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Gender, Madness and the Search for Identity in selected works of

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Helen Turner

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Literature, Film and Theatre Studies

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Abstract

In this thesis I engage with the subject of identity and how it is formed and undermined in the work of F. Scott Fitzgerald. In many of the novels and short stories a tension exists between two opposing forces. The first is the pursuit of a social identity which values inherited wealth and familial connections, mirroring in the values of the Old European World. In opposition to this is the protagonists' personal identity that is not dependent on these long established connections to others. In characters such as Jay Gatsby and Dick Diver the latter is sacrificed in order to pursue the former. However, such an act of self-betrayal is shown to have significant, indeed disastrous consequences resulting in alcoholism, narcissism and melancholia.

Alongside this study of Fitzgerald's male characters is a consideration of women in his work and the manner in which they are used as symbols of masculine success. I chart the development of these female characters from his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, in which women are primarily used to demonstrate the fears, desire and indeed character of the protagonist to more complex representations in the mature novels *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*. In *Gatsby*, Daisy Buchanan demonstrates a growing awareness of the female voice, even as, at times, Nick Carraway's narration attempts to suppress it. In *Tender is the Night*, I suggest that there are two distinct stories evident in one narrative. In this novel "her" story is as significant as "his" story. I argue that this dialogism is, in part, a product of the author's biography at the time of the novel's composition.

The depiction of these masculine acts of self-betrayal result in locating the most important aspects of identity in work. Or, as Fitzgerald wrote in 1936, "I have at last become a writer only."

Contents

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The writing of this thesis, though at times challenging and frustrating, has been an experience of enormous satisfaction and joy. In large part because I have been privileged to immerse myself in the life and work of this complex man and experience on a daily basis the breathtaking beauty of his words in his novels, short stories, essays and letters. It has been an opportunity for which I shall always be grateful.

Introduction

When considering the work of F Scott Fitzgerald a focus on identity may not appear to be the most original approach that could be taken. Questions surrounding how Fitzgerald presents identity in his fiction and understood it in his own life have been a constant presence in the critical debate surrounding the author. Milton R Stern, in his 1994 *Tender is the Night: The Broken Universe* divides his reading of Fitzgerald's novel into chapters each of which deal with a different component of identity, national and sexual, amongst others.[1] Chris Messenger in his 2015 work *Tender is the Night and F. Scott Fitzgerald's Sentimental Identities* is also concerned with how identity is created and maintained.[2] Scott Donaldson, in *Fool for Love*, approaches Fitzgerald's biography through what Donaldson detects as "a compulsion to please" which led to an "inordinate amount of time and energy pleasing women" and connects these pursuits for approval with Fitzgerald's sense of self until the eventual realisation that what was significant was "doing the work that mattered".[3]

Similarly, discussions around gender and Fitzgerald are widespread. Main questions arising in this area are whether Fitzgerald's women are a reflection of the new woman that he engaged with, or are they symptomatic of the fears and anxieties of the author. How do relationships with these women impact upon the male protagonists? And what pressures are exerted on them by other models of masculinity?

Due to his wife Zelda's profound mental health problems and the influence of this real life situation on the fictional world of *Tender is the Night*, the topic of

[1] Milton R Stern, *Tender Is the Night: The Broken Universe* (Twayne Pub, 1994).
[2] Christian K Messenger, *Tender Is the Night and F. Scott Fitzgerald's Sentimental Identities* (University of Alabama Press, 2015).
[3] Scott Donaldson, *The Impossible Craft: Literary Biography*, (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2015), 218.

madness is an ongoing concern in Fitzgerald studies. Biographical approaches return to this subject repeatedly. Often the approach is concerned with the manner in which Zelda was pathologised and her husband, despite his alcoholism, was not subjected to a psychiatric discourse in the same manner.

So why return to these key but frequently considered themes and how does this thesis attempt to approach them?

Firstly, I trace through Fitzgerald's male protagonists a tension between society and the individual in establishing a genuine, sustainable identity. At the heart of this tension is a pull felt by Fitzgerald's protagonists towards a socially determined identity that is recognised and validated by the society in which Fitzgerald's fiction operates. This identity is demonstrated by marriage, inherited wealth and familial ties and is, in many ways, a continuation of the established values of the old European world. Simultaneously there is a pull towards an identity that is forged independently by the individual and is closely associated with work or productivity. The male protagonist is seduced by the outward, socially determined markers of successful identity, which is most concisely illustrated as marriage to Fitzgerald's famous 'golden girl'. This is illustrated by Gatsby's pursuit of Daisy Fay Buchanan and Dick Diver's marriage to Nicole Warren. Through the course of the novels, work and industry are replaced by leisure and fleeting entertainments. This realignment with societal identity results in an act of self-betrayal, and is present in all of Fitzgerald's male protagonists of his completed novels with the exception of Amory Blaine in *This Side of Paradise*.[4] Significantly, or perhaps only co-incidentally, this character was created before the novelist's marriage to Zelda Sayre.

[4] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*, ed. James. L.W. West III, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

The aftermath of this self-betrayal is my second area of consideration. In Fitzgerald's protagonists who undergo a process of conforming (or attempting to conform) to a socially determined identity, I trace the devastating results of mental disorder or breakdown in the form of alcoholism, narcissism, and melancholia.

Alongside these considerations of Fitzgerald's male protagonists is the role of women in the formation of a masculine sense of self and how they are used as a site of projection for their male counterparts. I also contrast the way in which female identity in Fitzgerald's fiction is a search for one that is not dictated to by their relationships with men.

My final consideration is how these concerns impact on the manner in which narratives are constructed in the novels. Central to this concern is Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of polyphony, which the Russian theorist applied to Fydor Dostoevsky's work. The term, which is borrowed from music meaning multiple voices, recognises the manner in which Dostoevsky's novels contain multiple voices and perspectives that are not subordinated to the author's voice creating a multiplicity of stories within one narrative. This is something that I identify in Fitzgerald's work, particularly in his later works, which permit multiple stories and encourage contradictory critical readings.

My two major theoretical approaches are firstly Bakhtin's theories regarding polyphony, dialogism, multiplicity and simultaneity. With reference to his work I explore the polyphonic nature of Fitzgerald's novels; this approach is particularly useful in an analysis of *Tender is the Night*.[5] The complex narrative voice of the novel permits multiple perspectives on the same events, the result of

[5] *Tender Is the Night*, ed. James L. W. West III, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of F Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

which is (at least) two distinct stories occurring simultaneously, the story of Dick on the one hand and the story of Nicole on the other.

My second major theoretical tool is the work of Soren Kierkegaard, specifically his 1843 work *Repetition*.[6] This text provides a fascinating foil to *The Great Gatsby* as both texts explore the nature of memory in creating a personal identity and the pitfalls of investing a relationship with the significance of creating one's own selfhood.[7] With the exception of J'aime L. Sanders essay, "Discovering the source of Gatsby's Greatness: Nick's Eulogy of a "Great" Kierkegaardian Knight" which explores what the author sees as Kierkegaardian echoes in *The Great Gatsby*, there has been no other work that links these two authors. [8] My work, however, differs significantly from Sanders' as the Kierkegaardian text that she focuses on is *Fear and Trembling* and highlights the positivity that she finds in the text, which she argues, belies Kirkegaard's reputation as the father of existentialism. In *The Great Gatsby* she identifies a similar optimism that she finds in *Fear and Trembling,* which is marked by Gatsby elevating himself to a higher mode of Kierkegaardian existence in his despair at the loss of Daisy and can be identified by the markers of hope and faith.[9] My approach differs considerably from that of J'aime Sanders. By using the melancholy that is evident in *Repetition* I identify Gatsby as a potential melancholic suicide, who is rescued from this fate by his murder at the hands of George Wilson and elevated above it by Nick Carraway's narration.

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[6] Soren Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosphical Crumbs*, trans. M. G. Piety (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[7] F.Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, ed. Matthew J Bruccoli, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of F Scott Fitzgerald. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[8] J'aime L. Sanders, "Discovering the Source of Gatsby's Greatness: Nick's Eulogy of a "Great" Kierkegaardian Knight," *The F Scott Fitzgerald Review* 3 (2004).
[9] Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling: Dialectical Lyric by Johannes De Silentio* (Penguin UK, 1985).

In terms of structure the thesis is divided into four chapters. The first is concerned with masculinity, the second with the feminine, the third is focused on what is considered by most Fitzgerald's masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*, and the final chapter is devoted to Fitzgerald's final completed work, *Tender is the Night*.

Chapter One considers masculinity at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and how the so-called crisis in masculinity has been understood in recent studies by Michael Kimmel, Gail Bederman and E. Anthony Rotundo. This is followed by a brief consideration of the impact of World War One and the limited experience that Fitzgerald and his contemporaries William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway had of the conflict. I then turn my attention to Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and trace in these texts what I detect as "the absent but ever present feminine".[10] This is not only present in the fiction of these writers but also in the manner in which their response to the feminine impacted their creative lives. In this regard I am not so much interested in how autobiographical detail is incorporated into the text (although this is evident) but how biographical detail is associated with their role as writers through their own admission. The focus is on the connection made by Faulkner between Caddy Compson and his own deceased daughter (despite Caddy's creation before Alabama Faulkner's birth and death) and Fitzgerald's identification of the importance of the death of his sisters before his birth in his development as a writer. I also consider the parallels between Fitzgerald's pursuit, rejection and eventual marriage to Zelda Sayre and Faulkner's disrupted path to his marriage

[10] William Faulkner, *Novels 1926-1929 Soldiers' Pay(1926), Mosquitoes(1927), Flags in the Dust(1929), the Sound and the Fury(1929)*, ed. Joseph and Noel Polk Blotner (New York: Library of America, 2006).

to Estelle Oldham. Despite the re-unification with these women there appears to be a differentiation made by both men between these women before their rejection and after their re-unification with them. As Faulkner states in *The Marionettes*, the central female character is "changed but not changed". This presence and simultaneous absence of the feminine as well as this sense of permanence and change is traced through the course of the two novels.

My attention then turns to the influence of other men on Scott Fitzgerald. The influence his father, Edward, had on the writer is approached from a joint perspective. Firstly, I consider the importance of Edward Fitzgerald's identification with the South and, secondly, the significance of the son's sense of his father's perceived failures. How did these two aspects (that he attributed to his father as expressed in the incomplete "Death Of My Father"), influence Fitzgerald's understanding of masculinity? [11] When considering Fitzgerald's engagement with other men and their influence of his own sense of masculine identity, it is of some interest to consider how his sometime friendship, sometime rivalry with Ernest Hemingway influenced his own self-perception. I consider Hemingway's presentation of Fitzgerald in his posthumous memoir, *A Moveable Feast*. What does Hemingway's depiction reveal about how these writers used other male writers to exert, prove or question their own masculinity? Alongside Hemingway's presentation of Fitzgerald, his depiction of Zelda and the relationship she had with her husband, is revealing as to how he saw or perhaps constructed Fitzgerald's masculinity. In short: how are work and women used to create, maintain and undermine masculine identity?

In Chapter Two the focus shifts to a consideration of the feminine, in the specific context of the narratives that are told about women by men. I use Zelda

[11] John Kuehl, *The Apprentice Fiction of F Scott Fitzgerald* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1965).

Fitzgerald's position as a reader of male texts and as an individual subject of psychiatric discourse to explore theoretical positions pertaining to the relations between female experience and masculine interpretation of it. I begin with a brief overview of how the history of women and madness has been interpreted in recent times. This includes a consideration of the work of Michel Foucault with regards to a history of madness and Elaine Showalter with respect to how female experiences are incorporated into this historical narrative. Zelda Fitzgerald's troubled mental health history and her role as the model for some of the female characters in her husband's fiction makes such a consideration significant. Attention is then turned to Zelda in two capacities: firstly, Zelda as a reader of male texts, specifically those of her husband. By using her position theoretically it is possible to explore the relationship between women and the male written text. Reference is made to the work of Judith Fetterley, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Jacqueline Rose and Leslie Fiedler amongst others. Alongside her position as a reader of male texts I consider her position as the writer of autobiographical texts. My analysis of her work is focused upon the *Girl* series of stories that were published between 1929 and 1931, a period that begins just before her first mental collapse and ends in the aftermath of it. Despite growing interest in Zelda as a writer, very little critical work has been undertaken with regards to this story cycle, with most critical attention being focused on her one completed novel *Save Me the Waltz* (1932).[12]

My final consideration in this chapter is Zelda Fitzgerald as the subject of feminist biography. I explore the manner in which one life is used to elucidate the suppression of the female creative voice in the patriarchal culture of the western literary tradition. However, my concern is focused upon the problems

[12] Zelda Fitzgerald, *The Collected Writings*, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli (Scribner, 1991).

inherent in approaching biography as a means of illustrating theoretical positions, no matter how valid such positions may be. My interest lies in the problematic nature of the biographies of Zelda as well as the, perhaps not unsurprising, shift from subject of biography to fictionalised character in a number of recent novels, which provide free rein to present Zelda as a feminist icon and victim of a patriarchal culture and a controlling husband.

In Chapter Three focus shifts to Fitzgerald's 1925 novel, *The Great Gatsby*. Firstly, with reference to the work of Marianne DeKoven and Mikhail Bakhtin and a consideration of the critical debate around the nature of Nick Carraway's narration, I demonstrate the polyphonic nature of the text. This multiplicity is in part rooted in Nick's dual role of storyteller and participant in the action. It is also a result of the two distinct time frames in the novel: the time that the events took place and the time of Nick's narration. I argue that Nick tells the story in order to, firstly, create meaning out of a series of events which appear meaningless and secondly, to re-establish identity, not only his own but also Gatsby's. Through the course of the novel Gatsby's identity is uncertain which is illustrated by the rumours that repeatedly swirl around him; however, Nick's narration anchors Gatsby's identity back to who he was *before* he met Daisy. Through Nick's storytelling and his own death Gatsby is restored to an individual in keeping with the *idea* of America rather than the *reality* of America, a return to an individualism marked by faith and hope in the possibilities of the future. Gatsby, in his quest for a social identity that could re-capture Daisy, performs an act of self-betrayal from which Nick rescues him through his storytelling. Leading on from this I consider how identity is a product of masculine exchange in the novel. The central relationships in this regard are between Tom and Gatsby and Gatsby and Nick.

The final section of the chapter is concerned with what I term Gatsby's shifting personal identity. With reference to Soren Kierkegaard, R.D Laing and John T Irwin's recent work on the use of myth in Fitzgerald's fiction, I chart the changing nature of Gatsby's relationship with Daisy and how this is indicative of Gatsby's identity and state of mind, rather than baring any significance to Daisy herself. The relationship Gatsby has with Daisy has three movements. The first movement is marked by a process of projection and attribution, the second is a narcissistic extension of self and a simultaneous assimilation into self, and the third is a melancholic loss of self and it is this final phase that ends the novel. However, through Nick's narration after Gatsby's death, Gatsby is raised above this, raised, as it were, above the plot.

The final chapter is concerned with Fitzgerald's final completed novel. *Tender is the Night*. I begin with a consideration of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of simultaneity and apply this to Fitzgerald's novel. The narrative includes the multiple perspectives of multiple characters, which are distinct from each other but situated in parallel. Again, the nature of the critical debate around the novel is, I would suggest, indicative of its polyphony. I then connect the multiplicity of stories in the text to the themes of repetition, duality and trauma. In this section I look at the relationship between Nicole Diver and Abe North and consider the ways in which they mirror each other as both characters are traumatised by previous events. I also analyse the manner in which escalating violence stalks Abe North throughout the course of the novel and how he can be seen as a trigger for a number of Nicole's psychotic episodes.

Attention then turns specifically to Nicole and her pursuit of "self-authorship". Throughout the course of the novel she is subjected to a number of narratives all of which are constructed by men: her husband, her doctors and her father. Through the course of the novel Nicole's voice gradually begins to be heard. It is

a process of acknowledging and accepting what has happened to her rather than a continual, failing attempt to exclude the trauma from her sense of self. This is summed up in her statement, "[a]m I going through the rest of life flinching at the word 'father'?"[13] This emerging female voice is possibly tied to Fitzgerald's biography and his complex relationship with his wife, Zelda. A growing recognition can be charted through the course and development of Fitzgerald's fiction that "his story" does not necessarily match with "her story".

The final section of the chapter is concerned with Dick Diver and the shift through the course of the novel from masculine certainty to uncertainty. Nicole's desire to take control of her own voice and narrative means that Dick is no longer the only source of meaning for Nicole or, for that matter, the reader. This in turn highlights Dick's act of self-betrayal: his surrendering of a promising career to become the affluent caretaker, husband and host to Nicole Warren Diver. Just as with Gatsby, Dick is seduced by the trappings of social class, wealth and marriage at the expense of his authentic and individuated self. However, despite the anti-climatic ending there is a glimmer of hope as Dick Diver has returned to his role of doctor, albeit in a reduced capacity: it is an identity that is based on Diver's work, on his personal strengths and abilities. I believe it is this that lies at the heart of how Fitzgerald presents and engages with the idea of identity. It would seem that Fitzgerald had a tendency to be seduced by an idea of identity that is tied to social position and inherited wealth; this is encapsulated in his protagonists' endless pursuits of "the golden girl". However, Fitzgerald also suggests through his characters the importance of work in establishing a sense of self which one can be at ease with in the midst of uncertainty: an identity that remains despite constant personal and social

[13] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night,* 324.

change, that remains despite the fickleness of success, that remains even in the face of death. In this regard this thesis is an extended engagement with and an analysis of a fragment of a letter written by Fitzgerald to his daughter on the 7th July 1938, less than two and half years before his death:

> When I was your age I lived with a great dream. The dream grew and I learned how to speak of it and make people listen. Then the dream divided one day when I decided to marry your mother after all, even though I knew she was spoiled and meant no good to me. I was sorry immediately I had married her but, being patient in those days, made the best of it and got to love her in another way. You came along and for a long time we made quite a lot of happiness out of our lives. But I was a man divided – she wanted me to work too much for *her* and not enough for my dream. She realised too late that work was dignity, and the only dignity, and tried to atone for it by working herself, but it was too late and she broke and is broken forever.
> It was too late also for me to recoup the damage – I had spent most of my resources, spiritual and material, on her, but I struggled on for five years till my health collapsed, and all I cared about was drinking and forgetting.[14]

In this letter Fitzgerald brings together the three main concerns of this thesis: gender, madness and identity and it is these themes and how they are connected that I now wish to explore.

[14] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters*, ed. Matthew and Judith Baughman Bruccoli (Scribner, 1994), 363.

Chapter One: Masculinities

In order to explore the relationship between gender and madness it is important to consider how the ideas of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are to be defined for the purpose of this thesis. This chapter will concern itself with the shifting roles of men at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. It will also consider how social changes in America impacted in how men asserted their masculinity at a time when the old certainties of what constituted manhood were perceived to be under threat.

The approach will be threefold. Firstly, consideration will be given to the socio-historical context of America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. If, during this time, there was a crisis in masculinity, what was happening, particularly in America that led to this 'crisis'? The term itself implies that masculinity prior to this period was a clearly recognisable and definable entity that was subsequently disrupted, challenged and could perhaps even be destroyed. However:

> Manhood is neither static nor timeless. Manhood is not the manifestation of an inner essence; it's socially constructed.Manhood does not bubble up to consciousness from our biological constitution; it is created in our culture. [15]

The argument proposed here is that masculinity is not fixed, permanent or singular in nature.

The second part of the chapter will be concerned with F. Scott Fitzgerald's first novel, *This Side of Paradise* and its treatment of gender relations alongside that of his contemporary William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. In the final part of the chapter attention will turn to the historical figure of F Scott Fitzgerald. Biographical studies of Fitzgerald have focused upon his alcoholism;

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[15] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America a Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3.

however, the complexity of his troubled psychological make-up goes beyond his problem drinking. As a result consideration will be given to various aspects of his life and the people in it. Attention will be paid to the impact his father had on his understanding of what it was to be 'a man'. How did this crucial relationship influence his own feelings of being 'half-feminine'? It is impossible to ignore the complex and troubled relationship he had with Zelda Sayre when discussing the nature of masculinity and how it interacts with the feminine. His relationships with his male contemporaries, are also significant; as a result, the complicated links between Fitzgerald and his sometime friend, sometime nemesis, Ernest Hemingway is worthy of attention. Similarly, the manner in which the damaging destructive patterns in Fitzgerald's life are echoed in the lives of William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway is of interest when looking at the links between gender and madness.

Defining Masculinities

Michael Kimmel, in his 2006 work *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* recognises the impossibility of a single definition of masculinity whilst simultaneously recognising a cultural tendency to identify masculinity as white, middle-class and heterosexual. He continues by suggesting that alternative versions of masculinity identified as working-class, homosexual and non-white are defined as "other" in a similar fashion to the feminine in order to assert certainty about a "normal" masculine identity, particularly during periods of significant and rapid change such as those which occurred at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Changes in working environments meant that there was a shift from autonomous work to paid employment, which can be equated with dependency. Simultaneously, an increase in immigration saw an influx of 24 million Europeans between 1880 and 1924, alongside 500,000 African-Americans heading North between 1915

and 1920, followed by a further 1,000,000 during the decade of the 1920s. These changes in the ethnic make-up of the American cityscape were a visible manifestation of the changes that were occurring in American life and which "self-christened 'native' Americans perceived as a threat to their power and control".[16] These anxieties were as much concerned with controlling American national identity as with any economic impact. Alongside these changes, female emancipation was also gaining momentum and culminated in the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment of the Constitution in 1920. White, middle-class manhood, it would appear, was beset on all sides by the 'other' in various forms. Gail Bederman, however, stops short of calling this period of change a crisis in masculinity,

> there is no evidence that most turn-of-the-century men ever lost confidence in the belief that people with male bodies naturally possessed both a man's identity and a man's right to wield power. They might not have been entirely certain *how* these three factors were related, but few seem to have lost confidence *that* they were related.[17]

Bederman continues by highlighting that any suggestion of a crisis in masculinity implies that it 'is a trans-historical category or fixed essence' but she does argue that middle-class men were "actively, even enthusiastically, engaging in the process of remaking manhood" during the period between 1880 and 1910 (Bederman 15). This was illustrated by a focus upon physical activity as a marker of manhood; there was an increase in interest in pursuits such as boxing, hunting and fishing. Simultaneously, there was a growing concern that civilisation was effeminate. This is illustrated by the frequently quoted speech by Basil Ransom in Henry James' *The Bostonians* (1886):

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[16] Suzanne del Gizzo, "Ethnic Stereotyping," in *F. Scott Fitzgerald in Context*, ed. Bryant Mangum (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 226.

[17] Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization a Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States 1880-1917*, ed. C Stimpson, Women in Culture and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 11.

> The whole generation is womanized; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it's feminine, nervous, hysterical [...] The masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to know and yet not fear reality, to look the world in the face and take it for what it is [...] that is what I want to preserve, or rather *recover*; and I must tell you that I don't in the least care what becomes of you ladies while I make the attempt! (James *The Bostonians* qtd in Bederman 16)

This attempt to re-assert power over the 'other', be it women, black men, immigrants or homosexuals has been interpreted by feminist theorists, according to Kimmel, as examples of how "masculinity [...] was defined by the drive for power, for domination, for control".[18] However, he suggests that although this interpretation is significant the real fear that led to a desire *to* dominate was one based in a dread of *being* dominated. This in turn was connected to the idea of the feminine without necessarily being exclusively connected with women. As the quotation from Henry James suggests certain activities, characteristics and illness were equated with the feminine and effeminacy in men. In this exchange between men about masculine identity, women are used as a symbol or a prize that is bestowed upon the individual that most closely complies with the established American 'norm' of manhood. Anxiety around these issues are evident in both Fitzgerald's letters and in his fiction, most clearly represented in the triangular relationship between Daisy Fay, Tom Buchanan and Jay Gatsby. Tom's recapturing of his wife at the end of the novel is symbolic of his assertion of his power, control and autonomy.

World War One and American Manhood

Although obvious, it is important to make reference to the significance of the First World War and its role in altered attitudes of what constituted 'manhood' and 'masculinity'. In a study of an American writer working in the aftermath of

[18] Kimmel, *Manhood in America a Cultural History,* 4.

World War One, it is important to differentiate between the British, Colonial or European experience of the war and the war as experienced by their American counterparts. The United States' late entry into the war is reflected poignantly in the figures pertaining to mobilised forces, number of dead and injured and the casualties as a percentage. In total, although exact figures are a matter of debate, the U.S mobilised 4,355,000 men, of whom 116,516 were killed, 204,002 injured and the percentage of casualties of U.S. forces was 7.1%. In contrast, the British Empire mobilised 8,904,467 men, of whom 908,371 were killed, 2,090,212 were wounded and casualties as a percentage of the forces was 35.8%.[19] The figures become increasingly alarming when attention is turned to Russia, France and Germany. In short the U.S. experience in the war was two and a half years shorter than experienced by European counterparts. Secondly, the manner in which promotion occurred within the U.S army resulted in individuals that would previously have been perceived as the officer class not being automatically promoted. The U.S. army, with the significant exception of its attitude towards black men, was far more meritocratic than its British counterpart.[20] In *The Gun and the Pen: Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner and the Fiction of Mobilization*, Keith Gandal articulates this idea with reference to the three great American writers of the post-war era:

> the 'quintessential' male American modernist novelists were motivated, in their celebrated post-war literary works not so much, as the usual story goes, by their experiences of the horrors of World War I but rather

[19] These figures were obtained at the following website www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html .The source of which is the U.S Department of Justice.

[20] Keith Gandal, *The Gun and the Pen Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner and the Fiction of Mobilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). See pages 15-20 for further details. With reference to historians Nancy Gentile Ford, Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, Gandal argues that black soldiers were discriminated against to the extreme, however, other ethnic groups were not treated in the same manner. He provides details regarding the ratio between Jewish officers and regular soldiers which were comparable to the general army population.

> by their inability in fact to have those experiences. The famous sense of woundedness, diminishment, and loss in these works [...] stems, not principally from the disillusionment or the alienation from traditional values brought on by the crisis of the Great War or the failure of civilization it represented [...] but instead from personal rejection by the U.S Army. Fitzgerald, Hemingway and Faulkner were all, for different reasons, deemed unsuitable as candidates for full military service or command, and the result was that they felt themselves 'emasculated' again, not because of their encounters with trench warfare in a mechanized army or their consciousness of mass slaughter but because either they got nowhere near the trenches or because they got to them in 'trivial' non-combatant roles.[21]

The failure to fully experience active service was then compounded by the failure to compete within a meritocratic institution, the U.S. Army. The perceived threat that white, American masculinity faced prior to the war from immigrants and the working classes was highlighted when the 'norm' of American manhood, illustrated in Gandal's argument by Fitzgerald, Faulkner and Hemingway, was found wanting in this new 'egalitarian' order.

The men who had experienced the frontline, who had proved their manhood in battle, were not immune to a crisis in their own understanding of masculinity. Mental disturbance and madness, once the domain of women (indeed referred to as the 'female malady'), was now stalking men. Elaine Showalter in *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980* explores the onset of male hysteria or shell-shock during and after World War One within the context of how madness was diagnosed in women and how female madness or hysteria was a means of expression for women in a tightly regimented and controlled social environment. Showalter makes the comparison between the tightly regimented and controlled world of Victorian women that restricted personal expression of desire or fear and the tightly regimented and controlled world of the trenches. Not only were male responses becoming feminised but

[21] Ibid., 5.

their actual environment echoed the social position of women: voiceless, confined and devoid of autonomy.

> When all signs of physical fear were judged as weakness and when alternatives to combat – pacifism, conscientious objection, desertion, even suicide – were viewed as unmanly, men were silenced and immobilized and forced, like women, to express their conflicts through the body. Placed in intolerable circumstances of stress and expected to react with unnatural 'courage', thousands of soldiers reacted instead with the symptoms of hysteria. [22]

Action and inaction both lead to a failed manhood. It is at this point that Fitzgerald begins to write and is shortly followed by Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner. To explore some of the issues presented thus far attention will turn to the writing of Fitzgerald and Faulkner, focusing on two texts which are considered their most auto-biographical, either by their own admission ("I am Quentin in *The Sound and the Fury"*), or by general consensus (*This Side of Paradise* is based upon many of Fitzgerald's early adulthood experience). How are anxieties about masculinity explored in these early works, particularly with regard to a sense of paralysis that both action and inaction result in the same failure, and how are women used as both a symbol and a cause of this failure?

"I Eternally See Her Figure Eternally Vanishing": The Absent But Ever Present Feminine. [23]

While it can be counterproductive to approach literary works through a narrow biographical prism, the manner in which Fitzgerald and Faulkner considered the role of their own biographies in relation to these two texts is of interest. The association is not so much in terms of incorporating events in their own lives in

[22] Elaine Showalter, "The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Literature 1830–1980," (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 171.

[23] The quotation is from a letter to Charles Brown from John Keats written on his last voyage from England to Italy in October 1820. Quoted in John Evangelist Walsh, *Darkling I Listen: The Last Days and Death of John Keats* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), 25.

to their novels (although this is apparent, particularly in relation to *This Side of Paradise*) but the biographical detail, which is associated by the authors with the act of writing. In both cases there is an intricate relationship between their creative lives and a particular response to the feminine.

F Scott Fitzgerald was born on the 24 September 1896, the same year that his two sisters, aged one and three, died. In an article entitled "Author's House" published by Esquire magazine in July 1936, Fitzgerald makes a connection between the death of his siblings and his chosen profession.

> three months before I was born my mother lost her other two children and I think that came first of all though I don't know how it worked exactly. I think I started then to be a writer.[24]

Greg Forter explores the connection between Fitzgerald's creativity and the death of his older and, significantly, unknown sisters. "It follows that had there been no loss, neither would Fitzgerald have felt any impulse or reason to create".[25] Forter also points out the peculiarity of this loss: it is inherited from his mother Mollie and not a loss that is experienced. Mitchell Breitweiser suggests that, as a result, "Fitzgerald would thus come to spend his life in a search to cure the insatiable longing produced by internalizing someone else's

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[24] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Afternoon of an Author*, ed. Arthur Mizener (London: The Bodley Head Ltd, 1958), 233. Matthew J Bruccoli makes reference to this quotation in the opening pages of *Some Sort of Epic Granduer* (12). Although he does not explore the significance of the connection made between the deaths and Fitzgerald's choice of profession.

[25] Greg Forter, "F. Scott Fitzgerald, Modernist Studies, and the Fin-De-Siècle Crisis in Masculinity," *American Literature* 78, no. 2 (2006): 301. In Jonathan Schiff, *Ashes to Ashes Mourning and Social Difference in F Scott Fitzgerald's Fiction* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 2001). explores the possibility that Fitzgerald had psychological markers indicative of those of the 'replacement child'. By obtaining birth certificates, Schiff has been able to ascertain that the older child, Louise, died on 13th June 1896, at age 3, during Mollie Fitzgerald's pregnancy with Scott. However, the second daughter, Mary, died on the 25th November 1895 at seventeen months. The gap of ten months between her death and Scott's birth is suggestive of Scott being a 'replacement' for the dead girl.

grief".[26] The suggestion being made is that Fitzgerald is unable to mourn because he does not know that for which he grieves. Forter continues his argument by suggesting that this event, which was associated with his mother and not both of his parents, set up in Fitzgerald, "associations that link up creativity, unmournable loss and an internalized femininity".[27] The lost 'objects' are female and as so often in Fitzgerald's fiction, the female, even when present is somehow absent. The 'version' of the female that his protagonists crave is always a 'past' or 'previous' 'version', perhaps even a 'created version' based not in reality or experience but imagined in the same manner that Fitzgerald's dead sisters, to whom he linked his creativity, could only ever be imagined.

The connection between the lost or absent feminine and the creative impulse is something that Fitzgerald shares with Faulkner. The creation of Caddy Compson was, in Faulkner's own words, a response not only to his absent (non-existent) sister but also his absent (lost through death) first daughter, Alabama. As with Fitzgerald, these female figures are unknowable: his sister could only ever be imagined and his daughter, who died only nine days after her birth remains ever present through her absence, but unknown. Faulkner drew the connection between the creation of Caddy and the death of Alabama even though *The Sound and the Fury* was written before Alabama's birth on the 11th January 1931.[28] Faulkner wrote in 1933 shortly (and significantly) after the birth of his second daughter, Jill, that he "did not realise then that I was trying to manufacture the sister which I did not have and the daughter which I would

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[26] Quoted in Forter, "F. Scott Fitzgerald, Modernist Studies, and the Fin-De-Siècle Crisis in Masculinity," 301.
[27] Ibid., 302.
[28] Faulkner, *Novels 1926-1929 Soldiers' Pay(1926), Mosquitoes(1927), Flags in the Dust(1929), the Sound and the Fury(1929)*.

lose".[29] In the same introduction to the novel, Faulkner speaks of being 'destined' to lose his first daughter, suggesting that this event influenced him before it occurred: the feminine is always already lost, already absent, always unknowable.[30] Faulkner continues by recognising his own complex personal response to the feminine that is represented in the novel's depiction of the relationship between Caddy and her three brothers and father:

> I could be in it, the brother and father both. But one brother could not contain all that I could feel toward her. I gave her 3: Quentin who loved her as a lover would, Jason who loved her with the same hatred [...] jealous and outraged pride of a father, and Benjy, who loved her with the complete mindlessness of a child.[31]

Alongside these reflections upon the source of their creativity, the two writers also shared a complex path to marriage with women that would initially reject them and eventually accept them. It would appear that *This Side of Paradise* was, in part, re-written in response to Zelda's rejection of Fitzgerald. When she terminated their engagement in June 1919, Fitzgerald quit his job in advertising in New York and returned home to St Paul to re-write his novel. According to Edmund Wilson around this time Fitzgerald told him, "I wouldn't care if she died, but I couldn't stand to have anyone else marry her".[32] Matthew Bruccoli suggests that Fitzgerald "had the lingering hope that publication of his novel might win her [Zelda] back".[33] According to Scott Donaldson "the rejection by Ginevra [Fitzgerald's first love] – and later, the same rejection or very nearly so by Zelda – provided him with a basic donnee of his fiction. He took the hurt,

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[29] James B. Meriwether, *A Faulkner Miscellany* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1974), 159.

[30] Chris Messenger in his 2015 book *Tender is the Night and F Scott Fitzgerald's Sentimental Identities* also recognises the similarity in Fitzgerald's remarks about his deceased sisters and Faulkner's comments regarding the creation of Caddy Compson (199).

[31] Quoted in James Watson, *William Faulkner: Self-Presentation and Performance* (Austin: U of Texas Press, 2002), 10.

[32] Edmund Wilson *The Twenties*, 52 quoted in Matthew J. Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Univ of South Carolina Pr, 2002), 97.

[33] Ibid.

hugged it to his bosom, and would not let it expire".[34] If Faulkner used three male respondents to Caddy Compson to explore the impact of this one woman on male identity, then in *This Side of Paradise* Fitzgerald is performing a similar exploration.[35] However, there is one male respondent and four women to whom he is responding. Through the characters of Isabelle Borge (a debutante), Clara Page (a young widow), Rosalind Connage (a flapper) and Eleanor Savage (a free-spirited atheist) Fitzgerald explores various female identities and the masculine response to them. In Mary Jo Tate's *Critical Companion to F Scott Fitzgerald: A Literary Reference to his Life and Work*, the author cites biographical sources for the development of these female characters.[36] Isabelle Borge is said to be modelled on Ginevra King; Clara Page on Fitzgerald's cousin Cecelia Delihant Taylor; Rosalind Connage on Zelda Sayre-Fitzgerald and Eleanor Savage on Elizabeth Beckwith MacKie.[37] During the writing process, it would seem Fitzgerald is pre-occupied with absent, lost women who are, in part, models for the fictional women he is creating. Alongside the absence is the rejection the author experienced when Zelda Sayre called off their engagement. The significance of this event is pointed out by Fitzgerald himself in an essay "Pasting it Together" which formed part of *The Crack Up* series which was published in Esquire magazine in 1936:

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[34]Scott Donaldson, *Hemingway Vs. Fitzgerald: The Rise and Fall of a Literary Friendship* (Overlook Press, 1999), 49.For details on Fitzgerald's relationship with Ginerva King and its significance see James L West III's *The Perfect Hour: The Romance of F Scott Fitzgerald and Ginerva King, His First Love*. (New York: Random House, 2006).

[35] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise.*

[36] Mary Jo Tate, *Critical Companion to F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Facts on File Inc, 2007).

[37] Fitzgerald's use of Ginevra King as a model in his fiction can be seen in a copy of *The Beautiful and Damned* sent to King in 1936 with a note in the cover asking her which character was based on her. See Donaldson, *Hem V Fitz* 37) Elizabeth Beckwith MacKie provides a reminiscence of Fitzgerald and references the character of Eleanor Savage in the Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual (1970) pp 16-27.

> The other episode [...] took place after the war, when I had again over-extended my flank. It was one of those tragic loves doomed for lack of money, and one day the girl closed it out on the basis of common sense. During a long summer of despair I wrote a novel instead of letters, so it came out all right, but it came out all right for a different person. The man with the jingle of money in his pocket who married the girl a year later would always cherish an abiding distrust, an animosity, towards the leisure class – not the conviction of a revolutionist but the smouldering hatred of a peasant. In the years since then I have never been able to stop wondering where my friends' money came from, nor to stop thinking that at one time a sort of *droit de seigneur* might have exercised to give one of them my girl.[38]

What resonates throughout the quotation is mistrust: of Zelda, of other men and most importantly of himself. The shift from first to third person illustrates that Fitzgerald was fundamentally changed by the experience and that his sense of self was permanently altered not so much by the rejection by Zelda but by the re-unification with her. In spite of his eventual marriage to Zelda, the quotation suggests that her initial rejection remained with him and the Zelda before their break-up was lost to him. However, his uncertainty is not limited to his response to Zelda, the experience also appears to undermine his identity by making it something that can be challenged by other men. His failure or rather refusal to identify Zelda by name in this extract, reduces her to 'the girl' who is a pawn in his relationship with other men and a means of creating an identity based on social standing.[39]

As has already been suggested, the spectre of an absent female can also be traced in the formation of *The Sound and the Fury*. James G Watson in *William Faulkner: Self-Presentation and Performance* suggests that Faulkner's writing of *The Sound and the Fury* was "filling a literal void in the span from his childhood with his brothers when he first loved Estelle to a period of paternal

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[38] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *My Lost City: Personal Essays 1920-194,* ed. James L. West III, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 146-147.

[39] The celebrity aspect of their marriage in the 1920s makes the omission of Zelda's name of particular interest. Readers already aware of Fitzgerald would know his wife's name and the manner in which she was used as a model in his fiction.

grief in the early years of his marriage to her".[40] As has been mentioned, Faulkner, after the writing of the novel, connected the death of his first daughter with the creation of Caddy Compson but Watson recognises the role of Faulkner's wife, Estelle, in the character's formation. Estelle was known to Faulkner in childhood (mimicking a sibling relationship); she became the object of his affection and would reject him by marrying Cornell Sidney Franklin in April 1918 which is mirrored in Caddy's marriage to Sydney Herbert Head in April 1910. The complexity of his relationship with Estelle, according to Watson, influenced the manner in which Caddy Compson is presented in *The Sound and the Fury,* illustrated by the trio of characters who are required to adequately respond to Caddy. Faulkner, in an introduction to the novel, identifies the different responses of the brothers, and these responses are the three significant relationships men have with women - the role of lover, father and son. Through the creation of Caddy Compson and her three brothers who respond to her in such markedly different ways, Faulkner is able to explore complex and contradictory responses to the feminine and the manner in which relationships with women impact upon male identity.

Fitzgerald's refusal to name Zelda in "Pasting it Together" is also present in a letter William Faulkner wrote to his publisher, Hal Smith, explaining his reasons for marrying Estelle Oldham; she too is present but unnamed. "For my honour and the sanity – I believe life – of a woman. This is not bunk; neither am I being sucked in. We grew up together and I dont think she could fool me in this way; that is make me believe that her mental condition, her nerves, are this far gone"[*sic*].[41] The motivation for marriage seems to be an act of rescue. The

[40] Watson, *William Faulkner: Self-Presentation and Performance,* 10.
[41] Quoted in Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner a Biography* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2005), 240.

reference to her mental well-being, indeed the suggestion that Estelle's life depended on the marriage implies that Faulkner's decision to marry Estelle in 1929 was not based on the same reasons that he had wanted to marry her more than ten years earlier. He highlights their growing up together, she is a "known" entity but his suggestion that he thinks that she could not "fool me in this way" seems to imply the possibility of the opposite. Richard Gray suggests that the contrast between the young, virginal girl he had fallen in love with and the experienced woman (sexually and otherwise) that he married was one of the reasons that the couple were so often at odds.[42] Perhaps the unnamed Estelle of this letter is not the woman he had lost eleven years before. Faulkner's family members suggested that his motivations for marrying Estelle were varied. Joseph Blotner writes:

> Jack and Johncy felt that he had never stopped loving Estelle, no matter how embittered he had been by her marriage to Cornell Franklin. Feelings of pride and defiance, another kinsman would later say, had also impelled him to "show" these people who had once said, in effect, that he wasn't good enough to marry their daughter.[43]

By marrying Estelle, Faulkner challenges the authority of her father, representative of all fathers within patriarchy. It is an assertion of his identity that has been challenged by her initial rejection of him.[44] Yet, through the act of marriage both Estelle and Zelda become ever present but are irrecoverably altered through their previous acts of rejection. In Faulkner's *The Marionettes* (1920) he refers to the central female character as "changed but not changed".[45]

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[42] Richard Gray, *The Life of William Faulkner*, ed. C Rawson, Blackwell Critical Biographies (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 71.

[43] Blotner, *Faulkner a Biography*, 240.

[44] For details of Estelle's decision to marry Cornell Franklin see Blotner, 54-56. James Watson identifies the eerie similarity between Estelle's reluctant rejection of Faulkner and Daisy's decision to marry Tom Buchanan. Watson, 101-102.

[45] Jay Watson traces in *The Marionettes* Faulkner's reflections on his relationship with Estelle Oldham. See Watson, *William Faulkner: Self-Presentation and Performance*, 41-50.. Richard Gray asserts that although a lesser work, *The Marionettes* does point

The Estelle that returned to Oxford, a married and eventually divorced mother, was simultaneously the Estelle of Faulkner's childhood and profoundly changed through life experience. These women and their imagined counterparts become simultaneously inescapably present and permanently absent. Nicholas Roe in his 2012 biography of John Keats, notes a similar phenomenon in the romantic poet's relationship with Fanny Brawne as expressed in his sonnet "Bright Star". Roe quotes from a London newspaper with regards to an article about a magnificent comet that had appeared "[p]robably the present comet has long traversed ethereal space, and is now rapidly making its way towards the sun, its foci, in which case it will become more brilliant in approaching the sun, but appear to sink towards the northern horizon, and very soon become invisible".[46] The comet appears permanent and unchanging but is in fact transient.

> As Keats's solitary yearning for Fanny took on an aspect of 'impossibility and eternity', contrasting aspects of her comet – *brilliantly present, eternally vanishing* – may have helped release his divided feelings into a sonnet, 'Bright Star'.[47]
> (emphasis mine)

In what manner is the idea of the irreconcilable absence and simultaneous presence of the feminine located in individual female characters and the impact they have on masculine identity apparent in these two novels? In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner presents the reader with three disparate brothers in the form of Quentin, Jason and Benjy Compson, (for the purpose here, concern is for the two former) each, in his own way and for his own reasons, is pre-occupied with their sister Caddy who haunts the pages of the novel but is given

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towards the major works. Gray writes "its [*The Marionettes*] basic conceit, of a protagonist telling himself a story of which, eventually, he is the absent centre: this was to enable masterpieces in the future - which is to say, works in which the enigma of desire, in all its personal and social ramifications, was vividly rehearsed if never resolved."Gray, *The Life of William Faulkner*, 93.

[46] Quoted in Nicholas Roe, *John Keats* (Yale University Press, 2012), 331.

[47] Ibid.

voice only through the remembrances and articulations of her brothers. She is simultaneously permanently absent and eternally present both in the written text and in the lives and minds of her brothers. In the second part of the novel, dated June second 1910, there is an exploration of the fractured mind of Quentin Compson on the last day of his life, which will end by his own hand. The events and voices of the day are contrasted with the voices and memories of the past, which run throughout Quentin's stream-of-consciousness and the past is used to inform the future act of his suicide. The voices of the past, which take precedence, are that of his sister Caddy and his father, these remembered voices have become internalised by Quentin and have become part of his own internal monologue. His "speech [...] is not just full of other people's words but overpowered by them: voices from the narrative present and the past colonize Quentin's mind, mastering him even while he is trying to achieve mastery".[48] His inability to reconcile himself with these disparate voices or separate himself from them results in his complete mental disintegration: the result is paralysing inaction. [49] These relentless voices represent a challenge to Quentin's commitment to a Southern ideal that no longer makes sense in the rapidly changing, modern world, an "idealized version of things that Quentin has constructed – or, rather, has had constructed for him: a version that has himself as gentleman at its centre, and the purity of white womanhood (and of one white woman in particular) as its emblem and apotheosis".[50] Quentin's obsession with Caddy's sexual activity is a reflection of his obsession with the breakdown of a previous social and moral order, which has left him unclear of his role as a man

[48] Gray, *The Life of William Faulkner,* 143.

[49] The internalisation of external voices and/or people will also be explored in relation to the character of Jay Gatsby. Although the two characters seem disparate they share a number of characteristics in terms of their response to the past and their narcissism.

[50] Gray, *The Life of William Faulkner,* 144.

within society at large and within the microcosm of that society, the family. This confusion is compounded by the voice of his father, which is contrary to the voices of the "Fathers" of the South's past, as he dismisses the supposed purity of white womanhood.

> And Father said it's because you are a virgin: dont you see? women are never virgins. Purity is a negative state and therefore contrary to nature. It's nature is hurting you not Caddy[.][51]

The controlling, patriarchal importance placed on women's sexual purity as an indicator of masculine morality within the confines of the family is replaced by Quentin's father's misogynistic interpretation of women as never innocent, sexually or otherwise, purity in actual women is impossible in the mind of Quentin's father because it is in opposition to the nature of the feminine. Again a binary duality is presented in relation to women which brings into question the nature of the feminine which, for Quentin, is central in establishing masculine identity and is centred on female sexuality. In Quentin and his father's 'versions' of womanhood female sexuality is something that can and therefore must be controlled or, alternatively, cannot be controlled at all, the result of either position is disruption. The threatening nature of the feminine takes on biblical proportions at points in the text for example in "Mr Compson's [...] association of women with knowledge of and "affinity" for the impure even before they possess experience".[52] Mr Compson's response to women suggests that he believes they are beyond correction, a position rooted in the Garden of Eden and the biblical fall of mankind. In his conversation with Mrs Compson when he chastises her for spying on Caddy he makes the remark "*I didn't mean to speak so sharply but women have no respect for each other for*

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[51] Faulkner, *Novels 1926-1929 Soldiers' Pay(1926), Mosquitoes(1927), Flags in the Dust(1929), the Sound and the Fury(1929)*, 965-66.

[52] Stephen M Ross and Noel Polk, *The Sound and the Fury Glossary and Commentary*, ed. N Polk, Reading Faulkner (Oxford, Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 1996), 101.

themselves".[53] He continues with a statement about women that connects them with knowledge, fertility and evil:

> *Women are like that they don't acquire knowledge of people we are for that they are just born with a practical fertility of suspicion that makes a crop every so often and usually right they have an affinity for evil for supplying whatever the evil lacks in itself for drawing it about them instinctively as you do bed-clothing in slumber fertilising the mind for it until the evil has served its purpose whether it ever existed or no* [.][54]

The reference to 'bed-clothing' and 'fertilising' again brings the association of this 'affinity for evil' with women's sexuality, be that sexuality active or not. This association between women and evil is evident at the end of *This Side of Paradise* when Amory Blaine associates evil with beauty, which is then associated with the feminine, nature and darkness:

> Inseparably linked with evil was beauty – beauty, still a constant rising tumult; soft in Eleanor's voice, in an old song at night rioting deliriously through life like superimposed waterfalls, half rhythm, half darkness.[55]

The emphasis of the quotation is on nature, music and the past but a past that is lost, mythical and almost impossible to articulate. It echoes the closing lines of the sixth chapter of *The Great Gatsby*, when Nick responds to Gatsby's recounting of his romance with Daisy and insistence that the past can be repeated: "I was reminded of something – an elusive rhythm, a fragment of *lost* words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago . . . what I had almost remembered was incommunicable forever".[56]

Just as with the Bible's Eve, so both of these texts articulate masculine dread of the feminine but simultaneously admit its allure. Fitzgerald would return to this insistence of the allure of the feminine articulated through the voice of woman in *The Great Gatsby* and the masculine desire provoked by the quality

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[53] Faulkner, *Novels 1926-1929 Soldiers' Pay(1926), Mosquitoes(1927), Flags in the Dust(1929), the Sound and the Fury(1929)*, 950.
[54] Ibid., 950-51.
[55] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*, 258.
[56] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 87.

of Daisy's voice. The female voice is both seductive and deceptive: the fall of mankind is, in biblical terms, the fault of Eve's voice. However, the anxiety expressed through the course of both texts is generated not only by women but by the manner in which other men engage with them. Quentin's horror at the prospect of Caddy's marriage, "*why must you marry somebody Caddy*", is as much about Herbert Head's acquisition of her as it is about Quentin's perceived loss.[57] As an unmarried mother Caddy and her child will be subjected to the full force of the patriarchal moral code; her choices are limited, even non-existent. The appearance of conforming to the moral code has more significance than the code itself, a point recognised by Caddy and her mother. Quentin, despite his commitment to the Southern Ideal, refuses to acknowledge the requirement of Caddy to maintain the appearance of such an ideal rather than to act in a manner, which Quentin would perceive as "honourable" or "moral" in response to her pregnancy but would place Caddy outside of the moral code that her brother holds so dear. This distinction between what women have to do within a society that is patriarchal in nature and what some of the individual men within that society what them to do is also illustrated in *This Side of Paradise*. The two texts appear to have little in common and Fitzgerald's female figures appear to be a far cry from of Caddy Compson but their response to the male-oriented society in which they live and the attitudes that they exhibit toward the cornerstone of that society (marriage) do share similarities. The emphasis on the subject of marriage in *This Side of Paradise* is significantly different from the manner in which it is explored in *The Sound and the Fury*. Fitzgerald's use of a number of female characters allows for multiple female perspectives on marriage, which is recognised by all of them (largely reluctantly) as the defining

[57] Faulkner, *Novels 1926-1929 Soldiers' Pay(1926), Mosquitoes(1927), Flags in the Dust(1929), the Sound and the Fury(1929)*, 970.

moment in the lives of all women. The closest Amory gets to marrying is in his relationship with Rosalind Connage. Faulkner's use of the monologic stream of consciousness is replaced by rigid and theatrical dialogues between Amory and Rosalind in the form of scripts, a visual representation on the written page of the role-playing, performative nature of relationships between the sexes. In the scene in which Rosalind ends their relationship, Fitzgerald gives her stage directions "*she begins to cry – a tearless sobbing"*.[58] She is expected to conform to the emotional requirements of the event and is given direction as to how to perform for the purpose. The practicality with which she has, like her peers and Caddy Compson, always had to keep at the front of her mind with regards to her relationship with men as dictated by patriarchy, by "the father", is criticised by her male peers, the sons of those fathers. She is damned by the meeting of such expectations and by a failure to do so:

> ROSALIND: It's just –us. We're pitiful, that's all. The very qualities I love you for are the ones that will always make you a failure.
> AMORY: (*Grimly*) Go on.
> ROSALIND: Oh – it *is* Dawson Ryder. He's so reliable, I almost feel that he'd be a – a background.
> AMORY: You don't love him.
> ROSALIND: I know, but I respect him, and he's a good man and a strong one.
> AMORY: (*Grudgingly*) Yes – he's that.[59]

In this short exchange Rosalind identifies what she needs in a husband (reliable, a background for her) but also identifies what is lacking in Amory. She explains that the qualities she loves in him are the same qualities that mark him out as a failure and specifically a failure as a man. She does not love Dawson Ryder but she does respect him, something she is unable to feel for Amory if she believes not only that he is a failure in the present but will continue to be so in the future. Rosalind calls Dawson 'a good man', the emphasis of which should

[58] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise,* 179.
[59] Ibid., 181.

not be the adjective but the noun, he is a 'man' and 'a strong one'. This is what differentiates Dawson from Amory, a fact that the latter acknowledges in his grudging retort, "yes – he's that', implying that he is neither strong or a 'man' as defined by the 'norm' of American manhood. As Amory loses control of himself, resorting to out of control hysterical pleas, Rosalind stands firm:

> AMORY: (*A little hysterically)* I can't give you up! I can't, that's all! I've got to have you!
> ROSALIND: (*A hard note in her voice*) You're being a baby now!
> AMORY: (*Wildly*) I don't care! You're spoiling our lives! [60]

Amory's hysterical response marks him out as unmanly; Rosalind in contrast is remote and controlled. Just like Caddy and Miss Quentin, Rosalind is also "once a bitch, always a bitch." Towards the end of the novel Amory reads Rosalind's engagement announcement in the paper. His response indicates the manner in which, through her rejection, Rosalind is lost – not only physically, but symbolically – she remains but is simultaneously gone:

> She was gone, definitely, finally gone . . . Never again could he find even the sombre luxury of wanting her - not this Rosalind, harder, older - . . . -Amory had wanted her youth, the fresh radiance of her mind and body, the stuff that she was selling now once and for all. So far as he was concerned, young Rosalind was dead.[61]

The marriage of Rosalind to another man is defined by Amory as an act of prostitution; Rosalind has sold herself to the highest bidder. It is similarly demeaning to Dawson Ryder who, unable to inspire love in Rosalind uses the allure of hard, cold cash to win her over. Amory's equating Rosalind's rejection of him with her death, illustrates the manner in which what is lost is irrecoverable; even if Rosalind should return to him she cannot be the same woman *to him*. The experience has changed him and in so doing altered her.

