FITZGERALD'S NEW WOMEN: HARBINGERS OF CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

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F. Scott Fitzgerald's short stories and novels offer a vivid glimpse into the lives of upper middle class men and women during the two decades between World War I and World War II. Since he lived and wrote in an era of rapid social change--particularly for women--his work affords unusual insight into the frustrations and longings of American women as they moved slowly towards a greater degree of freedom in the first half of the twentieth century.

Fitzgerald's biographers and critics have commented frequently on the autobiographical nature of his literary works, often citing his wife Zelda as the prototype for his flamboyant women characters, who are frequently dismissed somewhat casually as shallow or selfish young women who in one way or another destroy the men who court them. Although scant effort has been made to analyze the motivation of women characters in Fitzgerald's novels, these women struggle openly with the limitations their society imposes on them, even as they engage in the raucous social life Fitzgerald made famous among the "flapper" generation.

Close textual analysis of the principal women characters in Fitzgerald's five novels reveals his intuitive grasp of the confusion many women experienced in the midst of the American society's transition from a strict patriarchy to a greater degree of equality between the sexes. As Fitzgerald presents romantic relationships, he demonstrates a seemingly perpetual power struggle between men and women. He traces a trend toward sexual experimentation, and yet he acknowledges--through his women characters--that economic dependence on men prevented many women from being truly liberated. Perhaps unwittingly, he also illustrates that women's "madness" can result from male exploitation and emotional abuse.

The principal women characters in This Side of Paradise (1919), The Beautiful and Damned (1922), The Great Gatsby (1925), Tender Is the Night (1934), and The Last Tycoon (1940) reflect the conflicts of women in Fitzgerald's transitional era. Encouraged to aspire towards women's liberation, they are simultaneously denied the tools--professional education, work, economic resources, and respect--to declare genuine independence.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

F. Scott Fitzgerald lived and wrote in an era of momentous social change, particularly for upper middle-class American women, and he was empathetically alert to the revolution taking place all around him. Many critics have noted that Fitzgerald had an uncanny knack for recording social history in his stories and novels, which reflect the slowly shifting status of women during the two decades between World War I and World War II. Fitzgerald's chief subject, of course, was romance--but in his painstaking depiction of the interplay between men and women, he incidentally amassed and preserved an impressive array of perceptions of gender-related concerns characteristic of his era. Viewed singly or as a group, his five novels now afford a compelling vision of the social, sexual, political, and economic milestones hurdled by American women in their quest for emancipation from the control of patriarchal traditions following the First World War.

Much has been written about Fitzgerald's penchant for basing his literary characters on people he knew, and it is logical to assume that the issues and conflicts that dominate the attention of his fictitious characters were in fact on the

minds of his contemporaries. Indeed, the timeliness of his subject matter contributed in a major way to his immediate popularity as a novelist with the publication of This Side of Paradise in 1920. Throughout his career he was keenly aware of the changing values, lifestyles, and aspirations of members of his generation, and he chronicled his observations in his fiction. Malcolm Cowley notes that:

> Fitzgerald never lost a quality that very few writers are able to acquire: a sense of living in history. Manners and morals were changing all through his life and he set himself the task of recording the changes. These were revealed to him, not by statistics or news reports, but in terms of living characters, and the characters were revealed by gestures, each appropriate to a certain year. (A Second Flowering, 30)

Fitzgerald's interest in history was complemented by his interest in women. It seems likely that his own tendency toward womanizing may have contributed to his unusual awareness of the status and behavior of women in the 1920s and 1930s. As Scott Donaldson in Fool for Love characterizes Fitzgerald's interactions with women:

> In groups, Fitzgerald may have preferred men, but he was very much a ladies' man himself. He talked their language. He was sensitive to shades of meaning and half-concealed feelings. He knew how to flatter. He paid attention when women talked. He treated them with the courtly manners of an earlier age. And of course they responded. (59)

As women he encountered in daily living reciprocated his interest, Fitzgerald was undoubtedly exposed more and more to their points of view. Naturally, what he learned inadvertently from real women influenced his development of female characters in his fiction. In fact, James Mellow attributes

the "vitality" of Fitzgerald's "heroines" at least in part to his "sharp-eyed" observations regarding "their style, their clothes, their conversation," and even "their techniques with men" (Invented Lives, 11). Similarly, Brian Way points out that "Fitzgerald recognized, sooner than anyone else, that the nature of [women's] advance had changed radically with the coming of the Jazz Age" (10).

But Fitzgerald's perceptions regarding the confusing status of women may actually be rooted all the way back in his childhood, well before the onset of the decade of the 1920s. His notes reflect a poignant memory of his mother, "always waiting in waiting-rooms an hour early, pulled forward by an irresistible urge of boredom and vitality" (The Crack-Up, 173). In much the same way, his female characters--Rosalind in This Side of Paradise, Gloria in The Beautiful and Damned, and Daisy in The Great Gatsby--are often affected by "irresistible urges of boredom and vitality." Moreover, according to Fitzgerald, changing attitudes during the Victorian era resulted in "dignity under suffering" becoming "a quality only women were supposed to exhibit in life or fiction" (Crack-Up, 208). Both Nicole in Tender Is the Night and Kathleen in The Last Tycoon, who are more mature--and more deeply troubled--than many of Fitzgerald's earlier heroines, often exhibit their integrity and dignity in the face of emotional hardship. Indeed, whatever its origin, Fitzgerald's recognition of both

the "irresistible urge of boredom and vitality" and "dignity under suffering" as important aspects of the lives of women in his era surfaces again and again throughout his fiction.

In addition to being an astute observer of the events and lives that surrounded him, Fitzgerald--like most writers--was also an avid reader. His personal correspondence reveals not only what he read but also the ways he responded to it. Among his favorite authors were several who examined women's social condition in some detail. For example, he read Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie (1900) with considerable attention and enthusiasm, for in a 1924 letter to Maxwell Perkins he ranked Dreiser's character Hurstwood alongside his own Tom Buchanan as one of the three best literary depictions of a male character (Turnbull, Letters, 172). Similarly, he had enormous respect for Sherwood Anderson, whom he once described as "one of the very best and finest writers in the English language today" (Letters, 187); he particularly appreciated Anderson's Winesburg stories, which he "waited for one by one in the Little Review" (Letters, 194), and which include the vision of "Tandy," who might well be viewed as a prototype for the New Woman of the postwar era.[1] Fitzgerald also rated Willa Cather as one of the outstanding writers of his era; her narrative method in A Lost Lady (1923) many even have influenced his own in The Great Gatsby (1925).[2] And he admired the works of Edith Wharton, whose aging debutante Lily Bart in The House of Mirth (1905) has much in common with his own

bright but insolvent women characters like Eleanor in This Side of Paradise (1920), who laments the fact that she is "'tied to the sinking ship of future matrimony'" despite her awareness that she has "'the brains to do everything'" (237).

It is interesting to note as well that Fitzgerald's 1931 essay entitled "Echoes of the Jazz Age" includes a brief, satirical literary history of the 1920s. In it, Fitzgerald seeks to "trace some of the revelations" of the decade. These "revelations" concern social and sexual situations which he deems both harmless and "familiar" to his generation:

> We begin with the suggestion that Don Juan leads an interesting life (Jurgen, 1919); then we learn that there's a lot of sex around if we only knew it (Winesburg, Ohio, 1920), that adolescents lead very amorous lives (This Side of Paradise, 1920) that there are a lot of neglected Anglo-Saxon words (Ulysses, 1921), that older people don't always resist sudden temptations (Cytherea, 1922), that girls are sometimes seduced without being ruined (Flaming Youth, 1922),that glamorous English ladies are often promiscuous (The Green Hat, 1924), that in fact they devote most of their time to it (The Vortex, 1926), that it's a damn good thing too (Lady Chatterley's Lover, 1928), and finally that there are abnormal variations (The Well of Loneliness, 1928 and Sodom and Gomorrah, 1929). (The Crack-Up, 16-17.)

While Fitzgerald casually pokes fun at the progressively more candid literary treatments of human sexuality, he simultaneously identifies one of the most pervasive and influential factors that contributed to the sexual revolution of his era: women's ever-increasing assumption of jurisdiction over their own bodies before, during, and after marriage. Relative sexual liberation was one of the most clear-cut victories of the New Woman of Fitzgerald's generation. As his novels and

his own marriage reflect, other liberties sought by women often proved far more elusive.

As Fitzgerald read about and interacted with young women who aspired to a greater degree of personal autonomy than their society yet allowed, he inevitably incorporated some of their aspirations and arguments in his literary works. Women in America gained the right to vote in 1920, the same year that This Side of Paradise was published. They had been dabbling with other liberties--smoking, drinking, experimenting with sex--since the start of the twentieth century. Despite suffrage and devil-may-care social attitudes, however, women of Fitzgerald's generation remained economically dependent on men. Particularly in his early novels, Fitzgerald draws young women who dream of a greater degree of liberation and financial autonomy than is actually within their grasp, given the constraints of their "female" educations and their opinionated social circles; they marry for security, so they naturally predicate their selection of prospective husbands in part upon a man's financial prospects. In his later novels, Tender Is the Night and The Last Tycoon, Fitzgerald portrays working for a living as a genuine possibility for women of his milieu, but he couches the option in distinctly unsavory terms: women who channel their energies into intellectual or professional--rather than social or domestic--pursuits do so at the risk of losing their femininity, and suffer the consequences of loneliness and mental

illness as a direct result of their willingness to "'challenge men to battle'" (Tender, 184).

Fitzgerald's principal women characters embody--or at least show the potential to develop--the exact qualities Sherwood Anderson's creative vision of "Tandy" outlines as desirable in the coming New Woman. The very name "Tandy" suggests the possibility of existing in tandem with another, and women in Fitzgerald's novels begin to demonstrate the will and capability to live in tandem with men--as separate, equal selves rather than as subordinates. They assert their independent wills and prove themselves "strong and courageous," willing--almost--to "venture anything." By daring to try to develop selves in their own right, they begin to cultivate options in their lives--chiefly the authority to choose rather than merely settle for romantic and marital partners. As they try to exercise the freedom to do what is right for themselves, they demonstrate their potential for being "strong to be loved," rather than dependent and vulnerable. They resist surrendering their fates to the whims of others, even though they are not consistently successful at it; they take active, not passive, roles in everything that concerns their spiritual, emotional, and economic welfare.

And yet these women who would be whole are often pathetic in their apparent lack of the internalized self-esteem that would be necessary for them to be able to realize the dreams they are capable of dreaming. They are a curious blend of

confidence and uncertainty, for they live on the threshold of a new era and still feel the influence of the old order, which stubbornly insists on subordinating them to men. They crave the unconditional acceptance that is every child's birthright, but the society they live in judges them harshly for daring to view themselves as separate from and equal to men. Therefore, they try very hard to accept themselves for who they are and to enjoy their lives to the fullest as they proudly--even defiantly--struggle to develop and preserve their integrity.

Fitzgerald's era was indeed a confusing time for women in America. On the one hand, they were beginning to perceive the possibilities of autonomy, self-actualization, and egalitarian relationships with men; on the other hand, to strike out on their own--without the tools or experience genuinely to fend for themselves--still entailed tremendous risks of economic disaster and social ostracism. Sometimes they recognized their need for work and money of their own but had no earthly idea of how to obtain them. They feared alienating family and friends. And, in the words of psychologists Violet Franks and Esther Rothblum, ". . . how many women are so strong that they can oppose societal pressures and cope with emotional cost?" (10).

The women of Fitzgerald's acquaintance--and, subsequently, his novels--were brought up, after all, in the Western tradition--"trained," as Tillie Olson explains, "to place others' needs first, to feel these needs as their own," and to

attempt to reap their "satisfaction" from "making it possible for others to use their abilities" (17). Unquestioning, self-effacing support is what Fitzgerald desired from his wife; and his heroes expected no less from theirs. Not surprisingly, the typical social condition of Fitzgerald's heroines strongly resembles the primary conflict of his wife Zelda's life, as summarized by Phyllis Chesler in Women and Madness:

> The combination of nurturance deprivation and restrictions upon their uniqueness or heroism is deadly. They cannot survive as just "women," and they are not allowed to survive as human or creative beings. (30-31)

Young women in his fiction, like Gloria Gilbert Patch, who longs to become an actress for want of any other professional purpose or training in her life, and Nicole Warren Diver, who lives unhappily in the shadow of her husband's career while dreaming of work of her own, demonstrate the frustration of women whose dreams and potential for being "everything" are thwarted by the expectations of those around them.

Although the morals and manners exhibited by the characters in Fitzgerald's novels reflect a genuine shift in the values of American society following World War I, the expectations imposed on women during that era did not change as rapidly as behaviors. Consequently, the Fitzgerald women reflect the internal conflicts characteristic of a time when, according to Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, author of Disorderly Conduct:

> Despite . . . basic social, economic, and demographic changes . . . the family and gender-role socialization remained relatively inflexible. It is quite possible that

> many women experienced a significant level of anxiety when forced to confront or adapt in one way or another to these changes. (199-200)

Over and over again Fitzgerald's principal female characters demonstrate that they are recipients of mixed messages about their roles and rights in life. They behave selfishly, impulsively, and inconsistently as a direct result of their fundamental uncertainty about their purpose in life--or, indeed, whether they have any real purpose at all.

Fitzgerald's novels are remarkable in that they capture the confusion characteristic of many of the women of his "lost," transitional generation--women who, like Zelda, were "the American girl living the American dream" and very nearly "became mad within it" (Milford, xii). Fitzgerald's women characters are spirited, ambitious, and outspoken; they want many things . . . and critics are all too prone to focus on their material wants, which are easy to identify, rather than their spiritual, intellectual, and emotional desires, which demand closer analysis. Above all, Fitzgerald's women long for respect, especially self-respect, which is contingent upon developing a sense of self and a sense of purpose in life. These are the things that they struggle the most to own, and they are the things that most consistently elude their grasp.

Although vast quantities of literary criticism focusing on Fitzgerald's novels have been produced over the approximately seventy years since he began his career, relatively little of it has dealt specifically with his portraits of women. In

general, his male protagonists evoke more commentary; his female characters, as might be expected for peripheral, subordinate beings, are usually mentioned only in passing. Biographers like Le Vot, Turnbull, Bruccoli, and Mellow are adept at pointing out parallels between what they perceive as character flaws in the fictional women and what Fitzgerald perceived as Zelda's shortcomings. Poor housekeeping skills, vanity, material acquisitiveness, stubbornness, restlessness, purposelessness, boredom, and attention-getting antics are among the many traits and behaviors often cited in reference to Zelda and the women in Fitzgerald's fiction.

To a great extent, the women tend to be viewed in terms of the roles they play in men's lives. Brian Way, for example, observes that, "Fitzgerald's young heroines assert their independent wills and exploit their sexual attractiveness with complete impunity" (11). And James Tuttleton, who credits "Fitzgerald and other young postwar writers" with creating "versions of what might be called 'the young American bitch,'" asserts that "Fitzgerald's memorable heroes all suffer at the hands of rich, bored, sophisticated, insincere women" (279, 281).

Significantly, however, critical references to Fitzgerald's women characters are not always so negative. Pamela Farley ventures simply that, "Fitzgerald never seemed to comprehend the female as a fully human person" (226). And Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin even goes so far as to say that

"most of Fitzgerald's women have a down-to-earth practicality and a non-romantic view of life which make them far more enduring than his heroes" (466).

There is some evidence to suggest that Fitzgerald himself was confused in his expectations for women, both in real life and in his fiction. In a 1922 New York Evening World interview conducted by Marguerite Mooers Marshall, Fitzgerald boldly proclaimed:

> "Our American women are leeches. They're an utterly useless fourth generation trading on the accomplishments of their pioneer great-grandmothers. They simply dominate the American man." (Bruccoli and Bryer, Miscellany, 256)

Even as he denounced American women openly for what he perceived to be their idleness and domineering behavior, he expressed a nostalgic yearning for a return to the romantic traditions of an earlier day. In the same interview, he declared that "'just being in love--doing it well, you know--is work enough for a woman'" (258). Apparently, Fitzgerald held conflicting views of what it meant--or should have meant--to be a woman in his era. While he considered it appalling for women to be so "'utterly useless'" as to have no "'accomplishments'" of their own, he simultaneously regarded a woman's chief purpose in life as "'being in love'" with a man.

In his fiction, his confusion sometimes manifests itself through a male character's apparent quest for perfect spiritual/romantic bonding, which winds up being tainted somehow by existence in a material world. As Scott Donaldson notes, in

Fitzgerald's mind and fiction, "love and money became almost inextricably entangled" (Fool for Love, 75). Yet it would be unwise to focus excessively on the role of money in the lives of Fitzgerald's female characters. Money is a concern for them in direct proportion to how much it was a concern for Fitzgerald himself. The New Women he portrays with noteworthy ambivalence are often equally concerned about other factors that affect their social condition.

While Leslie Fiedler refers to Fitzgerald's characterizations of women when he discusses the "goddesses" and "bitches" (314) who inhabit a great deal of modern American literature, Mary McCay pinpoints Fitzgerald's depiction of women more precisely:

> Towards his women, Fitzgerald has a highly critical attitude that often leaves them stripped to a core that is finally lacking in enduring values. He is harder on them than he is on his men. He judges them more severely--as if he secretly expected more of them at the outset but put them in a world that allowed them no theater for growth. They are stunted from the start by Fitzgerald's expectations on the one hand and by the world they live in on the other. (311)

Although McCay amply supports her view that Fitzgerald "judges" women "severely," she is slightly amiss when she declares that he "put" these women "in a world that allowed them no theater for growth." After all, Fitzgerald did not really create the world his characters inhabit: he re-created it out of his observations of the world around him. Because his novels are firmly rooted in social history, it is important to assess his characters' attitudes not solely on the

basis of Fitzgerald's artistic control and expression but also on the basis of their moment in history.

Frederick Lewis Allen's Only Yesterday, which is subtitled "An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties" and was first published in 1931, complements Fitzgerald's perspective on the social changes that were taking place so rapidly in the postwar decade. As Allen examines the impact of various changes on the lives of American women, two main issues stand out: women's new prospects for working outside the home, and a general heightening of social activity, including sexual experimentation. Allen also discusses the growing popular awareness of and interest in modern psychoanalytic theory, with particular reference to Freud. All of these concerns are woven into the texts of Fitzgerald's novels.

Allen introduces the subject of women and work following a general discussion of the "growing independence of the American woman" (79), with an emphasis on women's suffrage and the increase in women's leisure time afforded by the mechanization of many traditional domestic chores (washing, ironing, cleaning) and the accessibility of mass-produced food items like bread. Since women in the 1920s suddenly had fewer taxing, routine demands on their time, they were--for the first time--in a position seriously to contemplate pursuing professional endeavors of their own. And clearly the prospect of work outside the home--and the relative freedom an independent livelihood could provide--appealed to many women. In

fact, Allen attributes much of the social and sexual revolution of the 1920s to women's newly discovered potential to obtain paid employment:

> With the job--or at least the sense that the job was a possibility--came a feeling of comparative economic independence. With the feeling of economic independence came a slackening of husbandly and parental authority . . . . Yet even the job did not provide the American woman with the complete satisfaction which the management of a mechanized home no longer furnished. She still had energies and emotions to burn; she was ready for the revolution. (81)

Other, more recent historians--particularly those with a feminist perspective--develop the role of economics in women's quest for equality more thoroughly. In a 1976 work entitled Women, Money, and Power, Phyllis Chesler and Emily Jane Goodman declare,

> For most women, the opportunities to survive through the acquisition of money are derivative rather than direct; that is, women do not inherit businesses, or acquire high-paying jobs. They marry or in some other way use their looks and their bodies. For most women, some variation on this theme has been the only option--and therefore not an option at all. And, interestingly, when women in marriages or marriage-like situations perform the work required in keeping themselves and their houses looking beautiful, and sexual and other services, it is assumed that they are doing what they want to do; when, done for money, the same tasks become very declasse. (p. 20)

Paradoxically, therefore, being a flapper or vamp in Fitzgerald's day--with all the preoccupation with beauty, fun, charm, and sexuality that such terms imply--can in actuality be equated with work in the female tradition. Rosalind in This Side of Paradise makes this point exquisitely clear when

she refers to her beauty and social regimen as "Rosalind, Unlimited."

Although, as Sandra Gilbert points out, World War I "represented the first rupture with a socioeconomic history that had heretofore denied most women chances at first-class jobs and pay" (204), the women's movement of Fitzgerald's era lost considerable momentum shortly after suffrage was won. Kate Millett, who demonstrates that "the feminist movement" of the early twentieth century "collapsed in exhaustion," attributes its demise in part to "its failure to challenge patriarchal ideology at a sufficiently deep and radical level to break the conditioning processes of status, temperament and role" (85). In Millett's opinion, female "economic independence was consciously as well as unconsciously perceived to be a direct threat to male authority" (87). Carroll Smith-Rosenberg concurs, saying, "The New Women of the 1920s . . . failed because they lacked the real economic and institutional power with which to wrest hegemony from men and so enforce their vision of a gender-free world" (296).

In Fitzgerald's novels, which are accurate accounts of his moment in history, "the job"--for most women, at least--remains primarily in the realm of "possibility," not reality. Yet several of his principal female characters hint at their interest in the notion of economic independence. In <u>This Side of Paradise</u>, Rosalind cynically describes her social life as a business enterprise, with marriage as the ultimate deal she

expects to close; Clara intimates to Amory that she is intensely relieved to have inherited enough money not to be obliged to remarry following the death of her husband; and Eleanor is outraged to the brink of self-destruction over the misfortune of her being a "'girl'" and consequently destined to spend her lifetime married to a man almost certain to patronize her despite her superior intelligence. In The Beautiful and Damned, Gloria aspires to act but sets aside her interest in a career in order to placate her husband. In Tender Is the Night, Nicole, who is very wealthy, actively seeks out constructive intellectual pursuits while she is a patient in Dr. Dohmler's care--with the hope of working someday as a translator; she later envies her husband his career and expresses her confusion and concern when his commitment to his work appears to be flagging. Also in Tender Is the Night, Fitzgerald presents Rosemary, a young woman who, her mother proclaims, was "'brought up to work--not especially to marry'" (40). Even in his work on The Last Tycoon, Fitzgerald displays his awareness that economic and intellectual independence--or the lack thereof--profoundly shapes women's interactions with others; in his notes about the appeal of Kathleen to Stahr, he summarizes, "This girl had a life--it was very seldom he met anyone whose life did not depend in some way on him or hope to depend on him" (152).

While most of Fitzgerald's major women characters merely daydream about the possibility of developing careers of their

own, they actively engage in social and sexual activities undreamed of by their mothers. Judging by contemporary book reviews, the shock value of Fitzgerald's revelations about the flapper generation's morality may have contributed substantially to the instant popularity of This Side of Paradise: Fitzgerald had touched upon one of the most common and controversial topics of concern, and he was immediately heralded as a spokesman for his generation.

According to Allen, the sexual revolution of the 1920s stemmed from a rebellion "expressed not in obscure radical publications or in soap-box speeches, but right across the family breakfast table into the horrified ears of conservative fathers and mothers" (73). It is therefore no surprise that the "petting parties" that Fitzgerald describes in This Side of Paradise are taking place right in family living rooms, and Mrs. Gilbert in The Beautiful and Damned confides to Anthony both that she once came across Gloria "'acting very engaged'" with a young man in the family home and that Mr. Gilbert is "'very worried'" about Gloria's dating practices.

In his popular account of the 1920s, Allen describes the old moral code as one in which "women were the guardians of morality" and "young girls must look forward in innocence (tempered perhaps with a modicum of physiological instruction) to a romantic love match which would lead them to living-happily-ever-after; and until the 'right man' came along . . . allow no male to kiss them." The same code "expected that

some men would succumb to the temptation of sex, but only with a special class of outlawed women; girls of respectable families were supposed to have no such temptations." In fact, the post-war sexual liberation movement originated in an environment in which "boys and girls were permitted large freedom to work and play together, with decreasing and well-nigh nominal chaperonage, but only because . . . a sort of honor system was supplanting supervision by their elders" (73-74). The "honor system" Allen refers to--combined with the freedom and privacy afforded by the use of the family car--gave a great many middle-class young people opportunities to experiment with sex.

Fitzgerald's novels chart the progression of the social and sexual revolution of the 1920s. Although his sexual references are often vague, his topics include premarital sex, abortion, infidelity, incest, and cohabitation without marriage.

While most of Fitzgerald's fictional women are ill-equipped to declare economic independence from men, a significant number of them eagerly seize some degree of sexual freedom. In fact, by focusing pointedly on his female characters' increasingly permissive attitudes towards sexuality--to the virtual exclusion of their yearning for professional and economic autonomy--Fitzgerald, like many male spokesmen of his day, essentially misrepresents the central

issue of women's rights. In Disorderly Conduct, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg asserts that in the 1920s:

> The New Man could portray the New Woman as the enemy of liberated women because he had redefined the issue of female autonomy in sexual terms. He divorced women's rights from their political and economic context. The daughter's quest for heterosexual pleasures, not the mother's demand for political power, now personified female freedom. Linking orgasms to chic fashion and planned motherhood, male sex reformers, psychologists, and physicians promised a future of emotional support and sexual delights to women who accepted heterosexual marriage--and male economic hegemony. Only the "unnatural" woman continued to struggle with men for economic independence and political power. (283)

At least in Fitzgerald's novels, the vast majority of women opt for marriage instead of seeking economic independence, yet the promise of "emotional support" and "sexual delights" too often proves empty. Three of Fitzgerald's novels--The Beautiful and Damned, The Great Gatsby, and Tender Is the Night--focus sharply (though not exclusively) on the unhappy ramifications of the oppressive influence of women's marriages on their lives; the other two novels--This Side of Paradise and The Last Tycoon--deal with the often unjust courtship experiences of women in their romantic involvements with a variety of men. Sex in Fitzgerald's novels is almost invariably linked with a power struggle of some sort, and the women--who, by virtue of their economic dependence, are less free to assert their autonomous wishes--predictably wind up the losers, emotionally if not physically. Although Fitzgerald's Dick Diver is clearly patronizing his feminist patient when he asks if she's "'quite sure [she's] been in a real

battle'" (Tender, 184), the women in all of his novels consistently have to do battle one way or another in order to get the men in their lives to take them seriously. The many battles take their toll--socially, intellectually, emotionally, and psychologically.

What is most remarkable about the sexuality expressed by Fitzgerald's women characters is their proclivity to assert themselves unequivocally in matters related to sex, even while they recognize the constraints their economic condition imposes on their ultimate degree of personal freedom. Women in Fitzgerald's last three novels deliberately participate in or even actively initiate sexual liaisons with men other than their husbands: Daisy allows Gatsby to "take" her one evening long before her marriage to Tom Buchanan and then later resumes the affair by discreetly visiting Gatsby "in the afternoons" at his mansion; Myrtle becomes Tom's mistress behind her husband's back; Nicole deliberately sets out to go to bed with Tommy Barban while she is still married to Dick; Rosemary propositions Dick despite her friendship with his wife; and Kathleen, who reveals her extensive sexual experience through dialogue, urgently initiates intercourse with Stahr on the floor of his unfinished house even though she is planning to marry another man. In the earlier novels, This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned, young women willingly engage in premarital kissing and petting games even though they know that such activities can damage their

reputations and, consequently, diminish their marital prospects. These young women are acutely aware of the double standard as it applied to the sexual experimentation characteristic of the 1920s. Isabelle in This Side of Paradise resents being haunted by her "desperate past" and reputed to be a "Speed" whenever she arrives in a new town (62). Gloria in The Beautiful and Damned has once been thrown over by a boy who didn't respect girls who were accustomed to being kissed; she subsequently has difficulty in imposing limits on her degree of sexual intimacy with other young men she dates, including Anthony. And, most poignantly of all, Anthony's young lover at boot camp, Dot, finds herself snubbed by boys she knew in high school when she encounters them out "walking with 'nice girls'" (327); Dot, who has forfeited her "technical purity," recognizes that she is no longer deemed marriage material (326). By contrast, however, with the 1925 publication of The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald casually reveals that even "nice girls" may now engage in premarital sex; Gatsby is astonished to discover "how extraordinary a 'nice' girl [can] be" when he "[takes]" Daisy "one still October night" (149).

Although Fitzgerald often reports his characters' sexual activities in veiled and archaic terms, he undeniably addresses the changing morals of his era. With each novel, he brings out a new sexual subject, and each is potentially more shocking for readers than the last. In This Side of Paradise (1920), he alludes to the overtly sexual play of dating

couples when Amory dubs "the hand-knit sleeveless jerseys . . . 'petting shirts'" (60). In The Beautiful and Damned (1922), he refers to Gloria's possible pregnancy in discreet terms--"It had occurred to the estimable Gloria that she was probably with child" (203)--and then furnishes the young couple's very clear dialogue about abortion:

> "Do you want me to have it?" she asked listlessly.
> "I'm indifferent. That is, I'm neutral. If you have it I'll probably be glad. If you don't--well, that's all right too." (204)

Significantly, Fitzgerald's literary depiction of Gloria and Anthony's open contemplation of an abortion was published while birth control devices were still technically illegal in the United States, though according to Allen in Only Yesterday, contraception was "generally practiced or believed in by married couples in all but the most ignorant classes" (97).

The Great Gatsby is noteworthy in its portrayal of two married women's sexual infidelity as well as its revelation that "nice" girls can sometimes be persuaded to have sex before marriage--and then wind up marrying different men. Tender Is the Night is one of the most sexually explicit of Fitzgerald's novels, both in its reflection of Nicole's conscious, premeditated decision to commit adultery and in its concrete references to Nicole's childhood experience of incest, which is presented directly through Mr. Warren's confession to Dr. Dohmler:

> "People used to say what a wonderful father and daughter we were--they used to wipe their eyes. We were just like lovers--and then all at once we were lovers--and

> ten minutes after it happened I could have shot myself--except I guess I'm such a Goddamned degenerate I didn't have the nerve to do it." (129)

Fitzgerald follows Tender Is the Night and its intense focus on the dynamics of both human sexuality and mental illness (Dick's as well as Nicole's) with the unfinished novel The Last Tycoon (1940), which contains clear references to impotence, cohabitation without marriage, and even Hollywood's sophisticated call girls. In addition, for the first time in any of his novels, Fitzgerald overtly portrays female sexual urgency and initiative in The Last Tycoon:

> She waited in his arms, moving her head a little from side to side as she had before, only more slowly, and never taking her eyes from his. Then she discovered that he was trembling.
>
> He discovered it at the same time, and his arms relaxed. Immediately she spoke to him coarsely and provocatively, and pulled his face down to hers. Then, with her knees she struggled out of something, still standing up and holding him with one arm, and kicked it off beside the coat. He was not trembling now and he held her again, as they knelt down together and slid to the raincoat on the floor. (87)

As Kathleen orchestrates this sexual episode with Stahr, she exhibits a matter-of-fact acceptance of her own sexuality that sets her apart from women of the old order.

