

"Working for the Common Good": *The Sun Also Rises* as Ironic Cultural Critique

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Also Rises as Ironic Cultural Critique

Near the beginning of *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake Barnes, the novel's narrator and protagonist, and his friend Brett Ashley see a black musician at a jazz club. Jake refers to the man as a "nigger drummer," describing him as "all teeth and lips" and having a childish voice (63). Thus, in two sentences, he performs what will be a ritualistic action in the novel, the reduction of the ethnic other to a simple caricature. It would be too easy to dismiss Jake's language and perspective as indicative of the dominant perspective held by white society during the 1920s; this does not account for the unique flaws in Barnes. While Hemingway's largely white audience may have internalized perspectives of white privilege as normative, the narrative does not necessarily endorse this perspective. In fact, Jake's ironic, free indirect discourse often causes the reader to question his perspective, values, and actions. Here it would be naïve to claim that Hemingway was following a social agenda that pre-dated the Civil Rights Movement, and it is difficult to attribute Hemingway's intentions, especially in a novel that functions in an ironical mode with a single, unreliable narrator. Still, it is impossible to ignore the way Jake represents the ethnic other in the novel, the way he co-opts others' experiences and reduces them to his limited worldview. It becomes apparent, however, that Jake uses this subjugation and reduction of others to hide his own masculine lack. Jake's reduction of the racial "other" is therefore indicative of a personal weakness.

Rather than create what for many would be a stock Hemingway character, one filled with machismo and authority, Hemingway fashions an emasculated character in Jake Barnes. As he is threatened by male and female figures, Jake's myopia, bigotry, and physical impairment represent a dominant perspective. This perspective eclipses otherness and defines itself by a lack, a symbolic emptiness that forms the foundation for a white world that is, in the words of Toni Morrison, "playing in the dark."

The Sun Also Rises (TSAR) was Ernest Hemingway's first serious novel and received an unexpectedly warm public reception, due in large part to its topical nature: it was widely known to be based on Hemingway's experience with American expatriates living in Paris. Ultimately, this type of semi-autobiographical writing made him a famous personality as well as an author. This status unfortunately clouded the critical reception of his work; even after he had won the Nobel Prize in 1954, literary criticism mostly focused on linking Hemingway's work to his life.

Edmund Wilson's The Wound and the Bow is the origin of what comes to be known as the Hemingway "code." Although later critics will define a seemingly endless number of "codes," the one Wilson presents governs a way for one to "lose with honor," in a world where everyone is losing (217). For James Colvert, another early Hemingway scholar, the "pursuit of new values is the primary activity of all Hemingway's heroes," not the passive loss Wilson describes (380). Jake, Colvert says, "wipes clean...the slate of his moral consciousness in order to record only those values which he discovers through personal experience" (378). Phillip Young presents a synthesis of these two theses in his first book, A Reconsideration, in which he attempts to delineate the "Hemingway Hero," its relationship to the code, and uses Freudian theory to explain why it occurs so frequently in Hemingway's writing and how it is a product of his life and experiences.

The earliest hero archetype Young identifies, Nick Adams, is based loosely upon Hemingway's own perception of himself as a young man who "has been complicated and wounded by what he has seen, done, and been through" (47). This hero desires to live righteously in a flawed world but, unlike Colvert, Young posits that the code is obtained not through "personal experience," but is taught by a "Code Hero." Of course, in TSAR Pedro Romero is the Code Hero tutor to Jake, the Hemingway Hero.

