THE FUNCTION OF THE WOMEN CHARACTERS IN THE NOVELS OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

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THE FUNCTION OF THE WOMEN CHARACTERS IN THE NOVELS OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

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PREFACE

F. Scott Fitzgerald is often considered a first-rate writer who had never produced anything but second-rate books. The reasons usually given for this shortcoming purport that Fitzgerald's and his wife's extravagant living handicapped his attempt to become a dedicated artist. His last, unfinished, novel, written during his quieter final months, promised a great deal.

In writing of the Twenties, Fitzgerald appeared to be more accurate in his characterization of women than men, which might account for the weaknesses seen in his male protagonists. The purpose of this study is to present the relationships in each novel between the hero and the women characters that significantly motivate him.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to Drs. Clinton C. Keeler and Samuel H. Woods, Jr.; their guidance was my most valuable aid in preparing this study. I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Oklahoma State University library staff, who obtained for me books and articles necessary for my research. Also, to my wife Helen, who first encouraged me to study English, goes my repeated gratitude.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After F. Scott Fitzgerald's initial achievement of literary success with This Side of Paradise, he broke into tears, he recalled, while riding in a New York taxi, because he had everything he wanted and knew he would never be so happy again.[1] He had married Zelda Sayre and was a recognized author. What appeared to be sentimentality in the taxi, however, became the actual emotional conflict within each of his future heroes, the pain resulting from the realization of the loss of youthful splendor. In fact Fitzgerald was perspicacious enough to see that his own youthful happiness, as he experienced it, could only lessen.

But Fitzgerald wanted to be a great writer, and to be a great writer, he knew he had to write from only his own experiences. He developed a style similar to the Victorian novelists and created pseudo-intellectual Jamesian characters who possessed stronger traits of romanticism. Being oriented more toward the last century than most of his contemporaries, Fitzgerald expressed more clearly the conflict between romantic idealism and twentieth century industrialism. Like Jay Gatsby, he did not fully belong

to either. One year after the publication of This Side of Paradise, Dexter Green, in "Winter Dreams," laments the loss of his own youthful ideal when he hears of the degradation of his former sweetheart:

> Long ago . . . there was something in me, but now that thing is gone. Now that thing is gone, that thing is gone. I cannot cry. I cannot care. That thing will come back no more.[2]

Fitzgerald wanted to care always, to have always enough of the ideal of youth in him to be able to care. It was not until "The Crack Up," in 1936, that Fitzgerald publicly announced his break with the past and illustrated what Morse Peckham calls "negative romanticism."[3]

Living in the industrialized twentieth century with a mind strongly influenced by the writings of the middle and late nineteenth century established a dualism in Fitzgerald's works which has been noted, and similarly labeled, by most critics. Arthur Mizener's "enthusiastic, romantic young man . . . /and/ a spoiled priest"[4] is the best known classification. These two strains provide the context for the conflict in Fitzgerald's fiction. The idea of lost splendor and existing decadence is suggested by the very titles of his novels, especially This Side of Paradise, The Beautiful and Damned, and The Last Tycoon; and it supplies the subject matter for all of Fitzgerald's novels. It was the subject of his novels though that caused many early critics to dismiss him as a dated writer, a spokesman for the jazz age. And in 1925 H. L. Mencken called Fitzgerald a good historian and The Great

Gatsby an amusing anecdote.[5]

With the publication of The Crack Up in 1945, critics saw a new facet of Fitzgerald. His notes, letters, and bits of commentary showed that he was a serious writer concerned with much more than potboilers and The Saturday Evening Post. The most frequent criticism of a Fitzgerald novel became lack of clear objectification. With the exception of Gatsby, his heroes were considered pathetic, like Dick Diver, or not sufficiently motivated, like Amory Blaine and Anthony Patch. However, Lionel Trilling was the first major commentator who pointed out the importance Fitzgerald placed on human relationships:

> The root of Fitzgerald's heroism is to be found, as it sometimes is in tragic heroes, in his power to love. Fitzgerald wrote much about love; he was preoccupied with it as between men and women.[6]

Trilling noted how innocent of sex was Fitzgerald's writings and how his heroes desire a love frequently beyond possibility.[7]

Since the Fitzgerald revival of the 1950's more critics have examined more closely the individual characters in Fitzgerald's works. If Fitzgerald is primarily concerned with the moral and ethical relationships between men and women in America, a study of the interaction of his characters will elucidate his feelings more accurately and present the true dimensions of his characters. Recently, Charles Shain observed,

> In Fitzgerald's fiction the villain has animal magnetism and masculinity but in the end he is stupid about women

and treats them like whores. The Fitzgerald hero has softer qualities.[8]

One of the latest comments on this aspect of Fitzgerald's fiction is in Sergio Perosa's The Art of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Perosa concludes that "The love motive is always at the center of these stories /the novels/, no longer as a pretext but as a catalytic agent in reality."[9] If so, more thorough examination should be made of the women characters.

Arthur Mizener and Malcom Cowley did present more perceptive analyses of Fitzgerald's women. To begin with, Cowley refuted the idea that Fitzgerald was obsessed with money:

> Note that the Fitzgerald hero is not attracted by the fortune in itself. He is not seeking money so much as position at the peak of the social hierarchy and the girl becomes the symbol of that position, the embodiment of its mysterious power.[10]

Mizener refined the girl of power in terms of Fitzgerald's romanticism. What he said about Fitzgerald in 1961 can be applied to each of his heroes: "He never loved merely the particular woman; what he loved was her embodiment for him of the splendid possibilities of life he could, in his romantic hopefulness, imagine."[11]

That imagined life existed only in Fitzgerald's, and his heroes', youth. One girl is, or represents, this idealism; she is what Fitzgerald once called "the top girl."[12] A dominant trait of each hero is his attachment to this past ideal of youthful love. But with the change

that time brings the ideal fades; consequently, the idealists become more sensuous. On the other hand, the other women who significantly affect the heroes are only sensuous; often they are sensualists, and their influence is always harmful. From Amory Blaine's revulsion after his first innocent kiss with Myra St. Claire in This Side of Paradise to Rosemary Hoyt's sensual desire for Dick Diver in Tender is the Night, women's sensuousness entraps and leads, directly or indirectly, to the hero's fall. Even in Fitzgerald's unfinished The Last Tycoon, Monroe Stahr is only attracted to Kathleen Moore because he perceives her as his lost ideal, his dead wife. He does this because her voluptuousness, her physical resemblance to his dead wife, makes him abandon the past ideal.

The sensuous woman typlifies the emotional health in the hero's environment; she marks the depth his emotional involvement can reach in his world. The idealist represents the lost perfection in the hero's past to which he tries to return, or re-create. He never accepts the world about him; it is impossible to go back in time, but there is always the need to try to return. Thus he acts against his own reason; in so doing he reaches his inevitable collapse. Tragic is a word that critics have been reluctant to use with Fitzgerald's works. The fault lies in Fitzgerald's technique, his inability to confront the hero's idealism with the sensual evils in the world, both best objectified by women. When he did clearly establish

this conflict, he produced a masterpiece, The Great Gatsby.

In 1944 Charles Weir, Jr. called Fitzgerald's protagonists tragic, basing his conclusion on "the futility of effort and the necessity to struggle" seen in his heroes.[13] If Fitzgerald's heroes are tragic figures, their admirable qualities, in the Aristotelian sense, might be most apparent in their relationship with women. For the Fitzgerald hero's desire to love, his belief in love more than anything else, makes him, I think, superior to the characters about him. He outgrows his egocentricity, and he does not fall victim to social evils outside of himself. Amory Blaine criticizes marriages ruled by materialism; Anthony Patch, though a physical degenerate, still seeks a return to happiness with Gloria; Gatsby spends his money attempting to regain Daisy and the American dream; Dick Diver places more importance on his love for Nicole than on his own career; and Monroe Stahr's love for Kathleen rekindles his aesthetic ideals amid an industry in which individual talent is subordinated to mass production. These attributes result from, or are illustrated by, the hero's interaction with the women characters.

As previously noted, one cannot ignore the autobiographical aspect of Fitzgerald's writings. His wife, the former Zelda Sayre, appears in all his novels and most of his short stories. Charles Shain,[14] Arthur Mizener,[15] and Andrew Turnbull[16] have all noted the presence of real

women in Fitzgerald's fiction.[17]

To the hero the ideal girl is always the imagined, the girl that he was in love with at the time in his youth when he was most optimistic, when life promised the most, as was the case with Fitzgerald when he married Zelda. The idealist is usually referred to as the dream woman and is like Poe's dream women, as Maxwell Geismar says,[18] but she becomes a dream only after time has separated her from the past; the static idealism thus exists at one point in time, in the hero's youth. The hero's ability to maintain his ideal of perfection weakens as he ages, and he becomes more susceptible to the sensual world. For Fitzgerald's heroes do not fall; they degenerate or dissolve; each successive novel depicts a protagonist who is more vulnerable to the evils in his environment, as seen in his interaction with the sensuous woman.

Leslie Fiedler said that "Fitzgerald apparently never managed to accommodate to . . . the . . . great switch-over in roles, though he recorded that revolution in the body of his work,"[19] which may be applied as a valid conclusion to the change in the relationship between men and women through Fitzgerald's novels. The flapper could enthrall her suitor in Tis Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned, but the hero regains control of himself and asserts his will in the end. The later heroes are destroyed, or emasculated, in a world which no longer has as ideal girl, the flapper of the earlier novels; the women who are in-

volved in Gatsby's, Dick Diver's, and Monroe Stahr's ruin are idealists turned sensuous and exhibit aspects of a growing materialism. Only Kathleen in The Last Tycoon lies between idealism and sensuality, a new kind of woman in Fitzgerald's truncated second period.

Because Fitzgerald did not consciously characterize his women to fit ideal and sensuous molds, not all his female characters conform to systematic classification. Often one woman even functions as both. Kathleen, for example, in The Last Tycoon is a sensuous woman who stands for an ideal girl, Monroe Stahr's dead wife. Isabelle and Eleanor in This Side of Paradise both occupy positions midway between idealism and sensuality. Also, Jordan Baker in The Great Gatsby and Baby Warren in Tender is the Night are another kind of Fitzgerald woman, sexless domineering mercenaries who exist independently; the hero is not attracted or repelled by these kind of women. Thus, because they do not generate significant motivating forces in the hero, their importance in Fitzgerald's novels is minor.

The conflict that women present to the Fitzgerald hero can best be seen in one incident in "The Rich Boy," published shortly after The Great Gatsby. Anson Hunter, about to seduce Dolly Karger, "a pretty little thing," notices on the wall the picture of Paula Legendre, his lost dream girl; his desire for Dolly ceases; both "knew what would happen...with Paula's face to remind them that

something was lacking."[20] Without communicating, both characters understand the emptiness of sensuous experience, because of its inability to replace the fading ideal. Anson is able to keep his dream in mind though, and it maintains him in a hypocritical kind of benelovence to young married couples, but Dolly does not have this support:

> For a long time afterward Anson believed that a protective God sometimes interfered in human affairs. But Dolly Karger, lying awake and staring at the ceiling, never again believed in anything at all.[21]

The worst thing that can happen to a Fitzgerald character is staring at the ceiling, i.e., not being able to perceive something beyond the world of reality. The heroes demand more from their respective heroines than physical attributes and intelligence. Gatsby, Dick Diver, and Monroe Stahr all cannot accept the heroine because she is limited to these qualities.

Andrew Turnbull says that mere carnality had little appeal to Fitzgerald, who once said that Florence Nightengale was the greatest woman of all time because she conquered passion.[22] Fitzgerald's heroes are also surprised by the deceitfulness of women. The heroes, like their creator, seek protection in women; but, as Leslie Fiedler has observed, the women were becoming more masculine and independent. Each succeeding hero is closer to ruin as his idealism recedes into the past, becoming obscure; and it is, significantly, night imagery that

Fitzgerald employs more often as an escape, a consolation, which is preferable to reality. In "The Crack Up" he wrote,

> In a real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning day after day. At that hour the tendency is to refuse to face things as long as possible by retiring into an infantile dream but one is continually startled out of this by various contacts with the world.[23]

Dick Diver tells a woman artist who is a patient in his hospital that darkness is preferable to "the frontiers of consciousness."[24] Darkness is preferable to the loss of communion with the ideal girl, to awareness. As the novels become richer and subtler, the heroes grow progressively more alone, because they are more aware of their own fate - Fitzgerald's synonym for a state near to death.

Thus Amory Blaine's loss is small because he does not age enough; at the end of <u>This Side of Paradise</u> he has yet to become aware of his fate in the world. He loses Rosalind because he is not wealthy, but he does not think of her as a lost ideal. His reaction involves little more than social criticism. His major importance as a Fitzgerald hero lies in the fact that he is the young man out of which all the future heroes grow. The stages in Amory's development are love affairs, and the women he loves are, basically, the same kind of women characters that appear in Fitzgerald's later novels. At the end of <u>This Side of Paradise</u>, Amory is what the women characters have made him; before meeting them he has no depth;

Fitzgerald tells us he is a personality to be shaped at the beginning of the book:

> The only traits Amory had that made him worth while were those he did not inherit from his mother. From Stephen Blaine Amory got his height and his tendency to waver at crucial moments.[25]

Fitzgerald's heroes and heroines function with a set of values completely different and morally superior to their parents'. Amory's and Gloria Gilbert's parents are foolish. Mrs. Connage and Rosemary Hoyt's mother manipulate their daughters into situations, marriage and business, with only material gain in mind. Devereux Warren seduces his own daughter. Also, parents usually die outside the action of the novels, and Fitzgerald usually refers to their deaths ironically. Likewise, children generally present only problems to Fitzgerald's men and women. Gloria fears childbirth, and Daisy Buchanan is disappointed by it. Dick Diver's children become another point of antagonism between Dick and Nicole. Always parents and children are more of an encumbrance than an aid to each other.