The cumulative effect of Fitzgerald's increasingly forthright treatments of female sexuality is to remind the reader that Fitzgerald, living in an era of social transition, remained constantly alert to the social changes that were taking place around him. For many women of his generation, sexual freedoms may have been more readily accessible than economic or intellectual autonomy: the often unhappy women in

his novels certainly exhibit more initiative in sexual than in professional matters. Moreover, Fitzgerald's emphasis as an author on shifting sexual mores may have been influenced in part by his interest in another popular subject in his day, Freudian psychoanalytic theory.

While Fitzgerald's references to Freud in his novels are not extensive, they too reflect his sensitivity to the public's foremost topics of conversation in the 1920s. In Only Yesterday, Allen presents the roots of America's interest in Freud's teachings, noting that even though Freud "published his first book on psychoanalysis at the end of the nineteenth century" and "lectured to American psychologists as early as 1909," it was only after World War I that the "Freudian gospel began to circulate to a marked extent among the American lay public" (81).

Fitzgerald's first allusion to Freud in one of his novels occurs in This Side of Paradise. Significantly, the reference is made by a young, intellectual woman, in conjunction with a discussion of the role of sex in her life. One afternoon Amory's current flame, Eleanor, remarks:

> "Oh, just one person in fifty has any glimmer of what sex is. I'm hipped on Freud and all that, but it's rotten that every bit of real love in the world is ninety-nine per cent passion and one little soupcon of jealousy." (23)

Her fleeting reference to Freud is a casual acknowledgment of his pronouncement that unmet sexual needs lie at the heart of many human problems. Amory responds to her by preaching a brief sermon popularized by the contemporaneous interest in

Freud: "'Intellect is no protection from sex any more than convention is'" he begins. (238)

After Fitzgerald's introduction of Freud in This Side of Paradise, he incorporates elliptical reminders of Freud and psychoanalysis in general in The Beautiful and Damned. Gloria, like some of her forerunners in Fitzgerald's first novel, objects to young men's propensity to "analyze" her thoughts and behaviors rather than merely taking pleasure in her company and enjoying her for what she is. More importantly, however, when she is first introduced as a topic of conversation between Richard and Anthony, Anthony refers to her mistakenly as "Dora" (37)--a misnomer that implies a connection between Gloria and Dora, the young woman featured in Freud's famous Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria, which was published in 1905. Indeed, Elaine Showalter remarks on the similarity between Dora and the so-called "New Women" of the 1920s: "Dora's position was similar to that of many New Women. Although she felt contempt for her mother's monotonous domestic life, it was the life she too was destined for as a woman" (159). Gloria, like Dora, objects to the prospect of marriage and domestic responsibilities. The analogy between Dora and Fitzgerald's Gloria extends still further, however. Both Dora and Gloria are "treated like a pawn or a possession" and "denied . . . personal freedom" (Showalter, 159) by men they have been close to (Dora's father, Gloria's husband); and both have been pursued romanti-

cally and/or sexually by a friend of their father's. Both react to sexual and emotional pressures with hysterical symptoms: Dora loses her voice, and Gloria suffers a severe anxiety attack. In addition, both are very spirited in their relentless insistence on their own rights, and both ultimately terminate power struggles with significant men in their lives by withdrawing from them emotionally: Dora walks out on Freud, whose "tone with [her] is that of an antagonist" (Showalter, 160); Gloria retreats to her bed in order to avoid continuing confrontations with Anthony. With so many parallels between Freud's Dora and Fitzgerald's Gloria, it seems highly probable that Anthony's apparent slip of the tongue is a deliberate effort of Fitzgerald's to link Gloria with Dora, the epitome of a bold but frustrated, intelligent, and demanding New Woman.

Fitzgerald's most concerted and best-known attempt to weave modern psychoanalytic theory into his novels lies in the creation of Tender Is the Night (1934). His correspondence and notes amply illustrate his tapping of Zelda's illness to inform his characterization of Nicole and his understanding of the interactions between psychiatrists and patients in general. While he evidently failed to comprehend the broad implications of his character Dick Diver's failure to respect Nicole's transference and maintain appropriate psychological boundaries, he nonetheless offers his readers an intimate and detailed exposure to certain aspects of psychiatric illness

and treatment. More importantly, he pinpoints--perhaps inadvertently--the relationship between the traditional objectification of women by men and the dismal effect it can have on women's mental health.

Freud's influence on Tender Is the Night manifests itself through Fitzgerald's effort to depict what he describes in his notes as a young girl's "father complex." Although Fitzgerald earlier reveals a Freudian awareness of "the injury that a father can do to a daughter" in his 1932 story, "Babylon Revisited," his 1934 novel affords a far more vivid portrait of the dangers inherent in girls' dependent relationships with fathers and father-figures.

By presenting bonafide incest within the context of a fine, old American family--in what appears to be a genuinely loving father-daughter relationship--Fitzgerald exposes the myth of women's protection and safety in a traditional patriarchal culture. In Tender Is the Night Nicole is betrayed and driven mad by a man who in theory at least ought to be her protector. Her ordeal at home is then compounded by her psychiatrist's inept attempt to treat her "illness"--an illness which he evidently neither comprehends nor respects. Sexuality in this novel ultimately carries metaphorical implications: sexual "liberation" can pose certain risks for women, not the least of which is emotional victimization even within what the culture purports to regard as the most sacrosanct of relationships.

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Tender Is the Night is Fitzgerald's last complete novel, the product of nine years of literary toil. Composed primarily after the onset of his wife Zelda's illness, it is in part the product of Fitzgerald's own confusion, resentment, and guilt over his relationship with her. It is simultaneously his most convoluted and his most honest portrayal of postwar interactions between the sexes. Although it was underestimated by many critics during Fitzgerald's lifetime, Tender Is the Night stands out in some respects as the culmination of Fitzgerald's literary career as a social historian. In it, he captures, perhaps by accident, what James Miller calls the "social complicity" that is capable of bringing women in traditional patriarchal cultures to "the edge of madness" ("Creation," 245).

Throughout the novel, Nicole--like many of Fitzgerald's heroines--gradually addresses her sense that something important is missing in her life. Despite her tangible assets--money, marriage, beauty, and children--she lacks the meaningful activity and commitment that could give her life substance and foster her self-esteem. She measures herself somewhat harshly, by what Robert Daniel calls "the value system . . . of the earnest social feminist and career woman, many of whom had forgone marriage and motherhood as the price of personal self-realization" (55). Surrounded by contradictory messages about women's place in a changing world, she embodies Fitzgerald's own disappointment in romantic ideals.

"Attractive as she was," James Tuttleton observes, "the New Woman could hardly fulfill Fitzgerald's high expectations or realize his dream . . . he could not help recognizing in the New Woman what she so often recognized in herself--boredom, insincerity, triviality, and hedonistic irresponsibility" (280).

Nicole, like the other New Women in Fitzgerald's novels, hovers--without adequate preparation--on the threshold of a new era for women. It is natural for someone intelligent who is without stimulating work to suffer "boredom"; for someone taught to exude charm and conceal feelings to present an image of "insincerity"; for someone without opportunity to cultivate serious intellectual or professional pursuits to reflect apparent "triviality"; and for someone denied any power over her own life to appear to be acting out of "hedonistic irresponsibility." But Fitzgerald's New Women do not perceive their shortcomings as natural, for they exist in a time when "other women"--women they encounter on a daily basis--are beginning to seize heretofore unimaginable freedoms. Fitzgerald's heroines, however, perhaps like some of the women he knew personally, almost invariably find their fantasy of liberation overshadowed by the reality of their economic and emotional dependence on men. The conflict between their longing for autonomy and their economic condition, which prescribes subservience, often triggers symptoms of "madness." Yet their signs of what might sometimes be termed "mental

pathology" may in actuality be signs of health, escape valves for what Showalter terms "suppressed rebellion" (147). In their quest for autonomy, these New Women are out of syncopation with their civilization. The healthier they grow, the sicker they may appear--to some observers.

In fact, the chief women characters in Fitzgerald's novels often display nervous symptoms and disorders that readers in the late twentieth century can easily discern as direct results of the role conflict and confusion characteristic of women's lives in the 1920s and 1930s. Fitzgerald's women suffer from low self-esteem, depression, suicidal tendencies, anxiety attacks, hysteria, and even schizophrenia.

And it's no wonder. As recipients of mixed messages regarding their rights and capabilities for developing autonomous selves, Fitzgerald's female characters often have difficulty identifying who and what they really are. They see the intellectual and economic freedom a career would offer, but they lack the education and encouragement to identify and commit themselves to an appropriate field of work. They reach for sexual liberation, and they discover to their dismay that all too many men assume that their newfound ability to say "yes" implies a forfeiture of the old right to say "no." Again and again they find that a personal declaration of rights--emotional, intellectual, social, or sexual--may require them to relinquish some security which they cannot yet replace through provisions of their own. They face a world of

changing morals and manners with both courage and trepidation.

Fitzgerald captures the American woman in the midst of the changing society of the period between World War I and World War II in all her glory and confusion. The spirited women of his novels inspire admiration for their integrity, wit, charm, vitality, resilience, and creativity -- as well as their much talked-about beauty. At the same time, however, they evoke sympathy in their struggles to make sense out of a world that no longer makes sense, a world in transition--the world of relationships between the sexes. Like the stranger who comes to Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio, and dreams aloud of "Tandy," the women in Fitzgerald's five novels perceive possibilities for the future that are not yet reality, and they defiantly cling to their faith in those possibilities.

It is not easy for them. They suffer manipulation, betrayal, abandonment. They endure the backlash of men who are confused in their own right about lives that have been altered irrevocably by world war. Yet Fitzgerald's women characters--in all their confusion and imperfection--are among his finest monuments to his era; they are history in the making.

CHAPTER II

Romantic Love: The Luxury No Woman Could Afford *This Side of Paradise*

When F. Scott Fitzgerald described *This Side of Paradise* as "a novel about flappers for philosophers,"[1] he tacitly acknowledged his first book's value as a historical document. Reviewers in 1920 hailed the book, which became a bestseller, as "one of the few American novels extant," "a truly American novel . . . a little slice carved out of real life," and "the only adequate study . . . of the contemporary American in adolescence and young manhood."2 Yet what little attention literary critics have devoted to *This Side of Paradise* over the years has generally focused on the stylistic development of an immature writer rather than the historical significance of his subject matter.[3]

Fitzgerald is widely recognized as an autobiographical novelist, and a "chronicler . . . of the world in which he lived." Throughout his novels he depicts men as "romantics" and women as "pragmatists".[4] Although his male characters can afford to pursue romantic ideals, his female characters cannot, for they must derive their own security--and their children's--from their husbands' reputations and financial

welfare. In This Side of Paradise and in his subsequent novels, Fitzgerald clearly reflects his intuitive awareness of the economic, emotional, and intellectual sanctions the American patriarchy imposed on many of the women of his generation.

Amory Blaine, the protagonist of Fitzgerald's bildungsroman,[5] is the only son of a very beautiful but "weary" and "sad" woman, who forfeited a passionate romance with "a pagan, Swinburnian young man" in order "to marry for background" (4,7). Amory spends most of his early childhood receiving "a highly specialized education from his mother" --listening to her stories about her exciting past, serving as her sole traveling companion, and calling her by her first name. He is awed by her--from whom he inherited "every trait . . . that made him worth while" --but she is a nervous, unhappy, alcoholic woman who confides to her young son that she is "not understood" (3,4,21). Nevertheless, while Amory attends boarding school, his first daydreams about love feature "ivory women delved in romantic mysteries with diplomats and soldiers of fortune" (32)--fantasy women as beautiful and worldly as his mother was in her youth, but as yet unsullied by disillusionment. As he grows up, however, he is to find that the practical concerns that propelled his mother "to marry for background" instead of for love remain very much a fact of life for American women in the early twentieth century.

During his youthful quest for romantic fulfillment, Amory becomes infatuated with an amazing array of women--Isabelle, Clara, Rosalind, Eleanor--who have one significant common denominator: none values love as highly as he does. As he transfers his allegiance from one woman to another--largely on the basis of each one's inability to live up to his inflated romantic ideals--he often suspects them--unjustly--of toying unfairly with his emotions. While he is repulsed by any overt display of sexuality,[6] he is simultaneously intrigued by the relaxing moral standards that allow "any popular girl he [meets] before eight" to kiss him "before twelve" (59). But his perception of their casual regard for romance ultimately proves false. Theirs is a practical, not a romantic, approach to love and marriage: as women, they know that any marriage they make must be a compromise, for their society does not yet allow women to establish their own independent identities; their fates are inextricably bound to the marital choices they make. They simply cannot afford to take romance as seriously as Amory does.

Amory's first important romantic interlude occurs when he is eighteen and Isabelle, a young woman with whom he played as a child but who has "developed a past" (58) since he last saw her, is sixteen and a half. By the time Amory discovers Isabelle he has already noted the radical changes in courtship behavior over the past few years. He has, for example, "come into constant contact with that great current American

phenomenon, the 'petting party'" (58), and he has seen "girls doing things that even in his memory would have been impossible" (58-9). Amory's prudish fascination with the morals of his young women friends centers around their physical displays of affection directed toward individual men, for feminine courtship is no longer a matter of entertaining a host of callers but instead involves casual sexual experimentation on a one-to-one basis. The "popular daughter" ("P.D.") of the flapper era spends her time between dances in some private corner kissing, necking, or petting one of her dance partners--though her mother is unlikely to know how "casually" she is "accustomed to being kissed" (58). Times have changed, and changed very rapidly:

> The "belle" had become the "flirt," the "flirt" had become the "baby vamp." The "belle" had five or six callers every afternoon. If the P.D., by some strange accident, has two, it is made pretty uncom- fortable for the one who hasn't a date with her. The "belle" was surrounded by a dozen men in the intermissions between dances. Try to find the P.D. between dances, just try to find her. (59)

In this atmosphere of loosening moral standards and promiscuous kissing, Amory meets and immediately becomes infatuated with Isabelle, who has a reputation for being a "Speed" as well as a beauty. Isabelle is an unquestionably sexual young woman: she possesses an "intense physical magnetism" (63), and as she descends the stairway to the room where Amory and others wait, she is aware of being in "high color" (63)--a physical reflection of a female animal's

readiness for mating. Her silent speculations about Amory center around his dancing ability and his physical appearance, which suggest more sexual than intellectual or emotional curiosity. Yet she is aware of her reputation for loose morals and resentful enough towards her critics to be determined not to let young men take her kisses for granted:

> She was accustomed to be thus followed by her desperate past, and it never failed to rouse in her the same feeling of resentment; yet--in a strange town it was an advantageous reputation. She was a "Speed," was she? Well--let them find out. (62)

Needless to say, her resentment about people's moral condemnation of her behavior is a resentment towards the traditional double standard that dictates expressions of sexual interest are the norm for men, but an aberration for women.

Despite her resolution not to be taken too lightly, Isabelle is instantly attracted to Amory, as he is to her. She is "capable of very strong, if very transient emotions" (62), and he is "thrilled" to imagine at dinner that her foot brushes his under the table. They follow the courting ritual of the day, keeping things on a very superficial level, "playing" the "game that would presumably be her principal study for years to come." Though Amory is aware of Isabelle's affectation--he waits "for the mask to drop off" --he does "not question her right to . . . it" (66). By the time they've dined and danced together, each is silently looking

forward to some kissing, "the inevitable looming charmingly close" (69) as they sit together in the upstairs den.

While Isabelle seems quite taken with Amory, it is important to note that her pleasure stems more from the thrills of courtship and the exchange of physical expressions of affection "in . . . warm limousines" and "cosey roadsters" than from any particular partner. Indeed, Isabelle knows that "the boy might change," but she is nevertheless open and physically responsive to Amory: "her breath [comes] faster" (69-70) as they prepare to kiss. Of course, they've just met: there is no pretense of emotional or intellectual involvement, but as adolescents they are understandably intrigued by their own sexual possibilities. The society they live in, however, approves more of young men's physical drives than of young women's. While Isabelle worries about being hurt by gossip about her tentative sexual experimentation (kissing), Amory soon begins to worry about the potential damage to his own social standing if he is unable to score with (kiss) a "Speed."

Though their first intent to kiss each other is thwarted by the arrival of other party guests in the little den, Amory's sexual insecurity propels him to push Isabelle to kiss him when they meet and court again a few months later: ". . . if he didn't kiss her, it would worry him. . . . It would interfere vaguely with his idea of himself as a conqueror" (92). Because she is beautiful and responsive, Isabelle has

been the object of men's sexual and romantic fantasies since early adolescence. But she resents being treated merely as a sex object, and as Amory carelessly bruises her with his shirt stud, tries to coerce her into kissing him when she doesn't feel like it, and criticizes everything she says, she lashes out at him, insisting "I'll be anything I want" when he berates her for being "feminine." The more he pushes her for the kiss he thinks she owes him - "It isn't as if you were refusing on moral grounds," he urges - the more she senses his objectification and dehumanization of her. She asserts herself by pulling back. When he adopts a condescending attitude towards her intelligence-turning around her criticism of his insensitivity to a compliment ("I make you think, do I? Amory repeated with a touch of vanity"--she responds "emphatically": "You're a nervous strain . . . and when you analyze every little emotion and instinct I just don't have 'em" (90-93).

Not surprisingly, Amory emerges with a badly bruised ego from this first serious attempt at courtship with a young woman: he has been unable to make Isabelle meet his demands for even so slight a bit of physical gratification as a kiss. His selfish attitude towards Isabelle as a sex object has effectively prevented the development of any genuine, mutual caring. Isabelle, however, has displayed a strength of character new to women in the flapper era: by freely planning to indulge in a physical display of affection when her heart

was in it and by refusing to be coerced into such behavior at the whim of a sexist man, she has calmly asserted her right to her own feelings, to a sense of identity independent of her male companion's.

Two years pass between Amory's efforts to conquer Isabelle and his initial meeting with his young, widowed third cousin, Clara Page. During the interim between Isabelle's departure from his life and Clara's arrival in it, Amory has been so frightened by an unexpected and unconsummated sexual opportunity that he believes he's literally seen a ghost. For him, sexual temptation is proof that evil exists in the world; moreover, it is irrevocably linked to women's beauty and receptivity.

When Amory receives Monsignor Darcy's letter that contains a postscript suggesting that he pay a visit to his "remarkable" but "very poor" cousin (137), he decides to make the call "as a favor" (137). But as soon as he meets her he is completely entranced: "She was immemorial. . . . Amory wasn't good enough for Clara, Clara of ripply golden hair, but then no man was. Her goodness was above the prosy morals of the husband-seeker, apart from the dull literature of female virtue" (138). Amory is still angry and confused about his failure with Isabelle, judging by his hostile assessment of "the prosy morals of the husband-seeker," but Clara, though close to his age, is a widow with two small children. Having been married in the past, she is above reproach in Amory's

eyes: not for her the ideal kissing games of a young virgin looking for a husband to create her future, her adult identity. It is interesting to note, however, that Amory's early fascination with "Clara of ripply golden hair" calls to mind his boyhood fantasies of "ivory women" with distinguished suitors.

Unlike Isabelle, whose most compelling qualities are physical and sexual, Clara has a very cerebral--and indeed spiritual--aura. Freed by virtue of Clara's status as a widow from the compulsion to try to conquer her and net her kisses, Amory enjoys Clara's charm and sophistication as well as her beauty. Despite her poverty and responsibilities to her children, Clara can tend her household and entertain guests graciously, as if "she has not a care in the world." Moreover, she can "make fascinating and almost brilliant conversation out of the thinnest air that ever floated through a drawing room" (138).

Amory finds Clara's companionship delightful, partly because her golden radiance" (139)--her ephemeral quality--poses no sexual threat to him, and partly because she easily adopts a subordinate posture of female inexperience in relation to his patriarchal fantasies of male supremacy: when he asks her what she thinks of him, for example, she cautiously avoids criticizing him for his immaturity:

> "You're implying that I haven't used myself well?" Clara hesitated.

> "Well, I can't judge. A man, of course, has to go through a lot more, and I've been sheltered." (142)

As an impoverished widow with small children, of course, Clara has indisputably already had "to go through a lot more" than Amory has, but her casual dismissal of her own maturity and achievement appeals to Amory's vanity.

In fact, being with Clara feeds Amory's ego in a variety of ways. When he goes out with her, he particularly enjoys the attention she receives, for "in every store where she had ever traded she was whispered about as the beautiful Mrs. Page" (143). Naturally, Amory overhears people speculating about how quickly she'll remarry, and he can't resist trying to capture her for himself:

> "I think," he said and his voice trembled, "that if I lost faith in you I'd lose faith in God."
> She looked at him with such a startled face that he asked her the matter.
> "Nothing," she said slowly, "only this: five men have said that to me, and it frightens me." (144)

Clara is dismayed by Amory's trite expression of devotion to her at least in part because it is so predictable and so empty: it reflects a lack of genuine appreciation for the qualities that make her unique. When Amory pushes her to reveal her own understanding of love, she turns and responds "like a flash: 'I have never been in love.'" (145) Through this revelation, of course, she acknowledges that even her marriage--like Amory's mother's--was founded on something other than romantic love.

As a result of--or in spite of--the news that Clara has never been in love, Amory begins to push her to marry him, much as he pushed Isabelle to kiss him two years earlier. Amory's infatuation once more is entirely selfish; quite simply, he longs to acquire her now as a wife even though she is not in love with him. And his society approves of such matches: marriage is, after all, the traditional path to economic security for women within a patriarchal culture. Thus, Amory proposes to Clara "quite mechanically" even as he idolizes her and equates her serene spirituality with that of an untouchable virgin: "He longed only to touch her dress with almost the realization that Joseph must have had of Mary's eternal significance." Clara, however, is not deceived by Amory's idle proclamations of love, since she's heard exactly the same words so many times before. Moreover, she has determined for herself that she does not want to remarry: "'No,' she said; 'I'd never marry again. I've got my two children and I want myself for them'" (145).

By choosing not to remarry, Clara also chooses to continue to live in relative poverty. Significantly, however, she does so to protect herself, to guard her own personal identity by limiting the demands that are imposed on her by others. Were it not for her beauty, she explains, she would have been "a quiet nun in the convent" (146)--free to pursue a cerebral, spiritual existence, never to marry or bear children. The early death of her husband has given her a second chance for

independence and self-actualization; thus, her determination to remain single rather than compromise herself by remarriage reflects her strength of character. Amory, of course, is not pleased to be thwarted in his second earnest attempt to possess a beautiful woman, but the approach of the First World War provides him a welcome distraction.

Shortly after the war ends, Amory becomes involved in the deepest and most devastating love affair of his young life, his romance with Rosalind Connage. While he is waiting to attend a party where he is to meet Rosalind formally, he accidentally stumbles into a dressing room, where he awkwardly expresses surprise at discovering that she is not a "sexless" young woman fond of devoting her time and energy to swimming and golf. Rosalind teases in response--saying she does those things but not during "business hours," thus subtly alluding to her beauty rituals and social engagements as her life's work--which indeed they are, since she is a member of an American social class that still fosters women's economic dependency on men. Indeed, her reference to courtship as a form of "business" suggests a clear correlation between women's social activities and prostitution. Although her conversation is upbeat and humorous, her description of her "business" is nonetheless tainted by cynicism: "Oh, it's not a corporation--it's just 'Rosalind, Unlimited.' Fifty-one shares, name, good-will, and everything goes at $25,000 a year." Significantly, her joke about her business reflects

her sense that she is prostituting herself as she seeks a husband with sufficient resources; she will sell out, deliver "everything"--including her name and identity--for the right price. Like other women of her era, she is resigned to this fate simply because she has never been taught or expected to do anything else. Yet her sardonic remarks reflect her sense of the injustice of the status quo.

Rosalind appeals to all men, except those who find her exceptional "cleverness" or "beauty" intimidating. For Amory, she is the first real woman to combine the apparent physical accessibility of Isabelle with the intellectual sparkle of Clara. Again he finds himself instantly and thoroughly smitten. When he notes that she has "the same point of view on men that [he has] on women"--that they are fundamentally boring--she declares that she's "not really feminine . . . in [her] mind" (174). Interestingly, Rosalind's comment suggests that she believes that there is a clear distinction between male and female thought processes--and that women's minds are somehow innately inferior to men's. Yet her own quick mind and scintillating conversation intrigue Amory, and he begins at once to test her willingness to kiss him. Like Isabelle, Rosalind holds back when he tries to talk her into giving him a kiss, but, unlike Isabelle, she is able to reach an understanding with him: she responds enthusiastically to his suggestion as soon as they agree that they both simply "want" to exchange a kiss (175).

Despite Mrs. Connage's reminders to Rosalind that she needs to make a good marriage--to someone wealthy like Dawson Rider--in order to assure her family's financial security, Rosalind's romance with Amory escalates rapidly. Rosalind wants "real sentiment" and enjoys Amory in part because he appears able to "gratify [her] artistic taste" (185). They declare love for each other on the very night they meet, but Rosalind is aware even then that Amory's financial status bodes ill for their romance. As he leaves, she says "in an odd burst of prophecy," "'Poor Amory!'" (185) Her comment is a pathetic little double entendre: Amory is "poor" in an economic sense as well as an emotional one.

Amory's immediate reaction to being in love again suggests the sincerity of his emotions. He takes a job in an advertising agency, "where he alternate[s] between astonishing bursts of rather exceptional work and wild dreams of becoming suddenly rich and touring Italy with Rosalind." For several weeks the young lovers are "together constantly, for lunch, for dinner, and nearly every evening" (186), and Rosalind professes her passionate attachment to Amory by declaring her willingness to be possessed by him: "I want to belong to you. I want your people to be my people. I want to have your babies" (188). She sees love from a woman's point of view, recognizing that marriage will mean a loss of her independent identity; she longs for the tangible evidence of their love that children would represent; and her outspoken enthusiasm

for bearing Amory's children is no doubt also the most overt expression of sexual interest and intent that a respectable young woman of her era could get away with. She underscores the depth of her love for Amory again as she reveals: "For the first time I regret all the other kisses; now I know how much a kiss can mean" (189).

Although Rosalind genuinely reciprocates Amory's romantic devotion, she becomes increasingly aware of the personal sacrifices marriage to him would demand of her. Over a period of five weeks that Fitzgerald fails to account for, Rosalind changes "perceptibly-she is a trifle thinner for one thing; the light in her eyes is not so bright; she looks easily a year older." Her distress stems from Dawson Rider's efforts to lure her away from Amory, for she is uncomfortably aware that Dawson can offer her--and her future children--the kind of lifestyle she is accustomed to, and which Amory cannot and never will be able to provide. Her mother reminds her from a practical point of view that if she marries Amory, the "theoretical genius," she will "be absolutely dependent on a dreamer." As a woman in the days before women were free to pursue careers of their own, Rosalind is indeed destined to remain economically dependent on the men in her life--and she knows, as her mother points out, that her father is "an old man" (190) who won't be able to help her financially after she marries.

As Rosalind begins to waver in her resolve to marry Amory solely for love, Dawson Rider openly addresses her hesitation to marry for money; he tells her, for instance, that she'll "learn to love him" (195). She does, after all, like Dawson well enough--and she recognizes that he'd be a good father to their children and protect her from "worry." In fact, as she breaks her engagement with Amory on the basis of these practical, economic concerns, she sums up Dawson's advantage by saying he'd be "a background", echoing the longing for security that motivated Amory's mother's marriage years earlier. Nevertheless, Rosalind is in so much emotional turmoil over her marital choices that she tells Amory, "I want to die!" Obviously, she too resents the innate injustice of the social system which dictates that her selection of a husband will determine the degree of security she will enjoy over years to come.

Amory, of course, is an egotistical romantic, and he takes rejection by women very poorly--even though their rejections of him invariably stem from their own instincts for self-preservation in a society that affords young women of his social class little opportunity to take responsibility for themselves. When Amory hears Rosalind's decision to back out of marrying him to avoid condemning herself to being his "squaw--in some horrible place," he tries to coerce her into submission. First he tells her that their love won't be "a beautiful memory" to him because he'll only remember "the long

bitterness" (192-4). Then he goads her by accusing her of lacking nerve: "you don't dare be my wife." Rosalind steadfastly insists that she is acting out of common sense and "taking the hardest course" because she "wouldn't be the Rosalind" Amory "love[s]" (195) in the face of real economic hardship. Interestingly, Rosalind is aware of being simultaneously "old in some ways" and "just a little girl" (196). She does her best to make a mature compromise in light of almost unbearable conflicts, and Amory's reluctant departure leaves her genuinely suffering from an "aching sadness that will pass in time" (197). Like Clara and Isabelle, she acts out of responsibility towards herself, but Amory judges her harshly for it.

Eleanor, Amory's last serious romantic attachment in This Side of Paradise, is a startling forerunner of the women of his later novels--Gloria, Daisy, Nicole--whose brains and passionate natures are doomed to dissipate in nervous energy simply because women of that era were not encouraged or allowed to pursue meaningful work of their own. Amory stumbles across Eleanor as she's reciting poetry to herself one afternoon while he's out strolling in the country. They discover quite quickly that they have an uncanny intellectual rapport:

> As long as they knew each other Eleanor and Amory could be "on a subject" and stop talking with the definite thought of it in their heads, yet ten minutes later speak aloud and find that their minds had followed the same channels and led them each to a parallel idea; an idea

> that others would have found absolutely unconnected with the first. (226)

In addition, they feel a kinship because each has had a kind of gypsy childhood--traveling from town to town, country to country at the whim of a particularly "restless mother" (232).

Even at eighteen, however, Eleanor is cynical about love and sex: she declares she's "never met a man [she'd] marry" (228), and she ventures "that every bit of real love in the world is ninety-nine per cent passion and one little soupcon of jealousy." Amory, undoubtedly recalling Rosalind, hastily agrees that sexual love is "a rather unpleasant overpowering force" (238), and then--as is his wont--rapidly moves in to kiss Eleanor, even though she is not inclined to kiss him. As she backs away, he begins his customary coercion tactics: "Intellect is no protection from sex," he begins (238), but her anger thwarts his overtures.

