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Nate Botsis
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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by

Nate Botsis

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Nate Botsis

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ABSTRACT

Authenticity and Love in *The Sun Also Rises* And *On the Road*

by

Nate Botsis

Dr. Stephen Brown, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of English
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This thesis explores the themes of authenticity and love in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, and how each novel conveys these themes differently.

In *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway delivers the themes of authenticity and love by carefully and precisely crafting a story in which the hero of the story, Jake Barnes, changes significantly between the beginning of the story and the end. He acquires the courage to love, risking his authenticity in the process.

In *On the Road*, Kerouac's dual heroes, Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty, exhibit no discernible growth or change throughout the story. Interestingly, it is through their very lack of growth, their inability to mature, that the novel's themes of authenticity and love are delivered. They are as incapable of love at the end of the story as they are at the beginning. This becomes part of their authenticity.

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CHAPTER 1

AUTHENTICITY AND LOVE: AN INTRODUCTION

What is authenticity? The term's meaning has become diluted to the point of nullification through frequent overuse combined with occasional misuse. Nowadays the word authentic seems to find its most frequent employment as a keyword in advertising. After all, one must admit that an authentic Italian pizza sounds more appetizing than does a regular Italian pizza, and one can begin to see how the word slowly but surely loses its meaning. The fact is that the word authentic, when used as an adjective, often does a poor job of describing the noun. The aforementioned pizza is probably not really an authentic Italian pizza. It is probably a rapidly produced, very average American pizza, which would be fine if the claim had not been made that the pizza is authentic Italian pizza. The word authentic, in such an example, is used deceptively. It's meant to trick people. As such, one is right to regard claims of authenticity with a great deal of skepticism. As far as one does not wish to be deceived, one should ask the question, "What is authenticity?"

What is love? Love is another word that has become diluted and liquefied, able to be poured into any vase. Love generally has positive connotations, and yet it is also the cause of a great deal of confusion and pain. Love is complex, and although the general consensus is that it is important, (few will deny that), there seems to be little agreement about what it actually is.

How can anybody have an important and interesting discussion about authenticity and love if the words don't mean anything anymore? And if authenticity and love don't mean anything anymore, what does? As Guignon and Pereboom state, "As everything exceptional is reduced to something commonplace, and as all meaningful distinctions in life are obliterated, it becomes increasingly difficult in the present age to find anything that has any real meaning in relation to our lives" (xxxi). Authenticity is the cure for this kind of meaninglessness, not the cause of it. That is what Guignon and Pereboom mean when they say, "The ideal of authenticity is supposed to call us back from our ordinary, inauthentic way of being distracted and dispersed in the world" (xxxiv). The word "ideal" bothers people about this idea, and draws a great deal of criticism to that ideal, simply because it is that: an ideal.

Ideals can be valuable in spite of the fact that they are unattainable. Just as the ideal of perfection can be a useful teaching tool for the basketball coach trying to get each of his players to be the best they can be, the pursuit of the ideal of authenticity can is a necessary pursuit of any individual who wishes to develop his or her original personality.

One obvious difference between perfection and authenticity is that the benefits of authenticity are not so clear at first. Guignon and Pereboom correctly point out that "there is no reason to believe that a person who is authentic necessarily will be a more benevolent or more principled person" (xxxiv). The first step toward authenticity is a difficult step to take because it is a step away from the group. Authenticity is the call to individuality, and anybody who answers that call must answer it alone.

To be an individual, one must discover one's authentic self. To do that, one must understand that one's authentic self is just a modified version of what Martin Heidegger

calls "the *they-self*" (227). More explicitly, Heidegger states that "By 'others' we do not mean everyone else but me—those over against whom the 'I' stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself—those among whom one is too...this 'with' is something of the character of Dasein...the world of Dasein is a *with-world.* Being-in is *Being-with* others. The self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self*" (225).

To make that jump from "they-self" to "authentic-self" requires courage because it forces one to stop taking refuge in group conformity, and in that case one must come face to face with aloneness and separateness, and as Erich Fromm notes, "The experience of separateness arouses anxiety; it is, indeed, the source of all anxiety" (8). However, this anxiety can have a positive impact on an individual, and can pave the way to a greater happiness, if that individual uses it wisely, becomes more authentic, and hence develops a better understanding of the real possibilities that life has to offer.

Anxiety is another word whose popularity has come at a high price. The word now has decidedly negative connotations. An anxious person is considered to have a problem, sometimes to the point where drugs are prescribed to fix that problem. It is interesting, then, that Heidegger sees in anxiety the key to individuality, and thus the antidote to sameness:

> Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about—its authentic potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world. Anxiety individualizes Dasein for its ownmost Being-in-the-world...Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its being toward its ownmost potentiality-for-being—that is, its being-free for the freedom

of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. (Guignon & Pereboom 237).

In other words, anxiety is necessary for a person to make the leap from "they-self" to "authentic-self." However, it could be argued effectively that there is no such thing as an authentic self. Adam Phillips states, "The culture I grew up in informed me that I had an authentic, true self; and then I discovered in my adolescence in the 1960s and early 1970s that there was no such thing. I continued to live as if I had one, but the more I looked for it, and felt its presence, the more I realized it wasn't there" (38). What Philips does not recognize is that the realization that he lacks an authentic self is not the end of his authentic self as a reality, but its beginning as a potentiality.

One need look no farther than the philosophy of David Hume to find a well reasoned argument against the idea of a continuing, unified self: "we may observe, that what we call a *mind*, is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and suppos'd, tho' falsely, to be endow'd with a perfect simplicity and identity" (Treatise 257). The trick of authenticity is to recognize that the self naturally lacks an identity, and to provide it with one.

The goal of authenticity is to help an individual develop what is original in his or her personality. Guignon and Pereboom note that "The impact of this is that it leads people to understand their own role in creating their lives as 'works of art'" (xxxv).

However, the problem still remains that even if one becomes more authentic, that still does not guarantee that one will also become a better person from a moral standpoint. Adam Phillips states, "Why might we assume that an authentic person isn't dangerous" (38)? And Guignon and Pereboom concur, noting, "What is so troubling, however, is the

very idea that there could be an ideal like that of authenticity, which presumably points to a better or higher way of life yet may be consistent with the most monstrous ways of acting" (xxxvi). Authenticity, then, does not necessarily help solve any problems. It is just the artistic weaving together of the collected heap of perceptions that Hume refers to as the "mind."

Love, on the other hand, has the ability to solve problems. Considering the fact that love has been the purported cause of so many problems and so much bad behavior, this statement requires clarification. Love as an abstract concept, or love as object of any kind, is not the kind of love that can consistently help people solve problems. Only love as behavior can do that.

Of all the theories about love, and there are many, Erich Fromm provides one of the most useful. For love in the abstract is essentially meaningless, and any talk about that kind of love is better suited for amusement than anything else. If love is to make a difference, it must alter behavior, and that is what makes Fromm's theory of love so powerful.

Fromm poses the question, "Do we refer to love as the mature answer to the problem of existence, or do we speak of those immature forms of love which may be called *symbiotic union*" (17)? Symbiotic union could be fairly considered inauthentic love, as well as immature love. It is just people being together for reasons which they have not yet begun to examine. Authenticity would require an examination of such togetherness.

Fromm continues, "In contrast to symbiotic union, mature love is *union under the condition of preserving one's integrity,* one's individuality. *Love is an active power in*

man; a power which breaks through the walls which separate man from his fellow men, which unites him with others" (19). Looking at it that way, one can begin to see the connection between authenticity and love, and how important the former is to the latter. For without authenticity, there is no individuality, and thus no individual integrity to preserve, and thus no mature love.

Most importantly, love is an action. One must behave in a loving way in order to be a loving person. Such a simple conclusion does not seem to merit much looking into, were it not for the fact that people so consistently and so conveniently overlook that fact in an effort to justify the differences between their philosophies about love and their own behavior. How, then, does one become a loving person? According to Fromm, "the active character of love can be described by stating that love is primarily *giving,* not receiving" (21).

Though Fromm admits that the idea of giving here is "full of ambiguities and complexities," and ultimate concludes that "giving is the highest expression of potency," a conclusion which remains somewhat ambiguous, one thing, at least, is certain about love: The stage of a person's personality development and the level of maturity a person has reached will play major roles in that person's ability to love. Authenticity, by individualizing the individual, can start that individual down the path toward enhanced personality development and greater maturity. While there is no guarantee that the individual who strives to be more authentic will ultimately end up being a loving individual, there is the guarantee that the inauthentic individual will not be able to love.

Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* are two novels that, for all their differences, have the central themes of authenticity and love in

common. The biggest difference between them, in fact, might be the conclusions that each of them come to regarding these themes.

CHAPTER TWO

"FROM FEAR TO COURAGE: HOW JAKE'S CHARACTER ARC REVEALS THE THEMES OF AUTHENTICITY AND LOVE IN *THE SUN ALSO RISES*

Why would Hemingway begin *The Sun Also Rises* with the words, "Robert Cohn?" The novel originally began, "This is a novel about a lady. Her name is Lady Ashley and when the story begins she is living in Paris and it is Spring'" (Stoneback 7). However, Scott Fitzgerald advised Hemingway against beginning the novel this way. Linda Wagner Martin states that "Fitzgerald told Hemingway to omit the first chapter and a half of the draft version, the heavily romanticized biography of Brett Ashley" (7). Wagner Martin notes that Fitzgerald also warned Hemingway about the "condescending casualness" of the tone, and she makes a very interesting observation when she states that "Since much of the narrative is in the voice of Jake Barnes, Fitzgerald's comments about tone also were comments about Hemingway's protagonist" (7).

What Wagner Martin fails to recognize is that Hemingway, by choosing to take Fitzgerald's advice, did more than change the tone of the protagonist. He changed the protagonist. In the published version of *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake Barnes is the hero, not Brett Ashley. He tells his own story, not hers.

John Truby defines the hero of a story as, "the person who has the central problem and who drives the action in an attempt to solve the problem" (58). In *The Sun Also Rises,* Jake is that character.

The Sun Also Rises is a love story, and there is no other love story quite like it. This is due to Jake, the hero's, unique problem, and to what he must do to solve it as well as it can be solved, as there is a part of his problem, his actual, physical wound, that is unsolvable.

Hemingway's explanation about how he went about creating Jake Barnes not only reveals that the novel was meant to be a love story, but also what is fundamentally different about this particular love story: "I took him and made him into a foreign correspondent in Paris and, inventing, tried to find out what his problems would be when he was in love with someone who was in love with him and there was nothing they could do about it" (Stoneback 64). The originality of this approach to a love story should not go unnoted. In most love stories, the two central characters do not even know each other when the story begins, much less already love each other.

As the love story is essentially different from other love stories, Jake's goal as the hero of that love story is also different from the average hero's goal in the average love story. Usually, the hero of a love story wants to win the love of the person he or she loves. Jake already has Brett's love, but that love itself becomes problematic because it inevitably reminds him of his war wound, which, unsolvable itself, causes Jake's more central problem, at least as far as his growth and transformation in the story are concerned: his fear of love. While Jake can not do anything about his physical wound, a wound in which Hemingway later explained that Jake's "penis had been lost and his

testicles and spermatic cord remained intact" (Wagner-Martin 25), he can do something about the problem that results from that wound, which is his deep seated fear of being wounded again. One can see this fear at work in this early exchange with Brett. Jake says:

"We'd better keep away from each other."

"But, darling, I have to see you. It isn't all that you know."

"No, but it always gets to be" (Hemingway 35).

Jake's pseudo-pragmatic, tough guy stance is nothing but a front to hide his fear. At this early point in the story, he deals with his fear by running away from it: "We'd better keep away from each other." Mark Spilka astutely notes that "this fear of emotional consequences is the key to Barnes' condition" (Wagner-Martin 35), but he fails to note Jake's development in dealing with that fear, and how that is the structure upon which the rest of the story is built.

The centrality of the wound to Jake's development can not be overestimated. As Baldwin states, "Jake's wound becomes the novel's premise which determines so much of his ideology and behavior" (95). Since Jake is the hero of the story, many of the story's themes can be traced directly to his development, in other words to how his ideology and behavior change from the beginning of the story to the end. Jake Barnes, at the beginning of the story, is a wounded man scared of being wounded again. Unless he masters his fear, he will not be able to love. That is his predicament.

Although Hemingway makes it a point to note that Jake's wound "was physical and not psychological" (Wagner-Martin 25), Jake's goals in the story are almost entirely psychological, at least in the sense that he lacks what Michael Hauge calls "outer motivation." Hauge explains that a character's outward motivation "is outwardly visible

to the audience, as opposed to desires for self worth, acceptance, fulfillment or revenge, which are invisible" (7). Were it not for his wound, Jake's outward motivation would be to win Brett's love. Interestingly, Jake begins the story already having that which most love story heroes are after. His wound, however, has made the physical consummation of that love impossible. Jake must deal with the pain of his wound and the love that it cost him.

To add another layer of irony, it was because of his wound that he met Brett in the first place, as Jake says, "She was a V.A.D. in a hospital I was in during the war" (46). That could have been a storybook ending. When Count Mippopolous asks them, "Why don't you get married, you two" (68), he asks a very good question. After all, that is how love stories conventionally end. Jake's wound, of course, is why they don't get married, and what *The Sun Also Rises* gives the reader is the happily ever after part of the conventional love story, only it is not so happy. In fact the story is, in many ways, a direct attack on the happily ever after idea of the conventional romantic love story, and that is one of the reasons that the novel begins with "Robert Cohn."

