Tutor

English 204

Date

Word Count:992

Critical Look at Symbolic Ties to Money and Masculinity in *the Sun Also Rises*

Jacob Michael Leland of Brown University critically reviewed Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* in his journal article, “Yes, That is a Roll of Bills in My Pocket: The Economy of Masculinity. Within the article Leland examines Hemingway’s text and applies views of symbolism mainly in regards to the narrator of the novel, Jake. The symbolism thatLeland focuses on is Jake’s identity as a man as well as an expatriate. The assertion that money is directly related to the idea of Jake’s masculinity is correctly identified and discussed in Leland’s critical review.

One of Leland’s major points is that Jake can display his masculinity by spendingmoney (Leland 37). Even though Jake lost the ability to be a man physically (Hemingway39) he is able to make up for it by having the ability to spend money (Leland 37). The way that Jake spends his money is where the symbolism ties in. Jake ‘buys’ women, friends, and a social life. A significantly large majority of Jake’s spending is related to social spending. The social aspect can be observed by how Jake provides vacations and drinks for others. The ability to provide gives him a sense of power, and in return a sense of being a man.

However, even though social spending is a majority of Leland’s argument it is not what he began his review with. Leland first acknowledges the fact that Jake also utilizes money to identify himself as an expatriate. Jake is engrained in the Parisian society. He lives and works there; he is not a tourist. This differentiation is key. Even within this definition of self, Jake relies upon his monetary value. Here Jake’s ability to provide a contribution to the art and history as a Parisian citizen creates a power associated over the tourists. He does not fall for the same tricks and advertising that tourists fall for (38). Jake is a part of the Parisian economy which provides a definition of his self-worth.

Jake also spends his money in ways that give him a sense of connection to people. Leland identifies that Jakes spends his money on experiences and people that will benefit his social life instead of purchasing physical items (42). Jake pays to have dominance over others such as wait staff, “I spent a little money and the waiter liked me” (Hemingway 237). In Jake’s opinion he had made the waiter his friend. However, in reality the waiter needed the money and behaved in a manner that would encourage good tips. Leland acknowledges this fact and states that these workers are, “willing to perform a ‘sincere liking’ in the service of Jake’s ‘valuable qualities’” (Leland 41). In this situation Jake identified himself as a masculine being by having the ability to control another individual’s attitudes about him. The key here is that Jake’s idea was only formed and accepted by himself.

It is evident in *The Sun Also Rises* that Jake is only a part of a small crowd. His companions include Robert Cohn, whom he despises (Hemingway 185), Bill, Brett, Mike and Montoya. Anyone else is simply present to fill a void but is not a lasting impression or influential on a daily level to Jake. Therefore, it is imperative that Jake remains close to this set of individuals because it is what he has. His status in the group is one of an individual who is on the outs. He seems to always be looking in on the group and not a part of it. He defines himself as a member of the group by providing monetary value and allowing the trips to occur. This is obvious after the fiesta is over and Mike said, “I’ve no money” (233). Here Jake steps up as the only paid writer and took care of the bill. Once again Jake is involved in the Parisian economy and takes care of his friends symbolizing his masculine identity.

Along with paying for services Leland emphasizes Jake’s manliness from the ability to pay for women. He must pay to keep the appearance of a man by hiring Georgette who he can only dine with. In the same way Jake can only feel close to Brett and when he pays for her stay at a hotel, or can provide for her (43). Since Jake Barnes’s cannot physically be a sexual being his, “sexuality, then, is a commodity, with exchange-value but not use-value” (43). With money being Jake’s primary way of illustrating manliness it is notable that his money is spent in social settings providing for himself and others. He does not purchase physical items such as stuffed dogs but chooses to spend money on people. His definition of worth directly relates to his self-identification and manliness.

Contrary to the idea that money symbolizes masculinity for Jake one could argue that Jake illustrates his manliness when he fishes as well as when he attends the bull fights. However, the bull fights and trips were only a vacation for Jake. It is reasonable to have an identity year round such that one can conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. In Paris there were not the manliness possibilities so Jake found money to be a stable cohesive tie to power, status and in return manliness. Bullfighting and fishing do add to Jake’s manliness yet it is his ability to spend money is what allows him to be a man year round and control situations.

Leland’s observations on *The Sun Also Rises*accurately define Jake as an expatriate who can identify himself as a man by possessing the ability to use and spend money to his advantage.Jake earns his money in Paris making him a part of the Parisian society. His choice to spend his earnings in social settings indicate his need for friendships and his ability to have power over those who cannot provide for themselves. Overall, Leland correctly identifies the ways in which Jake exhibits his masculinity and identifies himself.

Works Cited

Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises*. New York: Scribner, 2006. Print.

Leland, Jacob Michael. "Yes, That Is a Roll of Bills in My Pocket: The Economy of Masculinity in The Sun Also Rises." *The Hemingway Review*23.2 (2004): 37-46. *ProQuest*. Web.