In The Beautiful and Damned, Anthony Patch, for a short time, experiences the idealism the later heroes can only look back on. Gloria is the ideal girl, what Maxwell Geismar called "a typical Fitzgerald heroine - impatience with men, vanity almost masculine, body incapable of passion or physical contact, cool perfection of her brow."[26] In contrast is Dot, whose final appearance

shatters Anthony's hope of regaining his idealism, that moment in his past with Gloria when "he wanted fiercely to paint her, to set her down now, as she was, as with each relentless second she could never be again."[27] Anthony tries to regain the past by a journey; he and Gloria look forward to being rich heirs and traveling to Italy. Fitzgerald's use of spatial movement offsets the short time that separates them from their early bliss. It is Dot's world, the sensual world, that Anthony fears from the beginning; finally, unable to struggle against it, he reverts to childhood and, as a schizophrenic, ironically gloats over his sudden wealth. Fitzgerald focused this conflict better in his next novel.

The Great Gatsby was Fitzgerald's finest achievement. Although he attempted less than in Tender is the Night, the final result was a more unified and better constructed novel. Daisy Buchanan is the best example of the idealist turned sensuous. Gatsby's dream is based on the Daisy in his past. His ability to maintain the vision of the ideal Daisy gains Nick's respect. Nick's judgment is, therefore, most significant in the novel because only he moves within, and is detached from, both the ideal and sensuous worlds. Gatsby and Daisy exist in the former, and Tom Buchanan, Myrtle Wilson, and, again, Daisy occupy the latter. It is Daisy's mere sensuality with Tom that destroys Gatsby's idealism. Tom and Myrtle represent the animality in the world that has destroyed Daisy

as an ideal and made her only a sensuous woman; Tom and Myrtle's sensual relationship also physically destroys Gatsby. To Gatsby, Daisy is the means by which his heart will be able to romp again like a god. He does not interact with other women, for he refuses to be aware of the present. It is more than a coincidence that Fitzgerald's masterpiece also exhibits the clearest conflict, focused on the hero, between the ideal woman and the sensuous world. Fitzgerald was able to gain this lucidity with the use of a first-person point of view, the lack of which perhaps kept Tender is the Night from being a greater novel.

Dick Diver is Fitzgerald's most tragic hero because he willingly puts the need to love, and thus cure, Nicole higher than his own emotional security and want of professional recognition. He is more complex than Gatsby and is able to preconceive, sentimentally, an ideal Nicole, partly which he abstracts from her letters to him before he has known her well. His ideal woman never existed; she is a construct, part of Nicole and part of Dick's youthful romanticism. He tries to make Nicole into this ideal and in so doing emotionally destroys himself. Fitzgerald may have so constructed the novel, beginning with Rosemary's point of view, because he wanted to present the early idealism of Dick after he suggested in the first part of the book that there was trouble between Dick and Nicole; seeing the two in this order would illustrate better

Dick's mistaken ideal. Nicole, like Daisy, moves toward sensuality, finally marrying someone physically like Tom Buchanan, Tommy Barban. To her, her past was destructive; to Dick her present awareness of his emotional inadequacy is destructive; she has, unknowingly, consumed his emotions through transference. Rosemary, Fitzgerald said, he employed only as a "catalyst."[28] She measures Dick's sensuous contact with the world. His inability to gain her love exposes his emotional weakness. She is the opposite of Nicole, a superficial, a movie star, and emotionally normal. Emotionally bankrupt, Dick's only recourse is to seek solace in nothingness. His end is a fading into obscurity.

The Last Tycoon marks a break from Fitzgerald's previous novels. Even his style is different in his last work, swift and curt with less subordination; he is more interested in action than before. Monroe Stahr is his strongest hero, who faces the decadence around him and refuses to give in to it. He dismisses Cecilia's love for him as childish infatuation; whereas Dick Diver wanted to believe Rosemary when she first says she loves him. Kathleen is also a new kind of heroine, for she is a sensual woman who becomes a representation of Stahr's ideal, his dead wife. Kathleen comes to him, appropriately, out of the night, on the head of Siva, a goddess of regeneration. She is willing to accept the world about her, to compromise; Stahr is not, and, thus, he cannot totally

accept her. His death was to have resulted, according to one of Fitzgerald's early plans, from Brady, his partner and Cecilia's father, finding out about his secret love affair with Kathleen, who has since married a studio technician. This complication is very similar to Tom Buchanan's destruction of Gatsby. But Stahr's actions, which bring about his early death, stem from his rejuvenation by Kathleen. She strengthens his idealism; and although he knows he only has a few months to live, he tries harder to produce quality motion pictures and to keep the studio from becoming a motion-picture automat. Fitzgerald's last work promised much. If he could have corrected the awkwardness in the point of view, he might have completed a major American novel.

At first reviewers thought Fitzgerald was engrossed with the rich and wanted to identify with them. But the morality seen in his works seems to imply a transcendence of the physical world. His heroes' actions are based on intuitive integrity, the one, and the ideal relationship they search for with the ideal woman is more important than money. The Fitzgerald hero gives part of himself, not money, in trying to reach his goal; and in this respect he morally surpasses the society in which he lives.

NOTES

[1]Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise (Boston, 1949), p. 118.

[2]Babylon Revisited and Other Stories (New York, 1960), p. 135.

[3]"Toward a Theory of Romanticism," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXVI, pt. 1 (March, 1951), p. 20.

[4]The Far Side of Paradise, p. 60.

[5]"The Great Gatsby," F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work, ed. Alfred Kazin (New York, 1951), p. 88.

[6]"F. Scott Fitzgerald," F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work, p. 195.

[7]Ibid., p. 197.

[8]F. Scott Fitzgerald (Minneapolis, 1961), p. 19.

[9]Ann Arbor, 1965, p. 189.

[10]"Fitzgerald: The Romance of Money," The Western Review, XVII (Summer, 1953), p. 251.

[11]"Scott Fitzgerald and the Top Girl," The Atlantic, CCVII, No. 3 (March, 1961), p. 55.

[12]The Crack Up, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York, 1945), p. 211. "I didn't have the two top things - great animal magnetism or money. I had the two second things, tho', good looks and intelligence. So I always got the top girl."

[13]"An Invite with Gilded Edges," F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work, p. 143.

[14]P. 8.

[15]The Far Side of Paradise, p. 122.

[16]Scott Fitzgerald (New York, 1962), p. 340.

[17]Although the almost impossible task of correlating real people with fictional characters is not my aim in this study, I found that assuming Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda Sayre's relationship provided a basis for the conflict between hero and heroine was helpful in understanding Fitzgerald's fiction.

[18]*The Last of the Provincials* (Boston, 1947), pp. 335-336.

[19]*Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York, 1960), p. 301.

[20]*Babylon Revisited and Other Stories*, p. 167.

[21]Ibid., p. 171.

[22]*Scott Fitzgerald*, p. 261.

[23]*The Crack Up*, p. 75.

[24]*Tender is the Night* (New York, 1951), p. 201.

[25]New York, 1920, p. 3.

[26]P. 300.

[27]New York, 1922, p. 72.

[28]*The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. Andrew Turnbull (New York, 1963), p. 532.

CHAPTER II

THIS SIDE OF PARADISE

When Fitzgerald began This Side of Paradise, he told Shane Leslie that it was to be a "potpourri," containing mostly autobiographical material.[1] Though the book was a financial success for a first novel, it accomplished little because it attempted little, especially when compared to The Great Gatsby or Tender is the Night. The major weakness of Fitzgerald's first novel that an early reviewer noted was a disunity in the book, the idea that Amory Blaine is "subject to change without notice."[2] A recent study, however, labeled this trait "indecision," calling it Amory's flaw.[3] The latter view, I think, is truer; for we are told that Amory inherited from his father "his tendency to waver at crucial moments."[4] He is acted upon more than acting. He is a character who easily becomes a composite of the various personalities he encounters.

This interpretation of Amory has been refined further by Kenneth Eble and Sergio Perosa. Eble sees Amory moving

> through a hall of mirrors which display the facets of his developing personality . . . . At the end of the novel, we are impressed not so much with what we can say of his personality but with the way we have felt the experiences he has gone through.[5]

Women were the experiences he has gone through, and Perosa sees Amory's growth toward the awareness of evil as an "education in stages with each woman in the book."[6] But Perosa's analysis seems too rigid and does not apprehend a unity in the novel. His emphasis on Amory's youthful egotism for instance appeared to result from placing undue importance on the subheadings in the novel, which Fitzgerald intended only as "whimsical commentaries."[7]

The novel deals almost exclusively with Amory's interaction with ideal women. But if Amory is to reach self-awareness, the Fitzgerald state next to ruin, his breakdown must be objectified in terms of both idealism and sensuousness, i.e. the conflict between static perfection and change. Fitzgerald's failure to create a stronger sensual woman character to offset the idealists minimizes Amory's sacrifice to save a friend from scandal in an Atlantic City hotel room. He is not sufficiently disgraced. Afterwards, Amory can only stand under a theatre marquee and see a sordidness in the people on the street, a "shame that women gave off at having men see them tired and poor." (p. 256) But Amory had not experienced the shame; so we can only take Fitzgerald's word for his feelings. The important scene in which Amory first recognizes the devilish figure, for instance, lacks force for this same reason. In 1920, Heywood Brown failed to see any meaning in Amory's reaction: "The youth immediately rushed away in a frenzy of terror and suffered from

hallucinations for forty-eight hours. The explanation was hidden from us."[8] Amory sees the figure while in a chorus girl's apartment, at the moment when she laid her head on his shoulder. If Amory's perception of evil was related to promiscuity, as I think it was, an artifical objectification of Amory's inner conflict was Fitzgerald's fault.

Amory begins as an abstraction; Fitzgerald emphasizes his dissimilarity from his parents, and Monsignor Darcy tells Amory, "I went into a state of coma and begat you." (p. 158) Amory's emotion becomes discernible only when Fitzgerald confronts him with girls. Much of what Amory says with respect to girls could have been stated by Fitzgerald's later heroes in their youth. Going to the bobbing party, Amory does not want to ride at the end of the wagon because "there is usually a crosseyed girl there." (p. 13) "I don't like girls in the daytime" (p. 13) anticipates the later light imagery in the other novels. Amory experiences disgust with his first kiss: he "wanted to creep out of his body and hide somewhere safe out of sight, up in the corner of his mind." (p. 14) The sharp reaction from his first sensuous kiss makes him aware of "a new animal of whose presence on the earth he had not theretofore been aware," (p. 15) and it is this animal that Amory will not be able to reconcile with his dreams "of secret cafes in Mont Martre, where <u>ivory</u> women delved in romantic mysteries with diplomats and soldiers of fortune." (p. 32, my italics)

Amory's growth, which is a movement toward an awareness of the sensuality in the world, conflicts with his early pre-established ideals: "It was always the becoming he dreamed of, never the being." (p. 17) When Amory loses his chance to marry Rosalind, he can only turn on his environment and criticize it. His awareness is gained only with retrospection. Likewise, he earlier reclined on the Princeton grass, and "The college bathed his eyes and slowed the flight of time"; (p. 54) but he springs to his feet and announces to a sundial, "I am very damn wet." (p. 55) Later he says time changes evil, but for Amory time can only bring the realization that evil exists. At the moment he breaks with Rosalind, he looks at his watch to remember the time. He records, therefore, the end of his idealism.

Without the presence of the sensuous woman, Amory remains intact emotionally and suffers little. Her absence has led many commentators to assume that the dream girl, often the flapper, is the "unattainable female whose chief role in life is to cause pain to the stricken male."[9] Such a simplification, although true at one time about some girls, does not furnish the major reason for the fall of Fitzgerald's heroes. It is precisely this point that I will try to demonstrate in each novel.

Isabelle is the first idealist that Amory falls in love with. She was "capable of very strong, if very transient emotions" (p. 62) and had a mixture "of the social

and the artistic temperaments found often in two classes, society women and actresses." (p. 63) Isabelle thus has both emotional and idealistic appeal. She has all the qualities that Amory dreams of, an "intense physical magnetism" (p. 63) and in her eyes "the light of the idealist." (p. 70) At this first stage of Amory's experience with the ideal woman, he expects her to physically exhibit her idealism; thus when Isabelle becomes cold, and lacks sensuousness, Amory realizes that he had no real affection for her. But it is too early for Amory to lose more than his vanity. Monsignor Darcy tells Amory at this timely point in the novel what his real problem will be:

> You say that convention is all that really keeps you straight in this woman proposition; but its more than that, Amory, its the fear that what you begin you can't stop . . . . its the half-realized fear of God in your heart. (p. 106)

Amory then begins to equate evil with degenerate women. When he thinks he sees the devil in Axia's apartment, it appeared to him that the "virile pallor" (p. 113) on the figure's face "was like weakness in a good woman, or blood on satin." (p. 113) Blood and satin symbolize the two conflicting forces in Amory, sensual and ideal; Amory rushes into the night with a feeling of guilt. The following day the scent of powders and tonics remind him of Axia's "sidelong, suggestive smile." (p. 117) He is now aware of the evil associated with a sensual woman.

