walter feels he cannot feel happy being a husband and father without ensuring the family's financial security – "his main purpose is not for himself, but for his wife and son" (Washington 12). This leads him to succinctly phrase his belief that "money is life" (Hansberry 37).

A key difference between Gatsby and Walter is the fact that Walter is seeking money to improve his family's life, while Gatsby seeks it to achieve social success and to marry Daisy. While Walter never actually gives up on his dream, he nonetheless eventually affirms his family as a priority over money. In this manner, Hansberry acknowledges the worth of Walter's dream, but also sends the message that money should not be a person's primary concern in life. In this sense, the play is also a powerful criticism both of racism, and the classist, deeply materialistic American society.

In both works, the American Dream is initially showed to be a positive, noble idea which worthy individuals strive for. But upon closer inspection and after further developments, we see that this vision is dangerous because it causes one to lose sight of everything else but the money. The American Dream is inherently an exhausting affair that usually benefits primarily only one person and possibly their family as well. It requires temperance and patience the likes of which most people do not have. When the disastrous consequences become evident, we are left to conclude that if the dream was ever possible at all, it has degraded and lost its previous dazzling appeal.

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The Differences between the African American's and the White's American Dream

Kathrin Majić Mazul

The Declaration of Independence of the United States declares that all men are equal with inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These undeniable rights form the basis of the American Dream. According to this, every U.S. citizen whether white or African American should be given the same opportunity in the pursuit of the American Dream. However, Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* and Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* clearly illustrate that some men are not as equal as others. Even though the American Dream proclaims the same opportunity for prosperity regardless of skin color, neither Fitzgerald's protagonist nor Hansberry's protagonists easily achieve the American Dream; but it is certain that the achievement of the American Dream is much more difficult for African Americans than for the white people.

In her play *A Raisin in the Sun*, Hansberry demonstrates the discrepancies between the achievement of the White's American Dream and the African American's dream through the characters of the Younger family. They all experience racism in employment and house purchasing. If they want to be able to afford themselves the bare necessities to survive, they have to work for the rich white families: WALTER: "Mama, a job? I open and close car doors all day long. I drive a man around in his limousine and I say, "Yes, sir; no, sir; very good, sir; shall I take the Drive, sir?" Mama, that ain't no kind of job . . . that ain't anything at all" (Hansberry 37). Walter Younger, who is thirty-five years old, wants to achieve something better for himself and his family by investing the insurance money in the liquor store venture. He does not want to spend his life driving around white people and obeying their wishes. The fact that he still cannot provide his family a decent living frustrates him: WALTER: "This morning, I was lookin' in the mirror and thinking about it... I'm thirtyfive years old; I been married eleven years and I got a boy who sleeps in the living room (*very, very quietly*) – and all I got to give him is stories about how rich white people live . . ." (Hansberry 10). His vision of the American Dream implies that the key to happiness is money. He does not appreciate his origin and heritage as Mama does, but rather mocks it as he struggles to be more like the white rich people: "And I'll pull the car up on the driveway just a plain black Chrysler, I think, with white walls–no–black tires. More elegant. Rich people don't have to be flashy . . . though I'll have

to get something a little sportier for Ruth–maybe a Cadillac convertible to do her shopping in" (Hansberry 62). His whole existence and meaning of life revolves around his desire to become rich and be able to afford his family everything they want. Unfortunately, the path toward material wealth is not easy for an African American originating from a poor, ordinary family.

Moreover, Hansberry sets the play in Chicago's South side where African Americans lived in small, overcrowded, and dilapidated apartments. The post-World War II period, the time when the play is set, is "characterized by extreme overcrowding, dilapidated tenements, high rents, and cramped "kitchenette apartments"" (Sperry, Perry, and Tatum). Also, Sofia C. Jose writes that "the real estate industry was aided in segregating Chicago by unfair costs of living within the housing industry. Landlords charged black families high prices for low quality housing, and the average black family in the ghetto had to pay 10% more in housing taxes and fees than in a comparable white neighborhood" (Jose 4). From these facts we can see that African Americans almost had no chance to improve their social status and escape the ghetto. Hansberry mirrors the actual situation of those years, housing segregation, into her play. While Walter only desires to attain enormous material wealth, Mama's vision of the American Dream includes a house with a garden to tend her plants: MAMA: "But Lord, child, you should know all the dreams I had 'bout buying that house and fixing it up and making me a little garden in the back" (Hansberry 17). She fulfills her dream and buys a house with a garden for her family to live in. However, the house is set in a white neighborhood since the houses in such neighborhoods are more affordable. Consequently, a representative of the white neighborhood in which the house is located, Mr. Lindner, blatantly tries to keep the Younger family away from it: "It is a matter of the people of Clybourne Park believing, rightly or wrongly, as I say, that for the happiness of all concerned that our Negro families are happier when they live in their own communities" (Hansberry 68). Racism in every sphere of their lives as the largest obstacle on their path toward fulfilling the American Dream truly offends their dignity and right to freedom in every sense. Nonetheless, nobody can take away their pride and the richness of mind and spirit: MAMA: "Son – I come from five generations of people who was slaves and sharecroppers – but ain't nobody in my family never let nobody pay 'em no money that was a way of telling us we wasn't fit to walk the earth. We ain't never been that poor. We ain't never been that – dead inside" (Hansberry 86). Although Mama's and Walter's dreams clash in the beginning, and Walter's shallowness and blind pursuit of material wealth threaten to tear the family apart, they show huge strength that white racist people will never have, and realize that the only thing that matters is a happy and united family.

On the other hand, the main protagonist of Fitzgerald's novel *The Great*

Gatsby, Jay Gatsby, fulfills the old-fashioned American Dream to own a large house, expensive car, and be a part of an upper social class. Nick, Gatsby's neighbor, describes Gatsby's house as a "colossal affair by any standard it was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a Marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden, it was Gatsby's mansion" (Fitzgerald 3). As opposed to Walter who never succeeds in attaining wealth, Gatsby uses lies and delusions on his path to the achievement of the dream. Although, just like Walter, he originates from an unknown family, he is given a better chance to enter the world of rich people and snobbery.

Furthermore, Fitzgerald depicts the dream as "an era of decay, both in moral and social values, displayed as cynicism, unrestrained greed, and the hedonistic pursuit of material excess" (Payne). The novel is set in the Jazz Age which is known for its reckless and opulent parties. Gatsby throws dissolute parties every week with an abundance of alcohol, gaudy display, and shallow people who lost their soul and dignity in the pursuit of money:

> *In the foreground four solemn men in dress suits are walking along the sidewalk with a stretcher on which lies a drunken woman in a white evening dress. Her hand, which dangles over the side, sparkles cold with jewels. Gravely the men turn in at a house– the wrong house. But no one knows the woman's name, and no one cares.* (Fitzgerald 97)

Human morality and social values are in decay as the Roaring Twenties and Prohibition offer a tempting shortcut to earning material wealth. Gatsby is not an exception: "Instead of what he is supposed to do, which is to go to school and work hard to get to the top, Gatsby drops out of College and chooses the short way of criminal activity, bootlegging, to move his way closer to the realization of his dream" (Changizi and Ghasemi 64).

However, Gatsby does not want to reveal the truth about his background because he is of no aristocratic origin. In order to completely fulfill his dream, to win back his long lost love, he invents stories about how he came to the top: "I am the son of some wealthy people in the Middle West, all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford, because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition" (Fitzgerald 34). Gatsby's lack of a prominent family or legacy to support him does not limit him on his path toward the Dream. Unlike the Younger family who is oppressed by the white people on their path to the fulfillment of the dream, nobody prevents the characters from *The Great Gatsby* from engaging in criminal activities. They do not care about their immoral behavior or other people. Only thing that matters to them is money and how to enjoy life: "They were careless people, Tom and Daisy – they smashed up things and creatures

and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together and let other people clean up the mess they had made" (Fitzgerald 98). In the end of the novel, Gatsby realizes that the blind pursuit of money costs him the most valuable things in life that money cannot buy. He attains the material wealth, but loses what is really important: family and friends.

To conclude, everybody has his/her own vision of the American Dream and strives to achieve it. However, not everybody has the same opportunity to do so. Both Hansberry and Fitzgerald portray the pursuit of money as something that corrupts the human soul. The characters in *A Raisin in the Sun* experience racism and the oppression of the white people on their own skin. For them the path to the top is not an easy one as they are limited by their skin color. Conversely, nothing limits Gatsby and other characters from the novel in their pursuit of money, not even the fact that their path toward it is paved with criminal acts and decay of morality and social values. Although everybody desires material wealth and envisions it as their ultimate American Dream, it is not just about the acquisition of the money and material things; it is about having a happy, loving family, to be contented with yourself and the life you have. Those who come to this realization will achieve the true American Dream regardless of their skin color.

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The Strength of the American Dream and its Heroes in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*

Josipa Pleša

Every war produces heroes. When the First World War ended, it was seen as the most destructive one in the history of mankind, with consequences which deeply marked the first part of the twentieth century, changing lifestyles and perspectives, influencing every aspect of life, including art. The 1930s were the years which brought to life two grand novels that point out the emptiness of post-war existence and the painful inability to forget or change the past. Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* are masterpieces with plots revolving around tragic heroes and their lost, unfulfilled dreams. The American culture and its dream of constant progress and material wealth shaped every generation, prospering even today, despite the fact that it has proven, so many times, to be impossible. The years after the First World War were marked by painful memories, inability to adapt to society once more, by the constant search for meaning and wealth and above all, the corruption of the society which destroys good individuals. Even though these two novels show how the search for the American Dream is always doomed to fail due to the corrupted society and malevolent human nature, it also shows how it can never be destroyed because its fallen heroes must become symbols of new hope.

Reading *The Great Gatsby,* one gets an image of, what seems on the outside, the perfect life. Jay Gatsby's life looks like a golden dream, coloured with the finest shades, but inside filled with memories that cannot be forgotten and haunting wishes of repeating the past once again. It was the same with the American society of that time, where a great abyss lay between what is on the surface, decorated and presented by the upper class, and what was in the core; empty, and broken. A similar principle can be seen in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and the way expatriates wander around Europe drinking excessively like they do not have a care in the world. This crippled generation of lost people who can no longer connect to the society are those who carry the burden of the war they survived and the misfortunes they had seen. When Jay sees that he will never be accepted by the society, he so long wanted to be a part of, and when Jake Barnes reconciles with the emptiness of life, they become symbols of broken ideals and dreams. There is no possible way to

bridge the gap between them and all the other people: "The loneliest moment in someone's life is when they are watching their whole world fall apart, and all they can do is stare blankly" (Fitzgerald 77).

Time is one of the most important motifs in both of the novels since different outlooks on the past define characters and influence their actions. The major moral of these novels is the fact that the past cannot be changed or repeated and one must learn how to accept this in order to live in the present. Gatsby is different from Hemingway's characters in a way that he uses time to constantly move forward, to follow the dream, repeat the past and get the love of his life, while Jake Barnes, together with Lady Brett and the others, never moves forward because he is destroyed by the memories and the inability to live fully. For them, time only passes and nothing good or constructive can come out if it: "I can't stand it to think my life is going so fast and I'm not really living it" (Hemingway 53). Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's characters have different perspectives regarding time, but they are all extremes, the fallen ones, Gatsby with his endeavour to repeat the past and Hemingway's characters with the inability to forget it.

The American Dream inevitably connects material wealth with happiness. This dream presents itself to be so pure and majestic while at the same time stands so terribly corrupted by greed and malice. It promotes all the best an individual can achieve by using all the worst methods: "The dream itself is ambiguous, contradictory, romantic in nature, and undeniably beautiful while at the same time grotesquely flawed" (Hearne 191). Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's protagonists can be seen as heroes of that dream since they never gave up completely, in spite of their inability to succeed and find happiness. They were all ruined because they followed the ideals of the dream: to fight for one's nation and to fight for one's material prosperity. The biggest irony is that they all lost all those things they were searching for: love, freedom, and happiness: "In the end Jake will never achieve the psychological stability he craves because he finally accepts prevailing social and medical philosophies about his injury" (Fore 3). Their actions were driven by the myth and from the beginning they were determined to fail in such a corrupted environment. Nevertheless, Gatsby is the one who fought until the end, and the Barnes' crowd is the one that survived the war. None of them have ever actually been free and they never had a choice. They are the victims and the heroes of the dream because the dream is something that moves, and in the end, destroys them.

For the fallen heroes of the American Dream, there is no love, no stability, and no peace. Those are the things these characters were never able to achieve and whose lives became symbols, strengthening, and enrooting the dream in the minds of future American generations. Something pure, no matter how

strong or determined it is, can never succeed in a corrupted and perverse society. This is why the dream can never fully thrive. It is only a beautiful myth designed to make a nation stronger by strengthening its individuals. The dream was never as good as those whose lives were ruined because of it and that is the biggest tragedy for each of the characters: ". . . never knowing that the dream which his idealism has created is not worthy of him . . ." (Pidgeon 179). In spite of all their misery, these characters are the ones whose pain and sacrifice brought hope, not for them, but for generations to come. These characters stand at the heart of the American Dream for they are the ones who never gave up, even when there was nothing left to fight for. They are those who will always be remembered by the ones who matter and their bitter legacy cherished by those who come after them: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (Fitzgerald 182).

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Part II: Social Criticism

Moloch who entered my soul early! Moloch in whom I am a consciousness without a body! Moloch who frightened me out of my natural ecstasy! Moloch whom I abandon! Wake up in Moloch! Light streaming out of the sky!

("Howl")

The "Lost Generation" and the "Beat Generation": A Mirror of Society's Problems

Marko Lugarić

Spanning across lifetimes and countless generations that came and went on this planet, few ever sparked such controversies to deserve special mention in the history books as the two generations that came to be known as the "Lost Generation" and the "Beat Generation". How they came to be called terms like "lost" and "beat", and why exactly they can be considered a mirror of society's problems, is the key question, one for which it is necessary to dig deeper into their history, down to the very source. It is important to note that both of these generations share something very specific in common, something that the previous generations do not, and that is the fact that both the "Lost" and the "Beat Generation" are generations of people who survived and lived after world wars – the largest wars mankind has ever known. Specifically, it was World War I which created the "Lost Generation" and World War II which created the "Beat Generation". To understand the two, one has to start from where it all began. Thus, the aim of this paper is to compare the two generations and try to explain just what might be the society's problems within those two periods.

Before Modernism came to be, the lifestyles of people were vastly different in both routines and customs. However, as World War I began, ". . . people started to leave their acceptable values and comply with the challenges that were changing lifestyles and thus this divergence greatly contributed to the emergence of Modernism" (Toker 2). This is the time where the "Lost Generation," a term that was coined by Gertrude Stein, comes into play. More specifically, this is the time when the works of the most influential authors of this generation ". . . became sacred scriptures to those who were convinced that they had lost their personal identities but had found themselves again in these books" (Toker 3).

Perhaps the most influential and well-known writer belonging to this generation was Ernest Hemingway, whose book *The Sun Also Rises* directly describes the lives of those deemed "lost", closely mirroring his own life and the people and events in it. In *The Sun Also Rises*, the most obvious characteristic is the excessive traveling, drinking, and debauchery that the characters undergo throughout the story. It is a perfect example of escapism, as the

characters try to forget the stress and trauma from the days of the war. In fact, they seem desensitized enough to be actually bored by the topic of war. "We would probably have gone on and discussed the war and agreed that it was in reality a calamity for civilization, and perhaps would have been better avoided. I was bored enough" (Hemingway 9). Not only is this desensitized nature clearly visible in the aforementioned quote, but there is also a display of the core problem that that society created, the Great War, a calamity for civilization that should have been avoided. This is coupled with the fact that, while everyone who has lived through the war understands each other perfectly, the younger characters, those who had not been to war, simply do not get it and are both unable to understand the ones who were and fit into their company.

According to Djos, *The Sun Also Rises* is shown to be a "remarkable portrait of the pathology of the disease of alcoholism" Djos (1). This in itself further proves the point that everything the "lost" are doing is escapism, because they cannot deal with the truth and reality anymore. Their reality has been shattered, their truth muddied and they spent the best years of their lives in trenches on war fronts and this is the very reason why they are called the "Lost Generation". It shows why they are a mirror of society's problems. It is not they who created the problems, but it is society that has created them, a society that is built upon a war mentality that lives on to this day, seemingly detached from the horrible reality of war. Those who have not experienced it will never be able to understand it or relate and that is the main issue – society itself cannot and does not understand the harsh and bitter truth of what it has created.

That said, we can continue on to the next so-called problematic generation, namely the "Beat Generation" of the post-World War II era, the 1950s. When talking about this generation, the name Jack Kerouac immediately comes to mind, with his famous American classic *On The Road*, which ". . . documents the author's real-life adventures traipsing around the country in his mid-20s with friends [. . . which] would comprise the core of "The Beat Generation," the last great American literary movement" (Lurie 2). And indeed, this generation, being another post-World War generation, has its own problems reflecting just what society did wrong once again. A large similarity with the previous "Lost Generation" is that this generation, too, indulges in heavy drinking, traveling, partying, and generally hedonistic behavior. However, unlike the earlier case, here it is not escapism, but pure boredom, as the Second World War brought upon a new golden age to the United States. The book presents this perfectly, as it ". . . evokes the exhilaration of being young, of leaving home for the first time and venturing out into the wider world

with an open heart and credulous mind" (Lurie 3).

