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INTRODUCTION

Dr. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki, Assistant Professor

The papers collected here comprise a selection of essays written by students of English Language and Literature who attended the course *Survey of American Literature II* (20th century) in the academic year 2017-2018 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. Furthermore, they represent the sequel to the special volume of students' essays "*I, too Sing America": Students' Essays on 20th Century American Literature*, published in 2016.

I have been teaching this course for the past six years, and modified course requirements in order to achieve the highest level of academic discussion and analysis, critical thinking, and writing. *Survey of American Literature II* is not a mere overview of the seminal literary achievements by American authors in the 20th century. It is a study of American history, culture, landscape, and spirit all of which are inextricably woven into the writings of Frost, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, Kerouac, Morrison, Cheever, Plath, and many others. The purpose of the course, and the papers, is to demonstrate a high level of understanding of historical, social, and cultural processes in the United States and discuss some of the prevailing issues that arise from the selected texts such as, the American dream, the pursuit of freedom and happiness, race, class, gender, and identity, which is something these papers certainly achieved.

Two papers focus on Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and discuss the issues of the American dream and identity, which might seem as an already worn out thesis. However, the papers comparatively approach these matters and connect concepts about the pursuit of happiness (and/or wealth) and identity with other notable texts. The analysis of *The Great Gatsby* and Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*

sheds light on the American dream across race, class, and time. The other paper underlines the tragedy of the disillusioned protagonists such as Gatsby and Blanche DuBois in Williams's play *A Streetcar Named Desire.* Additional two papers focus solely on the protagonist, Jay Gatsby. Whereas one paper maintains that there is nothing heroic in his character, the other provides compelling arguments claiming that Gatsby is indeed a traditional tragic hero. Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* seems to be quite popular among students, and there are two papers arguing the issues of homosociality, and the changing stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. African American literature, such as the already mentioned play *A Raisin in the Sun* and Morrison's Nobel Prize winning novel *Beloved,* are surprisingly well received among students who explored the issues of motherhood, money, and happiness in those works. Unlike with African American texts, students hardly (at all) connect with Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* even when they (have to) admit the merit and ingeniousness of this high-modernist novel. Nonetheless, I always encounter that one student who falls in love with Faulkner and provides and exceptional paper on time. Finally, two more papers focus on post – World War II poetry. One paper offersa cultural study of the Beat Generation and Ginsberg's *Howl,* maintaining its importance for the empowerment of the marginalized (queer community) in mainstream literature and culture. Similarly, the analysis of Sylvia Plath's poem "Lady Lazarus" suggests that her poetry served as a vehicle of women empowerment in the 1960s.

This brief summary of the papers illustrates the diversity of topics and approaches to the American literary canon of the twentieth century. The selected papers provide insightful analyses of a variety of historical, social, personal, and cultural issues, and are, therefore, a valuable resource and student of American literature.

Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*: A Queer Cry for Attention

Bruno Kulić

The postwar era saw the US boom economically and demographically, resulting in a golden era of unparalleled prosperity for the straight white man. At the same time, due to its involvement in a new war across the globe, a generation of young intellectuals started questioning its traditional identity. Nowhere was this skepticism more prominent than in the Beat Generation, whose devil-may-care approach to life resulted in artistic productions that were often dismissed as merely means of getting attention instead of serious art. The aim of this paper is to analyze *Howl* as a plea for attention from a people hitherto underrepresented in public discourse as well as literary canon, the sexual minorities.

The 1950s found the US under siege from within by McCarthyism, a legal witch-hunt by the government against alleged Communists and "sex perverts", as the two shared traits in mainstream American consciousness: "gays and communists both kept their true identities hidden, both seemed to move around in a secretive underworld" (Charles 104). The persecution of what were thought to be naturally subversive sexualities later became known as the Lavender Scare and resulted in FBI surveillance of suspected homosexuals. Furthermore, the FBI used the gathered intelligence to ensure the firing of gay employees from government and non-government jobs alike (Charles 103). Social discrimination based on sexual orientation was seen as justified by claims that homosexuality was a mental disorder, even though psychiatrists saw "their profession as playing a progressive role in defining homosexuality as a disorder rather than a moral failing subject to prosecution and imprisonment" (Zachar and

Kendler 3). Gay and lesbian bars, created with the intent of providing a separate and safe zone for sexual minorities, were considered illegal and thus subject to police raids (Noga-Styron et al. 373). This is the America that awaited *Howl* upon publication in 1956.

With the world such a hostile place, it is small wonder that Allen Ginsberg would find solace in the Beat Generation, who fulminated against the prudery of their parents' generation and considered taboos against honest and open discussions of sexuality harmful (Rahn). Their likeminded discontent with the state of their country lead to a complete rejection of the traditionally imposed ideology of familialism, and subsequently a life of reckless abandon where illegality was a guidebook, rather than something to stay clear of: "[they] purgatoried their torsos night after night / with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and cock and endless balls" (Ginsberg 9).

However, whereas sexual experimentation with the same gender was something to be dabbled in for William S. Burroughs or Neal Cassady, for Ginsberg it was an inescapable fact of life. His fight for Gay Liberation encompassed appropriating the harmful stereotype of gay men's promiscuity, a tactic which became popular with queer revolutionaries in the decades to follow. Ginsberg recounts this supposed insatiability of gay men's sexual appetites in many anecdotes throughout the poem: "who let themselves be fucked in the ass by saintly motorcyclists, and screamed with joy / who blew and were blown by those human seraphim, the sailors, caresses of Atlantic and Caribbean love" (12). The mention of sailors, or the navy, is notable in particular because in later years the same insidious conviction would be used as justification to pass President Bill Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which prevented gay people in the military from coming out because of the belief "that in doing so their straight colleagues would either feel at risk or actually be at risk of unwanted sexual advances" (Strudwick). Keenaghan concludes that queer people's misguided acceptance of their own outlawed position was a mistaken route to freedom (18).

That being said, appropriating a homophobic discourse was not Ginsberg's only instrument in advancing a liberal agenda. Selby claims that Ginsberg's poem is a rebellion seeking to conform by using traditional means – its sentiments are inspired by Emerson, employed in the style of Whitman using the language akin to that of Henry Adams (65). The author further expounds that *Howl*'s particular mix of sex and heroism were commodified in the 50s, which allowed the marginalized discourse to be absorbed into the mainstream: "It is in its proliferation of sexual discourses that the poem reflects most strongly its search for a mythical American connectedness" (65). This seems to recontextualize the poem as a kind of plea for acceptance, instead of a renunciation of the established societal structures in the recalcitrant spirit of the Beat Generation.

Despite its intent perhaps not being Beat-like, its contents still very much are the epitome of that bold and expressive literature that would become synonymous with the movement.The title itself is a perfect example of the violent and intense emotions characteristic of the Beats' writing. It is a cry "from protest, pain, attack and lamentation to acceptance, affirmation, love and vision – from alienation to communion" (Shrestha). William Everson's comparison of the poem to a scream from a paddy wagon is an apt one considering the following lines: "who bit detectives in the neck and shrieked with delight in police cars for committing no crime but their own wild cooking pederasty and intoxication" (Ginsberg 11). This proclamation of one's identity might only exist because of the unjust yet legal imprisonment of gay men, but Ginsberg nonetheless stated in an interview in 1974 that the poem is a literal "coming out of the closet" and an "acknowledgment of the basic reality of homosexual joy" (Raskin xx).

There is an undeniable auditory sense to *Howl*, perhaps stemming from its evocative title. It is often said that the poem is meant to be read aloud, if not chanted. Keenaghan claims the voiced word, the lyric verse existing between writing and song, is especially suited for opening one's self to others as "it does not simply signal the existence of singularities"; rather, it starts a conversation (28). This statement

may go some ways towards explaining why thousands of young people responded as though they had had been waiting for years to hear these very words (Gornick 5). The obscenity trial propelled the poem and its writer into the national consciousness, helping it sell out its first printing days after it was exonerated by judge Clayton Horn (Selby 67). The message reaching a wider audience than could ever have been expected should have meant that a generation of gay men would take it as a clarion call to freedom and subsequently crush the nation's denial of queer existence (Ginsberg et al. 7). This, however, did not come to pass.

The American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality from the official list of mental disorders in December of 1973 (Zachar and Kendler 3), but it was not until 1987 that it completely fell out of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Burton). The visibility of queer community seems to be inextricably linked with medicine, so it took the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s for it to enter the public spotlight. Keenaghan asserts that sexual minorities have embodied death in the social imaginary since the Cold War, whether literally through what was originally known as the gay plague, or figurative social constructs, meaning the death of the family and morality (19). Morbidly, suicide seems to be just as tightly connected with the community, as studies have found that LGBT youth are four times as likely to attempt suicide as their heterosexual peers (Halady 20), so it is not surprising to find Ginsberg nonchalantly stating that they "cut their wrists three times successively unsuccessfully" (13). Keenaghan stresses that even in today's supposedly more tolerant climate, the queer community lives in close proximity to threat and death (20). Holding one's partner's hand in public, walking too closely too each other or displaying too much affection is seen as imposing their private selves upon others, thus provoking violent responses, verbal or otherwise: "We are always public entities, even when we believe we're in the most intimate or private of situations" (Keenaghan 22).

Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* was always destined to make an impact. Its paradoxical mix of rebellion and conformity perfectly reflected a society in which a certain majority enjoyed peace and prosperity, while the outcasts were persecuted. Its uncensored obscenity offended many, yet that same unrelenting honesty is what made it appealing to the masses. While the poem failed to significantly influence the public discourse around sexual minorities, it did succeed in making the mainstream, however briefly, pay attention. It made America take notice of an extravagant individual's queer existence. Keeping in mind that those recognizably perceived as queer face danger even if they are carefully private, it makes perfect sense for Ginsberg to have lived as freely as he could, and to have proclaimed his sexuality as openly as he did – because if death is ever your companion, you might as well live without fear.

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The Reconstruction of Femininity in *Beloved*

Karla Špiranec

The reason why *Beloved* is flooded with tough, capable, and strong-minded women is because the book was written by one. Specifically, as she is a black woman herself, who has spent her whole life living with the same kind of women she is trying to portray, Toni Morrison does not allow the stereotypical portrayal of women as dependent, fragile human beings who cannot function on their own. Because of that, not one of her characters is portrayed as that kind of person. The aim of this paper is to discuss the impact of a female author on the portrayal of women in *Beloved.*

To start with, in an interview with Nellie McKay, Toni Morrison stated that her immediate role models in her life are women; her grandmother "who left her home in the South with seven children and thirty dollars because she feared white sexual violence against her maturing daughters" (Morrison, McKay 413) and her mother "who took "humiliating jobs" in order to send Morrison money regularly while she was in college and graduate school" (413). Most likely, that respect and admiration she has for her mother and grandmother influenced her characterization of Sethe and Baby Suggs, who were Beloved's mother and grandmother. As she thought of her own mother and grandmother to be fierce and resilient women, those thoughts could have inspired her to make Sethe and Baby Suggs the toughest women in the novel, capable of enduring almost anything thrown their way.

When talking about the virtues of genders, strength, power, and vigor always used to be attached to men, while women were always

just kind, caring, and gentle. In *Beloved*, it was Sethe's strength that knew no bounds. Throughout the novel she put to test both her physical and psychological strength. Sethe survived years of slavery during which she was tortured, molested, beaten, and raped. She was so brutally beaten with a cowhide that she ended up with innumerable scars on her back, which Amy Denver then compared to a chokecherry tree, telling Sethe how on her back she had "the trunk—it's red and split wide open, full of sap, and this here's the parting for the branches. You got a mighty lot of branches" (Morrison 79).

Furthermore, the thing that destroyed her both physically and emotionally was the stealing of her milk. That milk was the only thing she truly owned and the fact that they took it so easily destroyed her to the point where that was all she could think about. Sethe was raped in the process yet she was able to come to terms with that, since that was a frequent type of assault against enslaved women, but she could not get over the fact that they took what was most valuable to her and then just threw it away. Morrison's reconstruction of femininity is visible right here because Halle was the one who saw what they did to Sethe and "it broke him" (Morrison 69) to the point where he went mad and abandoned his family, yet Sethe, who lived through that, found a way to continue living for her children. Her strength both physically and mentally was superior to his.

Most of the women's strength in this novel comes from their love of her/their children. In her interview for *New York Times* Toni Morrison said that:

> One of the nice things that women do is nurture and love something other than themselves – they do that rather nicely. Instinctively, perhaps, but they are certainly taught to do it, socialized to do it, or genetically predisposed to do it – whatever it is, it's something that I think the majority of women feel strongly about. But mother love is also a killer. (Rothstein 17)

Regarding that quote, it is clear that Morrison wanted to portray Sethe as a mother who was ready to do anything for her children,

including killing. Sethe helped her two boys and baby girl get away from slavery by putting them on a train to Ohio and then, because she was unable to go with them, she found a way to get there by herself, nine months pregnant, during the winter. When the Schoolteacher showed up in her home, Sethe truly realized what "only a mother knows the cost of mothering" (Demetrakopoulos 58) really meant. Sethe showed how strong-willed she is when she killed Beloved. She so desperately wanted to save her children from going back into slavery that she found the strength and bravery to kill her child. Although whether this was right or wrong will be the everlasting dilemma, Morrison herself said: "if I had seen what she had seen, and knew what was in store, and I felt that there was an afterlife—or even if I felt that there wasn't—I think I would have done the same thing. But it's also the thing you have no right to do" (Rothstein 17).

