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MONEY AND VALUE IN THE SUN ALSO RISES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the role of money as a metaphor for value in *The Sun Also Rises*. Repeatedly in the text—most notably during a passage called Jake’s Reverie—spending practices are explicitly linked to other values, suggesting the symbolic role that money plays in delineating the ethics of this novel. Previous scholarly approaches to this topic have tended to focus only on the most literal implications of payment and spending, particularly emphasizing the philosophy of “exchange of values,” or simple equivalence, that Jake expresses during his reverie. However, this framework ignores the typically implicit quality of Hemingway’s narration, and thus obscures important interactions in the text that are not based on one-to-one exchange. In fact, I argue that Jake’s “exchange of values” philosophy is not the ethical center of the novel, but rather a pose he uses to distract himself from his internal conflict between morality and disbelief. The most important values in the novel lie in relationships that defy the concept of equivalence.

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Chapter 1

The Sun Also Rises as a “Moral” Novel

In 1941, during a post-nuptial trip to Honolulu with his third wife Martha Gellhorn, Ernest Hemingway was invited to have lunch with professors from the University of Hawaii. Carlos Baker reports that one of the instructors pulled the author aside to tell him that he was having his students read *A Farewell to Arms*; Hemingway advised him against it. “That’s an immoral book,” he declared, “Let them read *The Sun Also Rises*. It’s very moral” (*A Life Story* 429). Hemingway’s first major novel sold five thousand copies in two months, was in its eighth printing by the end of two years, and launched him to international celebrity status seemingly overnight, but “moral” is hardly the first word that comes to mind when one thinks about *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). In fact, many of Hemingway’s contemporaries asserted the opposite. “Here is a book which, like its characters, begins nowhere and ends in nothing,” wrote one reviewer in *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. *The Dial* called Hemingway’s characters as “vapid” and shallow as “the saucers in which they stack their daily emotion.” The writer’s own mother thought the book was so full of “utterly degraded people” that it “would have been better if it were never written.” (Wagner-Martin 1)

Somewhat ironically, these meandering characters, and the poignant sense of ennui they produce, have become a central object of accolade among modern critics. *The Sun Also Rises* is now widely lauded as an emblem of post-war malaise, an eloquent expression of the disillusionment associated with the end of WWI in the popular mind; the term “Lost

Generation,” appropriated from the novel’s first epigraph, has even become a common nickname for the twenty- and thirty-somethings of the early 1920s. “In the complications of the Jake-Brett romance lies Hemingway’s remarkable ability to catch the temper of the era,” explains Linda Wagner- Martin. “The loss of promise after World War I was one of the chief reasons for the expatriation of America’s writers and artists. Failure of belief in all of the traditional panaceas (religion, politics, economics, romance) led to the bleak ‘waste land’ atmosphere so evident in T.S. Eliot’s poem of that name...” (5). This characterization of the novel as an imprint of futility would seem to imply that *The Sun’s* most significant ethic is actually a lack of meaning. But if *The Sun Also Rises* is nothing more than an exercise in nihilism, in what sense does its author view it as “very moral”?

The Sun is manifestly a text concerned with a kind of value, not in the least because Hemingway bombards us with the details of his characters’ quotidian financial interactions. There are, by Patrick Morrow’s count, 142 direct references to payment in the text including 30 specific sums, like the price of a car from Pamplona to Bayonne (150 pesetas), or the cost per night at the little hotel in Burguete (12 pesetas) (Hemingway 235, 115).¹ This amounts to an average of one reference to money on every other page of the original Scribner’s paperback edition (Morrow 52). As Scott Donaldson points out, Hemingway cut 40,000 words between the first and final drafts of the novel, but “he retained these ubiquitous references to the cost of things.” Donaldson concludes: “He must have kept them for some perceptible and important artistic purpose” (402).

¹ All citations from *The Sun Also Rises* refer to the 2006 Scribner’s Paperback Edition

This assertion finds ready support in the text, in which nearly every major character uses language related to monetary value symbolically to express ideas about ethical values. The most explicit example of this occurs in Book II, during an extended interior monologue about morality that is often dubbed “Jake’s Reverie.” As most previous interpretations of the role of money in the novel draw from this section, and because the passage in its entirety is laden with important contradictions, I will cite it at some length here:

I thought I had paid for everything. Not like the woman pays and pays and pays. No idea of retribution or punishment. Just exchange of values. You gave up something and got something else. Or you worked for something. You paid some way for everything that was any good. *I paid my way into enough things that I liked, so that I had a good time.*

Either you paid by learning about them, or by experience, or by taking chances, or by money. *Enjoying living was learning to get your money's worth and knowing when you had it.* You could get your money's worth. The world was a good place to buy in. *It seemed like a fine philosophy. In five years, I thought, it will seem just as silly as all the other fine philosophies I've had.*

Perhaps that wasn't true, though. Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. *Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about.*

I wished Mike would not behave so terribly to Cohn, though ... I liked to see him hurt Cohn. I wished he would not do it, though, because afterward it made me disgusted at myself. *That was morality; things that made you disgusted afterward. No that must be*

immortality. That was a large statement. What a lot of bilge I could think up at night.

(152)²

Though different scholars focus on different parts of this passage, the majority take one or more of Jake's statements in his reverie as a literal indication of the meaning of money in the narrative. In this thesis, I will argue that this strategy of relying on Jake's most explicit ideas, and of using them to derive a single key or "code" for how money metaphors work in the text, obscures other important values that are supported, particularly implicitly, in the rest of narrative. Careful attention to the Reverie passage reveals a number of contradictory ideas and not a simple formula linking money, morality, and values as some critics have asserted. Before offering my close reading of Jake's Reverie, however, I must begin with the problem of how to interpret Jake as Hemingway's first-person narrator.

Reading Jake as a Character-Bound Narrator

Much has been made of the similarities between Hemingway and his protagonist in *The Sun Also Rises*. They are both World War I vets, both journalists expatriated to Paris from the American Midwest. When the novel is read as a *roman à clef* for the expatriate community in Paris, Jake takes Hemingway's place in the real party of people who visited Pamplona in 1925. Various early drafts of the story even featured a protagonist named "Hem," and later "Ernie" (*New Essays* 4). That Hemingway created a narrator who is similar to himself is undeniable, but

² Emphasis Mine

these superficial similarities should not imply, as some scholars seem to assume, that the two are not meaningfully distinct.

Terrence Doody, for example, contends that Hemingway's conceit of a character-bound narrator is unconvincing. He contrasts the framing of *The Sun Also Rises* with Fitzgerald's approach in *The Great Gatsby*. In the latter, Fitzgerald explicitly establishes that Nick Caraway is a "writer" constructing a narrative. Doody explains: "The self-conscious manipulation Fitzgerald devises for Nick is not an exceptional formal maneuver, but it does make *Gatsby's* meaning the clear result of Nick's participation, his understanding ... Nick, therefore is justified in achieving the apotheosis he works up to in the narrative's final moment" (112). In other words, *Gatsby's* structure invites us to look at the narrative as a reflection of Nick's character development, and not just Fitzgerald's authorial commentary on *Gatsby* delivered via Nick, his mouthpiece.

In contrast, Hemingway declines to situate Jake's narration in space and time. Jake's purpose in recounting the story, and even his temporal relation to its events, are unclear. In fact, with two exceptions, Jake appears to be experiencing and recounting events simultaneously.³ "In *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake is more a function of the style than its source," Doody concludes, "his voice and character are used to justify a vision of the world that Jake is never allowed to possess as his own" (105). A vision of the world, in other words, that should be read as belonging to Ernest Hemingway.

³ Only twice in the narrative does Jake appear to have advanced knowledge of events: first, when he comments that Francis taunting Cohn at the café "was friendly joking to what went on later" (56); second, when he disrupts the sequence of events and tells us that Brett forgets the bull's ear in her bed stand when she leaves the Hotel Montoya (203).

There may be some formal flaws in Hemingway's development of his character-bound narrator, but several features of the text complicate Doody's claim that Jake's voice is indistinguishable from that of Hemingway. One of the distinctive features of this novel is the ubiquity, and significance, of its dialogue. "[Hemingway's] dialogue is so natural that it hardly seems as if it is written at all—one hears it," wrote literary critic Burton Rascoe in a 1929 review, and this oral quality is not confined to *The Sun*'s dialogue. Rascoe continues: "There is no one writing whose prose has more of the force and vibrancy of good, direct, natural, colloquial speech" (Wagner-Martin 2). When characters speak directly in fiction, their words are not explicitly filtered through the perspective of the author/narrator and the text becomes less didactic. An apparent lack of authorial commentary is one of the ways in which Hemingway's prose models dialogue. Wagner-Martin describes his method as "understatement, a seemingly objective way of presenting the hard scene or image, allowing readers to find the meaning for themselves" (2). Clearly, the audience must go beyond the literal meaning of the text in order to understand *The Sun Also Rises*.

One of the ways this manifests, both in dialogue and narration, is Hemingway's pervasive use of sarcasm. "To understand Jake, we must hear his tone of voice," claims Michael Reynolds (27). He refers to Jake's patently sarcastic dialogue at the *Bal Musette* to illustrate this point. When Brett asks if he's having a lovely evening with his prostitute, for example, Jake replies: "Oh, priceless" (30). "We know exactly how Jake sounds when he says this," Reynolds continues, "His tone gives exactly the opposite meaning to what his words are saying" (28). This implicit quality is mirrored in much of Jake's narration. For example, though Barnes is not explicitly critical when he describes Cohn's foray as a magazine editor in Chapter One, he is clearly being ironic:

By that time Cohn, who had been regarded purely as an angel, and whose name had appeared on the editorial page merely as a member of the advisory board, had become the sole editor. It was his money and he discovered he liked the authority of editing. He was sorry when the magazine became too expensive and he had to give it up. (13)

Becoming the editor of an arts magazine should not be based on cash but on taste and talent—qualities that Cohn must lack, Jake's phrasing implies, since he was responsible for driving the magazine into the ground. Any reliable reading of *The Sun* must be rooted in the understanding that Jake's narration, like his speech, is not always straightforward, and that Hemingway frequently asks readers to deduce the meaning of the things his narrator recounts.

Yet understanding the significance of Jake's words requires more than an ability to recognize simple sarcasm. If we view Jake as a character as well as a narrator, we must also consider the bias that marks his narration. The way that Jake describes things is colored by feelings—jealousy, anger, disgust—emotions that Hemingway deliberately assigns to his protagonist and does not necessarily share with him. Jake's status as a character rather than a disinterested narrator is evidenced by his inconsistency. Despite Jake's conspicuous animosity at the beginning of Chapter One, Barnes is almost sentimental in other descriptions of Robert Cohn. “[Cohn] had a nice, boyish sort of cheerfulness that had never been trained out of him,” Jake recounts fondly, “He loved to win at tennis” (52). In fact, after criticizing Cohn's cowardice, greed, irresponsibility, arrogance, and ignorance throughout Chapter One, Jake concludes, honestly it seems to me: “I watched him walk back to the café holding his paper. I rather liked him ...” (15).

