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“Can’t Repeat the Past? Why, of Course You Can!”

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Greatest Lie

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Senior Honors Project

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Abstract

“Can’t repeat the past? Why, of course you can!” Jay Gatsby, the protagonist of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, said this to his friend Nick Carraway in order to convince both himself and Nick that he could recapture Daisy Buchanan, his former love. However, some of Fitzgerald’s critics argue that, on a second level, Fitzgerald is asking this question of his own audience. Fitzgerald used his life as a frame for his own work, so some critics argue that he stays stuck in the past and writes from his own limited world view. I believe the argument that Fitzgerald simply transformed his life events into literature discredits the author and overlooks his development as a writer.

In conclusion, I intend to review Fitzgerald’s works chronologically and use them to present evidence that Fitzgerald grew as an author over time.

“Most authors constantly repeat themselves,” Minnesota native F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) observed in 1933. “On the basis of...experiences we tell our two or three stories—each time in a new disguise—maybe ten times, maybe a hundred, as long as people will listen” (qtd. in Bloom, 107). In an interview, Carleton R. Davis asked Fitzgerald, “How long did it take to write *This Side of Paradise*?” The author replied, “To write it—three months. To conceive it—three minutes. To collect data on it—all my life” (qtd. in Baughman and Bruccoli, 4).

Fitzgerald’s use of all his life as a narrative frame in various novels, such as *This Side of Paradise* (1920), *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and *Tender is the Night* (1934) garners him criticism. In regards to his final novel, which narrates an emotional romance between wealthy expatriates who lived on the French Riviera in the 1920s, critic Philip Ravh remarked, “You [Fitzgerald] can’t hide from a hurricane under a beach umbrella” (Dickstein, 74). The hurricane represents the darkness and gloom that permeated American sentiment during the Great Depression, and the beach umbrella symbolizes Fitzgerald’s outdated subjects: wealthy socialites. I intend to prove that Fitzgerald’s writing does not, as Ravh suggests, stagnate and remain fixed in one particular style. Instead, it shows how the different chapters of his life influenced his work. His treatment of women in fiction, his attitude toward his characters’ “dream worlds,” and his shift in style from optimism to pessimism in regards to location, alcohol, and money demonstrate how Fitzgerald’s real life transformations altered his novels.

Contrary to Ravh’s claim, I plan to show that the time that Fitzgerald lived and wrote in had a profound impact on his literature. Specifically, I wish to demonstrate how Fitzgerald accepted modernism and allowed it to influence his literature even before the Great Depression struck. Since I plan to classify Fitzgerald as a modernist, I must provide a definition for this term.

According to the poet T.S. Eliot, one of Fitzgerald's contemporaries, the modernist writer addressed "the immense paranoia of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history." The specific, tangible alterations that resulted from this movement, I contend, provide solid evidence that reviewing Fitzgerald's works chronologically both highlights his development as an author and emphasizes how he became a more polished writer as he gained experience.

Examining Fitzgerald's treatment of women through this time based lens provides solid evidence that he moved away from primarily creating strong male leads and weak female characters. By adjusting his style and challenging the gendered stereotypes, Fitzgerald added a level of realism in his later novels, especially *Tender is the Night*, that did not exist in his earlier works. I plan to analyze several female characters to denote Fitzgerald's progression. I will begin with Clara and Eleanor Savage from *This Side of Paradise*, then move on to Dot from *The Beautiful and Damned*. Fitzgerald wrote these two novels in the early 1920s. Next, I will study Daisy from *The Great Gatsby*, and conclude with an examination of Rosemary Hoyt and Nicole Diver, the two main female characters in *Tender is the Night*. These novels were published in 1925 and 1934, respectively. I assert that, during the time gap that separates these two pairs of novels, Fitzgerald began to understand the need to rid his writing of flat, generic portrayals of men and women.