Young's book is the most frequently referenced work in discussions of the code because it is the first significant work dedicated to the theory and, in part, because it is widely reported that Hemingway became agitated at the idea of psychoanalysis being applied to his life -leading most to assume that this meant Young had struck "too close for comfort." In his essay "Hemingway: Valor against the Void." Ihab Hassan uses a Code to unify Hemingway's life, his narrative style, and his fiction. Hassan's work is representative of a dominant trend in early Hemingway criticism to read the author's work in the context of his life. Although some return to its basis in psychoanalysis to identify new principles that unify the novel, most Code critiques of *The Sun Also Rises*, especially those that incorporate biographical information, work to essentially reaffirm existing interpretations while dismissing alternatives and as a result overlook subtle gestures that the text makes to invite multiple, dynamic, and often competing interpretations. For instance, Robert E. Fleming's "The Importance of Count Mippipopolous: Creating the Code Hero" which does little but identify The Count, an often overlooked character, as a prime example of the code hero. Of course not all criticism has been formulaic implementation of a constructed code and, standing next to those that are, there are many essays that employ the code reading (or reject it) with

previously unrelated analytical frameworks to create new and persuasive connections to unconsidered themes.

Arnold E. and Cathy N. Davidson deliver a deadly blow to the "code hero" in their 1987 essay "Decoding the Hemingway Hero in The Sun Also Rises" in which they declare that any "code" reading of the novel will inevitably reveal major inconsistencies in itself and that "the novel itself effectively refutes any standards in the novel," including the principles of compensation that Jake expounds upon in monologue (86). Historical studies, other than those dealing specifically with Hemingway's life, make up a significant portion of criticism on this book. In a pair of 2001 essays William Adair uses extensive knowledge of the battles of World War I to imbue the events of the novel with extra value. Potential holiday plans that Jake suggests to Robert, according to Adair, outline the first battles in the War, the fiesta in Pamplona is reminiscent of a battle field, and Bill's gag about not being daunted and eating hard-boiled eggs is a jest at Marshal Haig. Michael Reynolds' 1987 study, "Recovering the Historical Context," illuminates much more of the world surrounding this novel's creation and does so in a way that reveals much more about the novel's themes and significance. He elucidates the various international economic crises that may have prompted Hemingway to include exact monetary figures in this novel, explaining the relevance of the Scopes Monkey Trial, and reminding us that the KKK in the 20s hated Catholics more than Jews. And, as for Cohn, Reynolds maintains that the anti-Semitism prevalent throughout the book doesn't indicate that Hemingway was a terrible person but instead "tells us...a good deal about America in 1926" (54). He calls the novel "a period piece, a historical artifact as precisely dated as that moment at Pompeii," which conveys the social and cultural milieu that existed at a unique point in world history (44). Mark Spilka explores this pervasive

mood in his 1958 essay "The Death of Love," in which he reads the novel as an allegory in which "Jake Barnes and Lady Ashley are two lovers desexed by the war," unable to love as a result of mental and physical trauma during the war, whose foil is Robert Cohn who still believes that romantic love is still a valid concept and will fight for it (33-34). Although his thinking is some ways clearly a product of his own time period (he concludes that "when men no longer command respect, and women replace their natural warmth with masculine freedom and mobility, there can be no serious love"), Spilka keeps his perception of The Sun Also Rises grounded in the cultural environment that produced it (37). For instance, he notes that emasculated Jake, flapper Brett, and the homosexuals at the *bal musette* reflect "the distortion of sexual roles which seems to characterize the period," making it clear that he understands the characters to be merely products of the historical forces that caused the end of traditional love (36).

Even before scholars tried to locate it in a social and historical context, the anti-Semitism in The Sun Also Rises concerned readers. In fact, at the time of its publication, many of the remarks made toward and about Robert Cohn were considered unnecessary and unusually offensive. It took considerable time for critics to respond to the bigotry with anything other than obvious distaste. In 1969 Michael J. Hoffman published "From Cohn to Herzog," an article in which he focuses on the sincerity of the Robert Cohn character, his intellectual pursuits, and his obsession with the metaphysical. Hoffman considers all of these to be positive traits of a common Jewish character rather than negative stereotypes. Josephine Knopf follows in similar suit with her "A Study of a Jewish Type and Stereotype," in which she both indicts Hemingway for portraying Cohn in a way that makes it seem to the reader as if "the traits of meanness corruption and weakness are somehow closely bound up with Jewishness," while attempting to pardon