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[60] Ibid., 183.
[61] Ibid, 234.

This use of women as symbolic representations of masculine ideals or fears is present in all of the depictions of female characters that Amory encounters. Women are therefore never fully experienced in the present moment as they are tied to the expectations and doubts of Amory. The imagery that surrounds them illustrates the way in which these women come to represent some ideal or fear in the novel's protagonist. Clara Page, a widowed mother, is also proposed to by Amory and like Rosalind rejects him. However, his response to this rejection is completely at odds with his response to Rosalind's rejection. The reason for this becomes clear as Clara does not base her refusal of Amory on the acceptance of another man. She states that "I'd never marry again. I've got my two children and I want myself for them".[62] By sacrificing her romantic/sexual life for her children, Clara can be elevated to sainthood.[63] Her sexuality, which is present in the repeated idealised descriptions of her – the word golden is used numerous times, a word always associated in Fitzgerald's fiction with physical female beauty – is non-threatening to Amory because it is not aimed at another man. She is uninterested in romantic love and indeed claims that, despite her marriage, she has never been in love. Amory:

> realized slowly how much she had told him [...] never in love [...] She seemed suddenly a daughter of light alone. His entity dropped out of her plane and he longed only to touch her dress with almost the realisation that Joseph must have had of Mary's eternal significance.[64]

Clara is transformed into the Madonna, the eternal mother whose identity is constructed through her children and not through her relationship with men. The image he constructs is one of an idealised femininity that ironically disengages itself from men; it is unobtainable but crucially it is unobtainable *for*

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[62] Ibid, 137.

[63] For a consideration of the influence of Roman Catholicism in the novel see Walter Raubicheck's essay "The Catholic Romanticism of *This Side of Paradise*" in *F Scott Fitzgerald in the Twenty-First Century*, pp 54-66.

[64] Ibid, 137.

all men. The religious, specifically Roman Catholic, imagery used in the presentation of Clara is not restricted to that pertaining to the mother of Christ. Apart from being described as 'devout' and Amory accompanying her to church, there are also a number of references made to St Cecelia, like Mary, a married woman who preserved her virginity.[65] The association Amory makes between Clara and virginity situates her as an object of unfulfilled desire, the suspension of the fulfilment of that desire maintains it. After all, "to touch the object of desire is to lose it".[66] Alongside the New Testament references there is also a connection between the first Bible story of Adam and Eve and the relationship between Amory and Clara. Interestingly, however, Clara is equated with the first man and not the first woman:

> "Tell me about yourself." And she gave the answer Adam must have given.
> "There's nothing to tell."
> But eventually Adam probably told the bore all the things he thought about at night when locusts sang in the sandy grass, and he must have remarked patronizingly how *different* he was from Eve, forgetting how different she was from him [.][67]

Amory seems to align himself and Clara in opposition to their gender roles. If Eve is responsible for the fall of mankind then Adam is its victim. It is in equating Clara with Adam that Amory is able to recognise woman as subject rather than object. It is at this moment that Amory recognises the "otherness" of woman is the result of the insistence of the male "I". By repositioning this woman as "I" (albeit through equating her with men) the potential "I" of womanhood and the attendant "otherness" of men is suggested. However, this understanding of Clara separates her from what Amory associates with the feminine. Clara's appeal is her failure to conform to what is identified

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[65] See www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=34 for the story of St Cecelia.
[66] Gray, *The Life of William Faulkner*, 71.
[67] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*, 132.

throughout the novel as the essence of femininity: not only woman's attractiveness to other men but also her desire for men be the desiring physical, financial or social in nature. Through the act of turning Clara into a saint and equating her with the Mother of God, she is disassociated with the sexuality that lies at the heart of the feminine. She is not connected with Eve, whose voice and sexual knowledge brought evil into Paradise. Clara's remark "[t]here's nothing to tell" also differentiates her from the seductive and destructive quality of the female voice, which is evident in biblical and mythological stories as well as Fitzgerald's own fiction, most famously in the depiction of Daisy Fay Buchanan. She is separated from female sexuality and its association with evil that is evident in the depiction of Eleanor Savage toward the end of the novel. If Clara Page has been associated with the purity of ideal womanhood in Christianity then Eleanor is repeatedly associated with the imagery of fairy tales and paganism. Amory's first meeting with Eleanor occurs in Maryland where he reflects on Edgar Allen Poe. Then:

> One afternoon he had strolled along a road that was new to him and then through a wood on bad advice from a colored woman [...] losing himself entirely. [68]

The quotation reads like the opening of a fairy tale and therefore brings with it the attendant associations of danger, unknowability and the supernatural. The fairy tale imagery continues:

> He stumbled blindly on, hunting for a way out, and finally, through webs of twisted branches, caught sight of a rift of trees where the unbroken lightning showed open country. He rushed to the edge of wood and then hesitated whether or not to cross the fields and try to reach the shelter of the little house marked by a light far down the valley.[69]

[68] Ibid., 207.
[69] Ibid.

The fairy tale images are suggestive of not only hidden fears and desires but also trials that must not only be overcome but passed through as a rite of passage. He then hears a "strange sound [...] a song, in a low, husky voice, a girl's voice" (*Paradise* 208). The hearing of the voice is in contrast to Clara's claim that "there's nothing to tell", this girl's voice ceases and begins again, it is referred to as a "weird chant" and Amory is almost hypnotised by its sound; again, the female voice is inciting but also potentially harmful. In keeping with the fairy tale imagery, Eleanor is given almost supernatural powers, she appears to be able to read Amory's mind and knows things about him despite the two having not previously met, without explanation.[70] He struggles to see her in the dark and all he can make out are her "damp hair and two eyes that gleamed like a cat's".[71] Amory, the reader is told, tries desperately to see "Psyche" in the dark. In contrast to Clara, Eleanor's femininity is connected with ancient myth and fairy tale. For a moment he fears that she will not be beautiful ("supposing she wasn't beautiful – supposing she was forty and pedantic – heavens!".[72] His fears are allayed ("she was magnificent") but new fears emerge as on seeing her she is described as "a witch". Female beauty is sought but also something that is seen as potentially dangerous and disruptive. Throughout the relationship between Amory and Eleanor there are repeated references to the moon, darkness and water, traditionally associated in mythology with the feminine, and this is then linked with evil in the mind of Amory:

> Inseparably linked with evil was beauty – beauty, still a constant rising tumult; soft in Eleanor's voice, in an old song at night rioting deliriously through life like superimposed waterfalls, half rhythm, half darkness.[73]

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[70]For a consideration of the supernatural in *This Side of Paradise* and the manner in which it is used to refer to Eleanor see "The Devil and F. Scott Fitzgerald" in *F. Scott Fitzgerald in the Twenty-First Century* pp 66-79.

[71] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise,* 209.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., 258.

Eleanor's frustration at being required as a woman to marry, her atheism and her interest in intellectual pursuits is in part appealing to Amory but it is also potentially socially disruptive. Her valid arguments regarding the limitations placed on female life is undercut by the extremity of her would-be act of suicide, which is the defining action that ends their relationship. The scene is problematic as it does not appear to develop out of the previous action; it feels particularly contrived in a novel which is not short of contrivance. Fitzgerald, in his annotated copy of the novel, next to the section regarding Eleanor wrote: "[t]his is so funny I can't even bear to read it."[74] Eleanor's charge to the edge of a cliff on horseback is preceded by an angry exchange between herself and Amory, which brings into question established attitudes towards marriage, God and the Church much to Amory's chagrin. "His materialism, always a thin cloak, was torn to shreds by Eleanor's blasphemy [...] She knew it and it angered him that she knew it". [75] The awkward handling of the episode seems to suggest that the female voice which not only *refuses* but is *unable* to conform to the expectations of the society that the text represents cannot be adequately framed by it. The denial of the feminine voice as expressed by Eleanor is highlighted by Amory's response to the end of their relationship. "For a moment they stood there, hating each other with bitter sadness. But as Amory had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he hated was only a mirror" (*Paradise* 222). Eleanor is physically present but is simultaneously absent as Amory reduces her to a reflection of himself, a symbol of his desires and fears. By reducing Eleanor to a mirror held up to him, Amory's narcissism is clearly demonstrated. Yet again,

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[74]Quoted in Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 122. As well as in Andrew Hook, *F Scott Fitzgerald a Literary Life*, ed. R Dutton, Literary Lives (Hampshire: PalgraveMacMillan, 2002), 26.

[75] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise,* 221.

women are not experienced as individuals in the present moment; instead they are intricately tied to masculine notions of the self who either reflect or distort masculine self-image and are rewarded or punished accordingly.

Men Without Women.

In the vast arena of World War One the absence of women is, of course, visible in the trenches and on the battlefields. However, the presence of the feminine is felt as their non-combatant role implies their responsibility in poems such as Siegfried Sassoon's "The Glory of Women" and the embittered "The Dead Beat" by Wilfred Owen amongst others.[76] Owen's poem is a chilling portrayal of a soldier's mental collapse whilst being physically uninjured and the brutal response of both military and medical personnel as he is accused of malingering. The reason for his collapse is never explained, memories and anxieties about home are suggested alongside the horror of warfare.[77] This suggestion that the War assumes all responsibility for any mental distress in men is explored by Pearl James who identifies the manner in which the horror of war is used as an excuse for feelings of incompleteness and instability in *This Side of Paradise*.

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[76] The Glory of Women reads:

You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
Or wounded in a mentionable place.
You worship decorations; you believe
That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.
You make us shells. You listen with delight,
By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed.
You can't believe that British troops "retire"
When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run,
Trampling the terrible corpses—blind with blood.
O German mother dreaming by the fire,
While you are knitting socks to send your son
His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

[77] In "The Dead Beat" only one reference is made to women but it is telling:

Maybe his brave young wife, getting her fun
In some new home, improved materially.

Amory's wartime experience is covered by a mere six pages, belonging to neither the novel's Book One or Book Two but written under the heading of "Interlude". The first definition of interlude in the Oxford English Dictionary reads: "A dramatic or mimic representation, usually of a light or humorous character, such as was commonly introduced between the acts of the long mystery-plays or moralities, or exhibited as part of an elaborate entertainment; hence (in ordinary 17–18th c. use) a stage-play, esp. of a popular nature, a comedy, a farce."[78] The defining experience of a generation therefore for Amory is a pause between two acts of real and significant experience. In the aftermath of Rosalind's rejection however the war gains significance as Amory hits the bottle and the bars:[79]

> He was in a rather grotesque condition: two days of worry and nervousness, of sleepless nights [...] the strain of it had drugged the foreground of his mind into a merciful coma. As he fumbled clumsily with the olives [...] a man approached and spoke to him, and the olives dropped from his nervous hands.[80]

The man is an old Princeton acquaintance and after reminding him of his name, the following exchange takes place:

> "Get overseas?"
> Amory nodded, his eyes staring oddly. Stepping back to let someone pass, he knocked the dish of olives to a crash on the floor.
> "Too bad," he muttered. "Have a drink?"[81]

Amory's behaviour suggests to his acquaintance, Jim Wilson, that he is a psychological victim of war. Amory's emotional exhaustion after the break-up with Rosalind has left him in a "merciful coma", suggesting a forced forgetting

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[78] Accessed through the Oxford English Dictionary website. http://www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/97950?rskey=9Yxx1o&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid accessed 27th July 2015.

[79] According to Bruccoli, Fitzgerald went on a similar alcoholic spree after Zelda Sayre called off their engagement. Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 96.

[80] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise,* 185.

[81] Ibid.

of the event. However, his 'nervous hands' and clumsiness suggests the nervous energy and compulsive tics of the traumatised returning soldier. Amory's uncontrolled and therefore feminine behaviour is understood by Wilson within that most masculine of contexts: war. War is the only thing that can explain, or justify, Amory's behaviour. Amory tows the line and "was discoursing volubly on the war".[82] Pearl James suggests that in order to compensate for his failure in other masculine arenas, Amory reconstructs his past in order to identify the start of his despair as the aftermath of the war, a masculine arena that is absent of women and femininity.

> Amory *misremembers* the war as the origin of his depression [...] The war serves as a cover story for a more personal blow to his masculinity that Amory disguises as war weariness. Disillusionment as a result of the war is a mythic and fraudulent explanation offered for emasculation at the hands of a materialistic, 'hard' New Woman. Talking about history becomes a way of both leaving the New Woman out *and* of implicating her in the traumas that modern history seems to visit on men.[83]

The war permits expression of feelings resulting from a sense of failure, even if these failures are made in other spheres of life. However, James does not mention the limitations of Amory's war service that did not see him posted overseas. Just as Hemingway and Faulkner (but not Fitzgerald) exaggerated or fabricated their war-time experience, so does Amory. War stories act as a means of asserting a masculine identity based on courage and physical exertion but also act as a mask to account for romantic, psychological and social failure. The war also allows for strong almost romantic attachments to other men without the danger of a homoerotic interpretation whilst simultaneously justifying a

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[82] Ibid., 186.

[83] Pearl James, "History and Masculinity in F. Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise," *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 51, no. 1 (2005): 23.

failure to form relationships with women.[84] James argues that in a scene at the end of the novel, when Amory visits a cemetery and looks at the graves of fallen soldiers of the Civil War and 'imagines them lying in perpetual and heroic intimacy', he is 'cloaking inadmissible homoerotic desire'.[85] After all Amory 'wanted to *feel* 'William Dayfield, 1864'":

> This process – of impersonalization through reference to a romanticized military history [...is] working through trauma, and thus, of masculinizing its subject. It enables Amory to declare himself "free from all hysteria".[86]

What is of interest here is that the very passage to which James refers as Amory's break from hysteria comes from the pen of Zelda. Fitzgerald lifted the passage, almost verbatim, from a letter he received from her in the Spring of 1919. The assertion of masculinity identified by James is voiced by a woman whom, at various times in her life, would be viewed as the very definition of hysteria.[87] Through this process of internalising the feminine, Fitzgerald performs an act of narcissism, this secondary voice becomes part of his own but it can also be seen as a reclamation of the feminine which has been rejected. Greg Forter in *Gender, Race and Mourning in American Modernism* approaches the treatment of the feminine in the work of Faulkner, Fitzgerald and Hemingway as the result of the rigid separation of the masculine and feminine as explored earlier in this chapter. The shift from manhood in

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[84]James argues that the war allowed men to redefine their masculinity to one that was more socially recognizable. She cites the example of Rupert Brooke, from whose poetry the title of the novel was taken, who was subject to 'homophobic censure' ibid. during his time at Cambridge but through his military service and his death in the war (although he died of blood poisoning not on the battlefield) his masculinity was re-defined.Ibid., 18.

[85] Ibid., 24.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Zelda's letter is published in F. Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda Fitzgerald, *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda: The Love Letters of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald*, ed. Jackson R. Bryer and Cathy W. Barks (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 26.. Fitzgerald made minor changes, for example the shift from first to third person. *This Side of Paradise*, 259.

opposition to boyhood to masculinity in opposition to femininity required a rejection of attributes considered, in this format, womanly.[88] These writers, however, mourn the loss or rather the rejection of these aspects of themselves and this melancholia is traceable in their female characters:

> While they indulged at times in fantasies of woman as premodern and , less often, of femininity as inauthentic mimicry, their dominant tendency was to associate the feminine with a creative and sensuously vibrant responsiveness to one's inner life, one's body, and the social world (including the inner lives and bodies of others).[89]

In *The Sound and the* Fury Quentin's longing for Caddy in this context is literally self-love: Caddy is an aspect of himself that has been rejected by himself in the search for an identity that he finds acceptable. His desire for Caddy and his even greater impossible desire to preserve her sexual innocence is a longing to recapture the innocence of his own childhood, a time before knowledge, a time of wholeness; a place as innocent as the Garden of Eden. "Insecure about his masculinity, he mourns a lost time and a lost girl: the idealized Caddy of his childhood and early adolescence".[90] What is sought is an imagined period of innocence equated not only with the sexual purity of childhood but a mythical period before female sexual knowledge and desire. The old standards of masculinity, which were recognised within the social structure of the South, are crumbling and there is a need to construct a masculine identity, no longer based on one's social position but as an individual, Quentin is unable to forge an identity and desires the complete destruction of the self rather than to continue in a position of inaction and impotence.

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[88]See Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996) 119-120 and Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (University of Chicago Press, 1995) 16-18.

[89] Greg Forter and Paul Allen Miller, *Desire of the Analysts: Psychoanalysis and Cultural Criticism* (State Univ of New York Pr, 2008), 9.

[90] Blotner, *Faulkner a Biography*, 215.

However, Quentin is not the only example of a masculine identity in crisis, or the only character in which we can see the reflection of their creator. There was "something of William Faulkner in Jason Compson, who was, with competition for the place only from his mother, the worst member of the family".[91] In Jason Compson we see the result of the changes that had taken place in American society at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. He is the man who is angry and frustrated because his position as a white man is no longer sufficient to ensure his power over others and autonomy of self. In the first three pages of Jason's narrative he identifies in a conversation with his mother about Miss Quentin, every societal and familial shift that has caused him bitterness. The first words we hear from Jason are "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say".[92] As the reader ends the section that is dominated by the ghostly figure of Caddy and moves on to the narrative which begins with her daughter, the latter is a continuation of the former in Jason's mind: once a bitch (Caddy), always a bitch (Quentin). Again, the 'bitch' is not these women but the feminine 'other', the opposite of the masculinity that Jason craves, a masculinity that is clearly defined and unquestionable. Jason's relationship with his niece is dominated by his desire to avenge himself on her mother, who, as a result of her moral lapse, lost Jason the opportunity to work at a bank, arranged by Herbert Head. Instead he is employed in a store: it is the feminine other (defined here as Caddy), which leads to unsuccessful masculinity. His resentment is not only aimed at his sister, however; equally guilty are the failed masculinities of his father and brother, an alcoholic and a suicide respectively: "I never had time to

[91] Ibid., 216.
[92] Faulkner, *Novels 1926-1929 Soldiers' Pay(1926), Mosquitoes(1927), Flags in the Dust(1929), the Sound and the Fury(1929)*, 1015.

go to Harvard or drink myself into the ground. I had to work".[93] In the aftermath of his father's alcoholic demise and his brother's suicide, he is left financially responsible for his neurotic, hypochondriac of a mother, his brother Benjy and his niece Quentin, whose support money, sent by her mother, Jason is embezzling. He is also responsible for the black workers employed by the Compsons. His resentment towards everything stems from his attempt to fulfil the traditional patriarchal role, as he sees it, but without receiving either the control or the respect that traditionally accompanied it. He is employed in menial work, a symbol of his lack of autonomy; he is unable to control his sexually promiscuous niece, a failure of his position of preserver of the patriarchal moral code, symbolised by the purity of women. He is unable to escape his neurotic mother and is therefore always "son" and never "father". He has neither the respect nor the fear of his black employees. Jason has failed in every traditional marker of masculinity; however, unlike his brother, he does not enter an existential crisis as a result of his fractured masculine identity. He takes refuge in a fury aimed at every conceivable group of people, "blacks, women, jews, intellectuals, Yankees, bankers or anyone else who appears to threaten his self-esteem".[94] His second refuge and consolation is the pursuit of money. "Money = identity = plot: the equation links the self-identity, of which Jason fiercely feels the lack, to the substantial items of hard cash and straight stories".[95]

Amory Blaine also makes the connection between money and identity. His family's diminishing fortune has an impact on his sense of self, which is translated into his failed romance with Rosalind, the product of his uncertain

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Gray, *The Life of William Faulkner*, 145.
[95] Ibid., 146.

social position. However, there is a growing sense of ambiguity through the course of the novel toward the notion of identity being based on inherited wealth and social position. Barry Gross in "*This Side of Paradise*: The Dominating Intention" acknowledges Kenneth Eble's position that Amory's "knowing of self is not an appreciation of his or mankind's metaphysical nature but of his social nature"[96] but he recognizes a development that Eble does not, centred on the figure of Dick Humbird, his death and subsequent apparition in the form of the devil. Humbird represents the ideal of the privileged class that Amory's family once belonged to and into which he aspires re-admittance through the "first 100 pages of the novel".[97] His reckless death, however (he is killed in a car accident whilst driving drunk), brings in to question the value of this 'aristocratic' ideal that Amory is pursuing. Gross identifies the manner in which this is illustrated by Amory following the apparition of the devil/Dick Humbird rather than being pursued by it. What is also being suggested is that the tug of war between society and the individual is central in the formation of identity in this novel and would continue to preoccupy Fitzgerald in his subsequent work. Craig Monk, in an essay concerned with Fitzgerald's political engagement in the novel, highlights the social turbulence of American life after world war one and the speed of the change that was occurring during the 1920s. In the midst of this social flux Monks suggests 'that at present, it would be naïve

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[96] Quoted in Barry Gross. ""This Side of Paradise": The Dominating Intention". *Studies in the Novel* 1 (1). Johns Hopkins University Press (1969): 53.

[97] An important detail that Gross does not draw attention to but underlines his argument that Fitzgerald is presenting a more complex response to the question of identity is the truth of Dick Humbird's background:

> "He's like those pictures in the Illustrated London News of the English officers who have been killed," Amory had said to Alec.
>
> "Well," Alec had answered, "if you want to know the shocking truth, his father was a grocery clerk who made a fortune in Tacoma real estate and came to New York ten years ago."
>
> Amory had felt a curious sinking sensation. Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*, 78.

for him [Amory] to speculate on the reform of the entire post-war world, but he is perceptive enough to recognize that the resuscitation of the self is the first step in redeeming the world around him'.[98] This distinction between the individual and the expectations placed upon it is encapsulated in Amory's mentor Monsignor Darcy's understanding of a personage in contrast to a personality. "Personality is a physical matter almost entirely [...] Now a personage, on the other hand, gathers. He is never thought of apart from what he's done".[99] Identity is based on the pursuit, not of wealth and social standing but, for Amory, on intellectual or artistic endeavour and self-knowledge. The concluding line of the novel "I know myself," he cried, "but that is all".[100] Despite its qualification "that is all", this is highly positive: this self-knowledge is the basis of an identity that is authentic and not tied to social expectation, wealth and inherited privilege. In this regard it is in keeping with an older version of America (real or imagined) that champions the individual and the possibilities that the new world affords it. The novel is a breaking-free from the social identities imposed on the individual through marriage, familial connection and heredity.

On the surface, Amory Blaine has nothing in common with Jason Compson, just as any connection with Quentin Compson seems unlikely, but through all three characters their authors explore how masculine identity is created and undermined. However, whilst Amory eventually asserts an identity that is based on his own self-hood, Quentin and Jason are examples of a failed search for a coherent identity, which both believed should be based on the social expectations of their maleness. Jason's attempt to act results in the same failure

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[98] Craig Monk, "The Political F. Scott Fitzgerald: Liberal Illusion and Disillusion in "This Side of Paradise" and "the Beautiful and Damned"," *American Studies International* 33, no. 2 (1995): 65.
[99] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*, 101.
[100] Ibid., 260.

that Quentin's inability to act led him to, ending in the one action (his suicide) that would end his impotence or, perhaps, preserve it forever. This idea of action and inaction both leading to failure is evident in Fitzgerald's reflections on his father, which will now be considered.

Edward Fitzgerald and the Failure of Action

In F Scott Fitzgerald we have a writer born in St Paul, Minnesota whose father, Edward, was born in Maryland and, according to his son, of aristocratic Southern stock. As has been repeatedly noted, Fitzgerald clung to his paternal ancestry and was distinctly embarrassed by his maternal roots, according to the author "straight 1850 potato famine Irish". Despite his preference for his father's pedigree, Fitzgerald remained ambivalent towards him and this ambivalence can be readily demonstrated. In the incomplete "The Death of my Father", he could write movingly about Edward Fitzgerald, " I loved my father – always deep in my sub-conscious I have referred judgements back to him, what he would have thought or done".[101] However, he was also capable of writing the following brutal remark to his editor Max Perkins in February 1926:

> Why shouldn't I go crazy? My father is a moron and my mother is a neurotic, half insane with pathological worry. Between them they havn't and never had the brains of Calvin Coolidge. If I knew anything I'd be the best writer in America (sic).[102]

The extremity of these two positions suggests that his fluctuating feelings are not simply the to and fro of most familial relationships and are indicative of a more complex response to his father. At the core is a conflict between what Fitzgerald believes his father was capable of and the failure that Fitzgerald perceived him to be when held up against the traditional markers of masculine

[101] Kuehl, *The Apprentice Fiction of F Scott Fitzgerald*, Appendix 2.
[102] Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters*, 138.

success. The events of Edward Fitzgerald's working life and their impact on the young Scott have been well documented, most famously by Scott himself in his 1936 interview with Michael Mok, which on publication brought Fitzgerald to the brink of suicide.[103] He recounts the failure of his father's business in the 1890s and the loss of his subsequent paid employment with Procter and Gamble in 1908; after this episode Fitzgerald states that Edward "was a failure the rest of his days".[104] However, in the same interview, appearing only two paragraphs before, Scott Fitzgerald identifies his father's demise as starting much earlier than his failure in the world of work:

> As a youngster of nine, my father rowed spies across the river. When he was twelve he felt that life was finished for him. As soon as he could, he went west, as far away from the *scenes* of the civil war as possible. (italics mine)[105]

Edward Fitzgerald significantly turned twelve in 1865 and, in the mind of his son, the defining moment of his life was the moment of Southern defeat. At this point, he retreats from the scenes that were the location of failed action resulting in a paralysis that is observed by Scott Fitzgerald, the "moron" of his letter to Perkins. With his suggestion that his father's life was finished at twelve, Fitzgerald recognises an inability to move forward into the future as his father is permanently regressing into the past. The statement echoes Faulkner's understanding of the significance of the South's defeat to Southern men:

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[103]The article entitled "The other Side of Paradise: Scott Fitzgerald, 40, Engulfed in Despair" was published in the New York Post on the 25th September 1936, the day after Fitzgerald's fortieth birthday; he was portrayed as a washed up drunk. In a letter to Harold Ober dated 5th October 1936, Fitzgerald details an attempted suicide provoked by Mok's article. See F. Scott Fitzgerald and Harold Ober, *As Ever, Scott Fitz-: Letters between F. Scott Fitzgerald and His Literary Agent Harold Ober, 1919-1940* (London: Woburn Press, 1973), 282.

[104] Edward Fitzgerald's work life problems encapsulate the 'crisis of masculinity' that has been identified at the turn of the 20th century as explored by Kimmel, Bederman and others.

[105] F Scott Fitzgerald, *Conversations with F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), 122.

> It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago. For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it's still not two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863 [...] it's all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet, it not only hasn't begun yet but there is still time for it not to begin against that position[.][106]

What is apparent is that in addition to the bitterness of defeat is grief for a lost, alternative present. Alongside Edward Fitzgerald's geographical displacement ("he went west"), there is the far more telling and damaging temporal displacement that Faulkner articulates in the quotation. Fitzgerald recognises this complex engagement with the South's past, present and future in a letter to his cousin, Cecelia Taylor, on the death of his Aunt Elise in August 1940:

> With father, Uncle John and Aunt Elise a generation goes. I wonder how deep the Civil War was in them – that odd childhood on the border between the States with Grandmother and old Mrs Scott and the shadow of Mrs Surratt .[..] How lost they seemed in the changing world – my father and Aunt Elise struggling to keep their children in the *haute bourgeosie* when their like were sinking into obscure farm life or being lost in the dark boarding houses of Georgetown.[107]

The tone of the letter suggests that Fitzgerald's father was robbed of a way of life and an inheritance both social and financial. He and the rest of his kind were lost not so much in "the changing world" that Fitzgerald mentions but the Northern world imposed on them after defeat. By implication, Scott Fitzgerald has also been denied what should have been his through his paternal line – wealth, social position and life experience – in effect, denied an alternative present. What is evident in Faulkner's specifically Southern fiction and

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[106] William Faulkner, *Novels: 1942-1954 Go Down Moses(1942), Intruder in the Dust,(1948) Requiem for a Nun(1951), a Fable(1954)*, ed. Joseph and Noel Polk Blotner (New York: library of America, 1994), 430-31.
This idea of returning to a particular moment in the past that defines both the present and the self is apparent in *The Great Gatsby*. Nick Carraway says the following about Gatsby "His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it slowly, he could find out what that thing was".Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 86.

[107] Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters,* 461-62.

Fitzgerald's reflections on his father that filters into his work set in New York, Europe and elsewhere is how obsessive regression into the past affords the illusion of a different now. This pull between the potentially damaging effect of action and the therapeutic effect of repeated storytelling based on the past both real and imagined, is markedly apparent in the relationship Scott Fitzgerald had with his father. Edward Fitzgerald's boyhood of rowing spies across the river during the civil war is replaced by an adulthood of telling, re-telling and remembering, passing on stories repeatedly to his son. In "The Death of My Father", Scott Fitzgerald recounts a number of occasions when these stories were told. On one occasion, Fitzgerald disappeared on the 4th July and was missing long enough to warrant the involvement of the police. On his return his father thrashed him:

> Afterwards, seeing in his face his regret that it had to happen I asked him to tell me a story. I knew what it would be – he had only a few – the story of the spy, the one about the man hung from his thumbs, the one about Early's march. Do you want to hear them I'm so tired of them all that I can't make them interesting. But maybe they are because I used to ask father to repeat + repeat +repeat.[108]

This domestic act of violence results in a feeling of shame, guilt and remorse: action, again is a source of failure and so what follows is a retreat into storytelling, as a means of replacing action. Fitzgerald's request to "repeat + repeat + repeat" is significant: there is comfort, familiarity and certainty in the repetition of hearing constructed narratives of the past. The words assigned to Edward are equally important: "Do you want to hear them I'm so tired of them all that I can't make them interesting". The re-told story does not remain the same: it is not a straightforward recounting of events, it is a narrative that alters and changes and may bear little resemblance to the events actually experienced.

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[108] *The Apprentice Fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. John Kuehl (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1965), Appendix 6.

The purpose of the personal narratives of the civil war and the family mythology they invoke serve a radically different purpose from the historical detail of the war as recorded by historians. They impact upon the listener as much as they haunt the speaker, illustrated by Fitzgerald's request for stories in the aftermath of damaging action. At the heart of his ambivalence towards his father, illustrated in his contrasting remarks in the letter to Max Perkins and "The Death of My Father" quoted earlier, is uncertainty as to whether his father's failure is the result of personal weakness that makes him unable to succeed in the post-war world or whether it is because of an admirable commitment to a regional identity. This confusion is evident in a number of Fitzgerald's works when he presents the relationships between fathers and sons. Dick Diver's complex response to the Reverend Diver springs to mind. Fitzgerald repeats in Dick's response to his father's death his own feelings that he recorded in "The Death of My Father": "Dick loved his father – again and again he referred judgements to what his father would probably have thought or done".[109] Within a page, however, the perception of him as ineffective is also present, "[h]e was one of those about whom it was said with smug finality in the gilded age: 'very much the gentleman, but not much get-up-and-go about him'". [110] This contradictory position did not appear in Fitzgerald's work only after the death of Edward however; from very early on in his literary career the figure of the father looms large. In Fitzgerald's one act play, *Shadow Laurels*, which was published in Princeton's *Lit* magazine, the author contemplates the nature of failure through the act of a son's pilgrimage to find out more about his dead, drunken failure of a father, through that man's friends. He discovers that his father was greatly loved by them and at the end of the play he makes this toast:

[109] *Tender Is the Night,* 222.
[110] Ibid., 223.

> I drink to one who might have been all, who was nothing – who might have sung; who only listened – who might have seen the sun; but who watched a dying ember – who drank of gall and wore a wreath of shadow laurels. [111]

The quotation articulates, through the figure of the father, the gap between what could have been and what actually is: people could have been different, invariably better, than circumstances permitted them to be. The title echoes the suggestion of an alternative present 'the shadow', that exists alongside the actual present. It is illustrative of the difficulty in clearly defining success and failure: the son's understanding of his father's life is at odds with the manner in which his father is understood and loved by his friends. The reality of his father's success or failure is, in part, one of perspective. Like Plato's captives in the cave, the son has been taken in by the shadows of his father's life rather than its reality. In Edward Fitzgerald, his son invoked the historical narrative of America, the battle between North and South, as a means of exploring the reasons for personal failure. When his son shone this light upon him, Edward Fitzgerald was a victim of circumstances beyond his control, a victim of historical forces that determined he would not wear the laurels, to return to his son's one act play, but only their shadow. The paralysis of inaction is the result of an inability to relinquish the alternative present that would have emerged with victory, leading to an obsessive attachment to the past, a past that has recreated the antebellum era as "a moral defence and an emotional refuge: as a Great Good Place, the site of patriarchal virtues, which had effectively been swept away by the barbarian hordes from the North".[112] The result of this is a feeling of displacement, not necessarily geographical but temporal, the present and the future are lost so in its place the past is constantly relived through this

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[111] *The Apprentice Fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 77.
[112] Gray, *The Life of William Faulkner*, 26.

re-imagined version of the old South and through personal oral narrative that becomes family mythology.

Storytelling becomes a means of escaping the present and perfecting the past. Fitzgerald, this most auto-biographical of novelists, re-worked his life throughout his fiction, sometimes administering blame, but always capturing a moment of life that was perfect: it could not last, but for an instant it was without fault. For Edward Fitzgerald the period of perfection was the time before the defeat of the South in the Civil War. After all he does, according to his son, "leave the *scenes* of the civil war" (italics mine) after the South's defeat but he would return to those scenes through his storytelling. Fitzgerald would also recount his time of perfect happiness however fleeting. In "My Lost City" (1935), he writes "I remember riding a taxi one afternoon between very tall buildings under a mauve and rosy sky; I began to bawl because I had everything I wanted and knew that I would never be so happy again".[113] This awareness of the fleeting nature of happiness, the knowledge that all things must pass, results in an assumption of failure on the part of Fitzgerald: defeat will come, a sense that he inherited from his father or absorbed by his observations of him. This was the version of masculinity that Edward modelled for his son. As the earlier quotations about his father indicate, Scott Fitzgerald recognised the potential duality of his father's failure: it was both personal weakness and circumstantial based on a geographical identification with a failed regionalism, which led Edward Fitzgerald into a state of passivity. However, despite the despair he sometimes felt toward his father, he recognised the appeal of passivity and, at times, embraced it. In "Author's House", Fitzgerald recounts being taken off the

[113] F Scott Fitzgerald, *Fitzgerald: My Lost City: Personal Essays, 1920-1940* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 111.

field during a football game, the coach telling him "we can't depend on you." On reflection, Fitzgerald reasoned, "I had been playing listlessly." He continues:

> I've been afraid plenty of times but that wasn't one of the times. The point is it inspired me to write a poem for the school paper which made me as big a hit with my father as if I had become a football hero. So when I went home that Christmas vacation it was in my mind that if you weren't able to function in *action* you might at least be able to *tell* about it, because you felt the same intensity – it was a back door way out of facing reality.[114]

Fitzgerald here admits to relishing the role of observer, of being out of the action, a role which he associates with his father and believed that his father approved of. The contrast between the man of action – the ultimate symbol of American manhood, the football hero – with the introspective poet who observes rather than engages is striking in its clear distinction. Fitzgerald points out that it made him "a hit with his father", not with school friends, teachers or wider society. If action was not a possibility then the telling of events was, and indeed was the choice that Fitzgerald made in his own life. The act of telling allowed action to become perfected and a fictionalised event could be experienced as intensely as lived experience. In the author's remembrances of his father there are a number of key memories where action is replaced with words, stories and the act of retreat. Again in "Death of my Father" Fitzgerald writes about political discussions between father and son:

> but we never came to the point of personal animosity about them but if things came to a fever heat the one most affected quitted the arena, left the room. [115]

The use of the word "arena" is suggestive of combat and "quit" is in keeping with an act of surrender, behaviour that could potentially be interpreted as that of a coward. Fitzgerald is aware that as a result of his withdrawal from action others could question his masculinity:

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[114] Ibid., 170.

[115] *The Apprentice Fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald,* Appendix 5.

> That was the point that I was taken out of the game. I remember the desolate ride in the bus back to the train and the desolate ride back to school with everybody thinking I had been yellow on the occasion, when actually I was just distracted and sorry for the opposing end. [116]

Fitzgerald believes his actions are identified as cowardly and therefore un-masculine. His failure to embrace physical aggression makes him less than a man in the eyes of his team mates. Inaction equates with passivity, which in turn equates with femininity. Importantly however, Fitzgerald believes his action is misinterpreted by his class mates, he believes that they think he is 'yellow' but they are wrong, they have misinterpreted his actions because they do not conform to the all important accepted 'norm' of Northern American manhood. Fitzgerald embraced the role of onlooker, the apparent passive observer but through the act of writing (as opposed to telling) stories he asserts an identity that accepts and embraces the passivity that such a position suggests. Writing becomes for Fitzgerald a valid replacement for action.

Fitzgerald wrote in his notebooks the following remark about the difference between himself and his sometime friend, rival and hero, Ernest Hemingway, a difference that stems in part from his identification with his father and that man's connection with the South. "I talk with the authority of failure, Ernest with the authority of success. We could never sit across the same table again".[117] The words failure and success could easily be replaced by "the South" and "the North". Perhaps Hemingway recognised the South's influence on his sometime friend, when he wrote the following in a letter to Maxwell Perkins, "He [Fitzgerald] is always the brilliant young gentleman writer, fallen gentleman

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[116] *Fitzgerald: My Lost City: Personal Essays, 1920-1940*, 170.
[117] F. Scott Fitzgerald and Matthew J. Bruccoli, *The Notebooks of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Harcourt, 1978), 318.

writer, gent in the gutter, gent ruined, but never a man".[118] What is offered from these two perspectives is an alternative response not only to action and inaction but also in the manner that masculinity can be understood. This Southern and Northern contrast is explored by Fitzgerald in *The Ice Palace* in which, Sally Carrol Happer's Northern beau, Harry Bellamy characterises Southern men as lazy. Furthermore the cold, active North is contrasted with the heat and slowness of the South. In Fitzgerald's statement about the difference between himself and Hemingway he is recognising aspects of his Southern father, articulated in this story, in himself. Most notably there is fear that his promise is unfulfilled, perhaps the result of the laziness that Harry Beau believes is a symptom of Southern men. This is illustrated in a 1940 letter to his daughter: "I wish now I'd never relaxed or looked back – but said at the end of *The Great Gatsby*: I've found my line – from now on this comes first. This is my immediate duty – without this I am nothing . . ." (*A Life in Letters* 451). However, his suggestion that failure provides authority in the same way that success does is a recognition (also made by Gail Hightower's father in *Light in August*) of the self-knowledge that is gained through defeat and its acceptance.

It was through his relationship with his father that Fitzgerald learned the therapeutic nature of storytelling, both told to others and to oneself making this relationship crucial in Fitzgerald's development as a writer. The Southern influence exerted over him through the figures of Edward and, of course, Zelda permeate his fiction as does his complex understanding of his father which influence its themes: hope, despair, dreams and their fleeting nature, and, of course, the question what is success and what is failure? The connection between the South's defeat and the act of writing is powerfully and wittily

[118] Matthew J. Bruccoli, *The Sons of Maxwell Perkins: Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, and Their Editor* (Univ of South Carolina Pr, 2004), 177.

described by William Faulkner during his classes at the University of Virginia, when he was asked about the literary activity in Mississippi, which could not be seen in New Jersey. He responded:

> Well, that's because Mississippi's in the South and New Jersey's in the North. I think that the wisest thing any nation can do when it gets itself into any sort of economic muddle is to pick out some rich nation and declare war, and get licked and then be supported. The folks in the South write because the North has supported us ever since 1865. We had plenty of time to write.[119]

The narrative of the South – the belief in a past that was better than the present and a resignation to the romance of doomed failure – is present both in Fitzgerald's life and more importantly for readers, in the very best of his writing.

Fitzgerald's Emasculating Relationships

The anxiety about how his manhood is perceived as opposed to what it is is present throughout Fitzgerald's correspondence and indeed was targeted by Zelda, as their marriage deteriorated, who accused him of having a homosexual liaison with Ernest Hemingway. His resentment about such accusations made by his wife and the gossip spread by Robert McAlmon suggesting both writers were homosexual is evident in both his correspondence and his notebooks. In a letter to Zelda in (probably) the Summer of 1930, Fitzgerald wrote, "The nearest I ever came to leaving you was when you told me you thot I was a fairy in the Rue Palatine…" (*sic*).[120] In his notebooks, he reflected, "I really loved him, but of course it wore out like a love affair. The fairies have spoiled all that."[121]. Bruccoli suggests "that although Hemingway is not named […] the reference is clear".[122] Fitzgerald resorts to conforming to perceived norms of manhood by blaming homosexual men for the impossibility of male friendship rather than accusing

[119] Frederick Landis Gwynn and Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner in the University* (University of Virginia Press, 1995), 280.
[120] Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters*, 89.
[121] Fitzgerald and Bruccoli, *The Notebooks of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 62.
[122] Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 284.

the perception of society created as a result of the contrasting of the "norm" with the "other". Despite his disgust at the accusation of homosexuality, his admiration for Hemingway cannot be doubted. Fitzgerald was enamoured by Hemingway's ability to unify both action and the re-telling of action in his work. The relationship was not without tension (Hemingway, it seems, was incapable of having a relationship without it) and Hemingway frequently belittled Fitzgerald both as a writer and as a man. He saw numerous weaknesses in his friend that he could not tolerate including his inability to focus entirely on his writing and his serious work rather than the short stories that Fitzgerald frequently resorted to for money. Hemingway was convinced that one of the major stumbling blocks that Fitzgerald had to contend with was Zelda. In *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway wrote of Zelda:

> Zelda was jealous of Scott's work [...] He would start to work and as soon as he was working well Zelda would begin complaining about how bored she was and get him off on another drunken party. They would quarrel and then make up and he would sweat out the alcohol on long walks with me and make up his mind that this time he would really work, and would start off well. Then it would start all over again.[123]

Hemingway's concern identifies two areas of Fitzgerald's masculinity that are, for the former, questionable. His failure to work brings into question his manhood as does his apparent domination by his wife, who, in Hemingway's mind dictated the pattern of Fitzgerald's working life and diminished his well being to serve her own needs. Hemingway dated his awareness of Zelda's mental health problems to June 1925, when he spent time with the Fitzgeralds and others at Juan-les-Pins:

> Zelda was very beautiful and was tanned a lovely gold color and her hair was a beautiful dark gold and she was very friendly. Her hawk's eyes were clear and calm. . . she leaned forward and said to me, . . . 'Ernest, don't you think Al Jolson is greater than Jesus?'

[123] Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (Jonathan Cape, 2010), 107.

> Nobody thought anything of it at the time. It was only Zelda's secret that she shared with me, as a hawk might share something with a man. But hawks do not share. Scott did not write anything any more that was good until after he knew that she was insane. [124]

This anecdote from *A Moveable Feast* serves two purposes: it presents Hemingway as more perceptive than Fitzgerald, even with regards to the latter's own wife, a habit that Hemingway exhibits in both his work and in his correspondence with Fitzgerald and others. It also points the finger of blame at Zelda, for the troubled working life of her husband. In his physical description of her, he falls back on the language used throughout Fitzgerald's fiction to describe his female heroines, she "was very beautiful and was tanned a lovely gold color and her hair was a beautiful dark gold" (*Feast* 111). This description conjures up the image of Daisy Fay Buchanan and Nicole Warren Diver, both beautiful, both utterly destructive; the analogy is clear, just as these fictional women unleashed havoc in the lives of their male counterparts so this woman unleashed havoc in Scott's. In the manner in which Hemingway presents the story the destruction is intentionally committed on the part of Zelda, "it was only Zelda's secret that she shared with me", other parties could have been made aware of her difficulties but chose not to see, or alternatively Zelda did not make them privy to them. It also places Zelda in the rather odd position of having chosen her mental ill-health in order to manipulate it to gain advantage. Hemingway's suggestion that he could "see" Zelda in a way that others could not echoes remarks made by Zelda about Hemingway. If, on their first meeting, Hemingway thought Zelda crazy, Zelda was no more enamoured with Hemingway: "Zelda's reaction to Hemingway on the other hand was no more

[124] Ibid., 111.

complimentary, for she considered him 'bogus'".[125] Mutual friend, Gerald Murphy, had the following to say on Zelda's feelings toward Hemingway:

> At that time the word [bogus] just didn't seem to fit; there wasn't anyone more real and more himself than Ernest. Bogus, Ernest? Of course, who knows how right she may prove to be?[126]

Gerald Murphy was yet another victim of Hemingway's spite and revisionist attitude towards his relationships. However, Zelda and Hemingway appear to identify what for others is strength, as in fact, weakness. The difference being that Hemingway's observations are made in retrospect, when the full horror of Zelda's ill-health and its outcome was clear. Hemingway also recounts in *A Moveable Feast*, Fitzgerald telling him of his romance with Zelda Sayre. This is how Hemingway recollects it:

> This first version that he told me of Zelda and a French aviator falling in love was truly a sad story and I believe it was a true story. Later he told me other versions of it as though trying them for use in a novel, but none was as sad as this first one and I always believed the first one, although a*ny of them might have been true. They were better told each time; but they never hurt you the same way the first one did.* (italics mine)[127]

Hemingway suggests that, at least in part, what Fitzgerald tells him is a constructed narrative, that alters and changes dependent on the need of the narrator and the setting in which the story is being told. Hemingway recognises truth in the first account that Fitzgerald told him and the unadorned description that Hemingway gives of the story, "of Zelda and a French aviator falling in love" is not clouded by a need on the part of Fitzgerald to impose meaning on what had happened; it was a recounting of a painful event. Hemingway goes on to describe how this experience in the life of the Fitzgeralds metamorphosed in to the stuff of novels. Significantly, Hemingway states that with each re-telling the

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[125] Nancy Milford, *Zelda* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 116.
[126] Ibid., 117.
[127] Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 102.

story was "better told but they never hurt you the way the first one did". The first version was the one that contained complete emotional authenticity unmediated through art or performance. However, the reliability of Hemingway's remarks on the Fitzgeralds has been brought into question a number of times. As Bruccoli states, "Hemingway is not always trustworthy on the Fitzgeralds" but what Hemingway suggests echoes Fitzgerald's behaviour with regards to the stories told of and by, his father.[128] Bruccoli himself adds credibility to Hemingway's account by providing similar testimony from Hemingway's first wife, Hadley. Importantly, however, in this account the remembrance of the affair is a shared creative venture between Scott and Zelda,

> It was one of their *acts* together. I remember Zelda's beautiful face becoming very, very solemn, and she would say how he had loved her and how hopeless it had been and then how he had committed suicide. Scott would stand next to her looking very pale and distressed and sharing every minute of it. Somehow it struck me as something that gave her status. I can still see both of them standing together telling about the suicide of Zelda's lover. It created a peculiar effect. [129]

Hadley Hemingway, in her recollection, identifies the manner in which the Fitzgeralds would re-imagine events, perhaps not only for 'effect' but to make these events more palatable. The story of Zelda and her French aviator lover has been altered considerably: Edouard Jozan did not commit suicide; indeed, Matthew Bruccoli's biography of Fitzgerald, contains a photograph of Jozan taken in 1957.[130] What both accounts share is the sense that the listeners are being told a story, that an event in the life of the Fitzgeralds has been fictionalised, transformed from a low point in their marriage, at best an indiscretion the result of loneliness, at worst a destructive affair that was a source of permanent damage that the marriage never fully recovered from, into

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[128] Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald,* 195.
[129] Milford, *Zelda*, 114.
[130] Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald,* 194.

a poignant anecdote of romantic failure. What purpose did this reconstruction of events serve for the Fitzgeralds and Scott, a cuckold in the tale, in particular? Perhaps for Scott such a story turned him into the victor in this love story, he gets the girl and a girl that is worth killing oneself for. Despite his wife's infidelity he re-asserts his role as husband and, through his successful recapturing of her affection, he re-asserts his masculinity held up in stark contrast to the complete failure of Jozan through the imagined act of suicide. For Zelda, as Hadley Hemingway describes it, the story gave her 'status', the only status available to her at this time was one which was achieved through her attractiveness to men. In the tale she inspires such devotion that her lover, like some knight enacting the romance of medieval courtly love, would rather die by his own hand than lose her. Both Zelda and Scott present Zelda as the prize and Scott as the winner of it. It also resembles the manner in which Fitzgerald and his father would retreat into story-telling to avoid complex and painful feelings, revealing a desire to avoid action or in the words of Fitzgerald, "if you weren't able to function in action you might at least be able to tell about it, because you felt the same intensity – it was a back door way out of facing reality".[131]

Challenging masculinity: Fitzgerald, Hemingway and Faulkner.

Hemingway's depiction of Fitzgerald in *A Moveable Feast* attacks his masculinity on four fronts. As previously noted, the truthfulness of Hemingway's anecdotes about Fitzgerald are questionable. For example, according to Hemingway, the meeting between the two authors was witnessed by a third party, Duncan Chaplin. However in a letter written to Matthew Bruccoli in 1976, Chaplin states that he was not Europe in 1925, the year of their

[131] Fitzgerald, *Fitzgerald: My Lost City: Personal Essays, 1920-1940*, 170.

first meeting. Bruccoli suggests however, that the reader of *A Moveable Feast* should keep in mind the final paragraph of Hemingway's 1960 Preface to the book,

> If the reader prefers, this book may be regarded as fiction. But there is always the chance that such a book of fiction may throw some light on what has been written as fact.[132]

However, this statement blurs rather than clarifies what Hemingway's aims were when writing the memoir and what his intentions were with regards to his presentation of Fitzgerald. It would be hard to see his representation of Fitzgerald as anything other than damning; he is portrayed as a drunk, a hypochondriac and sexually inadequate. If the recollection were truthful, it might be considered cruel, that a man who was of significant support to Hemingway throughout his early career, is presented as having few, if any, redeeming features; if, however, as the Preface suggests the memoir is to some degree at least, fictionalised, the motivation for Hemingway's humiliation of Fitzgerald becomes of considerable interest. The focus of his depiction of Fitzgerald is very specific and very much related to Fitzgerald's masculinity (or lack thereof): by undermining Fitzgerald's masculinity, Hemingway is simultaneously able to bolster his own. Hemingway draws attention to Fitzgerald's failings and anxieties, whilst being baffled by such concerns and contrasting the latter with his own assured masculinity. In the chapter entitled "A Matter of Measurements", Hemingway tells of an episode when he had to re-assure Fitzgerald about the size of his penis because Zelda had told him that he was inadequate. After Hemingway's inspection he tells Fitzgerald,

> "You're perfectly fine," I said. 'You are O.K. "There's nothing wrong with you . ."