Mark Spilka notes that "Cohn still upholds a romantic view of life" (34), and Robert Lewis states, "The central theme of romantic love is expressed most clearly in the character of Robert Cohn" (21). Through the character of Robert Cohn, as well as through Jake's development, Hemingway attacks the ideal of romantic love. Robert Lewis believes this attack develops beyond *The Sun Also Rises* and comes to full fruition in *A Farewell to Arms.* He states that, in that novel, Hemingway shows through Frederic and Catherine that "living for romantic love is personal and a rejection of the larger, more magnanimous, more perilous agape" (49). The key word there, at least regarding Jake's

early condition in *The Sun Also Rises,* is perilous. Jake, robbed of the possibility of romantic love, is too scared, when the story begins, to take the necessary risks of any other kind of love.

Lewis refutes Mark Spilka's assertion that the characters in *The Sun Also Rises* are "all incapable of love" (35), stating that "*The Sun Also Rises*—is a story of a sick love, a hypochondriac love, of lovers who enjoy poor health, poor love, sick love. But the love never dies" (25). Thus, while Lewis denies the death of love as the primary theme of *The Sun Also Rises*, he still believes that "mainly the impression of the novel is negative" (20). Interestingly, he finds *A Farewell to Arms* uplifting by comparison, in spite of Catherine's death at the end, stating that "her death carries the hope with it of the destruction of her destructive love that excludes the world" (54). That is a daring conclusion, considering that *A Farewell to Arms* could be considered one of the most powerfully unsettling novels ever written, as affirmed by Linda Patterson Miller's assertion that "The book so unsettled me that I could not reshelve it and move on" (3). However, Lewis can view Catherine's death as a positive because he sees in her kind of love an extension of the romantic love represented by Robert Cohn, and therefore her death, symbolically, could be seen as a positive insofar as it represents a negation of her thoroughly romantic, and therefore negative, "destructive" love. Erich Fromm has an equally negative take on this kind of love:

> One can often find two people "in love" with each other who feel no love for anybody else. Their love is, in fact, an egotism *a deux;* they are two people who identify themselves with each other, and who solve the problem of separateness by enlarging the single individual into two. They have the experience of

overcoming aloneness, yet, since they are separated from the rest of mankind, they remain separated from each other and alienated from themselves. (51).

One criticism of Jake is that he shares this same notion of romantic love with Cohn. Spilka states that Jake "seems no different from Cohn in his deepest feelings" (35). However, during *The Purple Land* exchange early in the story, it can be seen that Jake understands what Cohn is going through because he has gone through it himself before. Apparently, he once entertained such romantic notions about love, but his wound destroyed those notions. At the same time, his wound helped him achieve a more mature outlook. Hemingway's skillful juxtaposition of these two characters to begin the novel immediately establishes Jake's ability to grow and develop, just as Jake's first meeting with Brett shows that Jake must continue to grow and develop, that while he may have done away with the kind of romantic notions Cohn upholds, his replacement for those notions, aficion, has not helped him any in the love department.

From a personal growth and maturity standpoint, and hence from an ability to love standpoint, Robert Cohn is where Jake Barnes' was. Jake is not a case of "arrested development," as Harvey Stone calls Cohn after Cohn, a thirty-four year old man, tells him that if he could do anything he wanted he would "rather play football again with what I know about handling myself now" (51).

While Cohn's development has arrested, Jake's development, his character arc, is of primary importance to the story. Michael Hauge defines character arc as, "a character's inner growth and transformation through the course of the story" (8). Jake's outward actions seem haphazard and incidental unless they are looked at in relation to his inner growth and transformation. Conventionally, the hero's character arc plays second

fiddle to his or her outward motivation, but that convention is reversed in *The Sun Also Rises.* Hauge makes an important point about character arc, particularly when looking at Jake, when he states, "Character arc is a journey from fear to courage—from living an emotionally safe but unfulfilled existence to risking everything to find one's destiny" (8). Jake's wound has already sealed his destiny in some ways, and his only hope at fulfillment is to find the courage to risk the emotional wounds of love in spite of his physical wound.

In spite of Jake's fear of love at the beginning of the story, his cynical and realistic notion of the concept is certainly depicted as more advanced than Cohn's romantic idealism. Cohn's romanticism, in fact, affects his whole life, and combined with his stubbornness, it can make him a nuisance, which helps explain why, after three years in Europe, he has, according to Jake, "two friends" (13). Jake's aficion, however, has only recognized the loss of romantic love. It has not filled that void.

In chapter two, Cohn asks Jake, seemingly out of the blue, if he would like to go to South America. Jake knows that Cohn wants to go there because he has read *The Purple Land*, a book by the novelist William Henry Hudson that H.R. Stoneback states "deals with his experience in South America in a rather romantic fashion" (20). It should be noted that Jake is familiar with the book. He knows that *The Purple Land* paints too romantic a picture of the world, a picture of a world without wounds, and he also knows painfully well that such a book should not be taken as, "a guide-book to what life holds," and that the book "is a very sinister book if read too late in life" (17). The fact that Jake has read the book shows that there was a time in his life when such romanticizing

appealed to him, whereas his current feelings about the book show that he has matured since then.

The reason for that maturity, ironically, is his war wound, which destroyed for him those once appealing romantic notions. Cohn, having not yet been wounded in such a way, lacks that same mature outlook. However, it can be sensed that Jake wishes that such wounding would not have been necessary in order for him to achieve his wiser, more mature, and ultimately less romantic world view.

The conversation in *The Purple Land* scene shows Jake, in good faith, trying to help Robert Cohn, trying to impart his hard won wisdom in a way that is not preachy or ponderous but at the same time potentially helpful. Jake knows that Cohn's trip to South America would be a completely fruitless venture, and he tells him that "If you went there the way you feel now it would be exactly the same" (19). How does he know? From experience. He has already "tried all that" (19). However, Cohn stubbornly persists in asking Jake to accompany him to South America, and Jake resorts to humor in an effort to get his point across. In the following passage, James Hinkle notes that Jake, "deliberately and perversely misunderstands what is said to him" (Wagner-Martin 115).

"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." (Hemingway 17).

Hinkle does not expound on the purpose behind Jake's deliberate misunderstanding. In this case, Jake is using a teaching technique. His point is that he knows that Cohn does not really want to go to South America to see the real South Americans. He wants to go there because he read about those "real" South Americans in *The Purple Land*, and the book has so influenced him that he would likely fail to see the real South Americans even if he took the trip to South America, something Jake knows he has no real interest in doing, or else he would do it whether or not Jake would accompany him.

What does Jake's unwillingness to accompany Cohn say about Jake? While it could be argued that his unwillingness to venture to South America is more inauthentic than Cohn's wishing to venture there, that interpretation would only seem to be possible by taking his joke about the "real" South Americans too seriously. Jake is trying to teach Cohn something. He is trying to make the point that Cohn does not have to go to South America to start living his life. He could do that right there in Paris. Indeed he tries to make that point explicitly to Cohn immediately after the joke, only to have Cohn reply, "I'm sick of Paris" (19). Jake finally becomes frustrated and deems the task of helping Cohn impossible, stating "I was sorry for him, but it was not a thing you could do anything about" (20).

As a result of his wound, Jake has developed a philosophical outlook that precludes the kind of romantic notions that Cohn entertains. That philosophical outlook has led him to aficion, which really extends beyond the bullring, and could well be defined as simply a passionate devotion to the authentic. Marc Baldwin notes, "From the moment of his wounding, he has to make of himself, of his life's work, a totality" (134),

and H.R. Stoneback states that "This is the central question posed by the novel: given our mortality, the evanescent transience of life, how do we live our lives authentically and passionately every day of the short time we have" (24)? *The Sun Also Rises* is a story about what aficion teaches Jake about authenticity, and what Brett teaches him about love. Cohn's functions as a character in telling this story are multifold, but first and foremost, he is Jake's main opponent. He attacks Jake's biggest weakness, his fear of love, incessantly, whether by words or by actions, whether advertently or inadvertently. As Jake moves toward ever fuller self-realization, he moves away from Cohn.

It is worth noting how Jake's feelings about Cohn change throughout the story. It is surprising how often Jake's early efforts at being Cohn's friend, and even mentor of sorts, go unnoticed. Jake is not hostile toward Cohn at the beginning of the story, stating, "I was his tennis friend," and Cohn later states that "you're really about the best friend I have, Jake" (47). H.R. Stoneback points out that "In the Cohn-at-Princeton sketch that opens the book, it can be seen that Jake identifies with Robert, not with Princeton" (9). Early in the story, Jake sympathizes with Cohn and tries to help him.

Also, Jake does not like or dislike Cohn because he is a Jew. That is far too simple a reading of Jake's character. Jake, being Catholic, and therefore a religious minority himself, relates to, and empathizes with, Cohn's situation as a Jew. Jake is not an anti-Semitic character. If anything, Cohn's being a Jew is one of the reasons they are friends; but that too is highly doubtful. If Jake is smart enough to know that Cohn's being a Jew is not a good reason to not be his friend, he is smart enough to know that Cohn's being a Jew is not a good reason to be his friend either. This makes baffling Baldwin's assertion that "while most critics mention Cohn's Jewishness, only a few acknowledge

the novel's anti-semitism, while some even casually dismiss it" (91). The reason for this being, of course, that what little anti-semitism there is in the novel, basically petty name calling, is hardly worth mentioning, especially to a guy like Jake, who knows too well what real wounds are to worry too much about name calling. It is not Cohn's ethnicity, but rather his behavior, that causes the rift between him and Jake, a rift which, to further prove that Jake is not anti-Semitic, does not exist when the novel begins.

Still, Baldwin argues that "Robert Cohn may be a 'boor' but his boorishness cannot and should not be attributed—as it is by Jake and Brett and Bill and Mike—to his Jewishness" (92). Jake does not attribute Cohn's boorishness to his Jewishness. He does say that Cohn had "a hard, Jewish, stubborn streak" (18), but, as H.R. Stoneback points out, Cohn's "stubbornness has everything to do with his adolescent fantasies and his boyish insistence, nothing to do with his Jewishness. Hemingway added this gratuitous slur when he revised this scene, perhaps to illustrate the unfortunately common human tendency to resort to group-identity slurs when one is impatient or angry" (25). In other words, this slur can be attributed just as easily to the authenticity of the language employed by the author, and to an ability to match a character's language to that character's mood, as it can to political incorrectness or racism. Race is not the issue. Behavior is. As Stoneback notes that "to fail to see the rigorous focus on individual conduct is to miss one of the novel's primary themes entirely" (9).

The second mistake Baldwin makes is lumping Jake in with Brett, Bill, and Mike. Jake, in spite of all his troubles, has found some answers. He has a good job which he enjoys, and, as Stoneback points out, "Jake's bank balance ($2,432.60) indicates that he has plenty of money to live very comfortably" (63). Jake's problems are love related. Just

as his physical wound stole from him the physical ability to love, his emotional fear threatens his capacity to love at all. However, unlike his friends, Jake recognizes this, and he owes this recognition, once again, to his wound. Stoneback states that "Saint Ignatius was a soldier who received a serious groin wound from a cannonball in the siege of Pamplona in 1521, what Hemingway calls in *Death in the Afternoon* 'the wound that made him think" (45). Jake's wound has also made him think, and since this is obviously for him just as much a curse as a blessing, he has thought about the value of not thinking. After recounting the Italian colonel's lamentation, Jake thinks:

> I try to play it along and not make trouble for people. Probably I never would have had any trouble if I hadn't run into Brett when they shipped me to England. I suppose she only wanted what she couldn't have. Well, people were that way. To hell with people. The Catholic Church had an awfully good way of handling all that. Good advice, anyway. Not to think about it. Oh, it was swell advice. Try and take it sometime. Try and take it. (Hemingway 39).

It is interesting to note that this condemnation of thought is the result of too much thinking. Jake's wound, the wound that makes him think, also makes him realize that there is such a thing as thinking too much. This helps him realize the importance of passion, or aficion, and leads to his recognition and appreciation of the authentic.

However, Jake also uses his notion of aficion to shield him from the wounds of love, and he knows it. As the story progresses, and Jake takes action, one can see him coming out of the shell of aficion that he has protected himself with, and exposing himself to the wounds of love. This process reaches its culmination when he brings Brett

to Romero, but before that, one gets an idea about the dark side of aficion through the character of Montoya.

In the important first scene with Montoya, Jake reveals what aficion means to them, and how their mutual belief in aficion has cemented their friendship. Jake says, "Montoya could forgive anything... for one who had aficion he could forgive anything. At once he forgave me all my friends" (137). The ambiguity of the sentence, "At once he forgave me all my friends," should not go unnoticed. Montoya patently dismisses Jake's friends because they are not aficionados. The fact that Jake will not go that far, that he considers them his friends whether they are aficionados or not, shows that Jake is not fully ready to give up on love, to trade it in for aficion, as it were. Aficion means passion, but love means passion too, and Jake, even at the height of his aficion, can not discard the latter for the former.

Montoya is arguably the most misread character in the novel. He is so misread, in fact, that nobody seems to notice. Correctly understanding Montoya's function as a character is vital to understanding Jake's growth and development on his journey from fear to courage, and hence from the inability to the ability to love.

