

## Humorous Musings on our Subject, or How Foxwoods Saved My Soul

When I first heard about the Gambling Conference I thought I'd propose a scholarly interdisciplinary paper from the Moral Landscapes of Literary Study -- Dickens, Dostoevsky, Don DeLillo's latest novel. But nowadays the Moral Landscape is the job of Schools of Management -- for the first time this year Finance concentrators outnumber any liberal arts major at BC. So I'll leave that to others at the Conference.

Meantime I take license to add a little light entertainment, and perhaps some moral ambiguity, to the LUNCHSCAPE today by starting in another literary place -- the Broadway musical comedy Guys and Dolls. I may do a little singing later on, but for



the mid 1990's I go to my god child's wedding in California and then to Las Vegas with my brother. And then, Foxwoods saves my soul.

**Disturbance area I: money.** With too few addictions I have enough. Virginia Woolf's independence buying 500 a year and a room of my own. And more. What am I supposed to do with it? Buy stuff. The problem with that is, you then have to keep all that stuff. I learned to buy things that dissolved, flooding an inner world and leaving me without piles of stuff, things like concerts and travel and the very smallest Georgian enamel garnet and diamond pin not even to wear, just to look at. Satisfying. I learned the delights of writing checks to charities and giving gifts to family. Balancing.

The consumer culture spread its addictive tail but I just never somehow connected: more than one purse at a time? Really? Months go by with hardly a charge on the Credit card – oh pusillanimous member of a consumer confidence society! The anxiety culture blinks its addictive warnings: oh that did connect, but I didn't like how it felt. What if, what if: I'm a natural renter but bought a condo; I'm an optimist but bought the best healthcare. What am I afraid of? Where to practice not being afraid? Where to practice being able to spend freely or not to spend?

I'm not saying it can't get a little out of hand, this practicing: you've got to have rules if you're going to go to the casino. Virginia Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway walked across Hyde Park and threw a coin into the Serpentine pool – not her whole quarterly allowance from her husband. And of course you can give it away as well as throw it away: you can watch your charitable gifts increase to the measure of your dwindling mortgage and take rational pleasure; you can put your hand in your wallet at Sunday Mass and take irrational pleasure if you've forgotten to make sure there's a \$10 in there

and so have to hand over a \$20. Once in a while now I find I can even put some not-strictly necessary charge on the Credit Card. Both ways, I take my stake to the zone of



of social security money, the insecure young guy in the TV advertisement “makin’ it while fakin’ it.” It does give me a turn to see a busload of wheelchairs and oxygen inhalators moving clogingly down the aisle, though they’re talking happily together it seems, and my discomfort here, of course, is looking at age and sickness. Am I taking