During one of her frequent intellectual conversations with Amory, Eleanor articulates her profound dissatisfaction with her era's narrow view of women's appropriate roles and ambitions. In so doing, she calls attention to the plight of many intelligent women of her generation and social class who long for freedom from oppressive patriarchal traditions. Though Fitzgerald's women characters in This Side of Paradise and his later novels reflect varying degrees of awareness of the roots of their angst, Eleanor's vivid expression of her frustration reflects Fitzgerald's intuitive recognition of the

obstacles that young women faced when they contemplated self-actualization in a society that still accorded them only second-class citizenship. Eleanor's impassioned complaint reflects Fitzgerald's knack for serving unwittingly as a social historian; as Eleanor speaks, Fitzgerald sums up the frustrations of many of the young women of his acquaintance, including Zelda:

> "Rotten, rotten old world," broke out Eleanor suddenly, "and the wretchedest thing of all is me--oh, why am I a girl? Why am I not a stupid--? Look at you; you're stupider than I am, not much, but some, and you can lope about and get bored and then lope somewhere else, and you can play around with girls without being involved in meshes of sentiment, and you can do anything and be justified--and here am I with the brains to do everything, yet tied to the sinking ship of future matrimony. If I were born a hundred years from now, well and good, but now what's in store for me--I have to marry, that goes without saying. Who? I'm too bright for most men, and yet I have to descend to their level and let them patronize my intellect in order to get their attention. Every year that I don't marry I've got less chance for a first-class man. At the best I can have my choice from one or two cities and, of course, I have to marry into a dinner-coat." (237-38)

Eleanor, like her predecessors in Amory's affection, recognizes that the current social order is hostile towards women who yearn for sexual equality but who find themselves irrevocably "tied to the sinking ship of future matrimony" as their only means of establishing their adult identity and providing for their economic needs. Eleanor is acutely aware that marriage is unlikely to afford her any intellectual or emotional gratification.

Shortly after her tirade about these injustices, in fact, Eleanor nearly commits suicide in direct response to Amory's continued patronizing attitude towards her. When he criticizes her for what he considers blasphemy, she spurs her horse wildly towards the cliff, jumping off only at the last possible second, when it's too late to stop or turn her horse around. Her overwhelming impulse towards self-destruction results from her fear that she is doomed to waste her life in the company of men like Amory, who perpetually patronize her despite her superior intelligence. Her suicidal action suggests that she embodies the integrity to rebel against the profound injustice of her social condition.

Though she survives her suicide attempt, the extent--and intensity--of her unhappiness is indisputable. Eleanor's state of mind is the all too logical culmination of the concern with controlling her own destiny that each of Amory's romantic objects expresses in <u>This Side of Paradise</u>. In this first novel, as in his later ones, Fitzgerald inadvertently recorded the ambitions and frustrations of young women who were stranded between the oppressive traditions of the American patriarchy and haunting glimpses into a future that might afford greater equality of the sexes, and with it, greater freedom and happiness.

CHAPTER III

A Beauty Damned:
The Stubborn Integrity of Gloria Gilbert Patch

Gloria Gilbert Patch was not destined for happiness either, in Fitzgerald's kaleidoscope of contemporary relationships. Less than two years after F. Scott Fitzgerald dazzled and dismayed the American public through his portrayal of the flapper generation in This Side of Paradise, Metropolitan magazine began to feature the serialized version of his second novel, The Beautiful and Damned. It was 1922--only two years after Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment, granting women the right to vote, the same year, in fact, that the constitutionality of the Nineteenth Amendment was challenged and upheld in the Supreme Court.

Apparently the American political and social climate in the early 1920s only grudgingly accorded women even the most rudimentary means of attempting to assume some personal jurisdiction over their destinies. Although some women of Fitzgerald's social class were beginning to exercise the recently acquired right to vote, their degree of genuine personal freedom remained sorely restricted by their economic condition. Young women of Fitzgerald's acquaintance--like

Gloria Gilbert in The Beautiful and Damned--were products of "female" educations (168) and a socialization process that dictated that their ability to please men was their ultimate security. Fitzgerald astutely--albeit unconsciously--preserved the injustices inherent in this situation as he created the characters and chaos of his first novel about marriage.

Like Fitzgerald's other novels, The Beautiful and Damned is a loosely autobiographical tale about the plight of young Americans in love and, indeed, the state of early twentieth-century America in general. Unlike his other novels, however, as one critic observes, "The Beautiful and Damned is unique . . . in that it has a heroine as well as a hero" (Podis, 144). Gloria Gilbert distinguishes herself from other Fitzgerald women by her impressive degree of self-knowledge, dignity, and fortitude.[1] Her romance with Anthony Patch is swift and passionate, yet it is fraught with conflict; their ill-advised marriage deteriorates as rapidly and dramatically as their financial resources, yet Gloria herself manages at all times to maintain her fundamental personal integrity.

At its simplest level, The Beautiful and Damned, the least-known of Fitzgerald's novels, is the unhappy tale of a spirited young woman, who--by virtue of her beauty, charm, and social milieu--expects to be taken care of by a man, but isn't. The beauty and vitality that fuel Anthony's passionate attraction to Gloria ironically make her destruction inevitable. She naively opts to marry Anthony for passion,

though another suitor, Joseph Bloeckman, might well be a more suitable match.[2] Much to her dismay, she gradually discovers the emotional, psychological, and even physical abuse of which Anthony--her "temporarily passionate lover" (147)--is capable in his obsessive drive to possess and control her. Once she marries him, her fate is inextricably bound to his.

The marriage is destined for disaster because Anthony lacks the maturity and commitment to provide for Gloria in the tradition of their social class, and Gloria lacks both the means and the opportunity to declare true emotional and economic independence. As Anthony grows increasingly irresponsible--dipping into his investment capital to finance extravagant parties, avoiding regular employment, indulging his tastes for alcohol and other women--Gloria earnestly attempts to mitigate her own suffering by urging him to find a job, seeking work herself, and assuming ever-increasing responsibility for running the household. For her efforts she is rewarded not with respect or appreciation but with rising resentment and hostility. She finds herself trapped in a destructive relationship, without any hope of surviving economically or socially on her own. Having deliberately avoided the responsibility of parenthood, she finds herself by book's end the primary caretaker for the pathetic, deranged shell of the promising young man she married only a few years earlier. It is interesting to note that in her self-destructive relationship with Anthony, Gloria manifests many of the

symptoms of "women who love too much," as defined by modern psychologist Robin Norwood. Like Norwood's research group, Gloria gets involved with a man who "jeopardizes [her] emotional well-being and perhaps even [her] physical health and safety" (xiii), without being able "to assess the situation realistically and take care of herself by pulling out when the lack of reciprocity [becomes] apparent" (9). Moreover, Gloria is "terrified of abandonment," prone to "episodes of depression," "addicted to men and to emotional pain," "predisposed to becoming addicted to . . . certain foods, particularly sugary ones" (gum drops, in Gloria's case), and "not attracted to men who are kind, stable, reliable, and interested" (like Bloeckman).[3]

Like many of Fitzgerald's principal female characters, Gloria grapples with a severe but somewhat understated internal conflict: she has an independent streak and craves development and fulfillment of her self; yet she is also intensely aware of the prescribed roles her social stature imposes--or at least attempts to impose--on her. As she seeks to satisfy her society's expectations by marrying and accepting financial and emotional dependency on her husband, she finds it increasingly difficult to maintain any strong sense of self. Though Anthony expects Gloria to bow to his every whim without question--even when doing so violates her own personal dignity or sense of propriety--he fails to provide the security conventionally associated with marriage for women

of her class in Western civilization. Shifting attitudes toward women and cross-gender relationships leave Gloria in a precarious position: on the one hand, she perceives the possibility for self-actualization through making personal choices in her life; on the other hand, she discovers that her ability to exercise genuine control over her fate is still very limited. Her life, therefore, is filled with confusion, with the inevitable result that her words and behavior often strike others--including her husband--as irrational.

Gloria's confusion, of course, is compounded by her remarkable beauty. Her cousin Richard describes her to Anthony shortly before they meet as "'good-looking--in fact, damned attractive'" and, although Anthony remarks that he doesn't "'care for young girls as a rule,'" he nevertheless is affected by the mystique of her beauty:

> While it seemed to him that the average debutante spent every hour of her day thinking and talking about what the great world had mapped out for her to do during the next hour, any girl who made a living directly on her prettiness interested him enormously. (35)

To Anthony, at least, Gloria's beauty constitutes her livelihood. Significantly, her beauty is enhanced by her innate vitality.

When Richard takes Anthony to meet Gloria, Mrs. Gilbert strengthens Gloria's mystique by alluding to her relentless social activity, a direct outgrowth of her beauty and charm:

> "Gloria's out," she said, with an air of laying down an axiom from which she would proceed to derive results. "She's dancing somewhere. Gloria goes, goes, goes. I tell her I don't see how she stands it. She dances all afternoon and all night, until I think she's going to wear herself to a shadow. Her father is very worried about her." (39)

As Anthony begins to date Gloria, he discovers just how busy she is; he finds it difficult even to arrange appropriate engagements with her, for her social calendar is filled with a wide range of activities. Indeed, Gloria is so busy, Anthony finds himself sandwiched between her other commitments:

> She attended the semi-public charity dances at the big hotels; he saw her several times at dinner parties in Sherry's; and once as he waited for her to dress, Mrs. Gilbert, apropos of her daughter's habit of "going" rattled off an amazing holiday programme that included half a dozen dances to which Anthony had received cards. (67)

Not surprisingly, Anthony finds it difficult to entertain Gloria when he does see her; when he proposes visiting a cabaret, for instance, she responds without enthusiasm, saying that she's already "'seen every one in town'" (68). The bright, inquisitive debutante is already showing signs of being bored with life as she knows it--a life devoid of meaningful activity, intellectual stimulation, or professional purpose.

Gloria's frantic social activity during her youth certainly reflects both her popularity and energy: she is a highly sought-after companion, who is "'tremendously alive'" and "'a quite authentic and original character,'" according to

Anthony's friend Maury (48-9). Yet at the same time Gloria's frenetic involvement in social engagements suggests a restlessness and dissatisfaction with her life. She herself feels she has a "'man's mind'" (134), and the lack of serious intellectual pursuits in her life leaves her subject to boredom and depression; her habit of "'going'"--as her mother terms it--may well be an effort to mask her depression and compensate for her feelings of emptiness. Maury, a writer who senses Gloria's unprobed emotional depth and keen intellect, suggests to Anthony that there's more to her than meets the eye as he fondly reminisces: "'there was something about that little girl with her absurd tan that was eternally old--like me'" (51).

Further evidence of Gloria's intellect, depth, and low-grade depression surfaces as she and Anthony see more of each other. During one of their dates, Gloria compares herself to the lower-class patrons they observe at a bar, and she longs openly to be accepted at face value rather than "analyzed" by the men who admire her. Above all, she insists that she knows herself better than Anthony does, as he casually discredits her analogy between herself and other transient, festive images:

> "I'm like they are--like Japanese lanterns and crepe paper, and the music of that orchestra."
> "You're a young idiot!" he insisted wildly.
> She shook her blond head.
> "No, I'm not. I <u>am</u> like them. . . . You ought to see. . . . You don't know me." She hesitated and her eyes cam back to him, as though surprised at the

> last to see him there. "I've got a streak of what you'd call cheapness. I don't know where I get it but it's--oh, things like this and bright colors and gaudy vulgarity. I seem to belong here. These people could appreciate me and take me for granted, and these men would fall in love with me and admire me, whereas the clever men I meet would just analyze me and tell me I'm this because of this or that because of that." (72-3)

Clearly, Gloria's astute comparison between herself and other beautiful objects reflects her dissatisfaction with her current social interactions and her yearning to be accepted for herself rather than as a temporary projection of men's intellectualized visions and fantasies of her. It is significant that Anthony himself demonstrates that he's out of touch with her as he contradicts her open, sincere assessment of herself--an assessment which reveals low self-esteem, in that she claims "cheapness" as one of her qualities, as well as an unusual degree of introspection and honesty. Her sincerity about her self-assessment is evidenced both by her simple head-shaking in response to Anthony's objections to her remarks and by her willingness to meet his eyes as she attempts to explain her analogy.

Shortly after this incident, Gloria's disenchantment with her social life grows even more obvious, when "out of a clear sky one day she informs her mother that undergraduates weary her" (81). In fact, Gloria suddenly "retires" from her "dazzling career," leaving men "who fell in love with her . . . dismissed utterly, almost angrily" (81). Interestingly, Gloria's "retirement" from her frantic social whirl

coincides with attentions she receives from two men: Joseph Bloeckman and Anthony Patch, who compete for her hand in marriage. Gloria is burned-out and indecisive, favoring first one man and then the other. Her decision to marry Anthony is made amid tremendous internal conflict, similar to the emotional turmoil that propels Rosalind to reject Amory Blaine in favor of Dawson Ryder and Daisy to marry Tom Buchanan in the absence of Jay Gatsby. In fact, Gloria's retirement prior to her engagement to Anthony is a forerunner to Daisy's withdrawal following Gatsby's departure for Europe; in both cases, the young women's sudden cessation of their normal activities reflects profound, immobilizing depression.

Whether or not Gloria realizes it, her depression is intertwined with her dim awareness that she is destined to live as a reflection of some man's desire for her rather than as a self of her own creation. She is an aging debutante, fatigued by social pressures and eager to be done with them. Yet to Anthony she appears to be:

> . . . a sun, radiant, growing, gathering light and storing it--then after an eternity pouring it forth in a glance, the fragment of a sentence, to that part of him that cherished all beauty and all illusion. (73)

Anthony's objective in pursuing Gloria is apparently not reciprocity but possession, and Gloria's brief but courageous rejection of him following his initial effort to subjugate her to his will only reinforces his desire to "own" her (116).

Her decision to marry Anthony is an acceptance of the inevitable: women of her day and class simply had no viable means of support apart from marriage. Their engagement is marred by conflict, however, for "between kisses Anthony and this golden girl quar[rel] incessantly" (133).

Gloria knows, of course, that she does not really want the responsibility of marriage and a family. In fact, she tells Anthony outright that she "'hates'" the prospect of "'getting old'" and "'getting married'" "'more than anything in the world'" (64), for she abhors the idea of having "'responsibility and a lot of children'" (64). But she does not really see any alternative. Moreover, she is already accustomed to assessing herself as the object of others' wishes and perceptions instead of the subject of her own. At twenty-two, Gloria is--in some respects--really a child, for she has not yet learned to view herself apart from her ability to please others--especially men. She looks outward toward others to define who she is, and what her value in the world may be. Thus, she is sufficiently preoccupied when her father is displeased with her to mention it to Anthony during one of their dates: "'My daddy's mad at me,'" she says (65). Her childish diction underscores how limited her view of the world is. More importantly, in the following passage, Gloria eagerly encourages Anthony to tell her what he's heard about her before their meeting, as if gossip might provide some clue to her of her own identity:

> "I must confess," said Anthony gravely, "that even I've heard one thing about you."
>
> Alert at once, she sat up straight. Those eyes, with the grayness and eternity of a cliff of soft granite, caught his.
>
> "Tell me. I'll believe it. I always believe anything any one tells me about myself--don't you?" (60)

Gloria's urgent desire to hear--and believe--what others say about her suggests her fundamental insecurity. She herself does not know who or what she is--and she's desperately searching for clues to solve this mystery.

Although Gloria seeks others' perceptions of her to develop a sense of her identity, she is absolutely honest with herself about the nature of her social and economic condition. The most startling evidence of her proclivity for introspection is the diary she keeps before her marriage. The diary, though not "intimate" (144), nevertheless reflects Gloria's deep-seated frustration over living the supposedly carefree life of a debutante.[4] One telling passage has an unmistakable tone of cynicism:

> April 3rd.--After two hours of Schroeder who, they inform me, has millions, I've decided that this matter of sticking to things wears one out, particularly when the things concerned are men. There's nothing so often overdone and from today I swear to be amused. We talked about "love"--how banal! With how many men have I talked about love? (145)

Even though Gloria obviously resents the predictability and superficiality of her society's courtship rituals, three weeks later she writes that she wants to marry Anthony, and

that she expects her marriage to be a "live, lovely, glamourous performance" with "the world" for "scenery." Sadly, Gloria sees "What grubworms women are to crawl on their bellies through colorless marriages!" (147), but she fails to perceive any alternative to a dull marriage except the deliberate production of a "performance." Weary of her role as a debutante, she consciously decides to adopt the new role of wife--a role she plans to shape through personal interpretation. She marks the transition she expects marriage to entail by closing her diary with the inscription "finis." Unfortunately, she is ill-prepared for the harsh realities of becoming Anthony's wife.

Up to the time of her marriage, Gloria, like other young women of her generation and social class, has seized and enjoyed certain freedoms that her mother's generation did not share. These "freedoms," however, have been social and sexual--not intellectual, economic, or professional--and consequently somewhat illusory. Although Gloria and her counterparts in other Fitzgerald novels can get away with dating without chaperones, participating in petting parties, and kissing dozens of men--Gloria relates an anecdote in which she has been insensitively compared to a "'public drinking glass'" (182)--they are nevertheless affected by their society's expectations that they will remain subservient to men. In the era and class of Fitzgerald's focus, bright women like Gloria, whose "brain tired less quickly" than Anthony's

(168) generally lacked the education and opportunity to fend for themselves economically.

By marrying, Gloria merely transfers her dependency from her father to her husband, in the custom of the day. Although she has a modest income of her own--enough to buy her clothes, Anthony tells his grandfather--she expects marriage to be the key to genuine financial security. Her beauty and social graces are significant to her not merely in their own right but also because they are negotiable currency: they have a direct bearing on the quality of the match she can make. On the surface, Anthony appears to be a good catch, for he stands to inherit vast wealth; and Gloria anticipates that he will have "the wisdom" to give up the "passionate" nature of their romance in due time. In reality, however, the relationship proves to be a poor bargain for Gloria, who aspires to greater autonomy than Anthony will allow.

Signs of severe incompatibility surface during the courtship. One afternoon as Anthony is kissing Gloria in her living room, she shocks him by trying to impose limits on his behavior:

> . . . Anthony pulled her quickly to her feet and held her helpless, without breath, in a kiss that was neither a game nor a tribute.
>
> Her arms fell to her sides. In an instant she was free.
>
> "Don't!" she said quietly. "I don't want that."
>
> She sat down on the far side of the lounge and gazed straight before her. A frown had gathered between her eyes. Anthony sank down beside her and closed his hand over hers. It was lifeless and unresponsive.

> "Why, Gloria!" He made a motion as if to put his arm about her but she drew away.
> "I don't want that," she repeated.
> "I'm very sorry," he said, a little impatiently. "I--I didn't know you made such fine distinctions." (113-4)

By no means a prude, Gloria has willingly shared Anthony's kisses up to this point, but as he opts to take greater liberties--and to hold her "helpless"--she reacts with clear verbal and nonverbal signals of displeasure. Far from respecting her right to choose the nature and degree of intimacy she desires, however, Anthony responds to her "impatiently," with resentment toward what he perceives as "'fine distinctions.'" The incident ends in Anthony's hasty retreat "without dignity" from Gloria's presence, yet she remains angry even after his departure:

> For over a moment Gloria made no sound, Her lips were still curled; her glance was straight, proud, remote. Then her eyes blurred a little, and she murmured three words half-aloud to the death-bound fire:
> "Good-by, you ass!" she said. (115)

Her disillusionment with him is so intense, in fact, that they avoid each other for several weeks.

Since Gloria's rejection of Anthony's advances demonstrates her fundamental dignity and vitality--her "triumphant soul"--it poses an irresistible challenge to him; he grows increasingly infatuated with her, obsessed with the desire to "own that strength that could send him away" (116). His interest is in taking possession of--consuming--Gloria's

strength of will; hers is in maintaining personal jurisdiction over her life. The stage is thus set for an explosive power struggle between them.

During the six week period when Anthony waits and hopes for Gloria to forget his brutish effort to force "a kiss that was neither a game nor a tribute" on her, Bloeckman becomes a serious rival for Gloria's affection. Anthony is distressed to think of Bloeckman's potential appeal to Gloria, for he offers her a security and stability with which Anthony can't compete:

> . . . a new idea had seared his sky--what of Bloeckman! What would happen now? There was a wealthy man, middle-aged enough to be tolerant with a beautiful wife, to baby her whims and indulge her unreason, to wear her as she perhaps wished to be worn--a bright flower in his buttonhole, safe and secure from the things she feared. (118)

Significantly, Anthony thinks of Gloria's actions still in terms of "whims" and "unreason"--though, in fact, the extent of her "unreason" has only been to try to maintain control over her own experience, to choose freely what she will or will not do. Yet Fitzgerald's depiction of Anthony's assessment of Gloria has been treated by some critics as if Anthony's judgment were entirely accurate and reliable. Thus, Stern refers to Gloria as Anthony's "babywife," when in fact Anthony's behavior throughout the novel is more immature than Gloria's.[5]

Following the kiss incident and the subsequent estrangement between Anthony and Gloria, the couple eventually drifts back together--and on into marriage. But the match is a far from satisfactory one from Gloria's point of view. Although she expects the marriage to be a "performance" in which she can star, she also needs more security--and respect--than Anthony is capable of providing. She is not secure in his affection, for he is exceedingly jealous--even of her past boy friends, one of whom she pushed "'off a sixteen-foot embankment'" (181) for attempting to take excessive sexual liberties with her. Although Gloria herself is "proudly incapable of jealousy" (133), Anthony cruelly tells her stories of his own past romances in a deliberate effort to provoke her. After they marry, Anthony displays his jealousy by rudely dictating what ways he will or will not allow Gloria to interact with others. Gloria's responses to Anthony's efforts to control her reflect her internal conflict over the roles and rights of women: sometimes she challenges Anthony's authority; other times she blindly obeys his will.

At their height, Anthony's efforts to control Gloria amount to emotional coercion and, eventually, physical abuse. When she is bored with their lifestyle and concerned about their dwindling financial resources, she is eager to take Bloeckman up on his offer to schedule a screen test for her, so that she might get a role in a movie. Anthony, however, undermines her budding ambition--even though she offers to

"'only play unsophisticated roles'"--on the unreasonable grounds that he "'hates actors'" and assumes that her desire to go into the movies merely reflects her "'craving for excitement'" (213-15). He threatens to leave for Europe if she goes into the movies, and though she proclaims that she's not interested in trying to stop him, she does not go for the screen test.

Gloria yields to Anthony's manipulations without serious argument on several occasions, largely because her upbringing has led her to depend--financially, emotionally--on keeping her husband happy. He is, after all, her livelihood. Although she has long entertained the idea that being an actress might be personally gratifying - she tells Anthony before their marriage that she would like "'to go on stage some time'" (137) when a bona fide opportunity for her to test her skills arises, her automatic impulse is to turn to her husband to seek his permission: "'Would you let me, Anthony?'" she asks (213). His denial of permission in irrational, but--fearful of provoking his displeasure--she submits to his will. By doing so, of course, she is setting aside her own vision of self-realization in an effort to maintain domestic peace, which at that time at least is more important to her.

Anthony's obsession with controlling Gloria also manifests itself through physical abuse. On the few occasions when he subjects her to physical contact that is abhorrent or violent,

she wages earnest but brief battles with him. She tries to assert her independent will during their courtship, when she finds his manner of kissing distasteful, and during their marriage, when she tries to exercise some control over their social interactions. When her efforts to live by her own standards are thwarted, she loses confidence in her ability to maintain her integrity; depression is the inevitable result, which lowers her self-esteem and increases her dependency on Anthony.

As Anthony's drinking grows more and more problematic, Gloria understandably contrives to lead him away from settings where he drinks too much. In the Western tradition in general, of course, it is the wife's responsibility to manage a couple's social life. So one afternoon when Anthony has drunk himself virtually into a stupor at the Merriams' house, Gloria declares that it's time to go. She will not give in to the Merriams' polite insistence that they are welcome to stay, and Anthony is offended by what he sees as her decision to curtail his "innocent and harmless enjoyment." In the taxi on the way to the train station, Anthony silently, drunkenly determines that he must "assert his will against this cool and impervious girl, to obtain with one magnificent effort a mastery that seems infinitely desirable." At the station they argue over buying train tickets, and Anthony stubbornly and childishly insists that he "'won't go in the train,'" preoccupied all the while with the notion that <u>Gloria</u> is being

"selfish" and that he must prove himself her "master." True to herself, Gloria maintains her dignity and calmly vows to go home alone, whereupon Anthony "seizes her arm" to restrain her. The physical contact rapidly escalates into abuse, for he "tightens his grasp" as she struggles to "pull away from him." Bystanders watch as the scuffle between husband and wife continues, but no one makes any effort to intervene. Gloria tries to "jerk herself away"; Anthony grasps the other arm." She calls him a "'brute'" and continues to try to free herself by "tugging and straining." Unable to break away from Anthony's brute physical strength in his drunken rage, Gloria eventually releases her anger and frustration by biting Anthony's thumb after the train departs without them. Profoundly disturbed by his capability for physical violence, she tersely proclaims that he has "'killed any love [she] ever had for [him], and any respect.'" "'Oh,'" she exclaims, "'if I'd thought you'd ever lay your hands one me--.'" Nevertheless, she follows him unhappily--"with a subdued cry of infinite pain and despair" --into a waiting car; later, "wide-eyed and sleepless," she crawls into bed next to him, thus demonstrating her sense of helplessness and her lack of confidence in her ability to reject genuine physical abuse (197-201).

As the novel progresses, Gloria's vulnerability and internal conflicts grow increasingly vivid. When she fears she is pregnant long before they thought they might want to

have children, she seeks Anthony's opinion about getting an abortion. He offers no real help, saying quite simply that she must make up her own mind, even though she expresses her fear of having the baby in terms of wanting to preserve her physical beauty because it gives him pleasure:

> "All I think of ever is that I love you," she wailed. I value my body because you think it's beautiful. And this body of mine--of yours--to have it grow ugly and shapeless? It's simply intolerable. Oh, Anthony, I'm not afraid of the pain." (203)

By this time, Gloria is treating herself as an extension--or possession--of Anthony's. Significantly, she indicates that she is accustomed to effacing herself, focusing solely on her love of Anthony, which is "'all she thinks of ever.'" She is so dependent on him (despite her longings for control over her own life) that she finds it difficult to make her own decisions, even about her own body. She wrestles helplessly with her confusion, eventually justifying her decision to pursue what proves to be an unnecessary abortion on the grounds that to do so would be "'being true'" to herself (205). Though she obviously has little substantial sense of self, she nevertheless stubbornly aspires to some semblance of autonomy.

The more Gloria grapples hopelessly with the negative aspects of her alliance with Anthony, the more her vision of self-determination suffers under his influence. Though Anthony smothers her with his jealousy and obsessive mastery, she is not even reaping the benefit of security traditionally

afforded to women by marriage. Life with Anthony proves to be a series of upsets, arguments, and abusive episodes, culminating one night in Gloria's experience of a full-blown anxiety attack.

Her acute psychological trauma grows out of a typical evening's activities at the young Patches' home in the country. Anthony and his friends drink heavily, play music, dance, and then pick Gloria up and pass her around the room--with riotous disregard for her repeated demands to be put down. Gloria defends herself by striking one of the men, and then eagerly retreats to the solitude of her room. Lying awake, she feels "a weight pressing down upon her breast" and longs silently for her mother, who she knows is "dead, beyond sight and touch forever." Suffering under the tremendous psychological pain that is "pressing on her, pressing on her," she startles back to full consciousness to see one of the drunken revelers "swaying in the doorway" of her bedroom. Suddenly, "She knows what she must do--now, now, before it [is] too late. She must go out into this cool damp, out, away, to feel the wet swish of the grass around her feet and the fresh moisture on her forehead" (242-43). Gloria rises then, sneaks down the stairs, and rushes out into the night, aware that "even Anthony [is] part of this weight." Significantly, her focus is on the movement away from the source of her distress (Anthony, who provides no nurture, and the whole self-involved household) rather than toward any compel-

ling destination. When the household discovers her absence, several men set out to overtake her, but she continues to flee, with "this thing . . . driving her forward." She is acutely aware of a nameless oppression that threatens her terribly, and even when Anthony catches up with her she is too distressed to consent to return home. The men sit and talk with her until early morning, when she insists on boarding a train alone to return to the city (243-44).

The severity of Gloria's anxiety attack reflects her growing subconscious alarm over the course of her life with Anthony. He does not offer her the respect, appreciation, and security she craves, yet she does not know any way to change her situation. Every effort she makes to assert herself--to seek work and professional fulfillment, to curb Anthony's outrageous drinking and spending habits, to set limits on the treatment of her own body--is thwarted. She is remarkable in that she continues to try to maintain some jurisdiction over her own life, even in the face of nearly insurmountable obstacles: Anthony's jealousy and brute physical strength and her utter economic dependency. Though she is in touch with the reality of her vulnerability as a woman, she is not willing to relinquish her persistent struggle for personal dignity without an earnest battle.

Anthony is a fundamentally weak and impulsive man--it takes an insecure man to insist so selfishly on "owning" a woman--and Gloria finds his lack of commitment to their mutual

financial welfare enormously frustrating. As their resources dwindle, Gloria nags Anthony frequently about the importance of his getting some work and improving relations with his wealthy grandfather. Gloria sees the danger of using up their capital more clearly than Anthony, who is childishly inclined to give in to any impulses that strike his fancy. In fact, at one point Anthony confesses to Gloria that he once even succumbed to his "'instinct to kick a cat'" which had apparently been hoping someone would "'be kind to him,'" and Gloria identifies so intensely with the young cat's vulnerability that she cries and prohibits Anthony from coming near her (289-90). Like the cat that sought Anthony's affection, Gloria too has trusted Anthony unwisely with her welfare. In this episode Gloria again vaguely perceives the threat Anthony poses to her yearning for a modicum of kindness. Similarly, when Gloria later develops an interest in obtaining a squirrel coat the couple can ill afford because of Anthony's spending habits, her subconscious motivation may once more be her lingering hope and desire to be taken care of in the tradition of her gender and social class.

Near the end of the novel, after Adam Patch dies and while his will is being contested, Gloria begins to come to terms with the fact that her marriage to Anthony offers her no real security. As she matures, she assumes increasing responsibility for herself and for the household. She learns to cook her own meals, even though her upbringing had taken it

for granted that others would always cook for her. She contacts Joseph Bloeckman and goes for a belated screen test,[6] learning to her dismay that her once splendid beauty has faded too much for her to obtain starring roles; rather than accept a bit part that she feels is beneath her dignity, she rejects the opportunity to act altogether. She tries diligently to prevent Anthony from squandering their last few dollars on drink. In fact, it is even Gloria who maintains communications with the lawyers contesting Adam Patch's will while Anthony goes south for military training and becomes involved with Dot.

