Anonymous and Anonymous

Ms. Doe

AP English 7th Hour

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Jordan Baker

Primary Source: A Depiction of the Character

- "She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless, and with her chin raised a little as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall" (Fitzgerald 8).
  - This describes how she appeared to be condescending and snobbish towards Nick, and anyone else who seemed below her. For a first impression, the reader could deduce that Jordan is vain and would never give the time of day to someone who isn’t of her class.

- "Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter, that was as cool as their white dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire" (Fitzgerald 12).
  - What they discuss isn't important when compared with the problems in the real world. It shows how Jordan is only worried about superficial routine discussions, almost to get the discussion off of herself and her hidden self/secrets.

- "Jordan Baker instinctively avoided clever, shrewd men, and now I saw that this was because she felt safer on a plane where any divergence from a code would be thought impossible" (Fitzgerald 57-58).
  - This shows that Jordan surrounds herself with people that have the same moral values as her, which is why she continually spends her time with Daisy and Tom. She knows
that they aren’t the best people to be influenced by but they are well known in the
wealthy community, ergo she spends her time with them.

- "’Miss Baker’s a great sportswoman, you know, and she’d never do anything that wasn’t all
  right’" (Fitzgerald 71).
  - People view Jordan as very direct and honest person, but that is not her true
    personality, which is truly deceitful; she has even cheated on her golf tournaments.

- "’You said a bad driver was only safe until she met another bad driver?’” (Fitzgerald 177).
  - Jordan isn’t good at making decisions in her life, and when she gets hurt, she never
    reveals it to anyone. This may also indicate that she and Nick are homosexual.

- "She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage and, given this unwillingness, I suppose she
  had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young in order to keep that cool, insolent
  smile turned to the world and yet satisfy the demands of her hard, jaunty body" (Fitzgerald 58).
  - She has to hide her true emotions and replace them with a fake, cold, dishonest
    exterior. She doesn't like being "a lesser person" than someone else, which causes her
    to be that fake version of herself.

- "The bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed something- most affections
  conceal something eventually, even though they don’t in the beginning- and one day I found
  what it was" (Fitzgerald 57).
  - This shows how Jordan puts on a façade and a wall to masque and protect who she
    really is, and she has probably done this since she was little.

- "I doubted that, though there were several she could have married at the nod of her head, but I
  pretended to be surprised” (Fitzgerald 177).
• She is desirable to men; however, in Nick’s opinion, she is reluctant to date, let alone marry, any of her potential suitors. This gives the impression that she doesn’t enjoy the company of men.

• "Usually her voice came over the wire as something fresh and cool, as if a divot from a green gold-links had come sailing in at the office window, but this morning it seemed harsh and dry" (Fitzgerald 155).

• She is usually a relaxed person and tries very hard to appear that way, to be cool calm and collected (that’s how she appears to have power to others). But, occasionally, depending on her mood, she forgets how to act.

• "Her gray sun-strained eyes looked back at me with polite reciprocal curiosity out of a wan, charming, discontented face" (Fitzgerald 11).

• She is simply polite to others while she is at another place, mentally, while talking to them. If someone isn’t important, there's someplace that she would rather be than talking to him or her. At the same time however, Jordan appears to be wanting more, periodically looking longingly at what we want in her life.

**Literary Criticism: Analysis of the Character**

• "Recognizing the intentionality behind Jordan’s invisibility and indistinguishability from other women and understanding it as a self-conscious pose—a form of passing—reveals some of what I would like to argue are the novel’s heretofore undiscovered core concerns: intersections between racial and gender transgression, queer politics and practices of the closet, and the ways patriarchal capitalism constructs gender and sexuality" (Froehlich).

• Jordan is hiding the person she truly is, which is considered to be homosexual, behind the person that people will respect in society. Especially since she is a part of the
wealthy and is a professional athlete, she feels like she physically can’t reveal herself to the shallow people she surrounds herself with.

- "Jordan's apparent lack of definition is reflected in literary criticism of the novel, which dismisses her as a flat and static character, Fitzgerald's representative of a vacuous and superficial New Woman, a kind of stock character of the flapper" (Froehlich).
  - Jordan's character is known as a flat character, as she doesn’t truly develop as a as a person throughout the story. This causes her to be easily accepted by readers and wouldn’t be known as someone complicated.

- "Jordan Baker's name itself identifies her as queer - referring not only to the automobiles that are, of course, so closely associated with (male) wealth and power in the novel, but also with Josephine Baker, a racially and sexually transgressive figure"(Froehlich).
  - Jordan seems to have some of the same characteristics as a man such as the wealth and power which shows she is not like every other woman in that society. This shows partly why she didn’t share more of herself since it would create a larger gap between her and the “ideal” women of that class.

- “We should begin to suspect, as Nick does, that Jordan looks like her pictures precisely because she is always posing, and, as he soon realized, her superficiality is a carefully constructed mask designed to conceal a secret life in a panoptical society”(Froehlich).
  - Nick discovers that the Jordan that she is trying to get everyone to see is not the true Jordan that she is hiding from a society that won't accept her. Nick seems to be the only one (that we know of) that realizes Jordan’s truthful with herself and others.

- “The game she is playing, claiming the right to self-sufficiency, independence, and sexual freedom reserved for men, requires her to be particularly "careful," especially around Tom, both
as the embodiment of abstract social power and, quite literally, the force whom Jordan needs to evade: Daisy's husband" (Froehlich).

- Jordan believes she has the right to be authentic but won't show her true self because of the people in her life that will overpower her opinion. However, to her, it would be better to not feel safe to share with those around and be considered on the top rung.

**Historical Connection: The Character as a Representative of the 1920s**

- "Dating became an exercise in the machismo of capitalism; the man with the money could afford to ask the girls out; he had a car to take them out in; he drove, he paid, and she had to be 'good company' in return" (Ling).

  - Jordan, in the time frame of the story, never had to rely on the male to take her out because she had income from playing golf. However, she would let the male she was with pay, which helps this statement remain true in her instance.

- "Once the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified, the lines that divided women-class, race, age, ideology- became more significant" (Dumenil).

  - Jordan is prejudice towards certain groups of people, especially different groups of women. She acts differently when around people of wealth yet she looks down upon those who don't have as much to offer, like Myrtle.

- "The nub of this humorous piece was that when the young man came to 'call', he found to his astonishment that 'she had her hat on'' (Ling).

  - Just like the new rebellious role of women, Jordan had independence and took charge of her life, though she hid some aspects of herself. She and "flappers" didn't allow society keep them from fun.
"Women who regularly read Ladies Home Journal, could recall being warned in 1907 that it was scandalous to be seen dining alone with a man, even a relative, learnt from a debutant of 1914 that was 'now considered smart to go the low order of dance halls, and not only be a looker-on, but also to dance among all sorts and conditions of men and women" (Ling).

- Women of that era were breaking barriers when it came to relationships with men; and even though Jordan never had a true romantic involvement in the story, she went out with Nick alone. She also spoke with Gatsby alone without knowing him; both of these acts were, then acceptable compared to the era before.

- "A far larger proportion, one suspects, saw their daughters leave the house to sample the city delights by carriage, trolley-car, or on foot (Ling).

- Jordan is technically one of the ladies who traveled to the city, to venture out from their families. She, like the real life flappers, went to the city for new adventures and to be a part of this new party era with the richest of the rich. Jordan truly cared about wealth and being part of the highest class therefore she would make adaptations to her life just like women in real life.
Works Cited