The conflicts that arise between Jake and Montoya show that, as John Truby says, "Great storytelling isn't just conflict between characters. It's conflict between characters *and their values*" (97). Montoya and Jake both have aficion, but through their actions and beliefs, they show both the positive and negative sides to that same value. Truby explains it like this:

> Believing in something can be a strength, but it can also be the source of weakness. By identifying the negative as well as the positive side of the same

value, you can see how each character is most likely to make a mistake while fighting for what he believes. Examples of positive and negative versions of the same value are determined and aggressive, honest and insensitive, and patriotic and domineering" (98).

Thus, it is interesting and helpful to note the changes in Jake's relationship to Montoya. These changes represent the conflict residing within Jake's breast between aficion and love, specifically the kind of love Lewis calls "perilous agape" (49). Aficion, Jake knows from experience, can be used as a shield against the potential wounds of love. Also, as evidenced by Montoya immediately dismissing all Jake's non-aficionado friends, it is exclusionary.

Jake is conflicted about these things, while Montoya seems not to mind practically living in the vacuum of his hotel and the bullring. Moreover, he seems to consider anything outside that vacuum threatening.

In the name of aficion, Montoya wishes to nurture and protect Romero, to keep him from being wounded. Jake knows, however, from the result of his own growth and development resulting from his own wound, that such nurturing and protecting from wounds has the potential to stunt growth and prevent development. Montoya has an old fashioned, romantic ideal about how artists, (and bullfighters are artists in *The Sun Also Rises),* should be treated. He does not want to see Romero sacrifice his talent to life's temptations.

Hemingway explores this theme of the artist sacrificing his talents in greater detail in one of his best short stories, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," a story which Robert Lewis profitably explains to be "largely concerned with a romantic vision of life and love" (98),

and about which Carlos Baker states, "the focal point...is the corrupting power of women and money" (Lewis 97). Montoya, interestingly enough, remains romantically concerned about the corrupting power that women and money could have on Romero, and he wishes to shield Romero from the potential harm of those corrupting powers. These romantic notions that Montoya holds align him most closely, as a character, to Robert Cohn. It also highlights how the exclusionary nature of aficion can lead to harm, just as the exclusionary nature of romantic love can lead to the egotism *a deux*.

Cohn and Montoya are both examples of what John Truby calls a "fake-ally opponent," a type of character he defines like this:

> The fake-ally opponent is a character who appears to be the hero's friend but is actually an opponent...The fake-ally opponent is invariably one of the most complex and most fascinating characters in a story because he is usually torn by a dilemma. While pretending to be an ally of the hero, the fake-ally opponent comes to actually feel like an ally. So while working to defeat the hero, the fake-ally opponent often ends up helping the hero win. (59)

Montoya's dilemma has already been shown. Simply, he is torn about whether or not to tell Romero about the invitation that has been extended to him. More profoundly, he fears what will happen to Romero if and when he is exposed to the potentially corrupting powers of women and money.

In *The Dangerous Summer,* Hemingway introduces a man called Juanito Quintana, who he declares, "was the model for the hotel keeper Montoya in *The Sun Also Rises"* (53). Hemingway and Quintana discuss Antonio Ordonez, a bullfighter they both

had believed would be great, much in the same way that Jake and Montoya believe Pedro Romero will be great. Interestingly, Hemingway writes about Antonio:

> I had known his father Cayetano years before and had written a portrait of him and an account of his fighting in *The Sun Also Rises*. Everything that is in the bull ring in that book is as it was and how he fought. All the incidents outside the ring are made up and imagined. He always knew this and never made any protests about the book. (50).

Antonio's father Cayetano, then, has to be the real life model for Pedro Romero, as the other bullfighters in *The Sun Also Rises* that have names are real bullfighters with their names unchanged. One of the most important differences between "everything... ...as it was," and the "made up and imagined...incidents," is the important difference between the real life Juanito Quintana and Montoya, his fictional counterpart.

Hemingway and Quintana discuss whether or not the bullfighter Antonio Ordonez is as great as they believed he would be. One can see a great difference between what Quintana knows has happened to Ordonez and what Montoya fears will happen to Romero. After being away for two years since their original prediction about Ordonez' greatness, Hemingway asks Quintana about Ordonez:

> "Do you think we were right about him?"
>
> "Yes, hombre, yes. He's just as good as we thought he was and the punishment he's taken has strengthened him. It hasn't diminished him at all in any way." (63).

Meanwhile, and by comparison, Montoya chews his fingernails at the mere idea of the potential diminishment that any potential punishment could cause Romero.

Thus, after Jake changes the subject when Montoya expresses his idea that Romero "shouldn't mix in that stuff," Montoya declines Jake's drink offer and leaves, and never speaks another word in the novel. His presence becomes very much like Robert Cohn's during the fiesta, both of them just lurking around suffering silently, Cohn because of his love for Brett, Montoya because of his fear for Romero, and once again their similar character functions as fake-ally opponents can be seen.

Their roles as opponents can be most clearly seen when Jake comes all the way out of his shell and risks everything by bringing Brett to Romero. Their disguises as allies come off after this, Cohn's behavior revealing him to be the main opponent, Montoya's behavior revealing him to be a secondary opponent.

It is relatively simply to argue that Cohn's ultimate character function is as Jake's main opponent. As Lewis notes, "Lest one think that Cohn is not the pivotal character, if not the central one, Hemingway devotes the first two chapters of this economical novel to a history of Cohn's past and recent life" (22). In those first two chapters, Jake's description of Cohn as a fighter, as a lover, and as a man, helps to reveal a great deal about Jake himself in all of those same capacities. Jake believes that Cohn has not been wounded, and implies that Cohn could benefit from either being wounded or converting, as it were, to aficion. Either thing might help Cohn grow and develop into a more mature person with a less romantic and, it is implied, a more authentic, outlook and existence.

However, while Jake's wound has forced him to do away with many of the same romantic notions that Cohn still entertains, it has also paralyzed him somewhat emotionally, in that he, in a similarly stubborn and even more self-conscious way, refuses to risk the wounds of love. Cohn's stubborn refusal to take Jake's advice forces Jake to

examine, in a roundabout way, his own stubborn refusal to risk himself, and the reason for that refusal: his fear. One begins to see what Truby means when he states, "Never think of the hero and opponent as extreme opposites. Rather, they are two possibilities within a realm of possibilities" (91), and, "it is only because the opponent is attacking the hero's great weakness that the hero is forced to deal with it and grow" (88). One can see this principal at work in *The Sun Also Rises* at the beginning of the third chapter.

It is a baby step, no doubt, when Jake picks up the prostitute Georgette at the beginning of chapter three. However, one must consider that this is the first thing he does after the first two chapters with Cohn. This shows him trying to deal with his weakness, his fear of love, and it is also the first time the reader gets an idea about the nature of Jake's wound, so that one can begin to understand the reason for his fear.

Jake buys Georgette a drink. They get in a taxi to go to dinner. Inside the taxi, Georgette makes a move on Jake. He pushes her hand away, so she asks him if he's sick, to which he replies "Yes" (Hemingway 23). Jake's "yes" reveals as much as it conceals. As H.R. Stonebeck states, "What the reader understands from this first clue regarding Jake's wound, and what Georgette understands, is open to question" (35). It could be read as Jake straightforwardly indicating that something is wrong with him that prevents him from having sex, or it could be read as a metaphorical sickness that, since it stems from his war wound, represents a general post war anguish that encapsulates the sentiments of the expatriates in the 1920s. For the purposes of tracing Jake's growth and transformation through the novel, it will be far more helpful to read it straightforwardly.

Jake's "yes," indicates that he can not perform sexually, although the reasons why remain unclear. What, then, is wrong with Jake? H.R. Stoneback suggests that part of the

reason that Hemingway does not answer that question more specifically is because he would have had to have been "more specific than publishing etiquette (and censorship) would have allowed in the 1920s" (64). Hemingway later clarified the nature of Jake's wound in letters and interviews, stating that Jake's "testicles were intact and not damaged," that he was "capable of all normal feelings as a man but incapable of consummating them," and finally that, "The important distinction is that his wound was physical and not psychological and that he was not emasculated" (Wagner-Martin 25). With this insight, one can begin to see why Jake picks up Georgette, and better understand her crucial function in the story.

By picking up Georgette, Jake shows that he is "capable of all normal feelings as a man." One of those normal feelings is sexual desire, and picking up a prostitute is very obviously a show of sexual desire. Also, in its own small way, Jake's picking up Georgette reveals his struggles with love, and how he, safely at first, attempts to deal with them. For a prostitute is safe in ways of the heart, and that, perhaps as much as anything else, is their primary appeal. By virtue of her occupation, Jake knows that he can be safe with Georgette, that he is not risking any wounds. Ironically, it is while he is with her that Brett makes her first appearance, with, of all things, a group of homosexuals, revealing that she, too, chooses to spend time in the company of those with whom she feels safe. Brett, too, has wounds from which she feels the need to protect herself.

Georgette's character builds a brilliantly constructed bridge between Cohn and Brett. It has already been noted that Cohn serves the character function of fake-ally opponent. His attacking, however inadvertently, Jake's weakness, his fear of love, compels Jake to pick up Georgette in a baby step toward dealing with that problem.

Georgette begins to reveal Jake's problems with sex and love, problems which Brett exposes far more completely, directly, and because of this, more painfully.

Brett is that rarest of fiction characters: the fake-opponent ally. Truby states that "This character appears to be fighting the hero but is actually the hero's friend" (60). By exposing Jake's problems with sex and his fear of love, by getting Jake to talk about his problems, however obliquely, she sets him on the path toward solving those problems and healing his wounds.

That is another of the novel's great ironies, that one of the greatest sources of Jake's pride, his restriction on expression, is just another defense mechanism, another way to protect himself from the wounds of love. Baldwin points out that "at various times in the story Jake battles with himself, Brett, Cohn, Bill, and Montoya over his code of silence, over not talking about certain things. This en/forced repression stymies both communication and understanding" (9).

One can see this communication breakdown during Jake and Brett's first taxi-ride. In a rightfully famous passage, one gets a glimpse of the contradiction and confusion of both Brett and Jake. It is not unusual for the two lovers in a love story to have these types of communication breakdowns upon first meeting. The lovers start out on different wavelengths and end up on the same one. That is how love stories conventionally work. While one can see that Jake and Brett are not on the same wavelength, it is equally obvious that there is a great deal of history between these two.

"And there's not a damn thing we could do," I said.

"I don't know," she said. "I don't want to go through that hell again."

"We'd better keep away from each other."

"But, darling, I have to see you. It isn't all that you know."

"No, but it always gets to be."

"That's my fault. Don't we pay for all the things we do, though?" (Hemingway 34).

Next, Jake tries to avoid conversation about his wound. He sees the conversation headed that way and tries to cut it short. He does not want Brett to go there. He does not want to have to deal with that. Brett, however, refuses to let him off so easily. It must be remembered that this situation is not easy for her, that she suffers from Jake's wound too.

"When I think of the hell I've put chaps through. I'm paying for it all now."

"Don't talk like a fool," I said. "Besides, what happened to me is supposed to be funny. I never think about it."

"Oh, no. I'll lay you don't."

"Well, let's shut up about it."

"I laughed about it too, myself, once." She wasn't looking at me. "A friend of my brother's came home that way from Mons. It seemed like a hell of a joke. Chaps never know anything, do they?" (Hemingway 34).

One can see how Brett is actually trying to help Jake even though it seems like she is being abrasive. As Baldwin notes, "although Jake says 'let's shut up about it,' Brett keeps on talking" (30). Baldwin also notes, even more interestingly, that "when you say 'let's not talk about it' you are announcing that this 'it' is more important, carries more emotional weight, than other topics of conversation" (30).

After having talked about his wound, even that little bit, Jake feels better. Unfortunately, Brett now feels worse, and one gets a strong sense of the hopelessness of their situation:

"It's funny," I said. "It's very funny. And it's a lot of fun, too, to be in love."

"Do you think so?" her eyes looked flat again.

"I don't mean fun that way. In a way it's an enjoyable feeling."

"No," she said. "I think it's hell on earth."

"It's good to see each other."

"No. I don't think it is."

"Don't you want to?"

"I have to." (Hemingway 35).

Thus, in this brief conversation, Jake goes from "We'd better keep away from each other," to "It's good to see each other," all because he talked about his wound, and lifted some of that emotional weight off of his shoulders.

Meanwhile, though Brett remains consistent in her assertion that, "I have to see you" (35), her mood regarding that fact seems to fluctuate considerably. Robert Lewis reads her final "I have to," as an indication that "Brett is compelled to torture herself and to enjoy her torment" (26). He also sheds some light about Jake's saying that his wound is funny: "To the ancient Greeks who regarded romantic love as a sickness and a calamity, his wound would be funny, but it is not funny to the romanticist who lives for love" (26).

Most importantly, this scene shows Jake and Brett as two members of a kind of cult of the wounded. Bound together by their sickness and their wounds, Jake and Brett

form a cult of the wounded, and Brett is referring to this cult when she informs Jake that her new friend Count Mippipolous is, "One of us" (67).

Count Mippipopolous teaches Jake something about being wounded and still being able to love. Given Jake's situation, where his wound has taken from him both eros and romantic love, Jake has two choices: He can give up on love altogether or he can try to find a way to love anew, to venture into the more perilous lands of agape. By embracing aficion, Jake has embraced the passionate, and chosen to worship the authentic. In the process, he has turned his back on love.