No doubt Anthony's absence is a tremendous relief for Gloria, for their marriage has been filled with strife for a long time. She takes advantage of his absence to develop some of her own interests and to examine her life. She socializes a bit but makes it clear that she does not choose to make herself available to other men sexually. She spends a great deal of time in simple, solitary pursuits like reading and walking--which illustrate her return to an introspective mode characteristic of a woman who wrote a diary regularly up to her marriage.

Anthony's unexpected return from the south mars her newfound, tenuous equilibrium, and she takes to her bed just as the legal case--which will determine their economic future--is at last approaching trial. Anthony imagines that Gloria is coddling herself, that she's not really ill; the doctor,

however, recognizes the validity of her emotionally-induced illness and cautions Anthony not to disturb Gloria. Indeed, by this time Gloria cannot even stand for Anthony to sit on her bed, for he is repulsive to her, especially when his breath smells "'like whiskey'" (442).

True to their pattern, when something has to be done it is Gloria--not Anthony--who sees to it. So it is Gloria who leaves her bed to represent the couple in the courtroom when the verdict is delivered--and Gloria who returns to an alcoholic, hysterical, and deranged spouse to report the news that the couple will indeed inherit Patch's millions. Ironically, at the close of Fitzgerald's first novel about marriage, the wife--who has long struggled with the culturally-induced belief that she needs to be taken care of by a man--winds up as a kind of nursemaid to her very seriously unbalanced husband. Despite Gloria Gilbert Patch's relentless efforts to preserve her fundamental dignity, in the end she is damned both by her society's expectations and her personal economic dependency. In this respect she is not unlike The Great Gatsby's Daisy, whose unhappy marriage to Tom is dictated more by economic and social necessity than by reciprocal love and commitment.

CHAPTER IV

Beneath the Mask: The Plight of Daisy Buchanan

With two noteworthy exceptions,[1] Gatsby critics have generally been content to dismiss Daisy Buchanan as the "shallow," "foolish," "unworthy" woman who happens to embody Jay Gatsby's dream. Like the women Fitzgerald portrayed in This Side of Paradise and like Gloria Gilbert Patch, however, Daisy embodies conflicting values and expectations: the longing for the only security her social stature offers-- marriage to a wealthy man who can provide "background"--and the impulse toward independent efforts to achieve self-fulfilment.

Guided only by Nick's very limited view of her, readers often judge Daisy solely on the basis of her superficial qualities, with no apparent awareness that her silly manner conceals a woman of feeling or that her final "irresponsibility" towards Gatsby stems from an acute sense of responsibility towards herself. Certainly it is easy to join Nick in lumping Daisy and Tom together at the end of the novel and condemning them both for being "careless." But such a narrow estimation of Daisy's character is far too simplistic, for, although Nick conscientiously relates what Daisy does, he clearly does not understand what motivates her. In fact,

Daisy baffles Nick from the opening chapter, when he observes her unhappy situation with Tom and wonders why she doesn't leave him:

> I was confused and a little disgusted as I drove away. It seemed to me that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out of the house, child in arms--but apparently there were no such intentions in her head. (20-2)

Just as Nick fails to comprehend Daisy's reluctance to leave Tom at the beginning of the novel, he continues to be confused by her in the last chapter. In his final reference to Daisy, Nick once more acknowledges his uncertainty about what keeps Tom and Daisy together:

> They were careless people, Tom and Daisy--they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together. . . . (180-81)

Nick's prolonged confusion about Daisy's continued association with Tom naturally hinders his ability to present her character. Since Nick is the narrator of the story, his failure to perceive what makes Daisy behave as she does makes it easy for readers to jump to the conclusion that she is "shallow"--that she acts as she does for no good reason at all, either because she is incapable of genuine feeling or because she just doesn't care. But the very fact that Nick is perplexed about Daisy suggests that she ought not to be dismissed as the "beautiful little fool" she says she wants her daughter to be. Despite his inability to understand

Daisy, Nick's keen observations of her behavior demonstrate not that she is unable to feel and express strong emotions, but that she deliberately avoids them, perhaps as a defense mechanism, because she recognizes the pain they can entail. Daisy clings-- unsuccessfully--to a gay, superficial, "careless" world in an effort to protect herself from what are for her the terrifying dangers inherent in caring.

Without a doubt, Nick's confusion about what motivates Daisy is rooted in Fitzgerald's own uncertainty about his development of her character. Even before The Great Gatsby's 1925 publication, Fitzgerald revealed his dissatisfaction with Daisy in a letter to Maxwell Perkins:

> Chapter 7 (the hotel scene) will never quite be up to the mark--I've worried about it too long and I can't quite place Daisy's reaction. . . . I'm sorry Myrtle is better than Daisy. . . . It's Chapter VII that's the trouble with Daisy and it may hurt the book's popularity that it's a man's book, (Turnbull, Letters, 172-73).

Evidently, Fitzgerald--like Nick--did not quite know what to make of Daisy. Shortly after the book came out, he referred again to the problem of Daisy in letters to both Edmund Wilson and H.L. Mencken. A harsh critic of his own work, he wrote to Edmund Wilson:

> The worst fault in it, I think is a BIG FAULT: I gave no account (and had no feeling about or knowledge of) the emotional relations between Gatsby and Daisy from the time of their reunion to the catastrophe. (Turnbull, Letters, 341)

In his letter to H.L. Mencken, he pinpointed the problem more precisely:

> There is a tremendous fault in the book--the lack of an emotional presentment of Daisy's attitude toward Gatsby after their reunion (and the subsequent lack of logic or importance in her throwing him over). (Turnbull, Letters, 480)

Fitzgerald was a remarkably perceptive judge of his own work, and it is worth noting that his acute, valid sense of Daisy's inadequate development concerned only the second half of the novel. Apparently he was satisfied with Daisy's coexistence with Tom, his "best character," up to and including the scene of her reunion with Gatsby. And with good reason--for Nick's painstaking portrayals of Daisy when he visits her and Tom at their home in chapter 1 and again when she comes to his home for the surprise reunion with Gatsby in chapter 5 clearly reveal much more about her character than his depiction of her subsequent sudden, unexplained renunciation of Gatsby does. In fact, even through Fitzgerald himself may not have consciously been able to "place Daisy's reaction," his description of her up to the hotel scene indicates that he was at least intuitively aware of some "logic or importance" in her behavior during the confrontation between Tom and Gatsby.

Most studies of The Great Gatsby eventually focus at least briefly on Nick Carraway, and this one is no exception. We see Daisy, as we see Gatsby, only through Nick's eyes. But, although Nick thoroughly assesses and obviously admires

Gatsby's character and behavior, his perception of Daisy is far more limited. Perhaps this is what Fitzgerald was thinking of when he called Gatsby "a man's book," for, despite Daisy's important role in the story, the male narrator focuses almost exclusively on two men: Gatsby and Tom. Except for his account of one brief, private conversation with Daisy in the opening chapter, Nick's revelations about Daisy are restricted to her observable behavior among people and to other people's remarks about her. Nick describes Daisy in terms of gaiety, restlessness, fear, artificiality--but while he recognizes that she is affected, he fails to comprehend what lies beneath her affectation. And since he is the narrator of The Great Gatsby, his ignorance of--and apparent lack of curiosity about--what Daisy's affectation conceals can easily influence the reader's opinion of her.

But Nick's impressions of Jordan Baker, who grew up with Daisy in Louisville and who also reflects Fitzgerald's view of Southern womanhood, can shed some light on Daisy's character. Nick establishes his "tender curiosity" toward Jordan, then reveals an insight:

> The bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed something--most affectations conceal something eventually, even though they don't in the beginning--(58).

In Jordan's case, Nick develops his casual observation about affectations by saying that she is "incurably dishonest" and therefore feels safest "on a plane where any divergence from a

code would be thought impossible." Later he engages in a playful spat with her about her careless driving, and she reveals her assumption that other people are cautious: she evidently expects to be protected from her own vulnerability by the precautions other people take.

Like Jordan, Daisy is affected. Nick demonstrates his awareness of her affectation throughout the novel by commenting on her insincerity, as he does in chapter 1, following her private disclosures to him about her unhappy marriage.

> "You see I think everything's terrible anyhow," she went on in a convinced way. "Everybody thinks so--the most advanced people. And I know. I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything." Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom's, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. "Sophisticated--God, I'm sophisticated!"
>
> The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, by belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. (18)

Daisy may indeed have "been everywhere and seen everything and done everything," but her pretensions of "sophistication"--her insistence that "everything's terrible"--aren't convincing to Nick, perhaps because they aren't convincing to her. She's playing a part, saying what she considers appropriate, but not what she really feels. Nick gives us a clue to her deception when he describes her manner of delivery. It is significant that she "went on in a convinced way" instead of actually being convinced. Earlier in the same scene, when Daisy complains about her bruised finger, Nick observes that she wears an "awed expression," suggesting that

she is not in fact "awed." Later in the novel Nick pointedly reaffirms his sense of Daisy's affectation when she is reunited with Gatsby and Nick overhears her initiating a conversation--apparently with difficulty--"on a clear artificial note." (87)

Jordan and Daisy are not the first Southern women Fitzgerald portrays in terms of affectations. Sally Carrol Happer, the young protagonist in "The Ice Palace" (1920), is similarly wealthy, popular, and affected. Caught between her fear of stultification in the dying South and her craving for the security of marriage, she agrees to go north to marry Harry Bellamy. She explains to a Southern friend, Clark Darrow:

> "tied down here I'd get restless. I'd feel I was--wastin' myself. There's two sides of me, you see. There's the sleepy old side you love; an' there's a sort of energy-the feelin' that makes me do wild things."[2]

Though her Southern friends warn her against marrying a Yankee, Sally Carrol goes North to visit Harry and his family. There she begins to miss the security of an established code of behavior, much as Jordan and Daisy later do in The Great Gatsby. Confused, she fervently seeks Harry's advice about Northern etiquette, and he responds with a demand that she tell him how glad she is to be there.

> "Glad--just awful glad!" she whispered, insinuating herself into his arms in her own peculiar way. "Where you are is home for me, Harry."
>
> And as she said this she had the feeling for almost

> the first time in her life that she was acting a part. (11)

Sally Carrol chooses to act a part in an effort to resolve her conflicting needs for adventure (flight to the north) and security (suitable marriage). But soon after she recognizes that she is "acting a part," she argues with Harry over his unkind remarks about Southerners. "A Southerner wouldn't talk the way you're talking now" (18), she insists, demonstrating still further that she misses the comfort of an established code of behavior. It is no surprise, then, that, after getting lost for a brief but horrifying time in the ice palace at the winter carnival, she chooses to go back home.

Sally Carrol Happer is an important forerunner of Daisy Buchanan, for they suffer the same kinds of conflicts and attempt similar solutions. But Fitzgerald got the idea for "The Ice Palace" from Zelda, and her sympathetic view of the conflicting needs and desires of Southern women enabled him to portray Sally Carrol with generosity. He seems to admire the character, as he admired Zelda, for "her courage, her sincerity, and her flaming self-respect."[3] He describes Sally Carrol's affectation as something she recognizes and finds intolerable in herself. Moreover, he leaves the reader with a strong sense of her integrity, which she exhibits both as she openly tells Roger Patton her reasons for marrying and as she courageously leaves the cold North to go back home, where she feels she belongs.

Five years elapsed between the publication of "The Ice Palace" and The Great Gatsby, and during that time the erosion of Fitzgerald's marriage to Zelda may have decreased his sympathy for feminine conflicts. Furthermore, Daisy Buchanan, unlike Sally Carrol in "The Ice Palace," is not the protagonist of the novel; Fitzgerald is less thorough in his characterization of her. Although Nick is intuitively aware of Daisy's affectation, he utterly fails to explore its origins. Nevertheless, we can begin to understand Daisy better by closely examining Nick's observations of her behavior. In three key scenes--Nick's first visit to the Buchanans, Gatsby's reunion with Daisy, and the hot afternoon at the Plaza-Nick's simple descriptions of Daisy reveal her genuine love for Gatsby, her intense fear of emotions in general, and her craving for stability. The juxtaposition of these forces suggests the severity of Daisy's conflict: her longing for personal freedom is brought out by her deep-rooted affection for Gatsby, but her fear of emotions and her need for stability make her cling to her unsatisfactory marriage to Tom.

Nick's first description of Daisy's face when he visits the Buchanans for dinner at their home suggests that she is burdened with a serious internal conflict: "Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth. . . . " (9) Though her overall countenance is of sorrow, her face is somehow fragmented--turned into a set of beautiful objects, much as Tom and Gatsby turn her into

an object to suit their needs. And in her face, as in her life, vitality coexists with suffering. Nick's seemingly contradictory description of Daisy is strikingly effective. It is, in Bryer's words, an "arresting linkage," which evokes in the reader "a mixture of surprise and a realization of appropriateness" ("Style," 125).

In the opening chapter, Fitzgerald clearly indicates that Daisy embodies a war between hope and despair. At dinner, Daisy eagerly asks: "Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it" (12). Bored, Jordan suggests that they ought to "plan something." "All right," said Daisy. "What'll we plan?" She turned . . . helplessly: "What do people plan?" (12). Daisy's childlike anticipation of the longest day of the year and her gay eagerness to "plan something" demonstrate the optimistic aspect of her character. But her hopeful nature is thwarted by experience and her attitude grows cynical. First she recognizes that looking forward to something doesn't always pay off, and then she realizes that she doesn't know how to exert any control over the situation: she knows she'll miss the day she looks forward to, and she realizes that she doesn't know what to plan anyway. As Barry Gross observes, "the future for Daisy is not that orgastic consummation devoutly to be wished" ("Back West," 7). Yet Daisy can't help looking forward to

the future, despite her acute sense of futility; that is the nature and intensity of her inner conflict.

From the opening of the novel, Fitzgerald demonstrates that Daisy, like Gatsby, is at least in part a romantic.[4] The first clue that Daisy remembers Gatsby with more than just a passing interest appears during Nick's first visit to the Buchanans' home. Jordan tells Nick that she knows a man named Gatsby in West Egg, and Daisy, alert to an old lover's name despite five years of separation, her marriage to another man, and the birth of a daughter, suddenly interrupts: "'Gatsby?' demanded Daisy. 'What Gatsby?'" (11). Because dinner is announced, Daisy doesn't get an immediate answer, and her question may seem insignificant to a casual reader. But later in the novel, as Jordan tells Nick of Daisy and Gatsby's early romance, we learn that Daisy cared enough about hearing Gatsby's name that evening to wake Jordan up--after she had retired early to rest before a tournament--to get news of Gatsby. This incident in and of itself does not prove that Daisy's love for Gatsby approaches his for her, but, coupled with the events that follow, it certainly suggests that she, like Gatsby, cultivates fond memories of a dream lover.

Severe tension pervades the Buchanan home as Nick dines with Jordan, Tom, and Daisy. Even before Nick learns that "Tom's got some woman in New York" (15), his observations of the interplay between Daisy and Tom reflect the animosity between them. Their exchanges seem playful at first. Daisy

accuses Tom of hurting her finger, then childishly calls him "hulking" repeatedly, since she knows it upsets him. But gradually their feud escalates. The telephone's reminders of Tom's sexual fidelity contribute to Daisy's flirtatious behavior towards Nick at the dinner table. When Tom is first called away to the telephone, Daisy affects indifference by "enthusiastically" recounting a funny story to Nick. And when the phone calls Tom away again only a few moments later, Nick observes: "As if his absence quickened something within her, Daisy leaned forward again, her voice glowing and singing" (15).

Certainly Nick perceives that Daisy is reacting emotionally to an emotional situation, but her response is not immediately directed towards the source of her tension. Daisy responds to tension with energy, but, instead of openly confronting Tom with her anger, she enthusiastically engages herself with Nick and needles Tom through ironic remarks. Characteristically, she subjugates her desire to assert herself to her need for security. But the simple fact that she is anxious in the face of evidence of Tom's infidelity suggests that she has an emotional investment in her relationship with him. A woman who felt less would react less.

Daisy displays her intelligence, sensitivity, and suffering as she gets even with Tom throughout the evening. When Tom criticizes Jordan's family for letting her "run around the country," Daisy says, "She's going to spend lots of week-ends

out here this summer. I think the home influence will be very good for her" (19). Tom shows his recognition of her implications as he stares at her in silence. And Daisy continues to annoy him by making his concern about racial purity the butt of a nasty joke.

> "Did you give Nick a little heart-to-heart talk on the veranda?" demanded Tom suddenly.
>
> "Did I? . . . I can't seem to remember, but I think we talked about the Nordic race. Yes, I'm sure we did. It sort of crept up on us and the first thing you know--" (20)

Tom interrupts Daisy and addresses Nick, thus demonstrating his recognition of--and disregard for--Daisy's covert hostility.

By this point, of course, Daisy has had a little "heart-to-heart talk" with Nick, and in it she has disclosed that she is vulnerable to emotions, and that she has been deeply--perhaps irreparably--hurt. When Nick, having recognized "that turbulent emotions possessed her," asks Daisy about her daughter, Daisy cautiously exposes her feelings to him through her account of the child's birth:

> "Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool--that is the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.'" (17)

Daisy's story about the child's birth reveals a lot about her own unhappiness. She would choose to be a fool--to be incapable of and invulnerable to ideas and emotions--*if* she could; but the foundation of her desire to be unfeeling is experience: she does feel, she has suffered, and her desire for her daughter to be a "fool" is actually a desire to shelter her from experiencing the pain that Daisy herself has known. Daisy's remarks about the child's birth are pitiful, but they are rooted in the authority of bitter experience, and they are not shallow.

Daisy's capacity for feeling is further demonstrated by Jordan's story about her romance with Gatsby in Louisville. Jordan indicates that Daisy was very wealthy and very popular; moreover, she was apparently already cultivating a certain mystique. She customarily "dressed all in white" and drove "a little white roadster." Jordan also remembers one morning when Daisy and a young officer, Gatsby, "were so engrossed in each other that [Daisy] didn't see [her]" (76). Judging by Jordan's wording, the affection that flowed between Daisy and Gatsby at that time was unquestionably reciprocal. And Jordan strengthens her suggestion that Daisy was in love with Gatsby by her seemingly casual references to Daisy's behavior after Gatsby went to war:

> " . . . I didn't see Daisy very often. She went with a slightly older crowd--when she went with anyone at all. Wild rumors were circulating about her--how her mother had found her packing her bag one winter night to go to New York and say good-by to a soldier who was going overseas.

> She was effectually prevented, but she wasn't on speaking terms with her family for several weeks. After that she didn't play around with the soldiers any more, but only with a few flat-footed, short-sighted young men in town, who couldn't get into the army at all." (76)

Jordan's history of Daisy shows that Daisy was strongly attached to Gatsby--so fond of him, in fact, that she was willing to risk the wrath of her parents by running off to see him without permission. But she wasn't free: she was a young Southern belle, dependent on her "good" family and consequently protected and resticted by its established code of behavior. She was angry when they interfered with her plans, but her anger was ineffectual; she lacked the courage and conviction to break away from them in pursuit of her own happiness. But the unhappy end of her affair with Gatsby did have a profound impact on her: for a year she withdrew from her customary social engagements and rejected dates with attractive, eligible young men. The girl who had been so sought after began to associate only with men who could not possibly compete with Gatsby, whom she had loved very deeply. Daisy had, in effect, retreated from the risks of falling in love again.

As Jordan continues her monologue about Daisy, she remarks that Daisy returned to her previous gay social circle a little over a year later. She was still affected--but now her affectation concealed her fear of love:

> By the next autumn she was gay again, gay as ever. She had a debut after the Armistice, and in February she

> was presumably engaged to a man from New Orleans. In June she married Tom Buchanan of Chicago . . . (76-77)

Daisy's new gaiety was a false gaiety. Her flirtations, even with the man she eventually married, were not as deep as her affection for Gatsby had been. After a year of avoiding any involvement with potentially serious suitors, Daisy's sudden engagements first to one man and then to another reflect her sense of urgency to get on with her life. Gatsby's account of Daisy's increasingly desperate letters underscores this point:

> . . . there was a quality of nervous despair in Daisy's letters. She didn't see why he couldn't come. She was feeling the pressure of the world outside, and she wanted to see him and feel his presence beside her and be reassured that she was doing the right thing after all (151).

Daisy had sustained her love for Gatsby through their correspondence over more than a year. But she was a victim of her need for stability, and, despite their mutual love, Gatsby was unable to meet that need:

> She wanted her life shaped now, immediately--and the decision must be made by some force--of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality- that was close at hand. (151)

Daisy couldn't wait forever. Her need for stability was immediate, and she attempted to satisfy that need through something tangible, something close at hand. It is significant that she planned to marry one man and wound up marrying another, for her need was not for any particular person (unless it was for Gatsby, who didn't come to her), but

simply for an attainable partner who could provide-through marriage--the sense of identity and stability she so desperately craved.

Judging by the accounts of Jordan and Gatsby, Daisy was so in love with Gatsby--and so hurt by his failure to come to her when she needed him--that she virtually married Tom on the rebound. The vivid scene of Daisy's drunkenness when she "changes her mind" after receiving a letter from Gatsby is a clear indication of her devotion to Gatsby. Significantly, she asks that someone return the wedding pearls to "whoever they belong to": her future husband has no particular identity to her. She clings pathetically to Gatsby's letter, symbol of the man she really loves, because he himself is not available to her.

Nevertheless, Jordan tells Nick that Daisy married Tom "without so much as a shiver" (78). And, having made a formal commitment to her choice of Tom Buchanan for a husband, Daisy apparently allowed herself to fall in love with him. Jordan describes Daisy's devotion to Tom shortly after they returned from their honeymoon:

> " . . . I thought I'd never seen a girl so mad about her husband. If he left the room for a minute she'd look around uneasily, and say: "Where's Tom gone?" and wear the most abstracted expression until she saw him coming in the door. She used to sit on the sand with his head in her lap by the hour, rubbing her fingers over his eyes and looking at him with unfathomable delight. It was touching to see them together--it made you laugh in a hushed, fascinated way. (78)

Such devotion--even between honeymooners--seems excessive. But Daisy, profoundly disappointed by her first lover, struggled valiantly to grasp and maintain her new husband's love. If, as Jordan suggests, Daisy was genuinely in love with Tom following their wedding, that love was short-lived. Daisy's affection for Tom--like her earlier love for Gatsby--was soon shattered by his breech of her trust. When Tom's illicit liaison with a chambermaid in their Santa Barbara hotel became public knowledge, Daisy retreated once more from the risks of love. Although she remained married to him--she was already pregnant with their daughter--their relationship clearly deteriorated considerably. Perhaps Tom never even suspects how much he's forfeited through his philandering until he discovers that Daisy loves Gatsby. At the Plaza Nick suddenly sees her "as someone he knew a long time ago" (119).

The history of Daisy's severe disappointments in love is important preparation for the reunion scene with Gatsby, which Fitzgerald once called his "favorite" of the novel (Turnbull, Letters, 170). Through Tom as well as through Gatsby Daisy has discovered that romantic love leads to emotional anguish. Thus, it is not surprising that Daisy's overwhelming emotion when she first sees Gatsby at Nick's house is fear. She is deeply shaken by seeing him again, and it takes her considerable effort just to remain calm. Nick describes the couple's appearance as he enters the room immediately after they've seen each other:

> Gatsby, his hands still in his pockets, was reclining against the mantelpiece in a strained counterfeit of perfect ease, even of boredom. His head leaned back so far that it rested against the face of a defunct mantelpiece clock, and from this position his distraught eyes stared down at Daisy, who was sitting, frightened but graceful, on the edge of a stiff chair. (87)

Here Nick's description of the characters captures the tension in the air, just as his earlier description of the Buchanans' dinner does. Matters are so tense, in fact, that serving the tea provides them all with a "welcome confusion."

Daisy is stunned by the reappearance of Gatsby in her life. Her usual carefree manner is swept aside by the renewal of contact with the first man she ever loved in a romantic sense. She is drawn to him, but she is afraid of him, for, after all, she had trusted him--needed him--in the past, and he had failed her. She's been hurt, and her intense anxiety at the sight of Gatsby reflects that she's suffering from conflicting impulses. She still needs his love, yet she also needs the stability that Tom provided for her when Gatsby couldn't.

Nick doesn't assess Daisy's reaction to Gatsby much during the tea, but when he returns from his brief stay under the tree in the rain, he observes: "Her throat, full of aching, grieving beauty, told only of her unexpected joy" (90). He also reveals that Daisy has been crying in front of Gatsby--letting down her defenses--but that she dabs her tears away

and goes to wash her face when Nick comes in. Evidently, Daisy is a different person when she is alone with Gatsby.

Throughout their late afternoon visit to Gatsby's mansion, Daisy exhibits her need for tangible connections with Gatsby. As they visit his room, she touches his brush "with delight" and later buries her head in his shirts, sobbing. These things are important to her not because they are beautiful in and of themselves, but because they are Gatsby's. She is reestablishing contact with him through gradual, gentle contact with his belongings. That she expresses her affection through touching his things instead of through direct expressions of affection towards him reflects the severity of her fear of human relationships. Eventually, though, she dares to put her arm through his, and Nick recognizes the importance of their reunion--to both of them--as he leaves:

> They had forgotten me, but Daisy glanced up and held out her hand; Gatsby didn't know me now at all. I looked once more at them and they looked back at me, remotely, possessed by intense life. (97)

Daisy's renewed connection with Gatsby has brought her back from the cynical world of the emotionally dead: as she accepts and reciprocates Gatsby's love, she is "possessed by intense life."

Shortly after Daisy's reunion with Gatsby, she and Tom attend one of the lavish parties at Gatsby's mansion. There Daisy once more responds to an emotional situation with

anxiety. As soon as they arrive, she begins nervously flirting with Nick:

> "These things excite me so," she whispered. "If you want to kiss me any time during the evening, Nick, just let me know and I'll be glad to arrange it for you. Just mention my name. Or present a green card. I'm giving out green--" (105).

Of course, Nick is not the genuine object of her affection, but only a convenient distraction. Her real anxiety stems from the emotional ordeal of attending Gatsby's party with Tom. Soon Tom's undisguised interest in another woman stirs up old injuries, and Daisy reacts with her customary irony, " . . . if you want to take down any addresses here's my little gold pencil" (107).

Daisy is uncomfortable with the party and the feelings it arouses in her. But before she leaves she appears fascinated by the image an actress, "a gorgeous, scarcely human orchid of a woman" (106), presents. After Daisy expresses her approval of the actress by calling her "lovely," Nick reports that the rest of the party "offended her--and inarguably, because it wasn't a gesture but an emotion" (108). But the actress appeals to Daisy, not because Daisy is too shallow to appreciate emotion but because she has learned to fear emotion. Daisy admires the actress because she appears to have achieved the emotional invulnerability that Daisy herself has come to yearn for.

As Fitzgerald lamented in his personal correspondence, he fails to develop the emotional attachment between Daisy and Gatsby between the reunion and the catastrophe. He merely hints at an affair by Gatsby's remark to Nick that "Daisy comes over quite often--in the afternoons" (114). But when Nick sees them together again, he recognizes--as even Tom Buchanan is forced to recognize--that Daisy loves Gatsby. She reveals herself inadvertently through the way she looks at Gatsby, the way she admires him verbally, and especially the way she can't keep her hands off him. She needs his love, but she needs it to be tangible, and stable.

During the critical scene at the Plaza, Daisy's conflicting needs for love and for safety from emotions take on new dimensions. As is her custom, her impulse is to run away as soon as she senses a messy emotional situation on the horizon. Before they even leave for the city, she tells Tom, "Oh, let's have fun. . . . it's too hot to fuss" (120). And then at the hotel, she warns him, " . . . If you're going to make personal remarks I won't stay here a minute" (127). But her pleading is to no avail; Tom precipitates a confrontation with Gatsby, and Daisy's fear mounts.

> "Please don't!" she interrupted helplessly. "Please let's all go home. Why don't we all go home?" (131)

But Daisy cannot stop the building tension--so Tom, the embodiment of her need for stability, and Gatsby, the embodiment of her need for love, battle over her. "'I won't stand

this!' she cries, 'Oh please let's get out'" (134). Still, her desperation goes unappeased, and she cannot avoid the anguish of being asked to choose between the two men. Backed up against the wall, she ultimately rejects both, since neither can meet her needs by himself. She perceives that Tom cannot satisfy her expectations of romantic devotion, and Gatsby, who made his fortune illegally, cannot meet her need for stability.

When Gatsby wants Daisy to tell Tom she never loved him, she refuses:

> "Oh, you want too much!" she cried to Gatsby. "I love you now--isn't that enough? I can't help what's past." She began to sob helplessly. "I did love him once--but I loved you too" (133).

Daisy's insistence that she loved them both is honest--she loved Gatsby in a romantic way, and she loved Tom in a more practical way. They each met some of her needs, and so she loved them both. Her simple statement that she loved both marks a brief emergence from her concealment behind any of the different versions of her affectations. But, as Nick has observed frequently throughout the novel, Daisy is "helpless": Gatsby cannot tolerate her honest expression of her feelings. He wants to see her alone, perhaps to see if she'll change her story. But Daisy refuses, displaying her fundamental but, so far, well-hidden integrity: "'Even alone I can't say I never loved Tom', she admitted in a pitiful voice. 'It wouldn't be true'" (133).

Daisy's sudden, simple respect for the truth is startling to the reader, because Nick's perceptions of her throughout the novel are so very limited to her superficial manner. But her stubborn honesty under duress is a logical outgrowth of her inner struggle to resolve conflicting needs. It is a brief, futile attempt to declare emotional independence. But Daisy still needs the security of an established code of behavior, and she finds it easier to leave her lover than her husband.

Just as Fitzgerald fails fully to explore the nature of Daisy's affair with Gatsby, he fails clearly to account for her behavior following the scene at the Plaza. After the accident that kills Myrtle, Nick observes Daisy and Tom for the last time through their kitchen window:

> They weren't happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale--and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture, and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together. (146)

Perhaps Daisy has believed Tom's simple statement that afternoon that his extramarital affairs are over. Perhaps she simply needs him so badly after learning the truth about Gatsby that she doesn't care about his familiar shortcomings anymore. In any case, Nick clearly perceives a renewal of communication between Daisy and her husband. Sadly, but predictably, Daisy rapidly retreats into her unhappy life with Tom--abandoning her dream of a romantic lover to cling desper-

ately to the unsatisfactory stability her husband represents. She is a victim of a complex network of needs and desires: she deserves more pity than blame.

Daisy's confusion over her relationships with the two principal men in her life reflects the gender confusion that was rampant during Fitzgerald's era. Although she is disappointed in her marriage, she does not see any viable alternative to it. Her frustration over her apparent inability to protest effectively over her social condition is somewhat understated. In Tender Is the Night and Zelda's companion work, Save Me the Waltz, however, unhappy wives prove more outspoken about their unhappiness.