The conversational, unconsidered quality of Jake's narration demands that he is read as more than a didactic voice. Instead, his narration becomes an impression of his growth as a

character, just as Nick Caraway's narrative fluctuations indicate his character change in *The Great Gatsby*. Thus, the development of Hemingway's protagonist in this novel, like the progression of many of his plots, is implicit. To understand the essence of *The Sun*, the reader must construct Jake from the unarticulated meanings behind his irony, and the unstated reasons for his inconsistency.

Re-evaluating the "Code" Reading of Money

Given these extremely pervasive characteristics of Jake's narration in *The Sun*, it is surprising that so many of the critics who have explored the role of money in this novel are inclined to take his musing in Book II at face value. "[Jake's Reverie] is self-evidently the central statement on morality in the novel," writes Claire Sprague (260), and Scott Donaldson agrees: "It is Jake Barnes who explicitly states the code of Hemingway's 'very moral' novel" (401). Donaldson's language is telling; the word "code" references a long-standing tradition in Hemingway criticism of attempting to define, and redefine, the Hemingway "code-hero."

Philip Young laid the foundation for this approach in his 1959 book *Ernest Hemingway*. Young documented the reoccurrence of certain stock characters throughout Hemingway's fiction, namely a protagonist or "hero" who seeks to exemplify "certain principles of honor, courage, and endurance which...make a man a man," and a mentor or "code hero" who models these qualities (11). Like the terms "honor," "courage," and "manliness," this concept of a new heroic archetype is vague, allowing Young's successors to prod and massage the parameters of the Hemingway code over time. Nevertheless, thanks to the early predominance of *Ernest*

Hemingway, the search for the “code-hero” has been a major concern of Hemingway criticism since its inception.

Scholarship on *The Sun Also Rises* is no exception. “Much of the criticism of the novel represents an attempt to determine 'the code' governing its hero,” explain Arnold and Cathy Davidson, “and then, going beyond this first code, critics have searched for the code of all Hemingway heroes, Hemingway fictions and beyond that, have also postulated connections between the code meaning of the fiction, Hemingway's famous laconic prose style, and the author's life” (85). This approach is not without merit. Obviously, a writer's body of work is interconnected and individual books should not be considered in isolation from the whole. Nevertheless, any attempt to explain a piece of fiction using a rigid “code” is inherently flawed; the critic will necessarily ignore some parts of the text and favor others in his or her pursuit of homogeneous meaning. “A totalizing reading must somehow blink at its own inconsistencies,” the Davidsons conclude (86). In the case of Hemingway, these code readings also suffer from a tendency to rely heavily on biographical information, not just drawing from primary sources about the author's life, but also evoking his hyper-masculine celebrity persona in order to interpret the values supported by his fiction.

In this vein, many of the critics who correlate money with moral values in *The Sun* explicitly situate themselves within the Hemingway “code” tradition. Like Donaldson and Sprague, Earl Rovit uses Jake's Reverie to derive an inflexible rule for the significance of money and payment throughout the narrative. Though these authors' codes differ, all stem from the commercialized philosophy of “exchange of values”—introduced by Bill as a joke in Book I—that becomes a central theme in the first part of Jake's Reverie. Each interpretation offers some valuable insights into the effect of money in the novel. However, they are all blighted by

significant inconsistencies and generalizations, revealing the inadequacy of a code to explain the complex ideas about value in this text. In fact, I will argue that the “exchange of values” philosophy of Jake’s Reverie is more credibly read as a pose, adopted temporarily and considered secondary to his more fundamental concern with intangible values. When we consider the text holistically, the implicit meanings of Jake’s speech and narration betray an internal conflict between postwar disbelief and an enduring attraction to morality. In my reading, the essential values of this novel are not contained in a simple statement from one of Jake’s many soliloquies, but in his complex interactions with various characters throughout the text.

Chapter 2

Earl Rovit and the Tension between Materialism and Idealism

Earl Rovit begins his 1961 book, *Ernest Hemingway*, by outlining his approach to tackling the enormous topic that title sets out for him: begin by discussing Hemingway's life, move on to the formation of his aesthetic, and then analyze "the famous Hemingway 'code' ... there is an attempt to fit this code into the cumulative context of the aesthetic that has been developing" (Preface). Rovit's work, published nine years after Philip Young's book of the same name, is a direct response to Young's ideas about the Hemingway hero and code hero; Rovit refers to them as the "tyro" and "tutor" respectively. In his view, the "code," or the lesson the tyro must "painfully learn and relearn," is comprised of two values: "the ability to make realistic promises to oneself, and the ability to forgive oneself one's past" (92).

Although Rovit integrates illustrations from various works by Hemingway into his larger argument, he selects *The Sun Also Rises* for close analysis as an "illustrative exemplar of the critical hypothesis drawn from [*Ernest Hemingway's*] first six chapters" (Preface). In fact, he chooses to focus on money in the novel because he sees it as a metaphor for the code values that Jake, the tyro, must learn from his various tutors. Rovit opens his *Sun* chapter with Jake's Reverie, which he cites at length. However, in his determination to synthesize money in *The Sun* with his more reaching thesis about Hemingway's life and work, Rovit is not sensitive to the ambiguity surrounding value in the text, even within the portion of the Reverie he cites directly.

Jake begins, “I thought I had paid for everything. No idea of retribution or punishment. Just exchange of values” (152). His language here is closely related to one of Brett’s statements in Book I. “Don’t we pay for all the things we do, though?” she asks Jake, as they sit in a desultory cab and avoid discussing their unconsummated love. “When I think of the hell I’ve put chaps through. I’m paying for it all now” (34). This is an idea of retribution: Brett casts her impossible desire for Jake as punishment for the way she has used men in the past. It is also an idea of justice. In Brett’s professed world-view, bad things happen to those who have done something to deserve them. It is not surprising, therefore, that Jake rejects her taxicab philosophizing. “Don’t talk like a fool,” he replies and adds: “What happened to me is supposed to be funny” (34). If suffering were a form of penance—if cause matched effect—then Jake’s debilitating injury would be retribution for some significant crime. In fact, the opposite is true—we are not told that Jake has committed any profound iniquity and the circumstances surrounding his loss are ironically mundane. An American pilot in Italy, he has lost “more than his life,” fighting on a “joke front,” in an illogical war, on a foreign continent (38).

It is now commonplace to see Jake’s injury as a metaphor for the aftertaste of ennui and futility that WWI left in the mouth of the “Lost Generation.” The war is often characterized as uniquely psychologically damaging, not just because it was particularly violent, but because the physical and spiritual damage it inflicted were out of proportion with the highly political reasons it was fought. Michael Reynolds describes Europe in the early twenties as profoundly lacking in faith. After so much irrational suffering, he argues, people saw “the old values—love, honor, duty, truth” as “bankrupted” (63). Rovit evidently shares this view. He suggests that the experience of the war has left Jake in the “constant psychological situation of having to accept the absurd meaninglessness of fate and somehow wrest some meaning from it” (129). After his

undeserved misfortune, Jake cannot accept Brett's retributive morality and so he proposes an alternative: "No idea of retribution or punishment. Just exchange of values. You gave up something and got something else ... You paid some way for everything that was any good. I paid my way into enough things I liked so that I had a good time" (152).

Rovit takes this statement literally. For him, the narrative problem lies not in the validity of this worldview, but in Jake's initial inability to conform to it fully: "If we can accept this statement as being true for Jake," he writes, "it should follow that the novel will be a recording of Jake's painful lessons in learning how to live in the world while getting his money's worth of enjoyment at the price exacted from him" (130). He calls Count Mippipopolous the "tutor" in this "epistemological" quest. Alluding to the first of his code's "painful lessons"—"the ability to make realistic promises to oneself"—Rovit praises the Count's choice to invest in things with immediate, tangible value. "I get more value for my money in old Brady than in any antiques," the Count tells Jake and Brett before they enjoy an expensive dinner (68). Mippipopolous suggests that abstract artistic and historical value is dim compared to the palpable gratification of alcohol. "He has stripped his stockpile of illusions to the barest minimum" Rovit writes, "transferring the capitalist ethic of exchange values to the sphere of emotions ... he contents himself with things he cannot lose" (131).

Here the reader might object that most of Jake's friends indulge their senses without hesitation, and it only makes them more depressed: though Brett is in "fine form" during her dinner with the Count, she becomes extremely unhappy as the night of drinking continues. "Oh, darling ... I'm so miserable," she finally admits to Jake with a characteristic shiver (70). The difference, Rovit argues, is that characters like Brett, Mike, and Cohn have failed to shed the "illusions" that keep them from being content with the Count's tangible values: "[Hemingway]

demands a certain basic prerequisite from his characters before he would allow their emotional reactions to be considered worthy gauges of morality ... they would have to be willing to shed their illusions in their fight to force meaning out of life.” He continues: “Jake Barnes must learn to become uninvolved from useless and impossible illusions if he is to remain sane” (137). Thus, Rovit reduces the central conflict in the novel to Jake’s delusional love for Brett—a desire that, unlike hunger or thirst, Jake cannot hope to gratify. By abandoning this illusion at the end of the novel, Rovit concludes, Jake is able to “force himself to a new beginning,” displaying a “faith in his own human resources that, like the earth, ‘abideth forever’ in the granite veins of humanity” (141).

This grand language masks the very pessimistic implications of Rovit’s argument. If Jake’s “exchange of values” philosophy is the central meaning in the novel, the only values *The Sun* can support are dumb amusement and sensory gratification: food, drink, sex—what Jake refers to as a “good time.” More importantly, Rovit’s argument is based on the suspect assumption that all of Jake’s narration during the Reverie should be taken literally. When we realize that Jake must be read as a character as well as narrator, it is not credible to view his statements at the beginning of the passage as affirmative.

It is important to consider Jake’s Reverie in context.⁴ Rovit is right to characterize Jake as disheartened, but he does not consider how this mindset might inform his speech as a character-bound narrator. Immediately before launching into this rumination on morality, Jake listens enviously to Mike and Brett in the next room, as they laugh together in bed. “To hell with women, anyway,” he responds bitterly, “To hell with you, Brett Ashley” (151). This is hardly

⁴ To better understand the progression of Jake’s Reverie, refer to the full text on page 3

the context for a moment of self-realization, as Rovit would seem to suggest by taking Jake's theory as the kingpin for the moral lesson in the novel. Instead, Jake complains that although it seemed like his friendship with Brett was "getting something for nothing," the bill—in this case his inevitable jealousy and longing—always came; "That was one of the swell things you could count on," he adds with evident sarcasm.

Given this preface, it is not logical to interpret Jake's subsequent statements about "getting his money's worth" as a whole-hearted endorsement of materialism. As Rovit suggests, Jake does seem to view "exchanges of values" as the only reliable way to give meaning to his life after the moral devastation of WWI. When values are based on commercial equivalence, there is no room for the disconnection between actions and consequences embodied by Jake's injury. However, when Jake concludes that "the world is a good place to buy in," the reader must suspect that the tone of this sacrilegiously materialistic philosophy is ironic rather than earnest. "It seemed like a fine philosophy," he continues with similar sarcasm, "In five years, I thought, it will seem just as silly as all the other fine philosophies I've had" (152). This statement sounds more like a resignation than an epiphany. Equivalence is the only credible meaning that Jake can find in his post-war life, and even his commitment to this irresolute.