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[132]Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, vii. The complex nature of auto-biography has been explored by, among others, James Olney in *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography*.

> "But why would she say it?" [said Fitzgerald]
> "To put you out of business. That's the oldest way in the world of putting people out of business."[133]

Hemingway, by recounting this story, be it an accurate account or fictitious make believe is also putting Fitzgerald "out of business". Hemingway very publicly humiliates the dead Fitzgerald and simultaneously suggests to the reader, that he has never had such concerns. In Hemingway's tale Fitzgerald's anxiety is clearly connected to Zelda; he is developing neuroses as a result of his relationship with her and is being sexually humiliated by her. This type of dominance by a woman, for Hemingway, is the perfect illustration of the emasculated man.

Another aspect that Hemingway draws attention to is Fitzgerald's notorious drinking. It is hardly surprising that he does: most memoirs about Fitzgerald involve alcohol, but what is of interest is the slant upon which Hemingway focuses. His attention is on the aspect of Fitzgerald's drinking that again, in Hemingway's eyes, diminished his masculinity: he could not hold his liquor. On their first meeting, Hemingway writes,

> As he [F. S. F] sat there at the bar holding the glass of champagne the skin seemed to tighten over his face until all the puffiness was gone and then it drew tighter until the face was like a death's head. The eyes sank and began to look dead and the lips were drawn tight and the color left the face so that it was the color of used candle wax. This was not my imagination. His face became a true death's head, or death mask, in front of my eyes.[134]

Hemingway presents Fitzgerald as a neurotic, overly concerned with his health and is therefore placed in stark contrast to Hemingway's exuberant and physical masculinity, a man who relished activity and indeed injury as badges of courage. Scott Donaldson, in his essay 'Hemingway and Suicide" lists an astounding catalogue of injuries sustained in car accidents, plane crashes, battling bush

[133] Ibid., 113.
[134] Ibid., 86.

fires and attempting to shoot a shark.[135] The publication of *A Moveable Feast* came after both writers were dead. However, the mythology surrounding Papa Hemingway would only have highlighted Fitzgerald's presentation by Hemingway as weak, effeminate (in terms of his physical description), sexually emasculated and a poor drinker. The final way in which Hemingway emasculates Fitzgerald is through the discussion of his writing.[136] Although Hemingway famously acknowledged Fitzgerald's considerable natural ability and instinctive sense of language comparing it to "the pattern that was made by the dust on a butterfly's wings" he also presents Fitzgerald as a child entrusted with a treasure that in truth he had no right to touch.[137] For Hemingway, Fitzgerald was reckless with his gift and Hemingway illustrates this by comparing the work ethos of the two writers. The manner in which Fitzgerald used or rather abused his talent is a source of mockery for Hemingway.

> He [Fitzgerald] had told me at the Closerie des Lilas how he wrote what he thought were good stories for the Post, and then changed them for submission, knowing exactly how he must make the twists that made them into saleable magazine stories. I had been shocked at this and I said I thought it was whoring. He said it was whoring but that he had to do it as he made his money from the magazines to have money ahead to write decent books.[138]

In the same paragraph Hemingway speaks reflects on his own work practices:

> Since I had started to break down all my writing and get rid of all facility and try to make instead of describe, writing had been wonderful to do. But it was difficult, and I did not know how I would write anything as long as a novel. It often took me a whole morning of work to write a paragraph.[139]

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[135] Scott Donaldson, *Fitzgerald and Hemingway Work and Days* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 456.

[136] In Sarah Churchwell, "$4000 a Screw: The Prostituted Art of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway," *European Journal of American Culture* 24, no. 2 (2005)., the writer explores the relationship between the two authors through a discussion of their attitudes towards their art and the impact of money on how and why it was created.

[137] Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 84.

[138] Ibid., 89.

[139] Ibid.

The inference is clear: Hemingway is a serious and committed artist, even at this early stage of his career that lacked the financial security that Fitzgerald had achieved through his short story writing; he was not prepared to compromise or prostitute his work. Fitzgerald, however, was not in the same league of dedication. Despite the latter's greater wealth and popular success at this stage of their friendship, Hemingway is secure in his own sense of superiority in terms not only of his work, but his attitude towards it. After all, he spends an entire morning writing a paragraph, while Fitzgerald would mutilate his own work for money. The contrast that is identified by Hemingway, recorded in retrospect was something that Fitzgerald was not unaware of and his comment, referenced previously, in his notebook reflects this: "I [Fitzgerald] talk with the authority of failure – Ernest with the authority of success. We could never sit across the same table again".[140] This quotation could be read within the context of Fitzgerald's demise in the 1930s both financially and critically and Hemingway's rise in both areas but there is something more significant at work in this quotation and it is concerned with how they saw themselves not only as writers, but as men. In the account given by Hemingway of Fitzgerald, be it factually based or to a large extent a fabrication, Hemingway is setting himself and his rival as polar opposites of masculinity, largely by presenting Fitzgerald as a failed man on a number of fronts that Hemingway deems essential to ensure not only masculinity but the appearance of it: sexually confident, a good drinker, physically tough and dedicated to one's profession. Fitzgerald, or the Fitzgerald constructed in *A Moveable Feast*, is a resounding failure on all of these fronts. Fitzgerald, dead more than twenty years when Hemingway's posthumous memoir was published, was however fully aware of Hemingway's less than kind

[140] Fitzgerald and Bruccoli, *The Notebooks of F. Scott Fitzgerald,* 318.

attitude towards him and his work. Bruccoli captures the difference between the attitudes of the two writers in the following quotation:

> The crucial difference was in the public images Fitzgerald and Hemingway projected. Hemingway radiated confidence and dedication. Everything he did seemed related to his work. Fitzgerald, who had an abysmal sense of literary public relations, became a symbol for dissipation and irresponsibility. As Hemingway recognized, at some point in the late Nineteen-Twenties, Fitzgerald seemed to enjoy failure.[141]

What is identified by Bruccoli is the extent to which they became public figures, with an image which was either effectively managed (Hemingway) or completely mishandled (Fitzgerald). He also points out the aspect of Fitzgerald's personality, which enjoyed failure, reflecting the masculinity that was modelled for him by his father and integrated it into his own self-perception. Hemingway's understanding of masculinity is that it should be active and successful. However, he criticises Fitzgerald for his pursuit of material success. In September 1951, when the Fitzgerald revival was underway, Hemingway wrote to Malcolm Cowley the following:

> But he was a true rummy when I met him when I was married to Hadley .[..] that was one of his big problems, that and Zelda, and cowardice, and ambition and love of earning money which meant social, economic, and for a while, he figured, artistic success [.][142]

Presumably, success should not be pursued but achieved and achieved with longevity. For Hemingway, masculinity is an action, an act, a performance, identified by doing not aspiring, dreaming, hoping or remembering. Indeed, when Hemingway was no longer able to perform his version of masculinity, he performed one final act: suicide. The response of Faulkner to his death is both

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[141] Matthew J. Bruccoli, *Scott and Ernest: The Authority of Failure and the Authority of Success* (London: Bodley Head, 1978), 97.
[142] Quoted in ibid., 152.

interesting and would, no doubt, have infuriated Hemingway.[143] Faulkner's response to Hemingway's death, as recorded in Joseph Blotner's biography, focuses on Hemingway's masculinity, rather than on his role as artist and writer. Firstly, Faulkner highlighted the aspect of Hemingway that was performance and a performance that was, for Faulkner, a compensation for an underlying anxiety in Hemingway. Secondly, Faulkner presents Hemingway's suicide as cowardly and unmanly. Thirdly, he brings into question the dead man's masculinity through the women in his life, something that would, no doubt, have rankled Hemingway. However, in his final reflection, "'I don't like a man that takes the short way home," Faulkner feels that Hemingway's suicide is an escape, a failure to face life and its challenges squarely.[144] Interestingly, Faulkner's deconstruction of Hemingway's masculinity is almost a mirror image of the manner in which Hemingway challenges and belittles Fitzgerald's. The key means of attack are Fitzgerald's failure to fully commit himself to his work; his, according to Hemingway, emasculating relationship with his wife and his crippling relationship with alcohol. Faulkner speaks of Hemingway's suicide as a "short cut home", essentially an act of cowardice and this too is echoed in Hemingway's response to Fitzgerald's alcoholism, which although not an actual

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[143] Joseph Blotner's account of Faulkner's response to Hemingways's suicide is fascinating and worth quoiting in full. Blotner writes: When Jill [Faulkner's daughter] heard the first incomplete report of Hemingway's death, she went out to the screened-in side porch and told her father. "It wasn't an accident," he told her immediately. "He killed himself." When Harry Hyer saw him at the stable on Monday morning he was still talking agitatedly about it. He had told Jean Stein that he thought Hemingway protested too much, that his shows of fearlessness and virility was to some extent a cover-up. He continued to brood over it. To one friend he said that Hemingway was obviously sick, but there was something unmanly about what he had done. Then he made a curious remark: "It's bad when a man does something like that. It's like saying death is better than living with my wife." He was silent for a moment. "Hemingway's mistake," he went on,"was that he thought he had to marry all of them." The next time Red Hanbury saw Faulkner the reaction had crystallized further."I don't like a man that takes the short way home," he said. (Blotner 690)

[144] Blotner, *Faulkner a Biography,* 690.

death is in Hemingway's analysis a spiritual and creative one. Hemingway describes Fitzgerald's face during a period of drinking becoming "a true death's head" but perhaps more significantly for a writer Fitzgerald's "eyes sank and began to look dead and the lips were drawn tight".[145] Fitzgerald's ability to see and to communicate are compromised; the destruction of these abilities is the destruction of the basic tools of the fiction writer. The inference would appear to be that alcohol was disrupting Fitzgerald's ability to write to the point of creative death.

What is evident in the way these three writers engage with one another is that work, women and alcohol are central in how masculinity is judged. Alongside this is a belief that one's own masculinity can be ranked in relation to that of other men's and is a source of anxiety that they may be found wanting. This sense that an individual's sense of masculinity is closely tied to his relationship and engagement with other men is evident in the novel to which attention will turn in Chapter Three, *The Great Gatsby*. However, all three writers engagement with women also became important in how they saw themselves as men and it is to a consideration of the feminine that attention now turns.

[145] Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (Scribner Book Company, 2006), 86.

Chapter Two: Femininities

In the consideration of madness, gender and identity in Fitzgerald's fiction it would be difficult, if not impossible to ignore the influence of Zelda Fitzgerald on the work and life of her husband. That is not to say that one should fall into the trap of reading literary works as thinly veiled auto-biography or attempt to analyse the complexities of a relationship and a marriage lost in the past. However, the close connection between Fitzgerald's life and his fiction, does warrant, in fact it demands, that some reflection on the defining relationships of his life are considered, as they fundamentally impacted upon the defining themes of his work but also frame the manner in which many critical approaches to his fiction are framed. Perhaps no other person exerted more influence on Scott Fitzgerald than his wife Zelda; certainly in relation to issues of gender and madness this is the case and, in light of the title of this thesis, she cannot be ignored. As a result the focus of this chapter will be the connection between Zelda's ill-health and her husband's fiction; this will be approached from a number of perspectives.

Firstly, consideration will be given to the manner in which madness has been seen and treated differently over time, as presented, most notably, in the work of Michel Foucault. However, whilst recognising that the diagnosis and treatment of madness has impacted upon a number of social groups deemed "other" by a socially sanctioned "norm" that privileges white, middle-class, heterosexual men, for our purposes in this chapter, attention will be focused on how this specifically impacted women. Particularly significant in this discussion is the idea that "correct" behaviour that conforms to a socially recognised identity is central in the diagnosis of a return to mental health. This has obvious implications for Zelda who was subject to the suggestion that a renewed

commitment to her marriage and her role as a mother would promote mental well-being.

A second consideration will be the duality that is established between reason/unreason, sanity/insanity, cerebral/corporeal amongst others and how the definition of one is embedded in the other but with the former privileged and associated with the masculine, whilst the latter are aligned with the feminine. This is significant when attention is turned to the biographies of Zelda Fitzgerald, specifically (as opposed to those centred on Scott Fitzgerald) as this hierarchical duality is used, implicitly, as a way of approaching her life story, her marriage and her attempts at an artistic career. Connected to this duality is the paternalistic nature of most mental health treatments available during Zelda's lifetime, most notably the asylum, psychiatric intervention and psychotherapy.

The masculine interpretation of female experience in psychiatry is echoed in the the fictionalisation of female experience in male literary texts and as a result, Zelda's position as a reader of such texts is of interest. It is possible to explore aspects of the theories put forward by Judith Fetterley, Elaine Showalter and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar regarding the complex relationship between the female reader and the western, patriarchal, literary tradition through the figure of Zelda Fitzgerald. However, this will be considered by way of a theoretical position only and not imposed on the life and marriage of an historical figure. As the source of the fictional women of her husband's texts her response to them as a theoretical reader permits a specific study of the way in which a general female readership is required to "identify against themselves" according to Judith Fetterley. Related to this and adding an interesting perspective is Zelda Fitzgerald's role as a writer of auto-biographical texts and how these texts function as a response to her life and its fictionalisation in the narratives constructed by others.

Finally, analysis of Zelda as a subject of feminist biography will be undertaken focusing on the problems that result from the wholesale import of, albeit important, theoretical positions onto the specific lives of specific historical figures. In this regard Marianne DeKoven's following comment is significant: "perhaps the greatest risk of this discourse lies in its potentializing or 'essentializing' gender, thereby suppressing the historical, cultural particularity of actual women and men".[146] Following on from the consideration of Zelda Fitzgerald as a biographical subject, reference will be made to the manner in which, in recent years, she has undergone a process of re-fictionalisation. The freedom from the ties of any claim of actual historical truth allows novelists to indulge the somewhat perverse position held by some of her biographers (in light of the wholesale application of theoretical positions) that Zelda Fitzgerald's mental ill-health was to some degree, conscious or otherwise, a choice, the only mode of self-expression that was left open to her after writing, dancing and painting were suppressed. What is apparent in the study of the lives and fictions of F Scott Fitzgerald and his wife is that it is a battleground of competing narratives that are serving radically different purposes, alongside myriad motivations.

Lawrence W. Levine in his book, *The Unpredictable Past*, highlights the various and changing approaches historians have taken and do take towards their subject resulting in a field that, despite its concern with things that have happened, is constantly shifting and unpredictable.[147] Levine speaks of shifts within the focus of historical study, which have caused consternation and debate within the ranks of historians. He highlights the manner in which individual

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[146] Marianne DeKoven, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism* (Princeton University Press, 1991), 26.

[147] Lawrence W. Levine, *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

historians appear torn about what is the right area to be concerned with: the broad strokes of political power or the specific details of particular groups, which are not recognised within the traditional narrative of national history. Speaking of historian John Higham, who had championed a move away from homogeneous national history towards a focus on the specific groups that made up the United States and the resulting conflicts between them, Levine writes:

> Higham argued that somewhere in the late 1960s the ruling paradigms of homogeneity and consensus were replaced by the paradigms of fragmentation and heterogeneity. The ideal of the national community was replaced by the ideal of the local community: the town, the parish, the family, the ethnic group [. . .] But Higham was far from pleased. The more we learned about the specific he complained, the less we understood about the larger scheme of things. Historians had lost their sense of direction.[148]

Levine notes that discussions about history which oppose different approaches, "political versus social and cultural history, or narrative history versus analytic history", is actually a debate about the extent to which the powerless should be represented alongside the powerful in history, "the margins as well as the center".[149] The question is who or what is worthy of historical study. In the exploration that follows of work on madness by Michel Foucault, Elaine Showalter and others this factor must not be ignored. The possibility of a unified singular historical narrative regarding madness is non-existent but the reason why attention is being paid to, for example, Showalter's narrative and the overarching theory that it presents is because these approaches frame the manner in which the Fitzgeralds are seen, consciously or unconsciously, by a number of biographers and now also numerous novelists.

[148] Ibid., 5.
[149] Ibid., 8.

Foucault, Madness and Social Identity.

Michel Foucault's *History of Madness* is a complex and sometimes controversial work that is, however, important in any discussion of the treatment of and attitudes towards madness.[150] That said, the purpose here is not to engage in a close analysis of Foucault's work, however some reference to aspects of his work is beneficial to this discussion. The key tenet of Foucault's work that will prove useful is his argument that madness has been approached differently during various periods of history, not only in its treatment but in its very definition and the response it provokes within the society in which it exists. The definition of madness has changed over the centuries and some of the change has rested on the needs of the society in which those deemed mad live rather than the requirements of individuals labeled in this way. Foucault identifies the shift that occurred during the period of the Enlightenment when contrary to attitudes during the Renaissance the mad are confined alongside other forms of "unreason": the poor, the unemployed and criminals. The confinement was not medical in nature but served a social or judicial purpose, which Foucault associates with the social requirements of labour, which emerged during the eighteenth century. The failure to work, whether by choice or incapacity became a moral issue: idleness was morally wrong. By defining the "other" (those confined), what was "normal" could be identified, and the "abnormal" could be controlled, confined and managed. The need to define people and, through that definition, control them is central to Foucault's argument. This separation of the "mad" alongside other examples of unreason from the rest of society enforced silence upon it.

[150] Michel Foucault, *History of Madness* (Psychology Press, 2006).

The beginning of the use of morality in the treatment of madness is also noted by Foucault in the changing attitude towards hypochondria and hysteria. He charts the shift from these conditions being physiologically based with identifiable symptoms leading to diagnosis of what was considered a mental disease as opposed to madness.[151] Hypochondria and hysteria were no longer conditions that were physiologically-based, they became the result of lifestyle and subject to moral sanction. There is a shift from these conditions being seen as the result of internal "organic movements in the lower regions of the body" to the result of stimuli external to the body.[152]

By responding to these conditions within a moral framework, the behaviour displayed warranted correction and the tools of guilt and shame could be implemented. This is significant when we consider the position of women in particular as they are subjected to the control and sanctions of the patriarchal society in which they lived. The use of guilt and shame and the highlighting of a person's social role (for instance, wife, mother, daughter) were used to control the individual but also to maintain the status quo. Foucault identifies this relationship between moral judgement and treatment based on feelings of guilt because of "bad" or "immoral" behaviour provided the setting that allowed

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[151] Foucault identifies the unusual timing of this shift. He writes: "strangely, it is during the course of the eighteenth century, without there being any theoretical or experimental upheavals in pathology that the theme suddenly changed direction and meaning. A dynamics of the corporeal space gives way to a moral theory of sensitivity. It is only at this point that the notions of hysteria and hypochondria radically alter their nature and definitively enter the world of madness"(Foucault 286).

[152] Foucault, *History of Madness*, 294. Foucault suggests that as a result of this change "people were at once more innocent and more guilty. More innocent as they were swept along by the total irritation of the nervous system into an unconsciousness whose degree was proportional to the extent of the illness. But more guilty, more guilty by far, as everything to which they were attached in the world, the life that they led, the affections that they had, the passions and fantasies that they had nourished with excessive indulgence, all melted into an irritation of the nerves, where they found their natural effect and their moral punishment" (Foucault 295).

psychology to become possible. Again, this shift is more a response to madness than a signal of a greater understanding of it.[153]

Madness, Women and the Cultural Feminine.

Elaine Showalter in her work *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830 -1980*, charts the ways in which women have been controlled and dominated by the society in which they live, through the narrative of female madness. [154] Showalter, through reference to Mary Wollstonecraft's unfinished *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman*, illustrates the use of the narrative of the insane woman to privilege men. "Wollstonecraft's heroine Maria, has been forced into a madhouse by her abusive husband, who wants control of her fortune and her liberty to pursue his sexual adventures".[155] Importantly, however, Wollstonecraft does not limit her condemnation of this particular man against this particular woman but draws attention to the broader dilemma of women living in a patriarchal society. It is not simply within the confines of the madhouse that women are enslaved with little or no control over their lives but through their gender they are enslaved through their social position of being less than men.

Madness for Showalter has therefore been something that is “done” to women in the manner of Wollstonecraft's Maria but it has also been presented as the

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[153] Foucault explains the difference between sensation and sensitivity and how it impacted on diagnosis in the following way: “Part of this is the complete assimilation of hysteria and hypochondria to mental illnesses. Through this capital distinction between sensation and sensitivity, they enter the domain of unreason, which as we saw above was characterised by an essential moment of error and dream i.e. by blindness. For as long as the vapours were convulsions or strange sympathetic communications through the body, even if they resulted in fainting and a loss of consciousness, they were not madness. But when the mind becomes blind to the very excess of its own sensibility – then madness appears” (Foucault 296).

[154] Showalter, "The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Literature 1830–1980."

[155] Ibid., 1.

essential nature of the feminine, the 'other' that allows for the identity of the masculine to be sane. The dual nature of discourse, and the setting up of oppositions that are defined by each other as discussed by Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva and others is present here as Showalter suggests that "they [contemporary feminist philosophers, literary critics, social theorists] have shown how women within our dualistic systems of language and representation, are typically situated on the side of irrationality, silence, nature and the body, while men are situated on the side of reason discourse, culture and mind".[156] Showalter draws attention to the idea, also expressed by Foucault that the names, nature and understanding of the disorder may alter but its alignment, for Showalter, with the feminine never does. "Thus madness even when experienced by men, is metaphorically and symbolically represented as feminine: a female malady".[157] However, Showalter does not acknowledge that the dialogue between "sane" and "insane" or "normal" and "abnormal" is not limited to the dualism of masculine and feminine. An important point is made with regards to the suggestion of such a rigid duality in the response of Marianne DeKoven to the work of Julia Kristeva:

> This discourse assumes that time, identity, and history lie on the dominant, masculine side of a massive Western-cultural gendered dualism, constituted by and constitutive of their feminine other of 'truth', loss and timelessness, without disclaimer, qualification, explanation or footnote. Perhaps the greatest risk of this discourse lies in its potentializing or 'essentializing' gender, thereby suppressing the historical, cultural particularity of actual women and men.[158]

DeKoven's point rightly challenges Showalter's position which, through its rigidity, fails to recognise the subtleties of actual historical experience. DeKoven continues her statement by identifying the role of cultural factors in defining

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[156] Ibid., 3-4.
[157] Ibid., 4.
[158] DeKoven, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism*, 26.

concepts such as 'masculine' and 'feminine', hinted at in the last quotation from Showalter above but not expanded upon:

> I would especially like to make explicit at this point my (and many others') sense of the difference between woman, or the cultural feminine, as the repressed other of hegemonically masculine Western culture, and actual, historical women [... s]ince "masculine" and "feminine" are cultural abstractions – forces functioning pervasively in culture and representation, within historically specific configurations – they operate in a different register from the almost limitlessly multiple, complex, mixed, and indeterminate gender positions occupied by actual people.[159]

The problems of negotiating a pre-determined theoretical position with actual lived experience are illustrated by DeKoven. To apply DeKoven's theory to actual historical men and women is possible through the example of the Fitzgeralds. Fitzgerald, the historical figure, is aligned with cultural masculinity, an inheritor of the western literary tradition and therefore involved in the repression of the cultural feminine, which is aligned with the historical figure of Zelda. Another significant point that DeKoven makes and which is of importance as attention shifts to the function of narrative in the lives of the Fitzgeralds is the following:

> "the feminine" is often conflated in this discourse, and in my study here, with "the maternal," generally when the maternal aspect of the cultural feminine is the primary consideration in a particular segment of the argument. That conflation is a function of the cultural construction of these gender abstractions.[160]

By summarising aspects of Luce Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman*, DeKoven explains the narrative of Western culture, "created by masculine self-representation, which is driven by the necessity to produce an image of the self-same, and therefore to suppress the feminine, particularly the maternal".[161] This

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[159] Ibid., 27.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.

suppressed feminine poses such a threat to what DeKoven calls masculine subject-formation in other words, identity, that it must be presented as a "chaotic nothing". Irigaray argues that at one moment (and one moment only) in the history of Western culture was there the opportunity to overthrow the hegemony of masculine self-representation and that was in the work of Sigmund Freud. However, the opportunity was not taken by him and Irigaray sees a self-conscious re-enforcement of masculine hegemony resulting in a continued suppression of the feminine, fixed in the position of "other".[162]

Asylums and Gendered Identities.

With the emergence of the Victorian asylum there appeared to be a shift away from the brutality of its predecessor in the form of Bedlam and similar institutions. However, the requirement of control was still central to the functioning of this new environment. Foucault, Showalter, Chesler and others have highlighted the familial structure of the asylum, with the head doctor acting as father, his wife as mother and the patients as children. Within this pseudo-family the relationship between patients and caretakers was hierarchical in nature but even more importantly hierarchical in the manner of the family: correction of behaviour, the moral authority of the father and the expectation of obedience played out within the asylum setting. A return to health was seen as a conformity to expectation of social type. This recognition of a social type demonstrates the importance of others in the determination, not only of sanity, but of identity itself. Foucault does not explore the specific implications for women; however, if his understanding is correct, the only social types "morally recognised and approved" by a society that was male-centred, the only identity

[162] Ibid., 35-36.

open to women would be that of wife, mother or daughter. By creating an environment where the restoration of sanity was equated to complying with social norms these institutions enforced their own paternalistic and familial structures while simultaneously enforcing the patriarchal bias of the society in which they functioned. The connection between recognisable social type and sanity also creates a link between personal identity and social role. Insanity was therefore the result of a loss of identity through a loss or a refusal to accept social position and the attendant role required of it. The asylum was concerned, not so much with medical approaches to madness, but with correction; by this rationale reason itself was never lost but hidden, due to lifestyle or moral fault. Therefore the restoration of sanity was possible through correcting "wrong" behaviour or "wrong" thinking and so emerged what Showalter calls "the triple cornerstones of Victorian psychiatric theory and practice [they] were moral insanity, moral management, and moral architecture".[163] As previously noted insanity was related to a moral failing which would be treated with paternal supervision (an aspect of madness powerfully explored by Foucault) "in an effort to re-educate the insane in habits of industry, self-control, moderation and perseverance" (Showalter 29). The "moral architecture" that Showalter refers to is the environment of the asylum itself that permitted control of inmates without physical force. Showalter recognises the manner in which the Victorian Asylum reflected the concerns and priorities of the Victorian Age, "[i]n its optimism, paternalism, common sense, appetite for system, and especially in its fondness for domestic models of institutionalization".[164] Aspects of this Victorian sensibility of correcting "wrong" behaviour is recognisable in the facilities in which Zelda Fitzgerald was treated. She was institutionalised for the

[163] Showalter, "The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Literature 1830–1980," 29.
[164] Ibid.

first time on 23rd April 1930, as Matthew Bruccoli points out, ten years and twenty days after her wedding. The nature of the report made on her admittance to the Malmaison Clinic near Paris is significant, as her words are suggestive of a woman not being permitted to exercise creativity. Her anxiety appears to be completely connected to her not being able to work:

> Mrs FITZ-GERALD entered on 23 April 1930 in a state of acute anxiety, restlessness, continually repeating:
> "This is dreadful, this is horrible, what is going to become of me, I have to work, and I will no longer be able to, I must die, and yet I have to work. I will never be cured, let me leave. I have to go see 'Madam' (dance teacher), she has given me the greatest joy that can exist it is comparable to the light of the sun that falls on a block of crystal, to a symphony of perfume, the most perfect chord from the greatest composer in music [.][165]

Immediately the connection between female instability and creative expression is apparent but interpreted differently. Zelda's belief is that her work, in the form of dance, is the only source of mental stability open to her but this is dismissed by a number of her doctors. In the manner of the nameless protagonist in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, imposed rest was the answer for Zelda's distress. In a letter addressed to Scott Fitzgerald on the 23rd June 1930, Dr Oscar Forel of the Les Rives de Prangins Clinic on Lake Geneva writes:

> I've taken notice of the attached letter which shows how Mrs Fitzgerald still clings to her career as a dancer. On the other hand, Doctor de Jonge and myself, we are certain that it is not in this direction that she will find her equilibrium and the possibility of resuming a normal life. Therefore, if you write to the teacher of your wife as she demands it, it would be preferable (although it will be a big disappointment to her) that, in the answer, one makes her understand that there is not her real calling. She wants to start work again, but at this point in time, it is not a question of dance, but medical treatment which she urgently needs.[166]

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[165] Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 289.
[166] Ibid., 302.

The position of Zelda at this point in her life encapsulates the theoretical positions put forward by Foucault and by Showalter, Chesler and Appiganesi. She is objectified both as a patient and as a female living within a patriarchal system that imposes domesticity on women as the source of sound mental health. The suggestion is that if Zelda would comply with her role as wife and mother, her emotional and mental distress would subside. Between the lines, as Foucault suggests, a moral judgement is being made: her mental imbalance is the result of "wrong" behaviour, correction of her external activity will instigate internal calm. However, this imposed rest, a physical version of imposed silence, is detrimental to Zelda's attempts at creating an identity that is not dependent on her relationships with other people, most notably her husband and her child.

Zelda Fitzgerald as a Reader of Male Texts.

In Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's 1979 work, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, the authors explore the complex position of women within the western literary tradition.[167] Their argument is grounded upon the belief that the female reader and writer is confronted with a tradition that is exclusively male and patriarchal. Throughout the opening pages of the book, the authors explore the relentless masculine metaphors that illustrate for male writers the experience of authorial creation. By making reference to the musings of Gerald Manley Hopkins, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Ruskin on the act of writing, Gilbert and Gubar argue, "[i]n all these aesthetics the poet, like God the Father, is a paternalistic ruler of the fictive world he has created". [168] The paternalistic

[167] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Yale Univ Pr, 2000).
[168] Ibid., 5.

metaphor is continued by the manner in which male writers relate to or position themselves with other male writers. The language is one of kinship but more specifically that of fathers and sons, with younger writers inheriting (or rejecting) the tradition from their older forbears. Quoting Harold Bloom, the authors suggest, "the fierce struggle at the heart of literary history [...] is a battle between strong equals, father and son as mighty opposites, Laius and Oedipus at the crossroads".[169] This analysis of the metaphorical language surrounding the act of writing illustrates the manner in which women have persistently been excluded from the writing process, from the act of creation. The paternalistic metaphor that ties masculine sexuality with authority, activity and the creative venture does not allow for the female writer. "If male sexuality is integrally associated with the assertive presence of literary power, female sexuality is associated with the absence of such power".[170] *The Madwoman in the Attic* is an attempt to answer a question that is posed at the very beginning of the text, "[w]here does such an implicitly or explicitly patriarchal theory of literature leave literary women?".[171]

Of course, for other theorists, the problem faced by woman exists before she even picks up a pen because she is excluded not only as a writer but also as a reader. Judith Fetterley's, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, highlights not only the manner in which women are excluded but also the detrimental impact that such exclusion creates. Referring to Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* and Norman Mailer's *An American Dream,* the author writes:

> In such fictions the female reader is co-opted into participation in an experience from which she is explicitly excluded; she is asked to identify

[169] Ibid., 6.
[170] Ibid., 8.
[171] Ibid., 7.

> with a self hood that defines itself in opposition to her; she is required to identify against herself.[172]

Fetterley's argument echoes aspects of the standpoint theory that claims marginalised groups (in this case women) are able to see the social and cultural hierarchies more clearly than the dominant group (in this case men) who are assimilated more deeply into the status quo. In this instance Fetterley's position is akin to that of the standpoint of the outsider who can 'see' the western literary tradition more clearly than the men who have dominated its output. Fetterley's argument is that female characters in male fiction do not, indeed cannot, articulate female experience but rather are a reflection of the desires, anxieties and fears of the male author. As a result all readers, be they men or women, must read Western literature as 'men' as the experience of men is presented in fiction as the experience of *all* humanity.

> Power is the issue in the politics of literature ... to be excluded from a literature that claims to define one's identity is to experience a peculiar form of powerlessness [...] the endless division of self against self , the consequence of the invocation to identify as male while being reminded that to be male – to be universal, to be American – is to be *not female*.[173]

What is problematic in Fetterley's argument is that, although it recognises that male and female experience are different, it does not fully acknowledge that subjective experience of different men and different women does not allow for a simple separation based on gender lines. Even with acknowledgement of the impact of race, class and geography the suggestion that all female readers experience all male writing as one of powerlessness is a problematic proposition. What does have validity is the suggestion that some male writers do not recognise the subjective nature of their experience and translate it to one

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[172] Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, vol. 247 (Indiana Univ Pr, 1978), xii.
[173] Ibid., xiii.

that is universal. Throughout the discussions instigated by Fetterley, Gubar and Gilbert, Showalter and others, there is a connection made between the distorted view of female experience depicted in literature written by men and female madness. In Elaine Showalter's "Women and the Curriculum", the author underlines the complexity of the response female students have towards the literary canon as presented by the American college curriculum. In her argument, female experience as actually experienced by women is neither portrayed nor validated, and the result of having to position themselves as male readers is 'self-hatred and self-doubt' (Fetterley xxi). Fetterley also references Lee Edwards' article "Women, Energy and Middlemarch", where self-loathing is taken one step further. Edwards experienced the education system as:

> schizophrenic and I do not use this term lightly, for madness is the bizarre but logical conclusion of our education. Imagining myself male, I attempted to create myself male.[174]

The loss, or rather the lack, of any recognisable representation leads the female artist unable to articulate the self due to the false reflections of women mirrored in male texts. Gilbert and Gubar argue that these false images must be destroyed before the female artist can embark on the creative venture. Women "exist only to be acted on by men both as literary and as sensual objects".[175] Within the literary tradition the female is either the virtuous angel or a sinful monster, either the virginal madonna or the whore. The extreme nature of these depictions is not recognisable to female readers as valid representations but they must be authenticated by them as they are forced to see the feminine through exclusively male eyes. The result of such a predicament for Fetterley is

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[174] Ibid., xxii.

[175] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination,* 8.

catastrophic requiring the female reader to identify with a self-hood that is in opposition to her.

In light of this it is perhaps unsurprising that Lee Edwards' experience of American college education left her with a feeling of being "schizophrenic". The importance of seeing one's own experiences given cultural expression is crucial for a sense of those experiences being validated and recognisable. This need, which goes beyond desire, for cultural representation is not exclusive to women but also to those of non-European origin, those who do not identify themselves as heterosexual, those who are not middle class. In short the "other" needs representation as much as the "norm" of white middle-class manhood.

Despite reservations regarding the generalisations that are endemic in the argument – the assumption that all female readers experience male texts in an identical fashion and that all male texts force the female reader to "identify against herself" – Fetterley and Gilbert and Gubar's arguments do resonate with the specific experience of Zelda Fitzgerald. The confessed auto-biographical nature of her husband's fiction positions Zelda Fitzgerald as both muse and model for all his female characters, a matter of public record: "[i]ndeed I married the heroine of my stories".[176] As a result the complexity of female readers' and writers' response to the western literary tradition can be poignantly explored in the specifics of one individual life. Her position as a reader of her husband's texts is even more complex and her response to them more open to Lee Edwards' feeling of being "schizophrenic" as Zelda is not just seeing generalised female experience being represented in texts as a means of expressing male desires and fears, but she is seeing *her own* experiences and self used in this way. It is perhaps an obvious point but an important one to

[176] Fitzgerald, *Conversations with F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 7.

acknowledge that her position is not unique: writers absorb aspects of the people around them in developing characters. However, although not unique, Zelda's repeated representation does suggest a particularly intense awareness of the manner in which her experiences, words and relationship with her husband were being transformed into works of art. Similarly the variation in the manner in which she is depicted saw aspects of her identity separated from each other; she is both angel or "the golden girl" to quote Scott Fitzgerald and a monster or "the great american bitch" in the words of Dolores Barracano Schmidt. In her article of the same name Barracano Schmidt writes:

> They [literary works of the twentieth century by Hemingway, Lewis and Fitzgerald] present a specifically *male* view, and in these particular cases, a threatened male view of their times. It is in their female characters, created not experienced, that the nature of their fears and wishes will be found. [177]

How much more distorted must this fictional world appear to a woman who is not reading a fictional "type" but seeing her life, her experiences and sometimes her own language mutated into the source of male destruction? Barracano Schmidt opens her article in the following manner:

> When a character appears and reappears virtually unchanged in the work of a number of different authors over a period of time, we may theorise (a) that the character is derivative, the writers have used a common model; or (b) that the character is a product of social conditioning, an ideal or counter-ideal of the prevailing values of the society; or (c) that the character is a symbolic fulfilment of the writers' needs, a mythic l being invented to give solace in an otherwise terrifying situation.[178]

For Zelda, the disruptive figure of Daisy Fay Buchanan or the damaged and damaging character of Nicole Warren Diver are not exclusively reflections of social anxieties or archetypes replicated from other works of fiction; they are

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[177] Dolores Barracano Schmidt, "The Great American Bitch," *College English* 32, no. 8 (1971): 905.
[178] Ibid., 900.

herself as seen through the eyes of her husband. She is unable to recognise herself in the reflection of the mirror that Scott Fitzgerald holds up to her. As Leslie Fiedler notes in *Love and Death in the American Novel,* the hero in Fitzgerald's fiction "finds in his bed not the white bride but the Dark Destroyer; indeed, there is no White Bride, since Dark Lady and Fair, witch and redeemer have fallen together".[179] In the most personal manner possible, Zelda "is required to identify against herself".[180] The profoundly personal manner in which she is objectified and the confusing manner in which she is identified as both "angel" and "monster" is something that Zelda Fitzgerald was aware of from the very beginning of her relationship with her husband. In a letter dated May 1919, it appears that she was eager to kill the angel in the house or rather the princess in the tower, twelve years before Virginia Woolf suggested doing so: [181]

> Scott, you've been sweet about writing - but I'm so tired of being told that you 'used to wonder why they kept princesses in towers' – you've written that verbatim, in your last *six* letters! [182]

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[179] Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Stein and Day, 1966), 292.

[180] Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction,* 247, xii.

[181] Virginia Woolf, in her posthumously published essay 'Professions for Women' based on a speech given at a branch of the National Society for Women's Service on 21st January 1931, writes: 'while I was writing this review [of a novel written by a man], I discovered that I would have to do battle with a certain phantom. And that phantom was a woman, and when I came to know her better I called her after the heroine of a famous poem, The Angel in the House... I did my best to kill her. My excuse, if I were to be had up in a court of law, would be that I acted in self-defence. Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing. For, as I found, directly as I put pen to paper, you cannot review even a novel without having a mind of your own, without expressing what you think to be the truth about human relations, morality, sex. And all these questions, according to the Angel of the House, cannot be dealt with freely and openly by women; they must charm, they must conciliate, they must – to put it bluntly – tell lies if they are to succeed. Thus, whenever I felt the shadow of her wing or the radiance of her halo upon my page, I took up the inkpot and flung it at her. She died hard. Her fictitious nature was of great assistance to her. It is far harder to kill a phantom than reality."

[182] Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald, *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda: The Love Letters of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald,* 29.

She is aware that she is metamorphosing into a literary "type" and her experiences from this point on will not only be interpreted from an exclusively male perspective but they will be enshrined in a male text. At this early point in their relationship the image of the 'princess in the tower' plucked from a child's fairy story with all its attendant mythology regarding the relationship between men and women not only infuriates Zelda Sayre, but disturbs her, as well it might. Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic,* explore the significance of gender relations and the effect they have on the relationships between women in various myths and literary texts, making reference to, amongst others, Spenser's *The Faerie Queen,* Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the legend of Adam's first wife, Lilith. However, attention here is being paid to their reading of the Brothers Grimm version of Snow White. Gilbert and Gubar highlight the significance of the relationship between the Queen and Snow White and how the connection between these two female figures functions within a patriarchal structure.[183] The authors identify the absent King as the voice in the mirror and because of his physical absence he ensures the tortuous, suffocating relationship between the two women. It is the Queen's obsession with the mirror, an enforced narcissism, that establishes a relationship of rivalry and distrust between them, but the voice in the mirror is the voice, not only of the King, but of patriarchal judgement which will determine which is "the fairest of them all". This patriarchal approval is sought, precisely because it is the only source of power open to women. Significantly, Gilbert and Gubar identify the Queen and Snow White as two sides of the same coin. The battle between them

[183] For a fascinating discussion regarding how the Grimm Brothers version of the tale differs from previous ones see Marina Warner *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers.*

is a battle between self and self, echoing the position of Fetterley's female reader's requirement to pit herself against herself:

> For the Queen, as we come to see more clearly in the course of the story, is a plotter, a plot-maker, a schemer, a witch, an artist, an impersonator, a woman of almost infinite creative energy, witty, wily and self-absorbed as all artists traditionally are. On the other hand, in her absolute chastity, her frozen innocence, her sweet nullity, Snow White represents precisely the ideal of "contemplative purity" [...] the heroine of a life that *has no story*. But the Queen, adult and demonic, plainly wants a life of "significant action," by definition an "unfeminine" life of stories and story-telling. And therefore, to the extent that Snow White, as her daughter, is a part of herself, she wants to kill the Snow White *in herself*, the angel who would keep deeds and dramas out of her own house.[184]

The nature of the relationship between Snow White and the Queen ensures the latter's defeat: she can never gain mastery over what Snow White represents within patriarchal culture, the image of the chaste, passive "heroine of a life that *has no story*". The Queen's attempts to destroy Snow White and her eventual, apparent victory shows an unexpected and unwanted side-effect of the Queen's murderous plots, as they have "[strengthened] the chaste maiden in her passivity, they have made her into precisely the eternally beautiful, inanimate *objet d'art* patriarchal aesthetics wants a girl to be," and conferred the only power permitted women in patriarchal culture: young, beautiful, unchanging and preferably silent.[185]

As previously mentioned, Gilbert and Gubar's understanding of the fairy tale is that "the Queen and Snow White are in some sense one". Each one is trying to separate themselves from the other. This is exemplified in the enchanted apple, a two-faced fruit that represents the ambiguous but indissoluble relationship

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[184] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 38-39.
[185] Ibid., 40.

between the Queen and Snow White “who is both her daughter and her enemy, her self and her opposite”.[186]

The story is, however, a repetitive cycle. At the tale’s conclusion Snow White rises up from a glass coffin, regurgitating the poisoned apple, and she, now the confirmed “fairest of them all”, will marry patriarchal power in the form of the prince and will displace and replace the plotting Queen. However, what hope for Snow White after the end of the fairy tale? Is she not doomed to re-enact the madness and plotting of the woman she has replaced? Having been trained in the correct role of female domesticity by her sojourn with the dwarves, she exchanges one glass coffin for another. After all:

> There is [...] no female role model for her in this tale except the ‘good' (dead) mother and her living avatar the 'bad' mother. And if Snow White escaped her first glass coffin by her goodness, her passivity and her docility, her only escape from her second glass coffin, the imprisoning mirror, must evidently be through 'badness', through plots and stories duplicitous schemes, wild dreams, fierce fictions, mad impersonations. The cycle of her fate seems inexorable. Renouncing ‘contemplative purity', she must now embark on that life of 'significant action' which, for a woman, is defined as a witch's life because it is so monstrous, so unnatural ... she will do a silent terrible death-dance out of the story, the looking glass, the transparent coffin of her own image. Her only deed, this death will imply, can be a deed of death, her only action the pernicious action of self destruction.[187]

What is at work here is the tension between being the Queen and therefore the creator equated for Gilbert and Gubar with the role of plotter and schemer (i.e. a story teller) and that which is created, Snow White, an unchanging image. What relevance does this have for Zelda? After having made reference to the princess in the tower in 1919, Zelda continues with the theme in a letter dated February 1920, which strangely echoes Gilbert and Gubar's interpretation of Snow White:

> Darling Heart, our fairy tale is almost ended, and we're going to marry and live happily ever afterward just like the princess in her tower who

[186] Ibid., 41.
[187] Ibid., 42.

> worried you so much – and made me so cross by her constant recurrence . . . I *do* want to marry you – even if you do think I "dread" it – I wish you hadn't said that – I'm not afraid of anything.[188]

Just like Snow White, Zelda's fairy tale will end with her marriage and in a fashion similar to what Gilbert and Gubar refer to as the female "prison of the male text": she will be frozen in her husband's fiction as an *objet d'art*, passively lying in a glass coffin of cultural patriarchy or driven to crazed action in an attempt to escape Gilbert and Gubar's "looking glass".[189]

Zelda Fitzgerald as a Writer of Autobiographical Texts.

To continue with Gilbert and Gubar's theoretical position, through a number of different mediums (painting, dancing and writing), Zelda Fitzgerald does attempt to break free of the "glass coffin of cultural patriarchy" in an attempt to exert or create a sense of separateness from the patriarchal narrative in which she is trapped. The suggestion is that as a result of the cultural narrative which imposes on her the roles of wife and mother, and her husband's fiction, which alternates her role between "golden girl" and "bitch", Zelda Fitzgerald is driven mad. Her madness is akin to that experienced by Charlotte Perkins Gilman's protagonist in *The Yellow WallPaper*.[190] She is not so much mad as driven mad by her husband denying her any sense of autonomy or self-expression. This theoretical position is transcribed onto the life of Zelda Fitzgerald by a number

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[188] Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald, *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda: The Love Letters of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald*, 42.

[189] Marina Warner point out that despite fairy tales' predictable conclusion that on the marriage of the heroine 'they all lived happily ever after', the preceding tale actually demonstrates the opposite, 'the misery within marriage', that is the source of the unhappiness of the protagonists. See *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers*, 217.

[190] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper and Selected Writings* (London: Virago Press, 2009).

of her biographers, an aspect of her representation that will be returned to shortly. What is of interest with regards the work that she has left behind is the limited amount of critical attention it has garnered. This is at odds with the repeated claims made on her behalf that she was an artist of the same importance, or at least potential importance, as her husband.

The critical attention that Zelda's writing has received has focused on two areas. The first is the composition (rather than the work itself) of her one completed novel, *Save Me the Waltz*.[191] In particular her husband's response to its writing and its being sent to his editor, Max Perkins without F Scott Fitzgerald's knowledge or approval.[192] The manner in which he responded to Zelda's novel is perceived as illustrative of cultural patriarchy that seeks to control all narratives, even those experienced by women; as a result *Save Me the Waltz* is read as an alternate version of *Tender is the Night*. The problems that arose from the writing and publication of this text also raise issues regarding artistic jealousy and the definition of "professional" rather than "amateur", yet another binary that aligns masculinity with the former and femininity with the latter.[193] The second concern, which receives attention is the frequent claim that

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[191] Fitzgerald, *The Collected Writings.*

[192] Some articles that do consider *Save Me the Waltz* as more than just an interesting footnote in Scott Fitzgerald studies are: Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin's "Art as Woman's Response and Search: Zelda Fitzgerald's "Save Me the Waltz" *The Southern Literary Journal* 11.2 (Spring, 1979):22-42, Sarah Beebe Fryer's "Nicole Warren Diver and Alabama Beggs Knight: Women on the Threshold of Freedom." *Modern Fiction Studies* 31.2 (Summer, 1985):318-325, Mary E. Wood's " A Wizard Cultivator: Zelda Fitzgerald's "Save Me the Waltz" as Asylum Autobiography." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 11.2 (Autumn, 1992):247-264 and Linda W. Wagner's "Save Me the Waltz": An Assessment in Craft." *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 12.3 (Fall, 1982): 201-209.

[193] Scott Fitzgerald's response to Zelda's writing is evident in recorded joint sessions with Dr Thomas Rennie that were made on the 28th May 1933 at their home "La Paix" in Maryland (see Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 345-352). Fitzgerald states, "You are a third rate writer and a third rate ballet dancer [...] If you want to write modest things you may be able to turn out one collection of short stories. For the rest, you are compared to me is just like comparing – well, there is just not any comparison. I am a professional writer

Scott Fitzgerald repeatedly and at will, plagiarised his wife's life, thoughts and writing. These concerns with matters beyond the text demonstrate that, even for her most fervent champions who believe she should be recognized more fully as an artist in her own right, it is almost impossible to consider Zelda Fitzgerald's writing without looking at it through an auto-biographical prism.

Although her husband drew heavily on his own life and experiences – he is undoubtedly a highly autobiographical writer – these experiences through the creative act metamorphose into works of art that are distinct from the author's biography. James Watson when describing William Faulkner in the following manner, could also be writing about Scott Fitzgerald:

> Breaking into his own life experience, and breaking that, in turn, into diverse often divergent segments counterpoised against one another, he created a world of controlled chaos, made in his own protean image and reflective of his own multiple sense of self.[194]

Zelda Fitzgerald's writing does not undergo a similar transformation; her fiction remains intricately bound to her life experience. This is not to suggest that by definition such work is inferior (the poetry of Sylvia Plath springs to mind as an example of powerful autobiographical or confessional writing). However, the process of writing is serving a different purpose in the life of Zelda Fitzgerald than in her husband's. To demonstrate this, attention will now turn to the series of "*Girl*" stories, which were published between July 1929 and January 1931, bridging the period before Zelda's first breakdown in April 1930 and its immediate aftermath. Five of the stories were published in *College Humor* and credited to both Fitzgeralds although Scott was involved only in

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with a huge following. I am the highest paid short story writer in the world. I have a various times dominated – " to which Zelda responds, " It seems to me you are making a rather violent attack on a third rate talent, then . . . . Why in the hell you are so jealous, I don't know. If I thought that about anybody I would not care what they wrote." (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 345)

[194] Watson, *William Faulkner: Self-Presentation and Performance,* 2.

polishing them.[195] An additional one, 'A Millionaire's Girl', was published in the *Saturday Evening Post*, under Scott Fitzgerald's name, only with a price tag of $4000. This blatant misappropriation of her work has been seen by her biographers as symptomatic, not only of the Fitzgerald marriage (although the decision regarding dropping Zelda's name from 'A Millionaire's Girl' appears to have been made by Fitzgerald's literary agent, Harold Ober), but also a demonstration of how women's narratives are absorbed by patriarchal culture.[196]

The second story, 'Southern Girl' was published in July 1929, the setting of which is a southern town during world war one. The story recounts the romance between the southern girl of the title and a northern soldier stationed at a nearby camp. The basis of the narrative, is of course, the first meeting between Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald, which is used repeatedly in Scott Fitzgerald's fiction, most notably in the back story of Gatsby and Daisy's romance. Dan Stone, an Ohio native, accompanied by his northern fiancée, Louise, arrives on the doorstep of Harriet's home in the town of Jeffersonville, which she runs with her frail mother and younger sister. He is camped nearby and is looking for a room for Louise.[197] During the three weeks that follow Harriet and Louise become friends and a love triangle develops between the three characters. Dan, breaks his engagement with Louise and decides to marry Harriet. After the war, Harriet travels North to visit Dan and his mother. In this new setting they meet

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[195] Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald,* 270.

[196] Harold Ober explained " I really felt a little guilty about dropping Zelda's name from that story [...] but I think she understands that using the two names would have tied the story up with the College Humour series and might have got us into trouble." Ibid.

[197] The town's name echoes Faulkner's re-imagined Oxford in the form of Jefferson. This, of course, may be coincidental but Zelda knew and admired Faulkner's work, this is evident in a number of letters written by her to Scott and often Faulkner's work is referenced in connection with her own. See Bryer and Barks *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda,* 106, 137 and 158.

up again with Louise and Dan returns to his original love. Harriet returns to the South and after some years she marries an architect who lodged at her boarding house. He too is from Ohio and this is where the couple settle. At the close of the story it is reported that Harriet has had a baby and named the boy Dan. When recounting the key points of the story it would appear to be a simple fictionalised account of the author's first meeting with her husband with some additional plot details. However, on closer examination it is an interesting reflection on personal identity and it demonstrates the role that writing played in Zelda Fitzgerald's life, particularly as her sense of self was increasingly challenged by the ravages of mental ill-health.