Fitzgerald counterpoints Amory's move toward awareness with the death of his father, ironically, at Thanks-

giving. Clara Page, the next woman he loves is, appropriately, a widow, with fatherless children.

Clara is the ideal wife; no other Fitzgerald heroine has her beauty and motherly warmth; sha has lost none of her beauty in her act of producing offspring, and Amory meets her at the suggestion of Darcy. Fitzgerald emphasizes her spiritual purity: "Her goodness was above the prosy morals of the husband-seeker, apart from the dull literature of female virtue." (p. 138) In light of her sensuously unaffected idealism Amory recognizes his own inferiority. When he thinks to ask Clara to marry him, "This design /marriage/ flowed through his brain even to his lips, still he knew afterward that the desire had not been deeply rooted." (p. 141, my italics) Clara tells Amory why he cannot overcome his senses: "You're a slave, a bound helpless slave to one thing in the world, you're imagination," (p. 143) which she says is ruled by his emotions. Clara is ethereal beauty to Amory, as Perosa says,[10] but her healthy emotions and keen insight combine with her beauty to give her a virtue unmatched by Fitzgerald's other heroines. Amory says that if he lost faith in her he would lose faith in God, a statement Clara says other men have made to her.

Fitzgerald also employs light imagery to place Clara beyond the reach of his hero: "She seemed suddenly a daughter of light alone." (p. 145) Amory is placed in a separate realm, more conscious of his own sensuous egotism:

"His entity dropped out of her plane and he longed only to touch her dress with almost the realization that Joseph must have had of Mary's eternal significance." (p. 145) The first two idealists that Amory meets and loves, one whose emotions were artificial and one whose emotions were almost spiritual, have left Amory more able to judge women. He now encounters his true, attainable, ideal.

Rosalind and Amory's love is truer because they are alike. Only forces outside their relationship separate them. Their automatically falling in love with a wave of emotion cancelled all the "critical qualities" (p. 186) of previous romances. Rosalind offers Amory the promise of romantic fulfillment, a girl satisfying his need for artistic communication, or what Kenneth Eble calls Amory's alter ego.[11] With Rosalind, Amory experiences his own idealism; and when he loses her he loses his desire to be an artist. But he does not morally rise above his society because he does not struggle to regain the lost ideal. Time has not magnified his need for her. But her loss does give him knowledge and insight into the decadence in his society.

If Rosalind is a reflection of his own idealism, it is appropriate that she be introduced in dramatic form, in the novel, more like an abstraction. She says to Amory, "We're you - not me. Oh, you're so much a part of, so much all of me." (p. 188) But as their affair progresses through time, Rosalind's mother wants her to marry someone

who is rich. Rosalind does not have Amory's hope, and she foresees financial strife in their marriage. Amory cannot make the same association with her. She tells him she wants to keep their love "as a beautiful memory." (p. 194) When they separate, Amory notes the time from his watch when he lost his ideal woman; later he says while drunk, "Los idealism, got be physcal anmal." (p. 199) The memory of Rosalind has the same value to Amory as the lost idealist has for the other heroes. This recurrent feeling in each novel has, I think, never been noted. Nevertheless, what Fitzgerald says the loss of Rosalind meant to Amory could be said about Anthony Patch, Jay Gatsby, Dick Diver, or Monroe Stahr:

> She had taken the first flush of his youth and brought from his unplumbed depths tenderness that had surprised him, gentleness and unselfishness that he had never given to another creature. He had later love-affairs, but of a different sort; in those he went back to that, perhaps, more typical frame of mind, in which the girl became the mirror of a mood in him. Rosalind had drawn out what was more than passionate admiration; he had a deep, undying affection for Rosalind. (p. 209)

Now Amory can no longer believe in an ideal and begins to speak like an iconoclast. Again Darcy, Amory's moral adviser tells him that "the secret of success, when we find it, is the mystical element in us: something flows into us that enlarges our personalities, and when it ebbs out our personalities shrink." (p. 220) Thus Amory's last encounter with an ideal woman, Eleanor, is his experience in mysticism.

Eleanor functions like one of Poe's women, who offer

to the hero mystical escape from the world. Amory meets her in the night on a haystack, and her last name is Savage. She was the "last weird mystery that held him with wild fascination and pounded his soul to flakes." (p. 222) She says she will be his soul, (p. 226) and his attempt to make her his ideal is a rebellion against his own past. Their communication is closer than his previous affairs, for their minds always "followed the same channels." (p. 226) Amory even imagines Eleanor's mother would be like Beatrice Blaine. (p. 232) Amory wants to return to his lost idealism through the dark security of immeasurable darkness, to superimpose Eleanor upon his youth, but the first view he has of her in the bright lightning is that of a beautiful "witch." (p. 227) She is only the facade of the ideal, "the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty." (p. 222) Amory in time recognizes the facade, and the hypocrisy in her mysticism. He builds her from his own imagination, and his own sensuous relationship with her destroys his attempt to recreate idealism: "When Eleanor's arm touched his he felt his hands grow cold with deadly fear lest he should lose the shadow brush with which his imagination was painting wonders of her. (p. 230) Their conclusion, "that sex is right in the middle of our purest abstractions, so close that it obscures vision," (p. 238) places Amory at the stage of sensual awareness in which he knows his youthful idealism can never be relived. He knows he must turn from

hope, from the dark, and accept his finite existence: "naked souls are poor things ever, and soon he turned homeward and let new lights come in with the sun." (p. 240)

With the loss of hope, Amory is able to sacrifice himself before society; he permits himself to be arrested in an Atlantic City hotel with a friend's girl, in order to save him from public scandal. When the event is published in the newspaper, along side it is the notice of Rosalind's marriage to Dawson Ryder, the rich young man favored by Rosalind's mother. Thus sensuous degradation is correlated with the recognition that idealism is completely lost.

Now Amory has only reproach for the social structure. Viewing the people along the street, he thinks, "It was not so bad where there were only men or else only women; it was when they were vilely herded that it all seemed so rotten." (p. 256) He sees that the ideal women in his life, "whose unfathomable instincts . . . he had thought to perpetuate in terms of experience, had become merely consecrations to their own posterity." (p. 263) He sees that the ideal woman can only exist in the past for an artist; "The problem of evil had solidified for Amory into the problem of sex." (p. 280) Women, he tells two wealthy men who give him a ride towards Princeton in their car, control men and, thus, their money and, consequently, the culture, through marriage. But the "spiritually unmarried man," (p. 271) or artist for example, must seek systems

to counteract "human nature." (p. 272) Amory's view of the world results primarily from his loss of Rosalind:

> I am sick of a system where the richest man gets the most beautiful girl if he wants her, where the artist without an income has to sell his talents to a button manufacturer. (p. 277)

As a result Amory gives up his desire to be an artist; he thinks it is more important "to be a certain sort of man." (p. 281) Because of his past he cannot deal with beauty, especially the beauty of women. His knowledge of his own limitations, the opposite of youthful egotism, is the Fitzgerald state of defeat; and, appropriately, the book ends with Amory saying he knows only himself.

In his next novel, Fitzgerald was to better objectify the conflict within his protagonist and produce, though a weaker hero, a clearer cause for his defeat; for Anthony Patch's inability to regain his lost idealism crushes him.

NOTES

[1]*The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, p. 371.

[2]R. V. A. S., "This Side of Paradise," *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work*, p. 49.

[3]James Ellis, "The Fragmented Hero in the Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald" (unpub. Ph. D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1963), p. 17.

[4]New York, 1920, p. 3. All additional citations will be from this edition; page numbers will be cited parenthetically in the text.

[5]*F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York, 1963), p. 46.

[6]*The Art of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, trs. Charles Matz and Sergio Perosa (Ann Arbor, 1965), p. 19.

[7]*The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, p. 143.

[8]"Paradise and Princeton," *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work*, p. 122.

[9]Harry Heseltine, "The Development of the Fitzgerald Hero" (unpub. Ph. D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1956), p. 59.

[10]P. 20.

[11]P. 48.

CHAPTER III

THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED

The technical problems encountered with This Side of Paradise were not all overcome in The Beautiful and Damned. Recently Charles Shain said that the weaknesses of the latter were character presentation and motivation.[1] In 1925, three years after publication of The Beautiful and Damned, Paul Rosenfeld, a critic Fitzgerald highly respected, had said the same thing: "The world of his subject-matter is still too much within Fitzgerald himself for him to see it sustainedly against the universe."[2] But Rosenfeld added that the novel was not tragic because Anthony and Gloria, though at great cost, get the money and win out in the end. Although Anthony's tragic stature remains undefined, to say he won out would seem to ignore the heavy irony in the last scene of the book. Rosenfeld's comment, however, typified some of the criticism of its time, which assumed Fitzgerald was writing only about the rich, with little censure. But it appears that the very point Fitzgerald makes is that money is completely inefficacious for one in Anthony's situation; it cannot replace, or regain, the ideal. Anthony and Gloria both hopefully look forward to the court decision that will

award them thirty million dollars, Anthony's grandfather's estate. With the money they believe they can recreate the life and love they knew in their youth. But because of the strain, Anthony has a mental breakdown; his emotional weakness, what Harry Heseltine calls his character weakness,[3] puts him beyond the help of riches.

Heseltine says that Anthony is damned "because of his perversely held illusion that these /youth and beauty/ are unchangeable qualities - He has dedicated his life to a mistaken ideal."[4] It is not the ideal that damns Anthony but his separation from it, his belief that he can replace the ideal with materialism. He realizes this impossibility with the final appearance of one of the novel's frequently overlooked characters, Dot Raycroft. She is the first important sensual woman in Fitzgerald's fiction, and her final presence shatters Anthony's hope to return to the idealism he experienced with Gloria.

When we first meet Anthony, he is a happy Amory Blaine, attractive "to all women."[5] Early in the novel Fitzgerald presents Anthony's imagined relation with women:

> He felt that if he had a love he would have hung her picture just facing the tub so that, lost in the soothing steamings of the hot water, he might lie and look up at her and muse warmly and sensuously on her beauty. (p. 11)

He wants beauty around him but not close enough to touch him, afraid that its sensuousness might not live up to his ideal conception of it. Seeing a woman drying her hair on

a balcony outside his apartment, before realizing she is ugly, "his emotion had been nearer to adoration than in the deepest kiss he had ever known." (p. 18) The girls he sees on the street are also ugly, but he goes to see a play titled The Woman. (p. 23) Anthony's world is one in which "ugly women control strong men"; (p. 28) thus Anthony is attracted to beautiful women in whom he hopes idealism can remain unchanged. But because of the distance Anthony maintains from his ideal, which is later Gloria, he can only know a superficial ideal, i.e. beauty. His morality is to change when his ideal is threatened by change; because Gloria, as the voice says in "A Flashback into Paradise," is "incomprehensible . . . the beauty of her body was the essence of her soul." (p. 27) With Gloria's move away from ideal beauty, Anthony becomes more aware of the loss of idealism and, thus, more corrupted by the world.

Gloria is introduced in the novel in the same manner as Rosalind was introduced in This Side of Paradise. She is characterized indirectly before she enters the action. Her cousin Richard Caramel tells Anthony of Gloria's reputation as a vamp, and Anthony begins to imagine her before he sees her. At first sight he thinks she is "classical," (p. 58) and Gloria's statement that she is "a solid block of ice" (p. 57) seems not to bother Anthony, the pseudo-artist who wants to paint her before she changes. She appealed "to that part of him that cherished all beauty

and illusion." (p. 73) He sees her as an eternal ideal, and "her eyes appeared to regard him out of many thousand years." (p. 102) Also, Gloria is a Bilphist, believing in reincarnation; she tells Anthony that their two souls were in love before they were born; thus it follows that Gloria never accepts her physical change. After he kisses her, he had an "emotion that was neither mental or physical." (p. 104) His first sensory pleasure with Gloria, the kiss, occurred at night, when she was like a "feather, drifted in out of the dark." (p. 102)

As Gloria represents a point in eternal perfection, Anthony is "a passive thing, acted upon by an influence above and beyond Gloria." (p. 105) His desire to possess Gloria as an ideal without submitting to sensuous change is identical with his earlier wish to gaze on the picture of a beautiful woman from the comforts of his finite bath-tub. As James Ellis says, "By marrying Gloria's fabled beauty, Anthony feels that he will escape from this vulgar and meaningless world in which he finds himself trapped."[6] Her soul was "the living material of which the dead beauty of books was made." (p. 148)

Gloria, more than Anthony, cannot bring herself to accept mortality. She rebels against physical change, and she dislikes Anthony's kisses which come from "a brutish sensibility in him." (pp. 113-114) She dreads childbirth, refuses the temptation of promiscuity in Anthony's absence, and writes "finis" after the last entry in her

diary when she promises to marry Anthony; i.e., she wants to stop time.