In the next part of the reverie, which Rovit declines to cite, it becomes clear that Jake is still interested in intangible moral values. Two important turning points in the latter portion of Jake's Reverie are marked by the word "though:"

Perhaps that wasn't true, *though*. Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about.

I wished Mike would not behave so terribly to Cohn, *though*.⁵ (152)

The referent of “that” is not explicit. One might read the first phrase as Jake’s contradiction of his previous judgment that “exchange of values” was a silly philosophy. Defiantly, Jake claims not to care about moral meaning—“what it was all about”—as long as he can find a way of making his life bearable—“how to live it.” But the superficiality of this pose is evident in the next sentence, when Jake betrays his enduring desire to assign a higher meaning to his life: “Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about.” This contemplation of moral meaning evokes, seemingly abruptly, a sense of regret about the way he treated Cohn earlier that night. Implicitly, Jake’s guilt betrays his continued concern with values that cannot be explained by the simple equivalence he proposed a few paragraphs earlier.

Rovit's dichotomy between “illusions” and materiality touches on a central tension within the text. However, I think that he has misinterpreted—based largely it seems on his simplifying analysis of the Reverie passage—the role of each in the novel. In my reading, equivalence is not the moral “code” of the novel, but a posture that Jake adopts because he does not know how to actualize the intangible values he actually desires. Central to Rovit’s misconstruction is his assumption that Jake’s idealistic values are confined to an impossible sexual desire for Brett. As the end of his Reverie suggests, Jake’s concern with morality is actually manifested in many different ways, including his complex relationship with Robert Cohn.

⁵ Emphasis mine

Jake's Relationships with Cohn and Brett

Jake's guilt about his interactions with Cohn is not unique to the Reverie. At least five times in the text, Jake expresses regret over the way he has treated Cohn, and because he is unmotivated to change his behavior. An early instance of this occurs in Book I, when Jake meets Cohn and Frances at Café Select. Incensed that Robert wants to dispose of her to England so he can go away with Brett, Frances unleashes a tirade of insults aimed at his writing, intellect, masculinity and resolve. Some readers may feel that Cohn's treatment of Frances warrants her scorn, but this is not Jake's view: "I do not know how people could say such terrible things to Robert Cohn," he thinks as he listens to Frances fuming. "There are people to whom you could not say insulting things. They give you a feeling that the world would be destroyed, would actually be destroyed before your eyes, if you said certain things" (56). His reaction reveals more than a sense of moral obligation to defend Cohn; when Jake equates destroying Cohn with destroying the whole world, he betrays a profound attachment to him, or at least to what he represents. The tone of these phrases is protective and almost fond. Then Jake continues: "But here was Cohn taking it all. Here it was all going on right before me, and I did not even feel an impulse to try and stop it" (56). Clearly, Jake wishes that he could motivate himself to intervene for Cohn's sake—that he could believe it would matter if he acted to protect him—but he cannot.

For Rovit, Cohn's ultimate role is antithesis; if the Count is Jake's tutor, then Robert Cohn is the anti-tutor to his "epistemological" quest: "[Cohn] suffers cruel and comical ignominy to demonstrate to Jake the danger inherent in 'letting go' and falling into the pit of self-deception," Rovit explains (133). The Count models achievable value, but Cohn's tendency to romanticize hyperbolically echoes the delusion that, in Rovit's view, is responsible for Jake's

emotional stasis. In this way, Rovit recognizes that the anti-tutor-tyro relationship implies similarity as well as opposition. “[Cohn] is Jake Barnes’s double,” he writes, “they are both writers, they both fall in love with Brett Ashley, they are both superior to the meaningless swirl of drinking, promiscuity, and aimless pleasure seeking that surrounds them” (133).

This assignment of “superiority” recalls the inconsistent way Rovit interprets various characters’ indulgence in “drinking, promiscuity, and aimless pleasure.” At the beginning of his *Sun* chapter, Rovit praises Mippipopulous for understanding the intrinsic value of sensory gratification. Here, however, he calls Jake “superior” like Robert Cohn, whom we are told is “never drunk” (152). Rather than expanding upon this important affinity, however, Rovit points out that Cohn, “although his intentions are far more admirable than those of the other characters,” utterly fails to adhere to the code rule of making “realistic promises” to oneself. He thus concludes—illogically in my opinion—that Cohn is the “most despicable character Hemingway ever created” (134).

Rovit refers to a scene in Book I to support this conclusion. One day, Jake tells us, Robert Cohn came into his office. Barnes prefaces the exchange by warning us that Cohn has been reading Hudson’s *The Purple Land*, a novel about a “perfect English Gentleman in an intensely romantic land” (17). “[It] is a very sinister book if read too late in life,” Jake concludes. By using a charged word like “sinister” to describe Cohn’s idealistic book, Jake betrays how profoundly Cohn’s unattainable optimism affects him. Robert, excited by what he has read, proposes a trip to South America, which he evidently views as a mystical place:

“Would you like to go to South America, Jake?” he asked.

“No.”

“Why not?”

“I don't know. I never wanted to go. Too expensive. You can see all the South Americans you want in Paris anyway.”

“They're not the real South Americans.”

“They look awfully real to me.” (17)

Hemingway's intent to criticize Cohn is undeniable. His foolish comment about “the real South Americans” shows how far his view of the world is removed from reality. To use Rovit's dichotomy, while the Count invests in the certain enjoyment of old brandy, Cohn wants to buy adventure, a fantastic experience he has drawn from fiction instead of reality. On the other hand, the Count spends his money on a bottle full of liquid and a few hours of groggy enjoyment. Cohn, regardless of his naivety, is seeking something intangible, something that is not confined to simple gratification as its value.

After Jake repulses the first trip proposal, Cohn persists: “If I handled both our expenses, would you go to South American with me?” For Patrick Morrow, Cohn's offer is yet another example of the relationship between money and power in the text: “The rich Cohn defines himself largely by using money as magnanimous gesture, a way to obligate, to control” (54). He later argues that Jake uses money equivalently, as an expression of masculine power. But “power” seems like the wrong word for what Cohn proposes to purchase in this example. When Jake presses him, Cohn explains that he offered to pay because “it would be more fun with two of us.” In other words, Cohn wants to use his money for companionship; this scene actually foreshadows Jake's interaction with Georgette in the next chapter.

Despite his impotence, Jake engages one of the prostitutes he sees traipsing along the *Rive Gauche* one night: “I had picked her up because of a vague sentimental idea that it would be nice to eat with someone,” he admits (24). When Georgette begins to complain that the

restaurant he selects for their dinner is not chic enough—she, at least, is trying to get her money’s worth—Jake quickly abandons the idea: “It was a long time since I had dined with a *poule*,⁶ and I had forgotten how dull it could be” (24). Like Cohn, Jake tries to use his money to purchase an abstract value —companionship—instead of the dull material values of the Count. The difference is that Jake is crippled by post-war incredulity and thus quick to doubt the veracity of anything intangible. Cohn, the only major character who was not involved in the war, must be impossibly naïve to believe in ideals so fully. Nevertheless, he functions more as a dramatic illustration of Jake’s crisis of belief than as a warning against believing in anything at all. Through Jake’s biting criticism of Cohn, we recognize the former’s deeply painful rejection of traditional values. At the same time, the text registers Jake’s desire to protect his “tennis friend,” showing us that Barnes is still attracted to the very ideals he finds impossible to accept.

This is the context in which we must understand Jake’s “delusional” desire for Brett. In Rovit’s view, Jake Barnes has “three passions only: fishing, bullfighting, and Brett. The first two he is able to indulge in with full enjoyment —getting his money’s worth and knowing when he has had it. The third is an impossibility on which he expends an inordinate amount of psychic energy and pain ... and his meager pleasures for the price he pays become less and less” (137). By using words like “indulge,” “pleasure” and “enjoyment,” Rovit emphasizes the sexual incompatibility between Jake and Brett. This focus, however, does not touch the essence of their relationship. Jake’s impotence—Hemingway’s highly natural metaphor—makes a physical relationship literally unattainable, and this is symbolic of a more fundamental spiritual

⁶ Fr. Prostitute

separation. “Couldn't we live together, Brett? Couldn't we just live together?” Jake asks her when they are reunited in Paris:

“I don't think so. I'd just *tromper*⁷ you with everybody. You couldn't stand it.”

“I stand it now.”

“That would be different. It's my fault, Jake. It's the way I'm made.”

“Couldn't we go off in the country for a while?”

“It wouldn't be any good ...”

“I know.” (62).

Jake, like Cohn, wants a romantic relationship with Brett; his pastoral idea of living quietly in the country is almost as archetypal as Cohn's imagined “affair with a lady of title” (194).

Unlike Cohn, however, he cannot believe that his ideal is or can be actualized—with good reason. The reader doesn't doubt Brett when she tells us she would *tromper* Jake with everybody, not because of his impotence but because of her inability to remain faithful to any of the “undamaged” men she is connected with in the novel. Rovit, with his perpetual focus on materiality, analyzes this relationship in sexual terms, but the impossibility of Jake and Brett cannot be reduced to the former's physical inability. Instead, the physical disconnection between the two symbolizes a more profound emotional disbelief. Neither Brett nor Jake, despite their evident interest in love, can act based on the faith that it might be realized in their lives.

Thus, Jake's resentment towards Cohn after his rendezvous with Brett suggests more than sexual jealousy. As the novel progresses, Jake becomes increasingly antagonistic towards his

⁷ Fr. Cheat on

former friend. When the fishing party is awaiting Brett and Mike at Bayonne, for example, Jake pettily declines to share their telegram with Cohn:

“It's from them,” I said. I put it in my pocket. Ordinarily I should have handed it over.

“They've stopped over in San Sebastian,” I said. “Send their regards to you.” Why I felt that impulse to devil him I do not know. Of course I do know. I was blind, unforgivingly jealous of what had happened to him. The fact that I took it as a matter of course did not alter that any. I certainly did hate him. I do not think I ever really hated him until he had that little spell of superiority at lunch—that and when he went through all that barbering.

(105)

Hemingway is careful about Jake's motivations in this passage, and more explicit about the significance of actions that almost anywhere else in the novel. When Jake says he is “jealous of what had happened” to Cohn, the reader might assume that he is mostly upset that Cohn has had sex with Brett when he cannot. But Jake is not as violently resentful towards Mike or Romero. The narrative tells us that two things turn Jake's jealousy into hate: “that little spell of superiority at lunch” and “all that barbering.” Mike, who is just as disillusioned as Jake, is not pretentious about his romantic relationship with Brett; he gets upset that she has slept with other people, but he won't pretend that she loves him more than anyone else. Cohn romanticizes a single week, snidely implying that Brett will rush to Bayonne to see him, trying to look the part of a romantic lead with his incessant personal grooming. This speaks to Cohn's vanity, yet the reason that Jake resents Cohn is not that he is vain per se, but that he is arrogant enough to believe in an ideal that Jake both rejects as incredible and wants very badly to exist.