Brett has also been wounded by the war. Besides the torture she endures as a result of Jake's wound, she suffers from other wounds as well. Jake says that "Her own true love had just kicked off with the dysentery" (46), and her fiancé Mike later reveals, "Ashley, chap she got the title from...always made Brett sleep on the floor. Finally when he got really bad, he used to tell her he'd kill her. Always slept with a loaded service revolver. Brett used to take the shells out when he'd gone to sleep. She hasn't had an absolutely happy life, Brett" (207). Obviously, Brett's notions of romantic love have also been shattered by her wounds. However, she also remains afraid of agape, and she turns to eros in much the same way that Jake turns to aficion. This must be one of the reasons that Hemingway, according to Hinkel, described the novel as, "a little treatise on promiscuity" (Wagner-Martin 108).

Both Brett and Jake are wounded and fearful of being wounded again. That is one of the reasons that makes Brett's pronouncement that the count is "one of us," so important. By being wounded, he gains authenticity in their eyes, and admission into their cult of the wounded. However, it is not the mere fact that he is wounded, but his response

to that wound, that makes the count such an important character. Unlike Brett and Jake, he has embraced agape, he has continued to risk himself; and as a result, he has left Brett and Jake behind in the areas of personality development and maturity.

Chapter seven is so brilliantly crafted because of the juxtaposition of the three characters involved. Jake, Brett, and the count have all suffered wounds, and all three of them have a different way of dealing with those wounds. By comparing and contrasting how each character deals with similar problems, conclusions can be drawn as to what is the best way, and the important character function of the count can be discovered.

At the beginning of chapter seven, one can see Jake's immense struggles in dealing with his problem, and once again, Brett is the character with whom Jake feels safe enough to talk about his problems. Brett shows up at Jake's apartment with the count, but Jake does not want to come out of his room to meet him.

"What's the matter, darling? Do you feel rocky?"

She kissed me coolly on the forehead.

"Oh, Brett, I love you so much."

"Darling," she said. Then: "Do you want me to send him away?"

"No. He's nice." (Hemingway 61).

Notice that the count does not intrude on their conversation. Imagine if Brett were with Cohn. He would be hovering outside the door. He would not let Brett out of his sight. The count sits back and gives Brett and Jake their space. He respects them by doing that, and Jake recognizes that and respects him back, saying, in his typically understated way, "He's nice" (61).

Now imagine if Jake was like Cohn. He would have Brett send the count away, as far away and as quickly as possible. He would want to have her all to himself. If Jake was that way, he would miss the lesson the count has to teach him.

That lesson, as this scene is supposed to help make clear, could not come at a better time. Jake is at his worst in this scene. Nowhere else in the novel is he more pitiful. Jake is still heartbroken, along with Brett, who loves him too, but their discussions get them nowhere, and Brett concludes, "There isn't any use my telling you I love you," because "talking's all bilge" (62). As Stoneback points out, "the novel is driven by a tough stance against talking too much" (73). Once again, the irony here is that this tough stance against talking too much can be harmful, can hinder growth, development, and maturity, as well as communication and understanding. Certainly there is such a thing as talking too much, but there is also such a thing as not talking enough.

The count knows that. He later says to Brett, "You're always drinking, my dear. Why don't you just talk?" To which she replies, "I've talked too ruddy much." The count, not buying that, says, "I should like to hear you really talk," and, after more of her evasions, "Still I would like to hear you talk some time," to which Brett finally responds, "Isn't he a fool" (65)? It is clear that the count is not a fool at all, as he recognizes that it would do Brett, and Jake, a lot of good if they would "really talk."

The count's suggestions about talking, and how they differ from Jake and Brett's held notions, help highlight his function as what Truby calls a "subplot character." Truby explains:

> The subplot character has a very precise function in a story; and again it involves the comparative method. The subplot is used to contrast how the hero and a

second character deal with the same problem in slightly different ways. Through comparison, the subplot character highlights traits and dilemmas of the main character. (60).

The most important difference between the count, Jake, and Brett, is how the count handles his wounds. He continues to risk himself in spite of them. One gets a hint about this when he says, "I have been in seven wars and four revolutions" (66). Clearly, the count is not a man that is too scared to risk himself, even after he knows from experience what could happen by doing so.

After the count shows off his arrow wounds, Brett gleefully proclaims to Jake, "I told you he was one of us. Didn't I? I love you, count. You're a darling," to which the count coolly and somewhat surprisingly responds, "You make me very happy, my dear. But it isn't true" (67). Clearly, the count recognizes Brett's inability to love; and it is about love that he teaches Jake and Brett his most important lesson, in the following crucially important passage:

"You see, Mr. Barnes, it is because I have lived very much that now I can enjoy everything so well. Don't you find it like that?"

"Yes. Absolutely."

"I know," said the count. "That is the secret. You must get to know the values."

"Doesn't anything ever happen to your values?" Brett asked

"No. Not any more."

"Never fall in love?"

"Always," said the count. "I am always in love."

"What does that do to your values?"

"That, too, has got a place in my values."

"You haven't any values. You're dead, that's all."

"No, my dear. You're not right. I'm not dead at all." (Hemingway 68).

Just as the count continued to risk physically wounds in seven wars and four revolutions, he continues to risk the emotional wounds of love. He has ventured into the perilous realm of agape, and his reward, being "always in love" has been great indeed. It has even helped him "enjoy everything so well." Jake takes this seed of knowledge regarding love and cultivates it throughout the remainder of the novel. By the end of the novel, Jake no longer substitutes aficion for the loss of romantic love and eros, he makes aficion a part of agape. He risks the wounds of love, so that he, like the count, can be "always in love."

The importance of the count's lesson is underscored by the fact that it ends book I. Stoneback notes that "the powerful effect of his book I-book II division is to emphasize the importance of the action just concluded, the secret-of-the-values scene with Brett, Jake, and the count, and to provide the reader the meditative space to recognize that emphasis" (113).

The count's last appearance in the novel, however, is not in chapter seven, before that book I/book II division. The count appears in Jake's thoughts when he prays at The Cathedral of Santa Maria. During the end of a lengthy stream of consciousness prayer, Jake prays, "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, and I started wondering about where he was, and regretting I hadn't seen him since that night in Montmartre, and about something funny Brett told me about him" (103). This is an easy

passage to overlook, but if examined, it helps to clarify the count's role as a subplot character, revealing that both Jake and the count are indeed, as Truby says, "Dealing with the same problem in slightly different ways" (60).

What does the count's appearance in Jake's prayer mean? What is the "something funny" that Brett told him? Stoneback states that "This crucial passage was added in Hemingway's revisions, and it seems very much like a hint of the iceberg depths, a clue to a fact that Hemingway originally left out deliberately under his rubric of the theory of omission" (177). A strong case can be made that Jake and the count have more in common than first meets the eye.

Looking at the language Jake uses, Stoneback concludes that, "the earlier insistent use of the word 'funny' as a keyword linked specifically with Jake's sexually incapacitating wound constitutes the firmest kind of stylistic evidence that the 'something funny' that Brett has told Jake about the count is that he, too, has been rendered celibate by a war wound" (178).

The other possibility would be that the count is a homosexual. However, it is shown early in the novel, when Brett arrives at the *bal musette* with a group of homosexuals, that Jake recognizes homosexuals quickly, and that he does not particularly care for them. Of course, part of the reason he doesn't care for them, could be related to the fact that, as Ira Elliot points out, "What Jake is unable or unwilling to acknowledge (disclose) is that his relationship to women resembles that of the homosexual" (Wagner-Martin 70). However, while that is a possibility, the differences between the dialog employed by the homosexuals with Brett and the count are so great as to make it seem highly unlikely that the count is a homosexual. Where the count says to Brett, "you got

class all over you" (64), one of the homosexuals says to Brett, "I do declare. There is an actual harlot" (28), causing Ira Elliot to note about the homosexuals that their "mannered speech sounds theatrical and declamatory" (Wagner-Martin 68).

Finally, and most importantly in this examination of Jake's character arc, the count is a more powerful character if he shares with Jake *the same problem*, but deals with it differently. He knows what Jake is going through, and he knows what risks Jake must take in order to be able to love again, to crawl out of his self-made shell. Thus, when Jake thinks about the count near the end of his prayer, he, as Stoneback puts it, "reflects on his principal exemplar—in more ways than have hitherto been recognized" (178).

For all the talk of Hemingway's iceberg theory and his rubric of omission, book II begins with a very obvious clue about Cohn and Brett:

> I did not see Brett again until she came back from San Sebastian. One card came from her from there. It had a picture of the Concha, and said: "Darling. Very quiet and healthy. Love to all the chaps. BRETT."
>
> Nor did I see Robert Cohn again. (Hemingway 75).

Of course, Cohn is with Brett in San Sebastian. While he, once again inadvertently, makes his most furious assault on Jake's friendship and his fear of love off stage, Bill Gorton enters the picture. As Lewis notes, "Gorton is significantly different from the expatriates in that he has remained at home and he works. He is productive as are none of the others except Jake himself" (28).

Bill Gorton very clearly serves the role as Jake's ally. Truby defines an ally as, "the hero's helper. The ally also serves as a sounding board, allowing the audience to hear the values and feelings of the lead character" (59).

Nowhere is this more evident than during the scene after Jake and Bill have just finished their lunch after a pleasant day of fishing, and Bill strikes up a conversation about Brett and Catholicism, or, as H.R. Stoneback puts it, "Bill raises two of the most serious questions that a good friend can ask—about love and religion" (223).

"Say," Bill said, "what about this Brett business?"

"What about it?"

"Were you ever in love with her?"

"Sure."

"For how long?"

"Off and on for a hell of a long time."

"Oh, hell!" Bill said. "I'm sorry, fella."

"It's all right," I said. "I don't give a damn any more" (Hemingway 128).

Here one can see how far Jake still has to go. He still lacks the ability to talk about his wound or his difficulties with love without thoughtlessly snapping, "I don't give a damn any more." While that attitude might help take away the pain of the loss of romantic love, it certainly prevents the step toward agape, toward the count's "always in love," which is where Jake ultimately wants to get.

Bill, like Brett, does not let Jake off easily. He continues the conversation, turning the subject to religion, a subject that Bill seems to be heavily skeptical about. Jake may be skeptical about it as well, but as Robert Lewis notes, "he is skeptical and yet devout;

he does not believe, but he wants to believe" (30). Jake's answers in the following conversation seem to verify Lewis' idea.

"Listen, Jake," he said, "are you really a Catholic?"

"Technically."

"What does that mean?"

"I don't know" (Hemingway 129).

While Jake's "technically," denotes his devoutness, his "I don't know," denotes his skepticism. Lewis continues, "He goes through the motions of his faith hoping that somehow it will succeed in giving him an anchor in his disintegrating worldly milieu" (30). The value of this kind of going through the motions, for Jake, and perhaps for Hemingway too, is the value of ritual, and how ritual can instill discipline into one's life.

In *The Dangerous Summer,* Hemingway questions why his driver makes the sign of the cross before an apparently routine road trip to the capital: "I didn't hire you to drive by miracles, I thought, nor exclusively by divine intervention...Then I thought again and remembering the women and children involved and the necessity for solidarity in this passing world I repeated his gesture" (69). Afterward, Hemingway starts a prayer that sounds very much like a prayer that Jake Barnes would say:

> I prayed for all those I had in hock to Fortune, for all friends with cancer, for all girls, living and dead, and that Antonio would have good bulls that afternoon. (Hemingway 69).

Another possibility, albeit slight, is that Jake's "I don't know," indicates that he is more religious than most people will ever be, that he is more religious, even, than the technicalities of the church allow him to be. Erich Fromm states that "The truly religious

person, if he follows the essence of the monotheistic idea, does not pray for anything, does not expect anything from God; he does not love God as a child loves his father or his mother; he has acquired the humility of sensing his limitations, to the degree of knowing that he knows nothing about God" (66).

Most likely, Jake turns to religion for the discipline it can instill in his life and its emphasis on ritual. One of the rituals of religion which Jake adheres to passionately is, of course, the bullfight. Lewis states that "Jake's relation to bullfighting is also fraught with religious overtones, as is bullfighting itself" (32). Because of his aficion, his ritualistic attendance of the bullfights and his passionate dedication to it, Jake can recognize an authentic bullfighter from an inauthentic one.

One of the novelties of this novel, particularly to an American audience, is the idea that a bullfighter can be an artist. Bullfighting, and in turn bullfighters, are obviously important to Jake.

Pedro Romero, however, becomes important to Jake as more than just a bullfighter. It is Romero that presents Jake with the opportunity to heal his emotional wounds by risking himself for love. Because of Romero, Jake has a chance to kill his fear, just as Romero kills his fear when he kills a bull.

When Montoya offers Jake and Bill the chance to meet Romero, they jump at the chance. This initial meeting of Romero is a very powerfully rendered scene.

> Montoya knocked on the door and opened it. It was a gloomy room with a little light coming in from the window on the narrow street. There were two beds separated by a monastic partition. The electric light was on. The boy stood very straight and unsmiling in his bull-fighting clothes...his black hair shone under the

electric light...then he turned to me. He was the best-looking boy I had ever seen" (Hemingway 167).

H.R. Stoneback calls this "the *core image* of the novel...the first scene that Hemingway wrote in his earliest draft of the novel was, in fact, a version of this page, which remains, in spite of all his revisions, remarkably close to the original" (249). However, a more important confirmation about Romero as artist comes when Jake and Bill depart from Romero. Jake says, "He was standing, straight and handsome and altogether by himself, alone in the room with the hangers-on as we shut the door" (167). The idea that the artist does his work alone is a recurrent theme in Hemingway's work, and George Plimpton confirms that Hemingway possessed, "a strong feeling that writing is a private, lonely occupation with no need for witnesses until the final work is done" (18).