Similarly, the life of Baby Suggs was equally as hard as Sethe's and she showed just how much physical and emotional strength women actually have. She was born into slavery so almost all her life she did not know anything besides being a slave. She had multiple owners and the fact that Sweet Home is one of the better homes she had been at says a lot about the treatment she had received throughout her life. Her son Halle bought her freedom, so she could live her elderly years in peace and tranquility. As Halle is the only child she had with her at Sweet Home, it is obvious that she had a hard time as a mother as well. Baby Suggs had nine children yet Halle was the only one she knew where to find. All her other children were taken away from her and were either sold or killed.

Additionally, in an interview with Nellie McKay, Toni Morrison explained how her mother's talents were never hidden from men or white society, they were actually on display (416) so that could have affected Morrison's portrayal of Baby Suggs as a pastor and as a leader. That role alone reconstructs femininity as it was up until then because that role would usually go to a male character. In that same interview Morrison said that her life "seems to be dominated by information about black women. They were the culture bearers,

and they told us [children] what to do" (Morrison, McKay 415). That is exactly what Baby Suggs was, she was a true culture bearer who took the whole community with her. Her house, before Sethe killed Beloved, was always full of people wanting to hear her thoughts and advice. When she went to the Clearing, she was "followed by every black man, woman and child who could make it through" (Morrison 87) and while she talked, people would sit there and listen.

What is so special about Sethe and Baby Suggs is that through this reconstruction of femininity they did not just take on virtues that were tied to men, but they entwined them with virtues mainly attached to women. They are strong and capable leaders, but they are also kind, caring, and deeply in love with love. Sethe loved the concept of marriage so much that she hoped for a cake and a party for her whereas when Baby Suggs had to come up with a name she wanted to give herself, the first thing she came up with was Baby because her husband used to call her that.

Both Sethe and Baby Suggs cherished family values, their strength and independence did not affect their want to raise their children well as well as instil in them the most important values of their culture. Sethe and Baby Suggs "pass on their inherited values to make their children aware of their lost heritage, to inspire in them their lost values, to make them realize who they are" (Shaheen and Nazir 203). Shaheen and Nazir also claim that Sethe "tries to give her children a feeling of security, to reassert her matriarchal power by controlling their lives by herself, to give them a freedom from the horrors of slavery that she herself has craved for during her whole life" (Shaheen and Nazir 205).

In conclusion, Toni Morrison wrote a deeply feminist novel portraying women as they truly are today, both strong and gentle, tough and lovable, strong-willed and soft-hearted. It is obvious that Morrison's role models from her life heavily influenced her characters because they are portrayed as real women, and not in the way women had to act before – as quiet, timid and dependent human beings. The

women of the novel took virtues and characteristics tied to men and claimed them as their own. It is clear that Toni Morrison has paved the way for other authors to portray women the way they do today.

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Empowerment of Women in Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus"

Kristina Božić

The aim of this paper is to discuss the empowerment of women through the notion of self-destructiveness in Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus". The poem is commonly understood to be about suicide, but there is so much more to it than just its concept of self-destruction. It has also served as a guide to many women who were suffering to find themselves in a role that society has assigned to them, and that is the role that reduces women to instruments of pleasure. Therefore, the heroine of the poem tries to escape this imprisonment by trying to kill herself in order to free herself from all of the roles which were forced on her by the male dominance.

In order to understand Sylvia Plath's poetry, it is really important to notice that she was one of the representatives of the confessional poetry, and that is the poetry of the personal. The poets of this genre of poetry in the mid-twentieth century dealt with subject matter that previously had not been discussed in American poetry. They often wrote in an autobiographical manner addressing feelings about death, depression, trauma, and relationships. However, it is not fair to narrow Plath's poetry down to the genre of confessional poetry because it speaks "for multitudes of women with an enormous range of oppressive, and even violent, experiences" (Naylor-Smith 320). In her powerful voice lies the voice of all the women who had been oppressed in the past, but it also speaks to modern women trying to inspire them in order to stand up for themselves in their private and professional lives.

"Lady Lazarus" is the poem commonly understood to be about multiple suicide attempts provoked by depression and dark thoughts.

Sylvia Plath was clinically depressed for most of her adult life and she tried to commit suicide twice which led her to her third attempt in which she managed to take her life in 1963. She was 30 years old when she killed herself, and the narrator in the poem is of the same age, which does not seem like a coincidence. The poem consists of twenty-eight triplets which "replicate the number of days in a lunar cycle and the number of days in a normal menstrual, reproductive cycle" (Curley 213). The reproductive cycle reflects Plath's creativity, but it also highlights the losses she has experienced through life, like abortion, miscarriage, childbirth, and divorce.

The speaker in "Lady Lazarus" is an "undeniable feminine presence" (Curley 213) who is a figment of Plath's imagination. She used the name of her speaker as an allusion to the biblical character, Lazarus, who died and was resurrected by Jesus. Death connects her character with Lazarus, but the only difference is that Lady Lazarus manages to bring herself to life without any help. Through this certain feat, she controls her own destiny and does not bow down before God, or before Lucifer.

The speaker confesses about her suicide attempts and she tells the reader that the first one occurred when she was ten, accidentally. "The first time it happened I was ten/ It was an accident/ The second time I meant/ To last it out and not come back at all" (Plath 35-38). The second death was intentional and it was supposed to save her from all the misfortunes and injustice which she dealt with as a woman. This is her third suicide attempt and she starts to idealize the idea of death by comparing it to art. "Dying/ Is an art, like everything else/ I do it exceptionally well" (43-45). In the heroine's mind, there is something theatrical about dying. In death, as in art, lies a sort of perfection which is beyond vulnerability and uncertainty. Both states are to be performed in front of an audience and they represent "the big strip tease" (Daiya 166). There is only one problem with resurrection and that is the dramatic "Comeback in broad day/ To the same place, the same face, the same brute/ Amused shout/ A miracle" (Plath 52-55). Plath's representations of suicide can be interpreted

as the ultimate negation by women of accepting the domestic myth of twentieth-century America (Meneses 13). The dominant ideology of the time in which Sylvia Plath lived told a woman that in order to feel complete she needed validation from a man. Men's power over women and their view of women as sexual objects are depicted in the lines, where "The big strip tease" (Plath 29) attracts "The peanut-crunching crowd" (Plath 26), "arguably as a metaphor for women seen through the male gaze" (Meneses 15).

The poem has also drawn attention for its use of Holocaust imagery, similar to her poem "Daddy". This imagery beautifully portrays "the domestic holocaust women have experienced personally and privately" (Naylor-Smith 320). By comparing the heroine's skin to "a Nazi lampshade" (Plath 5) and her face to "a featureless, fine Jew linen" (9), the speaker defines her own condition. Jewish victims were obviously well aware of their oppression during the Holocaust, while throughout history many women have not been. "The public and historical recognition of women's oppression has been much delayed and downplayed, especially in comparison to something as publicly catastrophic as the Holocaust" (Naylor-Smith 321). Through her acceptance and embracement of her own oppression, she manages to take a step forward in changing the circumstances she found herself in. In the last couple of lines, the speaker denounces the doctors, such as calling the doctor "Herr Doktor" (Plath 65) or "Herr Enemy" (66), because they continue to bring her back to life when all she wants to do is to finally die. She is angry at the doctors because she thinks that the only way to escape the patriarchy is through a form of Revolutionary Suicide. "Through Revolutionary Suicide, there is an activism, a rationality fueled by hope, where suicide is the catalyst to express critique and refuse this world order" (Meneses 13). Taking her own life represents a new beginning or resistance to the patriarchal world. However, she keeps coming back to the same circumstances every time she comes back to life, which could represent the world's ignorance towards female rights. No matter how much women try to change the world around them, the patriarchy will fight back and deprive them of their voices. In these numerous attempts

lies the boldness and braveness of the speaker because she doesn't give up and she keeps looking for freedom in life.

Last but not least, is the phoenix myth of resurrection which is created by "a woman who has become a pure spirit rising against those who have confined her and bottled up her creativity and activity: God, doctors, men, and Nazis" (Daiya 168). The heroine warns all of them who have tortured her to beware because she is going to rise out of the ash and "eat men like air" (Plath 84). This metamorphosis of the self into spirit represents a 'higher good' which does not embody God, but her own willpower to take control over her life. Plath herself struggled to rise from her own oppression by "feeling under the control of men in her life and struggling inside a depressive mind" (Naylor-Smith 325). Even though it did not end well for Sylvia Plath, the character from her poem manages to create a bridge between the past and the future, between the end and the possibility of a better future for all women.

"Lady Lazarus" serves as a demonstration of the female artist's struggle for autonomy and independence in a patriarchal society, but it also gives a glimmer of hope through the notion of self-destructiveness. Self-destruction and liberation go hand in hand in this poem because suicide represents the only way for a woman to feel in control of her own life. Sylvia Plath manages to stand for all women through generations of devaluation and silencing of works written by female authors in order to oppress and discriminate them. Suicide, thereby, serves as a revolutionizing act through which the poet inspires women to always return stronger.

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Blurred Lines of Masculinity and Femininity in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*

Petra Mičević

Ernest Hemingway's archetypal novel of the Lost Generation, *The Sun Also Rises,* is one of his masterpieces and a classic example of his distinctive minimalistic, yet abundant in tremendous depth of meaning writing style. It was written in 1926 and it is also his first novel. *The Sun Also Rises* depicts the post-World War I generation where a group of American and British expatriates travel from Paris to the Festival of San Fermín in Pamplona to watch the running of the bulls and the bullfights. They are losing themselves in drinks, drama, and travelling, thus hoping that it would give a meaning to their lives. Among other complex topics, the novel examines the issues of gender misidentification and cross-gender themes, as shown by Hemingway's portrayal of effeminate men and boyish women. The purpose of this essay is to show how the traditional concept of what it means to be a man is undermined by the reality of the war and how male and female characters' sexual identities are blurred along the lines of the masculine and feminine identities.

To begin with, the first discernible proof of weakened masculinity caused by the war is portrayed through the narrator Jake Barnes. He is extremely anxious concerning his masculinity. As a soldier in World War I, he got wounded which rendered him incapable of having sex, even though readers know nothing about it other than it happened. Sam See in his article "Fast Books Read Slow: The Shapes of Speed in 'Manhattan Transfer' and 'The Sun Also Rises.' states that:

> The reader never really knows the "way" Jake is "wounded" because Jake evades, though does not avoid, the subject. He only records that, 'undressing, I looked at myself in the mirror

> of the big armoire beside the bed. That was a typically French way to furnish a room. Practical, too, I suppose. Of all the ways to be wounded. I suppose it was funny. I put on my pajamas and got into bed.' (357)

While it is true that Jake is not avoiding that subject, he is nonetheless trying to distract his attention from the wound. It is easily seen through his hostile and demeaning behaviour towards Robert Cohn which is certainly rooted in his own feelings of inadequacy. Not only is Cohn a Jew, but he is also the only nonveteran among their group of friends, which makes him perfectly suitable for someone to lash out on. In addition to that, Jake's frustration regarding his wound becomes even more protrusive when the love of his life, Lady Brett Ashley, refuses to be his partner because of his impotence. When Jake asks her to live together, her response is: "I don't think so. I'd just tromper you with everybody. You couldn't stand it" (27). It proves that she does not want to be in a relationship that excludes sex and it makes Jake feel even more inadequate because she is evidently the one establishing the rules that he needs to obey. That is why, other than his inability to procreate, Jake can be perceived as a weak, effeminate male character. "Physical rather than solely psychological war injury has been inflicted upon modernism's war veterans; it tends to be overtly symbolic: Great War veterans like the impotent Jake Barnes in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* suffers from injuries that matter mainly because they entail supposedly emasculating sexual impairment" (Mackay 57). Jake feels the "emotional wounding by Brett, which he associates with his unmanning sexual wounding during the war" (Adair 73). Ira Elliott in his article "Performance Art: Jake Barnes and "Masculine" Signification in *The Sun Also Rises*" states that when they go to watch bullfighting, it represents a symbol of "the physical battle between male rivals, most overtly expressed in the bullfight, where two such signifiers are the man and the bull. Jake is just a spectator at the bullfight rather than a participant, so, too, he can only look on as other men compete for the affections of Brett Ashley" (Elliott 87-88). Another symbol are steers, castrated male bovines, because they faithfully represent Jake and his

impotence. Steers' function is to make peace among the bulls, just like Jake's function is to keep peace among his friends.