On the night of their engagement, when Anthony is lying in his apartment alone, he hears a woman's laugh from the street below, which brings back the world he wants to avoid by marrying Gloria:

> Try as he might to strangle his reaction, some animal quality in that unrestrained laughter had grasped at his imagination, and for the first time in four months aroused his old aversion and horror toward all the business of life . . . . He wanted to be out in some cool and bitter breeze, miles above the cities, and to live serene and detached back in the corners of his mind. Life was that sound out there, that ghastly reiterated female sound. (pp. 149-150)

Anthony's reactions to the sensual laughter is the same as Amory Blaine's reaction to his first kiss; both want to escape into abstraction.

After Anthony and Gloria marry, the forces that will shatter Anthony become more evident. He changes more than Gloria; in his movement away from idealism, away from his love for Gloria, he becomes more vulnerable. His emotional involvement with the world is greater; he needs nourishment from his ideal to endure. But Gloria feels not this tie with him, containing within herself her sustaining life force, giving nothing. Likewise, she tells Anthony that she does not care how many women he knew before her as long as he had only "physical satisfaction" (p. 182) from them; she would not have wanted him to want to marry someone because "then there would be remembered intimacies." (p. 182) Returning from a visit to General

Lee's home in Arlington, she tells Anthony that all things fade and should be preserved in the heart. Anthony is in favor of preserving the home of Lee as a static ideal; Gloria wants to place the ideal in abstraction and make it eternal. She says there is no beauty without poignancy. (p. 167) She accepts her physical change only as a necessary process in her eternal cycle of renewal. If she is damned, it is because she places herself, her own paganism, before her for worship. Anthony finally becomes aware that change can only take him further from his early idealism. Anthony is damned for believing in a false ideal.

When their love begins to fade, they try to maintain their illusion with alcohol and wild parties, which can only bring dissipation. The more they submit themselves to physical enjoyment the more distant they become. When one of their parties is interrupted by Adam Patch, a guest who is appropriately named Paramour ironically says in the shocking silence, "I'm not a guest here - I work here." (p. 275) Afraid that grandfather Patch will change his will, they try several times to explain but are never admitted into his presence. They fear their fate without money. Traveling back to New York on the train, Gloria sees her possible future existence:

> From the tenement windows leaned rotund, moon-shaped mothers, as constellations of this sordid heaven; women like dark imperfect jewels, women like vegetables, women like great bags of abominably dirty laundry. (p. 283)

"When we get the money" becomes their declaration. Wealthy, they think they will be able to recreate the time "when love, springing like the phoenix from its own ashes, should be born again in its mysterious and unfathomable haunts." (p. 308) But Adam Patch's will leaves everything to his butler, and Anthony must file a deposition and prove that his grandfather was coerced in his final division of his property.

Before the case can come to court, Anthony is drafted into the Army. Once physically removed from Gloria, his antagonism for her ceases, making it possible for Anthony to again envision her as an ideal. He does this when he meets Dot, whose voice seemed "a part of the night." (p. 322) But Dot is sensuous; the night imagery is Anthony's imagination; without realizing it he is succumbing to the sensuous woman, a woman who represents the kind of life he wants to avoid. As Fitzgerald says, his affair with Dot was a result of his "increasing carelessness about himself." (p. 324) He tries to displace Gloria, the past ideal, with Dot. With Dot, he recalls Gloria five years before: "here again were the faint winds, the illusions, the eternal present with its promise of romance." (p. 329) And after he first kisses Dot, he writer Gloria a tender love letter. Dot's easily accessible love, which is described in terms like Myrtle Wilson's in <u>The Great Gatsby</u>, Anthony erroneously thinks contains some "spiritual reticence." (p. 326) He mistakes passive ignorance for

reticence.

When Dot acts and asks Anthony if he loves her, he is surprised; but he is unable to "withstand the lure that would draw him irresistibly out of his tent and over the telephone at the YWCA." (p. 333) When Anthony is to be transfered to another camp, he tries to break with Dot, but her emotional reaction to his news changes his decision. She says she will die if he leaves, and he says the memory of their affair will be sweeter when lost. Dot's terse answer to his trite sophism embodies the essence of the relationship between the sensuous woman and the idealistic hero: "What's death to me is just a lot of words to you." (p. 342) Anthony realizes his past actions have been based on unstable emotions and fears that Gloria, also, may have a lover, recalling that she said the effect of a love affair on one's mind was all that mattered. He begins to think he is losing Gloria and, as a result, approaches insanity.

If Maxwell Geimar's interpretation is correct, that Anthony goes mad when he finds out Gloria is not his image of "an absolute ideal to which he can dedicate himself,"[7] then Dot is the stimulus that creates this awareness. He thinks he hears Dot's voice and sees her eyes while working on a chain gang. He becomes delirious and physically weaker. However, Gloria's brush with promiscuity does not affect her. It has no promise for her because it was "ever a little odorous and stale." (p. 368) She can snub the

sensual world because of her egotism, her ability to see herself as an ideal. Anthony, more involved in his environment, cannot do this. They warmly reunite at the armistice but again sink into their disparate personalities, waiting for the court decision.

Gloria tries to cheat time and change by going into the movies. She has a screen test with Joseph Bloeckman, a producer who has been urging her to become an actress for several years. She hopes her beauty will be sustained "after the reality has vanished." (p. 393) For as long as her beauty exists, her physique is not important; she could complete her ephemeral life cycle and unite again with her beauty, as all beautiful Bilphists do. But when the test revealed she would be suitable for the part of a middle-aged woman, she sinks into despair and makes her "first awkward movement." (p. 394) She never consciously accepts defeat however. She dyes her hair, applies face cream, and tells Anthony that if they should lose the case in court they should take their remaining money, enjoy Italy, and "then just die." (p. 423)

Anthony thought of his return to idealism after getting the money, of Italy as

> Marvellously renewed, he would walk again in the Piazza di Spogna at twilight, moving in that flotsom of dark women . . . . when his purse hung heavy again even romance might fly back to perch on it . . . of women, women who changed, dissolved, melted into other women and receded from his life, but who were always beautiful and always young. (pp. 443-444)

But he also concludes that women have been the reason for

all his distress, sorrow, and pain. At the moment he has thought this, alone, preparing to leave for the court to hear the final decision, Dot reappears. Her presence is the biggest threat to his return to idealism. "His predominate sensation was that all the civilization and convention around him was curiously unreal." (p. 445) Dot says she wants him or death. Then Anthony, aware that the sensual woman, his Nemesis, stands before him, strikes out in the only way left for him. He picks up a "stiff" (p. 446) chair and throws it at her. His mind snaps, and he regresses into his subconscious, the "thick, impenetrable darkness" (p. 446) which Dick Diver later says is better than conscious awareness. Thus Anthony is defeated because he is incapable of ever hoping to realize his goal. As long as he could hope, he could struggle. Dot vanishes, and Gloria returns with good news; but Anthony is playing on the floor like a child, "in a patch of sunshine." (p. 446) He has psychologically done what his environment would not permit him to do: return to youthful romanticism.

In the last scene of the novel, Gloria is richly arrayed. With the luxuries she can now afford, she can maintain the facade of the ideal woman; to Gloria, whose knowledge is superficial, this is consistent, even though a young girl on her ship sees her and can conclude she is "sort of dyed and unclean." (p. 448) Anthony, self-deluded, gloating over his sudden wealth, thinks he has

won out against all kinds of hardships, oblivious of his present mental state. They are both in need of something that money can not buy. To say they won would appear to look at the novel as Anthony looks at his success. Fitzgerald's moral, I think, is quite clear.

As Henry Dan Piper points out in his new critical biography, The Beautiful and Damned is an artistic advance over This Side of Paradise because of the relationship Fitzgerald develops between Anthony and Gloria.[8] They are more completely imagined characters. And seeing more clearly the function of Dot and Gloria helps one to realize that Fitzgerald did present adequate motivation for Anthony's collapse.

In The Great Gatsby Fitzgerald was to split Anthony into Nick Carraway and Jay Gatsby. Anthony's idealism became an uncontaminated entity. Fitzgerald was also to depict the best example of the ideal woman, whose idealism fades, in Daisy Buchanan. When he combined all these in the proper framework, the result was one of the best American novels of the 1920's.

NOTES

[1]P. 29.

[2]"Fitzgerald before The Great Gatsby," F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work, p. 75.

[3]P. 107.

[4]P. 109.

[5]New York, 1922, p. 3. All additional citations will be from this edition; page numbers will be cited parenthetically in the text.

[6]P. 45.

[7]P. 304.

[8]F. Scott Fitzgerald, a Critical Portrait (New York, 1965), p. 91.

CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT GATSBY

In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald employed a first-person narrator, who was able to interact with and comment on the affairs of all the characters. Fitzgerald then was able to isolate his characters with their values, what Lionel Trilling called ideographs,[1] and filter through Nick Carraway all he wanted the reader to know about them. This also gave his third novel a balanced structure and unity which his others lacked. His awareness of its technical superiority caused him to return to the same device in The Last Tycoon.

Nick's view is that of the norm. He is a middle-class Midwesterner, educated in the East, with the average amounts of idealism, superficiality, and pride. But most important, he judges and qualifies Gatsby's idealism in comparison to the values of both Daisy Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson, the lost ideal girl and the sensual woman. Also, Nick, or man, is offered what James Ellis calls the theme of the novel, "The choice in life between following one's intellect or emotions."[2]

"Absolution," a short story published in 1924, was to have been the prologue to The Great Gatsby; but Fitzgerald

separated them and began the novel with Nick. The shorter work, however, sheds significant light on the novel. In it eleven-year-old Rudolph Miller first encounters evil, sexual perversion, and finally forces himself to confess to Father Swartz. The priest fails to resolve the boy's feeling about his sin; as a result, Rudolph believes that "there was something ineffably gorgeous somewhere that had nothing to do with God."[3] Rudolph evolves into Jay Gatsby, whose dream likewise had nothing to do with God. And the only advice Father Swartz gives Rudolph is also followed by Gatsby: "don't get up close . . . because if you do you'll only feel the heat and the sweat and the life."[4] Thus idealism and sensuousness are not compatible in Gatsby, who is, as Maxwell Geismar said in 1947, a new character for Fitzgerald, "a cultural hero, an age's illusion."[5] He was also Nick's illusion.

Nick is the rational view in the novel; Gatsby is the ideal, Nick's alter ego. Henry Piper, in his discussion of the genesis of The Great Gatsby, points out how Fitzgerald had to rewrite the novel to "endow them with separate personalities."[6] They both learn in the novel. What Nick learns about Daisy, Tom, Myrtle, and Gatsby changes his outlook on life; he sees the value, and hopelessness, in Gatsby's idealistic desire to deny time. What Gatsby learns ruins him; he cannot face the present, and its moral corruption destroys him. The values of the three major male characters are manifested in their association

with women. To see the contrast between the worlds of Daisy and Myrtle will define better the conflict at the core of the book, and only Nick can do this without being emotionally involved with either woman.

When Fitzgerald introduces Nick, he prepares us for Nick's account of things; for Nick, like most good narrators, is an inaccurate storyteller. At first he says he wants the world at "a sort of moral attention forever."[7] He naively wants to stop change. He desires a detachment from the world: "I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart." (p. 2) He has seen its fallibility, as Piper states: "in contrast to his neighbor, is his /Nick's/ ever-present awareness of man's mortality."[8] Only after he learns that Gatsby bought his house on West Egg to be close to Daisy does Nick say, "He came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendor." (p. 79) He also says that in his younger days he was "more vulnerable," that he also attracts "abnormal minds," and that "almost any exhibition of complete self-sufficiency draws a stunned tribute from me." (p. 9) He tells us enough so that we have an idea of his earlier gullibility.

When Nick goes to New York with Tom and Myrtle, his middle-class morals do not let him relax in their lusty company: "I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life." (p. 36) Sensuality attracts him as it does not

Gatsby, who "knew women early, and since they spoiled him he became contemptuous of them." (p. 99) Earlier, at Wilson's garage, Nick's tendency to romanticize surface reality appears; behind Wilson's garage, he could envision "sumptious and romantic apartments." (p. 25) He thinks the sensuous experience is an ideal; Daisy's voice affects him as it used to affect Gatsby. Nick's girl friend back in his home town is only something to be rid of. He picks out women on the street and imagines he follows them to their apartments, and they "turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness." (p. 57) Nick thinks of the warm darkness as a state of happiness; the defeated Fitzgerald hero thinks of it as a refuge from the sensuous world. But Nick finally learns that Gatsby must have "shivered" at seeing "what a grotesque thing a rose is." (p. 162) And the woman of West Egg, he imagines, becomes a drunken woman in a night scene by El Greco, her hands "cold with jewels." (p. 178) When he sees West Egg "through Daisy's eyes," he says, "It is invariably saddening to look through new eyes at things upon which you have expended your own powers of adjustment." (p. 105)

Nick's fault is that he believes in the superficial goodness of people, and he naively tells us he is one of the few honest people he has ever known. (p. 60) He believes in calling a spade a spade; thus his first impression of Gatsby is in terms of Gatsby's outward appearance

and Nick's own self-deception:

> /Gatsby had/ one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it . . . . It faced - or seemed to face - the whole eternal world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished - and I was looking at an elegant young roughneck. (p. 48)

Gatsby is a roughneck, socially unpolished, but he is more ardently sincere than Nick, because of his stronger faith in an ideal, to which Daisy holds the key. Nick discovers Gatsby's greatness, but he never fully realizes the value of Daisy to Gatsby.