The "Beat Generation" mirrors not only the problems of society, but the problems of the Unites States as a whole during that time, which is even hinted at in Kerouac's novel, "'What is the meaning of this voyage to New York? What kind of sordid business are you on now? I mean, man, whither goest thou? Whither goest thou, America, in thy shiny car in the night?'" (Kerouac 70). Rightly so, it was not just a question directed to the characters, it was a question directed to the whole of America – where is it actually going? The economic boom that happened after the war brought great prosperity to the country, but it also cost it its vision, and as such, the generation living in this era, and indeed the whole of the United States, was once again "lost," only this time in a different sense. With time "the apolitical Beat Generation metastasized into the heavily politicized hippie movement, [. . . which] is the reason why the Beat movement could not last" (Lurie 3).

Today, in our so-called "post-modern world," not much has changed regarding society. One could argue that it has in fact become even worse than before. It is worth mentioning all the later conflicts all over the world that crippled generation after generation and continue to do so to this day. Wars like the Vietnam War or the Gulf War or the currently on-going War on Terror in the Middle East are just several examples. The problem of human society is that while deeming itself highly advanced, it has never been able to overcome the war mentality that has plagued the human mind since the times we were still consisting of groups of rock-throwing cavemen. The whole essence of human society is the group mentality, which no matter how much individuals try, cannot seem to change or stray far away from its core, base thoughts. For each problem it solves, it creates two new ones. For each generation that suffers and learns from its mistakes, another takes its spot which forgets everything and the cycle starts anew, over and over again.

In conclusion, one can safely say that the core of society's problems is humanity itself. The petty human mind which, whilst thinking of itself as great and advanced, simply cannot let go of the basic, simple, barbaric urges that are subconsciously imprinted on it. Both the "Lost Generation" and the "Beat Generation," and all other similarly "broken and lost" generations are only a mirror, the end result of the issues that society creates and then cannot deal with. These generations are the victims of a mindset that just refuses to change, and until humanity, and with it society as a whole, finally finds a way to ascend above these basic urges, the world will not know peace nor will the problems cease to exist. It is only a matter of time when a new generation will take its place in history as another mirror of society's greatest problem – humanity's never changing mentality.

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Beloved as a Great American Novel: The Prerequisites for Freedom in the Nineteenth-Century United States of America

Helena Marković

The Great American novel is a term often used to describe a variety of literary works thought to perfectly portray the American culture in a certain period of time. It is a rather ambiguous term surrounded by much debate. Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is one of those elusive works thought to be greatly American. Sethe, and other main characters of the novel, show what it means to live, breathe, and be in the United States of America as an African American in the late nineteenth century. The portrayal is merciless – a brutal attack on the perceived Empire of Liberty promised by the American Revolution a century earlier. Therefore, *Beloved* is a Great American novel not because of its passive features but because of the challenge it presents. It challenges the essential idea of innate individual freedom in the United States of America. The novel questions the concept of liberty as a core American value and the possibility of being free just by being born in the United States.

Throughout the novel, Toni Morrison presents the case of an average nineteenth-century African American as needing several prerequisites for being free. The first prerequisite for achieving freedom in the United States is a favourable historical period; i.e. being born in a time when slavery was abolished and all men were free. This is not the case with Sethe, an ex-slave protagonist of the novel, whose story perfectly depicts both the ante- and the postbellum period of American history. Through her story, Toni Morrison portrays the entire social structure of the privileged and the subjugated in nineteenth-century America by "constructing history through the acts and consciousness of African American slaves rather than through the perspective of the dominant white social classes" (Krumholz 395). Morrison gives voice to the African-American stories previously deleted from the definition of American history. Her examination of the reality of freedom begins with the depiction of Sethe's past. In Sethe's rememory of the Sweet Home plantation and her life there, Morrison renders the gruesome experience of slavery. Slaves are anything but free. They are allowed no name, no identity, and no chance for desire: "Mister was allowed to be and stay what he was. But I wasn't allowed to be and stay what I was" (Morrison 72). The white owners eventually begin to see their slaves as subhumans with distinctive animal

features. However, their situation does not improve significantly even after achieving freedom. Upon escaping a life of servitude, Sethe's "achieved liberation" is taken again by enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act.

The second prerequisite for being free in America was being a part of the communal life. There was no possibility for African Americans to live as white, male, rugged individuals did in the past. In order for an ex-slave to survive, he or she needed the protection of a community. The community could physically shelter a person, e.g. by protecting a runaway slave, but it was also able to provide emotional support. Since slaves were separated from their families, they sought comfort from one another. Even for their life in Sweet Home, it is said: "It wasn't sweet and it sure wasn't home. . . But it's where we were. . . All together" (Morrison 14). Similarly, Paul D and his fellow inmates in Georgia are only able to achieve freedom when they work together. The most extreme example of the community's pivotal role is in its decision not to notify Sethe of the incoming schoolteacher resulting in her daughter's death. Another example of its relevance to an individual's freedom is the episode of the exorcism of Beloved. The community unites itself to free Sethe through a group process "in which the exorcization of the past is finally completed in a sort of communitary purification" (Durán 16). Through this joint effort, Sethe is granted liberty from the ghost which has haunted her, and which she would not be able to fend off by herself.

The third prerequisite deals not with the external but with the internal freedom of the individual. Morrison warns the reader of the danger which the unresolved past imposes on a person. She draws a parallel between the slavery in the United States and Sethe's infanticide. There is no possibility of forgetting such events since that would erase their legacy. That is why Beloved, a materialized symbol of the past, appears in the present and thus prevents Sethe from having any real future. If the past is not honoured or dealt with, it shall return to haunt the culprit. Likewise, it is suggested that to have a free tomorrow, one must liberate him or herself from yesterday. Sethe is not truly a free woman as long as she is immersed in the past: "But her brain was not interested in the future. Loaded with the past and hungry for more, it left her no room to imagine, let alone plan for, the next day" (Morrison 70). To achieve genuine liberation, an encounter with the past is an absolute necessity: ". . . emotional freedom, it appears, cannot be arrived at without fully admitting into one's present doubts about the past" (Daniels 17).

To conclude, *Beloved* is a Great American novel because it disputes the vision of America as a land of the free. It shows that some basic American notions of freedom are not absolute or always true; i.e. that all ideas, even the ones which construct a nation, have to be constantly challenged in order to remain true. The novel haunts the reader by presenting the true *Zeitgeist* of

nineteenth-century United States without leaving out the gruesome details. Morrison questions whether freedom is a God-given or a government-given right and what it takes to achieve it at all. She shows that several prerequisites are needed for a person to be free in the United States. One has to be born in a certain historical period, be part of a favourable community and deal with his or her own past to be free. However, although the novel challenges the idea of what is needed to be free in the United States, it remains true to a typically American notion of a continuous struggle for a better life, better living conditions, and a better society. The characters of the novel are enslaved – they are damaged and haunted, but never stop chasing their tomorrows.

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The Influence of Society in Creating Values of Family and Motherhood in *The Great Gatsby* and *A Raisin in the Sun*

Ida Relotić

The prevalent topic of Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* and Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* are the American Dream and the quest for freedom. Among the pages dedicated to that topic lie the hidden problems and everlasting question of family and motherhood. Two women are representative of two cultures and of two types of mothers: Mama as a role model for the African American struggling society, and Daisy as a perfect example of the old money white elite. Even though they are separated by race and class those characters share a bond called motherhood. This essay will try to prove that social struggle and racial background played a major role in Daisy's view of children and family as material indicator of wealth and power as opposed to Mama's appreciation of family as an invaluable gift worthy of every sacrifice.

In order to get a complete understanding of Fitzgerald's Daisy and her attitudes toward family and her own child it is necessary to review her past, her origins, and her views of life. In her youth Daisy "was a young Southern belle, dependent on her good family and consequently protected and restricted by its established code of behavior" (Donaldson 160), and her upbringing will play a crucial role in the development of her own emotions and her approach to life. Furthermore, the overly protected Daisy who grew up surrounded by material wealth and security only money can give with no worries about the immanent future fell in love with a young man Jimmy Gatz. She experienced a roller-coaster of emotions for the first time in life, so that Jimmy's sudden departure left her emotionally crippled. Being used to material wealth, she married Tom Buchanan, and "it is as though her choice to marry Tom and to conform to the expectations of their social world has made her cynical" (Parr 67). These reasons are mainly responsible for the creation of her identity as a mother and wife.

After establishing the social environment in which Daisy's identity was shaped as a "world where reality is grotesque and where even nature is not nurturing but threatening" (Lewis 74) it is possible to dive into explanation of her role as a mother and her relationship with the institution of the family. Daisy is married to Tom Buchanan and has a daughter. In this simple sentence lies a question: does having a child establish a woman as a mother? I argue for not; having a child does not make one a mother, the behavior and empathy

towards that child are decisive factors in motherhood because "selfhood is socially constructed through interaction with others" (Fitzgerald 113), primarily through interaction between a mother and a daughter. The first time Daisy's daughter is mentioned is in her words: "I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool – that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool" (Fitzgerald 13) where Daisy's cynical view is outlining her daughter's future. It is clear that Daisy is aware of her position in society as a woman and even though she was happy in the beginning "with the birth of her child, knows of Tom's casual infidelity and becomes progressively more bitter" (Handley 40). By giving birth she does not turn to nurturing her daughter to prevent her from making the same mistakes and give her hope for better future, but becomes bitter, condemning a child to a life of materialism and pretense while she reaches out to Jimmy to recapture past love with him as Gatsby.

When the child is finally presented in person, Daisy's words "come to your own mother that loves you" are mitigated by an observation made by the narrator, Nick, about Gatsby: "I don't think he had ever believed in its existence before" (Fitzgerald 89) because Daisy never portrayed herself as a mother. The feeling that Daisy is "playing a part . . . saying what she considers appropriate but not what she really feels" (Fryer 156) lingers throughout the book in the relationship with her daughter, and in the relationship with her husband. Her appreciation of the institution of family is extremely feeble and she is constantly oriented on material signs of wealth as shown in the situation when she cries into Gatsby's shirt saying "it makes me sad because I've never seen such – such beautiful shirts before" (Fitzgerald 70). In those moments she does not care that her child is at home with a nurse, she does not care that her husband is cheating on her, and her family is falling apart; she is solely concentrated on herself, and on Gatsby as an ambassador of wealth and money. That orientation and worship of materialism that was indoctrinated in her at a young age are preventing her from realizing her role as a mother, potentially marking her daughter and family for a life of pretense and misery tied with a golden ribbon of bitterness.

In opposition to Daisy, stands Lena Younger, a woman whose bearing "is perhaps most like the noble bearing of women of the Heroes of Southwest Africa" (Hansberry 499). She is a mother of two, a grandmother, and a family person; she is a representation of a proud African American woman who surpassed the racial struggle to be able to live in America, unfortunately, at a time of African integration into white society. Nonetheless, her social background shaped her into a "black matriarch incarnate, the bulwark of the negro family since slavery, the embodiment of the Negro will to transcendence" (Gomes 88). As opposed to Daisy's life in a protected aristocratic society of white elite, Lena and her family of four live in a place where "everything has been polished, washed, sat on, used, scrubbed too often" (Hansberry 487) and Lena herself, same as that apartment, has been used, scrubbed, and tired, but she never loses hope and faith in providing a better life for her family. Her character is com-

pletely defined by the role of a mother which is highlighted in her "natural" name: Mama. She, as a nurturing mother "is determined to raise her family out of poverty that surrounds them" (Gomes 88), and the struggle she went through in life as a black person in fight for her life and the life of her children made her resilient in that cause. In simple words, she stayed connected to the primordial instinct innate to every true mother which is the protection of what belongs to her, mainly, her family.

Lena Younger "generally, functions within a parent-child relationship" (Gomes 88) as it was shown in the previous paragraph. Her social background and the struggle that shaped her identity made her concentrated solely on the well-being of her family which is obvious in her words "seem like God didn't see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams – but He did give us children to make them dreams seem worth while" (Hansberry 503). The fact that she did not have the same luxuries in life as Daisy, and was not brought up in the security of money covered in deceit and pretense, but in the harsh realities of life, her values are extremely different from Daisy's. Lena did not have anything else except her family, and her children so she could not be distracted by wealth and power. Even when she got the opportunity to be wealthy, she was selfless, and the material wealth she gained through insurance was used to buy a house, and not just for herself but, as she said to her grandson Travis: "[I] went out and bought you a house" (Hansberry 534). The happiness of her family was her only priority in life. Her words that it is dangerous "when a man goes outside his home to look for peace" (Hansberry 534) are at the core of this essay. Daisy went outside of her house to look for peace and happiness, she did not find it, she got two people killed and returned to the life of lies unwilling to selflessly care for anyone else but for herself.

In conclusion, this essay presented substantiated evidence that perception of motherhood and family rests on social ground and upbringing of certain individuals, in this case of Daisy Buchanan from *The Great Gatsby*, and Lena Younger from *A Raisin in the Sun*. Daisy, as a puppet of a world oriented towards materialistic values, emotionally scarred by disappointments in life, and unable to fully realize herself, and express her emotions became detached from her family, but most importantly, from her only child. She, thus steered herself towards bitterness, cynicism, and ephemeral values. In opposition, Lena grew up surrounded by the harsh realities of life, and not having anything else to distract her or make her hopeless she held on as much as she could to the idea of family and motherhood which defined her life. Her family's happiness meant happiness for her because, in her eyes, the two are inseparable. Basically, the white aristocratic society represented by Daisy stands for the corruption of basic values in life making children and family only material indicators of wealth and power while the African American struggling society, uncorrupted by materialistic views on life, managed to stay true to the primordial instincts, and cherished one of the most important bonds in life, the bond of family.

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Miss Ratched was Right: The Mental Institution in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* as a Form of Social Contract

Mislav Uzunić

Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is undoubtedly the most important and the most influential book of the Beat Generation, alongside Jack Kerouac's *On the Road;* the book was even more acclaimed after the *Cuckoo's Nest* was adapted to the screen starring Jack Nicholson as Randle P. McMurphy. Both the book and the movie influenced the audience's view on mental institutions and electroconvulsive therapy (ETC) as something coercive and harmful. In this paper I will argue that, even though Kesey's depiction of the mental institution in the book strongly tries to convince us of McMurphy's heroism, it is wrong to conceive the mental institution as an instrument of oppression. I will compare the structure of the mental institution depicted in the book with the philosophical theory of social contract, which postulates that people accept to be governed by an authority in order to have an equal and just community.

At the beginning of the novel, through McMurphy's conversation with Harding, we learn that not all inmates in the mental institution are completely insane, and that many of them retain at least some sort of lucidity and critical judgment; McMurphy expresses his discovery: "I been surprised how sane you guys all are. As near as I can tell you're not any crazier than the average asshole on the street" (Kesey 61). As the story progresses, we learn more about the characters and their feelings about the institution, and the conclusion would be that they are miserable and oppressed – except most of them were there by consent. The fact that they accepted the rules consciously overrules McMurphy's insistence to liberate them from the hands of tyrannical Miss Ratched. It is important to note that during the novel there is a sort of contradiction in the way the staff see the role of the mental institution, and the way the patients perceive it. Miss Ratched, the leading nurse, believes that the staff is here to help the patients deal with their problems through group therapies and established rules (Kesey 47-49). The patients, whose spokesman, we could say, is Harding, shared this view and agreed to the rules until McMurphy convinced them that Ratched was "a bitch" (Kesey 57) that uses her power to torment the poor patients. Harding is at first apologetic of the staff's methods (Kesey 56), but then he admits that McMurphy is right in his criticism (Kesey 59). Both McMurphy and Harding, in my opinion, would be right, had it not been for the fact that few of them are committed, meaning

they cannot leave without the staff's consent, and most of them are there voluntarily (Kesey 167). This completely disregards any objections the patients have on the limited consumption of cigarettes or the strict rules that were not imposed on them, but accepted by them.

This notion of being free by accepting certain rules is of central importance to the philosophical theory of social contract which can explain why the mental institution was not insidious for the patients, or at least was not meant to be. The social contract theory is an attempt at explaining why, otherwise free people, would subjugate their will to law and authority, thus creating a state in which they have obligations in the form of citizenship (Weber 6). This antinomy is explained with the consent of a free individual; the person willingly accepts the rules with a premise that everyone else will accept the same rules, thus they are all equal under the same rules (Weber 2). This means that by losing one form of freedom we gain another form of freedom within a newly formed community in which rules shield us from perpetrators and usurpers. Comparing the social contract theory with the situation of the patients described in *Cuckoo's Nest* it would be wrong to assume that the patients were oppressed. First of all, the patients recognised that they were not fit to live in the society, so they decided to enter a new form of society designed for their needs. Some of them, such as Harding, were oppressed and ridiculed outside because of their "indulgences" (Kesey 257), but in the institution they are all equal and protected from deploration. I do not argue here that the society had the right to exclude some of its members because of the way they led their lives, that goes beyond my intention and this paper, but the point I want to make is that the patients found at least some sort of peace and equality within the mental institution. One might argue that nurse Ratched exercised force over the patients, but it is necessary to have a higher authority, the social contract theory argues, because without it there would be chaos (Evers 187), *especially* in a community of mentally unstable people.