Interestingly, this emphasis on Romero's aloneness signifies, before Jake has seen him fight and kill bull one, that Romero has a chance to be, "a real one." Jake's emphasis on Romero's aloneness sounds similar to the famed boxing trainer Cus D'Amato's theory about fighters, as recalled by Teddy Atlas:

> He knew the minute they walked in the door if they had a chance to be a fighter...He said, "if they walked in alone, they had a shot. If they walked in with a friend or their father, I didn't want them. To me, if they made that journey...by themselves, they had already shown discipline and control. If they needed someone with them, either I didn't want them or I said, 'I got a hell of a job on my hands.'" (Atlas 173).

Romero's aloneness, then, lets Jake know that he has a chance to be good, and Romero does not disappoint. Jake says that "After Romero had killed his first bull Montoya caught my eye and nodded his head. This was a real one. There had not been a real one for a long time" (168).

Jake's ritualistic attendance of bullfights helps him to recognize that Romero is a real one, just as it helps him recognize that "of the other two matadors, one was very fair and the other was passable. But there was no comparison with Romero, although neither of his bulls was much" (168). Here Jake makes the inevitable comparison between Romero, the authentic bullfighter, a "real one," and other bullfighters. The last recognition, that "neither of his bulls was much," makes clear the importance of the bull to the bullfighter and to the aficionado. If the bull is "not much," then the bullfighter's victory over him is also not much. The importance of ritual is underscored by the fact that one must attend many bullfights, witness many "fair" and "passable" bullfighters fighting bulls that are "not much" before one experiences, as Hemingway puts it in "Death in the Afternoon," the ecstasy that is, "while momentary, as profound as any religious ecstasy" (Stoneback 233).

At the next bullfight, Jake sits next to Brett and explains to her "what it was all about...so that it became more something that was going on with a definite end, and less of a spectacle with unexplained horrors" (171). It is during this bullfight when Romero really starts to shine, Brett really starts to fall for him, and Jake shares his knowledge and wisdom more openly than he usually does. H.R. Stoneback states that "this passage shows Jake in his role as teacher, his pedagogic function, which, though more understated elsewhere, pervades the novel" (251). One of the things that Jake teaches about is the art

of bullfighting, about what differentiates a "real one" from an imposture. He says that "Romero's bull-fighting gave real emotion, because he kept the absolute purity of line in his movements and always quietly and calmly let the horns pass him close each time...Romero had the old thing, the holding of his purity of line through the maximum of exposure" (172). It is important to note how Jake admires how close Romero lets the bulls' horns pass him, how he admires Romero's courage to work so close to that which wounds, to seemingly court danger, only to turn the tables, kill that which he fears, and emerge victorious.

It is after this bullfight that Jake has his breakthrough moment. When he brings Brett to Romero, he discards the romantic in him once and for all. Interestingly, in this love story, the less romantic that the hero gets, the better that he is able to love.

As might be expected, Jake's feelings about Cohn change after Brett tells him about their affair. Brett, when breaking the news to Jake, says, in all seriousness, "I rather thought it would be good for him," to which Jake quickly replies, "You might take up social service" (89). Jake maintains his composure, and when Brett asks him if he thinks it will be "too rough" on Cohn to go on the trip, Jake tellingly responds, "That's up to him" (90).

As it turns out, their affair is not good for Cohn. As a result of it, he gets more romantic, not less. Throughout the fiesta, he follows Brett around like a puppy dog, which disgusts and angers the whole party, including Brett. Finally she chases him off, telling Jake, "You know I do know how he feels. He can't believe it didn't mean anything" (185). Of course, to Brett, who has discarded romantic love for eros, it didn't

mean anything. To the romantic Cohn, however, it meant a great deal. It was, as Jake calls it, "his affair with a lady of title" (182).

Brett, like Jake early in the story, had good intentions with Cohn. She truly believed that their affair would be good for him, just as Jake believed that he could help Cohn by sharing his wisdom. However, both of them find Cohn's romanticism and immaturity too strong an obstacle to overcome, and both are left disappointed and angered, leading Jake to conclude:

"I'm not sorry for him. I hate him, myself."

"I hate him, too," she shivered. "I hate his damned suffering." (Hemingway 186).

The fact is that Jake also suffers for Brett's love, but his suffering is more authentic because of his wound. As Lewis notes, "Cohn's sufferings are academic; he goes literally by the book, and that is, no doubt, why he is scorned" (25). Jake has reason to suffer, and in spite of his suffering, he does not make suffering for others.

As Cohn's bad behavior continues, Jake gets a close look at what he does not want to be. Thus, Cohn continues to hammer at Jake's weakness, continues to force him to deal with his problem, to cope with his fear. Jake knows that he could potentially behave like Cohn. When Brett tells him, "You wouldn't behave badly," he says, "I'd be as big an ass as Cohn" (185). Brett, to prove him wrong, makes an astounding proposition. She asks him to bring her to Romero. Immediately, Jake's guard goes up.

"I'm a goner. I'm mad about the Romero boy. I'm in love with him, I think."

"I wouldn't be if I were you."

"I can't help it. I'm a goner. It's tearing me all up inside."

"Don't do it."

"I can't help it. I've never been able to help anything."

"You ought to stop it."

"How can I stop it? I can't stop things" (Hemingway 187).

Jake knows the risks of taking her to Romero. He knows it will betray his own notion of aficion, the thing that has helped hold him together since his wound. But he also knows that aficion has been the thing that has prevented him from loving since his wound, and that he has hidden behind aficion so that he would not have to take any emotional risks. He knows what the romantic Cohn's reaction will be, that Cohn has been itching to fight for Brett since he fell in love with her. He knows what Montoya, the stern and unforgiving upholder of all things aficion will think. He knows that he could be putting Romero's considerable talents in jeopardy. But most importantly, he knows that he loves Brett, and that wounds can be valuable if dealt with properly, and that if he does not do what she asks, he will once again doom himself to the emotionally safe, unfulfilled existence that he has been leading since he was wounded. He knows that he must take the risk or remain miserable.

Lewis seems to be getting at this when he says that "Only after Jake acts as her pimp with Romero does he finally begin to emerge from his passive role" (27). However, he is only half right. Jake does emerge from his passive role, but he does not pimp Brett. Stoneback correctly notes that "It is simply not true that Jake is, in any sense, a pimp" (260). Indeed, if Jake were a pimp, he would not take a swing at Cohn for calling him one. Pimps do what they do for money. Jake does what he does for love. By bringing Brett to Romero, he risks himself for that love.

The kind of love Jake risks himself for is agape. It is no longer romantic love. Brett helps him understand this by letting him know what she needs from him, telling him, "Oh, darling, please stay by me. Please stay by me and see me through this" (188). What Brett needs, and what she asks Jake to be, is a friend. She needs Jake to be her friend, just as she has been his. It helps to remember Truby's definition of a fake-opponent ally: "This character appears to be fighting the hero but is actually the *hero's friend"* (60). Jake, early in the novel, does not want to be Brett's friend. He wants to be her lover. But Lewis notes that "there is the growing presence of agape in the course of the novel, and it is finally extended to include the two great lovers themselves; the lovers are at last ready to love" (28). For Jake, being ready to love means being prepared to sacrifice, and take risks, for love.

He takes the risk. He brings Brett to Romero, and he suffers for it. Cohn beats him up and Montoya bans him from the aficionado's club. Their respective responses help clarify their roles as Jake's opponents. Both of them represent exclusionary powers that Jake finally realizes hinder agape, which is the most all encompassing love there is, and Jake's ticket to leading a more fulfilling existence. Jake may still be an aficionado, but he will not be an aficionado at the expense of love any more. He will have to start his own club.

After Cohn dusts off Jake and Mike, he goes and finds Pedro Romero with Brett, and showing off his boxing skills, pummels him as well. However, as Lewis points out, "the courageous Romero, though badly beaten, refuses to yield graciously" (24). Romero keeps getting up when Cohn knocks him down, and threatens to kill Cohn if he doesn't

leave town. Cohn breaks down crying, tries to shake everybody's hand, and ultimately leaves in disgrace.

The courage Romero displays when he keeps getting up foreshadows his final bullfighting performance, but it also sheds some light on the fact that while Cohn might have the boxing skills, it is Romero who has the fighter's heart. Romero is the one who, without any boxing training, has learned what Teddy Atlas believes might be boxing's most important lesson:

> If he's going to get to the top of the boxing profession, a fighter has to learn the difference between the truth and a lie. The lie is thinking that submission is an acceptable option. The truth is that if you give up, afterward you'll realize that any of those punches that you thought you couldn't deal with, or those rough moments you didn't think you could make it through, were just *moments*...maybe there is no more important lesson to learn from boxing than that. (Atlas 82).

Clearly, in spite of all the boxing he has done, Cohn never learned that lesson.

The last bullfight of the fiesta is the ultimate exhibition of Romero's greatness. Watching Romero, Jake states that "the fight with Cohn had not touched his spirit but his face had been smashed and his body hurt" (223). The emphasis here is on Romero's spirit. As badly as his body and face have been beaten, Romero fights on with incredible grace, healing not only himself in the process, but healing all who watch. As H.R. Stoneback states: "Like the novel's other wounded exemplars—the count, Jake—Romero is strong at the broken places, and his spirit epitomizes the secret of the values" (271).

Having completed his journey from fear to courage in book II, book III offers a look at the new and improved Jake. He goes to San Sebastian, where he bathes himself in

the waters, drinks and eats well, and thinks many interesting and illuminating thoughts. He is having a great time when a postcard arrives from Brett. The time has come, he knows, to be the friend to her that he promised he would be. When he signs his return postcard to her with love, he muses:

> That seemed to handle it. 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 lighthearted, almost playful tone of this passage shows how far Jake has come. Love no longer mortifies him, and because he has killed his notion of romantic love by risking himself for agape, he can have the pleasure of Brett's friendship.

In the concluding cab ride, Jake says that "Brett moved close to me. We sat close against each other. I put my arm around her and she rested against me comfortably" (251). All this indicates that, as Lewis states, "His love for Brett has undergone a subtle change. From unreasoning passion it has gone through a period of bitter awareness to an ending which describes a relationship of responsibility and care" (28). Why Lewis then concludes that the overall impression of the novel is negative remains somewhat mysterious. Considering the limitations placed upon Jake by his wound, it seems that he has done about as well as he could do.

Brett then says something that could easily restart all the old problems: "Oh, Jake, we could have had such a damned good time together" (251). This statement, while it indicates that Brett still loves Jake, also indicates why she is not the hero of the story. She has helped Jake make changes. She has been his ally and his friend. But she has changed precious little herself.

Jake's response, "Yes, isn't it pretty to think so" (251), which famously closes the novel, is a reminder of his wound as well as an indication that he has dealt with it. Perhaps it indicates that the restorative powers of agape and friendship are bringing Jake's imagination back to life. This passage by David Hume helps explain:

> As all men desire pleasure, nothing can be more probable, than its existence when there is no external obstacle to the producing it, and men perceive no danger in following their inclinations. In that case their imagination easily anticipates the satisfaction, and conveys the same joy, as if they were persuaded of its real and actual existence." (Hume 364).

The external obstacle to Jake's pleasure is, of course, his wound. But maybe for that split second when he utters his novel closing response, he imagines himself without it.

CHAPTER 3

"THIS IS NO STORY, THIS IS TRUE": AUTHENTICITY AND LOVE IN *ON THE ROAD.*

When Jack Kerouac, after years of deliberation on how to compose his road novel, finally proclaimed that "I'm just going to write it as it happened" (Charters xviii), *On The Road* was on the way to putting the novelty back in the novel. It did so by blurring the line between art and life, while redefining authenticity in the process.

Actually, the published version of *On the Road* is a great deal different from the original scroll of the novel, which was deemed too risky to be published. Frustrated but undeterred, Kerouac continued to work on the novel, composing *Visions of Cody*, and considering that to be the final version of *On the Road. Visions of Cody*, however, would not be published until after Kerouac's death. It baffled and infuriated Kerouac's friends and potential publishers alike, leaving Malcolm Cowley to proclaim that it "contained some impressively good writing but no story whatsoever" (Cunnell 39). Story, incidentally, is not the strength of the published version either.

One of the reasons Kerouac finally decided to write things just as they happened was because he was fed up with trying to invent a plausible story for his heroes, who he stated as early as August 1948 would be, "two guys hitch-hiking to California in search of something they don't *really* find" (Cunnell 3). For two and a half years before Kerouac wrote the infamous scroll version of the novel in April 1951, he labored extensively

trying to compose this novel about these two heroes. In that time, Howard Cunnell states, he began "three major proto-versions of the novel," abandoned all three of them, and grew increasingly frustrated. Cunnell continues to say that, in all three of those abandoned novels, "Kerouac is consciously trying to write a novel the way novels had always been written" (Cunnell 4). Kerouac's frustrations were due mainly to the fact that he could not find a way to employ both those novelistic conventions and his own, fresh voice at the same time. It was a letter from his friend Neal Cassady, the Dean Moriarty of *On the Road*, that led Kerouac to the realization that he was trying to achieve the unachievable. He either had to do away with novelistic conventions or with a new, fresh voice. He could not have both.