him by arguing that Cohn is modeled after the "shlemiel," a type of stock character in the Jewish literary tradition (69-70). A more recent (1992) treatment by Wolfgang Rudat explores the issues through a biographical lens, examining how Hemingway's relationship with Loeb may have affected his creation of Cohn. Most relevant is Rudat's conclusion that the racism towards Cohn amounts to nothing since it is so blatantly exposed and Jake is aware of its inappropriateness. Daniel S. Traber also argues that Jake is not a bigot, and that to the contrary he "rejects particular versions of dominant whiteness" in a way that has traditionally been misconstrued as racist or bigoted. Like Rudat, Traber also uses Jake's awareness of racism, as well as his awareness of his own biases, to support his claim. The reason that Jake rejects Cohn and is angered by the *bal musette* homosexuals may or may not be fundamentally prejudiced but what really sets them apart, and warrants their inclusion by Jake in his narrative as subjects of scorn, is that they are rich, promote a system of disparity centered on privileged birth, and break his moral code. For Traber, Jake's narrative is a "critique of elitism as a form of racial identity" that uses figures from marginalized groups to represent examples of identities that support and desire elitism (Cohn and the urbane young men), as well as identities that reject and invalidate it (the Basques Jake and Bill meet while fishing) (179). Thus, it is no accident that Hemingway frames the novel with a racially sensitive discussion of a conflicted character.

The Davidsons' "Decoding the Hemingway Hero" has also been a significant contribution to gender critiques of The Sun Also Rises. It is used as a point of entry in Debra A. Moddelmog's "Contradictory Bodies" essay. The Davidsons provide a lengthy discussion of the *bal musette* scene, in which Brett arrives with a group of homosexuals, wherein they align both Jake and Brett with identities of fallen sexuality as well as

homosexuality by arguing that after they all meet at the bar Jake replaces the young men (and should therefore be considered as equivalent or related to them) as Brett's companion and that she replaces Georgette the prostitute as his (89-91). For Modellmog, however, it is not this simple, and the fact that the pairings ultimately dissolve into free units "challenge[s] the validity of defining gender and sexuality in terms of binarisms" (156). Instead, she traces a web of desire among all the characters in this novel that cannot be defined in terms of traditional sexual terminology. She finds in the characters not just the frequently noted signs of gender inversion, but a "fluidity of sexual desire and gender identification" characteristic of contemporary mindsets (159). Like many of the cultural studies, this gender study works to reinterpret material that has traditionally been thought of as offensive and present that material as instead indicating Hemingway's socially progressive nature.

Earlier gender studies, such as Theodore Bardacke's 1950 article, "Hemingway's Women," usually criticize Hemingway's female characters. Brett, he says is a "woman devoid of womanhood," and indicative of Hemingway's inability to create believable women (309). Similarly, Jackson Benson identifies Brett as "a female who never becomes a woman," again chastising Hemingway for creating insufficient characters (30). More substantial treatments of gender issues in The Sun Also Rises did not appear until 1980 in Delbert E. Wylder's essay "The Two Faces of Brett: The Role of the New Woman." Wylder declares that it is critically more important to focus on "the novel itself than on Hemingway's personal chauvinism (90). Additionally he criticizes Mark Spilka's "Death of Love," which only discusses Victorian love— love which depends on a dominant male and an immobile female, and he argues that Brett does love Jake, contrary to Spilka's assertion that she only has a certain "tenderness" for him. Wylder

sees Brett as the "new woman," the independent woman of the early twentieth-century that acted out against Victorian standards. Her second "face" then is that of the caring matron, the Victorian "angel in the home." Brett is torn between traditional standards of womanhood and new gender possibilities, and, most importantly, she is not a heartless witch but a conflicted character, like all the others in this novel, struggling to fit into a radically altered society still in transition.