CHAPTER V

Nicole Warren Diver and Alabama Beggs Knight: Women on the Threshold of Freedom

Despite Scott Fitzgerald's heated allegations that his wife Zelda had stolen his material for Tender Is the Night when she wrote and published Save Me the Waltz, her 1932 autobiographical novel, Fitzgerald scholars have generally failed to examine the similarities and differences between the two books. Although the situations and characters of Save Me the Waltz and Tender Is the Night are, in some ways, quite similar, the story each conveys is distinct. Critical examination of the two novels is most enlightening when they are viewed as a pair of perspectives on American womanhood in a decade of momentous change.

Zelda Fitzgerald wrote the entire manuscript of Save Me the Waltz, her only novel, during six weeks while she was a patient in a mental hospital in 1932; her husband had already been working for seven years on the novel that was eventually to become Tender Is the Night.[1] When he learned that she had submitted her manuscript to Scribner's without first showing it to him, he was furious. Although he managed to impose numerous revisions on Zelda's book before its publication,[2]

his rage over what he perceived as her infringement on his rights to the literary expression of their common experiences lingered. In 1933, during a conversation between the Fitzgeralds in the presence of Zelda's psychiatrist, Scott accused Zelda of "broaching at all times on [his] material" and stubbornly insisted that Zelda make "an unconditional surrender" to him, relinquishing her "idea of writing anything" in the interest of his career.[3]

Fitzgerald need not have been so upset. Until recently, virtually no one--even among Fitzgerald scholars--ever bothered to read Save Me the Waltz, but Tender Is the Night, which is based on the same time period in the Fitzgeralds' lives, is widely recognized as an important twentieth-century American novel.

Although the two books have many superficial similarities, their plots are quite different. Zelda's novel focuses on Alabama Beggs, a pampered and privileged Southern belle who is given everything she could possibly want--except respect in a man's world and meaningful work of her own. As Alabama grows disillusioned with David Knight, her egotistical and unfaithful artist husband, she first engages in a mild flirtation, then resolves instead to make something of herself by becoming a ballerina. Much of the novel concentrates on her strength and determination--and remarkable success, considering the late age at which she embarks on her career--in that endeavor. She is foiled in her efforts only by her excess of zeal: by

failing to treat blisters on her feet she incurs an infection that leads to surgery and an untimely end to her dancing career. Defeated, she turns back to her unhappy marriage and young daughter, gracefully reconciling herself to the loss of her dream.

The plot of Tender Is the Night is, of course, more familiar to most American readers, but there is a widespread tendency to overlook Nicole Warren Diver's importance in the novel. Tom C. Coleman observes:

> Although Tender Is the Night is primarily Dick Diver's story, critics tend to misunderstand and minimize Nicole's role, the force which gives Dick's career its structure. In addition to being the narrative of the gradual deterioration of a brilliant but schizophrenic young doctor under the harmful cumulative impact of marriage to a beautiful and extremely wealthy and neurotic young woman, it is the story of Nicole Warren's long journey from insanity to sanity, from mental illness to mental health. (36)

Tender Is the Night, like Save Me the Waltz, is an autobiographical account of a very unhappy marriage between a proud, successful man who expects his wife to be subservient to him and a beautiful, intelligent woman who gradually tires of the purposelessness of her existence. Read together, these two novels offer an unusual and enlightening pair of perspectives on the impact of the breakdown of traditional gender roles on marriage in the late 1920s.

With the exception of Henry Dan Piper, who devotes a chapter of his critical biography of Scott Fitzgerald to Zelda's novel--noting that "Save Me the Waltz offers a more sensitive account of the deranged wife's view of her marriage

than we find in her husband's version, Tender Is the Night" (204)--few of Scott Fitzgerald's critics examine Zelda's novel in any depth. But the feminist movement has given rise to a flurry of critical activity focusing on women's forgotten writings, and Save Me the Waltz, with its uncommon distinction of viewing from a woman's perspective events and characters made famous by a male author, has recently received considerable attention.[4]

Perhaps partly because Save Me the Waltz is a woman's creation, critics are inclined to view it from a feminine perspective--sympathizing with Alabama, resenting David. Similarly, Tender Is the Night, a man's creation, generally evokes sympathy for Dick Diver and distrust--if not outright hostility--towards Nicole. Although Coleman breaks new ground in his 1971 article about Tender Is the Night by declaring that Nicole and her sister, Baby, are "innocent victims of their environment" (38-9), later critics continue to view Nicole without compassion, berating her for her "emptiness" (Prigozy, 214) and for her "materialism" (Grieff, 63).

Save Me the Waltz and Tender Is the Night both focus on the late 1920s, when attitudes towards women and their traditional roles were undergoing rapid change. Zelda Fitzgerald was receptive to the changes that would eventually allow women to pursue work that interested them; Scott Fitzgerald, who wanted much of his insensitivity towards Zelda pardoned on the basis of his efforts to support her financial-

ly, clearly accepted the traditional values of Western culture. As he wrote and as he lived, Scott clung tenaciously to the old standards that denied women the rights to work and love as they pleased. The most significant differences between Scott Fitzgerald's fictional female characters and Zelda's stem from the authors' own differences in attitudes towards women's roles. Zelda's protagonist, Alabama Beggs, is a new kind of woman, willing to take responsibility for herself and her own happiness by dedicating herself to something outside her marriage; but Scott's principal female character, Nicole Diver for the most part, is confined unhappily to traditional standards of feminine behavior in the midst of an era of change.

By far the most striking similarity between Tender Is the Night and Save Me the Waltz lies in their primary women characters, Nicole Warren Diver and Alabama Beggs Knight, who are clearly related to each other through Zelda.[5] But before any further examination of these women and their marriages, it is important to note some of the other, more superficial, characteristics the two books have in common. Both novels focus on American citizens living on the Riviera during the 1920s. Both books are rich with garden imagery. Both novels trace the changing marital relationship between a man who has achieved outstanding early success in his chosen career (Dick Diver as a psychiatrist; David Knight as a painter), and a woman who is growing tired of living in her husband's shadow.

In both books the husband's emotional and intellectual neglect of his wife contributes to her infidelity. Moreover, both novels contain the death of a father, and the deaths affect the adult children in similar ways: Dick is aware that "the earliest and strongest of protections is gone" (203) following the death of his father in the middle of Tender Is the Night; and Alabama, who leaves her own hospital bed to go to her father's deathbed in Save Me the Waltz, recognizes that "without her father the world would be without its last resource" (195).

Unquestionably, the substantial similarities between the Fitzgeralds' novels stem from their common life experience as husband and wife: they both based their works on their lives together in the late 1920s, when they were living on the French Riviera with their young daughter, Scottie, and growing increasingly dissatisfied with their marriage. Considering that they were both drawing on the same material, it is somewhat remarkable that their different perspectives could produce such different plots. Furthermore, it is ironic that Scott, the established writer, presents a more obviously autobiographical version of their story than Zelda does. As Meredith Cary points out in a recent article about Save Me the Waltz, ". . . whereas it is Zelda Fitzgerald's novel which is usually condemned as excessively autobiographical, it is Scott Fitzgerald's novel which in fact details the lives of an alcoholic and a mental patient" (65). Despite the apparent

differences between the two fictional accounts of the Fitzgerald marriage, Alabama Beggs Knight and Nicole Warren Diver, like the two novels they figure in, have many significant characteristics in common. Undoubtedly their similarities stem from the fact that they are both fashioned after the same real woman, Zelda Fitzgerald. Both Alabama and Nicole, like Zelda, are very beautiful, even well into their twenties, when they are both mothers. Alabama has a body she could "'sell . . . to Cartier's for a gold mesh sweat shirt'" (114), and Nicole is "lovelier now at twenty-four than she had been at eighteen, when her hair was brighter than she" (25). Both Alabama and Nicole were born into families whose only son died; and both have had especially close relationships with their fathers, who abandon them either through death (Alabama's father) or desertion (Nicole's father) in the course of the novel. As a young girl, Alabama is a sought-after companion and shows early promise as a dancer and performer. Similarly, Nicole's father describes her as a "darling," talented child, who was "smart as a whip" and accomplished in many different activities (126). Significantly, both women come from highly-respected, wealthy families: Nicole Warren is a member of one of "the great feudal families" of Chicago (127); and Alabama Beggs, who grows up on a street named after her ancestors, is the daughter of a Southern judge. Moreover, both Alabama and Nicole originally seek to establish their adult identities by marrying successful men, and both grow

disillusioned with their marriages while they are still in their twenties.

One of the most important emotional characteristics Nicole and Alabama share is sensitivity. Both women feel emotional slights intensely, particularly when they are serious enough to damage their already marginal self-esteem. Alabama's anguish over her suitor's lack of consideration for her feelings is reflected by the way she nurses her wound in the following passage from Save Me the Waltz:

> Alabama and the lieutenant lingered beside the door.
> "I'm going to lay a tablet to the scene of our first meeting," he said.
> Taking out his knife he carved in the door post:
> "David," the legend read, "David, David, Knight, Knight, Knight, and Miss Alabama Nobody."
> "Egotist," she protested.
> "I love this place," he said. "Let's sit outside awhile."
> "Why? The dance only lasts until twelve."
> "Can't you trust me for three minutes or so?"
> "I do trust you. That's why I want to go inside."
> She was a little angry about the names. David had told her about how famous he was going to be. (36-37)

Clearly, Alabama is hurt by David's failure to recognize her as a person ("Miss Alabama Nobody"), but after a mild protest she subjugates herself to him and tucks her wounded pride away to fester in secret ("She was a little angry about the names.").

In Tender Is the Night Nicole Warren, who, like Alabama, has fallen in love with a young lieutenant, experiences a similar slight at the hands of Dick Diver. He fails to take her feelings seriously during their budding romance. In the

following passage Nicole shyly reveals her own interest in a romantic relationship with Dick as she tries to assess his feelings for her.

> "You like me?"
> "Of course."
> "Would you---" They are strolling along toward the dim end of the horseshoe, two hundred yards ahead. "If I hadn't been sick would you--I mean would I have been the sort of girl you might have--oh, slush, you know what I mean."
> He was in for it now, possessed by a vast irrationality. She was so near that he felt his breathing change but again his training came to his aid in a boy's laugh and a trite remark.
> "You're teasing yourself, my dear. Once I knew a man who fell in love with his nurse--" The anecdote rambled on, punctuated by their footsteps. Suddenly Nicole interrupted in succinct Chicagoese: "Bull!"
> "That's a very vulgar expression."
> "What about it?" she flared up. "You don't think I've got any common sense--before I was sick I didn't have any, but I have now. And if I don't know you're the most attractive man I ever met you must still think I'm crazy. It's my hard luck, all right--but don't pretend I don't know--I know everything about you and me." (154)

Although Nicole is only seeking an honest answer to an honest question, Dick's evasive reply negates the value of her own emotions--inevitably threatening her self-esteem. Even when she interrupts him, refusing to tolerate his avoidance of her feelings any longer, Dick responds to her choice of wording rather than to her legitimate anger itself. As he talks down to her, treating her as a child, a patient, an inferior, her decision to talk back to him, refusing to accept inferior status, reflects both her sensitivity and her nascent mental health.

Despite their dismay over their suitors' insensitivity towards them, Alabama and Nicole wind up marrying them. Striving always to please their egotistical young husbands, the women inevitably damage their already low self-esteem. They accept their husbands' unrelenting sense of self-importance--of masculine superiority--just as they learned to live with their fathers' belittling attitudes towards them as they were growing up. In a recent article about Save Me the Waltz, Linda Wagner declares that the novel creates a "highly evocative picture of what it means to a female child to grow up, to grow into the bleak recognition that being female in America is--or was at the turn of the century--synonymous with being inferior" (201). Upon close examination Tender Is the Night also reflects the differing expectations American society has traditionally imposed on female and male children.

Although Nicole's childhood experiences are only alluded to while Alabama's are revealed directly, both young girls clearly learned that they were to remain dependent on men throughout their lives, leaving their fathers' homes only to become wives and mothers whose success would be assessed solely on the basis of traditional feminine criteria--housekeeping skills, beauty, charm, and children. Men, of course, were allowed a much greater degree of independence and the more rewarding occupation of work of their own choosing. In Save Me the Waltz, when Judge Beggs chastises the adolescent Alabama for what he considers inappropriate behavior, Alabama,

aware that boredom lies behind her wild partying, has "a strong sense of her own insignificance" (31). In Tender Is the Night Nicole displays a similar sense of her female insignificance as she responds to Dick's statement that he's accomplished only in his chosen field. "'Oh, I think that's fine for a man,' she said quickly. 'But for a girl I think she ought to have lots of minor accomplishments and pass them on to her children!'"(142). Nicole's simple statement reflects both her will to excel in her society's prescribed role for her (motherhood) and her unconscious recognition that women must make themselves content with "minor accomplishments," relegating major accomplishments (careers) to men. It is worth noting that Nicole's diction indicates her automatic subordination of herself in connection with men: she is a "girl" but Dick is a "man."

Naturally, Alabama and Nicole acquire some of their deep-seated sense of insignificance by observing their female role models, their mothers. As a girl Alabama watches her mother dedicating her entire adult life to raising children and running her husband's home according to his expectations. At the end of the novel, while Judge Beggs is dying, Alabama's thoughts bring into focus her previously subconscious perceptions of a woman's life in a man's world:

> She saw her mother as she was, part of a masculine tradition. Millie did not seem to notice about her own life, that there would be nothing left when her husband died. He was the father of her children, who were girls, and who had left her for the families of other men. (201)

Alabama's recognition of her mother's vulnerability and isolation at the end of the novel is particularly moving because by that time Alabama has lost her own battle to make a life of her own: no longer able to dance, she has retreated into her unhappy marriage; moreover, her only child is a girl--and consequently destined to leave her, as she and her sisters have left their mother, "for the families of other men."

Although Nicole's mother dies long before the opening of Tender Is the Night,[6] Nicole recounts an appalling episode that reflects Mrs. Warren's conviction that women could only be important through their association with men. In a conversation with Rosemary during one of their shopping trips, Nicole recalls a night when Mrs. Warren sent Baby to a ball "'with an ice pack strapped on under her evening dress'" after a doctor had diagnosed her "'side ache'" as appendicitis (55). Apparently, Nicole's mother believed so fully in female dependence on men that she was willing to put her daughter's life at risk in order for her to attend a social engagement where she might charm some eligible young men. Mrs. Warren's unspoken message to her daughters was clear: female children are insignificant, expendable.

As might be expected of young women raised to believe in their own insignificance in relation to men, Alabama and Nicole both attempt to escape from overpowering father figures through marriage. At seventeen, Alabama recognizes that

"looking for love is like asking for a new point of departure . . . another chance in life" (26). Marriage appeals to Alabama as one of the only ways a woman can significantly change her life; yet marriage offers no improvement in her social condition, for, as a female, she continues to be subordinated to men. Thus, her "new point of departure" inevitably disappoints her: as she transfers her dependence from father to husband, she continues to feel woefully inadequate as a person in her own right.

Like Alabama, Nicole fulfills her society's expectations by marrying as soon as she is old enough to leave her father's domain, which in her case includes the paternalistic trusteeship Devereux Warren has provided for her by placing her in Dr. Dohmler's care. Nicole's marriage, like Alabama's, fails to offer her any new opportunity for self-realization. Although both women attempt to declare themselves adults by marrying, neither achieves any real degree of independence; both remain subservient to men.

However sincere their love for their husbands may be, their marriages utterly fail to become mature, egalitarian relationships. Nicole, in fact, daily confronts a dual awareness of her inferior relationship to Dick: he assumes responsibility for--and superiority over--her as doctor to patient as well as husband to wife. From the very beginning of their relationship, they have been on unequal footing: the psychiatrists at Dohmler's clinic recognize the situational

element of Nicole's earliest expressions of love for Dick, for they label her initial interest in him a "transference" (120).

Alabama and Nicole find their lives as wives sorely unrewarding. Their husbands are successful and popular, but painfully egotistical and difficult to live with. In Save Me the Waltz David Knight berates Alabama constantly about her poor housekeeping. Moreover, he freely engages in extramarital affairs, yet demands complete fidelity from her. He neglects her emotional needs entirely, but he intervenes when she tries to fill them elsewhere. Shortly after thwarting a little flirtation Alabama has enjoyed with a Frenchman, David spends the night with another woman. When he returns at daybreak, Alabama is angry over his seizure of the traditional masculine prerogative for casual sex, yet she obviously expects her anger to be ineffectual. She interrupts her weeping long enough to declare, "'I wish I could live in your pocket!'" (116)--reflecting her culturally-induced determination to efface herself in relation to her husband. Not surprisingly, David is insensitive to the plea for affirmation her remark conveys. He compounds her already overwhelming sense of inadequacy by pointing out once again what he considers her major shortcomings as a wife: "'Darling!' answered David sleepily, 'there'd be a hole you'd forgotten to darn and you'd slip through and be brought home by the village barber'" (116-17).

In Tender Is the Night Dick Diver's lack of respect for Nicole parallels David's behavior towards Alabama. Dick is most severely insensitive towards Nicole as he takes advantage of the superior status their doctor-patient relationship affords him. Besides talking down to her when she originally expresses an interest in him, he fails to take his fellow doctors' warnings seriously as they tell him of the dangers inherent in his encouragement of Nicole's affections. He is amused by the perceived threat of his attractiveness to women in general, and he vows to put Nicole off by being "'gentle and repulsive.'" He says he'll "'chew garlic'" and "'wear a stubble beard'" to "'drive her to cover'" (131). As he drags his joke out, clearly having fun at a patient's expense, his monologue bodes ill of the developing romance. It does not occur to him that "Nicole's emotions [have] been used unfairly" until he perceives that they might be "his own" (145).

Much later, after Dick and Nicole have been married for several years, he continues to take advantage of her history as a mental patient. When Nicole receives a letter from one of the clinic's former patients containing allegations that Dick behaved improperly with her teenaged daughter, husband and wife converse.

> "This letter is deranged," he said. "I had no relations of any kind with that girl. I didn't even like her."
> "Yes, I've tried thinking that," said Nicole. "Surely you don't believe it?"
> "I've been sitting here."

> He sank his voice to a reproachful note and sat beside her.
> "This is absurd. This is a letter from a mental patient."
> "I was a mental patient."
> He stood up and spoke more authoritatively.
> "Suppose we don't have any nonsense, Nicole." (187)

Nicole knows perfectly well that Dick has a propensity for young girls, and, as a former mental patient herself, she has faith in the possibility that patients might perceive behavior and situations accurately. In fact, the letter's accusations are not completely unwarranted--Dick had kissed the young woman when he was alone with her, then decided against consummating the affair. But he struggles desperately against Nicole's recognition of the truth by adopting an authoritarian, professional tone.

> "Listen to me--this business about a girl is a delusion, do you understand that word?"
> "It's always a delusion when I see what you don't want me to see." (190)

Clearly, Nicole is angry about Dick's condescending attitude, but, like Alabama, she has learned to expect her anger to be ineffectual.

Isolated and unhappy within their marriages, the young wives in Save Me the Waltz and Tender Is the Night look outward for any possible form of self-affirmation. Alabama immerses herself in her reading: "Alabama read Henry James in the long afternoons. She read Robert Hugh Benson and Edith Wharton and Dickens while David worked" (90). When she

complains to David about her boredom, he suggests a classic feminine solution, planning a party.

Nicole is also accustomed to finding culturally-approved feminine methods of dealing with boredom: as a young girl, she reads, dances, draws, and plays the piano; as a mental patient, she writes letters to a soldier (Dick Diver) and practices speaking foreign languages; and as a young wife she copies recipes while she sunbathes and looks after her children at the beach. In the first section of Tender Is the Night Nicole is also portrayed enthusiastically engaging in one of the most time-honored of all occupations available to wealthy women with time on their hands: shopping. Critics who berate Nicole on the basis of materialism fail to note how easily she parts with her possessions:

> Rosemary watched Nicole pressing upon her mother a yellow evening bag she had admired, saying, "I think things out to belong to the people that like them"--and then sweeping into it all the yellow articles she could find, a pencil, a lipstick, a little note book, "because they all go together." (35)

Later, as Rosemary accompanies Nicole on one of her shopping sprees, it is clear that Nicole's focus is on her activity, not on obtaining objects of her desire: in her buying fever, Nicole buys things on her list and things on impulse, things for herself and things to give away. Pathetically, she seems to derive some self-affirmation through her purchasing power--just as many frustrated women still do today. She becomes so absorbed in her occupation, in fact, that she rouses Rose-

mary's concern as she almost forgets to keep her late afternoon assignation with her husband.

Literary critics often criticize F. Scott Fitzgerald's female characters for their apparent superficiality. Leslie Fiedler declares that he tends to treat his women characters as "goddesses or bitches" (314). Yet a closer look at the backgrounds of women like Gloria Patch, Daisy Buchanan, or Nicole Diver might acquit them of the charge of "bitch" and excuse them for their failure to live up to Fitzgerald's standards for goddesses. Perhaps inadvertently, Fitzgerald has drawn female characters who struggle with conflicts common to many twentieth-century women who are brought up to marry, not to work. Nicole Warren, like Gloria Gilbert and Daisy Fay, has been raised with the underlying assumption that women need to be taken care of--first by their fathers, then by their husbands. In Zelda's novel, Hastings, a guest at a party, tells Alabama outright, "'You need somebody to take care of you. . . You're a man's woman and need to be bossed'" (115). These intelligent women, ever cognizant of the second-class status their culture imposes on their sex, genuinely deserve the label "poor little rich girls." They crave intellectual stimulation and meaningful activity as much as other, less wealthy, women might crave new clothes. "'What'll we plan?'" Daisy cries in Gatsby, and years later, Nicole Warren Diver and Zelda's parallel character of Alabama Beggs Knight continue the desperate struggle for self-realization

through action. Unlike Daisy, however, Alabama and Nicole, who have been trained from infancy to be "happy to exist in a man's world" (Tender, 53), perceive that the world they live in is slowly changing; they come into contact with women who work side by side with men and who consequently reap substantial personal (and financial) rewards traditionally available only to men.

It is not surprising, then, that, despite their efforts to live within the constraints their conservative husbands and upbringings impose on them, both Alabama and Nicole are troubled by their sense of inadequacy and purposelessness. In an internal monologue, Nicole realizes she is "tired of knowing nothing and being reminded of it all the time." She envies Dick for his dedication to his work, and when he drops the title of "doctor," she is concerned: "--You've taught me that work is everything and I believe you" (161-62). It follows almost without saying that a woman who believes work is "everything"--and who is denied any opportunity to pursue work of her own--will suffer feelings of inadequacy.

As her marriage deteriorates, Nicole's apparently idle wish that she could "study medicine" (161) is reminiscent of all the earlier ambitions she's been forced to abandon. Nicole is, after all, gifted as well as beautiful. Even while she's a young girl at Dohmler's clinic, the psychiatrists recognize her "'excellent mind'" and her need for mental stimulation: they give her "'a little Freud to read'" (131)--

certainly not the customary recreational reading for a girl in her position. Moreover, Nicole nurtures her private dream of helping the war effort by perfecting her language skills; at one point she even writes to Lt. Dick Diver from the clinic, asking him to find her a job as an interpreter.

Nicole's early dreams of work are quickly terminated by her decision to marry. As Dick's wife she is condemned permanently to a life of leisure--to partying and sunbathing, and to subordinating herself to her husband. She is discouraged even from using her keen faculties of perception. Ironically, her ability to read human character often seems to surpass her husband's, though his work as a psychiatrist would seem to demand a finely developed capacity for responding intuitively to other people. Fitzgerald establishes Nicole's intuition early in the novel when she is on the beach while Rosemary singles Dick out to be the object of her romantic interest: "Oh, she chose him, and Nicole, lifting her head saw her choose him." Furthermore, Nicole is sensitive to her husband's unverbalized "characteristic moods" (27), and she is capable of using her intuition to handle difficult situations with diplomacy: in a crisis precipitated by their son's complaint that their host's sister had bathed him in dirty water, "Dick sat on the bedside indicating in a private gesture to Nicole that she should take over" (261).

Dick takes Nicole's intuitive ability and sensitivity for granted, as if they are merely part of the marriage package

he's entitled to. In fact, he fails to appreciate any of her special qualities or achievements openly--except perhaps her beauty, which appears to be more important to him than to her--as he assumes control over her life. His absorption of her identity extends even to the symbolic realm. In the early days of their marriage Dick is fond of signing their correspondence "Dicole," effectively denying that Nicole could have any significance except by association with him. This behavior of his is reminiscent of David Knight's naming of his fiancee, "Miss Alabama Nobody." In Save Me the Waltz Zelda Fitzgerald underscores the woman's loss of her independent identity through marriage by frequently referring to the married couple as the "David Knights" rather than Alabama and David Knight.

Of course, Alabama Beggs is less traumatized than Nicole Warren and has a greater sense of self up to the time of her marriage than Nicole does. Even as a young girl she is ambitious "to go to New York . . . to be [her] own boss" (16). Thus, it is not surprising that she finds it easier to assert her need for independence when she is hurt by David's emotional cruelty towards her. She easily resolves to take up ballet in retaliation for David's infidelity: "'I am going to be as famous a dancer as there are blue veins over the white marble of Miss Gibbs'" (118).

Much has been written about the ballet section of Save Me the Waltz. It is certainly one of the finest--and earliest--

fictional representations of woman's capacity for wholehearted devotion to her work, which removes her from the conventional domains of romance, marriage, and family. Yet the characters in Save Me the Waltz regard Alabama's dedication to ballet with skepticism; even characters who appear to defend Alabama's right to dance do so in unfortunate terms. Dickie, for instance, considers Alabama's interest in ballet "'the very thing'" to justify her eccentricity, then quickly demonstrates that he automatically views Alabama's work as secondary to her real career, marriage, by declaring, "'It would be almost as exotic as being married to a painter'" (113).

Once Alabama begins to train for ballet, she finds her fellow dancers unsympathetic towards her goal as well. When Madame asks why she has waited so long to start, Alabama replies simply that she's been "'too busy living'" but that she's now "'fed up'" with her previous existence. The instructor is intrigued and agrees to take Alabama on as a student, but the other dancers at the studio regard her with suspicion, clearly wondering why a married woman would voluntarily take on so much hard work.

Much later, when Nanny and Bonnie visit Alabama at the studio, Nanny is so impressed that she decides she ought to take up ballet as well. When Nanny declares, "'We must all have something to do, and Madam never plays bridge'" (147), she obviously views Alabama's dancing as recreation, not work. Even Alabama's husband, who is initially "noncommittal"

towards her decision to study ballet, becomes annoyed when it begins to take up too much of her time. He expresses his displeasure by belittling her efforts:

> "You're so thin," said David patronizingly. "There's no use killing yourself. I hope you realize that the biggest difference in the world is between the amateur and the professional in the arts." (147)

Despite her associates' refusal to take her career seriously, Alabama becomes a good dancer--and derives significant personal satisfaction from her ability. Like Zelda herself, she gradually retreats from family life, increasingly entrusting the care of her daughter to her husband. When she eventually has an opportunity to dance professionally in Naples, she willingly leaves her comfortable home and her family behind, to rough it in a rundown boarding house and make her debut as a ballerina. Unquestionably a New Woman, Alabama takes her work seriously.

While Alabama discovers herself through work, Nicole struggles sadly with her internalized notion that she is virtually worthless except by association with men. Instead of actively pursuing a career, she copes with her unhappy marriage by seeking affirmation from other men. However, it is important to note that while Scott Fitzgerald depicts Nicole as a woman who has almost no options for self-expression through work, he presents two significant visions of career women beside her in Tender Is the Night. Rosemary, "'brought up to work--not especially to marry'" (40), finds

success in her career but fails to find reciprocal romantic love. She embodies Fitzgerald's conservative view that career women are unfeminine. Moreover, the fascinating woman who is hospitalized in Dick's care declares shortly before her death that she "'is sharing the fate of the women of [her] time who challenged men to battle'" (184). Characteristically, Dick responds to her assessment of her illness with condescension, as he pointedly reminds her that "'many women suffered before they mistook themselves for men'" (184).

Surrounded by women who are deprived--of love, of life--simply through their effort to realize their unconventional ambitions in "a man's world," Nicole feels intimidated. Eventually, wishing to be a New Woman in any way possible, she seeks to relieve her restlessness and dissatisfaction through romance, one of the few options traditionally available to women. When she can no longer bear Dick's hostility towards her, she lets herself reciprocate Tommy Barban's long-standing affection. Initially she has no plan whatsoever to marry Tommy; she merely decides to effect a change in her unhappy life with Dick by entering a love affair "without emotion" (291). Thus, she attaches herself to a new man in her pursuit of a new sense of identity, much as she married Dick to leave behind an unsatisfactory association with her father.

Nicole's affair with Tommy is a reflection of her improving mental health, for she uses it to remove herself from the increasingly devastating relationship with Dick. As she

accompanies Tommy to a hotel for the first time, she daydreams about liberation from stultifying relationships with men:

> . . . she had a thrill of delight in thinking of herself in a new way. New vistas appeared ahead, peopled with the faces of many men, none of whom she need obey or even love (294).

Unfortunately, however, she is not yet confident or independent enough to assert herself with Tommy. In a scene that is strongly reminiscent of Gatsby's confrontation with Tom Buchanan over Daisy's affections, Tommy Barban intervenes between Dick and Nicole Diver to declare his intention of marrying Nicole. Unaccustomed to asserting herself, Nicole is easily swept into divorce and remarriage. She continues to let herself be defined according to her relationships with men.

Nevertheless, Tommy is undeniably an improvement over her first husband, for Tommy at least regards Nicole as a sane woman. In his address to Dick he accuses him of failing to understand Nicole, of treating "'her always as a patient because she was once sick'" (308). Apparently Nicole can now free herself from at least part of the dual sense of inferiority that being both patient and wife to Dick for many years has given her.

In Tender Is the Night Nicole Diver, one of Fitzgerald's many widely misunderstood female characters, takes small but significant steps towards her own personal freedom in a world dominated by men. Even as a married woman, she daydreams

about having a career of her own, as something "to hang on to" (161), to give her substance in her own eyes and in the eyes of the world. Although she denies herself a career, she permits herself a lover, and she notes with interest the emergence of other women like her:

> She was somewhat shocked at the idea of being interested in another man--but other women have lovers--why not me? In the fine spring morning the inhibitions of the male world disappeared and she reasoned as gaily as a flower, while the wind blew her hair until her head moved with it. Other women have had lovers--(276).

Later, when her improved self-esteem and her budding assertiveness cause her lover to liken her to a "crook," she reasons, "Better a sane crook than a mad puritan" (293). But because she continues to define herself in terms of her connections with men, her self-esteem remains shaky: men can destroy or affirm her sense of self-worth almost at will.