Part of Fitzgerald's struggle with writing compelling female characters comes from his own life. The author's past caused him, in his early works, to create clear gender differences between men and women. Cathy W. Barks mentions in her biography of Fitzgerald that "[He] enjoyed living in his imagination, creating idealized versions of himself, and inventing stories wherein he demonstrated courage, athletic prowess, and all manner of exceptional abilities" when he was growing up (5). Popular culture, too, contributed to how Fitzgerald crafted his

male characters. For instance, Heidi M. Kunz analyzes Fitzgerald's construction of Tom as a result of his social environment. She writes, "Roosevelt's exaltation of 'the strenuous life' and bodybuilder Bernarr Macfadden's promulgation of 'physical culture'...inspired popular new images of...manhood embodied in hypermasculine Caucasian physiques" (235). Fitzgerald's veneration of the physically strong male character figures prominently in *The Great Gatsby*. Nick Carraway notices Tom Buchanan's appearance almost immediately upon meeting the man, thinking, "Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body...It was a body capable of enormous leverage...a cruel body" (7). Daisy, too, classifies Tom based on his body, saying, "That's what I get for marrying a brute of a man, a great, big, hulking specimen..." (12). Tom also punched Myrtle Wilson in the nose just after she insisted that she had a right to say Daisy's name. Tom imposed his physical strength on Myrtle to maintain his control over her.

Unfortunately, women are inferior to men both mentally and physically in Fitzgerald's first works. Washburne argued that Fitzgerald's Victorian ideals led him to write Clara, one of the female characters of *This Side of Paradise*, as "not an individual...but a symbol of pure goodness that represents a spiritual reality as surely as the Virgin Mary" (17). Washburne argued that this perfect goodness made Clara nothing more than "the classic example of the asexual mother...a dull character type" (17). Even young, lively women could not avoid being classified as "dull." This term had nothing to do with age—gender determined whether or not a character could lead an exciting, fulfilling life in Fitzgerald's early novels. Eleanor Savage, a love interest of *Paradise's* protagonist, Amory Blaine, expressed frustration with the inherent limitations that afflicted women of her time. For example, she once complained to Amory, "You can do anything and be justified—and here I am with the brains to do everything, yet tied to the

sinking ship of future matrimony...I have to marry, that goes without saying. Who? I'm too bright for most men..." (Fitzgerald, 224). Following this exchange, Eleanor submits to a crazy fit of passion, whips her horse into a gallop, and directs it toward the edge of a cliff. At the last second, she throws herself sideways off the horse to avoid tumbling to her death. Though she is very much alive, having avoided her physical death, Eleanor remains intellectually and emotionally malnourished because she still must "descend to their [her suitors] level and let them patronize my intellect in order to get their attention" (224). We see, through Amory's later thoughts, that while the woman must yield to the man, the man does not need to change for the woman: "But as Amory had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he hated was only a mirror" (226). Through this sentence, Fitzgerald reveals that Eleanor is an instrument or vehicle for Amory. His love was not for her. Instead, his narcissistic love simply found expression within the young woman. Eleanor validated those traits—a desire for adventure, good taste in literature—that Amory appreciated. When Eleanor "ruined" them, he lost interest in her.

The theme of male dominance expands within Fitzgerald's next novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*. In his previous work, *This Side of Paradise*, Eleanor voiced her dissatisfaction with the power structure that prevented her from becoming anything other than a wife, mother, or a nun. In *The Beautiful and Damned*, readers meet Dot, an adolescent girl who appears eager to embrace her subjugation. Anthony Patch, the main character of the novel, met Dot while he was training to join the military in Montgomery, Alabama. The teenager fell madly in love with the "rugged" Anthony. After he completed his army training and went to war, he returned back to New York. Dot found him at his home through some extreme detective work: "She had seen an item in the paper concerning the lawsuit and had obtained his address from the clerk of the Appellate Division. She had called up the apartment and had been told that Anthony was out..."