In 1987 Wendy Martin also identified Brett as a "new woman," and similarly shows her to be a woman torn between old and new forms of gender identity. Martin, however, shows in great detail how Brett's struggle for identity resembles Jake's. She likens Jake's moral code of quiet suffering to Victorian standards for womanly behavior that Brett would have learned while growing up, and shows how Jake and Brett, both searching for a new gender identity, operate in relation to characters like Cohn and Romero who have "traditional" world views. Ira Elliott sees gender in The Sun Also Rises as something that is preformed. She argues that "the novel posits the site of sexuality in gendered desire rather than sexual behavior," and thus, because Jake is not able to perform homo or hetero sex acts, it is "gender performance and erotic object choice" that separate him from the homosexuals at the *bal musette* (71). Elliott also argues that Jake's status as an expatriate is a performative identity and that its inclusion in the book creates a "link between non-normative sexuality and decadence" (74). Elliott finds signs that Jake is ultimately not a member of the male gender that he attempts to include himself in through performance: although he is not a gay man, he is not a truly straight man, either, and the policeman at the end of the novel indicates this when he raises his baton (which is "symbolic of Jake's lack") in a gesture of rebuke (77). Axel Nissen, writing at the turn of the 21st Century, goes as far as to argue that Jake is himself a

homosexual, as are all the other principal characters in the novel. The premise of his argument is that, in the novel, "what cannot be named is not the nature of Jake's wound but his sexual identity as a 'queer' man" (42). Nissen uses an historical resource to delineate the difference between men who, in the 20s, were called "fairies" from "queers," the former being a flamboyant man who performs a non-male gender, the latter being a gay man who could pass for straight (48-49). Nissen uses this distinction to explain Jake's anger towards the young men at the *bal musette* and the fact that no one has identified Jake as an acknowledged homosexual before. Nissen, quoting from the same source, even declares that the *bal musette* bar is placed at the location of a gay nightclub that operated in Paris during the 1920s.

These gender studies, which bring existing critical studies (primarily biographical and/or psychoanalytic in nature) and other methods such as deconstruction and new historicism into their feminist analytical framework, are some of the best examples of contemporary criticism. These essays avoid the narrow and limited approaches of early Code and biographical criticism. Earlier historical critiques almost all assess the prevalence of anti-Semitism in the 1920s and by discussing Robert Cohn explore the role of marginalized groups in the text, keeping the study from becoming too narrow in focus. Studies that focus on Cohn or on Brett seem to ultimately revolve around the same issues of identity, culture, and presentation. Critics struggle to understand Jake's presentation of marginalized characters, how that presentation is affected by his biased perspective, how it stands in comparison to standards of the time, and why Hemingway includes such offensive content. Looking at these inquiries from a world in which the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission uses a single law to protect individuals from discrimination due to religion and race, as well as gender, it is natural to consider

race and gender to be related on a basic level. Reconsidering the foundational role of Freudian theory in the early criticism, and some of the basic assumptions of its authors, may lead us to question the accuracy of thinking that tolerated and encouraged gender inequalities, and to appreciate how criticism has over time rejected analytical frameworks based on assumptions of superiority that foster imbalanced relationships while at the same time adopting methods that paid close attention to those that were the object of such relationships. In almost every study there is an unfortunate tendency for the author to focus too closely on extant criticism, or outside theory and information, leading to a disregard for the text itself as the author generalizes and distorts it to fit the theory and approach of the paper. Starting with these interpretations in mind, specifically those addressing gender and inter-racial/cross-cultural issues, I intend to reveal instances in which this novel subverts expectations, gender, race, and class disparities to make it clear that neither Jake nor Hemingway endorse these disparities or the angry expressions of bigotry in the narrative, although neither expressly condemns them, and that the nontraditional identities that populate it are indicative of a fundamental theme of transformation and change.