Zelda Fitzgerald's parallel character, Alabama Beggs Knight, nearly succeeds in establishing her own sense of identity, independent of any man's opinion. Her failure to become a professional ballerina results purely from chance, not from any lack of ability or dedication to her efforts. Zelda, who shared Alabama's fate of being locked into an unhappy marriage and foiled in her sincere efforts to pursue her work, once talked to her psychiatrist about her need to be "on a more equal footing" with Scott; she disliked living "in a world that is completely dependent on Scott," and she wanted to develop some work of her own that could "back [her] up" in

her inevitable battles with her husband (Bruccoli, Epic Grandeur, 352). Zelda Fitzgerald, often dismissed merely as Scott's neurotic wife, deserves to be recognized at least as a spokeswoman for the women of her generation who were stranded between the old ideal of feminine subservience to men and the new ideal of equality.

At the same time, however, Scott Fitzgerald's achievement in his creation of Nicole Warren Diver ought not to be underestimated. Despite his reputation for being unsympathetic towards his female characters, young women like Rosalind, Gloria, Daisy, and Nicole invariably embody ideals of self-realization that their mothers did not share and confront role conflicts characteristic of women on the threshold of a new era of freedom. Nicole Warren Diver, presented under the cloak of schizophrenia, is a representative twentieth-century American woman, embodying conflicting ideals of femininity (submissiveness) and independence. Moreover, her understandable confusion is exacerbated by the direct victimization she suffers through intimate association with her father and her psychiatrist, who demonstrate the selfishness and cruelty the patriarchy is sometimes capable of inflicting on women.

CHAPTER VI

Aftermath of Betrayal: Incest, Madness, and Transference in Tender Is the Night

In Tender Is the Night more than in any of his other novels, Fitzgerald captures the nature of the impact conventional male chauvinism could have on a woman of his era. While the principal female characters in all of his other novels struggle with comparatively subtle forms of patriarchal oppression, Nicole Warren Diver is victimized by overt sexual exploitation perpetuated both by her father and by her psychiatrist-husband. According to contemporary theories, the dynamics of her illness and her interactions with men in general are startlingly appropriate for an incest victim.[1] Moreover, her vulnerability to "rape" by her father and subsequent exploitation by her father surrogate, a psychiatrist with whom she has a transference,[2] can be viewed symbolically as a reflection of the New Woman's tenuous social position in the face of patriarchal traditions. It is therefore important to examine Nicole's confusion about her experiences and roles in considerable detail.

Although Fitzgerald's biographers and critics comment more extensively on Tender Is the Night than on any of his other

novels except The Great Gatsby, relatively few have analyzed Nicole in any detail except insofar as she reflects Zelda, and Scott's ongoing power struggle with her. Nancy Milford points out that Fitzgerald "mercilessly exposed Zelda in his characterization of Nicole Diver" (284). Judith Fetterley alludes to Fitzgerald's unequivocal assumption that "Zelda's madness is his material" (113). And Matthew Bruccoli notes that Fitzgerald's "wife's illness was the catalytic agent in [his] new approach to the novel" following years of false starts on the project; Bruccoli adds that "Zelda Fitzgerald's tragedy . . . provided the emotional focus" of Tender Is the Night (Composition, 82).

Despite such widespread observations of the link between Zelda's life story and Fitzgerald's creation of the character Nicole, it seems noteworthy that at least three of the Fitzgeralds' biographers make a deliberate--and somewhat questionable--attempt to distinguish between Scott Fitzgerald's use of autobiographical material and his "pure invention" of supporting detail in Tender Is the Night. In The Composition of "Tender Is the Night" Bruccoli presents Fitzgerald's notes depicting parallels between Zelda's and Nicole's histories as mental patients as if they are important to understanding the novel, and then points out:

> The details of Nicole Diver's case were based on Zelda Fitzgerald's illness, as shown in the table comparing the two cases. The incest factor in Nicole's case was, however, pure invention. (82)

Similarly, Milford remarks that certain aspects "of Nicole's background are pure invention," despite the obvious "degree to which Scott used Zelda in a fictional counterpart." Like Bruccoli, Milford goes on to assert that "Zelda was not raped by her father" (219). Sara Mayfield makes the same proclamation in Exiles from Paradise: "Zelda was certainly never raped by her father" (212).

To be sure, the incest that triggers Nicole Warren's earliest symptoms of mental illness in Tender Is the Night might well be "pure invention" on Fitzgerald's part. However, given the nature of the incest taboo, the cloak of secrecy that generally surrounds cases of incest, the fact that incest memories are often repressed, and the widespread tendency--even among mental health care professionals--to dismiss reports of incestuous abuse as "fantasies,"[3] it seems somewhat naive for so educated a group of biographers to suggest--with apparent conviction--that any woman, particularly a woman with a deeply troubled psyche like Zelda Fitzgerald's--could not possibly have been an incest victim. It seems improbable that any scholar, however thorough, would have definitive knowledge on so personal a point, since incest victims themselves are often unaware of what lies at the root of psychological problems they experience later in life.

Regardless of how Fitzgerald obtained the incest material he used in his creation of Nicole, however, his evident grasp of the vulnerabilities of an incest victim is irrefutable.

His literary portrait of Nicole--her sometimes irrational behavior; her unwarranted faith in Dick; her poor self-esteem; her dependency; her longings for health, work and respect--reads like a case study of a hysteric (not a schizophrenic)[4] whose illness was precipitated by incest. Nicole's "madness," which is often exaggerated and seen as the root of all Dick's problems, can be explained very readily with the help of late twentieth century psychological research on incest victims and women who become sexually involved with their therapists.

In fact, as a result of Fitzgerald's perhaps intuitive understanding of the ramifications of incest, Nicole's tragedy is somewhat easier to comprehend--in a psychological and sociological context--than Dick's, though the novel is generally treated as Dick Diver's story. Bruccoli, for example, casually questions the significance of Nicole and her experience of incest as he asserts:

> Interesting as the comments on the social and incestuous aspects of Tender Is the Night are--and the former is indubitably a valid approach to the novel--the book is principally concerned with Dick Diver's tragedy. . . .(emphasis mine, Composition, 12)

Likewise, Fetterley drastically oversimplifies Nicole's incest history and role in the novel when she observes that, "The enemy in the text is the American woman and the text does a job on her" (114). Even McCay, who recognizes that Fitzgerald tends to be "harder" on his women than "he is on his men" (311), glosses over the real significance of Nicole and of her experience:

> The cause of [Dick Diver's] decline is, in Fitzgerald's eyes, Nicole--beautiful, rich, sick Nicole--whose illness becomes a challenge to the young psychiatrist who would make the beautiful shattered girl whole again . . . . Nicole herself has been destroyed by . . . wealth and by her own beauty, a beauty that tempted her own father to ravish her. (318)

The essential flaw in such critical assessments of Nicole's role in the novel is superficiality, both with regard to Nicole herself and with regard to Dick. Moreover, such superficial interpretations of the characters involved in this tragedy pave the way for blind disregard for the wider implications of the cross-gender relations within the novel. Obviously, Nicole's presence in the story does indeed contribute substantially to Dick Diver's demise--not just because her wealth enables him to turn his back on his chosen profession, but also--and more importantly--because her confused and unhappy alliance with him clearly illustrates his fundamental unsuitability to be practicing psychiatry in the first place. Dick's tragic flaw is not so much that he allows himself to be "bought" as that he simply "cannot maintain emotional detachment from entangling human alliances" (Berman, 72), a characteristic that prevents him from dealing "responsibly" with his patients' emotions. His failure as a psychiatrist arises not from any evil or temptation that Nicole herself embodies but from his own primary weakness, the self-centeredness that allows him to put his own needs ahead of those of his patient--in this case, a young, beautiful, and impressionable incest victim, who--predictably--finds herself enamored with him.

D. S. Savage hinted that Dick is largely responsible for his own fate as long ago as 1952, as he focused on Dick's failure to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries during his treatment of Nicole:

> . . . it is Dick's culpable folly in agreeing to marry his own patient which is the initial fault that sets in motion the entire process of involvement and degeneration; and it is interesting to note that . . . he is shown in the outcome as powerless to resist, not the inducements of Nicole's bank-balance but the sheer overwhelming vital force of her sexual attraction. (152)

For Dick Diver, as for so many of Fitzgerald's male protagonists, women exist primarily to pay him homage and give him pleasure; he does not see women as full and equal human beings with rights and dreams of their own, but only as objects of his desire. Indeed, he is decidedly cruel to women who aspire to independence.[5] Nicole's experience of incest is important to the novel in that it shapes her character, evokes her illness, and makes her profoundly vulnerable to Dick's objectification of her. She is twice victimized--first by incest and then by psychiatric malpractice; both manifestations of exploitation stem directly from patriarchal traditions that accord women second-class citizenship. Perhaps unbeknownst to Fitzgerald, the incest in Tender Is the Night serves metaphorically as a reminder of women's powerlessness in traditional patriarchal societies. The family where a father "rapes" a daughter, like the "therapeutic" relationship that allows men to define women's reality, is a microcosm of a larger society that condones and perpetuates myriad means of

exploiting and subjugating women. Nicole's relentless efforts to rise above her dual victimization are the efforts of a New Woman envisioning equality and autonomy. Like Fitzgerald's confused and talented wife Zelda, his character Nicole is a "strange, valuable girl" destined "to endure unnecessary rebuffs and discouragements" largely attributable to her birth into a society dominated by men (Hardwick, 103).

Once Fitzgerald decided to incorporate his understanding of Zelda's mental illness into his fourth novel, he wrote himself guidelines for developing the character who was to become Nicole. In his notes he warned himself to be "'careful not to reveal basic ignorance of psychiatric and medical training'" (Bruccoli, Composition, 80). He planned to "'read books'" on psychiatry and then to draw on a variety of sources of "'Material on Sickness,'" including consultations with clinicians who had treated Zelda.[6] His painstaking research undoubtedly assisted him in presenting psychiatry as it was then being practiced--in a masculine tradition, which was thriving on Freud's own efforts "to demonstrate his power to bring a woman to reason, and to bring reason to the mysteries of woman." Indeed, what is most noteworthy about Fitzgerald's presentation of psychiatric material in Tender Is the Night is his evident failure to comprehend the importance of "self-discovery and psychological insight . . . in effecting any therapeutic cure" (Berman, 70). In this context, it is no surprise that Dick Diver is most pleased with his patient-wife

when she invests her entire identity in him, "play[ing] planet to [his] sun" (289).

As an incest victim, Nicole has learned from her father, long before her first meeting with Dick Diver, that:

> . . . she is important because of her sexuality, that men want sex from girls, and that . . . she can use her sexuality as a way to get the attention and affection she genuinely needs, that sex is a tool. (Bass, 27)

She is struggling desperately with the aftermath of incest, with the painful, forced recognition of herself as a sexual object to a man she had no choice but to trust and depend upon, when she encounters Dick one evening on the clinic's grounds. As he gazes at her, aware as he later tells Franz that she is "'about the prettiest thing [he] ever saw'" (120), she too is acutely conscious of her sexual attractiveness to him. In her first letter to him, she refers to this chance encounter as follows:

> "You thought I was pretty too but I've had that before and a long time I've stood it. If you come here again with that attitude base and criminal and not even faintly what I had been taught to associate with the role of gentleman then heaven help you." (121)

Like many young women who have experienced incestuous abuse, Nicole is extremely sensitive to men's sexual interest in her. Following her own father's impulsive sexual advances, she has been placed in Dr. Dohmler's clinic largely on account of a generalized fear of men and the threat they appear to pose to her both physically and psychologically. Before her hospitalization, she has accused her father's trusted valet of

"'making up to her'" and said things that "'got crazier and crazier . . . almost always about men going to attack her, men she knew or men on the street--anybody---'" (127). Though the characters in the novel regard her preoccupation with men's potential or genuine sexual objectification of her as pathological, it is important to note that at least in Dick's case her perception of his personal, sexual interest in her is entirely accurate. He is extremely attracted to her when he initially encounters her, and he subsequently chooses to respond to her letters in part because "'She was such a pretty thing'" and "'she enclosed a lot of snapshots of herself'" (130). His motivation is therefore suspect from the very start. Far from sacrificing his own interests in an effort "to make the beautiful shattered girl whole again," he is selfishly absorbed in her beauty as well as utterly intrigued by her fragility--the fragility of a "'beautiful shell'" (120)--and her growing infatuation with him.

While Nicole is understandably apprehensive about Dick's obvious fascination with her physical beauty,[7] she nonetheless finds it easier to establish a long-distance "transferent" relationship with him through the mail than to work directly with the doctors on site at the clinic. This is entirely logical in the context of incest. Psychiatrists represent male authority figures to the adolescent victim, and the primary male authority figure in her life--her father--has betrayed and abandoned her.[8] Rather than risk further

emotional and sexual abuse by allowing herself to trust and confide in the doctors at the clinic, Nicole affects a certain degree of detachment--and safety--by communicating most openly with a doctor who poses less threat, simply by virtue of his distance from her.

When Dick returns to the clinic, Franz tells him that the "'change'" in the letters Nicole was sending him signaled that she "'had become [Dick's] case'" (119). Dick, however, has yet to learn the full background of Nicole's illness and scarcely seems to view her as a professional responsibility at all.

A lengthy conversation between Franz and Dick before Dick is allowed to see Nicole in person exposes Nicole's earlier incestuous encounter with her father. Franz relates Nicole's presenting symptoms and her diagnosis as a schizophrenic with a fear of men that is "'not at all constitutional'" (128), and then explains how Dr. Dohmler prompted Devereux Warren to confess to having committed incest with his young daughter. The incest had occurred when Warren, bereft of his wife's affection and companionship following her death, had cultivated an increasingly intimate, exclusive relationship with his adolescent daughter, who was equally needy emotionally and psychologically.[9] According to Warren, in his confession to Dohmler, father and daughter had gradually developed a habit of focusing all their attention on each other, holding hands and vowing to "'just have each other'" for a while. The

neighbors commented on the "wonderful" relationship between father and daughter. And Nicole was allowed to seek comfort in her father's bed, until "all at once" they "were lovers" (129).

Fitzgerald's original intention, judging by his notes for the novel, was to depict a young girl who had been "raped" by her father "under unusual circumstances"; however, there is no indication in the finished novel that Warren was guilty of forcible rape. In fact, references to the actual sexual activities of father and daughter are somewhat veiled, leading at least one critic to assume that Nicole had "consented" to intercourse (Berman, 82). Fitzgerald leaves no doubt whatsoever that intercourse has occurred. When Dr. Dohmler asks Warren if "'this thing'" continued following the occasion when father and daughter became "lovers," he is obviously concerned about the nature and extent of the sexual exploitation. When he asks whether there were "'consequences,'" he is wondering--as Warren recognizes--whether Nicole became pregnant. As a psychiatrist he is naturally probing for information that may help him treat the young patient--information that may be easier to obtain from the theoretically sane adult who victimized her than from the frightened, confused patient herself.

Franz sums up the clinic's assessment of the link between Nicole's experience of incest and the illness for which she was hospitalized, explaining to Dick that Nicole "'felt

complicity'" yet "'from sheer self-protection . . . developed the idea that she had no complicity.'" Franz believes that Nicole responded to the incest by slipping "'into a phantom world where all men,'" no matter how well "'liked'" and "'trusted,'" appeared to pose sexual threats (130-31).

Despite his purported eagerness to become a great psychiatrist, Dick displays little interest in the clinical assessment of Nicole that Franz offers. Instead, he wants to know more about the incestuous encounter itself. Dick's impatience prompts him to interrupt Franz in an effort to force the conversation's focus back onto the incest itself: "'Did she ever go into the--horror directly?'" (132). Later in the novel, his morbid fascination with Nicole's experience of taboo sexuality surfaces again even after his colleagues warn him to beware of Nicole's apparent attachment to him; in her presence at a social gathering his thoughts dart uncontrollably to "the dishonor, the secret" (152).

Dick's almost voyeuristic curiosity about Nicole's incest history is one of the earliest clues that he, like Devereux Warren, may be capable of indulging his own fantasies and impulses through objectification of her. According to current psychological theory, one of the most confounding elements of incestuous abuse is that it is "relationally-based" and "takes place within the context that is supposed to nurture, protect and care for the child, where she should be able to get a reasonable interpretation of reality and relational life, and

upon which she is utterly dependent" (Gelinas, 319). Clearly, Fitzgerald establishes the relational basis of Nicole's vulnerability to her father's sexual advances through Mr. Warren's own account of their seemingly ideal familial bond before the incest occurred. By depicting Dick's nonclinical fascination with Nicole's incest history, however, Fitzgerald also--perhaps unwittingly--demonstrates that Nicole's fears are at least somewhat justified: men whom she has every right to expect to be trustworthy do indeed see her first and foremost as a sexual object. The fact that her father used her sexually is titillating to her doctor, and ultimately contributes to her revictimization. In both her family and her therapy her self is violated by men who usurp her autonomy and view her as a sex object.

By demonstrating Dick Diver's selfish delight in Nicole's beauty, personal history, and infatuation with him, Fitzgerald hints prophetically at psychological and sociological phenomena documented in professional journals and texts approximately fifty years later. In The Secret Trauma (1986), a comprehensive study of incest, sociologist Diana Russell notes that:

> Some people apparently find the information that a child has participated in a taboo sexual relationship exciting and provocative, regardless of the involuntary nature of the child's victimization. Incest victims, for example, appear to be particularly at risk of revictimization by male therapists and psychiatrists. (171)

Particularly in light of such research, Dick Diver's preoccupation with Nicole's beauty and sexuality even while she's a patient in his care is highly credible. Moreover, Nicole's vulnerability to Dick's attention can be explained in part by Drs. Kenneth Pope and Jacqueline Bouhoutsos, co-authors of Sexual Intimacy Between Therapists and Patients (1986), who report that "there appears to be an inordinately large number of patients . . . who report incestuous experiences and subsequent multiple victimization" by therapists (54). Pope and Bouhoutsos also draw clear parallels between incest and therapist-patient involvement:

> The same vulnerability exists in the patient as in the child: the loving, trusting, belief that the parent (or parent-figure) is also loving and caring and would not hurt. There is the same feeling of powerlessness on the part of the child-patient: the fear that one cannot exist without the parent's or the therapist's protection and love. (53)

In Tender Is the Night, there are just such similarities between Nicole's "loving, trusting" involvement with her father--and his subsequent betrayal of her--and her exaggerated attachment to her father-surrogate, Dick Diver, who recognizes that his role as psychiatrist makes him a "'stuffed figure'" in her life, but courts her nonetheless.

Nicole herself, the child/patient, is not responsible for either her father's or her doctor's behavior towards her, for she is not on an equal footing with either of these men. She is needy, dependent, vulnerable; they are her caretakers, at least in theory. Among the many predictable consequences of

incest is an impaired ability to discern whom to trust.[10] Dick Diver, like Devereux Warren, is in a position to do her tremendous harm, and she is not even equipped to recognize it as it befalls her, for, as Pope and Bouhoutsos explain:

> The abused child learns to accommodate to a continuing outrageous sexual relationship, outrageous whether or not it is gentle, whether or not it is purported to be loving. The same is true of the relationship with the therapist. Sexualizing the therapy is a betrayal of a trusting relationship that requires an altruism, an unselfish involvement that the parent or therapist must have with a child or client in a subordinate or needy position to leave them whole. (53-54)

Nicole cannot be helped by Dick Diver's treatment because he is not capable of "unselfish involvement" with an attractive young woman. His earliest and most compelling thoughts of Nicole are of her beauty. Moreover, even Dick's original decision to become a psychiatrist was anything but altruistic: he "'got to be a psychiatrist because there was a girl at St. Hilda's in Oxford that went to the same lectures'" (138). Consequently, it comes as no surprise that his own deep-rooted drive "to be loved" (133) blinds him to his appealing young patient's conflicting need to develop a sense of self uncomplicated by sexual gamesmanship. Even when his colleagues at the clinic begin to question him about whether he has a treatment plan for Nicole, his light-hearted response demonstrates both his selfish contemplation of the possibility of having sexual contact with her and his utter insensitivity to the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship. When Franz points out Nicole's growing infatuation with Dick, Dick

insensitively jokes about "'tak[ing] her up in the edelweiss'" (138).

Recognizing the danger of Dick's apparent "'sentimental involvement'" with his own patient, both Franz and Dr. Dohmler, the clinic's director, attempt to set him straight. As an experienced psychiatrist and chief administrator of the clinic, Dr. Dohmler reminds Dr. Diver of the necessity of acting professionally in Nicole's best interests, despite any temptation she might pose to Dick:

> "I have nothing to do with your personal reactions," said Dohmler. "But I have much to do with the fact that this so-called 'transference,'" he darted a short ironic look at Franz which the latter returned in kind, "must be terminated. Miss Nicole does well indeed, but she is in no condition to survive what she might interpret as a tragedy." (139)

Just as Dohmler automatically distances himself from the patient by using a polite title, he expects Dick Diver to be cautious enough to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries, particularly with a patient whose personal boundaries--physical as well as psychological--have already been carelessly shattered by another man, her father. Increasingly concerned about Dick's degree of personal involvement with Nicole, Dohmler considers the possibility of separating the pair. Dick concedes that Nicole's infatuation with (and attraction to) him constitutes "'a situation'" only to be reminded vehemently again by Dohmler that "'it is a professional situation'" (140). Before the doctors agree that Dick must gently sever his relationship with Nicole, Dick specu-

lates aloud over the possibility of marrying her. Franz is so dismayed by this fantasy that he cannot curb an uncharacteristic outburst in which he declares that it would be "'better never to see her again'" (140).

It is interesting to note that Fitzgerald's identification of Nicole as a patient who can pose a curious blend of threat and temptation to her doctor is compatible with current research into therapist-patient intimacy and the phenomenon known as "countertransference." Just as a psychiatric patient may experience a "transference," which the Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry defines as "the projection or displacement upon the analyst of unconscious feelings and wishes originally directed toward important individuals, such as parents, in the patient's childhood"(759), a clinical practitioner may experience a "countertransference." Like a transference, a countertransference often involves the projection or displacement of unconscious feelings and wishes, only in this case the focus is on the analyst's, not the patient's, perceptions within the therapeutic relationship. In Tender Is the Night Dick Diver's interactions with Nicole are motivated in part by her unconscious activation of his countertransference; his "professional" behavior with her grows more and more inappropriate as she inadvertently triggers his drive to meet his own love and power needs.

The breakdown of their therapeutic relationship begins very early in their acquaintance, for Dick appears at all

times to be acting out of his own unconscious feelings and desires without serious regard for her psychological needs. Indeed, it is questionable whether they ever establish a bonafide, viable therapeutic relationship, for although Nicole sees Dick as doctor and authority figure, Dick fails to acknowledge his responsibility toward her in her role as patient.

Despite Fitzgerald's awareness that he was ignorant of the precepts and proper practice of psychiatry, he somehow managed to capture Dick's countertransferent thought patterns, which lead directly to his personal involvement with Nicole and ultimately to the destruction of his career. When Dick first meets Nicole in the clinic garden, he does not see "the girl" as a "patient," but only as "about the prettiest thing [he] ever saw" (emphasis mine, 120). Significantly, this reference to her connotes an object rather than a person. While he's away at the War, he receives "about fifty letters from her written over a period of eight months" and comes "to wait eagerly" for their arrival (121). Thus, he is already involved with Nicole--from a purely personal standpoint, despite her acknowledgment that she has been told he's a doctor--long before he returns to the clinic and is entrusted with her treatment. Under the circumstances, he probably ought never to have been designated her doctor in the first place, for he appears unable or unwilling to reject his own fantasies of her as girlfriend in order to be an effective

agent of therapeutic cure, a doctor capable of sufficient detachment to allow a patient to develop her own sense of self apart from his projected notions of what she could--or ought to--be in his life.

Close analysis of the text reveals evidence that Dick's behavior with Nicole is motivated largely by his own needs. The text, however, does not provide clear and accurate assessments on Diver's part of what would constitute proper care for her as a patient. His relationship with her is egocentric; his expertise as a psychiatrist, highly questionable. Fitzgerald even goes so far as to suggest that Dick is himself in the midst of a personal identity crisis--trying to decide "whether or not to die for what [he] no longer believes"--when he arrives at the clinic and assumes responsibility for Nicole's care. As he questions his shifting values, he also takes personal inventory of his desires: ". . . he used to think that he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it in" (13).

Although Dick recognizes that it is difficult actually to be good, kind, brave and wise, he clearly fancies himself in this traditional image akin to that of a masculine protector. Since he wants, above all, "to be loved," it is not surprising that he grows narcissistically involved with Nicole's sexualized transference, which prompts her to flirt with him and--

more crucial for her situation as patient--to worship him. Dick becomes more and more dependent on Nicole's attention--and "less and less certain of his relation to her" (135)--as she makes "a profound promise of herself for so little, for the beat of a response, the assurance of a complementary vibration in him" (136), and brings "everything to his feet, gifts of sacrificial ambrosia, of worshipping myrtle" (137). Although he is dimly aware of his obligation "to divorce her from any obsession that he [has] stitched her together" (137),[1] she is so infatuated with him that she habitually "[brings] out her accomplishments for his approval." Upon the advice of his colleagues, he makes a half-hearted attempt to withdraw from her emotionally, yet he finds himself leisurely strolling with her in the rain-drenched garden, "wanting only to drink the rain that touched her cheek" (143).

Evidently Dick does suffer some conflict over his attachment to his beautiful young patient. On a rational basis--and with the input of his esteemed colleagues--he perhaps perceives that his interest in Nicole is decidedly personal and therefore selfish and unprofessional as well. On another, more emotional, level, however, he finds it virtually impossible to resist the temptation Nicole's youth, beauty, and admiration pose. Because he wants so much "to be loved," he finds his own image in Nicole's eyes as she worships him profoundly appealing. It is his inability to resolve his internal confusion about Nicole that leads him to increase his

involvement with her. He encourages her attention and enters a relationship with her unwisely, on the unsound basis of her transferent vulnerability with--and affection for--him. By allowing himself to reciprocate Nicole's exaggerated interest, Dick commits a violation of his profession's ethics and actually sets the ensuing marriage up for failure. Because it originates in a therapeutic relationship, their romance is founded on a hopelessly unequal--and precarious--basis. Dick's unsuccessful, and perhaps even insincere, effort to discourage Nicole's infatuation while she is his patient has a lasting and deleterious impact on her. On the whole, she appears to be in better mental health during his absence from the clinic than she does during most of her subsequent marriage to him.

Before Dick's return to the clinic following the War, the other doctors have fostered Nicole's development of a sense of self--her faith in herself as an individual capable of making her own decisions, assuming responsibility, contributing to her community, and, above all, cultivating her own intellect and special talents. She needs just this kind of unselfish encouragement to grow well. She needs to learn to trust herself--for she felt "'complicity'" following the incest--and to learn how to discern others who are worthy of trust. She needs to begin to value herself for who she is, regardless of whether others treat her with respect. She needs, in short,

to become the center of her own universe, not a satellite of someone else's.

Unfortunately for Nicole, Dick Diver is ill-equipped psychologically to provide the unthreatening, nurturing environment she needs following her father's sexual exploitation. Almost as soon as Dick arrives on the scene, Nicole's transference triggers her unconscious efforts "to reassure herself of her irresistibility" in her favorite doctor's eyes and "to exaggerate her readiness for sexual surrender" (Berman, 74). Soon she has a firm "hold on him," and he is "thankful to have an existence at all, if only as a reflection in her eyes" (155). In effect, their roles reverse. Dick, who, as a psychiatrist, has a professional obligation to maintain appropriate detachment, becomes dependent on his patient for his own affirmation. His growing involvement with his patient on a purely personal basis forestalls her developing sense of autonomy, eventually depriving her of "of any subsistence except Dick" (180). This setback in her psychological development lasts for years, but ultimately she recognizes that she can--and "must"--"be something in addition, not just an image on his mind" (277).

Due to his own conflicting need to be worshipped, however, Dick has little tolerance for Nicole's occasional, cautious quest for a greater degree of autonomy. His countertransference, which derives from their initial therapeutic relationship, shapes their life together. Significantly, the close of

the novel illuminates the role of countertransference in Dick's deteriorating relationship with Nicole. His pervasive, almost overwhelming need "to be loved," which suggests an inferiority complex, apparently stems from his faint recognition that he is "the last hope of a dying clan" (302). His compelling drive to win approval, "to be loved," fuels his almost irresistible charm, which, ironically, is his tragic flaw. He chooses "sweet poison" to win affection, and his mask of selfless caring for others thinly disguises his real motivation, which is to make himself indispensable to them. Shortly before his separation from Nicole, he is called to assist some friends in distress, and he realizes: "He would have to go and face this thing that he didn't care a damn about, because it had early become a habit to be loved . . . " (302). The recognition of the tragedy inherent in his desire to curry favor surfaces as the passage continues:

> On an almost parallel occasion, back in Dohmler's clinic on the Lurischsee, realizing this power, he had made a choice, chosen Ophelia, chosen the sweet poison and drunk it. Wanting above all to be brave and kind, he had wanted even more than that, to be loved. So it had been. So it would ever be . . . . (302)

Dick's compelling needs to see himself as "brave and kind" and "to be loved" lie at the heart of his tragedy in Tender Is the Night. He is responsible for his own downfall, and, by the end of the novel, he knows it. Aware of the potential ramifications of intimate involvement with "a mental patient" (156), he nevertheless acts out of his urgent need "to be

loved," choosing "Ophelia," and thereby sealing his fate. Nicole herself as a person is not his problem; his unprofessional involvement with her is.

It is difficult to comprehend how Fitzgerald managed to delineate so clearly the effects of transference and countertransference in the relationship between Nicole and Dick, when he himself had no formal training in psychiatry and, in fact, appears to have "shared in the myth of the psychiatrist as a modern magician, a miracle worker dwelling in the psychic landscape of life" (Berman, 67). However, Fitzgerald's fundamental ignorance of psychology is evident in other aspects of the novel--most notably, as he attempts, through his characters, to offer a diagnosis for Nicole's illness. In this aspect of the novel as well as in his description of the Divers' marriage, there is no question that Fitzgerald drew on his experience with Zelda. Like Zelda, Nicole is diagnosed as being schizophrenic. In Nicole's case, however, the official diagnosis appears somewhat unjustifiable.[12]

In The Talking Cure, Jeffrey Berman points out the questionable nature of "Fitzgerald's implication that the incest directly precipitated Nicole's schizophrenia" and observes that Nicole "hardly appears schizophrenic at all." He goes on to note that, "The few symptoms [Nicole] manifests suggest hysteria and obsession compulsion" (82-83). Clinical definitions of "schizophrenia" and "hysteria," coupled with an analysis of Nicole's symptoms, support Berman's view.