Kerouac proclaimed hyperbolically that Cassady's letter "ranked among the best things ever written in America" (Cunnell 21). His use of hyperbole here helpfully foregrounds the published version of *On the Road*, wherein hyperbole is one of Kerouac's most notable rhetorical devices. The surviving fragment of Cassady's letter, published as "To have seen a specter isn't everything" in Cassady's book *The First Third*, does have some literary merit. According to Howard Cunnell, "The fragment is interesting both for its mixture of confession and boastfulness and for what Lawrence Ferlinghetti called Cassady's 'hustling voice,' a voice brilliantly captured by Kerouac in the novel" (Cunnell 21). Another thing that likely had a liberating effect on Kerouac's composition process was that Cassady's letter was a story told in the first person.

First person narration freed Kerouac a great deal from the novelistic and literary conventions that had been bogging him down. Kerouac's use of first person narration in the scroll version of the manuscript was particularly innovative because he did not assign

pseudonyms to himself or any of the characters in the novel. He did exactly as he said he would, and wrote it as it happened. As Howard Cunnell points out, "*On the Road* is the nonfiction novel, ten years early" (26). Can nonfiction, then, be art?

It would be difficult to contest that Kerouac's choice to compose a first person, nonfiction narrative heightened the authenticity of his narrative voice. However, it could be argued that this style of writing is more journalistic than artistic. In fact, that has been a common enough claim about Kerouac's writing, specifically *On the Road.* As Tim Hunt states, "Few could credit that Kerouac might be an experimental writer rather than a simple reporter of his own life and thoughts" (30). It must be admitted that, based solely on the text of the published version of *On the Road*, this claim has some merit. Kerouac does seem to be reporting his own life and thoughts, though not quite simply, and the fact that the published version of this novel bears little resemblance to Kerouac's more experimental works does not matter to those who come to his most famous book first in order to see what he is all about, and to judge whether or not they wish to read any more of his books.

If Kerouac wanted *On the Road* to be considered art and not journalism, which surely he did, his challenge was to make authenticity into an art form. The story, or plot, of a nonfiction novel told in the first person is likely to be haphazard and of secondary importance, as it is ostensibly dictated by the life experiences of the author. However, it should not be overlooked that the author must still choose what to include and what to omit, and these are, perhaps, the only artistic decisions related to story that are left him.

Eschewing the conventions of story and plot, Kerouac banks on the authenticity of his voice, the interestingness of his experiences, the beauty and exuberance of his

prose, and the power of the characters' personalities, particularly that of Dean Moriarty, to keep the reader from putting the book down.

At the beginning of the novel, Sal sets the tone by describing his kind of hero: "the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles" (Kerouac 6). This is Dean Moriarty, and while many might consider him an anti-hero, he is a real hero to Sal.

Dean is the maddest of the mad ones, and the reader is introduced to him in a very similar manner to the way Sal is introduced to him. As Carl Malmgren points out, "The novel begins and ends with Dean Moriarty. The first page begins, 'I first met Dean not long after my wife and I split up'; the novel ends with the words, 'I think of Dean Moriarty'" (64). Dean's introduction is brief, transitory, energetic, and exciting. It is just enough to make his presence felt strongly, to mythologize him, to give the reader a taste of the legendary Dean Moriarty. Dean's introduction must make a strong impression on the reader, because he is conspicuously absent from the rest of the novel's first section, where he is often spoken of but infrequently spoken with. At the end of chapter ten, Sal notes that "In a last-minute phone call Dean said he and Carlo might join me on the Coast; I pondered this, and realized I hadn't talked to Dean for more than five minutes in the whole time" (Kerouac 59). At the end of the first section, Sal laments, "Now it was too late and I had also missed Dean" (108). Sal betrays a tacit understanding that he owes all his road experiences and adventures to Dean, who inspired him and gave him the courage to finally take off and do what he had always wanted to do, to go from thinking

about experiencing his life to actually experiencing it. *On the Road*, in fact, owes much of its popularity and durability to its ability to inspire many of its readers in much the same way that Dean inspires Sal.

On the Road makes fitting in no longer seem like the highest good. Steve Wilson notes, "In the confining social environment of the late 1940s America, conformity was seen as a civic good" (302). If one never gets beyond the fitting in stage of personality development, one is bound to live a completely inauthentic existence, to remain always in Heidegger's "they-self," and miss out entirely on the possibilities of the "authentic-self."

Dean encourages Sal to make that leap, to become a more authentic person, and the novel attempts to help the reader do the same thing. What Dean can not teach Sal, and what the novel can not teach the reader, is how the newly authentic individual can reconnect with the group in order to form a healthy reconciliatory bond between the group and the individual. Love, of course, is the way to do that; but Dean Moriarty, authentic as he is, is incapable of love.

Steve Wilson states that "One important lesson Paradise learns from his tutelage under Moriarty is that authenticity in life requires abandoning our need for personal ties. We must focus our energies on obtaining our own kicks" (307). What is left unsaid is that if one stops there, if one develops no further from the abandoning of personal ties in order to get personal kicks, one is destined to lead a bleak, isolated, sad existence. This may be what Malcolm Cowley meant when he wrote about this about the book: "Faults: the author is solemn about himself and about Dean" (Cunnell 40). Why wouldn't he be solemn when one of the important lessons he learns from his hero is that authenticity requires abandoning personal ties and focusing on personal needs? Such a hero would

hang his best friend out to dry whenever it suits his purpose, and indeed that is exactly what Dean does to Sal on two different occasions in the novel: once in San Francisco near the end of part two, and once in Mexico at the end of part four. However, this says more about Dean as an individual than it does about authenticity as an ideal.

Dean's prodigious sexuality is another aspect of his unique individuality. It also immediately makes him an interesting character. His sexual prowess is a crucial part of his legend. Sal states, "To him sex was the one and only holy and important thing in life, although he had to sweat and curse to make a living and so on" (2). Though it should hardly be surprising that a man in his early twenties places a great deal of importance on sex, what makes it interesting is Dean's lack of inhibition and sexual hang-ups, his freedom from sexual repression, and how, on his priority list, sex is more important than making a living. That makes him different. That makes him a little bit of an outsider. Thus begins the mythologizing of not only Dean, but of the outsider.

Throughout *On the Road*, the outsider is glamorized. Steve Wilson states about Kerouac and the Beats that "The life of the outsider was for them the last place where authenticity survived in the manufactured world of America" (303). Sal states that Dean "was a young jailkid all hung-up on the wonderful possibilities of becoming a real intellectual" (4). This goes a long way toward enlightening Sal's most intense personal conflict, a conflict caused by his desire to be more like the young jailkid (the outsider) and less like the real intellectual. One can feel Sal's disappointment when he states that "All my other current friends were 'intellectuals...in the negative, nightmare position of putting down society" (Kerouac 8). Sal's desire to be an outsider is sincere, but there is a problem: Sal is not really an outsider. He always has to fabricate his outsider status. In

other words, he must always try to fit in with those who do not fit in. It is ironic that Sal puts down his friends for putting down society, and at the same time tries, and fails, to fit in with those who society marginalizes. His glamorization of the outsider is, after all, nothing more than an elaborate way of putting down society. He remains conveniently oblivious to the fact that he does what he puts other's down for doing, all the while attempting to be what he is not.

Also, one can not help but note how patronizing and condescending Sal is when he thinks he is being flattering. For instance, he recognizes early on that Dean is a conman, stating "though he was a con-man, he was only conning because he wanted so much to live and to get involved with people who would otherwise pay no attention to him" (Kerouac 4). In other words, one should not hold Dean's bad behavior against him, because he only wishes to fit in with the cool crowd, of which Sal implicitly acknowledges himself to be a member, and therefore it is understandable and even excusable.

Sal continues his patronization by way of glamorization, his condescension by way of flattery, when he has an affair with Terry, the (in Sal's words), "cutest little Mexican girl" (Kerouac 81). Before he gets to know her, and he thinks she has gotten on another bus and that he has lost her, one gets an idea about Sal's capacity to love when he says, "A pain stabbed my heart, as it did every time I saw a girl I loved who was going the opposite direction in this too-big world" (Kerouac 81). The beauty of the sentence is undeniable, but it is all style and no substance. For Sal to say that he loved this girl after one look at her in a bus stop is ludicrous. It would be better if he meant it to be funny, but he doesn't. He is as solemn as usual. Sal's love for women, then, is commensurate with

the amount of sexual desire they provoke in him, and, judging by his relationship with Terry, it lasts about as long as the sexual act. This means, then, that Sal is a lot like a lot of other guys, which would be all right if he would admit that and either accept it or change it, rather than blindly going on believing he is one thing, while being something else.

Sal gets so nervous before he has sex with Terry that he runs twelve blocks to get a bottle of whiskey, stating, "To relax our nerves I knew we needed whisky, especially me" (Kerouac 84). Unsurprisingly, considering that he is nervous and drinking alcohol, he starts talking too much. He starts talking about another woman to a woman he has just met and wants to go to bed with. As might be expected, Terry does not take kindly to this. She responds, "Who is this six-foot redhead? Why do you tell me about her" (Kerouac 84)? Under the circumstances, these are very good questions, especially the second one. Sal, however, can not understand why she would ask them, and comes to the conclusion that "In her simple soul she couldn't fathom my kind of glad, nervous talk" (Kerouac 84). This is a very defensive response, a passive-aggressive way of alleviating himself from any of the responsibility in their communication breakdown, and placing the blame instead on Terry's "simple soul."

Still, Terry forgives him and they begin what is, for Sal, a lengthy and serious relationship. As he states, "For the next fifteen days we were together for better or for worse" (Kerouac 86). He even gets a job picking cotton to help support her.

> We bent down and began picking cotton. It was beautiful. Across the fields were the tents, and beyond them the sere brown cottonfields that stretched out of sight to the brown arroyo foothills and then the snow-capped Sierras in the blue

> morning air...it was beautiful kneeling and hiding in that earth. If I felt like resting I did, with my face on the pillow of brown moist earth. Birds sang an accompaniment. I thought I had found my life's work. (Kerouac 96)

Mark Richardson notes that, "Sal's pastoral eye is hardly the eye of a migrant worker, whose felt relation to the cotton field is probably more economic in character than literary and romantic" (223). Once again, what we have here is Sal trying to be, indeed posing as, an outsider. Between him, Terry, and her son Johnny, they earn $1.50 a day, working from dawn till dusk. Not that Sal bothers to worry about that, or needs to, because when he gets tired of it, he just makes the off the wall and ludicrous assertion that "I carried a big stick with me in the tent in case they got the idea we Mexicans were fouling up their trailer camp. They thought I was a Mexican, of course, and in a way I am" (98). He decides to leave, stating, "I could feel the pull of my own life calling me back. I shot my aunt a penny postcard across the land and asked for another fifty" (98). In other words, just like that, Sal can send his aunt a penny postcard and have more money than these workers make in a month, working all day every day.

Sal manages not to notice this. He remains oblivious to the harsh reality of these migrant workers. As Mark Richardson points out, "Feeling the pull of her own life calling her back is a luxury that Terry simply never has. But then again she really is Mexican, whereas the dreamer Sal is, as he himself puts it, only Mexican 'in a way'—that is to say, only figuratively. That makes all the difference. There are Mexicans 'in a way' (Sal) and then there are Mexicans (Terry); there is freedom (what Sal has), and then what might be termed freedom 'in a way' (what Terry has)" (228). Furthermore, just as Sal provides a glimpse of his capacity, or rather his incapacity, to love upon first seeing Terry, he

provides a very similar glimpse at his unchanged incapacity to love upon last seeing her. He states, "Emotionlessly she kissed me in the vineyard and walked off down the row. We turned at a dozen paces, for love is a duel, and looked at each other for the last time" (Kerouac 101). One can not help but wonder, especially in light of Sal's notion that "love is a duel," which one of them felt their last kiss to be emotionless. To call love a duel seems to be a rather negative outlook. It is true that love is not always easy and does not lack conflict, and maybe that is why Sal prefers the romantic notion of love that comes at the first sight of a pretty girl in a bus stop, and requires no effort whatsoever.

One thing is for sure: until one knows and loves one's self, one will not be able to love anybody else. As Erich Fromm states, "an attitude of love toward themselves will be found in all those who are capable of loving others" (55). Sal, for all his searching, never achieves that attitude of love toward his self, nor does he achieve the capability of loving others.

In fact, as a character, Sal never achieves authenticity either. His honesty about this as a narrator, however, is authentic. Sal refreshingly admits, "I had nothing to offer anybody but my own confusion" (77), and nowhere is that more painfully evident than at the beginning of part three, when he muses, "At lilac evening I walked with every muscle aching among the lights of 27th and Welton in the Denver colored section, wishing I were a Negro, feeling that the best the white world had offered was not enough ecstacy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night" (Kerouac 180). One can only wonder what on earth this guy is talking about, and if he could possibly believe in any way what he is saying. Does he know anything about the America he is traveling back and forth across?

Mark Richardson notes that "*On the Road* invites us to suppose that in America Blacks have actually been somehow 'freer' than Whites. It accommodates us to their suffering by imbuing it with the prestige of martyrdom, as if suffering were a kind of gift" (230). It does not stop there. Sal continues his walk, musing, "I was only myself, Sal Paradise...wishing I could exchange worlds with the happy, true-hearted, ecstatic Negroes of America" (Kerouac 180). If only he were joking! It might be a strong statement then, satirical, daring, and poignant. Instead, it sounds like a utopian voice over of a narrator taking a leisurely stroll through fantasy land.