Daisy is Nick's cousin, and unknowingly he sees her much as Gatsby did five years before; for he says her voice is like "an arrangement of notes that will never be played again." (p. 9) Later, when Nick tells Gatsby about Daisy's voice, he uses the word indiscreet. He then begins to add "It's full of . . . ." But Gatsby finishes his sentence, saying it is full of money. (p. 120) For to Gatsby, Daisy is indiscreet, without ideal, governed by the wealth in which she lives; her love is subordinated to materialism; she cannot be his ideal girl in her present state. Nick misses the point entirely; he ruminates the same as when he first saw Wilson's garage: "That was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbol's song of it . . . High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl." (p. 120)

Nick sees her as an ideal, but Gatsby sees her as a former ideal.

The early Daisy exhibited a healthy balance between idealism and sensuousness, like Rosalind in This Side of Paradise. Nick hears about Gatsby's earlier love affair with Daisy from Gatsby and Jordan Baker. Jordan tells Nick that Daisy was an eighteen-year-old girl who "dressed in white" (p. 75) and had gotten drunk when she received a letter from Gatsby on the eve of her wedding. But she goes through with marrying Tom Buchanan, on a hot June day, as she says later. (p. 128) Afterwards, Jordan says that Tom was in an automobile accident when he had a chambermaid in his car; but Daisy, she recalls, despite the fast crowd they ran with, "came out with an absolutely perfect reputation." (p. 78) But what Gatsby recalls of Daisy is only the ideal Daisy. He tells Nick that he "took" her because "he had no real right to touch her hand." (p. 149) It is Gatsby's violation of the ideal woman that makes him adhere to the past so strongly. She was the "first 'nice' girl he had ever known." (p. 148) Enthralled with her "beautiful house" and the "fact that Daisy lived there," (p. 148) Gatsby makes the mistake of idealizing the sensuous experience:

> He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. (p. 112)

Thus "At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete." (p. 112) When

Gatsby returns to Louisville after the war to see Daisy, he learns that she has left. Leaving on the train,

> He stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him. But it was all going by too fast now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever. (p. 153)

Daisy becomes a sensuous woman. Later, when she indirectly tells Gatsby she loves him, even Tom "recognized her as someone he knew a long time ago." (p. 119)

Daisy's idealism fades through time, in her marriage with Tom. Nick says, when he is with Daisy and Gatsby in Gatsby's house, that Gatsby seemed to be entering a third state with her physical closeness: "After his embarrassment and his unreasoning joy he was consumed with wonder at her presence." (p. 93) The need to stop time is even felt by Nick; for when Gatsby almost knocked Nick's clock off the shelf, the three of them "believed for a moment that it had smashed to pieces on the floor." (p. 88) But Daisy "began to move with the seasons" (p. 151) after Gatsby first left her. She tells Nick early in the book that she is cynical about everything, (p. 17) because of her awareness of the sensuous world. Her child, Nick says, Gatsby kept looking at as if he never "really believed in its existence before." (p. 117)

Daisy's idealism fades quickly because of her relationship with Tom. He is described in physical terms, like Myrtle Wilson; he has excelled as an athlete, and

"not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body." (p. 7) He is sensitive to the word hulking which Daisy uses; and when he speaks philosophically, about civilization going to pieces, his remarks sound as inappropriate to Nick as Gatsby's belief that one can relive the past. But before marrying Tom, Daisy was "crying for a decision." (p. 151) The war separated her from Gatsby, and she wanted her life "shaped now, immediately . . . and the decision must be made by some force." (p. 151) Time without Gatsby had instilled her with the fear of change. In a sense she is spoiled and used to getting what she wants. After sufficient coaxing and a cold shower she goes through with the wedding. Later she discovers that the "wholesome bulkiness" which attracted her is in reality "a body capable of enormous leverage - a cruel body." (p. 7)

Sex was the basis for Tom and Daisy's marriage. When they can no longer satisfy each other's senses, they no longer love each other. Likewise, Daisy does not love her three-year-old girl. The best thing a girl can be is a fool, she says, i.e., incapable of becoming aware of her fate. For this has devitalized Daisy; she thinks it is better to be self-deluded like Gatsby: "You see I think everything's terrible anyhow . . . I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything . . . . Sophisticated - God, I'm sophisticated." (p. 18) Gatsby himself "learns he must deal with Daisy as a real woman."[9] Thus

when he summarizes Daisy's marriage to Tom, "It was just personal," (p. 152) he expresses in essence his concept of a marriage based solely on the physical, without faith in an ideal. For the same reason, Daisy fears she may not be able to keep Gatsby's love. Outside of Gatsby's house during a party, she can imagine a girl like her former self stealing his love:

> Perhaps some unbelievable guest would arrive, a person infinitely rare and to be marvelled at, some authentically radiant young girl who with one fresh glance at Gatsby, one moment of magical encounter, would blot out those five years of unwavering devotion. (p. 110)

Fitzgerald told Edmund Wilson that one of the big faults of the book was that he "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."[10] But Fitzgerald, his own worst critic, was intuitively right; Daisy and Gatsby's love is futile, and they should not be able to regenerate the rapport that they experienced during their ideal love. Thus he tells Nick he must relive the past, for to accept the last five years as history is to accept Daisy as a sensuous woman.

When Gatsby comes to this realization, his idealism is shattered. In the New York hotel room, Tom tells him that there are things between him and Daisy that Gatsby could never know, things they can not forget. "The words seemed to <u>bite physically</u> into Gatsby." (p. 133, my italics) Daisy fails to satisfy Gatsby when she tells him she cannot say she did not love Tom; she says Gatsby asks

too much. And as Gatsby becomes aware of the irradicableness of Tom and Daisy's marriage, Daisy stares, "terrified," as the news of Gatsby's illegal enterprises are revealed by Tom. Gatsby becomes simply another entity she sees in her degenerating environment. For Daisy's dislike of West Egg did not result from "the very simplicity she failed to understand," (p. 108) as Nick says; for she does not see it as something simple as he does. She sees and fears the mortality inherent in sensuousness. Her final attitude is apathy. Kenneth Eble's statement that Daisy is "truth unable to perceive itself" seems incorrect.[11] This might be more descriptive of Myrtle Wilson.

Myrtle is the sensuous woman who is presently crying for a decision. It is Myrtle's sensuality that attracts Tom, and their affair results in Gatsby's death. After Gatsby's idealism has been shattered, he and Daisy are driving back from New York when Myrtle, who thinks Tom is driving their car, runs onto the highway in front of them. Gatsby is literally and figuratively in a situation which he has no control over. Daisy's refusal to risk self-destruction in place of the absolute destruction of Myrtle sets in motion the forces that kill Gatsby. After Tom finds out about the accident, he helps Wilson conclude that Gatsby killed his wife. Tom has managed to physically destroy Gatsby, just as he mentally "snapped out" (p. 136) Gatsby in the hotel room. At that time, Gatsby was "made accidental; isolated"; (p. 136) without an ideal, he

has no reason to exist; consequently, his mere physical proximity to Tom and Myrtle's immoral love is fatal.

Although Gatsby and Myrtle never meet, Fitzgerald makes them antithetical constructs on a collision course. Both possess a vitality that separates them from the other characters and enables them to maintain their respective dreams. Gatsby's dream is incorruptible, contained in the romantic vision of America. Myrtle's dream is corrupted, based on materialism. Myrtle's sensuality makes her as much out of place in the valley of ashes as Gatsby's big game hunting in the Bois de Boulogne. Although Gatsby is socially unethical, his dream always remain intact, as Barry Gross says; "but the essential Myrtle, the sensuous Myrtle, undergoes a drastic change, her 'intense vitality is converted into impressive hauteur'."[12] Also, Gatsby and Myrtle are both manipulated by the rich.

When Nick first sees Myrtle, she does not float on a couch like Daisy; her animality is a sharp contrast with the cool elegant descriptions of Daisy:

> /Myrtle/ carried her surplus flesh sensuously, as some women can . . . . Her face . . . contained no facet or gleam of beauty, but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering . . . . /She/ walked through her husband as if he were a ghost. (p. 25)

The concreteness of Nick's first impression of Myrtle offsets his first impression of Gatsby, which is in terms of his own projected values. Myrtle is everything Gatsby does not want to be, or to accept. She is so much a part

of the sensuous world that she is incapable of idealizing. Going to her sister's apartment with Tom and Nick, she buys a copy of Town Tattle, cold cream, and perfume. The apartment has extravagant furniture with tapestries of ladies in the gardens of Versailles, too large for the room. And on the wall, a picture of Myrtle's mother "hovered like an ectoplasm." (p. 30) Because she never conceives of anything beyond its superficiality, she says she found out her husband was not a gentleman because he borrowed his wedding suit; and she gullibly believes Tom when he tells her Daisy was Catholic and, thus, divorce was difficult for him. Unlike Gatsby, she is not permitted in Daisy's realm. When she begins to chant Daisy's name, Tom breaks her nose just as he "snapped out" Gatsby's idealism.

If there is no longer any hope in the American culture for Gatsby's dream, there is also no possibility for Myrtle to realize her desires. She wants to escape from her husband and go west with Tom; Gatsby has come east, after he met his destiny at "Little Girl Bay." (p. 100) Gatsby was able to achieve the shell of his dream because he was unethical; however, Myrtle can not achieve her dream because she thinks she can superimpose it on the existing social order. Myrtle has no informing ideal she can follow and, therefore, can never raise herself above her surroundings, the valley of ashes. Even when dead she "mingled her thick dark blood with the dust." (p. 138)

Fitzgerald related her death in strong physical terms as opposed to no description for Gatsby's death. He insisted in a letter to Maxwell Perkins that his description of Myrtle's breast being ripped off should remain in the book.[13] Her sensuousness is literally crushed.

Of the three major women characters only Jordan Baker comes through the novel unscarred. She is a new female in Fitzgerald's novels, the only one adapted to her environment. Whereas Daisy and Myrtle are the names of flowers, suggesting beauty and zest respectively, essences characteristic of the two women, Jordan is as sexless as the desert in which the same river flows to the dead sea. She exhibits no passion with men; at times she is almost described as a Lesbian. She is to be followed by Baby Warren in Tender is the Night and Cecilia Brady in The Last Tycoon. They represent women who try to overthrow men. Thus, when Nick draws up Jordan to kiss her, she has a "wan, scornful mouth." (p. 81) They split in a mutual snub. As Leslie Fiedler had said, Fitzgerald was recording the change in the role of the sexes. Women like Daisy and Myrtle can not keep their equilibrium because they lack Jordan's coldness and disregard of ethics (she supposedly cheated in a golf tournament). But because of her independence, she has little influence on the male characters in the novel.

It is significant that after Myrtle's death Daisy has no dialogue. She complies with Tom's decisions just as

the flower with the same name always expands and contracts with the sun. Light, however, means the illumination of reality; what Daisy knows about Gatsby now obliterates her remaining romantic conception of him; but to Gatsby, Daisy has not changed; so he waits in the night, "watching over nothing" (p. 146) outside her house.

Nick concludes that Gatsby was better than the rest because he was able to adhere to a lost ideal, which was a reach for immortality, a belief that there must be something better than reality, if one can only achieve it. Gatsby tried to do this in the only way he knew how, with money. "Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply," (p. 59) Nick says; but Wilson, the impotent husband in the wastelands, judges Myrtle by his own values and says, ironically, that she was "a deep one." (p. 159) Tom, Daisy, Jordan, and Wilson are among the foul dust that floated in the wake of Gatsby's dream and caused Nick to close out his "interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men." (p. 2)

Although literary people Fitzgerald respected praised The Great Gatsby, he must have felt that the novel's limited success stemmed from the hero: Gatsby is a flat character. Nine years passed before Tender is the Night was published. Idealism was further in the past, and Fitzgerald had to extract Rosemary Hoyt, the sensual woman, from the male protagonist in the earlier Francis Melarkey version of the novel before he could be Dick.[14]

NOTES

[1]P. 202.

[2]P. 59.

[3]Babylon Revisited and Other Stories, p. 150.

[4]Ibid.

[5]P. 319.

[6]P. 107.

[7]New York, 1925, p. 2. All additional citations will be from this edition; page numbers will be cited parenthetically in the text.

[8]P. 107.

[9]Tristram Coffin, "Gatsby's Fairy Lover," Midwest Folklore, X (1960), p. 84.

[10]The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, p. 341.

[11]P. 94.

[12]"Jay Gatsby and Myrtle Wilson: A Kinship," Tennessee Studies in Literature, VII (1963), pp. 58-59.

[13]The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, p. 175.

[14]Matthew Bruccoli, The Composition of Tender is the Night (Pittsburgh, 1963), p. 35.

CHAPTER V

TENDER IS THE NIGHT

Tender is the Night grew out of works Fitzgerald could not seem to finish. He had taken a new approach; he wanted to write a psychological novel, using a multiple point of view similar to Ford Madox Ford's, to delve as deeply into a complex hero as he could. He thought that The Great Gatsby was handicapped by its length and "its purely masculine interest."[1] He decided to use an intellectual whose weakness was munificence.