I have already mentioned that all the characters are based on friends of Ernest Hemingway, a fact which significantly affected the critical reception of the book. Regardless of their origin, the characters in The Sun Also Rises prove to be the most memorable aspect of the narrative, and readers understand and relate to the characters almost instantly despite a noticeable lack of assistance from the narrator. Their dialogue is also admirable, so full of narrative information and so convincingly delivered that the narrator need seldom add explanation or commentary. Robert Paul Lamb identifies Hemingway as one of many early modernist writers, including Joyce and Stein, to use

"dialogue that is believable because it is indeterminate and represents a failure to communicate completely," and therefore able to express character and "crystallize" relationships (461). Lamb argues that Hemingway was the first writer to use this kind of "verisimilar" dialogue to convincingly "advance plot," in addition to its other modern uses (455). Because Jake leaves the characters almost entirely without introduction, the reader must infer their personalities from their actions and their speech, and Hemingway makes this a natural and seamless process for the reader by using witty dialogue that resembles ordinary casual conversation between friends.

A prime example of this verisimilitude in his dialogue is Hemingway's ability to create meaningless, and often illogical, conversations between characters that are trying to amuse one another. Bill Gorton, the American writer visiting Europe, is a frequent player in these instances of verbal exchange, often choosing to repeat a favorite word to the point of absurdity and using it for as many meanings as possible. For instance, Bill advises Jake numerous times in Paris that he "Never be daunted," after telling him that he is "Going to give all my friends stuffed animals" for Christmas, since he is, after all, a nature writer (73-74). The most elaborate and arguably most humorous of these tirades is Bill's explanation of the necessity to "Work for the common good [and]...Show irony and pity" (113). Irony and Pity, Bill explains to Jake, are very popular in New York at that time and important for serious writers to understand and use (114). Pity may be difficult to define in this context, but incongruity is at the heart of irony if we understand it in these terms: there can be no irony until an expectation or standard exists to be deviated from or defied. Incongruity is also in the hearts of Hemingway's protagonists: beginning with the War, which defied romantic expectations of battle, they have all found the world and their lives to be incongruous with their expectations for

them. However, because ironic situations will always emerge as long as existence continues to progress and change, it would be more ironic if their lives and world had been exactly what they had expected.

Bill Gorton seems to also use irony as a literary term. That is to say, in literature irony is a method for highlighting the incongruities within a text as well as the intentional creation of such incongruities. When we consider irony to be a product of change, this passage suggests important implications for a book that, like The Sun Also Rises is focused on the changed and changing. When irony is treated as a piece of literary jargon fit to be the subject of jokes within this book, one that frequently uses irony, the reader should assume that Hemingway does not object to the use of irony but to the use of irony as a "buzz-word" that is so broad in meaning that it is essentially meaningless. It seems to be this type of use which Bill pokes fun at by equating "Irony and Pity" with a communist creed, a depressing outlook, a circus act, and just about "anything" (113-114). In a novel that is so thoroughly tragicomic and so eager to leave things unstated, this overt focus on irony is significant and is itself ironic, causing the reader to pay close attention to further ironies in the text. The fact that Bill presents the fault of Irony by ironically using it to mean several conflicting and unrelated things displays how irony can still have meaning even when its definition makes it too vague to have meaning. After this satirization of Irony and Pity, we are more likely to notice instances of irony but find them less substantial than we might otherwise, and we will begin to think of them as pitiful. So when the waiter recounts the death of Vicente Girones -emphasizing how greatly Vicente's expectation of some "morning fun" differs from the horn in his back and chest that he receives- the irony of the situation only makes it appear that much more pitiful to us. Expatriates living in mid-1920s Paris still