Subsequently, while Jake is unequivocally a non-traditional male character in the novel, he is not the only one; Robert Cohn is an even more conspicuous example of an effeminate male character. As already mentioned, he is a Jew and the only one in their group of friends who never fought in World War I. That encouraged him to take part in sports, so he took up boxing. However, as much as he loved it, he was actually using it to defend himself from the "emotional injury of being tormented for his Jewish heritage" (Banache 38). Todd Onderdonk in his article "Bitched": Feminization, Identity, and the Hemingwayesque in *The Sun Also Rises*" states that "Cohn's Jewishness, niceness, and impercipience are all gendered traits in Hemingway's representation, traits that suggest Cohn's lack of the very epistemological masculinity that distinguishes Jake among the characters in the novel. Cohn belongs, in other words, to another sexual category entirely" (72). It is also apparent in his relationship with Frances. Cohn never stands up to her; he even refuses Jake's offer for a trip because it would make Frances uncomfortable if he spent time with another woman. Cohn, his movements, and his behavior are all controlled by Frances which proves her domination over his fragility."Cohn's fiancée Frances Cline also illustrates this phenomenon – her wounding viciousness representationally outweighing the wrongs being done to her by Cohn" (Onderdonk 88). Concerning his other "love relationship," his affair with Brett makes him even more (figuratively) castrated. Being an outsider and seen as a less of a man, especially by Frances, Cohn is trying to win over Brett. However, he is unable to get her attached to him, so he is trying to control her to some extent by being irrationally attached to her. Nevertheless, he is unable to do it, so it only contributes to his lack of masculinity and a feeling of inadequacy. His desire and gullibility allow Brett to "castrate" him and leave him to suffer: "when Brett sexually rejects Robert Cohn after a brief tryst in San Sebastian, for weeks afterward Cohn is in denial about his loss of agency in the relationship" (Onderdonk 66).

Lastly, Lady Brett Ashley is undoubtedly, other than Frances, the character that takes on a masculine, leading role in her relationships. She does not conform to traditional feminine behavior and looks, considering that she dresses like a boy and has short hair: “Brett was damned good-looking. She wore a slipover jersey sweater and a tweed skirt, and her hair was brushed back like a boy’s. She started all that. She was built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht, and you missed none of it with that wool jersey” (9). In spite of her boyish look, she spends her time surrounded by men who are mesmerized by her presence. As much as those men are trying to control her, she is the one controlling them because at first, she is involved with them, but then she rejects them thus confirming that none of them can possess her soul; only her body for a short period of time. “Brett is castrating to men if only in her all desirableness, which necessarily pits men competitively against other men—yet she also feminizes the victors, the men she sleeps with” (Onderdonk 77). Moreover, she frequently profits from Jake’s love for her. She often goes to him for emotional support and then abandons him to pursue affairs with other men. The fact that Jake is hurt by her actions and never tells her how he feels, is a repeated proof of her dominance. He allows himself to be emotionally abused, unable to stand up to her, probably because her emotional distance from him, and men in general, reminds him of himself. Brett represents the new age woman, even more because of her independence. When both Robert and Romero want to marry her, they actually want to do it in order to feminize her. As expected, due to those standards, Brett chooses to leave both of them because she refuses to compromise her sexual identity for them. Bullfighting also functions as a metaphor for the relationships between Brett and men; she manipulates them with her sexual power while refusing to be dominated and owned by any of them. On the other hand, she is just like them trying to find herself. While she was married to Lord Ashley, he would force her to sleep on the floor and kept threatening to kill her. After being dominated, humiliated, and abused by a man, no wonder she started to deny “a woman” within her and began to be promiscuous, just to avoid being hurt again.

In other words, it is obvious that characters from the novel, as members of the Lost Generation, cannot really express what the war has done to them, which stifles them emotionally and psychologically. Their behavior, for the most part, stems from the anxiety regarding sex. Women had to learn to be strong and independent in the course of the absence of men during World War I. On the other hand, men came back emotionally vulnerable and physically weak. It is all portrayed through novel's characters – Jake, whom war has rendered impotent, hence completely emasculated; Cohn, who has never even fought in World War I, but is still an outsider and insecure; Lady Brett Ashley who has actually been in war as a nurse, but she is an atypical woman because of her strength and independence. Both women and men are examples of a more fluid definition of their sex.All of them are trying to hide their insecurities and a feeling of inadequacy. Robert is trying to dominate Lady Brett Ashley due to a need to satisfy his lust and to prove his masculinity, Jake wants her love and acceptance to feel more like a man, while she is dominating both of them with her attitude, independence, and emotional alienation. It is certain that social conventions and war, even for those not fighting in it, leave a trace on people up to a point that it leaves them feeling insecure and uncertain about their sexuality, which makes them emotionally detached and lost while trying to pursue their true identity.

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Opposite Spectrums of Homosociality: Hemingway versus *Iron Jawed Angels*

Kristijan Kola

In a general sense, homosociality is a word that describes the selective socializing with members of the same sex. It can also be used in a broader sense of describing the friendships formed between people who share similar experiences, tastes, fears and similar. A great contrast between types of homosociality can be seen when juxtaposing Hemingway's works, foremost *The Sun Also Rises*, and the movie adaptation of the American women's suffrage movement during the 1910s called *Iron Jawed Angels*.

The Sun Also Rises features war-torn men trying to live their life in a world that robbed them of meaning, thus they are seeking that meaning in sexual encounters, alcoholic beverages and the occasional thrill. They aremost content in a place of comfort and serenity, which is the opposite of the atmosphere they experienced on a battlefield – they are trying to get away from conflict. In contrast to that, *Iron Jawed Angels* depicts female protagonists who are fed up with being treated as second class-citizen. They do not want silence like the Hemingway Hero, they want their voices to be heard, and more importantly, to count, whatever the cost may be, not shunning away from radical tactics, thereby creating a miniature war on their own.

Ernest Hemingway generally using soldiers and war veterans as the protagonists of his literary works should not be conceived as out of the ordinary when taken into account that he himself used to be a soldier and war veteran afterwards. His war experiences, as traumatic as they may be, turned out to be a blessing in disguise. They have given him insight into the psyche of people who were affected by war and their behavior, combining that with his war-influenced

style of writing he never failed to set the atmosphere and depict believable characters. At first glance those characters seem devoid of any emotion, but once they are by themselves or accompanied by like-minded individuals who are also branded by the terrors of war, their emotions start to seep through their battle-hardened façade, or as the American biographer Jeffrey Meyers puts it "Hemingway expresses his characteristic themes of violence, stoicism, war and death in perfectly controlled prose; and seems to excise all emotion from his work while allowing it to move powerfully beneath the surface" (Meyers 4).

That phenomenon of being able to empathize and emotionally connect oneself almost exclusivelywith those who have experienced the nature of warfare is the most prevalent portrayal of homosociality in Hemingway's works. *The Sun Also Rises* contains a good example of such homosociality, that example being Lady Brett Ashley, who spends a great amount of her time with the protagonist Jake Barnes and his male friends and colleagues. Even though she is mostly the sole female in a crowd of men, she is never being looked down upon, or being treated differently, because as a nurse she herself has seen the rotten fruits of war. Sharing that experience with most of them makes her stand on equal footing with them – she is one of them. At one point in the story she introduces Jake to the character Count Mippipopolous. As Jake expresses his skepticism about the Count, Lady Brett Ashley asserts "The count? Oh, rather. He's quite one of us" (Hemingway 17).He was one of them because according to him he partook in "seven wars and four revolutions" (Hemingway 32). Those two quotes prove that Jake and Ashley cherry-pick their company based on whether someone participated in a war or not.

However, one of the members of Jake's company did not even see the glimpse of a war. That individual is Jake's college friend Robert Cohn. For his lack of war experience, he is often ostracized, being treated with disdain and generally being made feel unwelcome by most others in that particular group, as can be seen in the following quotation "'There comes Cohn,' I said. Robert Cohn was crossing the

street. ‘That moron,’ said Harvey. Cohn came up to our table. [...] ‘Hello, Robert,’ Harvey said. ‘I was just telling Jake here that you’re a moron’” (Hemingway 23). The more polite character Mike Campbell does not acknowledge Cohn either and therefore he is unable to open himself up to Cohn, rather choosing silence over sharing his life’s story:

> ‘Were you in the war, Mike?’ Cohn asked.
>
> ‘Was I not.’
>
> ‘He was a very distinguished soldier,’ Brett said. ‘Tell them about the time your horse bolted down Piccadilly.’
>
> ‘I’ll not. I’ve told that four times.’
>
> ‘You never told me,’ Robert Cohn said.
>
> ‘I’ll not tell that story. It reflects discredit on me.’
>
> ‘Tell them about your medals.’
>
> ‘I’ll not. That story reflects great discredit on me.’ (Hemingway 71)

Even Cohn’s college friend Jake Barnes has troubles opening himself emotionally to Cohn, as a consequence of that Jake’s first burst of emotion can be seen when he is unaccompanied in his hotel room, crying. That fragile stoicism is a staple personality trait of many protagonists in Hemingway’s works. The friendship between Cohn and Barnes is just another example of such protagonists, who can only find emotional support in those who have experienced war, being unable to form meaningful bonds with the likes of Cohn, the shared pain they would have felt in company of their former brothers-in-arms becomes unbearable pain. For them, being surrounded by those who have no war experience is equivalent to being alone, or rather, lonely. A more extreme example of that is Herold Krebs from Hemingway’s short story ”Soldier’s Home”, who cannot even form an emotional bond with his caring mother, blatantly telling her that he feels no love for her:

> 'Don't you love your mother dear boy?'
>
> 'No,' Krebs said.
>
> His mother looked at him across the table. Her eyes were shiny. She started crying.
>
> 'I don't love anybody,' Krebs said. (Hemingway 7)

Following Jake Barnes' example of isolation as means of dealing with emotional distress, the character Nick Adams in Hemingway's "Big Two-Hearted River" goes on a fishing trip alone. As for most of the Hemingway Heroes it is implied that Nick Adams has had a gruesome past. The only friend he mentions throughout the short story is a man named Hopkins, whom he hasn't seen in a long while. Hopkins is presumably deceased and Nick, having lost that one kindred spirit of his, has no other option but to be alone, as it once again does not differ from being next to those who do not understand him.

Comparable to Hemingway's characters who find unity through their shared suffering, there is another interesting group which has amalgamated itself through suffering, but a different kind of suffering which was created by oppression. That group are the women's suffrage activists from the 1910s which are represented in the American historical drama film *Iron Jawed Angels.* The film follows the suffragist leader Alice Paul and the activists Lucy Burns, Inez Milholland, and Carrie Chapman Catt who share Alice Paul's pain and opinions thereby portraying another instance of homosociality.

The film begins with the youthful and idealistic Alice Paul and Lucy Burns who have returned from England to America and are presenting their uncommonly aggressive plan of campaigning directly in Washington D.C. for national voting rights for women to the elderly leaders of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Their idea is met with criticism by one of the women in charge of the NAWSA, stating that it would give a bad name to the women's suffrage movement, to which Lucy Burns replied that it would be preferable to having no name at all. Not long after, Lucy

Burns and Alice Paul dismiss the concerns expressed by the NAWSA and they start setting their plan into motion. Their unwise decision can be attributed to side effects of oppression, as the psychologists Blake T. Hilton states that "Oppression, the exercise of authority in a cruel or unjust manner, can precipitate many powerful and negative effects on the psyche..." (1) and one of those negative effects can be the formation of an inferiority complex, which leads to aggressive, and/or radical behavior as means of combating said inferiority complex: "Fanon [...] elaborates on the prevalent psychopathology of the oppressed and describes how he believes violence can unify the oppressed and give their internal struggle a means of effectual resolution" (Hilton 7).

Alice Paul has no troubles gathering sympathizers to her cause through her usage of logic, rhetoric and empathy towards women. She recruits the factory worker Ruza Wenclawska by opening her eyes to the hardships women face. She told her that 146 women had died in a factory fire and the factory Ruza Wenclawska works in does not even have a fire escape. After that revelation Ruza joins the suffragists, which is yet another instance of homosociality through collective suffering.

Although the two instances of homosociality that are being analyzed in this paper are based on suffering, they still differ. The homosociality represented in *Iron Jawed Angels* seems vastly more widespread than the one illustrated in any of Hemingway's works. Hemingway's characters pick their company from a very limited pool of individuals, that being people who were at some point affected by a war, whereas Alice Paul tries to unite all women, disregarding skin color, social status, or age, because all of women suffered equally from being denied the right to have citizenship and the right to vote. Another factor in this equation was established by the provost of the Florida International University Suzanna M. Rose in her research paper called "Same- and cross-sex friendship and the psychology of homosociality" that was published in 1985. In that research paper she states that "The homosocial norm refers to the seeking, enjoyment,

and/or preference for the company of the same sex that prevails societally" (1). Additionally, her research offers a statistic of homosociality which declares that "Same-sex friendships were clearly preferred by many participants, especially women. Sixty percent of the women and 33% of the men reported being more interested in having a close same-sex friend than a cross-sex one". That discrepancy in the percentage of homosocial behavior between the two genders is another indicator to why the two types of homosociality in this paper differ.

In conclusion, the only similarity between the homosociality in the opus of Hemingway and the movie *Iron Jawed Angels* is that they were both born of suffering. However, the differences are plentiful. The differences are based on gender-typical behavior, the individual targets of possible socialization in the respective stories and the behavioral patterns of both homosocial groups. Even though at first glance it may seem that the criteria for forming a homosocial group are stricter in Hemingway's magnum opus *The Sun Also Rises,* they are not. The parades in *Iron Jawed Angels* were led exclusively by women, with men standing by and voicing critical remarks, whereas Hemingway's character Lady Brett Ashley stands to prove that the Hemingway Hero does not discriminate or dismiss someone on account of gender and that is because during wartime, the right to vote does notmatter. The differences between men and women are immaterial on a battlefield. We are all the same in the eyes of falling bombs.