Moreover, Fitzgerald's unduly severe diagnosis of Nicole's illness is remarkably appropriate in the context of incest: current psychological research has revealed that incest victims with "disguised presentations"--those who manifest confusion and other symptoms but who do not talk openly of their incestuous encounters (like Nicole)--are frequently misdiagnosed. One of the most common misdiagnoses for such patients is schizophrenia.[13]

The Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry defines "schizophrenic disorders" as:

> . . . a group of mental disturbances essentially characterized by (a) one or more psychotic features during the active phase, including bizarre or absurd delusions (such as being controlled or thought-broadcasting), (b) somatic, grandiose, religious, or nihilistic delusions, (c) delusions of persecution or jealousy with hallucinations, (d) incoherence with marked loosening of associations, illogical thought, or poverty of speech together with either blunted, flat, or inappropriate affect, (f) delusions or hallucinations, or (g) grossly disorganized behavior, such as catatonia. Other common characteristics are deterioration from a previous level of job, social, or self-care functioning, and onset before age 45, with a duration of at least six months. A common term for schizophrenic disorder is schizophrenia. (655)

The symptoms outlined above are clearly more severe than the symptoms Nicole exhibits. Despite her confusion about some men's possible ulterior (sexual) motives in their dealings with her, Nicole is for the most part able to function normally among other people. Before Dick's return to the clinic, following the War, Nicole is even entrusted with the supervision of other, "less stable" patients on excursions to

town. Later, within her family and social circle, she is capable of assuming responsibility for others as well. At one poignant moment, in fact, she quietly asserts her sense that womanhood carries with it an inherent obligation to engage in the "business" of "holding things together" (82). Although Dick finds it convenient to label as "delusions" those things which she sees that he does not want her to see, she utterly fails to display any "bizarre or absurd delusions" within the novel. Her few irrational outbursts are invariably triggered by circumstances that can be linked psychologically with her incest experience. Hence, her behavior is not so much delusional as hysterical.

The Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry defines hysteria as:

> . . . a neurotic disorder characterized by suggestibility, emotional outbursts, histrionic behavior, repressed anxiety, and transformation of unconscious conflicts into physical symptoms such as paralysis, blindness, and loss of sensation. These symptoms serve to screen out anxiety (primary gains) and at the same time to elicit attention and sympathy (secondary gains). Freud interpreted such symptoms as defenses against guilty sexual impulses . . .. He also included dissociative conditions in his concept of hysteria. . . . (361-62)

The symptoms attributable to hysteria encompass virtually all of Nicole's manifestations of mental illness. Her original manifestations of illness, as presented in her letters to Dick Diver, reflect her anxiety and unconscious conflicts about sexuality. She reveals that she "has gotten only to like boys who are rather sissies" (121) and that she is frequently

apprehensive about men's glances: "They tried it again in the candy store again and I almost hit the man with the weight" (124). Moreover, her emotional outbursts and histrionic behavior take place in situations that remind her--at least on a subconscious level--of her father's betrayal. She leaves the room for some unstated reason during a dinner party when her husband and Rosemary, a girl young enough to be his daughter, are engaging in a flirtation; later allusions to a scene in the bathroom suggest histrionics. Nicole also suffers a breakdown--"everything got dark again"--immediately after the birth of her second child, a little girl (161);[14] and she revolts against her husband, wrecking the family car and nearly killing the family, following word from one of the clinic's former patients regarding Dick's sexual advances toward her daughter. In one of her most severe emotional outbursts of the novel, she retreats to a bathroom while Dick tries to get rid of a dead man's body discovered in Rosemary's hotel room. This incident, too, suggests an activation of subconscious associations with an earlier crisis, her incestuous encounter with her father.[15] In the following passage, Nicole's reaction when Dick appears at the bathroom door suggests many elements of incest, including invasion, blood, shame, betrayal, coercion, power, powerlessness, and stigmatization:

> Nicole knelt beside the bed swaying sidewise and sidewise. "It's you!" she cried, "--it's you come to intrude on the only privacy I have in the world--with your spread with red blood on it. I'll wear it for you--I'm

> not ashamed, though it was such a pity. On All Fools Day we had a party on the Zurichsee, and all the fools were there,and I wanted to come dressed in a spread but they wouldn't let me--"
>
> "Control yourself!"
>
> "--so I sat in the bathroom and they brought me a domino and said wear that. I did. What else could I do?"
>
> "Control yourself, Nicole!"
>
> "I never expected you to love me--it was too late--only don't come in the bathroom, the only place I can go for privacy, dragging spreads with red blood on them and asking me to fix them." (112)

Although the spread in this instance has been bloodied by a dead man's body, and handled by her husband, to Nicole the blood might well symbolize her loss of virginity in her father's bed. Her abhorrence of the possibility of being asked "to fix" the spread might well represent her resentment over being expected "to fix" her relationship with her father following their intercourse: her efforts to reassure her father that it didn't "'matter'" (129), and her stubborn silence about the incest during her months as a patient at Dohmler's clinic. Even her desperate plea for privacy reflects her lingering fear of invasion and violation as well as a deep longing for respect. In any event, however, her most blatantly "irrational" behavior occurs as a direct result of a severely stressful situation--the discovery of a body--that might very well upset people with considerably more stable mental histories.

Further evidence that Nicole's illness can be assessed more accurately as hysteria than as schizophrenia is found in Psychotherapeutic Interventions in Hysterical Disorders (1986). Several characteristics and behaviors that the

authors, Drs. Mueller and Aniskiewicz, attribute to hysteria are exemplified by Nicole in Tender Is the Night. The authors note, for example, that, "Whenever a hysteric becomes hysterical, it is a sign that something in the therapeutic relationship needs attention" (81). In the novel, Nicole's hysterical outbursts signal Dick's failure to address stressful incidents in her life as well as his propensity to incite her jealousy by flirting with other women. Interestingly, the authors of Psychotherapeutic Interventions outline in considerable detail the likelihood that hysterical patients might evoke countertransferent difficulties in their therapists, largely because hysterics tend to be extremely perceptive and articulate:

> The hysterical client is intensely aware of how she is being received. In particular, the hysteric is hypersensitive to the therapist's feelings about her, constantly alert to nuances in his behavior that reflect his subliminal attitudes about her." (66)

As has already been demonstrated, Nicole is keenly aware of Dick's initial attraction to her; later, she perceives his attachment to her and refuses to believe his denial of interest: "'It's my hard luck , all right--but don't pretend I don't know--I know everything about you and me'" (154). And of course she is right; Dick is thoroughly intrigued by her--and by his own image in her eyes. More importantly, however, Mueller and Aniskiewicz explain that hysterics often feel that they "have no inner core" and, as a result, are "vulnerable to being swept along by another person and . . . becoming drained and losing [their] tenuous self-esteem" (130). This aspect of

hysteria manifests itself in Nicole's extreme dependency on Dr. Diver, from their first meeting through most of the novel. Nicole experiences herself as virtually worthless--except through her association with Dick. When he tries to break off their relationship, "there [is] no home left to her, save emptiness and pain" (143). When they marry, she feels "lonely" but sees "no place to go except close" (159). During her pregnancy, she feels "like a broken roly-poly that can't stand up straight" (159) and eventually she grows "tired of knowing nothing and being reminded of it all the time" (161). Indeed, in the early days of her therapy and marriage she feels literally that she has no identity apart from Dick: "When I talk I say to myself that I am probably Dick" (162).

Even Nicole's initial infatuation with Dick is attributable to hysteria. According to Psychotherapeutic Interventions in Hysterical Disorders, a patient with hysteria and confusion about her relationships with men might well be expected to become infatuated with her doctor and even behave seductively with him. The danger, according to Mueller and Aniskiewicz, lies not in the patient's attachment to her doctor but in his response to it. If he allows himself to reciprocate her interest, he "perpetuates and exacerbates the client's Oedipal conflicts, inducing guilt, reinforcing passive defenses and delaying movement during therapy" (91). Apparently, in fact, intimate involvement with the therapist

is one of the very worst things that can happen to a patient with hysteria:

> If the hysterical client has elicited collusion in a male therapist, she has symbolically gained an excluding and exclusive relationship with the father, and her second state is worse than the first. . . . The male therapist has come to represent the Oedipal father, and although she sought exclusiveness, what should have remained at the wish-fulfilling fantasy level has become "real." (91)

For Nicole, the Oedipal "fantasy" becomes all too "real" not just once, but twice. Having endured an exclusive, incestuous liaison with her father, she then has the misfortune to enter therapy with a man who disregards her history and vulnerability as he selfishly cultivates his own fantasy of an exclusive relationship with her. Under the circumstances, it is quite remarkable that she ultimately manages to reject her unhealthy alliance with Dick and develop a somewhat autonomous sense of self. But achieving a sense of her own worth is no easy task for her, and her romantic involvement with Dick severely inhibits her progress along the way.

Nicole is prone to becoming involved with her therapist for a variety of reasons besides unresolved Oedipal conflicts. She appeals to Dick for what she is--beautiful, bright, young, talented, vulnerable--just as she appealed to his colleagues who "made rather a pet of her" (131) at the clinic while Dick was away at the War. Unlike his colleagues, however, Dick cannot distinguish between Nicole's needs and his own. His professional judgment is clouded by his own drive "to be loved," and he winds up behaving "as if" he met her in some

other context quite apart from a theoretically therapeutic relationship.[16]

It is interesting to note that Nicole fits a profile drawn nearly forty years after the publication of Tender Is the Night to illustrate the characteristics of women who are likely to be susceptible to romantic and/or sexual involvement with their therapists. In her 1972 book entitled Women and Madness, psychologist Phyllis Chesler notes that women who participate in intimate relationships with their analysts tend to be "intellectually insecure . . . sexually fearful and sexually compulsive . . . paralyzed by real and feared loneliness and self-contempt . . . and slow to express any anger." In addition, Chesler observes that such women tend to "[blame] themselves for any 'mistreatment' by men" and to "[confuse] economic and selfhood needs with romantic 'love' (149). Nicole exhibits all of these qualities and behaviors to some extent. Her insecurity about her intellect, for example, is evident when she minimizes her considerable prowess in languages and the arts by dubbing her accomplishments "minor"; she also dreams rather wistfully about "look[ing] over the whole field of knowledge and pick[ing] out something" that she could "really know about" and "hang on to" (161). She is so "fearful" of her own sexuality on the heels of her incest experience that she often appears altogether preoccupied with sex. And she is so isolated and lonely during her months at the clinic that she writes pitiful

letters to a virtual stranger, Dick Diver, confessing her self-contempt "I am completely broken and humiliated" and her sense of abandonment "I am lonesome all the time, far away from friend and family across the Atlantic I roam all over the place in a half daze" (123). She yearns for the sense of hope she had "ages ago" when boys "were in love with [her]," apparently seeing in romance a new point of departure, as Alabama does in Zelda's novel Save Me the Waltz. In short, she is a very confused and unhappy young woman whose only definition of self arises directly from whatever standards others see fit to impose on her. She is almost literally willing to sell her soul to the devil for a few crumbs of attention.

Fitzgerald's characterization of Dick does not provide any evidence that Dick ever fully grasps the extent of Nicole's vulnerability to him. Although his colleagues attempt to warn him that Nicole's "transference" may have gotten out of hand, his own interactions with expose his inability to empathize with her. His advice to her is, at best, oversimplified. At worst, his remarks are patronizing. Knowing full well her psychiatric history, he admonishes her to "try to forget the past" (142), and--treating her like a child--he tells her she "shouldn't" when she says she "hate[s] Doctor Gregory" (143). Even in his responses to her early letters, he merely tells her, "'Be a good girl and mind the doctors'" (130). Far from drawing her out as a person or in any way assisting her in

developing and strengthening a sense of her own worth, Dick's natural inclination seems to be to impose his own sense of her reality on her. He denies her her heritage by dismissing the impact of the incest and her illness with pat remarks, and he denies her her feelings by pronouncing them inappropriate. Later, he attempts to deny her her (accurate) perceptions by declaring them "delusions." Throughout the early stages of their relationship and most of their marriage, his tone with her is authoritarian, appropriate both for patriarchal traditions and, according to Chesler, for exploitive therapists.[17]

Either because she's unaware of her anger or fearful of expressing it, Nicole's response to both her father's abuse and her doctor-husband's authoritarianism is passive, almost serene, compliance. She holds her world together by avoiding overt hostilities insofar as she is able. Confrontation terrifies her, so she struggles to maintain control and decorum. Fitzgerald alludes to Nicole's outward calm repeatedly throughout the novel. She is marked by "a lovely peace, without a smile" as she watches her children at play on the beach (10). She is said to "[know] few words and [believe] in none, and in the world . . . [be] rather silent" (26). She is observed sitting "in the car, her lovely face set, controlled, her eyes brave and watchful, looking straight ahead toward nothing" (14). To Rosemary, Nicole's characteristic serenity appears almost mystical: she has "the face

of a saint, a Viking madonna" (33).[18] Eventually, however, Nicole's almost perpetual "exterior harmony and charm" is identified explicitly by Fitzgerald as "the other face of her illness" (180).

Nicole's exaggerated calm--her almost catatonic control--is a manifestation of her schizoid tendency and yet another accurate reflection of the impact incest can have. Although Fitzgerald employs the term "schizoid" within the text, he appears to consider it synonymous with "eccentric." Dick tells Baby Warren that Nicole is "'a schizoid--a permanent eccentric'" (151). The Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry, however, defines schizoidism as "a complex of behavioral factors that includes seclusiveness, quietness, and other introversion traits indicating a separation by the person from [her] surroundings, the confining of psychic interests to [herself], and in many cases a tendency toward schizophrenia" (654). With this definition in mind, it is clear that Dick's reference to Nicole's schizoid behavior shortly after she disappears from the dinner table is appropriate, even though his equation of schizoidism with eccentricity is an obvious oversimplification. More importantly, however, Fitzgerald's attribution of schizoid behavior to an incest victim is entirely compatible with current assessments of incest victims' characteristics.

According to research findings publicized by Incest Survivors Anonymous, victims "may be withdrawn and isolated,"

"passive or distant," and even "numb to the world and to their feelings" (Characteristics of Victims, 1). Other research supports these findings.[19] In fact, other, more recent literary representations of incest victims reflect equally serene, or, alternatively, dissociative, behavior. For example, Julia, an incest survivor in James Baldwin's 1978 novel Just above My Head, is described as being "at once present and very far away, and with a beauty . . . only seen in those who have been forced to suffer into, and beyond, astonishment" (42). Both Nicole and Julia, like other victims, struggle with feelings of isolation, emptiness, guilt, and confusion in the aftermath of incest. Their outward calm and silence may mask considerable internal strife.

Although Fitzgerald clearly accepts the Freudian notion that psychological patterns and problems stem from "secrets . . . buried deep in childhood struggles" (180), Nicole's bouts with mental illness as an adult cannot be blamed on Devereux Warren's exploitation without some recognition of the role Dick Diver, as Nicole's psychiatrist, plays in the perpetuation and exacerbation of her illness. In theory, psychotherapy affords patients an opportunity to "work through" their internal conflicts and achieve an appropriate resolution, thereby freeing themselves from tensions that may interfere with their enjoyment of life and fulfilment of personal goals. In Nicole's case, however, therapy is

counter-productive. Ideally, Nicole should experience a safe, nurturing relationship with a mature father figure determined to refrain from exploiting her at any cost. Instead, she becomes entangled in a pathological involvement with a man who reenacts her father's original betrayal. He is utterly absorbed in her youth and beauty: ". . . nothing had ever felt so young as her lips. . . . Her beauty climbed the rolling slope, it came into the room, rustling ghostlike through the curtains . . ." (156). Yet his professional training dictates caution with female patients, so he brushes off her tentative overtures with remarks like, "'You're a fetching kid, but I couldn't fall in love'" (154). Dr. Diver's inconsistency and occasionally impulsive responses to Nicole's intense infatuation contribute to her further victimization. Perhaps he feels he can justify his decision to seek an overtly sexual relationship with her by proposing marriage, but he apparently does not wait until the wedding night to pursue his desire for sexual intimacy. Their premarital sexual relations are alluded to only once, near the end of the novel, and in Fitzgerald's customary discreet language. In the first flush of liberation following sexual intercourse with Tommy, Nicole "scarcely recall[s] how she . . . felt when she and Dick had possessed each other in secret places around the world, during the month before they were married" (300). Fitzgerald's implications are casual, yet irrefutable--and profoundly disturbing in light of

Nicole's earlier experience of incest. Her doctor, like her father, has apparently violated her innocence and taken advantage of her vulnerability in a selfish effort to satisfy his own needs. The vision of the good young doctor traipsing around the countryside with his beautiful, wealthy, teen-aged incest-victim/patient, stopping here and there in "secret places" like roadside inns to indulge his sexual fantasies, is positively chilling.[20]

While it is unlikely that Fitzgerald had any understanding of the magnitude of Dick's impropriety with Nicole, it is evident that in this novel--like its predecessors--Fitzgerald is conscientiously attempting to capture a moment in history and share an intimate glimpse into his perception of human suffering. As usual, he draws on his own experiences with women and--perhaps inadvertently--illustrates the attitudes and conditions that shape their lives. Nicole is a young woman--a New Woman of great promise. But her emotional, intellectual, and psychological development is thwarted by circumstances beyond her control. Although she is economically secure due to a large inheritance, she is emotionally dependent--first on her father and then on her psychiatrist. Both men act--without evident malice--out of a patriarchal tradition that permits them to view women as something less than fully human. At their basest level, they both see Nicole only as an object of their own sexual fantasies. At loftier moments, "under the guise of helping," Warren and Diver

dictate Nicole's and other women's behavior, by assuming "a dominance over women, a dominance more insidious and far-reaching because so thoroughly disguised" (Fetterley, 124). For most of the novel Nicole, an incest victim, experiences herself as powerless, as Dick figuratively "rapes" her over and over again through his efforts to "define both reality and sanity" for her (Fetterley, 124). Instinctively, she responds to his abuse--as she responded to her father's--through hysteria.

And her hysteria is a clue that she embodies an embryonic New Woman, a woman who may learn to reject abuse by giving voice to her dissatisfaction with the status quo by whatever means possible. In the battle between the sexes Nicole suffers, but she does not succumb. Her compliant silence gives way to overt indignation near the close of the book, when she overcomes her fear of expressing her displeasure with Dick's deterioration and begins to talk back. In doing so, she begins to declare her independence, parting irrevocably from the past and ensuring her survival. The marriage between Dick and Nicole cannot continue, because she is no longer willing to honor its tacit demand that she be subordinate to Dick. Clearly, she is sympathetic with other women of her era in their quest for greater respect and personal freedom.

In <u>The Female Malady</u>, Elaine Showalter detects important connections between feminism and manifestations of hysterical disorders, noting that the "women's movement" of the 1920s

"offered a potent alternative to the self-destructive and self-enclosed strategies of hysteria, and a benign form of resistance to the patriarchal order" (161). From this perspective, Nicole's illness--and the related symptoms presented by her predecessors in Fitzgerald's other novels--can actually be interpreted as healthy integrity. She tries to resist oppression, which literally makes her ill. She longs for a new position of equality in the world of men. As Showalter observes, "the hysterical woman" is actually "a female avant-garde struggling to redefine woman's place in the social order"; feminism, in fact, provides an "alternative to hysterical silence . . . the determination to speak and act for women in the public world" (161).

Although Nicole does not overtly align herself within the text with the women's movement of Fitzgerald's era, she is nevertheless influenced by it. Other women in Tender Is the Night seize their rights with more confidence and ease. Her sister, though called "Baby," is responsible for managing the family fortune and appears less desperate for male attention. Similarly, Rosemary Hoyt makes her own money and chooses her own lovers, in the tradition of men. But Nicole is a product of somewhat different experience, more akin to that of the young women in Fitzgerald's earlier novels. Indoctrinated since birth, she fully believes that she cannot survive without the "help" of men. As a child, she is both emotionally and economically dependent on her father, who perhaps

unwittingly exploits her dependency by initiating--or, at the very least, encouraging--incestuous contact. As a young woman in the throes of mental illness resulting from her father's sexual abuse, and subsequent abandonment, she is emotionally and psychologically dependent on her doctor, who also uses her to meet his own needs. Through subtle and overt means, both men teach her--as her society generally dictates--that her role is to obey their will. She believes, in fact, that her survival ultimately depends on compliance.

It is not surprising, then, that Nicole is astounded by Tommy Barban's belief that she can--and should--assert her independent will. She responds to his initial suggestion that she speak out in an effort to curb Dick's drinking with utter incredulity: "'I!' she exclaimed in amazement. 'I tell Dick what he should or shouldn't do!'" (274) But gradually Tommy's influence helps her grasp what she has sometimes suspected: that she is capable of, and indeed entitled to, a certain amount of self-assertion. Inevitably, her growing willingness to discard her customary passive role in her relationship with her husband results in some outright conflict. On one noteworthy occasion she "[weeps] with anger at [Dick's] abuse" when he attempts to blame his demise on her illness. She rejects his cruel reference to her as "'questionable company,'" asserting forthrightly, "'You're a coward! You've made a failure of your life, and you want to blame it on me'" (301). As Nicole learns to question the things her tradition-

al, chauvinistic husband tries to tell her, her "case" is at last "finished," and "Doctor Diver [is] at liberty"--largely because she outgrows her unhealthy relationship with him (302).

Although Nicole's experience is more complicated--and more deeply disturbing--than that of Fitzgerald's New Women in his earlier novels, she displays similar underlying conflicts. Patriarchal prohibitions and exploitation inhibit her development of an autonomous sense of identity, but her innate intelligence, integrity, and curiosity prompt her to recognize the injustice inherent in the status quo. As she removes herself from the oppressive conditions of her marriage to her doctor, she demonstrates her commitment to the ideals of the New Women of her era who called for greater freedom and respect. In her surprising departure from the convention of subservience, she also paves the way for Kathleen and Cecilia, the New Women of Fitzgerald's final, unfinished novel, The Last Tycoon.

CHAPTER VII

Uncertain Futures: Fitzgerald's Vision of Women in The Last Tycoon

Like all of Fitzgerald's previous novels, The Last Tycoon is somewhat autobiographical and focuses pointedly on the romantic interplay between the sexes. Unlike his earlier novels, however, The Last Tycoon--even in its unfinished state--is clearly the product of maturing vision. The characters, dialogue, and settings are more vivid than any that precede them. The plot is stronger; the theme seems more compelling. In fact, Barry Gross asserts convincingly that, "The Last Tycoon would have been Scott Fitzgerald's best novel," for it "is both dramatic and philosophical/psychological, a sonnet sequence and an epic, a tour de force and a confession of faith" (197). Similarly, Edmund Wilson, in his 1941 foreword to the novel, proclaims that it is both "Fitzgerald's most mature piece of work" and "the best novel we have about Hollywood . . . the only one which takes us inside" (x). Ironically, however, even Fitzgerald's "most mature" vision of women--as reflected in this final, unfinished, novel--casts them in subordinate--and often quite precarious--

roles both within their relationships with men and within American society as a whole.

By the time Fitzgerald set to work on The Last Tycoon, his popularity as a writer had waned dramatically. Debt-ridden and suffering from the combined effects of alcoholism and tuberculosis, he had gone to Hollywood as a screen writer in hopes of renewing his fortune. In the patriarchal tradition, he was extremely concerned about supporting his daughter Scottie, who was attending Vassar, and his wife Zelda, who was confined in a North Carolina mental hospital. His annual royalty checks for his earlier novels were rapidly diminishing. Moreover, in the 1930s his short story market--which had been a good source of ready cash in the 1920s--"simply disappeared," according to Robert Martin, who attributes the magazines' lack of enthusiasm to the Depression as well as to Fitzgerald's "own inability to write stories the magazines wanted" and his "own emotional depression" (147).

Although Fitzgerald went to Hollywood out of financial desperation, he reaped more than just financial rewards from his move. His observations of the Hollywood movie studios and their personnel during his eighteen months under contract as a screenwriter, coupled with his Hollywood love affair with Sheilah Graham, inspired him to begin a new novel, despite his disappointment over the reception Tender Is the Night had received. His ability to apply himself earnestly to the task of writing The Last Tycoon was enhanced by his relative

freedom from domestic worries. With both Scottie and Zelda thousands of miles away, he was able to establish a daily writing regimen that was respected and assisted by both Sheilah and a young secretary, Frances Ring, who did his typing. In their stability and dedication, these two women afforded Fitzgerald a new perspective on female character. His understanding of them--and of his daughter Scottie, largely through correspondence--contributed to his characterization of Kathleen Moore and Cecilia Brady, the two principal women in The Last Tycoon.

In "The Last of the Novelists": F. Scott Fitzgerald and "The Last Tycoon," Matthew Bruccoli identifies numerous parallels between Hollywood tycoon Monroe Stahr's experiences in the novel and Fitzgerald's real life experiences in the 1930s. According to Bruccoli, "Stahr's sense of loss and his attempt to secure a new love" reflect "Fitzgerald's situation" during his years in Hollywood. Stahr's dead wife Minna--and his lingering grief over losing her--are reminiscent of Fitzgerald's mourning over "the hopelessly disturbed Zelda." But the most obviously autobiographical element of the novel is Fitzgerald's depiction of Kathleen Stahr, who critics generally concede is "based on Sheilah Graham." Bruccoli elaborates:

> Just as Stahr is struck by Kathleen's resemblance to his Minna, Sheilah Graham resembled Zelda. At the time Fitzgerald first saw Miss Graham--who, like Kathleen, was wearing a silver belt--she was engaged to the Marquis of Donegall, a circumstance Fitzgerald elevated into Kathleen's liaison with a king. Miss

> Graham's education in Fitzgerald's "college of one" also parallels Kathleen's experience. Finally, Stahr's hesitation about marrying Kathleen is a reflection of Fitzgerald's inability to marry Sheilah Graham. (19)

Because Graham strongly influenced Fitzgerald's portrayal of the primary woman in his last novel, it is important to examine her relationship with him.[1] Fitzgerald met Graham shortly after his arrival in Hollywood in 1937. Although they fell in love and remained intimate until his death in 1940, Graham strongly objected to being labeled as Fitzgerald's "mistress," because she always maintained her own home and was never supported by him. In her biography of Fitzgerald, she even quotes Edmund Wilson as saying, "'You were not his mistress . . . you were his second wife.'"[2] She explains that she "cared for" Fitzgerald "as the man who expanded all [her] capabilities for loving, for anguish, for honesty, for joy, for unselfishness," and she reports that it "depressed [her] to have [their] time together reduced to 'an affair'" (The Real, 14).

Certainly their three-and-a-half year relationship was more comprehensive than the traditional notion of an affair. Bruccoli credits Graham with "[providing] an atmosphere of regularity that made it possible for Fitzgerald to write" as well as serving as "the model for Kathleen" (The Real, 18). Frances Kroll Ring, in her memoir, Against the Current: As I Remember F. Scott Fitzgerald, fondly recalls Graham's comings

and goings in Fitzgerald's household as well as Graham's friendly acquaintance with Fitzgerald's daughter.

More importantly, however, feminist scholar Mary Ellmann, in her book Thinking about Women (1978), closely assesses the intellectual component of Fitzgerald's intimate liaison with Graham. Ellmann points out that Graham, as she accepted the role of "student" in Fitzgerald's special "college of one," fit a feminine stereotype, exhibiting "compliancy" in the face of her lover/patriarch's purportedly superior intellect and education. Ellmann calls this classic pattern of interaction "one of the most amiable of set relationships between men and women" but also points out that "the foundation of the stereotype is premarital or extramarital: the man's 'inner' life is a privilege to share . . but such unilinear pleasures are necessarily brief and irregular" (119).

Like the doctor-patient relationship of Dick and Nicole in Tender Is the Night, Fitzgerald's teacher role with Graham as student reflected the tradition of men occupying a position of authority and superiority over women. Fitzgerald's efforts to teach Graham what he thought a well-educated woman should know are called to mind in The Last Tycoon as Kathleen tells Stahr of her informal education during a long-term romance with an earlier lover. When Stahr casually comments on the scope of Kathleen's knowledge as it is reflected through her conversation, she explains, "'. . . the man I told you about knew everything and he had a passion for educating me. He made out

schedules and made me take courses at the Sorbonne and go to museums. I picked up a little.'" Even though Kathleen understates the extent of her learning, (much as Nicole belittled her considerable intellectual achievement as she addressed Dick Diver), Stahr is impressed, for he has "an intense respect for learning a racial memory of the old schules." Yet Kathleen appears determined to make light of her considerable intellectual achievement as she shifts the dialogue toward a psychological and biological perspective: "'It was just in place of babies'" (91). Interestingly, her remark subtly suggests that she has an internalized notion that procreation is a more natural and suitable undertaking for women than education.

Cecilia Brady, the young narrator of much of The Last Tycoon, appears to hold a similar view. Although she acknowledges that she has "the kicking fetus of a mind" (11) and she's a junior in college, she tends to evaluate herself in terms of her physiology, not her intellect, when she ponders the possibility of exciting men's interest. She notes, for instance, that she has "good features," "skin they seemed to love to touch," and "good legs"; in addition, she takes pride in her figure, for she "[doesn't have] to wear a brassiere" (68). Education appears to be of little import to her except insofar as she expects it to make her "fit to be a brilliant ornament of any salon" (17).

Fitzgerald himself, however, as the father of a daughter in college, opposed the notion that education was optional and unimportant for women in the 1930s. According to Bruccoli, during the time when Fitzgerald was writing The Last Tycoon, he was also "in conflict" with Scottie "over her attitude toward her studies" and consequently "was writing her a series of severe letters" (20). Frances Kroll Ring connects Fitzgerald's concern for his daughter's education with his awareness that women's lives were rapidly changing:

> He was compulsive about Scottie's education and impressed upon her that she would be the first woman in the family to try for a college education. She must be prepared to have an independent life with a rod of knowledge up her back to support it . . . . He was keenly aware of a changing world for women and he wanted his daughter to be ready for that world with education, goals, self-esteem. She must not fritter away her life as so many young women in the twenties had. (82)

Fitzgerald himself wrote to Scottie of the importance of preparing for the world of work:

> Every girl your age in America will have the experience of working for a living. To shut your eyes to that is like living in a dream--to say "I will do valuable and indispensable work" is the part of wisdom and courage." (Turnbull, Letters, 51)

It is interesting to note that Fitzgerald's allusions to women's education in The Last Tycoon, combined with his vehement insistence on its importance to both Sheilah and Scottie, underscore the frustrations of women in his earlier novels (and life experience), who longed for the sense of purpose that intellectual activity and professional achievement could provide but lacked the motivation, encouragement,

and formal education to pursue them. Before Fitzgerald's lifetime, education was considered more or less superfluous for most American women, yet during the course of his career he came to see it as essential. Without education, the women of his era had virtually no choice but to marry--sometimes unwisely--just to assure their livelihood. Education, however, could provide options for the New Woman by strengthening her intellect and self-esteem and, potentially at least, enabling her to enter the professional world and earn her own keep. Zelda lived long enough to know that she would have liked to have had such an option; so did at least two of Fitzgerald's women who were inspired by Zelda--Gloria and Nicole. But the naive young Cecilia of The Last Tycoon, like Fitzgerald's own daughter Scottie, at the time still sees her social life as the focal point of her existence. To be sure, education is something Cecilia values--but chiefly with respect to how much it can enhance her social graces and opportunities.