The story is narrated in the first person by an unnamed character who observes events with the perspective of an all-seeing omniscient narrator. The narrator watches but is not involved and more significantly not engaged in the events. This narrative voice is indistinguishable from the voices that narrate the remaining "*Girl*" stories suggesting that the voice of the narrator and the voice of the author are one and the same.[198] In part, this lack of differentiation between the author and the narrator is indicative of a lack of technique but it also marks the stories as confessional in nature. The autobiographical nature of the material, which equates Zelda with Harriet and Scott with Dan is complicated by the narrative voice, which is also aligned with the author creating the effect of the author observing a previous version of herself; the result is peculiarly voyeuristic. If this position is accepted the addition of certain plot details become particularly interesting. Harriet lives with female relatives, her father is not mentioned and his absence is not explained. Her mother is described as "fragile" and her sister is "younger" making Harriet the head of the

[198] *Poor Working Girl* (January 1931) is written in the third person but the narrative voice is unchanged from that which appears in the remainder of the series.

household; aside from running the boarding house she also works outside the home as a teacher. The narrator states that the people of the town wondered why Harriet is satisfied with these positions and reflects "[t]he reason was probably that she was incapable of giving up anything, of relinquishing the smallest part of a conception or a phase of her life until she felt it was completed".[199] This commitment to one course of action stops her from pursuing "one bigger unit of a job".[200] Harriet's identity is tied to work: although her responsibilities stop her from pursuing a more ambitious path her refusal to "relinquish' anything until it is completed demonstrates a commitment to work. Her ambitions for the future revolve around a "bigger unit of a job", as opposed to the expected path of marriage. Harriet's absent father and passive female relatives ensures that Harriet is, by the standards of the day, independent.

The changing moment of the narrative is the arrival of the northern soldier, Dan. They meet, not at a country club dance as their real life alter-egos did, but on the steps of Harriet's boarding house, with Dan accompanied by his fiancée. Immediately, the women are contrasted by their northern and southernness and it is this differentiation between the two women that is highlighted through the remainder of the story. "Her [Louise] black hair was too sleek to have known the muddy water of summer creeks, and her dark clothes were cut with a precision and directness which could not have been interrupted by frequent half hour respites from the heat.".[201] Louise's introduction draws attention to her eyes, "the gray eyes back of his shoulder started a little to hear so much instantaneous comradeship bouncing down the worn veranda".[202] The disembodied eyes,

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[199] Fitzgerald, *The Collected Writings*, 300-01.
[200] Ibid., 301.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.

alongside the narratorial voice, enhances the mood of voyeurism: Harriet is clearly being watched.

Over the course of the following weeks against the backdrop of the South during World War One with its attendant soldiers, dances, crowded verandas and "dawdling late yellow afternoons", friendship between the three characters forms and subsequently a love triangle.[203] These remembrances as told by the narrator are impressionistic, memories with a dream-like quality that are based on sensation and mood rather than on concrete events or episodes, which in turn creates an idyllic moment which will be, in time, lost in the past. This elusive quality runs throughout *The Great Gatsby*, particularly in the passages that look back on the early relationship between Gatsby and Daisy. Nick describes this mood in the following fashion: "I was reminded of something – an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words that I had heard somewhere a long time ago ... what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever".[204]

Dan chooses Harriet and breaks up with Louise in the setting of the Jeffersonville train station. In this location a contrast is drawn between the North and the South and the manner in which these locations effect both personality or identity and action. In the break-up scene, Louise is still aligned to the North but the influence of the South is evident in the behaviour of Dan:

> There must have been some protecting quality about the Northern solidity of the steel and screens and humming fans that gave Louise the confidence and courage to face the fact that Dan was breaking their engagement. And he found something in the cart of dripping ice beside the steam train, in the lounging, muddy river beside the tracks, in the low brick station with its long shed over the freight cars and drowsy porters, to keep him from minding that he was changing her life at a word into something quite different from how she had thought of it for two years.[205]

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[203] Ibid., 302.
[204] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 87.
[205] Fitzgerald, *The Collected Writings*, 303.

The solidity of the North is contrasted with the softness of the South, expressed in words like 'dripping', 'lounging', 'muddy' and 'drowsy'. The Southern environment has directly impacted on Dan, it has altered his behaviour and his reflections on his own actions. Louise remains in tune with the North despite her sojourn in the South.[206]

The story passes quickly over the subsequent courtship and engagement of Dan and Harriet. The relationship is described in the following fashion, " [t]hey had [...] written so many letters to each other from so far away, that their relationship had become a backdrop for their lives rather than reality".[207] This echoes Rosalind Connage's remark to Amory Blaine in *This Side of Paradise* when she breaks off her relationship with him in favour of Dawson Ryder, who is described as "so reliable, I almost feel that he'd be a – a background".[208] The South and the war have taken on a dreamlike quality, an unreality in opposition to the North and the post-war world. There is an awareness of this as Harriet heads North to visit Dan in his native Ohio: "Harriet set out for the North to recapture the balm and beauty of war nights under an Alabama moon".[209] The moment is already lost as they search "vaguely to re-create those moments of mutual discovery that she and Dan had shared".[210] They are already in the process of looking back into the past in an attempt to reclaim something that has gone, hence the urge to "recapture" and "recreate". This is, of course, reminiscent of Gatsby and his doomed quest to repeat the past. Harriet's trip

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[206] The broken engagement is a re-imagining of her own break-up with Fitzgerald in 1919; however, it was Zelda that brought the relationship to an end, citing financial concerns. This rejection was not forgotten by Fitzgerald, despite their marriage the following year.

[207] Fitzgerald, *The Collected Writings*, 304.

[208] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*, 177.

[209] Fitzgerald, *The Collected Writings*, 304.

[210] Ibid.

North begins with a sense of unease and displacement. Meeting Dan in a huge, modern train station, Harriet immediately feels out of place:

> The blue-white rays from the station skylight pelted mercilessly on rouge more convincing in the soft fuzzy light of the South, and all his [Dan] politeness could scarcely keep out of his eyes the dubious quality that men feel when they find themselves with women from a different financial plane from themselves.[211]

The South and the war are fantasy for Dan, he sees Harriet very literally, in the clear light of (a Northern) day and she is found wanting. The contrasting of the North and the South continues in the form of Dan's mother who is "formal and concise" whereas Harriet is used to the old being "tired and worn" like her fragile and ineffective mother.[212] The North is also described quite differently from the South: the descriptions are largely of interiors as opposed to the outside locations that are the focus of the descriptive passages of the South. The interiors provide detail of picture frames, rugs and books as opposed to the sensual descriptions of Jeffersonville: "the automobile rides past dusty mock-orange hedges, the beveled fruit rotting beneath; into the sweet tartness of Coca-Cola cooling in wooden tubs beside a country store; into the savoury vapours of Mexican hot dog stands, and into all the mysteries of a town that, to escape the heat, sleeps nine months of the year".[213] During her time in the North Harriet is described as having spent days "in the big redbrick house" and never quite conquering "the feeling that she, on confronting its mistress, might jump suddenly out of the window".[214] Harriet is completely at odds with the environment she finds herself in: her self-doubt when in the company of her prospective mother-in-law is in sharp contrast with the manner in which she asserts her independence when in Jeffersonville and with her own mother. The

[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid., 302.
[214] Ibid., 304-05.

flippant remark regarding throwing herself out of a window does illustrate how she is so uncertain of the North that it impacts upon her sense of self and her assured and certain identity is threatened by her change in environment. This manner of contrasting the North and the South and the impact that location has on an individual's sense of identity is explored in an early Scott Fitzgerald short story, 'The Ice Palace' (1920).[215] In a similar manner to Harriet, Scott Fitzgerald's heroine, Sally Carroll Happer follows her fiancé to his native North. The two locations are contrasted in a similar manner with attention particularly noting the difference in temperature, light and energy. The manner in which the North has a diminishing effect on Sally Carroll's identity leads to her abandonment of the North and a return to the South. This trajectory is mirrored in 'Southern Girl', although it is Dan who is decisive and inevitably breaks his engagement to Harriet in favour of Louise and Harriet returns to Jeffersonville. The South and the War are fantasies that cannot be maintained by Dan in the post-war Northern world. However, Harriet's return home, with neither bitterness nor sadness at her failed engagement, suggests that for her too the relationship was always more dream than reality. She reverts back to her old way of life and her old identity in this familiar location, just as Sally Carroll Happer returns, despite the threat to her identity when in the North, unchanged. Her time away from the South is a dreamlike interlude best demonstrated by the reader's last glimpse of Sally Carroll being the same as the first. At the opening and close of the story she is sat by her bedroom window looking down into the balmy street and talking to one of the local young men, Clark Darrow, about a plan to go swimming: her identity is assured and re-

[215] David W. Ullrich, "Memorials and Monuments: Historical Method and the (Re)Construction of Memory in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *the Ice Palace*," *Studies in Short Fiction* 36 (1999)., explores the impact of regional mythologies of the North and South and their impact on identity.

assured in this familiar location. Harriet's return to the South is marked by the manner in which she is unchanged by her experience in the North but the people of Jefferson do see her as different, if possibly not from her former self then certainly different from themselves:

> Old people said they didn't see how she found courage to work all day and dance all night and look after the boardinghouse in odd moments, and always to be laughing and happy.[216]

It is Harriet's apparent happiness that is a source of puzzlement; such a lifestyle should not bring her contentment. This is echoed in the response of her married peers, who pity her around "their bridge tables and over their bassinets" and they wonder "why she preferred long chalky hours in a primary school and the gentility of aged boarders' complaints to the gilded radiators and flowered chintz of a suburban bungalow".[217]

After five years, Charles an architect, who, like Dan, is from Ohio, appears in Jeffersonville. Harriet meets the former in exactly the same way that she met the latter: on her doorstep and wrapped in a bath towel. It is not only the similarity of their meetings with Harriet and their native Ohio that makes Charles interchangeable with Dan; they have matching mothers as well as matching front doors and physically they are indistinguishable. Dan is "a big square soldier [...] with [...] a big arena of teeth" Charles has "square shoulders and an arena of big white teeth" (Z Fitzgerald 301 and 307). The light in the boarding house even lights them in the doorway in an identical fashion. After Harriet marries Charles they move to Ohio and on this occasion Harriet conforms to life in the North, illustrated by her spending "a great deal of time working for leagues and societies of all sorts" (307). Through this action she is behaving in an identical fashion to Louise, to whom she lost Dan on her first trip

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[216] Fitzgerald, *The Collected Writings*, 306.
[217] Ibid.

to the North. This conformity, however, is also a loss of identity both personal and geographical; by complying with Northern expectation, Harriet surrenders her Southerness and by marrying she surrenders an aspect of her identity, a fact which she is aware of, according to the narrator:

> evidently she felt the fear of losing interest in life scurry away down the worn veranda, worsted by the heartiness of two ringing battle laughs. [218]

Marriage, for women, involves sacrifice. In 'Southern Girl', however, marriage also appears to be unavoidable. The conclusion of the story, which sees Harriet morphed into Louise and living with Charles, the life she could have had with Dan, appears positive. The reader is told: "the news is that they are perfectly happy – as she always *s*howed herself and so deserved to be".[219] However, Harriet's marriage has resulted in the sacrifice of her own identity: just as Charles is interchangeable with Dan so Harriet has become interchangeable with Louise. The focus on the appearance of happiness – Harriet *showed* herself to be happy according to the narrator – suggests the potential that the reality may be different.

The story consists of one story (the romance between a southern girl and a northerner) told twice, illustrated by the child that Harriet has with Charles being named Dan, evidence of the interchangeability of the two men and the inevitability of the story. The cyclical nature of the narrative is a repetitive retelling of events, not only the events within itself but in the life of its author. What is apparent in this repetition is that no alternative is possible, whether it is sought or not: Harriet (Zelda) is destined to marry if not the first version of a man then the second, both of whom lead to the same kind of life. Nothing can alter this path: not broken engagements, pursuits to the North or retreats to the

[218] Ibid., 307.
[219] Ibid.

South. Harriet and Zelda are trapped in a narrative that cannot be changed whether change is sought or otherwise leading to a striking mood of fatalism at the conclusion of 'Southern Girl', a feeling of complete entrapment.

This mood of fatalism runs throughout the remainder of the *Girl* series as does the themes of work and marriage and their role in the formation of female identity. The emphasis of the stories on work, marriage or both vary, reflected in the different scenarios that the young women find themselves in but all are linked to Zelda's life and experiences. Some of the stories are specifically autobiographical ('Southern Girl'*)*, others read as wish-fulfilment ('The Original Follies Girl', 'A Millionaire's Girl') and others enter the realm of fairy tale fantasy ('The Girl the Prince Liked'). Despite these variations, as has been previously mentioned the narratorial voice is the same throughout the series of stories, as, to a large degree, are the girls themselves. The most striking similarity is in their appearances – all are young, beautiful and attractive to both men and women – as was the youthful Zelda. The similarity of the girls and the unchanging narrator, both of which appear to equate with the author, creates the effect of the author experimenting with alternate versions of her life. The attention to the balance or conflict between marriage and work as a means of self-expression also resonates with Zelda's biography at this time.

What is apparent in all of the stories is a desire on the part of the 'girl' of the title to establish some level of independence (at least at the beginning) from the people, notably husbands and families that surround them. One of the key areas where this is sought is in terms of finance, all of these women recognise the significance of accessing money independently from others. In 'Poor Working Girl' (1931) Eloise Everett Evans, works as a baby-sitter/nanny in order to save money (unsuccessfully) to train for the Broadway stage. In 'A Millionaire's Girl' (1930), Caroline heads to Hollywood and a movie career and in 'The Original

Follies Girl' (1929) and 'The Girl with Talent' (1930), Gay and Lou, respectively, have successful stage careers, which frees them from dependency on others for money. However, what is also evident in these stories is that a career, apparently glamorous and financially rewarding, is not enough to fill the lives of these women. It is alongside these attempts at individual success that the spectre of marriage looms. Just as in 'Southern Girl' so marriage or successful relationships with men hover over these women and its lack is an incompleteness in them, as much in their own eyes as the eyes of those around them. What is clear is that identity is closely associated with relationships with other people and indeed is not an internal process: identity is imposed on these women by the people around them and the society in which they function. A defining aspect of how these women are seen is based on their physicality, their beauty, attractiveness to both men and women and aloofness. Their identity is closely allied to their physical appeal; as a result identity is, by definition, challenged through ageing. Towards the end of 'The Original Follies Girl', the narrator makes the following remark about the protagonist, Gay:

> All these wanderings about took time, and Gay was forgotten in New York . . .There were other girls from fresher choruses, with wide clear eyes and free boyish laughs . . . If you asked for news of her, a blank look or a look of hesitancy would cross the face opposite you as if its owner didn't know whether he should have news of Gay or not, since her present status was undetermined. People said she was older than she was, when they talked about her – men, mostly, who were anxious that she should belong to a finished past.[220]

Her diminishment is not restricted to her absence from New York: in this quotation it is tied to the ageing process, she becomes less visible as her physical beauty changes. This connection between Gay's identity and her body is evident in the second and third paragraphs of the story which are a description of her by the unnamed narrator:

[220] Ibid., 296.

> I thought how appropriate she was – so airy, as if she had a long time ago dismissed herself as something decorative and amusing . . . She was quite tall, and all of her fitted together with delightful precision, like the seeds of a pomegranate, I suppose that *objet d'art* quality was what drew about her a long string of men-about-town. (Z Fitzgerald 293)

The use of the word 'decorative' and the phrase 'objet d'art' demonstrates her value in terms of physical beauty only, but importantly the implication is that it should be unchanging and frozen, but unlike John Keats's Grecian Urn, Gay's position in the real world as an objet d'art is finite. Her absence from New York, however, allows people, significantly mainly men, to claim she is older than she is as they "were anxious that she should belong to a finished past" (Z Fitzgerald 296). By locating her only in the past, she can be frozen in time, to maintain permanently her position as a perfect objet d'art, unaltered by life and experience. The narrator, on reflecting on Gay's life, suggests that "[s]he wore herself out with the struggle between her desire for physical perfection and her desire to use it" (Z Fitzgerald 297). She is torn between the position of Gilbert and Gubar's Snow White, the paralysed objet d'art of male fantasy, and the Queen who demands autonomy and action.

The closing paragraphs of the story tell of Gay's death, reportedly from pneumonia, after giving birth to a child. In the wake of a diminishing career and fading beauty the permanence of a child and the longevity it appears to ensure is a retreat from the finite role of 'star' to the infinite identity of "mother". However, her identity is re-established, yet again, in relation to other people even if on this occasion it is a personal relationship with a child as opposed to the anonymity of an adoring crowd. There appears to be an absence of self at the end of the story, as if Gay is no more than a symbol for others. The narrator's final, somewhat vacuous words highlight Gay's lack of any meaningful identity:

> Gay was too good a companion and too pretty to go dying like that for a romanticism that she was always half afraid would slip away from her.[221]

In 'A Millionaire's Girl', the protagonist Caroline embarks on a low-key Broadway career after a rushed and subsequently annulled marriage. After meeting and breaking-up with the millionaire of the title she heads to Hollywood and embarks on the beginnings of a successful career on the screen. However, the motivation for this commitment to work is the aforementioned Barry:

> Ever since I met him everything I do or that happens to me has seemed because of him. Now I am going to make a hit so that I can choose him again, because I'm going to have him somehow [.][222]

Both Caroline's identity and experiences have become tied to this man and her search for success is not the result of internal motivation but rather by the desire for reunification with Barry. On the night of her film's premiere, it is revealed that Barry is to marry someone else. The failure of her role as prospective wife and by default prospective mother, is contrasted with her burgeoning and independent success on the screen and it is against this backdrop of contrast that Caroline attempts suicide. Despite independence and the potential for an identity that is not tied to another, her failure to marry is reason enough for attempted self-annihilation. However, just as she promised that she was "going to have him somehow" so the two do marry: if this could not be achieved through success and independence and a subsequent meeting of equals then it could be through self-imposed victimhood. The possibility of a fairy tale ending, however, is destroyed by the narrator in the final paragraph:

> She married him, of course, and since she left the films on that occasion, they have both had much to reproach each other for. That was three years ago, and so far they have kept their quarrels out of the divorce

[221] Ibid., 297.
[222] Ibid., 333-34.

> courts, but I somehow think that you can't go on forever protecting quarrels, and that romances born in violence and suspicion will end themselves on the same note; though, of course, I am a cynical person and, perhaps, no competent judge of idyllic young love affairs.[223]

For Caroline, there is no sanctuary in either work or marriage. The finite nature of a career dependent on youthful, physical beauty and the requirement of women in marriage to surrender some if not all of their identity as seen in 'Southern Girl' results in a fragmented identity based on relationships with other people, particularly men either as objects of their gaze or as husbands.

'The Girl with Talent' (1930) again focuses on the role of work and the role of marriage and family in the formation of women's identities. In contrast to the other *Girl* stories, Lou has both a successful career and a husband and child. In a scenario that appears to be before its time, the opening pages are concerned with the impossibility of maintaining success inside and outside of the home as Lou's role as stage performer is at odds with her role as wife and mother. Her absence from the family home is highlighted by the narrator, who repeats the phrase "no Lou" five times in one paragraph emphasising that her absence results in a lack of successful domesticity. Even with the presence of the child, her husband and a "cardboard" nanny, the absence of Lou means that a family is impossible. Lou leaves New York for Paris and after a liaison is divorced from her unnamed husband. Just as Caroline in 'A Millionaire's Girl' aspires to work after her break-up, so Lou says the following after her divorce:

> I am going to work so hard that my spirit will be completely broken, and I am going to be a very fine dancer [...] I have a magnificent contract in a magnificent casino on the Cote d'Azur, and I am now on my way to work and make money magnificently.[224]

However, in the final paragraph the reader is told that in the middle of her success she elopes to China with an Englishman and has another child. Just as

[223] Ibid., 336.
[224] Ibid., 325.

in 'Southern Girl', Lou is trapped in a narrative of repetition illustrated in the way in which the second baby is described in an identical fashion to the first: "they have a beautiful baby almost big enough to eat carrot soup from a spoon".[225] In the description of Lou's absence from her family home, her first child is described as a beautiful baby "eating carrot soup from a spoon".[226] The impression given is that this is not so much a new situation and/or relationship but the repetition of an old one. Again, the character, despite apparent success, is unable to find any sense of permanence in a career but is trapped in a narrative of domesticity. The narrator of the 'The Original Follies Girl' articulates the fate of these women in the following manner: "the restless souls [...] who see the necessity for solidity and accomplishment but never quite believe in it".[227].

In part the failure of belief is connected with the manner in which these women pursue ambition. The careers depicted in the series of *Girl* stories are, with one exception, those of the stage and performance and are pursued not as their own reward but as a means of either attracting men or are simply a by-product of the protagonists' physical attractiveness. This is particularly apparent in 'Poor Working Girl' where Eloise does not have the free access to money from convenient sources that appear in the remainder of the stories (in 'The Original Follies Girl' for instance, Gay receives five thousand dollars a year from her ex-husband). Instead, Eloise is from a poorer background and decides to work as a Nanny, motivated by a desire to earn enough money to go to New York to train for the stage. Although her family is not wealthy, it is also clearly not poor: she has received an education for girls at a college downstate. However, despite this

[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid., 319.
[227] Ibid., 297.

education, for women of a certain class (like that of Zelda's) they are trained for very little in life other than for marriage and motherhood, leaving those who embrace the changing mood of the 1920s and 1930s with few options. Eloise's education is surmised in the following fashion:

> It must have been quite a strain for so Anglo-Saxon and flawless a skin to contain the verse and choruses of all the popular songs for five years back, together with a real talent for the ukulele, a technical knowledge of football, ten poetic declamations and a lyric taste in dress. Eloise knew shorthand, too, but she fumbled about in it and was pleased with herself when it worked, like a famous person making a speech in a foreign language.[228]

Her education has prepared her for nothing and enriched her mind even less. The tone of the story is light-hearted and the portrayal of Eloise is humorous; however, a serious point is being made in its telling. The result of this lack in education is a floundering search for an identity that does not have to be connected to the commitments of family. In this story, as in most of the others, it is the apparent liberation of a stage career that is pursued, a career that on popular Broadway is dependent on youth and attractiveness and is, by definition, and as illustrated in some of the other stories in the series, finite. Eloise, lacking the discipline and commitment required, ends the story "working in the capacity of pretty girl in the local power plant" with a string of men pursuing her, presumably into marriage before too long.[229] In a curious end to the story, the narrator links Eloise's failure to adequately commit to the pursuit of this, albeit fantasy career, to her lineage. "The blood in Eloise's veins had worn itself out pumping against the apathy of weary generations of farmers and little lawyers and doctors and a mayor, and she couldn't really imagine achieving anything. She came from our worn-out stock".[230]

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[228] Ibid., 337.
[229] Ibid., 343.
[230] Ibid., 342.

The muted conclusion of 'Poor Working Girl' is shared by the remainder of the stories in the series. Invariably the end of the tale is anti-climactic with the heroine "off-stage" and no longer in the field of vision of the narrator. Through marriage (or on one occasion death) she has disappeared. The anti-climactic mood of the stories contains an element of accusation at the failure of these women to reach the climax that the narratives appear to be building towards, but alongside this is a resignation to the impossibility of an alternative ending. In 'The Girl with Talent', for example, after Lou tells the narrator her plans to become a truly great dancer, both creatively satisfied and financially successful and before she elopes with an Englishman to China, the narrator remarks, "[t]hinking that those were excellent defence plans that would never be carried out because of lack of attack, I made no comment".[231] Lou's departure from a burgeoning successful career is a foregone conclusion, as is the unhappiness of Caroline after she weds and Harriet's marriage to Charles. Similarly Eloise is trapped by her lineage and lack of any meaningful education and Gay is fated to succumb to her maternal instinct.

As has been previously mentioned the identical nature of the narrator's voice across the series aligns the narrator with Zelda herself and the interchangeability of the girls suggests that all of them are not only doppelgängers of each other but doppelgängers of Zelda. The fatalistic mood that dominates the stories suggests that, just as Zelda could not imagine alternative lives for her doppelgängers, nor could she envision, let alone realize, an alternative life for herself. This position is echoed in her partly autobiographical and only completed novel, *Save Me the Waltz*. Despite the heroine, Alabama Beggs's, success as a dancer and the possibility of a life

[231] Ibid., 325.

independent and separate from that of her husband's, she is injured before this can be brought to fruition. What maims Alabama is not the psychiatric damage experienced by her creator, but a physical injury, the direct result of her dancing, her attempt at an alternative life. The closing of the novel follows the anti-climactic path that is found in the "*Girl*" series of stories: her dancing career is in ruins after an injury to her foot leads to blood poisoning and her father is dead. She returns to her native town, accompanied by both her husband and child. Referring to the emptying of an ashtray, the last words spoken in the novel by Alabama are the following:

> It's very expressive of myself. I just lump everything in a great heap which I have labeled 'the past,' and, have thus emptied this deep reservoir that was once myself, I am ready to continue.[232]

Experienced Madness as Metaphor: Zelda Fitzgerald and Feminist Biography.

Gilbert and Gubar's reading of Snow White and the Queen as oppositions of the same impulse, a desire for female self-representation and the perils that such action can entail (that they are two sides of the same coin) can be used as a way of exploring these two aspects of Zelda Fitzgerald: that which is represented (Snow White) and that which seeks self-representation (the Queen). This duality, coupled with the dualities of male and female, madness and reason, the voice heard and the voice silenced that are identifiable in her relationship with her husband alongside the double narrative of their work (*Tender is the Night* and *Save Me the Waltz*) as well as in their letters, all unite to make Zelda Fitzgerald an obvious choice for biographers keen to tackle important discussions around the manner in which women are treated and represented in a patriarchal society. To this end, she is assigned a variety of pre-ordained identities by biographers, which are no less imposed upon her than those, that

[232] Ibid., 196.

said biographers claim, were forced upon her by her husband. What does appear clear is that she can never escape the "types" that she represents for others: the southern belle, the flapper, the mental patient, the oppressed woman, the frustrated artist denied a voice by a bullying husband. The manner in which Zelda Fitzgerald's life has been recorded and explored underwent a shift with the 1970 publication of Nancy Milford's *Zelda*. In this biography she takes centre stage and is not a footnote in the life of Scott Fitzgerald. Additional biographies have been written in subsequent years, Sally Cline's *Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise,* Kendall Taylor's *Sometimes Madness is Wisdom, Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald: A Marriage* and Linda Wagner Martin's *Zelda Fitzgerald: An American Woman's Life.*[233] The factual material used in these biographies is not different from the details provided in biographies of her husband but courtesy of a shift in point of view they create a radically different narrative. One area where this is particularly noticeable is the presentation of Zelda's mental ill-health and institutionalisation; the details of the latter have been well established by Matthew Bruccoli in his chronology of Scott Fitzgerald's life in his biography *Some Sort of Epic Granduer: The Life of Scott Fitzgerald* and it is from this source that the following overview is drawn. Zelda Fitzgerald was first hospitalised on the 23rd April 1930 at the Malmaison Clinic near Paris and she discharged herself on the 11th May 1930. She was, however, hospitalised again less than two weeks later on the 22nd May, this time at the Valmont Clinic in Glion, Switzerland and was moved to the Prangins Clinic in Nyon on the 5th June and was finally released on the 15th September 1931. Five months later, in February 1932, she suffered a second mental collapse and

[233] Sally Cline, *Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise* (Arcade Publishing, 2003); Kendall Taylor, *Sometimes Madness Is Wisdom: Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald, a Marriage* (New York: Ballantine, 2001); Linda Wagner-Martin, *Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald: An American Woman's Life* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

entered the Phipps Psychiatric Clinic in Baltimore and was subsequently discharged on the 26th June 1932. In early 1934, she had a third mental collapse and was returned to the Phipps Clinic on the 12th February, she was transferred the following month to Craig House, Beacon, New York and was transferred yet again to the Sheppard Pratt Hospital near Baltimore, on the 19th May 1934. She was moved to the Highland Hospital, Asheville, in early April 1936, where she remained until April 1940 when she was discharged and returned to her native Montgomery, Alabama to live with her mother. After this point there are some discrepancies about the number of times she returned to Highland Hospital and the length of the duration of these confinements. What is certain is that she was hospitalised for the last time on the 7th November 1947 and was killed in a fire at the Highland Hospital on the 9th March 1948. Sally Cline's interpretation regarding the discrepancies pertaining to her time in Highland Hospital is as follows:

> Yet, in order to present Zelda systematically both as "an invalid" and as "invalid", biographers have stated that she returned to Highland several times for very long periods each time. Hospital bills and correspondence [...] shows conclusively that those dates are inaccurate and the stated lengths of internment false. Zelda's first return to the Asheville hospital is reputed to be August 1943 to end of February 1944: a six month sojourn [...] her letters to [John] Biggs [F. S Fitzgerald's executor] until Christmas 1943 show she did *not* enter hospital until the new year 1944, when she stayed only eight weeks.[234]

Cline's suggestion is that there has been a deliberate attempt by Scott Fitzgerald's biographers to discredit his wife by exaggerating the nature of her mental ill-health and the institutionalisation that resulted. Zelda is being positioned not only as a victim of her husband's but also as the victim of cultural patriarchy that "invalidates" her both on account of her gender and the unreason that can be associated with her "madness". However, it would appear

[234] Cline, *Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise*, 391.

that Cline accepts the remaining data regarding Zelda's institutionalisations from 1930 onwards, which makes her suggestion that the confusion around the final periods of Zelda's ill-health significant. It re-enforces the position that is held by Cline and other biographers that Zelda's mental health improved *after* the death of her husband, drawing a link between female insanity and the manner in which women are controlled by the men around them. According to Cline, in the case of Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald, the control exerted related to her creativity. Many of Zelda Fitzgerald's biographers alongside Sally Cline, for example, Nancy Milford and Kendall Taylor, have all highlighted the manner in which Scott Fitzgerald made use of her letters and diaries in his novels. This usurpation of his wife's voice is identified as a critical factor in Zelda's damaged mental health according to her biographers: her voice is simultaneously suppressed by her husband's reluctance for her to engage with her own creative ventures but simultaneously her voice, in the form of her writing, is swallowed whole, manipulated and regurgitated through female characters in her husband's text. Her voice is distorted and unrecognisable to her: her relationship with her own language in a very literal sense becomes "schizophrenic" and as a result her mental and verbal disintegration, for biographers of Zelda Fitzgerald, is not surprising. Whilst recognising the confusing manner in which Zelda is positioned in relation to her husband's fiction, some of the claims made on her behalf by her biographers are problematic. Sally Cline, Nancy Milford and Kendall Taylor all indicate that Scott Fitzgerald recognised his wife's unique creative voice very early on in their relationship and that his pilfering of her letters and diaries began immediately. The private nature of the writings being moved into the public domain not by herself but by her (future) husband, also reflects the damaging separation of the domestic sphere (female) and the public arena (male). It is worth illustrating the

manner in which this plagiarism of material is recorded in a number of different biographies. Kendall Taylor in *Sometimes Madness is Wisdom, Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald: A Marriage* (2001) makes reference to Zelda Fitzgerald's diaries in the following manner:

> He [Scott Fitzgerald] read Parrott [friend of FSF at Newman School and Princeton] the parts of Zelda's diary he was using to revise his novel [...] It chronicled her personal observations and emotions in a highly original stream of consciousness.Parrott found it fascinating but hard to decipher. He wrote Fitzgerald, "As you say, it is a very human document, but somehow I cannot altogether understand it."[235]

Nancy Milford in *Zelda* (1970) records George Jean Nathan's recollection of 'finding' Zelda Fitzgerald's diaries at the Fitzgeralds' Westport home:

> They interested me so greatly that in my capacity as a magazine editor I later made her an offer for them. When I informed her husband, he said that he could not permit me to publish them since he had gained a lot of inspiration from them [...] Zelda apparently offered no resistance to this rather high-handed refusal of Nathan's offer,and the diaries remained Scott's literary property rather than hers.[236]

Sally Cline in *Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise* (2002) also recounts George Jean Nathan's comments regarding wishing to publish Zelda's diaries, echoing Nancy Milford, almost to the word, Cline writes:

> Evidence suggests there were several diaries, all of which Zelda seemed prepared to give to Scott. Certainly she offered no resistance to Scott's high-handed refusal of Nathan's offer. Zelda may not have realised at the time that through her silent acquiesence *her* literary property became and remained Scott's.[237]

All of the biographies quote Nathan's anecdote about finding Zelda's diaries; however, James Mellow in *Invented Lives* (1984) makes the following point that the three biographies quoted above neglect to mention:

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[235] Taylor, *Sometimes Madness Is Wisdom: Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald, a Marriage*, 56-57.
[236] Milford, *Zelda*, 71.
[237] Cline, *Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise*, 67.

> There is no doubt that Nathan had seen the diaries. But Nathan's random memories of the fabulous Jazz Age, in which he played an ornamental role, are not free of heavy gilding. Edmund Wilson, while both men were still alive, pointedly denied some of the stories that became part of Nathan's repertoire in print and in private conversation.[238]

What is agreed upon by all parties is that the diaries were lost. Cline writes:

> We have Scott's fictional appropriations but we do *not* have Zelda's diary or diaries. Perhaps in the course of the Fitzgeralds' changing addresses they were accidentally mislaid or removed from public perusal, if not deliberately at least conveniently. [239]

Cline's inference is clear: Scott Fitzgerald was hiding his plagiaristic tracks. However, her statement is contradictory: after all how can she suggest that "we have Scott's fictional appropriations" if we do not have access to the diaries? Similarly, essays and biographies championing Zelda's talents have made assertions that are unsubstantiated or show scant regard for detail. Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin argues that during Scott's editing of *Save Me the Waltz* "he carefully scrutinized the book for elements which might damage his public image, but he let it go to press unpruned of tangled metaphors and misspellings, of grammatical and typographical errors which obviously weakened it".[240] She fails to point out, either through ignorance or by withholding the fact that, Scott Fitzgerald was a notoriously bad speller. Zelda's "tangled metaphors" also undermines the argument that she was a writer of the same brilliance as her husband and indeed was the writer whom Scott plagiarised at length and at will.

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[238] James R. Mellow, *Invented Lives: F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald* (Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 114.
Mellow provides a number of stories told by George Jean Nathan that Edmund Wilson denied. Mellow quotes Wilson as having said, "It may be," Wilson concluded, "that [Nathan] and Mencken have a tendency to think they did more for people and influenced them more than was actually the case" (Mellow 115).

[239] Cline, *Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise,* 67.

[240] Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin, "Art as Woman's Response and Search: Zelda Fitzgerald's" Save Me the Waltz"," *The Southern Literary Journal* 11, no. 2 (1979): 24.

There are however, examples of Scott Fitzgerald transplanting extracts from Zelda's letters into his fiction. One such example is a letter written by Zelda in April, 1919, which closes:

> I wanted to *feel* "William Wreford, 1864". Why should graves make people feel in vain? I've heard that so much, and Grey is so convincing, but somehow I can't find anything hopeless in having lived – All the broken columnes and clasped hands and doves and angels mean romances – and in an hundred years I think I shall like having young people speculate on whether my eyes were brown or blue – of cource – they are neither – I hope my grave has an air of many, many years ago about it – Isn't it funny how out of a row of Confederate soldiers, two or three will make you think of dead lovers and dead loves – when they're exactly like the others, even to the yellowish moss?(sic)[241]

Except for a few alterations, for example the shift from first to third person, Scott Fitzgerald included this extract in *This Side of Paradise*. In fact, with the exception of Amory's brief meditation that "I know myself," he cried, "But that is all".[242] Zelda's words finish his first novel. Despite the few examples of this blatant and traceable use of her private correspondence, the discussion surrounding the use of her material in his writing continues to persist. What is clear is that it is now impossible to establish the extent or otherwise of Scott Fitzgerald's use of these materials but, without minimising plagiarism, the examples appear to be few and far between. However, by quoting Scott Fitzgerald's admissions, Zelda's quips about plagiarism, and the publication under their joint names of essays and stories written exclusively by her, the inference is made that Scott Fitzgerald plundered these materials and used them verbatim and at length.[243] The silencing of her voice, which is detected by

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[241] Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald, *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda: The Love Letters of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald*, 26.

[242] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*, 260.

[243] Reference is often made to a letter written by Scott Fitzgerald to Max Perkins dated February 21st 1920 in which he writes "I'm just enclosing you the typing of Zelda's diary. This is *verbatim* but is only about half. You'll recognize much of the dialogue. Please don't show it to anyone."

Zelda's biographers, becomes indelibly linked in the narrative they write with her mental collapse: the second is a direct result of the first. Just as the "mad" protagonist of *The Yellow Wallpaper* is attempting to free "literary women out of the texts defined by patriarchal poetics into the open spaces of their own authority" so is the very real Zelda trying to separate herself from her fictional alter ego frozen in Fitzgerald novels.[244] The symptoms of madness are presented as a way for Charlotte Perkins Gilman's anonymous protagonist and Zelda Fitzgerald to break free of the restrictive male text. Gilbert and Gubar suggest "[t]hat such an escape from the numb world behind the patterned walls of the text was a flight from dis-ease into health was quite clear to Gilman herself".[245] The interpretation of this fictional character is then placed, by her biographers, on the figure of Zelda. An escape from her husband's text would also be a return to authority over herself for Zelda Fitzgerald, a re-assertion of her own identity that has for so long been enshrined in the restrictive male text of her husband's fiction. However, denied the possibility of self-expression, the argument suggests that she uses the only vocabulary left open to her, that of madness, of unreason. Her own distinct voice that could not (or would not) be heard through the traditional male text forces itself to be heard, even if the result is in opposition to the monologue of reason. What is apparent here is that, as was discussed earlier, the relationship between the two Fitzgeralds is used as a way

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Zelda Fitzgerald's review of *The Beautiful and Damned* is also much quoted, in which she writes, "It seems to me that on one page I recognized a portion of an old diary of mine mysteriously disappeared shortly after my marriage, and also scraps of letters which, though considerably edited, sounded to me vaguely familiar. In fact, Mr. Fitzgerald – I believe that is how he spells his name – seems to believe that plagiarism begins at home." The article first appeared in *The New York Tribune*, April 22nd 1922 under the heading 'Mrs F Scott Fitzgerald Reviews "The Beautiful and Damned," Friend Husband's Latest' (*Complete Works of Zelda Fitzgerald* 387).

[244] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination,* 91.

[245] Ibid.

of exploring the manner in which cultural masculinity as described by DeKoven represses the feminine. This theoretical framework is then articulated through this particular historical couple with significant implications for the way in which their biographies are recorded particularly by feminist biographers. The manner in which Zelda Fitzgerald's life can be used as a way of exposing the difficulties women face when confronted by patriarchy which is so embedded in society, culture and language as to be perceived by both men and women as "normal" or "reality" is what is at issue. Just as this woman was used as a model for her husband's narratives, in her posthumous "life" she has been used by feminist biographers and scholars as a way of illustrating an argument that can be more powerfully illustrated through this woman and women like her, than through a purely theoretical approach. The documented nature of her life by herself, her husband, by friends and acquaintances, as well as through her fictionalised incarnations, allows feminist biographers and scholars to illustrate how the established and undisputed facts of one life, can be interpreted differently from the accepted patriarchal narrative. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl suggests that:

> *Zelda* offered many of the ingredients that can now be said to be typical of feminist biographies: a woman is rescued from both historical neglect and the shadows cast over her by the men in her life; she is allowed her own voice in the form of much quotation from her unpublished letters and manuscripts;she is not measured by male standards for female success or failure, diagnosed by male psychiatric categories, or fitted into male notion of female types; her private and domestic life is not cordoned off as a "separate sphere" but viewed in relation to her public life and achievement.[246]

The feminist biography is therefore presented as a means of redressing the balance evident in the production of both history and biography in its

[246] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Subject to Biography: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Writing Women's Lives* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 43.

traditional form but it also liberates the female voice and exposes masculine experience as subjective. Zelda Fitzgerald is used as a means of illustrating the fate of many women who, *unlike her*, are anonymous, are unknown, unknowable and story-less. William H Epstein suggests that in "Milford's narrative, Zelda seems to disappear from the Sunday rotogravure sections and Hemingway's bitch-goddess prose and to re-appear [...] as an individual human self – talented, troubled, perhaps doomed, but enmeshed now in a discursive context which renders her emblematic of women in patriarchal culture". [247] Elisabeth Young-Breuhl expands this point in *Subject to Biography: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Writing Women's Lives*, when discussing the nature of feminist biography after the publication of Nancy Milford's *Zelda* in 1970. She writes:

> much more obvious in recent feminist biographies than in *Zelda* is a claim, explicit or implicit, about the value of the relations between biographer and subject, and a celebration of the subjectivity of biographers who have given up worshipping before the patriarchal shrine of "objectivity". A collection of essays called *Between Women* published in 1984, offers many variations on the theme of how important to women biographers are their subjects and their subject's lives. The biographer-subject relationship is presented as one of reciprocity, and its terms are the terms of confidence between friends or female family members. Carolyn Heilbrun, with a slightly different emphasis, claims that women writing – and then reading – biographies find in them alternatives to the one plot traditionally deemed acceptable to women "the marriage plot," and that these alternatives include especially living and working with other women.[248]

The suggestion here is that the purpose of feminist biography is not exclusively to provide an objective portrayal of a chosen subject but it is also to explore the wider issues of the manner in which women live and work in a patriarchal culture. It is a political work, a social commentary. As Heilbrun suggests, the

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[247] William H Epstein, "Milford's" Zelda" and the Poetics of the New Feminist Biography," *The Georgia Review* (1982): 350.
[248] Young-Bruehl, *Subject to Biography: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Writing Women's Lives*, 44.

biographies of Zelda do explore, indeed emphasise, the aspects of her life that were not concerned with the marriage plot that was so crucial in her representation in her husband's fiction. Ironically, however, it is her very position as the wife of one of America's great writers, who by definition, is an inheritor of the Western literary tradition and therefore a component of the patriarchal social and cultural norm, which makes her of such interest to her biographers as a point of exploration for how women function in patriarchy. The manner in which she was used as a model for Fitzgerald's fiction allows feminist biographers to explore the way in which her experiences were framed within a male text and the use of some of her letters, diaries and remarks raises questions around the masculine response to the female artist, as does Fitzgerald's role as his wife's pseudo-editor. Equally useful is Zelda's long battle with mental health as it can be used to demonstrate the patriarchal narrative evident in Freud's theories of the unconscious. Her engagement with the psychiatric profession is made all the more interesting because, although clearly physically and mentally weakened by chronic alcohol abuse, her husband was never subjected to analysis, treatment and psychiatric discourse in the manner in which his wife was from 1930 until her death eighteen years later. However, there are deeply worrying aspects to this approach to biography that go beyond the sometimes polarising response that the two parties provoke.

Some Fitzgerald scholars have suggested that in recent years this redressing of the lives of the Fitzgeralds has led to something close to make-believe. In a number of reviews of the Cline, Taylor and Wagner-Martin biographies of Zelda, scholars have identified and rejected what Young-Breuhl praises with regards to the subjective nature of these post-*Zelda* feminist biographies. Philip McGowan states in his review of Linda Wagner-Martin's 2004 biography *Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald: An American Woman's Life*, the gravest sin of biography is when "it

conveys more about the biographer herself and about her opinions than it does about the subject".[249] Similarly James Meredith in his review of Kendall Taylor's biography argues convincingly that

> to sustain her contention [that Zelda was the ultimate victim of the union] she [Taylor] has concocted one of the most irresponsible claims about the Fitzgeralds' marriage I have read in a long time: Zelda's life with her husband was so painful that she chose schizophrenia as an escape from it, and her mental problems were a sign of wisdom.[250]

Meredith goes on to argue that "[s]chizophrenia just does not work the way Taylor wants it to, and her attempt to transform this disease into a romantic retreat from reality is totally unfair to all who have suffered from it, including Zelda".[251] Similarly, Cathy W Barks, in her review of the Cline biography suggests that the purpose of this biography and the one by Taylor is not authentically biographical: "[b]oth have created agenda-driven, superficially and falsely feminist biographies".[252]

The use of Zelda Fitzgerald's life to explore the nature of patriarchy has significant consequences: there is a need to *create* meaning that bolsters and confirms a pre-determined position that presents Zelda as a victim of both a patriarchal society and of a bullying, jealous and controlling husband. As a result, her chronic mental health problems are presented as a path chosen by her to escape the realities of an unhappy marriage. Or it is a metaphor, used by biographers, to illustrate the frustrations of generations of women unable to express themselves through self-determination or creativity. The feminist biographies with Zelda as their subject are serving a radically different function

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[249] Philip McGowan, "Review: The Art of Biography. Reviewed Work: Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald: An American Woman's Life by Linda Wagner-Martin," *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* 3 (2004): 146.
[250] James Meredith, "Review Marriage Tales. Reviewed Work: *Sometimes Madness Is Wisdom: Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald: A Marriage.*," *The F Scott Fitzgerald Review* 1 (2002): 213.
[251] Ibid., 215.
[252] Cathy W. Barks, "Review: Once Again, Biography as Agenda. Reviewed Work: *Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise* by Sally Cline," *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* 2 (2003): 219.

from literary biography. The purpose is not to be objective and, as a result, madness in this narrative becomes a choice, almost a creative venture that permits her voice to be heard through a monologue of unreason. It is presented as a continuation of the dualities that Showalter identifies in language and representation which equates masculinity with "reason, discourse, nature and mind" and the feminine with "irrationality, silence, nature and the body".[253] Zelda's madness in this approach to her life becomes a way of expressing the feminine in the only fashion that is permitted by the masculine and Zelda's ill-health is relegated to self-expression rather than a debilitating illness that had a crippling effect on herself and those around her. By moving away from objective biography to a subjective position that is primarily concerned with demonstrating a theoretical position, however valid that position may be, in this case the nature of patriarchy, credibility as a work of non-fiction must falter. It is perhaps not surprising that in the wake of the biographies written by Taylor (2001), Cline (2002) and Wagner-Martin (2004) there has been a shift toward presenting the Fitzgeralds as characters in novels. In works such as Therese Anne Fowler's *Z* (2013) and Erika Robuck's *Call Me Zelda* (2013), Zelda Fitzgerald has been presented as a trail blazer and a pioneer in female creative expression, a woman who is primarily a victim of her time rather than of her mental health.[254] In *Call Me Zelda*, she acts as guide for the female protagonist as she strives to find an identity that makes sense after a series of tragic family occurrences. Zelda is almost an avatar, the embodiment of female perseverance in the face of male opposition, and in the form of Scott Fitzgerald, male

[253] Showalter, "The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Literature 1830–1980," 3-4.
[254] Therese Anne Fowler, *Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald* (Hachette UK, 2013); Erika Robuck, *Call Me Zelda* (Penguin, 2013).

weakness. It would appear Zelda has come full circle: once again her identity is fictionalised in the world of the novelist.

Chapter Three: *The Great Gatsby*

The Dialogic Narration of Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby*.

In the introduction to Marianne DeKoven's work, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism*, the writer explores the characteristics of modernism. She suggest that:

> Modernist formal practice has seemed to define itself as a repudiation of and an alternative to, the cultural implications of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century feminism and socialism. I will argue here that, on the contrary, modernist form evolved precisely as an adequate means of representing their terrifying appeal. In chapter 1, I construct a formal paradigm I find characteristic of modernism : an unresolved contradiction or unsynthesized dialectic ("rich and strange" ; Julia Kristeva calls it an "impossible dialectic') that enacts in the realm of form an alternative to culture's hegemonic hierarchical dualisms, roots of those structures of inequity that socialism and feminism proposed to eradicate. I adapt Jacques Derrida's formulation of "*sous-rature*" to label this paradigm.[255]

Modernism, for DeKoven is simultaneously fearful of the change presented by political movements (feminism, socialism) that attempt to challenge the status quo but also drawn to those same movements, resulting in the formal qualities of modernism reflecting the complex response felt by artists to a world that was rapidly changing. In chapter one, entitled, "Modernism Under Erasure", DeKoven writes the following:

> The irresolvable ambivalence (fear and desire in equal portion) of modernist writers concerning their own proposals for the wholesale revision of culture, proposals paralleled in the political sphere by the programs for wholesale social revision promulgated by socialism and feminism, generated the irreducible self-contradiction, what I will call the *sous-rature*, of modernist form.[256]

In the use of the term *sous-rature*, DeKoven is considering both modernist form and its political significance or backdrop. She explains Derrida's use of the term as a "verbal sign that is discredited but has no adequate replacement".[257]

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[255] DeKoven, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism*, 4.
[256] Ibid., 20.
[257] Ibid., 21.

By appropriating this term DeKoven can illustrate visually both the existence of the 'word' and its rejection. She states,

> It [*sous-rature*] represents a visually compelling way (a word that is visible but at the same time crossed out) unresolved contradiction, unsynthesized dialectic, resulting from a historical transition in intellectual paradigms [...] a moment not of "paradigm shift" but of the simultaneous coexistence of two mutually exclusive paradigms.[258]

With reference to Conrad's *Lord Jim* and T. S Eliot's *Prufrock*, DeKoven argues that at the heart of the modernist project is contradiction: this is not a new suggestion but she extends this definition and claims that "modernist writing *constitutes itself* as self-contradictory, though not incoherent".[259] In her remarks on *Prufrock* she writes:

> The representation and its own negation co-exist in the text in an oscillating simultaneity, an unresolved contradiction – not a "tension" resolved or contained by "organically unified" form, as the New Critics have it, but something entirely different : a co-existent doubleness that is resolved nowhere, that is re-inforced in, rather than eased of, its contradictoriness by the radically disjunctive, juxtapositional *modernist* form of the poem.[260]

DeKoven's understanding of the modernist project and its multiplicity, is reminiscent of Mikhail Bakhtin's work on Russian master, Fyodor Dostoevsky:

> What unfolds in his [Dostoevsky's] works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with

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[258] Ibid.

[259] Ibid., 24.
DeKoven cites Eugene Lunn's definition in *Marxism and Modernism*. Listing the following four characteristics as the most important. "(1) aesthetic self-conciousness; (2) simultaneity, juxtaposition or 'montage' (I [DeKoven] would add the word 'fragmentation'); (3) paradox, ambiguity, and uncertainty; and (4) 'dehumanization' and the demise of the integrated and unified subject" (6). She continues by citing additional characteristics identified by Bradbury and McFarlane, "abstraction and highly conscious artifice, taking us behind familiar reality, breaking away from familiar functions of language and conventions and form [...] the shock, the violation of expected continuities, the element of de-creation and crisis" (quoted in DeKoven 6).

[260] Ibid., 23.

> equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event.[261]

For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky's work marked the beginning of the polyphonic novel. Bakhtin's theory is one in which multiple voices, positions, beliefs and ideologies are placed alongside each other, with no apparent preference given to any by the author, creating an impression that the text does not have a single author but multiple ones in the form of the voices of the characters. Bakhtin highlights the significance of the particular moment in Russian history when Dostoevsky was writing, a period of social fluctuation:

> The epoch itself made the polyphonic possible. *Subjectively* Dostoevsky participated in the contradictory multi-leveledness of his own time: he changed camps, moved from one to another, and in this respect the planes existing in objective social life were for him stages along the path of his own life, stages of his own spiritual evolution. This personal experience was profound, but Dostoevsky did not give it a direct monologic expression in his work. This experience only helped him to understand more deeply the extensive and well-developed contradictions which coexisted among people, not among ideas in a single consciousness.[262]

Similarly, the modernist period was a time of social, cultural and artistic change, a period when old certainties were being challenged, creating a dialogic relationship between previous established orders and the emergence of new approaches to the individual, society and creativity. To reiterate DeKoven's understanding of modernism: it is an on-going contradiction, the *sous-rature* of her theoretical approach, where that which is written but crossed out can still be seen, two irreconcilable positions co-existing. Fitzgerald writes and lives in the midst of this modernist dialectic. The contradictory nature of his art and times was recognised by Fitzgerald himself, when he writes in *The Crack-Up*, "the test

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[261] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Edited and Translated by Caryl Emerson. Introduction by Wayne C. Booth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 6.
[262] Ibid., 27.

of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function".[263] In the midst of societal change, the original social order is still visible, a social order which determined an individual's identity largely based on a person's race, gender and social class. Fitzgerald's ambivalence to these changes is evident in his complex presentation of the parvenu Gatsby: he is simultaneously heroic and absurd, illustrating that the text contains multiple stories, attitudes and positions. This variation is evident in the critical discussion around the novel, which allows for readings that are disparate and mutually exclusive. At the centre of this multiplicity is Nick's narration, which allows distinct and contradictory stories to co-exist but does not resolve them into a unified monologic whole, despite his assertion that "life is much more successfully looked at from a single window".[264] However, much of the critical debate around the text and Nick in particular is an attempt to reconcile the novel's plot to its multi-faceted narration.

Without repeating in great detail well-established positions with regards to the question of Nick's narration, some consideration of the variety of responses is both useful and justified by the scope of this discussion. These various arguments demonstrate an attempt to unify aspects of the narration with the plot in order to establish a monologic text. Nick has been seen as the moral centre of the novel, trustworthy and reliable, but simultaneously he has been called a hypocrite, snob, panderer and immoral. There is not even agreement amongst critics as to whether Nick is an observer of events or a pivotal participator in the action. Ernest Lockridge in his essay "F Scott Fitzgerald's 'Trompe l'Oeil' and *The Great Gatsby*'s Buried Plot" goes as far as to suggest that Nick misses or misinterprets every major event in the novel, from failing to realise that Daisy, knowing her to

[263] Fitzgerald, *Fitzgerald: My Lost City: Personal Essays, 1920-1940*, 139.
[264] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 7.

be Tom's mistress, killed Myrtle Wilson deliberately, to failing to recognise that Meyer Wolfsheim was behind Gatsby's death because of his lack of discretion in his relationship with Daisy.[265] Caren J Town suggests that Nick provides emotional rather than objective truth, "the question is not whether Nick means what he says: Nick *means* to be reliable, but his language is unreliable, and the question becomes one of metaphorical instead of psychological reliability".[266] However, for Frederick J Hoffman, "if we cannot accept Carraway, the novel is a chaos; that is [...] the chaos of Gatsby's world requires some kind of judgement from a set of standards we can accept or the novel is meaningless".[267] What each of these critics are identifying, but also attempting to reconcile, is the contradiction between plot and narration: Nick's narrative voice is deemed problematic, which goes beyond defining Nick as an unreliable or reliable narrator. Many critics have argued that the reason for this difficulty is Fitzgerald's failure to adequately control the first person narrative technique he employs.[268] Gary J Scrimgeour, through a comparison with *Heart of Darkness*, blames Fitzgerald's lack of technique as the problem: "In *The Great Gatsby* the

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[265] Ernest Lockridge, "F. Scott Fitzgerald's" Trompe L'oeil" and" the Great Gatsby's" Buried Plot," *The Journal of narrative technique* (1987).

[266] Caren J Town, "" Uncommunicable Forever": Nick's Dilemma in the Great Gatsby," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* (1989).

[267] Quoted in Peter Lisca, "Nick Carraway and the Imagery of Disorder," *Twentieth Century Literature* (1967).

[268] Such criticism usually comes from the belief that Fitzgerald lacked the professionalism of his contemporaries and relied solely on his talent for lyricism without demonstrating artistic control of his material. Gary J Scrimgeour, for example, writes of Fitzgerald's "careless technique and cloudy thinking" as well as an "inability to understand the true natures of the characters he created" (78, 85). Ernest Hemingway's remarks about Fitzgerald's abilities, I believe, have significantly contributed to the idea that Fitzgerald lacked the commitment to be a truly great writer. In his merciless depiction of Fitzgerald in *A Moveable Feast* he writes the following, acknowledging his sometime friend's talent whilst repudiating his waste of it: "His talent was as natural as the pattern that was made by the dust on a butterfly's wings. At one time he understood it no more than the butterfly did and he did not know when it was brushed or marred. Later he became conscious of his damaged wings and of their construction and he learned to think and could not fly any more because the love of light was gone and he could only remember when it had been effortless."Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast,* 84.

situation of Carraway is the same as that of Marlow, but I believe that Fitzgerald, never a great critical theorist, did not realize the dual nature of his narrator and therefore handled him very clumsily – and very revealingly".[269] Scrimgeour's argument with regards to Fitzgerald's inferior use of the first-person narrator as opposed to Conrad's is that Conrad was fully aware of the difficulties of using a narrator who was also involved in the events of the narrative. For Scrimgeour this duality of roles leads to the reader having to "question the accuracy of the narrator's account.[270] He continues, "[w]hen he [the narrator/participator] makes judgements, we have to decide whether his special interests betray the truth and whether the meaning of each particular event and of the whole fable differs from the interpretation he offers".[271] Conrad counteracts this potential confusion by using technical skill to frame Marlow: for example, the use of a second narrator, Marlow's story being "oral" rather than written and addressed to an audience in the narrative. "By thus drawing attention to his existence as a character in the story he tells, he refuses to allow us to ignore his subjectivity, so that it becomes difficult to read *Heart of Darkness* without realizing that it is not just a fable about universals but also an interpreted personal experience".[272] For Colin Cass, the trouble with Nick's narration is far simpler and as a result more fundamental. Again, the focus is on Fitzgerald's technical problems, this time not with the narration itself but the actual plot of the novel. For Cass, Fitzgerald's insistence on Nick's reliability is closely related to what he sees as the implausibilities of the plot. In his essay, "Pandered in Whispers": Narrative Reliability in *The Great Gatsby*", Cass identifies a number of events in the novel that he finds unconvincing, starting from Nick's acceptance of the role of go-

[269] Gary J Scrimgeour, "Against" the Great Gatsby"," *Criticism* (1966).
[270] Ibid., 76.
[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid., 76-77.

between.[273] Why, Cass asks, would Nick got to such lengths to ingratiate himself with a stranger, and one who seems so at odds with his own moral order? Similarly, why would Gatsby entrust a stranger (a friend of Tom's and cousin to the married object of his affection) with such a task? Similarly, why does Tom introduce his wife's cousin to his mistress? Why is Nick present for such a large part of the reunion between Daisy and Gatsby? If Daisy and Gatsby had preordained the lunch when they would confront Tom, would they really want witnesses? What is the motivation for going to town on such a boiling hot day? Why all the switching of cars? One such improbable event, Cass suggests, can be accepted but such a number tests the believability of the plot. The reason for the numerous improbabilities identifies a central problem of first-person narration: Nick needs to be in certain locations to witness certain events to be able to recount the story in its entirety. However, for Cass, some of these perceived problems are even more basic: the characters have to go to and from New York in order to pass through the Valley of Ashes and for Myrtle Wilson to be killed:

> Although *The Great Gatsby* is a splendid novel, critics give it too much credit when they write as if every word is freighted with the author's meaning. We cannot afford to be so ingenuous about the actual process of concocting a fiction. As his remark about getting the characters back to New York reveals, Fitzgerald had trouble making his plot operate smoothly and his choice of first person narration compounded his problem: not only must the basic Gatsby-Daisy plot be worked out (and counterpointed with the Tom-Myrtle and Nick-Jordan subplots), but at every step of the way Nick's source of information must be as credible as possible.[274]

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[273] Colin S Cass, "Pandered in Whispers": Narrative Reliability in" the Great Gatsby," *College Literature* (1980).

[274] Ibid., 117.
Cass's reference to Fitzgerald's remarks about getting the characters back to New York is concerned with a letter written by Fitzgerald to his editor, Max Perkins, on 20th December 1924. Cass quotes the following from it "The Chapter 7 (the hotel scene) will never quite be up to mark – I've worried about it too long and I can't quite place Daisy's reaction. But I can improve it a lot. It isn't imaginative energy that's lacking – it's because I'm automatically prevented from thinking it out over again *because I must get all those characters to New York* [emphasis Fitzgerald's] in order to have the catastrophe on the road going back, and I must have it pretty much that way. So there's

Cass suggests that one way "to make the reader overlook implausibilities is to teach him to trust the narrator".[275] Hence, Nick's repeated claims of honesty and his attempts to leave situations that the reader may find his presence at improbable (Daisy and Gatsby's reunion, the trip to Myrtle's flat). For Cass, therefore the complex positioning of Nick as both within and without the narrative, as Nick says of himself, "I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life", is in order to serve the dual functions that Nick as character and narrator must perform, even if these roles are in many ways mutually exclusive.[276] As an example Cass draws on the problematic role Nick plays in bringing Daisy and Gatsby back together. In order for Nick to witness the events he tells he must act in a way that is at odds with his position as the moral conscience of the novel, illustrated by "the sweeping moral pronouncements that the book begins and ends on".[277] Due to this technical difficulty faced by Fitzgerald he is left with only one choice in order for the novel to make sense thematically and in terms of the mechanics of the plot. "Fitzgerald's only choice is to make Nick seem temporarily to have missed the point. For the plot's sake Nick must cooperate [in re-uniting Gatsby with Daisy], but for the theme's sake he must not appear to cooperate with anything he recognizes as seriously immoral. Furthermore, the author does all

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no chance of bringing the freshness to it that a new conception sometimes gives" (quoted in Cass, 116-17).

[275] Ibid.

[276] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 30.

[277] Cass, "Pandered in Whispers": Narrative Reliability in" the Great Gatsby," 120. I would suggest, however, that the "moral pronouncements" that Cass refers to are those of Nick the narrator rather than Nick the character and are established after the events and in response to them.

he can to distract us from the moral ramifications of what does amount to pandering".[278]

Other critics have focused on Nick's obsession with the appearance of social order that overrides any moral concerns that he may have about the events that he witnesses. With reference to Wayne C Booth's work on the distance between the perception of the author and the perception of the narrator and subsequently the perception of the reader, Thomas E Boyle argues that it is necessary for the reader to read beyond Nick's narration. Suggesting in 1969 that previous critics and readers had been taken in by Nick Carraway, as Nick is by Gatsby, Boyle writes: "I have tried to see Nick's unreliability as an integral part of the book by finding ways in which the norms of the novel are conveyed independent of and in contradiction to the explanations Carraway offers".[279] In a similar vein, Peter Lisca argues that as much attention should be paid not only to *what* Nick says but *how* he says it:

> The first person narrative form compels us to extend the effects of Nick's sensibilities to even the seemingly most objective aspect of the novel, to see his bias for order and decorum as having not only ethical and autobiographical but epistemological and formal significance as well. Thus both *what* Nick takes note of and the language in which he notes it become important factors.[280]

Kent Cartwright points out that many critics have too closely aligned Nick Carraway with F. Scott Fitzgerald. Perhaps this is not altogether surprising, as Fitzgerald drew repeatedly on his life and experiences for inspiration for his

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[278] Ibid., 121.

[279] Thomas E. Boyle, "Unreliable Narration in" the Great Gatsby"," *The Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association* 23, no. 1 (1969): 22.
Boyle's use of the term 'norms of the novel' is borrowed from.*Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (University of Chicago Press, 1983); ibid.* Booth writes: "For lack of better terms, I have called a narrator *reliable* when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), *unreliable* when he does not".Ibid., 158-59.

[280] Lisca, "Nick Carraway and the Imagery of Disorder," 23.

work. *This Side of Paradise* was openly semi-autobiographical with the writer drawing on his experiences at Princeton. Similarly, *The Beautiful and Damned* relied on his experiences of his early married life. Both novels have intrusive narrators that detract from the story being told, which demonstrates that Fitzgerald was still mastering his technique. Similarly, for some, problems with the narrator have extended to *The Great Gatsby* in which "critics have tended not to distinguish between either the narrator and his author or the narrator and his novel".[281] Again, this suggests that Fitzgerald lacked technical control of his material: what is implied is that he wrote a complex novel in spite of himself. Kent Cartwright detects something far more skilful in Fitzgerald's handling of Nick:

> Almost from the beginning, the narration invites readers to feel subtle distinctions between representation and explanation. This divergence is a characteristic of the novel's narrative style and is repeated variously throughout the story. The technique has the advantage of economy; it gives readers two types of impressions: one created through descriptions of places, things and events, and another created by Nick's responses and reflections.[282]

However, for Elizabeth Preston the manner in which this doubleness is evident in *The Great Gatsby* is the product of Fitzgerald's ambivalence towards the changes occurring in American society with regards to race and gender.[283] In *Gatsby*, Preston sees a 'dialogic implied author' and it is here where the contradictory nature of the text resides; this dialogic implied narrator appears in numerous modernist texts according to Preston, for example in Faulkner's *Absalom! Absalom!* She highlights the contradictory attitude towards race in *Gatsby*, citing firstly, Nick's disgust at Tom's racist ideas, referring to his host as

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[281] Kent Cartwright, "Nick Carraway as an Unreliable Narrator," *Details: Papers on Language and Literature 20.2 (Spring 1984): p218-232.* (1984): 218.
[282] Ibid., 219.
[283] Elizabeth Preston, "Implying Authors in" the Great Gatsby"," *Narrative* (1997).

"nibbl[ing] at the edge of stale ideas" but contrasts this with Nick's blatant racism on the Queensboro Bridge when he describes "three modish negroes, two bucks and a girl. I laughed aloud as the yolks of their eyeballs rolled towards us in haughty rivalry".[284] For Preston this reflects the historical moment of the novel's composition echoing DeKoven's approach to modernism and its "impossible dialectic" or "unresolved contradiction" as well Bakhtin's understanding of Dostoevsky's specific historical moment. Preston writes:

> These literary documents, the products of the fictionalizing acts of real, white, male authors [Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Conrad], are clearly marked by an attempt to move out of – and to move readers out of – racist ways of thinking, discourse-patterns that had, up to this point, defined America. Yet in attempting to challenge old norms, these authors remained dialogically caught up in them [...] By considering the possible dialogicity of an implied author, we are able to view a moment in our history in which human agents, through their actions and their language, do not passively "discover" antiracist discourse and thought, but are engaged in an active struggle with that discourse as they attempt, through new literary forms and norms to replace it.[285]

Preston's reflections on the question of gender and the implied narrator with regard to *The Great Gatsby* detect less ambivalence and a more reactionary response. She does not recognise a dialogic implied narrator in the depiction of gender in the novel that she identifies in the treatment of race. Preston argues that throughout the course of the novel and in the depiction of all the female characters – Daisy, Jordan and Myrtle – "Nick consistently, and in accord with Fitzgerald, reaffirms patriarchal ideology".[286] Nick's often quoted reference to Jordan's dishonesty from the perspective of the narrator rather than the character of Nick – "[d]ishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame too deeply" – and in the present rather than the past tense indicates that Nick is

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[284] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 19 & 55.
[285] Preston, "Implying Authors in" the Great Gatsby"," 153.
[286] Ibid., 158.

sexist.[287] Preston contrasts this statement with Nick's remarks about himself, "[e]veryone suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine: I am one of the few honest people I know".[288] She does not recognise that Nick, in this statement, is as scathing of men as women in terms of honesty; therefore for Preston an opposition between "female dishonesty" and "male virtue" is established.[289] She continues by suggesting that the inherent sexism of both Nick and Fitzgerald is a disruptive force in the logic of the narrative. She explains this disruption as follows:

> the sexism actually infects the narrative progression to such an extent that we are left with an incoherent implied author. Fitzgerald has, from the very beginning, created specific expectations for Nick's narration. Fitzgerald has established Nick as the moral conscience, the one who can be trusted in both his vision and his voice; Nick's tale will expose transgressive behaviour. The sequence of events [...] lead us to conclude, both logically and emotionally, that Daisy's immoral behaviour prompts Nick's narration. Yet at the same time, Nick (and Fitzgerald) refuse to acknowledge women as agents capable of assuming responsibility for their own actions. Dishonesty in women is not to be blamed deeply, right?[290]

Daisy, in the novel, is treated as a commodity for the men around her: she is objectified as a non-person who has no agency, indeed, no meaning other than in relation to men. Simultaneously, however, the brunt of the blame for the catalogue of disastrous events, is laid at the feet of Daisy. Preston argues that

> Desiring to expose the injustices of an economic system which enables those at the top echelon to use their material possessions as a way of circumventing ethical accountability, Nick Carraway and F Scott Fitzgerald perpetuate capitalism's insistence on the commodification, exchange and victimization of women. We have no local contradiction here, but a global incoherency which seriously detracts from the effectiveness of the narrative. Seen in this vein *The Great Gatsby* exemplifies what I would like to call a dispossessed narrative, a text which does not possess a coherent implied author. (159)[291]

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[287] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 48.
[288] Ibid.
[289] Preston, "Implying Authors in" the Great Gatsby"," 157.
[290] Ibid., 159.
[291] Ibid.

Preston here echoes the work of Judith Fetterley in *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, in which the author argues that Nick's failure to identify Daisy as the killer of Myrtle Wilson is in keeping with his attitude towards women echoed in his analysis of Jordan's (and womankind's) inherent dishonesty. For Fetterley, this attitude towards women is shared by Fitzgerald and the society in which the novel was written: "Nick's behaviour in this matter [failure to confront Daisy with her responsibility in Myrtle's death] is, however, perfectly normal in a culture which defines women – legally, emotionally, psychologically – as children".[292] In the character of Daisy, feminist critics perceive the misogyny of Fitzgerald and his society. This is re-enforced by what Fetterley considers the inability of Nick and Fitzgerald to recognise Nick's behaviour towards Daisy as dishonest because it reflects the norm, indeed appears natural, in the patriarchal society in which Fitzgerald and the characters in his novels operate. The dishonesty and unreliability that some critics have seen in Nick, for Fetterley, is present but unintentional on the part

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Preston explains local and global contradictions and their impact on the implied author, in the following manner:

> In many narratives, discovering the degree of reliability between the implied author and narrator leads us to a monologic implied author, one whose beliefs remain consistent and coherent. When we do have local inconsistencies, if we see them as a result of dialogic tension, then they need not create obstacles to accepting the text on its own terms; they might function to make the reader actively negotiate and stabilize his or her own ethical position. But for narratives which do not possess a coherent implied author – "dispossessed" texts – the primary narrative line falls apart because of one or more incoherencies. In these reading experiences, the reader assumes an even more active role in the rhetorical transaction.

[292] Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, 247, 93. Critical consideration of Fitzgerald's female characters is indelibly related to Fitzgerald's relationship with his wife, which at times was more parent child than one of equals. Whether Fitzgerald's attitude to women is apparent in his treatment of Zelda as a somewhat errant child or whether this was a position taken as a result of her increasing ill health is open to debate.

of Fitzgerald.[293] The dishonesty of the novel, and Nick as its narrator, is the double standard of a society which dictates "one set of responses [as] appropriate to women and another to men".[294] To illustrate this she contrasts Nick's response to Jordan's dishonesty with his empathetic understanding of the lies and fantasies told and created by Gatsby.

This brief overview of some (certainly not all) responses to Nick's narration, illustrates the complexity of readings that the novel elicits. However, there is little consideration in the critical debate of the narration as symptomatic of modernism's self-contradiction or the manner in which it is indicative of the novel's polyphony.[295] Fitzgerald's use of a first-person narrator who is looking back on a series of events, which he was deeply involved in and deeply affected by, with the benefit of hindsight masks the dialogic nature of the text behind an apparent monologic, unified narrative located in a single consciousness. To return to Bakhtin's work on Russian master, Dostoevsky, the critic, with reference to German scholar Otto Kaus writes the following:

> No author [...] concentrated in himself so many utterly contradictory and mutually exclusive concepts, judgements and evaluations as did Dostoevsky – but more astonishing is the fact that Dostoevsky's work

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[293] Sarah Beebe Fryer, "Beneath the Mask: The Plight of Daisy Buchanan," in *Critical Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald's the Great Gatsby*, ed. Scott Donaldson (New York: G.K. Hall and Co (an imprint of Simon & Schuster MacMillan), 1984).,In this essay, the author does recognise Fitzgerald's problems when drawing the character of Daisy, however, she argues that Daisy is a far more complex character than much of the critical debate around the novel would suggest. Through analysis of three key scenes in the novel she illustrates Daisy's emotional depth, which is hidden behind a social mask designed to protect her from emotional hurt.

[294] Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, 247, 94.

[295] Michael Holquist in "Stereotyping in Autobiography and Historiography: Colonialism in *The Great Gatsby*." *Poetics Today*, Vol. 9, No 2, The Rhetoric of Interpretation and the Interpretation of Rhetoric (1988), pp 453-72 does use Bakhtinian thinking in approaching aspects of the novel's discourse. Winifred Farrant Bevilacqua and Philip McGowan have considered the novel through Bakhtin's work on the Carnival in *Rabelais and in his World*. In their essays, " '... and the long secret extravaganza was played out': *The Great Gatsby* and Carnival in a Bakhtinian Perspective" Connotations 13.1-2 (2003/2004): 111-129 and "The American Carnival of *The Great Gatsby*" Connotations 15.1-3 (2005/2006): 143-58 respectively.

> justify as it were all these contradictory points of view: every one of them really does find support for itself in Dostoevsky's novels.[296]

Similarly, critical argument can find convincing evidence within *The Great Gatsby* to support a variety of mutually exclusive positions. At the heart of the novel is a divergence between the plot and the narration of it, which impacts the manner in which both the meaning of the action and the identity of character is presented. The primary reason for this divergence is Nick's role as character-narrator. It is as a result of this dual function that Nick's story is both the story of Gatsby and Nick's personal interpretation of it. James Phelan in "Re-examining Reliability" recounts the events of the novel, suggesting that the plot is "tawdry", the characters "unsympathetic" and "the ending bordering on the ludicrous".[297] However, he suggests that the logic of the narrative is not evident in the list of the major plot events. The "logic [of the narrative] is to move the audience's understanding of Gatsby along two parallel but quite different tracks".[298] The two strands are firstly recognition of the limits of Gatsby's dream and secondly and, at the same time, an acknowledgement of Gatsby's potential – his greatness rooted in his ability to dream on such a scale – that goes beyond the actuality of that dream. For Phelan, the narrative logic as just described is possible because of the multiple functions that Nick Carraway serves in the novel: "although the beginning establishes him in a fixed position after the events he is about to narrate, the rest of the narrative shows him in a developing relationship to the ongoing events".[299] The reader, simultaneously, is privy to Nick's responses to the action at the time that they occurred and his reflections

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[296] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Edited and Translated by Caryl Emerson. Introduction by Wayne C. Booth*, 18.
[297] James Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996), 113-14.
[298] Ibid., 114.
[299] Ibid.

on those events at the time of his telling of the story. Therefore in the character/narrator of Nick, two voices are represented, one with the omniscience of hindsight, the other with the limited view of a participant. This duality can be taken further by acknowledging that Nick's fixed position at the time of the novel's narration affects the way in which he perceives what occurred, retrospectively. In many respects the evolving attitude of Nick through the course of the action is in fact the result of his narration; Nick is applying meaning that at the time of the events he did not recognise. Wayne C Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* also explores the relationship between Nick and the events he narrates by distinguishing between the younger Nick of the events and the older Nick who reflects on them, citing the latter as providing "thoroughly reliable guidance".[300] However, the differentiation between narrator and participant rather than the chronological age of Nick is of primary significance and in order to explore the events and characters that occur in the novel, we must first ask and answer the question, 'why does Nick tell the story of the Summer of 1922, at all?'

Nick's Narration as a means of Re-Establishing Identity through Story -Telling.

As James Phelan suggests, echoed by a number of other critics, the novel's depth belies its plot, which when recounted reads like pulp fiction with its concern with adultery, bootlegging, murder and scapegoating. It is a series of sordid events littered with characters who, based on their actions, are unsympathetic and without any redeeming qualities, including the eponymous hero, who is a bootlegger, fantasist and adulterer. Daisy, Tom and Jordan remain at the end of the plot exactly as they were at the beginning; the deaths of

[300] Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 176.

Gatsby, Myrtle and George Wilson serve no purpose, nothing is resolved or rectified, none of the characters are enlightened by what is experienced. However, Nick's narration elevates the figure of Gatsby, his dream, articulated by Nick (not by himself) is incorruptible even in the face of the corruptibility of others but this 'version' of events that Nick tells serves his own very specific purposes that have little to do with Tom, Daisy, Jordan or even Gatsby and the purpose it serves is an attempt to identify or rather *create* meaning. Without the specific nature of Nick's narration, the plot and its outcome despite its fatal consequences, is without meaning. By telling the story Nick attempts to give meaning to Gatsby's death and as a result purpose to the dead man's life. Nick's response to Gatsby however, is shadowed by the spectre of World War One, another event in Nick's life which is simultaneously life-changing and meaningless. The search for meaning, however, is not possible for the war so it *must* be for the events witnessed and experienced by Nick in 1922. This acquisition of meaning is dependent on the creation of an identity for Gatsby (his mercurial persona is evident in the vast array of stories that surround him) but also an assertion of identity on the part of Nick. His recognition of the significance of Gatsby's life and death, contributes to his self-definition in the aftermath of the events. Gatsby's story is also a story that Nick tells himself about himself which allows him to rise above the sordid squalor of the "foul dust [that] floated in the wake of his [Gatsby] dreams".[301]

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[301]Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 6.
In Janos László, *The Science of Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Psychology* (Taylor & Francis, 2008)., the author articulates the relationship between narrative and self as explored by Paul Ricoeur. He writes: "Ricoeur built the identity of the the storyteller (that of the Self) onto the sameness of the narrative. The Self will constitute and reconstitute himself by telling his own story, by creating his own plot, and by identifying with the fictitious or realistic stories of others."Ibid., 47. The work to which Laszlo is referring is Paul Ricoeur's essay "Narrative Identity" *Philosophy Today* 35:1 (1991:Spring) p.73-81

In the opening pages of the novel, Nick establishes not only the background to the story (the reason for his move to New York, his relationship with Tom and Daisy) but they also provide the reason *why* Nick is telling the story and it is intricately connected with his wartime experience. Nick makes a brief mention of his active service during World War One, although scant detail is provided, barely half a sentence, "I participated in that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War".[302] Given Fitzgerald's differentiation between those who actively served in World War One and those that did not in various short stories and novels (for example in *Tender is the Night* Dick Diver did not see active service, Abe North did and this is crucial in terms of character development) this detail is significant. Nick continues, "I enjoyed the counter-raid so thoroughly that I came back restless. Instead of being the warm center of the world the middle-west now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe – so I decided to go east".[303] His restlessness is a direct response to the war, a chaotic and unpredictable environment that has altered his response to his previous life, which Nick describes in terms of his family lineage in the city of his birth. The beginning of the Carraway line is cited as Nick's great uncle, who unlike his great nephew, escaped another traumatic conflict: "[he] sent a substitute to the Civil War and started the wholesale hardware business that my father carries on today".[304] After experiencing World War One this historical certainty has lost its value or is exposed as an illusion for Nick who abandons the old certainties and in his "restless" state heads to New York. In relating his horror at the events of the Summer 1922, Nick uses military imagery, "I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever", connecting the story he

[302] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 6.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid.

tells with the war he experienced.[305] It is, after all, the restlessness provoked by the war that brings him to New York and initiates his involvement in the events he recounts. The connection is further re-enforced by the first remarks exchanged by the narrator and the hero of his tale which are concerned with their shared military background. Indeed Gatsby recognises Nick, from the Third Division, in which they both served. The story that Nick tells is intricately linked with the war from the initial meeting between Gatsby and Daisy, which was only possible due to his military uniform, to the manner in which James Gatz creates his history, real and imagined, of Jay Gatsby's military record and time at Oxford.

It is this war record that Gatsby provides details of to Nick in Chapter Four of the novel, on their drive into New York. Prior to Gatsby's reference to his war experience Nick finds his stories about his life not only unbelievable but bordering on the laughable. Nick realises why Jordan Baker believes Gatsby to have lied about having attended the University of Oxford and he thinks that Gatsby is joking when he recounts the demise of his Midwest family "[f]or a moment I suspected that he was pulling my leg but a glance at him convinced me otherwise".[306] As Gatsby continues his fantastical tale involving travel to Europe, big game hunting, collecting jewels and dabbling in painting, Nick's belief about Gatsby is that he is a fraud:

> With an effort I managed to restrain my incredulous laughter. The very phrases were worn so threadbare that they evoked no image except that of a turbaned "character" leaking sawdust at every pore as he pursued a tiger through the Bois de Boulogne.[307]

[305] Ibid., 5.
[306] Ibid., 52.
[307] Ibid.

Nick's opinion, however, performs a volte-face when Gatsby speaks of his wartime record. Gatsby's military service appears to alter the way he sees the rest of Gatsby's story. Gatsby's identity shifts from being "a character leaking sawdust" to a very "real" war veteran. On the production of a medal from Montenegro and a photograph from his Oxford days, Nick reflects:

> Then it was all true. I saw the skins of tigers flaming in his palace on the Grand Canal; I saw him opening a chest of rubies to ease, with their crimson-lighted depths, the gnawings of his broken heart.[308]

For Nick, any credibility that Gatsby has is connected with his active service in World War One. It is this conversation shared between them on the trip to New York, which makes Gatsby a man of interest at all to Nick. His first impression of Gatsby was "that he was a person of some undefined consequence" but this had changed after "half a dozen [conversations] in the past month and found, to [Nick's] disappointment, that he had little to say" and "he [Gatsby] had become simply the proprietor of an elaborate roadhouse next door".[309]

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[308]Ibid., 53.
Scott Donaldson in a chapter entitled "The Trouble With Nick" in *Fitzgerald and Hemingway: Works and Days* refers to these thoughts of Nick's as "ironic overstatement" (102). Whilst accepting this position, Nick's attitude towards Gatsby does begin to change in the light of the latter's war service.

[309] Ibid., 51.
In Ronald Berman, *The Great Gatsby and Fitzgerald's World of Ideas* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997). , the author suggests that the novel is a response to the American Civil War rather than the First World War. To support his argument he quotes from an interview given by Fitzgerald in January 1921, "I am tired, too, of hearing that the world war broke down the moral barriers of the younger generation. Indeed, except for leaving a touch of destruction here and there, I do not think the war left any real lasting effect. Why, it is almost forgotten right now".Matthew J. Bruccoli, Scottie Fitzgerald Smith, and Joan P. Kerr, *Romantic Egoists* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1985), 79. However, Fitzgerald is here responding to questions about changing social and sexual mores – particularly changes in female behaviour and men's response to it. He suggests that these changes began before the war, citing "H.G Wells and other intellectual leaders". In the same interview he also says the following, "We all knew, of course, we were going to be killed and I like everybody else, wanted to leave something for posterity" (79). This remark is concerned with the impact on individuals that the war had on (would-be) participants. He even makes a connection between this and his writing, which was the posterity that he refers to in the quotation.

This alternating response to Gatsby appears throughout the novel and Nick's narration is an attempt to reconcile himself with the attitudes and actions he displays during the course of the events and his interpretation of them retrospectively. His narration is one which attempts to exonerate him from the culpability that the plot gives him, the primary responsibility that he avoids is his failure to re-assign blame in the wake of Gatsby's death. It could, of course, be argued that Nick is adhering to what Gatsby would have wanted; after all he was prepared to take responsibility for Daisy's actions when alive. Of course, the reader only has Gatsby's testimony as to what occurred on the road back from New York, the word of a fantasist. However, Nick's silence as an act of solidarity with Gatsby is contradicted by his eventual telling of the story, in which he clearly holds Tom and Daisy responsible. Therefore, Nick's confessed disapproval of Gatsby suggests an alternative reason that Nick holds his peace. In his final conversation with Gatsby, Nick says:

> "They're a rotten crowd," I shouted, across the lawn. "You're worth the whole damn bunch put together."
> I've always been glad I said that. It was the only compliment I ever gave him, because I disapproved of him from beginning to end.[310]

Tom, Daisy and Jordan may be a rotten crowd but it is Gatsby that warrants Nick's disapproval from "beginning to end". There may be something rotten in the state of East Egg but Nick is unwilling or unable to challenge the status quo that this "rotten crowd" represents. His ambivalence, particularly toward Gatsby, has led to a passive acceptance of the events, which he only challenges through the act of writing. This is made apparent when consideration is given to

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There is therefore two responses that Fitzgerald is giving in this article, one pertains to changes in society, particularly relations between the sexes, which cannot be connected solely to World War One and the other refers to how the individual experienced war, or the threat of it.

[310] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby,* 120.

Nick's attitude towards the inquest, which is more concerned with the façade of respectability than with the reality that lies beneath it. His initial response to the manner in which the events are reported in the newspapers is one of horror, he refers to them as "grotesque, circumstantial, eager and untrue".[311] However, when Michaelis's testimony hovers perilously close to the truth, Nick is troubled at the prospect of that truth being exposed:

> When Michaelis's testimony at the inquest brought to light Wilson's suspicions of his wife I thought the whole tale would shortly be served up in racy pasquinade – but Catherine, who might have said anything, didn't say a word.[312]

Catherine, Myrtle's sister, like Nick, is more comfortable with a heady mix of truth and lies. She is truthful in her acknowledgement that Myrtle did not know Gatsby but lies with her remarks that her sister was happy in her marriage to George Wilson. Catherine's refusal to expose the true nature of the Wilson marriage garners admiration from Nick: "[s]he showed a surprising amount of character about it too – looked at the coroner with determined eyes [...] and swore that her sister [...] had been in no mischief whatsoever".[313] Why would the revelation of truth as understood by Catherine be so troubling to Nick? After all, anything Catherine could reveal about her sister's extra-marital activities would be an exposure of Tom, one of the "rotten crowd" according to Nick, as she can reveal nothing of Gatsby. Again, Nick's reluctance to challenge the illusion of respectability is highlighted; his need for order demands a defence of the status quo, even if that defence is passive and the status quo rotten. An exposure of Tom's wrongdoing will be the start of the collapse of the house of cards, that Nick has involved himself in over the summer, the same house of cards that is

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311 Ibid., 127.
312 Ibid.
313 Ibid.

the basis of the society in which Nick functions. For Nick it would appear the need for social order is of more importance than truth at the time that the events take place. He is, however, unable or unwilling to see his own culpability in maintaining the status quo that he finds so reprehensible. Despite his feelings of repulsion toward Tom and Daisy after Gatsby's death he is unwilling to challenge the social order that they represent, even when given the opportunity to do so. He is maintaining two irreconcilable positions, summed up in his remark regarding the conclusion of the inquest, "[s]o Wilson was reduced to a man 'deranged by grief' in order that the case might remain in its simplest form. And it rested there".[314] This "simplest form" is as preferential to Nick as it is to anybody else involved. Nick's statement is shadowed by disgust at this state of affairs but he does not acknowledge his own role in reducing Wilson to a man driven mad by his wife's untimely death. This dual perspective in the position Nick takes in response to the aftermath of Gatsby's death is the result of his ambivalence towards Gatsby, which is equitable to his disgust for the world of Tom and Daisy. It is only in the act of writing down the events, the looking back into the past that Gatsby is championed through the act of re-telling, or re-writing. Gatsby's identity and his own, as perceived by the reader, is a result of Nick's recounting. He draws attention to the act of writing and the manner in which it is not entirely a fair reflection of what was experienced during the Summer of 1922, drawing attention to its artifice in Chapter 3:

> Reading what I have read so far I see I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me.On the contrary they were merely casual events in a crowded Summer and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs.[315]

[314] Ibid.
[315] Ibid., 46.

The narrative Nick tells is designed to make sense of what appears to have no meaning. Gatsby, with his created past, flamboyant present and uncertain identity, indicated by the myriad stories that circulate around him, has no meaning. For Nick to make sense of the events, he must create meaning and that involves creating an identity for Gatsby that, in terms of the fundamentals of the plot and dialogue, does not exist. In so doing, Nick also ascertains a certainty about his own identity that during the events of the novel is based on a passive acceptance of social norms, which have led to a culpability through a failure to act, hence the numerous critics who see Nick as nothing more than a snob. In order to shroud his own culpability and raise Gatsby above the action that made Nick "disapprove [...] of him from beginning to end" – to raise Gatsby, as it were, above the plot – Nick must frame him in his narration in a manner which allows him to be an "innocent" in a narrative, which is presented as being generated by Tom and Daisy.[316] In the recounting of events Nick attempts to banish his ambivalence that is present throughout the action of the novel. Through the course of the action he is ambivalent towards Gatsby, Tom and Daisy, Jordan, his work environment and the society of New York, but in the writing of his novel he is attempting to create a certainty that is missing not only from the events but Nick's response to them at the time that they occurred. On the opening page of the novel, the reader is informed by Nick that on his return West he "wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart".[317] This was his primary motivation when he begins the process of writing Gatsby's story down and in order for Nick to have the world stand "at a sort of moral attention forever" the messiness of Gatsby's story has to be

[316] Ibid., 120.
[317] Ibid., 5.

contained.[318] Importantly, he seeks moral order, as the establishment of social order seems beyond the realms of possibility for two reasons: firstly, as has been mentioned, the radical changes provoked by World War One, which had seen much of the Victorian markers of social order overturned; secondly, and contradictorily, the unchanging position of Tom and Daisy within a society that is in flux, remaining "above the hot struggles of the poor".[319] This position of untouchability is further enhanced by Tom's apparent non-participation in the purge of World War One.[320] He was not part of the event that is perceived as the defining moment of a generation. He rejects the modern world, articulated in his responses to questions of both race and gender and such a position is viable for Tom, as the old order is present enough for him and his wife to evade responsibility for their behaviour.[321] For Nick, the pair is unchanged by the events of that summer, events that have had a life-changing impact upon him. If they are not to be held responsible by society (and Nick is part of the reason why society has failed to assign blame) then Nick will hold them, through his artistic venture of telling Gatsby's story, morally responsible. In performing this task – the purpose of the book, laid down by the book – he must make a clear

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[318] Ibid.

[319] Ibid., 117.

[320] The fact that Fitzgerald does not mention Tom's war service, strongly suggests that even if he had joined the army, he did not get overseas. The importance placed on war time experience in this novel indicates that this lack in Tom's experience was deliberate on the part of Fitzgerald.

[321] The dinner party at the Buchanans in Chapter One, establishes Tom's attitude to race in the form of his admiration for *The Rise of the Coloured Empires* by Goddard which alludes to the 1920 publication, *The Rising Tide of Color* by Lothrop Stoddard. (See *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of F Scott Fitzgerald The Great* Gatsby edited by Matthew J Bruccoli, explanatory note 14.6-7, 1991: 183.) Similarly, his attitude to the position of women is summed up in his remark about Jordan Baker, "She's a nice girl," said Tom after a moment. "They oughtn't to let her run around the country this way" (*Gatsby* 18). This concern for female freedom is echoed in his shock when Gatsby first tells him that he knows Daisy, "I wonder where the devil he met Daisy. By God, I may be old-fashioned in my ideas but women run around too much these days to suit me. They meet all kinds of crazy fish" (*Gatsby* 81).

differentiation between good and bad, right and wrong, moral and immoral. Nick's attempt at removing the ambiguity of the events through his narrative voice creates DeKoven's *sous-rature* – Nick's narration attempts to cross out aspects of the story he is telling but they remain visible, resulting in a double story – and this has specific consequences for the manner in which, each of the characters and his relationships with them are presented.

In the case of *Gatsby* DeKoven's *sous-rature* becomes literal as Fitzgerald's previous version of the novel, *Trimalchio*, has survived.[322] As a result, an interesting comparison can be made between a number of pivotal scenes, which is useful in exploring Fitzgerald's approach to the additional editing of the text, his technique in the creation of greater mystery around the nature of Gatsby's dream (and as a result, Gatsby's identity) and the manner in which shifts in dialogue and Nick's narration alter the manner in which the events are perceived. The majority of *Trimalchio* remained unchanged from how the material appeared in *Gatsby*, but there was some substantial re-writing, notably of Chapters Six and Seven.[323] These changes become more significant because they occur in a relatively small number and do not affect the details of the plot. What is therefore present in *Trimalchio* is a more explicit version of Gatsby's attitude toward Daisy, which is not filtered through Nick's consciousness in the same manner that it is in the published novel. Major changes were made to the conversation between Nick and Gatsby, which occurs at the end of Chapter Six in *The Great Gatsby* after the party attended by the Buchanans. The scene is central in exploring the nature of Gatsby's love for Daisy and the almost grail-

[322] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Trimalchio: An Early Version of 'the Great Gatsby'*, ed. James L. W. West III, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[323] For further details of the extent and nature of Fitzgerald's rewriting see James L West III's Introduction to the Cambridge edition of *Trimalchio: An Early Version of The Great Gatsby*.

like quest he has embarked upon to win her back from Tom Buchanan. It also illustrates the utter impossibility of what he is attempting:

> He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: "I never loved you." After she had obliterated three years with that sentence they could decide upon the practical measures to be taken . . .
> "I wouldn't ask too much of her," I ventured. "You can't repeat the past.
> "Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!"[324]

The exchange is one of the most famous in the novel and perfectly encapsulates not only the impossibility of his almost religious quest but also the "extraordinary gift for hope; a romantic readiness" that Nick does not expect to come across again.[325] However, in the version of the scene that appears in *Trimalchio*, at the beginning of Chapter Seven rather than at the end of Chapter Six, and immediately preceding the lunch at the Buchanans that will lead to the confrontation scene at the Plaza hotel, the emphasis is slightly, but noticeably, different. What is contrasted is Gatsby's understanding of the past with the reality of Daisy's present. The conversation between Nick and Gatsby is worth quoting at length, as it is not widely known and it presents Gatsby in a different light from the hopeful and devoted lover:

> He seemed to feel that Daisy should make some sort of atonement that would give her love the value that it had before. Anyone might have come along in a few years and taken her away from Tom – he wanted this to have an element of fate about it, of inevitability – the resumption of an interrupted dance. And first Daisy must purify herself by a renunciation of the years between.
> "But how can she do that?" I asked, puzzled.
> "She can go to her husband and tell him that she never loved him. She can set that much right. Then we can go back to Louisville and be married in her house and start life over."[326]

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[324] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 86.
[325] Ibid., 6.
[326] Fitzgerald, *Trimalchio: An Early Version of 'the Great Gatsby'*, 90.

In this version, Daisy has a debt to pay, which has not so much the spiritual component that is present in the description of Gatsby's quest – Nick speaks of him being "in some fantastic communication with space and time"– but a religious one.[327] She needs to "atone", she must "purify" herself and "renounce" the five years of her separation from Gatsby. What is wanted is a complete wiping out of her previous life with Tom, a re-birth. However, it is not only Daisy that has a debt to pay; Gatsby also had a score to settle with a society, which questions the validity of men who are not the inheritors of wealth, money and tradition. In terms of the personal relationship he shares with Daisy, it is clear that he has triumphed because preceding this exchange between the two, Gatsby tells Nick, "Daisy wants us to run off together. She came over this afternoon with a suitcase all packed and ready in the car".[328] This show of commitment, however, is not satisfactory for Gatsby. His marriage to "the king's daughter, the golden girl" must be public, must occur in her parents house in Louisville, just as her marriage to Tom did.[329] Eloping may have been a possibility five years before for Gatsby, when his social and financial positions were questionable, but now he must demonstrate to himself that his wealth has made him a legitimate member of the club of successful masculinity, which in turn makes him a legitimate husband for Daisy. This, of course, has nothing to do with Daisy: this is only about how Gatsby sees himself and how he wants other *men* to see him. An elopement may signify a private commitment of great emotional depth – a considerable sacrifice for Daisy on both a social and familial level – but this private commitment has no validity for Gatsby. He demands and needs the social recognition that marriage to Daisy has within a

[327] Ibid.
[328] Ibid., 89.
[329] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 94.

patriarchal culture that sees women as something that men symbolically bestow upon each other as recognition of their socially valid manhood. Hence, Gatsby's adamant demand that they marry from her house in Louisville. The significance is not that it is Daisy's house but that it is Daisy's father's house and therefore represents patriarchal acknowledgement and acceptance. This exchange demonstrates the true value of Daisy for Gatsby, and it is based on her commodification summarised in his remark regarding Daisy's voice, which for Gatsby is "full of money" and expanded upon by Nick, who re-enforces the connection between this commodification and patriarchy. "That was it. . . It was full of money . . . High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl . . .".[330] Nick is initially unable to identify the quality that resonates in Daisy's voice, the most he is able to muster in describing it is, "[s]he's got an indiscreet voice . . . [i]t's full of -" Gatsby then completes the sentence for him.[331] However, in *Trimalchio*, Nick is very clear about what he hears in Daisy's hypnotic voice, "[s]he loves you. Her voice is full of it".[332] Gatsby, does not acknowledge Nick's comment and overrides it with his insistence that it is money he hears in her voice. Daisy's "love" is meaningless without the social acceptance that a public acknowledgement of their relationship promotes.

In *Gatsby*, Nick articulates the impossibility of Gatsby's ambitions in the statement that repeating the past is impossible, which is dismissed by Gatsby with an insistence that it can be done. In *Trimalchio*, Nick's articulation of this doubt is stated in far more practical terms: "'[t]ake what you can get Gatsby,' I

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[330] Ibid.

[331] Ibid., 93.

[332] Fitzgerald, *Trimalchio: An Early Version of 'the Great Gatsby'*, 96.This quotation illustrated the manner in which Daisy's love for Gatsby is more explicitly shown than in *The Great Gatsby*.

urged him".[333] The answer to the dilemma is very simple: if you love Daisy then accept the reality of the present (her marriage to Tom) and decide upon a course of action based on that truth. Nick continues, "Daisy's a person – she's not just a figure in your dream. And she probably doesn't feel that she owes you anything at all".[334] These two sentences explicitly encapsulate the tension that lies at the heart of the novel, and perhaps this is why Fitzgerald removed them during his process of re-writing. Nick's identification of the distorted nature of Gatsby's vision of Daisy acts as a sledgehammer through the subtleties that his narration creates, illustrating not only the impossibility of Gatsby's dream but also its utter unreasonableness. In these lines, Daisy is sympathetic, burdened with a role she neither sought nor understands. Gatsby's answer to Nick's suggestion that Daisy doesn't owe him anything, further provokes sympathy for her:

> "She does though. Why – I'm only thirty-two. I might be a great man if I could forget that once I lost Daisy. But my career has got to be like this – " He drew a slanting line from the lawn to the stars. "It's got to keep going up. I used to think wonderful things were going to happen to me, before I met her. . ."[335]

His remark is full of bitterness, a resentment that has been building over the intervening five years, exacerbated by the realisation that what has been done cannot be undone. The remark also identifies Daisy as the source of his trouble: he cannot forget that he once lost her and as a result is not, at thirty-two, the great man he might have been. He also creates an association between his success as a man, "his career" and his relationship with Daisy. Again, the connection between successful masculinity and the winning of a "type" of woman, represented by Daisy,, is drawn. This dialogue between Nick and Gatsby occurs in Chapter Seven of *Trimalchio*, and is followed immediately by

[333] Ibid., 90.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Ibid.

the lunch at the Buchanans that will inevitably lead to the confrontation at the Plaza and the deaths of Myrtle and George Wilson and Gatsby himself. In *Gastby*, the version of the dialogue is separated by only a few pages but does appear in the chapter before the confrontation scene in Chapter Seven. The impact of both scenes occurring in the same chapter in *Trimalchio* is that Nick and Gatsby's conversation shadows the confrontation between Tom and Gatsby, and Daisy's role in it. Gatsby's impossible expectation, his resentment, Daisy's position as the unknowing embodiment of Gatsby's dream, of his past and his future hangs over the Plaza scene, as does a lack of sympathy for Gatsby because of the bitterness that the conversation suggests. Daisy's role as a form of currency between men, a prize that is bestowed upon successful masculinity, is exposed in its entirety in this scene. In Nick's narration, Daisy's return to Tom is an acknowledgement of Tom's version of manhood; due to Nick's own identity being forged with Gatsby's through the telling of his story, Daisy's betrayal of Gatsby, for Nick, makes her as culpable as Tom: she is positioned with her husband in opposition to narrator and hero. She becomes part of the problem, "the foul dust [that] floated in the wake of [Gatsby's] dream".[336] Tom and Daisy become "Tom and Daisy" sharing both an identity and responsibility for Gatsby's demise during the course of Nick's re-telling of events. However, the confrontation scene when viewed in isolation from the events that follow it, which resonate so powerfully with Nick and the reader, does show the impossible situation that Daisy has found herself in. Just as Gatsby is struck by the realisation that Daisy has emotions, agency and a past that is not exclusively attached to his own, summed up in his desperate question, "You loved me

[336] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 6.

too?"[337] Daisy is confronted by her own realisation regarding her relationship with Jay Gatsby, she remains only as a symbol of masculine success. His despair at realising that Daisy has agency is, as she says herself, a sign that he did "want too much!"[338] Her desperate plea, " I love you now – isn't that enough? I can't help what's past . . . I did love him once – but I loved you too" is not truly heard by Gatsby; what he hears is not that she loved him but that he is an addition to Tom, summed up in the "too", that finishes her plea.[339] This is not enough to wipe out the loss of her that he felt five years before. Daisy's mistake, or rather her misunderstanding, is that she believes her relationship with Gatsby is about the present, the "I love you now" of her plea to him, but it is not and never has been about the present: Daisy is the symbol of his former self that fell in love with her, without her atonement, which is her denial of Tom and their marriage; their relationship in the present has no meaning for Gatsby. Although the reader is given little access to the thoughts and emotions of Daisy, Nick tells us in Chapter One that, "I had no sight into Daisy's heart", a couple of passages do suggest the significance that Gatsby has for Daisy.[340] When she leaves Gatsby's party with Tom, Nick writes:

> After all, in the very casualness of Gatsby's party there were romantic possibilities totally absent from her world. What was it up there in the song that seemed to be calling her back inside? What would happen now in the dim incalculable hours? 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.[341]

[337] Ibid., 103.
[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Ibid., 9.
[341] Ibid., 85.

The passage evokes all the feelings of new or re-discovered love: jealousy, fear of being replaced, insecurity, a sense that Gatsby could find someone worthier, captured in the phrase "some *authentically* radiant young girl" (my italics) implying that Daisy is not. Similarly, Jordan's recounting of the pair's early relationship suggests the depth of feeling she had. Jordan tells Nick:

> Wild rumors were circulating about her - how her mother had found her packing her bag one winter night to go to New York and say goodbye to a soldier who was going overseas. She was effectually prevented, but she wasn't on speaking terms with her family for several weeks. After that she didn't play around with the soldiers any more but only with a few flat-footed, short sighted young men in town who couldn't get into the army at all.[342]

Just as she was prepared to leave Tom, so she was prepared to abandon her family for Gatsby, all of which suggests genuine emotion, something far more considerable than the "presumptuous little flirtation" that Tom reduces it to.[343] The confrontation at the Plaza, therefore, not only results in "'Jay Gatsby' [breaking] like glass against Tom's hard malice" but so is Daisy's belief in the romantic possibility that Gatsby represents for her, destroyed not only by Tom's hard malice but by Gatsby himself, who sees her, just as Tom does, symbolically.[344] In this light, her decision to remain with Tom, which is made *before* they leave the hotel, is understandable. Both men see her only in relation to themselves. Her identity is dependent on her marriage to Tom and, although Gatsby's feelings for her may come from a place of greater emotional depth, he, like Tom, fails to recognise her "separateness" from him, her agency, her past, her internal life: in short her identity that is not determined by her relationship with men.

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[342] Ibid., 60.
[343] Ibid., 105.
[344] Ibid., 115.

Identity as a Product of Masculine Exchange.