(193). Dot's extreme devotion strikes Anthony as disturbing. The narrator mentions, "She was appallingly in earnest" (193). Dot provides a foil to Gloria, Anthony's wife, who has become cooler toward Anthony during the couple's spiral into crippling poverty and, in Anthony's case, alcoholism. However, he now becomes repulsed by Dot's affection and threatens to strike her. "Hit me!" she implored him—wildly, stupidly. "Oh, hit me, and I'll kiss the hand you hit me with!" (193-194). By employing the words "wildly" and "stupidly" to describe Dot, Fitzgerald separates Anthony from the young woman and artificially elevates the protagonist in the process. Anthony is a heavy drinker, and he and Gloria are broke. However, Fitzgerald has never subjected Anthony to the kind of obvious indictment that he places on Dot. Therefore, by comparing Anthony to Dot, Fitzgerald deemphasizes the male character's downward spiral. In a continuation of this effort by the author, Gloria comes back to tell Anthony that he's worth thirty million dollars—the court has allowed him to inherit his grandfather's wealth. This astounding material success places Anthony above Dot as well, even though the man has not done anything to earn the money.

Fitzgerald's next novel, *The Great Gatsby*, holds yet more challenges for women. The beginning of the novel, in particular, establishes the degree to which men affect women. Through his narrator, Nick, he introduces Daisy Buchanan and Jordan Baker when they are resting languidly upon a couch as if they were "buoyed upon an anchored balloon" (8). The word "anchored" applies especially well to Daisy, who decides to remain chained to Tom at the conclusion of the novel, though she strays toward Gatsby for a short time. Examining the rest of this passage proves invaluable as well. When Tom left, "the caught wind died out about the room, and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor" (8). The image of death and women descending shows how Tom enables women to defy gravity.

The fact that he affects Jordan rather than solely his wife speaks to how this influence worked on a large scale: The male elevating the woman is more than a part of Tom and Daisy's relationship. It also offers a sign that Fitzgerald, at this point in time, was still maintaining some of the Victorian ideals he had developed while growing up. The description of the opening scene in *Gatsby* forms a distinct contrast with how women were perceived when the story was written. Mitchell Newton-Matza has this to say about females in the Jazz Age: "Women were starting to have a greater share in American society...Although they were still hardly on the top rung of society, women were finding new avenues opening to them" (xvii). So, while Fitzgerald was a Jazz Age writer, he did not always implement the context of that particular time period into his novels.

Fitzgerald continues to remind his audience that women (in his mind) could not be independent. At the conclusion of *The Great Gatsby*, Nick reflects on how Tom and Daisy elected not to attend Gatsby's funeral and says, "They were careless people...they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made..." (179). Daisy is never independent of Tom in this sentence. Fitzgerald always refers to the couple as "they." Even though the relationship hurts both parties, Daisy is unable to escape it, whereas Tom could physically leave Daisy to be with Myrtle. This highlights the gender inequality that plagued Fitzgerald's writing, as does Gatsby's treatment of Daisy. At first, his all-encompassing love for his ex-girlfriend strikes readers as sweet, especially when it's compared to Tom's sparse affection. However, his obsession has ruined Daisy. As Nick Carraway remarked after a midday tea party, "There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but through the

colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything” (95). Jay Gatsby’s grand conception of a flawless Daisy serves to highlight the real girl’s imperfections. As a result, he depreciates the actual Daisy. Daisy also recognizes, like Eleanor, that intelligence is wasted on a woman in her day and age. She once professed to Nick that she wanted her daughter to be a beautiful little fool because that was the best thing she could be. The similarity between the two women underscores a lack of progress on Fitzgerald’s part and suggests that his youth—he was only 29 when *Gatsby* was published—perhaps prevented him from severing ties with the values he learned as a young man.

Though he began exploring avenues toward female independence within *The Great Gatsby* by making Jordan Baker a professional athlete, Fitzgerald made more serious strides in developing his female characters in his 1934 novel, *Tender is the Night*. One of his main female characters, Nicole, is the wife of Dick Diver, a well-respected psychologist. Nicole’s father raped her at a young age, and Nicole had been one of Dick’s patients. Fitzgerald builds up Nicole’s character over the course of the plot, transforming her from an infirm woman into a strong one. She begins an affair with the martial Tommy Barban after sensing that Dick has changed for the worse. Upon earning her independence by leaving Dick, Nicole “wandered around the house rather contentedly, resting on her achievement. She was a mischief, and that was a satisfaction; no longer was she a huntress of corralled game” (299). The binary between “corralled” and “mischief” plays on the fact that Nicole has newfound freedom: there are no longer any nurses or doctors to look over her, and she can now stand apart from her main caregiver.