feel the effects of the Great War, and the world they live in, already radically altered by the war, continues to change around them in surprising and often alarming ways as it progresses towards a second Great War, one of unprecedented atrocities and destruction. It is not surprising then that indicators of social and international progress are often locations of overt irony if we understand irony to be a way of emphasizing pity. Gertrude Stein's famous "lost generation" remark forms *The Sun Also Rises's* first epigraph. Hemingway places an importance on his own generation that was in large part responsible for the novel's initial popular success and, indeed, has given the novel a sustained importance over time. People feel that he has "captured a moment" with this novel, that it somehow contains the essence of a cultural *milieu* that was born out of a dissolution of national and personal identity following radical socio-political changes and the aftermath of World War I. *TSAR* is riddled with expressions of alienation (from self, other, home), filled with a dull sense of fear, and littered with characters unable to find significance and meaning in their lives. With the exception of Bill Gorton, all the primary characters in this novel are living in a foreign country: Jake and Robert are from America, Brett is from England, and Mike is a Scot. They live in Paris, not to become Parisian, but to interact with their friends from home and other expatriates involved in the arts. This creates a state for these characters in which they are estranged and alienated from their home-country, their friends and family there, and their political rights while still hoping to create art that would be received there. Maintaining such an identity alienates these expatriates from the French because it subordinates and impinges upon a cohesive Parisian identity. Estranged from the city they have inhabited in order to escape from the home with which they were unable to identify, the subjects

of this novel must feel some sense of discontinuity and anxiety brought on by uncertainty about their place in the world.

We find these feelings of displacement in Jake Barnes and his friends. Jake runs into Braddocks, Cohn, and others while out with Georgette, a Parisian *poule* who immediately dislikes his friends (especially Robert's girl Frances: "Who is she? ... Do I have to talk to her?") and brings their less flattering features to light, including their general inability to speak French, poor sense of humor, and the fact that once-a-week they rent out a bar that is at all other times frequented by "working people" and use it as their own dance-club (18). At dinner on another occasion, Bill and Jake have to wait at Madame Lecomte's because it is overrun with Americans (76). When this sense of displacement is not manifest at a cultural level, it is present in the social relations of the characters. Jake does not seem to like any of his friends or have very much to do with them. When Mrs. Braddocks introduces him to Robert Prentiss "a new and rising novelist" from America, Jake assumes immediate dislike and is unable to restrain an angry outburst (21). His relationship with Brett is a continual source of anxiety for him and at a basic level alienates him from her fiancée Mike and later Cohn when he sleeps with her. Jake and Brett displace their affection for one another into an impossible romantic relationship that alienates Jake from his own castrated body, seemingly the only impediment to their love. The motif of displacement and fear that seems to epitomize the "lost generation" is present at all levels of interaction in this book, it is also present in images of barren Spanish hills and solitary moments on fishing expeditions, even in Jake's narrative style which attempts to separate emotion from experience with a consistent, unaffected tone. This sense of isolation is common to Jake

and all of his friends but, pitifully, they never use this common ground to overcome the isolation.

The Sun Also Rises opens with a description of one of Jake's friends realizing his own ethnic identity. When he enrolls at Princeton, Robert Cohn encounters feelings of "inferiority and shyness" when "being treated as a Jew" (4). Jake is careful to tell us how he came to know the details of Cohn's past before imposing his own interpretation of those events on the narrative. He was not convinced, for instance, that Robert had been middle-weight boxing champion at Princeton until he "had somebody verify the story from [Cohn's trainer] Spider Kelley" (4). Jake struggles for a certain level of honesty in his narrative because he cannot achieve objectivity. A result of this conscious surrender to subjectivity is that we begin to sense the importance of selection in Jake's narrative. We derive an understanding of his character based on the content that he provides to us as well as his interpretation of it. For instance, Jake's assumption that Cohn's shyness and feeling of inferiority is caused by his ethnicity indicates his assumptions about race and white superiority. An extensive discussion of Cohn's history from Jake details a failed marriage, to "the first girl who was nice to him," and an attempt at a literary career; it also gives us information about Cohn, shows us how Barnes interprets the actions of his peers, and grants a certain significance to their relationship once we realize that Jake will not give such an exhaustive description of any other character (4-6). Is Cohn somehow more important to Jake than the other characters, does he enjoy the pitiful details of Cohn's life, or is Cohn merely the only character complex enough to deserve such an introduction?