Gatsby may not be able to see Daisy's identity as separate from his own but a number of male characters also establish their own identity in relation to that of other men. Nick, for example aligns his identity and his masculinity alongside Gatsby's through the course of his narration. In so doing, he places both himself and Gatsby in direct opposition with Tom Buchanan and the type of socially and financially determined masculinity that he represents, which is based on inherited wealth and privilege and is deeply connected with an identity that locates itself within the certainties of the past.[345] In the social order presented in the novel, Nick is, of course, more closely aligned to Tom than Gatsby; this is illustrated by his recounting of his family's history at the beginning of the novel and at its conclusion, "I am part of that [...] a little complacent from growing up in the Carraway house in a city where dwellings are still called through decades by a family's name".[346] Nick's move East was an attempt to move away from this ideal of manhood that has been challenged by his wartime experiences. He moves East to establish an identity rooted in action (albeit selling bonds in an office) rather than an identity rooted in inherited wealth, tradition and marriage. His response to Tom and Daisy's question about whether or not he

[345] In Greg Forter, "Against Melancholia: Contemporary Mourning Theory, Fitzgerald's the Great Gatsby, and the Politics of Unfinished Grief," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 14, no. 2 (2003).the author explores the complex manner in which masculinity is represented in the novel. Forter argues that Gatsby and Tom Buchanan create a symmetrical paradox - Tom may come from old money but he is an example of new manhood, whereas Gatsby represents an older manhood (Forter uses the phrase 'residual masculinity) despite his newly acquired wealth. Forter writes of Tom : [he] embodies [...] the shape the crisis in masculinity took among traditional, owning - class men. As those men came increasingly to demonstrate their *class* power through leisured display, that display threatened a *gendered* subversion against which they sought to defend themselves by cultivating the signs of "hardness" associated with the emergent form of manhood."

[346] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby,* 137.

was engaged illustrates the connections between wealth, marriage and social hierarchy and identity, which Nick appears to find problematic:

> "I forgot to ask you something, and it's important. We heard you were engaged to a girl out West."
> . . .
> "It's a libel. I'm too poor."
> . . .
> Of course I knew what they were referring to, but I wasn't even vaguely engaged. The fact that gossip had published the banns was one of the reasons I had come east. You can't stop going with an old friend on account of rumours and on the other hand I had no intention of being rumored into marriage.[347]

Marriage in this world is more than a personal decision: it is very much a part of the social fabric that implies social success and inherited values, a society in which identity is forged through relationships with others. It is, however, this identity that Gatsby craves during the course of the novel; even if through the telling of the story, Nick places Gatsby in opposition to it; he wants to be accepted as an equal not only *to* Tom Buchanan, but *by* Tom Buchanan. Gatsby's first meeting with Tom occurs at the lunch that he shares with Wolfshiem and Nick. His response is understandable as that of a man who is meeting the husband of the woman he has been in love with for many years: "[t]hey [Tom and Gatsby] shook hands briefly and a strained, unfamiliar look of embarrassment came over Gatsby's face".[348] However his behaviour when Tom shows up unexpectedly at his house with two companions indicates that he is impressed by Tom, even after his affair with Daisy has begun. "I'm delighted to see you," said Gatsby standing on his porch. "I'm delighted that you dropped in" (G*atsby* 79). Nick's response to this is, "[a]s though they cared!" (*Gatsby* 79) Gatsby's fall back position is that of host:

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[347] Ibid., 19.
[348] Ibid., 59.

> "Sit right down. Have a cigarette or a cigar." He walked around the room quickly, ringing bells. "I'll have something to drink for you in just a minute." He was profoundly affected by the fact that Tom was there. But he would be uneasy anyhow until he had given them something, realising in a vague way that that was all they came for.[349]

Gatsby knows the reason that they are there is convenience but he attempts to take advantage of the situation as a means of promoting his social standing: he needs them to approve of him despite the obviousness of their disdain. He pleads with them not to hurry their visit and indeed requests that they stay for supper, assuring them that he "wouldn't be surprised if some other people dropped in from New York".[350] However, the gap between Nick's understanding of the social mores of Tom's class is far greater than Gatsby's, who either due to ignorance or a wilful refusal to see, cannot or will not recognise that he is not considered "acceptable" by Tom and his male companion, Mr Sloane. Although their nameless female companion seems more open to Gatsby (but according to Nick that was probably the result of two high balls) when she asks them to accompany her to supper, Nick's response is clear, Gatsby's indicates his desperation for social acceptance:

> Gatsby looked at me questioningly. He wanted to go and he didn't see that Mr Sloan had determined that he shouldn't.
> "I'm afraid that I won't be able to," I said.
> "Well, you come," she urged, concentrating on Gatsby.[351]

His company is not sought and when he returns to the house to collect his coat and hat, Tom points out Gatsby's social faux pas, "[m]y God, I believe the man's coming [...d]oesn't he know she doesn't want him?"[352] Before Gatsby's return, the trio leave telling Nick to inform him that they couldn't wait. During this

[349] Ibid., 79.
[350] Ibid., 80.
[351] Ibid.
[352] Ibid., 81.

visit, Gatsby also lets Tom know that he is acquainted with Daisy to which Tom's initial response is that he cannot imagine where they would have met. His second response is the voicing of his concerns about women running around on their own and subsequently meeting "crazy fish": the golden girl is keeping bad company. As a direct result Tom attends the next of Gatsby's parties accompanying Daisy, which in turn leads to his investigation into the truth behind Gatsby's wealth.

The exchanges between Gatsby and Tom are very much based upon establishing identity. Tom quickly labels Gatsby a bootlegger and Tom is introduced to all and sundry at the party he attends as "Tom Buchanan – the polo player", much to Tom's chagrin.[353] Similarly, during their confrontation at the Plaza, Tom questions Gatsby's identity as an Oxford man, to which Gatsby responds by asserting his role as an officer during the war; Tom's wartime experience, or presumably lack thereof, is not mentioned at all through the course of the novel. When this attempt at exposing Gatsby as a fraud fails, Tom attacks him as a social upstart coveting his wife: "I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well if that's the idea you can count me out".[354] Of course, this provokes the question whether his response would be different if the man in question was Mr Somebody from Somewhere. Gatsby's social standing disturbs Tom and his uncertain identity, which has its origin in murky activity, appears to appal him more than his wife's adultery. It is Gatsby's lack of pedigree that is so offensive to Tom: his apparent arrival from "nowhere" to a mansion on Long Island is as baffling and troubling to Tom as other aspects of American life, which seems to indicate to him the end

[353] Gatsby's focus on the leisured nature of Tom's masculinity is a source of anxiety for Tom. See footnote 63 for details pertaining to Greg Forter's discussion on the manner in which masculine identity is presented in the novel.

[354] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby,* 101.

of Western civilisation. The lines that were once clear between races, genders and classes are blurring and Tom's understanding of white American manhood is not only being challenged but is being threatened. This breakdown of appropriate social boundaries is summed up by Tom's repeated return to the questions how and where could Gatsby and Daisy possibly have met. He finally draws the conclusion that the only way that their paths could have crossed was if Gatsby "brought groceries to the back door".[355] Of course, Tom is not far from the truth: it was the anonymity, the non-identity of the soldier's uniform that brought Gatsby into the vicinity of Daisy and Gatsby is fully aware of that fact. In this respect, both men's understanding of masculinity and the role played in its definition by the "golden girl" is identical. When recounting Gatsby's recollections of his initial meeting with Daisy, Nick writes, "he knew that he was in Daisy's house by a colossal accident. However glorious might be his future as Jay Gatsby, he was at present a penniless young man without a past . . . eventually he took Daisy one still October night, took her because he had no real right to touch her hand".[356] Gatsby's attitude towards his involvement with Daisy would be shared by Tom Buchanan: they both consider this relationship presumptuous but Gatsby holds the mistaken position that wealth can elevate him, that money can make him worthy, Tom knows that this is not the case; social and political power is inherited.[357]

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[355] Ibid., 102.

[356] Ibid., 116.

[357] In Lauren Rule Maxwell, *Romantic Revisions in Novels from the Americas* (West LaFayette: Purdue University Press, 2013).The author illustrates how Fitzgerald reflected the manner in which the United States, after World War One, imported the system of European class values into American society. This contradicted with the *idea* of equality that America had come to represent. She writes: "the change that Fitzgerald depicts is that the 'post-war new America' had a greater tendency to identify with and emulate 'the old, international, corrupt actuality' that characterised the great world empires – particularly, as we see in *The Great Gatsby*, the British Empire" (101).

If the relationship or rather the exchange between Tom and Gatsby can be seen as one based on the social identity of each other, the relationship between Nick and Gatsby is markedly different, despite the latter representing for Nick "everything for which I have an unaffected scorn".[358] The course of Nick's narration is a process of retrospective identification with Gatsby, in many ways similar to Gatsby's attachment to Daisy as an indicator of his identity. However, Gatsby has a permanence in death that ensures his position as a symbol of hope, encapsulated at the end of the novel by what amounts to Nick's eulogy for him, can never diminish. Nick writes of his dead friend:

> Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms father . . . And one fine morning –[359]

In the process of this eulogy, singular 'Gatsby' becomes plural 'us', referring to Gatsby and Nick, Gatsby and America, Gatsby and humanity and through this exchange between the singular and plural Gatsby comes to represent the best of all of them. Gatsby cannot fail in the symbolic role that Nick ascribes him because he is frozen in death unlike Daisy who, only frozen in time, is found wanting. It is on the figure of Gatsby that Nick places what he has learned through the course of that summer, even if Gatsby, like Daisy before him, does not really exemplify what Nick so closely associates with him. In the recounting of the moment when Gatsby falls in love with Daisy and "wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath" Nick in fact describes the end of the Gatsby that embodies the pioneering spirit of America, which he describes at the end of the novel[360]:

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[358] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 6.
[359] Ibid., 141.
[360] Ibid., 86.

> And as the moon rose higher the inessential house began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here . . . for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation . . . face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.[361]

The reference to the inessential house identifies the social trappings that Gatsby has fallen prey to; the desire for social acceptance through the traditional route, imported from Europe, of marriage and genealogy rather than exhibiting loyalty to the American ideal of individualism. Nick states that Gatsby's obsession with the past is a search for some part of himself that was lost, which "had gone into loving Daisy".[362] Nick continues, "[h]is life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could only once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was".[363] Gatsby himself articulates what was lost when he unified Daisy and his dream of self-creation:

> Well, there I was, way off my ambitions, getting deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I didn't care. What was the use of doing great things if I could have a better time telling her what I was going to do?[364]

There is a move away from action and a move towards recounting; despite what Ronald Berman refers to as Gatsby's 'heroic quality of vital energy'[365] this energy is trapped in mundane, domestic tasks or concerns: "on Mondays eight servants including an extra gardener toiled all day with mops and scrubbing brushes and hammers and garden shears, repairing the ravages of the night before." "There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of

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[361] Ibid., 140.
[362] Ibid., 86.
[363] Ibid.
[364] Ibid., 117.
[365] Berman, *The Great Gatsby and Fitzgerald's World of Ideas*, 129. For a discussion of the role of individualism in the novel see "Individualism Reconsidered" in Berman's *The Great Gatsby and Fitzgerald's World of Ideas*.

two hundred oranges in half an hour"[366]; "I have been glancing into some of the rooms"; "suppose we take a plunge in the swimming pool"; "I want to get the grass cut,".[367] Or, alternatively, his energy is invested in a futile attempt to recapture a moment that is lost, not unlike Nick's suggestion relating to Tom: "[he] would drift on forever seeking a little wistfully for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game"[368]; a far cry to the young Gatsby and his seafaring days with Dan Cody. Despite the differences between Tom and Gatsby, they are united by a belief that the best of life is behind them. Nick, through his narration, reconciles Gatsby to the man he was *before* Daisy, in whom, as Gatsby says himself, he lost part of himself. The Gatsby who, prior to his meeting with Dan Cody, stayed less than two weeks at St Olaf's College because of "its ferocious indifference to the drums of his destiny, to destiny itself".[369] By definition, this Gatsby looks forward, not backwards and by Nick associating Gatsby with hope, he once again turns him towards the future, even if through his death, he too, is already in the past. By reconciling Gatsby with his previous self, Nick unites him with the *vision* of America and separates him from the *reality* of America, which is consumed by an inherited social order that Tom represents and which through the course of the novel Gatsby so desperately wishes to join.

Through Nick's narratorial act of recreating Gatsby and his own identification with him, through the shift at the closing of the novel from "Gatsby" to "we", he aligns himself with the pioneering spirit, which he describes as manifesting in Gatsby as "an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness".[370] This sense of

[366] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 33.
[367] Ibid., 64-65.
[368] Ibid., 9.
[369] Ibid., 77.
[370] Ibid., 6.

hope, of a return, ironically, to an older version of America in Nick, is expressed not only in his identification with Gatsby but in his rejection of his Midwestern upbringing, marriage to a local girl and involvement in the family business, which are indicative of the social class from which he comes, modelled on old world values. In his act of moving away from these inherited traditions, which solidify identity, Nick seeks the individualism he attaches to Gatsby. However, just as Gatsby is self-contradictory so is Nick, as he has returned to the Midwest and presumably the identity he shared with his family and social class. The famous last line of the novel also indicates that despite Nick's belief in the green light that he now shares with Gatsby and his belief in the future that is represented by his statement that "tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms further", there really is no meaningful escape from the past. Despite his attempts to suggest otherwise, Nick, like Faulkner's Gavin Stevens is aware that "the past is never dead. It's not even past". [371]

Gatsby's Shifting Personal Identity.

Gatsby's sense of self is intricately bound to his love for Daisy but this is a far more complex idea than the statement suggests. His relationship with Daisy consists of three movements, all of which are focused on Daisy but refer exclusively to the identity of Gatsby. The first is marked by a process of projection and attribution; the second by a narcissistic extension of self and a

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There have been a number of critical discussions that link the novel to the pioneering spirit of the early American colonies. For example, "Boats Against the Current": Mortality and the Myth of Renewal in *The Great Gatsby*." by Jeffrey Steinbrink in *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 26, No 2, F Scott Fitzgerald Issue (Summer 1980), 157-170 and "The Allusive Past: Historical Perspective in *The Great Gatsby*." by John Rohrkemper in *College Literature*, Vol. 12, No 2 (Spring 1985), 153-162, amongst others.

[371] Faulkner, *Novels: 1942-1954 Go Down Moses(1942), Intruder in the Dust,(1948) Requiem for a Nun(1951), a Fable(1954)*, 535.

simultaneous assimilation into self; and the third by a melancholic loss of self. With reference to Kierkegaard, R D Laing and a recent critical study by John Irwin, the charting of Gatsby's relationship with Daisy from their first meeting to their final separation can be used to explore Gatsby's mercurial identity.[372]

The last time the reader sees Gatsby is the moments before he is shot by George Wilson. Although it is not a scene that it is witnessed by Nick, the omniscient nature of his narration and his repeated use of "must" as opposed to the extensive use of the conditional tense in large passages of his story-telling, suggests an element of certainty on Nick's part. This encourages the reader to accept the scene as an accurate depiction of Gatsby in his final moments. What is apparent in this scene is that, despite Nick's repeated claims that Gatsby "had an extraordinary gift for hope" (*Gatsby* 6), by the time of his death both his hope and romantic readiness have evaporated:

> I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn't believe it would come [Daisy's phone call] and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about . . .like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding towards him through the amorphous trees.[373]

What Nick describes here is a loss of enchantment, a loss of belief in the possibilities of life, an utter despair that strips everything of colour. Gatsby's "blue lawns" and "yellow cocktail music" are replaced by "scarcely created grass", "poor ghosts" and an "ashen figure". It is a far cry from how Nick first sees Gatsby, on his lawn, arms stretched out towards the green light at the end

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[372] Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosphical Crumbs*; Ronald David Laing, *The Self and Others: Further Studies in Sanity and Madness* (Tavistock Publications, 1962); John T Irwin, *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Fiction:" An Almost Theatrical Innocence"* (JHU Press, 2014).
[373] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 126.

of Daisy's dock, trembling with the enchantment of that "single green light, minute and far away" in which Gatsby has invested all his hope of repeating the past.[374] The green light is the symbol of the first movement of Gatsby's relationship with Daisy, that of projection and attribution. Leslie Chard draws a connection between Gatsby's green light and one that appears in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode". He argues that an examination of the novel and the poem can help "acquire a precise understanding of the nature of Fitzgerald's comment on the American Dream" and he believes that such a comparison draws the conclusion that the closing of the novel and its "boats against the current" "is an exercise in illusory futility".[375] However, the connection between the poem and the novel allows for a reading that is far more specific to the character of Gatsby as expressed in his devotion to Daisy. Stanza three of the poem is as follows:

> My genial spirits fail,
> And what can these avail
> To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
> It were a vain endeavour,
> Though I should gaze for ever
> On that green light that lingers in the west:
> I may not hope from outward forms to win
> The passion and the life, whose fountains are within![376]

The green light in Coleridge's poem is something that is pursued in vain because external objects cannot replicate or replace the internal life, cannot be a source of fulfilment. By recapturing Daisy, symbolised at the beginning of the novel by the green light, Gatsby mistakenly believes that he can reclaim part of himself; in the instance that he stretches his arms out to the light, his failure is enshrined because he has projected on to her an aspect of his own identity.

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[374] Ibid., 20.
[375] Leslie Chard, "Outward Forms and the Inner Life: Coleridge and Gatsby," *Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual* (1973): 189; ibid., 193.
[376] Duncan Wu, *Romanticism: An Anthology*, Third ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 675.

J'aime L Sander's argues with some suggestion that Fitzgerald may have been familiar with Kierkegaard's work, that *The Great Gatsby* shares similarities with Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (1843). "Kierkegaard imagines the life of his central character after he has lost the woman he loves much in the same way Nick imaginatively constructs Gatsby's life and love for Daisy".[377] It is not only aspects of the narrative that Sanders recognises in both works, she identifies a shared narrative view point towards the central characters as well as a similar mood in the works, suggesting the optimism of Kierkegaard in *Fear and Trembling* belies his reputation as the father of Existentialism and is present in Gatsby's optimistic hope which characterises his love for Daisy Buchanan. Within a broader context of the two men's work, Sanders suggests, "Kierkegaard's notion that human existence is a constant tension between one's aesthetic (external) and ethical (internal) existences" is in essence the same as "Fitzgerald's concept of the need to resolve one's private and public selves".[378] Sanders argues that because of his failure to win Daisy, a failure of his aesthetic (external/public) existence and his subsequent despair he chooses an ethical (internal/private) existence in Kierkegaardian terms, a higher existence marked by hope and faith. However, Kierkegaard's work *Repetition* (1843) also shares characteristics with *Gatsby* and is a useful text to explore not the 'hope and faith' of Gatsby but the melancholic despair that emerges after his brief re-unification with Daisy. Kierkegaard's complex understanding of persona, identity and authorial voice makes his work a fruitful tool in exploring the formation of Gatsby's identity and Nick's narration of his story. In the abstract of volume 17 of *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources,* entitled *Kierkegaard's Pseudonyms*, the editors state:

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[377] Sanders, "Discovering the Source of Gatsby's Greatness: Nick's Eulogy of a "Great" Kierkegaardian Knight," 112.
[378] Ibid., 111.

> One of the elements that many readers admire in Kierkegaard's skill as a writer consists in his ability to create different voices and perspectives in his works. Instead of unilaterally presenting clear-cut doctrines and theses, he confronts the reader with different personalities and figures who all espouse different views. One important aspect of this play of perspectives is Kierkegaard's controversial use of pseudonyms. The present volume is dedicated to exploring the different pseudonyms and authorial voices in Kierkegaard's authorship. The working assumption is that there is something unique and special about each pseudonym. The articles featured here try to explore each pseudonymous author as a kind of literary figure and to explain what kind of a person is at issue in each of the pseudonymous works. The hope is that by taking seriously each of these figures as individuals, we will be able to gain new insights into the texts which they are ostensibly responsible for.[379]

This awareness of the effect and impact of the authorial voice, Kierkegaard's use of pseudonyms and characters in his philosophical tracts allows for multiple interpretations of a single text, all of which are justified by the text. The multiplicity that can be found in a work such as *Repetition*, allows it to be a useful way of exploring Fitzgerald's fiction that shares this polyphony. In *Repetition*, the experiences of a character only identified as 'the young man' and his responses to events is mediated through the consciousness of Constantine Constantius, himself a pseudonym of the author. In this way Kierkegaard plays with the expectations and assumptions of his reader. His

[379] Jon Stewart and Katalin Nun, *Volume 17: Kierkegaard's Pseudonyms* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2015), Abstract.

awareness of the significance of persona is understood by Lee C. Barrett in the following manner:

> Even when writing under his own name Kierkegaard carefully constructed his authorial identity. Kierkegaard was convinced that an author's voice contributes significantly to a text's meaning. Three years after publishing *The Concept of Anxiety* Kierkegaard observed, "In one person's mouth the same words can be so full of substance, so trustworthy, and in another person's mouth they can be like the vague whispering of leaves."[380]

The closing quotation from Kierkegaard in this extract resonates with the complex response to Nick's narration that was highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, to what extent is Nick's narration trustworthy? What Kierkegaard's statement does is draw attention to the role of the reader or listener in establishing meaning, resulting in pluralities and mutually exclusive positions. This uncertainty aligns Kierkegaard to a twentieth century approach to both the literary text and identity, which does not see either as fixed, permanent or predetermined.

In *Repetition*, Kierkegaard echoes the doomed nature of a similar relationship to that of Gatsby and Daisy's. He articulates the mistake that lies at the heart of their relationship thus: "[i]t was impossible for him to make a real relationship from such a misunderstanding [...] the confusion, that she was just the visible form, whereas his thoughts, his soul, sought something else that he had attributed to her.".[381] Gatsby looks out at the green light, before his meeting with Daisy as Kierkegaard's "visible form", subsequently

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[380] Lee C. Barrett, "Vigilius Haufniensis: Psychological Sleuth, Anxious Author and Inadvertent Evangelist," in *Vol 17: Kierkegaard's Pseudonyms,* ed. Jon Stewart and Katalin Nun (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2015), 261.

[381] Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosphical Crumbs*, 12.

replaced by the physical form of Daisy herself; his pursuit of both however is "a vain endeavour" because what is pursued is "the passion and the life, whose fountains are within!" and this has mistakenly been "attributed to her". Nick comes close to articulating this feeling in the aftermath of the party attended by the Buchanans:

> He talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was [.][382]

Just as in the quotation from Kierkegaard, these lines refer to that which is sought as "something": what it is, is beyond identification. Similarly both passages refer to the "confusion" brought about by these relationships. For Gatsby, the moment of falling in love with Daisy is identified as the start of confusion and disorder not certainty or fulfilment and Gatsby, in part, recognises it as a betrayal of some fundamental part of himself, ironically the aspect of himself that he has attributed to her: "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".[383] In the moment of remembering his unification with Daisy, there is a suggestion that he wished he had done something differently, that he could re-write *that* moment.

In Soren Kierkegaard's *Repetition* the author, using the fictional narrator Constantine Constantius, explores with specific reference to romantic love, the difference between recollection and repetition. In the first paragraph he writes: "repetition and recollection are the same movement, just in opposite directions, because what is recollected has already been and is thus repeated backwards,

[382] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 86.
[383] Ibid.

whereas genuine repetition is recollected forwards. Repetition, if it is possible, thus makes a person happy, while recollection makes him unhappy".[384] Despite the claim that it is repetition that brings happiness, the narrator points out the advantage of recollection: "The great advantage of recollection is that it begins with loss. This is its security – it has nothing to lose".[385] Gatsby's desire is to exchange the unhappiness (and security) of recollection for the happiness of repetition, is illustrated in his naïve remark, "Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can!"[386] Gatsby longs, not so much for Daisy, as he does the opportunity to return to the moment of falling in love with her again, an impossible repetition. The narrator of *Repetition* sees this same desire in an acquaintance that is referred to only as the young man. The narrator observes his companion's "melancholy longing, through which he did not so much bring his beloved closer as remove himself from her even more".[387] The intense longing experienced by Kierkegaard's young man and by Gatsby results in a feeling of disconnection from the objects of their affection. The process of *The Great Gatsby* is one in which Gatsby's longing increases but his closeness to Daisy diminishes which is expressed in his remark after Daisy and Tom attend one of his parties: "I feel far away from her," he said. "It's hard to make her understand".[388] The moment when Nick first sees Gatsby, arms outstretched to the green light, is in fact the moment when she is closest to him through his projection, as he contemplates the possibility of repetition. His remark at the party illustrates the limitations of the static nature of his feelings and response

[384] Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosphical Crumbs*, 3.
[385] Ibid., 8.
[386] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 86.
[387] Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosphical Crumbs*, 8.
[388] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 85.

to Daisy. The narrator of *Repetition* identifies the mistake made by both the young man and Gatsby:

> His mistake was fatal. His mistake was that he stood at the end rather than at the beginning, but such a mistake is always a person's ruin.. . .This intensified recollection is the eternal expression for the beginning of romantic love, is a sign of genuine romantic love. An ironic elasticity is also required, however, in order for it to be of use. . . At the dawn of love, the present and the future battle for eternal expression. This recollection is precisely the reflux of eternity into the present, when in any case, it is healthy recollection.[389]

The young man and Gatsby, are already looking backwards, situating themselves at the end of the relationship, even as they wish to move forward. Kierkegaard's narrator identifies the reason why the relationship between the young man and his beloved is over before it has begun. Firstly, "[the young man] was deeply and passionately in love, this was clear, and yet he was already, in the earliest days, in a position to recollect his love".[390] For the young man and Gatsby the relationship is positioned in the past even from its very beginning. Gatsby's love for Daisy is based in memory, his love for her is something that he remembers rather than something that is experienced in the present; it can only be understood by looking back. It is a moment in the past that he wishes to recapture rather than a genuine desire to reunite with Daisy. Gatsby's attempt at repetition is bound to fail according to Kierkegaard's thinking as repetition is only a true source of joy when it is unplanned. Premeditated attempts at repetition cannot bring satisfaction and indeed provoke melancholy and despair as illustrated when the narrator of *Repetition* returns to Berlin in an attempt at repeating the past, he is left despondent and importantly, in relation to Gatsby, without hope.

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[389] Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosphical Crumbs,* 8.
[390] Ibid., 7.

> I was at Konigstadter Theatre the next evening. The only thing that repeated itself was that no repetition was possible . . . Whichever way I turned it was hopeless. The little dancer who had bewitched me the last time with a graceful manoeuvre that resembled the beginning of a leap, had made the leap. The blind man in front of the Brandenburg Gate, my harp player - for I was the only one who showed any concern for him - had a sort of greyish coat instead of the light green one for which I had a nostalgic longing, the one that had made him look like a weeping willow. He was lost to me and won by common humanity.[391]

Change is inevitable either because places, people and the self that is attempting repetition have changed or because of a misremembering or a later attachment of meaning placed on remembered events. Similarly, Gatsby's attempt at repetition is planned and, in order to be successful, requires the past to be changed, altered in order to validate what he remembers and what those events mean. His insistence that Daisy tell Tom that she never loved him is the central re-writing of the past (although not the only one) that he needs. However, whatever Daisy says, it cannot have altered the reality of her love for Tom. The confrontation between Tom and Gatsby and Daisy's refusal to endorse Gatsby's imagined past is the disappointed experience of failed repetition for Gatsby: the contemplation of repetition and the failed experience of it are shown in painful contrast. Before the meeting with Daisy after a period of five years, Gatsby experiences the joy that is experienced through the contemplation of repetition, the imagined re-living. This contemplation is encapsulated in the green light at the end of Daisy's dock, a symbol for Gatsby that permits repetition. Nick identifies the impossibility of repetition at the point when Gatsby tells Daisy about "the green light that burns all night at the end of your dock".[392] Nick remarks:

> Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had

[391] Ibid., 38.
[392] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 73.

> separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one.[393]

It is perhaps telling that Gatsby's supposed closeness to Daisy is equated with the distance between a star and the moon, the appearance is one of nearness, the reality is unnavigable space. Similarly, it is telling that at this first meeting between Gatsby and Daisy, her home is not visible. "If it wasn't for mist we could see your home across the bay".[394] The meeting in the present is distorted by the weight and significance for Gatsby of the past making the present impossible to see with any clarity. The progression of the novel is based on the failure to actually repeat and that failure has destroyed the joy and expectation of the contemplation of repetition; even at this early point in their re-unification disappointment and sadness begin to appear. Gatsby's first meeting with Daisy is marked by loss, the loss of the significance of the green light and the hope with which it was invested. The planned happiness of repetition, which would counteract the sadness of Gatsby's recollections can never succeed because repetition is *not* stagnant. "Repetition means getting our cognitive and moral bearings not through prompted remembering, but quite unexpectedly as a gift from the unknown, as a revelation from the future. Repetition is epiphany that sometimes grants the old again, as new, and sometimes grants something that is radically new".[395] Repetition therefore involves change or variation as in the repetition that Kierkegaard recognises in marriage. This repetition is one that is found in Tom and Daisy's relationship as illustrated by Tom's response to Gatsby's demand that Daisy tell him that she never loved him:

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[393] Ibid.
[394] Ibid.
[395] Edward F. Mooney, "Introduction," in *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), viii.

> "I never loved him, " she said, with perceptible reluctance.
> "Not at Kapiolani?" demanded Tom suddenly.
> "No."
> . . .
> "Not that day I carried you down from the Punch Bowl to keep your shoes dry?" There was a husky tenderness in his tone. ". . . Daisy?"
> "Please don't." Her voice was cold but the rancour was gone from it.
> She looked at Gatsby. "There, Jay," she said – [396]

This recognition of a shared past, of a relationship that changes and develops is in stark contrast to Gatsby's earlier remarks about his love affair with Daisy:

> "I told you what's been going on, " said Gatsby. "Going on for five years – and you didn't know."
> Tom turned to Daisy sharply.
> "You've been seeing this fellow for five years?"
> "Not seeing," said Gatsby. "No, we couldn't meet. But both of us loved each other all that time, old sport, and you didn't know.
> I used to laugh sometimes–" but there was no laughter in his eyes, "to think that you didn't know."
> "Oh – that's all."[397]

The contrast between Tom's real, experienced relationship with Daisy containing the echoes of repetition identified by Edward F. Mooney in his introduction to Kierkegaard's *Repetition* and Gatsby's experience of recollection, a frozen moment in time which he has projected onto the five years between then and now is telling.

The second reason why the relationship between the young man and his beloved will fail and why reunification with Daisy is impossible for Gatsby is the manner in which they have misattributed their feelings: "the more his passion boiled, the more blissful his songs, the more tender his speech, the tighter became the leash. It was impossible for him to make a real relationship from such a misunderstanding [...] the confusion, that she was just the visible form, whereas his thoughts, his soul, sought something else that he had attributed to

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[396] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 103.
[397] Ibid., 102.

her".[398] Gatsby marks the moment he falls in love with Daisy as the beginning of of his life being "confused and disordered", at the heart of his love for Daisy is a mistake, he has attributed something to her that is a part of himself.[399] Gatsby's love for Daisy is the result of how meeting her made him see and understand himself in a different way:

> And yet she was his beloved, the only one he had ever loved, the only one he would ever love. On the other hand, he did not really love her, but only longed for her. . . The young girl was not his beloved, she was simply the cause that awakened the poetic in him and thus transformed him into a poet. This was why he could love only her, never forget her,never wish to love anyone else, and yet still merely long for her. She had permeated every aspect of his being. The thought of her was always fresh. She had been important for him. She had made him into a poet, and with this signed her own death-sentence.[400]

Gatsby has projected onto Daisy his dream of self-creation, "the poet" that Kierkegaard refers to in the quotation. Daisy, like the young man's beloved, is destined for failure, to disappoint not only Gatsby, but Nick and the reader as she is unable to embody the projected version of himself that Gatsby has imposed upon her.

The second movement of Gatsby's relationship with Daisy is marked by narcissistic extension. Through the brief re-unification with Daisy, Gatsby moves away from projection and towards a failure to recognise Daisy as an autonomous being: she has become part of himself. In John T Irwin's 2014 work *F Scott Fitzgerald's Fiction: An Almost Theatrical Innocence*, the writer traces the influence of Greek and Roman myths on Fitzgerald's work but also traces these mythical structures in Fitzgerald's life. Irwin draws attention to Fitzgerald's tendency, in the words of James Mellow, towards a "nagging urge to remake and re-educate the women he was involved with – his wife, his

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[398] Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosphical Crumbs*, 12.
[399] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 86.
[400] Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosphical Crumbs*, 9.

daughter, his mistress".[401] His extensive list-making and suggestions for the women in his life to read certain books and to behave in certain ways, for example his habit of "educating" Sheila Graham, recorded in her memoir, *College of One*, and his adolescent letters sent to his younger sister, Annabel, in which he advises her how to behave and engage with young men, equates for Irwin with the myth of Pygmalion.[402] Pygmalion carves a statue of a woman out of ivory; despairing of women, he wishes for a wife like the female he has carved; returning home he finds the statue, named Galatea, has been brought to life by the goddess Venus. Irwin comments that:

> Though the apparent meaning of the myth centres on man's embodying his ideal image of womanhood in a physical object (the statue) that then becomes a real person, the deeper, less obvious meaning depicts the relationship between an artist and his work of art as a marriage between the male and female aspects of the artist's self. Clearly, in producing his own ideal image of woman, Pygmalion produces an oppositely gendered, reciprocal double of himself and, as Ovid says, "with his own work
> he falls in love."[403]

There is a clear echo in *The Great Gatsby* and the relationship between the eponymous hero and Daisy Fay Buchanan, although the action is in reverse: "the novel evokes Gatsby's turning a real woman (Daisy) into an idealized image during the five years of their separation in which he dreams of winning her back".[404] Daisy has become a work of Gatsby's imagination, in a similar fashion to the manner in which, Fitzgerald himself re-created Zelda as a fictionalised character, a work of art that he re-created in novel after novel, short story after short story. Irwin also suggests that the myth of Pygmalion contains the "subtext [...] of the male artist's relationship to his work of art considered as a

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[401] Mellow, *Invented Lives: F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald*, 37.
[402] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. Charles Martin (New York: W. W Norton and Company, 2010), Book 10.
[403] Irwin, *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Fiction:" An Almost Theatrical Innocence"*, 164.
[404] Ibid., 165.

female double".[405] In this statement Irwin argues that not only was Fitzgerald using Zelda as a model for his female characters, he was investing himself in them. To support his position he refers to James Mellow's work, *Invented Lives*, which quotes Fitzgerald, "I am half-feminine – that is, my mind is [...] My characters are all Scott Fitzgerald. Even the feminine characters are feminine Scott Fitzgeralds".[406] The manner in which Fitzgerald projected himself on to his female characters is not limited to his fictional world, as previously mentioned: he consistently wanted to re-educate and remould the women in his life, an attempt to re-shape these women to his own liking or his own likeness, brings to mind, for Irwin, the myth of Narcissus:

> The story of an artist falling in love with his own work [...] with his own projected self-image considered as the female aspect of his personality, necessarily implicates another myth: that of Narcissus, who falls fatally in love with his reflection in a pool.[407]

Irwin traces the myth of Narcissus and its connection with that of Pygmalion and the manner in which they are reflected in a number of Fitzgerald's works including *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Tender is the Night,* as well as in *The Great Gatsby*. Exploring the George du Maurier's novel *Trilby*, mentioned in *Tender is the Night*, as a nineteenth-century re-working of the Pygmalion myth, Irwin illustrates the closeness of this myth to the one of Narcissus:

> The story of Svengali and Trilby is simply the dark, modern version of the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea, and the image of Trilby as Svengali's mirror, echo and simulacrum makes clear the modern sense of how deeply the myth of Narcissus inhabits that of Pygmalion and Galatea. (In regard to this imagery, Fitzgerald, exhibits in *Gatsby* his own understanding of how much not only the Pausanian but also the Ovidian myth of Narcissus lies at the heart of the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea when he has Nick, after the confrontation scene at the Plaza, observe that 'Jay Gatsby' had broken up like glass against Tom's hard malice and the long secret extravaganza was played out'. This

[405] Ibid.
[406] Mellow, *Invented Lives: F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald,* 37.
[407] Irwin, *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Fiction:" An Almost Theatrical Innocence",* 166.

> sense of Gatsby's invented self as a mirror image shattered by Tom's revelation evokes Narcissus one last time when Fitzgerald chooses to have Gatsby die in a swimming pool, recalling Ovid's version of the myth where Narcissus dies beside the pool from an unsatisfiable longing to be physically united with his own image.)[408]

However, it is possible to take the concept of the mythical Narcissus further within *The Great Gatsby* if consideration is given to the concept of narcissism emanating from the myth. In this regard, it is not simply the notion of self-love but also refers to the manner in which the "narcissist" engages with the world around him or her. The third definition of narcissism appearing in the Oxford English dictionary is as follows: "psychoanalysis: self-centredness arising from failure to distinguish the self from external objects, either in very young babies or as a feature of mental disorder." Numerous critics have pointed out the manner in which Gatsby hangs his self-creation onto the physical form of Daisy: she is representative of the fulfilment of his dream of self realisation but she can also be seen as Gatsby's creation. Daisy, the love object of Gatsby's imagination does not exist, she is an extension of Gatsby, a name that is given to a dream of himself which fundamentally is part of himself. When Gatsby looks at Daisy, he sees an ideal version of himself, he does not "see" her at all. It is not until Chapter Eight of the novel that the reader is told, through the mediation of Nick, Gatsby's story of how and when he fell in love with Daisy. What is interesting is the manner in which Daisy is stripped of any uniqueness, any particularity, which makes a person fall in love with one individual instead of another. The first remark about Daisy is that "[s]he was the first 'nice' girl he had even known".[409] His initial attraction to her is based on her social position as a "type" of girl. Why Daisy? She was the *first* nice girl he had ever known, he had

[408] Ibid., 171.
[409] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 116.

accessibility to her because of the anonymity of his uniform, which hid class distinctions. “In various unrevealed capacities he had come in contact with such people but always with indiscernible barbed wire between.”[410] In the same paragraph reference is made to Gatsby having “never been in such a beautiful house before” and that this home was “as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp was to him”.[411] The paragraph ends with the additional allure Daisy has because “many men had already loved Daisy – it increased her value in his eyes. He felt their presence all about the house pervading the air with the shades and echoes of still vibrant emotions”.[412] In Gatsby’s act of remembrance, narrated by Nick, there is no sense of the uniqueness of Daisy, of any sense of her being irreplaceable; she was simply “‘the first nice girl he had ever known”, one amongst countless others of her “type”, made special because of Gatsby having access to her. It is in fact Nick who captures the individual nature of Daisy’s appeal and for Nick it is very much tied to the attractive quality of her voice, which Nick is unable to explain or adequately describe. When Nick has dinner with the Buchanans and Jordan Baker in Chapter One of the novel, he is immediately drawn to the sound of Daisy’s voice and numerous references are made to its peculiar, almost magical quality:

> (I’ve heard it said that Daisy’s murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.) [...] I looked back at my cousin who began to ask me questions in her low thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up an down as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. . . – but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget:a singing compulsion, a whispered “Listen,” a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.[413]

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[410] Ibid.
[411] Ibid.
[412] Ibid.
[413] Ibid., 11.

The mesmeric nature of Daisy's voice, illustrated by the leaning forward towards her as she spoke has equated her for critic Glen Settle, with the role of the classical sirens "who sing irresistibly enchanting songs to sailors nearing the end of extended journeys".[414] Nick's inability to pinpoint what is special about Daisy's voice reflects the alluring and hypnotic quality attributed to the classical Sirens, enhancing the idea of Daisy as the untouchable golden girl. This is in stark contrast to what Gatsby hears in her voice, not for him magical, elusive beauty but money: "[h]er voice is full of money".[415] In this statement Gatsby removes the romantic potential of Daisy for Nick as he concedes that it is this equation with commodification that Nick also hears in her voice: "That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money . . . High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl . . .".[416] Daisy, like her voice, is a symbol of success, power and authority for the man who is romantically linked to her. This projection of successful masculinity onto female characters runs throughout Fitzgerald's work; the winning and marrying of the "golden girl" is a reflection of social and financial success but with Gatsby, when he re-unites with Daisy, it surpasses projection. Gatsby's dream of his own self-creation has become externalised into the physical form of Daisy, but it fundamentally is part of him; Daisy is a reflection of his own ideal self and as a result is a narcissistic extension of Gatsby's personality. Gatsby's narcissism does not permit him to recognise Daisy as an autonomous individual; she has become part of his identity. The manner in which he commits himself to Daisy is reflective of how he externalises his dream allowing himself to "fall in love" with a part of himself:

> 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

[414] Glenn Settle, "Fitzgerald's Daisy: The Siren Voice," *American Literature* 57, no. 1 (1985): 116.
[415] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 94.
[416] Ibid.

> the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete. [417]

Without suggesting any parallel to the story of Christ in the novel, the use of the word "God" and "incarnation" in this passage do suggest "the word made flesh" and just as the word of God made manifest in Christ remains God, so the dream of Gatsby incarnated in Daisy, his own creation, remains an integral part of who he is. He can no more separate himself from her "perishable breath" than he can separate himself from his own reflection. After the conversation between Gatsby and Nick in the aftermath of the party attended by Daisy and Tom, Nick says that Gatsby wanted to "recover something, some idea of himself perhaps that had gone into loving Daisy".[418] Importantly, it was an idea of *himself* that was the basis for his love for Daisy, an aspect of himself that he could see reflected in the physical form of Daisy. It is this failure of recognition on Gatsby's part which leads to his feelings of horror at the moment that Daisy tells him that her experience of the past is not identical to his own, his response is one of complete incomprehension. In the confrontation scene at the Plaza Hotel, Gatsby is subjected to a brutal onslaught from Tom Buchanan as he is exposed to Daisy as a bootlegger, but the turning point of the scene, which brings about the breakup of Gatsby's fragile created self are the words spoken by Daisy:

> "Oh, you want too much!" she cried to Gatsby. "I love you now – isn't that enough?I can't help what's past." She began to sob helplessly.
> "I did love him once – but I loved you too."
> Gatsby's eyes opened and closed.
> "You loved me *too*?' he repeated. [419]

[417] Ibid., 86-87.
[418] Ibid., 86.
[419] Ibid., 103.

Gatsby is unable to understand that Daisy's memories and experiences of the past may differ from his own: his identification of her as an extension of himself cannot permit any deviation from his understanding and reconstruction of the past and when her voice is heard independently from his own, his fragile sense of self is depleted. When Gatsby's eyes "opened" they do so in both a literal and metaphorical sense as his eyes have been opened to the reality behind the illusion of the fictional Daisy he has created, but they are quickly closed again. After all, she is the incarnation of his dream which is what he has founded his imagined self upon, with the disintegration of his mythical version of Daisy his very self begins to crumble as well. It is after Daisy's sympathetic and understandable remark that Gatsby begins to lose control and, after the argument continues between Gatsby and Tom, Nick "turned back to Gatsby – and was startled at his expression. He looked – and this is said in all contempt for the babbled slander of his garden – as if he had 'killed a man'".[420] His anger is as much about the words that Daisy utters, unaware of their significance, as it is about Tom's relentless attack upon him. Nick's narration continues:

> It passed [Gatsby's expression], and he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made.But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, towards the *lost voice* across the room.[421]

The dream is no longer incarnate, "no longer tangible" in Daisy, its physical form is dead and what is left is Daisy's disembodied voice. She is further reduced to parts of herself, it is not only her voice that has become disembodied:

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[420] Ibid., 105.
[421] Ibid.

"[t]he voice begged again to go" but also, "[h]er frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage she had had, were definitely gone".[422]

After the devastation of the hotel scene, Daisy and Gatsby leave ahead of Tom, Nick and Jordan and they drive on "toward death through the cooling twilight".[423] The death that they are moving toward is physical, spiritual and ideological. Myrtle, followed by Gatsby and finally George Wilson will all undergo physical death but not before Gatsby will face spiritual death, the final phase of his relationship with Daisy which is marked by a melancholic loss of self. In the wake of the events of that afternoon and evening the death of Gatsby, albeit at the hands of another person, seems inevitable as his "death" has already occurred before his physical demise. In the moments before he is killed, Gatsby is confronted by the realisation that his reality is not the reality experienced by those around him. R D Laing argues that the "usual state of affairs is to be in a tenable position in phantasy systems of a nexus. This is usually called having an 'identity' or 'personality'".[424] The nature of Gatsby's identity is presented as problematic for Nick and others throughout the novel but crucially it is not problematic for Gatsby until the very end. Laing continues his argument "[w]hen his position, or positions in the social phantasy system become such that he can neither stay nor leave *his own phantasy*, his position is *untenable*".[425] This is the position that Gatsby finds himself in when the reader sees him for the last time and it is his realisation of his untenable position that prompts Nick's disturbing reflection on what must have passed through Gatsby's mind. "He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and

[422] Ibid.
[423] Ibid., 106.
[424] Laing, *The Self and Others: Further Studies in Sanity and Madness*, 40-41.
[425] Ibid., 41.

how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about . . ."[426] What is being described here is Gatsby's jolt, for the first time in the novel, into the present moment:

> To live in the past or in the future may be less satisfying than to live in the present, but it can never be as disillusioning. The present will never be what has been or what could be [...] To be sustained, elusion requires virtuosity: it can lead to enchanting nostalgia. It must never break down. If explicit, it becomes ugly [.][427]

Through the course of the novel, Gatsby has indeed demonstrated virtuosity in his acts of elusion but in the moments prior to his death it has broken down completely and just as Laing suggests it becomes ugly, encapsulated by the phrase, "what a grotesque thing a rose is". He is experiencing the present no longer coloured by the past or acting only as a means to the future: he is experiencing the "I am" of the moment unmediated by time.

> Time is empty. It is as futile as it is inescapable. A false eternity, made out of all the time on one's hands which drags on eternally. It [elusion] is an attempt to live outside time by living in a part of time, to live timelessly in the past, or in the future. The present is never realised.[428]

In Gatsby's final moments the present is realised for the first time and his experience of it and himself at that moment results in a complete collapse of his identity which was based upon, not so much the dream, which is so often alluded to, but on what Laing refers to as a "dramatized past" and a "dramatized" future.[429] The dividing line between imagination and experience has blurred. "She [an imagined case study of Laing's in the aftermath of a love affair] relived in imagination a past situation which had never been more than

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[426] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 126.
[427] Laing, *The Self and Others: Further Studies in Sanity and Madness,* 48.
[428] Ibid.
[429] Ibid., 50.

imagined. Retrospectively the past imaginary situation became the real one".[430] Laing's concept of "ontological insecurity" is useful here. Gatsby's understanding of his own identity is based on this imagined past and future and with the annihilation of both Gatsby's very being is brought into question:

> Here, man, as a person, encounters non-being, in a preliminary form, as a partial loss of the synthetic unity of self, concurrently with partial loss of relatedness with the other, and in an ultimate form in the hypothetical end- state of *chaotic nonentity*, total loss of relatedness with self and other. (italics mine)[431]

Gatsby's identity, dependent on an imagined past and on a person who is neither entirely other or entirely part of himself, cannot withstand reality in the present moment. One is left to wonder if George Wilson had not made his way through the trees with murderous intent, what would be left for Gatsby in the aftermath of that Summer? Gatsby's loss is immense: it is not only Daisy and the dream he surrounded her with that is gone but also his imagined past and future and his sense of self which is intricately woven by them all. The scene preceding his death brings in to sharp focus the melancholic grief, which is underneath the surface of Fitzgerald's depiction of Gatsby throughout the novel. What is lost cannot be adequately articulated; the whole is greater than its parts:

> It is evident that melancholia too may be the reaction to the loss of a loved object [...] The object has perhaps not actually died, but has been lost as an object of love [...] In yet other cases one feels justified in maintaining the belief that a loss of this kind has occurred, but one cannot see clearly what it is that has been lost, and it is all the more reasonable to suppose that the patient cannot consciously perceive what he has lost either. This, indeed, might be so even if the patient is aware of the loss which has given rise to his melancholia, but only in the sense that he knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him.(italics Freud's)[432]

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[430] Ibid.

[431] Ibid., 51.

[432] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume 14: On the History of the Psychoananlytic Movement, Papers and Metapsychology and Other Works*, trans. J Strachey, 2001 ed. (London: Vintage, 2001 (1957)), 245.

Throughout the course of the action, Gatsby is attempting to "recover something, some idea of himself" but it cannot be defined other than by association with Daisy, who is material, what is lost remains abstract and to use Freud's understanding it remains unconscious.[433] Gatsby knows not for what he grieves. Nick recognises this but is also very literally unable to articulate it:

> Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something- an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to tale shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound and what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever.[434]

If what is lost cannot be identified, relinquishment of Daisy is impossible but the events at the Plaza and on the road back from New York have made it clear that reunification with her is also doomed. His position, to use Laing's word, is untenable and as a result Gatsby's spiritual death occurs. The melancholia evident in Gatsby's last moments suggests that had Wilson not emerged through the trees, Gatsby's future would have been full of despair. Melancholia "is characterized by a numbed disconnection and a self-loathing whose logical conclusion is suicide".[435] Just as Quentin Compson's realisation that the ideals and codes he holds dear are redundant leads to his suicide, so Gatsby's inability to relinquish or reconcile with Daisy would result in similar despair. It is only through Gatsby's death and Nick's narration written after the Summer of 1922 that Gatsby is able to remain a symbol for Nick and the reader of both hope and faith in the order of the Kierkegaardian Knight referenced by J'aime Sanders.[436]

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[433] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 86.
[434] Ibid., 87.
[435] Forter, "Against Melancholia: Contemporary Mourning Theory, Fitzgerald's the Great Gatsby, and the Politics of Unfinished Grief," 139.
[436] See note 67.

Nick rescues him, through his narration, from his potential role of melancholic suicide.

The nature of Nick's narration does not allow for a straightforward interpretation of either events or character, an indicator of the text's modernist qualities, in particular its tendency toward self-contradiction. What the reader is left with is a multiplicity of stories and a multiplicity of possible understandings. In the midst of this stands Gatsby, simultaneously a romantic symbol of America, a devoted lover, a creator and a fantasist, a liar and a narcissist. What Fitzgerald has achieved in this novel is a contradiction that is, nonetheless coherent. To return to Marianne DeKoven's definition of modernism, the novel "constitutes itself as self-contradictory, though not incoherent".[437] As a result it appears that there are multiple "versions" of the novel all of which are contained within a single text. The following quotation from Faulkner, resonates with the multiplicity of the text of *Gatsby*:

> for you to choose among, which one she was, – not *might* have been, nor *could* have been, but *was*: so vast, so limitless in capacity is man's imagination to disperse and burn away the rubble-dross of fact and probability leaving only truth and dream [.][438]

This quotation from a work by Fitzgerald's contemporary, encapsulates the novel in all its infinite variety and the choice of one *Gatsby* over another *Gatsby* that each reader makes.

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[437] DeKoven, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism*, 24.
[438] Faulkner, *Novels: 1942-1954 Go Down Moses(1942), Intruder in the Dust,(1948) Requiem for a Nun(1951), a Fable(1954)*, 648.

Chapter Four: *Tender is the Night*

In the previous chapter consideration was given to the polyphonic nature of the text of *The Great Gatsby*. Despite the initial impression of a monologic text articulated through the consciousness of Nick Carraway, the narration is, in fact, complex and multi-faceted. Similarly, in *Tender is the Night*, Scott Fitzgerald created a work that is polyphonic, refusing an interpretation based on a unified vision of the novel's fictional world.[439]

In chapters two and three, reference was made to Marianne de Koven's, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism*. Particularly her concept of *sous-rature* and the way in which this concept is designed to move away from the tendency amongst some theorists to, in de Koven's words, "essentialize gender".[440] She writes:

> Perhaps the greatest risk of this discourse lies in its potentializing or"essentializing" gender, thereby suppressing the historical, culturaparticularity of actual women and men.[441]

The difficulty identified by De Koven is the tendency to place "masculine" and "feminine" in an either/or relationship which functions in a Derridean hierarchical duality that privileges the first at the expense of the second. Of course, this approach does have validity particularly when considering political, social and cultural manifestations of power. Indeed, such "essentializing" of gender has been used in this thesis with regards to the relationships between women, madness and patriarchal control. However, the wholesale application of

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[439] In Kirk Curnutt, ""A Unity Less Conventional but Not Less Serviceable": A Narratological History of *Tender Is the Night* " in *Twenty-First Century Readings of Tender Is the Night* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 120-42.The author discusses the development of the narratological perspective of *Tender is the Night* through its lengthy development and various early versions.