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A Correlation Between Money and Happiness in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*

Andrej Labudić

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness are considered to be the inalienable rights of the American people and therefore one of the foundations of the American society. At the start of the history of the USA these rights were not addressed to all people living in the federation. African Americans attained the right to Life and Liberty only during the Civil War after decades of social hardship and struggle. Nevertheless, the Pursuit of Happiness, although theoretically available to all, remained an unachievable aim to majority of African Americans even in the twentieth century. Theoretically intertwined with the notion of the American Dream, this last right was often severely restricted to the ones who had favorable starting positions on the social ladder. The thesis of this paper is that Lorraine Hansberry wanted to show that struggle for survival often did not allow African Americans to achieve their happiness through financial success – the constant worry about having enough money to pay bills, to feed and educate their children, and to secure them at least decent living conditions simply left them with no opportunity whatsoever to be the ones who fully participated in the American Dream.

The concept of happiness is a subjective notion defined by the individual himself. This definition is dependent on social circumstances, surroundings of the individual and most importantly, his or her ambitions. Whereas a freed slave is simply contented having his freedom, the twentieth century African American strived for something more. Being surrounded by the world in which many fellow citizens, whites in majority of cases, accomplished material wealth through entrepreneurship, he himself believed that the world offered

him something more than mere freedom and survival. That is the trap in which Walter, the central character of *A Raisin in the Sun*, fell into. He failed to acknowledge that the common African American's path to financial success is obstructed by various social inequalities inherent in the contemporary American society.

One of the first things that defines the social status of the individual is the place where he lives and spends majority of his time. The home of the Younger family was the first barrier they had to fight through, and maybe the hardest of all. The setting has an imminent role in building an overall atmosphere of the play and by "locating the Younger family in Chicago's South Side, Hansberry directly engages crises produced by ghetto economies and dehumanizing living conditions and restricted educational access" (Gordon 123). This family did not even own a home, they merely had the right to occupy and use it that they attained by paying rent for it. By being a tenant, you are obliged every week to put aside a significant amount of money exclusively in order to even have a starting position, to have a place where from you can dream for something more. Ruth, Walter's wife, was undoubtedly aware of the weight of this burden they had to carry when she said that they "put enough rent into this here rat trap to pay for four houses by now" (Hansberry 32). The flat itself formed such a depressing environment that the individuals who lived in it did not even accept it as their home. Even the humblest of the characters, Lena, admits that it is a "rat trap" and that she and her husband only planned "on living here no more than a year" (Hansberry 32). Lena reminisces about the house and garden she planned to buy when she had her own dreams, but "none of it happen" (Hansberry 32). The Youngers were constantly reminded of the shortcomings of their home by simply looking at the youngest member of their family, Travis. The poor boy had to sleep "on the make-down bed at center" (Hansberry 12) of their living room and his father could give him nothing more than "stories about how rich white people live" (Hansberry 22). Their flat restricted them on such a scale that the news about the baby that Ruth carried is shadowed by Bennie's question: "...where is he going to live, on the roof?" (Hansberry 46). In connec-

tion to that, Ruth even considered an abortion as the only solution to the residential and financial problems that would accompany the arrival of the new member of the family. The second obstacle the family had to overcome was their current jobs and perspectives. Walter "worked as a chauffeur most of his life" while his wife and mother did "domestic work in people's kitchens" (Hansberry 127). As long as they kept these jobs, they had no chance to move upwards the financial ladder of the American society. That's why Walter saw the cheque of ten thousand dollars the family was expecting from the insurance as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to move forward. Nevertheless, he did not choose to move one step forward, for example by buying a new house, but to move two or three steps at once by investing into the liquor business. He was aware of the chasm between his family's social status and the social status of the "white boys" who were sitting in the restaurants and "turning deals worth millions of dollars" (Hansberry 60). On the other hand, his mother Lena was more realistic and decided to invest money into a new home and by doing that she took a single but safe step forward. It's once again important to emphasize that this step was possible only due to the power of newly acquired money. Seeing his own and his family's future and happiness exclusively in money, Walter firmly believed that "money is life" (Hansberry 61). This leads us to the conclusion that Walter was a victim of the contemporary American values, more precisely materialism. This is clearly seen when he says: "I want so many things that they are driving me kind of crazy…" (Hansberry 60).

The third obstacle, which should be considered separately and as a completely different phenomenon in its nature than the previous two, is the pride, the notion which the Younger family nourished throughout "five generations of people who was slaves and sharecroppers" (Hansberry 123). Even after they had lost the majority of the money received from insurance, they got another chance to earn substantial amount of money. Nevertheless, this time the step forward depended exclusively on their willingness to disregard their tradition of resistance to racial inequality. Walter was ready to "get down" on his "black knees" (Hansberry 124), because he believed that

"their dreams have gone unfulfilled too long" and that they "struggled merely to survive economically" (Wilkerson 80). Nevertheless, at the last moment he realized that the happiness does not necessarily need to be equated with the money they possessed. Finally, he recognized that the fact that they are "very proud people" (Hansberry 127) who stand by their moral principles is of outmost importance. All the listed difficulties that surrounded their lives still remained a burden to be carried, but now a much lighter one because in a new perspective happiness suddenly became something attainable, inside their reach. Despite the fact that "there are no radical changes for the Youngers", meaning that "Walter still works as a chauffeur, Ruth as a maid" and that "the unwelcome presence of Lindner remains" (Saber 463), they now seem to be optimistic when it comes to their future.

To conclude, common African American families, plain working people in ghetto communities, did not have a considerable chance to prosper financially in the USA during the fifties. Various impediments to their advancement were imposed on them from their birth. The fact that they had to live somewhere and feed and clothe themselves and their children left them with no alternatives. They had to accept low-paid jobs simply to survive, often serving rich white people in a new form of contemporary slavery. The laws and racial institutions have changed, but the same principle of inequality remained as a permanent feature of the society. Nevertheless, although money and happiness are undoubtedly interdependent on each other, lack of money does not have to exclude happiness. Those poor African American families who acknowledged the fact that moral principles and heritage bear greater significance in life than money itself, as the Younger family did at the end, found a new perspective on life which allowed them to look forward to their future as a place of now achievable happiness.

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One Country, Two Dreams – The Comparison of American Dream(s) in *A Raisin in the Sun* and *The Great Gatsby*

Martina Pucelj

The United States of America is a relatively young country, but it has a rich history when it comes to different cultures. During the 20th century, there had been two distinct sides to the same country. On one side stands the prototypical American citizen – a white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant- who wants to be rich and successful. People who belong to this group are lucky because they are free and have basic human rights. On the other side are those who are less fortunate. African Americans have had many difficulties living in the USA. They faced racism and segregation in a country that was considered to be very progressive. Their only wish was to free themselves from slavery and to be recognized as human beings in the eyes of the general public. It is only to be expected that these two opposing sides have different wishes and dreams. This paper will compare the American Dream as seen by both sides. It will concentrate on the famous novel *The Great Gatsby* written by F. Scott Fitzgerald and the play *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry.

What exactly is the American Dream? "The ideology promises that everyone, regardless of ascription or background, may reasonably seek success through actions and traits under their own control" (Hochschild 4). This concept has made millions of immigrants move to America to fulfill their version of this dream. And even to this day, it attracts people to go to the USA and become successful and happy. The definition itself promises everyone an equal chance to achieve the American Dream, which would mean that race does not play any role in this but reality seems to be quite different: "When

Americans look at the prospects of others or at the overall pattern of racial interaction, African Americans are increasingly dismayed at the height of racial barriers to the American dream while whites are increasingly gratified by the decline of those barriers" (Hochschild 60). As already mentioned, African Americans have been affected by racism, discrimination, and segregation since the first day they were brought to America to work as slaves for the white landowners. Even today, about 150 years later, racism is still a huge problem in the USA. Unfortunately, this is seen only by a part of the population: "African Americans increasingly believe that racial discrimination is worsening and that it inhibits their race's ability to participate in the American dream; whites increasingly believe that discrimination is lessening and that blacks have the same chance to participate in the dream as whites" (Hochschild 55). These circumstances have affected the realization of the American Dream of the individuals. Different races want to achieve different goals. There is no such thing as THE American Dream, i.e. one that is everybody's goal. There are as many variations of the American Dream as there are people living in the USA. Only one thing could be named as being similar in most of the individual's American Dreams: "It is the bringing about a significant improvement life than they had adult with; whether it is financially, jointly, or essentially to live with a more comfortable nature than their guardians did" (Islam 22). Everybody wants to improve. In what way? That is the choice of the individual and depends on his or her desires.

One of the first literary works which comes to mind when thinking of the depiction of the American Dream is F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, published in 1925. An important thing to note is that this novel portrays society of post war America: "Fitzgerald has provided for us a sight of the individuals living in the roaring 1920s, where the people chase the American Dream under the materialistic influence of high society and put stock in piling up riches" (Islam 6). After World War I, people were enthusiastic to accomplish a good social position. If someone lives an extravagant lifestyle, everybody could see that that individual has accomplished the American Dream by becoming rich.

Jay Gatsby's unfulfilled dream is to be together with the woman of his dreams, i.e. Daisy. He falls in love with her and wants to spend the rest of his life with her. However, he does not belong to the upper social class and is therefore unable to marry her. Also, he does not have enough money to afford her lifestyle. Because of that, he tries to achieve his dream by having social influence and riches. First, he goes away but after returning with the money, he does everything he can to be near her: "Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay" (Fitzgerald 41). But he did not buy such a big house only because he liked it: "When he buys his fantastic house, he thinks he is buying a dream, not simply purchasing property" (Lewis 51). His mind tells him that this house and all the money he has could lead to Daisy. Jay Gatsby understands his place in the social ladder but refuses to accept it: "He tries to buy into a tradition instead of accepting one" (Lewis 54). But even after he earns all that money, he cannot be together with his love, because he cannot change his position in society. He was born with it and it will stay the same until his death. This means that he will never be able to marry Daisy and this fact ruins him internally: "The absence of great love is more painful because the sense of possibility money provides is so powerfully ambient in Gatsby's world" (Lewis 54). Everybody can see his fortune and glamorous lifestyle, and therefore assume that he must be happy. But that is far from the truth.

As already mentioned, Gatsby's American Dream is to be together with Daisy. To do so he needs to earn money which means that his American Dream consists of two parts: "The acquisition of money and love are both part of the same dream" (Lewis 56). He succeeds in fulfilling one part of it but the more important one remains unreachable. Love made him gullible in that he thinks that money can help him achieve everything. In a way, he seems to be extremely naïve and would believe almost anything anyone tells him. Even Daisy notices this: "You resemble the advertisement of the man" (Fitzgerald 64). But this is also a characteristic of his generation: "Gatsby has come to represent the undying hope and idealism which are fundamental features of the American Dream" (Lindberg 14).

Because of this, a part of his dream represents the American Dream of the 1920s. The First World War left many scars: "It affected the economy, the political situation, the psychology of people and also the personal life of each and every family. It was a big loss; loss of the mental condition of every individual. When the war ended, it left an entire generation in a state of misery and suffering" (Islam 9). One can easily understand why they strive to have as much money as possible after such a life. They worked hard to earn for a lavish life, but a big part of their American Dream was to show off their fortune: "The moneyed people used to attend and throw parties almost every day" (Islam 9). This is something that Gatsby does. He throws extravagant parties to which everybody who means something and wants to be seen will come and have a great time. But again, Jay Gatsby's motif to do so is a bit different from the norm: "'I think he half expected her to wander into one of his parties, some night,' went on Jordan, 'but she never did. Then he began asking people casually if they knew her, and I was the first one he found'" (Fitzgerald 42).

Gatsby's American Dream is only his. The reader can see this from Nick's descriptions of Daisy. There seems to be a great difference in what they see in her. Gatsby sees the woman of his life. He clings to the past because they were together back then. She turns into "his incorruptible dream" (Fitzgerald 85) and because of that "Gatsby is unable to alter or develop his image of her" (Lindberg 14). On the other side, there is Nick's vision of Daisy: "Daisy tumbled short of his dreams not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion" (Fitzgerald 51). He realizes that Gatsby's idea of Daisy is not real. Gatsby says that Daisy stands for "the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves" (Fitzgerald 83). There is also one interesting comparison: "in Nick's mind at least, it is Daisy's voice that holds Gatsby the most" (Parr 65). Gatsby describes it as "full of money" (Fitzgerald 65). However, Nick says that her voice is "a deathless song" (Fitzgerald 51) of "inexhaustible charm" (Fitzgerald 65). Even Nick, the character that seems to be the closest to Gatsby, does not understand his dream and does not see Daisy the same way he does. This only shows, once again, that a version of the American

Dream belongs to every individual. Unfortunately, Gatsby's dream never came true: "Yet what is Gatsby's love for Daisy but illusion, one fed by the dream of fulfillment America offered?" (Lewis 55). Everything can be summed up by one simple sentence: Everything Gatsby does is for Daisy – his American Dream.