Ultimately I feel that Cohn is supposed to reflect Jake or be equated with him somehow. They are both writers, have a desire for Brett which they cannot satisfy, and

are members of a persecuted religious group. Jake Barnes' character is the most elusive figure in this novel; Hemingway submerges it in dialogue, hides it behind correlative objects, and weaves it into the very fabric of his tale, leaving the reader to render what he leaves as a narrative framework into a realistic and full character. Jake's introduction of Cohn at the beginning of the novel, where the narrator would typically introduce himself, therefore indicates that we should read Robert as an analogue of Jake and use details about his character to inform our understanding of Jake.

The festival at Pamplona is one of religious worship that celebrates seasonal patterns and the rural life that allows working-class Spaniards, as well as visiting foreigners, to redefine or transform their identities. After attending a bull-fight Brett, Mike, Robert, Bill and Jake are walking through the crowded streets when Brett is surrounded by a dancing group who put garlic necklaces on her and dance around her as an icon. The "big wreaths of white garlics" identify with whiteness; they are worn to indicate participation in *the fiesta*, an opportunity for peasants to live like wealthy foreigners as well as with them, to become White and well-bred, allowing them at least the illusion of being the Center of a racial relationship that is by its nature subjective and subjugating (155). Having Brett "as an image to dance around" is for the dancers similar to wearing the garlic wreaths: it is indicative of *fiesta*, and identifies the peasants with whiteness as well as somehow whitening them. Adorning Brett with the wreaths further associates her with the Spanish workers, whitening the 'natives' and *their fiesta* while darkening Brett, Othering her by the association. The symbolic gesture of the *riau-riau* dancers also bluntly reduces her to a symbolic object, one that centers the experience of rural Spaniards while darkening and de-centering the English aristocracy, and moves Brett into a relationship in which she is object. Inversions and re-definitions of gender

roles are frequent and for the most part obvious in this book, but this is one of the few examples of inversion and distortion of class and ethnic roles. Just as the gender roles are indicative of sexual standards transforming on a global level, the identities explored above are indicative of global economic trends away from extremely disparate distributions of wealth and toward evenly distributed wealth and a middle-class majority. Overwhelmed by the festivities, Cohn comically passes out in the back room of a bar, "sleeping quietly on some wine-casks. It [is] almost too dark to see his face," and a big garlic wreath is "twisted" around his neck and chest (158). The symbolic white wreath has darkened him to the point of absurdity. When Cohn returns to the front room, wiping his eyes, Mike ridicules the presence of the garlic wreath, which for Mike identifies only darkness, on his body. He insults Cohn by repeatedly telling him to "Eat those garlicks, Robert," mocking Cohn for being racially marked to an absurd degree by the garlicks, and simultaneously mocking the body underneath that is indelibly marked as Jewish.

Jake's absent phallus also indelibly marks him, and in Freudian terms robs him of his masculinity. In Lacanian terms, however, the phallus is a symbol representing prosperity, often veiled by its association with the male genitalia. Living as an incomplete man in a world developing without regard to its destination or origin, Jake is unable to enjoy the simple pleasures of a romantic relationship, has no reason to expect a stable future, and is unsure of himself and his place in society. Displaced from his sexual identity and living abroad as a foreigner, he relies on his Lacanian phallus -his monetary wealth, his privileged ethnicity, and his social status- to provide relief from the uncertainty and despair that he must constantly face, and the comfort of consistency. He drinks fine alcohol, spends money in a way that emphasizes his

financial freedom, and revels in his privileged status as an elite white male -necessarily marginalizing the less fortunate other. Jake veils his physical lack with the virtual phallus, an inversion of typical Lacanian processes that, when examined as such, calls attention to the subjective nature of material prosperity and social status, and their lack of objective value. The protagonists of this book have what is referred to several times as "breeding." Essentially, having rich white parents gives someone "good breeding." Having good looks, aristocratic connections, and money of one's own makes one better "bred." Of course one's breeding only becomes significant if it can be compared against someone with poor breeding. Hence, this social status is dependent on their being people without good breeding who suffer because of it. Toni Morrison argues that in America social status is constituted by "White Freedom" which exists only in relation to "Black Slavery" (57). Jake is able to find comfort in his privileged status which depends on the subjugation of ethnically "inferior" persons, and although he does not work to maintain those exploitative relationships, he will not threaten his phallus by letting his social status escape him.