[440] DeKoven refers specifically to Julia Kristeva's *About Chinese Women*. DeKoven does take on board some aspects of Kristeva's work, for example, the idea of the "impossible dialectic", which is linked to DeKoven's concept of *sous-rature*.

[441] DeKoven, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism*, 26.

theoretical positions onto historical individuals has also been shown as problematic for the reasons articulated by DeKoven.

The tendency to essentialise gender is evident in the critical debate that surrounds Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*. Alongside the text on the page, the biographical nature of the material is subject to this either/or configuration that leads to interpretations that are demarcated along gender lines.

Critical responses to the relationship of Dick and Nicole Diver tend to sympathise either with Nicole or with Dick. James Gindin in his essay "Gods and Fathers in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Novels" describes Dick Diver as "a superior representative of America, powerful, intelligent, charming and not aware of his charm"[442]. In the same essay he continues:

> At the same time, he attempts to exert an American moral force within European society, a force expressed in terms of personal relationships, of consideration for others, of humanity [...] Fitzgerald consistently points out the moral center of Dick's charm, the exquisite consideration, the recognition of the value of everything around him, the capacity to extract the full humanity from his associates in the way that the priest, ideally, both guides and understands his parishioners.[443]

Similarly, at the beginning of Susann Cokal's essay "Caught in the Wrong Story: Psychoanalysis and Narrative Structure in *Tender is the Night*", the author remarks:

> Nicole is both damaged and damaging because of what she has done with her father [...] Dick first enters the Warren when Nicole is his patient, and when he enters her life story as a father figure he destroys his own tale in order to keep hers suspended in repetition.[444]

Again, in David W Ullrich's 2004 essay "Intertextuality in *This Side of Paradise* and *Tender is the Night*", he writes:

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[442] James Gindin, "Gods and Fathers in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Novels," *Modern Language Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1969): 74.
[443] Ibid.
[444]Ibid., 76; Susann Cokal, "Caught in the Wrong Story: Psychoanalysis and Narrative Structure in Tender Is the Night," *Texas studies in literature and language* 47, no. 1 (2005): 76.

> In conclusion, if anything saves Dick Diver, it is [...] his heroic self-sacrifice and grand illusion [...] *Tender* suggests that in the act of loving another person, we risk losing whatever self we have in that other, without the promise that such a self- sacrificing gesture will be returned, and with the foreknowledge that it might never be returned, and that the outcome may be self-annihilation.[445]

All of the above quotations reflect the argument that Dick Diver is sacrificed in order to save Nicole. His social position as a Doctor, the son of a Pastor, solidly professional and middle class as opposed to the member of an independently wealthy family makes him dispensable in the eyes of that family, illustrated most acutely by Nicole's sister, Baby Warren. Dick is destroyed by the social forces at work upon his, fundamentally good, nature.

Alternatively, at the other end of the critical spectrum, Judith Fetterley in her 1984 essay, "Who killed Dick Diver? The Sexual Politics of *Tender is the Night*", is very much focused on the autobiographical nature of the novel and the gender relations that it exposes. According to Fetterley, cultural power had to remain in the hands of men in order for them not to be feminized, the great underlying fear of modernist male writers. For Fetterley, the novel is primarily a work of autobiography that exposes male fears about female power expressed through artistic pursuits:

> Fitzgerald asserts his content as neither theory nor fantasy but as historical fact and in this context *Tender is the Night* is radically dishonest [...] Scott's ability to enforce the life of a woman on Zelda and to reserve to himself the role of "man" derived directly from his access to the various structures of power which a thoroughly masculinized America made available to men, enabling them to remain "sane" while the women go mad. To write a book which asserts the opposite is self-serving at best [...] To read *Tender is the Night* is to participate in the evocation of sympathy for Dick Diver, the victim of his culture, and to engage in the concomitant hostility toward that which has destroyed him. To the extent that our sympathies as readers affect other aspects of

[445] David Ullrich, "Intertextuality in *This Side of Paradise* and *Tender is the Night,*" F Scott Fitzgerald Review Vol 3 (2004):67

> our lives, *Tender is the Night* intends toward the perpetuation of male power.[446]

Sarah Beebe Fryer in her consideration of *Tender is the Night* and Zelda's alternate version of events *Save Me the Waltz* entitled "Nicole Warren Diver and Alabama Beggs Knight: Women on the Threshold of Freedom" also sympathises with Nicole but for different reasons rooted in the portrayal of this woman rather than as a criticism of Fitzgerald's perceived hostility to women in general and his wife Zelda, in particular. Fitzgerald's women

> confront role conflicts characteristic of women on the threshold of a new era of freedom. Nicole Warren Diver, presented under the cloak of schizophrenia, is a representative twentieth-century American woman, embodying conflicting ideals of femininity (submissiveness) and independence.[447]

In Beebe Fryer's reading of the novel, Nicole is a sympathetic portrait of a woman attempting to find her own place in the world; she is engaged in a search for autonomy separate from her father, her husband and her doctor.

The reader of these critics is offered an alternative of two interpretations, which are presented by these critics as mutually exclusive. *Either* Dick Diver is a self-sacrificing victim of the Warren family and its abundant wealth *or* Nicole Diver is on a quest to take control of her life, in part by sacrificing her husband, and rejecting the narrative that is told of it by the men that surround her. This either/or approach to the text (and to a considerable amount of the Fitzgeralds' biography) ensures a binary opposition of interpretation, each binary refusing to permit its alternative. However, a potentially more fruitful approach is to take

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[446] Judith Fetterley, "Who Killed Dick Diver? The Sexual Politics of *Tender Is the Night*," *Mosaic* 17, no. 1 Winter (1984): 114.
Milton Stern recognises the power relations between the sexes in *Tender is the Night*. He argues that there is a shift of power from men to women in the novel but that what is transferred is "'maleness,' a triumph of continuing selfishness, vanity, and irresponsible dominion over the old virtues and graces" (Stern 41). In essence, Stern argues that Fitzgerald's women are becoming 'men'.

[447] Sarah Beebe Fryer, "Nicole Warren Diver and Alabama Beggs Knight: Women on the Threshold of Freeedom," *Modern Fiction Studies* 31, no. 2 (Summer) (1985): 325.

on board Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of simultaneity. In Michael Holquist's work *Dialogism*, the author states, with reference to theories such as the death of the author, the following:

> All these deaths are melodramatic ways of formulating an end to the same thing: the old conviction that the individual subject is the seat of certainty, whether the subject so conceived was named God, the soul, the author, or my self. [448]

It is the certainty that these positions were once invested with that has lost its meaning, rather than the position that these roles inhabit. Holquist goes on to observe that for Bakhtin the "'self' is dialogic, a *relation*".[449] Bakhtin rejects the position that such oppositions as speaking/writing, signifier/signified and self/other are binary in nature but should be understood "as asymmetric dualisms" the component parts of which are in dialogue and it is through this dialogism that meaning is created.[450] Central to our purposes is that:

> Dialogism argues that all meaning is relative in the sense that it comes about only as a result of the relation between two bodies occupying *simultaneous but different* space [.][451]

Holquist continues by underlining the importance of space and time in dialogic thinking:

> They articulate what has been called the "law of placement" in dialogism, which say everything is perceived from a unique position in existence; its corollary is that the meaning of whatever is observed is shaped by the place from which it is perceived. [452]

This is explained by Bakhtin with the example of an observer looking at another observer, although the two are in the same space and sharing the same experience what they see is different, firstly because their "bodies occupy different positions in exterior, physical space, but also because we regard the

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[448] Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (Psychology Press, 2002), 19.
[449] Ibid.
[450] Ibid.
[451] Ibid., 21.
[452] Ibid.

world and each other from different centers in cognitive time/space".[453] These selves, however, do share simultaneity, they share what Bakhtin refers to as the event.[454] By using this idea of simultaneity it is possible to incorporate all aspects of the narrative of *Tender is the Night*, which is frequently trapped in an either/or binary in critical discussions. The primary narrative binary is the story of Dick Diver and the story of Nicole Diver, a relationship first viewed through the naive eyes of Rosemary Hoyt.

Simultaneity and the Self's Unique Position.

As has been discussed with reference to *The Great Gatsby* the narrative voice of *Tender is the Night* has been seen as problematic: either the result of Fitzgerald's inability to control his material or a symptom of the prolonged and painful composition of the novel.[455] While accepting that the manner in which the novel was written would contribute to its multiplicity, a potential symptom of the disjointed stop/start of Fitzgerald's writing at this time, the varying

[453]Ibid., 22.
For a full definition of cognitive time/space see Holquist pages 22-23.
[454] Bakhtin's use of the event takes on board the everyday meaning of the word in English but also incorporates an alternative, rarely used in Russian which means being. Holquist writes: "The obligatory grouping of these two words in this way is a syntactic doubling that points to the mutuality of their meaning [...] In Russian, "event" is a word having both a root and a stem; it is formed from the word for being - *bytie* - with the addition of the prefix implying sharedness, *so-* co [...] giving *sobytie*, event as co-being. "Being" for Bakhtin then is, not just an event, but an event that is shared. Being is a simultaneity; it is always *co* –being".Ibid., 25.
[455] Wayne C Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* raises concerns about the apparent randomness of the point of view., 191. Matthew J Bruccoli suggests that it was only in *The Great Gatsby* that he demonstrated control of the "techniques for controlling point of view and disciplining his habit of invading the narrative."Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 181.. Both sources are quoted by Curnutt, ""A Unity Less Conventional but Not Less Serviceable": A Narratological History of *Tender Is the Night* " 122.

narrative perspective adds considerable complexity to the text and cannot be dismissed as the accidental outcome of the text's laboured production.[456]

Through the course of the novel the reader is privy to the perspectives of not only Dick and Nicole but also Rosemary Hoyt and Abe North alongside minor characters such as Dr Franz Gregorovius and his wife Kaethe, amongst others. These multiple perspectives exclude the possibility of an interpretation of the text based on a unified, monologic narrative voice. Despite this, as has been mentioned, critics have tended to champion either Dick Diver or Nicole Diver at the expense of the other. However, the text not only permits, but encourages, an acceptance of both Dick's point of view and that of Nicole. It is this simultaneity, these multiple perspectives on shared experiences which illustrate how identity and meaning is formed by relationships with the "other" but also that each identity is simultaneously "self" and "other". In *Tender is the Night*, the reader is given access to the thoughts of a number of "selves", for example, Dick, Nicole, Rosemary and Abe but these "selves" also function as "other" for one another. It is for this reason that Dick Diver can be seen as a great man destroyed by his involvement with Nicole Warren Diver and her family *and*, simultaneously, a practicing psychiatrist who enters into a questionable relationship with his patient, which is damaging to the mental health of that patient. Similarly, Nicole is simultaneously a victim of the patriarchy that surrounds her *and* an energy-sapping destroyer of her husband's potential. This duality that permits both parties to be worthy of blame and a victim of the other

[456] In a letter to H L Mencken dated 23rd April 1934 Fitzgerald indicates the role of circumstance and design on the finished novel. He writes " [t]he first part, the romantic introduction, was too long and too elaborated, largely because of the fact that it had been written over a series of years with varying plans, but everything else in the book conformed to a definite plan and if I had to start to write it again tomorrow I would adopt the same plan, irrespective of the fact of whether I had, in this case, brought it off or not brought it off " (emphasis Fitzgerald's) Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters*, 256.

is reflected in two statements made by Nicole towards the end of the novel. "Some of the time I think it's my fault – I've ruined you [...] you used to want to create things – now you seem to want to smash them up".[457] However, when she finally breaks from Dick she states, "[y]ou're a coward! You've made a failure of your life, and you want to blame me".[458] Through the presentation of multiple perspectives through the course of the novel both positions can be sustained and undermined simultaneously.

The opening of *Tender is the Night* is illustrative of the way in which the point of view of the novel is not fixed. It is unique in Fitzgerald's novels as it is the only one in which the focus of the opening is place rather than character. The first two paragraphs establish the location of the beach where Dick initially reigns supreme and it is also the place from which Dick will retreat at the end of the novel. Although the description is quite brief it does highlight location before any characters appear. The first person to appear is an unnamed bather:

> Before eight a man came down the beach in a blue bathrobe and with much preliminary application to his person of the chilly water, and much grunting and loud breathing floundered a minute in the sea. When he had gone, beach and bay were quiet for an hour. Merchantmen crawled westward on the horizon; bus boys shouted in the hotel court; the dew dried upon the pines.[459]

The opening is the literary equivalent of the cinematic establishing shot. The reader is positioned in relation to *place* rather than *character*. The characters, Rosemary first, enter this space. Importantly, key figures are initially observed by the reader through the eyes of Rosemary and mediated by her. Critics have discussed at length the manner in which Rosemary's naivety colours the way in which the reader understands the Divers and their relationship. The shift away from Rosemary's perspective is therefore a breaking down of the glittering

[457] *Tender Is the Night,* 300.
[458] Ibid., 336.
[459] Ibid., 9.

facade of the Divers to reveal the desperate reality of their lives. What has not been noted is that this does provide an equality between Dick and Nicole: through this point of view device the reader does not (in these early stages) identify with either party at the expense of the other, despite Rosemary's crush on Dick and Nicole's imposing silence. At this stage both are "other" to Rosemary's "self". Michael Holquist notes:

> The other is in the realm of completedness, whereas I experience time as open and always as yet un-completed, and I am always at the center of space.[460]

The shift of perspective from Rosemary to other characters therefore exposes the reader to the "selfhood" of the "other": Holquist continues:

> When I look at you, I see your whole body, and I see it as having a definite place in the total configuration of a whole landscape. I see you as occupying a certain position vis-a-vis other persons and objects in the landscape (you are *one* other among *many* others).[461]

In this approach the "other" is complete and clearly defined whereas the "self" is always unfinished with time as "open and always as yet *un*-completed".[462] Through the course of the text characters move from being the completed "other" to the unfinished "self". Every character whose point of view is privileged at some point is experienced by the reader both as the incomplete "self" that is guiding the narrative and the "other" who is positioned within the world that is experienced. For example, in the first chapter of Book One Rosemary observes a woman, who it is later revealed is Nicole Diver:

> Nearest her, on the other side, a young woman lay under a roof of umbrellas making out a list of things from a book open on the sand. Her bathing suit was pulled off her shoulders and her back, a ruddy, orange brown, set off by a string of pearls, shone in the sun. Her face was hard and lovely and pitiful. Her eyes met Rosemary's but did not see her.[463]

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[460] Ibid., 26.
[461] Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, 27.
[462] Ibid., 26.
[463] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 12.

At this point Nicole is part of the landscape that is observed by Rosemary, one other amongst many others to use Michael Holquist's term. In the tenth chapter of Book Two the scene is returned to again but this time from Nicole's perspective. Alongside this shift in point of view the reader is now privy to Nicole's incestuous abuse at the hands of her father, her subsequent psychiatric treatment and marriage to Dick. It also comes at the end of an interior monologue in the present tense that briefly but revealingly tells of the events between her marriage and the moment she is witnessed by Rosemary on the beach:

> Yes, I'll look. More new people – oh, that girl – yes. Who did you say she looked like [...] No, I haven't, we don't get much chance to see the new American pictures over here. Rosemary who? Well, we're getting very fashionable for July – seems very peculiar to me. Yes, she's lovely, but there can be too many people.[464]

The same moment is shown as it was experienced by both Rosemary and Nicole but there has been a change of position as Rosemary becomes one "other" amongst many, indeed for Nicole, too many others.

Similarly, the fifth chapter of Book One alternates between the point of view of Nicole and Dick in one scene:

> For a moment Nicole stood looking down at the Mediterranean but there was nothing to do with that, even with her tireless hands. Presently Dick came out of his one-room house carrying a telescope and looked east towards Cannes. In a moment Nicole swam into his field of vision, whereupon he disappeared into his house and came out with a megaphone. He had many light mechanical devices.[465]

Neither position is privileged in this single episode: there is a recognition of the selfhood of both characters and their role as "others". This recognition of the "selfhood" of the "other" can be seen as one of the defining features of the novel.

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[464] Ibid., 186.
[465] Ibid., 34.

It is possible to read this duality as a product of the biographical influence on the text.

The Influence of Biography on the Text's Simultaneity.

The basis of the novel in the painful details of Zelda Fitzgerald's mental collapse and the author's slide into chronic alcoholism makes the work, in one respect, a personal meditation on the troubled nature of the Fitzgerald marriage. The act of writing can be seen as a means of exploring, explaining and understanding a relationship that had collapsed under the strain of addiction and madness. Alongside the reflective aspects of the text there are components that could be indicative of self-accusation, guilt-ridden nightmare and wish-fulfilment. It is as a result of the text's attempt to make sense out of the autobiographical material and a desire to assign blame that the characters of the novel, at times, are contradictory, unreliable and trapped in repetitive, disruptive cycles of behaviour. Similarly, episodes in the novel are re-told from more than one perspective and the certainty of events is undermined by the disappearance and unexpected re-appearance of characters without reason or explanation.

The general plan of the novel, which was constructed in 1932, describes the plot details (not all of which appear in the published work) from the perspective of the psychiatrist/husband only. Fitzgerald's original plot summary is as follows:

> The novel should do this. 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. (*sic*)[466]

[466] Matthew J. Bruccoli, *The Composition of Tender Is the Night* (Univ of Pittsburgh Pr, 1963), 76.

Fitzgerald then gives further particulars regarding the hero, some of which he associates with himself: "The hero was born in 1891 is a man like myself brought up in a family sunk from haute burgeosie to petit bourgeoisie, yet expensively educated" (*sic*). In contrast, the patient/wife has a "homicidal mania towards men" and "is the legendary *promiscuous* woman"(emphasis Fitzgerald's).[467] In the plan as laid down in 1932, Fitzgerald intended to show the character that would become Dick Diver as a man who sacrificed himself to restore health to his wife and collapsing into alcoholism in the process. At the conclusion of the novel he even unites his wife with a new and perhaps more suitable husband:

> He has known slightly for some time a very strong and magnetic man and now he deliberately brings them together. When he finds under circumstances of jealous agony that it has succeeded he departs knowing that he has cured her.[468]

Many aspects of this plan did make the final novel but other aspects were dropped (Dick Diver was originally destined to be a communist, for example). What does not appear in the plan but is evident in the final completed novel is a recognition of Nicole Diver's perspective on the events that occur. Responsibility for Dick's demise in the plan of the novel is laid at his wife's door; however, in the completed novel Fitzgerald acknowledges the narrative of the mad wife, acknowledges the "selfhood" of the "other". Similarly, in letters written by him during Zelda's sickness, he recognises, at times in spite of himself, Zelda's narrative as distinct from his own.

In correspondence with Doctors Mildred Squires, Adolf Meyer, Oscar Forel and Thomas Rennie, the issue of blame, guilt and responsibility is repeatedly raised. Fitzgerald is acutely sensitive in these letters to any suggestion that he may be responsible for his wife's mental undoing. He defends his use of alcohol,

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[467] Ibid.
[468] Ibid., 77.

his work ethic and appears to hold Zelda responsible not only for her collapse but his compromised position as a writer. However, there is an anxiety that pervades these letters that perhaps his role in the events are more significant than he is prepared to openly admit. The strongly worded denials barely conceal a fear that Zelda's mental collapse is, at least in part, his responsibility. In a letter to Dr Oscar Forel in the Summer of 1930 Fitzgerald writes "[i]s there not a certain disingenuousness in her wanting me to give up alcohol? Would not that justify her conduct completely to herself and prove to her relatives, and our friends that it was my drinking that had caused this calamity, and that I thereby admitted it?"(emphasis Fitzgerald's).[469] What is unwritten here is that such a decision would potentially prove to Fitzgerald himself that his drinking was part of the problem and, if that be the case, he would have been confronted not only with the considerable harm that his drinking had caused but also with the terrifying prospect of having to abstain from alcohol permanently. The complex relationship between Fitzgerald, alcohol, Zelda and madness is apparent in the letters of this period, and Fitzgerald repeatedly attempts to perceive their relationship in terms of two versions – her story and his story – he is constantly insisting that his "version" is "correct" but self-doubt in this regard bubbles under the surface. In April 1933 this self-doubt becomes blatant in a letter to Dr Adolf Meyer: "I will probably be carried off eventually by four strong guards shrieking manicly that after all I was right and she was wrong, while Zelda is followed home by an adoring crowd in an automobile banked with flowers, and offered a vaudeville contract" (*sic*).[470] The fractured nature of the Fitzgerald marriage has placed the two parties in binary opposition: only one of them can be sane, only one of them can be right, only one of them can write and perhaps

[469] Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters,* 197.
[470] Ibid., 228.

only one of them can survive. In the same letter to Adolf Meyer, Fitzgerald wonders "whether Zelda isn't more worth saving than I am".[471] He justified "saving" himself rather than Zelda by arguing firstly that he was the wage-earner and financially responsible for both Zelda and their daughter Scottie, in essence asserting his masculinity as defence. Secondly because he was "integrated – integrated in spite of everything." However this justification

> began to collapse, bit by bit, six months ago – that is to say the picture of Zelda painting things that show a distinct talent, of Zelda trying faithfully to learn how to write is much more sympathetic and, superficially, more solid than the vision of me making myself iller with drink as I finish up the work of four years.[472]

In *Tender is the Night* it appears that perhaps he experimented with this idea. Nicole does achieve some sort of recovery, the longevity of it is unclear but she does seem to fare better than her psychiatrist/ husband whom the reader last hears of as he shuffles from one small town to a smaller one, an uncompleted manuscript still on his desk. Nicole, cocooned by her money in the same manner as Tom and Daisy Buchanan, survives, recovers (to some degree) and marries Tommy Barban. Fitzgerald imagined such a fate for Zelda in a rather curious P.S. to a letter addressed to Adolf Meyer in the Spring of 1933:

> Or, if one can think of some way of doing it, Zelda marrying some man of some caliber who would take care of her, really take care of her. This is a possibility.[473]

This imagined knight in shining armour would be rescuing Fitzgerald as much as Zelda, saving him from the constant worry, responsibility and financial strain of Zelda's sickness. In the novel, however, he replaces the knight in shining armour for a mercenary soldier, which is not so suggestive of a happy ending. However, Dick's relinquishing of Nicole, although apparently a rung on a

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[471] Ibid.
[472] Ibid.
[473] Ibid., 233.

descent downwards both personally and professionally, can also be seen as a necessary step in the liberation of Dick, an important part of reclaiming his identity and dignity. The complexity of the text can be seen as a product of the characters' independence from their creator as articulated by Bakhtin in his study of Dostoevsky. They are two distinct voices that are not being used by the writer to express his own worldview but are involved in a dialogic relationship.

Repetition, Dualities and Trauma.

The multiplicity of the novel, which allows for a number of voices to be heard distinctly from one another, results in the novel telling a number of different stories. This is most clearly illustrated in the duality of Dick and Nicole's relationship: one story but two (or more) narratives. However, throughout the course of the novel, numerous stories are told and then re-told, events are replayed and misunderstood and characters reflect, double and undermine the narratives of each other.

The manner in which characters double and echo one another is evident in a number of relationships in the novel. Most notably Dick's relationship with Nicole is a doubling of her disturbed relationship with her father, enabling her to repeat the trauma of her incestuous abuse. Rosemary acts as a double for Nicole in order for Dick to replay his relationship with Nicole. Abe North acts as a preparation for the demise of Dick Diver and Tommy Barban is an alternative to Dick as he goes through the process of replacing him in Nicole's life. This doubling and echoing, however, is not limited to gender configurations (Abe/Dick/Devereux and Rosemary/Nicole) but crosses them in the mirroring relationship of Abe North and Nicole Diver. In a number of key scenes, these two characters are used to explore the nature of trauma but also the manner in which it is gendered. The source of Nicole's mental instability, although not

revealed to the reader until Book Two, is clear; Abe's mental instability illustrated by his alcoholism is more subtle. This subtlety can limit Abe's role in the novel to that of foreshadowing the eventual fate of Dick Diver but Fitzgerald's handling of Abe North is considerably more complex than such a reading implies. There are a number of aspects of Abe that reflect Dick, most notably his alcoholism; but also their physical appearance is similar. When Rosemary first sees them on the beach, she differentiates them only by the colour of their clothes, "a fine man in a jockey cap and red-striped tights [...] then a man with a long face and a golden, leonine head, with blue tights and no hat".[474] The former is Dick and the latter is Abe; Dick is later described by Rosemary to her mother as having "reddish hair".[475] This interchangeability is continued when Rosemary assumes that it is Abe that is married to Nicole, rather than Dick:

> The woman of the pearls had joined her two children in the water, and now Abe North came up under one of them like a volcanic island, raising him on his shoulders. The child yelled with fear and delight and the woman watched with a lovely peace, without a smile.
> "Is that his wife?" Rosemary asked.
> ''No, that's Mrs Diver . . ."[476]

There is however one fundamental difference between the two characters and it is revealed on a trip made by the Divers, the Norths and Rosemary to the battlefields of Northern France, Dick "was full of excitement and he wanted to communicate it to them, to make them understand about this, though actually

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[474] *Tender Is the Night,* 12.

[475]Ibid.
Laura Rattray, "An "Unblinding of Eyes": The Narrative Vision of *Tender Is the Night*.," in *Twenty- First Century Readings of Tender Is the Night*, ed. William Balzek and Laura Rattray (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 87; Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*; ibid., 19.highlights the difficulty experienced by the reader in establishing the identity of the characters seen by Rosemary Hoyt at the beginning of the novel. Rattray writes, "the text appears to delight in presenting a series of figures that could be, but in fact prove not to be, Dick and Nicole Diver".

[476] *Tender Is the Night,* 16.

Abe North had seen battle service and he had not".[477] This experience of war is never mentioned by Abe himself or any other character but revealed to the reader by the omniscient narrator that appears and withdraws from the narrative. However, this experience separates him from Dick Diver and given the latter's profession, the difference is significant. As Tiffany Joseph states in her essay, "Non-Combatant Shell-Shock: Trauma and Gender in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*", as a psychiatrist Dick's job is "to make men psychologically able to return to the front".[478] The contrast between the role of the two men, one responsible for returning men to war, the other sent on to the battlefield, is striking but it also demonstrates the manner in which the fate of one is profoundly connected to the fate of the other.

What is evident in the depiction of Abe North is that the violence of World War One was not limited to, nor is it able to remain, on the battlefields or in the past. Instead, the violence repeatedly encroaches on the present moment and stalks Abe throughout the course of the novel, mirroring the manner in which the act of violence that Nicole was subjected to relentlessly pursues her. Initially, the violence associated with Abe is a childish prank, first recounted on the beach and overheard by Rosemary: "some one referred to scornfully as 'that North guy' had kidnapped a waiter from a cafe in Cannes last night in order to saw him in two".[479] The absurd anecdote is referenced a number of times throughout the course of Book One and is always only half told, never entirely making sense or explained. However, the repetition of the anecdote is revealing: it is indicative of the manner in which Abe is trapped in a repetitive and unbreakable cycle that renders him unproductive. The extent of this lack of productivity is revealed at

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[477] Ibid., 67.
[478] Tiffany Joseph, "" Non-Combatant's Shell-Shock": Trauma and Gender in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Tender Is the Night," *NWSA Journal* 15, no. 3 (2004): 68.
[479] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 12.

the dinner held by the Divers at the Villa Diana when the film director, Earl Brady, tells Rosemary that Abe "was a musician who after a brilliant and precocious start had composed nothing in seven years".[480] The novel opens in 1925, meaning that Abe has written nothing since 1918, *nothing since the war*. However, he makes no mention of his experiences: his only response to the conflict occurs on the battlefields of Northern France, where he undercuts Dick's solemn mood:

> "All my beautiful safe world blew itself up here with a great gust of high-explosive love," Dick mourned persistently. . .
> . . . Suddenly a shower of earth gobs and pebbles came down on them and Abe yelled from the next traverse:
> ". . . "You're dead – don't you know the rules? That was a grenade."[481]

Again, when Dick makes reference to the death toll Abe states in a matter of fact fashion that "[t]here are lots of people dead since and we'll all be dead soon".[482] The remark suggests that death has lost significance, be it on the mass scale observed on the battle field, or the death of a specific individual. In the process of becoming desensitised to death, life also has a loss of meaning. If it can be destroyed so readily, what value can it really have? It is this loss of meaning that results in Abe's melancholic depression; his despair is observed by Rosemary when she sees him for the first time on the beach,"he [Abe] had one of the saddest faces Rosemary had ever seen".[483] Dick's reflections on the site of the battle suggests for him (at this stage at least) meaning is still possible. His suggestion that his "beautiful, safe world blew itself up" implies that the said beautiful, safe world did exist, even if its certainty and meaning has been disrupted by the events of World War One, there remains the possibility of

[480] Ibid., 42.
[481] Ibid., 38.
[482] Ibid., 67.
[483] Ibid., 15.

reclaiming it. For Abe, this is not possible: meaning has not so much been lost by his experiences, but shown to have never really existed. Abe grieves for something that he cannot fully identify: in true melancholic fashion he cannot articulate whet he has lost; he knows not for what he grieves and this is turned inwards upon himself. He *is* melancholic as opposed to Dick's *state* of mourning for a lost world, a differentiation famously articulated by Freud:

> Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal and so on [...] In one set of cases it is evident that melancholia too may be the reaction to the loss of a loved object [...] In yet other cases one feels justified in maintaining the belief that a loss of this kind has occurred, but one cannot see clearly what it is that has been lost, and it is all the more reasonable to suppose that the patient cannot consciously perceive what he has lost either [...] even if the patient is aware of the loss which has given rise to his melancholia [...] in the sense that he knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him. This would suggest that melancholia is in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious.[484]

Dick's complete collapse of meaning will occur at his father's graveside when he again mourns for a lost world encapsulated by his father: this association between his father and a way of seeing and inhabiting the world is summed up with the words, "good-by my father, good-by all my fathers".[485] Dick is, however, able to articulate what is lost. Such articulation for Abe is not possible: traumatised by the violent deaths of the war and guilty of avoiding his own, violence stalks Abe, he is haunted by the death his has avoided and through the course of the novel it becomes increasingly threatening. Firstly, there is the unseen but oft recounted kidnapping of the waiter, followed by the potentially threatening but ultimately absurd McKisco/Barban duel in which he was heavily involved. This escalates to the attempted murder committed by Maria Wallis as

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[484] Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume 14: On the History of the Psychoananlytic Movement, Papers and Metapsychology and Other Works*, 245.
[485] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 233.

Abe attempts to leave Paris, followed by the actual murder of Petersen which triggers Nicole's mental collapse at the end of Book One and finally, the violent death avoided by Abe in battle is meted out to him in a New York speakeasy. The escalating violence, Abe's disappearances and re-appearances alongside the uncertainty of the events he is involved in, sometimes to the point of appearing dreamlike or more accurately nightmarish, is indicative of the nature of trauma:

> In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. The experience of the soldier faced with sudden and massive death around him, for example, who suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relive it later on in repeated nightmares is a central and recurring image in our century.[486]

The episode of the duel between Tommy Barban and Albert McKisco as the former seeks to defend the honour of the Divers (particularly Nicole) without their knowledge is, in part, a rather absurd interlude in the telling of the Divers' story. However, it also reveals some significant details about the novel's themes and acutely contrasts characters and their values. What is apparent from the beginning of the scene is the way in which the duel is at odds with the post-war world. It belongs to a previous European age in which the violence of the duel was an assertion of masculinity rooted in an identifiable cause, even if that cause was trivial. As John Limon argues "[t]he duel with pistols is fought, and though it is rather a Tolstoyian affair with no injuries, the results are entirely beneficial".[487] This is in stark contrast to the emasculating, futile violence of the war's battlefields. Limon continues by illustrating that both participants go on to prosper: "brutal Barban gets love and money, the mediocre McKisco gets money

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[486] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 11.

[487] John Limon, *Writing after War: American War Fiction from Realism to Postmodernism* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1994), 112.

and fame".[488] Abe North gets neither. He does, however, pay the Doctor: "No, I've got it. We were all in about the same danger".[489] Abe pays the price for the duel, just as he paid the price for the war, neither of which were of his making. The connection between the duel and McKisco's subsequent success and greater self-awareness is made when Dick encounters him on the return trip to Europe after Dick's father's funeral in America, as noted earlier a significant moment in a loss of meaning as experienced by Dick.

> Success had improved him and humbled him. He was no fool about his capacities – he realised that he possessed more vitality than many men of superior talent, and he was resolved to enjoy the success he had earned [...] Indeed, his success was founded psychologically upon his duel with Tommy Barman, upon the basis of which, as it withered in his memory, he had created, afresh, a new self-respect.[490]

Of course, the reality of the duel, the actual event has "withered in his memory"; it has been re-created and assimilated into McKisco's new and improved self-perception. The absurd nature of the duel has been forgotten and what is remembered, or rather fabricated, is the courage that such an encounter with another man appears to suggest. In the arena of the duel the ability to identify the participants and to construct a linear narrative of events, even if the motivations and emotions pertaining to the event are re-written or misremembered, permits the violence to have meaning; it acts as an assertion of masculine identity. In contrast, Abe's wartime experience is marked by anonymity and a narrative of simultaneity that does not permit the kind of meaning that can be extracted from the duel. The war undermined masculinity and it shook the identities of men who based said identity on a clearly demarcated concept of masculinity as explored in chapter one of this thesis. The reality of the duel as witnessed by Abe and the reader can be forgotten, re-

[488] Ibid.
[489] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 60.
[490] Ibid., 234.

written into a narrative of masculine assertion and courage. This process begins the moment the duel is finished at Abe's insistence:

> "To hell with him [Barban]," he said in a tough voice.
> "Tell him he can – "
> "Shall I tell him you want another shot?"
> "Well, I did it," cried McKisco, as they went along. "And I did it pretty well, didn't I? I wasn't yellow."
> "You were pretty drunk," said Abe bluntly.
> "No, I wasn't."
> "All right, then, you weren't."
> "Why would it make any difference if I had a drink or so?"
> As his confidence mounted he looked resentfully at Abe. "What difference does that make?" he repeated.
> "If you can't see it, there's no use going into it."
> "Don't you know everybody was drunk all the time during the war?"
> "Well, let's forget it."[491]

Abe remains aware of McKisco's fear before the duel took place, but for McKisco, after the event, the fear never existed. McKisco can forget but Abe cannot: this apparently insignificant exchange is an example of the way that Abe is trapped in the act of remembering. His final remark "well, let's forget it", in response to Mckisco's remarks about wartime drinking is possible for McKisco but not for Abe. The conversation identifies the determining features of Abe: drinking, the war and the act of remembering, all are linked, feeding off one another as they undermine Abe's mental well-being and eventually his identity.

The first reference to the problematic nature of Abe's drinking is an observation made by Rosemary in chapter fourteen of Book One. "Rosemary realized for the first time that he was always stopping in places to get a drink".[492] As soon as reference is made to Abe's drinking problem it is immediately associated with his lack of productive work:

> "Abe feels that nothing matters till her gets on the boat," said Mary.
> "This time he really has got everything planned out when he gets to New York." She spoke as though she were tired of saying things

[491] Ibid., 60.
[492] Ibid., 71.

> that no longer had any meaning for her, as if in reality the course that she and her husband followed, or failed to follow, had become merely an intention.[493]

The alcohol is the source of his inability to work and this lack of productivity undermines his fragile identity that he battles to maintain from the beginning of the novel, where his work is considered central. He is identified as Abe North, the musician, albeit a rotten one in the opinion of the McKiscos. His failure to work therefore undermines his identity in the same way that Dr Richard Diver, psychiatrist, morphs into Dick Diver party host; both, consciously or otherwise, surrender an integral part of masculine identity that is tied to work. Abe's decision to return to America is, in part, an attempt to reclaim his identity from two forces that destroy his ability to work and therefore maintain his sense of self. Firstly, the leisured life he has been living on the Riviera with the Divers and, secondly, alcohol. The extent of Abe's problem with alcohol is revealed in a pivotal scene between Abe and Nicole at the Gare St Lazare station in Paris, when the two meet before Abe's intended return to America, productivity and identity. Prior to this episode, the two have shown some camaraderie: as previously mentioned, Rosemary mistakes them for a married couple; they sit together in good spirits at the Villa Diana dinner; the reader is told that Nicole "liked Abe better than anyone except Dick"; and there is some suggestion that Abe is aware of what has happened to Nicole.[494] When Abe narrates to Rosemary the build-up to the duel between McKisco and Barban, he states the following:

> Tommy is a watchdog about the Divers [...] she is inspiring and formidable – but it's a mutual thing, and the fact of The Divers together is more important to their friends than many of them realize. Of course it's done at a certain sacrifice – sometimes they seem just rather

[493] Ibid.
[494] Ibid., 94.

> charming figures in a ballet, and worth just the attention you give a ballet, but it's more than that – you'd have to know the story.[495]

It is at Abe's request that he meets Nicole before the rest of the party on the day that he is supposed to return to America, but Abe cannot remember why he made the request in the first place. An indication is given, however, when it is revealed that Abe "had been heavy, belly-frightened, with love for her for years".[496] Just as with his war service, this crucial piece of information is referred to only once and in both cases the reference is made by the narrator. The scene begins with Abe waiting at the station and wondering whether he had time to get a drink from the buffet, when he sees Nicole arrive:

> one end of his pendulous glance came to rest upon the apparition of Nicole at the stairhead. He watched her – she was self-revelatory in her little expressions as people seem to someone waiting for them, who as yet is himself unobserved.[497]

The use of the words "apparition" and "self-revelatory" suggests the peculiar nature of the relationship between the two most damaged characters in the novel. They seem to attract and repel each other as each sees in the other the abyss of mental turmoil that they themselves experience. In this short, poignant scene, the elements of performance and role-playing that dominates many of the relationships presented through the course of the narrative, completely disappear: Abe and Nicole "see" each other and the reader "sees" them both. Nicole's tenuous emotional control is demonstrated here, before it is revealed in full how damaged she is mentally. The ravages of alcohol and the melancholic despair experienced by Abe are also shown in detail; the scene is practically a re-enactment of Freud's definition of the melancholic:

> profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of

[495] Ibid., 52.
[496] Ibid., 94.
[497] Ibid., 93.

> the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment.[498]

The conversation is frank: Abe tells Nicole "I haven't had fun seeing you this time. I'm tired of you both, but it doesn't show because you're even more tired of me –"; Nicole responds, "Seems rather foolish to be unpleasant, Abe".[499] However, there is also an agitated nervousness displayed in both characters.

> Abe was feeling worse every minute – he could think of nothing but disagreeable and sheerly nervous remarks. Nicole thought the correct attitude for her was to sit staring straight ahead, hands in her lap.[500]

Both Abe and Nicole are aware that by looking at the other they are staring into uncertainty and instability. When Abe tries to explain his malaise, Nicole shuts him down quickly,

> "I suppose I got bored; and then it was such a long way to go back in order to get anywhere."
> . . .
> "No excuse for it," said Nicole crisply.[501]

Abe's statement is a desire to undo the past, to make it different but he also implies that at some point change was possible. He failed to make this choice, because it was too difficult: "it was such a long way to go back in order to get anywhere." As a result the past repeatedly encroaches on Abe's present and will continue to do so until his brutal death in a speakeasy brawl. Nicole's blunt response, "No excuse for it", is not as unsympathetic as it appears. Nicole too, spends her days trying to keep her disturbed past at bay, desperately trying to protect the present from her intrusive, destructive memories, it requires

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[498] Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume 14: On the History of the Psychoananlytic Movement, Papers and Metapsychology and Other Works,* 244.
[499] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night.*
[500] Ibid., 94.
[501] Ibid.
Scott Donaldson, in his essay reads this scene as an indication of Nicole's growing authority. Donaldson suggests that in this scene Nicole tells Abe what his close friend Dick should have. See Scott Donaldson, "The Seduction of Dr. Diver," *The Hopkins Review* 8, no. 1 (2015).

practice to perfect the studied calm she presents in the early pages of the novel. She continues,

> "I am a woman and my business is to hold things together."
> "My business is to tear them apart."
> "When you get drunk you don't tear anything apart except yourself," she said, cold now and frightened and unconfident.[502]

The final adjectives are telling. Nicole begins to question herself: the despair that Abe expresses resonates with her and her feelings of fear and uncertainty begin to appear. The final remarks of the conversation contains more than a hint of mania in Nicole. The rapidity of speech that occurred earlier in the conversation reappears:

> "Trouble is when you're sober you don't want to see anybody and when you're tight nobody wants to see you." [said Abe]
> "Who, me?" Nicole laughed again; for some reason the late encounter [with Maria Wallis] had cheered her.
> "No – me."
> "Speak for yourself. I like people, a lot of people – I like –"[503]

Nicole is retreating into herself: she assumes Abe is talking about her rather than himself and then she begins to ramble with her statement about liking people. The evidence in the novel suggests the opposite: Nicole is understandably suspicious of people. Nicole's trauma is beginning to show as her emotional control begins to slip. Simultaneously the reader is shown Abe's physical breakdown as his alcoholism takes its inevitable toll:

> He took advantage of Nicole's absence to cough hard and retchingly into his handkerchief, and to blow his nose loud. The morning was warmer and his underwear was soaked with sweat. His fingers trembled so violently that it took four matches to light a cigarette; it seemed absolutely necessary to make his way into the buffet for a drink, but immediately Nicole returned.[504]

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[502] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night,* 95.
[503] Ibid.
[504] Ibid.

The appearance of Rosemary and Mary North brings the conversation to an abrupt conclusion and Nicole is relieved: "Nicole burst forth grossly with 'Hey! Hi! Hey!' and waved the handkerchiefs she had bought for Abe.[505]

The women stand with Abe "in an uncomfortable little group weighted down by Abe's gigantic presence".[506] It is only with the arrival of Dick that the atmosphere changed:

> Dick Diver came and brought with him a fine glowing surface on which the three women sprang like monkeys with cries of relief, perching on his shoulders, on the beautiful crown of his hat or the gold head of his cane. Now, for a moment, they could disregard the spectacle of Abe's gigantic obscenity. Dick saw the situation quickly and grasped it quietly.[507]

Abe has become obscene in the eyes of those around him because he is no longer able to preserve the appearance of a man able to function, Fitzgerald emphasises this with repeated reference to Abe's failing physicality and the contrast with Dick's impeccable control. Abe's unreliability will again be made apparent when he re-appears in the text, twenty or so pages after he had apparently left it. The consequences will be devastating for Nicole as, yet again, the damaged Abe becomes damaging to Nicole: his repetitive returns are a ghostly echo of Nicole's inability to truly escape her own trauma.

In Chapter twenty-three of Book One, Fitzgerald explores the dissipation and lack of productivity that results from chronic alcohol dependency as Abe spends a day and a night entrenched at The Ritz bar.[508] At the opening of the scene it is nine o'clock in the morning with the barman Claude showing "no improper

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[505] Ibid.

[506] Ibid., 96.

[507] Ibid.

[508] The Ritz bar is the location of the opening scene of *Babylon Revisited* (1931) also concerned with the destructive nature of alcohol addiction. Mary Jo Tate in *F Scott Fitzgerald: The Essential Reference to his Life and Work* makes reference to a letter written by Fitzgerald to Zelda in 1930 but possibly not sent in which he writes that the Ritz was a place "where I got my self-esteem back for half an hour, often with someone I had hardly ever seen before" (*Life in Letters*, p.188 quoted in Tate, p.212).

surprise to making Abe a pick-me-up. Abe sat on a bench against a wall. After two drinks he began to feel better".[509] In a few sentences Fitzgerald conveys the cyclical nature of alcohol dependency: the necessity of the early morning drink to be able to function normally. As other customers drift in and out of the bar, with Abe as a permanent fixture, the sense of waste and lack of productivity is evoked with Abe embarking on trivial conversations and overhearing others, but doing nothing. The problems caused by Abe's alcoholism for those around him, particularly Nicole, are illustrated by two plot threads that come together in this scene. Firstly, the reader is replayed, from Abe's perspective, a scene that has already occurred in the preceding chapter. Dick receives a confused phone call from Abe, which is nonsensical both to Dick and the reader. The telephone is passed from one unidentified person to the next:

> Abe's conversation flowed on as follows:
> "Hello."
> "Well?"
> "Well, hello."
> "Who are you?"
> "Well." There were interpolated snorts of laughter.
> "Well, I'll put somebody else on the line."
> Sometimes Dick could hear Abe's voice, accompanied by scufflings, droppings of the receiver, faraway fragments such as "No, I don't Mr North . . ."[510]

When Dick finally manages to ask Abe why he has returned to Paris after having left on the train for a return to America the day before, he receives the following answer:

> "I got as far as Evreux, and I decided to take a plane back so I could compare it with Saint-Sulpice. I mean I don't intend to bring Saint-Sulpice back to Paris. I don't even mind Baroque! I meant Saint-Germain. For God's sake, wait a minute and I'll put the chasseur on the wire."[511]

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[509] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 117.
[510] Ibid., 113.
[511] Ibid., 114.

As so often with Abe, there is a process of return and repetition. He returns to Paris, and just as the anecdote of the kidnapped waiter is repeated so too is this episode in the following chapter:

> he had the chasseur telephone to the Divers; by that time he was in touch also with other friends – and his hunch was to put them all on different phones at once – the result was somewhat general. From time to time his mind reverted to the fact that he ought to go over and get Freeman out of jail, but he shook off all facts as part of the nightmare.[512]

The reference to Freeman introduces the second thread which has also been mentioned in the previous chapter and which in the final chapter of Book One will explode in violence leading to the mental collapse of Nicole, allowing Rosemary and the reader to finally witness what Mrs McKisco had seen in the bathroom at the Villa Diana. For Abe, the thought of Freeman makes reality less easy to hang on to, aspects of it appear as hallucinatory nightmare, and equally unresolvable. At the end of the chapter Jules Petersen, previously a ghostly figure, like Freeman, unknown by the reader, becomes a man seeking but failing to get admittance to the Ritz bar because of his race. The uncertainty of the identity of Petersen and Freeman is underlined by the reference made to them in the previous chapter in a confusing episode involving Nicole and an unnamed man. In chapter twenty-two, before the recounting of Dick's confused conversation with Abe, Nicole has a similarly confusing exchange with a man looking for Abe North, who also makes reference to Freeman and Petersen. Like the repetitive nature of trauma itself, constantly re-emerging without warning, so does Abe in a manner that will have catastrophic results for Nicole. His return is confused and confusing. He is referred to as "Mr Afghan North" by the unnamed man and, despite Nicole knowing that they saw him off on the train the day before, both Abe and his identification card have been seen that

[512] Ibid., 118.

morning. He is given an almost ghostly quality: seen by some, absent in the minds of others. The story then continues,

> "We have arrested a Negro. We are convinced we have at last arrested the correct Negro."
> "I assure you that I haven't an idea what you're talking about" [replied Nicole][513]

The reader also has no idea what is being referenced. The lack of narrative cohesion is both internal for the characters and external as the reader is similarly at a loss to make sense of Abe's unexpected return. The confusion continues when Abe is referred to as "Mr Afghan" and as having been robbed. A phone call is made to Nicole in which the names of two men are given "Meestaire Crawshow" and "Meestaire Freeman" with whom neither Nicole or the reader are familiar. She responds to the phone call abruptly,

> "We know nothing about it," Nicole disclaimed the whole business with a vehement clap of the receiver. Abe's bizarre reappearance made it plain to her how fatigued she was with his dissipation.[514]

Abe brings literal and metaphorical confusion into Nicole's world. He is as damaged as she is and therefore he is damaging to her. Abe upsets the fragile balance that Nicole strives so desperately to maintain and his actions like some ghostly doppelgänger, stalk her after his apparent departure and will lead to her mental collapse. Nicole's breakdown at the end of Book One disrupts the narrative constructed by Dick in the aftermath of her abuse. Meaning is compromised by the breakdown of language for Rosemary and potentially the reader:

> And now Rosemary, too, could hear, louder and louder, a verbal inhumanity that penetrated the keyholes and the cracks in the doors, swept into the suite and in the shape of horror took form again.[515]

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[513] Ibid., 111.
[514] Ibid., 112.
[515] Ibid., 129.

From Rosemary's perspective Nicole *literally* makes no sense. The use of the phrase "verbal inhumanity" emphasises Rosemary's innocence as to the true nature of the relationship between Dick and Nicole, and also points to the reader's lack of comprehension, the result of seeing the pair through Rosemary's eyes. Nicole's expression of anxiety cannot be adequately understood by Rosemary and so is reduced to inhuman. The carefully created world that has been maintained by Dick, illustrated by his raking of the beach at the opening of the novel, in order to preserve Nicole's functionality, is exposed as a construct. This break is a specific result of Abe and his actions. In this sense he functions as a disruptive double to Nicole ensuring that her own trauma will continually return. The reader encounters Abe for the last time shortly before Jules Petersen's murder, when he seeks out Dick for advice. The brief scene is dominated by Abe's alcoholism; he asks for a drink and Dick refuses him and just as the reader first saw Abe through Rosemary's eyes so we see him for the last time:

> She [Rosemary] was sorry [...] but laughed in a well-bred way, as though it were nothing unusual to her to watch a man walking in a slow dream. Often people display a curious respect for a man drunk, rather like the respect of simple races for the insane. Respect rather than fear. There is something awe-inspiring in one who has lost all inhibitions, who will do anything.[516]

The reader and Dick are informed about Abe's death by Tommy Barban and a group of his friends. The uncertainty around Abe continues after his death as the specific details of the fatal beating he received in New York are unclear; despite a newspaper report the location of Abe's death cannot be established:

> "He's dead. He was beaten to death in a speakeasy in New York. He just managed to crawl home to the Racquet Club to die-"
> . . .
> Hannan turned around to McKibben. "It wasn't the Racquet Club he crawled to - it was the Harvard Club. I'm sure he didn't belong

[516] Ibid., 124.

> to the Racquet."
> "The paper said so," McKibben insisted.
> . . .
> "But I happen to know most of the members of the Racquet Club," said Hannan. "It *must* have been the Harvard Club."[517]

At this point, Abe is the antithesis of Dick. However, as Abe disappears from the plot, Dick takes his place and begins the process of decline. Shortly after he is telegrammed with the news that his father has also died. It is between these two pivotal events that Dick realises he is losing sight of himself.

> Dick has come away for his soul's sake, and he began thinking about that. He had lost himself – he could not tell the hour when, or the day or the week, the month or the year. Once he had cut through things, solved the most complicated equations as the simplest problems of his simplest patients.[518]

Dick will begin to step into Abe's vacated place, another example of the text's doubling as his drinking spirals into alcoholism, resulting in ever-escalating social faux-pas and although not fatal, he too will be beaten, mimicking Abe's mental and physical collapse.

<u>Nicole Diver and the Pursuit of Female Self-Authorship.</u>

Laura Rattray in her essay, "An 'Unblinding of Eyes': The Narrative Vision of *Tender is the Night*", charts the use of sight through the course of the novel as a means of demonstrating the demise of Dick and the ascent of Nicole.[519] As Dick's sight begins to falter, Nicole's "white crook's eyes" see things more clearly. Rattray also convincingly contends that *Tender is the Night* is, in part, a reflection upon the novel form. The traditional approach taken at the beginning of Book Two, in which the presentation of Dr Diver is more akin to the novels of the nineteenth century rather than one written in the first half of the twentieth, is contrasted with the disjointed stream of consciousness that is associated with

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[517] Ibid., 227.
[518] Ibid., 229.
[519] Rattray, "An "Unblinding of Eyes": The Narrative Vision of *Tender Is the Night*.."