Some critics argue that, by finding her freedom in another man, Nicole remains weak because she remains dependent. However, unlike Daisy, Nicole has chosen her partner, and

rejects the one who could have most easily cared for her condition. However, she refused to abandon Dick at the first sign that he was drinking too much and becoming less effective in his work. She only leaves Dick when the break in their relationship becomes irreparable, which is a rational decision on her part. This willingness to accept reality leads into another display of Nicole's strength. When she is consummating her tryst with Tommy, he asks, "When did you begin to have white crook's eyes?" (291). She replies indignantly, "If my eyes have changed it's because I'm well again. And being well perhaps I've gone back to my true self—I suppose my grandfather was a crook and I'm a crook by heritage, so there we are" (292). Here, Nicole confirms her wellness for herself and does not mind defining herself as a crook, despite the negative connotations that come attached to that term. Nicole's intrinsic identity becomes unlocked through her actions and her choices.

Rosemary Hoyt, meanwhile, offers an even more prominent example of feminine strength within the same work. Michael Nowlin notes that Rosemary stands apart from men. She is "available to all but possessed by no one, and is represented in Fitzgerald's novel by that emblem of mass cultural desire, the movie star" (62). It is important to note that Rosemary's job as a movie star serves as a reflection of her own thoughts on marriage. Her desire for freedom comes through most prominently in this reflection about Dick: "For three years he had been the ideal...She did not want him to be like other men, yet here were the same exigent demands, as if he wanted to take some of herself away, carry it off in his pocket" (Fitzgerald, 211-212). Whereas previous female characters such as Eleanor could not simultaneously stop men from "carrying them away" and earn a living, Rosemary can find success in both endeavors. This is a key moment for Fitzgerald: Rosemary can do more than just wish for independence—she also possesses the means to achieve and maintain it. Nowlin also categorizes Rosemary as a phallic

woman. The word “phallic” suggests a masculine strength, a strength that previous female characters clearly did not own. Additionally, Rosemary’s status as an actress allows her economic freedom. Unlike Rosalind Connage and Daisy Buchanan, Rosemary’s money is entirely her own. This economic freedom distinguishes her from the female characters featured in Fitzgerald’s earlier works.

Now that I have concluded my analysis of Fitzgerald’s female characters, I plan to address how his environments change over time. I will chart the progression of the settings or “dream worlds” chronologically, beginning with *This Side of Paradise*, then transitioning to the environments of *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*. I wish to show how the environments become overrun by the futility that characterizes Eliot’s definition of modernism.

At first, the characters’ environments are welcoming. Amory, the young Princeton student, only notes the positives of his new home upon arriving at college. When he is due to graduate, he sobs at the realization that he must leave Princeton and his friends, lovers, and memorable, carefree times behind. As Nancy Van Arsdale comments, “Princeton must be analyzed as a modernist’s paradise temporarily gained, inevitably lost, never forgotten. Readmission remains Amory’s secret hope, as it was for Adam, Eve, and Scott” (39). Princeton, for Amory, stands as a fixed point that offers safety and holds mostly positive memories. To show how darkness eventually usurps Fitzgerald’s dream worlds, I will contrast Van Arsdale’s comments about Princeton with Harold Bloom’s analysis of Jay Gatsby’s mansion. Bloom states that, at the conclusion of the novel, the mansion has been reduced to “a huge incoherent failure” (49). He also remarks that the bright, buzzing atmosphere of the first party cannot be sustained: “The novel’s ebullient opening descriptions of Gatsby’s life and luxury turn increasingly dark, until the lights in the house are turned off altogether” (49). This darkness struck Fitzgerald

unexpectedly in the midst of the Jazz Age, at the height of his success. One can confidently assume that such pessimism overwhelmed the author because, as he finished writing and editing *The Great Gatsby*, Zelda had a small affair with a Frenchman.