Even more overtly, this central conflict between ideals and belief is manifested in Jake's tenuous relationship with Catholicism.

Jake's Relationship with Catholicism

In earlier versions of the novel, Jake's Catholicism was an explicit part of his narrative identity from the beginning. Joseph Svodboda reproduces the second chapter of a fledgling *Sun* manuscript, currently housed at JFK library: "So my name is Jacob Barnes and I am writing the story, not as I believe is usual in these cases, from a desire for confession, because being a Roman Catholic I am spared that Protestant urge to literary production" (137). Like many of Jake's comments in the published version of the text, this statement should be viewed skeptically; readers might suspect that a need for moral purgation *is* one of concerns that colors our narrator's seemingly objective descriptions.

In the final version of the text, however, Hemingway makes Jake's religious association much less conspicuous. The first clue that Jake is culturally Catholic is a seemingly off-hand comment about a wedding announcement, received from an unfamiliar sender. "I felt sure I could remember anybody with a name like Aloysius," thinks Jake glibly, "It was a good Catholic name" (38). The first time Jake professes his own Catholicism, he is similarly flippant. During the train ride from Paris to Bayonne, a large group of Catholic pilgrims commandeer the dining car. "It's a pity you boys ain't Catholics," jokes Hubert, Bill and Jake's Midwestern compartment companion. "I am," Jake replies, "that's what makes me sore" (93). Later, when an uncharacteristically serious Bill asks him if he's really Catholic, Jake responds more earnestly with "technically" and then finally, "I don't know" (129).

Michael Reynolds calls religious belief "one of the first major casualties of the Great War" (26). It makes sense that Jake, a spiritual casualty of the War, would have as much

trouble believing in a wise, benevolent God as he does in any other traditional system of values. On the other hand, Jake's repeated reference to religion, like his pity for Cohn and his love for Brett, betrays his continued attraction to intangible values despite his inability to believe in them. Jake even visits several churches during the course of the novel, though he refuses to go to confession. In Bayonne, significantly located on the border between Spain and France, Jake spends a long time kneeling in silent prayer:

I knelt and started to pray and prayed for everybody I thought of, Brett and Mike and Bill and Robert Cohn and myself, and all the bull-fighters ... I found I was getting sleepy, so I prayed that the bull-fights would be good, and that it would be a fine fiesta, and that we would get some fishing ... and I thought I would like to have some money, so I prayed that I would make a lot of money, and then I started to think how I would make it, and thinking of making money reminded me of the Count ... (103)

For Morrow, this passage is yet another indication that Hemingway's characters are so profoundly materialistic that they have "lost all values": "Jake even grants money sacred sanction and authority by substituting money for grace in the first church scene" (62, 55). But Morrow's cursory evaluation of this vital scene is too simple. Money is the last thing that Jake prays for, after fishing and bull-fighting, after all the bull-fighters, after himself, after "everybody [he] thought of."

Note that Hemingway carefully contrasts the material qualities of the church with Jake's spiritual requests in this scene. He starts, with characteristically poignant prose, by describing the church's physicality: "The first time I ever saw it I thought the façade was ugly but I liked it now. I went inside. It was dim and dark and the pillars went high up, and there were people

praying, and it smelt of incense and there were some wonderful big windows” (102). One reason that this description is effective is that it is tangible; it is easy for most readers to recall memories of incense, and dark wood, and silence in a full room, and to visualize a plausible idea of the church. When Jake begins to pray, however, the narrative is suddenly vague. It is more difficult for the audience to articulate exactly what Jake’s words might do to help a damaged person like Brett, and depending on his or her perspective, a reader might doubt that prayer could have any effect at all.

This scene, often ignored or abridged by critics, is one of the most effective illustrations of Jake’s post-war disbelief. It is easy to understand, in view of the profound weariness and cynicism of Jake and his friends, why the possibility of their improvement seems so much less credible to him than the wooden pew he’s kneeling on. Jake moves through a long list of prayer topics as if trying to find something worth praying for, some value that might be actualized in his life. He ends up with money, which prompts him to give up on prayer all together: “and as all the time I was kneeling with my forehead on the wood in front of me, and was thinking of myself as praying, I was a little ashamed” (103). Rather than granting money “sacred sanction,” Jake concludes that it is futile: “I regretted that I was such a rotten Catholic, but realized there was nothing I could do about it, at least for a while, and maybe never ... ” (103).

In the novel as in this passage, Jake’s commercialized “exchange of values” philosophy is not the guiding moral principle. Jake adopts disinterested materialism as a last resort, a defense mechanism against his growing sense that the intangible values he actually desires are unattainable, and even this supposed endorsement is always half-hearted. Rovit, like Jake in these passages, gives up too quickly by embracing materialism as the moral center of the novel. His rhetorical choice to characterize Jake’s problem as a conflict between a mostly sexual desire

for Brett and a more attainable sensory gratification is effective, but misleading. He is at once too specific and too holistic, picking a few key phrases from the Reverie passage as guidelines to interpret the novel in a way that bolsters his larger thesis about Hemingway's life and work. Though Rovit chooses *The Sun* as an exemplar of his Hemingway code, fitting the narrative around his code lesson of making realistic promises to oneself requires some contortions. In fact, rather than continuing to view the role of money in the novel literally, most of Rovit's predecessors have moved beyond direct connotations to the figurative function of spending in the text.

Chapter 3

The Significance of Jake's Spending Habits

In a novel marked by financial minutiae, Hemingway is particularly specific about his protagonist's monthly spending. Coming home from a late night at the *Bal Musette*, Jake stops to pick up his letters. "One was a bank statement," he tells us, "it showed a balance of \$2432.60. I got out my check-book and deducted four checks drawn since the first of the month, and discovered I had a balance of \$1832.60" (38). The meticulous description of this and some of Jake's other expenditures has inspired several scholars to look to spending as the key to the way money functions in the text. Rather than interpret Jake's *Reverie* literally, as Rovit does, both Scott Donaldson and Claire Sprague view it as figurative, a context for decoding the metaphoric meaning of money and its use in the rest of the novel. This shift allows both to move beyond Rovit's unabashed materialism, assigning intangible moral meaning to the way the characters behave in the narrative.

On the other hand, though neither Sprague nor Donaldson is as insistently concrete as Rovit, they follow him in establishing a one-dimensional explanation for the way that money works in the text. Also like Rovit, these two scholars read Jake's *Reverie* as a sincere indication of moral meaning in the novel, drawing their "code" for *The Sun's* ethics from key phrases within this one passage. Thus, the moral values each finds in the novel seem to stem from a

predetermined thesis about the meaning of spending, rather than detailed attention to the way money is used throughout the text. In fact, when we view “exchange of values” as a pose instead of a very simple metaphor for value in this book, it is clear that Jake’s spending habits are not its moral axis, but rather an extension of the tendency to escapism that characterizes his reverie.

Scott Donaldson’s article—“Hemingway’s Morality of Compensation”—sums up the role of money in the novel succinctly: “Money and its uses form the metaphor by which the moral responsibility of Jake, Bill and Pedro is measured against the carelessness of Brett, Mike and Robert. Financial soundness mirrors moral strength” (406). Claire Sprague derives a similar metaphor. The ways in which various characters “get and spend money” function as an “additional means of moral measure,” Sprague writes, “a subtle index of character” (259). These arguments, which betray a familiar tendency to nitpick Jake’s Reverie, rely heavily on a single idea from that passage—“You paid in some way for everything that was any good.” Indeed, in Donaldson’s reasoning, things almost become good because they have been paid for. For example, he notes that Bill has “made a lot of money on his last book” (76) and concludes that the frequent drunkard has earned the right to enjoy himself; both literally, and figuratively via hard work, “He had paid for his fiesta” (406). Of course, this creates the obvious inconsistency that some characters’ alcoholic-abuse—Bill and Jake’s—is a sign of ethical strength, while the same behavior from Mike and Brett signals moral degradation.

Donaldson seems uncomfortable with the lack of substance behind his rigid categorizations, and he works hard to give more texture to the moral strength exhibited by characters who are good at managing money. What distinguishes Jake Barnes from corrupt characters like Mike and Brett, Donaldson explains, is that Jake “works steadily at his regular job

as a newspaperman. He is, presumably, unsupported by money from home, and he spends his money, as he eats and drinks, with conspicuous control” (404). Donaldson then attempts to correlate this behavior with other moral values by suggesting that Jake is also “thoughtful and conscientious” in the way that he spends. When Jake abandons Georgette the prostitute at the bar, he leaves her fifty francs, allegedly to make up for her lost night of work. “This being France,” Donaldson continues, “he will, Brett assures him, lose his fifty francs. ‘Oh, yes,’ Jake responds, but he has at least behaved properly” (404). While not implausible, this evaluation of Jake’s behavior is clearly colored by the author’s prejudice about what constitutes “proper behavior.” A more reliable evaluation of Jake’s spending habits demands a closer analysis of how he uses money throughout the text.

In fact, in arguing that Jake is particularly conscientious about money, both Sprague and Donaldson have missed a very important textual detail. Remember that after deducting his monthly spending from a balance of \$2,432.60, Jake is left with \$1,832.60. Six hundred dollars would have been an incredible monthly expenditure in 1926. This is double Cohn’s allowance; Brett only gets about 500 pounds in an entire year (\$2,500 dollars per annum/ \$200 per month before taxes). According to Jacob Leland, Jake’s spending that month is the equivalent of \$6,271.19 in 2003 (39). That Jake would spend so exorbitantly is particularly notable, because living in Paris was very cheap for ex-patriated Americans due to the relative stability of the dollar. According to RF Wilsons 1925 guide, *Paris on Parade*, on \$2,500 a year “one can live in a comfortable hotel, take tea at the smart places two or three times a week, spend winter in Florence or on the Riviera, and summer on the Brittany beaches or in Switzerland” (Leland 39).

And yet there is merit to Donaldson's claim that Jake is extremely concerned with being thrifty. At Bayonne, he takes the time to check with the tourist office "to find what we ought to pay for a motor-car to Pamplona" (233). At Burguete, he tries to bargain with innkeeper to reduce the cost of the 12-peseta-a-night room he plans to share with Bill. Some readers might see this financial pettiness as uncharitable rather than attesting to "moral strength;" Donaldson skirts the issue by praising Jake's refusal to be "taken advantage of"—reaching, it seems to me, to find more "proper" behaviors to support his proposed relationship between thrift and morality. Regardless, it is clear that Jake is both thrifty in his purchases and lavish in his spending. Why? Leland proposes that he is footing the bill for his friends.

On multiple occasions, Jake buys things for a friend or for the group. Jake purchases Cohn's double-taper rod when they are preparing for the fishing trip, and he doesn't ask to be reimbursed for the tickets to Burguete until Cohn insists on wasting his by staying behind to wait for Brett. On the train to Bayonne, it is Jake who provides the funds when Bill tries to bribe the Dining Car's Maître d'. Patrick Morrow follows Leland in noting his phenomenon. "[Jake] pays the majority of the expenses in the book and is also the prime lender," Morrow writes, "one idea is that money is the way to buy and control friendships ... Money appears to be Jake's only means for overcoming his impotence and achieving some measure of power" (54). Leland agrees: "He spends money not to get things, but to establish his social position to define his relationships with other people" (41).