McMurphy has indeed pointed out some problems within that community, but the way he did it was harmful in the long run because he was not like them; he did not understand what it was like to be ridiculed, because he was the oppressor on the outside; he was the violator of the social contract on the outside as well as the inside. At the beginning of the novel we learn that McMurphy had a "history of street brawls and barroom fights and a series of arrests for Drunkenness, Assault and Battery, Disturbing the Peace, repeated gambling, and one arrest—for Rape" (Kesey 44). Furthermore, the reason for McMurphy's stay in the institution is entirely different from other patients' – he wanted to be institutionalised in order to eschew the farm work (Kesey 46-7). Considering these arguments it would be wrong, in my opinion, to blindly conceive McMurphy as a hero; I do not agree with J. Hicks when he depicts McMurphy as "the confidence man, he is also an avatar, a Christ —the healer" (77), nor with W.C. Baurecht who perceives McMurphy as an embodi-

ment of "a democratic hero" and "virile heroism in a story of democracy's triumph" (81-2); if anything, McMurphy's version of "democracy" is nothing but egoistic bullying. Conceiving McMurphy as a hero and a savior is the result of *our* perception; from the outside it certainly does seem that the patients are locked up in the institution, but from their perspective the institution is a protection from dangerous people from the outside, people such as McMurphy, who broke the rules and laws all through life. To further emphasize how distorted our perspective is I want to point out that the reader's only way of knowing what is happening is through Chief Bromden, the narrator, who is clearly a schizophrenic and who suffers from hallucinations (Hicks 73) and "can perceive the world only in fragments that happened to him" (Hicks 73) thus, the scenes such as when Bromden sees that a staff member is killing a patient, and "a shower of rust and ashes, and now and again a piece of wire or glass" (Kesey 81) fall out instead of blood and guts, leave the reader in a dilemma whether or not to believe Bromden's reports.

Considering the organization of our society in the form of a country and a mental institution, the only thing they differ in is the inhabitants; both the country and the mental institution have certain rules and regulations that every person must obey in order to remain in that community – they form a social contract. They obey the laws and rules not because they are coerced, but because it benefits their needs and purposes. As such, the mental institution in the *Cuckoo's Nest* must not be seen as a form of oppression, but as a form of sanctuary. The mental institution in the book, as well as many others, offers care for people with special needs in the form of a precise schedule or planned activities. Of course, that seems boring and restraining for us, and for McMurphy, but it is according to the needs of the patients; it is, after all, the main reason they voluntarily arrived at the hospital – to have someone supervise them because they cannot live on their own. One may accede to the arguments presented, but insist that it is unimportant given the fact that the patients are not cured, but tortured in the institution. I would reply that the way Kesey depicted the mental institution is highly fictional and unrealistic, and simply does not correspond to reality. People such as Dr. D. Weir have emphasised, based on real medical research, the misconceptions about such a view of the mental institution, as well as the misconception that electroconvulsive therapy is malicious or painful (Weir 2013); misconceptions that were the result of descriptions in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Kesey's story of the struggles of heroes we have all grown fond of is brilliant and it serves well for a quality novel, but is unsatisfactory for a critical evaluation of such a delicate community.

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Criticism of Society in Modernism and Postmodernism

Tomislav Vila

During humanity's long history the society has never been perfect and it has faced constant political, economic, and, what is most prominent, social issues. These include age-old ones like inequality, inequity, prejudice, and the more recent ones like human communication, more specifically a lack thereof. However, social issues are never left unnoticed and it has become a duty of literature to address, criticize, and attempt to diminish said issues, usually unsuccessfully. This trope of literature did not fade away in the 20th century due to two world wars and the effect they had on the society years after their end. Each of these two periods has its fair share of social issues which are addressed by Francis Scott Fitzgerald and Sherwood Anderson in the post-World War I period, a time associated with literary modernism and John Cheever, Allen Ginsberg, and Lorraine Hansberry in the post-World War II period, a time associated with literary postmodernism.

World War I brought about massive disillusionment considering all the values that characterize the American society, like the American Dream, and the overall bleakness and hopelessness in the American future. *The Great Gatsby* by Francis Scott Fitzgerald is, in its essence, a criticism of the American Dream which consequently created the social issues the novel addresses. Jay Gatsby is the definition and a prime example of the American Dream, a poor young man and a war veteran who became extremely wealthy in order to be worthy of Daisy, the woman he loves, and her social class. Despite the fact that this should provide him with approval and reverence of Daisy's social class, the reality is far more callous. Even though he is wealthy, Gatsby is New Money, i.e. a person who achieves prosperity by his/her own effort, and is in contrast with Daisy and Old Money, i.e. rich people by inheritance, who do not accept Gatsby in their ranks. In a word, despite achieving the American Dream, the most appreciated ideal in the American culture, Gatsby, due to his "insecure grasp of social and human values, a lack of cultural intelligence and self-knowledge" (Pidgeon 182), does not understand why he cannot become one of the elite. Moreover, the existence of the elite itself is a European construct and as such is contradictory to the ideals which created the nation. This hypocrisy of a small percentage of the population and their exclusiveness towards the aspiring individual are the main social issues that Fitzgerald wanted to express. Furthermore, Fitzgerald knows that this *status quo* is unalterable when, after Gatsby dies for the crime Daisy committed, she and her husband Tom lightheartedly "retreated back into their money

or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made . . ." (Fitzgerald 98).

World War II gave the USA the confidence it lost after World War I, making the country a world power next to the USSR. However, the rapid development which ensued did not exterminate the long present social issues like prejudice, inequity, and racism, which may have become even more prominent due to the extremely materialistic and conservative nature of the late 40s and 50s. This meant the continuation of the critical characteristic of literature, of which Allen Ginsberg was a part, as a homosexual poet who lived in this period of animosity towards his sexual orientation. Feeling oppressed and discriminated against, he joined the Beat Generation "for beneath the excess and the conformity, there is something more than detachment. There are stirrings of a quest" (Holmes 7) for personal freedom, identity, and a better society, all of which took shape in his poem "Howl". This poem's main focus are "the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked" (Ginsberg 1), the promising individuals oppressed and lobotomized by the American society. However, these minds have their own Messiah materialized in the person of Carl Solomon, who Ginsberg feels very close to when talking about "Rockland / where you're madder than I am" (Ginsberg 94, 95). Just as the best minds have a symbol, so does the American society; it is the Phoenician deity of prosperity and child sacrifice called Moloch. It is presented as being worshipped with huge skyscrapers as towers of Babylon, sacrifices of the youth through wars, and overall misery in exchange for the nation's superfluous prosperity. Moloch represents the relentless American capitalism which only tolerates obedience, something Ginsberg and his fellow men do not condone. They are sent to Rockland "where we wake up electrified out of the coma by our own souls' airplanes . . ." (Ginsberg 129) and start a rebellion, which Ginsberg is very optimistic about. And that is exactly what this poem encourages; rebellion.

Prejudice and inequality were embodied in racism during the 20th century and even after World War II it did not seem to be disappearing. However, during the 20th century the African Americans felt a certain pride and started to fight for their rights instead of passively accepting the oppression of the white Americans. This movement also appeared in literature and is present in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play about the troubles of the African American family. First, not every member of the family is proud of their heritage. The father, Walter Lee is an ambitious man who does not approve of idleness calling his fellow African Americans "a race of people that don't know how to do nothing but moan, pray and have babies!" (Hansberry 532). He is not concerned with the problems of his race and is instead focused on the American Dream. However, this does not make him an antagonist because Hansberry appreciates his willingness to advance in the world. Additionally, he later accepts his African heritage, but does not lose his ambition.

Second, the racism in the play never actually escalates the way it would in the South but is still present in, for example, the housing industry which "has a racist nature because of the discrepancies in housing cost between black and white communities and their separate housing locations" (Jose 881) and the representative of the said neighborhood who tries to bribe them not to move in. This is one of the examples of racial prejudice which proves that white Americans still were not ready to embrace their colored nationals. Nevertheless, the family decides to move in and withstand any possible assaults they may face in the future.

Serving as a sort of contrast to the established social problems is the scarcity of human communication, which is not as harmful in a sense of human rights, but is relevant in the sense of forming relationships with other people. And that is exactly what Sherwood Anderson in his *Winesburg, Ohio* and John Cheever in his *The Stories of John Cheever* are addressing. While the two authors wrote about different time periods; Anderson about the post-World War I and Cheever about the post-World War II era, the problems they tackle are not only shared by those two eras, but are present even today. Anderson talks about a small town in Ohio where selfish and alienated people "came along. Each as he appeared snatched up one of the truths . . . to himself . . . he became a grotesque . . ." (Anderson 19). Anderson presents this town as full of grotesques who are unable to communicate, like Elizabeth Willard, who shriveled up while looking through a window, and Wing Biddlebaum, whose inability to use his hands to communicate reduces him to a grotesque figure who eats bread crumbs off the floor. However, George Willard is the one who saves himself by leaving the town and choosing to pursue his dreams and not be subjugated by Winesburg. This, in a way, presents the optimistic side of Sherwood Anderson's work. On the other hand, Cheever is far less optimistic in his short story "The Enormous Radio," where the mother of the family is enthralled by the radio's ability to emit the conversations of their neighbors. The influence of technology non basic human communication is just an addition for the family members were poorly associating with each other even before the radio was bought. The mother did not converse with her children, did not try to raise them, and hid her shopping expenses from her husband. Additionally, when the father's business starts going downhill all the problems resurface and the family is visibly broken from the inside, just like the rest of the people in the apartment building, and just like the rest of the people in the USA.

To conclude, social issues have been present for centuries and literature has tried for just as long to remove them. Taking many bold attempts into consideration, these problems are so ingrained in the human society that they will never truly be able to disappear. Some authors, Fitzgerald for example, have a pessimistic view on the future of the social class relations materialized with the relationship of Jay Gatsby with the American elite. Despite that fact,

authors like Anderson, Ginsberg, and Hansberry are still hopeful and this sentiment is expressed through the characters in their works and the bright future that is before them. Finally, even though it may seem pointless sometimes, literature can affect the general populous' attitude; all it needs is time.

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The Fading of the Old South Seen through the Character of Caddy Compson in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

Lea Vizentaner

The novel *The Sound and the Fury* written by William Faulkner is one of the most famous and the best representations of what happened during the postbellum period in Dixie. Faulkner describes this adaptation through the typical Southern family such as the Compsons. This work will depict the daughter of the family, Candace "Caddy" Compson, as a "fallen" Southern belle character as well as the symbol of the South. In that way one will see the transformation of the South and the change in the people of the South. Part one shall describe the historical background of the Southern belle concept and Caddy in connection to this term. The second part will depict Caddy as a symbol of the South. The aim of this paper is to show how her behaviour and actions may be seen as a humane adaptation to the harsh changes and ungracious events of that time. Another important aim of this paper is to make the reader try to imagine Caddy as a representation of a mere human being who has made some questionable choices in her life, but who is also capable of doing the right thing.

Southern belles were young white prominent women who lived in the period before the Civil War. They were the representation of Southern elegancy and long tradition:

> *The Southern belle of the pre-Civil War area is an enduring image, encompassing visions of delicacy, gentility, and hospitality within the domestic sphere of the household. The private sphere of women embraced femininity, beauty, simplicity, and submissiveness; the highest roles to which a southern woman could aspire were those of nurturing mother, dutiful wife, and social moral pillar . . . women remained domestic and a top their pedestals, and men protected them . . . .* (Brown 1-2)

However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, when this novel takes place, the traditional South was already in the process of transformation and adaptation to the new postbellum era. The pillars of the Old South, the plantation system and slavery, were no more. Moreover, the suffragette movement was heating up and women, even in the traditional South, were awakening and changing. That is why one more important symbol for the traditional South, presented through Southern belles, was disappearing. Female appearance and behaviour were drastically changing. Their behaviour was becoming more man-like and their voices were finally heard in the public spaces.

Furthermore, their hairstyles and clothes were also becoming shorter and manlier. This change is seen in Caddy Compson, who has the potential to be a Southern belle: she is a young, white, and educated girl from a prominent Southern family. Howbeit, she is not an example of this traditional view. First of all, she is not feminine, submissive, and gentle. This can best be seen in the beginning of the novel when she climbs the tree to see her dead grandmother. During this event, the boyish and independent Caddy gets dirty and does not listen to the male members of the family who tell her not to climb the tree. This event also foretells the rest of the novel: Caddy's brothers only powerlessly observe her independence and defiance. One more example is described later in the novel, when Caddy's name and reputation are in danger because of her sexual adventures and her pregnancy. Even when she is in this difficult situation, she does not accept her brothers' help. They can just see her getting "muddy":

> *. . . the nigger children could look up at the muddy seat of Caddy's drawers as she climbed the tree to look in the window at the funeral, without then realising the symbology of the soiled drawers, for here again hers was the courage which was to face later with honor the shame which she was to engender, which Quentin and Jason could not face: the one taking refuge in suicide, the other in vindictive rage which drove him to rob his bastard niece of the meagre sums which Caddy could send her.* (Faulkner 8-9)

Another important thing to single out is Caddy's sexual knowledge. In the past it was believed that "the more pious and pure the Southern women, the more positive influence she would have over her straying man" (Brown 2). In contrast to the above, Caddy is not a religious and church-going person. When it comes to sexual activities, she is quite liberal. The most compelling explanation for her behaviour can be that she shows "repressed sexuality and displaced emotions of the nineteenth century ideal belles . . ." (Brown 20). So, with the shackles of the past gone, she really uses this freedom. She makes a great step from the ideal of the Southern belle in a way that she becomes a sexually experienced woman who has had a lot of sexual adventures. With this in mind, later in the novel, she has also divorced her husband and afterwards lives unwedded with a German officer. Moreover, her knowledge, allure, and liberty make her dangerous in the eyes of many males in the novel. They all long for her but at the same time they also resent her. Her own brothers, Quentin and Jason could not stand it, "the one taking refuge in suicide, the other in vindictive rage which drove him to rob his bastard niece of the meagre sums which Caddy could send her" (Faulkner 9).

In addition to this, it has to be mentioned that some critics have gone to the extremes and say that Caddy is a "fallen" or "bad" belle. This would be "a woman, who, while having most of the usual credentials of the ideal southern lady, 'violates' her culture's code of moral purity by openly expressing and relying upon her sexuality to achieve some sense of power" (Brown 2).

This statement can be applied to Caddy, because her use of this power, makes her stronger and more prosperous than all of the men in the novel.

As the last evidence, at the end of the novel Caddy leaves her home, family and most importantly, her baby. That is something a traditional Southern belle would never do. It can be confirmed by the quote from the *Gone With the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell in which she describes the emotional core of the Southern belles: "Why, land is the only thing in the world worth workin' for, worth fightin' for, worth dyin' for, because it's the only thing that lasts" (Mitchell 24-5).

When one talks about Caddy as a symbol of the South, it has to be mentioned that Caddy's name is an important aspect of the novel. The name Caddy is introduced in the first pages of *The Sound and the Fury* through Benjy's confusion in similarity of her name with the titles for the young boys on the golf course known as "caddies." It suggests a certain sexual ambiguity. Moreover, tomboyish behaviour and a slender frame in a woman's body represent androgyny of a kind. That is why it can be said that she represents white Southern people. Also, that can be connected to the previous paragraph and one can notice the difference from the Southern belle stereotype because they are frequently described very feminine and never manly.

Moreover, it is said that the sound of her name "functions as a poetic clang that collects a selection of female characters into an onomastic community ruled by the letter 'D', beginning with Caddy, Dilsey, etc. . . ." (Birns 2). That is why it is important to mention the significance of the letter "'D' . . . which connected a sisterhood of names that reminds the reader that within Yoknapatawpha County an unofficial matriarchate exerts a powerful influence . . ." (Birns 2).

Caddy is one of the characters connected with this theory about a matriarchate which is headed by her grandmother Damuddy. Not only the nomenclature, but also the literal imagery of their names suggests "mud," which inspired the writing of the novel. Faulkner himself explained this statement: "It began with the picture of the little girl's muddy drawers, climbing that tree to look in the parlour window with her brothers that didn't have the courage to climb the tree to see what she saw" (Faulkner 7).

One can see that these muddy drawers are connected both with phonetics of the Damuddy's death and also with muddy earth (South), motherhood, and the life cycle. In other words, "this is a definition of time associated with natural processes, nature and the earth – it is the domain of Mother Nature, the womanly earth of mythology whose time is biological and cyclical, suggesting a doom of dust unto dust without hope of redemption" (Birns 3).

Lastly, Faulkner himself wrote, "I loved her so much I couldn't decide to give her life just for the duration of a short story. She deserved more than that. So, my novel was created, almost in spite of myself" (Mortimer 5). From

this statement, one can see that Caddy can be seen as Faulkner's home, the South. The way Faulkner wrote about her in some parts is more similar to the descriptions of a place than to the descriptions of a person. He even called her his "heart's darling" and "the beautiful one." This, in relation to the meaning of her name, can indeed confirm what was stated above.