In action Jake maintains his social power through money, spending in a way that controls others. He solicits a prostitute, without any apparent qualms, so that he will have someone to dine with. Although he does not want her for sex, he still wants to exert power over a woman with his virtual phallus and in doing so reifies the woman's status as a subjugated sex worker, maintaining his own superiority and disguising his phallic absence by displaying the power his social status grants him. Additionally, Jake takes horse-cabs to separate himself from commoners on the street and over-tips waiters to "make friends" (233). When a German waiter is snooty to him in Pamplona he leaves the restaurant. The waiter's rudeness is inconsistent with Jake's social-class ideology; he is

unable to use his status to control a "subordinate" with poor breeding (the waiter's job alone clearly indicates that he is not well bred). Jake's phallus fails, leaving him impotent or again castrate, so he distances himself from this site of phallic absence. When the German waiter tells Bill and Jake that he has a table ready for them Jake ignores him, as he tries to ignore his injury, while Bill ironizes him, "Go sit at it" (211). Jake is also quick to pay his friends' bills or loan them money (as he does for Harvey Stone) and in doing so flaunts his status. Count Mippipopulous outclasses Jake in such displays, indicating (if his title did not already) that his social status is higher than Jake's. The count acts not as a foil to Jake but as a manifestation of the phallus which Jake has in spite of his lack of a physical phallus. In his rhetoric, Jake explores his racial privilege mostly at the expense of Robert Cohn. Although Cohn is white he is, for Jake (as for many people in the early 20th Century), decidedly "other" as a Jew. While his racial identity does not inform Jake's dislike of Cohn, Jake does associate displeasing aspects of Cohn's personality with his ethnicity (his "hard, Jewish, stubborn streak") and then uses Cohn's racial status to assure himself of his own superiority (10). His Jewish identity is used as a means by which people can insult Cohn safely; Jake is able to find Cohn's "effeminate" qualities disgusting without the risk of finding that he shares any such qualities with Cohn who he is separated from by his identity as ethnically other. Cohn's Jewish identity creates a non-Jewish identity that his friends share and use to elevate them socially.

A tender romance, a lesson in aesthetic prose, an unsolicited and frank *roman a clef*, as well as an anatomy of the mind of an American expatriate in interbellum Paris, *The Sun Also Rises* reveals the best and worst attributes of characters through the lens of a man poignantly aware of his own flaws. Jake Barnes engages the reader with

discourse on human nature, epicurean ethics, and personal philosophy to imbue the events of the novel with some level of order and logic. His choice of details, images, and events, however—even his discourse attempting to order those events—creates questions and conflicts that are not resolved in the narrative. Questions raised early in the novel about Jake's past and his sexuality are slowly answered through abstract language and inferences (Jake is not "sick" as he tells Georgette, nor "impotent," but "just had an accident") (15,115). Other textual gaps must be filled by the reader: it is left to us to imagine why Jake would fight for the Italians in World War I when he seems to have no ties to that country—perhaps it has something to do with his affinity for bullfighting, an interest to which we are introduced immediately before the only concrete description of Jake's time in the service (85)? The technique that Hemingway uses to create meaning through implication invites the reader to fill textual gaps with material from the book as well as with material of the reader's own creation. A result of this engaging and life-like narration he uses to describe real people and places is that the characters in *TSAR* can be approached not only as figures in Hemingway's imaginative universe or Jake's consciousness, but as figures in our own minds and indeed as real people living in the real world. Thus, when we consider Jake, Lady Ashley, or Robert Cohn in their historical context we see them as products of their privileged "white" environment as well as representatives of it, revealing the dominant ideologies and assumptions of their day and the prevailing moral sense of ours.

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