But Morrow's assessment of Jake, like his evaluation of Cohn, does not quite fit with the way the character behaves in much of the text. Take for example the interaction between Jake and Georgette the prostitute in Book I. Prostitution is a simple exchange of values: money for sex. Picking up a prostitute would seem like a perfect expression of Jake's exchange philosophy,

and Rovit's supposed moral code of the novel: "I paid my way into enough things I liked so that I had a good time." In reality, however, Jake can never buy the kind of "good time" he wants from Georgette. Hemingway harps on this point, doubling and then quadrupling the sexless relationships in this scene: after Brett enters with a crowd of gay young men, the couples are rearranged leaving Brett with impotent Jake and the homosexuals with the prostitute. "This whole show makes me sick," Jake concludes (29). Despite his claims during his reverie in Book II, when Jake leaves Georgette 40 francs at the *Bal Musette*, he is paying for something other than a "good time."

Donaldson views this detail as an indication of Jake's generosity, but context suggests otherwise. In the next scene, a drunken Brett has trouble circumventing Jake's concierge to see him: "There's a species of woman here who's waked the whole street up. What kind of a dirty business at this time of night!" (40). The next day, she enters the apartment without impediment. "You've got hell's own drag with the concierge now," Jake comments. "I ought to have," Brett replies, "Gave her 200 francs" (61). Of course, like the various couples at the *Bal Musette*, the concierge's newfound affection for Brett is a show. It seems fair to conclude that Jake left Georgette some francs for much the same reason that Brett gives the concierge money: to shut her up. "Half-asleep I had been sure it was Georgette," Jake admits when Brett comes to visit him that night, betraying his concern that not paying the prostitute could cause some unpleasantness later (40).

In this interaction with Georgette, Jake is not trying to buy a "good time" or be generous, nor is he attempting to establish "power" in the sense that Morrow uses the word as synonymous with control. I agree with the assessment that Jake uses money to compensate for his impotence—and symbolically, to deal with the sense of futility he feels after the War—but this

“exchange of values” more accurately purchases a lack of meaning than any concrete value. In this example, the value Jake gets for his money is a shelter from confrontation. In fact, disinterested passivity is a fundamental part of Jake's character, and it is manifested in more than his spending habits.

Jake is often highly apathetic in his responses to other people. I have already argued that Jake's internal conflict between morality and disbelief produces inaction in his relationship with Cohn. In the same scene, he is similarly passive towards Frances. His disdain for Cohn's mistress is palpable from the first chapter of the novel, and unlike his resentment for Cohn, it is not tempered with affection. “[Cohn] had been taken in hand by a lady who hoped to rise with the magazine,” Jake reports after describing Cohn's brief time as an editor, “when this lady saw that the magazine was not going to rise, she became a little disgusted with Cohn and decided that she might as well get what there was to get while there was still something available” (13). Clearly, Jake does not think much of Frances' intentions, but he listens patiently when she pulls him aside at the Café Select to complain about Cohn's refusal to marry her: “I'd be a good wife. I'm easy to get along with. I leave him alone.” Disinterestedly, Jake agrees: “It's a rotten shame” (55).

Whether it's literally picking up the bill, or paying compliments, it seems that Jake would rather do what it takes to avoid confrontation than face the truth about the people around him. It's easy to sympathize with this response. Frances and her friends range from egotistical to silly, so there is some value in Jake's ability to remain detached from their folly, in thought if not in behavior. The problem remains, however, that Jake's tendency to ignore his friend's conduct means that he fails to take affirmative action towards any positive values.

Perhaps the greatest flaw in previous arguments about payment in this novel is the assumption that because money is frequently mentioned in conjunction with value, the use of money is central to the values supported by the text. In fact, I would argue that for Jake, money serves a counterpoint role; it is a medium for contrast, highlighting a conception of value that explicitly defies the concept of equivalence.

Chapter 4

Spain and Non-Equivalence

The Sun Also Rises is formally divided into three books but the more organic narrative partition is geographical, based on the striking contrast Hemingway establishes between his two settings: France and Spain. The importance of place in this novel is another of its many critical clichés. However, few scholars have noted that the difference between the two countries is closely linked to payment in the text. Hemingway makes this relationship explicit in Book III, when Jake retreats from the caprice of the Fiesta to orderly San Sebastian. “It felt comfortable to be in a country where it is so simple to make people happy,” he says, after over-tipping his waiter, “You can never tell whether a Spanish waiter will thank you. Everything is on such a clear financial basis in France. It is the simplest country to live in. No one makes things complicated by becoming your friend for any obscure reason” (237).

From Rovit to Morrow, many of the scholars who discuss the role of money in *The Sun* have focused on equivalence relationships, which Jake associates with France in this passage. However, he also contrasts French exactitude with another type of interaction, one that prevails in Spain and has been ignored or minimized in these previous analyses. If we view money as a counterpoint to value in the text, then “exchange of values” relationships become a foil. In the Spain portion of the novel, Hemingway develops several key relationships that explicitly defy the concept of equivalence. It is within these unequal exchanges, I will argue, that the moral values most emphatically supported by *The Sun* are realized.

Scott Donaldson recognizes the different conceptions of exchange in France and in Spain. “Jake obviously prefers Spain to France,” he writes, explaining that “Spaniards, unlike Frenchmen, were likely to be friendly for no good financial reason at all” (416). To illustrate this, he points to the Basque peasants who share their wine with Jake and Bill en route to the fishing destination. After partaking of the Basques’ wine, Bill tries to reciprocate: “Every one took a drink very politely, and then they made us cork it up and put it away. They all wanted us to drink from their leather wine-bottles. They were peasants going up into the hills” (110). Donaldson, constrained by his thrift-morality correlation, fails to fully explore this important point. Instead, he concludes that the presumably hard-working peasants have earned the right to their Fiesta; generosity becomes another incidental “proper behavior” to valorize industriousness.

In fact, Donaldson’s elaborate calculations about who has and has not “earned” their amusements are exactly contrary to the peasants’ behavior in this passage. Not only do the Basques share freely with Jake and Bill, they explicitly refuse Bill’s attempts to pay them back by reciprocating. For these peasants, evidently, there is value in the act of giving without taking anything in return. The same is true for Wilson-Harris, a British vacationer that Jake and Bill meet in the mountains. On the last night of the fishing trip, Harris insists on buying all of Jake and Bill’s drinks; he even gives Jake a box of handmade flies as a parting present. Morrow is particularly harsh in his interpretation of Harris’s role: “Duplicitous as his name reveals, Wilson-Harris insists on buying friendship with alcohol and gifts” (55). He concludes, rather dramatically, that Harris tries to “purchase” Jake and Bill for himself, evidently as some kind of perpetual fishing companions. This unusual interpretation—molded to Morrow’s thesis that

spending is always an expression of power—clashes with the clearly positive depiction of Harris in the text.

In fact, Harris is direct about his motivations for spending so much on Jake and Bill. When Jake proposes another round, Bill reaches for his money: “I wish you’d let me pay for it,” Harris intercedes, “It *does* give me pleasure you know” (134). Like the Basque peasants, Harris finds value in generosity itself. The materialism that Rovit praises and Morrow condemns is not the only ethic represented in this text—in Spain, Hemingway depicts a value that is both intangible and fully actualized. This distinction is the key to understanding the most essential interaction in the text: Jake’s relationship with Montoya.

Montoya and the Role of Bull-Fighting in the Novel

According to William Balassi’s detailed analysis of the composition of the novel, *The Sun* was born of a 32-page, first-person narrative that Hemingway drafted during the week of July 21, 1925. The sketch depicted a protagonist named Hem who met a bull-fighter named Nino de la Palma at the Hotel Quintana. “The climax of the story occurs when Quintana walks into the room and sees Nino sitting between Hem and two women in evening dresses at a table full of drunks, a large glass of cognac in his hand,” Balassi paraphrases, “Without nodding, Quintana walks out, disgusted by what he sees and dismayed that Hem would be sitting in the middle of it all, doing nothing, this man with *aficion*, who only an hour before had felt so moved because he had shielded Nino from a similar situation” (108). In the finished version of the text, Nino becomes Romero and Quintana becomes Montoya, but the sequence of events is essentially

the same: after warning Montoya not to introduce Romero to the hedonistic American Ambassador, Jake agrees to become a kind of pimp by bringing the young matador to Brett. In many analyses of value in *The Sun*, this moment and Montoya himself, becomes incidental to Hemingway's clear interest in the symbolic value of bull-fighting. Donaldson, for example, describes the hotelkeeper as "bull-fighting's conscience" (414). From its inception, however, this narrative was anchored on a wordless exchange between the protagonist and hotel owner, suggesting the essential importance of Montoya to the meaning of the text.⁸

Montoya likes Jake because he shares his *aficion*⁹ for the bull-fights. This relationship, Jake tells us, is not a "simple exchange": "There was no password, no set questions that could bring it out ... it was a sort of oral spiritual examination with the question always a little on the defensive and never apparent" (137). Jake's language has warm, almost sexual undertones. He calls the relationship "something lewd" like a "very special secret," and he adds: "At once [Montoya] forgave me all my friends. Without his ever saying anything they were simply something a little shameful between us, like the spilling open of the horses in bull-fighting" (137). Forgiveness is the antithesis of equivalence; forgiving a debt means refusing to collect on a something owed in a just exchange. When Jake says that Montoya forgives him his debauched friends, he acknowledges that Montoya's esteem for him is undeserved, at least in part, and thus defies the kind of one-to-one transaction that prevailed in France.

The simile that Hemingway employs here is significant. "The spilling open of the horses in bull-fighting" calls to mind the phrase "spill your guts," again beautifully indicating the

⁸ Writing to his editor Max Perkins in December of 1926, Hemingway complained that "the chief criticism [of *The Sun*] seems to be that the people are so unattractive ... There's at least one highly moral hotel keeper in the book. That's my contention and I'll stick to it. And an exemplary Englishman named Harris" (*Selected Letters* 240).

⁹ Sp. Loving Fondness

visceral intimacy between the two men. More literally, however, Jake alludes to the brutal, habitual disembowelment of steers during the *corrida*.¹⁰ The dissonance between this violent image and Jake's affection for Montoya references the problematic role of bull-fighting in this narrative.

In letters from 1925-1926, the year *The Sun* was written, Hemingway frequently discusses his ambiguous attraction to the bull-fights. He was not unconcerned with the sport's inherent violence: "When you watch a lot of death in the bull-ring it seems so god damn unimportant and a dead horse ain't no more than a dead sardine," he writes to his army friend William B. Smith in February of 1925, "Maybe its sadism" (Spanier 248). Yet Hemingway clearly found it difficult to dismiss the fights that he found so alluring. Having already completed a short bull-fighting story, "The Undefeated," in 1925, Hemingway wrote Perkins in 1926 of his intention to follow *The Sun* with an entire bull-fight book: "It is a long one to write because it is not to be just a history and text book or apologia for bull-fighting—but instead, if possible, bull-fighting its-self" (though this project was never brought to fruition) (*Selected Letters* 163). Clearly, Hemingway saw the sport as artistically significant, despite its cruelty.