The second work to be analyzed in this paper is Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*, published in 1959. She was inspired by the poem Harlem, written by Langson Hughes, which she also uses as the epigraph for her work. It shows the reader that the play will deal with dreams and the questions what happens to those that do not come true:

> What happens to a dream deferred?
>
> Does it dry up
>
> Like a raisin in the sun?
>
> Or fester like a sore—
>
> And then run?
>
> Does it stink like rotten meat
>
> Or crust and sugar over—
>
> Like a syrupy sweet?
>
> Maybe it just sags
>
> Like a heavy load.
>
> *Or does it explode?*" (Hughes 1-7).

Hansberry depicts a poor family living in a small apartment. They get a lot of money and the question what to do with that money arises. Every member of the family has an idea about what they would spend it on but, interestingly, their dreams differ: "Almost every major character in the play has a dream and aspires for that which leads to clashes of the dreams" (Maheswari and Sangam 47). Each of these character's dreams can be interpreted as the African American ver-

sion of the American Dream: “In the same vein, *A Raisin in the Sun* represented the calamities that African-American workers confronted with in Chicago during the years of 1920s to the 1950s” (Nowrouzi et al. 2271).

First of all, Beneatha wants to become a doctor, which was, at that time, extremely uncommon for a person of color. She wants to elevate herself from the norm which society ascribed to her race. Everybody around her works as some type of a servant for a white person: “Not only big Walter but also mama, Ruth, and Walter lee all are victims of job discrimination and relegated to the roles of servants, dependents, and unskilled workers. Mama and Ruth are domestics; Walter lee is a chauffeur. It was common in the north that black worker was confined to domestic and personal service” (Nowrouzi et al. 2274). Beneatha tries to fight against what society asks from her. She does not even want to be a nurse because she would still have to work for a doctor. She wants to work only for herself and does not care that her family does not understand her wish: “I am going to be a doctor and everybody around here better understand that!” (Hansberry 53). One can consider her to be a strong female character because she is not trying to assimilate but rather wants to accomplish her dreams and become happy with who she is. For her, the American Dream would be to become a doctor – something, that is not common for her skin color. She wants equality and to have the same chances as white people, whose wish or decision to become doctors is profusely celebrated. Beneatha’s surrounding does not understand her wishes because they work as servants, something that is seen as being normal. She wants to escape that. At the very end it seems as if her family finally understands her wish and decides to support her, specifically Walter when he said: “And that’s my sister over there and she’s going to be a doctor—and we are very proud” (Hansberry 147).

Furthermore, Walter is dissatisfied with his job. He does not want to work for somebody else anymore. His dream is rather clear: “Walter Lee, who works as a chauffeur, has a dream. He is disgusted with the drudgery and wants to use the money to buy a liquor store which

will give him independence and affluence—the American dream" (Maheswari and Sangam 47). This seems to be the typical American Dream. Unfortunately for him, this dream was made for white people, who actually have a chance in succeeding. One cannot blame him for wanting to escape poverty. African Americans lived in gruesome conditions. Wanting improvement is self-explanatory. Still he cannot achieve his dream without being educated in this field. He does not understand how business works and therefore cannot open a liquor store successfully. Walter is so determined to achieve his dream that he ignores everybody around him and their reasonable arguments. Because of that, he selfishly takes the money and gives it to Willie who, of course, disappears with it. He put the whole family's destinies at stake and was left with nothing. He chases a white man's American Dream and cannot make it come true for himself because he does not have the same opportunities as they do.

Lastly, there is Mama's dream but to understand it, one must understand the circumstances in which this African American family lives. The Youngers live in a small apartment in which the furniture was very old: "Its furnishings are typical and undistinguished and their primary feature now is that they have clearly had to accommodate the living of too many people for too many years—and they are tired" (Hansberry 26). They take good care of the apartment by frequently killing the pest living in it: "… a Saturday morning, and house cleaning is in progress at the Youngers. Furniture has been shoved hither and yon and Mama is giving the kitchen-area walls a washing down. Beneatha, in dungarees, with a handkerchief tied around her face, is spraying insecticide into the cracks in the walls" (Hansberry 56). Hansberry portrays the state in which African American families lived: "rats, roaches, worn furniture, over-crowded conditions, and anti-integration" (Nowrouzi et al. 2271). This depicts the condition of the black citizens of Chicago during the 1950s but the poor African Americans did not have a chance to live any other way: "Discriminations trapped Blacks in ghettoes and provided no opportunity for them to escape from them. And whenever one tried to run to a white

neighborhood, they were attacked by whites and even law" (Nowrouzi et al. 2272).

Mama's dream is rather simple: "Lena Younger's dream is to buy a decent home and provide domestic happiness as well as comfort for her family" (Maheswari and Sangam 48). This is easy to understand. Every mother wants for her family to live in decent conditions and to have a nice roof over their heads. Her dream seems to come true after she makes a down payment for a house in an all-white-neighborhood, namely Clybourne Park. It is noticeable that she did not have racial segregation in mind while doing so: "Son—I just tried to find the nicest place for the least amount of money for my family" (Hansberry 94). Mama finally comes near the fulfillment of her dream but then comes the obstacle – Mr. Karl Lindren, representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association. He informs them that they are not welcome in the neighborhood: "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 118). He tries to give them money to keep them away: "Our association is prepared, through the collective effort of our people, to buy the house from you at a financial gain to your family" (Hansberry 118). All this turns into a hindrance for Mama's only dream and she seems to lose hope: "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 worthwhile" (Hansberry 48). Fortunately, Mama is proud of her ancestors and her race: "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" (Hansberry 142). The family stays proud and does not surrender.

The play depicts the racial segregation in the USA. This is noticeable not only in the jobs they have, i.e., serving white people, but also in the places they had to live in. The African American version of the American Dream includes equality and this would mean that they

can live wherever they want. That was something many desired but white people would not let happen. They tried to keep them off their ground by scaring them away with guns and bombs but also tried to buy them off. Mama brings the whole family forward, following her dream of improvement: "Mama is the one who gives courage to her family to live in a white neighborhood, and persuades them that it is their right to choose where to live and enjoy living in a better condition. She brings her children with dignity and proud and urged them to keep it in racist and materialistic American society" (Nowrouzi et al. 6). She keeps the family together and teaches her children that no one can harm them if they care for one another.

It is hard to believe that these extremely different literary works have one main theme in common – the American Dream. This concept promises everyone the same chances of success and happiness but that is far from the truth. In the novel *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald partially describes the typical white man's American Dream – to become rich and have an extravagant lifestyle. This is understandable when taken into account the time in which the play takes place. During WWI people were starving. After the war it was self-explanatory that they wanted to escape poverty. They wanted to earn enough money so that they would never have to hunger again. Jay Gatsby fulfilled this part of the American Dream but only because he wanted to achieve something else – he wanted to be together with Daisy. Unfortunately, the money did not help him much and he died without achieving his only goal in life. Lorraine Hansberry, on the other side, describes the hardships every African American family had to face in Chicago during the 1950s. Every character of the play *A Raisin in the Sun* wants something else, but everything can be summed up into the African American version of the American Dream. They do not want to work for white people anymore. They are not slaves anymore, but they still work as servants for the whites. Beneatha wants to grow out of that and that is seen as something revolutionary. Of course, African Americans are also only people and they also crave the original idea of the American Dream, but they do not have the means, ways or opportunities to actually achieve it.

Lastly, they are burdened by racial segregation and live in their own districts in poor conditions, surrounded by insects and rats.

The concept for both works bears the same name- the American Dream- but it clearly stands for different things when taken into account the race of the person longing for it and the condition in which they live. The white people aspire to become wealthy and to show off their money. However, African Americans want to get basic human rights which have been taken from them. They just want to be equal and have the same chances as the white population of the USA.

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“Tragedy of the Disillusioned”: On the Identity of Jay Gatsby and Blanche DuBois

Zvonimir Prtenjača

Having been cemented as the most prominent illustrator of The Roaring Twenties, Francis Scott Fitzgerald honed his unique style and eloquent commentary on the American Dream by introducing the mysterious character of the soldier-turned-billionaire Jay Gatsby, the titular protagonist of his 1925 Jazz Age chronicle, *The Great Gatsby*. Inspiring with his novels many literary artists portraying their respective periods, Fitzgerald’s brand of psychological and physical characterization can be traced in the artistic output of one of the three foremost American dramatists, Tennessee Williams, and his 1947 Southern Gothic play situated in The French Quarter of New Orleans, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play echoes the voice of Blanche Dubois, a deeply troubled, anti-belle protagonist tightrope walking on the edge of sanity who remains one of the most popular female characters in American literature and shares much with the character of Jay Gatsby. Therefore, this research paper aims to explicate the multilateral nature and the polysemous identities of the two aforementioned protagonists and consequently aspires to delineate the sequences in their lives which catalyzed their downfalls and branded them as tragic heroes, while also juxtaposing the aspirations and ideals with the people and times past they were hopelessly in pursuit of.

To initiate the inquiry in identifying who Jay Gatsby and Blanche DuBois are, one has to approach the outer rim of their characters as the first perception captured by the eye of the beholder. Fitzgerald purposely mystifies Gatsby by not allowing the reader to follow his true background as he concocts various lineages uttered by the

attendees of Gatsby's lavish parties. Hence, Gatsby is believed to be "a German spy during the war" (Fitzgerald 33), yet this is immediately contrasted as someone utters "that he was in the American army during the war" (Fitzgerald 33). Such discrepancy baffles Nick Carraway, a young bond and stock broker, Gatsby's friend-to-be, and an aspiring objective voice of the novel as its narrator, and results in the reader pondering who Gatsby really is. Gatsby himself boils the gossip up by voicing that he "was in the Third Division during the war" (Fitzgerald 35), specifying his status among the "Sixteenth Infantry until June nineteen-eighteen" (Fitzgerald 35) and later introducing himself as an elevated, "Oxford man" (Fitzgerald 36). In his play, Williams tends to follow this idea of the discrepancy of Gatsby's outer appearance by introducing Blanche DuBois as "incongruous to the setting" (Williams 3) and "daintily dressed in a white suit with a fluffy bodice, necklace and earrings of pearl, white gloves and hat, looking as if she were arriving at a summer tea or cocktail party in the garden district" (Williams 3). However, despite being mathematically precise about Blanche not fitting into the poor French Quarter which exudes raffish charm, Williams also mystifies her by noting that "her delicate beauty must avoid strong light" (Williams 3) and portraying her as lost after a ride on "a streetcar named Desire and then one called Cemeteries to Elysian fields" (Williams 3).What both authors herein infer is their desire to construct a secretive nature and a façade for their characters which allows them to play with the protagonists' identities, initiating their complex characterization.

Both Fitzgerald and Williams then resume to build around these previously set personas as they engage in portrayal of their characters' societal status. Jay Gatsby, "in his white flannel suit, a silver shirt and a gold tie" (Pidgeon), is now perceived by Nick as if graced with certain gorgeousness and an "Olympian stature which shows in his attitude toward all of his guests" (Pidgeon). What is more, Fitzgerald reveals to the reader that Gatsby inherited twenty five thousand dollars from Dan Cody, "a product of the Nevada silver fields, of the Yukon, of every rush for metal since seventy-five" (Fitzgerald 76) and, even though he does not illustrate the current source of Gatsby's

power, he begins to trace it and originates the idea that it is exactly money which is tied to Gatsby's rise in society and, subsequently, the construction of his identity. The quintessence of Fitzgerald's idea that societal power and money build identity is followed by Williams when explicating Blanche's background. Therefore, if the acquisition of wealth elevates Gatsby socially, the loss of it lowers Blanche who, once proud of her "American-French Huguenot ancestry" (Williams 34), but then forced to abandon it and sell her home plantation, Belle Reve, due to her ancestors' "epic fornications" (Williams 24), now remains confronted not only with the lessening of her social stature and "the disappearance of the old South and its codes and myths" (Oklopčić), but also with the eventual deconstruction of her upbringing as a Southern Belle, "the symbol of the U. S. South and one of the most important constructs of Southern mythology" (Oklopčić).

Furthermore, what is derivative from both protagonists' outer characterizations is their dependence on the past and the times which "were", not the times which "are". However, this is primarily visible when peered deeper into their psyches, and Fitzgerald and Williams do not refrain from this illumination of their characters' infatuation with the past. They tie Gatsby's and Blanche's motivations to a primeval source of perseverance to fight – love – and thus kick start the mechanism of their eventual downfall. It is this powerful feeling that has already blinded Blanche who states that "she was sixteen when she made the discovery" (Williams 66) by falling in love with a boy named Allan Grey, whom she describes as being encumbered with "a nervousness, a softness and tenderness which wasn't like a man's" (Williams 66), although he was not "the least bit effeminate-looking" (Williams 66). That there was something different about Allan deluded Blanche and this subliminal abnormality was revealed to be his homosexuality which turned Blanche's world upside down, but what scarred her and left her ever-yearning for the feeling she possessed then was the blame she felt when she, sodden in a drunken rage, named Allan disgusting and exposed him publicly, resulting in him ending his life with a single gunshot to his head. Hence, Blanche's desire for love was soiled and the "searchlight

which had been turned on the world was turned off again" (Williams 67), transforming Blanche's life and past into a prevailing sense of loss. Having lost her home, her one true love and, dissipating gradually, her identity, she is devoid of "reality which was privileged and comfortable" (Duerre) and she cannot accept the present, descending "deeper into her notion of the idealized past rather than adjusting to change, which eventually leads her to lose hold on reality altogether" (Duerre).