Though readers can offer the aforementioned biographical references as proof that Fitzgerald simply used the various places he lived as backdrops for his novels, I believe that viewing the author's locations through this frame disregards how modernism affected Fitzgerald. The settings of *Tender is the Night*, in particular, offer substantial proof that the literary movement had begun influencing the author. Some modernist authors, such as Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and James Joyce, left for Paris because they felt oppressed by the materialism of the United States and wanted to experience a new, bohemian culture. Yet Fitzgerald "still sensed the clock was ominously ticking down the minutes to when it [France] would be spoiled...he wrote that 'by 1928 Paris had grown suffocating'" (Barks, 9). Florence Chazarenc shows that Paris is a sight of decay for Dick, Nicole, and their friends: "Alcoholism, trickery, jealousy, violence, and loss of control are problems the little society has to face" (7). It is also in Paris that Dick and Rosemary find a dead black man, Jules Peterson, on Rosemary's bed in their hotel. Dick focuses his attention on protecting the movie star from a potential scandal because "her contract was contingent upon an obligation to continue rigidly and unexceptionally as 'Daddy's Girl'" (Fitzgerald, 109). Following the chaos, Nicole has a breakdown and Dick hears "louder and louder, a verbal inhumanity that penetrated the keyholes...and in the shape of horror took form again" (111). This scene lends credence to Chazarenc's observation that "Fitzgerald uses Paris...to signal Dick's disorientation. His disorientation is obviously in...his relationship with Nicole and due to his affair with Rosemary" (7).

A close examination of the other key setting of *Tender is the Night*—Zurich, where Dick and Franz set up their clinic—gives readers another chance to see how modernism now runs rampant through Fitzgerald’s writing. At first, Zurich appears to offer a foil to the wild, hurried lifestyle of Paris. The environment is natural and unaffected by modern life: “The sun swam out into a blue sea of sky and suddenly it was a Swiss valley at its best—pleasant sounds and murmurs and a good fresh smell of health and cheer” (Fitzgerald, 117-118). Additionally, Linda De Roche comments, “Switzerland has functioned for the world as a ‘clean, well-lighted place,’ to use Ernest Hemingway’s phrase, a good place beyond the reach of the moral corruption and debilitating chaos of modern life” (50). Yet, at times, Zurich fails to escape the chaos that has eaten up the rest of the world. For instance, when the Diver family makes a visit to the Agiri Fair, Nicole runs away from her husband and children to take a ride on a ferris wheel. She was “laughing hilariously; he [Dick] slunk back into the crowd, a crowd which...spotted the intensity of Nicole’s hysteria” (Fitzgerald, 189). In this instance, the frenzy of the fair interrupts the calm peace of Zurich and reintroduces chaos into the Diver family: Nicole claims that she ran off because she noticed a young girl eyeing Dick. Then, as they make the drive back to the clinic, Nicole grabs the steering wheel and Dick loses control of his car on a small hill and crashes it against a tree on the side of the road. After surveying the mess, Nicole begins “laughing hilariously, unashamed, unafraid, and unconcerned. No one coming on the scene would have imagined that she had caused it...” (192). The chaos now becomes tightly intertwined with the family itself. Nicole has created a major problem for Dick *by herself*, but only after she was exposed to a less healthy side of Zurich. Thus, De Roche’s claim that “Swiss sanatorium society is a socially constructed illusion that cannot conceal the taint of cosmopolitanism that created and sustains it and ultimately infects it with the modern disease [of modernity]” rings true (50).

The machinery that overtook nature, the distrust Nicole had in Dick, the inability to reconcile the growth of the industrial world with the shrinking importance of nature—all of these details are hallmarks of modernism.