Linda Wagner-Martin posits an explanation: "The Bullfight for Hemingway was a new source of ritual, a paradigm for the religious beliefs so shaken by WWI" (24). In the bull-ring, at least, the rules of the game are clearly set out. For Hemingway, and for Jake, the ring becomes a microcosm where intangible values like honor and bravery are actualized in a way that they do not appear in real life. When Cohn complains in Book I that his life is passing him by, Jake demurs: "Nobody ever lives their life all the way up expect bull-fighters" (18). And for Jake, none of the other bull-fighters in Pamplona live as fully as Pedro Romero.

¹⁰ Sp. Bullfight

As Romero kills his first bull of the Fiesta, Jake looks over at Montoya. “This was a real one,” he thinks. “The others twisted themselves like cork-screws, their elbows raised, and leaned against the flanks of the bull after his horns had passed, to give a faked look of danger,” but Romero risks himself by working close to the bull; the danger is real and so the triumph is more profound. “Afterward, all that was faked turned bad and gave an unpleasant feeling. Romero's bull-fighting gave real emotion,” Jake explains (171). In this way, Jake’s adoration of Romero is yet another manifestation of his attraction to intangible value. Through the drama of the fight, the matador becomes a rare earthly incarnation of moral meaning in Jake’s mind.

Thus, when Montoya asks him for advice about the ambassador’s invitation, Jake is uncharacteristically proactive. “They're a fine lot,” he cautions, “There's one American woman down here now that collects bull-fighters.” Montoya agrees: “People take a boy like that. They don’t know what he’s worth. Any foreigner can flatter him” (176). This idea of “flattery” is related to Jake’s theory of equivalence in French relationships. The Americans will pamper and indulge Romero, and in return, they can be seen in the company of a famous bull-fighter. Jake agrees with Montoya that Romero is worth more than what the Americans can offer in money and “good times,” confirming the viability of a value that transcends the simple exchange he proposes during his Reverie. By advising Montoya not to deliver the invitation, therefore, Jake condemns himself; within a few pages, he will agree to introduce Romero to Brett Ashley, another foreign woman who can be said to “collect” men.

According to Rovit, Jake’s choice to serve as Brett’s “pimp” is further evidence of his delusional dependence on her: “In pursuing the vain illusion of Brett, Jake too succumbs to self-deception and self-treachery, since he throws away a self-respect he does not need to lose” (138). George Cheatham agrees, concluding that Brett “clearly isn’t worth what Jake pays to

indulge her selfish desire for Romero” (29). Brett does exploit Jake’s affection for her in order to enlist his help: “Do you still love me, Jake?” is the incongruous preface to her request to be conveyed to another man, and this dissonance speaks to a flaw in Rovit’s analysis. It is illogical to suggest that Jake brings Brett to Romero because he clings to some impossible *hope* that they can ever be together. As I have already pointed out, Jake’s attachment to Brett is romantic rather than simply sexual. Agreeing to introduce her to the matador is a profoundly hopeless action. Just as Jake pays his friends’ bills, he submits to Brett because he does not believe it will matter if he resists. Thus, though at first he protests unenthusiastically that she “oughtn’t to do it,” he is easily persuaded to help her. “I’ve got to do something I really want to do,” Brett justifies, “I’ve lost my self-respect”:

“You don’t have to do that.”

“Oh, darling, don’t be difficult. What do you think it’s meant to have that damned Jew about, and Mike the way he’s acted?”

“Sure.”

“I can’t just stay tight all the time.”

“No.”

“Oh, darling, please stay by me. Please stay by me and see me through this.”

“Sure ... What do you want me to do?” (188).

For Jake to refuse Brett would be to take action, and acting would mean assigning some moral meaning to his behavior; acquiescence is static.

For Brett, the opposite is true. She agrees with Jake that it is immoral for her to approach Romero, repeatedly admitting that it makes her a bitch. “I don’t say it’s right,” she continues, “it is right though for me” (189). This syntax—a moral judgment followed by a rejection of

morality—mimics Jake’s defeated homily in the Bayonne Cathedral: “I regretted that I was such a rotten Catholic, but realized there was nothing I could do about it” (103). If Jake’s despair manifests in inaction, the product of Brett’s disillusionment is constant motion. “I’ve always done just what I wanted,” she explains, and during the course of the story she flits from Jake to the Count to Cohn to Mike to Romero. Like Jake, Brett sees her life as lacking moral meaning but also doubts the viability of any moral value. She cannot motivate herself to stop pursuing Romero even though she views it as wrong, because she cannot believe that her actions matter.

But these actions do matter in the narrative. Like Quintana in the July source text, Montoya comes into the restaurant and sees Jake with Romero: “He started to smile at me, then he saw Pedro Romero with a big glass of cognac in his hand, sitting laughing between me and a woman with bare shoulders at a table full of drunks. He did not even nod” (181). The climax of the novel is understated, but Jake is still preoccupied by this wordless interaction when he reaches San Sebastian days later. Jake celebrates his reintroduction to commercialized France by over-tipping his waiter. His consequent assertion that no one in France “makes things complicated by becoming your friend for any obscure reason,” clearly alludes to his recent rupture with Montoya, and the loss of a friendship that was not defined by logical equivalence.

Jake continues: “If you want people to like you you have only to spend a little money. I spent a little money and the waiter liked me.” And he adds with evident irony, “he appreciated my valuable qualities” (237). The bitterness of these statements speaks to Jake’s dissatisfaction with equivalence relationships, and provides further evidence that the “exchange of values” philosophy expressed during his Reverie should not be read as genuine. Instead, Jake’s remorse over the fight with Montoya, and his emotional listlessness at the close of the Fiesta, point to the preference for non-equivalence in this narrative.

The assertion of these values in the Spain portion of the text, however, is not conclusive. Jake, despite his sense of guilt, is still fundamentally conflicted between belief and morality. In the final chapters of the novel, Hemingway finally begins to breach the possibility of a resolution.

Chapter 5

A Damned “Good Time”

“Oh, Jake,” Brett said, “we could have had such a damned good time together.”
 Ahead was the mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me.
 “Yes,” I said, “isn't it pretty to think so?” (250)

As I read the final lines of *The Sun Also Rises*, I am reminded of Michael Reynold's interpretive caveat: “To understand Jake, we must hear his tone of voice” (27). Whether readers see this novel as ultimately hopeful or ultimately hopeless depends on the intonation we assign to Jake's closing words. For Earl Rovit, this line sounds triumphant; by contradicting Brett's speculation, Rovit argues, Jake shows that he has finally developed the ability to “hold himself apart from the illusions that [she] has voiced” (136). Patrick Morrow disagrees. He points out that this closing taxi-ride mirrors the trip that Jake and Brett take in Book I, when they hail a cab at the *Bal Musette* and depart aimlessly into the night. Like a cab circling the city, Morrow writes, the characters in *The Sun* are in “constant circular, senseless, and frustrating motion;” he concludes that Jake will never gain on his “moral deficit,” but rather continue spiraling downward into self-destruction (53, 62). Though Morrow's gloomy prophecies ignore some of the complexities of the text, he touches on a central ambiguity in its final chapters by acknowledging the dubious relationship between motion and progress. The final key to evaluating Hemingway's novel is not money, but change. Has Jake developed by the end of this

narrative? Or, is Morrow right to suggest that despite its progressing events, *The Sun* is fundamentally static?

If Montoya's wordless disapproval is the climax of the novel, Jake's reaction to this sole check on his behavior is indicative of its resolution. When Jake begins complaining bitterly about French equivalence in San Sebastian, one might conclude that the innkeeper's rejection has had a profound effect on his perception of value. On the other hand, Jake's guilt over his treatment of Montoya mimics his mixed feelings about Cohn, and Brett, and Catholicism throughout the novel. Jake tells us that "for one who had *aficion* [Montoya] could forgive anything" (137). The primary value manifested by the innkeeper is non-equivalence, so the ability to forgive is one plausible metric for Jake's character development. In fact, from Jake's breach of trust to the end of the novel, the text is marked by two important interactions that are based on forgiveness.

As the Fiesta dwindles, Robert Cohn's frustrated obsession with Brett reaches a boiling point. With sudden pugnacity, Cohn accuses Jake of being a pimp, comes to blows with most of the Pamplona party, and brutally assaults Pedro Romero. Bill recounts the developments to a bemused audience the next morning: "Then Cohn leaned down to shake hands with the bull-fighter fellow. No hard feelings, you know. All for forgiveness. And the bull-fighter chap hit him in the face again" (205). Bill has little time for Cohn's earnestness, implying that a smack in the face is a fitting retort to the former middleweight champion's unprovoked attack. But Cohn's request for forgiveness shows that he is more concerned with the moral significance of his actions than the physical act of hitting the matador, his expatriate friends, and especially Jake. That morning, when Cohn begs Jake to absolve him, the former invokes their ruined friendship:

He lay there on the bed.

“Well,” I said, “I’m going to take a bath.”

“You were the only friend I had, and I loved Brett so.”

“Well,” I said, “so long.”

“... Please say you forgive me, Jake.”

“Sure,” I said. “It’s all right.” (199)

Each time Cohn asks Jake to grant him forgiveness, Jake responds indirectly by saying it is “all right.” Honest clemency would mean forgetting the offense but Jake, despite his tepid assurances that all is well, allows his anger to fester. Later, when Bill starts to feel guilty about Cohn’s rushed departure, Jake responds: “Oh, to hell with Cohn” (226). If we compare Jake’s response to Cohn with Montoya’s treatment of Jake in the previous scene, it does not seem that the narrator has learned from his mentor’s example.

Montoya will forgive anything that is done with *aficion*; it is not until Jake renounces this value by endangering Romero that Montoya turns away from him. The innkeeper acts on his values by refusing to condone or even acknowledge Jake for his behavior. In contrast, Jake—who is “blind, unforgivingly jealous” of Cohn—detests his friend *because* of his idealism, another kind of passion for intangible values (105). Of course, Cohn’s moral position is more ambiguous than that of Montoya, and it may seem tenuous to clothe Robert’s violent temper tantrum with the distinction of moral passion. Nevertheless, here and throughout the text, Cohn’s behavior is much less significant than Jake’s reaction to it. In this final scene with Cohn, either genuine forgiveness or stern condemnation would be a departure from our protagonist’s habitual complacency. Instead, Jake’s lukewarm acquiescence to Cohn’s request for forgiveness simply maintains the pattern of passivity he has exhibited throughout the narrative. In fact, the only way in which Jake’s reaction to Cohn represents a change from his past behavior is that it is

no longer tempered by sympathy for his idealism. It does not seem, in this example at least, that Jake has learned from Montoya. Instead, his tendency to disengage from other people and from the events in his life is more pronounced than ever.