The idealization of the past is apparent within Gatsby, as well – his desire for Daisy Faye, a girl whom he was in love with when he was a soldier and whom he courted in Louisville, is slowly blinding him and tearing him from the reality he is currently in. His optimistic delusion enters a climax as he negates Nick's rather cynical output that one "can't repeat the past" (Fitzgerald 84) by uttering and incredulously crying: "Why of course you can!" (Fitzgerald 84). Fitzgerald uses this blind belief as a central point for Gatsby's character as he turns him into a restless man "looking wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand" (Fitzgerald 84), lost in his stubborn naïveté and determination that he will "fix everything just the way it was before" (Fitzgerald 84). Gatsby, "perplexed in a self-constructed world of heroism and fantasy alternating into reality" (Ilie) much like Blanche, slowly succumbs to blindness as he does not wish to realize that Daisy Faye is not a Faye any more – she is a wife to Tom Buchanan, a former Yale athlete and the bearer of the Buchanan name and its ancient, illustrious power, as well as a mother to their child. Hence, he becomes the embodiment of "a perfect dreamer who will stop at nothing to fulfill his goals" (Ilie) and "a romantic hero in an era of realism who wanted to remake the world" (Ilie), but also a human with faults lost in a world of safety he constructed for himself with the ideals of the past as its main fundaments.

Moreover, as romantic heroes, Blanche's and Gatsby's identities are closely connected to and interwoven with the nature of their illusions. With the former already perturbed by the past and the latter

being perturbed by the past, the fact that they seek refuge from the unwelcoming present in the worlds built inside themselves comes as no surprise. Having tried"to preserve the past by marrying the urbane and civilized, the 'light and culture' of the South in the form of Allan Gray" (Oklopčić) and in failing to do so, Blanche retreats from what she deems a shallow world of carousing into a steadfast world of illusions and magic: "I don't want realism. I want magic! Yes, yes, magic! I try to give that to people. I misrepresent things to them. I don't tell truth, I tell what ought to be truth. And if that is sinful, then let me be damned for it - Don't turn the light on!" (Williams 86). Herein Blanche becomes reckless and indulges in alcohol to literally drink her days away, and what is now also brought into limelight is her libidinous nature actualized in various forms of lustful intimacies with strangers. Her reality slowly slips from her fingertips as she lies to and hurts the men she seduced in her attempt to bury her feelings for Allan, but it does not leave her unscarred because she admits that she "was never hard or self-sufficient enough" (Williams 53) and that she "put on the soft colors of butterfly wings to make temporary magic" (Williams 53), progressively leading her into the present in which she is fading. In lieu of a domino effect, Blanche's harsh reality ensues embodied in the character of her brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski, whom she deems "ordinary, plain, bestial, animalistic, apelike" (Williams 47) and "a survivor of the Stone Age" (Williams 47) because he drinks heavily and physically abuses her sister, Stella. Williams uses Stanley as a raw character endowed with physical prowess to embody the "alpha man, a macho, who loves the power, and is capable to do anything do keep the order as it is" (Magdić 18), a reality painted with coarseness which contrasts Blanche's identity built on dreams, illusions, and the mindset of a gentle-natured Southern belle. As a naturalistically constructed character, Stanley embodies the Freudian instinctual and impulsive *id* and, even though he is "nowhere close to being a gentleman, or even a decent man" (Magdić 19), Blanche still wants him to like her because she is dependent on him and is currently living in his household. However, his primal aggression and sexual desire imposed upon the frailty of a tender and

spiritual Blanche culminates in the psychological power which she exudes over him due to her prevalent intelligence and met physicality, but this is countered by his dominant physicality which renders her helpless as he rapes her and dehumanizes her, identifying her as a mere "trophy" and objectifying her into a deeply tragic hero tortured by both "her present" and the "real present".

Such brand of psychological characterization can also be traced in the character of Jay Gatsby who, sharing a similitude to Blanche, refuses to accept the apparent reality and enters a state of his own, dreamlike subreality. He dons the mask of a wealthy, mythic hero in pursuit of Daisy with whom he subsequently engages in a sexual and emotional affair, challenging her marital status with the belief that this affair may kick start the relationship they once had. Insofar, much like Stanley Kowalski, Williams' cog in a larger naturalistic mechanism oiled by instinctually and sexuality prevalent in the play, Gatsby becomes a single-focused and emotionally invested man who may be analyzed as wanting to acquire Daisy as a "trophy wife", a sort of a social machination to further his own status. If seen as such, Gatsby becomes Fitzgerald's voice used to critique the social convention of marriage of the 1920s, namely because it was built on fundaments such as acquisition of power and social status, and not the purity of love, emotion, trust, and community. The prevalent opinion, however, is that Gatsby fits into the latter category as he "funds all of his enterprises in order to impress this woman with his wealth" (Ilie) and yearns to please "the one he gave his heart to" (Ilie) in a powerful "pursuit of love and happiness" (Ilie) which he deemed constructive and truthful in reinvigorating the past he had with Daisy. He completely invests himself to win her over and even takes the blame for the murder of Myrtle Wilson, Tom's mistress, when it was actually a distressed Daisy who ran her over in Gatsby's car. His ultimate sacrifice and the "romantic crusade in which he was the hero" (Pidgeon) vainly constitute his "magic realism" because the woman he knew and loved, Daisy Faye, is a remnant of the past. Who remains in the raw present which Gatsby stubbornly wishes not to accept is Daisy Buchanan, the character quintessentially responsi-

ble for his identification as a tragic hero and the woman whom he blindly deems emotional, while she actually remains "in love with the money" (Ilie) and even wholeheartedly embraces her current status as Tom's wife "because she is (namely financially and socially) secure with her husband" (Ilie).Gatsby's inability to recognize the' 'viciousness of her monstrous moral indifference" (Pidgeon)is deeply rooted within his world of illusions. He idealizes her and even apotheosizes their love as "something outside the realm of real life" (Pidgeon), which only furthers his blindness and delusion that she never loved Tom. Gatsby then turns to Nick (and himself) to justify the supposed strength of her love by uttering that "she might have loved Tom when they were first married" (Fitzgerald 117), but that "she loved me even more" (Fitzgerald 117). Gatsby's tragedy is thus instigated without him even realizing it, but he perseveres in being truthful to his ideals and dreams about their love. In reality, however, he may be perceived as "a fool in his attempt to rekindle the flame between himself and Daisy" (Ilie), but also as an unyielding idealist whose identity is, unlike Blanche's, intact and, even when "the dream clashes with reality" (Pidgeon), he aims to follow it anyway "because to face reality is to face the fact that all his years of dreaming and striving were for nothing" (Pidgeon).

With the protagonists drowning in their world of illusions, both Fitzgerald and Williams initiate their imminent end which rounds their identities as complex and multi-layered tragic heroes. Blanche is stripped of her gradually dissipating identity as a Southern belle and Williams uses her fear to be seen under the light of the paper lantern to emphasize the beauty she once had, which is now fragmented. Blanche echoes this by voicing that "physical beauty is passing, a transitory possession" (Williams 93) and that "the beauty of the mind, richness of the spirit and the tenderness of the heart" (Williams 93) grow by years. However, her ideals are negated and her obsession with the past and the Old South result in her being incapacitated and taken into an asylum after being entirely tortured by life. Hence, the noble identity of Blanche DuBois, the "white woods and orchard in spring" (Williams 34) of the Antebellum South and the product

of "centuries and generations of moral and physical corruption and degeneracy of both her aristocratic family and the U. S. South itself" (Oklopčić) completely fades away, yet the identity of Blanche Grey, "a destitute woman" (Williams 93) who has "always depended on the kindness of strangers" (Williams 107), remains. As the complexity of her identity is rounded, Blanche embodies "the conflict of binaries – body and mind, nature and culture" (Oklopčić) and tragically disintegrates from the concept of *noblesse oblige* with her past, presupposed values, and social behavior fit for nobility slowly fading into an abyss, leaving her devoid of sanity.

Gatsby, an unyielding idealist with a tragic flaw, "a crack in his identity" (Miller) and "a challenge to his dignity, his image of his rightful status" (Miller), faces his end when shot by Myrtle's husband, George Wilson, for something he had not done, but had decided to take upon himself out of his unbreakable ideal of and belief in love. His identity is thus deconstructed and, even though he displays "the indestructible will of man to achieve his humanity" (Miller) without reservation, his dream disintegrates because of his failure to reconstruct the past he had with Daisy, the past he idealized and fought for. However, for tearing the world apart in pursuit of his ideals, Gatsby as a tragic hero "gains 'size', the tragic stature spuriously attached to the royal or the high born in our minds" (Miller), herein acquired by a person revealed to be a mere farmer boy of "shiftless and unsuccessful" (Fitzgerald 75) descent. Therefore, the identity of Jay Gatsby, not truly a member of the upper class or an ancient family like the Buchanans, but a commoner, shifts to James Gatz, a bootlegger who "killed" himself out of love and reconstructed his identity which "sprang from his Platonic conception of himself" (Fitzgerald 75). Truly a Milleresque tragic hero, Gatsby's identity remains a sad and complex one, best described by Nick who paints him as having "believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us"(Fitzgerald 140), with his dream so close "that he could hardly fail to grasp it" (Fitzgerald 140).

Finally, from the comparison offered one can construe that both Fitzgerald and Williams aimed to construct their protagonists within the conventions of an archetypal tragic hero, yet they refrained not from interweaving this core identity of their characters with other literary mechanisms. The polysemous identities fabricated with such multilateral approach borne out not only Jay Gatsby, a soldier-turned-billionaire who was elevated socially during The Roaring Twenties or the Era of Prohibition due to his bootlegging and had thus embodied the American hero passionately pursuing the American Dream of wealth and success, but also James Gatz, an idealist and a man of the past chasing himself and the love once apparent, but now lost due to social conventions, awaking in him a Romantic hero and a hero disillusioned by the present in which he does not belong. Similarly, Williams outlined Blanche's identity as one initially associated with loss. She not only loses her home plantation, Belle Reve, and her noble identity built upon the fundaments of a gentle and spiritual Southern belle, but also the love of her life, Allan Grey, realizing within her the tragical convention of a Romantic hero whose ability to feel and love has faded and who thus engages in various superficial and shallow activities to wither away the past she is clinging onto. Both Gatsby's and Blanche's dreams and their intricately weaved subrealities based upon illusions of the past disintegrate and delineate their lives and identities as tragic ones in hopeless pursuit of feelings, values, people, times, and places long gone. In essence, the story of their lives and identities can be termed as "tragedy of the disillusioned", namely because it echoes the voices of the past unable to fit into the present and follows the journey of the souls wandering among their idealized world of the Old (the pre-war United States, the Old, Antebellum South), while being delusionally lost in the present of the New (the post-war United States, the New South) which they seemingly cannot or wish not to grasp.

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Jay Gatsby as Proof that Heroism is Impossible

Juraj Gerovac

Jay Gatsby, according to some, is a tragic hero, and according to others he is a Romantic hero. Though there is dispute about whether he is tragic or romantic, Gatsby is nevertheless described as a heroic character. There seems to be a natural tendency towards labeling main protagonists as heroes regardless of their actions and portrayal. Heroes appeal to readers and viewers because they "seem to have a supernatural talent to achieve set out goals" (Shadraconis 2) and "many desire to possess such power" (Shadraconis 2). According to Kinsella, Ritchie, and Igou "heroes come in many forms: some real and some fictional" (Kinsella, Ritchie, Igou 20) but this research paper will show that heroes do not actually exist, and that by their very definition they cannot exist.

Jay Gatsby is supposedly a hero, at least a tragic one. He possesses a tragic flaw that causes his downfall and makes the readers feel for him. Some may even want him to succeed and attain happiness since he is a hero. To understand why Gatsby is or is not a hero it is necessary to understand his character. The persona of Jay Gatsby is artificial; it is a figment of someone's imagination made real. Fitzgerald describes the forming of the persona without any room for confusion or interpretation: "The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God, . . . he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end" (Fitzgerald 52). The result of Gatsby's success in acting out his dream persona is a significant amount of narcissism and delusion. His delusion infected his relationships with other people, especially the one with Daisy.

Gatsby undeniably loved Daisy, at least as much as he could since he was not even a real person. Though it is questionable whether a delusional individual can have an honest relationship with others Gatsby did love Daisy in his own way. This is evident from his behavior when he is supposed to meet Daisy at Nick's house as he sends over "a greenhouse with innumerable receptacles to contain it" (Fitzgerald 44). Gatsby was so nervous about the whole thing that he could not even prepare properly. He sent over a considerable amount of flowers and people to cut Nick's grass, and he was unable to sleep the night before since he really wanted to make a good impression. In a way, Gatsby tried to compensate for his lack of true understanding of others by excessively using common signs of affection.