Earlier in Fitzgerald's works, the chaos and instability that marred the Diver family held much less weight. This claim is confirmed by a connection between two car accidents: the previously mentioned accident in *Tender*, and one in *The Beautiful and Damned*. Each party is attempting to go home when they must stop driving. Anthony and Gloria, however, are in the process of going to a new home. Fitzgerald brilliantly captures the spontaneity of this endeavor. Anthony exclaims to Gloria, "You see, as we get out of commuting distance from New York, the rents'll get cheaper, and as soon as we find a house we want we'll just settle down." By his frequent and soothing interpolation of the word 'just' he aroused her lethargic enthusiasm" (77). The Patches end up finding their house in Marietta because that's where the car broke down. After signing a lease, the couple dreams about how they would "join the nearest 'really nice' club, where Gloria would play golf 'or something' while Anthony wrote...Eventually the conversation assumed its eternal monotone: What then? Oh, what'll we do then?" (79-80). The feature that distinguishes this passage from the one in the later novel is that Anthony and Gloria make a conscious decision to move toward the unexpected and the unknown. They lack any sort of plan for the future. Dick, on the other hand, had been planning on how to best treat Nicole before he lost control of his vehicle. This change reveals that the Divers do not possess agency. During his attempt to reassert order in his world, Dick fell victim to unplanned chaos. While a similar lack of planning did not harm Anthony or Gloria, the consequences for the Diver family prove dire. This advances my position that modernism impacted Fitzgerald more and more in his later works.

Now, given that my analysis of Fitzgerald as a modernist writer has examined how his writing grew darker over time, I do not wish to imply that pessimism and development can be used as interchangeable terms for the author. I think that modernism introduced complications into his writing that either did not exist or were only briefly explored in earlier works. For example, in *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald presents a subtle criticism of the heavy drinking that was commonplace during the Jazz Age. The author recalled, ‘Many people who were not alcoholics were lit up four days out of seven...and the hangover became a part of the day as well allowed for as the Spanish siesta’” (qtd. in Crowley, 69). Fitzgerald lures readers into thinking that normal college festivities are underway when Amory and his friends decided to have “a party...of the harmless kind” (103). However, Amory remained sober during the night and saw, in the café where he and his friends were drinking, a man who looked like the devil. He fled the party and returned to his hotel. The next morning, Amory and his friend Sloane went out to get some air, and “then Broadway broke upon them, and with the babel of noise and the painted faces a sudden sickness rushed over Amory” (108). In this instance, Amory cannot revel in the decadence of his time as Sloane can. He is disillusioned with the excess of his time. As a result, Fitzgerald makes Sloane an outsider to the young man, writing, “He seemed no longer Sloane of the debonair humor and the happy personality, but only one of the evil faces that whirled along the turbid stream” (108). However, this desire to stop partying entirely soon passed.

For Anthony Patch, the protagonist of Fitzgerald’s next novel, drinking is at first a small pleasure, but eventually transforms into a profession. With nothing to do except wait for the court to decide whether or not he will inherit his grandfather’s money, Anthony makes drinking a full-time job. Gloria complains to a friend who visits the couple, ““He’s been sitting here all day drinking—except for the time it took for him to walk to the corner for a newspaper” (177-178).

Such heavy consumption makes readers lose respect for Anthony and, by extension, Fitzgerald. His character becomes both defined and limited by his drinking until readers have little (if any) reason to sympathize with Anthony in his self-made plight. Anthony once was optimistic about his prospects in life, even though he was not always motivated to do any real work to earn money. Toward the close of the novel, “the gray veils had come down in earnest upon him” (180).

One objection that critics levy at Fitzgerald is that, in later works, he “‘apparently found it too painful to write a full and honest portrait of a heavy or alcoholic drinker; except for two or three of the shortest portraits, there are always signs of...a desire to mitigate the ugliness” (qtd. in Crowley, 70). Fitzgerald did not harbor this desire (or, if he did, refused to yield to it) in *The Beautiful and Damned*. In the following passage, for instance, Anthony tries to convince an old acquaintance to lend him some money: “Anthony’s mind made an abrupt jump, and what he said was not at all what he had intended to say. ‘Un’erstand you kep’ my wife out of the movies” (Fitzgerald, 189). Patch’s circumstances, along with his drunk dialogue, help convey the severity of his affliction. Fitzgerald wants his audience to see Anthony as “ugly,” and we do. However, this limits *how* we view Anthony: it is very difficult to describe him for more than a few sentences until the words “drunkard,” “heavy drinker,” or “alcoholic” come into conversation. Since stereotypes and preconceived notions about such people exist, readers lose interest in Anthony because they have heard his story before.