Brett as a Moral Force

On the other hand, some critics see Jake's readiness to rescue Brett from the Hotel Montana as indicative of more genuine forgiveness. George Cheatham, for example, focuses specifically on the word "love" in the telegram Jake sends to preface his arrival in Spain: "LADY ASHLEY HOTEL MONTANA MADRID/ ARRIVING SUD EXPRESS TOMORROW/ LOVE JAKE" (243). Jake had previously mocked Cohn for sending a frivolous telegram: "Vengo Jueves Cohn." "He could send ten words for the same price," Jake complains to Bill (133). Cheatham argues that the eleventh word in Jake's telegram to Brett, the one that pushes him into a new paygrade, is "love." He claims that Jake violates his habitual thriftiness to show Brett affection, even after she convinced him to betray Montoya. "Such forgiveness simply doesn't add up," he concludes, "unlike Jake's checkbook, the relationship just doesn't balance" (39).

Thus, Cheatham's argument parallels my point about the intrinsic value of non-equivalence in Jake's relationship with Montoya: "Only in such a wretched, pitiful and foolish imbalance as that of his relationship with Brett does Jake's humanity, his morality, reside" (30). Cheatham's emphasis on moral imbalance here is close to the essence of the text, though I would argue that Jake's morality does not "reside" in all relational inequalities. Jake frequently pays more than his fair share in his relationships with his friends, but I have shown that this is often

born of a desire to avoid confrontation, and not out of compassion. In itself, Jake's willingness to answer Brett's demands for help does not represent a departure from his previous character.

Jake himself does not see the addition of the word "love" as a restorative action. "That seemed to handle it," he thinks sarcastically as he pens the telegram, "That was it. Send a girl off with one man. Introduce her to another to go off with him. Now go and bring her back. And sign the wire with love. That was it all right" (243). The use of the phrase "all right" recalls both his insincere pardon of Cohn and the end of the "pimp" scene: "[Romero] looked at me," Jake recounts as he stands to leave Brett and the matador alone at the café table, "It was a final look to ask if it were understood. It was understood all right" (190). Both allusions heighten the bitter irony of Jake's comments about the telegram, and he is still ambivalent towards Brett when he arrives in Madrid to meet her.

Much of the early reaction against *The Sun Also Rises* and its morals was concentrated on the character of Lady Ashley. In March 1927, Hemingway wrote to Perkins that he had received more clippings of the reviews of *Men without Women*, including Percy Hutchinson's article in *The New York Times*: "The other critical sportsman misses 'Lady Brett that little wanton ... so engagingly reprehensible in her morals,'" Hemingway jokes, quoting Hutchinson directly (*Selected Letters* 265). Even when later critics begin to write about Brett, their powerful word choice registers the intensity of the impression she creates. Theodore Bardake calls her a "woman devoid of womanhood"; For Edmund Wilson, she is an "exclusively destructive force" (Martin 69). This aggression does not always fade with time. Morrow, writing in the 1980s, dubs her the group's prostitute before selecting a more incisive, sub-human classification: "She could be considered parasitic, living off three men's bodies and attentions" (56). In one of the earliest scholarly articles about *The Sun*, Carlos Baker laments that so many readers found "Brett

and her little circle of drinking companions so fascinating as to overshadow” what he viewed as the true moral value in the novel: “physical and spiritual manhood” (*Writer as Artist* 82, 93). For Baker, the moral backbone of this narrative is forged with dichotomies of negative/positive values: vanity versus sanity, Montparnasse versus Burguete, femininity versus masculinity. Brett, along with “feminized” men like Mike and Cohn, functions primarily as a moral counterpoint, a source of contrast to emphasize Jake’s positive, essentially manly qualities. “When Jake takes a long objective view of Lady Ashley ... he is too honest not to see her for what she *objectively* is,” Baker explains, “an alcoholic nymphomaniac”¹¹ (*Writer as Artist* 91).

Baker’s use of the word “nymphomaniac,”¹² as well as his hierarchical male-female dichotomy itself, hints at the prevailing attitudes about women and casual sex that might have influenced these early critics’ views on Brett’s role in the novel. Here the reader might object that a critic like Baker, who was born only twenty years after Hemingway, would be a fairly good barometer of the types of social prejudices that would have informed that author’s perspective. While Lady Ashley’s effect on readers will vary with time, scholars who valorize her representation as an assertion of gender equality may be over-zealous.¹³ Nevertheless, there are many aspects of the text that point to the similarity between Brett and Jake, rather than the fundamental difference. “Brett’s apparent nymphomania can be at least partly excused by the

¹¹ Emphasis mine

¹² The OED defines nymphomania as: “Uncontrollable or excessive sexual desire, *spec.* in a woman. Freq. *hyperbolic*”; The term emerged with the advent of psychology at the turn of the century, when it was associated with fears about female sexual expression; The underlying assumptions behind this terminology are evident in this excerpt from C.S. Whitehead’s *Ethical Sex Relations* (1928): “It is said that maidens suffering from peculiar nervous diseases, such as nymphomania ... and some forms of hysteria, should marry, as a cure usually follows” (69). It is now rarely used in a clinical sense.

¹³ See for example Wendy Martin’s “Brett Ashley as New Woman” in *New Essays on the Sun Also Rises*; After making some compelling arguments about Hemingway’s engagement with the idea of the “New Woman,” Martin tries to equate Jake’s relationship with Brett to his idealized homo-social bond with Bill, a position she supports with scant textual evidence: “As Jake and Brett toast each other with their ‘coldly beaded’ glasses, they experience the deep mutuality that Bill and Jake share when they drink from the ‘moisture beaded’ wine bottles that had been cooled in the Irati River” (80).

unhappy circumstances of her past life,” Donaldson concedes, noting that after losing her “own true love” to typhoid during the war, Brett married an abusive veteran who threatened to kill her with the loaded revolver he kept under his pillow. He concludes: “Like Jake, she still suffers from war wounds” (413).

More important than this superficial connection between the two characters, however, is the similarities these “wounds” have produced in their world-views. Though at times Brett expresses a sense of personal guilt for her dysfunction— “Don’t we pay for all the things we do, though?”—she seems to share Jake’s sense of moral uncertainty. One night in Paris, Count Mippipopolous shows Brett and Jake his own “battle” wounds: “I’ve been in seven wars and four revolutions,” he tells them, lifting up his shirt to reveals his scars:

“What were you doing?” asked Brett. “Were you in the army?”

“I was on a business trip, my dear.”

“I told you he was one of us. Didn’t I?” Brett turned to me. (67)

Jake’s incongruous injury is not the novel’s only absurdity: the source of the Count’s wounds is similarly irrational, just as Brett’s “true love” died from typhoid, not on the battlefield as one would expect from a soldier. The Count, like Brett and Jake, knows that consequences in real life are not always correlated with actions. Unlike the Count, however, Brett follows Jake in expressing continued concern for intangible values. As I argued in the previous chapter, Brett’s repeated assertions that she is a “bitch” for choosing to pursue Romero indicates that she sees the action as immoral, and thus her choice to approach him anyway speaks to her inability to act on her convictions. The difference between Jake and Brett is that while the former’s moral conflict produces inaction, Brett finds herself unable to stop doing just what she wants.

Because of this, some scholars read Brett's retroactive choice to renounce Romero as a moral triumph. "In Brett's relinquishing of Pedro Romero, a man she sincerely could have loved, comes her moment of truth," Linda Wagner-Martin asserts (4). In fact, Brett herself valorizes her actions in the text. "He shouldn't be living with any one. I realized that right away," she assures Jake, adding: "I'm not going to be one of these bitches that ruins children ... I feel rather good, you know" (247). If we accept Lady Ashley's characterization of her actions as moral, then by leaving Romero, Brett has found a way to transcend the conflict between morality and disbelief. Jake's response to her moralizing, however, is less-than affirmative. After they retire to the sleazy hotel bar, Brett begins repeating herself: "You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch."

"Yes."

"It's sort of what we have instead of God."

"Some people have God," I said. "Quite a lot."

"He never worked very well with me."

"Should we have another Martini?" (249).

By equating her temporal actions with God, Brett asserts more than their value; she also precludes the possibility of any higher, intangible meaning. Despite his skepticism about religion throughout the novel, Jake is not satisfied with this substitution. Significantly, Brett's choice to leave Romero does not truly represent a change from her previous behavior; she has only abandoned yet another man. Lady Ashley continues to be defined by her clumsy defense mechanisms, oscillating between exaggerated cheer and deep melancholy. Amid her bright moralizing, Brett becomes suddenly despondent: "She looked away. I thought she was looking for another cigarette. Then I saw she was crying. I could feel her crying. Shaking and crying"

(247). Like Jake's materialism, Brett's moralizing in this scene is more credibly read as a pose than a genuine change in perception. Neither for Brett nor for Jake, it seems, does the relinquishing of Romero represent a satisfactory resolution to the moral crisis incited by the War.

The intensity of Jake's inner turmoil becomes clear that night, when the couple dines at Botin's. Jake gluts himself on roast suckling pig and 5 bottles of *rioja alta*. For Rovit, this is an "act of propitiation to the pain of shedding an old self": Jake's release as he finally accepts the viability of tangible, material values. However, though this behavior is certainly an indulgence in his previous materialism, it is not portrayed positively in the text. Even Brett is surprised by Jake's conspicuous consumption. "You like to eat, don't you?" she asks. "Yes," Jake replies, "I like to do a lot of things." But when Brett presses him, this assertion is not substantive:

"What do you like to do?"

"Oh," I said, "I like to do a lot of things. Don't you want a dessert?" (249).

Like Jake's materialistic "exchange of values" philosophy, this sudden excess is a reaction to his crisis of value, not a propitiation to materialism. As the dinner wears on, Jake binges like an addict and Brett becomes increasingly alarmed: "Don't get drunk, Jake, You don't have to" (249). It seems that the deficiency of Brett's moral solution has only heightened the impracticability of synthesizing values and belief in Jake's mind.

On the other hand, I agree with Rovit that the rising motion of Jake's indulgence in this scene is building to a release. In the final pages of the novel, Jake does begin to abandon some illusions, though the change is more complex than Rovit would imply by rejecting all intangible values. And contrary to Morrow's assertion, the final cab ride is not identical to the first.

Rereading the “Lost Generation”

Having finished-off Brett’s dinner as well as his own, Jake suggests that they take a taxi-ride to nowhere in particular. As the meandering cab turns onto Gran Via, Brett leans against him. “Oh Jake,” she says wistfully, “we could have had such a damned good time together.” The cab slows to a stop; “Isn’t it pretty to think so?” is Jake’s reply (250). For Rovit, the halted taxi symbolizes Jake’s choice to stop yearning for Brett. I have argued, however, that Hemingway uses the words “good time” in this novel to signify much more than Jake’s impossible sexual desire for Lady Ashley. As Rovit himself acknowledges by calling Jake’s Reverie an affirmation of materialism, when Barnes says “I paid my way into enough things that I liked, so that I had a good time,” he is referring to all of the tangible values he and his friends pursue in excess: food, wine, sex—immediate gratification of the senses.