In the end, one can say that Caddy Compson is the beginning and the end of this novel. She is a multi-layered character. At first glance, she is only a girl from the South who is defying tradition presented through her family. However, after a closer look, Caddy can also be taken as a representation of the changed Southern belles of the twentieth century. After years of submissiveness and silence, Southern belles are visibly changing. This is seen in Caddy's manlier appearance and defiance towards everything prototypical. She is independent, practical, and more powerful than many male characters of the new society. Moreover, she is using her knowledge and attributes to get what she wants for herself and she is very successful in that. That is why some critics unjustly call her "fallen" or "bad" belle. Lastly, from another standpoint, she can be seen as a representation of the South, its change and painful adaption to the new affairs. Her character is sexually ambivalent, which makes her more universal as a character. This means that she can represent the part of the Southern nation capable of adaptation to the new world. Furthermore, many times Faulkner writes about her in the way a patriot would write about his home. Even the meaning of her name, which is connected with soil and people, shows deeper symbolism. Finally, one can say that through Caddy as a symbol of both a Southern woman and of the South itself, in his own way Faulkner shows this important historical period which influenced both the people and the land.

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Part III: African American Literature

"They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed –
I, too, am America"
("I, Too")

Living and Coping with Racism as Epitomised in Morrison's *Beloved* and Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*

Katarina Deriš

Throughout the existence of human beings, racism has existed in one form or another. For the African American community racism has irrefutably left deep scars in their identity, both individual and collective. The dual identity of African Americans grew and developed from the mournful depths of slave-holding America, to the abolition and the struggles of ostensible equality. The paper will try to see into the question how can we deal with evil like racism, and what is the best and the natural way to respond to the plights it brings. Works such as *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, or *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry talk about the coping mechanisms and choices people make under racial suffering; in *Beloved* in a post-abolitionism America, and in *A Raisin in the Sun* in the early 20th century. In both works there are characters representative of the way African Americans cope with racism and the inability to enjoy what most of us experience as inalienable human rights. There is also a catalyst, a person, a notion, a thing around which the characters seem to take their stand.

First of all, in Morrison's *Beloved* the catalyst is Sethe's daughter, a nameless child that she killed in desperation and in order to save her from a terrible life of slavery. She is present throughout the story, first as a ghost, and later as a young woman that they call Beloved. Her presence, or the lack of it, acts like an indicator of how the characters cope with their collective and personal experience of slavery and their past: "Beloved is the incarnation of Sethe's baby girl and of her most painful memory – the murder of her daughter to protect her children from slavery. Beloved is Sethe's 'ghost' the return of her repressed past, and she forces Sethe to confront the gap between her mother love and the realities of motherhood in slavery" (Krumholz 5).

One of the main protagonists is Paul D, a man who spent most of his life as a slave, later roaming around America to find work where he could, enjoying his life as a free man, and the fact that nobody could make him stay in one place: "Probably best, he thought. If a Negro got legs he ought to use them. Sit down too long, somebody will figure out a way to tie them up" (Morrison 31). He finally settles when after many years he meets Sethe again. They had been slaves on the same plantation for a while, and their reencounter brings back the feelings he had for her. Paul D seems to be eager to let all slavery re-

lated feelings go, his way of coping is running away from reminiscing, and he gives up on trying to live like an unburdened human being, forgetting love and hope, as a price for letting go of his past: "The best thing, he knew, was to love just a little bit; everything, just a little bit, so when they broke its back, or shoved it in a croaker sack, well, maybe you'd have a little love left over for the next one" (Morrison 66). Although Beloved finally makes him face his demons, his presence in the house initially makes Beloved go away, which is a clear representation of his ability to shut the past down.

The second character is Baby Suggs, she is one of the spiritual leaders of the black community where Sethe lives. Although she has also been a slave, her way of coping is providing help to all the others who are in some way suffering. She is strong and seems to have surpassed the burden of slavery by preaching to others. She enjoys great respect of the community, and she is a strong moral character, who uses her wisdom to lead others. The one thing that truly disrupts her peace is Sethe's act of infanticide, after which she soon becomes bed-ridden and dies.

Lastly, the character of Denver represents the new generation. She is a calm, fearful girl who spent most of her life in isolation. Denver was not born a slave as Sethe was pregnant with her when she was running away from enslavement to a life of freedom: "Denver has not grown up within the formal institutional mechanisms of slavery, and, therefore, as she has little comparative basis from which to understand the chaotic orgy of physical violence and terrorism that white people have been perpetrating upon black folks in both pre- and post-slavery" (Cosca 10). Sadly, even though she was born free she was limited by the spirit of Beloved, who for Denver represented the family past she had to deal with. Her relationship with Beloved was not negative, because Denver was not personally a part of the slave culture, and for her Beloved is somebody who makes her less lonely. Her true colours appear by the end of the novel, when she collects herself and leaves the safety of Sethe's house to search for help. This makes her strong, and she finds new confidence and hope, finally free of the spirits of her family's past.

By the same token, the characters in *A Raisin the Sun* show similar ways of dealing with racism. The catalyst in the play is money. The money represents a certain type of freedom for all the characters, as much as being free of Beloved meant to the characters in Morrison's novel. One of the characters for whom money is most important is Walter Lee, a middle-aged black man, on a lookout for an easy enough way to earn enough and fulfil his potential. He finds his past to be a burden and he does not care much for the struggles of the black people in America, nor the fact his parents came to where they are by being humble and working hard. For the most part, Walter Lee deals with his struggles in the same way Paul D dealt with his. He is eager to move on,

disregarding his past, and making the most of what he was given, but finally comes face to face with himself: "Walter's character emerges by the end of the play as a black Everyman figure who is poorly educated, living in the ghetto, and still able to dream and keep a strong sense of self-respect" (Saber 460).

Similarly, we can connect the characters of Lena ("Mama"), the mother of Walter Lee, and Baby Suggs. Lena is also a strong moral character and the person to go to for advice: "Hardships in life do not make her bitter, and she never gives up on life or quits dreaming. Lena also escapes subservient passivity by playing a vital role in her children's life instead of lecturing them about how things should be, but showing them the way to achieve this" (Saber 458). She too enjoys great respect of the other family members and serves as a moral guideline for Walter Lee, who in his struggles to make money, tends to stray from the right path, and forgets all that makes him who he is. Moreover, Lena, much like Baby Suggs is aware of how sacred human life is. The idea that Walter's wife, Ruth, was prepared to have an abortion to help her family, breaks her spirit in a certain way and the same happens with Baby Suggs when she found out what Sethe did.

Finally, we have the character of Beneatha ("Bennie"). She is a young, strong-minded, educated individual, who represents the new generation of free women, who have the ability and the opportunity to succeed on their own: "Oh, I probably will . . . but first I'm going to be a doctor, and George, for one, still thinks that's pretty funny. I couldn't be bothered with that. I am going to be a doctor and everybody around here better understand that!" (Hansberry 506). She makes sense of her racial identity by going all the way back to Africa, and the positivity of the traditional culture, for she believes that her connection to being black is not only what it means to be black in America. She is somewhat disconnected from the identity that the older characters share. In some respects she is much like Denver. Young and misunderstood, but also full of life and a glimmer of hope for a new definition of racial identity in America.

On the whole, there are many comparable notions in both of the works. The presented characters seem to deal with racism similarly. Even though they are not set in the same time in history, and the characters do not deal with the same level and severity of racism, they deal with it in an alike manner. Some human characteristics transcend time and cultural differences, but at the same time, the effects of the collective African American culture and conscience appear to remain in some organizational forms, like in this case the family in both works. The struggles of racism shaped the spirit of alike characters in a similar way, perhaps setting an example that the strength of human beings is a lot more innate, and that the human spirit can overcome almost all odds.

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The Concept of Freedom in Morrison's *Beloved* and Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*

Ivana Jurašinović

When it comes to African American literature, freedom is one of the most frequent topics. During the period of slavery African Americans could not fully comprehend the idea of freedom because they had little time to worry about anything else but hard physical work and survival. After the abolition of slavery, African Americans got a taste of freedom but they were still denied so much in comparison with the white Americans. This essay will compare the concept of freedom in Morrison's novel *Beloved* and Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* where the former reflects the period of slavery and the latter the period after the abolition of slavery. The comparison will be made through analysis of the denied rights such as the right to work, the right to a home, and the right to a name. Furthermore, freedom is denied by taking someone's free choice, a chance to decide and desire.

In Morrison's *Beloved* the most important motif is "an exploration of a sense of self through both personal and group history to the final end of articulating a narrative of the self with a clear sense of one's place among one's people, in an accepted or chosen location" (Leake 120). Basically, to be free means to have a choice, to not need permission for desire and to be able to make your own decisions. If you do not have a name, you do not have an identity and therefore you do not understand who you are and what your place is in the world. Without knowing who you are, you cannot perceive yourself as a free being able to make decisions.

These topics can be depicted in both literary works in relation to freedom. In *Beloved* slaves work for the white population and they are considered no more than animals that work because they exist for that sole purpose. They get enough food to survive, but are punished if they make a mistake. Like wild beasts, they are denied freedom and rights because white owners do not consider them human. Through slavery, the minds of African Americans have been shaped in such a way that the concept of freedom is not something they could understand or even think about and their main problem is surviving the hard physical work, horrible living conditions, and the brutality of white owners. They do not have the right to choose whether they want to work because they are considered to be more wild beasts than humans and therefore unable of making choices when it comes to freedom and rights. Even when

Sethe finally gains her freedom she cannot fully understand its concept. She can only understand by connecting it to the one thing that shaped the minds of slaves and therefore she sees freedom as the end of slavery but not as a possibility for a new beginning where the past is in the past: "To Sethe, the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay. The 'better life' she believed she and Denver were living was simply not that other one" (Morrison 63).

The right to a home is a major symbol of freedom and it does not refer to an architectural building but to the idea. In *Beloved*, there have been "voluntary journeys, by which the characters seek the place to define themselves, and involuntary journeys, by which characters are displaced and thus stripped of their identities" (Leake 120). A free person will have a home where she or he belongs and inside of which she or he will know their place and identity. The life of a slave is similar to the life of a wild beast which means that they do not have a name or a home. Because they lack identity and a home, they cannot fathom the idea of freedom because they cannot even fathom the idea of themselves.

Slaves have a place to sleep but they have no home. When it comes to the idea of home, slaves are conscious of the difference between a place for living, a house, and a home. In the novel Morrison emphasizes this difference by naming one of the plantations owned by white people Sweet Home even though it "wasn't sweet and it sure wasn't home" (Morrison 35). Therefore, when free slaves finally have a home, the value of this moment is in being free to name it. It is not full of beautiful and deceptive adjectives but it represents the number of the house and therefore allows "a hint of the superiority, the pride, former slaves would take in having an address of their own" (Morrison 19).

Being able to choose whether you want to work, have a home, and name it are signs of freedom which are rare and priceless for slaves. However, the most important sign of freedom is the possession of something eternal and priceless and that is a name. This idea is the most important one because it does not take away your right to have a choice, a family and a home, but by denying the slaves the right to a name, disables them from ever forming a full identity.

The name holds the information about our identity, about our origins and the place we have in a community and in a family. Slaves do not have names because they are separated from their mothers and because as wild beasts they do not need one. Their names are given in the same way they would be given to wild beasts. For example, in the case of Paul A, Paul D, Paul F and others, the given names do not give an identity but a sense of order. A slave's mind is shaped by slavery so the full extent of freedom is unknown

to them. Morrison shows that "denial of humanity and selfhood takes place even under the more benign forms of slavery" (Malmgren 102). Even though Mr. Garner claimed that his slaves are human and not wild beasts, the slaves feared that he could take away their humanity and identity because he had the power to take away their names. They understand the importance of a name, but they believe that the white man has complete control over the names and identities just as he has control over their rights and freedom: "Did a whiteman saying it make it so? Suppose Garner woke up one morning and changed his mind? Took the word away" (Morrison 241).

Sethe's name is given by her mother because she was the only child of an African American. On the other hand, Baby Suggs had the name Jenny as a slave but after she gains freedom, she is free to create a new name for herself taking her husband's last name and the nickname which he used to address her. She understands the difference between the supposed name that they get as slaves and the one that depicts your entire being.

As has already been mentioned, freedom is also denied by taking away someone's freedom of choice, the chance to decide and desire. Paul D and Sethe realize that as free people they can do whatever they want and they do not need permission: "He knew exactly what she meant: to get to a place where you could love anything you chose – not to need permission for desire – well now, *that* was freedom" (Morrison 162). What Sethe did not have as a slave was autonomy which "is, as some have said, that which makes agency possible" (Babbitt 5). Sethe was proud of herself after she decided to leave Sweet Home and carried out her own plan successfully and therefore acquired freedom for herself and her daughter: "I did it. I got us all out. Without Halle too. Up till then it was the only thing I ever did on my own. Decided. And it came off right, like it was supposed to… I did that. I had help, of course, lots of that, but still it was me doing it; me saying, *Go on,* and *Now*. Me having to look out. Me using my own head" (Morrison 183).

On the other hand, Hansberry's novel depicts the American society after the abolition of slavery. In this society slavery has been replaced by a milder term - racism: "Mama – they don't do it like that anymore. He talked Brotherhood. He said everybody ought to learn how to sit down and hate each other with good Christian fellowship" (Hansberry 100).

Same as slavery shaped the minds of slaves; the American Dream shaped the minds of these free African Americans. They cannot fathom the idea of freedom but they rather neglect it and through the American Dream they focus on money and materialism. In the play *A Raisin in the Sun* Walter perfectly portrays this type of African American. In order to fulfill the American Dream one must have a good job, and a good salary in order to buy a big

and fancy house and expensive possessions. As a free African American, Walter has the right to work but African Americans have been promoted from a slave to a servant with a small salary. The importance of home is blurred by the desire for a bigger house and wealth.

However, some of the free African Americans can see what slaves could not. They realized that freedom means doing what you want and the wrongness in being another man's servant: "My husband always said being any kind of a servant wasn't a fit thing for a man to have to be. He always said a man's hands was made to make things, or to turn the earth with – not to drive nobody's car" (Hansberry 84).

Until the end of the play, Walter does not understand his mother's concept of freedom. When he sees his son, he remembers who he is and what six generations of his family went through and kept their freedom and home in spite of slavery, racism and discrimination. They'll rather choose the harder life then accept the easy way in order to keep their freedom and independence from white people: "Well – what I mean is that we come from people who had a lot of *pride.* I mean - we are very proud people. And that's my sister over there and she's going to be a doctor – and we are very proud . . ." (Hansberry 127).

In these literary works it is shown how slavery and the American Dream shape the minds of African Americans. It influenced their inability to fathom the idea of freedom and to focus on fighting for it instead of obsessing with the past and pursuing money. In *Beloved*, Sethe could not be free until she understood that her freedom was not just the end of slavery but also a new beginning and an actual life with all the rights and chances that only a free person can have. On the other hand, Walter learned that the only way to live is by being free because no matter how hard it might get, you should always choose your identity, origins and pride over the money of wealthy white people. Their freedom was denied by white people who made them into slaves and who discriminated against them even after the abolition of slavery. On the other hand, they themselves negated their freedom by accepting the logic of slavery and the pursuit of the American Dream.

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The Importance of Names for African American Identity in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Mirna Pucelj

Beloved is one of Toni Morrison's most famous novels that was published in 1987 and earned her the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction the following year. In it the author vividly displays the horrors and devastating consequences of slavery and honors all the victims by giving them a voice to tell their unembellished side of history. One of the many aspects of slavery it addresses is the practice of slave masters naming their African American slaves, thus not allowing their parents to have any say in the shaping of their child's identity and self. In this paper I will discuss how African American slave masters used slave names as one of many instruments of oppression and dehumanization in order to completely eradicate a slave's identity as a human being.

"Sixty Million and more" (Morrison 12) is the dedication with which the author pays tribute to that many and more Africans that died on the slave ships in the Middle Passage, also known as the Atlantic slave trade. Those that managed to survive the journey were unfortunate enough to experience the fate of "human subjects in a society that rejects the human status or identity of any black individual" (Cosca 1). In *Beloved,* the author portrays the great difficulties former African American slaves are facing in accepting the notion of being a free, "intellect-possessing human being" (Cosca 10) who did not have to "pick . . . the tiniest stars out of the sky to own" (Morrison 183) for fear it will be taken away from you and "split you wide open" (Morrison 183). Some are escapees, some were officially granted freedom, yet all are having trouble "overcom[ing] their own mental enslavement" (Lyles-Scott 208) and finding themselves.

An important role in the process of losing as well as reclaiming one's identity is played by something seemingly insignificant – a person's name. Slave masters were well aware of the fact that personal names "give rise [to] a people's identity" (Lake 1) and are a "necessity [to creating] . . . a cultural and historical vision of themselves" (Lake 2). The name your parents give you at birth becomes an integral part of your personality, a legacy that connects you to your family. Slave owners misused this principle in order to "obscur[e] the familial relationships between slaves, both as a means of making [them] . . . feel alienated and as a means to attempt to eliminate natural feelings of love and affection" (Cosca 3).