Gatsby is delusional and as a result he was unable to see the truth regarding the situation with Daisy. When Daisy's child shows up Gatsby "kept looking at the child with surprise" (Fitzgerald 62)to the point of Nick saying "I don't think he had ever really believed in its existence before" (Fitzgerald 62). Gatsby cannot understand that Daisy has other important matters in her life since he just wants the two of them to be together, and as a result he tried to persuade Daisy to leave her old life behind without even considering what would happen to her daughter. Gatsby's delusion has its roots deep in his persona and it causes him to view everyone else as such, which can be seen from Nick's description of Gatsby early on in which he says "He had one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself" (Fitzgerald 25). Gatsby acted out a role and expected everyone else to be the same, and even encouraged them to do so since it validated his own lifestyle. Gatsby did not understand people as they wanted to be understood, he understood them as he wanted them to be understood; he wanted them to fit his own delusions and narratives so that he could keep living his seventeen-year-old boy's dream. This inevitably leads to his downfall and ruins his relationships.

Gatsby's second supposed heroic trait is his cynicism and rejection of the American Dream. Everything about Gatsby ridicules the American Dream. As Pidgeon claimed *The Great Gatsby* is "a criticism of American experience—not only of [their] manners, but of [their] basic historic attitude toward life. The theme of Gatsby is the withering of the American Dream" (Pidgeon 179). Gatsby seems successful at first, but the readers eventually learn that his money was not acquired legally and that his success was not achieved through hard work; everything about him is a lie, including his wealth. Tom reveals that Gatsby "bought up a lot of side–street drug–stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter. [Tom] picked [Gatsby] for a bootlegger the first time [he] saw [him], and [he] wasn't far wrong" (Fitzgerald 74). Gatsby's parties were not to celebrate the rich lifestyle of those who achieved the Dream, which is evident from the fact that he himself never attended them since he was not one of the truly hard-working successful people. All Gatsby ever wanted was Daisy's attention, not the supposed American Dream in its degraded version of the 1920s. Gatsby's rejection of the Dream, and him merely existing being the proof of its degradation are often used as arguments in favor of interpretation of Gatsby as a Romantic hero.

Despite these arguments it can be argued that Gatsby is no hero at all. While claiming Gatsby is not a hero after carefully laying out the arguments for his status might seem contradictory, it is actually possible to prove there is nothing heroic about him. Gatsby is undeniably tragic, and even Romantic, but he is absolutely not a hero. As was stated in the title of this paper, heroism and heroes are impossible, but people will do anything to construct them wherever they can. The reason people do so is described by Faber and Mayer who drew on Jung when they said "An archetype is an internal mental model of a typical, generic story character to which an observer might resonate emotionally" (Faber, Mayer 307). People need heroes because they need to believe they are, or at least can become, heroes regardless of how awful their situation is or how horrid their actions are; people need hope. They need a symbol that everything is going to be fine in the end and archetypes give them that hope because "with mental

models, an individual has a framework with which to operate, understand, and explore" (Shadraconis 1). Archetypes give people predetermined justifications for their explorations of their desires, even if those desires are morally grey at best. This is the reason there are so many heroes, why there are willing and unwilling heroes, anti-heroes and Byronic heroes, tragic heroes, Romantic heroes, etc. People have constructed a hero for nearly every story imaginable simply because they always need to have someone they can cheer for, someone that will give them hope even if that someone is a vile person and the element they identify with is the supposed hero's worst feature. Gatsby is supposed to be a tragic hero because we feel pity for him, but he has not done anything truly heroic. His delusion ruined his life and almost ruined the lives of the people around him. The actions of a narcissistic, delusional bootlegger can hardly be considered heroic, which means the only heroic element left is the reader's compassion for his plight. Real life crime lords can feel love, they can feel empathy for those close to them, and if a loved one dies one can pity them and their reversal of happiness to sadness, but one should never call them heroes since their actions are not heroic. Gatsby is not a tragic hero; he is simply tragic.

He is not a Romantic hero either since he simply rejected the values that were never truly his in the first place. Gatsby contributed to the degradation of the American Dream and is supposedly a hero for it, but perhaps he could have saved the Dream if he invested his money into a more noble cause instead of lavish parties. Perhaps he could have helped the Dream if he invested his energy into it instead of a frivolous chase of a woman he could never truly have. If rejection of accepted norms is supposed to be heroic then trying to save those norms would be villainous, but it is impossible to know beforehand whether certain norms are worth saving since social norms and values are only heroic or villainous in hindsight. Gatsby is not a hero for his mockery of the Dream, he is simply a man who rejected society and through his acts of rejection actually caused more pain for those around him. But people refuse to focus on the negatives of Gatsby's actions since they want justification for their own rejection

of norms. That is what heroes are for, they “organize and simplify collective responses by enlisting interest in causes and creating mass followings, heightening a sense of ‘we,’ and strengthening morale by focusing collecting efforts and complexities on one individual” (Kinsella, Ritchie, Ingou 25). It is acceptable to reject common norms because heroes do it as well, and through them everyone does it and everyone feels justified as part of a larger whole.

In conclusion, and to put it simply, as long as there are numerous definitions for heroes there can be no heroes. As long as a delusional, self-destructive narcissist can be hailed as a hero simply because readers can feel pity for him, or because he rejected the society of morally grey people, heroism is impossible. If everyone is a hero, then no one is truly a hero. One solution would be to find a definition that is far more restrictive and as such gives more credence to the word hero, but a far more realistic and useful solution would be to give up on the concept altogether. People need to stop looking for heroes and hope in everything they do, and instead accept that some actions are simply wrong and have no excuse. Accepting mistakes and owning up to them is a far more valuable lesson one can learn than learning that there is a justification for everything, and that everything can be subjectively explained away. There can be no objective definition of a hero, which is why any attempts at establishing one are futile, and why true heroes are impossible.

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Jay Gatsby as a Traditional Tragic Hero

Dina Šoštarec

F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* published in 1925 follows the life of the main character Jay Gatsby. Gatsby is a complex character who exhibits many different traits which could be attributed to different hero types. However, the main goal of this research paper is to show that Jay Gatsby corresponds to the traditional concept of a tragic hero in many ways by comparing Gatsby to Aristotle's criteria for a tragic hero.

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle presents his own poetic theory and describes the major components of a good tragedy and the characteristics of a tragic hero. As Burke noted, there are three key elements in Aristotelian plot structure of a tragedy and those are *hamartia, peripetia and anagnorisis* (14). In the first part of the research paper, I will compare the Aristotelian structure of a tragedy to the structure of *The Great Gatsby* by exploring whether it includes these elements.

The term *hamartia* is often interpreted as the hero's tragic flaw which ultimately causes his downfall. However, this definition is not precise enough in that it does not state what kind of flaw is in question. Bremer proposes that it should not be understood as a moral flaw, which would imply the hero's moral weakness, but rather as an intellectual one which could be further explained as the cause of "a wrong action committed in ignorance of its nature, effect, etc." (Golden 125). Gatsby's intellectual error is his intentional ignorance regarding his relationship with Daisy. The narrator, Nick Carraway, often subtly emphasizes the events or circumstances which indicate Gatsby's self-willed denial. For example, when Daisy's daughter appears Nick tells the reader: "Afterward he [Gatsby] kept looking at the child with surprise. I don't think he had ever really believed in its existence before"(134). The root of Gatsby's ignorance is his desire for the present to somehow continue at the very point where he and

Daisy parted, which is possible only if there was nothing in between. Gatsby is more than willing to forget all the reminders of the life without Daisy and demands that she does the same. However, he not only insists on abandoning the past, but he also wants Daisy to ruin and crush all the remainders, including her husband. Gatsby's tragic flaw therefore overlaps with the traditional tragic flaw called *hubris*, meaning excessive pride and arrogance which often lead to loss of touch with reality. His ignorance is not caused only by the potential suffering which would arise from the acceptance of the facts, but also by the pain from the blow which his ego will receive. In connection to this, Giles Mitchell argued that Gatsby was a prime example of a narcissist, which becomes especially prominent when one analyses Gatsby's desire for perfection and omnipotence. Desire for perfection is expressed through Gatsby's ability to idealize himself and Daisy to an extreme degree, while omnipotence is expressed in his belief that he can control time (Mitchell 388). An example of this belief is Gatsby's bewilderment when Nick warns him that he cannot repeat the past: "'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!'" (Fitzgerald 111). In a way, Gatsby shows his disrespect for time itself and thinks of himself as superior to it. He shows a lack of appreciation of time by showing willingness to sacrifice his present in pitiful hope of reviving and changing the horrible and tragic past.

Furthermore, Gatsby's idealization of himself and Daisy leads to what the Greeks called *peripetia*, meaning something similar to "reversal of fate". Traditionally, *peripetia* should be a reversal from happiness to misery (Burke 15). In Gatsby's case there is no real happiness to begin with, just an imaginary one which Gatsby created himself. Gatsby's main goal was to win over his lost love Daisy, and one could easily argue that this pursuit was not motivated by romantic reasons, but rather by more materialistic and opportunistic ones. Gatsby sought social approval and possibly imagined Daisy as a gateway to it. It could be argued that being part of the highest social class is what Gatsby interprets as happiness, which is influenced by the concept of the American Dream. Fitzgerald compares Gatsby's goal with "following of a grail" (149), which emphasizes how important

and symbolic Daisy was for Gatsby or, in other words, it proves that he truly saw this attempt to have her as his fate. However, when Daisy finally learns that Gatsby never went to Oxford, and that he probably acquired a good part of his wealth by smuggling alcohol, *peripetia* takes place. Daisy no longer wants anything to do with him and she begs her husband to go home: "'*Please*, Tom! I can't stand this anymore!'" (Fitzgerald 135). The reversal of fate is even more emphasized when Gatsby's whole identity is revealed as a deception constructed by Gatsby himself. James Gatz is everything but a successful wealthy businessman that Jay Gatsby represented. He is an ordinary man belonging to lower social circles who had no real prospect of success through legal means. Therefore, the reduction of Jay Gatsby to James Gatz can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of *peripetia*. The sense of grandiosity crucial for a classic narcissist is suddenly lost.

However, this loss is more than Gatsby can take. Therefore, even though it is obvious to the reader and other characters that Daisy's love for Gatsby was only a part of an illusion Gatsby created for himself, Gatsby refuses to admit it. He sticks to his original belief until the very end in hopes of keeping his ego intact. As a result, the last crucial part of the plot, *anagnorisis* or recognition, never truly takes place because of Gatsby's denial of what others perceive as evident reality. Aristotle argued that the absence of the recognition is acceptable only in simple plots (Burke 15), i.e. ones which do not cause pity or fear and lack *peripetia*. However, it seems that Gatsby's denial makes him that more tragic. Ultimately, he dies believing in his fantasy. From the point of view of Freudian psychoanalysis, Gatsby never fully faced the real trauma that happened to him and "all his later actions just show he never believed in the fact of not having Daisy, and [that] he wanted to change his past" (Bui 45). Aristotle argued in his *Poetics* that the recognition, combined with reversal, will produce either pity or fear (35). The main purpose of a tragedy is *catharsis*. The audience members or readers should feel purged or cleansed of certain subconscious feelings they might have had (Burke 15). Even though this particular aspect of tragedy is highly subjec-

tive, one could argue that *The Great Gatsby* produces this very effect. Although Gatsby himself never recognizes or admits the truth, the readers do because the narrator, as opposed to Gatsby, at least tries to report the events truthfully and completely. In addition to this, Nick also has greater knowledge of events than Gatsby. He can therefore describe Gatsby's tragic death and lonely funeral which causes ultimate pity for Gatsby. The description of the funeral is harshly contrasted with the great number of people who attended Gatsby's parties. Ultimately, Gatsby got what every tragic hero gets, and that is *nemesis* or punishment. His death was unwarranted and his funeral represented everything he fought against – isolation, loneliness and abandonment.

I will proceed with the comparison of Aristotle's description of a tragic hero with the character of Jay Gatsby. When Aristotle discusses the tragic hero, he explicitly states that there are "four things at which one ought to aim" (41), namely reliability, appropriate properties, lifelikeness and consistency (41). Because Aristotle's concept of lifelikeness, or truthfulness to life, is never explained by Aristotle himself and its true meaning is still a subject of debate among scholars, this research paper will not deal with that particular requirement.

When it comes to having appropriate properties, Aristotle argued, and rightly so, that not every property is fit for each character. As an example, he uses manliness which would not be fit for a woman (41). This is possibly the most inscrutable of all of Aristotle's points because of its subjectivity. However, if we take Aristotle's own example of manliness, which includes valour, it can be argued that Gatsby meets this requirement. Gatsby not only believes in ideals, but he is willing to sacrifice himself only to uphold their purity. Gatsby's valor is even taken to an extreme towards the end of the novel when he literally takes the bullet for Daisy.

This also shows that Gatsby stays true to himself throughout the novel and that he does not undergo any significant change despite the truth that he inevitably faces, even if he decides to ignore it. He

remains willfully blind to it exactly because he wants his ideals, beliefs and himself to remain consistent. Therefore, Gatsby meets Aristotle's second criterion as well, one of consistency.