Based on my previous analysis, I contend that Fitzgerald’s decision to write a less “honest portrait” of a heavy drinker actually enhances his literature. Dick Diver’s drinking creates a conflicted personality, a man that audiences want to embrace *and* reject. Anthony, by comparison, does not elicit much warmth from readers during the latter stages of *The Beautiful*

and Damned. Anthony and alcohol become inseparable, both literally and figuratively: he is always drunk by the conclusion of the story. However, in *Tender*, alcohol creates a conflict with Dick's conception of himself at a fundamental level: he was "wanting above all to be brave and kind, he had wanted, even more than that, to be loved. So it had been" (302). Obviously, achieving such greatness would prove challenging if Dick ever drank excessively. Fitzgerald shows how alcohol taints Dick's image when he spends time at a bar with Collis Clay, one of Rosemary's on and off boyfriends. Dick tried to find a girl he had previously danced with and almost wandered into the women's restroom instead. He also started an altercation with a cab driver over a taxi fare and got taken to a police station to settle the issue. After being released, Dick fought the man who took him to the station. This side of Dick is neither brave nor kind—instead, he responds to the irrational price of the ride with irrationality on his own end. Fitzgerald's description of this scene presents not the suave Dick who can effortlessly charm a group of friends, but rather, a man who revels "in savage triumph" (Fitzgerald, 227). This contrast exists because of Dick's excessive drinking. However, because Dick rarely acts in such a manner, audiences may be tempted to retain a belief that the doctor's good personality outweighs the bad.

Additionally, Dick's drinking negatively impacts his professional life. After the parents of a patient removed their son from Dick's care because the son smelled alcohol on Dick's breath, he calculated that he drank a half pint of alcohol a day. However, Dick "blamed himself only for indiscretion" (253). However, his partner Franz warned, "Dick, I must say frankly that I have been aware several times that you have had a drink when it was not the moment to have one. There is some reason" (253). However, the reason is never mentioned specifically. By making Dick's drinking an unmentioned, clandestine event, it becomes similar to Nicole's

illness, which is also shrouded in silence and secrecy. Fitzgerald's attempt to excuse Dick's drinking backfires—it instead offers up implied evidence that Dick's problem is so serious that it *must* be kept hidden. This creates a sense of instability within Dick's character, and further highlights how Fitzgerald's foray into the realm of modernism led him to create complicated, well developed characters that better captured his audience's attention than [than??] protagonists like Amory and Anthony could.

The fact that Dick's (or, more precisely, Nicole's) considerable wealth not only failed to protect the couple from suffering, but also contributed directly to their downfall, represents another modernist hallmark of Fitzgerald's writing. In his later works, his characters feel less compelled to search for material wealth, and should they find it, it does not necessarily guarantee happiness or security. Fitzgerald's concern for money plays a prominent role in *This Side of Paradise*. After falling in love with Rosalind Connage, Amory realizes he must adequately provide for his fiancé so she can maintain her extravagant lifestyle. At the novel's close, upon Amory's realization that he has lost his money, he laments the fact that he can now identify with the city's poor: "The rain gave Amory a feeling of detachment, and the numerous unpleasant aspects of city life without money occurred to him in threatening procession. There was the ghastly, stinking crush of the subway..." (240). The word "procession" emits a connotation that the threat of poverty could kill Amory. Additionally, Fitzgerald offers evidence that the young man links his identity directly to his monetary value. Amory engages in a back and forth conversation with himself. Part of the conversation proceeds as such:

A—I am merely afraid of being poor...Just passively afraid.

Q—Where are you drifting?

A—Don't ask *me!*" (242).

This passage represents the most tangible identity crisis that Amory faces over the course of the novel. The fact that Amory avoids answering his *own* question of where he's drifting in life, coupled with his admission that he only has twenty four dollars to his name, demonstrates that the protagonist's identity is grounded in money. Similarly, Anthony Patch becomes consumed with the results of his father's will: will he or won't he receive a large inheritance? He asks his former friend Muriel Kane, "Do you think if I don't get this money of my grandfather's life will be *endurable*?" (177). As was the case with Amory, Fitzgerald's protagonist links his life directly to great sums of money. When Muriel suggests that he find a job, Anthony retorts, "Well, suppose I made fifty a week. Do you think I'd be any happier?" (177). The answer to this question is "yes." Anthony and Gloria would still be citizens of the middle class, but they would no longer be living miserably in squalor. However, because they had become accustomed to living beyond their means, earning a "meager" fifty dollars a week seems pointless to the couple. At the end of the novel, Fitzgerald turns Anthony's stubbornness into an ode to perseverance by claiming the young man "had known that he was justified in his way of life—and he had stuck it out staunchly" (195).