Paul D's name is the prime example for this attempt of subordination. He is "one of a series of Pauls, named in alphabetical succession" (Lyles-Scott 206) to differentiate him from other male slaves: "And so they were: Paul D Garner, Paul F Garner, Paul A Garner, Halle Suggs and Sixo, the wild man" (Morrison 32). No trace of individuality is present in that name. At one point, when he is forced to wear the iron bit, he realizes that he is even "*inferior* to a barn animal" (Cosca 10) because not even the rooster at Sweet Home, called Mister, can experience such an indignity: "Mister, he looked so . . . free. Better than me. Stronger, tougher . . . Mister was allowed to be and stay what he was. But I wasn't . . ." (Morrison 93). After gaining freedom he, "the last of the Sweet Home men" (Morrison 93), keeps his slave name, probably to remind him of his deceased African American brothers.

Baby Suggs, on the other hand, takes a different turn and at the age of sixty, when freed, gives herself a name. Of course, she was given a name by her first slave owner and was called Jenny Whitlow. However, she proves to be the "most self-identified, self-aware, and self-possessed" (Lyles-Scott 208) character of all when she rejects the name the white people imposed on her and instead takes the one she could identify with the most: "Baby Suggs was all she had left of the 'husband' she claimed" (Morrison 163). During the last ten years of her life that she spends as a free woman Baby Suggs reinvents herself completely after realizing that "she knew more about [her children] than she knew about herself, having never had the map to discover what she was like" (Morrison 161). Later on she becomes the spiritual preacher of her community and is able to move on with her life, thus proving that it is possible for a former slave to overcome the trauma of slavery but that it takes time, love, and acceptance.

Sethe is the second womanto to experience for herself that "freeing yourself [is] one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self [is] another" (Morrison 116). Her path of reclaiming her lost identity also begins with her name. As opposed to Paul D's and Baby Suggs's, "Sethe's name is unique because she was not named by a white slave master or overseer" (Lyles-Scott 205). She was named by her mother, which is a very rare case among slaves. Her mother had other children besides Sethe but they were the product of rape, not mutual lust or love, by white men and for that reason "she threw them all away but [Sethe] . . . Without names, she threw them" (Morrison 83). Sethe is the only exception, named after the only African American man her mother ever chose to embrace and who did not rape her. Even after gaining freedom she keeps her name, probably because it is the only thing her mother left her as a legacy. Both as a slave and as a free woman Sethe defines herself through her role as a mother, which is her strongest trait throughout the novel. However, "the mother cannot *be* a mother to the children she has born because they are not hers under slavery" (Babbitt 3), which is why her

protectiveness and love reaches its peak when she escapes the chains of slavery: ". . . maybe I couldn't love em proper in Kentucky because they wasn't mine to love" (Morrison 183). The act of infanticide is also the moment of her own suicide – that is how far she is willing to go to protect those that meant more than life to her: "Since the whites in [Sethe's eyes] had disappeared and since they were as black as her skin, she looked blind" (Morrison 171). Only towards the end does Sethe begin to heal and realize that she really is her own "best thing" (Morrison 294). She has a right, an obligation even, to find happiness in life and, by accepting her past, to finally have a future to look forward to.

Although it seems insignificant, a person's name, along with one's past, family, and personal experiences, is important in the process of developing one's self. Sethe and Paul D kept their slave names as a reminder of the gruesome experiences that scarred them for life. Baby Suggs gave herself a name and is done with her past the fastest, whereas Sethe and Paul D are still struggling, especially with acceptance. The practice of slave masters to give their African American slaves new names was an attempt to deprive them of their culture, history, and identity. Sadly, it served its purpose well. Those that were able to physically free themselves of slavery now had to go through a more challenging transition – the mental one. By casting away one of the most obvious symbols of enslavement – the name – African American slaves made the first step towards a strenuous retrieval of their own identity.

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Part IV: Identity Issues

"Everybody knew what she was called but nobody knew her name. Disremembered and unaccounted for, she cannot be lost because no one is looking for her . . ."

(*Beloved*)

Doomed by Time, Past, and Memories: Jay Gatsby and Quentin Compson

Petar Botić

And thus passeth it on, until the present intent conveys over the future into the past; the past increasing by the diminution of the future, until by the consumption of the future, all is past.

Saint Augustine

During the period of modernism, the symbolism of time became one of the key aspects of many literary works. For modernist writers, time is one of the most important elements when it comes to forming the identity of characters. Therefore, the course of their actions is closely related to their way of perceiving time. What modernist writers emphasized is the subjective understanding of time driven by characters' consciousness, in contrast to time as an objective, physical category. While this subjective time is "an ongoing project of constructing a meaningful time . . . the pure, unorganized flow of sensations and other mental events" (Collins 335), the objective time is simply the passage of time – "on-going, irreversible, without resonance of human meaning" (Collins 335). It is precisely this internal perception of time that can have catastrophic consequences for certain characters. In that sense, Jay Gatsby, the protagonist of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and Quentin Compson, the protagonist of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, are representative characters whom the subjective perception of time – their past and memories which consumed their present – led to doom.

Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is usually characterized as an American novel in the sense that it describes the American Dream, and the American society of the post-World War I period. However, it is necessarily to point out that the motif of time and past lies in the essence of the novel as well: "For the Great Gatsby is fundamentally an American novel about American society, the American way of life and an ironical commentary on the American Dream: but it is about the past too, about the pathfinders . . . who made a continent and whose dreams . . . made the society that is portrayed in the novel" (Handley 46). In this sense, Jay Gatsby is a pathfinder who struggles to achieve

his own dream, which is the dream based completely on his past and memories. Nick's observation describes Gatsby as being stuck in the past:

> *"He talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was" (Fitzgerald 118).*

Gatsby's idea of himself is forever marked by his memories of Daisy, who is the embodiment of his past and his ultimate dream. He subjects himself to the past, which results in the past dictating both his present and future. Ultimately, Gatsby wants his present and future to become the past: "'You can't repeat the past.' 'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!'" (Fitzgerald 118). His obsessive wish to repeat the past is what cost him his life, both literally and figuratively. Figuratively, he could not truly live in the present and move on past Daisy and his memories of their love. Literally, the pursuit of the dream is the very cause of his death: ". . . he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream" (Fitzgerald 172). All these instances point to the fact that the subjective perception of time and living in the past can enslave one's present and future, thus becoming the dominant factor in the construction of one's identity and course of actions. In the case of Jay Gatsby, that had fatal consequences; Gatsby's past and present merged into an unfortunate mess. By being "borne back ceaselessly into the past" (Fitzgerald 193), he deprived himself of any future existence.

Similarly, William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* features another character – the deranged Quentin Compson – whose life and death can be analyzed in terms of living in the past and dwelling on the memories. Moreover, Quentin's mental breakdown revolves around a womanly figure, as well. The focal point of his life is the event of Caddy, his sister, losing her chastity. As far as Quentin is concerned, this symbolizes the "physical and spiritual maladies . . . decaying aristocratic world . . . a family destroyed by its own helplessness, perversion, and selfishness" (Brown 544). Quentin cannot stop thinking about Caddy losing her virginity and he blames himself for everything that led to the ultimate decay of his family. His thoughts of committing incest with Caddy is one of the best examples of how mad he is and how guilty he feels: ". . . I'll make you say we did I'm stronger than you I'll make you know we did you thought it was them but it was me listen I fooled you all the time it was me . . ." (Faulkner 185). The point when Caddy became sexually active was the defining moment for Quentin's consciousness and the course of events in his life.

At that point, he becomes obsessed not only with the past, but with time in general: "The most significant characteristic of Quentin's mind is his fixation with time . . . All of his other obsessions are aspects of his preoccupation with time, as are the recurrent images and their associations" (Brown 545). This is why Quentin's narrative starts with him "hearing the watch" (Faulkner 93). For him, the passage of time means merely living with his past memories which become unbearable. He thinks his suffering is greater than that of Christ: ". . . Christ was not crucified: he was worn away by a minute clicking of little wheels. That had no sister" (Faulkner 94). Ironically, only when he starts being severely traumatized does he actually notice the time. "I walked upon the belly of my shadow" (Faulkner 119), "Somewhere I heard bells once" (Faulkner 216), "I could hear my watch ticking away in my pocket" (Faulkner 102). Quentin can see, hear, feel, and sense time. He tries to break the time by breaking the watch and its hands, but the ticking remains; the time still passes and the fixations which control his mind stay. He feels the time wear him away with every click of the wheel. He cannot stand it anymore – for him, death is the only way out of his past memories: "A quarter hour yet. And then I'll not be. The peacefullest words. Peacefullest words. *Non fui. Sum. Fui. No*[*n*] *sum* (Faulkner 216). In order to truly wipe out the time, he must do away with himself, so that he can no longer feel it. Eventually, Quentin casts himself into the oblivion of the river, erasing the past, erasing his memories, erasing himself: "I was I was not who was not was not who" (Faulkner 211).

Both Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* exhibit how time, or rather a peculiar perception of time, can have disturbing, tragic, and fatal consequences. Both protagonists in these novels, Jay Gatsby and Quentin Compson, can be analyzed in terms of their own preoccupation with certain past events and memories. Fitzgerald and Faulkner describe the possible outcomes of such chaotic mindsets, and both of them have disastrous consequences. It is also evident that the manner in which one perceives time, past, and memories can be essential in the structure of one's identity. In these instances, the perception of time is distorted, leading to obsession, madness, and eventually, death. The past does shape our present and future, but by being stuck in the past, one ruins them both. "It is perfectly true, as the philosophers say, that life must be understood backwards. But they forget the other proposition, that it must be lived forwards" (Kierkegaard 161).

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Violating the Code? – Hemingway's Depiction of the Code Hero in *The Sun Also Rises*

Miroslav Dikanović

Ernest Hemingway, an American author and journalist, wrote his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, in 1926. *The Sun Also Rises*, is a particularly interesting novel to scholars because it deviates in certain aspects from his other fictional work. One of those aspects is the so-called "Hemingway Code Hero." Hemingway drifts away from the usual code while writing *The Sun Also Rises* and "critics have failed to agree on where, if at all, the base of values resides in the novel" (Rovit 343). The focus of this paper is Jake Barnes and the question whether he can be considered a true Hemingway hero or not.

Neither Hemingway nor any of the characters in his novels mention any kind of code or set of moral rules which the hero is obliged to follow. Yet, after looking at the total body of Hemingway's works, critics have formulated a particular code. Some critics even claim that the Hemingway hero "can almost be stereotyped in Hollywood terms" (Rovit 342). In most of his fictional novels and short stories Hemingway illustrated the protagonist as a true American hero – a rugged individual, "generally successful womanizer," yet "innocent of lust," "hunter-fisherman-soldier who battles against fate with . . . his own skill . . . and courage in order to wrest a small victory in a long war which he knows he cannot possibly win" (Rovit 342). Jake Barnes, as the protagonist and narrator of the novel *The Sun Also Rises*, is different; he simultaneously breaks and reaffirms Hemingway's code on many occasions. One of the many facts that confirm Jake Barnes as a Hemingway hero is the existence of loss because scholars agree that loss is one of the key features characteristic for the Hemingway hero. According to Rovit, loss is crucial in almost every text of Hemingway's, and Jake Barnes also has plenty of it. Due to a war injury, he is impotent and bears many wounds. Jake is not only physically crippled, but his impotence also damaged his psyche. Dana Core claims that "Jake will never achieve the psychological stability he craves because he finally accepts prevailing social and medical philosophies about his injury – and these ideas, in turn, will always leave him vulnerable to the fear that he will 'degenerate' into an invalid or a 'pervert'" (76). By making him impotent Hemingway also managed to violate the code because such a mentally weak persona cannot be considered a true hero.

Another example that both breaks and solidifies the code is the heavy drinking. It is usual for the Hemingway man to drink a lot. In consideration of the previously mentioned loss experience, it is also frequent for the hero to avoid the quiet darkness of the night and to hide behind the illusive comfort of alcohol. But the Hemingway hero is not a man who gives way to alcohol, who drinks in excess, and loses control of his behavior and awareness. The Hemingway hero is always in control of his body and actions. Jake Barnes is a character who also drinks a lot and yet there is no clear situation in the novel that indicates complete loss of control. Though there are a few examples of such borderline situations. For instance, it was Jake who started the fight with Cohn – evident from this reference: "I swung at him and he ducked" (Hemingway 100). Although Cohn provoked him, it was Jake who started the fist-fight. He knew that Cohn was a boxer in college, even a pretty good one, so who in their right mind would throw a punch at a boxer? However, on another occasion when they were drinking again, Bill said: "Good old Jake! I knew you wouldn't pass out" (Hemingway 118). Bill's words prove that Jake is not the kind of guy who drinks excessively and passes out on a regular basis; it proves that Jake knows how to hold his liquor, which is a trait that confirms him partially as a Hemingway hero.

In addition to alcoholism, religion is another characteristic that defines the Hemingway hero. To understand the religious beliefs of a Hemingway hero one must first understand the so called "nada concept." "*Nada* connotes the absence of transcendent authority and the absence of a priori values. It emphasizes meaninglessness, the contingency of life, and the impossibility of deliverance from any of these ontological states" (Stolzfus 212). This means that the Hemingway hero does not believe in God or life after death. He fears death, but faces danger when necessary, and he also lives his life to the fullest. Jake Barnes is in a kind of a grey area on this matter as well; his actions indicate that he is not very pious, however, he has not given up on religion completely: "I was a little ashamed, and regretted that I was such a rotten Catholic, but realized there was nothing I could do about it, at least for a while, and maybe never, but that anyway it was a grand religion, and I only wished I felt religious and maybe I would the next time . . ." (Hemingway 51). This quotation indicates that Barnes is not the best portrayal of the usual Hemingway hero, though considering all of his actions during the plot, one could say that he is quite comparable to a Hemingway hero from a religious point of view.

An exact answer cannot be given to the earlier set question whether or not Jake Barnes is a true Hemingway hero. Jake Barnes could be considered as an urban Hemingway hero; he does not display all of the usual features of a Hemingway code hero. Nevertheless, he exhibits traits through various actions, thoughts, and struggles that suggest him being a Hemingway hero.

Hemingway portrayed a man who suffered immense pain in his life. One could say that living his life with pride and honor after so much pain is heroic enough. If not a true code hero, Jake Barnes is in spite of everything a decent man; calling him a Hemingway hero or not is only a matter of perception.

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The Tragic Fall of a Romantic Hero: The Portrayal of Jay Gatsby as "the Great"

Dora Orešković

The Great Gatsby is a novel written by Francis Scott Fitzgerald in which he portrayed the American society of the period known as the Jazz Age. The Jazz Age was marked by spontaneous, carefree behavior of people who placed great emphasis on materialistic things and led a hedonistic life that came to its' end with the Great Depression. The novel evokes the atmosphere and follows the lives of characters belonging to the upper class. The central character of the novel is Jay Gatsby. Fitzgerald used features of a romantic and tragic hero and combined them to form Gatsby's character. Due to Gatsby's fall, imposed by a set of events over which he had no control, his characteristics of a romantic hero, of a man willingly heading toward destruction, are shifted to those of a tragic hero worthy of compassion and the epithet "the Great." The aim of this paper is to list the features of Gatsby from the perspective of both a romantic and a tragic hero in order to be able to combine them and truly depict his character.

The romantic hero is a type of hero who can be described as alienated and isolated from the society. Having one's own personal beliefs, being self-centered, and being focused on achieving one's goal, a hero does not socialize with other people. On the one hand, isolation is a feature that describes in which way Jay Gatsby lived his life. Nick Carraway is a narrator in the novel and through his eyes we get to know Jay Gatsby. The first thought that is formed around Gatsby is that he is mysterious; he is talked about but no one seems to know who he really is:

> *"Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once." . . . "I don't think it's so much that", argued Lucille skeptically; "it's more that he was a German spy during the war." . . . "I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany" . . . "Oh, no," said the first girl, "it couldn't be that, because he was in the American army during the war".* (Fitzgerald 44)

On the other hand, Gatsby did not rebel against society and lived a lonely life; rather, he used society to get what he wanted. Since Daisy was the only thing he thought about, he built his entire life around her trying to find a way how to make her his. To illustrate, he threw parties only in the hope that Daisy would come to one of them. He accepted the rules of the society, but only in order to achieve his personal goal.

Everything was done for Daisy who, when they first kissed, made him feel like God:

> *He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning-fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.* (Fitzgerald 112)

The kiss was an event which changed his life and made him "alienated from the World, Reality and Others" (Sepčić 49). He fell in love with her, after having kissed her once, and, based on that one kiss, he decided that he would dedicate himself to her. He assumed that she wanted the same. The false and unrealistic idea caused his fall and it is evident that "Gatsby's delusion is created by an arbitrary act of the mind" (Sepčić 49). What is more, he not only wanted true love in a society arranged aroung material wealth, but he also wanted it with the girl of his past. His persuasion was so strong that he continued to love her even when he realized that "her voice is full of money" (Fitzgerald 120) and that she is not as she was in his mind. He loved the idea of love more than he loved her. For Gatsby "the love becomes more important than the object of it" (Lewis 49). He was aware of the fact that she was not how he imagined her, but he voluntarily continued on idealizing her. Frederik Garber, in the article "Self, Society, Value and the Romantic Hero," describes the way romantic heroes think. Graber says that the "value, they asserted, is private, individual, and self-created. The mind, then, becomes its own source for standards of reward and punishment, and thus one feels guilt according to the scheme of values one's own mind has established" (330). The illusory world was the only world that he knew of and the only one he accepted. Therefore, Gatsby, after being rejected by Daisy and left with nothing, does not create a new life for himself and does not start over, but indulges in death.