James Baldwin apparently did not find Sal's desire to exchange worlds with the happy Negroes of America either fantastic or complimentary, judging by this response: "It is absolute nonsense, and offensive nonsense at that: I would hate to be in Kerouac's shoes if he should ever be mad enough to read this aloud from the stage of Harlem's Apollo Theater. And yet there is real pain in it, and real loss, however thin" (Richardson 230). Indeed, even the most hard-bitten detractor of the novel would have a hard time arguing that the book lacks sincerity. In fact, when it is all said and done, the most authentic thing about Sal is his sincerity, even if it is the sincerity of confusion.

It is worth wondering whether Sal's sense of loss and pain causes him to despair, or whether his desire to despair causes him his sense of loss of pain. One of Kerouac's more telling philosophies was his concept of life as a "circle of despair." Joshua Kupetz states that "According to Kerouac, the circle of despair represents a belief that the experience of life is a regular series of deflections from one's goals. As one is deflected from a goal, Kerouac explains, he or she establishes a new goal from which he or she will inevitably also be deflected" (89). How easily this could become a self fulfilling

prophesy. How nice this philosophy would be to have in any difficult situation. Just give up. Something goes wrong, blame it on life. The old circle of despair again. No problem. Beyond representing a masochistic attitude toward fate and a pessimistic attitude about life, this attitude prevents individual growth and maturity. One episode in particular puts Sal's lack of maturity on blatant display.

Late in the novel, Sal and Dean are in a Denver bathroom. Sal says, "In the john of a restaurant I was at a urinal blocking Dean's way to the sink and I stepped out before I was finished and resumed at another urinal, and said to Dean, 'Dig this trick'" (Kerouac 213). First of all, this is junior high behavior. There is no getting around that. True, it has a certain juvenile charm about it, and it seems innocuous and harmless enough, but what follows reveals a great deal about Sal's psychological make up.

Dean says, "it's a very good trick but awful on your kidneys and because you're getting a little older now every time you do this eventually years of misery in your old age" (213), to which Sal responds, "It made me mad. 'Who's old? I'm not much older than you are...you're always making cracks about my age...you don't have to warn me about *my* kidneys" (213). Here is a grown man acting like a junior high kid and taking it very personally when he is reminded that he is not a junior high kid anymore. Once again, if Sal displayed a sense of humor about how his action does not correlate to his age, how his behavior is, to put it nicely, unusual for an adult, the whole scenario would take on a completely different light. Instead, the mere mention of his age, the slightest reminder of his adulthood (as he does pee tricks in urinals) is enough to infuriate him. This is especially true because the reminder comes from Dean, a man with whom he feels safe from these kinds of reminders. Tim Hunt states that, "Dean is a 'cowboy' and evokes

in Sal a nostalgia for the frontier and escape from adult responsibilities" (264). How dare Dean, the man who represents escape from adult responsibilities, remind Sal that he is an adult?

Dean leaves the restaurant, quite uncharacteristically leaving his food untouched, and Sal starts to feel guilty. When Dean comes back and tells Sal he was crying, Sal responds enigmatically, "You don't die enough to cry" (214). What is apparently supposed to come off as some deep philosophical statement comes off instead as more pseudo-philosophical nonsense, and while it seems like Sal redeems himself a little when he ponders, "how ugly I was and what filth I was discovering in the depths of my own impure psychologies" (214), all this turns out to be is more empty chatter. It does not mean anything because Sal has no intention of owning up to what he says, as he makes abundantly clear just moments later: "It's not my fault! It's not my fault! Nothing in this lousy world is my fault, don't you see that? I don't want it to be and it can't be and it *won't* be" (214). This attitude would be disappointing in a fifteen year old, but in a man pushing thirty, it is a problem. It is precisely this unwillingness to accept responsibility for anything, this insecure, defensive, fault finding, blame laying attitude that keeps Sal from maturing.

Sal is not alone. *On the Road* notably lacks positive role models and mature characters. It is just those kinds of people that the novel wishes to upset. The novel's message is essentially negative, in that the characters pride themselves more on what they are not than on what they are. They are not conformists, they are not law-abiding, they are not traditional or conventional, and they are not mature. They spurn the routinization of contemporary society, and their continuous and unpredictable motion is their preferred

way of thumbing their noses at that society. Usually they are not headed anywhere for any particular reason, as Sal sums up when he says, "It was a completely meaningless set of circumstances that made Dean come, and similarly I went off with him for no reason" (116). Whenever this lack of positive motivations is called into question, the immaturity of the characters comes into focus.

In one scene, Carlo Marx confronts Sal, Dean, and Dean's girlfriend Marylou about their apparent lack of intentions, saying, "It seems to me the time has come to decide what you are and what you're going to do" (128). Carlo then addresses each member of the group individually, and the response he gets is this: "No answer—giggles" (128). First, it should be pointed out that the character of Carlo Marx is no shining example of maturity himself, but the point here is that they literally giggle at the idea of having goals and a plan. While this line of thinking could represent and encourage a certain openness of mind that could actually be a beneficial and healthy outlook in a society becoming ever more narrow-minded and tunnel-visioned, it does not come off that way. Instead, the attitude behind this giggling and snickering at mature behavior and adult responsibilities is essentially the same attitude as a juvenile delinquent making fun of his teacher. The message is, "I will not be like you." If this message is met by a teacher wise enough to respond, "That's fine. What will you be like?" The student has no answer, so he giggles off the question.

This delinquent attitude is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the novel's success. Certainly it captured and articulated something that resonated with readers. Underneath the apparent material success America was experiencing in 1957, there must have been a deep rooted feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction, a feeling that life had more to offer,

and a confusion about what that might be. Kerouac, being the artist, expressed this communal feeling in *On the Road.*

Penny Vlagopoulos states that "Kerouac felt too deeply the gaps between what life was supposed to be and how people actually lived it. He lamented in a journal entry in 1949, 'I feel that I'm the only person in the world who doesn't know the feeling of calm irreverence...All the others are perfectly contented with real life. I am not" (58). Obviously, based on the popularity of *On the Road,* Kerouac was not the only one who felt as he did.

This feeling of dissatisfaction and alienation was seething underneath the surface of mainstream American society, and if *On the Road* goes anywhere, it is underneath that surface. Even if Sal carries with him a mainstream expectation of what the fringes of American society will be like, and never sees anything but what that preconceived expectation allows him to see, at least he makes the journey.

In fact, journeying is more important than discovering in *On the Road.* George Mouratidis states, "Kerouac underscores the significance of the process of authentication itself—the journey rather than its end—thus demonstrating that that which would be deemed most authentic is actually a *becoming* rather than a being" (70). That does not accurately reflect the kind of journeying taking place in *On the Road.* The journaling depicted in this novel is the journeying of a kid running away from home in a huff, only to be home by dinner. In other words, it is journeying itself, not becoming, that is deemed most authentic in *On the Road,* where there is precious little becoming going on. The characters don't become anything but what they already were. It is a fleeing from, not a going toward. This accentuates the novel's essentially negative message, as the

characters, the "wild Bohemians," as Malcolm Cowley calls them (Cunnell 46), race from coast to coast shouting "Na-na-na-na-naaa, you can't get me!" Yet there is something appealing about that. It could be the first step toward authenticity, the step away from society.

However, individuality is not without its perils, and authenticity does not guarantee anything, especially not permanent happiness. It was that kind of permanent happiness ideal, sponsored by society, which spawned *On the Road*, which aspires to wipe the plastered smiles right off those gleaming, satisfied faces. Though *On the Road* does not attempt to do this with anger, one could well wish it did. As it is, the prevailing emotion in *On the Road* is sadness, not anger. The dissatisfaction with society is still there, but since it causes sadness instead of anger, it kind of blunts the edge of it.

That is another reason Dean appeals to Sal: He is not perpetually dissatisfied. His willingness to say yes to any new experience, to fly uninhibited in the face of tradition and conventionality, is enough to make him heroic to a guy as down in the dumps as Sal. Sal hints at that early on, saying, "his 'criminality' was not something that sulked and sneered; it was a wild yea-saying overburst of American joy" (Kerouac 7). Sal's own sense of displacement and unhappiness is so strong that he is willing to believe in anything that might restore in him a sense of belonging and happiness. Of all the people he knows, Dean is the happiest. Nowhere is this more obvious, nor the difference between his outlook on life and Sal's more obvious than when Dean says:

> You see? Heeby-jeebies, I'm classification three-A, jazz-hounded Moriarty has a sore butt, his wife gives him daily injections of penicillin for his thumb, which produces hives, for he's allergic...he must blow and snort constantly to clear his

> nose, which has collapsed just under the bridge where an operation some years ago weakened it. He lost his thumb on his throwing arm. Greatest seventy-yard passer in the history of New Mexico State Reformatory. And yet—and yet, I've never felt better and finer and happier with the world and to see little lovely children playing in the sun and I am so glad to see you, my fine gone wonderful Sal, and I know, I *know* everything will be all right. (Kerouac 186)

Though Sal can never bring himself to believe that way, he recognizes the value of that kind of faith, of that kind of happiness, hard won in the face hardship. He recognizes that Dean has something valuable to teach him, and he tries to learn it. One has to give him credit for that.

However, before Sal catches up to Dean and hits the road with him in an effort to learn his lessons, he takes to the road by himself, inspired by Dean but not accompanied by him. During this first trip, Sal gets a job as a security guard, continuing his romanticizing of the outlaw that began with his sentence about Dean's "yea-saying" criminality. Aside from being the first thing that happens in the novel other than talking and traveling, Sal's stint as a security guard provides him with some valuable insight into the nature of cops and criminals, which leads to some interesting and provocative ideas about the role of the outlaw in society.

One can see Sal differentiating between Dean's "yea-saying" criminality and the more typical sulking and sneering criminality, the implication being that it is foolish to be a sulking and sneering type of criminal. The personal dissatisfaction has not changed in that case, thus the criminality has solved nothing. It has put the individual's freedom at risk and not made him a whit happier. Criminals of this sort are not very different from

the cops trying to catch them, and there is no shortage of cop stories in *On the Road.* In fact, these cop stories contain Kerouac's best social criticism and represent some of his best writing in the novel.

In San Francisco, Sal's friend Remi gets him a job as a security guard in the barracks. Sal says of his co-workers, "It was a horrible crew of men, men with cop-souls" (Kerouac 65). "Men with cop-souls," is one of the diamonds of Kerouac's bejeweled prose. It says everything simply, originally, and perfectly. The cop-soul spirit is exactly what *On the Road* rises up against, which makes it ironic that its author spent some time, however brief, working as a cop of sorts.

Sal reserves his most telling commentary for the leader of these men with cop-souls, stating, "The cop who had been an Alcatraz guard was potbellied and about sixty, retired but unable to keep away from the atmospheres that had nourished his dry soul his life. Every night he drove to work in his '35 Ford, punched the clock exactly on time, and sat down at the rolltop desk" (Kerouac 67). From the sound of things, this guy might as well be in prison himself! That, of course, is the point.

The low point of Sal's experience working as a cop, but the high point of his writing about that experience, is when he and a cop named Sledge, at Sledge's behest, arrest a group of men for making too much noise. Sal states, "We went to the offending room, and Sledge opened the door and told everybody to file out. It was embarrassing. Every single one of us was blushing. This is the story of America. Everybody's doing what they think they're supposed to do" (Kerouac 68). Nowhere else in the novel is the lack of authenticity in America stated more powerfully. The message is clear: nobody has

the guts to be authentic, not the criminals, not the cops, not anybody, including Sal himself. America needs Dean Moriarty. Then again, Dean Moriarty is America.

Thus, the contradiction continues. How can the authentic Dean Moriarty and the inauthentic America be metaphors for each other? For Kerouac, they are opposite sides of the same coin, and he flips that coin at his whim. George Mouratidis helpfully states that "Kerouac's representation of his relationship with Cassady (Moriarty) is one of contrasts, consisting of various and distinct incarnations of Cassady between which we as readers move in our attempt to establish a sense of his development and changing significance" (69). The same could be said of Kerouac's representation of America. He constantly shifts and changes his thoughts and opinions about it, and usually these changes are more drastic than slight. With Kerouac, it is all one thing or all the other. One can tell that from the way hyperbole pervades this novel. It is difficult to get through a page of *On the Road* without Sal stating that something was the greatest, the silliest, the goofiest, the worst, the saddest, the most or the least likely, the funniest or the least funny. Captivating as Kerouac's prose can be, and his prose is his greatest strength as a writer, one can not help but think that it would be even better if he employed a little subtlety.

Then again, one of the reasons for this hyperbolic language, and the shifting representations of both Cassady (Moriarty) and America, is that Kerouac is writing the myth and reality of both, and the difference between myth and reality is often hyperbolic. The weird thing about Kerouac (Sal) is that after he sees both the myth and the reality of something, and understands each for what it is, he chooses to ignore the reality, and accept the myth. There is no better example of this than the last paragraph of the novel,

when he returns to the myth of both America and Dean Moriarty, which is right where he started.