The novel, he told his editors, should do the following:

> Show a man who is a natural idealist, a spoiled priest, giving in for various causes to the ideas of the haute Burgeoise, and in his rise to the top of the social world losing his idealism, his talent and turning to drink and dissipation.[2]

But today many critics are still dissatisfied with Dick's dissipation. The major point of critical disagreement over the book is whether or not Fitzgerald gave sufficient motivation for Dick's collapse. Kenneth Eble typlifies those who fail to see Dick as a tragic character; he may go too far though when he says that Dick is a "superficial characterization" and places him alongside Gatsby.[3] In disagreement with Eble is Henry Dan Piper. In his 1965

biography, he states that Dick's imagination is not only capable of creating the radiant world that Rosemary discovers at the beginning of the novel, but that he has the insight to see through his own world to its rotten core.[4] If Piper's interpretation is truer, does Dick realize that he becomes a victim of the rotten core?

Once again the problem is one of objectification. If Dick is emotionally bankrupt at the end of the novel, if his love for Nicole emotionally drains him, he should, being Fitzgerald's most intellectual hero, hide his weakness better than any other of Fitzgerald's characters. He is deluded, like Gatsby and Anthony Patch; but he would never utter Gatsby's absurdities or whine like Anthony. Since the essence of Fitzgerald's stated intention implies a conflict that originates from social contact, it seems that any change in Dick should be traced through his interaction with other people. His reaction to them and how he affects them might determine the course of his behavior. Because women characters dominate the book, his involvement with them could illustrate his idealistic and emotional aspects. Thus his heroic stature, and fall, might be better understood by examining, as with Fitzgerald's former protagonists, the women in his life.

Fitzgerald's initial description of Dick is specific in pointing out his emotional weakness and his intellectual achievements. He is well educated, at one time a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. Fitzgerald even drops Freud's

name in the novel, whom Dick plans to study with in Vienna. And he is the first Fitzgerald hero who knows his own weakness: "He knew, though, that the price of his intactness was incompleteness." (p. 5) Dick, in his intellectual development, had not matured emotionally. A young Rumanian told him, "That's going to be your trouble, judgment about yourself." (p. 5) Likewise, Dick's first "faint doubt as to the quality of his mental processes" (p. 4) occurred when he met Ed Elkins, a socialite. accordingly, Fitzgerald tells us that when Dick arrived in Zürich, it was with "the illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people." (p. 5)

After Dick meets Nicole, his natural inclination is sympathy: "When I see a beautiful shell like that I can't help feeling a regret about-what's inside it." (p. 9) He does not know at this time what is inside Nicole, but he will try to change what is inside her according to his preconceived idea of an ideal woman. However, before he falls in love with Nicole, his

> memory of her became overlaid by the vivid presence of a Wisconsin telephone girl at headquarters in Bar-sur-Aube. She was red-lipped like a poster, and known obscenely in the messes as 'The Switchboard'. (p. 14)

A sensual woman can erase the ideal in Dick. And when he says he is only "a sort of stuffed figure in Nicole's life," (p. 21) he is actually giving his own conception of Nicole, the shell. He wants to negate the sensuousness of her so he can superimpose one created from his intellect,

which he logically thinks she needs.

Dick, who became a psychologist because he wanted to be near a girl who studied psychology in college, foolishly thinks of love as if it were a segment in a rational system: "He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it in." (p. 23) Nicole's letters to him present her conscious thought and enhance the remembrance he has of her from their first meeting. In this way Fitzgerald keeps her physically out of the novel and at the same time presents enough of her thought so that Dick's imagination can conceive her as an ideal. Only after he does this does he learn that she was seduced by her father and requires help that only he can give. Thus, Dick's meeting Nicole after the war is similar to Gatsby and Daisy's reunion. The change in the women during the separation is something Dick and Gatsby never completely adjust to.

When Dick and Nicole are together again,

> her youth and beauty grew on Dick until it welled up inside him in a compact paroxysm of emotion . . . . as Dick became less and less certain of his relation to her, her confidence increased. (p. 25)

As Nicole goes emotionally out to him, she becomes a stimulant to that inhibited emotion in him that he has never satisfied; although the "logic of his life tended away from the girl," (p. 28) he cannot help feeling the emotional need for her, even of taking the risk that

> Nicole well will be someone other than the Nicole he loves, and he knows that in any case she will have no further need of him. It is his weakness to love her so much, yet in sacrificing himself for her sake Dick

acquires a tragic grandeur in his defeat.[5]

Dick is aware that Nicole's emotional independence might separate them. When he finally realizes that his intellect cannot help her, or him, he is at the stage of defeat. Dick dissipates because of his helplessness; regardless of his talent he can not gain what he wants the most, love from Nicole. His first strong erotic experience with Nicole portends what her independence can do to him:

> As he held her and tasted her, and as she curved in further and further toward him, with her own lips, new to herself, drowned and engulfed in love, yet solaced and triumphant, he was thankful to have an existence at all, if only as a reflection in her wet eyes. (p. 47)

The scene ends and Dick's doubt is born amid darkness.

By the time Dick and Nicole meet Rosemary, their marriage is held together only by their personal need for each other. Dick has temporarily left his practice, and they are relaxing on the French Riviera. Nicole has given birth to two children, Lanier and Topsy; and approaching the role of a sensualist, she is attracted to Tommy Barban, whose bronze body and physical achievements make him similar to Tom Buchanan. She immediately dislikes Rosemary. She sees her as a competitor, one who could rob her of Dick's life-giving aid, and speaks to her in an "almost harsh" (p. 73) voice. She heard "the little sigh" (p. 75) from Rosemary at the announcement that Dick was "already possessed." (p. 75) "I'm a mean hard woman," (p. 76) Nicole tells Rosemary ironically. Fitzgerald employs

flower imagery to sharpen the contrast between the two women. Dick says Rosemary is "blooming," (p. 77) and Nicole is wearing an "artificial camellia." (p. 82) Rosemary has the youth, and Nicole's garden is rotting and "grassless." (p. 82) She is the radiant young girl that Daisy Buchanan feared.[6]

Rosemary, naive, at first does not see the conflict between Nicole and Dick. She thinks Dick is "the real thing," (p. 88) because she cannot see past the facade Dick puts up. She wants to go as far as she can with Dick; she tells him abruptly that she loves him. In a letter to Joseph Hergesheimer, Fitzgerald referred to Rosemary as " only a catalytic agent."[7] Her interaction with Dick measures his emotionalism. However, Rosemary is a new movie star, a superficial ideal, who is a tool of her mother: "it would please rather than pain her /Mrs. Speers/ if this somewhat bouncing, breathless, and exigent idealism would focus on something except herself." (pp. 68-69) Rosemary, who is the American lower-class ideal, is sensuality uninformed, lacking conviction.

At first Rosemary makes Dick a father image, she "had the sense that Dick was taking care of her." (p. 77) Robert Stanton traced the incest motif that runs through the novel; he gives a good demonstration, citing abundant textual allusions, beginning with Nicole's relationship with her father and expanding his discussion to include a symbolic presentation of worldwide decadence, with Dick's

last collapse occurring, appropriately, in 1929. He maintains that "Dick is attracted to Rosemary's immaturity partly because of a corresponding quality within himself."[8] Dick also is emotionally immature, as noted; he thinks that in Rosemary he will find the passion to satisfy his own romanticism, the passion Nicole would have had, he thought. But Rosemary's inexperience handicaps her sensuous awareness. She secretly overheard Dick and Nicole behind a coat rack once:

> Nicole gave a little gasping sigh. For a moment the words conveyed nothing at all to Rosemary - but the tone did. The vast secretiveness of it vibrated to herself . . . . Now a strong current of emotion flowed through her, profound and unidentified. (p. 112)

When Dick first embraces her, "her youth vanished as she passed inside the focus of his eyes and he had kissed her breathlessly as if she were any age at all." (p. 124) Dick tries to imagine Rosemary as he wants her; but later in a taxi, "He kissed her without enjoying it. He knew that there was passion here, but there was no shadow of it in her eyes or on her mouth." (p. 125) Rosemary cannot be made the ideal woman, and Dick is chilled by her innocence. He wants from her what she is incapable of giving. Her love with Dick is "experience" for her, but Dick demands a moral commitment; for he must find a love that will bolster his morale and reassure him his world is not sterile; Rosemary's love must have conviction:

> She did not know that splendor is something in the heart; at the moment when she realized that and melted into the passion of the universe he could take her without question or regret. (p. 125)

Rosemary wants sexual intercourse with Dick, whether she enjoys it or not. She tells him she "always hated to think about it." (p. 126) She thinks, ironically, he would have no feeling of guilt because she asks him, "But you can love more than just one person, can't you?" (p. 126) Furthermore, she says she doesn't care if she has a baby as a result of their act. If Nicole consumes Dick emotionally, Rosemary wants to emotionally split him.

Dick deludes himself into thinking that Rosemary can be his ideal. He sees Daddy's Girl, in which

> her tiny fist . . . /dispelled/ the forces of lust and corruption; nay, the very march of destiny stopped . . . /before/ her fineness of character, her courage and steadfastness. (p. 130)

Like all Fitzgerald heroes, he wants to escape from time. He foolishly turns to Rosemary, for she can superficially stop time. Nicole can not. Nicole was

> the product of much ingenuity and toil. For her sake trains began their run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the continent to California; Chicle factories fumed and link belts grew link by link in factories; men mixed toothpaste in vats and drew mouthwash out of copper hogsheads; girls canned tomatoes quickly in August or worked rudely at the Five-and-Tens on Christmas Eve; half-breed Indians toiled on Brazilian coffee plantations and dreamers were muscled out of patent rights in new tractors - these were some of the people who gave a tithe to Nicole and, as the whole system swayed and thundered onward, it lent a feverish bloom to such processes of hers as wholesale buying, like the flush of a fireman's face holding his post before a spreading blaze. She illustrated very simple principles, containing in herself her own doom, but illustrated them so accurately that there was grace in the procedure, and presently Rosemary would try to imitate it. (pp. 113-114)

But Rosemary has not yet begun to imitate Nicole, so Dick clings to her. When they leave the exhibition in Paris,

they move "over the brief threshold of the future to the sudden past of the stone facade without." (p. 135) But Dick must ignore logic to regain the past, and in the taxi outside,

> They stopped thinking with an almost painful relief, stopped seeing; they only breathed and sought each other . . . . The communion of self with self seemed to be on a plane where no other human relation mattered. (p. 136)

Rosemary's symbolic function in these passages is aptly stated by Edwin Fussell: "Rosemary manifests the effects of Hollywood sentimentality and meretriciousness on the powers of American perception and imagination."[9]

Dick insists in going on with Nicole. He tells Rosemary that he is too intricately involved with Nicole to leave her. In a sense, Dick thinks he can split himself, giving Nicole his professional attention and Rosemary his emotions. And he wants to "sweep away" (p. 146) Rosemary's mother, who had been the source of Rosemary's idealism. But Dick soon realizes his own inadequacy.

Fitzgerald pinpoints Dick's awareness of his own insignificance with Nicole in a scene in the Gare Saint-Lazare. First, Nicole meets Abe North, who is leaving on a train soon, and near delirium tremens from a life of heavy drinking. While waiting for Dick, Rosemary, and Mary North, Nicole tells Abe, "I am a woman and my business is to hold things together." (p. 144) Abe returns, "My business is to tear them apart." (p. 144) Their statements would be equally true if they were exchanged

and Nicole were speaking with Dick. Nicole has been administering advice to Abe; for once, she is trying to advise someone psychologically. Tiring, she "gratefully" (p. 144) sees a woman she recognizes; she tells Abe she must speak to her. But the girl snubs Nicole. "She looked at me as if I were rotted," (p. 144) Nicole informs Abe when she returns to the bench. Now Mary and Rosemary arrive, and the women encircle Abe's "wreck of a galleon." (pp. 144-145) But still they are "frightened at his will, once a will to live, now become a will to die." (p. 145) Abe is more aware of himself now than Dick is, who enters with "a fine glowing surface on which the three women sprang like monkeys with cries of relief." (p. 145) They all move toward the train.

They enter "a vague racial dusk that hindered and blinded both them and their observers." (p. 145) They have moved into a nebula of the libido, and, appropriately, Nicole is the first to see the coming murder. The woman who snubbed her ran from her male companion, just as Gloria ran from Anthony toward a train and self-destruction; only Nicole's friend pulls out a revolver and shoots the man she was with. The bullet goes through the man's identification card in his vest pocket and kills him. Dick and his company never learn his name. Thus the man loses his individuality and becomes a symbol for the conquered male. Dick begins to help the arrested friend of Nicole, conscious that he is showing off for Rosemary.