Another way to look at Gatsby is through the characteristics of a tragic hero. Aristotle stated that a tragic hero should be "a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty. He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous" (45). Furthermore, in order to evoke the feeling of compassion, a tragic hero needs to be a common man to whom people can relate. Jay Gatsby is that man. He is a representative of a man who achieved the American Dream, which is stated to be equally achievable by everyone. He did everything right and yet ended up tragically.

The tragic flaw responsible for his fall is his innocence. Innocence is a virtue which society has to take into account and value. Gatsby's innocence is

not negative on its own. It just means that he is honest and expects truth in return; that he is real. Therefore, society's corrupted way of functioning, distorted moral values, and people's carelessness made him appear flawed. He ends tragically because of the set of events over which he had no control. His fall was predetermined. He became rich and was one of the members of the upper class, but his money was not inherited, it was earned and, therefore, considered dirty. His money did not have the history and his ancestors were not well-known people, so despite his having made it to the upper class, he was not accepted. He was looked down upon and rejected by Daisy because of being "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere" (Fitzgerald 130). In addition to that, Nick describes Tom and Daisy as "careless people" who "smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together" (Fitzgerald 180-181). Daisy and Tom are the ones responsible for Gatsby's tragic ending and they represent the carelessness of the whole upper class. Because of them, even by succeeding, Gatsby fell.

To look at Jay Gatsby as just one type of hero would not depict him correctly. As a result of the duality of his personality he earned the epithet "the Great." Arthur Mizener described the duality of Gatsby's life:

> *The first is the purity and intensity of Gatsby's desire to make real, in the actual world, an ideal mode of existence. The second is the way he is forced by the conditions of American society to use shoddy materials, to actualize his dream in the "vast, vulgar, meretricious beauty" which is all his world makes available to him.* (134)

Some may claim that his fall is a result of self-destruction, but other factors need to be taken into consideration too. He is an idealist who builds his life around one idea: love. His innocent belief in the achievement of that goal made him vulnerable, made him easily manipulated, and crushed by the society. This is why he is the Great Gatsby. Fitzgerald succeeded in presenting him as a romantic hero with a tragic ending. Although he earned his money in an immoral way and became one of the members of the upper class he was "perfectly ready to throw it away – along with his life – when Daisy destroys his faith in her as the incarnation of his dream" (Mizener 135). His actions were based on greater values than those of the other characters. His fall happened when Daisy rejected him, but he rose again when he calmly accepted death. He stayed true to himself and chose death over this "modern world that has become a moral and spiritual wasteland" (Resneck Parr 60). He clung on to one idea but it is not an idea that killed him; it is society that made him so disgusted by the world that death seemed greater than being alive.

In conclusion, the above mentioned arguments prove that Gatsby is of a dichotomous nature. Fitzgerald presented Gatsby as a character who pos-

sesses features of a romantic hero, but who ends tragically. The novel depicts Gatsby's rise and his fall. Gatsby lived in his own world, in an illusion which enabled him to function in the reality. All things considered, the reason why Gatsby earned the epithet "the Great" is the fact that his world is more alluring than the reality; his world is even more real. He wanted greater things in his life than those dictated by the society. He lived for and wanted love. His death represents the liberation from a morally distorted world which did not allow him to actualize himself.

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"Is There No Way out of the Mind?" – *The Bell Jar* and *Ariel* as a Depiction of Sylvia Plath's Life

Iris Spajić

Depression, emptiness, and death are only some of the motifs which constantly recur throughout Sylvia Plath's literary works. The reason for that is her peculiar perception of death itself, as she stated in "Lady Lazarus": "Dying/ is an art, like everything else/ I do it exceptionally well" (Plath 7). Her works are "a fusion of art and [her] life" (Anderson 80), meaning that both her confessional poetry and semi-autobiographic prose "may be seen as an attempt to narrativize her lived experience into a story" (Anderson 80-81). Every piece of her work corresponds with some significant aspect of her life. Therefore, her depression, emptiness and eventual death, which can be traced all the way back to the relationship with her father, are immortalised in her poetry collection *Ariel* and her novel *The Bell Jar*.

In order to understand Sylvia Plath's works, it is crucial "to understand her life" (Simpson 90). Her style of writing displays a balanced mixture of imagery and sentiment, which are a construct of her need to communicate her repressed emotions and traumas. The majority of her opus revolves around death, but there are many different aspects that are closely connected with this motif. The most important factor which triggered Sylvia Plath's utter dissatisfaction and depression was the death of her father Otto Plath. Her "feelings toward him, though powerful, were ambivalent" (Rietz 417). In "Daddy", she says: "Every woman adores a Fascist/ . . . Brute heart of a brute like you" (Plath 50) and expresses hatred towards him, but at the same time she shows affection and longing: "At twenty I tried to die/ And get back, back, back to you/ I thought even the bones would do" (Plath 51).

"Loss or absence . . . [and] symbolic overpresence of the father" (Rose 231) provoked the development of the Electra complex which, consequently, led to her distorted perception of relationships with men. In Plath's novel *The Bell Jar*, the main protagonist, Esther Greenwood, whom she based on herself, states: "I always had a terribly hard time trying to imagine people in bed together" (Plath 5). Although she does not think about sex with excitement, she feels obliged to lose her virginity to be equal to Buddy, whom she dated. In her poems she expresses an aggressive attitude towards men – ". . . I eat men like air" (Plath, *Lady Lazarus* 9), "If I've killed one man, I've killed two——/ The vampire who said he was you/ And drank my blood for a year" (Plath, *Daddy* 51).

The death of her father makes Plath lose her faith, as well. After she heard he passed away she said: "I'll never speak to God again!" (Simpson 90). In her letter to Richard Sassoon, her former lover, she said: "I talk to God but the sky is empty … I feel like Lazarus … I rose up again, an even resort to the mere sensation value of being suicidal, of getting so close, of coming out of the grave with the scars" (Plath, *Unabridged Journals* 199). This statement shows how great the void in her was and how she wanted to hold on to something, but it did not seem to have the desired effect.

In addition, in her works, she shows her fascination with death. At the beginning of *The Bell Jar*, Esther talks about being burned alive: ". . . I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves. I thought it must be the worst thing in the world" (Plath 1). At one point, she also mentions a certain way of dying when she thinks about Japanese people:

> *"I tried to imagine how they would go about it. They must have an extremely sharp knife. . . . Then in one quick flash, before they had time to think twice, they would jab the knives in and zip them round . . . Then their stomach skin would come loose, like a plate, and their insides would fall out, and they would die. It must take a lot of courage to die like that".* (Plath 113)

In both cases, she exhibits some kind of fear. In a letter to her mother, Plath wrote: "Every day is so precious I feel infinitely sad at the thought of all this time melting farther and farther away from me as I grow older. Now, now is the perfect time of my life" (Schuwy 52). It seems contradictory that she would commit suicide when she felt that life was so profoundly precious and when she had such a great repulsion towards death.

In many cases Plath expresses feelings of emptiness and listlessness. She does not even see herself as a complete person: "And I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself" (Plath, *Tulips* 11). Similarly, in *The Bell Jar*, Esther is aware that she feels down, but she is not able to do anything about it: ". . . but I couldn't get myself to react. I felt very still and very empty, the way the eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo" (Plath 2), "The silence depressed me. It wasn't the silence of silence. It was my own silence" (Plath 15). This depressing silence soon became more problematic for Plath. Her fear and anxiety are clearly visible in "Elm":

I am terrified by this dark thing

That sleeps in me

. . . . . .

What is this, this face
So murderous in its strangle of branches? — —

Its snaky acids hiss.
It petrifies the will. These are the isolate, slow faults
That kill, that kill, that kill. (Plath 16)

Sylvia Plath raises the issue of suicide in many of her poems. Her attitude towards it fluctuates between fascination, determination, and fear. For instance, the former is introduced in "Cut": "What a thrill ---/ My thumb instead of an onion" (Plath 13) and "A Birthday Present": "I do not want much of a present, anyway, this year./ After all I am alive only by accident./ I would have killed myself gladly that time any possible way" (Plath 42). On the other hand, she wanted someone to dissuade her from the suicidal thoughts. In *The Bell Jar* Esther says: "Catholics thought killing yourself was an awful sin. But perhaps, if this was so, they might have a good way to persuade me out of it" (Plath 134)

The scenes in the novel where Esther tries to commit suicide correspond to Sylvia Plath's suicide attempts. At first, Esther only tests what it would feel like to kill herself:

> *I looked down at the two flesh-colored Band-Aids forming a cross on the calf of my right leg. That morning I had made a start. I had locked myself in the bathroom, and run a tub full of warm water, and taken out a Gillette blade . . . I thought it would be easy, lying in the tub and seeing the redness flower from my wrists, flush after flush through the clear water, till I sank to sleep under a surf gaudy as poppies. But when it came right down to it, the skin of my wrist looked so white and defenseless that I couldn't do it.* (Plath 120-121)

Sylvia Plath did the same thing and when her mother asked her about it she said: "'I just wanted to see if I had the guts!' She grasped her mother's hand and cried, 'Oh, Mother, the world is so rotten! I want to die! Let's die together'" (Simpson 203). This shows how unbearable her life was for her. She saw death as a form of salvation.

Another suicide attempt in the novel which corresponds to the one in real life is the following:

> *I went downstairs and picked up a pale blue envelope from the dining room table and scrawled on the back, in large, painstaking letters: I am*

> *going for a long walk . . . I unlocked the strongbox and took out the bottle of new pills. There were more than I had hoped. There were at least fifty . . . Then I took the glass of water and the bottle of pills and went down into the cellar . . . Then I set the glass of water and the bottle of pills side by side on the flat surface of one of the logs and started to heave myself up. It took me a good while to heft my body into the gap, but at last, after many tries, I managed it, and crouched at the mouth of the darkness, like a troll.* (Plath 137-138)

Sylvia Plath managed to survive this suicide attempt although she was not found for three days. She was also hospitalized and underwent different treatments. She showed improvement, but her state of mind constantly varied. "Plath was discounting the future heavily. She clearly was unwilling to invest any more in her own creative potential. She was in fact unwilling to invest in life" (Runco 641).

Sylvia Plath's opus gives the reader an insight into an intricate world in which she lived. Although there is an explicit background behind the topics presented in her poetry and prose, her state of mind is still perplexing. In her works we see that she was torn between her lust for life and inclination towards death. As Esther in *The Bell Jar*, Sylvia Plath started showing improvement, but uncertainty about the future remained: "But I wasn't sure. I wasn't sure at all. How did I know that someday . . . the bell jar, with its stifling distortions, wouldn't descend again?" (Plath 197).

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The Impossibility of a Singular Identity of Beloved in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison

Ivana Varga

The novel *Beloved* is certainly one of the major works of postmodern literature dealing with the issues of black identity in the twentieth century. Its complexity and multilayered form enable numerous interpretations of themes and motifs, all of which deserve more in-depth research individually, but the aspect that will be talked about in this paper is the problem of identity of the character Beloved, who, much like the novel, refuses a singular interpretation. Beloved's identity and who she really is in the novel can be viewed through different aspects that construct different identities, and some of these aspects are name, race and the influence of those around us.

The first interpretation of Beloved's identity is that of a daughter of a runaway slave killed at the age of two but brought back to life by a mysterious force. This interpretation of her identity tells us a lot about the definition of a heuristic identity as seen by Cornel West: "For me identity is fundamentally about desire and death. How you construct your identity is predicated on how you construct desire and how you conceive of death" (West 1). Beloved's desires are constructed and centering around a single principle for "[a]lthough she has claim, she is not claimed. In the place where long grass opens, the girl who waited to be loved and cry shame erupts into her separate parts, to make it easy for the chewing laughter to swallow her all away" (Morrison 323). Her desire to love and be loved, or, as she says, "claim and be claimed" consumed her identity as well as her name.

Beloved's identity also shines through her want of recognition, "quest for visibility," as Cornel West calls it (1), and here it comes in the form of a name. As a ghost of a two-year-old, Beloved had no name, therefore she lacked the first indicator of identity and even when she came back, she was not given a name; she simply took the word which was written on her tombstone; ". . . every word she heard the preacher say at the funeral (and there was to say, surely) engraved on her baby's headstone: Dearly Beloved. But what she got, settled for, was the one word that mattered" (Morrison 5). The power of the name lies in the fact that it can reflect the hopes and wishes that the person naming the child has for it. For Sethe, it did do that, as she profoundly believed she took proper care of the baby and that is was indeed (be)loved. However, Beloved does not trust her devotion "[u]ncomprehending everything except that Sethe was the woman who took her face away, leaving her crouching in a dark place, forgetting to smile" (Morrison 296). So for Beloved,

her name is not something she can build her identity around, for she feels she is not (be)loved. Though she tries to love Sethe and Denver by claiming them, her love is in fact consuming them and killing them, as the next passage will prove.

Related to this interpretation of Beloved's identity is her role of a daughter and a sister, which are aspects of identity conditioned by our community, namely a family, as they denote "a particular quality of a relationship between the members of a particular social unit" (Piotrowska 21). Community plays an equal part in the creation of our identity as individual input does. According to Piotrowska, the same was acknowledged by Morrison: "Morrison insists that *the place* inhabited by the community was not that essential for its single members as it were for *the people* that formed it. One has always been surrounded by other members of the community, therefore, the development of the "I" could only be achieved among others" (20). Therefore, even in the moment of her reincarnation the connection to the mother, Sethe, is obvious because as soon as Beloved emerged from the water, Sethe's bladder filled to capacity and "there was no stopping water breaking from a breaking womb" (Morrison 61). Denver felt a connection to this mysterious girl from the start as she nursed her from her initial weakness: "Four days she slept, waking up and sitting up only for water. Denver tended her, watched her sound sleep, listened to her labored breathing and, out of love and a breakneck possessiveness that charged her, hid like a blemish Beloved's incontinence" (Morrison 64). But Beloved's claim of her mother and sister and their claim on her consumed them because in the final chapters Sethe becomes defined by what Beloved is to her: "Beloved, she my daughter. She mine. See. She come back to me of her own free will and I don't have to explain a thing" (Morrison 236). Namely, before the interference of the outer community, there is nothing more of Sethe and Denver than the wanting and claiming of Beloved.

However, if we place emphasis on the racial, origin, and gender aspect of the identity of Beloved, two interpretations of who she is emerge. The first one is that she is the collective past of African slavery that came to America through the Middle Passage and the second one is the identity of Sethe's African mother as interpreted by Jennifer L. Holden-Kirwan. By marking Beloved's identity with the symbol of past slavery, the racial aspect dwells on the journey through the Middle Passage. At certain points in the book Beloved has hallucinations that directly refer to the conditions aboard the ships taking the slaves from West Africa to the West Indies where it has been estimated that between thirty and sixty million slaves died during the voyage. The conditions on the ship gravely affect Beloved, as can be seen by her loss of her sense of self and not-self because of the "tight-packing" ("US History") of the slaves in the hull: "I am not separate from her there is no place where I stop her face is my own . . . I am always crouching the man on my face is

dead his face is not mine" (Morrison 249). But with this aspect, only further deconstruction of Beloved's identity ensues; she cannot be defined as only this symbol of the past because in it she loses her identity completely. But this is not untypical of slave narratives as "racial solidarity against common oppression seems vital" (Piotrowska 21). The personal trauma that impacts her identity is considered "less important than the interaction and interdependence of various consciousnesses – this way the narrative becomes *collective*" (Piotrowska 21).

Opposing this interpretation of Beloved's identity is Holden-Kirwan who considers Beloved to be Sethe's mother because "[u]pon Beloved's arrival, Sethe's repressed memories of her mother slowly begin to re-emerge" (Holden-Kirwan 5). By entertaining the thought of Beloved being Sethe's mother, the racial aspect of identity emerges in the form of African female mistreatment as slaves. For example, the story of raping that Sethe remembers her Nan told her: "She told Sethe that her mother and Nan were together from the sea. Both were taken up many times by the crew" (Morrison 74) and similar reports Beloved made in Part II: "I am going to be in pieces he hurts where I sleep he puts his finger there I drop the food and break into pieces" (Morrison 251). Furthermore, the harsh treatment of women did not stop at sexual molestation, they had other corporal punishment, like the bit: "She'd had the bit so many times she smiled. When she wasn't smiling she smiled, and I never knew her own smile" (Morrison 240). Once more there is an uncanny resemblance between Sethe's mother and Beloved because of Beloved's reaction as she emerged out of the water in the beginning: "If they had, chances are they would have hesitated before approaching her. Not because she was wet, or dozing or had what sounded like asthma, but because amid all that she was smiling" (Morrison 60). These readings of Beloved construct her identity in terms of gender, origins and race, but once again they define only an aspect of Beloved's identity.

To conclude, the aim of this research paper was not to prove Beloved as having a better or worse interpretation of her identity, but in fact to prove the possibility and actual necessity of multiple readings of her identity, as none of these aspects alone make up a complete identity and to say some of these readings are better than others would negate other aspects of her subjectivity. Of course, as the interpretation of a literary work is never actually completed, neither is my own reading of Beloved's multiple identities. Nonetheless, the brilliance of Toni Morrison's masterpiece *Beloved* will surely attract new readings and new interpretations of identities in the near future.