While Anthony applauds himself for remaining steadfast to his value system, Nick Carraway criticizes Tom and Daisy for doing the very same thing at the conclusion of *The Great Gatsby*. He says, "They retreated back into their money..." to insult the couple for refusing to attend Gatsby's funeral (179). The word "retreated" makes Tom and Daisy sound cowardly, and marks the first time in Fitzgerald's work that the author questions whether earning money is always worth it.

Finally, in *Tender is the Night*, a Fitzgerald protagonist openly resents the role that money plays in his life. Dick attempted to "maintain a qualified financial independence. After a

certain point, though, it was difficult...in multiplying ways he was constantly inundated by a trickling of goods and money” (169-170). He also disapproves of how Baby Warren, Nicole’s older sister, uses her money to make Dick her puppet. He reflects on the “unsaid lines: ‘We own you, and you’ll admit it sooner or later. It is absurd to keep up the pretense of independence’” (176). Whereas a character like Anthony would have happily accepted money from his wife’s family, Dick rejects the materialism that prevents him from being his own man.

Additionally, Dick elects to leave the beach that he once owned because he is no longer suited for it. The man who once wanted to be the greatest psychologist who ever lived has transformed into an everyman, “a dot [who] mingled with other dots in the summer crowd” (Fitzgerald, 310). I intend to show that this seemingly unremarkable ending displays a newfound maturity on Fitzgerald’s part and provides a contrast with the conclusion of *The Great Gatsby*, where the author still entertains thoughts of saving the past.

At the close of *Gatsby*, Nick states, “Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that...recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that’s no matter—Tomorrow we will run faster...And then one fine morning—So we beat on, boats against the current, borne ceaselessly into the past” (189). This finale oozes optimism when one considers what Gatsby wanted in life. He wanted to be put back into his own past, so the last line would be a joy for him. On the other hand, should he capture the “orgastic future,” he will also be pleased. Fitzgerald’s artistic decision to present two optimal endings just after Gatsby’s death shows that the author was still enjoying the lavish Jazz Age lifestyle, and did not believe anything could tarnish it.

On the other hand, in the finale of *Tender*, Dick is conversing with an old friend, Mary North, just before he leaves his beach on the French Riviera. He recognized, “stealing over him...the old necessity of convincing her that he was the last man in the world and she was the

last woman” (313). Reverting back to his old ways, even for a second, makes Dick feel ill. For Fitzgerald, this denotes a clear break from his history: whereas Gatsby and Amory romanticize the past, Dick suffers pain if he attempts to follow their example and stay in a lost time period. He also tells Mary, “I must go” (313). This signals a newfound maturity from Fitzgerald. He does not try to spin things in an overly positive way in this conclusion and instead opts for a realistic response. He does not try to preserve the past, and allows it to recede into the background.

The finale of *Tender* gives me an outlet to examine both the theme of the past, as I have just indicated. More importantly, though, it provides a background on which I can present the main points of my paper. To start, Dick’s refusal to even attempt at wooing Mary, a woman he no longer deserves, shows that Fitzgerald has now placed realistic limitations on his male characters—before, in romantic endeavors, the woman took most of the blame for any failures in a relationship. Next, to move on to the topic of dream worlds, it is clear that Dick does not feel too pained at leaving his grand creation. He does not remain in a familiar environment and elects to pursue an unknown future. Dick’s departure from the French Riviera signals a desire to escape the modernism—the “futility and anarchy”—that overtook him in both France and Zurich—yet, because Dick leaves without Nicole’s money, he is not trying to return to the excess of the Jazz Age. This finale, then, suggests that Fitzgerald evolved as a writer over time, and did not pigeonhole himself in one particular era.

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