The last criterion, one of reliability, is to be understood as moral goodness of the character (Burke 15). It is important to note that our morals and ethics differ from the ones in ancient Greece, but the paper will try to explore Gatsby's morality by focusing on examples which would most likely be considered as virtuous by Aristotle as well. Gatsby is a morally ambiguous character, especially if one takes into account his smuggling of alcohol and the fact that his whole persona was a fraud. However, despite his flaws and delusions, Gatsby is still probably conceived as at least a moderately morally good character especially because he is contrasted with "careless people" (Fitzgerald 180) such as Tom and Daisy. Even though Gatsby does questionable and illegal things, just a little before he dies Carraway tells him: "'They're a rotten crowd', I shouted across the lawn. 'You're worth the whole damn bunch put together'" (Fitzgerald 154). This claim can be supported by the fact that Gatsby is willing to take the blame for Myrtle's death just so he could protect Daisy. Despite his questionable and possibly selfish motives for the insistence on having Daisy, his last deed is undoubtedly altruistic. Even if pleading guilty could possibly mean earning Daisy's sympathy, it would not involve any material or social gain, nor could their love ever be realized. Even though Gatsby is not morally perfect, he is probably the best one can hope for in a morally corrupt society which Fitzgerald tried to depict.

There are some deviations from Aristotle's theory of tragedy and tragic character. One particular deviation seems to be of great importance because it creates the biggest contrast between Jay Gatsby and Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero. Aristotle argued that the tragic hero should be "in great repute and good fortune" (37). Later, he also argued that tragedy should be "an imitation of people better than we are" (42). Gatsby, on the contrary, is an ordinary man who strives to be exactly that – someone who is honorable and belongs to the highest social class, but he is certainly not born that way. For

Aristotle, this criterion was not to be bypassed. He perceived it as of special importance since he believed that aplay would cease to be tragic if the audience witnessed the fall of someone who they do not admire nor respect. However, if pity and *catharsis* which stems from it are produced, which they are in the case of *The Great Gatsby,* there is no reason for this prohibition. The problem which arises from this requirement seems to be rather whether Gatsby should be regarded as a hero at all, and not whether he could be considered tragic.

To sum it up, the character of Jay Gatsby and the structure of Fitzgerald's novel greatly correspond with the traditional criteria which Aristotle laid out in his *Poetics*. It seems that possible ambiguities and difficulties arise when one tries to find the arguments which would support the claim that Jay Gatsby is suitable to be regarded as a hero in relation to Aristotle's requirements. However, his essential attributes and the development of the plot indisputably make him a tragic character who provokes feelings of sympathy and pity despite him possibly being an inappropriate tragic hero in Aristotelian tragedy.

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The Concept of Time in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

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Throughout the novel *The Sound and The Fury*, the reader can see an established perplexed relation between the time and action. This involvement of time tends to be more important that the action itself. In other words, time serves as a medium which disclosures a vivid correlation between the past and the present when the shaping of Faulkner's characters is discussed and analyzed. The influence of time in shaping the action and characters in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* will be explored throughout this paper.

In order to understand Faulkner's time concept, one has to be aware of the Modernist time period and its characteristics. Modernism can be explained as "a movement away from the apparent objectivity provided by omniscient third-person narrators, fixed narrative points of view, and clear-cut moral positions" (Klages 172). Having said that, a high level of subjectivity arises from Faulkner's stream of consciousness, which serves as the only guideline on the narratives embedded in a dubious time frame. Another notable characteristic of the Modernism is "an emphasis on fragmented forms, discontinuous narratives, and random-seeming collages of different materials" (Klages 172). Therefore, by using fragmentation, Faulkner manages to evoke a discontinuation between the past and the present, as well as to blur the line between reality and mere subjectivity or illusion. This narrative technique is visible in Faulkner's elaboration, when he, upon telling one instance, decides to break the narrative and shift his narration to another point of observation: "Jason and Caroline Compson have had three sons and a daughter. The daughter, Caddy, has given herself to Dalton Ames and become pregnant by him. Forced to get hold of a husband quickly . . ." (Sartre 226). By using this means, it is visible that Faulkner tries to bring the story closer

to the reader, but by giving it too many parallel actions, the reader can easily lose focus, sense of chronology, and is forced to observe the story through fragments, rather than the chronological aspect or the plot itself. Faulkner uses the motif of the past as a prevailing one and gives the impression that the entire plot is centered in a parallel dimension and is ceaselessly repeating itself without any indication of present or future:

> As for Faulkner's concept of the present, it is not circumscribed or sharply defined point between past and future. His present is irrational in its essence; it is an event, monstrous and incomprehensible, which comes upon us like a thief – comes upon us and disappears. Beyond this present, there is nothing, since the future does not exist. One present, emerging from the unknown, drives out another present. (Sartre 226)

In accordance with the philosophy that everything is derived from the past into the past, Faulkner's characters tend to be shaped as the slaves of time which keeps passing by, driving them into madness and deterioration. Upon creating Quentin, the concept of a tragic, time-obsessed hero is born. Through Quentin, Faulkner manages to establish the strongest and the most visible correlation between the concept and the character. Quentin's character represents an inner struggle within a man incapable to adopt and accommodate himself to the life he is supposed to lead. In the light of this, one can observe Quentin's behavior towards women characters, especially his sister Caddy, which shows that he is unable to comprehend the affairs of the Postbellum South and the gradual decadence of chivalry: "If we could just have done something so dreadful that they would have fled hell except us. I have committed incest I said Father it was I it was not Dalton Ames" (Faulkner 69). Comparatively, it is to observe that by saving Caddy's reputation, Quentin also saves the ideology and illusion of the Old South that is implanted in him. Quentin's salvation of Caddy symbolizes faith in nobility of the Compson family and its ancestry. Another aspect in observing time in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* is the change of prevailing life-style philosophy. Throughout

the novel, the reader is gradually familiarized with a concept of the Nihilism, which is the most visible in Quentin's narration accompanied by his father's advice and guidelines:

> I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire; [...] I give it to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools. (Faulkner 67)

Quentin tries to deliberate himself from the passage of time, but all of his attempts are unsuccessful. Moreover, when Mr. Compson gives him a watch, he does not only give him a device, he also gives him a reminder that everything is temporary, and that he cannot beat time, no matter how hard he tried. The Compson family, once noble and honored, stands as a metaphor for the corruption of Southern Aristocratic Values; this parallel decadence of the Old South and the Compson family leads towards Quentin's demise. He is not capable enough to adjust, or self-centered enough to live, knowing that his sister is promiscuous, his father is a drunkard, his brother Jason money-driven egomaniac or that Benjy is irrevocably broken. In the light of this, one can see why Quentin decided to break the watch; Quentin tried to escape present 'captivity' and turn back the hands of time, but he cannot, because he is nearly always 'back in time':

> This is what enables us to understand that strange formula [...]: "I am not is, I was". In this sense, Faulkner can make of man a being without a future, "sum of his climactic experiences,""sum of his misfortunes,""sum of what have you." At every instant we draw a line, since the present is nothing but disordered rumour, a future already the past." (Sartre 228)

In contrast to Quentin, the reader can observe other characters in the novel. Benjy is in an aspect similar to Quentin, but two cannot be equalized because of Benjy's inability to understand concept of

time at all. For Benjy, the present state is equally vivid as past, because everything he experiences serves as his basis for understanding and grading the new reality. As an illustration, Caddy, who always "smelled like trees" (Faulkner 15) when she was an uncorrupted innocent girl, stopped smelling like trees when she lost her virginity and started behaving promiscuously: "Caddy put her arms around me, and her shining veil, and I couldn't smell trees anymore and I began to cry" (Faulkner 38). With that instances, accompanied by stormy sky, both the reader and Benjy understand that something has changed. Benjy has the ability to understand and provide some central themes to the reader, for example, Caddy's departure, Quentin's suicide, the act of selling the pasture and the arrival of Miss Quentin, but has no logical and connected time frame, which allows him to combine present and past, without the ability or explanation what occurred before and what after: "His narrative is therefore an inextricable mixture of past and present; characters appear in their childhood and in their maturity; incidents that happened ten years ago are sandwiched in between the events of the present" (Recht 37).

Jason's character portrays someone who is mostly present-oriented, but mainly self-oriented: "Jason, who is painted too savagely, much too black, is the only unconvincing character in the novel. All the others live intensely and vividly" (Baker 40). The concept of time has not shaped Jason because he does not care about the family ancestry, even though he tends to seek some acknowledgement by taking care of the entire household, and especially young Miss Quentin, who is his complete opposite. Jason sees profit in everyone, and those who are not profitable for him, do not exist for him; for example, Benjy, who lives and behaves as a child of three years old, even though he is actually thirty-three. In a way, by creating Jason, Faulkner established the rational and mostly unbroken narration, which has the ability to depict the real state of the Compson family:

> In the third part, Jason, mother's pet, soliloquizes on the downfall of the family, and the cross he has to bear with Benjy slobbering and moaning in the house when he should have

> been sent to asylum at Jackson long ago, his mother coddling herself with camphor and hot water-bottles, pretending to be ill, and Quentin, Caddy's scapegrace daughter, meeting lovers under bushes. (Baker 40)

Jason's character is far away from a Southern gentleman, and Faulkner uses the opening sentence of Jason's chapter to describe his personality and behavior towards women: "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say" (Faulkner 146). In other words, Jason stands for a false ideology combined with a lack of a manhood and the (in)ability to succeed in his intentions.

When observing Caddy, the reader may notice that she is the only character who can be described as future-oriented. Even though Caddy possesses the components of the past that structure her persona, she is the only emotionally stabile and reasonable character. The passage of time gave her the ability to equally cherish her past, present and future. This trait is the most visible in her approach towards family members. Benjy, whom she should have 'left' in the past, is equally important to her as her daughter Quentin, who should be the main reason of her concerns. Coupled with her future-oriented manners, Caddy can be portrayed as an anti-belle. She is not worried about her appearances and behaves as a boy:

> Caddy took her dress off and threw it on the bank. Then she didn't have on anything but her bodice and drawers, and Quentin slapped her and she slipped and fell down in the water. When she got up she began to splash water on Quentin, and Quentin splashed water on Caddy. (Faulkner 21)

Her unconventional behavior leads to frequent arguments with her brothers, but mostly her mother. Mrs. Compson cannot understand Caddy, because she cannot comprehend that times have changed and the South is not what it used to be, and neither are they – the noble house built upon their ancestors:

> “You don’t need to bother with him.” Caddy said. “I like to take care of him. Don’t I. Benjy. “Candace.” Mother said. “I told you not to call him that. It was bad enough when your father insisted on calling you by that silly nickname, and I will not have him called by one. Nicknames are vulgar. Only common people use them. Benjamin.” she said. (Faulkner 56)

By failing to accept the change, Mrs. Compson fails as a mother and a wife, which forces Caddy to take her mother’s role in taking care of Benjy and the rest of the household. The role of a mother is depicted in her later relations to Miss Quentin, where Caddy does not directly serve as a mother figure, and similarly to her relations to Benjy, does not directly obtain the duties of a mother, but rather only provides for her child, leaving Miss Quentin the opportunity to shape her own identity and lifestyle. It is important to comprehend that Caddy perhaps fails to fulfil the role of a mother to her child, as being a mother has negative connotations to her. As she was growing up, she started to realize that her mother was a Southern lady only in her appearance, but lacked in qualities of motherhood, such as love, affection, care and understanding. Upon leaving the Compson household, Caddy leaves behind her mother’s false ideology, her father’s cynicism and general artificial mannerism that amazed them or gave them the impression that they are what they used to be. In addition to that, Caddy’s inability to engage in real romantic relationship can be observed as a consequence of time changing in the South. Caddy does not appreciate men whom she spent time with and sees them only as means of escaping the Compson set of rules and norms which are not valid anymore: “did you love them Caddy did you love them When they touched me I died” (Faulkner 122). To contrast that, Caddy’s tragedy lies within Faulkner’s inability to give her a voice in the novel; but by giving her the voice, the entire circular composure of narration and relationship of the characters with the past would be broken. Caddy’s tolerance dominates the novel, even though it is portrayed throughout the narrations of others. She sees humanity in the world and is not judgmental, but tends to be a broken character, because the setting and the time allow her to understand others;

Quentin's fascination with time and oblivion, Benjy's immense love for pasture and Jason's love for money. At the same time, her tragedy lies within her awareness that she cannot be understood or accepted in the world fulfilled with the Compsons' expectations and ideology.

To conclude, Faulkner's time and setting definitely shape the characters as well as their actions. This trait is most obvious in the portrayal of Quentin, who is unable to escape the past and feels obliged to re-live his past all over again in fear of potential oblivion. The change of atmosphere in the Old South sets a new way of living and the accustomed chivalry slowly fades away. When observing Faulkner's characters, it is visible that they cannot adapt themselves, which serves as one of the main reasons for their downfall. Faulkner's characters re-live their past, missing out on present and future. They are only capable to understand the concept of passage of time, when time has already passed. That is why one can argue that Faulkner's circular type of narration provides no particular action, but rather gives different subjective information, granted from a different character throughout his narration. The only objective chapter is the last one, narrated by Dilsey, but the reader can also notice the dose of subjectivity presented there. Because Faulkner is focused on the technique of inner-monologue, subjectivity prevails the novel, leaving it, as Faulkner says: "[…] a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

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