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Part V: Gender Issues

"He calls her Circe," Mike said. "He claims she turns men into swine"

(*The Sun Also Rises*)

Masculinity and Male Dominance in *The Sun Also Rises*

Andrea Kristić

There are several ways of perceiving masculinity. Some of them are socially embedded, whereas the other can be regarded as products of the individual's perspective. Hemingway himself, encouraged by his own life experiences, presents masculinity the way he sees it in his novel *The Sun Also Rises* (Blackmore 50). Nevertheless, it always comes back to the male psyche instead of the looks. Good looks without gentlemanlike behavior do not make one a man, which is exactly what this essay will be discussing. A true man is characterized by certain desirable traits and without them he will hardly be an accomplished one.

It is difficult to be a man when one does not think or act like one, but instead relies on his physical appearance. Hemingway describes a few types of men in this novel presented by different characters. The first of them is embodied in the character of Robert Cohn. He used to be a boxing champion, which required certain physical abilities. He is strong and "could knock down anybody who was snooty to him, although, being very shy and a thoroughly nice boy, he never fought except in the gym" (Hemingway 3). However, his mental abilities are not on the same level as the physical ones, which comes from the fact that "[h]e had been reading W. H. Hudson. That sounds like an innocent occupation, but Cohn had read and reread 'The Purple Land', [. . .] a very sinister book if read too late in life" (Hemingway 5). His immaturity is particularly visible in the scene when he beats Romero out of pure jealousy. The fact that he is not in complete control of his actions only proves that he has not yet grown mentally. Boxing here "signifies his masculinity and enables him to assert his dominance over other men" (Winnacot Chapter 4), but when it comes to Brett, he is the one who is completely dominated. Brett has made him one of her toys and he is unable to protect himself, to cease her dominance. His impulsiveness and liability are stopping anyone from considering him a true man.

Romero, similarly, has all the external characteristics a true manlike hero is supposed to have. What is more, he is also a bullfighter, which is considered to be a true manly sport. Even Jake admires him in some way because Romero represents everything "Jake wishes he could be" (Blackmore 55). Though he is still young and inexperienced, he manages to accomplish with Brett what Jake cannot due to his impotence (Blackmore 56). According to Blackmore "Hemingway seems to employ Romero as a touchstone of true manhood" (55). How-

ever, manhood and masculinity are two different things. Manhood is usually based on physical characteristics, whereas masculinity rather relies on the psyche. Still, manhood is conditioned by time and experience, which Romero does not seem to have much of. He, just like Cohn, cannot resist Brett's attractiveness and becomes only one of her many lovers. This brings one to the conclusion that he is only strong on the outside. On the inside he is immature, and therefore as weak as Cohn. Yet, because of his young age, Brett does not want to ruin him the way she usually does with men. Even though Romero possesses external characteristics that are regarded as masculine, one cannot say that he is a real man. He has not yet matured enough to be called a man. Mentally he is still on the level of a child.

Jake, on the other hand, is a complete opposite of the first two characters, both mentally and physically. As he was wounded in the war, he finds himself in a difficult situation, in which he questions his masculinity. However, despite the impotence, he does not lack masculinity. On the contrary, he is the most masculine character in this novel. The war was a breakeven point in his life and the lives of other soldiers who fought there. Nevertheless, unlike Mike or Cohn, Jake does not run from the reality. Instead he tries to deal with it the best he can. His physical powerlessness, so to say, only helps him develop the mental strength. Unafraid to be alone with himself, "Jake experiences what many war veterans experience when they find themselves alone, a vulnerability that enables them to confront their emotional wartime scarring" (Zabala 22). War has left him permanently wounded, but still, "[r]ather than shutting down completely, Jake finds a new way to assert his masculinity, by not allowing his war wound take over his life" (Zabala 21). As Dana Fore in her article states, he "re-evaluate[s] the effects of his wound for himself, discarding former notions about 'damaged' masculinity based on cultural stereotypes" (81), which significantly helps him accept his situation. When it comes to Brett, he does not let her influence him the way she does other men. What is more, he is the one who is dominant here, though he is still attracted to her. The domination is not visible very often, but there are a few situations in which she is completely owned by him. One of those is when he kisses her in the car and she confesses that she "turn[s] all to jelly when [he] touch[es] [her]" (Hemingway 4). Only a person who plays an important role in one's life can make them feel that way. Though there are moments when she is difficult to handle, Jake successfully manages to control his desires and impulses calmly, responsibly and steadily, like a real man.

Throughout the novel there are numerous examples of how a man should and should not act in certain situations. Even though there is no universal pattern of masculine behavior, it is easy to recognize it when one sees it. Though the war changed the perception of masculinity, some things stayed the same. Jake here not only proves that good looks do not make a man, but

he also finally succeeds in proving that, in spite of the physical emasculation caused by the war, he is still more of a man than Cohn or Romero. It has become a fact that physical appearance can only attract a person, but cannot permanently keep one interested. A lot more than just a pretty face is necessary to retain one's attention.

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Wounded Masculinity and the Influence of Femininity on Masculinity in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Morrison's *Beloved*

Mirjana Marković

Masculinity is a concept that has been explored at great length in many famous literary works. It has been an important topic in literature since the beginnings of the written word, and has remained such even today. In the 20th century, many novels that were written explored this particular motif either as their most important topic or as a side notion, and different authors showed different views on it. Two novels that were written in this period prominently feature the issue of masculinity, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. These novels feature two characters who, although quite different, are in certain ways also quite similar. Jake Barnes and Paul D are characters whose masculinity is frequently questioned in the novel, not so much by other characters as by themselves, and is also greatly influenced by the prominent female characters of the novels.

When we first meet Jake Barnes and Paul D, they are both free men. The former is free in that his days of being a soldier in World War I are long past, and the latter is free in that he has escaped from slavery. However, at the point when we meet them, they are both broken in a way. Jake was physically broken in the war when he sustained an injury that left him impotent (Hemingway 120), whereas Paul D's spirit was broken by what he experienced while he was a slave. This reflects on their attitude toward themselves and their sense of masculinity. They both feel quite emasculated by what had happened to them and spend a great deal of time trying to assert themselves as real men.

Hemingway's Jake Barnes tries to assert his masculinity in various ways. One way of doing that is by taking everything that happens around him stoically. Jake is basically the "embodiment of iceberg masculinity" (Onderdonk 76), which is showcased in the fact that he rarely shows any real emotion. In that way, he differs from the other male characters in the novel, who talk about their feelings much more often than Jake does. By not talking about his emotions, Jake appears to the other characters as though he does not have any, which is consistent with the traditional image of what men are supposed to be like. Another way in which Jake affirms that he is a real man is through

money. "While not extravagantly rich . . . Jake does earn a steady and dependable source of income – he is . . . the only steady worker out of the group of men courting Brett" (Puckett 140). The fact that he is the only financially stable character who fights for Brett's affection asserts him as the most masculine of the candidates in that respect, and thanks to that, he is the one that Brett turns to whenever she needs someone to depend on (Puckett 140). Jake also tries to show his masculinity by fighting Robert Cohn, but that attempt does not succeed; "I swung at him and he ducked. I saw his face duck sideways in the light. He hit me and I sat down on the pavement. As I started to get on my feet he hit me twice. I went down backward under a table" (Hemingway 193-4).

Likewise, Morrison's Paul D also has several ways of showcasing his masculinity. He first does this by chasing off the baby's ghost that resides in 124. He does so by yelling at the ghost and smashing things, even challenging it to a fight; "You want to fight, come on!" (Morrison 18). This is a typically masculine way of dealing with things and he does it as soon as he appears, showing to the women of the house how strong and capable he is. Another way in which he demonstrates his masculinity is by telling Sethe that she can depend on him; "Sethe, if I'm here with you, with Denver, you can go anywhere you want. Jump, if you want to, 'cause I'll catch you, girl. I'll catch you 'fore you fall" (Morrison 46). In that quote, he describes himself as a man that both Sethe and her daughter can depend on. He also tries to assert his masculinity when he "feels unmanned by Beloved" by asking "Sethe to have a child with him" (Fowler 22). His idea is that impregnating a woman would prove that he is a real man, so he tries to get Sethe to agree to it in order to feel manlier.

When it comes to how femininity influences the masculinity of these two characters, it is important to note that Lady Brett Ashley is the only prominent female character in *The Sun Also Rises*. She is a dominating character in that she controls all the men around her, including Jake Barnes. Jake is emasculated by Brett's actions because, even though she loves him, she is constantly sleeping around with people he knows, which reduces him to the role of a friend and, occasionally, "pimp" (Hemingway 193). He is so successful in performing the role of a friend that he is the one Brett depends on to get her out of trouble. When she is left alone and penniless after Romero's departure, she calls to Jake for help, and he agrees to help her, even signing his telegram with "LOVE JAKE" (Hemingway 243). This can be perceived as the ultimate point of his emasculation.

Beloved's Paul D is, on the other hand, influenced by both Beloved and Sethe in conflicting ways. Beloved is the emasculating figure in the novel in that she moves him out of the house against his will (Morrison 114) and then proceeds to rape him. This scene is particularly interesting in that it involves

"the rape *of* – not *by* – the black male" (Kang 31). If it were Paul D who raped Beloved, the scene could be interpreted as a violent assertion of masculinity, but in this way, it is an example of emasculation. However, the rape is also an act which helps Paul D regain his masculinity, since it forces him to face his past and the experiences with rape he already had (Morrison 108). This helps him realize that he was never really a man at all, and that realization serves as the starting point for the creation of a new identity, and, with it, a new sense of masculinity. Thus, Beloved is both a negative and a positive figure for him since she has contradictory effects on him.

Sethe also serves as an influence on Paul D's sense of masculinity. She functions as a sort of opposing force to Beloved, since she removes the hold that Beloved has on Paul D, stopping his movement around the house by asking him to come sleep in her room, where he belongs (Morrison 131-2). She also makes him want to be the better version of himself, which denotes the more masculine version that can defy Beloved; "when he saw the diminished expectation in her eyes, the melancholy without blame, he could not say it. He could not say to this woman who did not squint in the wind, 'I am not a man.'" (Morrison 128). Sethe is such a strong female character that Paul D feels ashamed to be weaker than her, and thus decides not to be so weak, so Sethe's influence on him is very positive.

At the end of their respective stories, both Jake and Paul D get a kind of closure regarding the question of their masculinity. Jake finally realizes that his relationship with Brett will never happen, and his final sentence, "'Isn't it pretty to think so?'" (Hemingway 250), serves as a way of acknowledging this. After all, only a few pages before that he realized just how much she was using him and how emasculated that made him feel; "[t]hat was it. Send a girl off with one man. Introduce her to another to go off with him. Now go and bring her back. And sign the wire with love. That was it all right" (Hemingway 243). It can be said that his masculinity is thus asserted in that he realizes that it is the woman who holds all the power in their relationship (Onderdonk 85), and he gets closure when he reconciles with the fact that that will never change.

On the other hand, Paul D's story ends with another attempt at asserting masculinity after having been emasculated by Beloved and coming to terms with the past. One of the final sentences he utters to Sethe is "Denver be here in the day. I be here in the night. I'm a take care of you, you hear? Starting now" (Morrison 272), which can be compared to the aforementioned quote he gives about being someone Sethe can rely on. He thus goes full circle and returns to where he was at the start of the novel, but this time as a whole person who now has a genuine claim for his assertion of masculinity.

In the end, it can be said that both Jake and Paul D assert themselves as real men throughout the course of the novel. They do so at first without having grasped their respective situations in their entirety, and it is finally the female characters who help them realize where they stand and why. Thus, it is with the help of femininity that masculinity asserts itself as, although wounded, no less powerful than the average masculinity. It is quite apparent that, by the end of their respective stories, Jake Barnes and Paul D become as masculine as they can be in the world that had formed them, and that is all any man can hope for.

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Redefinition of Femininity in the Post-War Society Portrayed in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

Lucija Periš

The Sun Also Rises is a semi-autobiographical novel by Ernest Hemingway which portrays the lives of five expatriates and becomes "the era's favorite expression of romantic disillusion" (Bercovitch 181). *The Sound and the Fury*, a novel by William Faulkner depicts the "Compsons, a once powerful Southern family . . . now living out the last stages of their moral and economic decadence in a world where their patriarchal values are losing their currency" (Varsamopoulou 133). This novel in its characters presents a clash between modernity and the antebellum society preoccupied with the Old Southern values. The two novels show how modernism and the war had influence on the definition of masculinity and femininity, in the physical, mental, and sexual sense. World War I caused the distortion of gender roles, changed the traditional definition of womanhood, and caused the crisis of masculinity: "women freed themselves from the shackles put on them by men, escaping the traditional role forced upon them" (Bercovitch 154). This essay will try to explore how the post-war crisis, the loss of masculinity, and the distortion of gender roles established a new female identity and how the redintegrated womanhood manifested.

To begin with, the fact that the gender roles have been changed and women gained emancipation is mostly visible in their physical traits and appearance. Women refuse to reconcile themselves to the rules that were imposed on them, and the freedom of their physical appearance is a manifestation of their newly acquired emancipation. First, Lady Brett Ashley opposes traditional femininity by displaying her short hair. Her haircut is not merely a haircut, but the outward symbol of her emancipation: "For when Brett refuses to let her hair grow long for Pedro, it means that her role in life is fixed: she can no longer reclaim her lost womanhood" (Spilka 137). Her hair is her utmost sign of the new role of women in society, which she refuses to grow because long hair would deprive her of her role: "To yield up her cropped head would be to yield up her emancipation from female servitude, to become feminine rather than phallic; and this Brett cannot do" (Fiedler 89). Furthermore, Brett wears items that were designed for men, like a male hat, which signifies the liberty that in the new era belonged to women. Her hat and haircut become

symbols of the woman typical for modernism: "With a man's felt hat on her boyish bob . . . she completes the distortion of sexual roles which seems to characterize the period. For the war, which has unmanned Barnes and his contemporaries, has turned Brett into the freewheeling equal of any man" (Spilka 130).

What is more, in *The Sound and the Fury*, women also physically manifest their newly acquired roles, emancipation and liberty. That is visible in Caddy's daughter Quentin, who wears too much make up and dresses in a promiscuous manner in order to emphasize the freedom she possesses, which no one can deprive her of: "Her kimono came unfastened, flapping about her, damn near naked" (Faulkner 228).

Nevertheless, the change in womanhood is mostly visible in the new definition and perception of sexuality. Both authors "identified themselves with the sexual revolution which the Twenties thought of as their special subject" (Fiedler 86). Traditional gender roles have been changed, which made women sexually liberal and men sexually frustrated. To begin with, Lady Brett Ashley is comfortable with her sexuality and breaks the traditional prejudice regarding chastity and the number of the partners women were supposed to have. Unlike men in the novel, she establishes multiple relationships and does not experience a deeper emotional connection to men, which is a stereotype set upon women. Furthermore, to Lady Brett, a relationship with a man is nothing more than a physical pleasure because "she is incapable of love, except as a moment in bed" (Fiedler 90). Women in *The Sun Also Rises* show their newly acquired dominance by leaving men castrated, emotionally destroyed and deprived of their manhood. "In the end, not only are her physical lovers unmanned and degraded, but even Jake, who is her priest and is protected by his terrible wound, is humiliated" (Fiedler 90). A similar pattern of behavior could be noticed in the prostitute Georgette who is "sick and sterile, having reduced love to a simple monetary exchange" (Spilka 130).

The twentieth century became an era in which women became aware of their sexuality, unlike men who started suppressing it. In the Old South, in "Quentin's world young men lose their virginity as soon as possible, but their sisters keep their virginity until they are married" (Bloom 121). Quite the contrary, in the early twentieth century, the time around which the plot of the book is organized, Caddy lost her virginity before her brother. She is sexually more advanced than her brothers, and "the reversal of this situation in the case of Quentin and Candace makes Quentin feel that his sister has assumed the masculine role, and that he has assumed the feminine role" (Bloom 121). Women's broadmindedness could also be noticed in Caddy's rebellious daughter Quentin, who grows into a woman who refuses to act according to the rules her family sets. Although a fifteen-year old, she estab-

lishes a relationship with a boy that makes her more advanced than all of her uncles. All of the mentioned changes in women's behavior lead to the final emancipation of women, while post-war emasculation of men and their suppressed sexuality lead to "the shizoid split between mind and body" (Varsamopoulou 142), and eventually to their tragic end.

Finally, "Faulkner shows the way biological gender is modified by emotional ambiguity and portrays a whole array of men with traits traditionally regarded as feminine and women with essentially masculine qualities" (Bloom 239). The reason why women in the novels coped well with the new age is because they were mentally adjusted to it. Men in both of the novels "remained fixed to an idealistic demand for a pre-modern order" (Varsamopoulou 140), which eventually lead to their emasculation. Unlike men, who worshiped traditional values, women adapted to the modern times by acquiring new characteristics. The age of modernism transmuted a woman from a domestic figure and a housewife to a self-conscious woman, even a typical egoistic "Faulkner's villainous woman" (Bloom 240). They reject the role of passive women and devoted mothers and wives. To begin with, Mrs. Compson is the first paradigm of an egoist who notices her family's problems only when they influence her. Her neglect of her children caused their downfall, and yet she regards them as a curse set upon her: "what have you done what sins have your high and mighty people visited upon me" (Faulkner 127).