But Nicole takes charge, telling him to wait while she telephones the girl's sister. Dick then sees Rosemary close up for the first time since the previous night; "the slow warm hum of love began again," (p. 146) and Rosemary, enthralled, says, "You like to help everybody, don't you?" (p. 146) She adds that her mother also likes to help people, and "For the first time the mention of her mother annoyed rather than amused Dick." (p. 146) Dick realizes more clearly now that the facade his self-control has managed to maintain is what Rosemary loves; he feels the inanity of his own impetuosity with Rosemary and her mother, the fact that he is emotionally her inferior. As they all leave the station, Nicole says, "Course that's why she talked so strangely to me - she was getting ready to open fire." (p. 147) Nicole and Rosemary laugh, "but they were both horrified, and both of them deeply wanted Dick to make a moral comment on the matter and not leave it to them." (p. 147) However, Dick

> was too shaken by the impetus of his newly recognized emotion to resolve things into the pattern of the holiday, so the women, missing something, lapsed into a vague unhappiness. (p. 147)

The murderess and murdered are Nicole and Dick; just as in "One Trip Abroad," which Fitzgerald wrote shortly before Tender is the Night, and in which he describes Nelson and Nicole Kelly, who are very much like Nicole and Dick, and who realize in a flash of lightning that the other young couple they have observed intermittently, who were once

beautiful like themselves, are them, their own images reflected in the other's forms; so does Dick see the death of part of himself, his hope for ideal fulfillment. This was empathically objectified beside the train, by characters which appear to have no other function in the novel: "the concussions . . . had finished God knew what dark matter, had terminated it. The shots had entered into all their lives." (p. 147) The dark, or night, is now devoid of ideal; it can only be Dick's refuge. And the egotism resulting from Rosemary's praise for him, and her "self-accusation of selfishness in the station," (p. 148) has "tended momentarily to blind him to what was going on round about him, and deprive him of the long ground-swell of imagination that he counted on for his judgments." (p. 148)

This awakening of Dick's occurs in "a relic of the seventies, era of the Crtstal Palace," (p. 142) which is a sign of the blind optimism of the Victorian era. The idealism of the nineteenth century rotted under its own glossy exterior; likewise, Dick's former ideal, the young Nicole he hoped to mold into perfection, is only a shell of Dick's dream.

Before the murder scene, Dick told Rosemary, while visiting World War I trenches outside Paris, that the war was a "love battle . . . . All my beautiful lovely safe world blew itself up here with a great gust of high explosive love." (p. 118) But the war has brought an after-

math of social revolution. And Dick, who thinks the force had to be great to destroy his love, soon sees that two revolver shots can do the same thing. He probably could not help wondering if Nicole was the kind of woman worth fighting a war over when he overhears two porters outside the station, who put into a newer, present, context the ideas Dick expressed on the battlefield: "Tu as vu sa chemise? Assez de sang pour se croire á la guerre." (p. 147)

Also, while in Paris Dick hears of a story about Rosemary that evokes his emotional immaturity. Collis Clay, a former boy friend of Rosemary's, tells Dick she was traveling with a boy on a train to New Haven; and the conductor made a scene when he found their compartment locked and the curtain drawn. Hearing of this, Dick feels he is an outsider to the sensual love he wants. The idea of another man with Rosemary sent "through him waves of pain, misery, desire, desperation." (p. 150) He imagines the event in relation to his own involvement with Rosemary: "the white excitement of the event viewed from outside, the inviolable secret warmth within." (p. 150) "Do you mind if I pull down the curtain?" becomes a running thought in Dick's mind, illustrating his sentimental desire to lose himself in the security of dark passion. Though he is outwardly unchanged, "he was yet swayed and driven as an animal." (p. 152) Idealism is too far in the past; Nicole as a sensuous woman has forced him into an

existence that he knows can only lead to moral corruption. He can no longer adhere to a false ideal: "Dignity could come only with an overthrowing of his past, of the effort of the last six years." (pp. 152-153)

Rosemary is a means by which Dick's emotions are objectified. However, his love for her produces in him a pain, almost masochistic, which he is afraid of losing, and he begins to pick up women on the street. But Nicole is the doom in Dick's awareness. She, in her climb to emotional and, thus, mental stability, relies on Dick, needs his sensuous communication. Her independence eliminates her need for him. Dick is even envious of her emotional erruptions. Although, in the hospital Dick goes out "unreservedly, almost sexually" (p. 201) to a woman artist who was in pain. He wanted to gather her up as he did Nicole, for her illness contained "only remote abstractions." (p. 201) Nicole is no longer the objectified abstract Dick's senses and imagination had built. Dick and Nicole, also, are no longer "opposite and complementary." (p. 207) Nicole has become "the drought in the marrow of his bones. He could not watch her disintegrations without participating in them." (p. 207) This is most destructive, because he "had managed to keep alive the low painful fire of intelligence." (p. 212) Thus he can recognize his own dissipation.

It is Dick's intelligence though that again recreates the ideal Nicole when he is physically removed from her.

He travels to America for his father's funeral; and like Anthony Patch in his separation from Gloria, Dick remembers "her better self." (p. 218)

Dick is sensuously corrupt now and tries to pick up a girl he sees one night in Innsbrück, though "He had long been outside the world of simple desires and their fulfillments, and he was inept and uncertain." (p. 219) When he meets Rosemary in Rome, their love is quelled by simple chemistry: "No, not now - those things are rhythmic," (p. 228) she says; and Dick sees "eternal moonlight" (p. 229) in her face. Rosemary is not the dark refuge he desires: "beside him in the car she glowed away fresh and new in the morning sunshine." (p. 230) When he asks her if she is still a virgin, she puns: "It's all been - abortive." (p. 229) Finally, Dick's act of love with her involves nothing more than sensory contact. Fitzgerald's cold, matter-of-fact statement, "what had begun with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last," (p. 231) conveys by its very tone Fitzgerald's censure. However, Dick's love for Nicole had been "a wild submergence of soul." And when he thinks of her dying, he imagines her sinking "into mental darkness"; (p. 235) the thought makes him "physically sick." (p. 235) Dick leaves Rome on the brink of defeat.

If Nicole can no longer be a good wife, if she, a product of both the decadent civilization about Dick and Dick's imagination, is no longer an ideal to him, all he

can do is leave Nicole, who finally sees her dependence on him as the "dependence on a false reality."[10] And Nicole's money is not Dick's major concern, as Mizener states:

> Dick Diver is not tempted, but repelled by Nicole's money, but he is not protected from her grace, part of woman's charm; but when Nicole is her whole self she is for men like Tommy Barban (animal magnetism), and Tom Buchanan.[11]

In contrast to Nicole is her sister Baby Warren, "The clean-sweeping irrational temper that had broken the moral back of a race and made a nursery out of a continent." (p. 251) Baby Warren, Nicole, and Rosemary all accept and illustrate material progress; only Nicole has enough nostalgia for the past to make her look to the future hesitantly. The sensual fascination she has for Tommy Barban makes her "spiritually" (p. 288) go out to him, but "Then self-preservation reasserted itself and, retiring to her own world, she spoke lightly." (p. 288)

Dick cannot break with the past; thus he turns to his children, the embodiment of youth. His intimacy with them is stronger than Nicole's, who had rejected them. But Dick seeks them for protection; he knows Nicole's "leap" (p. 298) is near, when she will change "in the very chemistry of blood and muscle." (p. 298) Then his ideal will exist only in his memory. Nicole will be only sensuous, like a "racing chassis, concealed for years under the body of a family limousine . . . stripped to its original self." (p. 289) Nicole's independence from Dick will also place her on a self-sustaining level with Gloria Patch;

she says, "Either you think or else others have to think for you and take power from you, pervert and discipline your natural tastes, civilize and sterilize you." (p. 308) She severs her bond with Dick when she counters his intelligence with her own; then "the household . . . was hers at last." (p. 320)

Nicole leaves Dick and marries Tommy, taking the children with her. Dick melts back into the American culture, just as Nick Carraway returns to the Midwest. The last thing we hear of Dick is that he had trouble with a "girl who worked in a grocery store," (p. 334) in upstate New York. He has become an insignificant statistic in a culture that idolizes Rosemary.

Viewing Tender is the Night as a European critic, Sergio Perosa finds it easy to see the implied allegory in the novel. His belief that the characters represent social and moral positions and "exemplify in their conflicts a contrast of wider social implications and of larger moral and symbolic significance" is lucid, tenable, and superficial;[12] for it fails to elucidate Fitzgerald's main point, which Charles Shain aptly expressed in one terse phrase: "how to live."[13] Dick only wanted love as a complement for his skill. He did not know that he could never have his preconceived ideal:

> it was as if for the remainder of his life he was condemned to carry with him the egos of certain people, early met and early loved, and to be only as complete as they were complete themselves. There was some element of loneliness involved - so easy to be loved - so hard to love."

(p. 263)

The Depression public did not receive well Tender is the Night, because Fitzgerald's subject matter recalled memories everyone wanted to forget. Most readers erroneously concluded that Fitzgerald was retelling the same story found in his earlier novels. This rejection precipitated Fitzgerald's nervous collapse. But with the help of Sheilah Graham, he managed to replace despair with a positive attitude. He turned toward the future and created Monroe Stahr, his most virile hero, and entered a new period.

NOTES

[1]*The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, p. 247.

[2]Mizener, *The Far Side of Paradise*, p. 307.

[3]P. 138.

[4]*Tender is the Night* is available in two different texts, the 1934 version which begins with Rosemary's point of view and the 1951 version in which Fitzgerald had moved Rosemary's introduction to the second of the book's parts, representing Fitzgerald's intentions for revision, partially completed. All references to this novel will be from the 1951, New York edition.

[5]K. G. Cross, *F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York, 1964), p. 84.

[6]See above, p. 50.

[7]*The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, p. 532.

[8]"*Daddy's Girl*: Symbol and Theme in *Tender is the Night*," *Modern Fiction Studies*, IV (Summer, 1958), p. 139.

[9]"Fitzgerald's Brave New World," *English Literary History*, XIX (1952), p. 303.

[10]William Hall, "Dialogue and Theme in *Tender is the Night*," *Modern Language Notes*, LXXVI, pt. 2 (1961), p. 621.

[11]"Scott Fitzgerald and the Top Girl," p. 56.

[12]P. 124.

[13]P. 41.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST TYCOON

Fitzgerald called his unfinished The Last Tycoon "an escape into a lavish, romantic past that perhaps will not come again into our time."[1] He had severed his own attachment with youthful idealism, and to any hope for Zelda's recovery. Shortly after Tender is the Night, in "The Crack Up," he had announced his new pessimism; from now on he said he would only be "on the make" like everyone else. But an intelligence, he said, should "be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise."[2] His definition could be applied to the heroes of his first four novels. But Fitzgerald's statement is important when applied to his last work, for it helps to make clear why he might have created his most tragic hero in Monroe Stahr. It is Stahr's conscious awareness that he is separated from his past idealism, essentially, which prompted Edmund Wilson to say that The Last Tycoon was Fitzgerald's "most mature piece of work." (p. x)

Obviously Fitzgerald was trying to make a comment similar to the one he made in The Great Gatsby. References to Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Jackson, the power struggle to occur in the studio between the old-line

executives and the union, the location in America of certain specific actions, and several incidental allusions indicate that Fitzgerald wanted to make a statement about the lost individual initiative that had created America. He even made Stahr's origin lower than Irving Thalberg's, from whom he modeled Stahr, to emphasize the rags-to-riches career of Stahr. And like all Fitzgerald heroes, Stahr cares too much for his own safety. Trying to produce good films, he unknowingly lets himself be trapped by materialism; as Piper says, "From The Great Gatsby to The Last Tycoon, the morality of money is Fitzgerald's major theme."[3]

In his notes, Fitzgerald said that Stahr "had everything in life except the privilege of giving himself to another human being." (p. 139) He is offered this privilege, but as far as we know, he never accepts it. He is a man who sees below the surface into reality; and like Richard II, he is surrounded by corrupt and weak men. The evil beneath Hollywood's surface was like the eczema on the actress' chest and back "which was plastered over with emollient." (p. 51) And Stahr's partner William Brady hides a nude secretary in his office closet and has a picture of his wife on the wall; his daughter, and Fitzgerald's narrator, who is "of the movies but not in them," (p. 138) happens upon the nude girl. Her first words are "Cover her up." (p. 103) But Stahr is awakened to his existence, and the industry's fate, only after Kathleen

Moore reminds him of his lost ideal, his dead wife, Minna Davis. His love for Kathleen, a sensual woman, is his attempt to free himself from the corruption in which he finds himself; for she is the real world he has lost touch with.

Kathleen first comes to Stahr, appropriately, at night, riding on the head of the goddess Siva (a papier-mâché Siva), the Hindu goddess of destructive and regenerative powers, which is floating on the flooded back lot of the studio. The earthquake that caused the flood occurs when Stahr was asleep; he even "thought he dreamed it." (p. 23) When he sees Kathleen, he thinks she is Minna back from the dead. Likewise, the quake causes Cecilia Brady's picture of her mother to fall off the wall, revealing a small safe. (p. 23) The quake also symbolizes a time shift; Cecilia said it was "like some nightmare attempt to attach our navel cords again and jerk us back to the womb of creation" (p. 23) and that the back lot looked like a child's picture book. (p. 25) To Cecilia, a young Baby Warren, such a shift is a nightmare because she is allied with the powers of material progress; she is a rationalist who unemotionally tells Stahr she loves him, just as Rosemary told Dick Diver the same. Cecilia is infatuated with Stahr's facade of success, as she thinks marrying a doctor would be most attractive. Only years later, as she tells the story, does she say, "we must go beyond the senses," (p. 3) as she did not. However, when

Stahr first sees Kathleen in the water, he has to take "a tentative step - to see if the weakness had gone out of his knees." (p. 26) Thus, he has to physically test his existence after seeing the likeness of his lost ideal woman, who was a former actress when he was becoming a tycoon, this was the period of idealism for him, only now Minna is forgotten on the lot.