Significantly, Jake’s Reverie is sandwiched between two other uses of the phrase “good time” in the text: both before and after Jake’s interior monologue, Mike taunts Robert Cohn by excluding him from the Dionysian atmosphere of the Fiesta: “Do you think you belong here among us? People who are out to have a good time?” (181). In fact, Cohn does not belong with people like Mike. As Rovit points out, Robert’s idealistic belief in intangibles, however naive, detaches him from “the meaningless swirl of drinking, promiscuity, and aimless pleasure seeking that surrounds [him]” (133). What Rovit does not recognize is that in the final lines of the novel, Jake admits that he doesn’t belong with the Fiesta crowd either.

Brett’s use of the word “could” in this passage is significant. She implies that she and Jake could have had a good time together if he had not been injured, essentially blaming the War for the physical and spiritual disconnection that dooms their relationship. But this recurring

justification for dysfunction, which looms over the text in the form of Jake's unspoken impotence, is in fact complicated from the first pages of the novel by Hemingway's dual epigraphs.

The words of the first epigraph—"You are all a lost generation"—are not Hemingway's, but Gertrude Stein's "in conversation." In *A Movable Feast*, Hemingway credits the original phrase to a French mechanic, who complained about his lazy assistants while fixing Stein's Ford. "It is the ones between twenty-two and thirty that are no good," he tells them, "c'est un génération perdu."¹⁴ No one wants them. They are no good. They were spoiled. The young ones, the new ones are all right" (Soto 42). Afterward, Hemingway recounts, Stein tried to apply the title to his entire generation to suggest that they had been irreparably damaged by the War. Hemingway resented the generalization. "I considered [it] a piece of splendid bombast," he wrote to Max Perkins in 1927, "[I'm] weary of Gertrude's assumption of prophetic roles" (*Writer as Artist* 80). This biographical detail complicates the first epigraph, which is often read as a key to understanding the novel. Even without this history, however, careful readers will recognize the hierarchy between the two epigraphs Hemingway selects: one taken from casual conversation and the other from a sacred text.

In Ecclesiastes, the Teacher sets out to determine if man can achieve anything permanent from the "work at which he toils" on earth, and thus give meaning to his life. He concludes that because humans are mortal, everything—including sex, wealth and other tangible values—is ultimately "meaningless" (*New International Version*, Eccles. 1: 1-3). Even intangible virtues like wisdom are not absolutely significant because they are fleeting; the wise

¹⁴ Fr. It's a lost generation

man may be better than the fool, the Teacher explains, but “the same fate overtakes them both” (Eccles. 2:14). By referring to this ancient idea of moral futility in his second epigraph, Hemingway points out that the War did not change the fundamental nature of life: all generations, aware of their transience, must face a sense of meaninglessness.¹⁵ The essential fallacy of the “Lost Generation” is that traditional systems of value like romance and religion would be absolutely meaningful if not for the destruction of the War.

Critics often characterize Post-War Europe as disillusioned. Disillusionment, though painful, can be a positive experience when it involves recognizing the fallacies ingrained in conventional values. But Jake and Brett are not disillusioned. Instead, they cling to an ideal of the old order with a petulant nostalgia for something that never existed. Jake fails to see his values manifested in real life because his ideals are unrealistic. Consider, for example, Jake’s romantic desire for Brett throughout the novel. I pointed out in Chapter Two that Jake’s pastoral idea of living with Brett in the country is just as fantastic as Cohn’s depiction of his own experience with Lady Ashley as a chivalric adventure. In Brett, Jake seeks a love that he can accept as absolutely meaningful, and thus he is constantly disappointed by the human imperfection of their relationship. As Hemingway suggests by alluding to the text of Ecclesiastes, no one can ever find ultimate significance in temporal values, whether tangible or intangible.

The resonance of Ecclesiastes throughout this novel does not imply that *The Sun* is nihilistic, however. Despite its refrain of “Meaningless,” Ecclesiastes concludes with affirmative values. “I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while

¹⁵ Baker confirms this interpretation by referring to a personal letter the author wrote him in 1951: “[Hemingway’s] reason for adding the quotation from Ecclesiastes, was to indicate his own belief that ‘there was no such thing as a lost generation’” (*Hemingway Writer as Artist* 80).

they live,” the Teacher reasons, “this is the gift of God” (Eccles. 8.14-15). In this way, Brett does come to serve a counterpoint role to Jake at the end of the novel. The problem with Brett’s valorization of her choice to leave Romero is not that she tries to endow her behavior with any moral meaning; generosity, forgiveness and passion are all valuable in this novel. Her inability to accept her actions as immediately significant is much more problematic. Brett’s vacillating mood in Madrid, followed by her nostalgic final words during the taxi-ride, suggests that she continues to yearn for an impossibly grand ideal instead of accepting the simple values that are manifested in her daily life. By rejecting Brett’s hypothetical, therefore, Jake shows that he has begun to shed the illusions of the “Lost Generation.”

Like the cab, the story halts abruptly. Hemingway continues the narrative practice he has adopted throughout the novel of asking his readers to deduce for themselves the meaning of Jake’s words. Jake’s shift in perception is subtle, but significant: letting go of his idealizations actually opens Jake up to being satisfied with the values that do exist in his life—actions that are good in themselves if not absolutely significant, like Montoya’s friendship, Romero’s *aficion*, and Harris’ generosity. In a text consumed by the impossibility of belief, Hemingway gives us a resolution that affirms the possibility of being content with simple values, adding a glimmer of hope to a novel that is often read as essentially futile.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Though I have written very little about Bill Gordon in the previous pages, this thesis began with him. In Book I, as Jake and a drunken Bill walk down the Boulevard, Gordon makes off-kilter jokes about their surroundings:

"Here's a taxidermist's," Bill said. "Want to buy anything? Nice stuffed dog?"

"Come on," I said. "You're pie-eyed."

"Pretty nice stuffed dogs," Bill said. "... Mean everything in the world to you after you bought it. Simple exchange of values. You give them money. They give you a stuffed dog."

"We'll get one on the way back."

"All right. Have it your own way. Road to hell paved with unbought stuffed dogs. Not my fault." (78)

Intrigued by this seemingly nonsensical comment, I began to notice that the concept of equivalence is everywhere in the novel, though the phrase "exchange of values" is only explicitly mentioned one other time (during Jake's Reverie). From the concept of exchange came my focus on money, and from money, the correspondence between modes of spending and values in this text.

Unsurprisingly, given the prevalence of these references, I found a plethora of critics who had already begun the task of investigating the role of money in *The Sun*. In this paper, I cite scholars from the inception of Hemingway criticism to the early 2000s. As I tried to look for

more recent criticism that directly addressed my topic, however, the scholarship became increasingly sparse.

In part, I think, this development responds to some of the flaws I have pointed out in early critical approaches to Hemingway's fiction. Instead of generalizing code readings and reaching theses about the writer's entire body of work, the trend in Hemingway criticism today seems to be specificity. Global topics like values, which get at the essential meaning of the text, are no longer as prevalent. Titles in the Fall and Spring 2014 volumes of the *Hemingway Review*, for example, are narrow in focus—both in the part of the text to which they refer, often quoted directly in the title, and the highly-specific themes they seek to elucidate. One recent article about *The Sun*, published in fall issue of the *Review* last year, focused on a series of war allusions.¹⁶ Of course, the mere existence of a semi-annual publication dedicated solely to Hemingway speaks to a reason for this shift.

One of my reservations in choosing *The Sun Also Rises* for my thesis topic was that Hemingway and his writings have been so thoroughly explored by critics already. I wondered if it would even be possible to say anything of merit about *The Sun* that has not already been discussed with excruciating detail in multiple publications. When I began studying the work of previous scholars about money and value in this text, however, I encountered not only problematic generalizations, but also a failure to give full consideration to many of the features of the novel that most affected me as a reader. The critical trend away from global significance toward specificity does little to respond to this essential problem.

¹⁶ Articles about *The Sun* in Vol. 34, the Fall issue of the *Hemingway Review* include: “‘Floating I saw only the sky:’ Leisure and Self-Fulfillment in Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*” by Justin Mellette, and “Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*: The Dog in the Window and Other War Allusions” by William Adair

It is always easier to attack an argument than to make one. However, I can state with satisfaction that even after 100 years of criticism, I was still able to draw my own conclusions about *The Sun's* ethical implications. For literary works of great significance, it remains a valuable task to examine a piece in the context of the essential values it seeks to convey. This is especially true for literature that poignantly affects such wide audiences, both at the time of its publication and today.

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Schreyer Honors College, The Pennsylvania State University **Class of 2015**
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WORK AND INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Public Media Intern, WPSU Radio and Digital Media **Fall 2014**

- Performed initial research, drafted proposals, and researched funding opportunities for digital media projects to inform the public about community and social issues, such as human rights violations, domestic abuse, and environmental sustainability.
- Served as a research assistant for an upcoming documentary about environmental sustainability efforts in the US and China.

Research Assistant, Hemingway Letters Project **Spring and Summer 2013; Present**

- Assisted with the authoritative publication of Ernest Hemingway's letters by transcribing correspondence, researching primary sources, organizing files, and copy-editing final proofs of the manuscript.

Peer Tutor of Writing, Penn State Learning **Spring 2012- Present**

- Helped students process ideas, develop arguments, and communicate effectively in writing by reviewing classroom assignments, resumes, and other applications
- Explained concepts of syntax and grammar to students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds

SERVICE AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Penn State Service Trips, Alternative Breaks **Fall 2013- Present**

- During fall break, volunteered at urban philanthropies in Washington DC, worked at various service sites with the Youth Service Opportunities Project (YSOP), and learned about issues of homelessness and food security in America
- As Education Director for Urban Service Trips, led a group of 20 students on a service trip to New York City; planned activities to educate participants about the problems that stem from urban poverty in the US and facilitated group discussions about the complexities associated with responding to these situations.

Penn State Crew and St. Catherine's College Boat Club **Spring 2014- Present**

- Rowed crew and competed at the collegian level; trained five to six days a week year-round.

Presidential Leadership Academy, Delta Class **September 2012 –Present**

- Selected as one of a class of 30 students to explore ambiguous social problems and develop critical thinking skills through courses taught by the President of Penn State University and the Dean of the Schreyer Honors College
- Composed a policy paper recommending changes to undergraduate general education requirements and presented findings to the President of Penn State and other members of the Board of Trustees.

Liberal Arts Undergraduate Council **Spring 2012- Present**

- As a student representative of the College of Liberal Arts, organized and staffed programs for new students, events for students to explore majors and minors within the liberal arts, and career development opportunities

Paterno Fellows Student Advisory Board **Fall 2011- Present**

- Advised administrators on standards and events for Penn State's liberal arts honors program.

STUDY ABROAD AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Centre de Linguistic Appliquée, Bésançon, France **Summer 2012**

- Intensive program in French language with homestay.

Arab American Language Institute in Morocco, Meknes, Morocco **Summer 2013**

- Intensive program in Modern Standard Arabic, option in Moroccan Darija, with homestay.

English Tutor, Lyon, France **Summer 2014**

- Lived with a French family and tutored their children in English in preparation for the Baccalaureat exam; achieved near-native fluency in French

AWARDS AND HONORS

Department of English Student Marshal
President's Award; Sparks Award; Evan Pugh Scholar
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