Like most of the women in Fitzgerald's earlier novels, most of the women in The Last Tycoon are relatively uneducated. But in The Last Tycoon nearly all of the women do aspire toward independence to such a degree that they attempt to provide for themselves financially. In this respect, Kathleen and many minor characters display their sense of living in a new society. Yet a close examination of their

employment reveals that they are really no better off than their forerunners in Fitzgerald's earlier novels.

As Kathleen relates her life story to Stahr, she pinpoints the hardship she suffered for lack of preparation to support herself. The proverbial orphan, she tells Stahr that she was presented at Court by an impoverished stepmother, who died soon after, leaving her to fend for herself at the age of sixteen. Feeling that "she was too weak to go into the streets," she tried first to sell cars and then to get work as a chambermaid. Eventually she met "'The Man,'" who was "a blessing at first," since "from sixteen to twenty-one the thing was to eat." For a while they "travelled the world" together, but, "Then The Man went to seed, drinking and sleeping with the housemaids and trying to force her off on his friends. They all tried to make her stick with him. They said she had saved him and should cleave to him longer now, indefinitely, to the end. It was her duty. They brought enormous pressure to bear. But she had met The American, and so finally she ran away." (112)

From Kathleen's description of her experience, it is clear that she has lacked the wherewithal to provide for herself financially. Her "survival" has long depended on her willingness to abandon her fantasies of earning a living through conventional employment; it has been necessary for her to market herself to men . . . a man . . . "The Man," who turns out to be a king and is therefore suggestive of the patriar-

chal tradition itself. Surprisingly, Kathleen's experience is little different from that of women in Fitzgerald's other novels. Despite her noble contemplation of automony, her economic condition forces her to turn to men for support. She consents to being the King's traveling companion, as the young women in This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned consent to marriage, because their bodies and charm are the only negotiable tender they have. Moreover, like Nicole in Tender Is the Night, Kathleen has found it impossible to terminate an unhealthy relationship with one man until another stepped forward and proclaimed himself her protector.

Other women in The Last Tycoon wind up accepting almost equally subservient postures in their quests for financial security. Kathleen's friend Edna, who is with her at the studio on the night of the earthquake when they first encounter Stahr, supports herself through prostitution; she visits "call-houses," as Kathleen later tells Stahr (88). Some women in the novel hold jobs that require them to perform other functions traditionally linked with the feminine gender. The stewardess on the plane in the opening scene is responsible for keeping her guests comfortable by serving them food and beverages and nursing them if they feel ill. The actresses at the movie studio entertain others--in the social convention--by drawing on such time-honored feminine attributes as beauty, vitality, and charm.

Several women in the novel are employed as secretaries, whose work routinely entails pleasing male bosses. Most significantly, Brady's secretary--somewhat facetiously named Birdy Peters--strives diligently to meet the demands of a man whose conception of a secretary's responsibilities evidently includes the gratification of his sexual desires. This instance of a woman's employment status is especially noteworthy because of its impact on Cecilia Brady, who accidentally discovers the naked secretary in her father's office closet. What might be viewed as a rather comical scene by some readers is apparently deeply disturbing to Cecilia, who flees in silence after demanding that her father "cover" Birdy "up." Cecilia remembers that she has "surprised" her father "before," yet she continues to feel "just black and awful" later in the day. As she muses over her father's behavior with his secretary, she reminds herself, ". . . there was probably not any kind of place, including churches and offices and shrines where people had not embraced--but no one had ever stuffed me naked into a hole in the wall in the middle of a business day" (104). Her stark vision of the incident, and her attendant depression, suggest her dim perception that her father's crude objectification of his secretary may reflect a fundamental lack of respect for all women. She identifies with Birdy, but yearns for a greater degree of respect.

Only one woman in Fitzgerald's last novel actually appears to have achieved independent financial security: Jane

Meloney, a writer who makes "over a hundred thousand a year." Not surprisingly, however, Fitzgerald's brief description of Meloney when she first appears includes a passage that deprives her of any sexual or romantic appeal: "Without being an old maid, she was, like most self-made women, rather old maidish" (36). This description reaffirms Fitzgerald's customary point-of-view that successful career women invariably had to sacrifice their femininity in the quest for what were supposedly "masculine" forms of achievement.[3] Interestingly, however, Meloney's success as a writer derives from "such ordinary assets as the bare fact that she was a woman and adaptable, quick and trustworthy, 'knew the game' and was without egotism" (36). The other major writer in the novel, a man named Wylie White, at one point compares himself to a woman, saying, "'I'm vain as a woman. If anybody pretends to be interested in me, I'll ask for more. I like advice" (16).

Liking advice and craving attention are not necessarily signs of vanity, however. They are at least as likely to be signs of insecurity and low self-esteem. Over and over again the women in Fitzgerald's novels attach themselves to men even as they long for feminine identities that are not contingent upon currying males' approval. Their patriarchal culture defines them in terms of their relationships with men, and they thrive on men's interest at least in part because they have not yet found any alternate means of defining and knowing themselves.

In The Last Tycoon Fitzgerald's intuitive grasp of women's social condition during his lifetime moves into a symbolic realm, for Monroe Stahr is--among other things--an archetypal patriarch. He is not just another man; he is a hero and father-figure to virtually all the people who inhabit the world of his studio. How he regards women can therefore be seen as indicative of how the American patriarch defined the women of his era.

Numerous details in the unfinished novel suggest that Stahr is the "wise old man" of his milieu and that he has always made it his business to look after the citizens of his studio society. Cecilia summarizes his patriarchal role among the Hollywood crowd:

> He spoke and waved back as the people streamed by in the darkness, looking, I suppose, a little like the Emperor and the Old Guard. There is no world so but it has its heroes, and Stahr was the hero. Most of these men had been here a long time--through the beginning and the great upset, when sound came, and the three years of depression, he had seen that no harm came to them. The old loyalties were trembling now, there were clay feet everywhere; but still he was their man, the last of the princes. And their greeting was a sort of low cheer as they went by. (27)

Heroes like Stahr, of course, inspire respect, and even worship, among their followers. They also dispense wisdom, as Stahr does when he identifies which segments of film should be cut: "The oracle had spoken. There was nothing to question or argue" (56). Sometimes individuals, who run into difficulties directly seek the wisdom of patriarchs; Stahr, for example, has a visit from an actor, distressed by impotence,

who tells him, "'. . . I came to you, Monroe. I never saw a situation where you didn't know a way out'" (35). Stahr's aura of wisdom is enhanced by his extreme dedication to his work and by his impending death; although Stahr estimates his age at thirty-five when Kathleen asks, his doctor knows that he is "due to die very soon now" and that he is prone toward "working light hearted with fatigue" (108). Stahr is also "Napoleonic," according to Fitzgerald's notes, and "more of a man's man than a ladies' man" (147). Even his rival Brady likens him to "'a little goddam priest or rabbi,'" thereby demonstrating an awareness of Stahr's virtually transcendant influence over the people around him (103).

Although some of the men in Fitzgerald's earlier novels occupy roles that might imply some degree of patriarchal authority, Monroe Stahr is the most thoroughly developed, mature, and consistent male character to appear. Devereux Warren in Tender Is the Night is approximately Stahr's age and is a father, so he might be construed as a kind of patriarch; but he lacks the wisdom and esteem that are generally associated with the archetype. Similarly, Dick Diver, who is not much younger than Warren and Stahr, occupies a patriarch's role in his capacity as a doctor; far from inspiring confidence and loyalty, however, he habitually alienates people he would like to charm and often becomes enmeshed in situations others find somehow appalling. Gatsby has an aura of mystery about him that is akin to Stahr's charisma, but the

throngs who seek him out are only superficially interested--primarily in the good parties he has to offer--and ultimately prove disloyal. Amory and Anthony are merely egotistical schoolboys in comparison to Monroe Stahr. In effect, then, Stahr is Fitzgerald's first and only male character who exhibits the maturity, wisdom, leadership, strength, and courage generally associated with the archetypal patriarch.[4] As an archetype, he represents a cultural tradition. His responses to the behaviors and attitudes of the New Women Fitzgerald portrays within The Last Tycoon can therefore help to illuminate Fitzgerald's perceptions of the traditional culture's impression of the changing status of women.

According to Fitzgerald's characterization, Stahr is not usually inclined toward "losing his head' over women. Although he clearly misses his wife Minna Davis--who, perhaps significantly, did not share his surname--"He had never lost his head about Minna, even in the beginning--it had been the most appropriate and regal match imaginable." After the marriage was arranged, as a king's would be--on the basis of propriety, his wife "loved him always," in the feminine convention, and his own "tenderness" surfaced dramatically just before her death. Since Stahr "had another sort of adventure reserved for his mind--something better than a series of emotional sprees," he maintained detachment from women "in his younger days" as he "had them once and never more than once--like one drink." It was only in his maturity

that he recognized the "barrenness" of his life without romance and set about learning "tolerance, kindness, forbearance, and even affection like lessons" (96-97).

Stahr's lack of personal interest in most women serves in part perhaps as a metaphor for the American patriarchy's disinclination to pay much attention to women. Just as Stahr's pattern has been to take women for granted, turning to them only occasionally as his need for something they offer arises, so too has the American society at large generally ignored women except in moments of crisis, at least up to the time of Fitzgerald's generation.

But for Stahr the New Woman, as she appears in the form of Kathleen Moore, offers unusual and intriguing possibilities.[5] Her initial attraction for Stahr is her novelty, for "she [does] not belong to the Hollywood world" (133). Kathleen makes Stahr "glad that there [is] beauty in the world that would not be weighed in the scales of the casting department" (66). He immediately associates Kathleen with his dead wife, but when they smile at each other, it is "as if this was the beginning of the world" (73).

While there is nothing at all unusual about a Fitzgerald protagonist falling rapidly in love with a beautiful woman, Kathleen differs from her predecessors in other novels in small but important ways. According to Fitzgerald's notes, Kathleen's almost irresistible appeal stems from the fact that she has "a life" of her own that does "not depend on him or

hope to depend on him" (152). In this respect, she indeed appears to be a New Woman--exercising her own autonomous judgment, providing for herself. Upon closer examination, however, this view of Kathleen is not really supportable. Although she demonstrates her honesty and assertiveness in a variety of ways and does not depend on Stahr for her livelihood, she is not genuinely independent. She tells Stahr of her past long-term liaison with another man, describing it as "one of those awful mistakes people make." Despite her plans to marry the man who rescued her from her "awful mistake," she decides to make love with him "in the fuselage of [his] house," all the while "thinking irrationally that it would be such a bright indefatigable baby" (80,81,87). Like the New Women Fitzgerald presents in earlier novels, Kathleen displays overt sexuality that is received with mixed reactions on the part of the conventional patriarchy that Stahr represents.

Like a noble, wise patriarch, Stahr listens to the news of Kathleen's earlier sexual involvement with sensitivity, "weighing but not judging," as he recognizes pragmatically that, "It would have been a waste if she had not loved and been loved" (80-1). In a more abstract situation, however, the very same representative of the patriarchy lambasts his studio writer for giving the impression in a script that "a future wife and mother" is "one-third whore" (40). Stahr's acceptance of the changing sexual attitudes and behaviors he encounters in his personal life co-exists with his more

conservative view of what constitutes appropriate morality in the movies. His ambivalent feelings about expressions of female sexuality may be representative of the American society's attitude toward the sexual revolution that took place during Fitzgerald's lifetime.[6]

Not surprisingly, Kathleen Moore proves to be more liberated in sexual matters than in economic matters. Unable to support herself through employment, she has resorted to depending on men to provide for her financially. Ironically, Stahr does not appear to be aware that she is less in control of her life than he imagines. Her somewhat aloof manner with him apparently conveys self-sufficiency, for she does not depend on him for anything. Nevertheless, she <u>does</u> have plans to marry another man, the one who rescued her from the decadent king. Her semblance of self-sufficiency may stem more from her commitment to someone else than from a genuinely autonomous lifestyle. It is also interesting to note that Kathleen's movement from one intimate liaison to another parallels the relationship patterns of Daisy in <u>The Great Gatsby</u> and Nicole in <u>Tender Is the Night</u>. All three of these New Women have extreme difficulty in leaving dysfunctional relationships; they dare not contemplate the end of an association with one man, however cruel he may be, without a suitable replacement for him. The women of Fitzgerald's transitional era--at least as they surface in his novels--consistently appear to long for autonomy while experiencing

themselves as powerless without a male protector. This results in a kind of serial monogamy for them as they move readily from one relationship into another, often confounded by their sense that something is missing in their lives and loves. What they really need, without realizing it in most cases, is a strong sense of their own value, irrespective of men's romantic impulses toward them. Fitzgerald may have perceived the economic constraint on women's development of a sense of identity, for he repeatedly created female characters who daydreamed about the independence and respect a job might offer. However, his notes for The Last Tycoon suggest that Kathleen's search for employment would have reflected the absurdity and futility of the grandiose quest for autonomy: she was to have evoked encouragement only from a Swami (146).

Nevertheless, Kathleen does clearly set herself apart from women of previous generations. In addition to her assumption of the right to engage in sexual activity outside of wedlock, she also feels free to speak out against what she perceives as unreasonable demands on her. In one noteworthy scene Kathleen decides to leave a dance where she is uncomfortable; Stahr stops her on the way out the door.

> "Am I responsible for this?" he asked.
> "I was going anyhow." But she added almost resentfully, "They talked as if I'd been dancing with the Prince of Wales. They all stared at me. One of the men wanted to draw my picture, and another one wanted to see me tomorrow."
> "That's just what I want," said Stahr gently, "but I want to see you much more than he does."
> "You insist so," she said wearily. "One reason I left England was that men always wanted their own way. I

> thought it was different here. Isn't it enough that I don't want to see you?" (74-5)

While Kathleen obviously feels that she ought to have some jurisdiction over her social interactions with men, she also seems to have significant difficulty in rejecting their demands. Rather than simply saying "no," she sometimes finds it necessary to withdraw from situations where men put pressure on her. She reports that she "'left England'" in order to separate herself from insistent men; she also attempts to leave the dance primarily to break away from men who have plans for her--plans she does not care to satisfy. Interestingly, she compares Stahr and his coercive, possessive prodding with men of the even more traditional patriarchy, the old order of England. As they leave the dance together and continue the discussion, she labels herself a "'weak woman'" and eventually agrees to see him again the next day.

As a patriarch, Stahr naturally ignites the curiosity, respect, and romantic fantasies of many women. Throughout the unfinished novel young Cecilia Brady is even more intrigued by Stahr's authoritative manner and serene sophistication than is Kathleen. Cecilia's fascination with this traditional male archetype is all the more compelling because she evidently perceives herself to be a New Woman. Early in the novel she turns contemplative following Wylie's implication that people are interested in her only because she's Brady's daughter:

> We don't take abuse like our mothers would have. Nothing--no remark from a contemporary means much. They tell you to be smart, they're marrying you for

> your money, or you tell them. Everything's simpler. Or is it? as we used to say. (68)

While she diligently attempts to set herself apart from her mother's generation--wanting above all to feel that her generation of women is able to command more respect--her final thoughts evoked by this incident suggest her own doubts over whether the status of women had genuinely improved.

Still, she considers herself a liberated young woman, and she finds it possible not only to imagine a premarital affair with a man practically her father's age but also to pursue it actively. Her thoughts about Stahr originate as a schoolgirl's daydreams of romantic conquest: "When I wasn't dozing I was thinking that I wanted to marry Stahr, that I wanted to make him love me" (17). She is awed by him: "I never dared look quite <u>at</u> him, unless I had something important to say" (15). Yet she finds it pleasant to watch him "as unobtrusively as possible," even though her "stomach [dips] a little at the proximity to Stahr" when she spends time at the movie studio (21). In effect, she has a severe crush on him for--without really knowing him--she looks upon him as a masculine ideal.

Cecilia's infatuation in and of itself does not make her a New Woman, but her decision to act upon it does. Absolutely "head over heels in love with" Stahr, she boldly makes her move:

> My heart was on fire, and smoke was in my eyes and everything, but I figured my chance at about fifty-fifty. I would walk right up to him as if I was either going to walk through him or kiss him on the mouth--and stop a bare foot away and say "Hello" with disarming understatement.

> And I did--though of course it wasn't like I expected. . . . I stood there, an hour, I think, without moving, and all he did was twitch the side of his mouth and put his hands in his pocket. (70)

It seems noteworthy that Cecilia's effort to be assertive as a New Woman elicits very little response from the content patriarch. He doesn't even get particularly flustered when she says, a moment later, "'Undertake me.'" Instead, he merely looks up "in surprise" and seems "almost miserable for a minute." Then he casually dismisses her attentions, and she recognizes the moment as "the end" of her "childhood" (71).

Cecilia's startling discovery that seizing prerogatives may not be as rewarding as she anticipates reflects lessons many young women of Fitzgerald's generation must have learned. Imagining emancipation from the society's patriarchal traditions and conventions was one thing; achieving genuine freedom was a different matter altogether. As Cecilia muses, "How different it all was from what you'd planned" (70).

Although The Last Tycoon was still unfinished when Fitzgerald died of a heart attack in 1940, as his final novel it completes the important portrait of American womanhood that he created in his major works between the two world wars. Fitzgerald's close attention to detail and nuance makes his writing important not just as literature but also as social history. Throughout his adult life, there was much talk about the changing status of women. Although he evidently listened closely to that talk, his characterization of contemporary women in his novels suggests that he perceived on some level

that certain aspects of women's liberation were more illusory than real.

To be sure, the women in Fitzgerald's fiction do tend to be more assertive and more sexually active than women in earlier works of American literature. But no one who must rely on others for the fulfillment of basic survival needs is ever really free. Virginia Woolf explains the important difference between symbolic and genuine emancipation in A Room of One's Own (1929). "The news of my legacy reached me," she reflects, "one night about the same time that the act was passed that gave votes to women. . . . Of the two--the vote and the money, the money, I own, seemed infinitely the more important" (37).

The New Women of Fitzgerald's era--and in his fiction--had won suffrage. But that fact doesn't seem to matter much to them--or to him--for he never seems to mention it in his novels. What the women of This Side of Paradise, The Beautiful and Damned, The Great Gatsby, Tender Is the Night, and The Last Tycoon do consistently care about is dignity. They want to be treated with respect and to be allowed to make their own decisions, especially with regard to their bodies. They want to be able to support themselves financially by doing work of their own choosing. They want, above all, to be heard in their earnest quest for autonomy.

It is a tribute to the artistry of F. Scott Fitzgerald that he could so accurately record these New Women's voices--

and that he could listen so well to them in the first place. Although much critical attention has been devoted to Fitzgerald's compelling male characters, his women characters command just as much respect. They are poignant, complex, frustrated, and often damaged. And they seem--even in the later decades of this century--to be all too real.

Notes

Chapter 1

1.) The stranger in Anderson's story envisions the manifestations of "a new quality in women," which will make them "strong and courageous" through their recurrent "struggles and defeats." These New Women, able to "venture anything" will be "something more than man or woman." Anderson's allusion to the possibility of transcending gender calls to mind the aspirations of Fitzgerald's New Women, who attempt to take charge of their own destinies by breaking away from certain patriarchal conventions.

2.) The narrators of A Lost Lady and The Great Gatsby are both looking back on love stories in which they were peripherally involved. Both describe their relative naivete at the start of their narratives, and both recount events that contribute to their subsequent disillusionment. In addition, both narrators have four-letter, monosyllabic names: Niel in A Lost Lady and Nick in The Great Gatsby.

Chapter 2

1.) Fitzgerald referred to This Side of Paradise in these terms in his inscription in the copy he gave to H.L. Mencken. See Bruccoli, Correspondence, p. 55.

2.) These descriptions appear in reviews by Harry Hansen in the Chicago Daily News (March 31,1920), David W. Bailey in the Harvard Crimson (May 1, 1920), and Burton Rascoe in the Chicago Daily Tribune (April 3, 1920). See Bryer's Critical Reception, pages 1, 19, and 3, respectively.

3.) Note in particular the critical articles by Barry Gross and Clinton Burhans listed in Works Cited. The most recent stylistic examination of This Side of Paradise is also the most lengthy: see The Making of This Side of Paradise, by James L.W. West III.

4.) Scott Donaldson, in particular, discusses the influence of women in Fitzgerald's life on his characters. Mary McCay refers to Fitzgerald's men as "romantics" (311) and James West refers to his women as "pragmatists" (67).

5.) For a thorough analysis of This Side of Paradise as a bildungsroman, see the article by Barry Gross.

6.) For an examination of Fitzgerald's association of sex with evil, see the article by Clinton Burhans.

Chapter 3

1.) Barry Gross notes that Gloria is different from Rosalind and Daisy "only in the degree of her self-

knowledge and articulateness." See "The Dark Side of Twenty-Five," p. 47.

2.) Although Scott Donaldson deems Bloeckman "unpleasantly aggressive" (183), Gloria takes his affection very seriously . . . wondering on the eve of her engagement whether is was "wrong to make Bloeckman love [her]" (147).

3.) See Norwood's complete list of traits of "women who love too much," pp. 7-9.

4.) Several of Fitzgerald's biographers and critics have noted that Zelda accused him of using passages of her diaries in his novels. See, for example, Stern, p. 109.

5.) According to Stern, "Anthony caters to his babywife . . ." (141). Stavola calls Gloria "egocentric, careless, and pleasure seeking" (123).

6.) Like many of Fitzgerald's characters--and, indeed, Fitzgerald himself--Gloria harbors a vague sense that Hollywood can always offer financial redemption. For a thorough analysis of Fitzgerald's view of Hollywood, see "Hollywood in Fitzgerald," by Robert A. Martin.

Chapter 4

1.) Joan S. Korenman examines Fitzgerald's contradictory descriptions of Daisy's coloring in terms of her "embodiment of traits associated with the fair and the dark women of romantic literature" in "'Only Her Hairdresser . . .': Another Look at Daisy Buchanan" in American

Literature, 46 (Jan. 1975), 574-78; and Leland S. Person, Jr., considers Daisy "more victim than victimizer" in "'Herstory' and Daisy Buchanan" in American Literature 50 (May 1978), 250-57.

2.) F. Scott Fitzgerald, Babylon Revisited and Other Stories (New York: Scribner's, 1960), p. 4. Subsequent references are to this edition.

3.) In a 1920 letter to Isabelle Amorous, Fitzgerald wrote about Zelda: ". . . I fell in love with her courage, her sincerity and her flaming self-respect. . ." The letter appears in Sheilah Graham's The Real F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1976), p. 58.

4.) For fuller discussions of the romantic aspects of Daisy's character, see both the Korenman and Person articles cited above.

Chapter 5

1.) See Matthew J. Bruccoli's The Composition of Tender Is the Night: A Study of the Manuscripts (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963) for a detailed analysis of Fitzgerald's nine-year process of writing the novel.

2.) The exact changes that Scott imposed on the original manuscript are unknown, since Zelda's papers were destroyed in the fire that killed her in 1948. Scott discussed some of the changes he considered mandatory in his correspondence with his publisher, Maxwell Perkins.

3.) For a complete account of this dialogue between husband and wife, see Matthew J. Bruccoli, Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Scribner's, 1981), pp. 349-52.

4.) Recent essays about Zelda's novel include Meredith Cary's Save Me the Waltz as a Novel," Fitzgerald-Hemingway Annual, 1976, pp. 63-78; Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin's "Art as Woman's Response and Search: Zelda Fitzgerald's Save Me the Waltz," Southern Literary Journal, 11 (Spring, 1979), pp. 22-42; and Linda Wagner's "Save Me the Waltz: An Assessment in Craft," Journal of Narrative Technique 12, No. 3 (Fall, 1982), pp. 201-209.

5.) It is not my primary purpose here to establish similarities between Scott's fictional characters and Zelda, but critics generally recognize Zelda's influence on Scott's characterization of women.

6.) Fitzgerald was inconsistent in establishing Nicole's age at the time of her mother's death. Nicole remembers being thirteen shortly before her mother died; Mr. Warren says his wife died when Nicole was eleven. See p. 55 and p. 126.

Chapter 6

1.) For thorough analyses of the psychological ramifications of incest, see both the Russell book and the Gelinas article listed in Works Cited.

2.) Berman points out that "At the center of the male-female relationship in Tender Is the Night looms the specter of transference, with its ominous implications of the repetition-compulsion principle" (72-3).

3.) In I Never Told Anyone (Florence Rush, editor), Bass traces mental health care professionals' disinclination to believe accounts of incest back to Freud himself. She notes: "When Freud was confronted with frequent accounts of sexual assault by fathers against daughters in his psychiatric practice, he felt he had discovered a major cause of hysteria. But as the enormity of this indictment against fathers became apparent to him . . . he revised his opinion and decided that women had fantasized these rapes" (25). Interestingly, Incest Survivors Anonymous includes among its many statements in its "Open Letter to the Professional Community," "Fantasy is that it did not happen."

4.) Berman notes that Nicole "hardly appears schizophrenic at all" and points out that her "few symptoms . . . suggest hysteria and obsession compulsion" (83).

5.) Chesler declares that therapists who become sexually involved with patients tend to be "quite cruel to protestors or deserters" (Women and Madness, 151). Dick Diver is most cruel to Nicole near the end of the novel, after she begins to assert herself.

6.) It is interesting to note that Fitzgerald reminded himself in writing to draw on material from Zelda's doctors Forel and Bleuler, "'in this case using no factual stuff'" (Bruccoli, Composition, 81).

7.) Russell observes, "Given the many different experiences of sexual assault in the lives of incest victims, it is hardly surprising that they are more fearful." She adds that "the incest experience itself could have stripped away some of the victims' potential ability to protect themselves" (172).

8.) Russell's research indicates that "incest victims might be more sensitive to, and easily upset by, experiences such as sexual advances by authority figures, sexual comments by men on the street," and other manifestations of men's casual sexual objectification of them (165).

9.) According to Gelinas, "The inception of incest occurs gradually and usually in the context of the father's emotional needs, mother's depletion and daughter's parentification" (321).

10.) Russell elaborates on this point: "One common consequence of the manipulation of a child's trust and vulnerability is an impaired ability to correctly judge the trustworthiness of others. This impaired capacity, in turn, may make victims more vulnerable to subsequent abuse, both sexual and nonsexual" (168).

11.) Pope and Bouhoutsos recognize the danger inherent in a therapist's belief that he is responsible for his patient's cure. They note, "Perhaps the most difficult trap to avoid is the feeling that one is indispensable, that only through personal intervention can one provide a patient with the feeling that he or she is lovable, desirable, and worthwhile" (45). Needless to say, such an approach to therapy gives the psychiatrist an exaggerated notion of his importance and makes it easier for him to rationalize unprofessional conduct.

12.) Clemens suggests that Zelda, too, may have been misdiagnosed.

13.) Gelinas explains that, "the presence of depressive complications with impulsive and dissociative elements can lead to multiple and erroneous diagnoses; the most common misdiagnoses are borderline personality disorder, latent schizophrenia, and bipolar affective disorder" (327).

14.) For more information about the potential psychological repercussions of giving birth, see Marilyn Yalom's book, Maternity, Mortality, and the Literature of Madness. In addition, Gelinas discusses the role of "developmental triggers" like giving birth in her essay, "The Persisting Negative Effects of Incest."

15.) According to Gelinas, an "undisclosed incest victim" may manifest a characterological depression with

complications and with atypical impulsive and dissociative elements" that are brought on by the activation of subconscious memory processes (326).

16.) According to Pope and Bouhoutsos, "therapists commit a serious error with damaging consequences where they respond to clients' sexual attraction as if it had occurred in a different context. These . . . scenarios are among the most confusing for both therapist and [patient, and are among the most damaging" (10-11).

17.) Chesler also notes the tendency among exploitive therapist to be "involved in creating a primal patriarchal family-empire," with themselves at its center (Women and Madness, 150).

18.) For an examination of Fitzgerald's use of religious imagery, see Joan Allen's Candles and Carnival Lights: The Catholic Sensibility of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

19.) Gelinas notes that "incest victims tend to be extremely unassertive and passive, to the point of paralysis" (322).

20.) Pope and Bouhoutsos explain that sexual intimacy between patient and therapist may have any or all of the following consequences for the patient: quilt, ambivalence, feelings of isolation, feelings of emptiness, cognitive dysfunction, inability to trust, identity and boundary disturbances, sexual confusion, lability of mood, suppressed rage, and increased suicidal risk (64).

Chapter 7

1.) In a letter to Maxwell Perkins in May, 1939, Fitzgerald alluded to Graham's influence on The Last Tycoon by asserting that "the novel was about some things that . . . happened to [him] in the last two years" (Bruccoli, As Ever, 285).

2.) Sheilah Graham, The Real F. Scott Fitzgerald, 16.

3.) Kate Millett observes that in American society following World War I women's budding "economic independence was consciously as well as unconsciously perceived to be a direct threat to male authority" (87). It seems likely that Fitzgerald's own insecurity about providing for Zelda and Scottie may have influenced his treatment of female financial success in his novels.

4.) Barry Gross describes Stahr as "the complete man: romantic, moralist, visionary, humanist, pragmatist, individualist, technician, artist" ("Scott Fitzgerald's The Last Tycoon," 209).

5.) Kathleen Moore's prototype, Sheilah Graham, has been described as "a female Gatsby, an outsider who had risen to a position of prominence." See Donaldson's Fool for Love, 204.

6.) Fitzgerald's notes for the novel suggest that the society's discomfort with the women's movement may have been made more explicit if Fitzgerald had been able

to complete the novel. In a passage marked "[Kathleen and her husband?]," Fitzgerald describes a man's anxiety over a woman's independent thought processes: "He was afraid of her when she thought, knowing that in the part of her most removed from him, there was taking peace a tireless ratiocination, the synthesis of which has always a calm sense of the injustice and unsatisfactions of life" (151).

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