Nicole and reflects the changes that the novel form underwent at the beginning of the twentieth century.[520] This contrast in the way the two characters are presented can also be seen as indicative of an increasing sense that certainty within and without the text is no longer possible.

The closing scene of Book One is Nicole's mental collapse in the wake of the Jules Petersen murder. His body is discovered by Rosemary in her own hotel room: Dick takes control of the situation by moving the body into the hallway and stripping the blood-soaked linen from the bed. In an act that sees him sacrifice the mental well-being of his wife in favour of saving and therefore impressing the movie starlet, he gives Nicole the responsibility of hiding the bed linen. In light of the incestuous abuse she has been subjected to by her father, which will be revealed in Book Two, the outcome of this act is predictable. Dick, accompanied by Rosemary, enters the bathroom of the Divers' room to find Nicole in a state of acute mental distress:

> Nicole knelt beside the tub swaying sidewise and sidewise. "It's you!" she cried, "-it's you come to intrude on the only privacy I have in the world – with your spread with red blood on it . . ."
> "Control yourself!"
> "-so I sat in the bathroom and they brought me a domino and said wear that. I did. What else could I do?
> "Control yourself, Nicole!"
> "I never expected you to love me - it was too late - only don't come in the bathroom, the only place I can go for privacy, dragging spreads with red blood on them and asking me to fix them."
> "Control yourself. Get up-"[521]

Nicole's words in this scene are her first on the subject of what has happened to her.[522] She is articulating her experience albeit somewhat incoherently. Dick's

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[520] For the sake of brevity I have used the terms nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels, whilst conceding that the suggestion that one form of the novel ended in 1899 and a new form commenced in 1900 is misleading.

[521] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night,* 129.

[522] In Pamela A Boker, "Beloved Illness: Transference Love as Romantic Pathology in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Tender Is the Night," *Literature and medicine* 11, no. 2 (1992). The

demands that she control herself silences Nicole's voice: silence has been a defining feature of the way Nicole is presented throughout the course of Book One. However, this enforced silence, in part a response to Rosemary's presence, ensures that the revelation of Nicole's trauma is not voiced by her, but by the men who surround her.

After Nicole's outburst there is an abrupt change in place, time and even in the way Dick Diver is addressed. Book Two opens with the following clear and concise information, completely at odds with the closing of the previous book:

> In the Spring of 1917, when Doctor Richard Diver first arrived in Zurich, he was twenty-six years old, a fine age for a man, indeed the very acme of bachelorhood.[523]

The perspective has shifted away from Nicole and the details of their initial meeting is told from the point of view of Dick and the men that are his colleagues and Nicole's doctors. The two meet shortly before Dick is sent to France as part of the war effort, and on his return he explains to Dr Franz Gregorovious, the details. Like Gatsby, Dick is in his uniform, assuring his social anonymity. However, Dick claims that Nicole was also in some way disguised as he was unaware of her status as a patient at the clinic:

> " – I caught up with a nurse and a young girl. I didn't think the girl was a patient . . ." He broke off recognising a familiar perspective, and then resumed: " – except Franz, I'm not as hard-boiled as you yet; when I see a beautiful shell like that I can't help feeling a regret about what's inside it. That was absolutely all – till the letters came."[524]

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author quotes this passage but makes the surprising claim that Nicole has suppressed all knowledge of what happened to her at the hands of her father.

[523] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 133.
Laura Rattray in "An 'Unblinding of Eyes': The Narrative Vision of *Tender is the Night*" highlights the assertion of a traditional narrative structure at the beginning of Book Two. She writes "[b]y setting the opening of Book 2 in Dick's youthful, pre-Nicole prime, an apparently uncomplicated narrative world of biography, fact, order control and the narrator's third-person assertion emerges and the explosive challenge of the previous scene is, for the moment at least, successfully contained" (93).

[524] Ibid., 139.

Dick's claims however are not entirely convincing; the presence of the nurse would surely have raised the possibility in his mind that Nicole was a patient. His reference to Nicole as 'a beautiful shell', although it is not clear whether this thought occurs during the present tense of his conversation with Dr Gregorovious or at the time of his meeting with Nicole, indicates an awareness of her vulnerability. What occurs next in the mind of Dr Gregorovious is a fortuitous transference as Nicole begins to write letters to Dick whilst he is stationed in France:

> The letters were divided into two classes, of which the first class up to about the time of the Armistice, was of a marked pathological turn, and of which the second class, running from thence up to the present, was entirely normal, and revealed a richly maturing nature.[525]

Extracts from the letters are given, which is the only insight into the mind and emotions of Nicole at this time. There are indications of her mental ill-health as well as her self-awareness regarding this. Her fear regarding men is also demonstrated in these letters, aware of Diver's attraction to her she threatens him. "If you come here again with that attitude base and criminal and not evenly faintly what I had been taught to associate with the role of gentleman then heaven help you".[526] Her self-awareness is illustrated in remarks such as, "I am not going to write you any more. I am too unstable".[527] There is also resentment towards her doctors and her treatment; the specific subjects of her animosity are not clear but her distrust and unease are apparent:

> Here I am in what appears to be a semi-insane-asylum, all because nobody saw fit to tell me the truth about anything. If I had only known what was going on like I know now I could have stood it I guess for I am pretty strong, but those who should have, did not see fit to enlighten me. And now, when I know and have paid such a price for knowing, they sit

[525] Ibid., 140.
[526] Ibid.
[527] Ibid., 143.

> there with their dogs lives and say I should believe what I did believe. Especially one does but I know now.[528]

However, the details of what has happened to Nicole are not told by Nicole; instead Dr Gregorovious recounts to Dick details of her admission when the latter returns from France. Initially, Gregorovious takes out papers pertaining to the case but "he found they were in his way and put them on his desk. Instead he told Dick the story".[529] Gregorovious then recounts events that he did not witness but was informed of by the clinic's head, Doctor Dohmler. Dick therefore receives the details third hand and due to the information being passed on orally rather than in a written format, which would be expected in medical circles, the information takes on the feel of gossip or story telling. The initial consultation is between the doctor and the patient's father, Devereux Warren, Nicole is absent. Narrative privilege is awarded to her father (and perpetrator) in a manner that echoes Freud's privileging of patriarchal discourse in his case study of Dora (Ida Bauer). In both instances this occurs despite questions being asked about the truthfulness of what is said. After Devereux Warren gives details of Nicole's breakdown, the reader is told that Doctor Dohmler "was wondering why and about what the man was lying to him".[530] Similarly,Freud tells us that Dora's father believed "that Dora's tale of the man's immoral suggestions is a phantasy that has forced its way into her mind" despite his having "no very high opinion" of the man accused by Dora, Herr K.[531] Dohmler's first words to Devereux Warren are "[s]uppose you start at the beginning and tell me everything." Instead Warren misleads Dohmler: "There

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[528] Ibid., 142-43.
[529] Ibid., 144.
[530] Ibid., 147.
[531] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol 7: A Case of Hysteria, Threee Essays in Sexuality and Other Works.*, ed. J Stachey (London: Vintage, 2001 (1953)), 26.

isn't a beginning, at least there isn't any insanity in the family that I know of, on either side".[532] Of course, there is a very clear beginning, easily identifiable, instead he describes Nicole's behaviour rather than acknowledge his own. He places the "blame" on Nicole: it is her behaviour which is cause for concern and this behaviour isolates her from the people around her.

> " – I try to figure but can't remember exactly where we were when she began to do funny things – crazy things. Her sister was the first one to say anything to me about it – because Nicole was always the same to me," he added rather hastily, as if someone had accused him of being to blame , "– the same loving little girl. The first thing was about a valet."[533]

Nicole's illness manifests itself, unsurprisingly, as a fear of men. "Almost always about men going to attack her, men she knew or men on the street – anybody –" [said Devereux Warren].[534] Despite Devereux's crucial role in creating this fear he presents himself as a victim of his daughter's ill health, "[h]e told of their [the Warrens'] alarm and distress, of the horrors families go through under such circumstances".[535] The sickness as implied by Devereux Warren at this point began with Nicole, it is not the result of an experience:

> "Of course, I've read about women getting lonesome and thinking there's a man under the bed and all that, but why should Nicole get such an idea? She could have all the young men she wanted."[536]

Devereux's suggestion is that men (or one man, in particular) are not the problem but actually the solution. Even at the point when his daughter's wellbeing has been so critically compromised and he has run the submarine blockade to get her help, Devereux Warren is unable to be honest about the root cause of his daughter's distress. It is only through Doctor Dohmler's strong arming that Devereux, reluctantly, reveals the truth. Again the language used is

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[532] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*.
[533] Ibid., 146.
[534] Ibid., 147.
[535] Ibid.
[536] Ibid., 146.

designed to distort and mislead: "We [Devereux and Nicole] were just like lovers – and then all at once we were lovers".[537] At this moment of confession he is still unable to take responsibility. The use of the simile 'like lovers' demonstrates a refusal to acknowledge the full implications for Nicole of what has occurred. It implies a relationship of parity and one entered into by mutual choice. The act, however, was one of sexual violence inflicted on a daughter by her father. The language of seduction surrounds the incident and this language, and the narrative it creates, are controlled by the authoritative men that surround Nicole. Accordingly, Nicole's problems are a result of her own guilt, rather than her father's:

> "She felt complicity – . . . First came this shock. Then she went off to boarding-school and heard the girls talking – so from sheer self-protection she developed the idea that she had no complicity – and from there it was easy to slide into a phantom world where all men, the more you liked them and trusted them, the more evil – "[538]

The victim's feelings of complicity are confused in this 'version' with the responsibility that lies with the perpetrator; Gregorovious presents Nicole as equally culpable as her father. For Nicole, this world where men are more evil the more you trust them is not a phantom world, as implied by the Doctor, but lived experience in which her betrayal at the hands of her father has undermined her trust and confidence in all men. Her dysfunctionality is understood through a narrative which does not fully permit female experience; the call made by Devereux Warren is the same as that made by Dora's father: "please try and bring her to reason" and made by Dick Diver in his repeated requests for Nicole to control herself.[539] However, what is actually requested is a return to the appearance of normality, in spite of what has been experienced, an

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[537] Ibid., 149.
[538] Ibid., 150.
[539] Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol 7: A Case of Hysteria, Threee Essays in Sexuality and Other Works.*, 26.

appearance of normality that does not disrupt the established masculine narrative. According to Jacqueline Rose, therefore "Dora reveals how Freud's concept of the feminine was incomplete and contradictory, thus delineating a major problem in psychoanalytical theory: its inability to account for the feminine".[540] An example of this is Freud's assumption that what may be pleasurable for a middle-aged male subject will be equally so to the teenage female he has objectified. Despite accepting the truth of what Freud is told by Dora, he continues to view events from the standpoint of Herr K. The problems experienced by the patient are the result not of Herr K's behaviour but by her incorrect interpretation of and response to them:

> He [Herr K] then came back, and, instead of going out by the open door, suddenly clasped the girl to him and pressed a kiss upon her lips. This was surely just the situation to call up a distinct feeling of sexual excitement in a girl of fourteen who had never been approached. But Dora had at that moment a violent feeling of disgust, tore herself free from the man, and hurried past him to the staircase.[541]

The same is evident in the presentation of Nicole's case, where even when the facts are established that an abuse of patriarchal power has taken place, the events are viewed from a standpoint that privileges masculine experience at the expense of the feminine. After speaking to Devereux Warren at the initial consultation (and before Warren confesses to sexual engagement with Nicole), Dr Dohmler says, "'I would like – to talk to her – a few minutes now,' . . . [in] English as if it would bring him closer to Warren".[542] However, the reader (nor Dick in this recounting of events) is privy to what is exchanged between Dohmler and Nicole: she is either silent or speaks but is not heard; she is, however, diagnosed as schizophrenic *before* her father's confession. In a similar

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[540] Jacqueline Rose in Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane, *In Dora's Case: Freud--Hysteria--Feminism* (Columbia University Press, 1990), 183.
[541] Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol 7: A Case of Hysteria, Threee Essays in Sexuality and Other Works.*, 28.
[542] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 147.

fashion to Nicole's diagnosis, Dick has a number of pre-ordained positions toward Nicole during their courtship. In part he mimics a paternalistic tone, in spite of the damage that her father has inflicted upon her. When Franz thanks Dick for replying to Nicole's letter, Dick

> sighed. "She was such a pretty thing – she enclosed a lot of snapshots of herself. And for a month there I didn't have anything to do. All I said in my letters was, "Be a good girl and mind the doctors."[543]

His statement "Be a good girl and mind the doctors" echoes Devereux's description of his response to her: "As a child she was a darling thing – everybody was crazy about her".[544] Similarly, the pity in Dick's response to Nicole is mirrored in Devereux Warren's response to her after her mother's death. "when she was little she used to come into my bed, every morning, sometimes she'd sleep in my bed. I was sorry for the little thing".[545] In these echoes, both her father and her future husband infantalize her but simultaneously they objectify her sexually, despite the nature of their relationships with Nicole – father and doctor – should exclude them from such engagement with her.[546] Just as Devereux blurred and then crossed the line in his relationship with his daughter so Dick will cross the line in his relationship with his young, beautiful and fragile patient. In the early stages of their courtship the manner in which Nicole is described have the effect of a frozen image – an objet d'art like Keats's grecian urn – a moment of perfect beauty, unchanging, unthreatening and silent:

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[543] Ibid., 150.

[544] Ibid., 145.

[545] Ibid., 148.

[546] Scott Donaldson points out that Devereux Warren tells Dr Gregorovius that Nicole used to sing to him. In the next scene, Dick fully aware of all the details of Warren's confession is sung to by Nicole as she makes him "a profound promise of herself for so little". As Donaldson remarks "[i]t's a chilling repeat performance". Donaldson, "The Seduction of Dr. Diver," 16..

> Her hair, drawn back of her ears, brushed her shoulders in such a way that the face seemed to have just emerged from it, as if this were the exact moment when she was coming from a wood into clear moonlight.[547]

Again,

> Her face, ivory gold against the blurred sunset that strove through the rain, had a promise Dick had never seen before: the high cheekbones, the faintly wan quality, cool rather than feverish, was reminiscent of the frame of a promising colt – a creature whose life did not promise to be only a projection of youth upon a greyer screen, but instead a true growing [.][548]

In the section of the novel that charts the burgeoning relationship between the two Nicole is assigned multiple identities: she is a child, a patient, an object of beauty and at a lunch shared by the pair in Zurich, she becomes an object of sexual jealousy. Despite "the logic of his life tended away from the girl" when Dick sees another man looking at Nicole he attempts to intimidate him.[549] The desire of another man for Nicole provokes the same longing in himself.

As has been mentioned, the beginning of their relationship, both romantic and therapeutic, is shown from Dick's perspective; her confusing identity child/woman, lover/patient are as symptomatic of the confusion of the men around her (notably Dick and Devereux Warren) as they are of Nicole herself. As Dick contemplates a relationship with Nicole it is apparent that he does not want her to have a narrative, again he wants her to be like Keats's urn; no past, no future just a frozen present: "The unknown yielded her up; Dick wished she had no background, that she was just a girl lost with no address save the night from which she had come".[550] This would be of benefit to Dick, Nicole could simply be amalgamated into his own narrative, simplifying her identity to the part of it which is connected to his own. However, Dick's wish acknowledges this

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[547] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night,* 155.
[548] Ibid., 163.
[549] Ibid., 158.
[550] Ibid., 156.

fate would be of little benefit to Nicole; perhaps it would be even more frightening than her current narrative – "just a girl lost" – perhaps the fate of being storyless is the most terrifying of all. The remainder of the novel can be read as an attempt by Nicole not to be the lost girl with no background: no story, but to claim her story even if it is at times an unhappy and damaged one, she does this most powerfully in her rhetorical question, "[a]m I going through the rest of life flinching at the word 'father'?".[551] It is clear that by the end of her marriage to Dick and the end of the novel she is adamant that she will not. In a number of scenes throughout the last two books of the novel there is a growing awareness in Nicole that her subjectivity is in no way "less" than Dick's. The complex and confused manner in which the relationship comes into being will resonate in both characters and their relationship throughout the course of the novel. From the beginning of their romantic involvement the power relations between Dick and Nicole are skewered as Dick has the advantage of knowledge over Nicole. As her doctor he is privy to information that would not automatically be accessible to a potential spouse. This knowledge reverberates throughout their marriage: it is on occasion used to control and manipulate Nicole and will eventually cause the resentment that will lead her to abandon Dick in favour of Tommy Barban. This knowledge allows him to control and indeed create the narrative around Nicole and her illness and the novel is in part the story of Nicole's attempted journey towards autonomy or at least a recognition of the validity of her own voice.

Through the course of Book One, Dick Diver is presented as the controlling force within the life of Nicole as well as the controlling force of the narrative of

[551] Ibid., 324.

the text. In the first conversation that Rosemary has with Dick her initial response to him is as follows:

> He seemed kind and charming – his voice promised that he would take care of her, and that a little later he would open up whole new worlds for her, unroll an endless succession of magnificent possibilities.[552]

These qualities of caretaking and the promise of excitement are assigned to Dick by Rosemary before any demonstrable action could bring her to such a conclusion. Dick provides certainty or is, again, assigned it by the characters that surround him. At Abe North's farewell at the Gare St Lazare, Abe's unpredictability provokes fear and uncertainty in Rosemary, Nicole and even his own wife, Mary. This is in sharp contrast to the response of the women to Dick on his arrival previously quoted. After the troubling conversation between Abe and Nicole and the discomfort of the women in Abe's company, Dick arrives and provides assurance not only for the women but for the reader too that things will once again make sense. However, although Dick has control of the events of Book One and is the guiding force of the narrative, as early as chapter six of the first book, doubts around this apparent control are raised by the omniscient narrator:

> So long as they subscribed to it completely [Dick's world], their happiness was his preoccupation, but at the first flicker of doubt as to its all-inclusiveness he evaporated before their eyes, leaving little communicable memory of what he had said or done.[553]

The second half of Book Two and Book Three is not so much a breaking down of Dick's authority so much as a recognition (one made particularly by Nicole) that the certainty associated with such a claim does not exist. Dick's perspective on the events, through the course of the second half of the novel is no longer privileged by Nicole or the reader, as the only source of meaning. Nicole goes

[552] Ibid., 23.
[553] Ibid., 25.

through a process of not only asserting her own identity (she "resented the places where she had played planet to Dick's sun"[554]) but also a growing awareness that Dick's subjectivity does not equate with infallibility, the narrative that he constructs about himself, his work and his marriage is not the only one possible and Nicole begins to question the narrative that Dick has created around them. There are two occurrences that begin the process of undermining Dick's perceived infallible authority, both in Nicole's eyes and in his own. The first is Dick's involvement with Rosemary, which will be returned to later, this is crucial in Dick's loss of self-assurance. The second is Dick's involvement in Gregorvious's clinic thanks to the financial help of his loathed sister-in-law, Baby Warren, despite Nicole's insistence on the importance of work for Dick:

> Dick, why did you register Mr. and Mrs. Diver instead of Doctor and Mrs. Diver? I just wondered – it just floated through my mind. – You've taught me that work is everything and I believe you.[555]

It is at the point that he returns to the role of Doctor – a position assigned with authority and one in which he has exerted control over Nicole's life and life story – that Nicole begins to question his position as the source of meaning. The shift from certainty to uncertainty is exposed at the beginning of the scene that will result in Dick's agreement to join Gregorvious's clinic. The quotation refers to the solidity of the world of the 1890s, the world before the war; however, the shift to a mood of uncertainty also refers to the narrative world of *Tender is the Night*. From this point on there can be no singular, monologic perspective on the events of the narrative. They are open to interpretation; they may be confused or lied about; the 'truth' exhibited in a monologic narrative is no

[554] Ibid., 322.
[555] Ibid., 186.

longer a possibility just as the perceived certainty and knowability of the Victorian world has gone forever:

> With the pert heady wine he relaxed and pretended that the world was all put together again by the grey-haired men of the golden nineties who shouted old glees at the piano, by the young voices and the bright costumes toned into the room by the swirling smoke.[556]

Historical and narrative certainties are no longer possible. At the end of this chapter, with Dick's agreement to join the clinic, the action moves forward eighteen months at the opening of chapter fourteen. The shift of mood is again emphasised with the opening of the chapter concerned with the details of a dream or rather nightmare experienced by Dick:

> Dick awoke at five after a long dream of war [...] there were fire engines, symbols of disaster, and a ghastly uprising of the mutilated in a dressing station. He turned on his bed-lamp light and made a thorough note of it ending with the half-ironic phrase" "Non-combatant's shell-shock."[557]

It would appear that whether you directly experience the mental trauma exhibited by Nicole and Abe or just are an observer of it, no-one will be left unaffected by what is experienced. In this chapter that once again shows Dick is his role as doctor the reader is presented with what is described as Dick's most interesting case. The woman is also described as being "particularly his patient" in the same manner that Nicole had become his particular project.[558] However, there is a startling contrast between this patient and his patient wife: gone is the romantic imagery that was frequently used to describe the early relationship between Dick and Nicole, despite the psychiatric impetus of their relationship. Nicole is presented as a beautiful but damaged young woman, with the emphasis on the former allowing her to be incorporated into a recognisable

[556] Ibid., 199.
[557] Ibid., 206.
[558] Ibid., 210.

romantic narrative. This can be illustrated by the excessive language in the scene depicting Dick and Nicole's first kiss:

> The voice fell low, sank into her breast and stretched the tight bodice over her heart as she came up close. He felt the young lips, her body sighing in relief against the arms growing stronger to hold her [...] she curved in further and further toward him, with
> her own lips, new to herself, drowned and engulfed in love, yet solaced and triumphant [.][559]

The degree of sentimentality that can be detected in the description brings with it an association with the well-established romantic genre. Nicole is incorporated into an established and recognisable plot. Dick's second patient, however, is disfigured by excruciating eczema, "a living agonising sore" despite being "exceptionally pretty" on her admittance.[560] This woman's ill-health cannot be hidden behind the mask of physical beauty and as a result she is excluded from the romantic narrative into which Nicole is incorporated by Dick. The short dialogue between Doctor and patient is difficult to categorise: again this is in stark contrast to the formulaic aspects of Dick's early relationship with Nicole. The patient, whose name is not provided remarks, "I'm sharing the fate of the women of my time who challenge men to battle".[561] She positions herself or is positioned in opposition to men. In Chapter Twelve of Book One Rosemary, Nicole and Mary North are described very differently:

> Their point of resemblance to each other, and their difference from so many American women, lay in the fact that they were all happy to exist in a man's world – they preserved their individuality through men and not by opposition to them.[562]

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[559] Ibid., 178.

[560] Ibid., 206.
Zelda Fitzgerald was afflicted with eczema dating from her first mental collapse. See Milford, *Zelda*, 169.. According to Milford, Zelda made a connection between this physical ailment and her psychological problems. Ibid., 177.

[561] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 210.

[562] Ibid., 63-64.

This connection between female identity and how it is (or is not) connected to men runs through the conversation. Dick's position appears to be that those women, like his patient, who do not tie their identity to that of men as Rosemary, Mary and Nicole appear to have done – earlier in the novel at least – rightly or wrongly, will pay a price. Dick's response to the patient's analysis of her fate is "[y]ou've suffered, but many women suffered before they mistook themselves for men".[563] The conversation has been full of images of battle, of a war between the genders; however, this becomes unacceptable to Dick and he wishes to return to a linear narrative that will identify the reasons for her ill-health: "We would like to go into the true reasons you are here–".[564] However, the woman rejects such verbal certainty enshrined in a narrative based on cause and effect. In her statement "I am here as a symbol of something. I thought perhaps you would know what it was", there is an implied rejection of words and a shift to a different form of expression; this is enhanced by her occupation of painter.[565] She does not want to be incorporated into Dick's narrative, nor can she be:

> With disgust he [Dick] heard himself lying, but here and now the vastness of the subject could only be compressed into a lie.
> "Outside of that there's only confusion and chaos. I won't lecture to you– . . . But it's only by meeting the problems of every day no matter how trifling and boring they see, that can make things drop back into place again."[566]

To avoid chaos is to establish the certainty of routine, a structure based on the stories we tell ourselves – about our daily lives as much as the narratives we construct about our whole lives – a beginning, a middle and an end. Dick, we

[563] Ibid., 211.
[564] Ibid.
[565] Ibid.
[566] Ibid.

are told, wanted "to gather her up on his arms as he had so often Nicole".[567] He responds to her "almost sexually" despite its focus on romance this is the driving force of the marriage plot but he cannot incorporate her into such a story.[568] The narrative certainty with which Dick formulated his relationship with Nicole is replaced with a series of images in his relationship with this patient:

> The orange light through the drawn blind, the sarcophagus of her figure on the bed, the spot of face, the voice searching the vacuity of her illness and finding only remote abstractions.[569]

The uncertainty generated in this scene is continued in the next chapter in which the focus is again on one of his female patients; this time the woman concerned has written a letter to Nicole accusing Dick of having seduced her daughter. Dick is not in full control of the situation when he is confronted by Nicole because the letter allows Nicole to consider events without the automatic mediation that Dick frequently asserts. The accusations in the letter are not the only source of information regarding the claim of seduction. The episode is recounted through the narration. The patient's daughter is referred to as "a flirtatious little brunette" and on a trip back from Zurich, "[i]n an idle, almost indulgent way, he kissed her" but refused to take the relationship further.[570] After the description of what had happened Dick attempts to discredit the story because of who is telling the tale:

> He sank his voice to a reproachful note and sat beside her.
> "This is absurd. This is a letter from a mental patient."
> "I was a mental patient."
> He stood up and spoke more authoritatively.
> "Suppose we don't have any nonsense, Nicole."[571]

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[567] Ibid.

[568] Ibid.
Dick's response being described as sexual in nature is worth noting as it is at odds with Fitzgerald's usual focus on romance.

[569] Ibid., 212.

[570] Ibid., 213.

[571] Ibid., 214.

Dick's denial is a lie and one that Nicole will not simply accept. His authority over her is slipping as Nicole questions not only what Dick is saying but the very authority he claims in saying it. Nicole refuses the established, automatic acceptance of the doctor's word and the automatic dismissal of the words and experiences of the mental patient. This episode is immediately followed by a trip made by the Divers and their children to a fairground. Nicole retreats into herself and is again silent, but this time her silence is an ominous sign to Dick. "The situation was always most threatening when she backed up into herself and closed the doors behind her".[572]

His attempts to soothe her with cooing words, "[c]ome on, darl" are unsuccessful and he is filled with dread. The certainty with which he has always managed and controlled Nicole, such as during her mental collapses at the Villa Diana and the Paris hotel room has evaporated. Her silence cannot be challenged with his command to "control yourself" as her hysterical bouts had been. In contrast to the private, confined bathrooms that the previous episodes have taken place in this one occurs in an open, public space and instead of speaking, Nicole runs. Dick discovers her laughing hysterically on a ferris wheel, a public display of the mental distress that Dick has always managed to contain in the private sphere; instead of demanding that she control herself he is limited to asking her why she is unable to do so. The question provokes dialogue as opposed to the monologic control that Dick has consistently exerted over Nicole: he has had authorship over her responses to her own experiences. However, when Dick denies knowing why she is so upset that she has lost self-control, she answers him:

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[572] Ibid.

> "That's just preposterous – let me loose – that's an insult to my intelligence. Don't you think I saw that girl look at you –. . . Don't you think I saw?"
>
> ". . . – this business about a girl is a delusion, do you understand that word?" [said Dick]
>
> "It's always a delusion when I see what you don't want me to see."[573]

Nicole challenges Dick's position as the authority on the events that they experience together. She also questions Dick's motivation in trying to dictate the meaning of Nicole's experiences. Dick's response to this accusation is one of guilt, despite his attempts to explain away these feelings, he is unable to adequately do so:

> He had a sense of guilt as in one of those nightmares where we are accused of a crime which we recognise as something undeniably experienced, but which upon waking we realise we have not committed. His eyes wavered from hers.[574]

Although there is a denial of guilt there is an acknowledgement of the possibility of guilt in a different reality, in this case the waking world and the world of dreams. There is the possibility of a different experience of the same event: the crime was simultaneously "undeniably experienced" and "not committed". A singular interpretation is therefore not possible; in his world he may not be guilty but in Nicole's he may be. As Dick's authority flounders as a result of Nicole's rejection of the certainty of Dick as the source of meaning, the world which he has created around Nicole also begins to fragment. "Fifteen minutes ago they had been a family. Now as she was crushed into a corner by his unwilling shoulder, he saw them all, child and man, as a perilous accident".[575] However, Nicole is not able to step into the vacuum left by Dick; her attempts to apply meaning are babbled and incoherent, responding to Dick's decision to return home she replies, "[a]nd sit and think that we're all rotting and the

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[573] Ibid., 216.
[574] Ibid., 216-17.
[575] Ibid., 217.

children's ashes are rotting in every box I open? That filth!"[576] As a result Dick is relieved to see that "her words sterilized her" and she must once again turn to him to take control. "Help me, help me, Dick!".[577] Dick's relief is based on Nicole's meaninglessness. He becomes the source of interpretation and meaning both within the plot of the text (Nicole's pleas for help is in essence a need for Dick to create sense) and in relation to the reader, as the alternative voice to Dick's (Nicole's) is confused and confusing. However, despite Nicole's relinquishing of her brief period of control, Dick recognises a shift in their relationship. Nicole is now exhibiting characteristics that he associates with men.

> It was awful that such a fine tower should not be erected, only suspended, suspended from him. Up to a point that was right: men were for that, beam and idea, girder and logarithm; but somehow Dick and Nicole had become one and equal, not apposite and complementary; she was Dick too, the drought in the marrow of his bones.[578]

Men are here equated with structure, the structure on which both identity and meaning are established; Nicole is "suspended" from Dick unable to exist without his support, both emotional and intellectual. However, by the recognition that husband and wife, doctor and patient, have "become one and equal" Dick begins to recognise that Nicole is becoming her own source of meaning. She is no longer just one amongst many "others" in the narrative he constructs around his own self. The move away from the pair being "apposite and complementary" is a move away from story (Nicole) and storyteller (Dick) to a recognition of multiple stories and multiple tellers.

The unease continues on the journey home. Again, Nicole makes statements that are unclear and appear random, "Nicole [...] reiterated a remark [...] about

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[576] Ibid.
[577] Ibid.
[578] Ibid.

a misty yellow house set back from the road that looked like a painting not yet dry, but it was just an attempt to catch at a rope that was playing too swiftly".[579] Nicole is attempting to grasp meaning but it is beyond her reach: her words make sense but lack context denying them any real meaning, it is present but beyond Nicole's control. Dick's response to Nicole's ramblings is a belief that he will have to spend a considerable amount of time "restating the universe for her".[580] In other words he needs to re-assert authority over the narrative that she tells herself, about herself. It is evident in this passage the manner in which sanity is likened to the acceptance of a story (to some degree any story) in this novel. Anything that disrupts the narrative needs to be rejected even if the disruption is the result of experience; this latest psychiatric break is the result of her own knowledge and experience of Dick's behaviour.:

> Nicole was alternately a person to whom nothing needed to be explained and one to whom nothing *could* be explained. It was necessary to treat her with active and affirmative insistence, keeping the road to reality always open, making the road to escape harder going. But the brilliance, the versatility of madness is akin to the resourcefulness of water seeping through, over and around a dike. It requires the united front of many people to work against it.[581]

The reality that is referred to is a constructed reality that allows sanity or rather the appearance of sanity to be maintained. The metaphorical road that Nicole is on is one that has been established by Dick and her doctors to allow her to function *despite the reality* of her relationship with her father. The "road to escape" is the madness that reveals itself *because of the reality* of that relationship. Importantly, there is a shift in Dick as he recognises the need for "Nicole [to] cure herself", to construct her own story. He wanted her to

[579] Ibid., 218.
[580] Ibid.
[581] Ibid., 218.

"remember [...] the other times and revolt [...] against them".[582] The metaphor of the road then becomes literal as Nicole grabs the wheel of the car whilst Dick is driving and runs it off of the road, demonstrating the growing difficulty in maintaining Dick's authority over Nicole's story, despite his desperate attempts to keep them both on the road, literally and metaphorically, Nicole's growing autonomy, albeit a troubled one, no longer makes this a straightforward task. He no longer can "cut through things, solved the most complicated equations as the simplest problems of his simplest patients".[583] His acknowledgement of an alternative perspective on events rules out the possibility of simple solutions and simple narratives. After this event Dick requests leave from the clinic and there is a growing separation between the lives and stories of Dick and his wife. His increasing lack of control over his wife, which in part, at least he hesitantly welcomes, leads to an unravelling of his own life. The certainty of his own story appears to have been intricately woven with the lack of certainty in Nicole's. He learns of the deaths of Abe North and of his father, the latter a symbol of old certainties and values, which are lost both to him and to the modern world. On his return to Europe after his father's funeral in America, the increasing chaos in Dick's life continues with the unsatisfactory consummation of his relationship with Rosemary and a brutal beating at the hands of the police in Rome after a dispute over a taxi fare, which is only resolved with the help of Baby Warren at the conclusion of Book Two.

At the beginning of the final book of the novel, Dr Gregorvious's wife, Kaethe a minor character in the novel, makes two observations that in some respects dictate the path of the final section of the book and indeed predict the position that Dick and Nicole Diver will be in at the end of the novel. Kaethe makes the

[582] Ibid.
[583] Ibid., 229.

observation to her husband that she believes "Dick is no longer a serious man".[584] This will be returned to shortly. Her second observation is that she thinks "Nicole is less sick than anyone thinks – she only cherishes her illness as an instrument of power".[585] This is an inversion of the course of the novel up to this point. Her mental ill-health has been used repeatedly to exert control over her; however, in this final section of the book there is an attempt on the part of Nicole to no longer be restricted by the ill-health that has defined her through the course of book two. Her decision to leave Dick is pondered by her over a considerable length of time and is not in anyway an impulsive act. On a number of occasions she moves towards Tommy and then retreats. At the point when Rosemary returns to the Riviera Nicole reflects upon her relationship with Dick and the possibility of its end:

> So delicately balanced was she between an old foothold that had always guaranteed her security, and the imminence of a leap from which she must alight changed in the very chemistry of blood and muscle , that she did not dare bring the matter into the true forefront of consciousness.[586]

Her reflections also illustrate her growing awareness of her separateness and the over-reliance on Dick for making sense of her life and illness: "every word had seemed to have an overtone of some other meaning, soon to be resolved under circumstances that Dick would determine".[587] She even approaches the possibility of having an affair with Tommy "thinking with Dick's thoughts".[588] At the beginning of her relationship with Tommy it is clear his attitude towards her is markedly different from her husband's:

> "Why didn't they leave you in your natural state?" Tommy demanded presently. "You are the most dramatic person I have ever known."

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[584] Ibid., 271.
[585] Ibid., 269.
[586] Ibid., 314.
[587] Ibid.
[588] Ibid., 326.

"All this taming of women!" he scoffed.[589]

It is not clear if Tommy is aware of the reason for Nicole's psychological problems but what is apparent is that he will not confine her to the identity of patient. In a discussion with Dick about his relationship with Nicole, Tommy accuses him of having never understood Nicole. "You treat her always like a patient because she was once sick".[590] He describes her treatment as " 'kind' bullying", a recognition of the level of psychological control she has been subjected to both as a wife and as a patient. Dick's influence does not, however, leave Nicole immediately; in this scene reference is made to "Dick's ghost prompting at her elbow". Similarly after sleeping with Barban, despite "all that Dick had taught her" falling away and her being "nearer to what she had been in the beginning" she was still "attuned to Dick, she waited for interpretation or qualification; but none was forthcoming".[591] In essence, she is waiting to fall sway under the narrative authority of Dick, but it does not come: "she had a thrill of delight at thinking of herself in a new way. New vistas appeared ahead, peopled with the faces of many men, none of whom she need obey or even love".[592] Her break from Dick in this regard is an act of liberation and a necessary one:

> in the space of two minutes she achieved her victory and justified herself to herself without lie or subterfuge, cut the cord forever."[593]

Her newly found freedom however is tempered by the portrayal of Tommy Barban, who is characterised by his physical force. He may not see Nicole as a patient but it would appear by all indications at the end of the novel that she will

[589] Ibid., 327.
[590] Ibid., 345.
[591] Ibid., 332.
[592] Ibid., 328.
[593] Ibid., 337.

be expected to comply to the identity of obedient wife. At the close of the novel, as she attempts to go to Dick, she is forcibly stopped by his replacement:

> "I'm going to him." Nicole got to her knees.
> "No, you're not," said Tommy, pulling her down firmly. "Let well enough alone."[594]

Fitzgerald leaves the impression with the reader that perhaps Nicole has just exchanged one authority with another, her identity remains tied to the man that has now replaced the father, husband and doctors who have controlled her and dictated the meaning of her own experiences. Similarly, the apparent recovery that Nicole has undergone is in no way presented as complete or permanent but no longer the responsibility of her former husband and doctor.

Dick Diver and the Loss of Masculine Certainty.

Through the course of the novel, Nicole Warren Diver undergoes a process of liberating herself not so much from the narrative that the men around her have authored for her but rather by a recognition that such a process has taken place. She recognises that her own voice is as valid as the voices of those who have had authority over her. Nicole's refusal to flinch at the word father for the remainder of her life is not only a response to that relationship but a refusal to continue privileging the patriarchal narrative that has surrounded her.

Dick Diver also undergoes a similar realization; however, the breakdown of the assured authority of the patriarchal narrative results not in liberation but in uncertainty as the breakdown of the narrative is a loss of power as the source of meaning. In this respect, both Nicole and Dick go through the same process but their response to it is dictated to by their staring point in relation to it. The inability to identify a singular narrative permits Nicole to make her own but for

[594] Ibid., 351.

Dick the loss of that singular narrative means the end of certainty. The breakdown of this certainty is illustrated by Dick's increasing inability through the course of Book Three to accurately interpret the situations that he finds himself in. His social mastery which is evident throughout the course of Book One evaporates and Dick is found in a number of humiliating situations. Alongside the beating he receives in Rome, he unintentionally insults the sisters-in-law of the re-married Mary North; he drinks too much on an acquaintance's yacht that he has invited himself on (where Nicole reacquaints herself with Tommy Barban); and, in an embarrassing attempt to impress Rosemary, he fails to pull off a stunt on an aquaplane. Through the course of these incidents the way that Nicole (amongst others) views Dick begins to change: for example, the episode on the aquaplane is seen exclusively through the eyes of Nicole, whose growing embarrassment and irritation is evident to the reader. This shift in the way that Nicole and others see him begins to effect the way in which Dick sees himself. Nicole's responses to him both verbalised and otherwise are mirrored by Dick's increasing uncertainty about himself and his behaviour. The beginning of this unease can be charted from a particular moment in his relationship with Rosemary. After the shooting by Maria Wallis in the Gare St Lazare, Dick, Nicole and Rosemary retreat to a café; on Rosemary's departure, Dick

> saw a flash of unhappiness on her [Nicole's] mouth, so brief that only he would have noticed, and he could pretend not to have seen. What did Nicole think? Rosemary was one of a dozen people he had "worked over" in the past years [...] there was a pleasingness about him that simply had to be used – [...] go along attaching people that they had no use to make of.[595]

In the final breakdown of their marriage, Nicole will identify the appearance of Rosemary as the main reason that their relationship faltered. However, it is also

[595] Ibid., 101.

the beginning of Dick's feelings of doubt and social misreading and the loss of the "surety that he knew everything".[596] After Nicole leaves, Dick has a conversation with Rosemary's would-be suitor, Collis Clay, who recounts a story about an indiscretion committed by Rosemary and a young man on a train between Chicago and New York. The anecdote brings into question Dick's impression of Rosemary through the course of their relationship. The emphasis throughout the depiction of their involvement has always been on Rosemary's childlikeness by repeated reference to her mother, Dick refers to her as a "lovely child" and remarks "I always think I'll see a gap where you've lost some baby teeth" and "you seem so young to me".[597] Her virginity is referred to throughout their involvement and this innocence, emotional and physical, dictates the way that Dick sees Rosemary. The anecdote not only undermines Dick's view of the movie starlet but it undermines his confidence in his ability to read people:

> With every detail imagined, with even envy for the pair's community of misfortune in the vestibule, Dick felt a change taking place within him. Only the image of a third person, even a vanished one, entering into his relationship with Rosemary was needed to throw him off balance and send through him waves of pain, misery, desire, desperation.[598]

He is repelled by the story but he desires Rosemary all the more. He is taken aback by Clay's response to the episode that seemed to give him "the joyful conviction that Rosemary was 'human'".[599] To be human in this context is to have a story; this recognition of Rosemary's selfhood, of a life story that is not exclusively based on her "otherness" to Dick's "selfhood", disturbs him but it is taken by the younger man in his stride. Dick refers to Collis Clay as being "post-war", again differentiation is being made between the watershed moment of the

[596] Ibid., 38.
[597] Ibid., 74,75,76.
[598] Ibid., 102.
[599] Ibid.

conflict, the world before and the world after are distinctly different.[600] Despite Dick's superficial embrace of the modernity of the 1920s, he is not fully at ease with the world after the war and its attendant loss of an apparently linear narrative of progress. It is after the telling of this anecdote that uncertainty begins to emerge in Dick's thinking. On leaving Clay, he visits his bank and then heads out to the Film Par Excellence studio.

> He was rendered so uncertain by the events of the last forty-eight hours that he was not even sure of what he wanted to do [...] Dignified in his fine clothes, with their fine accessories, he was yet swayed and driven as an animal. Dignity could come only with an overthrowing of his past, of the effort of the last six years.[601]

The appearance of dignity, illustrated by the materialistic possessions that are the product of his marriage to Nicole do not equate with actual dignity. To regain the latter Dick needs to "overthrow the past". By overthrowing his marriage to Nicole (the six years referenced), he would be returning to a world of work and the dignity associated with an identity tied to his profession. This idea is re-enforced by the bank clerk who "always asked whether he wanted to draw on his wife's money or his own".[602] In these few pages a link is made between dignity and identity as the product of the certainty of work, when all else has become uncertain and brought into question. The profound significance of Collis Clay's remarks about Rosemary are underlined in the final paragraph of the chapter:

> He [Dick] knew that what he was now doing marked a turning point in his life – it was out of line with everything that had preceded it – even out of line with what effect he might hope to produce upon Rosemary [...] But Dick's necessity of behaving as he did was a projection of some submerged reality: he was compelled to walk there, or stand there, his shirt sleeve fitting his wrist and his coat-sleeve encasing his shirt-sleeve like a sleeve valve, his collar moulded plastically to his neck, his red hair cut exactly, his hand holding his small briefcase like a dandy – just as

[600] Ibid., 101.
[601] Ibid., 104-05.
[602] Ibid., 103.

> another man once found it necessary to stand in front of a church in Canossa, in sackcloth and ashes. Dick was paying some tribute things unforgotten, unshriven, unexpurgated.[603]

The reference to the Holy Roman Empire's Henry IV and his pilgrimage to Canossa to seek the forgiveness of Pope Gregory VII is an acknowledgement of wrongdoing but also indicative of metaphorical self-flagellation. Dick may be dressed in fine clothes as opposed to Henry's hair shirt but Dick's discomfort is equated with it. The self-consciousness with which he embarks on a romance with Rosemary indicates his awareness of the damage that such a relationship will cause but it is presented as necessary to undo the wrongdoing of his marriage. The humiliation that will follow, up to and including Nicole's final rejection of him is, to continue the catholic imagery, a penance for his own act of self-betrayal that took place through his abandonment of his profession and his decision to marry. Self-respect and identity are to be found in work, not romantic love. It is this lesson that Dick learns through the course of the novel and, despite his demise, his rejection of Nicole's money and his return to work albeit in small American towns, his manuscript still unfinished, is a return to a recognisable identity.

[603] Ibid., 105.

Conclusion

The intention of this thesis has been to demonstrate the manner in which gender and concepts of madness are present in the formation and undermining of identity in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald. I have attempted to demonstrate that the unease experienced by Fitzgerald's protagonists is the result of a slavish desire to conform to social expectations that situate identity as dependent on a manhood based on social and familial connections, inherited wealth and the attendant pursuit of "the golden girl" who is the embodiment of these values and desires. However, through this process Fitzgerald's protagonists (notably for the purposes of this thesis Jay Gatsby and Dick Diver) perform an act of self-betrayal. They sacrifice their individuated selves and their potential for greatness in pursuit of the social markers of success in 1920s America.

The greatness that Nick Carraway identifies in Jay Gatsby resides in the man he was before he met Daisy Fay Buchanan. By investing in the pursuit of this woman, Gatsby loses sight of his own sense of self, which had originally been focused upon the possibilities of America to create one's own identity and self without being restricted by the limitations of one's birth. In the scene where Nick recounts Gatsby's act of remembering his dedication of himself to Daisy, this self-betrayal is evident and is recognised by Gatsby himself:

> 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. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning fork that had been struck upon a star.[604]

This awareness of his own self-betrayal is re-enforced by a consideration of the original draft of the novel, *Triamalchio*, where Gatsby expresses it far more forcefully and assigns blame to Daisy for his failure to become the man that he

[604] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 86-87.

believes he could have been. After Nick points out to Gatsby that Daisy probably does not feel she owes him anything at all, Gatsby responds with the following:

> "She does, though. Why — I'm only thirty-two. I might be a great man if I could forget that I once lost Daisy. But my career has got to be like this ——" He drew a slanting line from the lawn to the stars. "It's got to keep going up. I used to think wonderful things were going to happen to me, before I met her. And I knew it was a great mistake for a man like me to fall in love - and then one night I let myself go, and it was too late—— "[605]

Through Nick's narration, Gatsby is restored to his previous self, before his acknowledged act of self-betrayal. The reader's final glimpse of Gatsby before his death is marked by despair and melancholy. However, this is not the reader's lasting memory of him. Nick creates the lasting image of Gatsby in his iconic closing eulogy to the dead hero:

> Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter — tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms father . . . . And one fine morning ——- So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.[606]

Similarly, Dick Diver surrenders his promising career as a psychiatrist to become the personal caretaker of the beautiful, wealthy but damaged Nicole Warren Diver. As with Gatsby there is a realisation that he has betrayed himself in order to attain an identity that is based on marital connections and its accompanying wealth. Dick's "dying fall" in this context is an act of self-sabotage. He is subjected to a number of public and private humiliations, many of which appear to be avoidable resulting in as sense that he is engaged in an extended act of self-flagellation for his betrayal of himself. As with Gatsby, there is a specific moment when Dick comes to a realisation that he has lost his own individual identity in exchange for a social identity, which he finds increasingly meaningless. The close of the novel is anti-climactic but importantly it

[605] Fitzgerald, *Trimalchio: An Early Version of 'the Great Gatsby'*, 90.
[606] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 141.

demonstrates a return to an identity that is dependent on Dick and his occupation rather then on his relationship with other people.

In both novels there is also a growing awareness of the changing position of women. Fitzgerald's female characters are often interpreted from the perspective of destructive characters who are primarily responsible for the demise of the male protagonists. However, it is also possible to trace a growing awareness through the course and development of his novels, of a female voice that is indicative of a more complex representation of women. There is a recognition of the impossible position these women are placed in when they are objectified as the pinnacle of social success in the eyes of the men that pursue them. In the confrontation between Tom and Gatsby in The Plaza hotel, the impossibility of Daisy's position is evident. She has unknowingly become the object of, not only Gatsby's often referenced dream, but his very idea of himself. On close reading it is difficult not to sympathise with Daisy however this sympathetic portrayal has to be uncovered by reading around Nick's narration which, by elevating Gatsby condemns Daisy to a component of "Tom and Daisy" who destroy spiritually and physically the novel's hero.

Through the course of *Tender is the Night*, the female voice becomes increasingly audible. Like Daisy, Nicole has been accused of being the destroyer of Dick Diver's potential and personality. Alongside this, however, is a narrative of emancipation, as Nicole wrestles back control of her narrative from the men that surround her and control the story that she tells herself about herself: her father, her doctors and her husband. Similarly to her husband, the end of the novel for Nicole is anti-climactic. She may have freed herself from the narrative control of her doctor-husband but she has replaced him with another man who is domineering and controlling.

Identity is often perceived and understood in relation to other people; an individual's sense of self is created by connections to others (familial, racial, national amongst others). However, in Fitzgerald's novels relationships are often forged in order to reflect how an individual wants to see himself. The end result is therefore frequently frustration, resentment and an implicit (or explicit) sense of self-betrayal. The mature novels can be seen as an attempt to reconcile the protagonist's self-betrayal with his true self. This awareness of the paramount importance of the individual's relationship with himself is, however, evident in the very early examples of Fitzgerald's fiction. The closing line of *This Side of Paradise*, "I know myself," he cried, "but that is all–" despite the qualifying addition of "but that is all" is a statement of affirmation.[607] It may be the only thing Amory Blaine does know, but it is the most fundamental.

It would appear that in Fitzgerald's fictional world identity is most secure for men when based on the idea of work and a undivided loyalty to the talents and strengths evident within the self. This echoes strongly in Fitzgerald's own biography where his pursuit for the symbols of success sometimes distracted him from what he came to acknowledge should always have been his primary focus: his writing. For women, the search for identity is presented as more elusive but it does rest on an independence from the sometimes suffocating relationships through marriage, children and family that during the historical period that Fitzgerald worked in, were often perceived as the defining attributes of a woman's sense of self. Again, the writer's biography echoes in the fiction as the complex personality of Zelda and her ongoing search for a sense of autonomy, it could be argued, haunts Fitzgerald's literary imagination and

[607] Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise,* 260.

pervades the construction of his female characters resulting in an ambivalence towards them.

The process of writing this thesis and the focus on, not only Fitzgerald's fiction, but also of theoretical approaches to gender and madness as well as a consideration of the work of some of his most significant contemporaries alongside an engagement with the theoretical approaches of Mikhail Bakhtin and the work of Soren Kiekegaard in many ways results in posing more questions than it answers, providing a fruitful source for further engagement and study. The first question to consider is how do some of the ideas and conclusions made in this thesis extend to Fitzgerald's other work? Due to the limitations in place on the length of this work it was necessary to choose specific aspects of the author's work to concentrate on but there is obvious scope to extend this study to Fitzgerald's second novel *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922) and *The Last Tycoon*, which was unfinished at the time of his death in 1940.[608] Both novels can be considered in light of this thesis as gender, madness and identity are all themes that are present in these works, both of which have not been subject to extensive scholarly discourse. Alongside the novels, are of course, Fitzgerald's short stories, many of which have not garnered a great deal of attention and are therefore open to further analysis. Similarly how can the works of Soren Kierkegaard and Mikhail Bakhtin be used to explore Fitzgerald's other work? The interesting parallels that I find in *The Great Gatsby* and *Repetition* also pose questions about Fitzgerald as a reader of literature, philosophy and history and the attendant influence such work would have on

[608]*The Beautiful and Damned*, ed. James L. W. West III, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of F Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

his own is an area worthy of considerable attention as little has been undertaken to date.

The necessary restrictions on what parts of Fitzgerald's oeuvre were to be considered were not the only ones that had to be applied in constructing this thesis. Further study of Scott Fitzgerald's connection with the South and its influence on him would be of considerable interest. As would his complex relationship with alcohol, and with women other than Zelda as Fitzgerald's biography, in many respects, remains as compelling as his fiction. His periods of working in Hollywood and the manner in which this impacted on him as a writer is worthy of greater attention and connects him again with William Faulkner and it is this relationship that I am most interested in pursuing further. The relationship between the work of these two writers and the peculiar echoes in their biographies have not been explored to any great extent with both writers being associated primarily with Ernest Hemingway. However, I hope that this thesis has suggested some ways in which their fiction can be explored side by side and it is to this work that I now intend to turn my attention.

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