Furthermore, another presence of the traditionally considered male trait in a woman is Caddy's display of bravery, which male characters lack. The masculinity in her actions could be traced from her early age: "As a child, Caddy Compson shows "manly" courage and audacity and wishes to be a king or general, and Quentin's feminine timidity renders him ineffectual" (Bloom 239). What is more, a manly pattern of behavior could be noticed in Lady Brett Ashley, who considers and addresses herself as one of the "chaps." Her social behavior, drinking, partying, and coldness are a symbol of her masculinity. Spilka emphasizes that "she seems released from her womanly nature and exposed to the male prerogatives of drinking and promiscuity" (Spilka 130). Unlike men who are described as "sick romantic steers" (Spilka 135), women in the modern world are not prone to being fooled by romantic ideals, sentimentality, and heroism. Furthermore, they despise and parody them. Unlike Robert Cohn, who is obsessed with romantic books such as *The Purple Land*, Lady Brett is not spellbound with romanticism. Women have become realists which is in accordance with the reality of the post-war world in which disillusion prevents any ideal. Unlike Cohn and Barnes, Lady Brett despises emotions, and even ridicules Jake of "getting damned romantic" (Hemingway 130).

To sum up, these novels vividly represent the impact that the war may have on people's worldview and the alterations it can cause in an organized society. Precisely, World War I had an important role in shaping awareness about female identity. The crisis of masculinity was a shortcut that followed the war that enabled women to stand out, form their identity, desires, and opinions, which were neglected before. It helped women in that, during the crisis which men were going through, they could prove their integrity and impact society. Women became advocates of modernity, prosperity, and progress. In my opinion, modern novels are important because they liberate women from their stereotypical roles of obedient mothers, wives, and daughters. Characters such as Lady Brett Ashley, Caddy, and her daughter Quentin proved that every woman has an identity and a strength on her own, independent of men and far more extensive than was thought before.

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The Gentle and the Brutal Dominance of Women over Men in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*

Jure Zelenika

Throughout history, men have always been shown as the dominant figures, but F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway demonstrate that the opposite is true in their novels *The Great Gatsby* and *The Sun Also Rises*. In these two American modernist novels, the male characters are dominated by the female characters in two different ways: gently and brutally. The term "gentle dominance" may seem quite vague, but it perfectly depicts the power, as well as the grace, of the hold Daisy has over Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby*, and the term "brutal dominance" depicts the forceful, assertive hold that Brett has over almost all the male characters in *The Sun Also Rises*.

Daisy Buchanan is the main female character in *The Great Gatsby* and she, as well as the whole novel, was inspired by "Zelda . . . the legendary American author F. Scott Fitzgerald's crazy, disruptive wife, the spoiled Southern belle from Montgomery, Alabama, who wouldn't marry him until he had fame and wealth" (Fowler). Fitzgerald is infatuated with Zelda, and in the same way, Gatsby is infatuated with Daisy. He mythologized Daisy as the perfect woman, so even after she got married, he went to the town where they had last met and he "stretched out his hands desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him" (Fitzgerald 84). This sentimental act, among many others, clearly shows that he has put Daisy on a pedestal: "Gatsby sees Daisy but as a blinded idealist who has a dream" (Pidgeon 181), and this is precisely how Daisy gets her power over him. It is the kind of power which one does not ask for or take over someone, but is just given to, and Gatsby is the one who has given Daisy power over him. She dominates his thoughts to make getting her his only goal, but she does it unintentionally, which, oddly, gives a quality of gentleness to it. The moment when she did all that was when she said that "she wanted her life shaped now, immediately and the decision must be made by some force of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality that was close at hand" (Fitzgerald 83), and that force was her husband, Tom Buchanan. Daisy never asks of Gatsby to acquire all his wealth for her, but he knows that he has to do that in order to get what he wants, i.e. to get her: "Fitzgerald makes it clear that Gatsby does not enjoy these things for himself. They are merely

being used to realize his dream . . . the acquisition of Daisy" (Pidgeon 180). Pigeon also notes that "the reader sees Daisy as sophisticated, heartless, cold, while Gatsby's vision of her is of the beautiful princess" (181). In the last moments of his life, Gatsby also realizes "what a grotesque thing a rose is" (Fitzgerald 89) and in that moment of disillusionment, he finally realizes who Daisy really is and releases himself from her control, only to die soon after, but as a free man.

In Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*, the main female character is Lady Brett Ashley. Autobiographical elements play a role in the shaping of her character as well, as "Hemingway was bewitched, at the time of writing, by the self-possession of the real-life Lady Duff Twysden, and she . . . would serve as the partial inspiration for *The Sun Also Rises*'s heroine" (LaCava). When the reader is first introduced to Brett, she is described as follows: ". . . her hair was brushed back like a boy's . . . she was built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht, and you missed none of it with that wool jersey" (Hemingway 12). Her short boyish hair and the writer's comparison to a yacht, which is primarily a man's vehicle, foreshadow her masculine attitude, and with it, her brutal dominance over the men in the novel. The first man she dominates is Jake Barnes. The fact is "that she is in love with Jake, who, because of his genital wound, cannot satisfy her sexually. As a result, she believes she could not be faithful to him if they were to live together" (Charles and Nolan 111). The question arises, why does Jake willingly spend time with her, even though there is no chance for the success of their romantic relationship? There is no correct answer, but the most likely one is that he is painfully in love with her, and endures a lot of discomfort just so he can be near her: "Jake must endure Cohn's boasting of being with Brett, he must hear Brett and Michael at night in the room he has masochistically chosen adjacent to his, and, to his own self-disgust, he acts as pander between Brett and Romero" (Hays 241).

There are other men who she brutally dominates as well. Brett sleeps with Robert Cohn, only to abandon him afterwards, which leaves him desperately following her around with hope that she will love him again. Furthermore, she dominates Mike Campbell, Brett's future husband who is bothered by her promiscuity, which leads to his drunken and violent acts of self-pity and jealousy. All three of these men needed her, they handed the power of control to her, and she used it intentionally, which in a way makes it brutal. She keeps them around for her own comfort: "Mike, someone to travel with who was in worse shape than herself and thus in no position to judge her; Cohn, novelty and the virility of an athlete; Jake, true affection and understanding, as well as staunch support without sexual claims . . ." (Hays 240). The only man who truly escaped Brett's grasp was Count Mippipopolous because she could not use his need for love to dominate him. When they discussed values, the

Count said: "I am always in love" (Hemingway 32) and she then realized that "as much as he would like [her] company, he doesn't need her, as the other men in the novel do" (Hays 240), which renders her powerless when it comes to him.

To sum it all up, both characters are based on the real experiences from the writer's lives: Daisy on Fitzgerald's Zelda and Brett on Hemingway's Lady Duff Twysden. Both of the female characters managed to dominate the men in the novels by using love as their main weapon. Daisy was unaware of her doings, which gives her dominance over Gatsby a dose of gentleness. On the other hand, Brett knew the effect her actions would have, and yet she went through with her dominance over the men in *The Sun Also Rises* with little to no hesitation, which gives it a dose of brutality.

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Lady Brett Ashley – A Disciple of Oscar Wilde

Luka Zucić

Dim Powers of drowsy thought, let her no longer be
Like the pale cup of the sea
When winds have gathered and sun and moon burned
Dim
Above its cloudy rim
But let a gentle silence wrought with music flow
Whither her footsteps go.
(Yeats 34)

There are characters in literature that simply overwhelm the reader. The way in which they are described, the things they say, the things they do – they seduce and bind readers, who turn the pages of their respective novels with frantic speed, just to see what these mesmerizing characters will do next. Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* features such a character – Lady Brett Ashley, an enchanting woman who destroys Jake Barnes, the protagonist of the novel. She lives her life fully – she drinks, dances, loves, cries, and if she sees an opportunity for pleasure, she will most certainly grab it. Every city she visits – Paris, Pamplona, St. Sebastian – becomes her playground. To men, she is irresistible, and in a beautiful gender role reversal done by Hemingway, she is the one who has numerous amorous escapades with men, who are usually left emotionally annihilated after Brett loses interest in them.

But, Brett is not the only character in the history of literature that pursues pleasure – the famous Irish writer Oscar Wilde, known for his aesthetic sense, created a character that pursued the pleasures of life with a fervour that more than matches that of Brett – Dorian Gray. And yet, when one reads *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian Gray's presence fades away when he is in the company of another enthralling character. The dastardly debonair Lord Henry

Wotton, a damsel-daring disciple of debauchery, a divine dispenser of depraved deeds, a dauntless demon that defenestrates the duties that all prim and proper members of the Victorian high society fulfil – this is the character from whose mouth, wreathed in azure opium smoke, Oscar Wilde's thoughts on marriage, art, women, men, love, and life emerge. One cannot shake off the impression that Wilde imagined Lord Henry as a character who exists only to be quoted – and indeed, Lord Henry is a teacher whose aphorisms speak of aesthetics, pleasure, and all things sensory – and when one compares his pursuit of pleasure with that of Lady Ashley, it is obvious that the two have very much in common. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to analyse the philosophy of Oscar Wilde, as it is expressed through Lord Henry Wotton, in order to determine whether Lady Brett Ashley follows the tenets that Wilde teaches. The paper will also reference some material from Oscar Wilde's life, specifically from the time when he was imprisoned in Reading Gaol, and some material from his other works, such as *The Critic as An Artist* and *De Profundis*, in order to find out whether or not Lady Brett Ashley really is Oscar Wilde's disciple.

The reader's first contact with Brett is through an unusual metaphor which Hemingway uses. Besides stating that she is good-looking, Hemingway writes that "she was built with the curves like the hull of a racing yacht" (Hemingway 22). Women were and are usually compared to gentle, fragile things like flowers and summer days. Oscar Wilde mentions "metaphors as monstrous as orchids and as subtle in colour" (Wilde 107). But Hemingway immediately destroys such notions when he describes Brett with his metaphor. Racing yachts are powerful and roaring engines that embody speed, and whose curves slice through the ocean without hesitation – Brett is a racing yacht, powered by "the hard gem-like flame of aesthetic sensibility" (Laver 13), and she possesses inexhaustible energy when it comes to partying and travelling to various locations with her lovers. And yet, there is a darker background that she shares with other members of her company – with the exception of Cohn. She was marred by war and its horrible experiences and tragedies. Jacob Barnes informs the reader that "she was a V.A.D. in a hospital" (Hemingway 39) during the war. Even in times of peace, hospitals are not the loveliest of places – so one can imagine the horror Brett probably had to endure every single day while helping soldiers who suffered grievous wounds.[1] But, after the war, Brett, along with other ex-soldiers and war heroes, does not shy away from life. It appears that she follows one of Lord

1 Certain Russian writers, like Chekhov and Solzhenitsyn, specialize in hospital-description that can help readers imagine the horrible conditions present in such places. See Alexander Solzhenitsyn's two-part novel *Cancer Ward* (Раковьий Корпус) and Anton Pavlovich Chekhov's short story "Ward No. 6" ("Палата № 6").

Henry's aphorisms: "to cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by the means of the soul" (Wilde 18). Brett definitely has her moments of vulnerability, but most of the time, she sees the world as her oyster – and through her own realizations of pleasure, she is able to mask the stains which have been left on her soul by the war. But it can also be extrapolated that the war experiences of Hemingway's characters were crucial and necessary in order for them to fully grasp and enjoy life's hedonistic side. This statement can be supported with a quote from Count Mippipopolous – an aristocrat whose philosophy resembles Lord Henry's: "You see, Mr. Barnes, it is because I have lived very much that now I can enjoy everything so well" (Hemingway 60). This proves to be the very heart of Lady Brett Ashley, and it is because of this that everyone falls in love with her – within her, opposite forces are in unison. Like Dorian Gray says: "Each of us has heaven and hell in him" (Wilde 134). Brett has been through hell, and now she seeks asylum in heaven through her senses. In this, she is a true disciple of Oscar Wilde.

After exploring the motifs and sources behind Brett's pleasure seeking, one should also clarify the ways in which Brett pulverizes standard conceptions of love and marriage. In her every relationship – with Michael, Romero, Cohn, Jake – she is the dominant figure, and one can imagine her every lover uttering Wilde's famous words: "The curves of your lips rewrite history" (Wilde 190). But a question can be asked: does Brett really seek love? According to the novel, she had two loves in her life – her first love died of dysentery and her second – current – love, Jake, is impotent due to a war injury. Jake's impotence may symbolize his inability to keep up with Brett, as she runs from one romance to another. Therefore, one might think that Brett found love, but that love is impotent and she needs some other source of pleasure. In pursuit of that, she breaks all traditional moral rules and boundaries – she even seduces a young toreador in front of her fiancée, who stupefies himself with drinks in order to forget that Brett is having affairs with other men. However, this kind of behaviour is not accepted by the general public and society is always quick to judge promiscuous women – unlike Lord Henry, who does not judge them, and is actually quite fond of promiscuous women. He says: "the people who love only once in their lives are really the shallow people" (Wilde 42). Once again, Brett follows Lord Henry's teachings. Although he is married, Lord Henry has numerous affairs with other women. Both Brett and Lord Henry want to escape the dullness of married life – they do not want to be anchored to a single place or person. In *The Sun Also Rises*, Romero is the character who embodies tradition, and the one who wants to tame Brett – a young, handsome, virile hero – but he is not Brett's equal. This is obvious in a single request: "He wanted me to grow my hair out. Me, with long hair. I'd look so like hell" (Hemingway 242). This is Romero's attempt to make Brett more womanly and it proves to the reader that he is not able to understand Lady Brett Ashley's complex nature. Furthermore, Oscar Wilde writes: "As

for marriage, of course that would be silly, but there are other and more interesting bonds between men and women" (Wilde 64). Wilde refused to believe that marriage is the only type of relationship between a man and a woman.

Such thinking, together with numerous scandals with his friend / lover Lord Douglas, led to Wilde's imprisonment – first in "Wandsworth prison" (Laver 24) and then he was "transferred to what was supposed to be the slightly more kindly atmosphere of Reading Gaol" (Laver 24). Lord Douglas destroyed Wilde. In his long letter *De Profundis*, Wilde simply said: "While you were with me, you were the absolute ruin of my Art" (Wilde 6). Douglas and Wilde's relationship shows us the potency of terrible lovers, and the power they wield over those who adore them. Brett is Jacob's terrible lover, and they both know that. Even though they love each other, they slowly disintegrate. Jacob suffers gracefully, and he is the real Hemingwayesque hero – the steadfast Saint Sebastian. Dorian Gray laughs at such ideas, "at the pathetic uselessness of martyrdom, all its wasted beauty" (Wilde 94).

This opposition is also visible in the style of both authors – Hemingway's short and clear style, but "still brilliantly, even crazily complex in its organization and effect" (Cain 80), and Wilde's high-brow writing, which is the product of his "wit, his insight, and of his curious syntax" (Beatty 34). The two styles could not be more apart, yet, when it comes to marriage and love, Brett once again follows the teachings of Oscar Wilde.

However, for all their similarities, Brett is not as reckless and cold as some of Wilde's characters. For example, Dorian Gray ruins children. He falls in love with the seventeen-year-old Sibyl Vane because of her acting skills – and when she acts badly on purpose one night, his illusion is ruined, and he abandons her. Sibyl, mad with sorrow, commits suicide. Dorian blames himself for this, but at the same time, the aesthetical doctrine of Lord Henry begins to shape his thoughts about her death. Through careful reading, it is obvious that Dorian was not in love with Sibyl, but was in love with the Actress – a created persona that embodied the most beautiful works of art. Dorian is the one responsible for her death, and yet "the roses are not less lovely for that. The birds sing just as happily in my garden" (Wilde 85). Dorian destroys or ignores anything that weighs him down and prevents him from attaining the most sublime of aesthetical pleasures. Basil Hallward, whom Dorian sees as a moral fetter around his leg, is an artist, but he does not pursue pleasure in the same ways as Dorian or Henry. Dorian kills Basil, and this murder is the act with which Dorian throws his consciousness in the gutter.

On the other hand, Brett knows where to draw the line – specifically in the case of Romero. She ends her relationship with him by saying: "I'm not going to be one of these bitches that ruin children" (Hemingway 243). One can

deduce that Dorian is willing to sacrifice anyone and anything in pursuit of pleasure, while Brett, although free-spirited and unbound, holds fast to some beliefs.

In this case, she does not follow poor Mr. Gray and Lord Wotton – this is one opium den that she will not enter.

To sum up, Lady Brett Ashley's style of life certainly follows some of Oscar Wilde's philosophy, contained in the works referenced in this paper. But, while Wilde's characters know no boundaries, Brett is a true lady and knows when to pull out of compromising situations. One can easily imagine someone painting a portrait of Lady Ashley - most certainly a lovely portrait, one that would not grow old or become degenerated as Dorian Gray's – and Jacob Barnes would take up the role of a custodian, removing every glimmer of dust that falls on the portrait of his love.

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