Stahr, who dislikes one movie scene because the couple stop and start loving again over trifles, the next day remembers the image of Kathleen and asks his secretary to get in touch with her. By accident, she contacts Edna, the girl who was with Kathleen. Edna is a prostitute. But her voice still evokes the image of Minna in Stahr's mind, his heart cringed "at the intense reality of the day outside his window." (p. 59) Stahr feels his separation from the ideal, because of his enlightenment and how the sensuous world is changing him: "it seemed that Minna had taken their poignancy with her; his apprehension of splendor was fading so that presently the luxury of eternal mourning would depart." (p. 62)

Fitzgerald chose, I think, to have Stahr meet Edna before meeting Kathleen again so that a sharper contrast would appear between Kathleen and "a pretty American woman and nothing more." (p. 62) Edna tells him she is not the woman he wants and directs him to Kathleen's house. Fitzgerald again employs light imagery to describe Kathleen when Stahr sees her for the second time: "There she was -

face and form and smile against the light from inside." (p. 64) Stahr then reconstructs the ideal movie star with his imagination:

> It was Minna's face - the skin with its peculiar radiance as if phosphorus had touched it, the mouth with its warm line that never counted cost - and over all the haunting jollity that had fascinated a generation. (p. 64)

Stahr's heart, which he said always stays inside him, (p. 17) "with a leap . . . went out of him . . . only this time it stayed out there with a vast beneficence." (p. 64) The only woman character in the novel who was a friend of Minna's is Jane Meloney, a writer. Fitzgerald's description of her illustrates the change that has occurred:

> Her value lay in such ordinary assets as the bare fact that she was a woman and adaptable, quick and trustworthy, knew the game and was without egotism. She had been a great friend of Minna's, and over a period of years Stahr had managed to stifle what amounted to a sharp physical revulsion. (p. 36)

In his relationship with Kathleen, Stahr thinks he is doing what Gatsby could not do, recreate the past. "They existed nowhere"; (p. 64) their love surpasses time and place; it is part of an eternal ideal. For Kathleen's beauty surpasses the imitation beauty that Hollywood produces, and Stahr "was glad there was beauty in the world that would not be weighed in the scales of the casting department." (p. 66) He realizes the impossibility of possessing this ideal though when he returns home. He is lonely and hurt; he mentally apologizes to Minna. (p. 66) Stahr sees that he cannot change reality, but he knows that he must try. In contrast with the communion he and

Kathleen have is Cecilia's superficial affection; she says she was "head over heels in love with him." (p. 67)

Cecilia is the opposite from Minna. Very similar to Rosemary Hoyt, though less naive, she is the sexless kind of woman that portends barrenness. "It's more than possible that some of the pictures which Stahr himself conceived had shaped me into what I was," (p. 18) she says. But Stahr is too emotionally balanced to be affected by her immature infatuation, in contrast to Dick Diver, who was affected by Rosemary's idolatry. Cecilia is attending Bennington and knows the difference between Hollywood and the rest of the country, but her knowledge is limited to the difference itself. She has seldom seen below the glamour of Hollywood; thus, she can not understand Stahr. He is a god figure to her, and she describes him early in the novel as an airplane descending upon Hollywood, as if he were of celestial origin. Also, she wants to give herself to Stahr for no other reason than the sex act itself. She is the immoral sensuous woman, who is incapable of seeing into reality, who likes writers because "you usually get an answer." (p. 12) She thinks of her body as all right because she thought of it as "geometric." (p. 104) Potentially, she is a domineering woman, and one of Stahr's attributes is that he is a man's man and does not succumb to the decadence of the world that Cecilia, unknowingly, represents. One time she is in Kathleen's apartment and feels a horror; she feels she must be "out into the placid

sunshine." (p. 104) Finally, her breakdown follows an affair she has with a man she does not love.

Kathleen, "the most glamorous and sympathetic" (p. 139) of Fitzgerald's heroines, becomes Stahr's moral guide. The mature seriousness of their relationship belittles Cecilia's school-girl crush on Stahr. Kathleen's life does not depend on Stahr in any way, as the rest of the characters do. She has kept above the sordidness of the world, leaving her former husband when he tried to force her off on his friends. (p. 112) She is "the fresh iced fish and lobsters" (p. 114) he saw in store windows when a boy. She restores his hope and determination to resist the union organizers who would turn the studio into a motion picture automat. Only Stahr, at first, as Fitzgerald said in his notes, "doesn't realize that she has become necessary to him." (p. 104) When he discovers she is engaged to be married, he lets her drift away from him in spite of a "time-need" (p. 116) which "urged him, against the whole logic of his life" (p. 116) to keep her. After failing to act, Stahr tells Brimmer, a union leader, "There is no substitute for will. Sometimes you have to fake will when you don't feel it at all." (p. 121) Stahr's failure to commit himself to a sensuous union with Kathleen results from his tendency to think of her as an ideal. Desiring her too early would conflict with his belief that she can be another Minna.

Stahr's incompleteness is symbolized by his unfin-

ished house, wherein he and Kathleen consummate their first act of love. For Stahr, "Like many brilliant men . . . had grown up dead cold . . . . he had learned tolerance, kindness, forbearance, and even affection like lessons." (p. 97) To get to Stahr's house, they had to travel past "the gaudy shacks and fishing barges," (p. 84) the California counterpart to the valley of ashes. As they kiss, they "melted into darkness," (p. 86) the escape from white reality. Stahr "trembles" (p. 87) in her arms. Fitzgerald probably wanted to emphasize the sensuousness in the seduction scene that followed to establish sufficient reason for Stahr's newly-awakened desire for Kathleen; her warmth compels him to envision her as an ideal to work toward in the future. "He felt the madness about it akin to the love of an aging man for a young girl." (p. 116) And Kathleen began to look more like Minna actually looked than how she looked on the screen. (p. 89) But his wish to have Kathleen as an ideal is hopeless because he knows that in a few months he will die.

Because he only has a few months to live, he wants to keep their relationship sensuous. He tells Kathleen he did not "consciously" (p. 88) want to seduce her. "I'm rather a trollop; she said, following his thoughts." (p. 88) And Stahr knows this must be their relationship:

> Be a trollop, he thought. He wanted the pattern of his life broken. If he was going to die soon, like the two doctors said, he wanted to stop being Stahr for awhile and hunt for love like men who had no gifts to give, like young nameless men who looked along the streets in the

dark. (p. 90)

So, when he is out of sensory contact with Kathleen, he thinks it is alright to open her letter to him, which she lost in his car.

The letter tells Stahr of her engagement to a man who is coming to California to marry her. Stahr is confused and thinks "Minna died again." (p. 98) The next time they meet, she tells him she must marry the man; but Stahr receives the suggested meaning that she is his if he will only take her. But both Stahr and Kathleen foresee what Rosalind saw, the fate of their marriage; and they separate.

Fitzgerald was to have Stahr and Kathleen get together again. Brady was to find out about Kathleen from Cecilia and try to blackmail Stahr by threatening to tell Kathleen's husband, who is a union technician in the studio. At the climax of the power struggle, Stahr plans to have Brady murdered; Brady is killed after Stahr, who had changed his mind, his himself killed in a plane crash in mid America. In the last scene of the novel, Fitzgerald wanted to depict Kathleen standing outside the studio, which she only entered one time, illegally.

The last idea Fitzgerald had in mind for the book is similar to the ending of <u>The Great Gatsby</u>. Just as Nick Carraway realizes that the dream of America Gatsby had can no longer be fulfilled, so Kathleen represents the warmth and hope that is isolated in America by the artificial

dreams that Hollywood produces. Thus Stahr does not seem to lose Kathleen for the reason Edmund Wilson suggests, her lack of money. (p. 130) Stahr has no apparent obsession with money. He does with power, for he can turn it into a good. The real reason lies in Stahr's entanglement with Hollywood. He has avoided learning the techniques of motion picture filming, for example, so he can preserve a sensuous acceptance from the scenes of a movie as they unfold in the rushes. (p. 148) In so doing his personality is tied too closely to superficial abstractions; he has prostituted his emotions to the films. This leads him to make a completely wrong appraisal of Kathleen: "He judged her as he would judge a shot in a picture." (p. 80)

How much Fitzgerald would have altered the text before its final book form is hard to say. It must be kept in mind though that he was planning to have it serialized in a popular magazine, and, thus, he may have slightly overstressed the love affair. Nevertheless, Minna, Kathleen, and Cecilia function within the idealistic-sensual construct in the same way as the women characters in all of Fitzgerald's previous novels.

<u>The Last Tycoon</u> also is a record of Fitzgerald's personal life. Sheilah Graham was Fitzgerald's model for Kathleen. Minna, one can easily assume, is Zelda, whose incurable schizophrenia correlates nicely with Minna's death. Fitzgerald, like Monroe Stahr, turned his back on

youthful idealism, and, as Arthur Mizener affirms, his talent was not petering out.[4]

NOTES

[1]*The Last Tycoon*, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York, 1941), p. 141. All additional citations will be from this edition; page numbers will be cited parenthetically in the text.

[2]*The Crack Up*, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York, 1945), p. 69.

[3]P. 299.

[4]*The Far Side of Paradise*, p. xvii.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Today, few Fitzgerald critics would adhere to the older idea that he was only a spokesman for the jazz age. In fact, the bulk of commentary written in the last decade about Fitzgerald has opposed this view. What deceived many readers was the luster of his style and the fact that, with the exception of The Last Tycoon, almost all the action in his novels occurs before and during the twenties. But each successive book deals with a problem of greater magnitude. He was developing as a novelist should. Alfred Kazin accurately said in 1951 that Fitzgerald was "easier to appreciate than to explain."[1] Is not every great writer?

This study has tried to explain something about Fitzgerald's novels. It is often said that literature is not produced in a vacuum. One could not overemphasize this with Fitzgerald. The appearance of Zelda in his writing is so extensive that it is immeasurable. And when she was no longer with him, Sheilah Graham replaced her. This change altered his conception of the fictional female character. In writing the seduction scene for The Last Tycoon he unconsciously noted the difference: "My girls

were all so warm and full of promise. What can I do to make it honest and different."[2] By honest, he meant factual, real, what I have called sensuous. His relationship with Sheilah Graham was realistic, with no romantic illusions. It was as if the sensual woman character had stepped out of his fiction and agreed to an armistice. For Fitzgerald, who was a bit of a prude on the matter of sex, almost always associated coarse femininity with immorality. The word husky, for instance, appears in two sentences dealing with women in his notebook which illustrate this point: "At /her/ voice full of husky laughter his stomach froze."[3] and "Why do whores have husky voices?"[4] These are the dangerous women in Fitzgerald's fiction, who, sometimes, are the aged flapper. Their sensuality grows stronger with each book because they complement the fading idealism of the dream girl. Amory Blaine interacts with idealists who only exist on film for Monroe Stahr.

Also in Fitzgerald's notebook were descriptive fragments of idealists, women whose beauty is almost spiritual. But his diction usually consecrates her in a stasis. For example, "Her beauty was as poised and secure as a flower on a strong stem; her voice was cool and sure, with no wayward instruments in it that played on his emotions."[5] As the woman's role in American culture was changing, Fitzgerald was trying to comment on his time and also employ his own personal history, his life during and after

winning of Zelda. Their extravagant life was an attempt to maintain the joy of their romantic courtship. When Zelda was beyond recovery, a permanent schizoid, he in a sense was free, as Ernest Hemingway recalled in A Moveable Feast: "Scott did not write anything any more that was good until after he knew that she was insane."[6]

The change in the women characters in Fitzgerald's novels is not paralleled by a change in the male characters. His heroes are different facets of himself, but their values and weaknesses are about the same. They only mature as the heroines lose their beauty and warmth. How the hero reacts to her change seems to be Fitzgerald's major concern. A man with youthful romantic idealism, which Fitzgerald considered an admirable quality, can only be as virtuous as the women he loves. Charles Shain says that Fitzgerald's major theme is "that we create a large part of our moral selves as we become engaged in . . . society."[7] He also distinguishes Fitzgerald's attitude toward women from all other modern novelists.[8] Thus love should never be subordinated to material wealth; this is Fitzgerald's moral.

In all cases, wealth brings degeneracy. The ideal girl, with the exception of Kathleen, is born in a rich family, and the wealth corrupts her after maturity. Rosalind cannot marry Amory because he is not rich. Gloria, above all else, must have the trappings of an heiress, Daisy can only conform to Tom's wishes, Nicole

must be bought a young, emotionally healthy doctor; only Kathleen scoffs at the glitter of a rich Hollywood, is outside of it and unaltered by it. Conversely, the heroes are not rich, again with the exception of Stahr, who was born poor however. In their endeavor to regain the dream girl, they are corrupted by the wealth that has corrupted her.

Beloved Infidel appears to be an accurate history of Fitzgerald's last three years, good enough in Andrew Turnbull's estimation to use as an important source for his biography of Fitzgerald. In Miss Graham's book one can see that Fitzgerald had finally stopped drinking and had taken up a quiet domestic life. One can not help wondering what he would have accomplished if he had first met a woman like her in place of Zelda. J. B. Priestley's statement of this idea will serve best as my concluding remark:

> Another kind of woman, as he discovered when it was all too late, might from the first have given him the security and tranquillity that the artist in him, if not always the man, needed so desperately.[9]

NOTES

[1]"Introduction," F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work, p. 17.

[2]The Last Tycoon, p. 151.

[3]The Crack Up, p. 143.

[4]Ibid., p. 198.

[5]Ibid., p. 132.

[6]New York, 1964, p. 186.

[7]P. 8.

[8]P. 17.

[9]"Introduction," The Bodley Head Scott Fitzgerald, I (London, 1959), p. 9.

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