Thus, one has to wonder what the point of all that traveling was, considering that Sal ends up in the same place he started, both from a physical and a psychological standpoint. Sure, he has many experiences, some of them quite exhilarating, and all of them rendered exhilaratingly by Kerouac's hyped up, energetic prose. Still, when it is all said and done, his searching has not resulted in any discernible discovery or growth. He still prefers mythology to reality, as evidenced by the fact that he leaves Dean out in a cold winter night in order to go to a Duke Ellington concert with Remi Boncoeur. The real Dean is there, asking Sal if he can just ride part of the way to the concert with them, saying, "Want to be with you as much as possible, m'boy, and besides it's so durned cold in this here New Yawk" (Kerouac 306), but Sal ignores this request, leaves this real Dean out in the cold, and then writes the elegiac final paragraph about the mythological Dean, which famously ends, "I think of Dean Moriarty" (307). There is an obvious disconnect here between what Sal says and what he does, which he apparently fails to recognize. If he thinks so much about Dean Moriarty, why did he leave him on the street like that? To please another friend that he had let down before? All right, then if he had gone with Dean, and left Remi go to the concert, would he have ended the novel, "I think of Remi Boncouer?" But this novel does not want questions.

Admittedly, the exhilaration of the rush toward that last sentence is so intense that one could happily just close the book and enjoy the novel for what it is: an exhilarating, pointless novel. Ultimately, the novel is exhilarating and pointless because the author sees life as exhilarating and pointless. That the novel, even the heavily edited published

version, represents the author's sensitivities so thoroughly speaks to the fact that Kerouac achieves authenticity as a narrator, even if he fails to do so as a character.

That's one of the reasons Sal and Dean make such a good pair. Sal wishes he could live like Dean and Dean wishes he could write like Sal. They compliment each other well.

Dean's writing career will never get off the ground because his authenticity drives him to live life to the fullest, preventing him from fulfilling any of his literary dreams. If he were to fulfill those dreams, he would need to discipline himself to occasionally take a step back from life in order to create art, and quite obviously he is unable to do that. Maybe, when it is all said and done, he is really paying lip service to the idea of being a writer. Then again, maybe he is creating a different kind of art: the art of authenticity. Is Dean the authentic modern artist? Is he the man who, as Otto Rank says, "will remould the self-creative type and will be able to put his creative impulse *directly* into the service of his own personality" (430)?

It is no accident that one of the first things Sal mentions about Dean's letters, besides the fact that he supposedly wants to learn how to write, is that Dean wants to learn "all about Nietzsche" (Kerouac 1). Nietzsche is the perfect philosopher for Dean, as his idea of authenticity seems tailor made for him. Dean exhibits some of the qualities of Nietzsche's "Superman," or "Ubermensch." Jacob Golomb describes those qualities as, "the *amor fati* attitude and the affirmation of oneself, namely, of having the *optimum* 'faith' in one's self" (26). These characteristics, Golomb continues, "are the prerequisites for creating one's authenticity" (26). Thus once again the idea is reiteration of the idea

that authenticity is something one creates, not something one discovers. In *On the Road*, authenticity becomes an art.

The authenticity represented both by Kerouac's prose and Dean Moriarty's behavior stresses unrestrained wildness. Carl Malmgren states that Kerouac "calls for a highly personal and confessional narrative, one scribbled down without correction and at a high speed in a quest for spontaneity and, consequently, authenticity" (61). One can easily see the connection between the style of narrative Kerouac deems authentic and the style of living that Cassady deems most authentic. Heavy emphasis is placed on spontaneity, rapidity, and mobility.

This emphasis on movement is underscored by the title of the book itself, *On the Road*. John Leland notes that *On the Road* was also "Neal Cassady's phrase for being high" (4). In one of the most famous passages of the novel, Sal catches the dynamism and exhilaration of this unrestrained quest for authenticity, stating, "we all realized we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one and noble function of the time, *move*. And we moved" (Kerouac 134)! This omnipresent and comparatively obvious emphasis on motion, suggesting unique and authentic possibilities of spatial manipulation, often overshadows the novels more subtle critique of modern day temporality.

One of the ways Dean creates his own authenticity is through his unique conception of, and use of, time. Erik Mortenson states that "*On the Road* provides ample evidence that Dean's conception of time is shifted away from past and future and toward an ever-changing present" (55). This difference is highlighted most explicitly when Sal and Dean are headed from San Francisco to New York, and end up with a group of

people headed to Kansas in what Dean terms a "fag Plymouth" (Kerouac 207). Here, Dean explains what he means when he says he knows time:

> "Now you just dig them up front. They have worries, they're counting the miles, they're thinking about where to sleep tonight, how much money for gas, the weather, how they'll get there—and all the time they'll get there anyway, you see. But they need to worry and betray time with urgencies false and otherwise, purely anxious and whiny, their souls won't be at peace unless they can latch on to an established and proven worry and having found it they assume facial expressions to fit and go with it, which is, you see, unhappiness" (Kerouac 210).

One can see that Dean is disgusted by the inauthenticity of these people in general, and not just their notions about time. Still, the idea that one can "betray" time is particularly sagacious. It indicates that Dean's knowledge about time lies in his wisdom that life is made out of time, and that there is more than one way to waste it. It is usually the mainstream culture that decides what is wasting time and what isn't. Erik Mortenson states that "Dean's knowledge of time is that time will take care of itself, it has to, because each moment must continue on" (58).

Dean's theory, while interesting, seems too reactionary, so much in opposition to what mainstream society thinks that it seems like nothing but a hasty thumbing of the nose at that society. A personification of Sal's hyperbole, Dean both lives and theorizes to extremes. Mortenson states, "while the passengers already alluded to lose themselves in an over-identification with worldly concerns, Dean might be said to do precisely the opposite—he seeks to escape his ties to the situation around him" (58). Still, it would be hard to argue that Dean's conception of time isn't superior to that of the passengers. He

really does seem to know time much better than they do, in that at least he has made an authentic attempt to know it. Mortenson acknowledges this when he says, "Rather than seeing the world as others see it, Dean attempts to encounter for the first time what is truly important in the present moment" (59).

Dean's knowledge of time supersedes that of Sal's as well as it does that of the passengers. Sal never quite assimilates Dean's carefree attitude about time. He too betrays time in a way. As Mortenson notes, "Although Sal seems to share Dean's ecstatic revelry in the moment, when expounding his own thoughts, quite a different belief system emerges, one that focuses not on the fleeting quality of life, but on death" (59).

Sal's thoughts about time and death are unsurprisingly tinged by his religion. In fact, the religiosity of *On the Road*, often goes unnoticed. Kerouac himself referred to it as, "a story about 2 Catholic buddies roaming the country in search of God" (Leland 149). The religion in the book, however, comes off much differently than Kerouac intended, and it is highly doubtful that anybody who reads the novel would describe it in that way.

The most religious thing about Sal's character is his conception of time. As Mortenson states, "his notions remain firmly entrenched in Christian ideals that display temporal transcendence in terms of annihilation" (61). While Sal's religion does not help him enjoy each moment of life, Dean, the other Catholic buddy, has found a way to know time without abandoning his religion. Dean's affirmation that "God does exist" (Kerouac 138) is an affirmation for him of existence itself. It is almost as if he is imploring Sal to shake free from his fixation on death so that he can enjoy life. Right at the beginning of the novel Sal admits, "feeling that everything was dead" (Kerouac 1). Dean is the

opposite, as Mortenson points out, "Dean's is a life-affirming philosophy, a belief that life should be lived to the fullest in every moment" (60).

Once again, this rendering of both life and death in extremes is the ultimate undoing for both Sal and Dean. Dean's attempt to live life to the fullest in every moment burns him out to the point where he is barely coherent by the end of the novel, and Sal's feeling that everything is dead, in other words his notion of his Christian notion of time, never really changes, as evidenced by this passage near the end of the novel:

> From when destruction comes to the world of "history" and the Apocalypse of the Fellahin returns once more as so many times before, people will still stare with the same eyes from the caves of Mexico as well as from the caves of Bali, where it all began and here Adam was suckled and taught to know (Kerouac 281).

Once again, as Mortenson points out, "we see transcendence rendered as death and destruction" (61), just as it was at the beginning of the novel. In other words, this is just more confirmation that for all Sal's searching, he has not discovered anything, and neither has he matured as a result of his experiences.

Though John Leland notes that "despite the characters' repeated references to God, salvation, and redemption, the book's religious dimension has been overshadowed by the image of two wild and crazy guys" (130). That's because the characters, especially those two wild and crazy guys, have religious beliefs that do not appear to matter very much to them. Those beliefs are just extensions of their personalities, and nothing that would help them to develop or change those personalities: or in other words, nothing that would help them mature as individuals.

Sal's religious beliefs are particularly troubling. They just don't seem authentic, but rather they seem whimsical at best, negative and even selfish at worst. After Sal's first day picking cotton, which is actually pretty funny timing if one thinks about it, Sal states, "I looked up at the dark sky and prayed to God for a better break in life and a better chance to do something for the little people I loved. Nobody was paying attention to me up there. I should have known better" (96). The spirit in which Sal utters that prayer, combined with his attitude about having uttered it at all, makes him sound like a crybaby.

Published just one year before *On the Road*, Erich Fromm offers some interesting insight into why this might be: "What we witness...is a regression to an idolatric concept of God, and a transformation of the love of God into a relationship fitting an alienated character structure...Contemporary man is rather like a child of three, who cries for father when he needs him, and otherwise is quite self-sufficient when he can play" (97). Sal's prayer sounds very much like a cry for father during a brief intermission when he is unable to play.

On top of that, Sal's religion doesn't provide him with any solidarity and doesn't help him mature in any way. There is a whimsical nature to all of it, and Sal's particular brand of whimsicality leads not to the affirmation of God, as it does for Dean, but rather to God's negation. Nowhere else is this more evident than in the last paragraph of the novel, in that line that sticks out like a sore thumb: "and don't you know that God is Pooh Bear" (Kerouac 307)? If this is the summation of the wisdom Sal garnered from his travels, religious or otherwise, perhaps he would have been better off staying home.

While it seems innocuous, innocent, almost childlike and playful, what the Pooh Bear line indicates is that God, for Sal, could be anything. How nice. Of course, God, for Sal, could also be nothing. Or if God is Pooh Bear today, God could very well be Panda Bear tomorrow, and Grizzly Bear the day after that. In other words it's a completely pointless thing to say, and yet it stands out, and remains memorable, like the chorus of a bad pop song.

It would be nice to say that Sal's searching confusion revealed by the Pooh Bear line shows that he has a better attitude than the zealous fanatic who believes wholeheartedly that he knows the truth about God, and feels compelled to share that truth with other people whether they like it or not. However, the line so clearly reveals the kind of regression to the idolatric concept of God that Fromm talks about that it actually paves the way for that kind of religious fanaticism. One so desperate to believe as to utter, "God is Pooh Bear," with a straight face is always in danger of being led down the wrong path by anybody who makes him believe in something.

In fact, that basically sums up *On the Road.* Sal needs to believe in something, and Dean gives him something to believe in. Dean does not lead Sal down the wrong path so much as he leads him down the road to nowhere, which is, all things considered, the preferable alternative.

Movement is king in *On the Road.* What's interesting is that the need for perpetual motion might be caused by the very need to believe that Sal seeks to find a cure for in that perpetual motion. Fromm states, "People are anxious, without principles or faith, they find themselves without an aim except the one to move ahead; hence they

continue to remain children" (96). This explains the lack of mature characters in the novel, just as that lack of mature characters explains the absence of love.

Dean has much to teach about authenticity, his fierce individualism and defiance of social norms attests to that. However, he has precious little to teach about love, unless one wishes to learn from his bad example.

Early in the narrative, Sal states that "Marylou was the only girl Dean ever really loved" (111). Of course, not too long after that, Dean states, "I hit Marylou on the brow on February twenty-sixth at six o'clock in the evening" (185). Sex and violence, then, are the primary ways that Dean expresses his "love" for Marylou. Though Dean and Marylou aren't married, one can find a valuable insight about the nature of their relationship in Fromm's *The Art of.Loving*:

> Even to show one's anger, one's hate, one's complete lack of inhibition is taken for intimacy, and this may explain the perverted attraction married couples often have for each other, who seem intimate only when they are in bed or when they give vent to their mutual hate and rage. (Fromm 50)

It's not just his relationship to Marylou that speaks to his inability to love, but his relationships to people in general, and to himself. His philosophy that, as Mortenson states, "life should be lived to the fullest in every moment" (60), leads him to early burnout. If he truly wanted to learn all about Nietzsche, as he claimed, he should have taken heed to this line: "One must know how *to conserve oneself*: the hardest test of independence" (50).

On the Road doesn't come to any firm conclusions about anything, and maybe it's appropriate that a book carrying that title should not. Malcolm Cowley's claim that "The

'wild bohemians' of the novel were like 'machines gone haywire...with hardly any emotions except a determination to say Yes to any new experience" (Cunnell 46), is not far from the truth. Sal, in fact, is far more inclined to say no to new experiences and is only activated to start saying yes by Dean's refreshingly life-affirming, yea-saying brand of authenticity.

In a society striving for sameness, *On the Road*, strives for something else. It appears that when Cowley says that *On the Road*, "will stand for a long time as the honest record of another way of life" (Cunnell 47), that he underestimated the value of such a record, especially in a society where less and less such records can be found.

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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Nathaniel Botsis

Local Address:
10115 Jeffreys Street #1188
Las Vegas, NV 89183

Degrees:
Bachelor of English, Liberal Arts, 2000
Michigan State University

Thesis Title: Authenticity and Love in *The Sun Also Rises* and *On the Road*

Thesis Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Stephen G. Brown, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. John Unrue, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Charles Whitney, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. Giuseppe Natale, Ph.D.